

**Notice of a public meeting of
Corporate Parenting Board**

- To:** Councillors Looker (Chair), Runciman (Vice-Chair), Brooks, Cuthbertson, Funnell, Potter, Scott and Wiseman
- Date:** Wednesday, 7 May 2014
- Time:** 5.30 pm
- Venue:** The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members are asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests,
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda.

2. Minutes

(Pages 1 - 6)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2014.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Board's remit can do so. The deadline for registering is 5pm the working day before the meeting, in this case **5pm on Tuesday 6 May 2014**.

Anyone who wishes to register or who requires further information is requested to contact the Democracy Officers for this meeting, details of whom are listed at the foot of this agenda.

Filming or Recording Meetings

Residents are welcome to photograph, film or record Councillors and Officers at all meetings open to the press and public. This includes the use of social media reporting, i.e. tweeting. Anyone wishing to film, record or take photos at any public meeting should contact the Democracy Officer (whose contact details are at the foot of this agenda) in advance of the meeting.

The Council's protocol on Webcasting, Filming & Recording of Meetings ensures that these practices are carried out in a manner both respectful to the conduct of the meeting and all those present. It can be viewed at

http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/download/3130/protocol_for_webcasting_filming_and_recording_of_council_meetings

4. Show Me That I Matter Annual Report and U Matter Survey Findings (Pages 7 - 48)

The Children's Rights and Advocacy Service have prepared two reports relating to feedback from York's children and young people, who are looked after. The U Matter survey took place in early 2014 and the report summarises the findings. The Show Me That I Matter annual report 2013-14 summarises the discussions which have taken place in York's children in care council during the past year.

5. Verbal Update Regarding Inspections Arrangements for Children's Services

All local authorities with responsibility for Children's Services will be inspected from November 2013 onwards under Ofsted's new framework for Children in Need of Help or Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers. Inspections will be undertaken at short notice and they will last for 4 weeks. This verbal briefing will advise the Board about the preparation that is being undertaken for York's inspection.

6. Draft Work Plan for 2014-15 (Pages 49 - 50)

To consider the Board's draft work plan for the forthcoming municipal year.

7. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officers

Name: Catherine Clarke and Louise Cook (job-share)

Contact Details:

Telephone: (01904) 551031

Email: catherine.clarke@york.gov.uk and
louise.cook@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officers responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 **(01904) 551550**

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	5 March 2014
Present	Councillors Looker (Chair), Runciman (Vice-Chair), Cuthbertson, Scott and Wiseman
Apologies	Councillors Brooks, Funnell and Potter

20. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in relation to the business on the agenda or other general interests they might have within the remit of the Board. None were declared.

21. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 2 December 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

22. Public Participation

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

23. Independent Reviewing Officers: Manager's Annual Report 2013

Members considered the draft 2013 Annual Report of the Manager of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO). The draft report provided a detailed overview of the service in 2013-14 including information on the reporting period, the legal, statutory and national context of the IRO Role, the structure of the City of York Council IRO Service, IRO caseloads and unit performance (including data on the number of reviews, timeliness of reviews, participation in reviews, consultation prior to reviews and the distribution of review records), the profile of Looked After Children in York and the IRO impact on the outcomes for children and young people (including dispute resolution and escalation,

quality assurance audits and referrals for advocacy). The report also outlined the five key priorities for 2014-15.

The Head of Service (Resources), Children's Social Care and the Principal Advisor/Interim IRO Manager attended the meeting to present the report.

Members noted that while the purpose of the report was to meet the statutory requirements established by the IRO handbook (2010), the report also recognised and responded to the findings and recommendations of the Thematic Report in relation to an evaluation of the effectiveness of IRO's entitled "*Independent Reviewing Officers: Taking up the challenge*" published by Ofsted in 2013.

Members were informed that caseloads were currently too high and noted that IROs also chaired child protection conferences which, while enabling them to maintain their skills, took up a significant amount of their time. They were advised that authorisation had now been obtained for two additional sixth-month posts (one full time and one part time) and it was likely that these would be advertised through secondment opportunity and external advert. Members were advised that the posts were temporary to take into account of future Looked After Children projections, which indicated a decrease. Members asked that an update on recruitment of staff be provided at a future meeting of the Board.

Members noted that the Unit was currently located within the Children's Social Care Service however there was a question of where it would be best located to achieve independence. While there were good reasons for the unit reporting to the Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services, the independence of the unit was also a critical requirement.

With regard to the timely review of children, Members acknowledged that reduced capacity had impacted on performance and in turn achieving the timescales in which reviews have to be held. While only 79% of reviews had been completed on time during 2013, officers advised that they were confident that they would be able to meet the performance target of 90% this year.

With regard to participation in reviews, Members acknowledged that it was important to have a number of different methods of engaging with children and young people and to aim for high levels of participation through attendance. Members noted with interest the opportunity for children and young people to partially chair or co-chair their own

reviews. Members asked to see some comparative data on looked after children to enable them to compare York with other authorities and it was agreed that this would be provided at a future meeting. Members suggested that it would be useful if age profiles could be included in Table 6 “Method and Percentage Looked After Children Participating in their Review”

Officers acknowledged that the results in table 8 “Percentage of Looked After Children seen prior to Review” would have caused some concern and explained that they had thoroughly scrutinised the data and reasons behind it. They advised that capacity had caused some difficulties, with the overview of out of area children being most important to address. Members noted the limitations of the database which lead to gaps in data capture and the need to improve the recording of seeing of young people. Officers advised that they hoped to achieve what they felt was an achievable target of 50% principally through increasing capacity but also through more accurate recording.

With regard to the information provided in relation to the IROs impact on the outcomes for children and young people, Members were advised that the Dispute Resolution Process had been reviewed and revised during 2013. They acknowledged that the report did not tabulate a statistical return on the informal and formal resolutions achieved by the Unit in 2013 due to concerns about the validity and credibility of such data collected but that instead case examples had been provided to demonstrate where the unit had made a difference to the lives of children and young people. Members suggested it may be useful to include some examples of IROs in situations which didn't go as planned. They were advised that future reports would include statistical information on informal and formal resolutions achieved by the Unit.

At this point in the meeting (6.30pm), the Chair, Councillor Looker stood down from the Chair as she had to leave the meeting to fulfil another prior commitment. Councillor Runciman (Vice-Chair) took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

With regard to the number of referrals to the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service, officers expressed the view that four referrals was an under representation in their view. It was agreed that further information be provided at a future meeting on how the council is fulfilling its advocacy role.

Members expressed concern at the number of interim IRO managers who had been in post during the last year and stated that this was

neither beneficial to staff members nor the service. Officers noted these concerns and advised Members that draft proposals for the long term future of the unit would be available shortly and an update would be provided at a future meeting.

Members considered the five priorities for 2014-15 which were detailed in the report.

The Board praised officers for presenting an honest and informative report. They recognised and acknowledged the recommendations contained within the report and noted the challenges faced by the unit and the tough targets it had to meet.

It was agreed that an update would be provided at a future meeting on the following areas which had been raised by Board Members.

- Long term plans for the unit including recruitment of additional staff
- Referrals to the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service
- Comparative data from other local authorities regarding participation in reviews.

Officers offered to provide a regular update on the IRO service if required.

Members acknowledged that the draft report needed to be considered by the City of York Safeguarding Children's Board before it could be finalised but stressed the need to see the final report in order to meet statutory requirements and it was agreed that this be added to the Board's work plan for 2014-15.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted, with particular reference to the priorities for 2014-15

(ii) That an update on the concerns raised during consideration of the draft report be provided at a future meeting of the Board.

(iii) That the final report be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

Reason: To ensure that the independent reviewing officers are undertaking work which offers appropriate challenges to the care provision for looked after children and young

people and to improve it in accordance with the Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15

24. Corporate Parenting Board Draft Work plan for 2014/15

Consideration was given to the Board's work plan for the 2014-15 municipal year. It was agreed that the suggested items for consideration detailed at the bottom of the current work plan, and listed below, be fed into a draft work plan for the forthcoming municipal year. These were:

- The emotional well being of looked after children
- Promoting a positive sense of identity for all children
- Update from Service Manager and the elected Member with responsibility for visiting children's homes.
- Feedback from the Glen in the wider context of short breaks.
- A briefing note to be provided to the Board on lessons that could be learned from the Daniel Pelka case in Coventry.
- Profile of Looked after Children in the City – twice yearly update requested.
- Update on Strategic Partnership Arrangements

In addition to the above issues, it was agreed that it would be beneficial for Corporate Parenting Board Members to meet with both foster carers and members of the Show Me That I Matter Panel.

Resolved: (i) That the work plan be approved.

(ii) That a work plan for 2014-15 be drafted to include the suggestions detailed above.

Reason: To ensure that the Board has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor Looker, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.05 pm].

