

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham, S60
2TH

Date: Tuesday, 19th January, 2016

Time: 5.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. 5.00 p.m. - Minutes of the previous meeting held in November, 2015, and matters arising: - (Pages 1 - 6)
 - Virtual School Review;
 - Leaving Care Hub – progress;
 - Leaving care housing – Draft Housing Strategy refers.
6. 5.10 p.m. - Communications.
 - Fostering Recruitment timescales;
 - LAC Champion role – who's who and confirming positions;
 - Review of officer attendance at CPP meetings;
 - Staff who are leaving / have recently left.
7. 5.20 p.m. - Performance of services for looked after children as at the 30th November, 2015. (Pages 7 - 25)
 - Report not to be presented, but Member questions and comments are invited.
8. 5.25 p.m. - Complaints and customer contacts made by children and young people to the Children and Young People's Services Directorate between 1st December, 2014, and 30th November, 2015. (Pages 26 - 33)
 - Report not to be presented, but Member questions and comments are

invited.

9. 5.30 p.m. - Voice and Influence: - (Pages 34 - 100)

Presentation of: -

1. Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers – report to set the scene for the following items;
 2. Report from the LAC Council;
 3. LAC Summit – report;
 4. Right2Rights – annual report on work with young people;
 5. 'Are you listening DVD'.
10. 6.15 p.m. - Discussion on the previous item focusing on how voice and influence work is done in the Council.
11. Date and time of the next meetings: -

All meetings are due to start at 5.00 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall: -

- Tuesday 8th March, 2016;
- Tuesday 12th July, 2016.

12. Work programme 2015-2016: -

March, 2016

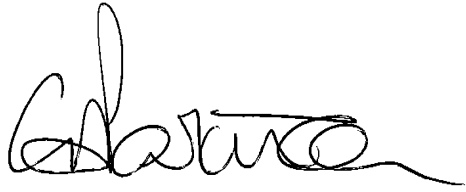
- IRO annual report
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers
- Children placed out of Borough – update

July, 2016

- LAACT annual report

Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel: -

Councillors G. Watson (Deputy Leader and portfolio holder), J. Hamilton (Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission), S. Ahmed (second representative of the Improving Lives Select Commission), C. Vines (representative of the Opposition), S. Currie (Designation).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Parkinson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Catherine Parkinson
Interim Director for Legal and Democratic Services

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 10th November, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Hamilton, C. Vines, Ahmed, Currie. Officers in attendance were: - H. Etheridge, J. Stanley, H. Mangham, J. Hopkins, K. Holgate, C. Hall, L. Grice-Saddington, S. Wilson, A. Harvey, J. Parfremment, D. Johnson, M. Barton, R. Wall, C. Bailey, M. Whiting.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from L. Dale, P. McCurry, P. Davies.

D19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made.

D20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2015.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 22nd September, 2015, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

D21. COMMUNICATIONS: -

It was noted that Councillor S. Ahmed had joined the Corporate Parenting Panel as a second representative of the Improving Lives Select Commission. Councillor S. Currie had also joined the Corporate Parenting Panel. Councillor Watson welcomed them to the group and looked forward to working with them in the future.

A celebration dinner for foster carers was taking place on 27th November, 2015. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel were invited to join the celebration.

Councillor Ahmed asked about the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel. She felt that there was a gap for an audit quality assurance representative.

D22. FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT.

Consideration was given to the Fostering Service's Annual Report, 2014/2015. The report outlined what the Service's future priorities were: -

- Increase the number of foster carers to build-on the increases over the previous four years (132-167 foster carers);
- Caring for sibling groups and older children (10+ years old);

- Strengthen support to enable children to stay at home or with extended family;
- New 'Be a Hero' campaign;
- Positive achievements in placement stability for children and young people;
- Increased number of young people 'staying put' post -18;
- Increased support for carers;
- Increase in fostering celebration events;
- Increased uptake of training by foster carers;
- Newly established Permanence Fostering worker post;
- The business transacted by the Fostering Panel over the year.

Discussion followed and the following points were raised: -

- The length of time that the fostering application process took – around four months. One Elected Member was aware of a family who's process had taken eighteen months. It was agreed that this was unusual. A report on the process would follow;
- Were assessments undertaken in a multi-agency approach, or conducted in silos?;
- Was the training available appropriate, were there any gaps?;
- Sufficiency strategy.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That a report on the fostering approval process be presented to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

D23. ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT.

Consideration was given to the Adoption Service's annual report, 2014/2015. The report noted that: -

- The Service had to achieve a high level of recruitment of prospective adopters to meet the needs of children who had an adoption plan and to ensure timeliness for children achieving permanence;

- There was an emphasis on older children and sibling groups and children with additional needs;
- The Adoption Service promoted the use of Early Permanence planning for children and the support available from the Therapeutic Team;
- The average A1 measure for children in adoption placements as at 30th September, 2015, was 340 days, against a scorecard measure of 426 days;
- Rotherham's 'A1' measure currently exceeded the target by 86 days. 83% of children currently placed met the A1 measure of 426 days;
- The average A2 measure for children in adoption placements as at 30th September, 2015, was 136 days, against a scorecard measure of 121 days;
- There were 30 children with a plan of adoption as of 30th September, 2015. Seven had had a placement order for more than 4 months;
- 22 children had had an adoption order granted between 1st April – 30th September, 2015;
- Six adoptive families were approved between 1st April – 30th September, 2015;
- The business transacted by the Fostering Panel over the year.

An adopter who had been through the Early Permanence programme attended the Corporate Parenting Panel and spoke powerfully about her family's experience, their thoughts and feelings about what had happened. She shared her feelings about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. The members of the Corporate Parenting Panel thanked the Adopter for her heart-warming story, it was a privilege to hear.

Questions were raised, including: -

- Customer surveys – how do we improve subsequent adopters' journeys?;
- Adoption networks.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

D24. SUPPORT TO ROTHERHAM CARE LEAVERS.

The report outlining the support to Rotherham care leavers was presented. The services provided were clearly defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000) and the associated guidance from The Children Act (1989) relating to Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

The report set out the differences between eligible, relevant and former relevant in respect of leaving care support. Assessment and planning for the groups was considered.

The report outlined Rotherham's provision: -

- Personal advisers;
- Financial support and claiming benefits;
- Weekly living allowance;
- Accommodation;
- Setting-up home allowance/leaving care grant;
- Keeping in touch;
- Education, Training and Employment;
- Duty/emergency support;
- The Integrated Youth Support Service's role;
- Housing options for the overall service – a hub was required. This needed to be central/accessible, private and welcoming.

The report shared highlights and achievements of young people. Rotherham was very proud of all young people and their achievements in education, training and employment. Celebration events were planned for 11th December, 2015.

Questions were asked about the report: -

- Did the young people have appropriate access to CAMHS for issues like self-harm?;
- Was there appropriate support for care leavers accessing appropriate housing;
- Was the customer survey questionnaire appropriate and accessible for care leavers to complete?.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That further consideration be given to the Leaving Care Service's hub.

(3) That further consideration be paid to the Council's housing strategy and whether it met the needs of care leavers.

D25. MISSING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Consideration was given to the report presented that provided an update on Missing young people. The report showed the number of incidents and return home interviews between April – November, 2015. Any issues identified in return home interviews were referred to the child's worker to manage and address.

Discussion ensued on the report presented: -

- What were the trigger points for further work with young people;
- What was the quality assurance process for the return to work interviews?;
- Why did the data only go back as far as April, 2015. – It was explained that this was due to different trackers being used across the period. There was data pre-April 2015;
- Family CAFs;
- Were there concerns that children going missing could be subject to FGM?.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

D26. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT.

The performance of services for looked after children to 30th August, 2015, had been submitted for consideration.

Good and improved performance during August 2015 in relation to looked after children was health and dental assessments – 90.6% and 94.1%.

Areas of concern during August, 2015, in relation to looked after children was up-to-date Personal Education Plans – 68.1%.

Red rated indicators as at the end of August, 2015 were those relating to:

-

- LAC cases reviewed within timescales;

- % of LAC with up-to-date Personal Education Plans;
- Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

D27. RESIDENTIAL HOME ISSUES.

The report providing an update on Children's Residential Service Ofsted judgements and Regulation 44 reports was considered. The report provided information about the outcomes of Woodview Children's Home and Saint Edmund's Children Home, and the management responses/action plans now in place.

Questions followed the presentation of the reports and action plans. These included: -

- The communication process for key stakeholders. Councillor Vines expressed dissatisfaction about how he had found out about the inspection outcomes;
- What would happen to staff who were found to be at fault?;
- Involvement of Elected Members in Regulation 44 visits;
- Why had issues not been picked-up by the Regulation 44 visits and by Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers visiting children in the homes;
- Where was the quality assurance and was whistleblowing used?;
- Were concerns raised in supervisions / appraisal processes?;
- Councillor Ahmed was concerned about the long-term impact living with such poor standards could do to the young people in the Children's Homes. It could erode their self-esteem or lead them to believe the poor standards were acceptable;
- Were complaints made and were they taken seriously?.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

D28. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS: -

Resolved: - That the next Corporate Parenting Panel meet on Tuesday 19th January, 2016 at 5.00 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.

Summary Sheet**Council Report:**

Corporate Parenting Panel

Title:

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 19th January 2016

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?:

No

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

Nicole Chavaudra, Joint Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Quality

Report Author(s):

Sue Wilson, Head of Service, Performance & Planning

Ward(s) Affected:

All

Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on the performance of services for looked after children as at the 30th November 2015. This report should be considered alongside the data report attached.

The data presented within the attached report is a subset of the Safeguarding Children and Families Monthly Performance Report November 2015.

Recommendations:

That the Panel consider the detail provided in the performance reports in relation to the services for looked after children and care leavers

List of Appendices Included:

Monthly Performance Report November 2015

Background Papers: None**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel:**

No

Council Approval Required:

No

Exempt from the Press and Public:

No

Title:

Corporate Parenting Performance Report

1.Recommendations

1.1 That the Panel consider the detail provided in the performance reports in relation to the services for looked after children and care leavers

2.Background

2.1 This report provides an updated summary of performance under key themes as at the end of November 2015. It is presented to the CYPS Performance Meeting which specifically covers data and information in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers

A number of improvements have been made to the data and performance management arrangements for Safeguarding Children and Families services since the Ofsted Inspection of 2014, including this new suite of monthly data and performance information.

3.Key Issues

3.1 Key information:

At the end of November 2015 there were 418 looked after children which equates to 74.1 per 10k population. Although this is in line with our statistical neighbours it is higher than the national average and best performing LAs.

At the end of the month we had 418 Looked After Children (LAC), which equates to 74.1 per 10k population. Following a small drop in October we are now back in line with numbers seen earlier in the year placing us higher than our statistical neighbours and national averages.

Attention continues to be focussed on discharges from the care system. The LAC service manager along with the Interim Head of LAC has undertaken a review of cases to determine those children in care who secure a permanent placement outside the care system, for example through Special Guardianship Orders, Child Arrangement Orders and/or reunification with family members.

The number of children placed out of the Borough in independent placements is high and the strategy to reduce usage is multi-faceted. Furthermore, some measures, for example foster care recruitment, have long lead in times. Our new foster carer recruitment campaign is now completed and has been launched. In addition an Adoption recruitment campaign is to follow as we have a shortage of adopters for all age ranges including babies. A permanent Head of LAC has now been appointed (start date February 2016) and this work will be one of his priorities.

3.2 At the end of November 2015 there were 97.9% of looked after children who had an up to date plan and 94.9% of those children preparing to leave care with a pathway plan.

3.3 At the end of November 2015 75.1% of looked after children have had a stable placement for more than 2 years, with 10.5% of looked after children who had 3 or more moves.

Our LAC placement stability continues to be very strong when compared to national averages with 75.1% of long term LAC in the same placement for at least 2 years, compared to 67% nationally. Performance in this area in terms of the data may drop as practice improves to find foster placements or return children to family members. This is one of those indicators that can look good but may mask drift in proactive child centred care planning.

There has been an increase in LAC having 3 or more placements in the last 12 months to 10.5% following a month on month trend of circa 9% but this still compares well to the national average of 11.0%.

3.4 At the end of November 2015 88.1% of looked after children had a review in timescale and 95.4% had been visited by their social worker in line with national minimum standards (with 83.6% within our local standards).

3.5 During the 8 months to the end of November 2015 there had been 26 children adopted, with 20 of this within 12 months of their “should be placed for adoption” decision (SHOBPA) – 76.9%.

Performance each month can vary significantly given the size of the cohort there are no adoptions currently recorded for November.

Given these factors it is most useful to look at a rolling 12 months than a month snapshot and overall performance in this area over the last 3 years has shown an improving trend. The available number of in house adopters is lower than we need and this is likely to result in the need to purchase placements from other adoption providers. The adoption recruitment campaign is being redesigned and shared arrangements with other South Yorkshire authorities are being progressed.

3.6 Performance around PEP’s has had an increase in November to 91.7% of eligible looked after children have an up to date PEP.

The completion of the PEP moved to an E-PEP system in September (start of Autumn term). It was anticipated that performance data would take some time to show improvement, and performance reported last month was of significant concern. Urgent activity was undertaken to examine the issues and as a result a revised system for signing off of PEPs was put in place by the Assistant Director for Education and Skills. This has resulted in much better performance of 91.7% of LAC with an up-to-date PEP. Addressing this backlog has also retrospectively improved the performance now showing for October to 80.5%.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

There are no options to consider in relation to this report

5. Consultation

There are no areas required for consultation in relation to this report

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 There are no timescales in relation to any decision making in relation to this report and its contents

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 There are no specific financial implications in regard to the performance report itself, however supporting looked after child is a key priority and a current and recurring budget pressure, particularly in relation to the cost of those children and young people who are placed out of authority.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no immediate legal implications associated with the proposals.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no Human Resources implications associated with the proposals.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 This report is to provide information to the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure they have as much information as possible in relation to the numbers of and performance of services supporting looked after children and care leavers in Rotherham who are potentially one of the most vulnerable groups. As corporate parents of these children and young people it is important that the panel understand the information presented to help shape and improve services to them

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Data is recorded routinely around ethnicity of children and young people who are in the care of the local authority and is used in relation to their current and future placements and permanency.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Corporate Parenting responsibility is more than just for elected members and staff and managers in Children & Young People's Services it is also important that key partners and other Directorates play a part in championing our young people and helping to improve their lives.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Resources have been strengthened in relation to developing improved services for children and young people who are looked after in Rotherham.

13.2 A quality assurance framework has been developed to ensure that the quality of services for children and young people is regularly audited and assured.

14. Accountable Officer(s):

Sue Wilson (*Head of Service, Performance & Planning*)

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services: Not applicable

Director of Legal Services: Not applicable

Head of Procurement (if appropriate): Not applicable

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Weekly Performance Report

As at: 10th November 2015

Document Details

Status:

Date Created:

Created by: Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager - Social Care

Contact: Ext. 22666 / deborah.johnson@rotherham.gov.uk

	NO.	INDICATOR	MONTH END DATA					CURRENT (10/11/15)	TREND LINE
			Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sept	Oct		
LAC Cohort	1.1	NUMBER OF <u>MAINSTREAM</u> LAC	420	425	416	414	412	407	
	1.2	NUMBER OF SHORT TERM BREAK LAC (V4)	32	33	33	34	33	33	
Legal status	2.1	NUMBER OF <u>MAINSTREAM</u> LAC - by legal status							
	2.1a	C1 - Interim care order	70 17%	82 19%	76 18%	68 16%	61 14%	58 14.3%	
	2.1b	C2 - Full care order	228 54%	235 55%	235 56%	235 57%	235 58%	233 57.2%	
	2.1c	E1 - Placement Order Granted	52 12%	50 12%	51 12%	49 12%	50 12%	49 12%	
	2.1d	L1 - Under police protection in LA accom.	1 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0.0%	
	2.1e	J1 - In LA on remand/committed for trial / sentence	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 0%	1 0.2%	
	2.1f	J2 - Detained in LA accommodation under PACE	0 0%	1 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0.0%	
	2.1g	V2 - Single Period of Accommodated under section 20	69 16%	58 14%	54 13%	63 15%	65 16%	66 16.2%	
Legal Proceedings	3.1	Number of Proceedings commenced	18	7	6	5	7	MONTHLY DATA	
	3.2a	Number of completed legal proceedings	5	17	11	7	9		
	3.2b	Number and % completed within 26 weeks	4 80%	17 100%	6 56%	7 56%	6 66.7%		
	3.2c	Average time taken to complete (in weeks)	23.1	19.3	31.2	20.5	30.7		
	3.30	% of those completed where an order was granted	100%	100%	100%	86%	89%		
	3.4a	Number of ongoing legal proceedings	71	68	61	57	55		
	3.4b	Number of ongoing legal proceedings past 26 weeks	10	11	9	10	10		
Placement Analysis	4.1	NUMBER OF <u>MAINSTREAM</u> LAC - by placement type (CCM)							
	4.1a	Fostering in House	175 42%	179 42%	174 42%	174 42%	177 44%	176 43%	
	4.1b	Fostering - IFA	105 25%	102 24%	103 25%	103 25%	105 25%	106 26%	
	4.1c	Fostering - Relative/Friend	16 4%	20 5%	22 5%	26 6%	24 5%	25 6%	
	4.1d	Residential - In house	19 5%	15 4%	13 3%	12 3%	10 2%	10 2%	
	4.1e	Residential - OOA	36 9%	37 9%	34 8%	36 9%	36 8%	36 9%	
	4.1f	Placed for adoption (not current foster carer)	32 8%	23 5%	23 6%	21 5%	17 4%	17 4%	

	NO.	INDICATOR	MONTH END DATA					CURRENT (10/11/15)	TREND LINE
			Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sept	Oct		
P	4.1g	Placed with parents	12 3%	23 5%	21 5%	15 4%	13 4%	13 3%	
	4.1h	Independent	10 2%	9 2%	9 2%	8 2%	6 2%	6 1%	
	4.1i	Other	15 4%	17 4%	17 4%	19 5%	18 5%	18 4%	
	4.2	Total in a Commissioned Placement (supplied by Commissioning Team)	-	-	148	150	152	152	
Placement Performance	5.1	Long term LAC in placements which have been stable for at least 2 years	108/152 71.1%	109/149 73.2%	110/147 74.8%	110/148 74.3%	108/147 73.5%	109/145 75.2%	
	5.2	LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	41/417 9.8%	38/423 9.0%	37/416 8.9%	38/416 9.2%	36/412 8.7%	26/408 6.4%	
	5.3	DISRUPTIONS							
	5.3a	Number of disruptions (placement breakdowns & unplanned moves) IFAs / independent Residential	10	4	1	2	1	4	
	5.3b	Number of disruptions (in-house fostering)	1	0	0	0			
	5.4	DISTANCE FROM HOME							
	5.4a	Number and % of LAC in commissioned placements who are placed over 20 miles from home	-	-	55	57	55	61	
			-	-	37%	38%	39%	61%	
5.4b	Number and % of all LAC placed over 20 miles from home	-	-	56	58			Data Warning: Validation work required of child home postcodes	
		-	-	13.5%	13.7%				
5.5	Number of children in an inadequate provision		1	1	1		0		
Foster Carers	6.1	Number of approved carer households - Total	170	172	173	172			
	6.1a	- of which are mainstream	161	163	164	163			
	6.1b	- of which are connected persons	9	9	9	9			
	6.2	Number of new Foster Carer approvals	2	2	1	1	1		
	6.3	Foster Carer resignations	0	0	0	1	1		
	6.4	Number and % of Long Term Fostering placements approved by panel	49 47%	49 48%	49 47%	49 47%	49 47%	49 44%	
TERING TEAM	7.01	Number of Fostering Enquiries	21	11	8	25	15		
	7.02	Number of active assessments							
	7.02a	- Mainstream	15	15	15	13	16		
	7.02b	- Reg 24	6	6	6	6	10		
	7.03	Number of Foster Carer reviews completed	19	13	14	8	18		
	7.04	% of Foster Carer reviews in timescale	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
	7.05	% of Foster Carer's whose reviews are up-to-date (annual review process)				100%			

