



Classification: Non Derby City Council document

## Change Grow Live - End of Year Report 2018-19

### Children's Rights Service

On March 1st 2019 Sova merged with Care Grow Live (CGL) to form a larger stronger more focussed service provider. Our mission at CGL is to help people change the direction of their lives and live life to its full potential. Our objective is to deliver services which improve the health and wellbeing of the young people we support helping them to achieve life affirming goals. CGL have over 53 projects across England and Wales attracting more than 2000 volunteers and in excess of 3500 staff. Through our three services on behalf of Derby City Council in 2018-19 we supported 187 children and young people providing independent visitors and/or advocacy support. We pride our service delivery on the passion for equality which drives our staff and volunteers.

### Quality Assurance

CGL are committed to delivering high quality, safe and cost effective services. In 2018-2019 CGL continued to operate under the following quality frameworks and approved provider standards;





Classification: Non Derby City Council document

## The Children's Rights Service Derby

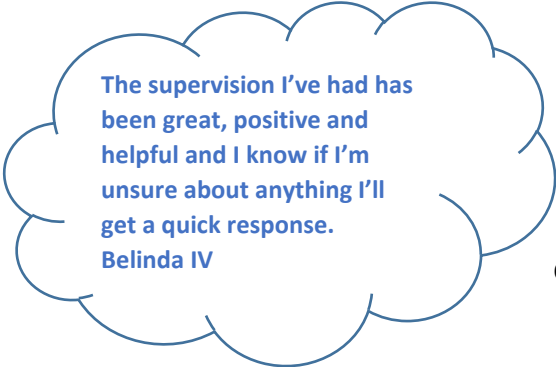
CGL are commissioned by Derby City Council to deliver their Children's Rights Service. Incorporating:

- The Independent Visitor Service
- Issue based Independent Advocacy for looked after children & young people
- Independent Advocacy at initial child protection conference & review
- Independent Advocacy at residential children's homes
- Independent Advocacy for young people in private foster arrangements

Our practice is underpinned by the National Standards for the provision of Independent Advocacy 2002 and the National Standards for the provision of Independent Visitors 2016. Positive stake holder partnerships are maintained by providing reports and meeting with the corporate parenting lead and commissioning managers quarterly to ensure close monitoring and review of the service.

We have built links with independent reviewing officers, social work area teams, independent chairs, fostering services, leaving care services, the virtual school, Children In Care Council together with third sector organisations and children's rights networks to ensure the service is accessible, transparent and independent.

## Volunteers on DCRS



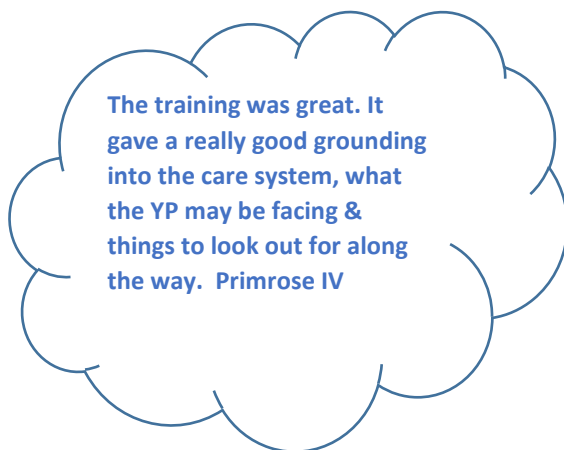
The supervision I've had has been great, positive and helpful and I know if I'm unsure about anything I'll get a quick response.  
Belinda IV

Our model is to recruit, train and deploy volunteers. We are passionate about equality and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. We want our volunteers to reflect the diverse



**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

communities of Derby, we encourage applications from all members of the community including those with previous experience of the challenges our young people may face. Existing volunteers continue to be our very best ambassadors and receive a Rolls Royce experience in terms of training, opportunities for development, support and supervision. Here is a sample of what our volunteers have to say:



