



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

Co-ordination of Engagement Activity with Children in Care

Summary Report

Response to the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

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1. Background

The recent Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services highlighted several areas of improvement including to:

‘Strengthen the arrangements for user engagement in child protection processes to ensure their views and experiences are sought in order to inform service delivery and development’ (p.8)

On page 26 of the Ofsted report under, ‘Making a positive contribution, including user engagement’ it observed that opportunities for looked after children and young people to make a positive contribution are adequate and a well established Children in Care Council exists. However it also states that ‘while these meetings provide good arrangements for some young people to engage in decision making and service development not all young people are equally involved’. It also states the ‘systematic evaluation of services by children and young people is not firmly embedded’.

The Policy, Research and Engagement Team working with the Children and Young People’s Directorate are developing a plan to address the issues raised by Ofsted by refining existing information capture processes to enable an overview of the views of children in care to be achieved to help inform service delivery and development. It will enable effective reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board, as well as providing feedback to children and young people on the impact their involvement has had on the services we provide to them.

2. Aims of this Project

The aims of this project are to:

- improve the experiences of children living in care by collating information from current engagement activities in which children in care participate.
- improve the co-ordination of information and embed a systematic approach so that the views of children in care can be analysed more effectively.
- provide an overview of the experiences of children in care, collating information in order to identify common themes and concerns.
- ensure that reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board is effectively structured so that it can take and record any actions required in relation to the views of children in care being reported and feedback appropriately to these young people
- ensure that children in care do not feel over consulted.

In order to better understand the scope of information which is currently being captured we are:

- mapping existing engagement activity undertaken with Children in Care in Derby (see Appendix 1)
- speaking with Directors and Service Managers to identify where we currently gather information from children in care as well as where there is potential duplication or gaps in information.

3. Coordination of Information from Engagement Activities with Children in Care

Existing children in care engagement activities mapped so far include:

3.1 Children in Care Review Process

Every child in care receives a review form before their review meeting. The current review form is being redesigned with the involvement of the Consultation and Engagement Team, Children in Care Council and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO). This is so that the information collected can be analysed and used to inform and improve service delivery and development.

3.2 Children in Need/Child Protection Conference

The IRO for Children In Need has developed a tool of engagement for children and young people and parents/carers that potentially could be revised and used for child protection conferences. We will look at how information from this could feed into reporting process to the Corporate Parenting Board.

3.3 Residential Children's Homes

To review existing processes of engagement in order to develop a structure that can be streamlined so the information can be analysed collectively and reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

3.4 Children in Care Council

To support CSV who are currently commissioned to run the Children In Care Council to ensure that the views of children in care council are reported as part of this process to the Corporate Parenting Board.

To ensure one way that children and young people receive feedback will be through the newsletter that goes to all children in care.

3.5 Annual Survey for all Children in Care

There is a potential opportunity to develop and undertake an annual survey of children in care similar to that used by Ofsted 'Care 4 Me Survey'.

3.6 Parents/Carers of Children in Care

A process of engagement for the parents/carers of children in care is to be investigated.

4. Analysis of Information Collected from Children in Care

Part of this project is looking at which information that we collect from children in care should be analysed for reporting also how this information can practically be drawn together and analysed. Once the mapping exercise is complete the next key areas to explore will include:

- whether the tools currently used for data collecting need to be reviewed/redesigned to better support this process
- any redesign work of these tools
- identify key questions/areas covered in these tools to be used in the analysis
- checking that any planned analysis are compliant with Data Protection Best Practice
- assessing whether corporately we need to purchase a qualitative data analysis tool to assist with the analysis of comments into key themes.
- what the reporting structure will look like including the frequency of reporting
- what the feedback structure will look like including the frequency of reporting.

5. Reporting and Governance

Once the reporting structure is agreed all reports will be submitted for consideration by the Corporate Parenting Board.

6. Next Steps and Timescales

The proposed time scales for this process are set out in the table below:

Action	Timescale
1. Map out existing engagement activity undertaken with children in care	End of February 2012
2. Speak with Directors and Service Managers to identify where we currently gather information from children in care as well as where there is potential duplication of or gaps in information	End of February 2012
3. Whether the tools currently used for data collecting need to be reviewed/redesigned to better support this process	End of May 2012
4. Any redesign work	End of May 2012
5. Identify key questions/areas covered in these tools to be used in the analysis	End of May 2012
6. Checking that any planned analysis are compliant with Data Protection Best Practice	End of May 2012
7. Assessing whether corporately we need to purchase a qualitative data analysis tool	End of May 2012
8. What the reporting structure will look like including the frequency of reporting	End of July 2012
9. What the feedback structure will look like including the frequency of reporting	To be determined by the Corporate Parenting Board

7. Recommendations

- To note the contents of this report and approve this process.
- Further consideration is given to the resource implications of this project.