

**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
**Title of report:** Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children's Rights Team) annual report

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 (annual report)

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a>	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Sal Tariq) - 12.9.18
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>	Cllr. Viv Kendrick

**Electoral wards affected:** Not applicable

**Ward councillors consulted:** Not applicable

**Public or private:** Public

## 1. **Summary**

The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights team) shares the views and opinions of children looked after with Children's Social Work Services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard and taken into account in respect of Local Authority policy development and service delivery. The service also supports children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a child protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the complaints process and training them to be able to take part in the recruitment process for posts such as Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to adults (Total Respect Training). This training helps adults to consider what the barriers are to the participation of children and young people and why it's important to listen to what children and young people say. Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7) receives an 'Initial Visit' from a Children's Rights team, Advocacy & Participation Worker. During this, children and young people are informed about the service and the support that they can receive from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Following a Looked After Review, every child or young person looked after is invited to complete a Rate My Review feedback form, which is then shared with the Children's Rights team. The team subsequently contact children and young people who have completed the form to discuss their responses, in order to support the development of review meetings being conducted in a way which allows children and young people to be comfortable and able to participate in what is their meeting.

Within the Children's Rights team, a full time Officer co-ordinates the Independent Visitors Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with; supporting and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for this scheme.

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

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

For information only, no decision required.

## 3. **Implications for the Council**

### 3.1 **Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

Not applicable

### 3.2 **Economic Resilience (ER)**

Not applicable

### 3.3 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 terms of decisions that are being made which affect their lives as individuals and to ensure that service provision in general is influenced by the voice of children and young people and that they meet their needs.

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

Through advocacy children and young people often achieve a positive outcome or a compromise to their request. If it is not possible for the child or young person to have the outcome they desire their advocate supports them in trying to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes during 2017 to 2018 are given below:

- Additional contact with family being agreed
- Clarity about contact arrangements being reached
- Children /young people remaining in placement or new placements being agreed.
- The views of the child or young person being taken into consideration about what they wanted from their long term placement
- Attending school trips or holiday activities

### 3.4 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

### 3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

## 4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

## 5. Next steps

- To work with Senior Managers to ensure that the voice of the child is included in sufficiency planning.
- Offer Student Social Work placements within the Children's Rights Team, to lead on gaining the voice of the child within the child protection process.
- To re-establish links between Senior Managers, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Groups, with clear pathways that enable young people to present their views clearly and influence service provision.

- As per the annual report / key priorities for the Independent Visitors Scheme, re-assess the current offer and function, proposing changes as necessary in order to provide a service which meets the needs of children in care and care leavers.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the report be noted.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

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9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Not applicable

10. **Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)