We currently have 55

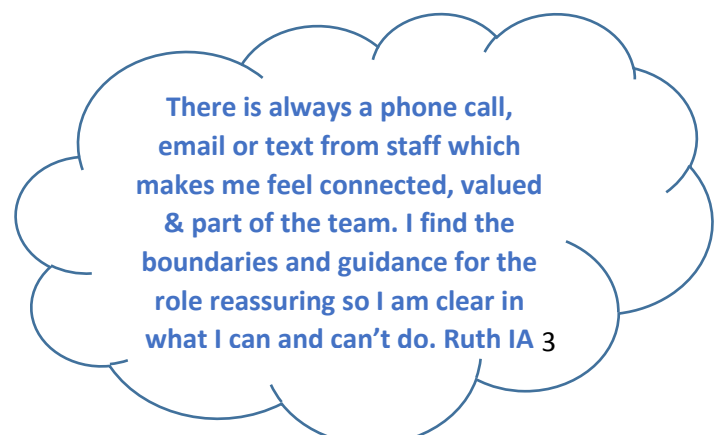


volunteers involved in our service, we are delighted to boast two husband and wife teams reinforcing the caring, nurturing nature of our volunteer profile. With such strength within our team we are able to offer a unique service to our looked after

children;

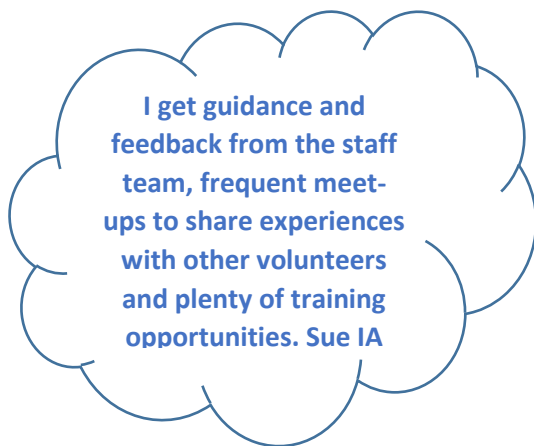
Our staff team of two are tenacious in recruitment linking with a hub within CGL projects nationwide to find support for young people placed out of area and at a distance. Networking is essential on a local level too, drawing interest and developing relationships with agencies such as Derby Radio, Derby University, Derby College, Churches and other third sector groups.

Under CGL we adhere to a national volunteer training programme ensuring all are embedded into the organisation, sharing our values and committed to our



service. The recruitment process nationally and locally is:

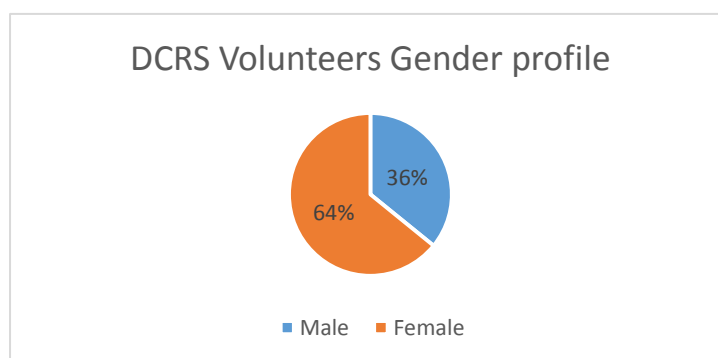
- Initial interest / application and interview
- References & DBS
- Classroom training including core elements (safeguarding, risk assessment, boundaries) and project specific information.
- Safeguarding ELearning
- Shadowing (if advocacy)
- Completion of assessment pack
- Pre-start discussion



