

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT

November 2012

| | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Title of paper: | Barnardos Advocacy and Independent Visitor (IV) Service – Nottingham Residential Visiting | |
| Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s): | Ian Curryer, Corporate Director Children Services and Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer Satinder Gautam, Director of Childrens Safeguarding | Wards affected: ALL |
| Contact Officer(s) and contact details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonia Cain, Nottingham City Council, Service Manager, Social Care • Sue Berry, Development Children’s Services Manager - Barnardo’s | |
| Other officers who have provided input: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine Mayfield, Sherwood Children’s Services Manager – Barnardo’s | |
| Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority: | | |
| World Class Nottingham | | |
| Work in Nottingham | | |
| Safer Nottingham | | ✓ |
| Neighbourhood Nottingham | | ✓ |
| Family Nottingham | | ✓ |
| Healthy Nottingham | | |
| Serving Nottingham Better | | ✓ |
| Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users): | | |
| This report summarises the service provided to Nottingham City looked after children through the Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service provided by Barnardo’s since May 2011 until the end of March 2012. | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | |
| 1 | The Board to continue to acknowledge the importance of Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service in safeguarding and helping with the general well being of looked after children to get their views heard effectively at times when they are potentially at their most vulnerable. | |
| 2 | Both Barnardo’s and Nottingham City Social Care will continue to promote the service to all looked after children and young people to ensure that everyone has equal knowledge and access to the service | |
| 3 | Barnardo’s to work with the Commissioners to continue to evaluate the most effective way of delivering advocacy to children and young people looked after by Nottingham City | |

1. Background

- 1.1 Barnardo's secured the contract to run the advocacy services for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in February 2011. The core staff team of Advocacy Manager Sara Parker, Independent Visitor co-ordinator Suzanne Wood, Senior Advocate Mary Lewis and Project Administrator Caroline Stevens (subsequently left) were transferred over from NYAS to Barnardo's as of 1st May 2011. None of the sessional staff either from NYAS or Voice were subject to TUPE as they were deemed as self employed. In the year, one of the biggest achievements has been to recruit, vet and train a team of sessional advocates who work for the service around the country– at the time of writing this report there are now 27 sessional advocates – some of whom we have newly recruited and trained specifically for this contract and others we have recruited from other Barnardo's advocacy services around the country.
- 1.2 The contract is to supply issue based advocacy, residential visiting advocacy, independent person service, and independent visitor service to Nottingham and Nottinghamshire looked after children and young people wherever they may live in the country. The contract also incorporates provision of an advocacy service to Clayfields secure children's home – a service previously provided by Voice. There is also provision to supply advocates on a spot purchase basis for child protection conferences and if agreed by the budget holders any child in need including children known to the Disabled Children's Team. The aim of the service is to support looked after children and young people in getting their points of view heard by people who make decisions about them, and through the independent Visitor Service offering long term positive adult role models for looked after children who are more of risk of being isolated
- 1.3 Whilst much of the service had previously been run by NYAS the new contract incorporated some new areas to develop e.g. residential advocacy visiting service to every child/young person looked after in a residential home (including semi-independent homes) wherever this may be in the country. This has in many ways been the most challenging part of the contract to develop due to the constant moves of looked after children from both authorities and allocating work across the country using Barnardo's national advocacy network of services. It has required considerable resources to keep this information accurate and up to date and we have over the year developed communication systems with the placement teams from both Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire to this affect.

2. Development of Quality Assurance measures

- 2.1 Barnardo's uses a variety of quality assurance tools to ensure that the service is delivered to a high quality to children and young people. Firstly Barnardo's works to the National Advocacy Standards as outlined below:-

Standard 1

Advocacy is led by the views and wishes of children and young people

Standard 2

Advocacy champions the rights and needs of children and young people.

Standard 3

All advocacy services have clear policies to promote equalities issues and monitor services to ensure that no young person is discriminated against due to age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, disability or sexual orientation.

Standard 4

Advocacy is well-publicised, accessible and easy to use.

Standard 5

Advocacy provides help and advice quickly when it is requested.