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Corporate Parenting Board

7 May 2014

Report of the Assistant Director, Children's Services, Education and Skills

Show Me That I Matter Annual Report and U Matter Survey Findings**Summary**

1. This paper provides an update on two reports for discussion.
 - The first annual Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) report (Annex A)
 - The U Matter Survey findings and recommendations (Annex B)

Background

2. York has a strong history of involving children and young people in services that affect their lives. The voice of children and young people is understood to be a key component in improving outcomes for children and young people. This ranges from affecting the individual experiences of children and young people and also how messages can inform more system wide and strategic developments.

Show Me That I Matter report

3. Across arrangements for children and young people there is a matrix of opportunities for children and young people to have a voice and to be involved. The Show Me That I Matter panel is a key channel for Looked After Children (LAC) in York. The group hold monthly panel meetings to raise and discuss issues that are important to Looked After Children and young people, with the aim that councillors will help to shape and improve the services for looked after children and young people. A number of LAC aged 14-19 directly attend but messages are drawn from a much wider audience of Looked After Children. These messages may come from:
 - We Talk 2
 - U Matter survey
 - SMTIM Facebook Group

4. For the first time an annual report has been produced to summarise the work of the group over the last year. A full report and a child friendly version of the report have been produced. The full report is available as Annex A.
5. The Board is asked to:
 - read the annual review to understand the work of SMTIM.
 - comment on the report or issues highlighted in it.
 - identify issues raised that the Corporate Parenting Board could progress further.

UMatter Survey Findings

6. In 2013 the U Matter survey was developed as a way of monitoring the effectiveness and functionality of the Pledge for Looked After Children. The U Matter survey provided a chance for children and young people in care to inform the Children's Rights and Advocacy service about their experience of living in care. The survey was available to complete online or via interview: interviews were conducted by professionals, the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and Show Me That I Matter.
7. A copy of the report and its recommendation is available as Annex B. A summary of findings can be found below.
8. Most young people were positive about their placements and felt listened to by their foster carers; they were invited to family events and felt able to talk to a foster carer or social worker if there was a problem. Most young people feel they have been treated as an individual, with respect, have had a say in decisions that have been made about them, and were positive about the relationship they had with their social worker. However making contact with social workers wasn't always easy. Most young people were happy with their contact arrangements with family. Young people were positive about the support they had received in accessing health services and reported that they were encouraged to take part in leisure activities.

9. Over a third of young people didn't answer questions about Reviews, indicative of disinterest from young people. Many young people didn't know who their Independent Reviewing officer (IRO) was, this tended to be because their IRO had not visited them between review meetings. However young people tended to feel comfortable enough to have their say in their review meeting. Young people generally felt well supported in their education, yet nearly half of young people thought that they didn't have a Personal Education Plan.
10. More than half of young people were unaware of the Rights and Advocacy Service, however most young people knew they had a right to complain. Overall young people were very positive about their experience of being Looked After by City of York Council with 76% said their experience of being looked after as either 'good' or 'very good'. 58% gave City of York 5/5 for the quality of placements and 90% agreed with the statement that 'City of York Council provides good quality placements.
11. The Board is asked to note the contents of the report and discuss its recommendations.

Consultation

12. The work of each of the officers reporting to the Board is undertaken with consultation with service users e.g. looked after children and care leavers foster carers, adopters, Feedback from Show Me That I Matter and I Matter Too (representatives of all looked after children)

Options

13. There are no options for decision, as the information provided is intended to progress information sharing with the Board about the experience of looked after children.

Analysis

14. There are key messages from the feedback of young people both in the Show Me That I Matter annual report and the U Matter survey for 2013-14. In conjunction with the feedback from key officers from children's social care, education, health and the manager of the independent reviewing officers, this report provides valuable information for the review of the Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15. The findings will also provide a basis for the preparation of the refreshed strategy for 2015-18.

Council Plan

15. The Corporate Parenting Board will be ensuring that the work of partners for looked after children contributes to the aims of

- The Children and Young People's Plan
- Building strong communities
- Protecting vulnerable people

16. Through the positive outcomes for looked after children, the aim is for them to be able to benefit from and contribute to

- Get York moving
- Create jobs and grow the economy
- Protect the environment

Implications

17. Financial : Not applicable

Human Resources: Not applicable

Equalities: Not applicable

Legal: Not applicable

Crime and Disorder: Not applicable

Information Technology: Not applicable

Property: Not applicable

Other: Not applicable

Risk Management

18. Not applicable

Recommendations

19. The Board is asked to:
- (i) read the SMTIM annual report and the U Matter Survey.
 - (ii) comment on the report or issues highlighted in it.
 - (iii) identify issues raised that the Corporate Parenting Board could progress further.

Reason

20. The views, wishes and feelings of looked after children and young people are central to the strategic planning for current and future services for this group of young people.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Eoin Rush, Assistant Director
554212

**Report
Approved**



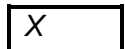
Date 25 April 14

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A - Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) report

Annex B - U-Matter Survey findings and recommendations

Abbreviations:

Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM)

Looked After Children (LAC)

Independent Reviewing officer (IRO)

ANNEX A

SHOW ME THAT I MATTER YORK'S CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

SOPHIE BARNES

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INTRODUCTION

Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) is the name of York's Children in Care Council (CiCC). York's CiCC hold monthly panel meetings to raise and discuss issues that are important to Looked After Children and young people, with the aim that councillors will help to shape and improve the services for looked after children and young people. Councillor Janet Looker, Lead Member for Children's Services, and Councillor Jenny Brookes attend the panel meetings, along with Nikki Wilson, Children's Rights and Advocacy Officer and Michelle Howlett, Looked After Children Development Officer.

This report will detail the findings, conclusions and actions from the SMTIM panel meetings held in 2013, using the minutes of each SMTIM meeting. Each discussion point from the meetings, and any conclusions or actions on that discussion point, will be outlined.

PANELS: SMTIM AND WE TALK 2

SHOW ME THAT I MATTER

York's CiCC consists of experienced young people, aged between 14 and 19, and they convene monthly to discuss issues that are important to looked after children young people. The definition and purpose of the CiCC, the structure and location of panel meetings and the skills and qualities of the CiCC have been prominent topics of discussion at various meetings.

The CiCC have completed exercises to establish their role, and to determine the aims and expectations of a member of the CiCC. They have also looked at what motivates individuals to become members of the CiCC and what skills a member of the CiCC should have. The CiCC have determined that they need to possess these qualities: care experience, reliability, respect (in particular being polite), communication skills, listening skills, confidence and self esteem and patience. It is important for the CiCC to understand their purpose and the skills they need to possess so they can ensure the panel functions efficiently and effectively. Attending panel meetings also gives members of the CiCC the opportunity to gain skills and experience in a professional environment.

At the November panel meeting, participation volunteer Matthew Wotherspoon gave a brief presentation on the skills CiCC members require and how these skills can be promoted when applying for future employment or training. This helps the CiCC use the skills they have gained while being a member of the CiCC in order to shape their future.

YORK'S CiCC

YOU SAID

The CiCC have said that they represent children in care in York and they described the panel meetings as “a group where we come together to share views on foster care, a place to share worries and thoughts, to make being in care better, to talk about things that need changing and do something about them”.

For the CiCC to function, members have said that they “need to listen to each other and to talk to the relevant people who make decisions at the council”.

YOU SAID

At the August activity day, the CiCC looked at who within the council they could approach when they would like information/something changing and also what their job role is and how to contact them. The CiCC have also said that when there are guest speakers or councillors at meetings, they would only like to receive small bits of information at a time because they find it easier to process and remember.

SO...

The CiCC have been made aware of the Children’s Rights and Advocacy Service and the role which it has at the council. Issues raised with the Rights and Advocacy Service will be taken forward with the relevant people.

PANEL MEETINGS

YOU SAID

Between January and August, the location of the panel meetings was 29 Castlegate. The CiCC said they would like to have a meeting at West Offices to see what the building is like.

SO...

At the August activity day, it was agreed that the next meeting would take place at West Offices so the CiCC could see the building. At the September SMTIM panel, Howard Lovelady took the panel on a tour of West Offices and the panel decided that future meetings would be held at West Offices.

YOU SAID

The CiCC said they would like to have a named chairperson at each meeting, rather than having a different chairperson at each meeting.

SO...

It was agreed that the CiCC would vote for a chair every six months. In September, Shelley was nominated as chair and Luke as vice chair.

YOU SAID

The CiCC said they would like to change the structure of panel meetings. They said they would like more time for preparation on agenda items, particularly as there were a few new members of the CiCC. The CiCC have asked for a reminder at the end of each meeting (and in the post) on the date and agenda of the next meeting.

SO...

