

**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019  
**Title of report:** Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children's Rights Team) annual report

**Purpose of report:** To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 01 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 (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?	N/A
Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a>	N/A
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	N/A
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Mel Meggs) – 14.10.19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	N/A
Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>	Cllr. Viv Kendrick (Children's)

**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 offers advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the 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 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 from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

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

The 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 relation to decisions that are made which affect their lives, and to ensure that service provision in general is influenced by the voice of children and young people.

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

Through advocacy children and young people often achieve a positive outcome or a compromise 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 2018 to 2019 are given below:

- Placement stability
- Placement move agreed
- Young people's views taken into consideration with regard to schooling
- A change of Social Worker agreed
- Keeping the same Social Worker agreed
- Allowances / savings clarified and received by the young people
- Contact / increased, contact agreed and arranged

#### **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 evaluate the effectiveness of student social work placements (for both students and the team)
- To consider offering an apprenticeship within the service which is ring-fenced to a care leaver (aged 18 plus).
- To continue to develop links between Senior Managers, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Groups, with clear pathways that enable young people to present their views clearly and influence service provision.
- To increase the membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum, and to develop ways to capture the views of children / young people who do not attend the groups, to influence service development and provision.
- To increase the offer of advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over, subject to a Child Protection plan.
- To consider the implications and resources required to develop the offer of advocacy for Child Protection conferences.

- As per the annual report / action plan for the Independent Visitors Scheme, re-write guidance for Independent Visitors who are supporting young people over the age of 18
- Match newly trained Independent Visitor volunteers with young people on the current waiting list.
- Consider the viability of further expansion of the Independent Visitor Scheme

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the report be noted

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

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager

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

Not applicable

10. **Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)