



Notice of a public meeting of

Corporate Parenting Board

To: Councillors Rawlings (Chair), Cuthbertson (Vice-Chair),
S Barnes, Brooks, Funnell and Runciman

Date: Monday, 25 September 2017

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: The King Richard III Room (GO49) - West Offices

A G E N D A

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 - 4)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2017.

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 on Friday 22 September 2017.

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 Officers (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/download/downloads/id/11406/protocol_for_webcasting_filming_and_recording_of_council_meetings_20160809.pdf

Strategic Theme: Respect and Involvement

Any Board Member whose area of interest relates to the issues raised in the following three reports will have the opportunity to give an update under these items.

- 4. Annual Advocacy Report** (Pages 5 - 18)
The 2016-17 Annual Advocacy Report provides a review of the statistics on the demographic of young people who have requested advocacy, details of advocacy requests / common themes and reviews the outcomes of the service.
- 5. Show Me That I Matter Annual Report 2016-17** (Pages 19 - 30)
This report details the issues identified by the Children in Care Council (CiCC), how these issues are being addressed and what issues are still to be taken forward. The report also details professionals and partner agencies that met with the CiCC, the outcomes of these discussions and different projects that the CiCC is involved in.
- 6. U Matter Survey 2017** (Pages 31 - 44)
The U Matter Survey 2017 details the consultation findings from children and young people looked after by the City of York Council.

7. Development Review of Placement Services (Pages 45 - 54)

This item presents an update with regards to a development review of Placement Services.

Any Board Member whose area of interest relates to the issues raised in this report will have the opportunity to give an update under this item.

8. Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2017-18 (Pages 55 - 58)

To consider the Board's draft work plan for 2017-18 and to receive any updates Members may wish to give on their agreed areas of interest relating to the work of the Board.

A copy of the completed 2016-17 work plan is attached for information.

9. Urgent Business

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

Board Members Agreed Areas of Interest

- Show Me That I Matter - Councillor Rawlings
- Housing and Pathway Team - Councillor Stuart Barnes
- Education/Schools - Councillor Brooks
- Health - Councillor Runciman
- Placement Team, Fostering Service and Short Breaks – Councillor Cuthbertson
- Virtual Head and School for Children in Care – Councillor Brooks
- Connexions / Education, Training & Employment - Councillor Funnell

Democracy Officers

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

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	26 June 2017
Present	Councillors Rawlings (Chair), Cuthbertson (Vice-Chair), Runciman and Funnell
Apologies	Councillors S Barnes and Brooks

1. **Declarations of Interest**

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

2. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 10 April 2017 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. **Strategic Theme: Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health; Wellbeing; Relationships & Identity Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Children and Young People in Care, on the edge of Care and Care Leavers**

Members consider a report that informed them about the activity of the Sub Group for Emotional/Mental Health of Children Looked After, Care Leavers and Edge of Care which reports to the Emotional and Mental Health Strategic Partnership.

Officers gave an update and highlighted the roles of the various sub groups and explained how working collectively supported the emotional and mental health of children and young people in care.

Members noted that the Children in Care Strategic Partnership also had an interest and role in supporting and challenging practices and services and had identified a need for clarity around the effectiveness and use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SQD).

In answer to Members questions, officers confirmed:

- The SQD was a brief behavioural screening questionnaire offered to children in care.
- Psychology students from York University were undertaking a literature review which would focus on the evidence base of effectiveness of mental health interventions for children and young people.
- They considered each child's requirements on an individual basis and would continue to support and listen to the views of children in care.

Discussions took place around the Health Assessments and Members highlighted the feedback they had received from some young people in care and agreed further discussions were required to ensure subsequent health appointments were carried out accordingly. They also highlighted the need to ensure any documentation that was to be considered by children and young people must be user friendly and include appropriate terminology.

Following further discussions around the NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group's role and children on the edge of care, Members thanked officers for their update and agreed that the new sub group approach would also endorse Ofsted's recommendations to ensure care leavers were supported to understand their health histories and that care leavers and professionals would be clear about the pathways to access support for their emotional and mental health needs.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep Members updated on the progress and for Members to clarify any issues arising.

5. Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2017-18

Members considered the Boards work plan for the 2017/18 municipal year.

Following discussions it was:

Resolved:

- (i) That the work plan be noted
- (ii) That the NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group's Action Plan be considered at the 25 September 2017 Corporate Parenting Board.

Reason: To keep the Board's work plan updated.

Cllr Rawlings, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 5.45 pm].

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Corporate Parenting Board**25 September 2017**

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

Annual Advocacy Report 2016-17**Summary**

1. The aim of this report is to share with the Corporate Parenting Board the 2016-17 Annual Advocacy Report, which provides a review of the statistics on the demographic of young people who have requested advocacy, details advocacy requests / common themes and reviews the outcomes of the service.

Background

2. The Children's Rights and Advocacy Services (known as Speak Up) provides advocacy for children and young people who are in care, on a child protection plan or wanting to make a complaint against the council, in line with the Local Authority's statutory duty.

Consultation

3. See Annex A.

Options

4. See Annex A.

Analysis

5. See Annex A.

Council Plan

6. See Annex A.

Implications

7. Financial: There are no financial implications to consider.

Human Resources (HR): There are no HR implications to consider.

Equalities There are no issues relating to equalities to consider.

Legal: There are no legal implications to consider.

Crime and Disorder: There are no issues relating to crime and disorder.

Information Technology (IT) There are no IT implications.

Property: There are no issues relating to property.

Other: There are no other known implications.

Risk Management

8. There are no risks to consider.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to note the information provided in the 2016-17 Annual Advocacy Report.

Reason: In order that Members are briefed on the advocacy casework that is carried out with children and young people.

Contact Details

Author: Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Nikki Wilson
Children's Rights Manager
CEC
Tel No. 07769725174

Eoin Rush
Assistant Director of Children's Services

Report Date 14.9.17
Approved

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A – 2016-17 Annual Advocacy Report

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ANNUAL ADVOCACY REPORT

April 2016 – March 2017



INTRODUCTION

Advocacy is about providing individuals with support to help them express their own views, have their voice heard, access information and services and understand their rights and entitlements. Advocacy is based on the belief that all individuals are equal with the same rights and responsibilities.

Every Local Authority is required to provide advocacy services for looked after children and young people and also children and young people who want to make a complaint. The Children and Young People's Act (2008) placed additional duties on local authorities to ensure that the views of looked after children are represented throughout the care planning and review process. This act requires local authorities to provide advocacy support to any child or young person in care that may require it.

AIM OF THE REPORT

The aim of this report is to explore and review the advocacy provided by the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service to see if it functions effectively and to outline any areas of the service in need of development.

This will be done by:

- Looking at an overview of the advocacy service
- Reviewing statistics on the demographic of young people who have requested advocacy
- Analysing advocacy requests and outlining any common themes
- Reviewing the outcomes of the service, evaluating its effectiveness and looking at areas for development

All advocacy requests from the financial year 2016/17 will be used in the analysis of the service.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

The Children's Rights and Advocacy Service (known as Speak Up) promotes children's rights entitlements and provides advocacy for children and young people who are in care, on a child protection plan or wanting to make a complaint against the council, in line with the Local Authority's statutory duty. The service provides issue-based advocacy and only exists for the time it takes to resolve the specific issue. It should be noted however that children and young people often raise numerous issues, sometimes requiring advocacy for a significant length of time. It is a confidential service and is independent from Children's Social Care, in line with the National Standards for the provision of Children's Advocacy Services (2002).

The role of an advocate:

- ✓ Advocates should work for children and young people and no one else.
- ✓ Advocates should value and respect children and young people as individuals and challenge all types of unlawful discrimination.
- ✓ Advocates should work to make sure children and young people in care can understand what is happening to them, can make their views known and, where possible, exercise their choice when decisions about them are being made.
- ✓ Advocates should help children and young people to raise issues and concerns about things they are unhappy about, including making informal and formal complaints.

National Standards for the provision of Children's Advocacy Services (2002)

THE SPEAK UP TEAM

The Speak Up team are made up of two Advocacy and Participation Workers (each 0.4 PTE), a Project Officer Apprentice and a Children's Rights Manager (0.7PTE). Speak Up also has a small group of trained advocate volunteers who undertake advocacy with children and young people. However due to service pressures and an increased demand, a temporary increase in hours has been agreed for an additional 0.6FTE Advocacy and Participation Worker.

Advocacy referrals can be made directly by children and young people or professionals on their behalf, via telephone, email, Facebook or through the website <http://www.showmethatimatter.com>.

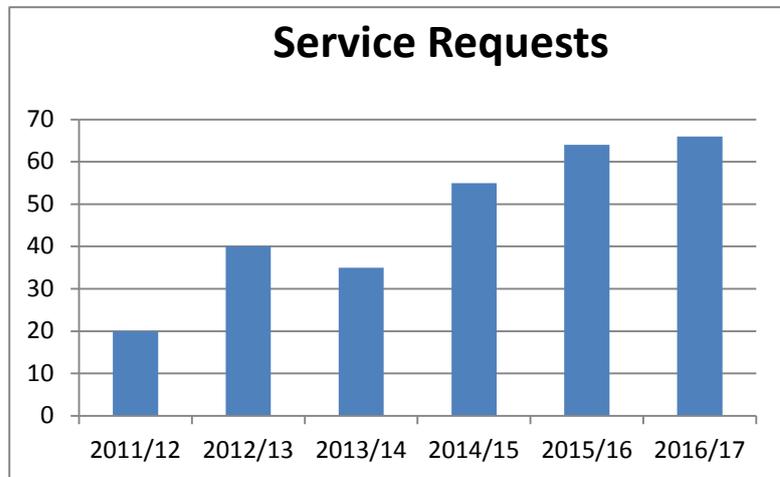
AWARENESS OF THE CHILDRENS RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

For Speak Up to function effectively children, young people and professionals need to be aware of, and have an understanding of, the service. When a child or young person first comes into care, they are issued with an information pack which includes information about their rights and entitlements and the Speak Up service. Speak Up also send quarterly newsletters to all looked after children and young people aged 5+ which include details of the service, with specific reference to advocacy and how to access this.

