



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY JOINT SUB COMMISSION 6 SEPTEMBER 2005

Report of the Director of Social Services

Participation and consultation of children and young people

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the progress of the work of the Participation Officer with children and young people in Derby and other initiatives to improve children/young peoples participation.
- 1.2 To note detail and outcomes from the Young Achievers Awards, held on 24th April this year

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Participation Project Officer 'Naomi Feldman' has been in post since May 2003 and has a range of work from activities to increase children/young people's involvement in individual care planning to their participation in more strategic events. This can be attendance at the two reference groups for children looked after or more public partnership events.
- 2.2 A critical part of this role is to support operational staff to embed good participation and consultation practice into their service areas, including children who are looked after and children in need. A Participation Policy has been produced to support this work and focus. This is attached at appendix two.
- 2.3 The following areas identify some of the work undertaken since the last report to the sub commission in October 2004:

- Reference Groups for children looked after

The KICK group (Kids IN Care In Kontrol) is for young people aged 13 years and above, and The Connector group is for children aged 12 years and below. They are both well established groups and have worked on a wide range of activities including:

- Production of welcome pack for children/young people in children's homes
- Developed artwork and content for the production of new statutory review consultation forms
- Produced contact/business cards to increase staff accessibility for children/young people
- Produced set of playing cards to increase children/young people participation in their own statutory review
- Produced animation for Carezone website

- Presentations given to councillors for CLA Topic Review, school governors and peer mentors
- Contributed to policy development, including customer Care strategy, Information sharing leaflet for ISA and SSD participation Policy
- Increasing young people's involvement in Recruitment and Selection
This has developed from work in 2004 when care experienced young people were involved in the recruitment of workers for the Advocacy project and the KICK group provided questions for the recruitment of social workers. More recently young people have received training and support to enable them to be members on interview panels at Derby University social work selection and residential care worker interviews for Children Homes.
- Young people's mental health group
This is a multi agency group of young people with representatives from SSD, Children's Fund, Connexions and CAMHS, who are looking at the views of young people currently or previously looked after who have received mental health services. They have produced a video, presented at the CAMHS stakeholder conference and are now working on a video/DVD for other young people with advice and information.
- Derby Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC)
Have developed a multi agency working group to develop the participation of young people in child protection processes. This can include the attendance of children and young people in child protection conferences. Consultation has taken place with young people and staff and guidance has been produced for staff. It is hoped that finances will be available from ACPC to engage advocates to support children/young people in this process.
- Participation of looked after children/young people in statutory reviews
The Independent Reviewing Officers and social care staff have continued their focus of encouraging children/young person's participation, not just by attendance at their reviews but by written communication or via a third person. The new consultation forms developed by the KICK group in conjunction with Q Arts will assist with this.

2.4 The Young Achievers Award Ceremony on Sunday April 24th 2005 was the fourth annual event to celebrate achievements of children and young people in the care of Derby City Council, and care leavers. Over fifty children and young people attended and were each presented with a trophy and book or book token, by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Roy Webb, at the David Lloyd Leisure Centre. About twenty others, who could not attend or preferred to receive their awards more privately, also received awards. Young people themselves took on much of the work, organising and arranging, announcing and entertaining. Refreshments, and an opportunity for many to use the sports facilities of the centre, or join in the karaoke followed the event.

Looking forward to next year and building on the success of these annual events to celebrate achievements, alternatives are currently being explored. This is with the aim of rewarding success more immediately and may encourage wider participation. It is possible that smaller celebrations may take place three or four times a year, and possibly include celebrating achievements of young people from other disadvantaged groups.

2.5 There are positive contributions and achievements from individual children/young people are worthy of reporting. They are:

- One care experienced young person involved in the KICK group from the start- he says this has given him positive experiences and opportunities: eg-speaking at conferences, mainstream reference groups for young people in Derby, now on full time traineeship to City Council
- Several children looked after accessed KICK and Connector group and have increased in confidence and self esteem, two young people presented at the Young Achievers Award
- Young people attending 'special schools' due to physical and learning disability access KICK/Connector groups and have gone on to access mainstream reference groups in Derby
- The weekly homework club for children looked after is attended by a young person who has fixed term exclusion from school
- One care experienced young person spoke on GMTV during fostering week

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Background papers:

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 Implications

Appendix 2: Children's Participation Policy

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The report has no financial implications.

Legal

- 2.1 The Children Act 1989 clearly states that children looked after should be involved in decisions about their care and that practitioners should ascertain the wishes and feelings of children/young people that they are working with.

The principles of participation are reflected in article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that children/young people have a right to say what they think about matters that affect them and a right to have those views taken seriously

Personnel

- 3.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 Ensuring that vulnerable children/young people are able to positively contribute to their individual care plans and make their wishes and feelings heard will help to ensure that their needs are met and that services are provided in the best way for them

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 This furthers the Council's Objectives of **healthy, safe and independent communities**

This supports the priorities of **improving children and young people's prospects** and **improving life chances for disadvantaged people and communities**