

**KEY POINTS from Children in Care Consultation Form Pilot Project
FEBRUARY 2014**

- **PLACEMENT:** It is good to hear that 88% of the young people who responded stated that they are happy where they live, either in foster care or a residential placement. In relation to aspects of the care they receive; 96% are very happy or fairly happy with their home, 97% very or fairly happy with the cleanliness of their home, 97% feeling they have a comfortable bedroom, 93% being happy that they have their own space, 93% happy with the food provided, 92% happy with clothing provided. **All aspects of a child's placement are discussed at LAC reviews and any concerns the child/ YP may have about their placement will be acted upon.**
- **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:** in regard to how we support young people living in the care of Derby City Council, the responses show that they are generally consistently fairly happy with how we support them. 85% were very or fairly happy with how they are supported emotionally and 82% were happy that their views were listened to. 93% felt their health needs were being met and 90% felt that they were provided with they are supported in learning life skills (learning to budget money, cooking, communication skills etc). It is good to hear that 86% are very or fairly happy with their social worker, although this should be improved and if a child has an issue with their SW then the IRO would always take steps to rectify this. **Lack of resources for psychological support/ CAMHS for children in care has been an issue over many years and improvements need to be made. Senior IRO attends Health/Social Care Steering Group and this issue is being taken to Commissioning to seek improvement in this service.**
- **FAMILY CONTACT:** This is always a difficult subject as some children do not want to be in care and are not happy with levels of contact they have with their families. This is usually due to the frequency being ordered by the courts, or parents not engaging but we know that this issue causes unhappiness for many children. The responses show that 80% stated that they were happy with the arrangements for contact and 7% were "not sure". 13% were not happy. **Family contact arrangements are discussed at every LAC review and if a child has written, or said that they are not happy then the reasons are explained to them for the arrangements being what they are and there is always discussion about changes that could be made to improve things if possible. Of course this is not always possible but an explanation will always be given to the child/ YP.**

- **EDUCATION:** Responses show that the young people who completed their Review Consultation Forms are generally fairly happy with the different aspects of school / college. 80% were either very or fairly happy with the school environment. 99% reported that they have somewhere to do their homework and 94% stated that they have someone to help them with their homework. **Obviously these last two should be 100% but it is the YP's opinion and this would have been discussed at the LAC review. Regulations state that a child in care should not have any change of school unless there is agreement by the IRO, especially in Key Stage 4.**
- **PLANS FOR CHILDREN:** only 59% of children and young people who responded state that they were aware of what plans we have made to support them. 41% were either unsure or did not know. **This is of concern but many children and young people find this question confusing. The child often does not relate this question to what their "Care Plan" is (whether they will continue to live with their foster carers or in the same residential unit) when this is clarified at reviews they usually say that yes they do know what the plan is. The way this question is asked needs to be changed.**
- **SAFEGUARDING:** Just under three quarters of the young people said that they had 'never' been bullied (71%), over a quarter said that they are being bullied 'sometimes' (27%) with 2 respondents (2%) being bullied 'often'. 23% said that they had witnessed bullying. 3 children wrote that felt unsafe in their placement, 8 felt unsafe at school/ college and 6 put "other". **Examples of why they were unsafe were; being scared of dark, bad experiences when younger and bullying behaviour at school. Examples of bullying behaviour expressed were name calling and children being mean to each other or fighting. Often a child's interpretation of what constitutes bullying is not the same as an adult's view (sometimes the child has been bullying other children themselves) but any instance of bullying is always taken very seriously and whenever a child writes that they are experiencing bullying this is always discussed at a LAC review. Regarding the 3 children who felt unsafe at their placement, this would have been explored in the review. A child's safety is always a priority for any LAC review.**
- **REVIEW MEETINGS:** 85% of the young people completing their Review Consultation Forms said that they were happy with who attends their LAC Reviews. Of the 15% who were not, the answers included 6 who were not sure who attended anyway, 1 wanting a specific person there (often a family member who has not attended) 1 who did not want a specific person there. Children are given a choice of where they would like their meeting to

be held and if possible this choice will be agreed to. Two children didn't want to be there themselves. **Obviously this would have been discussed with child prior to the review and in some cases two separate meetings can be held or the child can be seen by the IRO separately. The Review team are looking at the best way to consult children about the whole review process and are in discussions with the Children in Care Council about this at present.**

- **LEAVING CARE/PERSONAL ADVISORS:** Although 63% of those who are 16/ 17 years old responded that they knew what support would be offered to them when they leave care, there were 15 respondents aged 16 or over who answered the question which asked whether they had met their Personal Advisor from the Leaving Care Team. Out of the 15 respondents, 14 indicated that they had not met their Personal Advisor and one was 'not sure'. **This is of great concern, it has been a issue for many years that there are insufficient resources in the Leaving Care Team to provide a PA for all 16 an 17 years olds, even though this is a statutory requirement. The Review Team are addressing this issue using the Dispute Resolution Process.**

**Maggie Duggins
Senior IRO
10.02.14**