

# Public Document Pack



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

**Julie Muscroft**

Governance and Commissioning

PO Box 1720

Huddersfield

HD1 9EL

**Tel:** 01484 221000

Please ask for: Jodie Harris

Email: [jodie.harris@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:jodie.harris@kirklees.gov.uk)

Monday 19 September 2022

## Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

### Corporate Parenting Board

The **Corporate Parenting Board** will meet in the **Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.00 am** on **Tuesday 27 September 2022**.

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', on a light-colored background.

**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 Elizabeth Reynolds

Councillor Richard Smith

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Karen Allison

Councillor Carole Pattison

Gill Addy

Tom Brailsford

Keith Fielding

Stewart Horn

Colleen Kenworthy

Barry Lockwood

Elaine McShane

Mel Meggs

Sara Miles

Jo-Anne Sanders

Ophelia Rix

Janet Tolley

Christine Carmichael

Keely Lucas

Farrah Munir

Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities

Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers

Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

Kirklees Fostering Network

Head of Joint Commissioning, Children & Families

Kirklees Fostering Network

Kirklees Fostering Network

Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection

Director for Children's Services

Interim Head of Service (Child Protection & Review Unit)

Service Director for Learning and Early Support

Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers & Looked after Children

Virtual School Headteacher

Kirklees Fostering Network

Care Leavers

Care Leavers

# Agenda

## Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

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**Pages**

**1: Membership of the Board/Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

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**2: Minutes of previous meeting**

1 - 10

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

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**3: Interests**

11 - 12

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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**6: Public Question Time**

The Board will hear any questions from the public.

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**7: Role of the Corporate Parent**

Mel Meggs, Strategic Director for Children's Services will attend to speak to the Board about the Role of the Corporate Parent.

Contact:

Mel Meggs, Strategic Director for Children's Services

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**8: Children's Performance Highlight Report**

13 - 26

The Board will consider a report giving key highlights from the latest Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service

Contacts:

Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children

Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children

Ian Mottershaw, Head of Service –Contextual Safeguarding and Y.E.S, Family Support and Child Protection

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**9: Children's Rights Team Annual Report 2021/2022**

27 - 54

The Board will consider the Children's Rights Team Annual Report 2021/ 2022.

Contacts:

Krissy Podgorski, Children's Rights Team Manager

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding

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**10: Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) Report**

55 - 62

The Board will consider an update on the findings of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children in Kirklees.

Contacts:

Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding and Y.E.S -  
Family Support and Child Protection  
Elaine McShane, Service Director -Family Support and Child  
Protection

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### **11: Virtual School Governing Body Update**

The Board will receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Virtual School Governing Body.

Contacts:

Councillor Carole Pattison  
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher

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### **12: Children's Ambition Board Update**

The Board will receive an update in relation to the Children's Ambition Board.

Contacts:

Elaine McShane, Service Director (Family Support and Child Protection)  
Tom Brailsford, Service Director ( Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

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### **13: Updates from Board Members on interaction with services**

The Board will consider verbal updates from Board Members in relation to progress and key issues following interaction with Services and partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

Contact:

Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

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### **14: Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/2023**

63 - 70

The Board will consider the agenda plan for 2022/23.

Contact:

Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement

Officer

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Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**Tuesday 12 July 2022**

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)  
Councillor Richard Smith  
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds  
Councillor Karen Allison  
Councillor John Lawson  
Councillor Andrew Marchington (ex-officio)  
Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children  
Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)  
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support  
Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children  
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher  
Keith Fielding- Kirklees Fostering Network  
Colleen Kenworthy - Kirklees Fostering Network

Apologies: Councillor Carole Pattison  
Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection  
Sara Miles, Head of Service – Resources, Improvement and Partnership  
Christine Carmichael - Kirklees Fostering Network  
Barry Lockwood - Kirklees Fostering Network  
Keely Lucas – Care leaver Representative  
Farah Munir – Care leaver Representative

#### **1. Membership of the Board/Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Carole Pattison, Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection, Sara Miles, Head of Service – Resources, Improvement and Partnership, Christine Carmichael- Kirklees Fostering Network, Barry Lockwood - Kirklees Fostering Network, Keely Lucas – Care leaver Representative and Farah Munir – Care leaver Representative.

## **2. Minutes**

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

## **3. Interests**

No interests were declared.

## **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 public questions were received

## **7. Children's Performance Highlights Report**

The Board considered the latest reports giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for Children's Services.

Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children presented the key highlights in relation to Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability. It was explained that:

- There was a decreasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 650 children in June 2021 to 604 children in May 2022.
- Between January and May 2022, 73 children became looked after, and 87 children were no longer looked after during the same period.
- It was important to look at the reasons for the decreasing trend to understand the data.
- Children were still becoming looked after, but work had been undertaken to ensure that children returned home where it was safe and appropriate to do so.
- Special Guardianship Orders had been secured for 23 children, and 5 Children had been returned home after being looked after for a significant period.
- 16 Children also had remained with carers under the refreshed Staying Put policy.

The Board noted the update and explanation for the decreasing trend expressing that the breakdown of the data was reassuring and positive. The connection to family was key for children and young people and the Board highlighted that this work should carry on wherever it was safe to do so.

In response to a question from the Board in relation to Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing the Board highlighted the number of missing episodes and questioned how young people had been reported missing. The Board also questioned if the postponed meeting with the police had taken place and what the outcomes of this discussion was. Ophelia Rix responded to suggest that a focused report around children missing, and the context of the work undertaken around this be provided to a



future meeting of the Board. The Board welcomed the suggestion and further expressed concerns that when a young person was missing it left them potentially open to exploitation.

Janet Tolley, Head Teacher of the Virtual School provided an update in relation to Children Looked After Educational Outcomes and explained that:

- The nationally published data for Children Looked After attainment showed outstanding performance at Key Stage 4 (KS4) in 2021.
- For all attainment and progress indicators at KS4 Kirklees Council Virtual School was in Band A and one of the highest ranking nationally.
- Performance in terms of overall attendance and exclusions was also strong with Kirklees Council Virtual School being placed in Quartile Band A.
- In relation to Personal Education Plans, 100% of PEPs were completed within the Spring Term in-line with the termly processes.
- 97% of initial PEPs were completed within 10 school days of a child coming into care since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.
- 3 PEP's were not completed within the 10 days, but there were exceptional circumstances involved and these PEP's took place on day 11.
- 91% of school moves since the start of the academic year had been carefully planned to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision.
- Addressing issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic continued to be a key priority following the return to school for all pupils.
- Covid-19 continued to impact on the number of PA pupils, even though many of these young people were not attendance concerns.
- Persistent Absence (PA) and Unauthorised Absence remained a high priority for all pupils with attendance less than 90%.
- It was important to be mindful of the emotional issues for young people following the pandemic and respond creatively where there were concerns.
- The Virtual School continued to have a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education provision.
- Work was also ongoing across services to reduce the number of school moves and any breaks in provision whenever possible.

The Board noted the update and asked if there were any opportunities to learn more about the model used for the Virtual School. It was agreed that any Board members interested in learning more about the virtual school be invited to a separate briefing for this purpose.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children provided an update in relation to Children Looked After Health and highlighted that:

- Initial Health Assessments (IHA):
  - Kirklees Local Authority rolling 12-month data showed that 79.3% of IHA's were completed within the statutory 20 working day timescale.
  - Locala monthly data for May showed that 75% were completed in timescales.
  - This equated to 3 breaches which were due to late notification and placement of child outside the locality.

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- A breakdown of the 12 month rolling data identified that there were only 4 children whose IHA was completed late within the last year.
- It was important to note that small numbers had a large impact on the percentages.
- A hybrid model was still used to carry out IHA's due to the remaining Covid-19 restrictions in clinics.
- Review Health Assessments (RHA):
  - Kirklees rolling 12-month data showed that 91.5% of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 94% of 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) were completed in the statutory timescales.
  - Locala monthly data for May showed that 78% of under 5-year-olds and 82% of over 5-year-olds RHA's were completed in timescales.
  - There were 11 in-house breaches related to arrangements with carers, capacity, and placement moves.
  - The decreasing trend had continued into June due to various factors.
  - There was now increased access to information (through system 1), which led to more in depth investigation during RHA's.
  - There had also been an increase in the number of children with complex needs.
  - It was important to note that similar challenges were also being reported by statistical neighbours.
  - Communications with the Commissioner and the relevant Cabinet Member had begun to address the new challenges.
- Dental Checks/Registrations within last 12 months:
  - The data for June 2022 showed a positive increasing trend in terms of dental checks.
  - 91% of children under 5, and 97% over 5, were seen by a dentist in the last 6 months.
  - The Flexible Commissioning Project was still in operation and being promoted to ensure Looked After Children had opportunity to be registered at a Dentist.
- Substance misuse:
  - 6 young people had admitted or were known to use substances that had a significant impact on their daily life when asked at their last RHA.
  - It was noted that this figure was low compared with the national average and may change at their next RHA.

The Board expressed admiration for ambitions for continual improvement in relation to Children Looked After Health. The recent challenges outlined were also acknowledged, and it was agreed that a meeting be held with the Chair and Cabinet member for Children and young people to discuss how the increased pressure on health services may be alleviated.

The Board noted a continually improving picture in relation to Children Looked After Convictions and that a further update be presented at a future meeting of the Board.

Ophelia Rix presented the data in respect of Care leavers, and highlighted that:

- Personal Advisors (PA's) were now allocated to young people from age 17+.
- The data showed an increase in the performance indicator from 91.7% in April 2022 to 97.4% in May 2022 which was positive.
- Building early relationships with PA's was a key priority and the ambition was to begin allocation of PA's to young people from 16.5 years old.
- It was also important to note that all young people either had an allocated PA or a Social Worker.
- There has been an increase in relation to the number of Care Leavers that PA's contacted from 90.2% in April 2022 to 91.0% in May 2022.
- It was important to view this data in the context of this group being aged 18 plus and, in some situations, chose not to keep in contact with their PA.
- Work was being undertaken to collect data to understand the rationale behind a Care leavers decision to decline to keep contact with PA's.
- In May 2022 there was a decrease to 87.2% from 88.0% in April 2022 in relation to the number of young people in suitable accommodation.
- It was important to note that where a young person was in custody that this would be classed as unsuitable accommodation.
- Work was to be undertaken to provide a specific breakdown of the number of young people in custody and other types of non-suitable accommodation.
- This data would then be provided to the Corporate Parenting Board for better understanding and context.
- There had been an increase in the numbers of young people who had an up-to-date Pathway Plan.
- Work continued with PA's to ensure Pathway Plans were completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus on the improvement of the quality of plans.
- A key concern and priority area for improvement was to increase the number of young people with access to further Education, Employment or Training.
- A Panel of representatives from across the Council and external partners were reviewing what could be improved, and what opportunities were available.
- The approach to improvement would also combine increasing work with the Virtual School Post 18, alongside early intervention work with young people.
- It was planned that a report setting out the measures undertaken to address concerns around Education, Employment and Training be presented at a future meeting of the Board.

The Board noted the value in providing stability to Care leavers in relation to better education, employment, and training. Ophelia Rix responded to agree highlighting the the value of family communities and the positive link to a young person's further prospects. Ophelia added that other key areas of work would include reviewing the experiences of Care leavers with a particularly focus of what intervention or opportunity could have been provided earlier to lead to better outcomes as well as forecasting the future needs of young people. This information would be important to help identify what was required from the Council as a Corporate Parent.

Ophelia also requested that members of the Council be asked what can be done in their capacity as elected members to identify opportunities for care leavers. The Board noted the request and suggested part of the approach may involve identifying some

young people who may act as mentors on options post 16. The Board also questioned how to communicate the ask and challenge to wider member of the Council.

The Board wanted to know if there was any correlation between children in further education, employment or training with those in staying put arrangements. Ophelia Rix responded to agree to undertake investigative work alongside foster carers to understand what the key factors were that made young people more able to be engaged in education, employment, or training.

Responding to a question from the Board about improving Pathway Plans, Ophelia Rix responded to advise work was to be undertaken to change the language in relation to Pathway Plans, to reflect what the child's ambitions are and what can the Council do to support this. The Board commented that intervention could not come early enough and welcomed the ambition to start working with young people from age 16 plus.

Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships) presented the data in relation to fostering and it was highlighted that:

- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers decreased to 171 at the end of May 2022, this is below the 12-month average of 207.
- From March to May 2022 there were 12 new foster carer approvals and 11 resignations of which 7 were now Connected Carers which was positive.
- The number of family and friend's placements at the end of May 2022 was 110, this was higher than the 12-month average of 104.
- The May figure of 182 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements for IFA placements was above the 12-month average of 177.
- The Fostering service continued the modernisation agenda, including a media campaign, new redesigned website and improvements to Liquid Logic.
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continued to be a priority, and it was important to ensure that robust systems and processes were in place.
- This included having a strong online presence to continue the campaign to recruit high quality foster carers for children and young people.
- Extra resources were being created, including the appointment of a new Head of Service to focus of the recommendations of the Care Review.
- Work had continued to increase the number of Kirklees foster placements.
- There were 11 assessments in process at stage 1 and 2, 16 enquires and 14 expressions of interest in June.
- There had also been a net gain of 4 fostering placements and the total number of foster carers was 173.

