

## **Compliments & Complaints** **for Children in Care**



## **Care Leavers /Children looked After/ Fostering** **Executive Summary** **2020-2022**

## **Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022**

### **Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	Page 3
<b>2. Complaints</b>	Page 3
<b>3. Highlights</b>	Page 4
<b>4. Contacts</b>	Page 4 & 5
<b>5. Compliments</b>	Page 6
<b>6. Complaints</b>	Page 6
<b>7. Timescales</b>	Page 7
<b>8. Complaints received from</b>	Page 8
<b>9. Issues</b>	Page 9
<b>10. Complaint Outcomes</b>	Page 10
<b>11. Children &amp; Young People - Upheld or partially upheld</b>	Page 10
<b>12. Learning from complaints</b>	Page 11
<b>13. Conclusion</b>	Page 12
<b>14. Areas for development</b>	Page 12 & 13

## **Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022**

### **Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering**

#### **1. Introduction**

This is a summary report of the Annual Reports of the Children's Services Compliments and Complaints 01 April 2020 to the 31 March 2022. This Executive Summary focuses on the **Care Leavers, Children Looked After and Fostering service areas** only.

Kirklees Children Social Care are committed to responding to complaints as a priority, despite the unprecedented challenge on the services by the impact of Covid 19. There were undoubtedly, significant challenges for the appointed responding manager/s to respond to complaints within timescales. Complaints were received and processed continuously, through consistent continued service delivery throughout the pandemic.

#### **2. Complaints**

The Council operates two separate Complaint's procedures that consider complaints from all members of the public related to Children's Social Care.

- Complaints about Children Social Care Services (as per statutory regulations under the Children's Act 1989).
- Corporate complaints procedure – this relates to Complaints which fall outside of the above regulations.

There are 4 stages to the complaints process. Resolution at the earliest stage is the preferred outcome.

**Local Resolution (LR)** is a restorative approach within the process that encourages Responding Managers to intervene early, have open and honest communication, even if challenging and resolve complaints received with a positive outcome. It allows the service to resolve matters as swiftly as possible and helps prevent drift and delay.

**Stage One.** Childrens Social Care Service teams and Independent Providers providing services on the Council's behalf are expected where possible, to resolve complaints at this initial point. The Statutory complaints procedure requires complaints at Local Resolution / Stage One to be responded to within 10 working days (with an extension of a further 10 days where necessary).

**Stage Two.** This stage is generally implemented when a Complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of Local Resolution / Stage One. Stage Two is an investigation usually conducted by an Investigating Officer with an Independent Person. An Independent Person must be appointed to the investigation (regulation 17(2)). The Independent Person must be involved in all aspects of consideration of the Complaint, including any discussions about the action to be taken in relation to the child. The Manager responsible for the service which has been complained about, adjudicates

## Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

### Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

on the findings. Stage Two Complaints should be dealt with within 25 days, although in certain cases this can be extended to 65 days.

**Stage Three.** This is a Review Panel to which Complainant's who are not satisfied with a Stage Two response can proceed their Complaint to, which the Council is required to establish. The Panel makes recommendations to the Service Director who makes decisions about the complaint and any action to be taken. Complaints Review Panels are made up of three independent panelists. There are various timescales relating to Stage 3 complaints. These include:

- Setting up the Panel as soon as is reasonably practicable
- Producing the Panel's report within a further 5 days
- Producing the Local Authority's response within 15 days.

A further option for Complainant's to progress a complaint is the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), who is empowered to investigate where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint. Complainant's can refer their complaint to the LGO at any time, although the Ombudsman normally refers the matter back to the Council if it has not been considered under the Council's procedure.