A new structure was proposed which allows time for preparation on agenda items; this is to ensure the CiCC have a good understanding of the issues and topics being covered at panel meetings. Having an understanding of the issues and topics enables the CiCC to genuinely participate in discussions and voice their own opinions, rather than agreeing with the majority view.

WE TALK 2

We Talk 2 is a group formed by the union of the Looked After Children's Support Team and the group I Matter 2. The two groups were very similar, with lots of overlap in content covered by the groups, so joining them together was a sensible option.

The Looked After Children's Support Team was formed in 2012 and they helped support the City of York's looked after children and young people, and their families and carers. The team liaised with partner agencies across the city to coordinate and facilitate contact between LAC and their parents and other relatives, support parenting assessments and re-unification plans, as well as helping looked after and adopted children understand and make sense of their own life history.

I Matter 2 is a sub-group of SMTIM and is aimed at looked after children between the ages of ten and fourteen. The group is more informal and activity based than SMTIM, but still allows looked after children and young people to share their views and to raise any issues regarding being in care. Issues raised at I Matter 2 are shared with the CiCC, who are then able to raise these issues with senior managers and councillors.

In March, the role of the Looked After Children's Support Team and aspects of their work were explained to the SMTIM panel. It was discussed that the Looked After Children's Support Team were to liaise and work with I Matter 2. In May, Michelle Howlett updated the CiCC on the arrangements of the LAC's Support Team and the consultation work they were to be doing with I Matter 2 and the LAC's consultation group, which was run by the Looked After Children's Support Team. Discussions were in place regarding the union of the Looked After Children's Support Team with I Matter 2, but this was to occur when Hamilton House, a new location for the meetings, was ready for use. The Looked After Children's

Support Team and I Matter 2 joined in November and meet monthly at Hamilton House. In November, a new name for the group had not been decided, but it was later determined by the group that they would be called We Talk 2.

THE PLEDGE

The Government states that every council should make a set of promises to all its children and young people in care; this is called a Pledge. In York, children and young people were asked what they thought were the kind of promises that should be made to children and young people in care, and the Pledge is based on their feedback.

Throughout the 2013 panel meetings, discussions were held on how to monitor the effectiveness and the functionality of the Pledge. It was proposed that the Pledge could be monitored by interview, and it was decided that a questionnaire was to be put together covering each Pledge point. The suggested names for the questionnaire were *Your Voice* and *U Matter*. The latter was chosen and was developed into the U Matter survey, which is discussed in more detail in the following section within this report.

YOU SAID

The CiCC watched The Pledge DVD so that all members, new and old, understood The Pledge. Feedback from the CiCC was that The Pledge was a too lengthy.

SO...

There are plans are in place to re-do The Pledge, and feedback from the U Matter survey will be used to inform the new Pledge.

A specific point within the Pledge – access to leisure – was raised by the CiCC. The Pledge states ‘You will be able to use the City of York Council’s leisure services, free of charge’. As a result of this, the Council produced a leisure offer to all looked after children and young people, comprising of free council gym and swim membership at Energise and Yearsley Swimming Pool.

YOU SAID

Feedback from the CiCC indicated that there were problems in accessing the free swim and gym membership and there were concerns that not all young people were aware of its existence.

SO...

It was agreed that the Children’s Rights and Advocacy Service would do more to promote the leisure offer, and information continues to be regularly shared with social work teams, in young people’s newsletters, on Facebook and on the SMTIM website.

U MATTER SURVEY

The U Matter survey was developed as a way of monitoring the effectiveness and functionality of the Pledge and was a chance for children and young people in care to inform the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service about their experience of living in care. The survey was available to complete online or via interview: interviews were conducted by professionals, the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and SMTIM.

YOU SAID

The survey was piloted at the June meeting but feedback from the panel was that the survey was too lengthy.

SO...

Nikki Wilson and Michelle Howlett took the feedback from the panel and made alterations to the survey. The results from the survey will be used to inform the next Pledge.

On 20th September 2013, the survey went live and was available for young people to complete until 31st December 2013. This work concluded at the end of 2013 and the findings will be used to inform the next Pledge.

SHOW ME THAT I MATTER WEBSITE

The website www.showmethatimatter.com was created so that information regarding looked after children and young people was available online and was launched in March 2013. The website provides information for looked after children and young people, as well as for professionals and carers. Councillor Jenny Brookes asked for the link to the site to be sent to all councillors so that all professionals working with children and young people in care were aware of the site.

YOU SAID

Two members of the CiCC said they wanted to view the site and provide feedback.

SO...

The two young people gave their feedback on the site.

Although the SMTIM website has been extremely useful in making information available, the layout, design and content of the website need improving and developing. A plan for the development of the site is underway for 2014.

CONTACT WITH PROFESSIONALS, TEAMS AND PROJECTS

INDEPENDENT VISITORS

Independent Visitors (IVs) are adults who give up some of their free time to support young people who are in care. They are independent as they are volunteers who do not work for the Council. IVs are for looked after children and young people who have little or no family contact, and who would like to have a friendship with an adult who is outside the care system. IVs also provide advice and support to young people in care. The Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to appoint IVs for looked after children in their care.

Nikki Wilson shared information about the Independent Visitors Scheme with the CiCC and it was agreed that a further cohort of volunteers would be recruited to become IVs.

YOU SAID

Members of the CiCC, Ashleigh, Amy and Luke, expressed an interest in interviewing the volunteers for the position of IV. Despite volunteering, none of the young people were available to interview candidates and so a young person's interviewing panel was unable to take place.

SO...

Interviews for IVs were held in July and a cohort of IVs was recruited.

INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS

An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) oversees the care planning and chairs the review meetings for children and young people in care. Each looked after child or young person has an IRO and their IRO should remain the same if possible. An IRO's main job is to ensure that the looked after child or young person's care plan meets their needs and that the voice of looked after children and young people is heard.

YOU SAID

Some members other CiCC said they were unaware of who their IRO was and what their job entails.

SO...

This issue was tackled by arranging for two IROs, Helen Bromley and Claire Mo, to attend the November SMTIM panel meeting to explain their job role and to look at how they can improve review meetings for LAC.

YOU SAID

When the IROs attended the panel meeting, the CiCC had small group discussions about their experiences of reviews and suggested improvements that could be made. The main message from the discussion was that more time should be made for IROs to spend with children prior to their reviews, in order to find out how the child or young person would like the meeting to take place and how they would like to contribute.

SO...

Nikki Wilson was to feedback to senior managers on the CiCC's comments about how to improve reviews for young people.

YOUNG INSPECTORS

The Young Inspectors are a voluntary group of young people from marginalised backgrounds who inspect and report on various services in York and give feedback from a young person's perspective on how the services could be improved. This involves visiting services and interviewing staff and service users. Young people need to be referred by someone in order to become a Young Inspector and referrals are accepted from all organisations.

In January, a discussion on Young Inspectors was held in preparation for the visit of two Youth Support Workers. The two Youth Support Workers, Emma and Jean, were guests at the February panel meeting; they explained the role of a Young Inspector and asked if any members of the CiCC were interested in the programme. The CiCC were to speak to Nikki if they wanted to be involved in Young Inspectors.

CARE4ME SUMMARY REPORT

The Care4Me Summary Report is a national report detailing children and young people's views on being in care. The Office of the Children's Rights and Director (OCRD) – currently hosted by Ofsted – managed and administered the Care4me survey, which was sent to local authorities undergoing an Ofsted inspection of their Safeguarding and Looked After Children services. Each local authority conducted their survey separately at the time of their inspection. The Care4Me Summary Report brings together the individual authority results to provide a national overview. The National Overview Report of Children and Young People's Views, which includes the Care4Me Summary Report, can be viewed at www.rights4me.org.

The CiCC were informed of the Care4Me survey in July and how it relates to care in York. They were encouraged to participate in order to voice their views on being in care. The survey was promoted on the SMTIM website and on Facebook in order to get as many

responses as possible. In October, the CiCC looked at the Care4Me summary report and gave their views on the findings.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

AUGUST ACTIVITY DAY

An 'away day' was arranged for the CiCC which took place on August 5th 2013 at Bradley Wood Activity Centre. The activity day was attended by six young people and three members of staff. There was no SMTIM panel meeting held in August, due to there being an activity day.

At the July meeting, details of the 'away day', including location – Bradley Wood Activity Centre – were provided and consent forms were distributed to the young people. The 'away day' was described as a development day with a combination of small group work and outdoor activities.

As there was no panel meeting in August, details of the activity day, as an alternative to minutes, were provided.



Young people enjoying the activities at Bradley Wood Activity Centre

The first outdoor activity was a team building activity involving a group ski walk race and a travel across the swamp exercise. Everyone participated and did extremely well, despite the rain. The second outdoor activity was the high ropes, which included climbing the high ropes and a leap of faith. Indoor group exercises were completed, which included discussions on SMTIM; the outcome of these discussions has been summarised earlier in this report.