Responding to a question from the Board about the impact of the recent media campaign, Tom Brailsford agreed that it was important to monitor the effectiveness of promotions and to present this data to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board. In relation to raising awareness of Kirklees's Fostering offer the Board was also interested to investigate how to target specific parts of the local community and welcomed ideas on how best to approach this from members and officers.

The Board raised concerns about increased pressure on foster carers due to a 30 percent decrease in capacity, the changes being made to the Placement Support Service and new financial challenges arising from the cost-of-living crisis. The Board asked what measures Kirklees may take to support Foster Carers highlighting that that some local authorities were providing cost-of-living crisis payments as a means of additional support, noting that this would be effective in improving the retention of foster carers also. It was also raised that skill level payments had not been increased.

Tom Brailsford responded to advise that the Placement Support Service (which supports Foster Carers) was in the process of being reviewed and modernised to make sure that the service was more flexible and was there to support foster carers as soon as possible. In respect of support during the cost-of-living crisis, Tom further reassured the Board that discussions were ongoing with the Director for Children's Services to address the new challenges. In terms of Skills Level Payment there was an ongoing piece of work centred around benchmarking Kirklees against other regional local authorities in West Yorkshire and equalising payments to make sure they were comparable regionally. Tom further highlighted, that one of the key recommendations of the recent Care Review was to take a more regional approach to all work in relation to children's residential care and foster carer recruitment and as a part of this it was important to ensure parity in both the approach to the cost-of-living crisis and skills level payment.

The Board noted the response and suggested that in revising and improving the Placement Support Service that foster carers be engaged with throughout the process. The Board also asked if there were any new timescales in respect of the work around skill level payments.

In response, Tom Brailsford agreed to provide revised estimated timescales in respect of the work being undertaken around skill level payments to the Board. He also reassured the Board that engagement with foster carers was part of the ongoing co-production of the modernisation of the Placement Support Service and agreed to discuss support to foster carers in more detail at the next regular meeting with the Kirklees Fostering Network.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Children's Performance Highlights Report, and it was agreed that:

1. A focused report around children missing, and the context of the work undertaken around this be provided to a future meeting of the Board.
2. A meeting be held with Gill Addy, Designated Nurse and the Cabinet member for Children and Young People to discuss how the increased pressure on health services may be alleviated.
3. A report showing a breakdown of the number of young people in custody and other types of non-suitable accommodation be provided to a future meeting of the Board.
4. A report setting out the measures undertaken to address concerns around Education, Employment or Training be presented at a future meeting of the Board.
5. Investigative work be undertaken to understand what the key factors are in increasing the number of young people engaged in further Education,

Employment or Training are, and for the findings to be reported back to the Board.

6. A message is sent to members of the Council requesting support in respect of Education, Employment or Training for care leavers.
7. The impact of the recent fostering campaign's be monitored and the findings to be reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.
8. Support for foster carer be discussed during the next regular meeting with the Kirklees Foster Network
9. That engagement continues to be held with the Kirklees Fostering Network in respect of modernisation of the placement support service.

## **8. Virtual School Governing Body Update**

Janet Tolley, Head Teacher of the Virtual School presented a verbal update in relation to the last meeting of the Virtual School Governing Body which was held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022. It was highlighted that:

- The Governing Body firstly received a staffing update, which advised that a SEND Lead was recently appointed to the Virtual School.
- There were also changes to the Senior Leadership Team as a result of the new duty placed on the Virtual School which included supporting all young children with a social worker.
- Since the introduction of the new duty, the virtual school had adopted a new SLT model on a temporary basis.
- This was decided as the best approach to take forward and since the governing body meeting a permanent Virtual School Headteacher had been recruited to work alongside the Executive Virtual School Headteacher.
- The specific role of the Executive Headteacher was to work strategically across services and the education provision.
- So far work had included raising awareness of the new duty, and the roles that providers and services play in terms of safeguarding and supporting attainment.
- Wider work involved the development of a 'Vulnerable Children's Dashboard,
- The Head Teacher update was considered by the Governing Body.
- Whilst nationally attendance performance data was strong, there were still attendance concerns particularly post pandemic in relation to Persistent Absence (PA) and unauthorised absence.
- Arising from the discussion, the Governing Body requested that interrogation of the data for PA, exclusions and suspension breakdowns be undertaken and compared with other local authorities.
- A Finance Overview and Update was presented to the Governing Body.
- It was noted that investment was being used to commission services that schools could not commission alone and for targeted individual support.
- Presentations were considered in respect of Post 16 and 17 work.
- It was also noted that the virtual school's was now working with young people from 2 -18 years old and providing support from nursery onwards.

The Board commented that the work undertaken to explore how to work strategically across services to implement the new duty was encouraging. The Board asked if there was any national longitudinal work ongoing in respect of understanding the impact on

attainment outcomes for the cohort of students impacted by the disruption to education arising from the covid-19 pandemic.

Janet Tolley responded to advise that there was no specific work yet but agreed it was interesting to consider how this cohort of students was tracked across all areas. Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support further advised that Kirklees's Outcomes Report would be presented to Cabinet towards the end of this month and would provide a good baseline source of information in respect of specific groups of children. It was noted that it was important to start to track longitudinal information going forwards and agreed this was to be discussed at a future meeting of the governing body.

The Board welcomed the work being undertaken by the Virtual School in response to the new duty and agreed this information was relevant to this Board requesting that the Executive Virtual School Headteacher be invited to provide regular updates and appropriate times throughout the municipal year.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Virtual School Governing Body update and agreed that:

1. Board members be invited to a briefing about the work of the Virtual School and a meeting of the Governing Body.
2. It was important to track longitudinal information in respect of the cohort of students impacted by the covid-19 pandemic and for this to be discussed at a future meeting of the Governing Body.
3. The Executive Virtual School Headteacher be invited to the Board to provide updates at appropriate times during the municipal year.

## **9. Children's Ambition Board**

The Board considered an update on the Children's Ambition Board presented by Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support.

It was explained that the focus of the last meeting of the Board, was on understanding data in relation to various key areas such as suspensions and early support. The Board also received updates new partnerships and on progress made in family hubs and early support.

The Board noted that the development of MST and the impact on children and young people had been useful and positive.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the update on the Children's Ambitions Board.

## **10. Update from Board Members on Interaction with Services**

The Board shared that member of the Children's Scrutiny Panel had attended various visits including the social work team in Batley and to the MST teams and it was useful to hear their feedback.

The Chair of the Board and Cllr Pattison – Cabinet Member for Learning and Aspiration had also attended the Brambles School Opening celebration. It was highlighted that

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the school was fantastic in terms of the new design and that it was inspiring to see the enthusiasm of the staff and children.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the update on Interactions with Services.

### **11. Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/23**

The Board were informed that the next meeting of the Board may be cancelled due to the date of the meeting taking place at a time when a significant number of members could not attend. It was agreed that a decision would be taken in due course and members informed as soon as possible.

The Board highlighted some of the agenda items to be considered in the next municipal year 2022/23, which included:

- The Annual Health Report
- The One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report

It was also noted that several focused reports had been agreed arising from the discussion during the meeting and that these should be factored into the work programme at an appropriate time.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the agenda plan 2022/23



**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: 27 September 2022

Data is as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, unless stated otherwise.

\*Benchmarking Source: Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMt) V3.23. Benchmarking data is from March 2021 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	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	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	62.4 (624)	61.5 (615)	61.9 (619)	60.7 (607)	93.3	67.0
	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)	12.2% (76)	13.2% (81)	13.4% (83)	14.2% (86)	12.6%	16.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - LAC with three or more placements	% (number)	6.9% (43)	9.6% (59)	9.5% (59)	9.1% (55)	7.5%	9.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of LAC in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	228	275	305	279	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.45	0.56	0.63	0.58	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make?

- There is currently a decreasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 62.4 (624 children) in September 21 to 60.7 (607 children) in August 22. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 61.5 (615 children), below our 31 March 2021 published rate of 66.0, the England 2021 rate of 67.0 and significantly below our Statistical Neighbours 2021 rate of 93.3.
- Of the 86 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering. The full breakdown is as follows:

Placement Type	Number	%
Fostering	72	83.7%
Placed for Adoption	5	5.8%
Residential	4	4.7%
S1 - Residential School	2	2.3%
Other / unknown	1	1.2%
Hostel/Supported Accommodation (not subject Children's Home regs)	1	1.2%
YOI or Prison	1	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	

- The Heads of Service continues to have oversight of permanency planning through Legal Gateway and Permanence Panel. The panels are held weekly to ensure consistency regarding decision making and care planning for children and young people. The panels also provide a quality assurance framework and opportunity to evidence good practice and areas for development.
- An External Placement Review and Finance Panel is now in place, and is held every 2 weeks, chaired by the Service Director. The purpose of the panel is to ensure better oversight of children who are not placed in Local Authority provision and provides a quality assurance function in that it provides high support and challenge as required to avoid drift and delay in care planning for children and young people.
- Whilst the number of social work changes has improved a focus needs to remain on reducing this number further, as we are mindful of the impact this has on our children and young people and will continue to focus on staff retention and consistency in case allocation.
- We have seen a slight decrease in relation to the number of children who have had 3 or more home moves from 59 (9.5%) in July 2022 to 55 (9.1%) in August 2022. Also, of note we have successfully reunited a number, of the young people back with their birth family. This inevitably has seen an increase in the placement with parents' data but is a positive outcome for the young people.

### **What do we want to improve?**

- The service will continue to work with the Placement Support team and the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) team to collaboratively support improving placement stability for our children and young people with a focus on integrating strength-based approaches and tools into practice.
- Further worker needs to be undertaken to 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.
- A review of placement stability will be undertaken as part of practice learning days to further identify areas of future learning and development and to strengthen the good areas of practice that are currently taking place.

## Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	99.4%	98.1%	97.6%	97.6%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↔		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory timescale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	94.8% (598)	94.1% (574)	94.6% (573)	95.0% (575)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
4.09.02: Missing children: a. No. of CLA having at least one Missing episode per month	% (number)	3.4% (21)	2.1% (13)	2.3% (14)	1.8% (11)	9.3%	11%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
b. No. of LAC that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	52.4% (11)	53.8% (7)	42.9% (6)	27.3% (3)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
4.09.03: Independent Return Interviews for CLA offered within 72 hours of the child being located	% (number)	100.0% (20/ 20)	76.9% (10/ 13)	66.7% (8/ 12)	57.1% (4/ 7)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make?

- 11 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit in August 2022 relating to 19 children in total. There was a high number of children who were also the subject of Child Protection Plans at point of referral -11 children from 6 families. The Service undertake analysis to identify any reasons and potential trends.
- For all the referrals received, children and young people were allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) within 24 hours and Initial Child Looked After Reviews were arranged within 4 weeks of the children and young people becoming Looked After.
- In August, the Child Protection and Review Unit held **67** Looked After Review Meetings for children, with only 1 Review not taking place within timescales.
- Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained 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 timescales. August is a quieter month for Child Looked After Reviews due to school Holidays so it is expected that there will be an increase in Review Meetings in September.
- IROs robustly review children's care plans. They provide time-bound actions, which are followed up in between children's Review meetings to ensure that plans for children progress swiftly, and where drift is identified informal and formal resolution processes are used effectively.
- Children's reviews are well attended by a range of partner agencies, who commit to taking actions to improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- In the month of August 4 young people were supported in their CLA reviews one of whom lives out of area. Generally, Children Looked After reviews are not held during the school holidays therefore numbers are much lower than in previous months.
- There has been an improvement in the percentage of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards from 94.6% in July 2022 to 95.0% in August 2022. We continue to have weekly oversight and monitoring of the visits as part of our service performance meetings. The meetings focus on timeliness and quality of visits to young people as well as providing evidence of practice in relation key strengths and areas for further development.

