



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 12th September 2023

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 2022 to 31st March 2023 (Annual report).

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.	Not Applicable
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	24-08-2023
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Vicky Metheringham
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	No
Cabinet member portfolio	No
	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.

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 professionals (Total Respect Training). This training helps professionals 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.

Children and young people who are new into care (or when they reach the age of 10 if already Looked After) receive information about the service, or as required a visit from an Advocate. This is undertaken with consideration to the child's individual needs and circumstances. The purpose of this is to share information about what support that they can receive, and what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

The Independent Visitor's scheme sits within the Children's Rights team; 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.

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 Looked After, by Kirklees Council.

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 educational 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, Advocates support children and young people to understand the reasons why. There are a wide variety of issues that young people have sought advocacy support for, including for their children Looked After Reviews, family time, and issues relating to finance, education, and placements.

3.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees

Not applicable

3.7 Other (eg Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

4 Consultation

Not applicable

5 Engagement

Not applicable

6 Next steps and timelines

Key priorities for 2023/2024 include:

- To develop further the recording of advocacy work by exploring electronic recording of work with Liquid Logic Developers, with the view of establishing Tableau dashboards.
- Continue to develop and enhance involvement in Practice Learning Days across Children's Services, to further capture children's voices, experiences, and help support participation to inform service developments and practice improvements.
- Review the Service against revised Advocacy Standards when published.
- To complete a review of the current service capacity and offer, with a view to exploring:
 - Developing a consistent and achievable Child Protection Advocacy offer.
 - Expanding the current Advocacy offer to include an offer to children subject to Child in Need Planning and Children with a Disability.
- In collaboration with the Looked After Children's service, develop a children's consultation forum to ascertain the view of children and young people Looked After in respect of how they wish to celebrate their achievements.

7 Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted.

8 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable

9 Contact officer

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10 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

11 Service Director responsible

Kiran Lord, Service Director, Resources, Improvements and Partnerships