	NO.	INDICATOR	MONTH END DATA					CURRENT (10/11/15)	TREND LINE
			Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sept	Oct		
FOS	7.06	% of Foster Carer with up-to-date Supervisory visits (every 6 weeks)				96%			
	7.07	Number of Allegations		0	1	1	1		
	7.08	Number of disruptions (in-house)	1	0	0	0	1		
	7.09	Numbers of 'staying put'	12	12	12	13	13		
Residential	8.1	Occupancy - Local residential homes (number of vacant beds)							
	8.1a	- St Edmunds (6 bed total)		0	0	1			
	8.1b	- Silverwood (5 bed total)		0	0	1			
	8.1c	- Woodview (6 bed total)		3	3	3	closed	closed	
	8.1d	- Cherry Tree (5 bed total)		3	3	3			
	8.1e	- Liberty House (224 available 'sessions' per 4wk month)		98	92	125			
	8.2	Number of homes with inspection outcomes which are not at least 'good'		2	2	2	2		St Eds - Inadequate Cherry Tree - Adequate
	8.3	Number of placement disruptions in local residential		0	1	4			
Placement review	9.1	Number of CYP identified for placement stepdown awaiting transfer					8	7	
	9.2	Number of CYP identified for reunification awaiting transfer					5	5	

IDENTIFIED DATA DEVELOPMENTS

Timeliness of FC assessments (16 weeks?? Check)
Adoption breakdowns within 2yrs of adoption
CME/Education for LAC
LAC council recruitment

Safeguarding Children & Families Monthly Performance Report

As at Month End: November 2015

Document Details

Status: Issue 1

Date Created: 17/12/2015

Created by: Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager - Social Care

Contact: Ext. 22666 / deborah.johnson@rotherham.gov.uk

(‘DOT’ - Direction of travel represents the direction of ‘performance’ in reference to the polarity of ‘good’ performance for that measure.)

	NO.	INDICATOR	GOOD PERF IS	DATA NOTE (Monthly)	2015/16			Year to Date 15/16		DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month unless stated)	Target and Tolerances			YR ON YR TREND		LATEST BENCHMARKING - 2014/15			
					Sept-15	Oct-15	Nov 15	YTD	DATA NOTE			Red	Amber	Target Green	2013/14	2014/15	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP QTILE THRESHOLD
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	7.1	Number of Looked After Children	Info	Count	412	406	418			⬆️				n/a		407				
	7.2	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 population aged under 18	Info	Rate per 10,000	73.1	72.0	74.1			⬆️	🟢	more than +/-5	+/-5	upto +/-2 of 73.5	70	70	73.4	49.0	60.0	-
	7.3	Admissions of Looked After Children	Info	Count	11	23	25	144	Financial Year	➡️				n/a	147	175				
	7.4	Number of children who have ceased to be Looked After Children	High	Count	17	28	14	138	Financial Year	⬇️				n/a	136	160				
	7.5	Number & Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to permanence (Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order, Adoption)	High	Percentage	6 35.29%	3 10.71%	5 35.71%	46 33.34%	Financial Year	⬆️	YTD	<33%	33%>	35%	55 40.44%	60 37.50%				
	7.6	LAC cases reviewed within timescales	High	Percentage	117/127 92.1%	85/89 95.5%	89/101 88.1%	317/376 84.3%	Financial Year	⬇️	🔴	<90%	90%<	95%	98.6%	352/371 94.9%				
	7.7	Percentage of children adopted	High	Percentage	5 29.4%	3 10.71%	0 0%	27 19.56%	Financial Year	⬇️	YTD	<20%	20%<	22.7%	26.5%	26.3%	25.1%	35.0%	17.0%	37.0%
	7.8	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Health Assessments	High	Percentage	91.7%	91.5%	90.3%			⬇️	🟡	<90%	90%<	95%	82.7%	81.4%				
	7.9	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Dental Assessments	High	Percentage	96.2%	95.4%	90.3%			⬇️	🟡	<90%	90%<	95%	42.5%	58.8%				
	7.10	% of LAC with a PEP	High	Percentage	93.6%	95.8%	96.6%			⬆️	🟢	<90%	90%<	95%	65.7%	68.7%				
	7.11	% of LAC with up to date PEPs	High	Percentage	68.6%	80.5%	91.7%			⬆️	🟡	<90%	90%<	95%	72.9%	71.4%				
	7.12	% of eligible LAC with an up to date plan	High	Percentage	98.8%	99.5%	97.9%			⬇️	🟢	<93%	93%<	95%	67.0%	98.8%				
	7.13	% of completed LAC visits which were completed within timescale - National Minimum standard	High	Percentage	94.0%	96.0%	95.4%			⬇️	🟡	<95%	95%<	98%		94.9%				
	7.14	% of completed LAC visits which were completed within timescale - Rotherham standard	High	Percentage	74.0%	76.0%	83.6%			⬆️	🔴	<85%	87%<	90%		64.0%				
CARE LEAVERS	8.1	Number of care leavers	Info	Count	199	195	197			⬆️	🟡			n/a		183				
	8.2	% of eligible LAC with an up to date pathway plan	High	Percentage	94.9%	94.9%	94.9%			➡️	🟡	<93%	93%<	95%		69.8%				
	8.3	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	High	Percentage	98.5%	99.0%	97.5%			⬇️	🟡	<95%	95%<	98%	96.3%	97.8%	74.2%	100.0%	77.8%	90.0%
	8.4	% of care leavers in employment, education or training	High	Percentage	70.9%	70.8%	64.5%			⬇️	🔴	<70%	70%<	72%	52.3%	71.0%	40.8%	65.0%	45.0%	55.8%
PLACEMENTS	9.1	% of long term LAC in placements which have been stable for at least 2 years	High	Percentage	110/148 74.32%	110/146 75.34%	109/145 75.17%			⬇️	🟢	<68%	68%<	70%	68.8%	110/153 71.9%	67.6%	79.0%	67.0%	71.1%
	9.2	% of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	Low	Percentage	40/412 9.7%	38/407 9.3%	44/418 10.5%			⬇️	🟡	>12%	12%>	10%	11.2%	49/409 12.0%	9.6%	7.0%	11.0%	9.0%
ADOPTIONS	10.1	% of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Percentage	3 / 5 60.0%	3/3 100%	0/0 n/a	20 / 26 76.9%	Financial Year	⬇️	YTD	<83%	83%<	85%	55.6%	84.6%				
	10.2	Average number of days between a child becoming Looked After and having a adoption placement (A1) (Rolling 12 months)	Low	Rolling year - ave count	378.7	359.8	344.1	375.9	Rolling Year	⬆️	YTD	>511	511>	487	661	417.5	507.3	328.0	525.0	468.0
	10.3	Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family (A2) (Rolling 12 months)	Low	Rolling year - ave count	149.8	143.6	137.9	161.9	Rolling Year	⬆️	YTD	>127	127>	121	315	177.3	217.1	45.0	217.0	163.0

PLANS - IN DATE

DEFINITION

A child's plan is to be developed for an individual child if they have a "wellbeing need" that requires a targeted intervention. Each type of plan has a completion target. When a Looked After Child reaches 16 years and 3 months they become eligible for a 'Pathway Plan' - this plan focuses on preparing a young person for adulthood and their future (For example; future accommodation, post 16 Education/Training and Employment)

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

For all plan types the exceptions are reviewed at the weekly performance meetings so the reasons for an absence of an up to date plan is clearly understood by senior managers. Performance in relation to plans remains high and has further improved for CIN.

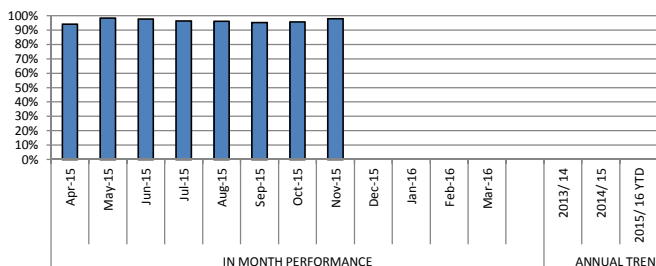
Absence of an up to date LAC plan in almost all cases has been due to the presence of an alternative plan - for example the child has had a pathway plan put in place as they have reached age 16 years and 3 months or because the correct process has not been followed on the IT system to link the document to the section where data is extracted. The next few months will concentrate on the quality of the plans and the of the work which these plans should be driving, this may result in plans requiring further work before association on the system which may cause delay and impact on these performance measures.

The remits of both the locality and looked after children teams are being adjusted in order to enable social workers to develop a more specialist approach to distinct areas of work and the move towards embedding the Strengthening Families model is expected to contribute to the improvement in the quality of plans generally that is required.

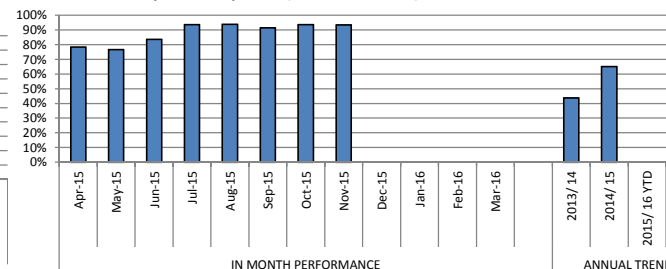
		5.4	5.5	6.13	7.12	8.2
		CIN with a recorded plan (open at least 45 days)	CIN with an up to-date plan (open at least 45 days)	CPP with an up to date plan	LAC with an up to date plan	Eligible LAC with an up to date pathway plan
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Apr-15	94.1%	78.3%	97.0%	94.1%	77.6%
	May-15	98.3%	76.5%	100.0%	94.3%	85.2%
	Jun-15	97.7%	83.5%	100.0%	95.5%	92.8%
	Jul-15	96.3%	93.6%	99.2%	98.8%	94.2%
	Aug-15	96.2%	93.8%	100.0%	98.1%	98.5%
	Sep-15	95.3%	91.4%	99.8%	98.8%	94.9%
	Oct-15	95.7%	93.5%	99.5%	98.8%	94.9%
	Nov-15	97.8%	93.3%	99.7%	97.9%	94.9%
	Dec-15					
	Jan-16					
	Feb-16					
	Mar-16					
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14		43.8%		67.0%	
	2014/ 15		65.1%	97.6%	98.8%	69.8%
	2015/ 16 YTD					

LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE					
	BEST SN					
	NAT AVE					
	NAT TOP QTILE					

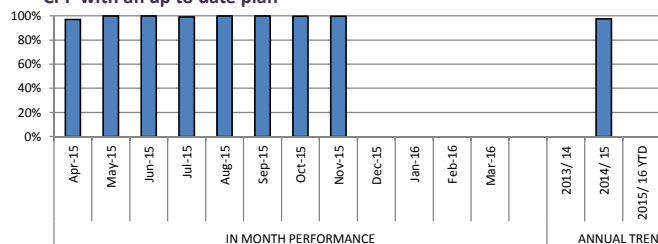
CIN with a recorded plan - open at least 45 days



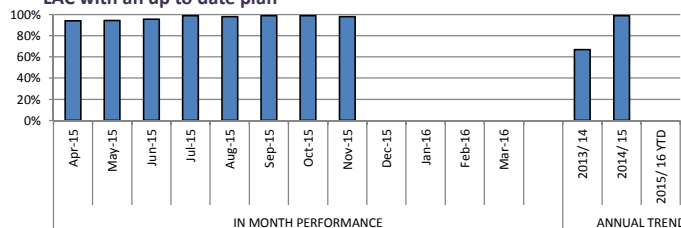
CIN with an up-to-date plan - open at least 45 days



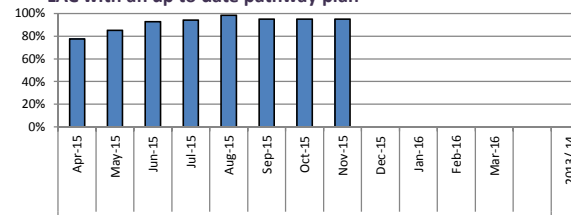
CPP with an up to date plan



LAC with an up to date plan



LAC with an up to date pathway plan



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

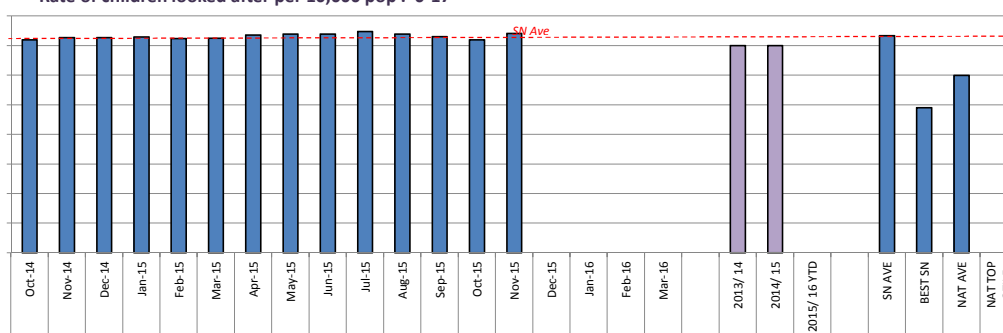
DEFINITION Children in care or looked after children are children who have become the responsibility of the local authority. This can happen voluntarily by parents struggling to cope or through an intervention by children's services because a child is at risk of significant harm.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

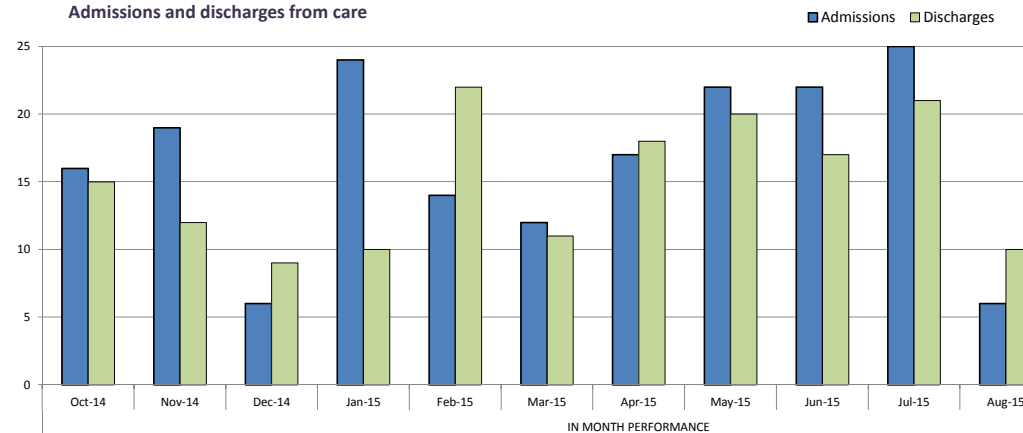
Although the numbers of LAC are in line with our statistical neighbours they are higher than the national average and best performing LA's. Early help arrangements need to be strengthened over time to prevent the need for children to come into care this is part of the departmental strategy. After a rise in LAC numbers over the Summer there was a levelling off and a drop in early Autumn however numbers have again started to increase, it is not unusual for numbers to increase in the late Autumn and run up to the Christmas period as reunifications and adoptive placements are often deferred until New Year to prevent the additional pressure that comes during this emotive time. However we will need to monitor this closely in the New Year and for some time to come. Attention continues to be focussed on discharges from the care system the LAC service manager along with the Interim Head of LAC has undertaken a review of cases to determine those children in care who could be secured permanence outside the care system for example through Special Guardianship Orders, Child Arrangement Orders and/or reunification with family members. The number of children placed out of the Borough in independent placements is high and the strategy to reduce usage is multi-faceted and some measures for example foster care recruitment have long lead in times. Our new foster carer recruitment campaign is now completed and has been launched. In addition an Adoption recruitment campaign is to follow as we have a shortage of adopters for all age ranges including babies. A permanent Head of LAC has been appointed and will start in February 2016 this work will be a priority for him.

		7.2	7.1	7.3	7.4
		Rate of children looked after per 10K pop	Number of LAC	Admissions of children looked after	No. of children who have ceased to be LAC
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Oct-14	72.0	404	16	15
	Nov-14	72.7	408	19	12
	Dec-14	72.7	408	6	9
	Jan-15	72.9	409	24	10
	Feb-15	72.4	406	14	22
	Mar-15	72.5	407	12	11
	Apr-15	73.6	415	17	18
	May-15	73.9	417	22	20
	Jun-15	73.9	417	22	17
	Jul-15	74.8	422	25	21
	Aug-15	73.9	417	6	10
	Sep-15	73.1	412	11	17
	Oct-15	72	406	23	28
	Nov-15	74.1	418	25	14
	Dec-15				
	Jan-16				
	Feb-16				
	Mar-16				
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14	70.0		147	136
	2014/ 15	70.0		175	160
	2015/ 16 YTD			144	138
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE	73.4			
	BEST SN	49.0			
	NAT AVE	60.0			
	NAT TOP Q TILE	-			

Rate of children looked after per 10,000 pop . 0-17



Admissions and discharges from care



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PLACEMENTS

DEFINITION A LAC placement is where a child has become the responsibility of the local authority (LAC) and is placed with foster carers, in residential homes or with parents or other relatives.

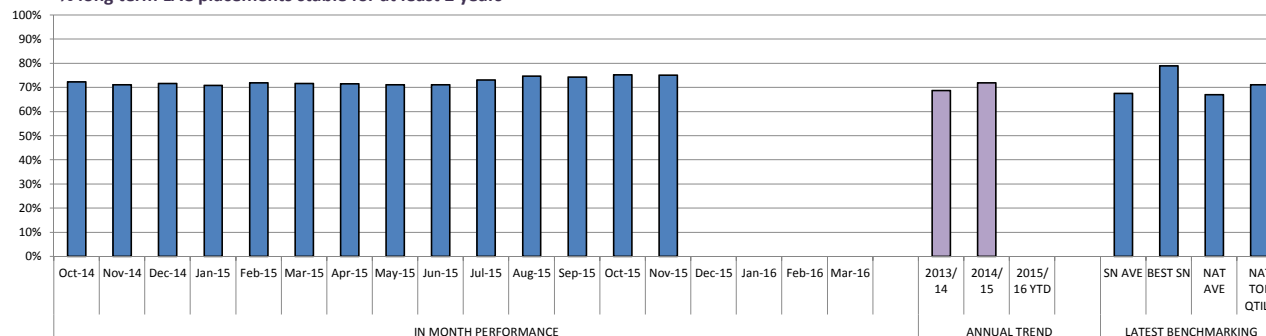
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

As reported previously performance in relation to LAC stability is very strong however it will be examined closely as part of our strategy to reduce the number of children in out of authority placements. We need to ensure that stability does not mask case drift and result in children remaining looked after longer than necessary or remaining in placements that are not meeting their long term needs.