Children and young people are also made aware of the service through professionals. All professionals working with children and young people in care should be aware of the service so they can signpost and refer young people who may benefit from the support of an advocate. There is currently a varying degree of knowledge among professionals about when to seek advocacy, so it is important to ensure professionals have a clear understanding so they can make an informed decision about when to promote involvement of the service. The Children's Rights Manager regularly liaises with social work teams and attends team meetings to promote the service to professionals.

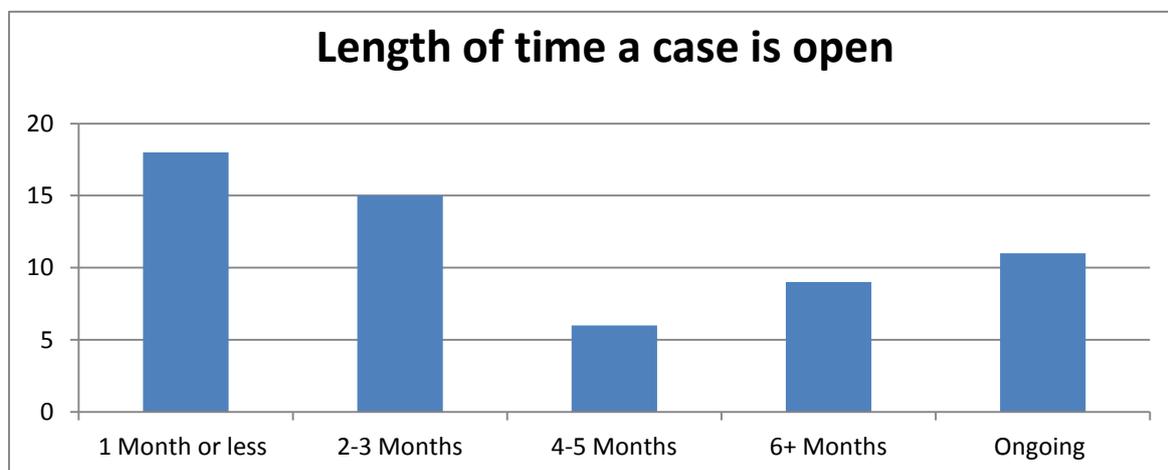
ADVOCACY REQUESTS- STATISTICS

Recent years have seen a steady increase in advocacy referrals with 2016/17 showing the highest number of referrals to date (66). There has also been a decrease in the number of cases which have resulted in 'no further action' (7 referrals this year compared to 14 in the previous year). This has meant that in practice, the service has



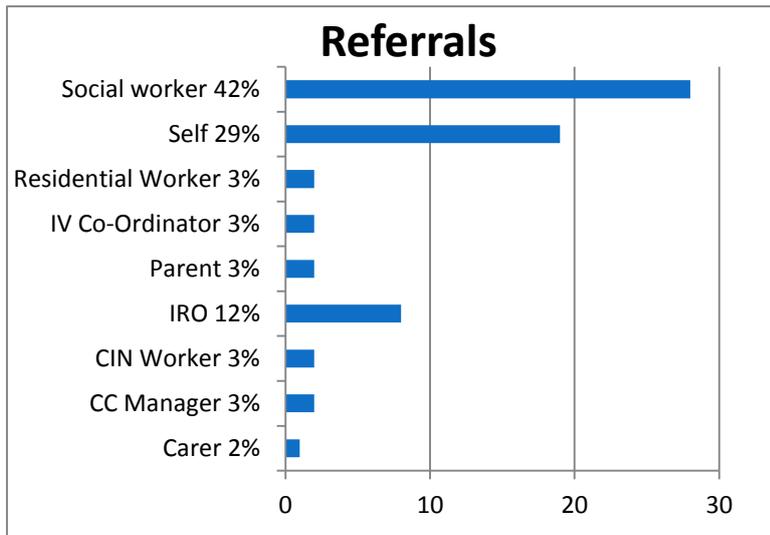
carried out casework in relation to 9 more cases than it did the previous year. During 2016/17, 48 advocacy cases were closed and 11 remained open with ongoing advocacy still being provided.

Reviewing the length of time in which cases have been open provides the Speak Up service with valuable information. The following data is based on the advocacy cases in the year 2016/17 not including those that resulted in no further action.



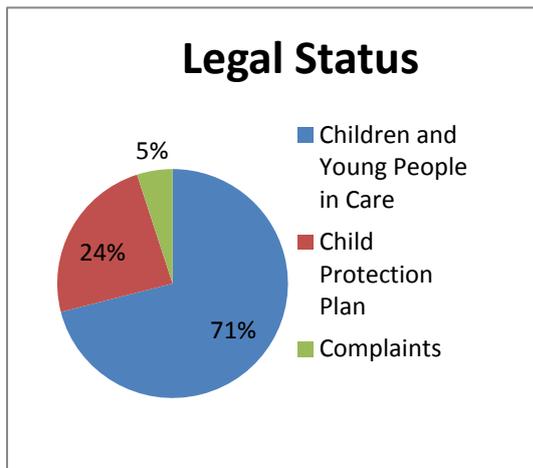
The data shows a varied picture which reflects the individual nature of each advocacy case. The majority of cases were open less than three months although a significant amount of cases have required advocacy for a longer period of time, either as a result of the complexity of the situation or the young person raising a number of subsequent issues.

REFERRER



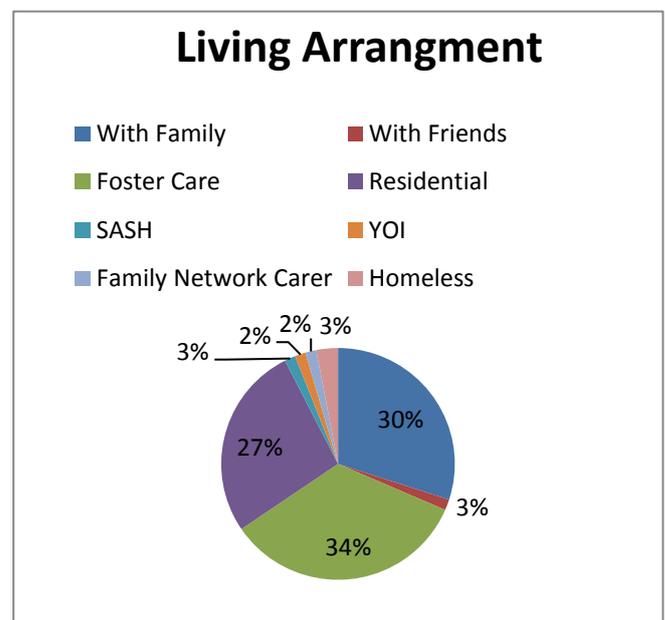
The majority of referrals this year came from Social Workers (42%) young people (29%) or Independent Reviewing Officers (12%), which is similar to the previous years findings. Awareness of the service amongst young people and the social work teams is a real positive, although the absence of referrals from the education sector is an area that should be addressed.

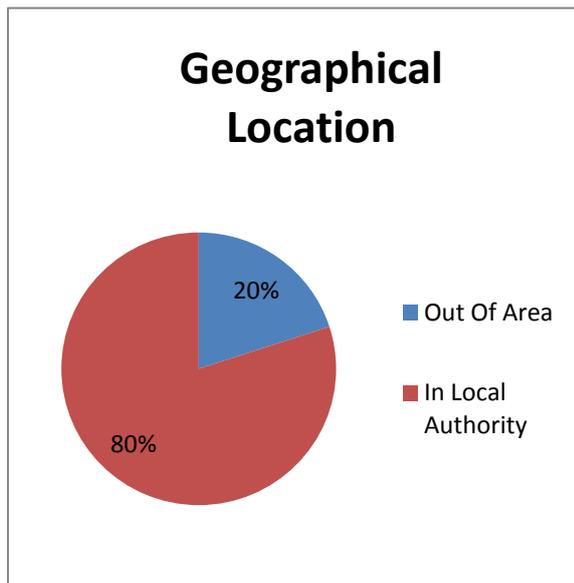
PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ACCESS ADVOCACY



70% of those accessing the advocacy service were children and young people in care (47 referrals), 24% were subject to child protection plan (16 referrals) and 6% of requests were to support children or young people who wanted to make a complaint (3 referrals). It should be worth noting that in addition to these 3 there were a further 3 young people who were in care that went on to make a complaint, therefore the service supported 6 young people in total through the complaints process.