former Sova staff and volunteers

#### **2018-19 DCRS delivered:**

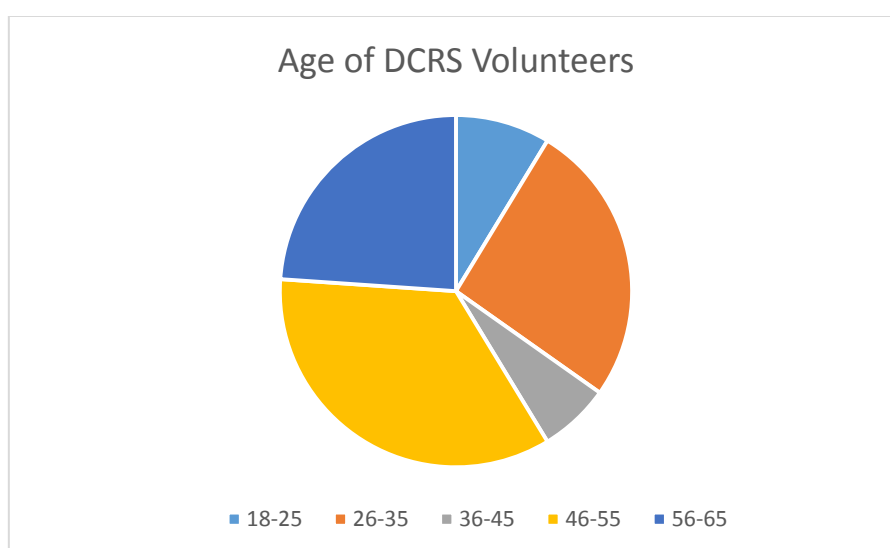
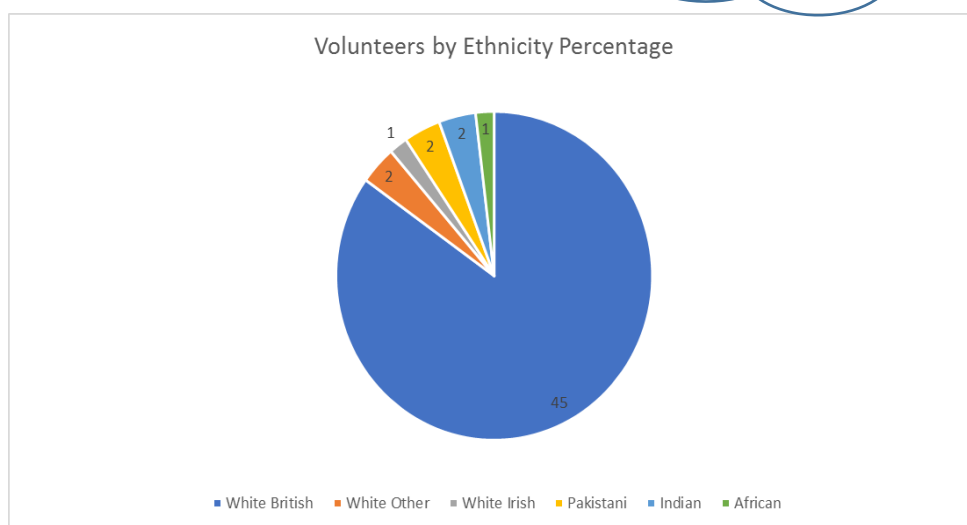
- 13 training sessions for volunteers across both projects.
- 8 volunteer support group meetings.
- 4 tailored and informative Newsletters
- 2 minimum supervisions for each volunteer
- National Celebration event for



**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

The supervision I've had has been great, positive and helpful and I know if I'm unsure about anything I'll get a quick response. Ian IV

Expenses are paid quickly, I know the contact sheets &



## Independent Advocacy

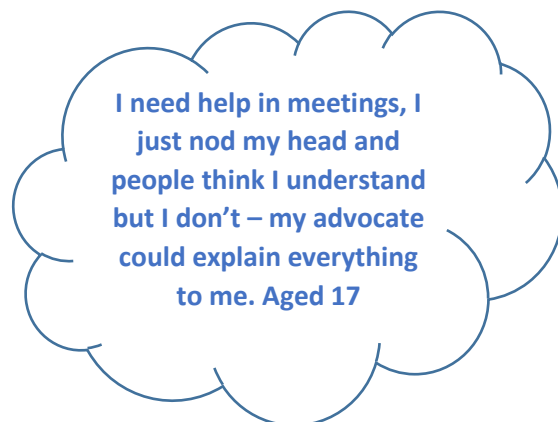
Independent advocates provide vital information, signposting and support to children and young people – making sure their voices are heard and their rights upheld. In June 2019 The Children’s Commissioner for England released her findings regarding advocacy services and made several recommendations



including a consolidation of the law so entitlements to advocacy are clear and the revision of national standards (statutory guidance); We are delighted and proud that CGL, represented by our project manager Gill Black has

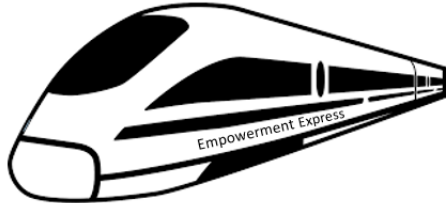
been invited to form part of the expert advisory panel working with Article 39 and others reviewing the national advocacy standards to review the standards, recognising her expertise in the field. <http://www.article39.org.uk>

We pride ourselves on our ability to respond to young people no matter what their circumstance or location. Our passion for equality is the driving force of our service, consequently a young person seeking support to challenge the local authority as they are detained under a secure order is met with the same commitment as a young person requiring support to obtain a bicycle pump. Non instructed cases are frequent adopting the watching brief style of advocacy to ensure a voice is given to the most vulnerable of our young people. Clearly, some cases require a greater knowledge and experience but all cases are of equal importance.