Standard 6

Advocacy works exclusively for children and young people.

Standard 7

The advocacy service operates a high level of confidentiality and ensures that children, young people and other agencies are aware of its confidentiality policies.

Standard 8

Advocacy listens to the views and ideas of children and young people in order to improve the service provided.

Standard 9

The advocacy service has an effective and easy to use complaints procedure.

Standard 10

Advocacy is well-managed and gives value for money.

- 2.2 At the end of September 2011 we piloted Barnardo's new advocacy training package for all the new advocates. This has been followed up with an individual training plans worked out for each member of staff. As well as providing formal training days, Barnardo's believes that learning and development is on-going and has encouraged more experienced advocates to shadow and mentor new staff. We held a training day on 23rd June 2012 for the advocates to get together and share good practice on issues such as recording in line with Barnardo's new updated recording policy. We had a trainer facilitating some discussion on non-verbal communication techniques at this session at the request of the advocates.
- 2.3 Following the TUPE transfer of staff Barnardo's carried out a safeguarding audit of the service by our regional safeguarding lead. A number of areas were identified to work on and in September 2011 all the wider staff team and existing Independent Visitors attended Barnardo's Core 1 safeguarding which was adapted specifically to meet the needs of this service. This has subsequently been delivered to newly vetted Independent Visitors volunteers
- 2.4 Supervision. All staff receive monthly supervisions to reflect on practice and be accountable for what they are delivering. For some of the advocates around the

country this has had to be by telephone but where possible this is done on a one to one basis. In addition to this managers are available to offer guidance and support to staff as/when issues arise with a case. Managers use Barnardo's quality assurance tools to ensure that the service is adhering to standards. These include file sampling of records and quarterly performance reports to an ADCS.

3. Themes and Issues for Nottingham/shire Advocacy.

3.1 The initial TUPE of the service was not a particularly easy time for the staff or the service. This and the short term contracts have brought issues for recruitment into vacant posts. Now we have confirmation that the contract has been renewed for another year until the end of March 2013 we are seconding a new experienced manager into post to start September 2012. We have utilised existing managers at Sherwood and the East Midlands Development Manager to provide cover until this person is appointed into post.

3.2 The new residential advocacy service has reached out to some of the most vulnerable children from Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire. The requirement has been to visit all children and young people who are looked after wherever they may live in the country. We are currently visiting approximately 100 residential homes all around England and Wales from the Lake District to the Cotswolds. We have now set up systems with the Placements Teams in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire so that they keep us up to date with this information as we are all aware looked after children very often move frequently. This is a new part of the contract not previously delivered by NYAS. Now all young people in external residential placements get a monthly advocacy visit.

We have also been visiting semi-independent homes which are not staffed 24 hours a day. This is a broader and wider service than offered previously to a group of young people who are not easy to make contact with - our advocates have been visiting these young people often in the evenings to suit the young person after work or college. We are aware that the total numbers of looked after young people has risen since this service was tendered out and so the list of placements that require a monthly visit has been increasing steadily. We have offered a bigger service to more young people at this time.

3.3 Another theme throughout the year has been for the Independent Visitor Service and the number of matches that can be safely managed by one IV co-ordinator. Potentially now all looked after children and young people from Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire could request an Independent Visitor. We are working with the commissioners to agree how to prioritise matches so that the more vulnerable and isolated children and young people get a service.

3.4 Young people have reported some inconsistencies with Pathway Planning processes.

4. Publicity and Promotion

4.1 One of the first things we did in the year as a new service was to develop a new leaflet to promote the service to looked after children and young people in

Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire. This has gone out to all looked after children social work teams in the City. Electronic and hard copies have been circulated around other teams both by Barnardo's staff and through the commissioner for the City. Staff have attended the PIMMS meetings in the city and the equivalent in Nottinghamshire to promote the service. The commissioners also sent out a letter to all residential homes explaining the new requirement for the RVA service. The Placement Services for both authorities make us aware on a monthly basis of any changes, moves or new placements and following this we allocate an advocate to visit that unit or see the child newly admitted.