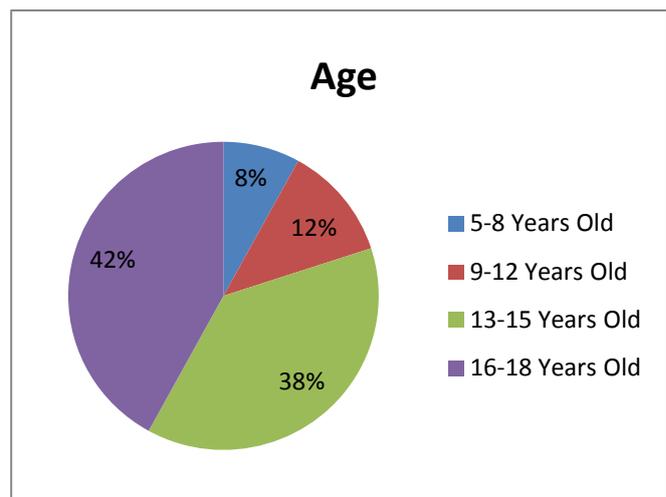
Last year half of the children and young people in care who received advocacy were living with foster carers. This year that has dropped to 34%. This is due to there being a higher number of people living with family (30%) or in residential care (27%) which have both increased from 19% last year





The geographical location of the children and young people accessing advocacy has changed slightly with out of area referrals dropping to 20% from 23%. The number of referrals from children and young people residing within the Local Authority has increased from 77% to 80% which may well reflect the drive to ensure more children and young people remain in the city rather than being placed out of area. This does however show that the service is still working hard, not only with children and young people placed locally but also those placed at some distance.

A large proportion of children and young people accessing advocacy were aged 13+ (80%) which is a slight increase from the previous year (78%). The number of children and young people accessing advocacy in the 16-18 age group has increased by 3% whereas the 5-8 years category has dropped by 4%. This may be due to the service raising its awareness and developing young people's understanding of the service. Therefore the older age categories may access the service more due to a better understanding but also due to a difference in circumstances.



ADVOCACY REQUESTS

For reporting purposes advocacy requests are categorized into the following themes at the point of referral to the service: disagreement with overall care plan, unhappiness with social work service, placement issues, contact, education and support to have voice heard in decision making process. It should be noted that children and young people often raise subsequent issues during a piece of advocacy so this does not reflect all advocacy issues raised but the presenting themes at the point of referral. These themes are outlined below and then discussed in further detail. It should be noted that NFA cases haven't been included in these results.

Theme	No. of Requests raised	Percentage 2016/2017	Percentage 2015/2016
Support in Decision Making	25	42%	50%
Contact	9	15%	3%
Placement Issue	7	12%	11%
Others	7	12%	6%
Disagreement with Care Plan	4	7%	5%
Unhappy with Social Work Services	4	7%	17%
Education	2	3%	N/A
Access to Services	0	0%	8%

SUPPORT IN DECISION MAKING

The number of advocacy requests for this theme has dropped from 50% in 2015/16 to 42% this year, although it is still the theme with the highest number of requests. Support in decision making as a theme includes assisting children and young people to attend reviews or other decision making meetings, or attending on behalf on a child or young person and feeding in their views.

Referrals came from both children and young people in care and those subject to a child protection plan. Of the 12 referral for children subject to child protection plans, 2 required supporting a young person to attend conferences and 10 involved the advocate attending on behalf of children. Out of these 10, 7 were of primary school age. Of the 13 referrals for children in care, 12 were of secondary school age and 7 were placed out of area either in a foster placement, residential setting or young offenders institute.

CONTACT ISSUE

Contact issues refer to any problems that arise relating to the young person's contact arrangements with either relatives or close friends. There has been a significant increase in the number of contact issue cases rising from 3% in 2015/16 to 15% in 2016/17. This is the highest number of contact related request in the last 3 years. Out of these 9 referrals, 8 were in relation to young people in care and 1 was a young person on a child protection plan. 7 of these referrals related to contact with siblings and 2 to issues regarding contact with a parent. One young person went on to make a Stage 2 complaint regarding the issue.

PLACEMENT ISSUE

12% of advocacy requests were relating to issues with placement, a slight increase from the previous year (11% in 2015/16). Issues with placements included requests to change placement, unhappiness/disagreement with placement rules and regulations and general unhappiness in placement. All young people were in care, placed in a range of different placements. One young person went on to make a complaint that was dealt with at a Stage 1.

OTHER

It was felt that these requests didn't fit any of the common themes and therefore were placed under the 'other' category. The referrals under the category of 'Other' were in relation to:

- unhappiness with restrictions relating to internet access
- advice and guidance regarding personal issues
- assistance on accessing funding for a laptop
- support to access personal files
- support during age assessment interview for an unaccompanied asylum seeking young person

UNHAPPY WITH SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

There has been a significant drop in the number of cases relating to unhappiness with social work service with the percentage dropping from 17% to 7%, suggesting there has been improvement within this area. The 4 referrals that were received related to young people reporting difficulties in their relationships with social workers or general unhappiness with the social work service they were receiving. All 4 referrals were in relation to young people wanting to make a complaint, one of whom was a young person in care. Two of the complaints were dealt with at a Stage 1 and one was dealt with at a Stage 2. One young person decided not to complain.

DISAGREEMENT WITH PLANS

7% of advocacy requests were in relation to children or young people who were not in agreement with their overall care plan, compared to 5% in the previous year (2015/16). These were mainly disagreements regarding placements or planned placement moves. 3 referrals were in relation to young people in care and 1 a young person on a child protection plan.

EDUCATION

5% of all advocacy cases in 2016/17 were related to education provision. Requests included supporting a young people who felt that they weren't being listened to in their school setting and another who was unhappy about the lack of support with their education. All 3 of the young people were in care.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

During 2016/17 there were no referrals received in relation to access to services. It is worth noting that in the previous year access to service referrals made up 8% of the workload.

EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE

Direct feedback is obtained from children and young people who have accessed advocacy in an attempt to evaluate and improve the service. During 2016/17, 11 evaluation forms were completed by children and young people. Unfortunately this is a decrease from last year; this could be due to young people being reluctant to complete evaluation forms once the work is concluded.

Children and young people are asked to sign an agreement form before they start work with the service. Within the form there are 3 questions, this allows us to compare how the child or young person felt before accessing the advocacy service and how they felt once the work was complete. This information then gives an indication of young people's experiences of receiving advocacy and how effective the service has been.

WERE YOU HAPPY WITH THE HELP YOUR ADVOCATE GAVE YOU?

All young people who completed an evaluation form said yes, they were happy with the help they received from their advocate.

HOW CONFIDENT DO YOU FEEL IN BEING ABLE TO PUT YOUR POINT OF VIEW ACROSS?

Out of the 11 responses, 5 young people felt very confident when asked if they felt able to put their views across, 4 were confident, and 2 did not answer the question.

ON THE WHOLE DO YOU FEEL LISTENED TO?

9 out of 11 responses stated that on a whole they felt listened to, one response however selected both yes and sometimes and 2 responses didn't complete the question.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

AWARENESS OF THE SERVICE

This is an ongoing area of development for the service as it continues to increase the number of referrals it receives. However there is a very small amount of referrals being received from schools and foster carers, despite these two groups spending the most amount of time with children and young people. Moving forward, the service should focus on raising awareness of the service amongst foster carers and also within schools.

EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE

The number of evaluations compared to the number of referrals is very low. This makes it difficult to gain a true representation of the efficiency of the service and also the views of children and young people. Historically, it is known that gaining feedback from children and young people after the event is difficult as they often don't return forms or attend final meetings where this would be completed. This may be a result of the child or young person having no interest in taking part in the evaluation or not wanting to complete the form knowing it would be returned to their advocate directly.

One approach to consider would be to change the way in which the service is evaluated. An effective way of doing this would be to ask children and young people what their preferred method of evaluation would be. This could be keeping the current paper form method but alter the way in which it is returned by making it anonymous, using an online survey which would give anonymity, receiving a phone call or attending a meeting with someone that is not the advocate to gain a honest evaluation. By tailoring to what children and young people would prefer, it is more likely that they will complete the evaluation. This will then provide the service with a higher number of responses, so they can evaluate the service and gain a solid understanding of how the young people feel about the advocacy they've received.

Another consideration would be to gather feedback from professionals working directly with the child or young person, to ascertain their views on how effective the advocacy has been.

SUMMARY

This report has provided an overview of the advocacy service and the casework that has taken place during 2016/17. It has compared different statistics from 2016/17 and 2015/16 and highlighted and explored common advocacy themes, before identifying areas for further development. It is important that next year's annual report looks at the areas of development to ensure that the service is able to establish if progress has been made and evaluate any changes made to the service.

REFERENCES

Department of Health (2002) *National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services*. Department of Health Publications.



Corporate Parenting Board**25 September 2017**

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

Show Me That I Matter Annual Report 2016-17**Summary**

1. The aim of this report is to detail the issues identified by the Children in Care Council (CiCC), how these issues are being addressed and what issues are still to be taken forward. The report also details professionals and partner agencies that met with the CiCC, the outcomes of these discussions and different projects that the CiCC is involved in.

Background

2. Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) is the name of York's Children in Care Council. Monthly panel meetings are held for young people to raise and discuss issues that are important to them, with the aim of shaping and improving services for children and young people in care in York. Panel meetings are attended by Elected Members and Council Officers to listen to the views of young people and respond to issues raised.