The September panel meeting included feedback on the outcomes of the activity day held in August and it was indicated that a training session was to be held for all members who were unable to attend the activity day.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

In December, the CiCC attended an activity day instead of holding a meeting at West Offices. The panel went to Yorkshire's Winter Wonderland, which included activities such as ice skating. At this activity day, the panel said goodbye to Matthew Wotherspoon, participation volunteer, and welcomed Helen Jones as the new participation volunteer.



Young people ice skating at Yorkshire's Winter Wonderland

Takeover Day was discussed by the panel in September. Takeover day is a national event whereby children and young people get the chance to work with adults for a day. It gives children and young people the chance to experience a work environment and it gives adults a new perspective on their work. The panel agreed that Takeover Day is a good event to take part in but that it should be well planned for 2014.

Throughout the year, there have been a number of regional and national meetings which members of the CiCC have attended, along with professionals. These include:

- A regional CiCC event held in Barnsley on 12th January 2013, attended by two CiCC members and Nikki Wilson
- A national CiCC event held in Leeds on 9th November 2013, attended by two CiCC members, Nikki Wilson, Councillor Brooks and Howard Lovelady.

EDUCATION

VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The City of York Council has created a Virtual School to ensure that looked after children and young people receive a high-quality level of support with their education. There is a Virtual Head Teacher and a multi-agency team who work together to track the progress of looked after children and young people and to ensure that they are receiving appropriate support and opportunities.

In July, Trisha Head, the Virtual Head Teacher, attended the SMTIM panel to introduce herself to the CiCC and to describe her role. This gave the CiCC chance to ask questions about Trisha's role, and how she can support looked after children and young people.

The role of a Virtual Head Teacher:

- To work closely with other head teachers and school governors to ensure there is a good understanding of what is important to looked after children and young people.
- To provide training to teachers, head teachers and social workers.
- To work with School Improvement Professionals to raise the standards in schools.
- To work with the Admissions and Access Team to help ensure that moves between schools are reduced.

HEALTH

Looked after children and young people require an initial health assessment within the first 28 days of coming into care and subsequent annual review health assessments.

In May, Sue Roughton and Barbara Stewart attended the SMTIM panel to talk about healthcare for looked after children and young people and to get their views on their involvement with their health assessments. Following the panel meeting, Sue Roughton was to confirm whether young people in higher education were exempt from health care costs, and this was confirmed at the June SMTIM panel meeting.

ISSUES RAISED BY THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

TRANSPORT

YOU SAID

The CiCC outlined problems with contacting taxis and discussions took place around whether young people could be involved in the training of drivers.

SO...

This was discussed with taxi companies but was not something they decided to take up.

YOU SAID

The CiCC said that there were problems with bus travel across the city. Currently, young people in care are given a bus pass for designated zones but this causes difficulties when young people change placements or want to access different parts of the city.

SO...

This issue was taken forward by Councillor Looker who has arranged for young people in care to have free bus travel across the city; this will be implemented in April 2014.

APPRENTICESHIPS

YOU SAID

Young people in care said they would like more help in arranging apprenticeships with the City of York Council.

SO...

The Pathway Employment and Training Officer has negotiated that LAC and care leavers will be given priority on City of York Council Level 2 apprenticeships. Initially, apprenticeship vacancies within the council will be advertised to LAC and care leavers. LAC and care leavers who have a successful application and interview will be appointed. If no LAC and care leavers are appointed, the vacancy is advertised publicly.

Further to this, the Pathway Team has met with Human Resources to discuss further opportunities for LAC and young people within the council; these include Level 1 apprenticeships, trainees and work experience opportunities.

OTHER ADVOCACY ISSUES

YOU SAID

Nikki Wilson outlined advocacy issues which young people felt were in need of attention by the CiCC. These included more choice around placements, and better and quicker responses from social workers.

SO...

Donna Barnes, Principle Social Worker responsible for Social Working Practice across Children's Services will be attending the SMTIM panel meeting in March 2014 to address the issue of responses from social workers. Howard Lovelady, Head of Resources in Children's Services and Debra Lane, Fostering Manager, will be attending the SMTIM panel meeting in May 2014 to discuss choices around placements.

VIOLET CHAMBERS FUND

The Violet Chambers Fund is a fund of £20,000 that was left in the will of deceased Miss Violet Chambers to looked after children and young people. The fund was discussed by the CiCC in February, where views and ideas were shared on the spending criteria and the application process. It was agreed that funding should be spent on an event or experience that will be 'meaningful or memorable', up to the value of £100. The fund has been divided into two ring-fenced halves, Under 11s and 11+. Both funds are dedicated to provision over and above that normally provided for looked after children and young people and aim to provide cultural, sports and educational experiences and may include theatre trips, activity days, meals out, etc.

11+ Fund

Applications can be made by professionals on behalf of young people or young people themselves, with a supporting professional. Applications are judged by a panel that consists of three young people from CiCC and three professionals (Howard Lovelady - Head of Resources, Nikki Wilson - Children's Rights Officer and Sophie Barnes – Service Support Apprentice). Members of the CiCC can still apply for the fund but will not be able to sit on the deciding panel when their request is being processed.

Under 11s Fund

This fund will be used to provide a day out for those children under the age of 11 and their fostering family. Day passes will be purchased from Piglets Adventure Farm, Monk Park Farm or York Maze and costs will vary depending on the number of children in a family.

YOU SAID

The CiCC were shown the Violet Chambers Fund pack (information sheet and application form) in order to get their feedback. The CiCC said they were happy with the fund pack.

SO...

Information about the Violet Chambers Fund was distributed to foster carers, residential settings, fostering teams and SW teams. Posters were mailed out to schools, children's centres, Hamilton House and Danesgate. The Violet Chambers Fund is being advertised on the SMTIM website, Facebook and in the Rights and Advocacy newsletter.

WHAT'S MEANINGFUL AND MEMORABLE TO YOU?

Applications have included visits to London to see West End shows, meals with relatives, go-karting, paintballing and rally driving any many more...

SO...

So far we've had 28 applications, and we've approved 21 of these. Some applications haven't been approved because young people have asked for something the council should already be providing. The unsuccessful applications have been followed up by Nikki Wilson and Howard Lovelady, and the young people have been able to make a second application.

"The show was really good and it was in London which is the best theatre place ever. I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed the whole experience and I have never seen such a professional show. Can't wait to tell my friends and make them jealous."

"I really think you should carry on with this [Violet Chambers Fund] as it brings families together and poorer families will be able to have fun."

LEAVING CARE

Various aspects of leaving care have been discussed by the CiCC. These include: the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, the Charter for Care Leavers, pathway support and changes in the structure Children's Services which have had an impact upon the process of leaving care.

NATIONAL CARE ADVISORY SERVICE (NCAS)

The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) provide advice, information and aim to improve the policy and practice of a young person's transition from care to adulthood¹. NCAS developed the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum which brings together local authorities so that they can support each other in achieving the best outcomes for outcomes for young people making the transition from care to adulthood.

YOU SAID

The CiCC discussed appointing a representative to attend the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum. Luke was appointed as the representative, but could not attend the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum as it was scheduled to take place on a weekday. The majority of the CiCC are in full time education, which means they were also not able to attend the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum.

SO...

Nikki Wilson contacted NCAS to raise the issue that young people who are in full time education cannot attend forum meetings which are scheduled on a weekday, and in response NCAS are planning on holding future meetings in the school holidays.

LEAVING CARE CHARTER

The Leaving Care Charter, as explained by the Department for Education, is a set of principles and promises made to care leavers by the local authority. The Leaving Care Charter is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the local authority should do to be good corporate parents.

In May, Amy Keogh attended the SMTIM panel to discuss the Leaving Care Charter and Pathway Support. The Pathway Team has had issues in communicating the existence of the Charter to young people, and so Amy Keogh aimed to make the CiCC aware of the Charter and its purpose. Currently, most young people are made aware of the Charter through one to ones with workers. The Pathway Team is looking to develop their communication with young people in care by exploring the use of social media, but hurdles such as confidentiality need to be explored first.

YOU SAID

The CiCC said that the Charter for Care Leavers was too wordy, not written in words they understand, confusing and not realistic in its statements and promises. They proposed some amendments to the Charter for Care Leavers.

The CiCC's proposed Charter for Care Leavers

The City of York Promises to:

- Respect and believe in you, support you in your beliefs and accept your culture
- Value your strengths and encourage your goals
- Take time to listen to you, respect your point of view and put your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you. If our opinion is different to yours we will fully explain why, and try to negotiate a compromise.
- Give you information you may need to support you into adulthood.
- Support you with the choices you make; we will support, not judge, if you change your mind.
- Give you advice, information, practical and financial help and to provide emotional support.
- Prepare you for your move to independent living, but only when you are ready. To do all we can to help you feel safe and happy to help you settle into independent life.
- Help you break down barriers you face when dealing with other agencies. We will work with other agencies such as housing, benefits, colleges, universities, employment providers, and health services to offer you the support you may need. To provide you with a Pathway Worker to age 21 or 25 if in education.
- Offer you advice and information whatever your age.

