

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 3rd November 2020

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

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

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable If yes give the reason why
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	23/10/20 Tom Brailsford
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

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

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

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

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

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners

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

3.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

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

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

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

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

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

The priorities for the next six months will be to:

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

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

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

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

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director - Resources, Improvements & Partnerships