



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 29th June 2021

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 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 (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 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
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	16 June 2021; Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships. Children's Services. No No
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Kendrick

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.

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, one full 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.

This report outlines the challenges and opportunities of the last 12 months during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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

Not Applicable

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 2020/21 included:

- Access to savings
- Support for driving lessons
- Stability of placement
- Move of placement
- Support in making applications
- Finance for equipment

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:

- Increased children and young people's participation in Looked After Reviews and Child Protection conferences.
- Increase membership of and improve accessibility for both the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum, to help ensure the voice and influence of children and young people informs practice and service delivery.

- To work with others across Children's services to capture children's voices and experiences and to help support participation inform service development and design.
- Introduce improved quality assurance mechanisms, to support the development of the Children's Rights Service and the team.
- Develop the Independent Visitor Scheme to provide a consistently high-service to children, young people, and volunteers.

4 Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

5 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not Applicable

6 Contact officer

Melanie Tiernan, Children's Rights Team Manager– 01484 225288 email: melanie.tiernan@kirklees.gov.uk

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding– 01484 221000 extension 71493 email: 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