Consultation

3. See Annex A.

Options

4. See Annex A.

Analysis

5. See Annex A.

Council Plan

6. See Annex A.

Implications

7. Financial: There are no financial implications to consider.

Human Resources (HR): There are no HR implications to consider.

Equalities There are no issues relating to equalities to consider.

Legal: There are no legal implications to consider.

Crime and Disorder: There are no issues relating to crime and disorder.

Information Technology (IT) There are no IT implications.

Property: There are no issues relating to property.

Other: There are no other known implications.

Risk Management

8. There are no risks to consider.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to note the Show Me That I Matter Annual Report 2016-17.

Reason: In order that Members are briefed on the work of the Children in Care Council.

Contact Details

Author:
Nikki Wilson
Children's Rights Manager
CSES
Tel No. 07769725174

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Eoin Rush
Assistant Director of Children's Services

Report Date 14.09.17
Approved

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A – Show Me That I Matter Annual Report, 2016-17

Abbreviations

CiCC Children in Care Council
SMTIM Show Me That I Matter

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



ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2016- MARCH 2017

INTRODUCTION

Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) is the name of York's Children in Care Council (CiCC). Monthly panel meetings are held for young people to raise and discuss issues that are important to them, with the aim of shaping and improving services for children and young people in care in York. The panel is facilitated by members of Speak Up, York's Children's Rights and Advocacy Service, and elected members are invited to each meeting.

The aim of this report is to detail the issues identified by the CiCC, how these issues are being addressed and what issues are still to be taken forward. This report will also detail professionals and partner agencies that met with the CiCC, the outcomes of these discussions and different projects that the CiCC are involved in.

PANELS: SMTIM, I MATTER 2 AND I STILL MATTER

SHOW ME THAT I MATTER

SMTIM consists of up to twelve care experienced young people, aged between 13-19 years. The panel meets monthly at West Office to discuss issues that are important to children and young people in care in York. Any issues raised are fed back to senior managers, with the aim of helping to shape services for children and young people in York. Young people regularly invite professionals and agencies to attend the panel to discuss issues and give feedback on service provision. In addition to this SMTIM hold informal planning meetings and focus group as and when required.

Young people chair the panel meetings, with support from Speak Up. The positions of chair and vice chair are voted for by young people every twelve months. This year young people decided to change this slightly and appointed two young people as co-chairs. Young people are encouraged to take on other formal roles within the panel but to date haven't taken up this opportunity.

I MATTER 2

I Matter 2 is a sub-group of SMTIM, jointly delivered by Speak Up and the Looked after Children's Support Team. This group meets monthly at Hamilton House and is aimed at younger children in care, aged 8-13 years.

The group has a more informal, activity based approach, allowing a relaxed environment for children and young people to share their views and raise any issues. Issues raised at I Matter 2 are shared with the SMTIM panel, who are then able to take these forward with senior managers and Councillors. In light of the difference in approaches of the two groups a degree of flexibility is needed to ensure that children and young people are able to participate in whichever group they feel more comfortable accessing.

I STILL MATTER

I Still Matter was set up in October 2016 as a second sub-group of SMTIM, specifically to look at leaving care issues. It is jointly delivered by Speak Up and the Pathway Team and meets monthly at West Offices. Issues raised by the group are fed directly into SMTIM by two representatives from the group.

WORK CARRIED OUT

Between April 2016 and March 2017 SMTIM carried out 11 formal panel meetings, 20 focus groups and 2 social events / activity days. In addition to this a number of panel members have participated in 7 conferences, 15 interview panels and a variety of training sessions throughout the year.

CONTACT WITH PROFESSIONALS

SMTIM have invited a number of professionals to attend panel meetings and focus groups, either to address specific issues raised by the panel or after a request to attend to seek the panel's views.

Contact with professionals	
April 2016	Jon Stonehouse, Eoin Rush, Judy Kent
May 2016	Judy Kent and Luke Rodgers
June 2016	Helen Bromley (IRO), Sarah Olorenshaw (IRO) and Claire Mo (IRO).
July 2016	Anna Buchan and Sue Ward
August 2016	Judy Kent
September 2016	Sarah Clarke (Virtual Head)
October 2016	William Shaw – Wellbeing Team, Observer: Madeleine Morrison (Student Social Worker)
November Focus Group	Karen Hedgley and Sue Ward
February 2017	Joint meeting with Corporate Parenting Board
March 2017	Sophie Keeble, Sarah Clarke

REGIONAL MEETINGS, CONFERENCES AND AWARD CEROMONIES

Regional Children in Care Council

The Yorkshire and Humberside Children in Care Council meets periodically in various locations across the region. Young people's meetings and professional's meetings take place separately and are an opportunity for different local authorities to meet, share and discuss

their CiCC with neighbouring authorities. Representatives from SMTIM and Speak Up have attended Regional CiCC meetings.

In February 2017 a young people's regional meeting was hosted at West Offices, enabling members of SMTIM to give feedback on York's behalf. Regional meetings provide local authorities with the opportunity to share examples of work and good practise and to raise any ongoing issues.

Princes Trust Conference

October 2016 SMTIM was invited, alongside Inspired Youth, to attend the Princes Trust Conference following the launch of the Aspire to More Project, which highlights the importance of role models for care leavers and children in care. SMTIM co-chairs presented at the conference which took place in the Houses of Parliament and was attended by care leavers, professionals and the Children's Minister.

Virtual School Conference

SMTIM were asked to present at the Virtual School Designated Teacher Conference that took place in December 2016. Representatives from SMTIM spoke about improving the PEP process for children and young people in care and delivered a Speak Up and Hear My Voice workshop for professionals.

Catch 22 Award

In October 2016 SMTIM were shortlisted for two Catch 22 Awards for the Aspire to More project. Representatives attended the celebration event during care leavers week and came first for Best Pitch and Poster Award.

Kids Count Award

In November 2016 SMTIM's Aspire to More project won a national award from the charity Kids Count, for 'Most Inspirational Youth Campaign'. Representatives from SMTIM attended the awards ceremony that took place in the House of Commons, alongside MPs, peers and other inspirational young people. The award was presented for making an outstanding contribution by being the most innovative youth-inspired online campaign.

York Community Pride Award

SMTIM were nominated for 2 awards in the 2016 Community Pride Awards; Spirit of Youth and Best Community Project. Representatives of SMTIM attended the ceremony, where they received runner up awards.

INTERVIEW PANELS AND TRAINING

SMTIM members continue to have involvement in the recruitment and training of professionals. Young people's interview panels have been in high demand throughout 2016-2017, with SMTIM sitting on 15 interview panels for roles in Children's Social Care, including senior management posts.

Speak Up and Hear My Voice training was developed in 2015 as a direct response to SMTIM's views on the importance of reducing stigma faced by children and young people in care. With the support of Speak Up young people designed a training programme which features the Arts4Care film, "Listen to Me" that was produced in 2014 with Inspired Youth. The training, whilst providing professionals with the opportunity to hear directly from children and young people in care about their experiences, also offers practical tools and resources as to how practice and service development could be adapted to embed participation. Young people have continued to co-facilitate this training with Speak Up and have delivered training to elected members and a variety of professionals across Children's Services.

KEY ISSUES RAISED

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health Assessments

SMTIM were asked to take part in a piece of work to look at how health assessments are carried out with children and young people in care. An initial focus group took place with Karen Hedgley and Sue Ward to look at health assessments and continued work is taking place around the design and development of a leaflet for children and young people about their health assessments.

Mental Health Awareness

SMTIM members said that they thought more awareness was needed of mental health and the services available, amongst young people. SMTIM were of the view that young people in care have a variety of different experiences which can be traumatic and therefore need to ensure they are able to access the right support. SMTIM raised this issue with Jon Stonehouse and Eoin Rush when they attended the panel in April, and discussed the role of Wellbeing Workers that were being rolled out across schools, as well as the Minding Minds Scheme that was developed by the Youth Council. Following on from this SMTIM met with William Shaw to hear more about the Wellbeing Worker role and subsequently delivered a training workshop to the staff team.

SMTIM said that they would also like to devise a short film highlighting some of the issues faced by young people in care, with a particular focus on mental health, in an attempt to raise awareness amongst young people.

EDUCATION

SMTIM were approached by the Virtual School regarding Personal Education Plans and how professionals could better engage children and young people in the process. Sarah Clarke attended the panel in September 2016 to discuss this, when young people spoke about the importance of children and young people deciding themselves how they would like to feed into their PEPs. They also agreed to present their views at the Designated Teacher Conference that took place December 2016.

IT PROVISION

SMTIM raised the issue of internet access and laptops as something that they felt needed addressing. Young people debated at length the benefits of having adequate IT provision and internet access and the impact that this can have if they don't have access. In particular young people wanted to ensure that all young people had internet access as they viewed this as essential, both in relation to their education and social interaction. They were also of the view that, where appropriate, consideration should be given to young people having their own laptop. Sarah Clarke and Sophie Keeble attended the panel in March 2017 to hear SMTIM's views and agreed that further discussions would take place around how these issues could be addressed.

LEAVING CARE

Rights and entitlements

SMTIM members had a number of questions relating to the support available to care leavers; in particular they wanted more information about when the Pathway Team start working with young people, when their Pathway Plans should be started and how young people were informed about their rights and entitlements post 16. Speak Up were able to answer their specific questions regarding Pathway provision and clarified that it was the social workers role to ensure that young people had access to the necessary information but that IROs would also check this at the young person's review once they reach 16. Young people were also reminded about the SMTIM website that contains Information about rights and entitlement.