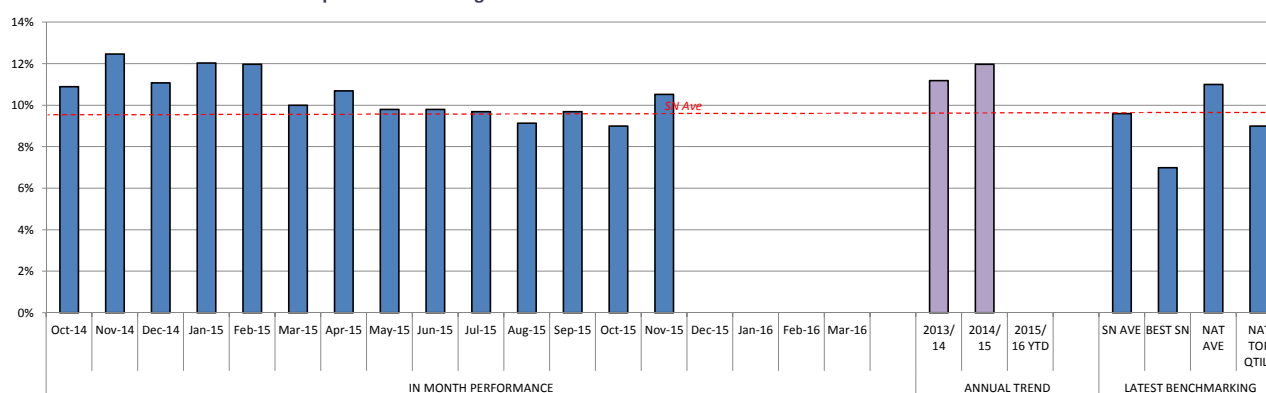
Our sufficiency strategy identifies that we have too many children placed in residential care, this balance has started to shift slightly but remains an issue and we will need to shift that balance to have more children placed in a family setting. Every child in residential care has been reviewed by a senior manager to consider whether it is possible and appropriate to plan for a move into a more appropriate family based setting. Team Around the Placement (TAP) meetings have been introduced to ensure that every support is put in to prevent placements disrupting and are well utilised.

		9.1		9.2	
		No. of long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	No. of LAC with 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Oct-14	115 of 159	72.3%	44 of 404	10.9%
	Nov-14	111 of 156	71.2%	50 of 401	12.5%
	Dec-14	109 of 152	71.7%	46 of 415	11.1%
	Jan-15	105 of 148	71.0%	49 of 407	12.0%
	Feb-15	110 of 153	71.9%	49 of 409	12.0%
	Mar-15	109 of 152	71.7%	41 of 409	10.0%
	Apr-15	106 of 148	71.6%	44 of 412	10.7%
	May-15	108 of 152	71.1%	41 of 417	9.8%
	Jun-15	108 of 152	71.1%	41 of 417	9.8%
	Jul-15	109 of 149	73.2%	41 of 421	9.7%
	Aug-15	110 of 147	74.8%	39 of 417	9.1%
	Sep-15	110 of 148	74.3%	40 of 412	9.7%
	Oct-15	110 of 146	75.3%	38 of 407	9.0%
	Nov-15	109 of 145	75.1%	44 of 418	10.5%
	Dec-15			of	
	Jan-16			of	
	Feb-16			of	
	Mar-16			of	
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14	108 of 157	68.8%	44 of 393	11.2%
	2014/ 15	110 of 153	71.9%	49 of 409	12.0%
	2015/ 16 YTD				
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		67.6%		9.6%
	BEST SN		79.0%		7.0%
	NAT AVE		67.0%		11.0%
	NAT TOP QTILE		71.1%		9.0%

% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years



% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - REVIEWS & VISITS

DEFINITION

The purpose of LAC review meeting is to consider the plan for the welfare of the looked after child and achieve Permanence for them within a timescale that meets their needs. The review is chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

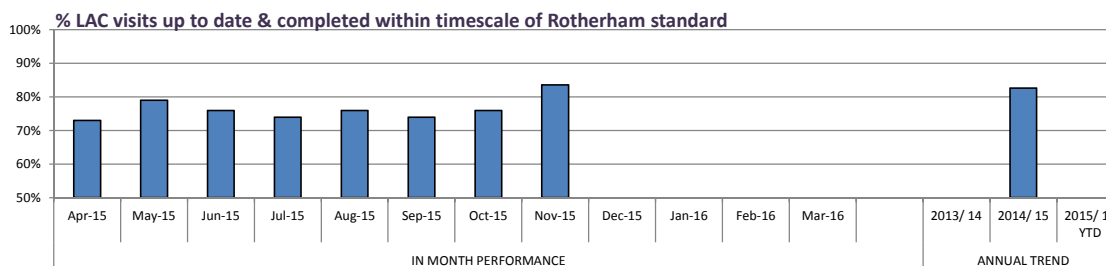
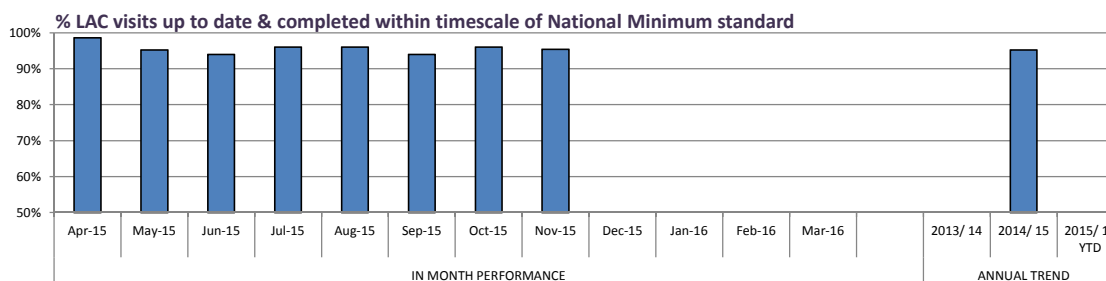
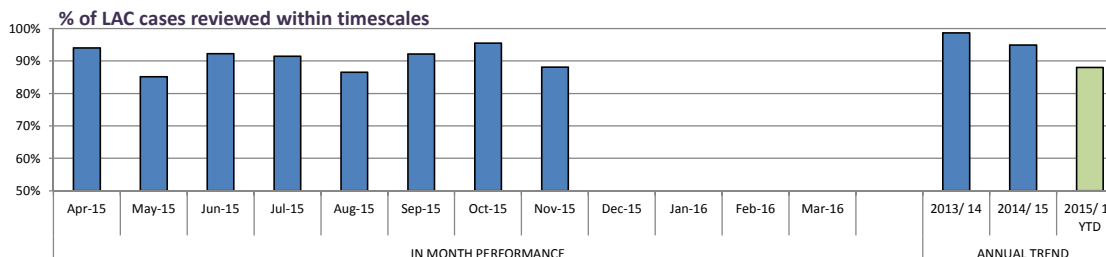
The LA is also responsible for appointing a representative to visit the child wherever he or she is living to ensure that his/her welfare continues to be safeguarded and promoted. The minimum national timescales for visits is within one week of placement, then 6 weekly until the child has been in placement for a year and the 12 weekly thereafter. Rotherham have set a higher standard of within first week then 4 weekly thereafter until the child has been permanently matched to the placement.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

LAC Reviews: There were 11 children and 10 meetings that were out of timescale in November- 2 were rearranged due to court timescales, 2 due to sickness of key staff. The remaining 6 meetings were due to capacity and organisation issues within the IRO service, this issue is being picked up by the new Interim Head of Safeguarding and action measures are being put in place.

LAC Visits are monitored at the weekly performance meeting. Performance in relation to visits within the National minimum standards remains well above 90% any visit exceeding statutory minimum timescales is examined on a child by child basis to ensure they have been subsequently visited and to ensure the reason for lateness is understood. In addition to statutory minimum standard Rotherham has set a local standard that exceeds the National one, performance in relation to local standard has been low and sustained attention has started to see some movement in this figure for the first time, the visiting pattern for each child has to be sustained over a period of time to ensure a clear and ongoing shift in performance. A target has now been set to achieve 90% of LAC visits within Rotherham standard and will be closely monitored.

		7.6		7.13	7.14
		No. LAC cases reviewed within timescales	% of LAC cases reviewed within timescales	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of National Minimum standard	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of Rotherham standard
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Apr-15	79 of 84	94.0%	98.6%	73.0%
	May-15	63 of 74	85.1%	95.2%	79.0%
	Jun-15	95 of 103	92.2%	94.0%	76.0%
	Jul-15	106 of 116	91.4%	96.0%	74.0%
	Aug-15	32 of 37	86.5%	96.0%	76.0%
	Sep-15	117 of 127	92.1%	94.0%	74.0%
	Oct-15	85 of 89	95.5%	96.0%	76.0%
	Nov-15	89 of 101	88.1%	95.4%	83.6%
	Dec-15	of			
	Jan-16	of			
	Feb-16	of			
	Mar-16	of			
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14		98.6%		
	2014/ 15	19 of 371	94.9%	95.2%	82.6%
	2015/ 16 YTD	331 of 376	88.0%		
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				
	BEST SN				
	NAT AVE				
	NAT TOP QTILE				



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - HEALTH

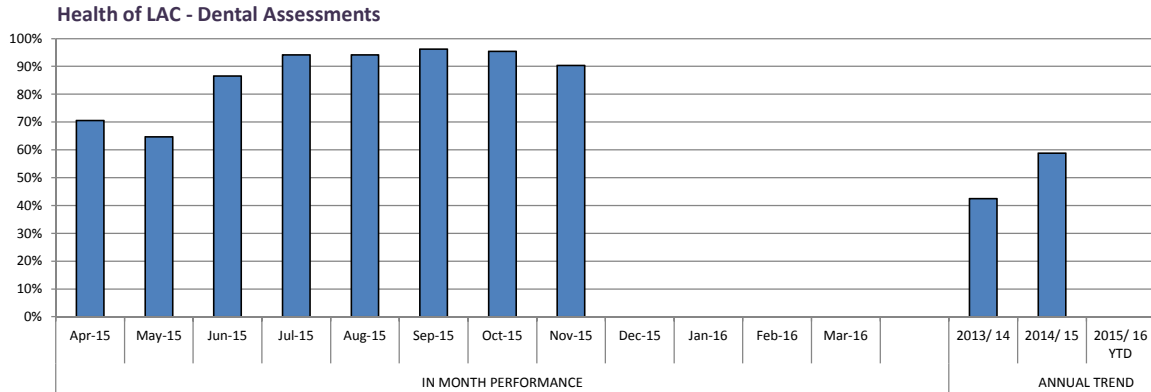
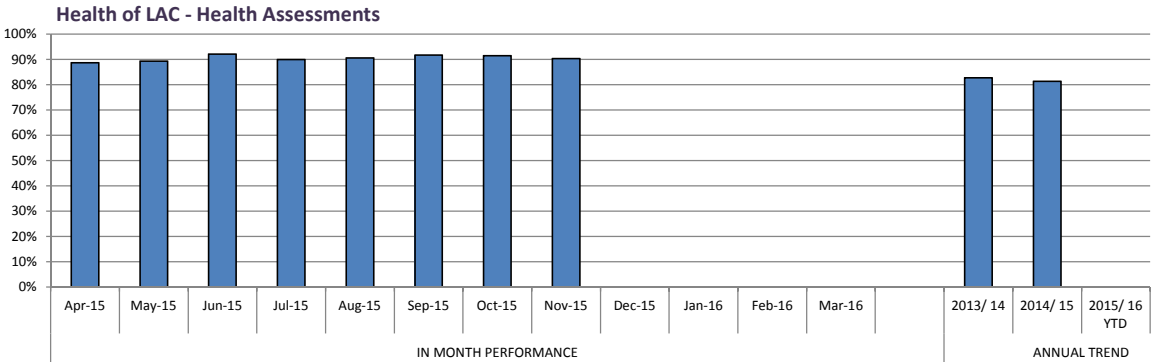
DEFINITION Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and to promote the welfare of the children they look after, therefore the local authority should make arrangements to ensure that every child who is looked after has his/her health needs fully assessed and a health plan clearly set out.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS Performance in relation to health and dental assessments was poor and has been the focus of concerted joint effort and has shown improvement. Close monitoring means that any dips in performance are understood. Due to the process for health QA checks of assessments following completion there is a time lag between the assessment occurring and showing on the system as completed therefore for example the October report showed a dip in performance for that month however it is now apparant that the improvement was largely sustained. Performance will continue to be very closely monitored.

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE		7.8	7.9
		Health of LAC - Health Assessments	Health of LAC - Dental Assessments
	Apr-15	88.7%	70.5%
	May-15	89.3%	64.7%
	Jun-15	92.1%	86.6%
	Jul-15	89.9%	94.1%
	Aug-15	90.6%	94.1%
	Sep-15	91.7%	96.2%
	Oct-15	91.5%	95.4%
	Nov-15	90.3%	90.3%
	Dec-15		
	Jan-16		
	Feb-16		
	Mar-16		

ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14	82.7%	42.5%
	2014/ 15	81.4%	58.8%
	2015/ 16 YTD		

LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		
	BEST SN		
	NAT AVE		
	NAT TOP QTILE		



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

DEFINITION

A personal education plan (PEP) is a school based meeting to plan for the education of a child in care. The government have made PEPs a statutory requirement for children in care to help track and promote their achievements.

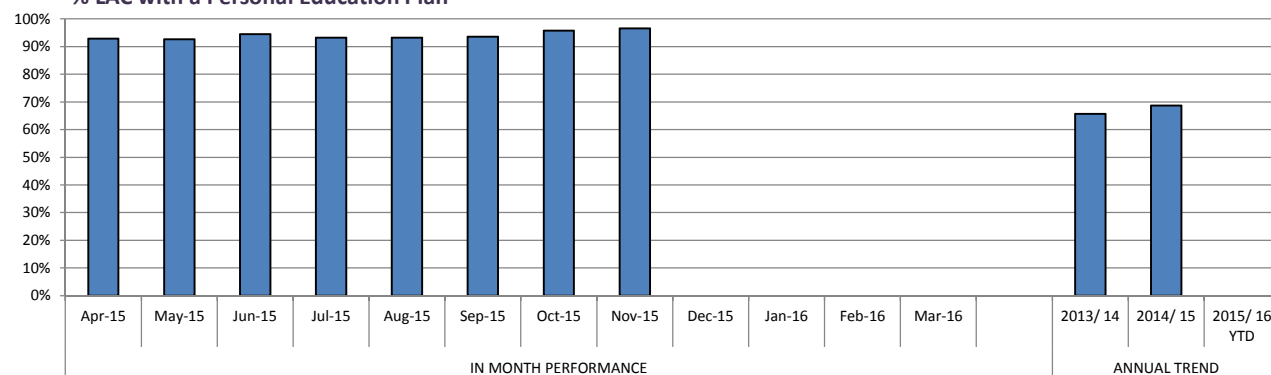
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Previously education of Looked After Children was supported by The Get Real team this team ceased to exist from the 1st April 2015 and this has been replaced by a new Virtual School .

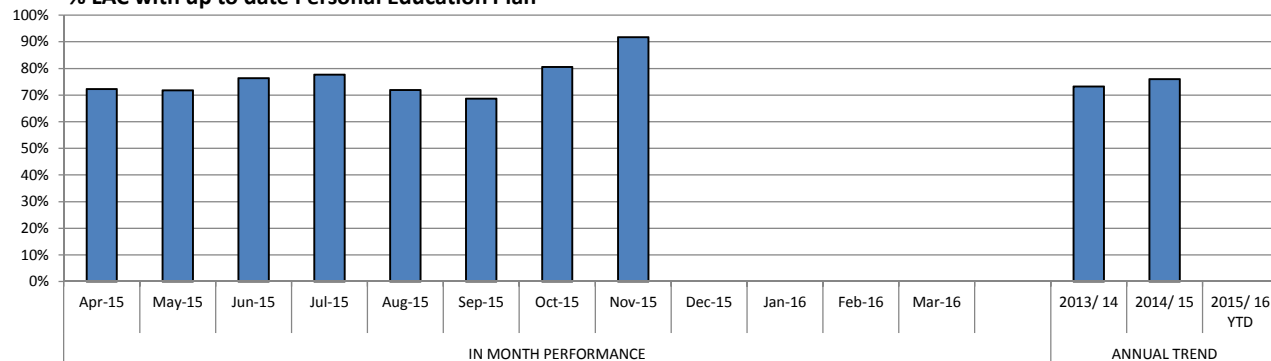
The completion of the PEP moved to an E-PEP system in September (start of Autumn term) It was anticipated that performance data would take some time to show improvement and this was the case and last month performance was of significant concern. Urgent activity was undertaken to examine the issues and as a result a revised system for signing off of PEPs was put in place by the Assistant Director Education and Skills this has resulted in a jump in performance. Addressing the backlog has also retrospectively improved the performance now showing for October.

		7.10	7.11
		% LAC with a Personal Education Plan	% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Apr-15	92.9%	72.3%
	May-15	92.6%	71.8%
	Jun-15	94.5%	76.3%
	Jul-15	93.2%	77.7%
	Aug-15	93.2%	71.9%
	Sep-15	93.6%	68.6%
	Oct-15	95.8%	80.5%
	Nov-15	96.6%	91.7%
	Dec-15		
	Jan-16		
	Feb-16		
	Mar-16		
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14	65.7%	73.3%
	2014/ 15	68.7%	76.0%
	2015/ 16 YTD		
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		
	BEST SN		
	NAT AVE		
	NAT TOP QTILE		

% LAC with a Personal Education Plan



% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan



ADOPTIONS

DEFINITION

Following a child becoming a LAC, it may be deemed suitable for a child to become adopted which is a legal process of becoming a non-biological parent.

The date it is agreed that it is in the best interests of the child that they should be placed for adoption is known as their 'SHOBPA'. Following this a family finding process is undertaken to find a suitable match for the child based on the child's needs, they will then be matched with an adopter(s) followed by placement with their adopter(s). This adoption placement is monitored for a minimum of 10 weeks and assessed as stable and secure before the final adoption order is granted by court decision and the adoption order is made.

Targets for measures A1 and A2 are set centrally by government office.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Performance each month can vary significantly given the size of the cohort there are no adoptions currently recorded for November.