### 3. Highlights

- The number of complaints resolved at early stages of the Complaints procedure was high, positively **78%** of complaints received were resolved through the Local Resolution (LR) process. Compared to the previous year, this was an increase of **10% (68%)**.
- **1** complaint progressed to Stage Two of the Statutory Complaints Procedure, and subsequently to Stage 3. (It progressed to this stage in the next reporting period)
- No complaints were recorded at Stage Three of the Statutory Complaints Procedure or through to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
- **15%** of the complaints registered at Local Resolution of the Statutory Complaints Procedure were from children and young people.
- **17%** of the complaints registered at Stage One of the Statutory Complaints Procedure were from children and young people.
- **71%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales.

### 4. Contacts

In total, **60 contacts** were recorded by the Compliments and Complaints Team in 2021 to 2022 relating to Care Leavers, CLA and Fostering.

- **8** were resolved by other means,
- **11** were logged as Compliments and
- **41** were recorded as Complaints.

## Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

### Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

See table below showing the breakdown of figures into the different types of contacts and complaints recorded.

TYPE OF CONTACT Children and Young People	Care Leavers	Children Looked After	Fostering	Total
Compliments	2 (1)	-	9	11 (1)
Resolved by Other Means (Enquiries, Referrals, NFA)	2 (2)	3	3	8 (2)
Total compliments & Resolved by Other Means logged by CYP	3	-	-	3
<b>Total compliments &amp; Resolved by Other Means</b>	4	3	12	19
Local Resolution / Service Resolved	3 (3)	20 (3)	9	32 (6)
Stage 1	2	1	3 (1)	6 (1)
Stage 2 *Did not proceed	-	-	1	1
Stage 3	-	-	-	-
Corporate	-	1	1	2
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	-	-	-	-
<b>Total complaints</b>	5	22	14	41
Total complaints logged by children and young people	3	3	1	7
<b>Total contacts</b>	9	25	26	60

Of the **60** contacts, **10** of these were made by children and young people; equating to **17%** of all contacts received by the three areas considered for the purpose of this report. In the previous year this figure was **38%**.

**1** contact was a compliment and **2** were resolved by other means, with only **7** recorded as complaints, compared to previous year's figure of **26**.

**15%** of the complaints from children and young people recorded were registered at the Local Resolution stage. In the previous year this figure was **49%**. **1** out of **6** of the complaints registered at Stage One of the Statutory Complaints Procedure was received from a child /young person.

## **5. Compliments**

Of the **60** contacts received from the three areas in the reporting period **19** contacts received were recorded and categorised as - resolved by other means and **18%** of these contacts were recorded as compliments, **11** in total in this reporting period. This is a reduction from the previous year in which **15** compliments in total were recorded. The remaining contacts were enquiries, signposting / referrals to other services or no further action required.

Of the **11** compliments recorded; 9% (**1**) was received from a child/young person 18% (**2**) were received from parents / relatives, 45% (**5**) were received from foster carers / adopters, and 27% (**3**) were from colleagues from other services /areas and other professionals.

