

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 15 September 2014

Title of paper:	NYAS Advocacy and Independent Visitor (IV) Service – Nottingham Residential Visiting	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman (Director of Children’s Social Care)	Wards affected: ALL
Report author(s) and contact details:	Paul Clark, NYAS. Operations Manager, East Midlands. c/o Attenborough Suite, Mohan Business Centre, Tamworth Road, Long Eaton, Derbyshire. paul.clark@nyas.net	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Emma Dacres, Project Manager NYAS Mary Lewis, Senior Advocate NYAS Heather Walker, IV co-ordinator, NYAS	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	26th August 2014	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>This report summarises the activities undertaken to date of the advocacy and independent visitor (IV) services provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) during the first quarter of 2014/15.</p> <p>The report will also highlight the benefits of providing good quality advocacy and IV services and this contributes to safeguarding and improving outcomes for young people.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	To acknowledge the advocacy and independent visitor activities being undertaken by NYAS.	
2	To recognise the importance of the advocacy and independent visitor services in safeguarding and helping children in care to get their views heard.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 To acknowledge the advocacy and independent visitor activities being undertaken by NYAS.

It is important to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board (the Board) has an understanding of the Authority’s children in care advocacy and independent visitor arrangements and the activities being undertaken to ensure the best quality provision is being delivered. Ensuring the Board has a thorough understanding of what NYAS,

as providers of these services, are contracted to deliver and the work being conducted to deliver these services, will place the Board in a position to better scrutinise the quality of advocacy and IV provision.

1.2 To recognise the importance of the advocacy and independent visitor services in safeguarding and helping children in care to get their views heard.

Children in care have a right to have their wishes and views concerning their care heard. Ensuring that this happens improves the child's experience of care, which in turn promotes positive outcomes for them in the future.

Independent advocates play a vital role in ensuring that the wishes and feelings of looked after children are listened to and considered when making decisions that affect their care.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 NYAS was awarded the contract to provide advocacy services and independent visiting services commencing 1st April 2014. The service was awarded following a competitive tendering process. Prior to 1st April, 2014, the service was delivered by Barnardos.

The commissioned service provides –

2.3 ISSUE BASED ADVOCACY

- An issue-based advocacy service for all eligible Children and Young people.
- Advice and information for children and young people about their rights, including those contained in Sections 17 and 26a of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This service is for children and young people up to the age of eighteen years, looked-after now or in the past, or up to twenty five for those with a disability or in higher education. This includes children and young people who are in short-term placements, in secure placements and those in out of county placements

2.4 INDEPENDENT PERSONS SERVICE

This service is for all eligible children and young people subject to current Secure Accommodation Orders and provides Independent Persons for secure accommodation review panels as specified under the current Statutory Regulations. (Section 25 Children Act 1989, Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991, Children (Secure Accommodation) Amendment Regulations 1992)

2.5 INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE

This service provides suitable appointed volunteers to visit any child or young person who is looked-after where it is deemed to be in the child or young person's best interests, in accordance with s47 The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. This includes children placed out of the local authority area.

2.6 RESIDENTIAL VISITING ADVOCACY SERVICE

This service provides visits to all Children & Young People's residential children's homes and residential schools, whether provided by the Local Authority or an independent provider where a looked after child from Nottingham City or a Nottinghamshire County is placed. This is to include those placements outside the City of Nottingham or the County of Nottinghamshire.

2.7 RESIDENTIAL VISITING ADVOCACY SERVICE TO SECURE ACCOMMODATION

This service provides residential visiting advocacy to Clayfields House in Stapleford on a weekly basis.

2.8 SPOT PURCHASE

NYAS provides an independent advocacy service for the following children and young people on a spot purchase referral basis. They include those who are-

- At risk of exclusion from school or have been permanently excluded.
- Involved in an Initial/Review Child Protection Conference,
- Referred by the Youth Offending Team/Service
- Placed in a residential setting by Council Educational Services or from an SEN disability tribunal
- Deemed to be in need of this service

2.9 SERVICE TRANSFER

NYAS utilised the services of independent advocates from other contracts to ensure that the most vulnerable young people were prioritised and received a service while the service was being transferred from Barnardos to NYAS.

2.10 STAFF TEAM

The staff team is made up of a Project co-ordinator, a Senior Advocate and an IV co-ordinator. The contract is overseen by the Operations Manager for the East Midlands. In addition, NYAS currently has seven independent advocates, with a further five currently completing the final stage of their training and a further four beginning their training. We are continuing with a programme of recruitment and have for further candidates to interview in the near future.

