



Review of Children Looked After Services- Terms of Reference

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Commission is asked to
- consider and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Review of Children Looked After Services
 - set a timeframe for completing this review

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members of this Commission resolved at the January meeting to conduct a review on Children Looked After services. Following a presentation from the Assistant Director Children and Family Services and the Commissioning Manager for Social Services in February, members agreed the terms of reference shown in Appendix 2 at their April meeting.
- 2.2 Progress in completing this review has been rather slow due and therefore following the change in the composition of the Commission after July bye-election, Members were asked to confirm whether they wished to proceed with this review. Members considered the review of services to Children Looked After to be an important area of work and resolved to continue with the review but wished to revisit the Terms of Reference to ensure it was sufficiently focused.
- 2.3 The suggestion received from members are shown in Appendix 3.
- 2.4 Members are asked to give their suggestions for improving the current terms of reference and set a time table for completion of this review.

For more information contact: Mr M Hussain 01332 255597 e-mail mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk
Background papers: None
List of appendices: Appendix 1 - Implications
Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference agreed at April meeting
Appendix 3 - Member suggestions for amendments to the Terms of Reference

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| IMPLICATIONS |
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Financial

- 1.1 Any costs incurred with conducting this review will be contain within the £8000 Research budget allocated to the Commission.

Legal

- 2.1 Work programmes of the overview and scrutiny commissions are subject to approval by the Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC). A report will be taken to the next meeting of the SMC asking for its approval to proceed with this review.

Personnel

- 3.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 Looked after children are considered to be amongst the most vulnerable groups in the city.

Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 5.1 The report supports the Corporate Objective of **healthy safe and independent communities** and contributes to the Corporate Priority to **modernising social care**.

Review of Children Looked After Services

Terms of Reference for the Review agreed by Commission at 18 April 2005 meeting

The Commission will:

- To examine why there are high number of looked after children in the city compared with other similar sized authorities
- To examine the process of looking after children and consider whether the placements are effective, deliver good quality of service and outcomes for looked after children
- To consider ways of safely reducing the gap between Derby and similar sized authorities of the number of looked after children
- To understand the triggers for child protection register
- To evaluate the evidence and make recommendation to the Council Cabinet

| Session | Witness | Issues | When |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| General briefing session | Social Services Keith Woodthorpe Hazel Lymbery | Introduction to Looked After Children services | February 2005 |
| Session 1 | Social Services Senior managers and front line staff | To examine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care Needs Assessment Process • The threshold and processes for children entering the service • Child protection strategy • Strategy for reducing number of CLA • How best interest decisions are made and the length of time it takes to make suitable placements • Placement process - where children are placed and why and respective outcomes for children • How do Social Services support CLA and equip them on life skills • The impact of the Gatsby project on CLA | |
| Session 2 | Service User's Children Looked After | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine children's views about the service and what opportunities they have for personal development. • To consider psychological effects of being looked after by the Council on CLA where appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2005_ Young Achievers Awards • 17 May KCK Group |
| Session 3 | Foster Carers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine the process of recruiting and retaining foster carers and how this may be improved • To consider the views of foster carers about the service | |
| Session 4 | Adoption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine the process of adoption and how it supports looked after children | |
| Session 5 | Comparable authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the processes and budgets of similar sized authorities and the respective outcomes for looked after children. This could include 15 Comparator authorities identified by the Audit Commission as well as authorities with good children services | |

Member suggestions for amendments to the Terms of Reference

- How can Derby City Council attract and retain qualified Children's Social workers? What are other Authorities doing to solve this problem?
- How can Derby City Council attract and retain good quality foster carers? What are other Authorities doing to solve this problem?
- What suggestions have CLA got to attract both social workers and Carers?
- What suggestions have CLA, Carers and Social Workers got that could improve the service provided by Derby City Council?