- *Missing CLA:*
  - The number of Children having at least one missing episode has reduced in November, however the average remains at approx. 3%. This average remains considerably below the national average and statistical neighbours (10.0% and 8.7% respectively).
  - The principles of 'Right Support, Right Person, at the Right Time' are consistently adopted when approaching an Independent Return Interview. Utilising familiarity and identifying the right person for the circumstances and placing the Young Person at the centre of the decision is the consistent approach undertaken. With very specific exceptions all Children and Young people are offered an independent return home interview (97%).
  - All IRI's were conducted with the young person and an emphasis is placed on securing quality and meaningful information from those IRI's, therefore we maintain the ethos of using the right person to secure the account, knowing that a person with a positive relationship is more likely to obtain better information that will inform future planning. The use of the right person does sometimes compromise the performance data in respect of expediting within 72hours.
  - 99% of all Independent Return Home interviews offered and accepted were completed.
  - The number of children having multiple missing episodes has fluctuated between 3 and 8 in the three-month period which is lower than the 12-month average. The percentage rate of these children is determined from a very low overall number in the cohort of missing children. The slight fluctuation in the overall number of Children therefore creates a significant shift in the percentage and as such presents a volatile range.
  - As per previous reports, all children's homes are being encouraged to review missing reporting strategies with the placing Local Authorities to ensure they are fit for purpose and have a clear expectation on the home to try all avenues to locate the child before reporting them missing.
  - Daily Risk Exploitation and Missing Meetings (DREAMM) occur with partners to discuss, intelligence, missing episodes, and individual circumstances to ensure actions, and allocations are in keeping with the core principles placing the child at the centre.
  - The Philomena Protocol is a Police initiative to help locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing. The basis of the scheme is for vital information about the young person to be recorded on a form so that this can be used to help locate them safely and quickly. The Philomena Protocol documents continue to be used by all children's homes and semi-independent providers in Kirklees (introduced in July 2020). A number of meetings have been held with providers recently to consider the protocol, the information within it and expectations that all providers use it. Feedback showed that children's homes and semi-independent providers like the protocol and that the information held means that children are located more quickly and that it aids the Police to do this. It was recognised by the police that more work needs to take place with the police call operators who receive the information as they are not all familiar with the protocol.
  - Provider meetings are run 3 to 4 times per year. These have focussed on the Philomena Protocol and support through Covid-19. Meetings have continued to take place and attendance has been good, but more work is required, to increase understanding and fully implement the protocol across the partnership.
  - There are a number of partners involved when a young person who is looked after goes missing. These include foster carers, children's homes, EDS, CLA Teams, Youth Engagement Service and WY Police. Despite the protocol in late 2021, Police highlighted a number of missing episodes where they questioned how young people had been reported missing. Police expressed a view that more could be done by the responsible carer to determine whether they are missing or whether they are absent from placement. This has resulted in a discussion being planned between all involved partners to review responsibilities and reporting. The meeting has been postponed twice at the request of Police and is rescheduled to take place in February 2022.

## What do we want to improve?

- The principles of Right Person, Right Support at the Right Time is embedded in the decision making through the Youth Engagement Service. This principle must continue to be the driver of decisions and become the default position across more services.
- The report identifies the number of independent Return Home Interviews offered and accepted. Securing more IRI's remains a priority and together with securing those IRI's comes the requirement to ensure quality and value is maximised.
- The Service Managers to continue to provide oversight of statutory visit compliance through the weekly performance meetings that are held within the service.
- The Youth Engagement Service has developed a recording system to enable a more nuanced understanding of IRI outcomes. This recording is intended to inform discussion about how more productive and informative data might be able to be created regarding both the allocation of and outcomes of IRI's.
- Independent Reviewing Officers to continue to liaise closely with Social Workers and the Children's Rights team to ensure that children are enabled to participate in their Reviews, and that their voice is heard. Since Covid restrictions have been removed, the IRO Service offers every child the opportunity for an in-person Review Meeting and visit if this what they indicate they would like.
- Children's Rights Service have liaised closely with IRO Service and have relaunched updated online versions of Children's consultation documents for Looked After Reviews, and Evaluation forms for children to complete about their Reviews. The aim is to help children and young people gain understanding of what a Review meeting is, what they can expect, why it is important that their views are heard, the different ways they can make sure this happens, and to encourage improved participation of children and young people in their reviews.
- With others capture children's voices and experiences, and support young people's participation to inform service development.
- The IRO Service intending to collate and analyse information from children about their experiences of their Looked After Reviews over the forthcoming months to inform continuous service delivery improvement.
- Introduce improved quality assurance mechanisms to support the development of the Children's Rights Service and the team, and bench mark the service against the new Advocacy Standards which are due to be published imminently.

## Children Looked After Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Autumn Term 21/22	Spring Term 21/22	Summer Term 21/22	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age LAC with PEP in the last term)	%	100%	100%	100%		
	Direction of Travel	-				

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	100%	100%	n/a	98%	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	23.0%	23.5%	26.8%	n/a	28.4% (2020/21)	30.4% (2020/21)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑			
LAC with a mid-year school move	%	21	7	1	n/a	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓			

## **Service Narrative**

### **What difference did we make?**

- The above published information shows outstanding performance at Key Stage 4 in 2021 and strong performance in terms of overall attendance and exclusions all in Quartile Band A.
- 100% of PEPs have been completed within the Summer Term in-line with the termly processes.
- The Virtual School is currently leading on all PEPs since the Covid-19 lockdowns began in March 2020. These are virtually held meetings unless there is a critical reason why in person attendance is required.
- 98% of initial PEPs have been completed within 10 school days of child coming into care since 01/09/2021.
- We continue to work with social work teams to improve both PEP and initial PEP completion and the quality assurance of PEPs.
- 89% of school moves since the start of the academic year have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision (4 out of 5 young people over 20 days UASC no school place).

### **What do we want to improve?**

- Impact of the pandemic remains – some key areas we continue to focus on include Emotional Health and Wellbeing, engagement in education and academic catch up.
- Persistent Absence (PA) / Unauthorised Absence remains a key priority for all pupils with attendance less than 90%.
- We will continue to have a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education provision.
- We will continue to work across service to reduce the number of school moves (2018-19 (82), 2019-20 (64) 2020-21 (75)) and to reduce the number of young people with a break in provision whenever possible.



## Children Looked After Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	54.9%	62.4%	60.2%	60.3%	31.9%	40.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	88.8%	78.3%	79.6%	77.4%	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	%	87.1%	88.9%	89.0%	87.0%	86.9%	89.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	92.1%	94.1%	93.9%	93.7%	92.2%	91.0%
	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)	0.99% (5)	1.22% (6)	1.03% (5)	1.05% (5)	2.2%	3.0%
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↔		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make?

#### Initial health assessments (IHA):

- Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data shows that **77.4%** were completed in the statutory 20 working day timescale.
- Locala monthly data for August shows that 15 were completed in house, **100%** in timescales. One was completed on our behalf by another authority and was late due to a placement move.

#### Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **87% & 93.7%** of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales.
- Locala monthly data for August shows that **71%** of under 5-year-olds and **50%** of over 5-year-olds RHA's were completed in timescales. There were 18 in-house breaches, related to Placement moves x5, team capacity x5, holidays and carer commitments x7, health appointment x1. Four were completed on our behalf by other authorities, one was late due to their capacity.
- Discussions have taken place between the Joint Commissioner, Locala, Director of Children's Services & the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, to consider the Business Case that has been submitted, to help mitigate capacity issues and the reducing KPI data. The team support all children with a 'looked after' status and care leavers originating from Kirklees and those residing in Kirklees from other areas as required. They prepare and work in the IHA clinic, complete comprehensive RHA's and offer support & guidance to agencies, carers, and children. Additional work can be linked to UASC, foster panels, CWD and Care Leaver History letters.

#### Dental Checks (attended) within last 12 months:

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **60.3%** of children aged 1 to 18 years, at the point of their RHA had attended the dentist. This figure takes account of times when there was a backlog of routine appointments.
- Locala monthly data for August shows that **73%**, had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA.
- A letter is to be circulated to carers of looked after children to remind them to contact the child's dental surgery if they have not attended recently.

### Registered at dentist:

- Locala data shows **80% & 91%** of children age 18m to 4 years and 5 years + respectively at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' has supported CLA and care leavers to register. We have seen recent staff changes in some practices affecting some availability. The Designated Nurse is to attend the 'Kirklees Oral Health Advisory Group', to advocate for vulnerable children and care leavers.

### Substance misuse:

- 5 young people (**1.05%**) have admitted or are known to use substances that have a significant impact on their daily life when asked at their last RHA. All have been discussed with the local Substance Misuse Outreach worker, to ensure support has been offered.
- If a young person declines their RHA, a check is made with the social worker to ascertain if substance use is an issue.

Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support.

## Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				*Benchmarking
		Jul-Sep 21/22 Q2	Oct-Dec 21/22 Q3	Jan-Mar 21/22 Q4	Apr-Sep 22/23 Q1	
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)	%	0.55% (2/364)	0.55% (2/364)	0.00% (0/364)	1.75% (6/343)	Eng.: 3.00% SN: 3.43% Y&H: 3.00%
	Direction of Travel	↓	↔	↓	↑	

### Service Narrative

#### What difference have we made?

- For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions but is however a much-improved picture from 2016 when less than 30% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions
- For the year 2019/2020 90.9% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the last year is an increase of over 25% (65.8%).
- For the year April 20 to March 21, 87.7% of Children Looked After 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.
- For the April 21 to March 22 period 64.3% of interventions completed by Children Looked After were completed successfully compared to 72.8% of the general population. This is a reduction in Children Looked After completion from the same period of last year which was 87.7%, whilst the general population remains broadly the same.
- Whilst the numbers of Children Looked After offending remain small in the cohort, we are seeing a decrease in the numbers compared to the same period last year. In the year to date we have seen a decrease in the percentage of CLA offending from 5.6% (20/21) to 2.47% (21/22).

#### What do we want to improve?

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 22/23 year is smaller than the 21/22 year (343 compared to 364), but through continued interventions by the YOT, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will remain low
- There is a focus around Looked After Children in our subgroups – specifically Subgroup 2 – Reducing offending and reoffending.

## Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	83.8%	100.0%	100.0%	96.0%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↓		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	92.9%	91.5%	92.7%	92.5%	95.6%	91.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	87.7%	87.6%	88.9%	88.8%	91.5%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	58.4%	55.0%	55.4%	59.2%	48.0%	52.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	86.2%	80.1%	73.0%	71.4%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		

## Service Narrative

### What difference did we make?

- *Contact with care leavers* – There has been a slight decrease in relation to the number of Care Leavers we were in touch with during this month from 92.7% in July 2022 to 92.5% in August 2022. This also has, to be viewed in the context of this group being aged 18 plus and, in some situations, young people do not wish to keep in contact with their Personal Advisor. The team continue to work innovatively to keep in touch with all young people.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – There has been a significant impact on the increasing demands for tenancies. However, we continue to work with our housing colleagues who have agreed to prioritise the properties for our young people, and this has helped to improve our performance. In August 2022 we have seen a decrease to 88.8% from 88.9% in July 2022. We will continue to work with our Housing providers to ensure that suitable accommodation is available, we have also maintained strong links with private housing providers. We have continued to provide virtual and face to face life skills and pre-tenancy training and continue to explore collectively how we can improve independence training for our young people.
- *Children in Care aged 17 years with an allocated Personal Advisors* – There has been a decrease in performance on this indicator this month from 100% in July 2022 to 96.0% in August 2022. Further work is to be undertaken as a priority with the team to address Personal Advisor (PA) allocation, but it is important to note that all the young people do have either an allocated PA or an allocated Social Worker.
- *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. In order, to offer support to our young people we have recently established a virtual clinic where extra support is available from our Careers Advisor. In May 2022 we have seen a decrease in the number of young people who are either in employment, education, or training, this is also a priority area to be addressed by the team.
- *Pathway Plans* – We have seen a decrease in the numbers of young people who have an up-to-date pathway plan this month. 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. This is monitored at our performance meetings chaired by the service manager.

## What do we want to improve?

- *Number of young people with a pathway plan* – The number of young people with a pathway plan has increased 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 have recently reviewed our financial offer to our care leaver along with our staying put policy and they will be launched following approval. We aim to review our commitment to care leavers, and both will significantly improve and enhance our offer to our young people.
- To improve the allocation timeliness of Personal Advisors and the timeliness and quality of visits to young people.
- This is a key priority area for the service to address and increase the number of our young people who will have access to Education, Employment or Training.

## Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	9.5% (22)	7.0% (13)	6.5% (12)	4.7% (9)	13.9%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
A10 Average timescale (days) between the child coming into care and being placed with the adopter adjusted for foster carer adoptions (12 month rolling period)	Number	546.6	494.9	475.8	465.2	396.7 (17-20)	367.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
A2 Average timescale (days) between receiving court authority to place a child and the council deciding to match the child with an adoptive family (12 month rolling period)	Number	236.3	191.3	205.1	208.0	180.0 (17-20)	175.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		

## Service Narrative

### What difference did we make?

- 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 Panel on a weekly basis in order 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 procedure's 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.
- 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. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic we have experienced delays in relation to court

hearings for application for adoption orders again has restrictions have lifted this is now an improving picture.