2.11 PROGRESS TO DATE

Independent visitor service

Since the transfer in April 2014, 26 Children and young people from Nottingham City are supported by the NYAS Independent Visitor Service. 13 of which are currently matched with a volunteer; 4 matches are currently on hold due to the need for further information from the referrer. 8 young people are currently waiting for an Independent visitor's, 5 of which are out of county in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire. At the end of the first quarter, 5 additional young people were referred and are currently awaiting an initial assessment.

Enquiries from individuals interested in becoming volunteer IVs is high. Since the beginning of the contract five individuals have applied to become volunteers; of these, three have been interviewed and two have been taken forward and added to ten volunteers awaiting training. Training has also been scheduled for September 6th 2014

and five volunteers have confirmed their attendance. We also have two volunteers who are in the process of being matched.

Advocacy Service

Referrals are received through our national helpline and passed through to the local co-ordinator for allocation. Initially, the allocation process has taken longer than normal due to the lack of local advocates. Advocates have been sourced from out of county contracts. NYAS normally allocates each case within 24 hours and the advocate makes contact with the child or young person within 72 hours. Whilst we have not been able to achieve this in every case during the first 3 months, we are working towards achieving this over the coming weeks as our numbers of local advocates increase.

The following charts indicate numbers of advocacy cases as well as the common issues, ages and demographics associated with the referrals.