Advocacy for leaving care

SMTIM raised their unhappiness that advocacy for care leavers wasn't something that Speak Up could provide and that any requests for advocacy are signposted to York Advocacy, who offer independent advocacy to vulnerable adults. Young people were of the view that for

young people leaving care, being able to access this from a service already known to them was crucial. For those who had accessed advocacy from Speak Up whilst in care, they wanted to be able to continue to access this as care leavers. This issue was raised with Jon Stonehouse and Eoin Rush in April 2016 when it was acknowledged that leaving care can be a difficult time and that this was something that would need to be considered further.

SOCIAL WORK INVOLVEMENT

The Children's Social Care undertook a re-structure in September 2016, having a major impact on how children and young people's cases are managed. SMTIM were in support of the new structure which created a Permanence Team dedicated for children and young people in care. However, they reported that for some young people the process had involved multiple changes of workers and this had been difficult. It was agreed that the U Matter Survey could capture young people's experience during this difficult time.

SMTIM could see the benefits of having a team that was dedicated solely to young people in care and felt that this provided an opportunity to build closer links between SMTIM and the social work team. Therefore, in March 2017 the Permanence Team and the IRO Team were invited to a SMTIM Bake Off event, which gave professionals and young people the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a focus on how best to engage young people in the review process.

ONGOING PROJECT WORK

ASPIRE TO MORE – RAISING ASPIRATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

The Aspire to More project was created in partnership with Inspired Youth as a direct result of SMTIM's anti-stigma campaign. The project introduced young people in care to inspirational care leavers who they interviewed about their life journey and which are shared at <https://aspiretomore.wordpress.com> through a series of blogs and posters. During this project young people had the opportunity to interview a number of successful care leavers including published authors Jenny Molloy and Paolo Hewitt.

In September 2017 SMTIM held a launch event in West Offices and featured in both the local and national press. The blog, which has continued to receive national press coverage, is still ongoing and new role models are continually being added.

ROOM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

SMTIM said that they would like to be involved in developing a space in West Offices that that was more appealing to young people; that was bright and welcoming to young people, whilst maintaining its professional look and functions. Young people made a variety of suggestions about how this could be done and met with Facilities Management to discuss

these. It was agreed that SMTIM would work with a professional artist to create a piece of wall artwork that would be displayed in the King John room and that the Aspire to More images would be displayed in each of the downstairs conference rooms in West Offices.

MAKE YORK HOME PROJECT

SMTIM were invited to take part in the Make York Home Innovation Project which looked at the emotional, practical and professional support that foster carers need in order to provide safe, caring and stable homes in York to children and young people in their care. Although young people did not want to attend all the projects 'sprints', they were represented by Speak Up throughout and took part in two co-production events organised by the project leads.

BRIGHT FUTURES & TAKEOVER

As a direct result of SMTIM raising the issue of work experience for young people in care, the Bright Futures project was set up in April 2016. The project is a joint initiative between York Cares and Speak Up and is externally funded by the Careers and Enterprise Fund until August 2017. Bright Futures aims to support young people to further develop their skills, knowledge and attributes, providing experiences to enhance their curriculum vitae and potentially lead to future employment. A series of skills-workshop, behind the scenes visits, taster sessions, work placements and takeover opportunities are delivered to provide practical and meaningful experiences for young people within their chosen area of work.

SMTIM have continued to provide consultation on the project and will play an active role in the formal evaluation of the project that is being carried out by researchers at the University of York.

SUMMARY

SMTIM have achieved a great deal within the past twelve months through continuous work dedicated to improving services for looked after children and young people in York. The work SMTIM have taken part in illustrates the growth and value of the CICC, both at a local and national level.



Corporate Parenting Board**25 September 2017**

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

U Matter Survey 2017**Summary**

1. The aim of this report is to share with the Corporate Parenting Board the U Matter Survey 2017, which details the consultation findings from children and young people looked after by the City of York Council.

Background

2. The U Matter Survey is a chance for children and young people in care to feedback to the City of York Council about their experiences of being looked after. This survey helps to ensure that children and young people have an opportunity to highlight what the Local Authority should change and improve for children and young people in care, as well as highlighting areas of strength.

Consultation

3. See Annex A.

Options

4. See Annex A.

Analysis

5. See Annex A.

Council Plan

6. See Annex A.

Implications

7. Financial: There are no financial implications to consider.

Human Resources (HR): There are no HR implications to consider.

Equalities There are no issues relating to equalities to consider.

Legal: There are no legal implications to consider.

Crime and Disorder: There are no issues relating to crime and disorder.

Information Technology (IT) There are no IT implications.

Property: There are no issues relating to property.

Other: There are no other known implications.

Risk Management

8. There are no risks to consider.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to note the findings of the U Matter Survey 2017.

Reason: In order that Members can be briefed on the 2017 U Matter findings.

Contact Details

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Eoin Rush
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Report
Approved



Date 14.9.2017

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A – U Matter Survey 2017

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U MATTER SURVEY 2017

CONSULTATION FINDINGS FROM CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS



INTRODUCTION

The U Matter Survey is a chance for children and young people in care to feedback to the City of York Council about their experiences of being in care. The importance of understanding the views of children and young people in care is addressed in Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This states that “*when adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.*” This survey helps to ensure this is the case as it gives children and young people an opportunity to voice their opinion on what the local authority should change and improve for children and young people in care, as well as highlighting areas of strength.

This report will outline the findings from the 2017 U Matter Survey and, where possible, will discuss them in relation to the findings from the previous report in 2015. This will hopefully provide a comprehensive overview of the views of children and young people in care, as well as care leavers, and will aid in helping to improve and shape service provision.

Method

The Survey was made available both online and as a paper copy. The online version could be accessed on Survey Monkey ([surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)). When approaching children and young people about completing the survey, multiple strategies were adopted. A variety of professionals were asked to encourage young people they were working with to complete the survey (social workers, pathway workers, independent visitors and advocates), existing groups such as Show Me That I Matter, I Still Matter, I Matter Too and Altogether Active were approached, and foster carers / families were contacted to advise on the best way to engage individuals and, where necessary, visits were offered to support young people to complete the survey.

Young people participating were not required to include any personal information, however they were able to leave their name and contact details if they wanted further information about their rights and entitlements or to be entered into a prize draw with a chance to win £25 in vouchers.

RESULTS

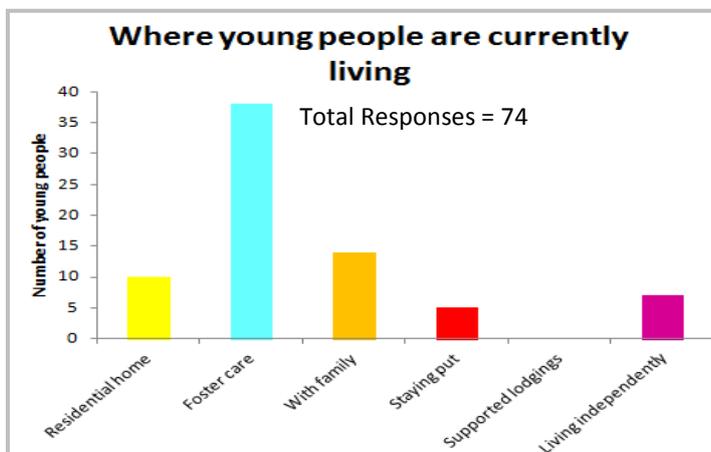
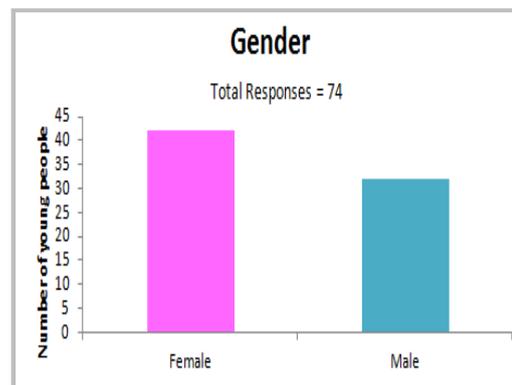
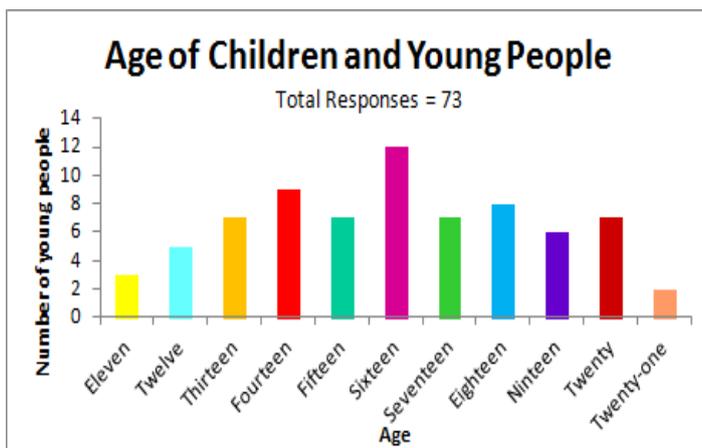
The results will be discussed in the order in which the sections were completed on the survey. Not all the questions were answered by all of the young people who took part in the survey and therefore there are varying levels of response rates to different questions.