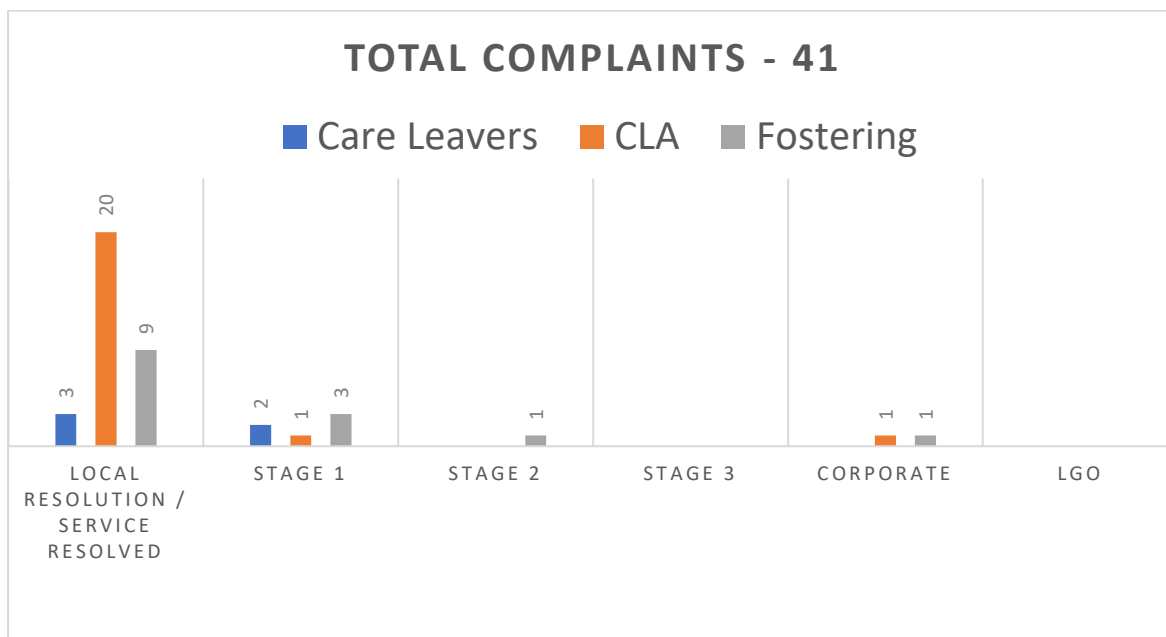
The number of compliments received in over the past two reporting periods (**26** in total) highlights that development and improvement is required with regards to how compliments are shared with and recorded formally by the Children's Compliments and Complaints team

**Examples of compliments received:** Most of the compliments recorded related to similar themes as in the previous year. They demonstrate an appreciation of thanks for their worker and how those involved felt comfortable and respected during conversations. They acknowledge success in forming positive working relationships with families, despite often difficult situations.

## **6. Complaints**

Of the total contacts received, **68%** were recorded as a complaint, **41** in total: averaging at **3.4** complaints per month - across all three service areas. This is a reduction from the previous year when an average of **4.5** complaints per month were received.

**Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022**  
 Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering



Of the **41** complaints recorded, **32** of these were resolved positively via the Local Resolution process: **78%** of all complaints received. This is an increase from the previous year's figure of **68%**. Whilst there were **6** Stage One complaints recorded 15% of all complaints received, which is a reduction from the previous year when **13** were recorded and responded to.

Local Resolution and Statutory Stage One Complaints make up **93%** of all complaints recorded across the services, **38** complaints in total. All complaints made by children and young people were resolved at this stage to the satisfaction of children and young people.

The total number of Corporate Complaints logged in respect of the three service areas was **2**. These were responded to by the Children Looked After service and the Fostering service and both were resolved at Stage One within timeframes.

There was **1 Stage Two** complaint, which following independent investigation, progressed to a Stage 3; this will be reported on in the next reporting period.

## **7. Timescales**

It is important to note that there are statutory timescales applied to responding to Complaints that are monitored and reported upon. Whilst all complaints recorded in the period did receive a response, **71%** were responded to within timescales, 29% being outside of timescales. a reduction in the previous year's performance of **17%**. All complaints were responded to, and information relating to any delay in response to complaints was shared with Senior managers in the service areas to allow exploration of presenting issues and the opportunity to address these with Responding managers.



## Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

### Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

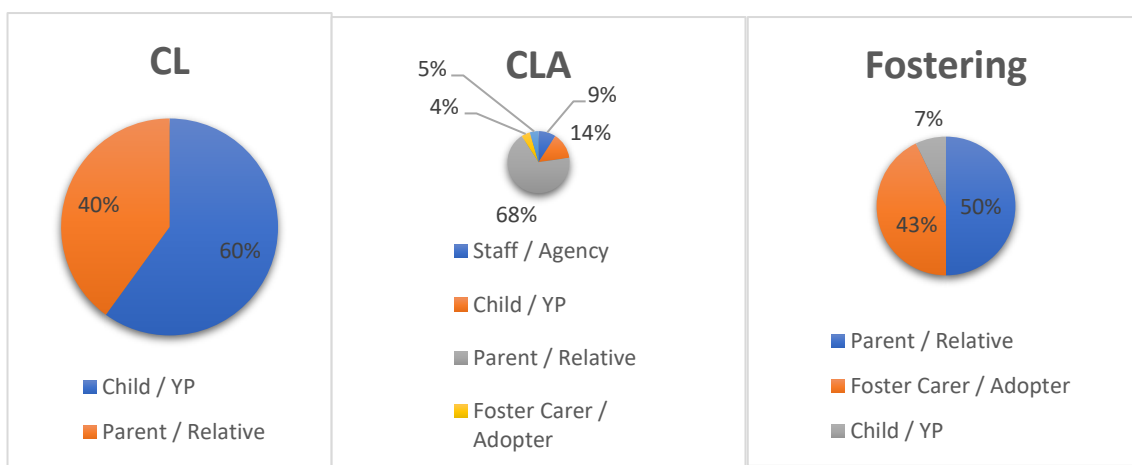
	Care Leavers	Children Looked After	Fostering	Total
Responded to within timescales	2	15	12	29
Outside of timescales	3	7	2	12
No response received	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Complaints</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>41</b>

#### 8. Complaints received

The data shows that **41** complaints were recorded relating to the three service areas considered in the reporting period, **7** of these were received from children and young people, approximately **17%** of all the complaints recorded. This has decreased from 2020-21, when **48%** of all complaints received, across the three areas were raised by children and young people, either directly or through advocacy.

Further exploration around this reduction in the number of complaints made by/or behalf of children and young people will be monitored. Regular information sharing and joint meetings are held between Childrens Rights Team and the Compliments and Complaints Unit. This increases awareness and improves communication. Moving forward this will need to extend to the service areas addressed in this report. Consideration has been given to using other new forms of media to inform children and young people of the complaints process and how to utilise this, e.g., podcast and this is to be explored further

Of the **41** complaints recorded, **7** were raised by children or young people, **24** by parents and relatives, **7** by foster carers / adopters, and **3** were raised by a professional /Councillor.





## Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

### Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

**60% (3)** of the complaints relating to the Care Leavers service were raised by young people. This is less than the previous year's figure of **82%**. **14% (3)** of the complaints relating to the Children Looked After service were received from children and young people. Again, this is a reduction from the previous reporting period (**55%**.) **15** complaints were received in relation to the Fostering Service, **1** of these (**7%**) was from a child or young person.

**4** of the **7** complaints raised by children and young people were supported by a Children's Rights Advocate, equating to **57%**, which is a slight reduction compared to the previous year's figure of **62%**. Children and young people are often supported by the Children's Rights Team to raise a complaint, to ensure that they receive support to ensure that their views are heard.

### 9. Issues

Each complaint is categorised (as agreed with the Complainant) before it is shared with a Responding Manager to investigate. There can often be more than one issue per complaint. Of the **41** complaints received, there were **82** complaint issues recorded across the three services.

Complaint Issues Children and Young People	Care leavers	Children Looked After	Fostering	Total
Failure to consult listen communicate effectively	<b>3 (2)</b>	<b>15 (2)</b>	<b>7 (1)</b>	<b>25 (5)</b>
Issue Relating to staff	<b>1</b>	<b>5 (1)</b>	<b>3 (1)</b>	<b>9 (2)</b>
Financial Issue	<b>1 (1)</b>	-	<b>5</b>	<b>6 (1)</b>
Failure to provide services	<b>2 (2)</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>3 (2)</b>
Delay in provision / assessment	-	<b>2</b>	-	<b>2</b>
Standard / quality of service	-	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Inaccurate decision making	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3 (2)</b>
Information not provided	-	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
Inaccurate information provided /on file	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Confidentiality	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5 (1)</b>
Request for support	-	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Welfare issue of child	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Contact arrangement issues	-	<b>9</b>	<b>5 (1)</b>	<b>14 (1)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>82 (14)</b>

Of the **7** complaints raised by children and young people, **14** separate issues were highlighted. The main trends of the complaints received from children and young people related to:

- Failure to consult / listen / communicate effectively; **36%** of all children and young people complaint issues, **5** in total.

## Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

### Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

- Issue relating to staff; **14%** of all complaint issues, **2** in total.
- Failure to provide services **14%**
- Inaccurate decision making also accounted for **14%** of all children and young people complaint issues recorded.

#### **10. Complaint Outcomes**

Following investigation of a complaint, the Responding Manager will decide whether they agree to uphold the complaint issue or not; they can also agree to partially uphold individual elements of a complaint.

Approximately **23%** of all complaints across the three service areas were upheld, an increase from **11%** in the previous year, whilst approximately **22%** were partially upheld, a reduction from **31%** in 2020-21. If a complaint issue is partially or fully upheld, this suggests that learning from the complaint could be identified by the service area to inform practice improvement. More complaints made were substantiated, across all of the service areas and therefore learning must be extracted from these and applied to future practice to reduce the presenting issues that warrant a complaint being made.

- **45%** of complaints relating to the Care Leavers Service were upheld (**11%** in the previous year) and **22%** partially upheld (**21%** previous year).
- The Children Looked After service upheld **20%** of their overall complaint issues (7% previous year) and partially upheld **20%** (**37%** previous year).
- The Fostering Service upheld **22%** of their overall complaint issues (15% previous year) and partially upheld **25%** (33% previous year).

The data also shows that complaint issues not upheld across the services, equated to **44%** of all complaint issues. Whilst **11%** of complaint issues were not confirmed as to whether they were upheld by the Responding Manager. It is positive that this has reduced from the previous reporting period figure of **24%**, however, there should be no complaints received that do not have a recorded response.

The trends in the desired outcomes from complaints raised by children and young people complaints were similar to previous reporting periods and related to request to change a worker, to request an investigation into what has happened regarding their concerns raised, provide a clear explanation of the procedure / policy that Children's Services were following and to seek assurance that the issue(s) they had experienced would not happen to any other children and young people.

#### **11. Children and young people - Upheld or partially upheld Complaints**

The below graph shows complaint issues raised by children and young people that were upheld and partially upheld across the services.

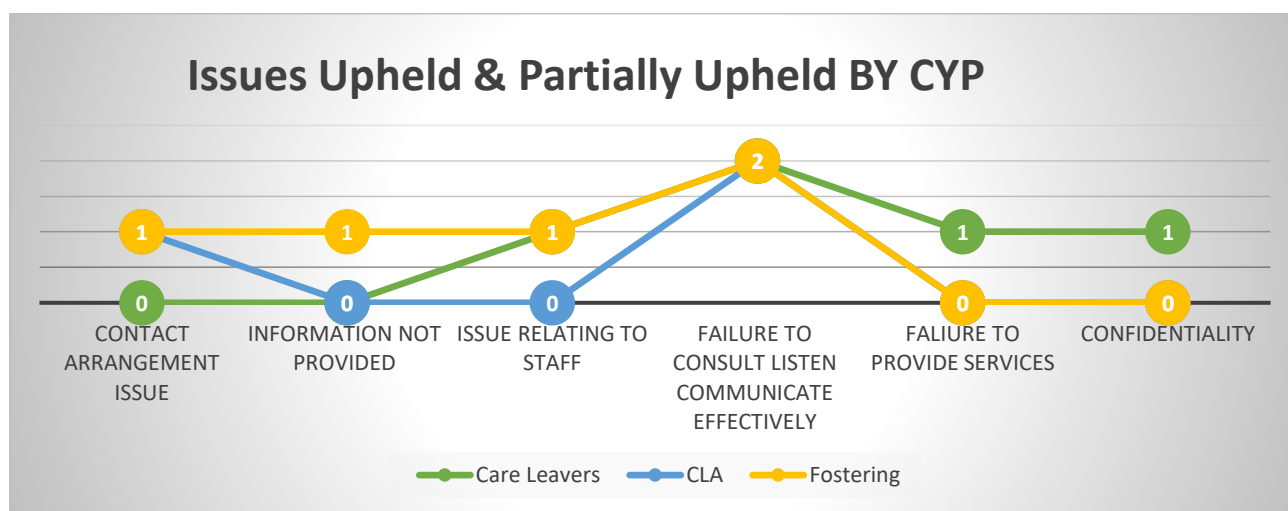
## Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

### Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

Of the **37** complaint issues that were upheld or partially upheld, **12** were raised by children and young people. The Care Leaver service (shown in green) upheld **5** children and young people complaint issues, the Children Looked After service (shown in blue), upheld **3** children and young people complaint issues and the Fostering service (shown in yellow), upheld **5** children and young people complaint issues.

The **12** issues that the service areas agreed to uphold or partially uphold are detailed in the graph below.

The most prevalent were, **Failure to consult / listen / communicate effectively**



## **12. Learning from Complaints**

When Responding Managers have completed a response to a complaint, they are requested to submit a completed 'Learning from Complaints' form to the Compliments and Complaints team. This provides a summary of learning identified and how this will be shared/addressed. This form also specifies which of the complaint issues have been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.

**Care Leavers Service** - **5** learning forms were shared with the Compliments and Complaints team relating to **5** complaints. Areas of learning identified related to; information sharing, communication of significant events by partner agencies and how new policies and guidance are implemented. How best to communicate with children and how to respond when staff have unplanned absence. These were all areas for consideration.

**Children Looked After Service** - **13** learning forms were shared with the Compliments and Complaints team, relating to **22** complaints.

## **Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022**

### **Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering**

Learning was identified regarding, Communication, information sharing, confidentiality, and recording. Timeliness of decisions made, and responses given, were all presenting themes of the completed learning forms

**Fostering Service** – 4 learning forms were received in relation to 14 complaints, a summary of the learning identified is shown below.

Clarity around presenting issues such as contact, communication with parents and how changes in finance are communicated were taken for consideration for learning moving forward.

The continued sharing of learning from Compliments and Complaints is essential for the increased understanding of best practice across the whole service. Continued contribution by the Compliments and Complaints team to the induction of Managers, regular reports, and communications to management teams across the service, presentations at panels and events and a sustained approach to raising awareness of the process of learning from complaints is essential. When learning is collated centrally it is shared with the Learning and Development service and incorporated into training courses to facilitate improved practice across all service areas.

### **13. Conclusion.**

This Executive Summary addresses the three service areas relating to children Looked After, as requested by the Corporate Parenting Board.

Complaints are sometimes complex, covering several issues. Complaints are in the main resolved early in the process and to the satisfaction of complainants; in most cases complaints are responded to in a timely manner. When learning from these complaints is received by the Compliments and Complaints team, this is shared to support practice improvement.

### **14. Areas for development:**

- Strengthen liaison with Responding Manager to ensure that all complainants receive a full response, in accordance with the guidance as laid out by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Capture and report on the child's voice being listened to and responded to consistently under the Complaints procedures
- Further develop the work already started in terms of building relations between service areas and the Compliments and Complaints team.
- Create a robust training package which can be delivered as and when required, across the service areas.
- Create and deliver a training programme for Responding Managers in the service areas, with focus on learning from complaints, to ensure learning is captured and recorded effectively.

## **Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022**

### **Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering**

- Create induction training and refresher Compliments and Complaints eLearning courses to be accessed via the intranet as required by those undertaking the role of responding manager.

Regular presentations at the Children's Services Quality Assurance Panel, and attendance at engagement events and information sharing reports between the Compliments and Complaints team and the 3 Service areas will support the outlined areas for development and improve opportunities for shared learning.

We will strengthen how we inform and support children and young people to better access and engage with Compliments and Complaints. Together with the work being undertaken with the Children's Rights Team, we will ensure that we improve how the voice of children and young people is heard.