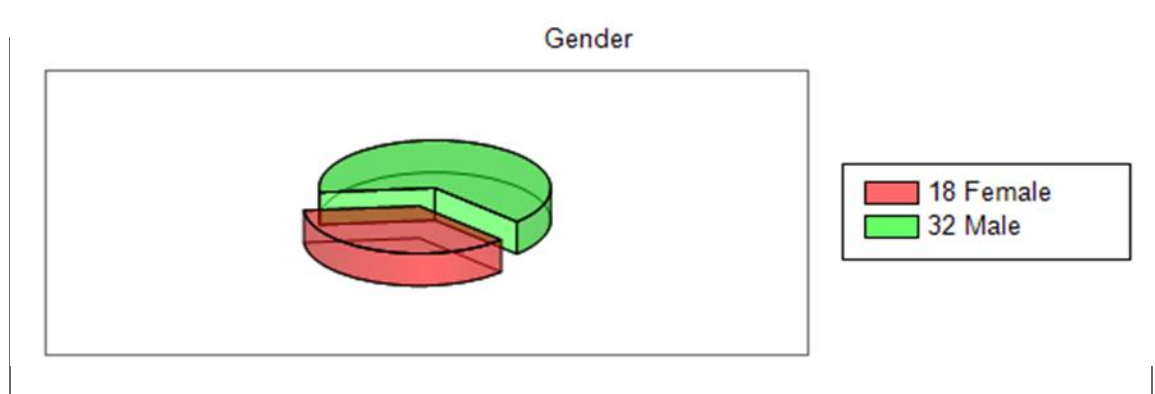
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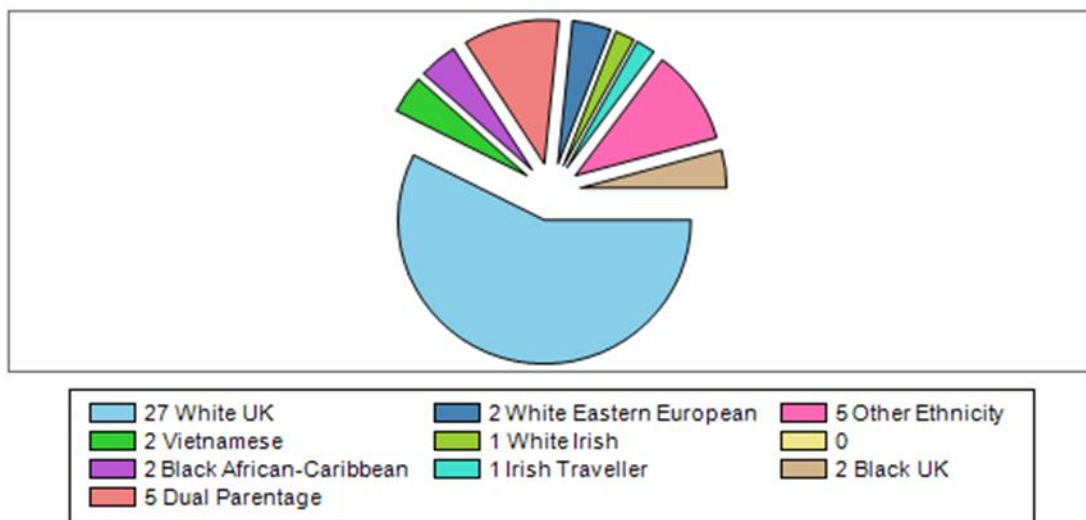
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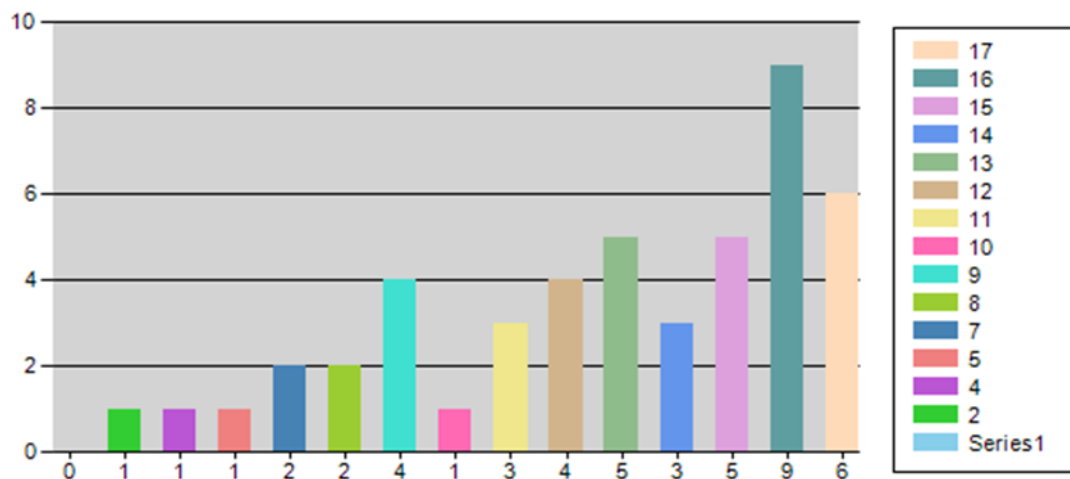
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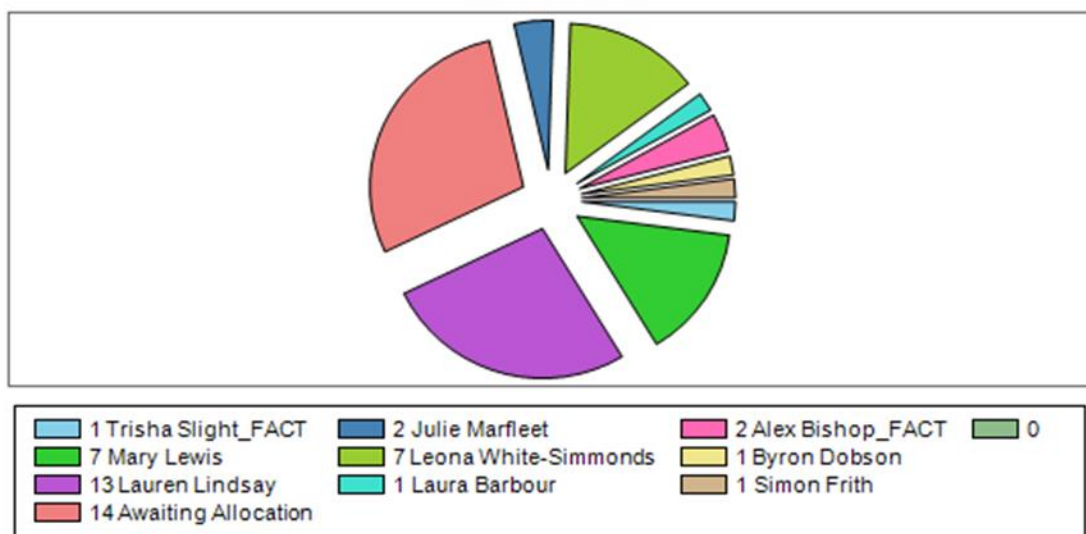
Ethnic Origin (Top 10)