### **What do we want to improve?**

- To continue to develop working relationships 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.
- We have been able to enable children to remain within family, whose alternative plan would have been that of adoption, through the Family Group Conference, and connected persons assessments.
- Kirklees will need to consider whether a panel environment would be of benefit, to consider the below recommendations. This could be similar to, if not, the same as Permanence panel, or be heard at this panel, as additional to the already set TORS.
- Maintaining a realistic outcome of rescindment, within 12 months of Placement Order, if links have not been productive. We also need to have scrutiny of this within the panel environment. This would involve the formulation and frequency of this panel, to ensure all the below issues are considered to have had the appropriate oversight and management.
- Our ongoing working relationships with One Adoption and case audits will be able together to consider individual cases. We will be able to determine/monitor links and match children with potential adopters within the first 3 months of the Placement Order being granted. If this hasn't happened, we need to review this within a panel environment, to ensure we are working closely with One Adoption, and ensuring that everything possible is completed, to try and match children, much earlier (fund days/ National register).
- Through work with One Adoption, we will determine harder to place children, and put plans in place to consider these children for family fun days sooner, as we realistically know at the point of final order in most cases, that children will be more difficult to match. Therefore, we need to be more proactive about this approach.
- Reconsider the timescale for foster carers declaring an interest in adoption. At present this sits at 12 months, which then requires a 3-4 month assessment process. If this was to change to 6 months, then there is potential for a child to be adopted within 14 months of final order, for foster to adopt cases (not EPP). Changes to this present arrangement would need to be agreed and discussed at senior management level before this could progress.
- One of our main issues is in relation to the recording systems and accuracy. We need to be better at recording on the Liquid Logic which would give a better indication of orders being made. We remain to be committed to staff training, to ensure that accurate records are kept, which has also included a number of roll backs, to determine the factual information. We will continue to prioritise this as a learning outcome, as both a refresher for staff, and as part of ongoing training/ induction of new employees.
- Through monthly meetings with One Adoption and case audits, we will work together at a proactive approach to improve the timeliness of the adoption orders being made, post placement.
- One Adoption and Kirklees to work together at focussing on adoption cases in the Practice Learning days. To highlight good practice and developmental areas.

## Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Sep 21	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total New Carer Approvals in Month:	Number	4	3	7	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	2	2	7	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
In-house Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	0	2	3	7	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	226	170	171	177	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
b. Family and friend placements	Number	97	120	118	121	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	166	179	178	172	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make?

- From June to August 2022 there were 14 new foster carer approvals, of which 13 were connected carers and 1 mainstream carer. 11 fostering households resigned and 2 have been de-registered in the period.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers stood at 177 at the end of Aug 22, just below the 12-month average of 178.
- The number of Family and Friends Placements stood at 121 at the end of Aug 22, inclusive of Reg 24 Placements. The 12-month average is 110.
- The August 22 figure of 172 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements for IFA placements is a decrease over the 12-month high of 185 seen in Mar 22. The 12-month average is 178.
- The data shows a net gain of 9 fostering households in the past 12 months.

#### What do we want to improve?

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a priority. We are focussed on recruiting internal foster carers who can help us to meet our sufficiency needs around placements for older children, children with complex needs, offering short and long-term placements, and short notice / emergency placements.
- We want to ensure that new foster carers receive the right level of support particularly in their first year of fostering; induction, training and support from a Supervising Social Worker are all essential aspects of supporting and retaining new foster carers.
- The new website for foster carers is being further developed, to include additional information for that will inform prospective foster carers
- We are currently in the process of updating the Foster Carer handbook which will clearly set out the Kirklees offer so that existing and new carers are clear about the Council's offer to foster carers.
- We are currently implementing a modernisation plan for the Fostering Service. This includes the line management, performance management and further integration with the Placement Support Service, this work is overseen by a strategic Board.
- Under the wider sufficiency agenda, we are in the process of opening a new children's home, the building work is expected to be completed by the end of the October.

## 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
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
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
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
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

Term	Description
SM	Service Manager
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





**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Title of report:** Children’s Rights Team Annual Report

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

<p><b>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?</b></p>	<p><b>Not Applicable</b></p> <p>If yes give the reason why</p>
<p><b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council’s Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b></p>	<p><b>Not Applicable</b></p>
<p><b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b></p>	<p><b>Not Applicable</b></p>
<p><b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b></p> <p><b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b></p> <p><b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b></p>	<p>Elaine McShane , Service Director, Child Protection and Family Support - 15/09/2022</p> <p><b>No</b></p> <p><b>No</b></p>
<p><b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b></p>	<p>Cllr Kendrick</p>

**Electoral wards affected:** N/A

**Ward councillors consulted:** N/A

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes

## 1. Summary

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

## 3. Implications for the Council

### 3.1 Working with People

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

### **3.2 Working with Partners**

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

### **3.3 Place Based Working**

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

### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

Not Applicable

### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

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

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

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

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

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

Not Applicable

## **4. Next steps and timelines**

Key Priorities for 2021/22 include:

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

#### **4 Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the report be noted

#### **5 Cabinet Portfolio Holder’s recommendations**

Not Applicable

#### **6 Contact officer**

Krissy Podgorski, Children’s Rights Team Manager –01484 225288 email [krissy.podgorski@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:krissy.podgorski@kirklees.gov.uk)

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

#### **7 Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Not Applicable

#### **8 Service Director responsible**

Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships



**Annual Report**  
**Looked After Children Independent Service Children's**  
**Rights Team**  
**April 2021 to March 2022**

<b>Krissy Podgorski</b>	Manager - Kirklees Children Looked After Independent Service (Children's Rights Team)
<b>Anna Gledhill</b>	Service Manager, Quality Assurance, Children and Young People Service
<b>Dated</b>	June 2022

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*The Children's Rights Team strives to empower children and young people to have their voice heard in decisions affecting them, raise aspirations and create positive change'*

## **1. Introduction**

The Kirklees Children Looked After Independent Service (Children's Rights Team) offer advocacy, advice and representation to children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority.

Empowerment of children and young people should be central to all we do in advocacy. This underlies the values of the work of an Advocate, including supporting children, being child or young person led, sharing knowledge and information, being empathetic to individual experiences, and listening to the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people.

Individual Advocates encourage the empowerment of children and young people by finding out how they feel and what they want, they can also help the child/young person to detangle complex systems to help them understand what is happening and why.

In 2002, the Department of Health released national standards for all advocacy providers and those providers involved in all decision-making processes for children. The Children's Rights Team works in line with these standards:

- Advocacy is led by the views and wishes of children and young people
- Advocacy champions the rights and needs of children and young people
- All advocacy services have clear policies to promote equalities issues and monitor services that ensure no young person is being discriminated against due to age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, disability, or sexual orientation
- Advocacy is well-publicised, accessible, and easy to use
- Advocacy gives help and advice quickly when they are requested
- Advocacy works exclusively for children and young people
- Advocacy services are confidential
- Advocates to listen to the views and ideas of young people to improve the service provided
- Advocacy services must have an effective and easy to use complaints procedure
- Advocacy services must be well managed and good value for money

## **2.The Aims of the Children's Rights Team**

- Communicate the wishes and feelings of any child or young person 'Looked After' by Kirklees Council
- Attend decision making meetings with the Local Authority or school

- Uphold children and young people’s legal rights and human rights, ensuring that they are fairly treated, current framework of legislation, incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Easily explain information or processes that are happening in a way children and young people understand
- Assist children and young people in making a complaint
- Signpost to relevant services
- Support the empowerment of children and young people looked after to assist them to engage in meaningful participation in respect of decision-making which affects them, both individually and collectively

### 3.Children’s Rights Team Structure



### 4.Children’s Rights Service Overview

**4.1** The service works collaboratively with Children’s Social Care /Children’s Services to ensure that the views, wishes, feelings and opinions of Children Looked After are heard and considered individually and in respect of service delivery and policy development. Additionally, the team supports children and young people to navigate and use the complaints process.

**4.2** Another function of the service is to work with children and young people through training and supporting them to undertake a meaningful role in the recruitment process of professionals. Children and young people also 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 is 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 an Advocate, the purpose of which is to share information about the service, what support that they can receive, and what participation opportunities they can become involved in.



**4.4** Two Advocacy & Participation Workers co-ordinate and support the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF). The CiCC and CLF enable children and young people Looked After and care leavers to come together to work on projects, and /or to meet with senior managers, to enable their voices to be heard and influence service provision.

***Appendix 1 of this report provides an outline of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum activities undertaken during 2021 to 2022.***

**4.5** The service also offers support to children and young people over the age of ten, subject to the child protection process.

**4.6** The Independent Visitors Scheme sits within the Children's Rights; the scheme matches children and young people who are in the care of the local authority with adult volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with, supporting, and listening to them, together with undertaking positive activities.

***A separate annual report for the Independent Visitors Scheme can be found at Appendix 2 and 3.***

## **5.The Impact of Covid-19 on Service Delivery**

**5.1** Throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Children's Rights Team continued to provide services and support to children and young people Looked After and Care Leavers.

**5.2** A three-year comparison shows that overall, Covid-19 did not have a significant impact on the total amount of advocacy issues the Children's Rights Team supported children and young people with. During the pre-covid reporting period of 2019-2020, the total of number of issues children and young people were supported with was 506. During Covid, 2020-2021 the total was 494 and in 2021-2022 it was 492. ***See table in the three-year comparison section***

**5.3** Children and young people's participation in the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum was however impacted by Covid-19 with virtual meetings replacing in person meetings. During this period as some children and young people did not wish to participate in virtual meetings membership declined, however, following the easing of restrictions, group membership has increased, and children and young people are again enjoying a range of activities, and are fully involved in consultations and project work.

**5.4** Virtual Children Looked After reviews are preferred by some children and young people, although overall, feedback indicates that most children and young people would rather engage in person meetings. Advocates continue to support children and young people to ensure that they are consulted as to how and where they would like their Looked After reviews to take place.

## **6.Contact with Young People**

**6.1** Advocacy must be easily accessible. This means that every care must be taken to ensure that children and young people are informed about the availability of Advocacy services, and that these services are delivered in places that are 'child or young person friendly' and are convenient, safe, and private. Other access considerations include those

related to disability, language and communication, culture, or access to technology. These should be considered on an individual basis, taking the lead from the child's or young person's wishes and needs wherever possible.

**6.2** Information about the Children's Rights service is provided in a variety of ways and promoted in places that young people use, in addition the team also provides:

- **Link Visits-** Each Advocate is responsible for maintaining links with a specific Residential Children's Home setting. This involves ensuring a presence at least once a month and providing relevant information and literature in respect of the Children's Rights Service.
- **Drop-Ins-** The Children's Rights Team attend Drop-in sessions at No 11 and No 12 on a fortnightly basis. No 11 is situated in Huddersfield Town Centre and No 12 in Dewsbury Town Centre. Both spaces have been designed to provide a place where Care Leavers can access support, guidance, and assistance from the Leaving Care team and partner agencies.
- **Initial Visits-** Every child and young person over 7 years old who is new into care receives an initial visit from an Advocate in the team, a variety of resources are used to aid understanding dependent on the age of the child or young person.
- **Birthday and holiday cards-** Currently children and young people Looked After are sent birthday cards and a card at Christmas, both which contain information about the Children's Rights team and contact details. In addition, the service is introducing a card for Eid, which has been designed by a member of the Children in Care Council.

## **7.Children and Young People who are Looked After**

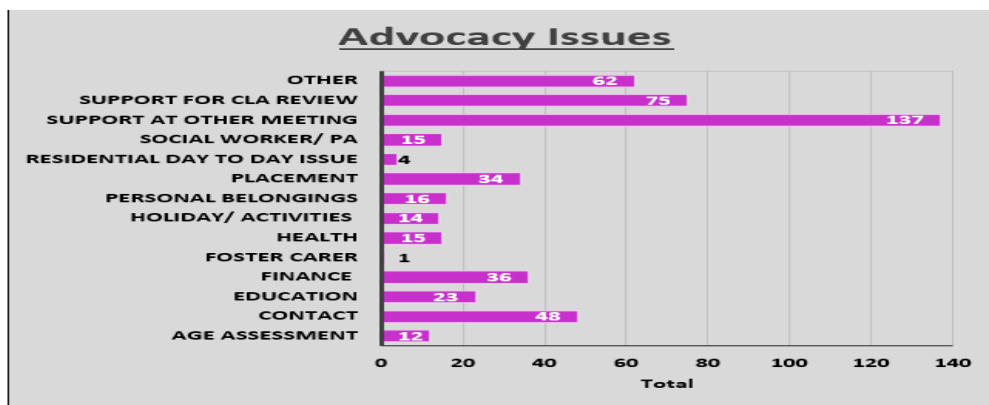
**7.1** Due to the wide variety of circumstances and complexities encountered in advocacy referrals, it can be difficult to capture the specifics of each individual issue.

**7.2** Every child Looked After by the Local Authority has the right to an independent Advocate. This is defined in the Children Act 1989, which 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, including The Adoption and Children Act 2002, extended this to include Care Leavers, and to children and young people outside of the complaint's procedure, when decisions are being made that affects their lives.

**7.3** There are a wide range of issues which children and young people who are looked after and care leavers approach us with. 133 individual children and young people were supported by the Childrens Rights Team within this reporting period with 492 separate pieces of advocacy undertaken. This shows that children and young people may experience multiple issues and that they feel confident to seek support from their Advocate or contact the service on multiple occasions.

**7.4** The chart below illustrates the types of advocacy issues that the Children's Rights Team support children and young people with, the most common being support for Children Looked After (CLA) Reviews and in or for other meetings, for example. supporting care leavers who have children going through Care Proceedings, support at Pre-Birth

Assessments or supporting children /young people at their Personal Education Plan Meetings.



**7.5** Of the advocacy work undertaken 320 pieces related to working with females, 169 with males and 4 for children /young people who identified as 'other'. This would indicate that girls/young women are more likely to contact the service when they are experiencing issues or require advocacy support.