SO...

These suggestions were taken into account when the Charter was revised in 2013. This shows the CiCC had a direct involvement in improving the Charter.

The Pathway Team is in the process of setting up a Care Leavers Consultation Group - consisting of members of the Pathway Team - that will meet regularly. It is hoped that a member of the consultation group will regularly attend the SMTIM panel to share information between looked after children and young people, and care leavers. Two members of the consultation group plan to attend the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum to keep up to date with national developments for care leavers, and also to benchmark York's Pathway Service against that of other local authorities.

Annex B

Children's Rights and Advocacy Service

U MATTER SURVEY

CONSULTATION FINDINGS FROM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



BACKGROUND

The green paper Care Matters (DfES, 2006) outlines as part of its transformation programme for children living in care, the expectation for local authorities to develop a pledge to set out the things that all children in the care of that authority can expect to receive. York's Children in Care Council, *Show Me That I Matter* played a key role in developing and steering City of York's pledge before it was launched in February 2011. The pledge would be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect the up-to date views of children and young people living in care.

A survey, named *U Matter* was conducted as a means to collect current views of young people in care, the results of which have been shared with the Show Me That I Matter panel in the first step to updating the pledge. This report contains the findings of the survey, which, in addition to shaping the pledge, should also be used to inform future practice.

METHOD

The survey was available in paper format and online, through Survey Monkey (SurveyMonkey.com). The survey was promoted to young people in a variety of ways; the survey money link was advertised in the newsletter sent out to all looked after young people over the age of 11. There was also a link provided on the Show Me That I Matter website (showmethatimatter.com) and the Show Me That I Matter Facebook page. In addition social workers were asked to identify young people on their caseload who may be willing to participate in completing the survey. Young people who were already in the process of receiving services from the Rights and Advocacy Service were also approached about completing the survey.

Young people were supported by the Children's Right Service, school or carer (if required) to complete the survey, although some completed it independently. Some young people chose to complete the survey via SurveyMonkey.com but most completed a paper copy. The survey enabled young people to complete the survey anonymously if they wished.

A total of 50 children and young people in care completed the questionnaire, ranging in age from 8 to 17. The majority of these were living in foster placements, however 2

young people were currently living in a residential placement, 2 were living with family and 1 was living independently. The survey included the views of young people placed out of area. 27 of the young people were female, 22 were male and 1 didn't specify their gender.

PLACEMENTS

37% of young people had experienced only one placement, whilst 46 % had experienced 2-4 placement moves, and 17% had 5-10 placement moves. However only 13% of young people felt they'd moved too many times; the majority of young people felt that the number of moves had not been a problem.

Almost half of young people had been required to move school for as a result of a placement (44%). There were mixed views about having to move schools, with some feeling upset about leaving friends, but others feeling that their new school was better. One young person felt relief that they no longer had to travel to school by taxi.

Only small percentages (13%) of young people were given written information or photographs about their placement prior to moving there. However lack of written information did not appear to affect the quality of young people's experience in that placement, as the 87% who didn't receive written information all agreed with the statement that 'City of York Council provides good quality placements'. Furthermore all said that they felt they could talk to their social worker if there was a problem. One young person commented how they would have liked more preparation time to get to know their carer:

"I would have liked to have spent more time with my foster carer before I moved in, we don't get on".

Most young people (93%) felt they had an adult they could talk to if there was a problem; either their social worker or their carer. The 7% who felt they could not talk to either their carer or social worker were mainly females (one didn't disclose their gender, the others were all female). This could suggest that females have more specific needs with regards to communication with those caring for them. There were 7 young people who chose not to answer the question about whether they could talk to their social worker or carer; these were all male. 5 out of 7 of these were under 10.

42 out of 50 young people said their foster carers listened to them, 3 ticked both 'yes' and 'no' and 4 young people felt their foster carers did not listen to them. 46 out of 50 young people thought their foster carers spent enough time with them, with only 2 stating a definite 'no'. One young person had a lot of praise for their foster carers:

"The good thing about this placement is that my carers are very kind; they care about you a lot. It makes it easier for me to not be living with family, which some people find very hard".

However this was not everyone's experience. The importance of feeling part of a family was highlighted by one young person:

"In my current placement we get on well together and I'm included in my family activities. In my previous placement nothing was good. My carer did not talk to me, I did not feel like I was part of the family"

Respondents were given the following statement and asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed:

"the Council provides good quality placements for children and young people"

The majority (90%) either agreed or strongly agreed that City of York provides good quality placements. Of the 10% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed, all were female; a total of 5 people.

Summary: Most young people were positive about their placements and felt listened to by their carers; they agreed that city of York Council provides good quality placements. They were able to talk to a foster carer or their social worker if there was a problem, however the majority were not given written information or photographs about their placement prior to moving.

FOSTER CARE

Most young people (91%) felt that they were able to make their bedroom feel like their own/have a say in how it looked. The remaining 9% accounts for 4 young people who, reassuringly had all agreed earlier in the survey that they could talk to their social worker or foster carer if there were any problems. However:

- one young person had disagreed that City of York provides good quality placements, indicating a particular problem with their placement/carer.
- one young person felt that their foster carer didn't listen to them
- one young person was in residential care

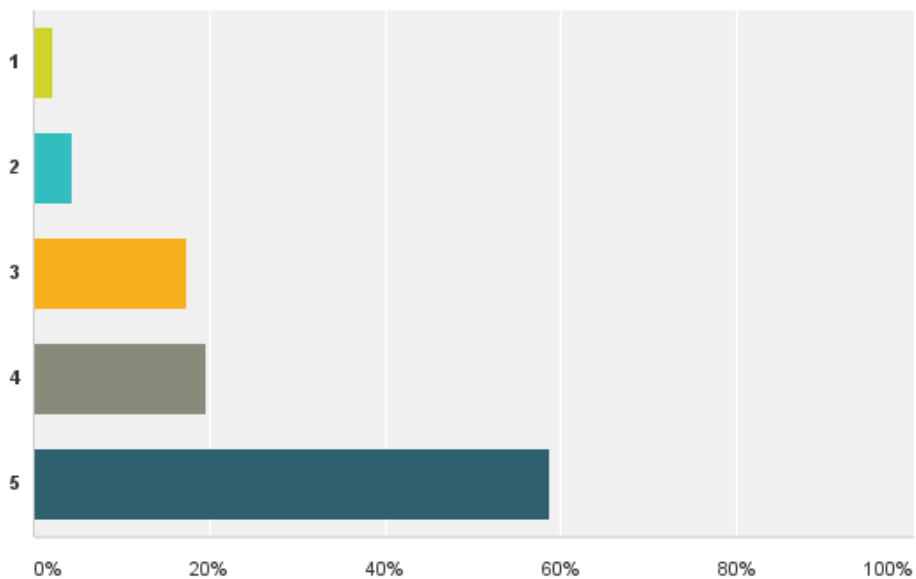
2 young people who completed the survey reported that they had shared a bedroom; one of these felt that they could make their bedroom their own.

Consistent with the remarks about bedrooms, 91% of young people said they were invited to family events within their placement. From the 9% who weren't invited to family events, all agreed earlier in the survey that they could talk to their social worker or foster carer if there were any problems. It should be noted that, (discounting one young person who lived in residential who mistakenly answered this question), all of these were teenage boys.

City of York Council received high scores when young people were asked to rate the quality of their placement out of 5 (1 being lowest and 5 being highest); 58% rated their placement 5 out of 5.

Q16 Overall how would you rate the quality of your placement? (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)

Answered: 46 Skipped: 4



The young people who gave a score of 3 or below, which accounted for 11 individuals (19%), had all previously indicated they felt able to talk to their social worker or foster carer if they were unhappy about a placement. Furthermore, all had agreed with the statement that City of York Council provides good quality placements. It should be noted that all of these young people were in their teens.

However one young person explained the difficulty in addressing any problems, even when they felt able to talk to someone about it:

“when I was unhappy in placement it was difficult to talk to someone about it, eventually I spoke to the Children’s Right Officer. It’s difficult to complain about bad placements when you don’t want another move.”

Summary: Most young people were happy with foster care; they were able to make their bedrooms feel like their own and were invited to family events. Should any problems arise they were able to talk to their carer or social worker about it.