5. Participation of Young People in the Service

- 5.1 The views and wishes of young people are paramount in an advocacy and IV service. The main aim of the advocacy service is to get the wishes and views of the young people heard at a time when they are vulnerable. We use a variety of tools to do this depending on the young persons' ability, interests and needs. For Child protection conferences we have a wishes and choices form that children can fill in – some children find this incredibly useful – one recently very clearly writing pages on what she wished to happen which is then presented at the conference. Participation of children and young people in their LAC reviews has been much improved in the city recently. Current performance is 94% which is up from 86% 2011/12 and 71% 2010/11. Barnardo's staff over the year have liaised with the Children in Care Councils of both Nottingham/Nottinghamshire but it is acknowledged that there is further work that we could undertake here

6. Partnership Working

- 6.1 During the year we have worked in partnership with Nottingham City on a number of issues. In December 2011 we contributed to the Fostering inspection by being part of a focus group on participation. Catherine Mayfield the Children's Services Manager at Sherwood contributed to the disabled Children's Ofsted Inspection. She brought to this not only her experience through jointly managing the Advocacy service currently but her experience of managing work with children with life limiting illnesses through other services delivered at Sherwood by Barnardo's.

7. Plans for Continual Development of the Service

- 7.1 Now we have secured the contract for one more year until the end of March 2013 we have written our business plan for the year ahead. Plans include:-
- Further promotion of the service to relevant agencies in the area to encourage the use of spot purchase advocacy for areas such as S17 Children in Need, Education concerns such as Special Educational Needs and those at risk of Exclusion and the Youth Justice system.
 - Children with disabilities require extra help to have their wishes and choices heard at multi-disciplinary team meetings as well as in end of life planning. This could be facilitated by spot purchase, issue based advocacy.

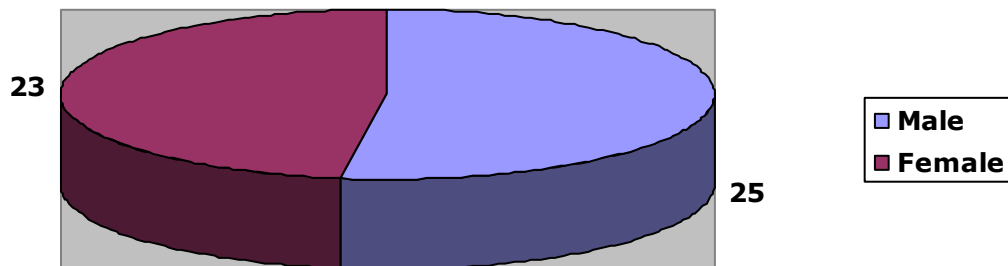
- Working with Children and young people to redesign promotional literature, with a special focus on literature accessible for young people with differing communication skills and for younger children.
- Training for the advocates – in disability awareness and non verbal methods of communication
- Barnardo's have agreed to give £20,000 additional voluntary funds to this service with the aim of developing a more specialised advocacy service for children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation – this we know is particularly relevant for looked after children. This is being looked at with other advocacy services in the region too so it is hoped to share materials and ideas. This will be particularly for advocacy and we will work closely with other agencies in the city who will be working with children at risk of sexual exploitation.

8 Statistics for 2011/2012

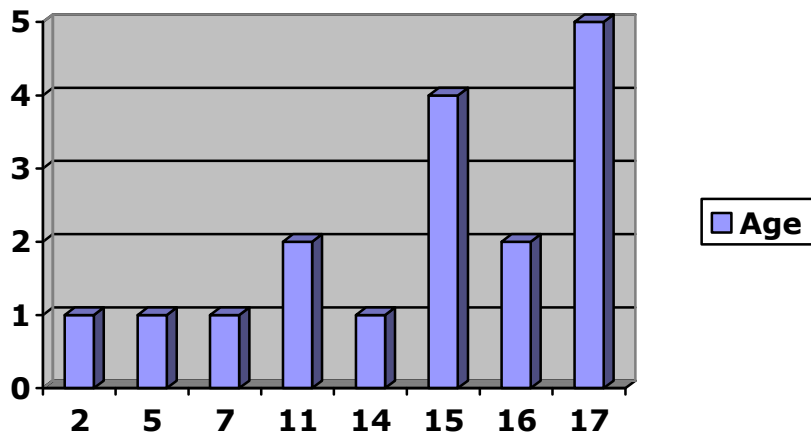
The statistics below show the number of referrals to each section of the service from 1st May 2011 to 31st March 2012:-

