

## Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

January 2012

Responses to questions in section 10

### Do Looked After Children and young people know who their corporate parents are?

A relatively small group of our Looked After Children could name or describe their corporate parents. Given the diverse age range and circumstances of these children and young people it is not surprising that many more can not. There are systems in place to ensure that this information is shared with all of our Looked After Children and increasingly we see and promote opportunities for members to meet and interact with this group.

A representative group of Looked After Children and Young People who form the children in care council Show Me That I Matter Panel [SMTIMP] meet regularly with two elected members (Cllrs Looker and Brooks) to discuss their views concerns and ideas. This Panel also invites senior officers from the Council and in other organisations to hold them to account on the quality and delivery of the services they receive.

### What do they say about what they expect from local councillors and others acting as their corporate parents?

Members will have the opportunity to hear first hand through the DVD produced by a group of our Looked After Children what they expect from those responsible for their care. The DVD will be presented to the meeting.

### Do all members receive mandatory training on their role as corporate parents and is this refreshed during their term of office?

A pre council briefing was undertaken twice during 2010-11 and this was refreshed in autumn 2011. This will be timetabled in the autumn of each year for elected members, who may have missed preceding events.

### Are there appropriate opportunities for elected members to meet looked after children and young people and to celebrate their achievements when they do well?

Whilst there has been a variety of events and individual contacts with Looked After Children both from senior officers and Members to celebrate various achievements our strategy recognises that we need to be more systematic in how we approach this issue.

There is planning for a celebration event for looked after children in Spring/Summer 2012 to which elected members will be invited.

Is there an active Children In Care council with elected members and others in authority (across the council and other partners) to express the needs and wishes of looked after children locally?

Yes. Our Show Me That I Matter Panel is a highly successful forum that brings together Looked After Children and Young People and elected members. Partners from other parts of council and beyond attend regularly of chief executive, community dentist, education transport provider, head of virtual school, paediatrician, Child Adolescent and Mental Health Service professionals.

How are children in care's complaints responded to and how are lessons learnt?

York has a complaints manager, who oversees the investigation of complaints. All matters are taken very seriously and dealt with promptly to ensure that safeguarding of children and promotion of their welfare is paramount. There is a proportionate approach so that lower level issues are dealt with by a problem solving and conflict resolution approach at social worker or first manager level. Ongoing complaints, which are not resolved, and allegations against carers and other professionals are dealt with by independent people to ensure full investigation.

The complaints manager undertakes an annual review of all complaints and ensures that the general messages from the complaints are addressed, as well as specific action related to the individual matters raised.

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18-1-12