Given these factors it is most useful to look at a rolling 12 months than a month snapshot and overall performance in this area over the last 3 years has shown an improving trend. The available number of in house adopters is lower than we need and this is likely to result in the need to purchase placements from other adoption providers. The adoption recruitment campaign is being redesigned and shared arrangements with other South Yorkshire authorities are being progressed.

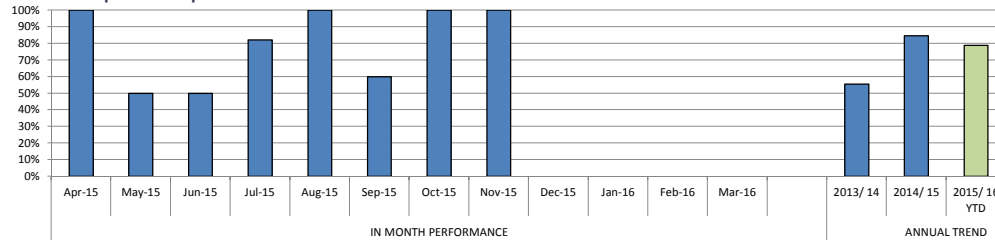
				10.1	10.2	10.3
		Number of adoptions	Number of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) (rolling yr.)	Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) (rolling yr.)
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Apr-15	4	4	100.0%	389.9	142.2
	May-15	2	1	50.0%	396.3	144.7
	Jun-15	2	1	50.0%	399.6	148.9
	Jul-15	8	6	82.1%	379.7	139.6
	Aug-15	1	1	100.0%	380.1	140.7
	Sep-15	5	3	60.0%	378.1	149.8
	Oct-15	3	3	100.0%	359.8	143.6
	Nov-15	0	0	100.0%	344.1	137.9
	Dec-15					
	Jan-16					
	Feb-16					
	Mar-16					

ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14			55.6%	661.0	315.0
	2014/ 15			84.6%	417.5	177.3
	2015/ 16 YTD	19	15	78.9%	391.8	156.4

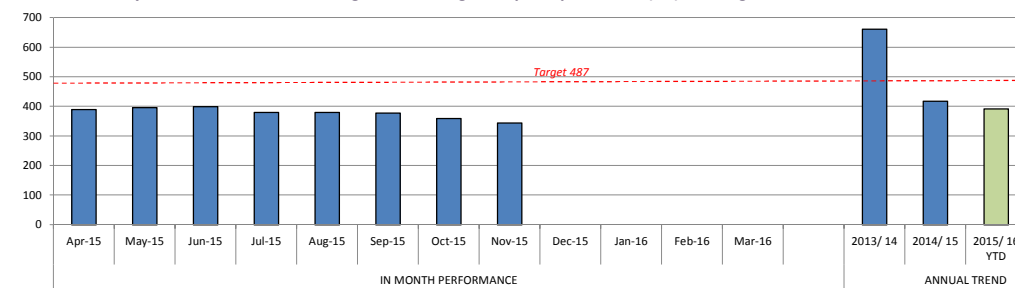
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE					
	BEST SN					
	NAT AVE					
	NAT TOP QTILE					

*Annual Trend relates to current reporting year April to Mar not rolling year

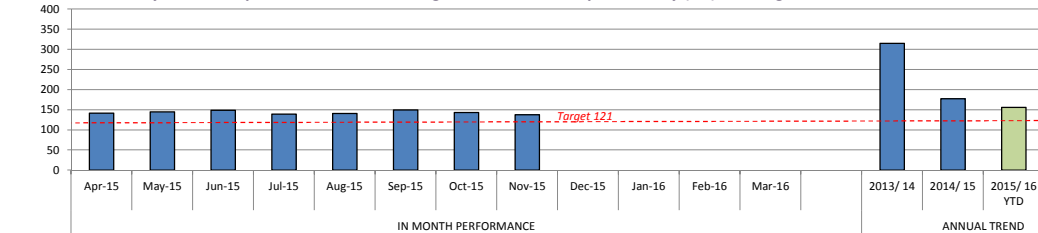
% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA



Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) - Rolling Year



Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) - Rolling Year



By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Summary Sheet

Council Report: Corporate Parenting Meeting 19th January 2016

Title: Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report:

Ian Thomas Strategic Director

Report Author:

Jane Parfremment, Assistant Director Safeguarding

Ward(s) Affected:

All Wards are affected

Executive Summary:

Corporate Parenting Panel on 19th January 2016 has a theme of 'Voice and influence' and is receiving a number of reports that outline how participation and engagement activity has been undertaken across a range of services, teams and projects. This report invites Corporate Parenting Panel members to consider and debate how the activity that is currently undertaken could be improved and strengthened to provide increased impact and improved outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Recommendations

1. That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the range of engagement work undertaken to provide voice and influence for Looked After Children.
2. That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the opportunity to align and join up these work streams, services and projects.
3. That the Corporate Parenting Panel support the establishment of a working group to develop a more co-ordinated approach to engagement and participation, and to build a deeper understanding of the lived experience of children in our care.
4. That the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse a proposal that the above working group focus specifically on demonstrable impact

and outcomes from participation activity, and the most effective approaches to engaging looked after children in meaningful ways.

5. That the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse a recommendation that the above group examine how the range of services and projects can be reviewed and redesigned to ensure maximisation of capacity, and the embedding of meaningful engagement of looked after children in the people and services that support them.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

Corporate Parenting Panel Reports of 19th January 2016

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Children and Young People's Services Improvement Plan

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Corporate Parenting Panel- Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers

1 Recommendations

- 1.1** That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the range of engagement work undertaken to provide voice and influence for Looked After Children.
- 1.2** That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the opportunity to align and join up these work streams, services and projects.
- 1.3** That the Corporate Parenting Panel support the establishment of a working group to develop a more co-ordinated approach to engagement and participation, and to build a deeper understanding of the lived experience of children in our care.
- 1.4** That the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse a proposal that the above working group focus specifically on demonstrable impact and outcomes from participation activity, and the most effective approaches to engaging looked after children in meaningful ways.
- 1.5** That the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse a recommendation that the above group examine how the range of services and projects can be reviewed and redesigned to ensure maximisation of capacity, and the embedding of meaningful engagement of looked after children in the people and services that support them.

2 Background

- 2.1** Rotherham Commissioners have laid out a clear vision and determination to help the council secure a safe environment for Young People and ensure good, sustainable services and regulation to restore healthy democratic leadership and accountability.
- 2.2** The vision is for Rotherham Children's and Young People's Services to be rated as outstanding by 2018, based on a robust service improvement approach. A key improvement measure within the Rotherham Children and Young People's Services improvement action plan is to ensure that the voices and experiences of the most vulnerable children are routinely heard at all levels within the Local Authority and that they inform strategic planning and commissioning.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1** Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services have a range of services and projects that play a direct role in consulting with Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The Corporate Parenting Panel on 19th January 2016 has a theme of 'Voice and Influence' and is receiving a number of reports that outline how participation and

engagement activity has been undertaken across a range of these services, teams and projects.

3.2 It is critical to the Council's ability to improve its services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, that participation and engagement activity is robust, regular and secures meaningful, and impactful, engagement of children and Young People at all levels. Participation and engagement activity must have demonstrable impact with services shaped and improved in direct response to the feedback received. It is also our ambition that we strive to build a deeper understanding of what it really feels like to be a child in our care, understanding both the benefits and limitations of traditional approaches to engagement, so that we can better respond to children and young people's needs

3.3 There are a number of Ofsted Key Judgements related to this area as outlined below:-

- Children and Young People are listened to, practice is focused on their needs and experiences and influenced by their wishes and feelings or, where they cannot represent their view themselves, those advocated on their behalf. They are consistently seen and seen alone by social workers where statutory guidance requires that this should happen and it is professionally judged to be in the best interests of the child.
- Practice is informed by feedback from children and their families about the effectiveness of the help; care or support they receive from the time it is first needed until it ends.
- Children, Young People and families have timely access to and use the services of an advocate; where appropriate.
- Children and Young People are seen by their social worker alone and understand what is happening to them. Professionals and carers, who know them well, develop positive relationships with them and are committed to protecting them and promoting their welfare.
- Children and Young People are helped to understand their rights and the responsibilities that accompany those rights and legal entitlements. They understand how to complain and have access to an advocate and independent visitor. Complaints are treated seriously and result in a clear response, urgent action and improved services where that is required. Senior Managers regularly review and act upon complaints from Looked After Children.
- Children and Young People are represented by a Children in Care Council or similar body which is regularly consulted on how to improve the support they receive.
- The Local Authority is an active, strong and committed corporate parent that knows the children and Young People it looks after well. It is an effective and successful champion of their progress (particularly in education and learning) and an ambitious corporate parent, ensuring that each child has every opportunity to succeed. It actively challenges and engages partners where appropriate to support children and Young People, such as

engaging the Local Authority strategic housing function.

3.4 The range of reports presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 19th January 2016 demonstrates the scope of activity in relation to participation and engagement that is occurring. Equally; there is scope for improved co-ordination, alignment and evidence of impact.

3.5 This report makes recommendations in Section One on how further improvements might be achieved and the Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to utilise the 'Voice and Influence' themed meeting of the 19th January 2016 to robustly examine the opportunities for achieving better outcomes by co-ordinating and maximising the capacity that already exists within the Council for activity of this nature.

4 Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 Continue with current arrangements and activities

Although the current activity provides benefits and is valued by those involved within it there is scope for further improvement and maximisation of the resources committed. More Looked After Children should be directly engaged and there needs to be more demonstrable impact. *Not recommended.*

4.2 Continue with current activity alongside a review and redesign

This option ensures continuity of current activity whilst providing the opportunity to maximise investment and to deliver improvement in line with the Council's Children and Young People's Services Improvement Plan and to demonstrate progress against key Ofsted judgement areas. *Recommended.*

5 Consultation

5.1 The core purpose of this report is to improve consultation, participation and engagement processes with the Looked After Children and Care Leavers population.

6 Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 To be presented at the Corporate Parenting Panel 19th January 2016.

Subject to approval a working group to be established in February 2016 in line with recommendation three.

7 Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications however there is a potential opportunity to maximise use of resources through increased co-ordination and alignment of activity.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 Not Applicable

9 Human Resources Implications

9.1 Not Applicable

10 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 To improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers we need to ensure that participation and engagement is embedded across all aspects of design and delivery of services to them.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Participation and engagement of Looked After Children and Care Leavers is essential to improved outcomes. This is particularly in accordance with UN Rights of the Child (Article 12)

12 Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The working group should ensure that participation and engagement activity impacts across the whole council and partner agencies to ensure improved services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

13 Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Failure to deliver effective voice and influence activity will impact on the Council's ability to improve the service to this particularly vulnerable group of children

14 Accountable Officer(s):

Jane Parfremment Assistant Director Safeguarding

Nicole Chavaudra Joint Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Quality (Voice and Influence Lead)

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:-

Director of Legal Services: - Neil Concannon

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):-

Michelle Whiting

Interim Head of Looked After and Leaving Care Services

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Summary Sheet

Council Report: Corporate Parenting 19th January 2016

Title: Voice & Influence - Looked After & Leaving Care Young People's Feedback Report – October 2015

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?
No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report
Linda Harper, Interim Strategic Director

Report Author:
Lisa Du-Valle

Ward(s) Affected:
All Wards are affected

Executive Summary:

This is a report that is prepared on an annual basis to communicate the voices of Rotherham's looked after and leaving care young people about their experiences and perceptions of living in care and being care leavers. The report provides recommendations from young people which they hope will inform future service planning and improvements.

Recommendations:

- That Corporate Parenting Panel note the contents of the report
- That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the key role that the Looked After Children's Council play in having a voice and giving voice to other most vulnerable children and young people.
- That the Corporate Parenting Panel members promote the role of the Looked After Children's Council in their everyday work in the borough and 'champion' the LAC Council as a positive example of LAC Voice & Influence.
- That Corporate Parenting Panel note the recommendations of the report entitled Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix A - Descriptive Data
- Appendix B – Have Your Say Form

Background Papers

NO

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

NO

Council Approval Required

NO

Exempt from the Press and Public:

NO

VOICE & INFLUENCE- LOOKED AFTER & LEAVING CARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEEDBACK

1 Recommendations

- 1.1** That Corporate Parenting Panel note the contents of the report.
- 1.2** That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the key role that the Looked After Children's Council play in having a voice and giving voice to other most vulnerable children and young people.
- 1.3** That the Corporate Parenting Panel members promote the role of the Looked After Children's Council in their everyday work in the borough and 'champion' the LAC Council as a positive example of LAC Voice & Influence.
- 1.4** That Corporate Parenting Panel note the recommendations of the report entitled Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

2 Background

- 2.1** The Early Help Service in Rotherham operates a Looked After Children's Council (LACC) for children and young people aged 11 to 18 years. The LACC is essentially a peer support group for young people living in care and care leavers. These young people are enthusiastic and show their commitment to Voice & Influence by having their say about things that matter to them and by helping design and shape the services that young people receive in Rotherham.
- 2.2** This report highlights the voice & influence process of the LAC Council it demonstrates how a voice is given to looked after and leaving care young people and makes recommendations around their findings for the panel to consider.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1** Looked After and Leaving Care young people continue to be amongst our most vulnerable young people, only by taking steps to actively engage them in an opportunity that gives them a meaningful voice that is listened to and acted upon will our services have a better understanding of these young people's needs and better provide services that meet their needs.
- 3.2** Continued financial investment in the LAC Council for the next financial year is essential to ensure that young person friendly activities and opportunities are available to engage them.
- 3.3** Feedback and recommendations to improve the services suggested by young people requires a young person friendly response so they understand the actions of the local authority as corporate parents and

also communicates that LAC & Care Leavers voices are of value and being taken seriously.

4 Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 None

5 Consultation

5.1 The LAC Council are committed to giving voice to other young people and improving our the services they have consulted with 69 of their Looked After and Leaving Care peers living in and out of the local authority using their 'Have Your Say' form specifically designed by young people. LAC Council also analysed the responses.

6 Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 No Applicable

7 Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1

8 Legal Implications

8.1 No Applicable

9 Human Resources Implications

9.1 No Applicable

10 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 To improve outcomes for Looked After Children it is important that they are given opportunities to have their voices genuinely heard so that they may continue to communicate how life is for them. By listening and acting upon their recommendations around 'equity', we are moving towards co-produced services that genuinely meet the needs of our most vulnerable young people.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Good quality, voice & influence opportunities for looked after and leaving care young people to have their say around issues that matter to them has positive outcomes for children and young people and in turn their local authority. This is particularly in accordance with UN Rights of the Child, (Article 12)

12 Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 None

13 Risks and Mitigation

- 31.1** Failure to listen and act upon the voices from our vulnerable young people is disempowering for those young people who have given up their time and worked hard without payment to try to make a difference and is a missed opportunity to improve services for looked after and leaving care young people by the local authority.

14 Accountable Officer(s): Michelle Whiting

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Paul Jackson

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):-

Name and Job Title.

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**LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN'S COUNCIL**

Voice & Influence Report
Looked After & Leaving Care
Young People's Feedback
October 2015

Equity

'the quality of being fair and impartial'

Young People Making a Positive Contribution to Rotherham
Looked After & Leaving Care Services

Written by Lisa Du-Valle
Voice & Influence Team
Rotherham Integrated Youth Support Service

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- Appendix B – Have Your Say Form

Introduction

Over the past six months Lisa Du-Valle has been working with the Looked After Children's Council to support them in engaging in Voice & Influence opportunities. Part of the Voice & Influence process was specifically focussed on actively engaging Looked After and Leaving Care young people in giving their voices to shape Rotherham Services through consultations and discussions around things that matter to them including the LAC Sufficiency Strategy, Corporate LAC Promise, developing the S Word Leaflet, supporting the C&YP Commissioning Strategy 2013-2016 (easy read version) and helped to develop the mymindmatters website. Develop the LAC Promise and deliver the LAC Summit.

One of the early tasks for the LAC Council (LACC) was to design a basic feedback tool where Looked After and Leaving Care Young People (LA&LC) could have their say about their perceptions and experiences of living in care or leaving care. Members of the LACC decided this year's theme would be '**equity**' as they were curious whether other young people felt they were treated equally to non-looked after and leaving care young people by those around them. This theme created much debate amongst the LAC Council who eventually settled upon a set of questions they wanted to ask their peers. Collectively they created the LA & LC 'Have Your Say' feedback form (see appendix B).

This young person friendly feedback form was deliberately designed with 4 basic questions for speed of completion and easy comprehension to maximise potential completion. Special attention was taken with developing the HYS form design so visually it would be attractive to other young people. The 4 questions asked were:-

- Q1. Do you feel that you are treated the same as other young people around you who aren't in care? (please explain)*
- Q2. Are there any times where you feel less valued than young people who aren't in care or leaving care? For example, places you go or people you are around*
- Q3. What do you think would make young people who feel differently feel the same as those who aren't in care or leaving care?*
- Q4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about being in care or leaving care?*

Distribution of the 'Have Your Say' feedback forms was supported this year by Service Managers who provided £100 worth of prizes to be used as incentives to complete the feedback form, they also posted out blanks to all looked after young people from Rotherham and emailed HYS forms to all leaving care workers to support completion with young people they work with on behalf of the LACC. Alongside the LAC Council members self-completion, in total 69 completed forms were returned to the LAC Council.

The 69 HYS feedback forms were quantitatively analysed (see appendix A) then analysed using thematic analysis by the Looked After Children's Council. Recommendations for the improvement of the Looked After Children and Leaving Care are drawn from the analysis of young people's feedback and further discussions with the Looked After Children's Council.

This Voice & Influence feedback report is being submitted to Ian Thomas, Interim strategic Director for CYPS, and Jane Parfremment, Director of Safeguarding Children & Families, to be genuinely considered by these directors and the Looked After Children's Teams. It is anticipated that the voices of these looked after and leaving care young people will inform future strategic planning.

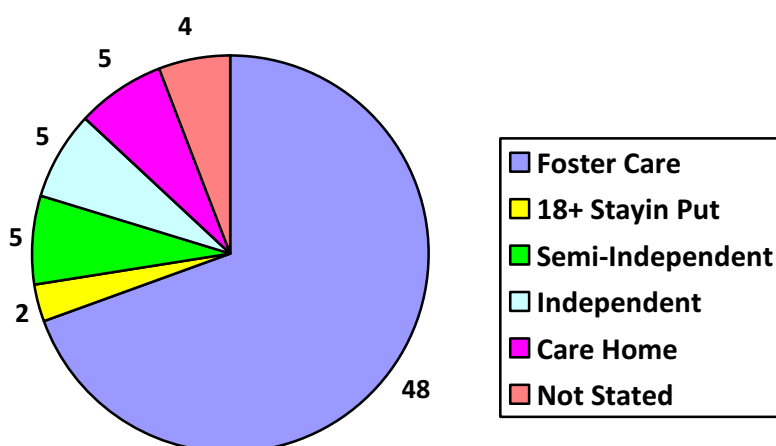
Young People's Voices around Equity LAC 'Have Your Say' Feedback Findings

The LA&LC 'Have Your Say' (HYS) feedback form was completed by 69 looked after and leaving care young people from Rotherham about their perceptions and experiences of 'equity' whilst living in the care system. These forms were completed during the period June and September 2015 inclusively.

