

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

York's Guarantee to Looked After Children

Summary

1. The focus in this report is upon the work of the Show Me That I Matter Panel, children in care council. The Panel has recently completed the development of a refreshed request for a guarantee about the standard of services for children, young people and care leavers from elected members, social workers, council staff, and its partners.

Background

2. In 2010 the lead member for children's services and the director for children's services endorsed a commitment to The Pledge To Looked After Children in York. This detailed commitment made 12 undertakings about the standard of work that should be expected from social workers, foster carers and the children's workforce.

In 2014, the Show Me That I Matter Panel has reviewed the experience of looked after children and young people and it has presented a refreshed, more concise version of the key issues, about which young people want clarity.

Consultation

3. Feedback from Show Me That I Matter and I Matter Too (representatives of all looked after children) York Area Foster Carers Association, is regularly sought and incorporated into the service development.

Options

4. 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

5. The Show Me that I Matter Panel is York's children in care council. The seven young people meet monthly with two elected members from the Corporate Parenting Board. The meetings are facilitated by the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service.
6. During each year, the young people of the Panel invite a range of officers, who can advise them about the services provided for looked after children. They have met with the Chief Executive, the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills, the designated doctor and nurse for looked after children, the Headteacher of the virtual school for looked after children. Service managers in children's social care have also attended to offer information about key issues for the Panel.
7. In 2014, the Panel has focussed upon a refresh of the pledge undertaken by Corporate Parents (the lead member and the director) in 2010. The work made specific reference to the findings of the U Matter survey 2014, which reflected the broader views of all looked after children, who participated in the research.
8. The Panel decided that children and young people wanted a guarantee about a range of key areas, which could be summarised a single page. There are eight headings:
 - good placements
 - treated with respect
 - help you keep in touch
 - have fun together
 - help you in school
 - reliable social worker
 - an independent reviewing officer, who I know
 - support you until you are an adult

Council Plan

9. 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

10. 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

11. There are no financial, human resources, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, information technology or property implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

12. Not applicable.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that the Board notes the endorsement of York's Guarantee to Looked after Children by the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People and the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Reason: To ensure that all those involved with children and young people are collaborating to ensure that Corporate Parenting is central to all planning and operational work of elected members, staff and partners in accordance with the Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15.

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Report
Approved



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Specialist Implications Officer(s) - Not applicable

All



Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

York's Pledge 2010 (available online only)

York's Guarantee to children and young people in care, 2014 (available online only)