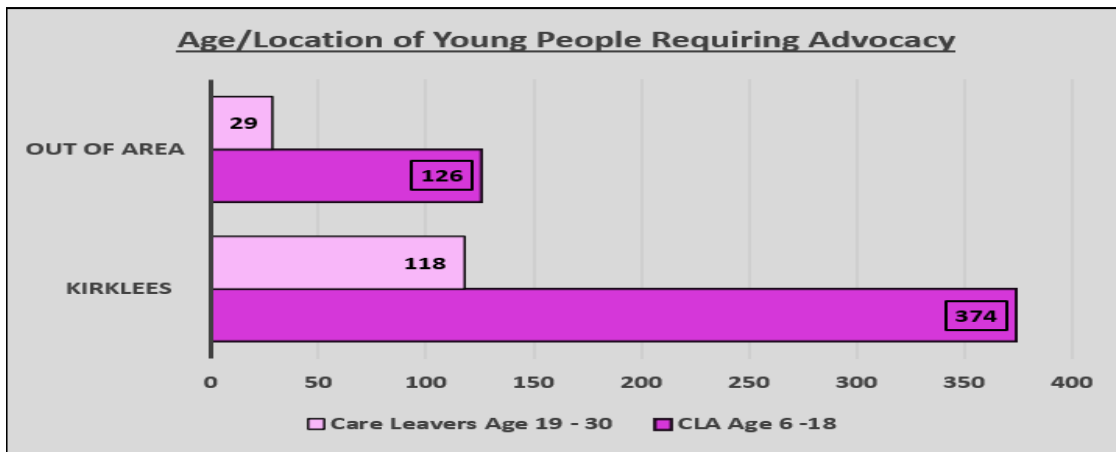
**7.6** There were 15 occurrences of advocacy undertaken relation to issues with Social Workers or Personal Advisors (PA), 34 in relation to placements, and 36 regarding issues in relation to finance, as illustrated in the chart above. Themes and patterns relating to the advocacy issues are explored in section 8.

**7.7 Non-Instructed Advocacy-** For a small number of children and young people (4 in this period) the support offered was non-instructed advocacy. This is provided when a child or young person does not have the capacity to clearly communicate their wishes or feelings or have an appropriate level of understanding. For these children and young people their Advocate gathers information from a range of sources such as parents, carers, and 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.

**7.8 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children-** There has been an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children accessing support from Children's Rights, together the service receiving requests for Advocates to attend Age Assessments.

**7.9** Of the advocacy work undertaken in this reporting period, in 156 occasions of the total 492, support has been provided to children / young people placed out of area.

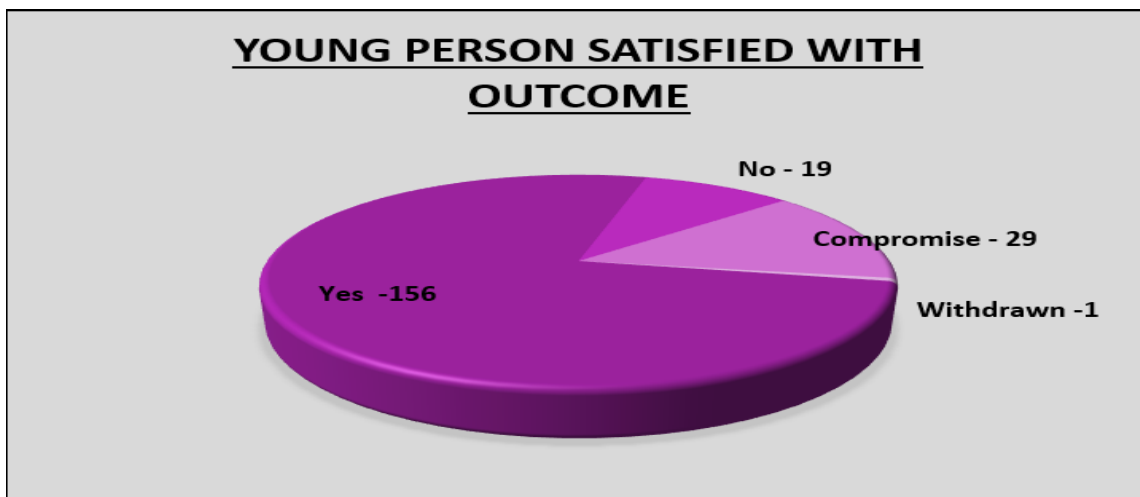
**7.10** The Children's Rights service works closely with the Child Protection and Review Unit and in this period, the services have worked together to revise consultation documentation, seeking to increase the offer and choice for how children and young people can access their Children Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews.



**7.11** The above graph shows that a higher volume of advocacy is provided to Children Looked After (374) as opposed to Care Leavers (118). The graph also illustrates that whilst the service supports children and young people living within the local authority area, those who live outside of the area do access the service.

**7.12** Of all the advocacy provided in the reporting period, in 50 instances, issues were raised by children and young people who lived in a residential setting, whilst 104 were raised by children and young people from a Black and Minority Ethnic Group and in 52 instances advocacy was provided to children with a disability.

**7.13** The pie chart below shows that, not including Child Looked After Review or support at other meetings, 156 young people were satisfied with the outcome achieved in relation to the issue they raised and were supported with, 29 felt they reached a compromise, 1 issue was withdrawn, whilst 19 children /young people were not satisfied.



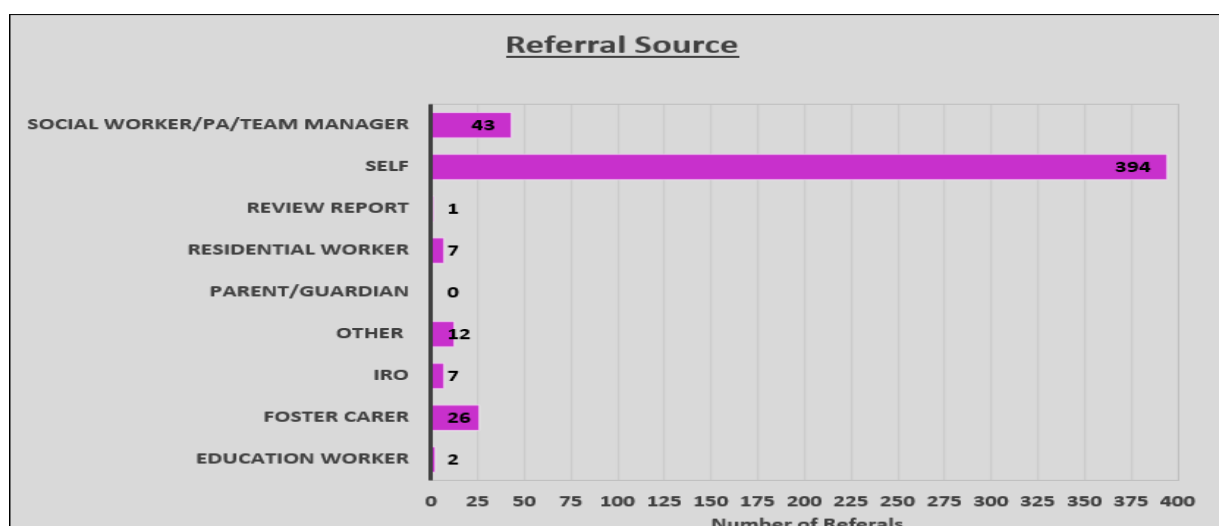
**7.14** There were 9 formal Complaints raised by the Children’s Rights service on behalf of 6 different children and young people in this reporting period. One was addressed outside of the Complaints procedure, 6 by way of a local resolution, and 2 at stage 1 of the Complaints procedure. (Some related to more than one issue) The details of these are outlined below.

Procedure	Number of cases	Issues	Outcomes
Local Resolution	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inaccurate decision making</li> <li>Lack of communication</li> <li>Contact Arrangement Issue</li> <li>Failure to consult /listen /communicate effectively</li> <li>Other (Issues relating to staff)</li> <li>Delay in provision /assessment</li> <li>Financial issue</li> <li>Inaccurate decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not proceed - Advice and support provided by Children's Social Care</li> <li>Not upheld</li> <li>Partially upheld</li> </ul>
Stage 1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact arrangement issue</li> <li>Other (issues relating to staff)</li> <li>Confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially upheld</li> <li>Upheld</li> </ul>

**7.15** There were 89 advocacy issues raised which by children and young people which were resolved informally, with restorative work with other services/professionals being facilitated by the advocate. This meant that the issue was not then escalated to the Complaints Team.

## 8. Themes and Patterns

**8.1** The graph below highlights that most requests for advocacy work is received through young people self-referring to the service, with the second highest referral source being Social Workers or Personal Advisors, followed by referrals made by Foster Carer's.



**8.2** 48 Many of the issues raised by children and young people related to Family Time, the majority of which was to request sibling contact and/or parental contact. Other areas included contact with extended family and requests for overnight stays.

**8.3** In addition there were 36 issues raised in relation to finance, common themes within this related to driving lessons (4), bank accounts (4), clothing allowances (4), food parcels (4), and requests for bus passes (3).

**8.4** Looked After children and young people often approach Children's Rights with issues around placements, in total there was 34 pieces of advocacy undertaken in relation to this. Of these, 17 were in relation to children and young people living in foster care. 3 issues were raised by young people recorded as living independently, 5 by young people living in children's residential homes. 2 young people were living in semi-independent, whilst 3 were in temporary housing, 1 was living with a parent, 2 were classed as residing in 'other' placement and 1 was living in supported lodgings. Issues included post 18 planning, placement moves and uncertainty in relation to this, and homelessness.

**8.5** In the reporting period advocacy has been provided to support children and young people regarding the need for professional decision making and delay, for example in relation to receiving authorisation to go on a school trip, a sleepover, a holiday. A report by the Children's Commissioner, Children's Social Care – putting children's voices at the heart of reform January 2022, highlighted this issue and recommended - *'The system should be able to empower foster parents or children's home managers to manage everyday decisions for children in long-term and stable placements.'*

**8.6** Requests for advocacy to support young people and care leavers through Pre-Birth Assessments and Care Proceedings in relation to their own children has increased; this is viewed as positive, to help ensure that they receive support to understand and navigate complex systems and processes, and impartial advice.

## **9. Child Protection Advocacy**

**9.1** In the reporting period the service received 153 notifications of Initial Child Protection Conferences, in relation to these, there were 76 Social Worker referrals to the service, 21 children and young people were contacted and 16 were supported at their Conference. Additionally, the service received 223 notifications Child Protection Reviews; 50 children and young people were contacted, and of these 44 were supported at their review. Whilst the Children's Rights Team are informed of all Child Protection review meetings, children who received advocacy representation at their Initial Child Protection Review Conference and/or children where an advocacy referral was received are prioritised for support.

**9.2** There are various reasons as all Child Protection conference and review notifications, do not led to advocacy support, these include, late referrals, previously declined, parents decline, unable to contact parents, cancelled/rearranged conferences / meetings, service capacity and /or young people decline or there is difficulty in contacting them. However, during the reporting period there has been an increase in advocacy capacity in the service, and the aim is to utilise this to enhance support to children and young people subject to Child Protection plans

## 10.Three-year Comparison

**10.1** The table below shows the level and issues related to advocacy support between the years of 2019 and 2022 and the year-on-year similarities. As previously outlined above, most advocacy support is provided to children Looked After in relation to their Review meetings, and other meetings, whilst support requested and provided relating to placements, contact, and finance issues, accounts for other significant areas of service provision. Advocacy support relating specifically to Age Assessments has only been captured from 2021-2022 and will be monitored by the service.

	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Age Assessment	12	0	0
Contact	48	34	40
Education	23	9	16
Finance	36	60	27
Foster Carer	1	2	1
Health	15	7	6
Holiday/ activities	14	5	6
Personal belongings	16	9	13
Placement	34	21	32
Residential day to day issue	4	4	2
Social worker/ PA	15	25	18
Support at other meeting	41	80	96
Support for CLA review	171	192	205
Other	62	46	44

## 11.Participation Opportunities

**11.1** The Children's Rights service works with children and young people to support participation opportunities, this includes:

**11.2** Children in Care Council (CiCC): The council is for children and young people Looked After aged between 12 and 16. The council meets 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.**

**11.3** The Care Leavers Forum (CLF): is for young people aged 16 and over to support young people to work with professionals, to help ensure that their views are heard regarding Care Leaver service delivery and provision. **See appendix 1 for more details.**

**11.4** Professional Recruitment Panels: The Children's Rights team supports service areas to meaningfully involve children and young people in the recruitment of professionals, i.e., Social Workers, team, Service or Senior managers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

**11.5** Total Respect training: Following the easing of Covid restrictions, arrangements have now been finalised for this training is to be delivered in person, from June 2022.

**11.6 Skills to Foster training:** In person delivery input by young people did not occur during this reporting period. However, a video was made by children and young people who shared their experiences of being in care for a commissioned company who delivered the training package virtually, due to the Pandemic. The plan is to return to in-house and Kirklees led delivery, and this is being progressed.