Out of those 69 participants, 35 were male and 34 female. The majority of participants measuring 59, described themselves as White British, 7 as Dual Heritage, 2 as Pakistani, 1 as British Asian and 1 described herself as from Czech Republic. All were aged between 10 and 22 years old.

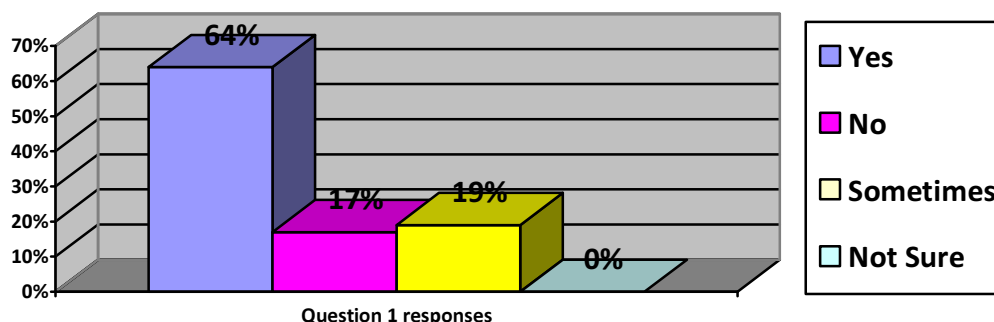
Living Arrangement Breakdown of 69 Young People:-

Young participants had a broad range of living arrangements based in Rotherham and out of local authority. 28 of these were living out of Rotherham and 41 were living within Rotherham.



All 69 participants who completed the Voice and Influence 'Have Your Say' forms were asked four basic questions about their experiences and perceptions of 'equity' when living as a Rotherham Looked After Child. Below is a breakdown of their responses to each question and examples of young people's voices:-

Q1. *Do you feel that you are treated the same as other young people around you who aren't in care? (please explain)*



'64% felt Yes we were treated the same!'

From those 64% of young people who felt they were treated the same as other young people, further thematic analysis indicated that this was largely due to perceptions around equity of activities and outings experienced, opportunities provided, feelings of belonging, material possessions in comparison with non-looked after peers and doing 'ordinary' things. Here are some examples:-

'Yes, because I got to do lots of activities and outing like anyone else'
(13 year old, male, St Bedes)

'Yes I do 'cos my carers give me the opportunities to be independent. Also, I am treated like a son at my current foster care' (18 year old, male, Foster Care, Doncaster)

'Yes, because they take you like family' (11 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Yes because they get the same things as me.... Like a TV, Xbox, anything!'
(14 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Yes, because when for instance I wanted to go round at my friends house I can do that like a ordinary person. And it feels Nice to do what people around you do to'
(13 year old, female, Foster Care, Doncaster)

'36% - said we are Not Always treated the same!'

Thematic analysis from those 17% of 'No' answers, and 19% of those who responded 'Sometimes' revealed that responses for the two options were indistinguishable from each other so were placed together. Collectively these 36% who felt they were not being treated the same either always or sometimes as other non-looked after young people, expressed reasons around LAC having to live apart from their biological families, having much stricter rules and control imposed upon them than their peers and having to deal with other people's negative perceptions of a looked after child and however well-meaning being treated 'special' is, this is not always appreciated by the young person who wants to blend in and be the same:-

'No, because they live at home whit there Mum an Dad and I'm in care whit random people'
(13 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'No, because they are not your real family and not the same blood'
(17 year old, male, Notts)

'No, feel I'm treated differently, like people are trying to control me more than kids not in care are 'controlled' '
(18 year old, female, Foster Care, Worksop)

'No, I feel that rules are strickter for LAC than children at home'
(12 year old, male, Foster Care Rotherham)

'No, like in school teachers give me more of a leaway than other kids.... Treat me special and I don't want to be treated special I want to be a normal child'
(15 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Sometimes, because at school I don't get treated like students should at our school. But at my care home with foster parents and here at LAC Council I always get treated the same'
(14 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

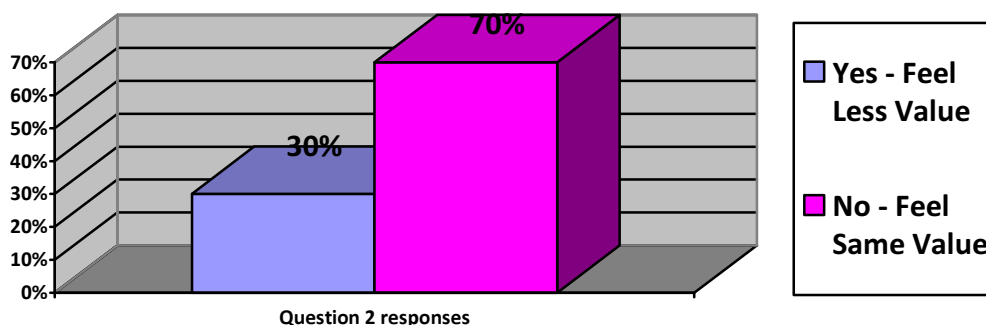
'Sometimes I receive special care & respect from people due to my circumstances and they pitty me... which I hate!' (18 year old, female, Semi Independent, Rotherham)

'Sometimes, it depends where I am. Home = Yes School = No'
(12 year old, female, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'No, I am the only one in care in my class' (11 year old, male, Foster Care, Hull)

'Sometimes, 'cos people out of care get help off parents/family/friends – we get help off people we don't really know or know us at eric manns or bridges'
(19 year old, female, semi-independent, Rotherham)

Q2. *Are there any times when you feel less valued than young people who aren't in care or leaving care? For example, places you go or people you are around*



'30% - of LAC young people feel they are not the same value as their peers due to their looked after status'

Thematic analysis from those 30% of young people who felt of less value than other young people due to their looked after status, revealed this was due to perceptions around inequity of treatment from foster carers in comparison with their own biological children, inequality of treatment for LAC within schools and basic inequity that young people have experienced poor care from their biological parents whereas other young people have not making them feel of less value. In addition feelings that being in care is a punishment for individuals is evident as they can't see their biological parents/families every day like other 'normal' young people when the young person hasn't done anything wrong. Here are some examples:-

'I'm not allowed to stay at home whilst they (foster carers) are on holiday but their own son is'
(18 year old, female, Foster Care Worksop)

'Sometimes I feel like people find it easy to reject me because they know I've been rejected before and I can handle it so it doesn't matter... Like I don't count'
(18 year old, female, semi-independent, Rotherham)

'I'm obviously not the same value cos u don't get to see your family every day. It's like you are in prison and everyone else can see their parents'
(15 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Sometimes because I think of others parents, and thinking about mine (that they were no good) but then I think about others parents, and thinking about how much they value and love them, whereas mine don't (or didn't) so that's why I sometimes feel less valued than others'
(12 year old, female, Foster Care, Doncaster)

'They (social care) have moved me a lot of times and I have not been able to see family members as I should be able to.... I don't feel like people listen to me as much (as if they would if I wasn't a looked after child)'
(18 year old, female, semi-independent, Rotherham)

'70% - feel they have the same value as their peers who are not living in the care of the local authority'

Thematic analysis from those 70% of young people who perceived themselves to have the same value as their peers indicated this was due to being treated the same as other young people in their foster care placement, their schools and having the same opportunities as other young people or no-one knowing they were living in care. Here are some examples:-

'I feel valued because they treat me the same'

(12 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'I always feel the same value as any other young person'

(13 year old, male, St Bedes)

'I feel like I am living with my real parents that's how GREAT Tina and Paul are to me!!!!'

(13 year old, female, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Not at all to be honest I feel Better Because I get more attention and focus and get to go where I want if staff available'

(16 year old, male, Residential, Retford)

'Everyone treats me like I am normal whether I am in care or not'

(17 year old, female, Sherburn in Elmet)

'I feel valued 'cos being in an Asian family is nice I feel like I'm wanted at weddings and people listen to what I want to say'

(10 year old, female, Foster Care, Rotherham)

Interestingly, two comments within this category felt they had the same value partly due to no-one knowing they were a looked after child:-

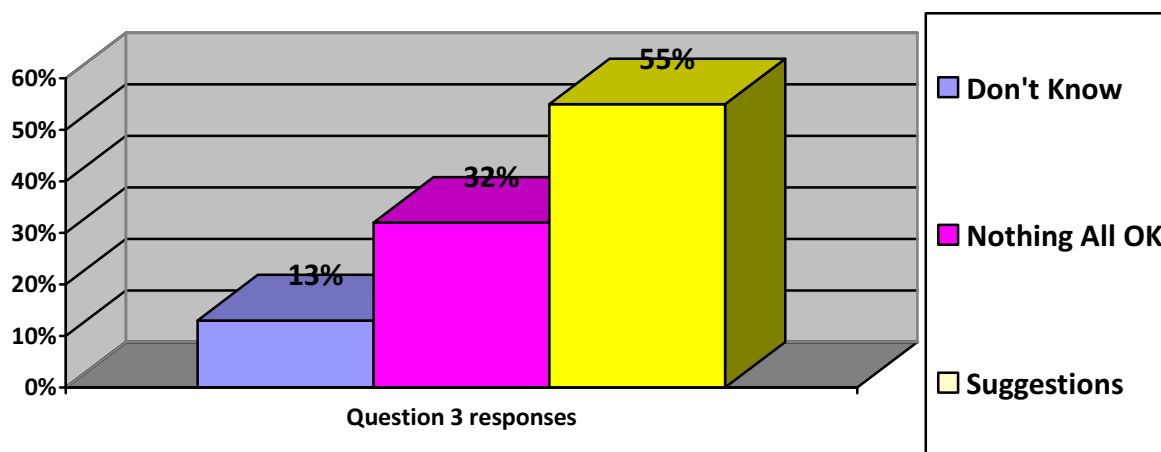
'I feel the same value, I'm not treated any differently to anyone else I think this is because I haven't told anyone I'm in care'

(13 year old, female, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'I am the same value. My friends don't know so it isn't a problem'

(12 year old, female, Foster Care, Rotherham)

Q3. What do you think would make young people who feel differently feel the same as those who aren't in care or leaving care?



'55% - Voiced suggestions to improve the quality of experiences for LAC young people'

Thematic analysis by the LAC Council indicated that young people felt greater opportunities to have a better social life including greater access to social media, spend more time with family, to have more independence and increased privacy may help those young people who don't feel they are treated the same or have same value as non-looked after children.

'If I was allowed to have social media e.g. facebook, twitter etc, and if I didn't have to go to so many meetings and fill in so many forms'

(13 year old, female, foster care, Rotherham)

'Being able to go out with friends'

(17 year old, female, Foster Care, OOA)

'To be able to talk to friends and family more'

(16 year old, male, Foster Care, Doncaster)

'To have mobile phones just like other young people'

(14 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Having parents who love me and help me through tough times be there when I need them. Someone to care and love me. Someone to keep me safe'

(12 year old, female, Foster Care, Doncaster)

'Have my Mum & Dad back'

(11 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'To live as long as I want with my foster family and not wait till I am 18 and no good for the money & they don't want me anymore'

(18 year old, female, OOA)

'Less rules and regulations'

(12 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'For schools to stop treating me different in school, like if I want to go out at lunch I can't pick my friends for myself – teachers wait at side door specially for me to tell me who I can go with. They think they are looking out for me because I am in care but they are treating me different and it's not fair' (15 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Ensure all teachers keep information about us private. Once, not on purpose I heard a teacher talking about another student who was in a placement. I shouldn't have heard this' (12 year old, female, Foster Care, Rotherham)

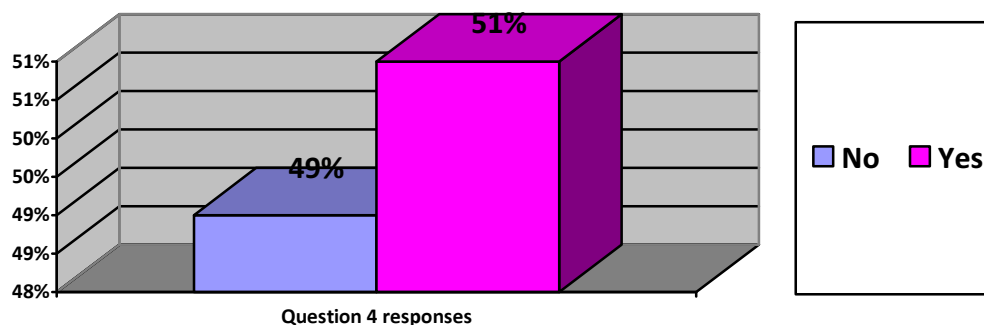
'By going out without staff all the time' (16 year old, male, Residential, Wrexham)

'Being able to go were ever I want meet people when ever I want'
(11 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Have some freedom & go places on my own (like other young people who aren't in care'
(16 year old, female, Foster Care, Sheffield)

'Not to feel watched' (20 year old, male, Independent, Rotherham)

Q4. *Is there anything else you would like to tell us about being in care or leaving care?*



This question was included by the LAC Council to capture anything that the young person may wish to voice whilst they have the opportunity.

'51% - Had more to tell us!'

During thematic analysis of these 51% of participants comments, the LAC Council placed them into 6 categories below:-

Professionals/Support

'Everything is okay, Syed helps me a lot' (11 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'Yes, I really like care. It's really good. I like the staff they really help us. They give us what we want and really help' (14 year old, male, Foster Care, Rotherham)

'put the right workers with the right child!' (20 year old female, independent, Rotherham)

'Care helps on so many levels it helps to plan and because you have support by staff and there willing to Put time and effort into stuff with you'
(16 year old, male, residential, Retford)

'I like living at park house and I like working with all staff I also enjoy activities with staff'
(12 year old, male, residential, Notts)

'What people say that things are going to get done never get done'
(16 year old, female, foster Care, Rotherham)

'It's okay, I get extra help with school and treated like a normal 13 year old girl – at home and at school. I enjoy where I live and I like school in general but there's some idiots who pick on me sometimes but other than that it's okay'
(13 year old, female, foster care, Rotherham)

'I like all the staff here and enjoy them spending time with me taking me out'
(13 year old, male, St Bedes)

'Lisa is amazing, Lisa should get an award, she really does, unsung hero award or something like that! Hope this brightened your day lol'
(18 year old, male, foster care, Doncaster)

Belonging/Family

'Being in care is not that bad. You get a loving family that appericate and love you an everything you have ever wanted' (13 year old, female, foster care, Doncaster)

'I'm happy in care but would like more contact in Rotherham'
(12 year old, male, foster care, Rotherham)

'being in care is hard. I miss my family and want to be home with my family'
(17 year old, female, foster care, OOA)

'It's a really better place for me and I get better chances to go on holiday and I see my family'
(12 year old, male, foster care, Rotherham)

'It is difficult in care because I am a single mum. I don't see all my family I am unhappy because I am not treated as an adult hear in this country like in my own'
(16 year old, female, foster care, Sheffield)

Safe/Security

'Them who are going into care no need to panic because you will be safe and it wil be like a home what you will be safe an have a great life in ☺ !!'

(13 year old, female, foster care, Rotherham)

'It has made a big difference in my life a good difference'

(17 year old, female, foster care, Bradford)

'It's for your own good realy so there's nothing you can do about it but here's my moto for it - Live life like you want no one can get in the way'

(13 year old, female, foster care, Doncaster)

'There's a sign in the care home saying that there is no need to worry. I know there is no danger and I am always safe'

(14 year old, male, semi-independent, Rotherham)

'Well I'm pleased that I live in care cause I've got a much better and safer home'

(10 year old, female, foster care, Doncaster)

'Being in care is scary I wish I was at home where I belong with my family and friends ther no internet her too so I can't play on my Xbox ☹'

(13 year old, male, Chesterfield)

Miscellaneous Comments

'It's good until you turn 18'

(18 year old, female, Nelson Street)

'£1,700 savings wasn't enough and more things should be funded'

(17 year old, female, foster care, Rotherham)

'Would like to be able to relax more at weekends than living strickt routine'

(12 year old, male, foster care, Rotherham)

'It's a good thing to do'

(16 year old, male, Wales)

'It's fun and no body judges you for it because they don't know what it is like'

(13 year old, male, foster care, Rotherham)

'It is different and helps you for your own future – P.S. Sorry about my writing'

(17 year old, male, Notts)

'I REALLY, REALLY ENJOY BEING IN CARE! HOWEVER WEIRED THAT SOUNDS, I DON'T REALLY GRIEVE ABOUT MY PARENTS THAT MUCH'

(12 year old, female, foster care, Doncaster)

Recommendations from Rotherham Looked After and Leaving Care Young People

Recommendations 1 & 2)

LAC Equity supports trusting relationships = Greater Protection

36% of LAC who participated in this feedback felt they were not always treated the same as their non-looked after peers. It is felt that trust may be compromised between young people in care and their carers, social workers, teachers and other professionals when looked after young people perceive they are not being treated the same or equal to other young people. As widespread research suggests that trust is crucial to develop strong stable relationships, and these types of relationships help protect children in care, the Rotherham Looked After Children's Council suggest that trust needs to be strengthened, recommending that 'equity' awareness training should be made available for all staff working with LAC to challenge some pre-conceived ideas around the needs of LAC. In addition, it is suggested that LA&LC young people need more voice & influence opportunities to identify and share with their corporate parents what is really important to them individually to genuinely influence their own care. Together, these two suggestions may potentially help build stronger, trusting and stable relationships with looked after young people and their workers and in turn help protect LAC in Rotherham.

Recommendation 3)

Greater social interaction with Voice & Influence youth groups

30% of LAC feel they don't have same value as their peers undermining their self-confidence and self-esteem. During discussion the LAC Council talked about how isolating being in care can be without their biological families and often having few positive relationships with peers outside of the LAC Council. It is felt that looked after young people should have greater Voice and Influence opportunities to engage in social interaction youth groups with other looked after children, actively participating in educational, sporting and team building opportunities will build upon personal development. Research shows that such group work methods raise self-esteem and confidence, increases quality of life and wellbeing in vulnerable young people. In addition positive engagement with social groups promotes the cultivation of social capital which in turn contributes to young people's resilience. The LAC Council suggests that Social Workers, PA's, Managers and Foster Carer's actively promote the engagement of looked after and leaving care young people in Voice & Influence youth groups across Rotherham.

Recommendation 4)

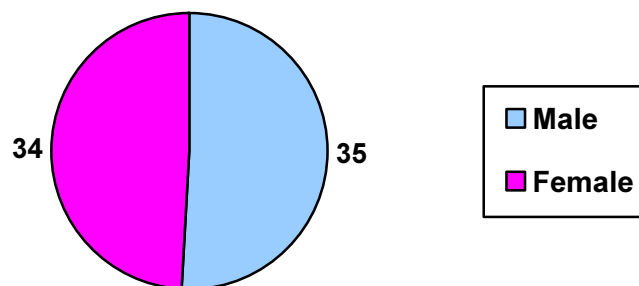
LAC Voices empowered to negotiate their contact with family

Another issue raised by LA&LC young people scattered across all four questions emphasised a common complaint that they weren't allowed to see their 'real' parents and siblings as often as they would like to. Although, it is understood that these are most often due to legal conditions to protect LA&LC young people, it is recommended that whenever possible and safe, looked after children and young people should be given a greater voice to express their wishes and empowered to negotiate the frequency of contact with siblings, and in turn furnished with opportunities to make contact with their parent/s and/or siblings. Where this choice is not possible, further explanations and emotional support should be forthcoming from Foster Carers, Social Workers and Reviewing Officers etc.

