

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 3rd JUNE 2013

Title of paper:	Children and Young Peoples Participation	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Candida Brudenell – Interim Corporate Director for Children and Families. Helen Blackman, Acting Director Children's Safeguarding	Wards affected: ALL
Report author(s) and contact details:	Dorne Collinson 0115 8764736 dorne.collinson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Elise Darragh 0115 8764844	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		✓
Neighbourhood Nottingham		✓
Family Nottingham		✓
Healthy Nottingham		✓
Leading Nottingham		✓
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>The report sets out the current position in relation to the participation of children in their looked after reviews and notes that there has been improved performance.</p> <p>A number of service improvements are also noted that will assist children and young people in having a voice in such processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are now able to contact their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) between reviews, alongside the IRO speaking with them before the meeting. • Developments have been made to facilitate young people chairing part or all of the looked after review. <p>Information is presented in relation to suggested ways for continued improvement in performance.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	The Board are asked to note the current levels of performance in relation to child participation.	
2	The Board are asked to note the suggested improvements in relation to	

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 This report gives a detailed analysis in respect of the participation of Children in Care within their Looked After Reviews.

For the purpose of this report participation refers to the definition of PAF C63 which is:

“The number of children and young people (aged 4 and above) who communicated their views specifically for each of their statutory reviews as a percentage of the number of children and young people who had been looked after at 31 March for more than four weeks (i.e. more than 28 days inclusive of 31 March).”

1.2 Participation within the performance indicator covers:

- Attended and spoke for self
- Attended, conveyed views symbolically
- Attended, views represented by advocate or IRO
- Not attended, views represented by 3rd party
- Not attended, written views conveyed

1.3 In the report presented to Corporate Parenting Board dated 1st February 2012, the following programme was proposed:

- Head of Safeguarding to be briefed on each individual child who has not participated in their review and this is to be shared with both the Children in Care and the Social Care Heads of Service
- Further work to be undertaken with the Independent Reviewing Officers to clarify the definition of participation including targeted work around this issue within the induction programme of new staff.
- Active chasing to take place with social workers before reviews to ensure they seek and include the views of children/young people in their reports/reviews.
- The Review Monitoring Form that is completed by the Independent Reviewing Officers at the end of each meeting to be updated to record issues in relation to participation. This will ensure more localised team feedback and analysis thus targeting improvements
- Team-based performance to be discussed at each Performance Information Management Meeting (PIMMs)
- Independent Reviewing Officer's will discuss at team links meetings. These to be increased to quarterly meetings
- A standard recommendation to be included on the Looked After Child (LAC) template to ensure that participation is individualised to each child/young person. If the child's participation is not available within the meeting then workers are to be given ten working days to feed this back to the IRO prior to escalation through line management channels.
- A specific piece of work in to be driven in relation to improving workers communication with disabled children to ensure their participation.
- All contracts with external providers to be updated ensuring that 100% participation of those children placed with them is identified as one of their performance targets.

1.4 As a result of that work there has been a consistently high performance regarding children and young people participating in their meetings. IROs have worked with

some young people over a period of time so that they develop the confidence to chair some or part of their reviews. Currently 92.6% of children and young people participated in their reviews. Of these 45% attended their review, and were able to share their views regarding their care plan.

As would be expected the majority of children who attended where 10 years or older [appendix 1]

- 1.5 The service has also developed letters to send to children and young people about the reviews and introducing their IRO, and each IRO has a set of business cards that enables the child or young person to contact the IRO between reviews.
- 1.6 Children and young people will attend and contribute to their reviews and care planning if they truly understand what is happening and why it is important for their voice to be heard. The IRO handbook 2010 made it clear that part of the functions of the IRO is to speak with the child before the review, and between reviews. There has been significant improvement in the performance of IROs in this matter, with many children and young people being seen before the review and their views sought by the IRO. Some been seen between meetings, or have been contacted by telephone.
- 1.7 In order to ensure continued improvement it is proposed that alongside the measures currently in place outlined above, the following should also be developed:
 - Reduction in IRO caseloads so that they are compliant with statutory guidance. This will then allow IRO to see more children and young people between looked after reviews.
 - Distribution of 'Your IRO' leaflet to children and young people in care. A draft of this leaflet was raised with the Children in Care Council and their suggested amendments noted.
 - Changes to the care status of young people remanded by youth justice courts within the 'Legal Aid, Sentencing Punishment of Offenders Act from December 2012, has resulted in this cohort of young people being classed as children looked after and therefore requiring to be reviewed in the same manner as other Children in Care. Given that the Youth Justice Board decides the appropriate placement and the period in care can be short, it has been a challenge for IROs to see young people before their first review. The IRO Service is already working alongside Youth Offending Team in developing suitable protocols that ensure that the young person has a voice in their plans that aim to divert them from offending.
 - Alongside colleagues in the Directorate and partner agencies, embed the use of evidenced based tools from solution focus therapy as a means to continue to capture the child or young person's voice regarding their care.

2. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

- 2.1 This report is for information and discussion.

3. **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

4.1 Children's views in relation to their looked after plans are critical in ensuring delivery of the plan within an appropriate timeframe. This will prevent children from drifting within the care system leading to improved outcomes and increased value for money.

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

5.1 Participation of Children in Care in their care planning process ensures that the views of our most vulnerable children and young people are listened to. It also enables them to develop skills necessary to contribute to the wider community when they reach independence.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

An EIA has not been completed as this report does not include proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions.

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

Appendix 1