RESIDENTIAL CARE / CHILDREN’S HOME

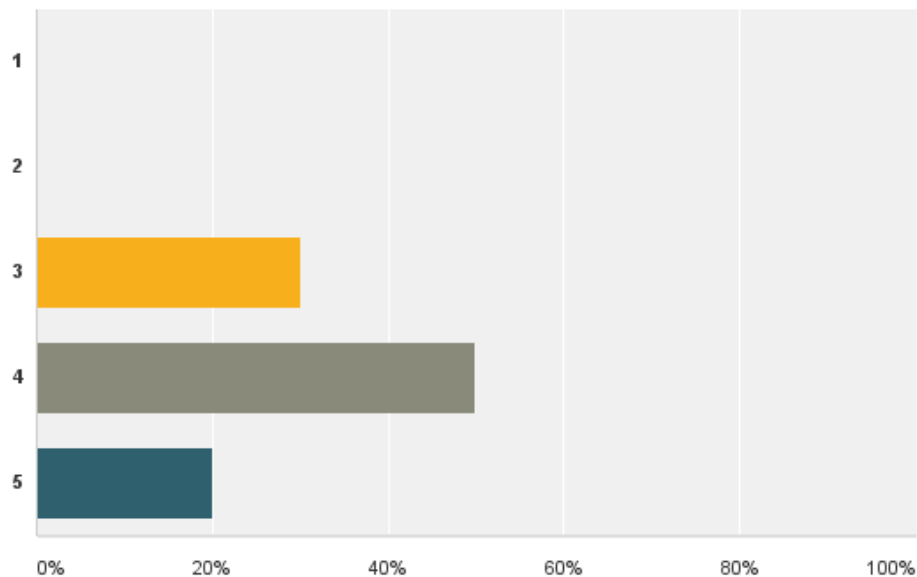
Whilst only 2 young people were currently living in residential care, 10 young people completed this section of the survey, presumably commenting on previous experiences of being in residential care. 5 of these young people experienced residential care in York and 5 outside of York. 9 of these young people said the staff who cared for them were interested in their views, however 5 young people said the staff didn’t spend enough time with them.

“the good things about my care home are more things to do, being independent. The bad things are too many rules (stupid rules) and being away from my family”

4 out of 10 young people said they could make their bedroom feel like their own, whilst 3 felt they could not; the remaining 3 did not answer.

Q21 Overall how would you rate the quality of your placement? (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)

Answered: 10 Skipped: 40



Summary: Residential staff were interested in young people's views, but young people's experience wasn't as positive as those living in foster care. Half of the young people felt staff didn't spend enough time with them.

RIGHTS AND RESPECT

When asked whether their carers had treated them as an individual and with respect, only 40 out of 50 young people responded. 37 felt that they had been treated in this way, 1 thought 'yes and no' and 2 felt that their carers had not treated them in this way.

However 35 young people (out of 40 who chose to answer) felt that they've had a say in the decisions that have been made about them. 3 young people ticked the boxes 'yes' and 'no' indicating that they had a say either sometimes or to a limited extent. Only 2 said they had not had a say. One young person commented on making a choice *not* to have a say:

"I can have a say in decisions... but I usually choose not to have a say"

Of those who answered, around half of young people said they were aware of the Rights and Advocacy Service, however as 9 young people skipped this question, it is reasonable to presume that the figure who don't know about the service is much higher (60%). Of those who said they knew about the service, there were degrees of understanding as to what support was offered; one young person commented:

“I've heard of it but I don't know what it is”

However 87% of young people knew they had a right to complain if they were unhappy about the care that they received, and 19% (8 people) had made a complaint. Of these 8 young people 3 were happy with how it was dealt, 1 was 'happy-ish' and 1 was not happy. The remaining 3 did not comment.

Exactly half of young people knew about the Pledge made by City of York Council to look after young people. When asked to prioritise what issues City of York Council should be promising, young people identified:

- good quality placements
- help to keep in contact with friends and family
- a social worker who is reliable, trustworthy, who will listen to you and treat you with respect.

One young person summarised the details of a good quality placement:

“The most important thing the Council should promise is that you get a good placement with kind and caring foster carers, where you can say if you're unhappy and they'll understand”.

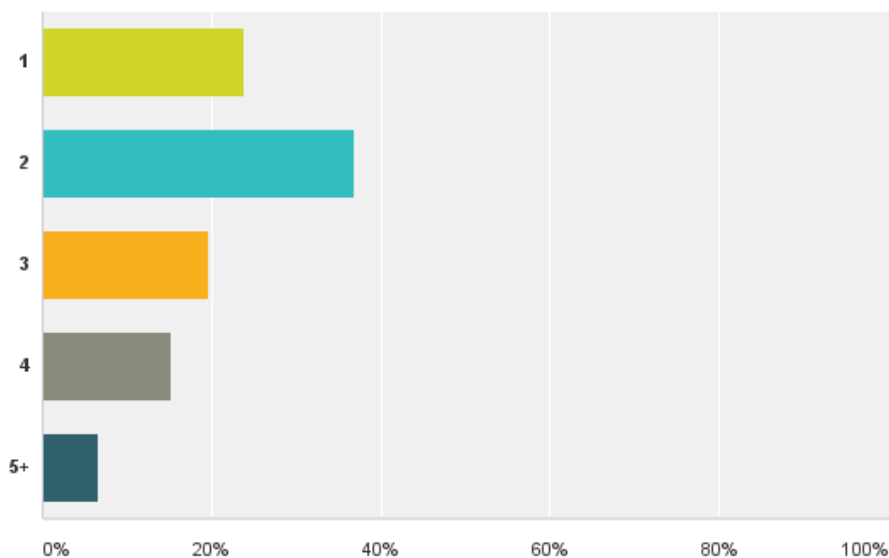
Summary: Most young people feel they have been treated as an individual and with respect and that they've had a say in decisions that have been made about them. Only half (possibly less) knew about the Rights and Advocacy Service, however most people knew they had a right to complain.

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER

There appears to be a high staff turnover which is represented in the graph below. Only 23% of young people have had the same social worker in the last 2 years. Conversely, 40% of young people have had 3 or more social workers in the last 2 years. 21% have had 4 or more in the last 2 years.

Q28 How many social workers have you had in the last 2 years?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 4



77% of young people were happy with the frequency of the visits from their social worker. Some young people who thought they had less regular visits from their social worker were still happy with the frequency. The quality of the contact with social workers was rated quite highly too; 81% thought their social worker was reliable and 76% got to see their social workers alone. Importantly 89% of young people felt that they could talk to their social worker about any worries they may have.

However ease of making contact with social workers was less clear. Over half of young people didn't have their social worker's mobile phone number, and 6 people skipped this question which suggests a higher figure. It was noted that of those that did have their social worker's mobile number, the contact details tended to be held by the foster carer(s). Those who did have their social worker's number tended to be in their mid to late teens: 13 out of 20 young people were 15 years or above. It should be noted that 71% of young people didn't know who to contact if their social worker was on holiday.

Furthermore, 8 young people skipped this question, therefore it is reasonable to assume this figure is higher. Again those who did know who to contact in their social worker's absence tended to be older, the breakdown as follows:

1 x 12 year old

3 x 14 year olds

2 x 16 year olds

5 x 17 year olds

1 x 19 year old

88% of young people felt that their social worker acts on their wishes and feelings. The remaining 12% (5 young people) who felt that their social worker did not act on their wishes and feelings comprised of 1 male, aged 15 and 4 females aged 15 or 16. 5 males (aged 8-17) and 1 female skipped this question. These figures could suggest that females value being listened to more than males, an issue that seems to be of particular importance during teenage years for females. Although almost half of young people didn't answer this question, 60% thought that when it has not been possible for their social worker to act on their wishes and feelings, their social worker explained why. One young person explained their acceptance of decisions made in their best interests:

"I was very young when decisions were made so I don't think I had a say. I don't mind, they were good decisions".

Summary: Most young people were positive about the relationship they had with their social worker, however making contact with them didn't seem quite so easy; over half of young people didn't have their social worker's mobile number and most people didn't know how to contact if their social worker was on holiday.

REVIEWS

More than half of young people didn't know who their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was, and a further 7 young people skipped this question. It can therefore be presumed that the proportion of young people who didn't know who their IRO is higher. It should be noted that only 3 out of 21 young people who knew who their IRO was, were male.

74 % of young people said that their IRO doesn't contact them in between meetings/reviews (19 skipped this question). However, of the 21 young people who did know who their IRO was, all except 1 reported that their IRO visits them in between meetings. This suggests face-to-face contact with young people is the most effective way to establish contact.