8.1 Issue Based Advocacy

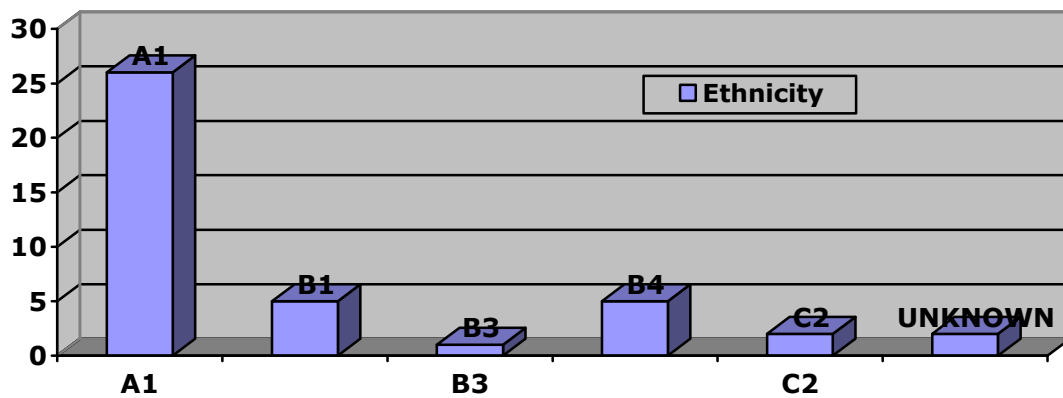
Nottingham City Cases – 48 new referrals in the year
Nottingham City Cases by Gender:-



NCC cases by Age



Nottingham City Cases by Ethnicity:-



Nottingham City Cases by Issue:-

| Issue |
|--------------------------------------|
| Parents not consenting for operation |

| |
|---|
| Wants to discharge himself from care |
| Does not want a house placement |
| Concerns about being in care |
| He is against a proposed move |
| Issues including about inheritance |
| Help to stay in care 18+ |
| Concerns about house move |
| Issues regarding placement move |
| Representing at school meeting |
| Help with obtaining help from social worker |
| Representation at meetings |
| Concerned about her future |
| Does not want to move to another home |
| Wants to change social worker |
| Is against a placement move |
| Communication issues with SW |
| Help filling out forms, not seen SW |
| Help with enquiries |
| Needs help re family contact |
| Needs help after turning 18 with accommodation |
| Issues with accommodation and liaising with professionals |
| Not happy in general and with social worker |
| Help with enquiries |
| Help with moving |
| Help at her LAC review |
| Help with contact and communication issues |
| Help with contact |
| Help with contact and moving |
| To attend LAC review |
| Help with issues regarding placement |
| Help to understand why he is in a children's home not foster |
| Doesn't want to move home |
| Help with some issues regarding being in care |
| Support regarding move to another placement |
| Initial Child Protection Conference issues |
| Gang issues reason moved - support with care planning - getting into school etc |

8.2 Nottinghamshire Cases - 38 new referrals in the year

Detail by ethnicity, gender and age has been collated.

8.3 Spot Purchase Advocacy

In addition to the Issue Based Advocacy Nottingham City have spot purchased advocacy for 40 children and young people at child protection conferences so that their wishes and feelings are heard at a time in their lives when they are very vulnerable.