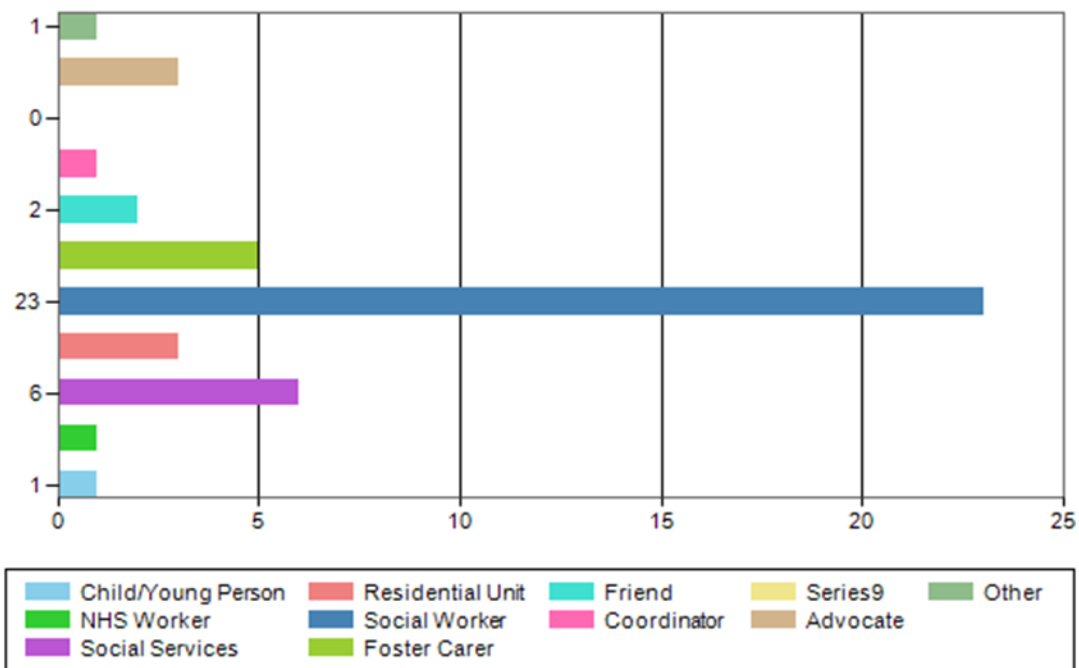
Age



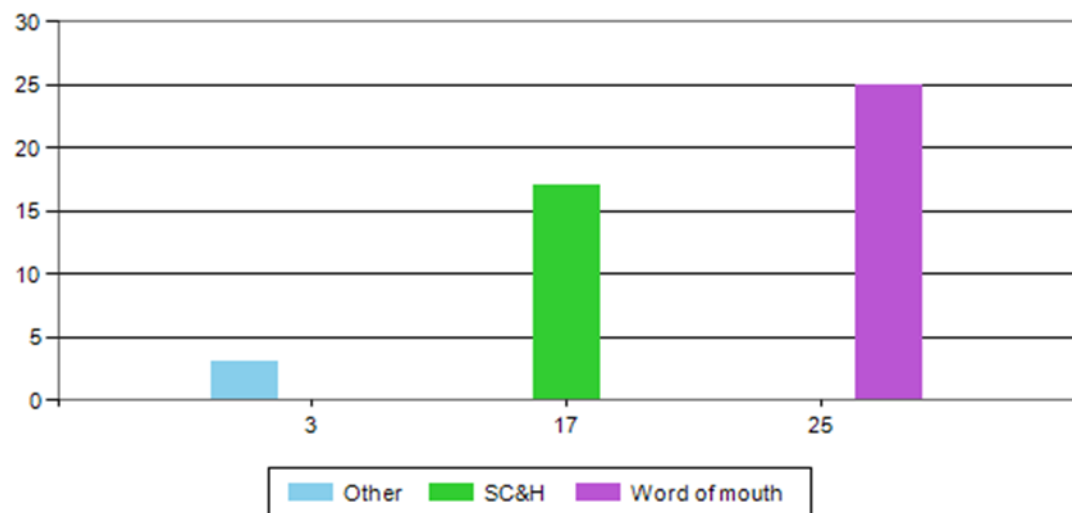
Allocated Advocate



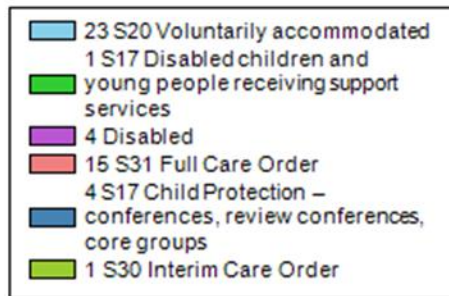
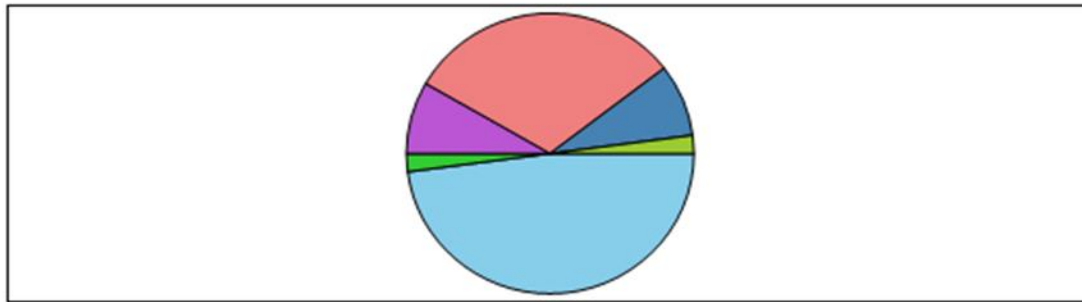
Source of Enquiry



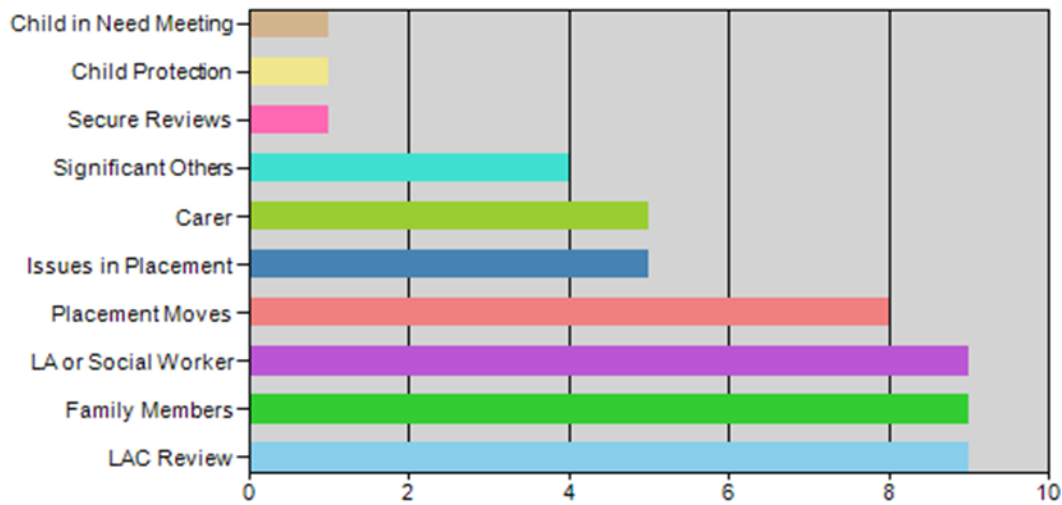
Service Found How.



Client Legal Status



Issues (Top 10)



Assigned Issues : 56 (All Cases)

Issue	Issue Path	Count
LAC Review	\Meetings\Advocacy	9
LA or Social Worker	\Relationship Problem with\Advocacy	9
Family Members	\Contact\Advocacy	9
Placement Moves	\Placement\Advocacy	8
Issues in Placement	\Placement\Advocacy	5
Carer	\Relationship Problem with\Advocacy	5
Significant Others	\Contact\Advocacy	4
Child Protection	\Meetings\Advocacy	1
Secure Reviews	\Meetings\Advocacy	1
Unsuitable Placement	\Education\Advocacy	1

Resources	\Disability\Advocacy	1
Communication	\Disability\Advocacy	1
Child in Need Meeting	\Meetings\Advocacy	1
IV Referral	\IV	1

RESIDENTIAL VISITING

In addition, Clayfields House has received weekly visits since 1st April in line with contractual requirements.

In area residential units (i.e. residential units located in Nottingham city) have also received visits.

Additional visits have been made to children and young people placed out of county. Further visits to additional units are currently booked.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 The combined (City and County) contract has a value of –

1. Year 1. £189,043
2. Year 2. £184,673
3. Year 3. £184,673

4.2 In addition, further costs will be incurred through the spot purchase arrangement. These are invoiced regularly to allow for close budget monitoring.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 The service ensures that the wishes and feelings of looked after young people are considered when planning for their futures. Risk to the local authority is therefore reduced and managed as concerns and complaints are supported and effectively managed. Vulnerable children and young people are further supported through the residential visiting advocacy and the independent visiting service, with particular focus on minimising isolation and maintaining contact with the young person.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions) **X**

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 None.

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 None.