**11.7** The Annual Achieve Awards which celebrates the achievements of Children Looked After over the age of 16 and Care Leavers took place in October 2021. The Children's Rights Service is represented in the working group, overseeing the planning for the 2022 event.

## **12. Quality Assurance**

**12.1** The Children's Right Service works closely with the Child Protection and Review Unit to share information, including themes from advocacy, to support positive outcomes and service delivery improvement. The team manager also works closely with the Children's Complaints team to discuss ongoing complaints and cater for joint working to resolve these at the earliest opportunity.

**12.2** A Childrens Rights monthly report is completed regarding data, including themes and patterns relating to advocacy issues, to highlight themes and patterns and support service delivery.

**12.3** On a quarterly basis the Childrens Rights Team seek feedback from children and young people who have received advocacy to inform continuous improvement of the service.

## **13. Young people's voice**

**13.1** When a matter is resolved and/or advocacy support ends, 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 can be improved. Young people have shared that they do not want to receive lots of paper forms or information, so in response to this an electronic feedback form is sent directly to their phone or e-mail address. This has been extended to the children and young people's participation groups, with feedback forms being sent after each group session. Feedback is gathered and analysed on a quarterly basis.

**13.2** 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. Examples of feedback received are highlighted below,





*Direct quotes from children and young people gathered from feedback forms in relation to service provision.*

## **14. Conclusion**

**14.1** Overall the take up of advocacy within Kirklees remained consistent during 2021-2022 despite Covid restrictions being in place for most of this reporting period.

**14.2** During the pandemic Covid restrictions influenced the membership of the CiCC and CLF, as virtual meetings were held and membership decreased during this period, however membership has since increased steadily.

**14.3** Total Respect Training has returned to being held in person; 16 people attended the first session and with positive feedback was received.

**14.4** In comparison with last year, the number of formal complaints initiated decreased significantly, 31 complaints were processed during 2020-2021 with only 9 reaching the Complaints Team in the period of 2021-2022; this has involved the team working to help resolve issues for children and young people quickly using an informal process and restorative practice.

**14.5** The demand for Young Person's Interview Panels has continued in this reporting period with the team endeavouring to facilitate all requests received.

**14.6** Home visits to children and young people in respect of advocacy took place during lockdown providing a risk assessment was completed including a rationale as to why the visit needed to be in person, such as identified communication difficulties. Face to face group work resumed in June 2021, and pre pandemic service delivery is fully resumed.

**14.7** During this period a new team manager started with the service and additional Advocacy capacity, it is envisaged that this will enable the service to fulfil our ambition to offer more consistent Child Protection Advocacy.

**14.8** The service has implemented new monitoring system in April to provide more detailed information and analysis in terms of specific issues, patterns and trends relating to Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

**14.9** Currently a modernisation of the service is being reviewed, the principles of which are:

- To ensure the voice of the child is at the centre of all our work and needs to be heard and captured
- To develop appropriate, enabling structure(s) for children and young people to have a voice that shapes and improves their lives and our services across Kirklees
- To design accessible and appropriate services and provision across Kirklees

**14.10** The recommendations in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (2022) final report regarding advocacy may impact in the future on the Children's Rights Team and the current service offer.

## **15.Key Areas of Development from Previous Year 2021-2022**

- **To promote and improve children and young people's participation in their Looked After Reviews.**

Regular links with nominated Independent Reviewing Officers have been maintained, a Voice of the Child group to promote child friendly Children Looked After Reviews resulted in refreshed and updated paperwork, ensuring feedback is obtained from children and young people.

- **To promote and improve children and young people's participation at Child Protection conferences.**

A Voice of the Child group with Child Protection Conference Chairs was implemented to improve ways of and tools for gathering and presenting children's wishes and feelings in relation to risks and measuring progress when children are subject to Child Protection Plans.

- **To ensure the Independent Visitor Scheme is robust and provides a high-quality consistent service for children, young people, and volunteers.**

A virtual training package for new Independent Visitors was created alongside an annual timetable of support groups to ensure Independent Visitors are well supported and are kept informed of current developments.

- **To develop the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum; including increased membership and improved accessibility, to ensure the voice and influence of children and young people informs service delivery and design**

Memberships has increased with short-, medium- and long-term young person led planning in place. Feedback Forms are utilised to inform and improve service delivery.

- **To work with others across Children's services to capture children's voices, experiences, and help support participation and inform service development.**

The Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum invites senior managers from various service areas in Children's Services to attend the groups which provides opportunities for consultation regarding service delivery planning, delivery, and improvement.

## **16.Key Areas of Development for the Next 12 Months**

- Introduction of improved quality assurance mechanisms, to support further development of the service and provide assurance that a consistent and high-quality service is provided.
- To review and develop advocacy support to Care Leavers and Children Looked After who are going through Care Proceedings in relation to their own children.
- Further develop the Child Protection advocacy offer, to provide a more consistent offer to children and young people.
- To create stronger links with strategic groups and Boards.
- To continue to work with others across Children's Services to capture children's voices, experiences, and help support participation and inform service development
- To review the service against the new Advocacy Standards which are due to be published.
- To ensure key links and relationships are developed and maintained with Magdale House, the new Kirklees Children's home.



## **16. Appendix 1-Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF)**

**16.1** The Children in Care Council meets bi-weekly. 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 improve services to best meet the needs of children and young people.

**16.2** 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. Young people work with professionals with the aim to improve services and ensure that these meet their needs. The group meets bi-weekly.

**16.3** The groups were merged due to the impact of Covid-19 on the number of attendees, children and young people have been consulted about separating the groups, however they chose to stay together in the short term. As membership continues to increase steadily and due to the differing issues that children in care and care leavers experience, the groups will be reformed as separate groups in September 2022. This will enable focus on important issues relevant to each of the groups.

**16.5** During this reporting period the groups have been involved in the following:

- Preventative work around Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing including a presentation from 'Kooth', (Kooth is an online mental healthcare service which aims to provide mental health service to individuals under the age of 21), and a session with a practitioner from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- The opportunity to become a 'Children's Rights Champion', this is a course aimed at care experienced children and young people to help them learn about their rights, being heard and respected, and how Advocates help protect rights. So far one member has completed the online course and was presented with a certificate during one of the CiCC meetings to celebrate this achievement.
- Consultation with a Service Manager from Corporate Parenting regarding the changes to the Placement Support Service seeking their views and suggestions about accessing emotional well-being/mental health as a child in care/care leaver.
- Ongoing art project to decorate the young people's room at Brian Jackson House. Young people will also be designing a new logo for the CiCC.
- The group was involved in and contributed toward the Total Respect Training which the Children's Rights Team delivers in conjunction with young people.
- Consultation on the new Financial Policy, Commitment to Care Leavers and Staying Put Policy.
- Discussion and consultation about the planning of the 2022 Achieve Awards

## 16.5. 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.
- 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.
- To identify alternative ways to facilitate sharing the wider views of children and young people who are Looked After and those leaving Care to the Corporate Parenting Board- suggestions include
  - A video or PowerPoint created by the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum being shared with the Corporate Parenting Board perhaps two or three times a year which outlines the work they have been doing.
  - The Corporate Parenting Board members attending an activity day with the groups.
  - Individual members of the Corporate Parenting Board to be invited to visit the groups periodically throughout the year.



## **17. Appendix 2 -Independent Visitors Scheme Report**

### **Kirklees Independent Visitors 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.

#### **17.1 Introduction**

Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen. The scheme was established in its current format nine years ago; it is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer.

The scheme provides independent adult volunteers who befriend children / young people in the care of the local authority; to spend time with them on a one-to-one basis, undertake activities and develop a positive relationship with a trusted, responsible adult. Volunteers provide children / young people with the opportunity to talk to someone independent, seek advice, guidance, and support from and have fun with, in an informal setting.

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

Children and 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 child's / young person's 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 it directly with the Scheme Coordinator, their Social Worker, key worker, or carer. However, a formal referral document needs to be completed and submitted by the child's Social Worker.

Since September 2021, the scheme has been managed by the previous Children's Rights team Manger on a part time basis. During this time, a review of the service has been undertaken. This involved a review of the Independent Visitors and their contact with children and young people alongside the oversight and quality assurance of the scheme.

A successful recruitment campaign has been undertaken during the last financial year and new matches have been facilitated.

## **17.2 Current position**

There are currently 27 trained and available volunteers. 21 Independent Visitors are matched with a child / young person on a one-to-one basis. Work is ongoing to ensure appropriate matches are made for the remaining volunteers. 3 additional volunteers have undertaken the training to become an Independent Visitor and are awaiting their DBS certificate and / or completion of other forms. There continues to be interest in the scheme although not all enquiries result in an application being received. The scheme coordinator endeavours to contact non respondents to gain an understanding of why they have decided not to pursue volunteering with the Scheme but there is no overarching reason why this is the case and includes a change of circumstances or looking into multiple opportunities to decide which is right for them. 1 person has recently been interviewed and will be undertaking virtual training with a one to one follow up with the scheme coordinator to check and supplement learning.

9 Independent Visitors have left the scheme in the past 12 months. 5 of these were due to issues during the Covid period affecting contact between them and their young person. This led to young people not wanting to continue seeing an Independent Visitor when face to face visits resumed and the volunteers decided not to continue with their role. 1 volunteer retired from the scheme when their young person no longer wished to see him regularly.

A recruitment campaign was undertaken in October 2021 which resulted in 10 volunteers completing training in February 2022.

There are 30 children / young people waiting for a match with an Independent Visitor of these, 16 currently live in a host local authority and 14 live in Kirklees. The waiting list is reviewed regularly to ensure the referrals remain appropriate and contact is made with Social Workers to check continued suitability.

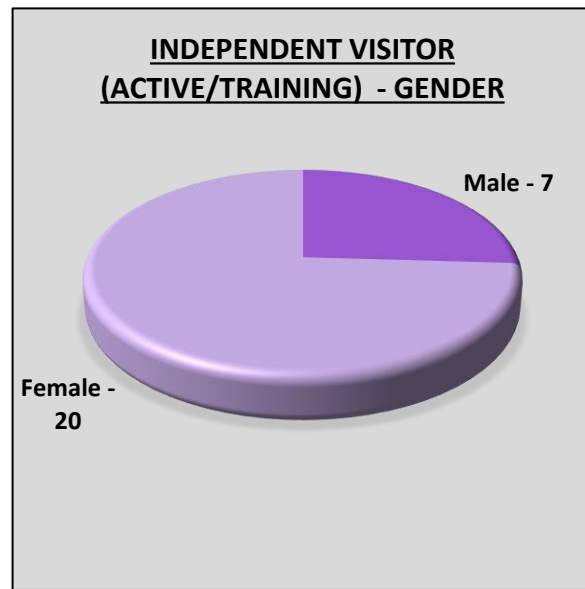
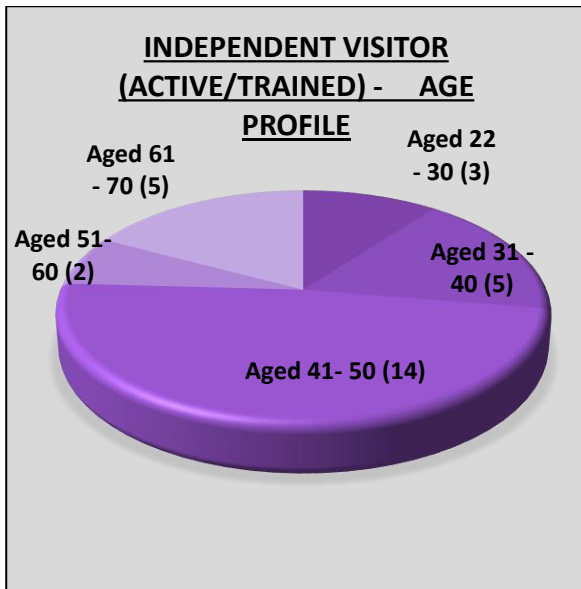
## **17.3 Volunteers and Young Person Profile**

### **Volunteer profile**

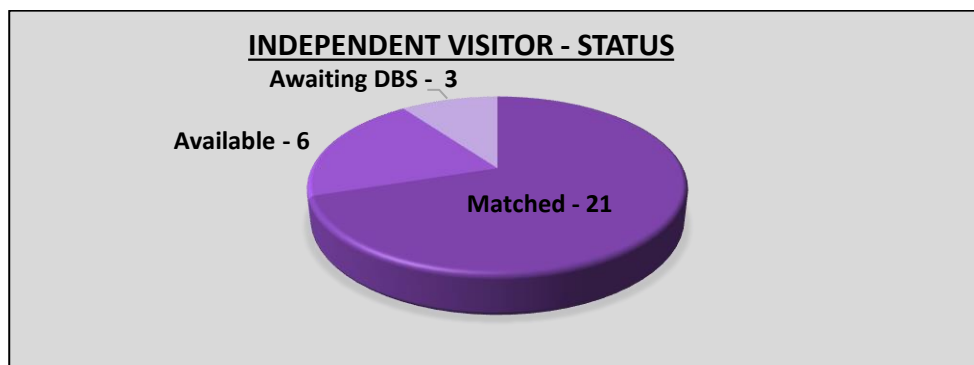
The Independent Visitors Scheme has a diverse range of volunteers. Volunteers must be aged 18 or over, with a minimum 5-year age gap between the adult volunteer and the young person they are matched to. Volunteers in the youngest age range are accepted only if they can demonstrate a degree of maturity appropriate to managing the challenges which young people may present. The graphs below shows that 14 volunteers are aged between 41 and 50 which taken with 8 volunteers in the other younger age groups evidence's that the majority of volunteers are undertaking this role alongside work or study. 24 volunteers are of white ethnicity with 6 being from 'other' ethnicity.