Participation

A total of 77 children and young people aged 11-21 took part in this survey, 84% of whom were still in care and 16% were care leavers. While this is a substantial number and enables us to gain some valuable insight into the views of young people in care, it is important to note that this report cannot claim to provide a review of the opinions of all children young people in the care of the City of York Council.

Age, Gender and Living Situation

The following charts show the age and gender of young people who took part in the survey as well as where they were+ currently living.



These graphs show that the gender and ages of the young people who participated are fairly evenly distributed, meaning the results that are reported below are reflective of the views of both males and females, throughout a range of ages. The largest proportion of young people were currently in foster care (51%) and therefore these results will largely show the views of those who are in this current living situation.

Section 1: Where You Live

This survey asked whether young people were given any written information or photos of their foster home or residential setting before moving. 39% answered that they had and 61% answered that they had not. This is an improvement from 2015 when only 21% said they had received written information or photos before moving. It should however be noted that in some cases the reason given for no information being received was due to the placement being with a family member, however the fact that fewer than 50% reported receiving this information is of significance.

On being included in activities where they live, 72% said that they were, 12% said they were not and 15% said that they sometimes were.

Responses were extremely positive when children and young people were asked about their current placement with 94% said they were happy with their placement, while only 6% said they were not. When asked if they were able to speak to social worker if they were unhappy with their placement, 91% said that they were and 9% said they were not. This is an improvement from 2015 where only 72% said they would be able to talk to a social worker in this situation.

While only a relatively small number of young people were residing in residential placements (10 in total), one young person highlighted his varied experiences living in different residential settings:

“Due to my behaviour I got moved..., I realise now it was harder for placements for me to be found. I realise that care homes [can be] totally different, [some] were more caring than others, they wanted to help you change whilst [some] just wanted to criminalise you... I used to get sanctions with my money and that affected me more than being arrested. If you can get a young person to have focus then they'll stay out of trouble. My focus was music, my key worker in the care home got in touch with Princes Trust and got me a grant for some music equipment and helped me build a passion. Little things like the research my key worker did helped me a lot.” Young person, aged 19

Section2: Your Social Worker

The number of young people who reported they knew how to contact their social worker if they needed them remained high this year at 85%, which is in line with last years findings, and a huge improvement can be seen in regards to young people knowing who to contact if their social worker is not available. This year 70% reported they would know who to contact whereas in 2015 only 45% reported this.

There were mixed responses regarding young people's views on the reliability of their social worker with 56% reporting them to be reliable, 20% saying they did not think they were reliable and 23% stating they were sometimes. It should be noted that this is a decrease in

positive responses from the 2015 survey, when 65% said they thought their social worker was reliable, however this could be attributed to the added option of 'sometimes' to the 2017 version of the survey.

In terms of how often they saw their social worker, 75% said that they were happy with how often they did while 14% said they were not and 11% said they weren't sure. When asked if they wanted to elaborate, most said that they would like to see them at least once a month. One young person aged 16 commented, "I would like to see my social worker every 4-5 weeks so I can bring any concerns up from your point of view".

Finally, the survey explored whether, if they had experienced a change of social worker, were they happy with the way in which this change over had taken place, to which a mixed response was reported with 58% saying they were and 42% saying they were not. One young person said "Too many social workers...I want just one social worker who I can bond with." It is worth noting that this survey was rolled out following a period of significant change and restructure in Children's Social Care and the findings are reflective of this.

Section 3: Reviews

The survey revealed that 63% of young people knew who their Independent Reviewing Officer was, 16% said they didn't and 21% weren't sure. This is a decrease from 2015 when 78% said they knew who it was. However, again, this may be a result of the added third option of 'not sure' in this year's survey, giving children and young people the opportunity to select this where they might have opted for 'yes' in the 2015 survey. Additionally, there have also been recent changes within the IRO team which could also account for these results.

Young people were asked if they attended their review meetings and 85% said they did with 15% saying they didn't. This is an improvement from 2015 where only 65% said they usually attended the meetings. A very positive result is that 85% said they had the opportunity to speak to their IRO before their meetings and 15% said they didn't. Also, 51% said they were involved in planning their reviews, 26% said they weren't and 23% said they sometimes were. One young person aged 14 suggested that review meeting would be improved by "including me more, talking to me not each other". Another young person aged 19 reflected back on his reviews by saying "review meeting where extremely stressful for me when I was younger. I found that everyone was very supportive during these meetings and that's something I appreciate."

Section 4: Seeing Your Family and Friends

The survey asked if young people felt they had received the help and support they needed to keep in touch with their family and friends; 87% responded that they had and 13%

hadn't. This is an increase from last year when only 82% felt that they had received this help and support.

This survey further asked if young people knew who to speak to if they were unhappy with these arrangements and 93% that they did, with only 7% responding that they didn't. They were also asked whether the reason had been explained to them if they had been unable to see someone and 77% said it had while 23% said it hadn't. Despite the majority responding that they had, the number who responded that they hadn't (15) is not insignificant and should be taken into account. One young person said that they didn't think they had enough "support with contact with family and friends living out of area".

Section 5: Education and Training

The number of young people who felt they were receiving the right amount of support in their education and training remains high at 89% (with only 11% feeling they hadn't) This is consistent with the 2015 results where, again, 89% felt they had received the right amount of support.

Results from this section also revealed that 90% knew who to go to at school if they needed support (10% did not) and that 80% stated that they were involved in their Personal Education Plan (PEP) (20% were not). It is worth noting that two young people commented that they did not know what their PEP was.

Section 6: Health and Happiness

Regarding after school clubs and activities, 93% of children and young people felt that they were able to choose if they wanted to take part in the ones that they wanted, whereas only 7% (4 people) felt that they were not.

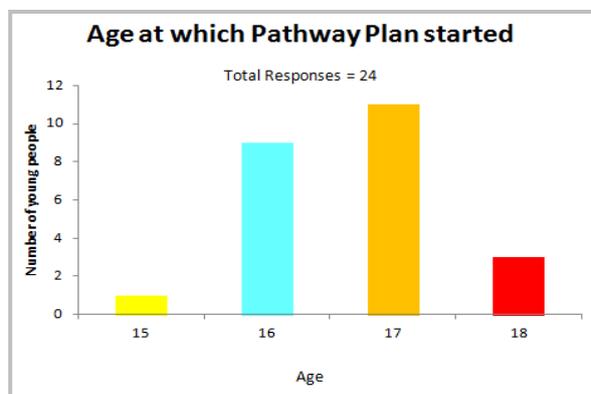
When asked about their Health Assessment, 85% said they knew what it was while 15% said that they did not.

The most positive response from this survey was in answer to the question "If you didn't feel happy is there someone you would be able to talk to?" where 97% of children and young people who answered said yes and only 3% said no. They were also asked if they knew where to get information, advice and support and 93% said that they did. One 14 year old young person commented, "I don't really tell anyone how I feel, but I know who to talk to if needed."

When invited to provide any additional information two young people commented on either lack of knowledge about how to access CAMHS provision or unhappiness with the CAMHS provision they had received.

Section 7: Leaving Care

In 2015, 89% felt they had received enough support to prepare for leaving care and 86% felt they had since leaving care. This year positive responses remained high, but saw a slight drop with 81% reporting that they had received enough support when getting ready to leave care and 86% reporting they had received enough support since leaving care.



Care leavers were asked at what age they started their Pathway Plan and the graph shows these results. Care leavers were asked if they thought their Pathway Plan had helped prepare them for independent living to which 62% felt it had and 38% felt it hadn't. One care leaver stated that "Pathway have been really supportive" whereas another said that they had

"learned to live independently [on their own] and through [support from their] foster carers."

Young people responded extremely positively to questions about their happiness with contact with their Pathway Worker and support on managing finances. 91% said they were happy with the level of contact they had with their worker and 92% felt they had received enough support with managing their money. However when invited to provide further information the following two comments were made:

"I feel there could be more support for when I need someone to talk to." Young person age 20.

"I think young people should be taught more about ... understanding loans and reasons for avoiding them, credit score and banking when turning 18. These are really important things to teach people about money management." Young person age 19.

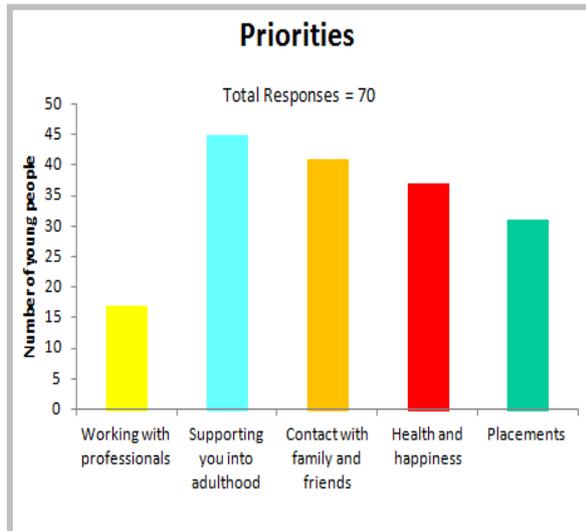
Section 8: Rights and Entitlements

The majority of young people felt their workers and carers treated them with respect (97%), which has increased from 85% in 2015. Two young people responded "sometimes" to this question and one felt that "only carers treat [them] with respect." Young people were also asked if they felt they had a say in the decisions that had been made about them and 85% felt they had while 15% felt they hadn't, which is in line with results from 2015.