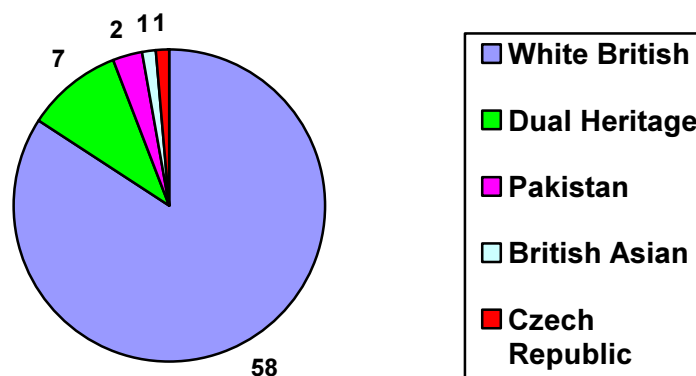
Descriptive Data ~ Looked After & Leaving Care Feedback

The descriptive data for all 69 young people engaged through Voice & Influence with Looked After Children and those in Leaving Care. Showing Gender, Ethnicity, Living Arrangements, and Age from the Young Person's feedback processes has been expressed below in various charts.

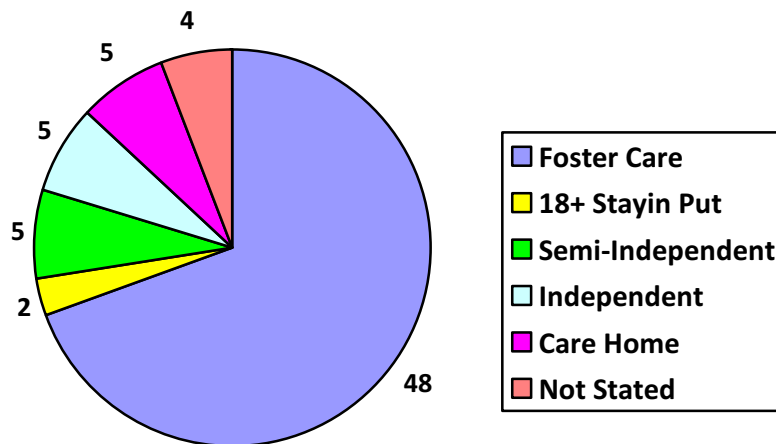
Gender of 69 Young People



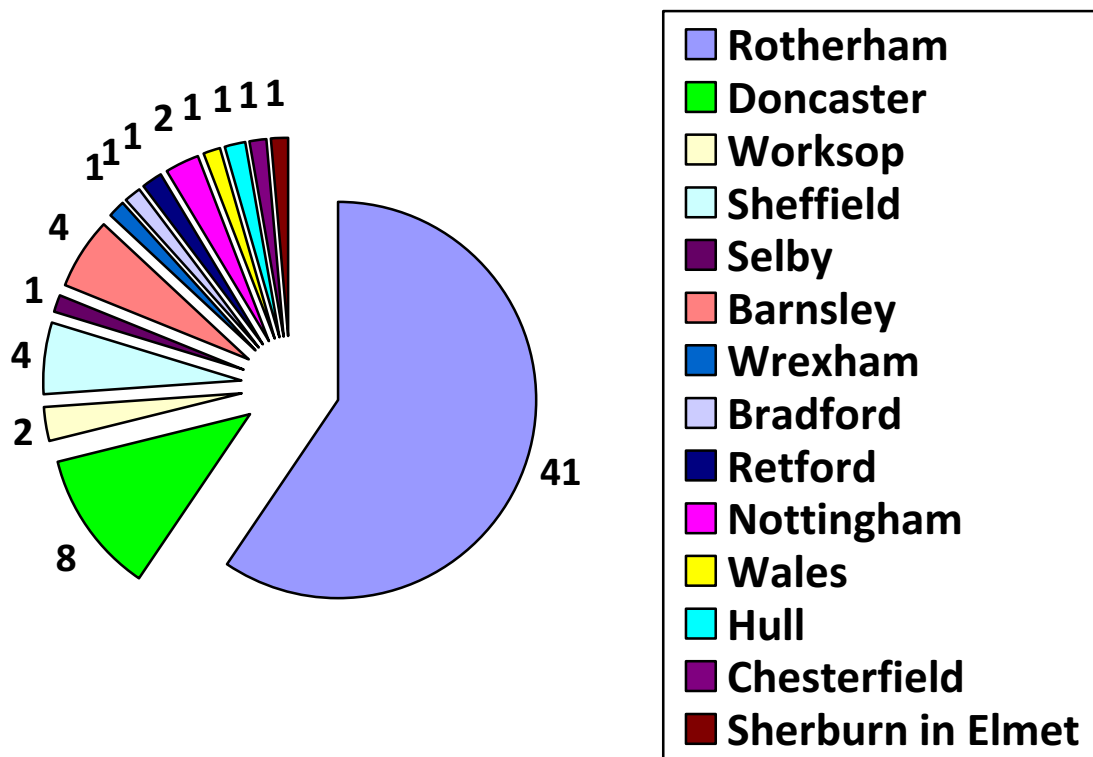
Ethnic Origins of 69 Young People



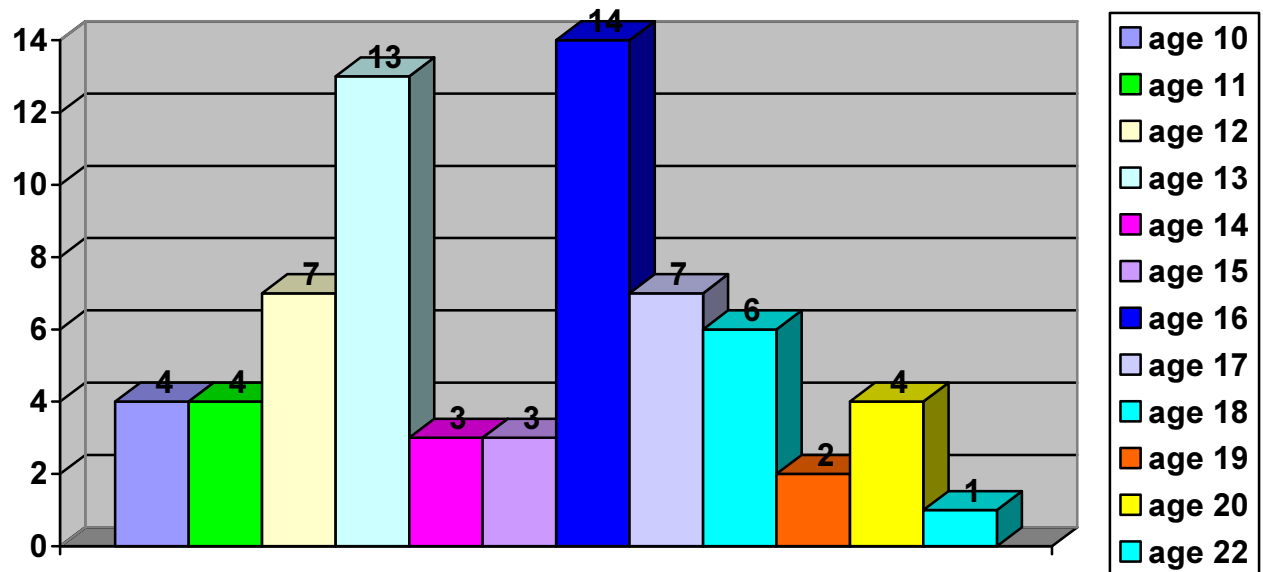
Breakdown of 69 Young People Living Arrangements:-



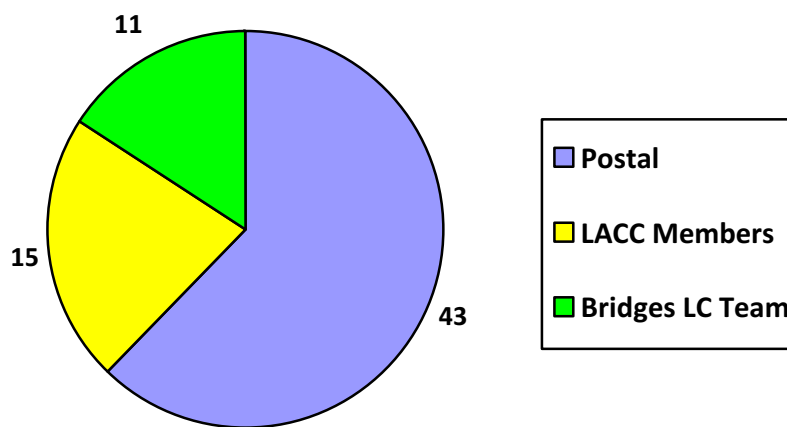
69 Young People living in and outside of Rotherham:



Ages of 69 Participants



Route of Completed feedback



If you are a looked after child aged 11–21 years, please complete this form and give us your feedback. Your voice is very important to us! The LAC Council will review this information in confidence alongside other 'Have Your Say' forms from other young people in care.



Have Your Say

Please hand/post this completed form back to:
Lisa Du-Valle at the LAC Council or
 Eric Manns Building
 Opposite Town Hall
 Moorgate, Rotherham

Tel: 01709 822130 or Mob: 07748143388
 Or hand in to your social worker to give to Lisa.



LACC Rotherham
 Feedback report 2015/Du-Valle



@LACCRotheram



Council

By filling in this form you will be in with a chance of winning gift cards to be spent at



Prize Draw! **£60 Gift Card**
£25 Gift Card
£15 Gift Card

Have your say...

Name:	Age
Address:	
Ethnicity:	

Q1. Do you feel that you are treated the same as other young people around you who aren't in care? (Please circle)

Yes **No** **Sometimes** **Not Sure**

Please explain why you feel like this:

Q3. What would make young people who feel differently feel the same as young people who aren't in care or leaving care?

Q2. Are there any times where you feel less valued than young people who aren't in care? For example, places you go or people you are around?

Q4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about being in care?

THANK
YOU!



Rotherham Looked After Children's Council LAC Summit Report October 2015

**Young People Making a Positive Contribution to
Rotherham Looked After & Leaving Care Services**

Written by Lisa Du-Valle
Looked After Children's Council
Voice & Influence Team
Integrated Youth Support Services
With a concluding note from Michelle Whiting Interim Head of Looked After Children

Thank You!

The Rotherham Looked After Children's Council would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all of our 78 guests for coming along, working together and joining in the fun at the LAC Summit!

Special Thanks goes to:-

Ian Thomas (Interim Strategic Director) for opening up the Summit and being the first person to sign our LAC Promise 😊

Michelle Whiting (Interim Head for Looked After Children) for believing in us enough to ask us to put on the LAC Summit and giving us the freedom to go for it!

Commissioning, Performance & Quality Team for support in developing the LAC Promise, behind the scenes and front of house support and enthusiasm

Matt Ellis (Herringthorpe Valley Youth Centre Manager) for being our music and sounds DJ on the night

Sarah Bellamy (V&I Youth Worker) for being our photographer on the night

Kelly Stevenson (V&I LAC Council Support Worker) for your enthusiastic and energetic support behind the scenes with young people, doing mountains of admin stuff and helping Lisa

Lisa Du-Valle (V&I Youth Worker, LAC Council) *'for helping us to sort stuff out and being there for us all every week'*

From 😊

Jocelyn Abbie TJ Nicky
 Terry Lee Charlotte Zoe Simon
Mark Kelsie Caitlin Paislie
 Courtney Tylor Aleanor

The LAC Summit was held on Wednesday evening, 9th September 2015 at the New York Stadium, Rotherham. 78 guests arrived to participate in the Summit at the request of the LAC Council. The guests were a diverse group from across RMBC Services and 7 Rotherham Councillors (see appendix A)

This report is written to raise awareness of the LAC Summit and ongoing work to improve services for Looked After and Leaving care young people in Rotherham and the Rotherham Looked After Children's Council involvement in the design, development and delivery of the LAC Promise and LAC Summit.

Introduction & Background to the LAC Summit

The Rotherham Looked After Children's Council (LACC) is a Voice & Influence youth group for Looked After Children aged 11 to 18 (25 where there is a disability) We hold regular meetings to raise awareness and have our say about things that affect us and work together to influence positive decisions, and shape services to improve the lives of everyone living in Social Care in Rotherham. The LACC currently has 15 active members and meets for Voice & Influence training and development sessions weekly at the MyPlace building Rotherham. In addition, the LACC hold regular meetings on weekends and evenings to prepare presentations and complete high profile project work.

The LAC Council has adopted the following statement from Article 12, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

'Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account'

The Corporate LAC Promise

One of the LACC core aims is to help design, develop and shape services for Rotherham Looked After Children and Care Leavers and earlier this year the LAC Council were invited to work alongside RMBC staff from the Commissioning, Performance & Quality team to support the development of the Corporate LAC Promise. The LAC Council embraced this opportunity and worked for 3 months putting forward ideas for inclusion and tweaks to wording within the promise going back and forth until all parties were satisfied and agreed with the final results. The LAC Promise is a set of 9 points that young people feel are important to them and wanted social workers and all corporate parents to use as an operational benchmark when working with Looked After and Leaving Care young people. (see appendix B)

With the completion of the LAC Promise the Rotherham LAC Council was invited by Michelle Whiting (Interim Head of Looked After Children) to deliver their own LAC Summit where they could launch the Corporate LAC Promise to Social Care Staff, Managers, Directors and RMBC Councillors.

The Voice & Influence Youth Work Process

Taking this request back to the young people of the LAC Council in July the Voice & Influence youth work process began in earnest to empower young people to make

their own decisions about what they wanted to happen. After discussing the options and parameters of a potential LAC Summit the group wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to share their work around improving services for Looked After and Leaving Care young people with social workers and social care staff they knew and revelled in the opportunity to deliver their own LAC Summit in their own style.

Concerns over the timing of the LAC Summit were raised with Michelle as traditionally LACC members numbers are low during the summer holidays due to young people going away on holidays and staying at Foster Carers caravans for extended periods of time. Questions needed to be asked whether a quality LAC Summit could be delivered given these challenges. With this consideration and after discussions around young people's availability and venue choice the date for the Summit was set for Wednesday 9th September, early evening at the New York Stadium venue.

The whole process of writing and delivering the LAC Summit for a group of 15 Looked After young people involved a lot of team work, decision making, negotiating and planning that is part of the voice and influence youth work process. This group are all volunteers who support each other and give up their time weekly for free. A vast amount of research now recognises that in challenging our young people to deliver such projects and appropriately supporting their personal, social and educational development along the way we are empowering them to have greater aspirations, cultivate social capital, increase self-esteem and confidence. In addition for vulnerable young people such as Looked After and Leaving Care young people opportunities may well contribute to increasing their resilience and protect them from future harm. For every LACC young person who has been involved in the development of the LAC Promise and delivery of the LAC Summit they have been involved in a personal journey, alongside a shared experience with peers that has been at times brave, frustrating, ambitious and hilarious.

In order for young people to organise their own event they needed to be clear about what they were trying to achieve with the Summit from a LAC Council members perspective. This involved young people making numerous decisions from their aims for the LAC Summit to who they wanted to invite for their audience. The group worked really hard to put their Summit programme together working through their residential at Filey and through their summer holidays to complete it. After much debate young people agreed their aims for the Summit:-

Aims of the LAC Summit:-

- Launch our Corporate LAC Promise - Raise awareness of the items within it
- Deliver an exercise to challenge the audience to consider ways in which they could keep this promise to LAC over the coming year
- Raise awareness of the Looked After Children's Council and their work
- Recruit new members for the LAC Council through participants attending the LAC Summit

The young people decided to deliver their aims in two parts using two distinct methods of delivery in order to get and retain their audience interest. The first section was to raise awareness and recruit new LAC Council members which involved a colourful group delivered powerpoint presentation, introducing themselves and their work to the audience. The second section shifted gears to that of a mock Quiz show whereby a LACC member Nicky played game show host and the rest of the group supported him in achieving their aims to launch the Corporate LAC Promise and actively engage the audience in providing ideas around how the services could achieve all 9 points within the LAC Promise.

To have a greater understanding of the processes and level of work involved with achieving the aims of the LAC Council for the LAC Summit, some detail of active engagement in planning and delivery of their aims are detailed below;

AIM: Raise awareness of the Looked After Children's Council and their work

Young people had requested Ian Thomas to open up the LAC Summit and introduce the LAC Council which he kindly accepted and delivered with his friendly professionalism. Young people chose to raise awareness of the LACC to their audience by delivering a colourful group powerpoint presentation. Members worked together to write presentation cards to introduce the LAC Council and its aims, and outline different aspects of the LACC including social, educational and personal opportunities for development. To show their consultation work to shape Rotherham Looked After Children Services and work within wider communities, work with National Children in Care Councils and other Youth Voice Groups including Rotherham Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament. Once the group was satisfied that all corners of their work was represented on their script cards they took time to identify appropriate members to read them based on their literacy skills and confidence levels. After further alterations to individual scripts to fit individual speech patterns young people went on to decide which photo's they wanted to place on powerpoint presentation and in what order this should be. Young people rehearsed their parts numerous times during the sessions and took them home to practice after sessions to prepare and build their confidence. Thoughts around presentation extended to young people creating display boards and choosing to wear their LAC Council T Shirts, displaying the LACC logo recently re-designed by young people and to introduce themselves to the audience from chairs on the stage to communicate togetherness and friendliness.

AIM: Recruit new members for the LAC Council through participants attending the LAC Summit

Young people were aware that some LACC members would be leaving the group in September as they were moving on to Universities. This would leave 4 places open to fill for potential new members. To capitalise on this opportunity at the Summit the young people created a LACC welcome pack to be distributed to all attendees on the night which included their up-dated LAC Council information booklet, LACC Referral Form, LACC pen and business card. It was hoped the whole evening presentation and recruitment packs would not only raise awareness of the benefits of being a LAC

Council member but also would encourage members of the audience to encourage young people they worked with to also consider coming along to a meeting to join in the fun. Unfortunately, despite the LAC Councils best efforts, to date only one young person has been put forward by an audience member to join the LACC.

AIM: Launch our Corporate LAC Promise - Raise awareness of the items within it

After relatively very little debate the group decided that to introduce their LAC Promise they wanted to deliver it to their audience in a comic style 'Quiz show' where the host would ask the audience to work in teams to answer basic questions about the LAC Promise and accompanied by the LAC Council who would support individual tables and Matt Ellis who supplied the background music and noises, young people would dish out really poor prizes to the winners. Young people had great fun choosing the right music and sounds to accompany their 'show', and creatively devised 2 prizes which were an Ipad (a medical eye pad) and an Apple Note Pad (Apple on a note pad) to give out.