74% (20) of the current volunteers are female and 26% (7) male. This is a similar cohort as seen in other regional schemes. Although some young people have specified that they would like a male volunteer, many have been matched with a female volunteer and these relationships have been sustained. The next recruitment campaign will be more targeted to recruit male volunteers.





The scheme seeks to match a volunteer with a child / young person who meets their preference in terms of placement, location, age, and gender within 8 weeks of being classed as available. It can take longer to ensure that the match is appropriate and likely to be successful. Following the recruitment drive in October, 4 new matches were made.



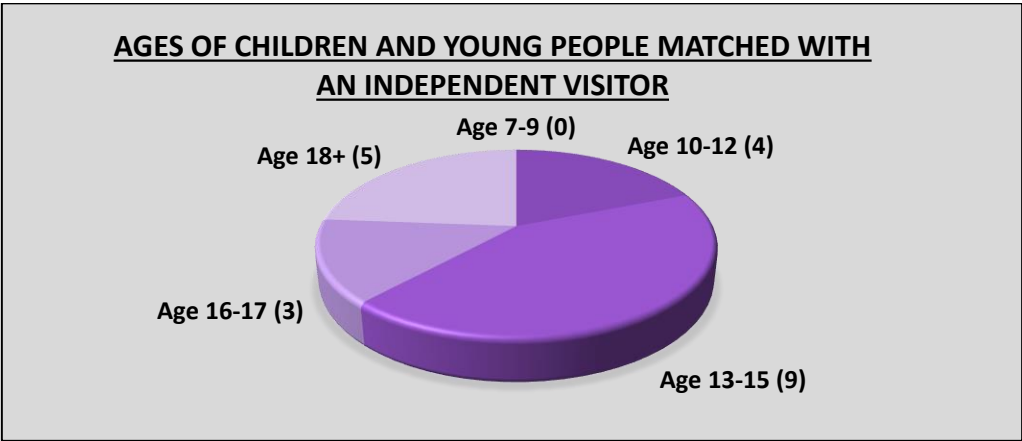
#### 17.4 Profile of children and young people

There are currently 21 young people matched with an Independent Visitor. There are more girls (57%) than boys (43%) benefitting from the scheme.

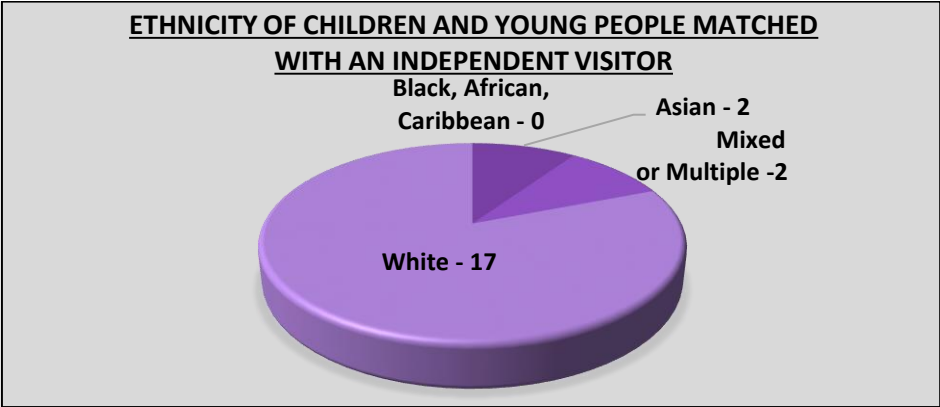
With regards to age, 5 young people over the age of 18 are still receiving support from their Independent Visitor. Continuation over the age of 18 is in line with Government recommendations and is based on the needs of the young person, however the frequency tends to be less than monthly. All matches for over young people over 18 are reviewed annually.

3 older teenagers (16-17), 10 young people aged between 13 and 15 and 4 aged between 10 and 12 years old currently have an Independent Visitor.

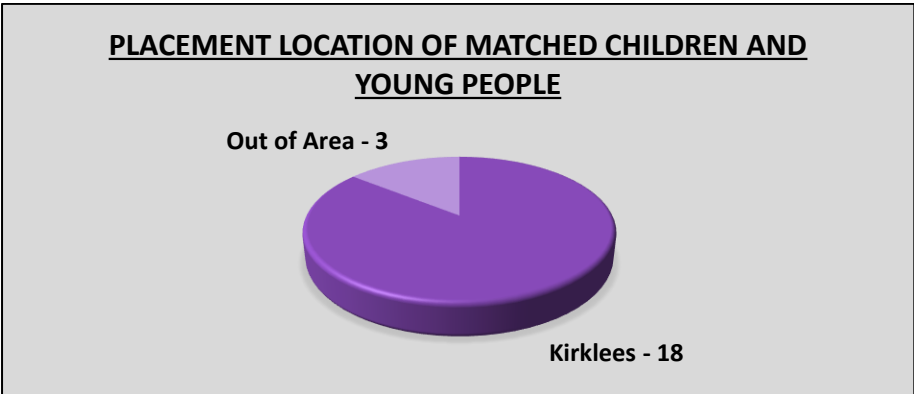




The ethnic background of children / young people who have an independent visitor is broadly representative of the wider Kirklees community. <sup>1</sup>



Most matched children/young people (86%) live within Kirklees with 14% living in a host local authority area such as Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale.



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

## 17.5 Making a difference.

Independent Visitors are required to submit a short feedback form following each visit or contact with the child / young person they are matched with. Regular quality assurance ensures all Independent Visitors are having contact with their young people a minimum of 3 monthly, however contact is recommended once a month.

During this reporting period contact continued to be virtual during periods of Covid restrictions. In person visits resumed in line with government guidelines. During of Covid lockdown periods there was evidence of Independent Visitors maintaining their relationships in creative and engaging ways including; regular video calls where young people and their volunteer undertook challenges; craft activities / and cards being sent in the post; One young person made a scrap book of all the time she has been seeing her Independent Visitor which is for over 3 years (an example page is shown below).



Many relationships with children / young people have been re-established and both parties have been keen to resume the contact and activities together. The value and impact of the relationship is evidenced within feedback received from children / young people.

Referrals continue to be made for new children / young people to be allocated an Independent Visitor which indicates the demand for and value of the scheme.

## 17.6 Feedback from young people

Young people are spoken to at the time of the Annual Review for an Independent Visitor Volunteer. General feedback is they value a relationship 'just for them' and they do not have to share their time with other family members or children / young people with whom they live. The following are direct comments from young people:

*"I really enjoy seeing my Independent Visitor. I like that I can talk to her, she takes me places, we do new things that I didn't think I would ever get to do. We have been to a vintage clothes shop, to the cinema, we go for meals and shopping. I like that I can get out of the house, meet new people, and it is something just for me and not with parents. It gives me freedom. I want to continue with my Independent Visitor. I love her, she's the best. We always have a laugh; it is just good to be with her."*

*“I’m really happy seeing my Independent Visitor. She’s someone I can talk to outside of the household, she’s reliable, reassuring and generally a lovely person. She takes the pressure off me and shares an outside look on things, she gives me amazing advice. She’s like part of my family – what I would want.”*

*“My Independent Visitor has done so many wonderful, thoughtful things for me. She is the best human being ever!”*

## **17.7 The impact of Covid-19**

Clear guidance was issued to Independent Visitors throughout the Covid-19 restrictions to ensure that Independent Visitors worked within the guidelines.

Throughout Covid-19 lockdown periods Independent Visitors were asked to keep in touch with young people through letters / cards and / or virtually through using social media applications such as Skype/WhatsApp/Zoom/telephone calls. A very small number of young people did not wish to have virtual contact with their Independent Visitor and instead preferred to wait until in person visits could resume. This led to some relationships breaking down and children / young people deciding that they no longer wanted to meet with their Independent Visitor, in the main, these volunteers decided to leave the scheme rather than be matched with another child / young person.

### **Priorities for the scheme**

- Match existing trained and available volunteers with young people on the waiting list
- Review the current waiting list and amend as appropriate
- Ensure that every Independent Visitor has an annual review with the Scheme coordinator
- Undertake a full recruitment campaign in October 2022
- Introduction of enhanced quality assurance processes to identify areas of strength and those of challenge. To include mechanisms to capture feedback from children and young people more regularly to support continuous practice and service delivery improvements.
- To review the scheme against the National Independent Visitor Scheme Standards
- To undertake a further Quality Assurance Audit of the Scheme during the financial year 2022 / 2023

## **18. Appendix 2- Updated Independent Visitor Position as of 01.08.2022**

**18.1** There are now 32 trained Independent Visitors. 29 children and young people are matched with 28 volunteers (1 volunteer is double matched).

There are 4 Independent Visitors without a child or young person matched to them, 3 are female and 1 male. There are 11 young people on the waiting list, 3 of these are within Kirklees and 7 are out of area. However, due to matching requirements some Independent

Visitors may not be suitably matched to a young person in the short term, and new referrals to the scheme are being sought.

18 August 2022

Mel Meggs, Director of Children's Services, Kirklees Metropolitan Borough  
Carol McKenna, Clinical Commissioning Group<sup>1</sup>  
Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime  
John Robins QPM Chief Constable, West Yorkshire Police  
Julie Sykes, Independent Scrutineer

Dear Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership

### **Joint targeted area inspection of Kirklees**

This letter summarises the findings of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children in Kirklees.

This inspection took place from 27 June 2022 to 1 July 2022. It was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

### **Headline findings**

Partners at a strategic level enable a well-embedded practice approach that supports professionals to work well together. Children in Kirklees who are at risk of, or experiencing, criminal exploitation have their needs identified quickly and receive multi-agency support to manage and reduce risk to them effectively.

### **What needs to improve?**

- The recording of the work and decision-making of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP).
- The training offer from the KSCP to ensure that it provides relevant, localised multi-agency training focusing on child criminal exploitation.
- The exercise of professional curiosity from some health practitioners, including GPs and emergency department staff.
- Contingency planning for children in care who are not able to return to their birth families.

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<sup>1</sup> as of 1 July 2022, the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) changed to the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)

## **Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP)**

The Kirklees safeguarding children partners have significant knowledge of the local area and demand, practice within their agencies, and the experiences of children. Partners have strong aspiration, willingness and motivation to reduce risks of criminal exploitation for children in Kirklees. Mature relationships within the KSCP enable partners to challenge each other effectively. This demonstrates the well-established respect for, and equity of, partners' views.

The KSCP has strong links with the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board, adult safeguarding board and the community safety partnership. Executive partners have agreed the provision of two exploitation subgroups that focus on strategic and operational matters relating to the exploitation of children. The KSCP receives relevant information from these forums and is able to share information specific to safeguarding children at risk of criminal exploitation. This supports a holistic approach to addressing criminal exploitation in Kirklees.

The impact of COVID-19 has stalled the progress of some of the priorities of the KSCP and the exploitation subgroups. However, several initiatives have been implemented, for example the 'safe zones' scheme in Huddersfield, 'be phenomenal' in schools and the 'focused deterrent car'. These are positive examples of how partners have acted on children's views and their understanding of need in Kirklees.

The range of multi-agency work that focuses on children who are at risk of, or experiencing, criminal exploitation is not always fully recorded at the KSCP level. This means that it is not always clear for other professionals and children to see the work that the partnership has effectively planned and coordinated to evaluate the work of the partners.

The KSCP uses local, regional and national research to develop services based on its local knowledge of need and demand. This has created a strong multi-agency service for children who are at risk of, or are experiencing, exploitation. This has included the development and implementation of the Youth Engagement Service (YES) and the amalgamation of the YES with the Youth Justice Service into a wider contextual safeguarding service.

The KSCP does not currently receive sufficient collective data to have a comprehensive overview of practice and outcomes for children who are at risk of criminal exploitation. However, inspectors did see several strands of work across the partnership that are contributing to the improvement of the current reporting of performance data.

Individual agencies singularly provide effective exploitation training, advice and support to their workforce. The KSCP recognises that there is a need to ensure that the multi-agency child criminal exploitation training is refreshed and is based on national and local research and need. This is a missed opportunity to enable the wider workforce to learn together and understand the complexities of working with children at risk of exploitation in Kirklees.

## **Main findings**

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers have an effective oversight of practice at the 'front door'. Daily and weekly multi-agency meetings, such as the daily risk exploitation and missing meeting (DREAMM), exploitation screening panel, exploitation screening review meeting and the referral review panel, enable managers to have ongoing oversight of the demand for services, the quality of work and the allocation of resources. Practice or multi-agency difficulties are identified and swiftly acted on. All partners have invested in these forums in terms of staff availability and time.