81% of young people said they attend their review and 76% feel comfortable enough to have their say in the meeting. 19% said they didn't attend, some young people commented that they chose not to have a say:

“I chose not to go to my review meetings because they are boring”

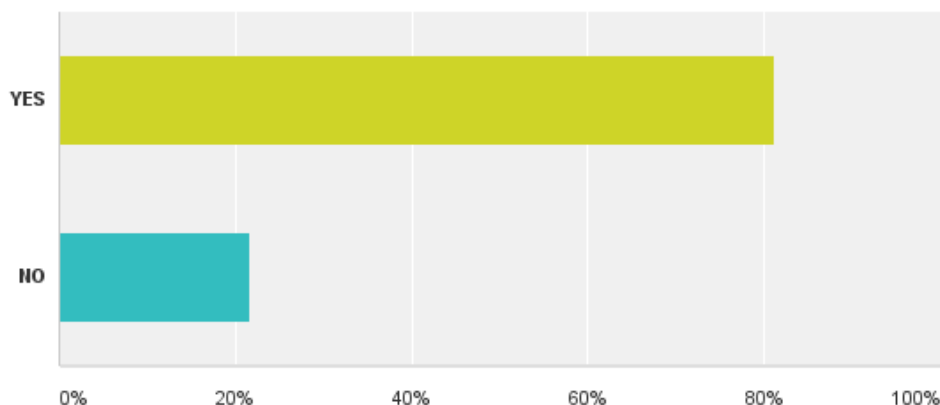
And

“Sometimes I feel a bit nervous and don't have much to say so I don't always go”

The figures on review attendance are difficult to determine; it's fair to assume that the 13 people who skipped the question can be added to the figure who don't attend their review. Therefore the review attendance figure is more likely to be around 60%, rather than 81%.

Q43 Do you normally go to your review meetings?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 13



37% of young people had received the support of an advocate to help them have their say, whilst others used people already in their support network to advocate on their behalf as required, such as a teacher or foster carer. 8 young people said they didn't understand the things that were discussed at their review meetings. When asked

whether the review focuses on the positives as well as any difficulties they may be experiencing, only one young person said 'no' (however 17 people skipped this question).

Only 5 young people said there are people at their review meeting who they would rather they not be there; only 2 of these had addressed this with their social worker or IRO. 4 young people said there were people who they would like to attend their meeting who weren't invited. However 2 of these commented it was actually a parent who had not been able to make it rather than not been invited. 1 young person had addressed the invitation list with their social worker or IRO.

Only 3 young people said that they were unhappy about the venue for their meeting, and 11 young people had helped to chair their own meeting. One young person commented:

"In my reviews I always do a theme; once I made name badges for everyone, another time I made everyone a bun".

Another young person said:

"I do a powerpoint presentation with lots of photos of me and what I've been doing in school"

Unfortunately this particular topic (reviews) saw many young people disengaging from the questionnaire with high levels of young people (sometimes up to 19 young people) skipping questions. This suggests there is still some way to go to engage young people effectively in the review process.

Summary: A lot of young people didn't know who their Independent Reviewing officer was and reported that they did not contact them in between meetings.. It appears that a lot of young people attend their review, and those who do, tend to feel comfortable enough to have their say. However young people showed a level of disinterest in reviews as almost a third of young people chose not to answer questions about reviews.

CONTACT WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

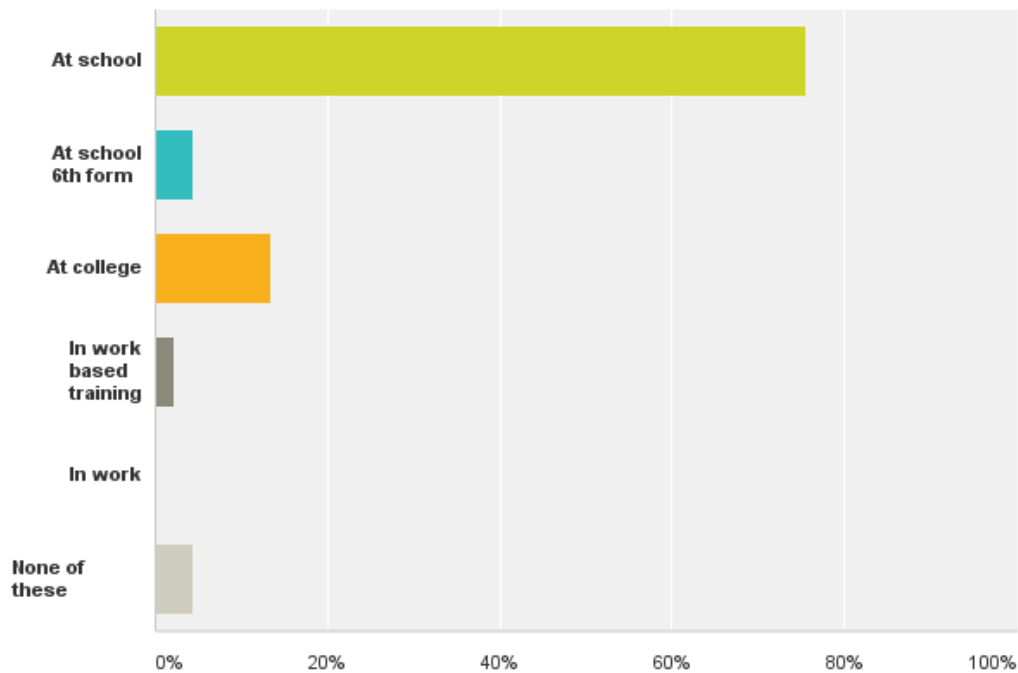
Statistics showed that the majority of young people were happy with their contact arrangements. 87% of young people have been asked who they would like contact with and 92% felt they'd had the help and support they needed to keep in touch with family. 86% felt they'd had support to keep in touch with friends. 93% had been given enough information about practical arrangements for contact, such as where, where and how often contact took place; 73% were happy with the arrangements. However 95% of young people knew who to speak to if they were unhappy.

Summary: Most young people were happy with their contact arrangements with family (but slightly less felt they'd had enough support to keep in touch with friends). Most young people knew who to speak to if they were unhappy.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Q58 What education setting are you in?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 5



27% of young people had changed schools because of a change in placement, however once person commented on the benefits of this:

“Although I had to change school for this placement I didn’t mind, I don’t have to go in a taxi anymore and my new school is even better”

90% of young people felt that their carers take enough interest in their education, and 93% said they had the right amount of support in their education or training. Personal Education Plans were not a familiar concept to everyone; only 27 young people out of 50 said they had a Personal Education Plan, 3 of these commented that they ‘weren’t sure’. These 27 young people were then asked about whether they were consulted about what support they wanted with their education; 10 young people responded, 6 feeling they were consulted and 4 saying they were not consulted.

When thinking about transitions, 71% of young people feel they were given enough information and support (at the right time) about choices in education, training or employment.

It is worth noting that questions around education saw fairly high numbers of young people disengaging (between 9 and 19 young people skipped these questions). While

this was not a high as the Review's section, it suggests that education is a topic that young people feel less motivated about.

Summary: Young people showed less interest in answering questions about education, but from those who answered, most felt well supported in their education. However, only around half of young people knew that they had a Personal Education Plan.

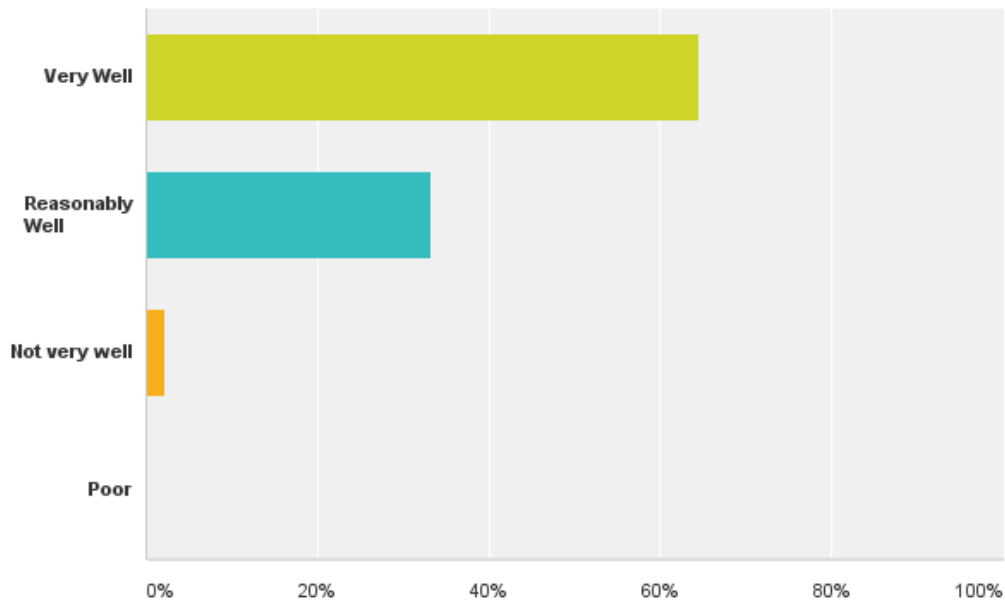
HEALTH & HAPPINESS

77% of young people knew who their GP and dentist were and 91 % reported having regular dental checks. Less reported (70%) having regular eye test, however this could be attributable to the fact that eyesight test are required less frequently than dental appointments. Almost all young people (98%) said they felt able to talk someone about their health, whether that be a foster care, social worker, doctor or schools nurse if they had any concerns about their health.

