

**Corporate Parenting Committee
20 February 2024**



Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
Report author: Pervez Akhtar, DHoS QA

ITEM 09

Annual Report by Change, Grow and Live
Commissioned Childrens Rights Service

The Children's Rights Service – Annual Report 2022/23

Purpose

- 1.1 There is a statutory requirement to provide a Childrens Rights Service for children in care. The annual report outlines service provision, take up and relevant issues for consideration by the members of Corporate Parenting Committee

Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider content of report and make appropriate recommendations

Reason

- 3.1 As part of our contract there is a requirement for the service to provide an annual report. This is an important statutory service for children in care.

Children in Care Council Summary

The annual report provides information about how Change, Grow and Live have provided independent advocacy and independent visitor services.

Over the year CGL advocacy have provided help and support 59 issue based referrals, 40 were from children and young people placed outside of area.

Advocates have a monthly clinic in each of the residential homes so young people can speak to the advocates.

CGL also provide advocacy to help young people get their views across at the initial child protection conferences. These are children that still live at home. This has worked well over the year and continued to grow. In 2022/23 CGL supported 18 children/young people to participate in 25 separate conferences.

It has been agreed with CGL that they should at least provide 40 independent visitor matches to young people in care. At the end of the year there were 31 matches across the board. Young people who live a way from Derby and who do not have any regular contact with family or friends are given priority for independent visitor matches.

Supporting Information

- 4.1 Provision of the Children's Rights Service is enshrined in legislation for looked after children through the Children Act 1989 and through related regulation and guidance. The Council has a statutory duty to provide advocacy services for looked after children making complaints and to appoint independent visitors.

The Children's Rights Service in Derby is made up of 3 services and from the 1st April 2017 it has been delivered by SOVA¹ (Now CGL) the services include:

- The Independent Visitor Service
- The Independent Advocacy Service for all children in care (Since January 2018 this has been expanded to include children who are privately fostered)
- Independent Advocacy at Child Protection Conference

- 4.2 Since starting the contract for children rights service on 1st April 2017, CGL has worked hard to develop partnerships and provide quality children's rights service. In 2022/23 they received 59 advocacy referrals, which covered a range of themes:

- Support to prepare for looked after child reviews
- Support during looked after reviews
- Placement
- Support to attend court proceedings
- Support to liaise with leaving care workers
- Support to meet with school/education
- Other

Advocacy in child protection conferences has continued to be provided and over 2022/23 18 young people were supported to participate in over 25 separate conferences.

In January 2018 SOVA started to provide independent advocacy to children that are privately fostered. There are a small number of children that are privately fostered.

There were 31 Young People Matched with Independent visitors at the end 2022/23.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 NA

Other options

- 6.1 NA

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 NA

Legal implications

¹ Society of Voluntary Associates

8.1 There is a statutory requirement to provide a Childrens Rights Service for children in care.

Climate implications

9.1 NA

Other significant implications

10.1 NA

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care	20.10.23
Report sponsor	Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care	20.10.23
Other(s)		

For more information contact:

Background papers:

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Annual Children Rights Service Report

Appendix 2 – Presentation Children Rights Service