The survey revealed that 77% felt they knew enough about their rights and entitlements and 23% didn't. Furthermore, 83% knew about Speak Up and 17% did not (this is similar to the 2015 results which found 81% knew about the service). This year, 96% reported knowing

they could make a complaint if they were ever unhappy, which shows an improvement from last year when only 88% said they knew they had the right to make a complaint.

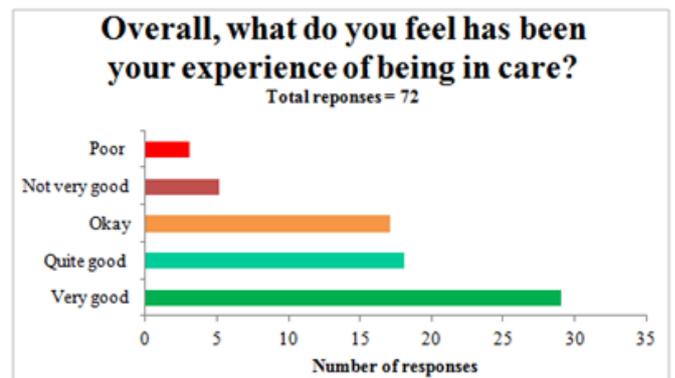
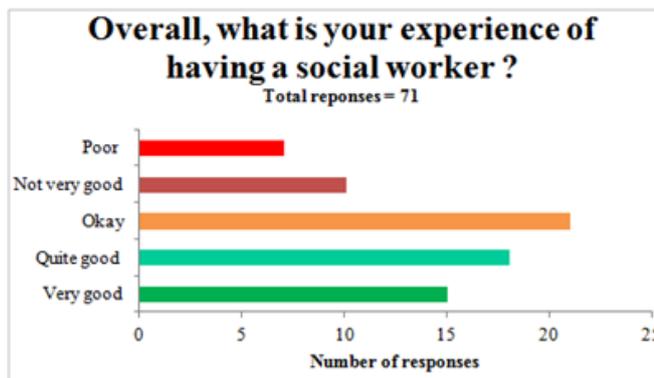
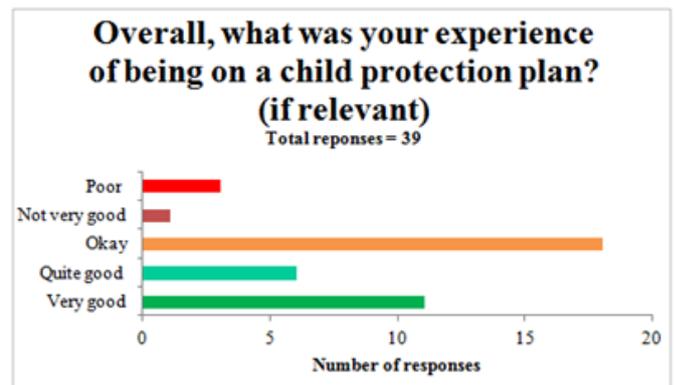
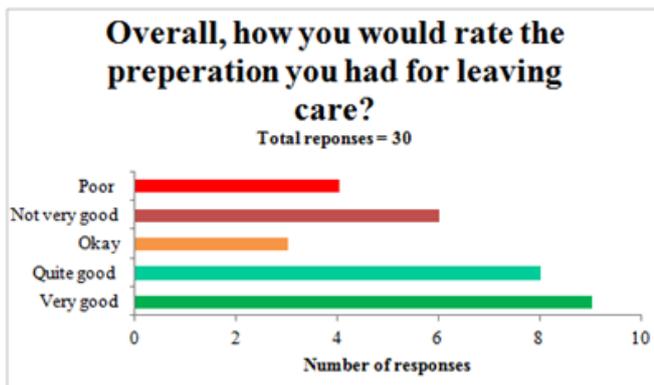
When asked, 75% said they knew about SMTIM and 25% said they did not. Following from this, 50% said they wanted to know more about getting involved in participation activities. However, some of the individuals who responded that they did not want to know more explained that this was because they were/had already been involved. The survey asked



about young people’s view on what the priorities should be of the Children in Care Council, Show Me That I Matter. They were asked which of the following were the most important for SMTIM to work on: working with professionals, supporting into adulthood, contact with family and friends, health and happiness and placements. They were invited to select as many of the options as they wished and the chart displays the results, with supporting into adulthood and contact with family and friends receiving the most responses.

Section 9: Overall Experience

The first part of the final section contained four questions asking about the overall experience the young people have had of being in care. There were five response options: Very Good, Quite Good, Okay, Not Very Good and Poor.



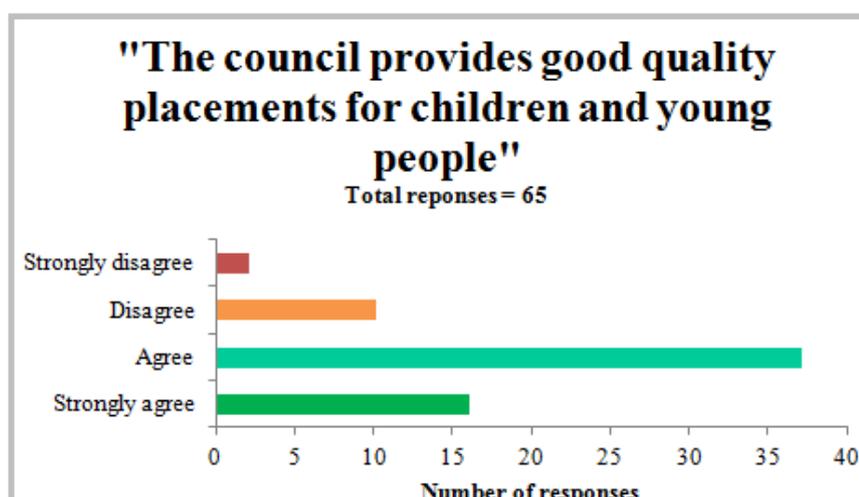
The data shows that a large proportion (65%) of young people stated that their experience of care was quite good or very good. Some young people (24%) simply said their experience was okay. 11% did not feel their experience had been good.

Almost half (46%) of the young people felt their experience of being on a child protection plan was only okay while 44% felt it was either good or very good, 8% felt it had been poor and 2% (one individual) felt it had not been very good. Less than half (46%) felt that their experience of having a social worker was either good or very good, 30% felt it was okay and 25% felt it was either not very good or poor.

Over half (57%) of young people felt the overall preparation they had for leaving care had been good or very good, 10% felt it was okay and 33% felt it was not very good or poor. When you compare this with the results from the previous leaving care section it is not clear why such a significant number felt their preparation had been poor / not very good when they had rated the support they had received so positively. It could be that this is more of a reflection on whether young people can ever feel fully prepared for the reality of independent living, rather than a reflection on specific support provided for those leaving care.

Finally, the survey asked how much children and young people agreed with the following statement in the last 12 months: "The council provides good quality placements for children and young people in care?"

They were given four response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The graph below displays the number of responses for each option and shows that the majority of children and young people either agree or strongly agree with the statement (82% either agreed or strongly agreed) while 18% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.



SUMMARY

The final section of this report will summarise the findings from the survey and highlight key strengths as well as areas to focus on in order to improve the experiences of children and young people in the care of City of York Council. Areas of strength include the quality of placements for children and young people (with 82% of young people describing these as good quality placements), young people's views on how they are treated by professionals and whether they are included in decision making (with 97% reporting that they are treated with respect and 85% stating that they have a say in decisions that are made about them) and young people's awareness of their right to make a complaint if they are unhappy (96%).

The majority of young people who were asked stated that they were currently happy in their placement (94%) and would be able to speak to their social worker if they weren't (91%). However, less than half reported that they had received written information or photographs prior to moving to their placement. High numbers of young people reported knowing how to contact their social worker (85%) and an increasing number knew who to contact if their social worker was unavailable (an increase from 45% in 2015 to 70%). However a significant number of young people reported that they had been unhappy with how a change of social worker had been managed (42%). In terms of seeing their family and friends, the majority of young people felt that they had received a sufficient amount of support, knew who to contact about these arrangements and had felt that were they not able to see someone, the reasons had been explained to them.

A significant number of young people stated they didn't know who their current IRO was (37%) and only half reported that they were involved in the planning of their review meetings. However a high percentage of young people reported that they regularly attended their reviews and had the opportunity to speak to their IRO before the meetings.

The majority of young people felt they were receiving the right amount of support in their education and training (89%), knew who they could go to in school if they need any support (90%) and felt they were able to choose if they wanted to take part in after school clubs and activities (93%).

In relation to leaving care provision, responses were positive with the majority of care leavers reporting that they had received enough support both in preparation for leaving care (81%) and since they had left care (86%). However, in contrast, when asked about their overall experiences, 33% stated that they hadn't felt adequately prepared for leaving care. 38% didn't see the value in their Pathway Plan but the majority were happy with the contact they had with their Pathway Worker (91%) and felt they had received enough support in managing their money (92%).