When asked about whether they had received any other support with their health, 72% of young people reported that they had accessed such support. Young people seemed satisfied with how their health was cared for with 98% reporting that their foster carers had looked after their health either 'well' or 'reasonably well'.

Q71 How do you feel your carers took care of your health? e.g. took good care of you whilst ill, took you to the doctors/ dentist

Answered: 45 Skipped: 5



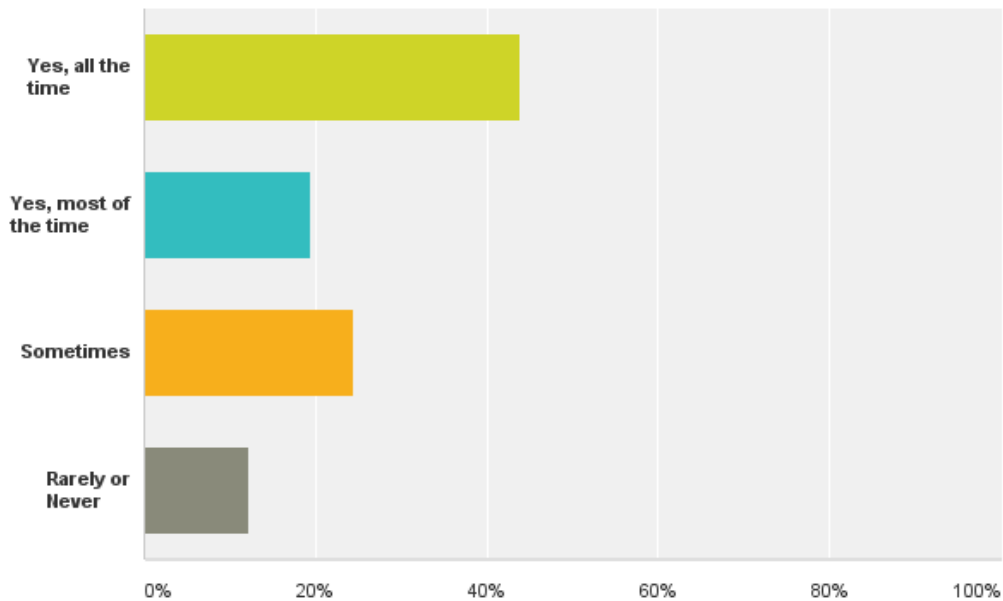
With regards to accessing social and leisure opportunities, 90% reported that they were encouraged to take part in such activities. One young person commented:

“I’ve been encouraged to take part in activities, but only by my social worker, not my foster carers”

However there was a more varied response from young people when asked about whether they could confide in the adults looking after them if they had a personal problem, with 36% saying they could confide rarely or only some of the time.

Q70 If you had personal problems, could you confide in any of the adults looking after you?

Answered: 41 Skipped: 9



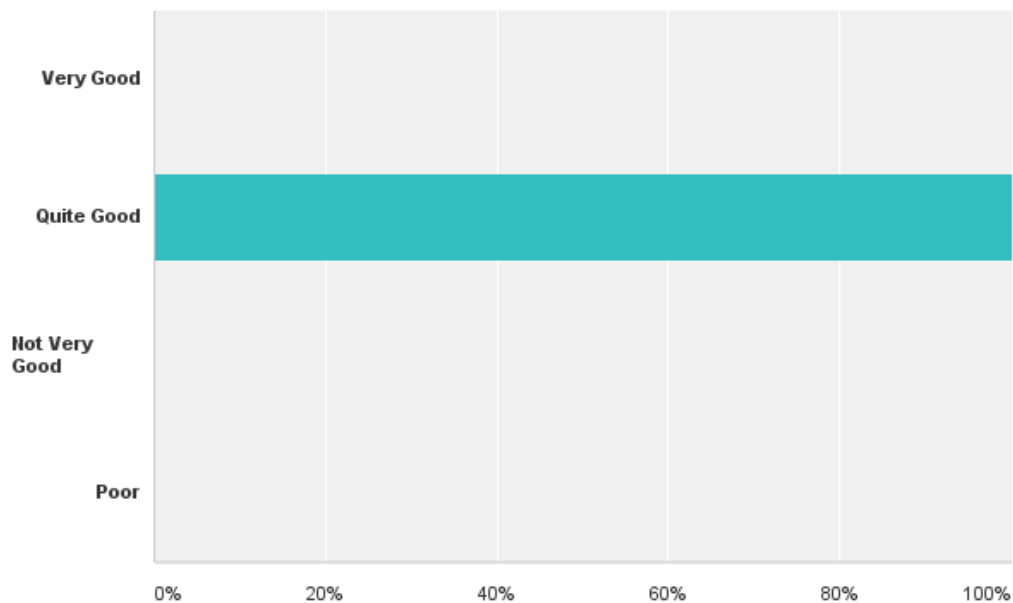
Summary: Many young people knew who the doctor and dentist were and most reported having regular dentist checks. They were encouraged to take part in leisure activities, and nearly all reported they could talk to someone if they had a concern about their health. But when this was framed within talking about a ‘personal problem’ with carers young people were less certain that they could talk to someone.

LEAVING CARE

Only 1 or 2 young people responded to questions about leaving care, therefore more research is required for more conclusive results. Of these young people, 100% felt they had received enough help in getting ready to leave care, but 100% also felt they had not received enough help in finding accommodation. 100% felt they got enough help with finding work or further training/education. Again, 100% felt they were getting enough support since they left care. The preparation for young people leaving care was given an overall rating of ‘quite good’. While information on leaving care was limited during the survey, City of York Council hold more information about young people’s preparation for leaving care and experiences of leaving care through exit interviews undertaken by the manager of the Pathway team.

Q76 Overall, how would you rate the preparation you had for leaving care?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 48



Summary: Young people were satisfied with the support they received for leaving care; however for a more accurate reflection of young people's experience leaving care further research would be required. Much of this information is collated by the Pathway Team during exit interviews.

OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Some young people commented on their experiences of using taxis to get to school or to clubs and groups they were involved in out of school; often feeling that taxis were late and unreliable. One young person said that taxis ran smoothly during term time when their was a routine in place but in holidays taxis sometimes wouldn't turn up at all because they hadn't been booked by the social worker.

One young person disliked having to use taxis for school because it was tiring:

“the journey was long because there were other children to collect. I was the first to be picked up and the last to be dropped off so it was a really long day”

CONCLUSION

Most young people were positive about their placements and felt listened to by their foster carers; they were invited to family events and felt able to talk to a foster carer or social worker if there was a problem. Most young people feel they have been treated as an individual, with respect and have had a say in decisions that have been made about them. They were positive about the relationship they had with their social worker, however making contact with social workers wasn't always easy. Most young people were happy with their contact arrangements with family. Young people were positive about the support they had received in accessing health services and reported that they were encouraged to take part in leisure activities.

Over a third of young people didn't answer questions about Reviews, indicative of disinterest from young people. Many young people didn't know who their Independent Reviewing officer was, this tended to be because their IRO had not visited them between review meetings. However young people tended to feel comfortable enough to have their say in their review meeting. Young people generally felt well supported in their education, yet nearly half of young people thought that they didn't have a Personal Education Plan.

More than half of young people were unaware of the Rights and Advocacy Service, however most young people knew they had a right to complain. Overall young people were very positive about their experience of being Looked After by City of York Council with 76% rating their experience of being looked after as either 'good' or 'very good'. 58% gave City of York 5 out of 5 for the quality of placements and 90% agreed with the statement that 'City of York Council provides good quality placements'.

Sarah Wild
Children Rights and Advocacy Service
March 2014

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**Corporate Parenting Board
Draft Work Programme for 2014-15**

Meeting Date	Work Programme
30 June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports from the adoption and fostering services
22 Sept 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report (draft considered at meeting in March 2013 – update on issues raised and final report to be presented at future meeting) • Health of Looked After Children (update report due summer 2014)
24 Nov 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emotional well being of looked after children • The Education of Looked After Children
2 Feb 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Service Manager and the elected Member with responsibility for visiting children's homes. • Feedback from the Glen in the wider context of short breaks.
27 April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile of Looked after Children in the City and the proactive steps being taken in reducing numbers • Promoting a positive sense of identity for all children

Forward agenda

- Members of Board to meet with foster carers (outside of formal meeting)
- Members of Board to meet with members of the Show Me That I Matter Panel (outside of formal meeting)

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