Professionals are clear on their role and contribution to these multi-agency forums and decision-making. Joint decision-making is encouraged to facilitate a shared understanding to reduce the risk of exploitation for children. However, the possible contribution of community and voluntary sector agencies to these meetings has not been fully explored.

Most agencies use the information-sharing forums to 'flag' effectively children who are at risk of, or experiencing, criminal exploitation. However, health IT systems do not consistently identify children at risk of exploitation through the use of 'flags'. This means health practitioners are not always able to see at first glance if a child is at risk of criminal exploitation.

Senior leaders in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) show strong commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children exposed to child exploitation. Effective governance within the CCG and health providers offers oversight of safeguarding arrangements and the performance of services. The Health Assurance Information Group is a strength and provides an effective forum for the collective sharing of knowledge and prioritisation of work across the complex health economy.

Staff in all partner agencies receive appropriate levels of training to support them in their role when working with children who are at risk of exploitation. Social workers are supported through access to specialist knowledge from the YES. Child criminal exploitation training is accessible to health practitioners, and they report that this is increasing their knowledge and skills.



The police force's children vulnerable to exploitation team (CVET), is a skilled team consisting of experienced and accredited child abuse investigators. The team has provided effective training to frontline police officers and staff across the Kirklees area to raise awareness of its role in the protection of children and risk indicators for exploitation. Frontline police officers in Kirklees receive regular bulletins about children who are at risk of exploitation, and those who pose a risk to them. During this inspection, the police force agreed to improve their electronic briefing system to make sure that information can be updated in real time.

The YES works intensively with children to reduce risks of exploitation. Caseloads are low to enable that to happen. Staff demonstrate a tenacious commitment to supporting young people and are motivated to reducing risks of exploitation. The team has strong links with other agencies and is also involved in the training of other services.

The CVET undertakes successful disruption activity using appropriate tactics to reduce the risk of exploitation for children. However, recording of the activity, particularly in complex cases when a crime has not been committed, is not consistent. This makes it difficult to monitor progress.

The 'partners intelligence portal' enables information to be shared quickly with the police. Partners in Kirklees use this resource effectively.



### **Practice study: highly effective practice**

The Youth Engagement Service (YES) in Kirklees is a successful resource that works well with other agencies to identify and meet the needs of children who are at risk of, or are experiencing, exploitation. This service initially focused on child sexual exploitation and gang activity in Kirklees. However, it has developed over the last few years in accordance with leaders' understanding about the level of demand and need in their local area, particularly in relation to child criminal exploitation.

The YES is made up of social workers, youth engagement officers (from a wide and varied range of backgrounds), a PACE worker and a large number of youth outreach workers. YES staff work closely with other providers to meet children's needs, for example BASE (substance misuse), KISH (Kirklees Integrated Sexual Health), Youth Justice Service, police, statutory social work teams, and the community and voluntary sector. The service has seen a recent increase in the number of criminal exploitation concerns raised and it is working closely to provide specialist training, advice and support to the wider workforce.

Joint supervision for YES staff and case-holding social workers is very reflective and supports the direction of the intervention for the child.

The YES works intensively with children to reduce risks of exploitation. It agrees priorities and action plans to work alongside social workers and early help practitioners and staff attend all multi-agency meetings for children.

The YES has engaged in Practice Learning Days with statutory social work teams to review the quality of practice and outcomes for exploited children in Kirklees. The positive impact and learning of this model is now planned to be rolled out as multi-agency practice learning events.

In all the strategic and operational work seen by inspectors, the involvement and positive impact of the YES was clearly evident in improving children's lived experiences.

### **Multi-agency practice with children who are at risk of, or experiencing, criminal exploitation**

Children in Kirklees benefit from the strong relationships between partners in the front door. Professionals working with children make the clear distinction between criminal and sexual exploitation to inform the response from the front door. Prompt and effective information-sharing informs decision-making for next steps to safeguard children. Timely management oversight of contacts received at the front door means that decisions are made swiftly and appropriately to ensure that work

progresses, and families do not wait for the allocation of appropriate services. Children and families are routinely engaged at this early stage, and their views are clearly recorded.

Partner agencies raise appropriate challenge when there is a dispute about decision-making.

Agencies across the partnership have a strong child-centred approach. Practitioners are persistent in their efforts to engage children and families who present as resistant to professional involvement. Professionals carefully consider who is the most appropriate individual to work with a child. This reduces the need for children to repeat their stories.

Assessments of children's needs are detailed and concise. Most consider relevant history and factors including culture, religion and ethnicity as well as the exploitation risk. Decisions made for next steps are proportionate to the level of risk and need identified. When child protection concerns are highlighted for children, strategy discussions are arranged quickly, and these are well attended by the relevant professionals who know the children best.

Children and young people's voices are captured well in most agency's child records. This offers additional insight into their lived experiences.

Multi-agency meetings ensure that progress against the child's plan is regularly monitored, reviewed and amended in response to changing circumstances. These meetings evidence the strong multi-agency relationships which exist to support some of the most vulnerable children at risk of exploitation.

A wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies work well together to identify and address risks of criminal exploitation for children in Kirklees. Substance misuse and sexual health workers jointly visit children and provide an effective, regular drop-in clinic for children in care who live in residential children's homes.

Practitioners are aware of the changing levels of risk and the fluctuating ability of children to engage, and they are tenacious in finding creative ways of working with children to reduce risk.

Police prevention interviews are held regularly when children go missing. This provides an early understanding of push and pull factors and supports the child on their return. Independent return home interviews are offered routinely and completed when engagement is possible. When successful engagement with children

has not been achieved, the interview considers push and pull factors and includes discussion with family and the wider professional network.

Professionals avoid unnecessary criminalisation of children who are at risk of criminal exploitation. They understand the contextual factors underpinning children's behaviours and the impact on their emotional well-being. The inspectors saw examples of the National Referral Mechanism being used appropriately, ensuring that children are recognised as victims of exploitation.

Children at risk of, or experiencing, exploitation are encouraged and supported to attend some form of education provision. Education staff carry out appropriate welfare and safety checks when children are absent. However, education practitioners are not always fully informed of children's histories and this affects the practitioner's ability to recognise risk and concern sufficiently. Furthermore, not all personal education plans fully reflect the work that education professionals complete with children and their families.

Children at risk of exploitation have their health needs met by specialist health professionals from a range of services.

Health and education professionals are not always informed, engaged or invited to multi-agency risk management meetings in longer-term cases. The outcomes and actions from some multi-agency risk assessment meetings are, for a small number of children, unclear and they are not always shared with all agencies. For example, GPs are often unaware of the risks relating to child exploitation, which limits their ability to offer support to children and families.

Professionals in the emergency department do not always demonstrate professional curiosity when seeing children. The medical model used often focuses on the presenting complaint and practitioners do not always explore children's behaviours, such as self-harm, going missing and not attending school. Additionally, professional curiosity was not always evident in GP health records, for example in regard to a child's vulnerability, and their request for contraception. These are missed opportunities to explore with the child the possible reasons for their presenting behaviours and consider what other help, or outside medical care, might be needed.

Not all children's statutory care plans include contingencies in the event of children in care not being able to return to the care of their families. This affects the timeliness of securing permanence for children and increases the risk of multiple changes to where they live.

Inspectors engaged with children, young people and their families who commented on their experiences in Kirklees. For example a parent told inspectors that the intervention from the partnership 'had been amazing' and led to a reduction in the number of times their child went missing. Young people told inspectors: 'They

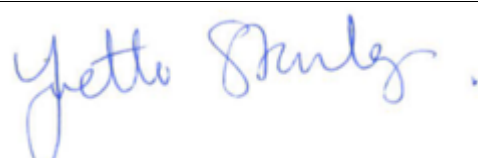
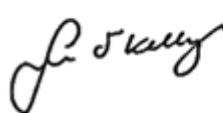

listened a lot, telling me what to do and helping me; 'The social worker was amazing and was always there for me;' and 'I am feeling positive about the future.'

### Next steps

We have determined that Kirklees Council is the principal authority and should prepare a written statement of proposed action responding to the findings outlined in this letter. This should be a multi-agency response involving the individuals and agencies that this report is addressed to. The response should set out the actions for the partnership and, when appropriate, individual agencies. The local safeguarding partners should oversee implementation of the action plan through their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership should send the written statement of action to [ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk) by 25 November 2022. This statement will inform the lines of enquiry at any future joint or single-agency activity by the inspectorates.

Yours sincerely


<b>Yvette Stanley</b> <b>National Director Regulation and Social Care, Ofsted</b>

<b>Dr Sean O'Kelly BSc MB ChB MSc DCH FRCA</b> <b>Chief Inspector of Hospitals and Interim Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services</b>

<b>Wendy Williams, CBE</b> <b>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services</b>

**Corporate Parenting Board**

**Agenda Plan 2022/23**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Issues for Consideration</b>	<b>Officer Contact</b>
<p align="center"><b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022</i></p>	<p align="center"><b><u>Pre-meeting (private)</u></b></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Care leavers/ Children Looked After Overview Report</p> <p>Ambition Board Data Slides</p> <p align="center"><b><u>Public Items:</u></b></p> <p>Membership of the Board</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane /G Addy</p> <p align="center">O Rix</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane /G Addy</p> <p align="center">Board Members</p> <p align="center">J Tolly/O Rix/ E McShane</p> <p align="center">Cllr Pattison /J Tolley</p> <p align="center">E McShane</p> <p align="center">Board members</p> <p align="center">J Harris</p>

**Corporate Parenting Board**

**Agenda Plan 2022/23**

9 <sup>th</sup> August (Cancelled)		
<p><b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022</b></p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Pre-meeting (Informal)</b></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Overview reports (Children Looked after and Care Leavers)</p> <p align="center"><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>Children’s Rights Team Annual report</p> <p>JTAI Inspection Outcome Report</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children’s Ambition Board Update</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>M Meggs Strategic Director for Children and Young people</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane /I Mottershaw/ J Tolley</p> <p>A Gledhill /S Miles</p> <p>E McShane</p> <p>Cllr Pattison/J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford/ E McShane</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

**Corporate Parenting Board**

**Agenda Plan 2022/23**

<p><b>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022</b></p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Pre-meeting (Informal)</b></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center"><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>Annual Health Report</p> <p>Virtual School Annual report</p> <p>Statement of Purpose</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>G Addy</p> <p>J Tolley/ L Hallas</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Cllr Pattison</p> <p>T Brailsford / E McShane</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

**Corporate Parenting Board**

**Agenda Plan 2022/23**

<p><b>Tuesday 24 January 2023</b></p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Pre-meeting (Informal)</b></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center"><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>CLlr Pattison / J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford /E McShane</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
<p><b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b></p>		



**Corporate Parenting Board**

**Agenda Plan 2022/23**

<p align="center"><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 30<sup>th</sup> February 2023</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Pre-meeting (Informal)</b></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center"><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p align="center">(TBC)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p align="center">Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p align="center">T Brailsford / E McShane</p> <p align="center">Board Members</p> <p align="center">J Harris</p>
<p align="center"><b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2023</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023</i></p>	<p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p>	<p align="center">(TBC)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p>

## Corporate Parenting Board

### Agenda Plan 2022/23

	Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)	Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley
	Children's Ambition Board Update (verbal)	T Brailsford / E McShane
	Updates from Board Members on interaction with services	Board Members
	Corporate Parenting Board Agenda	J Harris

#### Standing Items (as on Agenda Plan)

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Attendance by Strategic Director Update on the Role of Corporate Parent

- (SD Growth and Regeneration) Last seen March 2022
- (SD Environment and Climate Change – Last seen March 2022
- (SD CCG's Chief Officer – Last seen February 2022)
- (SD Children's Services – September 2022
- (SD Adults and health – January TBC)
- (SD Corporate Strategy/Public Health – tbc)

Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes

Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)

Ambition Board Update (verbal)

Updates from Board Members on interaction with services

Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/23

Items for consideration /to schedule :

## Corporate Parenting Board

### Agenda Plan 2022/23

Statement of Purpose for Fostering Service (November TBC)  
Statement of Purpose for Residential Care  
Report on Accommodation  
Fostering Annual Report  
Pathway planning report  
Missing report  
The Sufficiency strategy  
Supported Lodgings Scheme  
Report of Adoption – to consult with OAWY new municipal year  
A report from the virtual School re Post 16 attainment.  
Ethnicity of LAC and foster carers.

#### **Annual / 6 monthly reports:-**

- 6 monthly report on Children's Rights (Oct to March) A Gledhill (June)
- Annual Report on work of the Children's Rights) April onwards
- 6 monthly report on Independent Visitors Scheme (Oct to March)
- Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care (January)
- Annual report on children who go missing from care
- Annual report on children and young people placed outside the Kirklees boundary
- Annual Health Report (report on health of looked after children)
- Annual Report on Kirklees Fostering Service
- OAWY – Annual (highlights report on Kirklees performance data)
- OAWY – 6 monthly report (June/July)

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