Young people were very clear they wanted workers to keep to these LAC promises and wanted them to sign up and agree to them for everyone to see. Based around their idea of a fun Willy Wonker style contract created a giant LAC Promise, a colourful A1 size sheet ready for their audience to sign at the Summit.

During rehearsals the original host of the Summit had to pull out due to pressures of preparing for University so on our final rehearsal Nicky put himself forward, made the part his own, and did a fabulous job as host ad-libbing on the night and including creative banter mimicking Paddy McGuinness was great fun, leading to his request for the audience to sign up to the LAC Promise warning them '***no likey – no signey!***' On the evening the young people delivered this section of the LAC Summit wonderfully well enjoying every minute along with the audience.

AIM: Deliver an exercise to challenge the audience to consider ways in which they could keep this promise to LAC over the coming year.

This aim quickly snowballed from its basic roots of challenging the audience to come up with ideas about the LAC Promise to becoming far more complex to capture information that could be measured. Thinking up a way to get the audience to engage in an exercise run by young people that would make them engage with the LAC Promise thereby learning it, and identify creative ways in their own practice in which they could keep their promise and make it happen so that this information could be collected/recorded in a format that could be translated into measures to check on success in the following year was no easy task. This had to be broken down into bite size chunks for young people to engage with and slowly based on past experiences of exercises they had engaged with at the LAC Council young people developed their ideas.

Young people decided to challenge each of the 9 tables at the Summit to work together to engage in exploring the possibilities of points within the LAC Promise, saying how each point could be achieved within their work, and feeding back and

sharing their ideas recorded on flip chart paper to the rest of the audience. (see appendix C) Young people from the LACC chose to be present at each table to assist with the process and the host would support the process by working the tables and speaking with them on the microphone. When all avenues of the LAC Promise had been explored Nicky the host invited Ian Thomas followed by members of the audience to sign up to the LAC Promise. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the whole LAC Summit evening and the sense of achievement and empowerment was evident in their excitement and confidence supporting audience members to sign up to the LAC Promise.

What Next?

Following on from the LAC Summit, the information gathered from the LAC Council exercise was worked on within the Commissioning, Performance & Quality Team who included a section around how these will be measured/inspected/audited to check whether we are delivering these promises. Although this is still in draft stages we have included in within our appendices (see appendix D) to show how this work is continuing to move forwards.

Also, the LAC Council have requested that the giant LAC Promise that has been signed by everyone present at the LAC Summit should be displayed in Riverside House to continue to raise awareness of it and also keep the Promise in people's minds. Steps are being taken to enquire about a mobile poster frame to display the work.

In addition, Collette Bailey IYSS Head of Service Early Help and Families, (Lead Youth Offer) has requested that the LAC Council could deliver the LAC Summit presentation and LAC Promise exercise to the senior Managers in the IYSS over the next few months. This would ensure the LAC Promise went to a wider audience and everyone across the council who works with Looked After and Leaving Care young people could sign up to the LAC Promise.

Feedback from LACC Young People

The LAC Council have had some tremendous experiences and achievements during the last year and have been involved in a whole range of youth voice activities and opportunities to have their say and make a positive impact on the things that matter to them. Development of the LAC Promise and engagement in the LAC Summit will stand out as making a difference to services for Looked After and Leaving Care young people of Rotherham. All 15 LACC members actively contributed to the LAC Summit either through writing scripts, creating ideas and supporting rehearsals over the summer holidays, it was only possible for 10 of our young people to actually perform on the night.

All of the LAC Council have provided positive feedback saying although it was hard work leading up to the Summit, they really enjoyed delivering it, and felt 'proud' to be part of it. Despite initial nervousness about performing in front of the large audience they settled into their roles and delighted in the audiences response to their delivery and were warmed by the support they received during the LAC

Promise exercise where LACC members individually joined their guests seated at tables making the whole evening a positive and empowering experience.

Alongside, young people wanting to say a big thank you to all those who supported them in making the LAC Summit happen which we felt was important to place at the beginning of the report. They also had a few more comments to express what they thought of taking part in the LAC Summit and we would like to leave this report as we began it with the voices of our fabulous young people:-

'Can we do it again!?'

'I want to say that it was a great example of how the looked after children's council can have a clear and open dialogue with corporate parents and councillors! Those who impact on the care that we receive'

'I must admit I did enjoy it and I got a lot of feedback from my table to see what they were gunna change to help looked after young people and them in leaving care'

'I thought it went well!!'

'It was alright... I liked the table things and when Nicky did the games'

'It was a good summit, I just hope that everyone keeps to the promise'

'I liked it... It was good to communicate with social workers, I got a lot out of it... it was good for my confidence for speaking to the social workers about the promise 😊'

'Oh I really enjoyed it and thought that it was a great turn out and I thought it was excellent because my table I had my social worker in and I think we got to know each other more'

'It was great I felt like I took a lead role in it and it helped me with being able to socialise better with people and yes I would defiantly do it again'

**For further information about the Rotherham
Looked After Children's Council membership please contact:-**

Lisa Du-Valle on 01709 822130 or mob 07748143388



LACC Rotherham



@LACCRotherham

End note from Michelle Whiting Interim Head of Looked After Children

When the LAC Council went for refreshments everyone discussed what they would do to keep the LAC promise.

Every person in the room wrote on a card addressed to themselves what they had promised to do

We all agreed that it was a very valuable opportunity for staff and people who mattered, to hear what our children experienced so we decided that :-

1. We would hold a Lac Summit every year
2. That we would ask the young inspectors to test out whether we are meeting those promises.
3. The young inspectors report will be fed back to next years summit.

Oh and the individual cards will be posted to each of the participants in the New Year to remind them what they promised to do!

Appendix B

Guests Attended the LAC Summit:

Rotherham Councillors

Adoption – Adoption team looking after parents and carers becoming adoptive parents and children being adopted

CiN – Children in Need (teams)

DfE – Department for Education (Government department)

Evolve – Child Sexual Exploitation Team

IYSS – Integrated Youth Support Service, Early Help

LAACCTT - Looked After and Adopted Children's Therapeutic Team

LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Performance & Quality Team – Children & Young People team that monitors performance and quality of services

RCCG - NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group

Senior Management Team – Children & Young People Service Strategic Director & Directors of each service

Virtual School



Looked After Children and Leaving Care Promise – 2015



As your Corporate Parent we promise:-

Appendix D

Feedback from LAC Summit - Wednesday 9th September
LAC Council exercise on LAC Promises

PROMISE 1**We will help you to live in a safe place where you are protected from harm**

- Ensuring recruitment of carers is robust. Appropriate Foster Carers, meeting legal criteria. Foster Carers to receive good training
- Listening to young people's views, but educating about risks
- Social workers to visit young person at home, regularly
- Ensuring dynamics in residential homes are considered
- Good rapport/relationships with carers, residential workers and social workers
- Challenging professionals – for the benefit of young people
- Advocates for young people – 'would you place your child there?'

- Explaining to young people what safe choices are
- Managing risk – age/understanding
- Expectations and boundaries
- Listening to young people – do they feel safe and understanding
- Good quality carers/providers – choice
- Key person/relationship – who do the young person want
- Saying 'No' at times and being a parent – we don't always get it right
- Multi-agency working – Ownership – It is not someone else's issue
- Quick and responsive services
- Services to meet young people need rather than making young people fit services
- It is OK for young people to make a mistake
- Less placement changes

PROMISE 2**We will listen to what you have to say and make sure it makes a difference**

- Ensure that there is access to trusted adult(s) who can listen
- We will tell you what changes as a result of what you tell us (quickly)
- We will help you to put on events so that people can listen
- We need to make sure that the right people listen to you, depending on what you want to say
- We will check that we have a really great and effective advocacy service – Might mentors help too (Check Barnsley & Sheffield systems)
- We will ask you if we are keeping our promises – (Young Inspectors might help with this)
- Look at community mentors – "wider family" – across all sectors – people who can support, who young people can go to

- Make time to listen to the young person, allow person to feel comfortable to allow this alone; with carer; appropriate place
written; different comms; text; email
- We will act on your wishes when possible or will explain why we can't provide what

<p>you want and discuss what is best</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect your wishes into everyday plan and services • Chance to check, review, audit – are wishes implemented
<p>PROMISE 3</p> <p>We will help you to learn and do your best at school and college</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support • Nag – persistently • Have someone to talk to about choices • Financial support • Equipment – computers/laptops/books • Look at how we can help with homework • Taking an interest – know what person likes and what their talents are • Support hobby and interests including getting qualifications or awards in it • Celebrate achievements • University taster days • Do visits and help with research on careers
<p>PROMISE 4</p> <p>We will help you to be happy and healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered with appropriate health, dental providers • Enable children to feel loved, have warmth, be nurtured • Give continuity of relationships and care – Good and positive through childhood and beyond • We are going to be motivated to promote what makes the child happy and healthy, through working together creatively • Give young people what they need and not what we have got • Helping to maintain and grow good family relationships and friends • Promote self-esteem and good role modelling • Fun
<p>PROMISE 5</p> <p>We will help you to learn new skills as you grow up and become an adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work opportunity placements • Work experience – apprenticeships – jobs • Engage partners – NHS & Others • Early years opportunities • Pay for hobbies – gym memberships, driving lessons etc. • Constructive holiday activities – include Foster Carers & family • Literacy and numeracy skills – close the gap • Be imaginative • Managing conflict – skills needed • Help you learn independent living skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to learn new skills as you grow up and become an adult • Access to social activities and recreation • For implementation of independence work to be undertaken before 16 • Giving young people options, and responding to their wishes • To remember that 'adult' does not mean 18

- Staying Put arrangement
- Considering risks but not being 'risk averse'
- To be encouraged and supported to follow dreams
- Multi-agency work to access further opportunities

PROMISE 6

We will fully involve you in plans and decisions about you and your future

- Be flexible and be willing to let people have a try
- Be creative about how you engage and work with children and young people
- Let child/young person chair their own review
- Think about how use technology e.g. an 'app' for consultation forms rather than on a piece of paper
- Mix it up a bit – don't ask same questions all the time
- Use activities or going out rather than just sit in a room and talk
- Be willing to compromise where there is a disagreement – consider alternatives
- Put young people in touch with 'Youth Start' or other organisations – Advocacy type services
- Placement choice
- Young person at the centre
- PEP – pupil voice section always done and acted upon
- Consultation at every opportunity, creative methods
- We are going to ask what young people may want to choose
- Enable young people to have different chances and experience – go for it or leave it behind if they want to take risks
- Manage expectations – help young people to make good decisions and choice
- Understand role of parent boundaries and safety

PROMISE 7

We will help you take part in activities that you enjoy or that you are interested in

- Help explore interests with young person ask; tasters; support current interests, hobbies
- Social links, skills, share interests
- Social opportunities, friendships
- Supporting links with friends, activities
- Activities co-ordinators
- LAC activities (funding)

PROMISE 8

We will help you to explore and be ready for the world of work

- Try new things, placements, work experience?
- Council pro-activity – Visits to work place
- Encourage, employability group
- Confidence, peer mentoring, IYSS, LACC, Schooling
- Parent and carers evenings compulsory – give priority, make sure they come in
- High expectations
- Trial interviews
- Financially, clothing, transport, internet access, equipment, printers, computers
- Sheffield or other university open days – support to go with

- Identification of strengths and weaknesses
- Extra time in exams for LAC
- Employers experience (stigma) – be open
- PEPS, PA, Peer Mentors
- Range of skills that contribute – soft skills – self confidence
- Mentoring by corporate family member or other young person
- Showing interest in – what young person wants to do – Being a good parent with school
- Recognising talent
- Opportunities able to explore
- Celebrate achievements
- Financial support
- Increase links with business and other corporate parents
- Build on what we have it is not enough – 30 day placements
- Practical help to take to interviews etc.
- Raising aspirations – what is out there e.g. Higher education visits
- Joined up plans – PEP's – Child and young person focussed
- Encourage and support volunteering and additional experiences

PROMISE 9

We will help you to be proud of yourself and celebrate your individual beliefs

- Help people feel normal – or recognise that no one is 'normal'
- Positive feedback i.e. rewards
- Encouragement! - Helped to believe in yourself
- Has to be part of training role of everyone around children and young people
 - 'gaps' filled by other people i.e. mentors?
- Opportunities to succeed – hobbies
- Celebrate the small and big things
- Annual events
- Keep a record of achievements
- At reviews record and acknowledge success achieved
- Not judge
- Develop sense of belonging
- Help give back to community
- If you do have a faith/spiritual belief – we will help you express this

Appendix E



Looked After Children & Leaving Care Promise 2015



Promise 1

We will help you to live in a safe place where you are protected from harm

We will do this by

- Listening to your views on where you want to live and if we cannot offer you a choice we will explain why.
- Listening to you about keeping in touch with your friends and family.
- Working with you to make sure you feel safe.
- Making sure you know what to do if you don't feel safe.
- Providing you with contact details for someone you can rely on if you don't feel safe.
- Giving you advice and support to help you stay safe.

We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises

- Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases
- Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC
- IRO Consultation for LAC review
- No. of young people under 18 attending CSE Education Sessions (LAC?)
- Audits carried out in line with Quality Assurance Framework
- % long term looked after children in stable placements for at least 2 years

Promise 2

We will listen to what you have to say and make sure it makes a difference

We will do this by

- Helping you to have your say and listening to your views.
- Including you and asking your opinion making sure that you are part of the decisions made about

We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises

- Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases
- Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC
- IRO Consultation for LAC Review
- Performance Indicators % children attending a review

<p>you and your future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valuing your views and opinions ▪ Making sure you have different and modern ways to tell us your views and opinions ▪ Encouraging you to talk to us about anything important to you at a time convenient to you ▪ Making sure you know how to raise your concerns or make a complaint, comment or compliment ▪ Offering you independent advocacy support (someone to help you speak out) if you need or want it ▪ Asking you if we are keeping our promises, listening and acting upon your views ▪ Promoting groups and activities for young people to regularly be involved in. ▪ Offering you advice and advocacy support to access relevant financial support and bursary's for employment, education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance Indicators % children reporting to a review ▪ Initial & Core Assessment ▪ Complaints/Comments/Compliments ▪ Mystery Shopping – Young Inspector Programme ▪ IYSS Indicators? ▪ Foster Carer Feedback Forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Foster Carers ➢ Children & Young People whose parents are Foster Carers ➢ LAC children who are fostered
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Promise 3

We will help you to learn and do your best at school and college

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making sure you have a place at the best school or college for you. ▪ Making sure you do not have to move schools wherever possible ▪ Introducing you to your Designated Teacher at school, college or university so you know where to go for help. ▪ Involving you in the development of your Personal Education Plan ▪ Working with school to make sure you get extra help from relevant services if you need it. ▪ Working with you, your carers and professionals to make sure you get the most from school, college, university and training. ▪ Making sure you have the materials, clothing and equipment needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases ▪ Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC ▪ IRO Consultation for LAC review ▪ Performance on Care Leavers in employment , education or training ▪ Performance on Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date PEP ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date Plan ▪ Virtual School Annual Report ▪ Case Studies from LAC/Leaving Care ▪ Children Commissioners annual LAC Survey ▪ Recognise LAC educational achievements

Promise 4**We will help you to be happy & healthy**

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognising that we all need different things to make us feel happy, healthy and cared about. ▪ Making sure you know how to keep healthy and make healthy choices. ▪ Training carers and professionals to help you to be happy and healthy. ▪ Encouraging you to have regular health, dental and optician checks. ▪ Supporting you with any appointments you have. ▪ Making sure you know who to speak to in confidence for advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases ▪ Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC ▪ IRO Consultation for LAC review ▪ LAC Health Indicators ▪ IYSS Indicators ▪ CAMHS Indicators ▪ Audits carried out in line with Quality Assurance Framework ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date health assessments ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date dental assessments

Promise 5**We will help you to learn new skills as you grown up and become an adult**

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talking to you about your future and help you plan. ▪ Fully involving you in your Pathway Plan and getting the help you need to make good choices for the future. ▪ Identifying the support you need and who will provide it. ▪ Helping you to be prepared and have skills like budgeting, cleaning and cooking for when you live on your own. ▪ Helping you to find somewhere safe and suitable to live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases ▪ Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC ▪ IRO Consultation for LAC review ▪ Children Commissioners annual LAC Survey ▪ IYSS Indicators ▪ Performance on Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date PEP ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date Plan ▪ Performance on Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation ▪ Case Studies from LAC/Leaving Care ▪ Complaints/Comments/Compliments ▪ Mystery Shopping – Young Inspector Programme

Promise 6**We will fully involve you in plans and decisions about you and your future**

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explaining things to you in a way that you understand. ▪ Making sure carers and professionals spend time with you and get to know you properly. ▪ Involving you in your Care Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases ▪ Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC ▪ IRO Consultation for LAC review ▪ Children Commissioners annual LAC Survey ▪ IYSS Indicators

<p>and making sure that your wishes and feelings are always considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making sure your review meeting is worthwhile and useful for you ▪ Offering to meet you at a place or your choice ▪ Supporting you to attend meetings and to share your wishes and feelings. ▪ Offering you advice to access services to support how you feel emotionally ▪ Supporting you to access finances for you to attend Higher Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance on Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date Plan ▪ Case Studies from LAC/Leaving Care ▪ Complaints/Comments/Compliments ▪ Mystery Shopping – Young Inspector Programme ▪ Audits carried out in line with Quality Assurance Framework
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Promise 7**We will help you take part in activities that you enjoy or that you are interested in**

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging you to seek out activities available to you that you find fun or you are interested in. ▪ Making sure you are encouraged to try new things and develop yourself further ▪ Giving you the opportunity to get to know other looked after children through attending groups and activities ▪ Providing carers and professionals' with local information about activities in and out of school and around where you live. ▪ Make sure you can keep going to activities you are involved in if you move placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases ▪ Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC ▪ IRO Consultation for LAC review ▪ Children Commissioners annual LAC Survey ▪ Audits carried out in line with Quality Assurance Framework ▪ Performance on Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan ▪ Performance on LAC with up to date Plan

Promise 8**We will help you to explore and be ready for the world of work**

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listening to what you want to achieve and involving you in your plans for your future. ▪ Making sure you have all the information you need to make choices. ▪ Helping you to apply for an apprenticeship or go onto college or university. ▪ Supporting you to find a job or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases ▪ Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC ▪ IRO Consultation for LAC review ▪ Children Commissioners annual LAC Survey ▪ Performance on Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan ▪ Performance on Care Leavers in employment , education or training

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> placement. Working with you to know when it's right for you to move on from care to find a place to live and learn on your own Making sure you have the materials and clothing you need to be make sure you are ready or training, higher education or employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Studies from LAC/Leaving Care
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Promise 9**We will help you to be proud of yourself and celebrate you individual beliefs**

We will do this by	We will measure/inspect/audit we are delivering these promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting you to attend and take part in religious and cultural practices, events or celebrations. Helping you to record important events, achievements and people in your life Respecting differences and supporting your individual needs Taking time to explain how proud we are of you. Making opportunities for you to create good memories for yourself for your future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell us what you think forms at reviews & closure of cases Voice & Influence annual consultation for LAC IRO Consultation for LAC review Children Commissioners annual LAC Survey Case Studies from LAC/Leaving Care Performance on Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan Performance on LAC with up to date Plan

Summary Sheet

Council Report: Corporate Parenting Meeting 19th January 2016

Title: Rotherham Looked After Children's Council Update Report and LAC Summit Feedback

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?
No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report:
Linda Harper Interim Strategic Director

Report Author:
Lisa Du-Valle

Ward(s) Affected:
All Wards are affected

Executive Summary:

This is a report prepared on a quarterly basis to provide Corporate Parenting Panel with information and regular updates around what Rotherham Looked After Children's Council are doing. This report gives a brief summary of the work undertaken by the LAC Council in terms of helping shape services, activities and events they have jointly planned and delivered. It also provides information regarding the inaugural LAC Summit.

