

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24th October 2019
Title of report: Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children's Rights Team) six monthly update report

Purpose of report: To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 01 April 2019 to 30 September 2019

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 Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	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 portfolio	Cllr. Viv Kendrick (Children)

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, 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 10 years and over when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the complaints process and to take part in the recruitment process in young people's panels. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to staff (Total Respect Training). This training helps staff to consider what the barriers are to the participation of children and young people and why it'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.

Within the Children's Rights team, one 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 6 monthly report is being provided in relation to the Independent Visitors scheme.

The attached report covers all other functions undertaken by the Children's Right's team for the period of 01 April 2019 to 30 September 2019.

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.

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

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

- Young person being allowed to move schools
- Successful transition achieved
- Confirmation of support from the Leaving Care Team post 21
- Confirmation of financial support during 12 week University break
- Personal belongings being found / replaced
- Contact being arranged in line with young people's wishes
- Mental health support being reinstated

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

The priorities for the next six months will be to:

- Increase the membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum
- Improve opportunities for children and young people who are not part of the above groups to give their views and opinions to effect service delivery and in relation to their own plans. The development of an APP is being looked into in order to provide an alternative platform for children and young people to communicate and share their views.
- Increase advocacy support for children aged 10 and over at Child Protection conferences.
- Ensure that feedback from children and young people in relation to services and issues are linked into the wider quality assurance framework, to inform learning and/or service provision.
- Further develop working with the Child Protection and Review Unit and Independent Reviewing Officers, to promote more child friendly reviews.
- Update the literature which is provided to children and young people when they first come into care.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

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

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

Melanie Tiernan and Anna Gledhill

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

Not applicable

10. **Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)