

# APPENDIX 2



## **Introducing SOVA & Derby Children's Rights Service**

SOVA have over 40 years' hands-on experience delivering services to people with complex needs throughout England. SOVA were delighted to be awarded the Children's Rights Service in April 2017, and are pleased to report that under their careful watch the service thrives.

### **Staffing Structure April 2017**

The Service incorporates three aspects, Independent Advocacy, Independent Visitors and Independent Advocacy support for Children at initial child protection conference. In April, two members of staff underwent the TUPE process and joined SOVA as Service lead and Project Officer. The majority of volunteers transferred but inevitably some chose to take the opportunity to retire from volunteering.

### **Volunteers**

SOVA were and remain grateful to the volunteers transferring from the outgoing provider, indicative of their commitment to their role. SOVA were entirely reliant upon their good will as it was necessary to repeat paperwork already in existence with the outgoing provider. Due to data protection, details could not be transferred. With 30 volunteers to process, this was a mammoth task for the staff.

### **Young People**

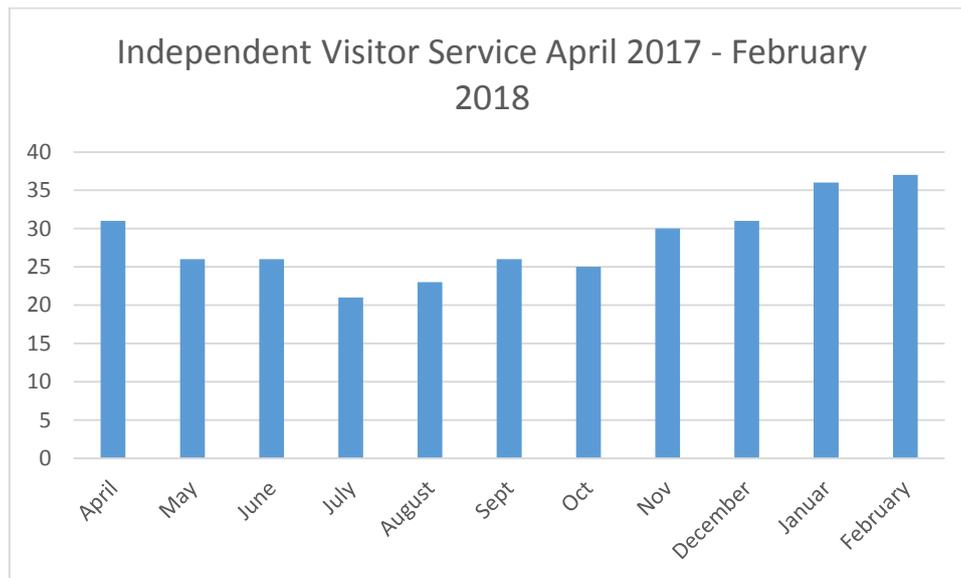
In the same way, the outgoing provider were not able to share anything more than the name of any young person referred into the service whether or not they were matched with an independent visitor. Consequently, staff were engaged in a lengthy process of chasing names, details and outstanding paperwork for all young people requiring a service. Risk assessments and referral details were needed for all. SOVA has a responsibility to deliver a safe service and could not rely upon hearsay or historical knowledge, paperwork trails need to be water tight. Throughout the year, notwithstanding the frantic administrative work required, SOVA provided a seamless transition for all aspects of the service.

### **Service Delivery & Development – Responding to demand**

- Advocacy continues to thrive with 51 referrals received (at the time of writing) both from children situated within the City and outside of the City boundary.
- Monthly advocacy clinics are provided to all local authority residential homes in Derby by experienced advocates.
- January 2018 SOVA agreed to provide advocacy for privately fostered children
- Advocacy at Child Protection conference continues to be utilised with 60 + children having been supported to participate in conference thus far occasionally with less than 48 hrs notice.

## **Independent visitors**

- April 2017 - 31 matches transferred to SOVA with a waiting list of 23
- Matches dropped to 21 in July 2017 due to young people turning 18 or volunteers leaving.
- 27 new referrals received since start of contract.
- 24 new matches
- IV matches currently stand at 38.
- Current waiting list 14 young people



## **Scrutiny & Transparency**

- SOVA meet quarterly with commissioners and the corporate parenting lead to share information and review progress. By means of discussion and a detailed report commissioners are able to monitor the service at regular intervals.
- SOVA gather data and develop and assist projects by sharing best practice. SOVA have robust internal reporting in place to ensure feedback from young people and volunteers is captured and utilised.
- SOVA have 10 independent visitor services across England and draw upon the resources of sister services to assist in volunteer recruitment.

## **Looking after our Young people and our volunteers**

- Seven separate training sessions across both independent visitor service and independent advocacy have been held.
- Partnership working has developed with Derby University providing training facilities and access to social worker students to recruit volunteers.
- Existing volunteers have regular supervision with staff.
- Quarterly peer support meetings are held where volunteers can share ideas and experiences
- Staff meetings are held fortnightly.

## **Moving Forward**

In conclusion, we are pleased with the progress made during the first year. Recruitment of volunteers is established with regular training scheduled. The volume of referrals received demonstrates a continued demand for all services; waiting time on the IV service has been dramatically reduced in some cases young people have been matched within four weeks of a referral being received. We intend to continue with this same momentum into the second year of service and anticipate exceeding the targets set by commissioners.