

Summary Sheet

Report Title

Rights To Rights Annual Report 2018.

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jon Stonehouse – Director – CYPS.

Report Author(s)

Tracey Arnold, Service Manager IRO and Advocacy Service.

Ward(s) Affected

All

List of Appendices Included

Rights to Rights Annual Report 2018.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Senior manager team and Corporate Parenting Panel.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Annual LADO Report April 2017 – March 2018

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 DLT and Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider the content of the report that offers an overview of the function from 2017-2018, and offer feedback around the key messages and action plan to confirm if these are agreed.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Annual Rights2rights Report reflects the progress and contribution the R2R service has made to the outcomes for Looked after Children in Rotherham through the provision of the advocacy service and Independent visitors (IV's) scheme. The criteria for the IV's scheme is clearly set out in the Children and Young Persons Act (2008) which 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 advocacy offer for all young people looked after in Rotherham is that every child over the age of 5 who becomes looked after by the Local Authority, will have the opportunity of a visit by one of the three Rights to Rights Advocates. This should take place within 20 days of the date the child becomes looked after. They will also have the opportunity to have an Independent Visitor if this is their wish.

The length of time the Rights to Rights Advocate and the Independent Visitor remains involved with the young person is very much led by the young person. Following the initial visit a young person can self-refer or be referred by any professional parent /carer involved with the child. This service continues to be offered after they have ceased to be looked after and whatever their age.

3. Key Issues

In the reporting period until April 2018, the key reasons why a young person would want an Advocate are the following:

- Support to make a complaint,
- Issues in relation to their placement/accommodation,
- To have their wishes and feelings heard in relation to contact,
- Issues with their social worker,
- Help with financial entitlement,
- Issues with a change of their school.

The main areas for development for the service are:

- Balancing the visibility of the Advocates, alongside offering the young person confidentiality. An area of focus is being able to evidence outcomes for our children due to our involvement. The service needs a more sophisticated suite of data in order to track the outcomes of the services involvement and

answer the question; what difference do we make to those young people we are involved with?

- The profile of the service needs to become embedded within the organisation beyond the Looked after children service. After the establishment of link teams within the IRO and CP chair service, a similar approach within the Advocacy service will ensure that as soon as a child becomes LAC, an advocate becomes an integral part of their network.
- A third key issue is to address the Advocacy services and IV involvement with those of our looked after children who are not White British in culture and ethnicity. Advocates and IV's are predominantly involved with White British young people and therefore our children of diverse cultures may not be receiving the help and support they need. Overcoming the barriers to this issue is one of the service priorities over the coming year and has already started within the recruitment of number of IV's from diverse cultures.
- Links with the children's disability services are a key issue in terms of priorities. Children with disabilities are underrepresented within the Advocacy service and therefore forging links with the service and having a link team member attached to that service will ensure that some of our most vulnerable children and young people have an independent voice.
- At the present time, the complaints process remains the only avenue which children and young people can access in order to escalate their concerns. The introduction of an Escalation process akin to that of the IRO does will give a formal structure to concerns that are raised to ensure minimal delay and drift for our young people.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 DLT and Corporate Parenting panel are asked to consider the contents of the report which includes the proposals for the improvement plan over the next twelve months.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 N/A

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 The action plan identifies a number of system and performance data changes which need to be embedded and developed over the next 6 months.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 N/A

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Rebecca Pyle, Team Manager has been sent the report for approval.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 Amy Leach has had sight of the report and has no comments regarding the contents

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The report offers a clear focus around RMBC's statutory duty to provide an Advocacy function.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Advocates are conscious of and take into account Human Rights implications in all of their interactions with children, young people and their carers and parents.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Within the attached report

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Within the attached report

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Rebecca Wall, HoS Safeguarding, Quality and Learning.
Tracey Arnold, Service Manager IRO and Advocacy Service.

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Neil Hardwick.	Approved on 4 th December 2018
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Sent to Rebecca Pyle, Team manager on 4 th December 2018 .	
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Amy Leach	Approved on 4 th December 2018.

Report Author: Tracey Arnold, Service Manager IRO and Advocacy Service.

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