8.4 Residential Visiting Advocacy

Currently we visit: on a monthly basis:-
6 County homes

10 City Homes
56 Independent homes in Nottingham/shire
40 Out of area homes from Wales to the Lake District

8.5 Independent Person

During the year we have worked with 3 young people offering an independent person service to ensure that the correct procedures are being followed

8.6 Independent Visitor Service

Since May 2011 we have received 35 new referrals to this part of the service - 20 from Nottingham City and 15 from the County. This is in addition to the young people who transferred over to the service already matched.

We receive huge interest in people becoming IV's, for example, in quarter 4 we received 47 new enquiries 12 of which have returned application forms. The majority of enquiries (25) came via the Barnardo's website, with other sources being Local CVS sites (18), Nottingham University (1), Charity jobs website (2), and 1 from word of mouth.

54 volunteer enhanced CRB's have been cleared, with 5 left to be processed which are not urgent as the volunteers are on hold.

6 matched Independent Visitors have had 1:1 individual support meetings.

40 Independent Visitors have completed Barnardo's Safeguarding Core 1 mandatory training

As Barnardo's volunteers, additional training is available to all Independent visitors should they wish to take this up, on areas such as Equality and Diversity, Personal Safety and Health and Safety.

8.7 Advocacy at Clayfields (Nottinghamshire County Council Secure Home)

The Clayfields element of the contract is to supply weekly Independent Visiting Advocacy to each of the 3 units at Clayfields. This is currently provided by 2 experienced advocates, with support now available from the advocates employed in the community element of the contract.

In quarter 4 Advocates carried out 28 contractual visits as well as attending on other occasions to provide specific individual support for young people at meetings.

Advocates supported 3 young people with formal complaints during the previous quarter. Both of these related to a lack of appropriate support from social care. In one case a response is still being awaited and in the other the young person was not happy with the response received and so is being supported by the advocacy

service to respond to this. Advocates will remain involved to support this process until resolution as per the young person's request.

Issues arising:-

Advocates have been asked to support young people with various issues highlighting the types of concerns effecting young people in secure accommodation.

- Contact with Family and Friends
- Sentence planning queries such as information on early release procedures, mobility and Secure Accommodation criteria
- Contact with social workers
- Using complaints procedures
- Accommodation on release
- Application to YJB
- Requests for transfer to different units within Clayfields
- Information re court appearances
- Concerns re consistency of staff / young person feeling unfairly treated
- Concern of young person following a restraint
- Help obtaining personal property from a previous placement
- Transition issues such as future plans for education, accommodation, what support available for young people when back in the community

9. Reasons for Recommendations (Including Outcomes of Consultation)

- 9.1 The recommendations are based on what children and young people are telling our advocates directly. Advocacy is vital in making successful plans for children and young people as it is evidenced that if their views are taken into account the plans made are far more likely to have successful outcomes

10. Other Options Considered in Making Recommendations

- 10.1 None

11. Financial Implications (including Value for Money)

- 11.1 The service is jointly commissioned by Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council for a total amount of £180,000 per year. This includes the weekly advocacy service at Clayfields Secure Residential Children's Home.

12. Risk Management Issues (Including Legal Implications, and Equality and Diversity Implications).

- 12.1 The Advocacy and IV service minimises risk to both Nottingham City Council Social Care Department and to young people who are looked after. It does this through offering a professional advocacy service to ensure that the voices and

concerns of children are heard by other professionals. The new residential visiting advocacy service for all children and young people once a month wherever they live in the country offers a service to the most vulnerable and isolated children and young people. The IV service minimises risk to isolated looked after children through offering an appropriately matched befriender/mentor.

12.2 The advocacy service is no longer free for all disabled children but is for children who are looked after. We have offered advocacy on a spot purchase basis to disabled children who are not looked after. In addition to this we have noticed that an increasing number of children who are looked after have a disability and additional communication needs. To support this we have offered our advocates additional training in non-verbal communication.

13. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

13.1 This report does not include proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions. All young people in the care of the local authority will receive support from this service. A detailed analysis of the gender, ethnicity, ability and age of the young people is routinely collected to ensure support on an equalities level is fair, equitable and appropriate.

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

None

15. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

None