Recommendations

- That Corporate Parenting Panel note the contents of the report
- That Corporate Parenting Panel note the key role that the Looked After Children's Council play in providing a voice to help shape Services for children and young people in Rotherham
- That the LAC Summit becomes an annual event
- That Corporate Parenting Panel note the recommendations of the report entitled Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix A – LAC Summit Report
- Appendix B – LAC Summit Guests

- Appendix C – LAC and leaving care promises 2015: As your Corporate Parent we promise
- Appendix D – Feedback from LAC Summit

Background Papers

No

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

ROTHERHAM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL UPDATE REPORT

1 Recommendations

- 1.1** That Corporate Parenting Panel note the contents of the report
- 1.2** That Corporate Parenting Panel note the key role that the Looked After Children's Council play in providing a voice to help shape Services for children and young people in Rotherham
- 1.3** That the LAC Summit becomes an annual event
- 1.4** That Corporate Parenting Panel note the recommendations of the report entitled Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Background

- 2.1** The Early Help Service in Rotherham operates a Looked After Children's Council (LACC) for children and young people aged 11 to 18 years. The LACC is essentially a peer support group for young people living in care and care leavers.
- 2.2** The young people who are involved with LACC are enthusiastic and committed to Voice & Influence by having their say about things that matter to them they help design and shape the services that young people receive in Rotherham. This report highlights the body of work carried out by the LACC over a six month period up until October 2015.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1** Looked After and Leaving Care young people continue to be amongst our most vulnerable young people. The LAC Council is a unique group in Rotherham that is committed to supporting looked after & leaving care young people, their weekly meetings together at the LACC acts not only as a Voice & Influence group but importantly as a peer support group where they can come together talk about their experiences with each other in a safe place, seek comfort, acceptance and friendships in a young person friendly environment.
- 3.2** The LACC has a budget of £3000 and this financial investment is utilised to provide young person friendly activities and opportunities that support their continued engagement in the LAC Council and continuation of their Voice & Influence work.
- 3.3** The LAC Council is open to all Looked After Young People aged 11 to 18 years and continues to actively recruit new members. Currently there are 15 active members at the LACC the optimum number based on the current delivery model is 20 young people and there is therefore a desire

to recruit another 5 members in the near future. The LAC as it currently operates is limited to 20 members due to current staffing ratios, venue and budget considerations.

- 3.4 The LAC Summit was held for key people to hear directly from Rotherham's Looked After Council about their experiences, the work they do and most importantly the promises we as Corporate parents have made our looked after children and young people leaving care in Rotherham.
- 3.5 The summit participants identified how they can keep these promises both as individuals and in how the council and its partners plan and run services.

4 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 No Applicable

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The LAC Council has consulted widely with looked after and leaving care young people both in and outside of the authority to have a Voice on issues that are relevant to them. Also, LACC members have consulted with non-looked after young people whilst working on joint projects shared with the Youth Voice Groups including at Rotherham Show, and Voice & Influence Youth Conference, brief details are contained within the report.

6 Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 Not Applicable

7 Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 None identified

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Not Applicable

9 Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 Not Applicable

10 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 To improve outcomes for Looked After Children we need to give them opportunities to:-
 - (a) To come together in an empowering supportive environment where they can speak freely about their experiences of living in care, build confidence and friendships

- (b) To ensure they have genuine opportunities to have their voices heard within Social Care and the wider children's development agenda, by listening and acting upon their suggestions, we move towards co-produced services that genuinely meet the needs of our most vulnerable young people.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1** Good quality Voice & Influence opportunities for looked after and leaving care young people to have their say around issues that matter to them has positive outcomes for children and young people and in turn their local authority. This is particularly in accordance with UN Rights of the Child (Article 12)

12 Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1** None

13 Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1** A reduction in funding to deliver the LAC Council would impact upon the nature of the delivery. Planning will need to be in place to identify an agreed budget to mitigate against the risk.

14 Accountable Officer(s): Michelle Whiting

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Paul Jackson

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):-

Michelle Whiting

Interim Head of Looked After and Leaving Care Services

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Title: Rotherham's Right 2 Rights Service 19th January 2016

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Linda Harper, Interim Strategic Director

Report Author(s)

Lynne Grice-Saddington, Manager – Rotherham's Right 2 Rights Service
Children and Young People's Services, Safeguarding Unit.
01709 823765

Lynne.grice-saddington@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

All Wards are affected

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a preliminary update, post Ofsted Inspection, focusing on the developments of the Right 2 Rights .

The Children's Rights Service commenced in 1999 with the introduction of the Children's Rights Officer post which has gradually evolved into the current Right 2 Rights Service. We provide services for children and young people who are, or who have been, looked after by the local authority. We also work with children and young people with learning / physical difficulties or disabilities who access services at the Orchard Centre.

The recent agreement to increase staffing levels within the service in order to address the difficulties faced by the service, and which were highlighted by the Ofsted inspection, has increased the capacity within the team. The overall aim / outcome is to provide a more focused and timely response to the young people, so they know their rights and have their voices heard via an effective and well-

resourced Rights, Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service. This service is offered for all of Rotherham's looked after children, placed both in and outside of the borough.

Recommendations

- 1.1 That Corporate Parenting Panel note the contents of the report.
- 1.2 That Corporate Parenting Panel note the key role that the Right 2 Rights Service currently play in supporting looked after children and young people and in ensuring that their wishes and feelings are acknowledged, recorded and appropriately acted upon.
- 1.3 That Corporate Parenting Panel note the recommendations of the report entitled Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

- The Children Act (1989) Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review.
- The Children Act (1989) Schedule 2, Paragraph 17
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (s.17)
- Definition of Independent Visitors (Children) Regulations 1991 Statutory Instrument 1991 No 892.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Title: Rotherham's Right 2 Rights Service, Interim Report.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Corporate Parenting Panel note the contents of the report.
- 1.2 That Corporate Parenting Panel note the key role that the Right 2 Rights Service currently play in supporting looked after children and young people and in ensuring that their wishes and feelings are acknowledged, recorded and appropriately acted upon.
- 1.3 That Corporate Parenting Panel note the recommendations of the report entitled Development of participation and engagement with Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Children's Rights Service commenced in 1999 with the introduction of the Children's Rights Officer post which has gradually evolved into the current Right 2 Rights Service. We provide services for children and young people who are, or who have been, looked after by the local authority. We also work with children and young people with learning / physical difficulties or disabilities who access services at the Orchard Centre.
- 2.2 The service was one which, during the initial years, developed well and the additional finance from funding streams such as the Children's Fund enabled the service to develop innovation in rights and advocacy provision. Unfortunately cessation of government grants and budget reductions led to a decline in investment and support for the services which has inevitably impacted upon the ways in which RMBC's looked after young people were supported.
- 2.3 The Ofsted Inspection in October, 2014 highlighted;

"The Right 2 Rights Service provides independent Visitors and advocacy services, which children like"

It is positive that Ofsted acknowledged the work that was being undertaken to support LAC and those placed out of authority as it demonstrated that where capacity allowed the service worked well. The key issues raised related to capacity, it was highlighted that there was a high level of referrals awaiting allocation for an Advocate or Independent Visitor (IV). As part of the CYPS improvement plan agreement was reached to recruit additional staff members this comprised one full time business support post, one full time advocate post, one 30hr advocacy posts and an increase of 7 hours to the established children's rights assistant/advocate post.

The new staffing structure has been in place since the beginning of November 2015. The impact of this has been immediate and is Outlined below.

3. Key Issues

The main elements of the service are as follows;

3.1 Rights

- **Information and advice** regarding the rights of Looked after Children is a key element of the service. Activity has commenced to re-brand the service and update materials. Newsletters will be sent out on a quarterly basis, the winter one is to be distributed in December, 2015. These publications will contain information and also ways in which RMBC's Looked after Children can raise issues and be involved in the further development of the service.
- An area of improvement highlighted by Ofsted was to, **“Ensure that all looked after children and young people and care leavers have a clear understanding of their rights and entitlements”**. The service is now in a better position to develop the website and make better use of creative ways of engaging looked after children and young people living both locally and those living in out of authority placements.
- **Rother-Link Service** - This is a service for children and young people living in out of authority placements. Initial attempts to engage LAC in this project were not entirely successful and the methods have been revisited. The service intends to have a more direct approach which will focus on **all** children in such placements and rather than developing a 'writing and responding' approach will be directly targeting the children, offering initial visits, phone calls etc. and setting up a group which will be managed at 'arm's length' using technology such as Skype and conference calling alongside the usual forms of communication such as mail and email processes.

Children and young people will be offered incentives to remain involved with the service such as vouchers and competitions and this will ensure that the voices of those living away from Rotherham are sought, acknowledged and used to help inform service delivery and future developments within the authority.

They will form a group in their own right which will complement the work of the LAC Council.

- **Visits to all children and young people over the age of 5 years**, entering the care system, will commence 1st January, 2016. The service will visit each child within their first month of becoming looked after and this will also include those who are placed out of authority.

From the outset newly LAC will have the opportunity to meet an advocate, explore services available to them and will receive encouragement to become involved in meetings such as their LAC reviews to express their wishes and feelings. They will immediately be made aware of the Right 2 Rights Service and how to contact it. They will also be advised of the Comment and Complaints Process and will receive a gift and information pack for future reference.

Children's Group – It is the intention to form a children's group for those aged 5 to 11 years. This is intended to commence during February half term 2016. The voice of younger children is an area identified for priority development to ensure that their experience and wishes and feelings are informing our service delivery and planning.

Disability Group – There was previously strong representation from the children attending the Orchard Centre with groups such as the Orchard Flyers and the Orchard Stars but this has declined over the years. Attempts have been made to re-engage and energise this initiative and the increase of staffing will allow renewed efforts. This is a particularly vulnerable group and it is therefore essential that the authority seeks their views, wishes and feelings.

3.2 **Advocacy**

Advocacy provides; information, advice, advocacy, representation and support. Looked after children and young people are empowered to express their views, wishes, feelings and needs in creative and informative ways. If they are unable or unwilling to interact with professionals or carers the service will intervene and assist.

Work is time limited and the service strives not to unnecessarily undermine or damage relationships with carers or professionals whilst equally ensuring that RMBC's looked after children and

young people are fully involved in important processes which involve them and impact upon their lives.

- **Advocacy Referrals and Allocations**

The service supports RMBC's looked after children and young people irrespective of where they are living and the injection of new advocates into the team has seen immediate improvements in service delivery around advocacy. The service is able to respond more effectively to requests and all current advocacy referrals are allocated to an advocate. Verbal feedback from complaints is that they have already seen rise in the number of complaints progressing through more formal channels with the support of advocates.

There is a clear referral system which gathers appropriate information and sets targets for work to be undertaken and identifies outcomes to be achieved. Referrals are received directly from children and young people or from social workers and other professionals and carers.

Agreements with the each Looked after child / young person at the commencement of the relationship to explore desired outcomes and to support clear boundaries and roles. Children and young people are expected to give their consent to the service although there is some undirected advocacy for younger children and those with disabilities or learning difficulties who are unable to give consent or direction.

Advocacy Referrals January, 2015 – November, 2015	
Active referrals carried forward from 2014	39
Referrals received January, 2015 – November, 2015 Inc.	56
Advocacy referrals closed	37
Advocacy referrals refused by the child or young person	1
Advocacy referrals withdrawn by social worker	2
Numbers awaiting allocation	0
Number of current active advocacy cases	55

Since the beginning of November, with the new advocates, the service is currently allocating all cases upon receipt of referrals. Further awareness raising in relation to the service via new publicity materials and entry visits to new LAC is expected to lead to an increase in referral rates, demand levels will be tightly reviewed.

As a way of addressing some of the anticipated increasing demands there is to be further exploration of the use of volunteers in the provision of advocacy. The service is also looking to offer student placements for those wishing to undertake rights and advocacy work. The manager is now in a better position to support and co-ordinate such placements which will benefit this service whilst widening the student opportunities within Rotherham.

- **Business Support**

The additional full time business support officer is enabling the manager to refocus activity as a result of reduction of administrative duties. The service is also better able to record and track referrals and information and improve materials and information for LAC. The business support role is vital in supporting the recruitment, training and support for volunteers.

3.3 Independent Visitor Service

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is duty bound by legislation to provide a Volunteer Independent Visitor Service for looked after children and young. Initially The Children Act (1989), Schedule 2, Paragraph 17 stipulated the specific duty to appoint Independent Visitors for specific children and young people in circumstances where;

- It appears that communication between the child or a parent or any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for the child has been infrequent; or
- The child has not been visited (or has not lived with) a parent or any person who is not the child's parent but who as parental responsibility for the child, during the preceding 12 months

The Children and Young Persons Act (2008) now places a duty on us to make Independent Visitors available to all children in care if this is deemed to be in their best interests.

The Independent Visitor (IV) role is that of a befriender, once trained and matched with a child or young person they will function independent of the authority. They will not receive regular close supervision or be case managed however, risk assessments will be conducted as part of the matching process and safeguards and support measures will be put in place for emergency situations. They will be expected to attend support sessions at six weekly intervals and further training opportunities will be available.

The relationship is a confidential one and information is only shared if the child or young person agrees, dependent on age and understanding, or if safeguarding issues arise.

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers

It has been extremely difficult to keep pace with the recruitment and retention of volunteers; however, focused efforts have enabled the recruitment an additional 4 volunteers. Unfortunately turnover has resulted in the loss of 5 volunteers.

Some of the volunteers have been with us for four and five years some expressing a strong wish to remain with the child throughout their care experience. Whilst the service cannot dictate how long a volunteer stays, efforts are made to emphasise that this is a long term commitment and that is expected that they remain with the service for at least 2 years. Most volunteers appreciate the nature of the commitment and that they need to give time to build up appropriate relationships with the child and to ensure that they are not further 'let down' by failed commitments to them.

There has been a clear reduction in volunteers applying to Rotherham and it is felt that this is partially due to the difficult times we have faced recently as an authority and the negative media coverage. We used to receive many responses and enquiries from the Sheffield Universities, indeed, several of our volunteers are qualified social workers who have remained committed to the role after completing their studies and commencing social work duties in other authorities.

Volunteer Independent Visitor (IV) Service January, 2015 - November, 2015	
Fully trained volunteers	16
Volunteers IV's allocated to LAC	10
Volunteers in matching process with named LAC	4
Volunteer on hold	1
Dual Role – Volunteer Independent Reviewing Officer/Advocate – on hold	1
Children awaiting allocation	8

A new phase of training for six Volunteer Independent Visitors is due to commence in the first week of January, 2016. The additional staffing structure has freed up the manager to commence further training phases in April, 2016 and September, 2016.

- **Involvement of children and young people**

The involvement of looked after children is actively encouraged in recruitment and training of new Advocates and IV's. The current group who are linked with Independent Visitors also become involved in inspections and consultations arising within the authority such as a recent questionnaires regarding health provision for Looked after children and young people.

An event is planned for December, 2015 which will be a Christmas celebration for our IV's and their linked child but this will also be a consultation exercise to explore the Independent Visitor Provision and identify ways to continually improve the service and how to better involve Looker after children and young people.

- **Referrals for LAC placed in out of authority placements**

Two children currently awaiting the allocation of an Independent Visitor are living in out of authority placements. This is a problematic area nationally and one which is discussed frequently at the Regional Independent Visitor Coordinator Groups.

One of the young people lives in West Yorkshire and was matched briefly but this relationship needed to end due to personal issues regarding the Independent Visitor. The child is receiving a regular advocacy service which is appropriate for her current needs and we will support her whilst we attempt to identify a new Independent Visitor for her.

The other child lives in Lincoln and we are currently providing the social worker with information regarding a possible Independent Visitor Service within the area which will provide this service for a fee.

It is difficult to recruit Independent Visitors who are prepared to travel long distances to fulfil the role. Equally attempting to set up reciprocal arrangements is not currently being met with enthusiasm or commitment due to pressures placed upon providers to supply volunteers for the children for their local authorities.

The service has Independent Visitors who have committed to travel to areas such as Newark, Manchester, Wakefield, Chesterfield and West Yorkshire. However, this can be extremely time consuming for the IV and incurs expensive travel costs to the service it can also lead to a less frequent visiting pattern than is the ideal.

3.4 Strategic Involvements – Voice of the Child

The manager has remained focused on ensuring that the voice of the child is central to strategic developments within the authority. She is regularly in attendance at;

- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Foster Panel
- Looked After Children Strategy Meeting
- LADO Strategy Meetings
- Missing From Home Strategy Meetings
- M2/M3 Managers Meetings and Extended Leadership Meetings
- Consultation and Training Events
- Statutory Reviews, Pep Meetings, Professionals Meetings etc.
- Attendance at occasional IRO Team Meetings

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 None

5. Consultation

5.1 None due to the restricted time scales available. Children and young people will be consulted in depth for the Annual Report and their direct comments included. We will also provide anonymous case studies and request that a group of young people and volunteers attend the Corporate Parenting Panel in June, 2016 which is our usual practice.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Not applicable

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 None

8. Legal Implications

8.1 None

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 None

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 Over the next six months it is expected that we will see continued improvements within our service delivery and support to Our Looked after children and YP. As outlined in the report the increase in staffing has ensured that we are now more able to meet the rights and advocacy and independent needs of RMBC's Looked after population. Equally the manager is now able to focus upon the recruitment of IV's and the development and performance of the team. The manager will equally be able to contribute to developing strategies to ensure that the voice of the child is truly embedded in practices for the individual and within the organisation as a whole.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 It is an expectation that looked after children have equal access to services regardless of where they are placed. Advocacy services for such children and young people is vital, we will ensure that every effort is made to engage and consult with **all** LAC, empowering and supporting them to understand their rights and to challenge services when necessary. We equally need to involve them in the future development of services, supporting them in highlighting positive experiences and proposing changes when required.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 None

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 None

14. Accountable Officer(s)

14.1 Elaine Redding – Interim Head of Safeguarding and QA

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Named officer – Michelle Armeson (feedback awaited)

Director of Legal Services:- Named officer - Neil Concannon – 11.12.15

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):-

Rebecca Wall – Operations Manager CC's and IRO's
Lynne Grice – Saddington – Rights to Rights Team Manager

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