Corporate Parenting Board**25 September 2017**

Report of Corporate Director, Children, Education and Communities

Development Review of Placement Services**Summary**

1. This item presents an update with regards to a development review of placement services.

Background

2. In August 2017 initial information was shared with foster carers and other colleagues about this review.

Consultation

3. This item will provide the Board with an update on this and on progress.

Options

4. This agenda item will provide the Board with the opportunity to evaluate and comment on current progress.

Analysis

5. The purpose of the development review is to ensure that we have sustainable, skilled placements so that, when it is in the best interest of the child, we can look after them in York. The review will look at:
 - our approaches to advertising and recruitment
 - our financial remuneration structure
 - our support to fostering households
 - the development pathways for our foster carers
 - how we recognise long service and celebrate properly the contribution of those fostering households that retire or resign.

Council Plan

6. This work contributes to the Council Plan priorities:

- A focus on frontline services
- Child in Care Action Plan

Implications

7. Financial: This process is intended to be cost neutral

Human Resources (HR): There are no HR implications to consider at this stage

Equalities: There are no equalities implications to consider at this stage

Legal: There are no equalities implications to consider at this stage

Crime and Disorder: There are no crime and disorder implications to consider at this stage

Information Technology (IT): There are no IT implications to consider at this stage

Property: There are no property implications to consider at this stage

Risk Management

8. Any reduction in the number of existing valued fostering households would be a risk. This possible risk will be mitigated

- by ensuring consultation with foster carers throughout the process
- by the assurance that the introduction of any new fee payment system will retain an element of choice and opportunity for each fostering household and by phasing in any new fee payment system.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to consider the presentation of progress towards the full compliance with the guidance set out above.

Reason: In order that officers can clarify any issues arising and so that Members can comment on progress.

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Eoin Rush
Assistant Director, Children's Specialist
Services

Report Date 14.09.17
Approved

Presentation by:

Dot Evans,
Head of Children's Social
Work Services

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A - Briefing Paper July 2017

Annex B - Review Update September 2017

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Working Together to Develop our Fostering Service for York's Children and Young People

A briefing for Foster Carers and Social Care Staff

1. Introduction

York foster carers provide safe, warm and welcoming care to some of the City's most vulnerable children and young people.

When we ask our Looked after Children about the care they receive most tell us they are *happy in their placement*¹

In York, our foster carers work together to help each other and the children and young people they look after. Stay-overs, peer support, informal coffee mornings and more formal meetings with Council officers all contribute to a great fostering service.

Feedback we received through the Make York Home consultations tells us that our foster carers and social care staff are very ambitious to make sure that in the future, few or no children will need to go outside of our City² for their care. Of course this is good news and we want to respond.

2. Make York Home

At the heart of the Make York Home work is an aspiration to ensure that we have enough, well supported and fully engaged foster carers working with social care colleagues to ensure that there is a placement that is right for every child who needs one and that this is in or near to York.

The City is very fortunate to have a high number of very experienced carers who have the knowledge and skills to help

¹ U Matter Survey 2017 – 94% of children surveyed said they were happy with their placement.

² In this, case we include all York carers whether or not they live within the City boundaries



develop and grow our fostering community. Our very experienced foster carers are a valuable resource and a great source of advice, support and guidance both for newer carers and for the Local Authority in terms of helping to shape the future foster carer arrangements for the City.

3. The Challenge

In a nutshell, the biggest challenge in achieving our Make York Home vision is the supply of new foster carers coming into the system.

We know that many potential fostering households rule themselves out, on first reflection, often believing they are not suitable and sometimes for financial reasons.

When we talk to people who decide not to apply to become a foster carer they tell us that the current remuneration structure makes it very difficult for them to make the necessary lifestyle changes to commit to this role.

This situation is not unique to York and indeed there is currently a national fostering stock take to³ look nationally at the role of foster care, an exercise driven in part by recognition of a national shortage of fostering households.

We know that many of our very experienced carers will retire over the coming years and it is really important that we do not lose their experience, skill and knowledge as they leave us. Thankfully some choose to work with us in different ways beyond their caring role to offer advice and sometimes direct support to new carers. This is definitely a pattern we would like to sustain.

4. Growing our Foster Carer Community

It is also essential that we think carefully about how we can address the concerns and barriers to those families described above so they can join our fostering workforce. To do this we will

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-fostering-stocktake-call-for-evidence>



need to make some changes to our current arrangements. This might include:

- a review of our approach to advertising and recruiting carers
- building and growing the support arrangements that our foster carers tell us work well (stay-overs, advanced training and gateway events)
- experimenting with new arrangements (peer mentoring, fostering clusters)
- thinking again about how we can remunerate our foster carers from the start so they are in a position to apply themselves to the role full time where that is needed

5. Our Approach to Change

For all of the reasons described above we will approach any change as a shared endeavour. Working with York Area Foster Carer Association [YAFCA], our fostering households, our looked after children and young people and Council officers and elected members we will shape and design our arrangements to make sure that we can deliver our Make York Home vision.

6. Pace of Change

Everyone involved in our fostering arrangements in York will understand that time is not on our side in terms of making the necessary changes to make it possible for more families to foster. This does not mean we will rush any changes but we will draw on the extensive discussions and conversations we have had to date to inform some initial design principles.

7. Thinking about the 'As Is'

We recognise the importance of minimising where possible any disruption or changes where working well, however even at this early stage it is inevitable that any change will bring some disruption and in these circumstances we are determined to consult widely and to listen carefully at each stage.



8. Scope of Review

The review of our fostering arrangements will focus in the first stage on issues that may prevent families from considering this role. Specifically, we will look at:

- our approaches to advertising and recruitment
- our financial remuneration structure⁴
- our support to fostering households
- the development pathways for our foster carers
- how we recognise long service and celebrate properly the contribution of those fostering households that retire or resign.

9 Timeline for the project

Phase 1 –August 2017

Information gathering: focus groups / meetings with relevant staff including foster carers, fostering staff, the finance team and young people.

Research neighbouring authorities including North Yorkshire, East Riding, Hull, North Lincs and North East Lincs to obtain details of their current payment systems to ensure any changes that CYC proposes are comparable.

Phase 2 – September 2017

Initial proposal paper to be drawn up.

⁴ The introduction of any new fee payment system will retain an element of choice and opportunity for each fostering household.



Phase 3 - October/November 2017

Consultation period with foster carers – minimum 28 days.

Phase 4 – November / December 2017

Re-draft proposal to include suggestions/comments from the consultation.

Phase 5 – January 2018

Proposal to be presented to CYC Executive Member.

Phase 6 - April 2018

Implementation of the new system.

Draft for

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Placement Development Review
Position Update - September 2017.

Remit:

A review of all York based provision for children in the care of the Local Authority.

Purpose:

To ensure that York provides sustainable and responsive placements to children in the care of the Local Authority.

Principles:

- We will better ensure that our children have a positive experience of family life if placed with foster carers.
- We will seek to normalise the experience for children in foster care through appropriate delegated authority. However we will ensure that this authority is exercised appropriately.
- We will recognise and celebrate the contribution made by foster carers.
- We will develop our service within the current budget.
- We will think wider than 'just finance' when it comes to foster carers' support and training.
- We will be explicit in our expectations of what it means to be a CYC foster carer and provide clarity in respect of associated fees and allowances.
- We will explore and develop alternative high quality resources for children and young people for whom placement within a family home is not appropriate.

Progress to date:-

- Briefing document has been shared with all foster carers.
- Initial informal consultation with SMTIM, staff, YAFCA.
- Initial comparison with neighbouring Local Authorities.

Moving forward:-

1. Consultation October/November 2017.
2. Final paper January 2018.

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Corporate Parenting Board – Workplan 2017-18

Meeting Date	Strategic Themes	Reports Supporting Strategic Theme	Other Reports
26 June 2017	Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health; Wellbeing; Relationships & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people in care, on the edge of care and care leavers 	
25 Sept 2017	Respect & Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Advocacy Report • Annual SMTIM Report • U Matter Survey 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review of Placement Services
20 Nov 2017	Moving to Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Put • Housing • Education, Training & Employment • Apprenticeships • Where young people live • Relevant performance data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated terms of reference • Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report • Member visits to Children’s Homes
12 Feb 2018			
16 April 2018			

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Corporate Parenting Board – Workplan 2016-17 (Completed – for information)

Meeting Date	Strategic Themes	Reports Supporting Strategic Theme	Other Reports
27 June 2016	Education	Virtual School Development Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of 2016-17 Virtual School Improvement Plan • Rees Centre for Education – key issues for Elected members • Results of Poetry Competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on SMTIM Panel (including Bright Futures Scheme) • Corporate Parenting Board Programme of Work and Priorities
26 Sept 2016	Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health; Wellbeing; Relationships & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMTIM Panel Annual Report 2015-16 • Annual Advocacy Report 2015-16 • Care Leavers Bill – Keep on Caring • Making York Home – Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual School Update - GCSE and A Level results for children in care • Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report • Inspection Briefing
21 Nov 2016	Good Safe placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making York Home – Project Update • Context Setting Data • Findings of the Ofsted Report following a Children's Home Inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Social Care Restructure Update • Member Visits to Children's Homes • Response to the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
13 Feb 2017	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the Health Needs of Looked After Children • Meeting the Emotional and Mental Health Needs of Looked After Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2016-20 – Young Person's Version • Ofsted Inspection Outcome

Meeting Date	Strategic Themes	Reports Supporting Strategic Theme	Other Reports
10 April 2017	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-16 Annual Report of the Virtual School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Implementation of Local Area Teams – their role in supporting vulnerable children