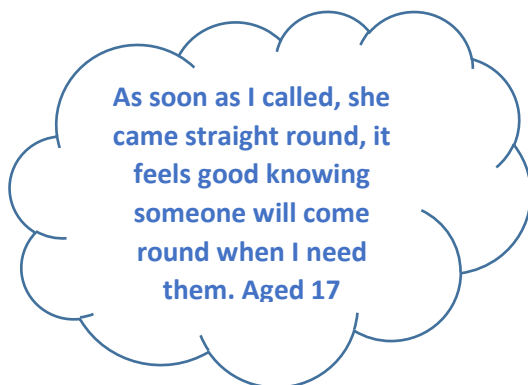


**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

Advocates listen to the wishes and feelings of the young people they support and help them to understand their Human Rights. Our advocates possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills and use analogies to help young people and professionals understand more about their role; for example, “The Empowerment



Express” - an advocates role is to empower the voice and rights of the young person they support, they may not always change the final destination but they strive to improve the young person’s experience during the journey, in turn improving the young person’s relationships with the professionals charged with making best interest decisions.



As soon as I called, she came straight round, it feels good knowing someone will come round when I need them. Aged 17

## Referrals to Advocacy

Referrals may be made at any point by anyone regarding any issue with the consent of the young person. The age range of those accessing the service is 4 – 18 years or 25 years if the young person

has additional needs. Referrals are accepted on behalf of

- children in need for initial child protection conference & review
- children & young people in foster care
- s20 voluntary placement orders
- full care orders
- secure orders
- Young people in private foster care arrangements.



He said far more to the advocate than he did to anyone else! FC

NB: Though care leavers without additional needs are not currently covered by the existing contract, advocacy support has always been provided if requested.



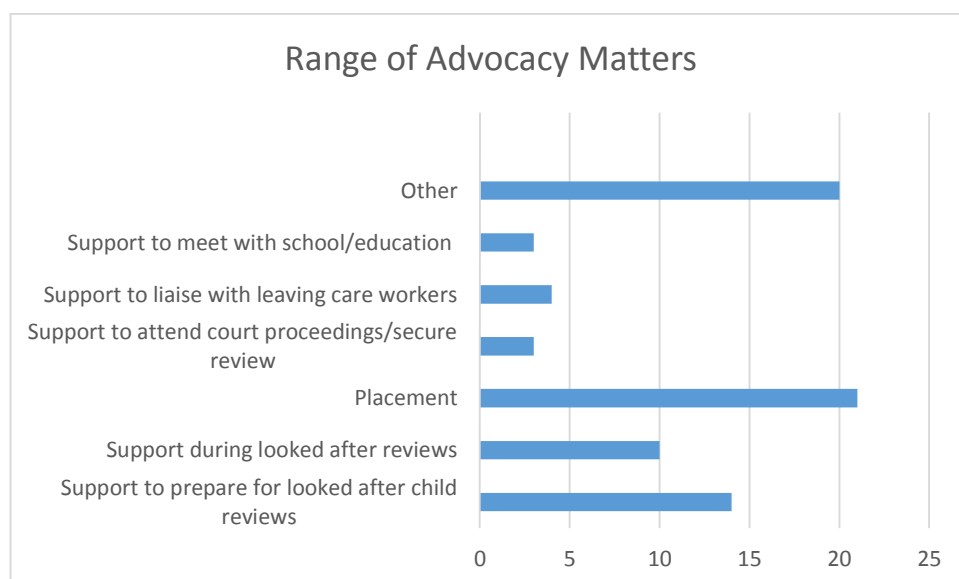
Classification: Non Derby City Council document

**2018 – 19** we received 71 issue based referrals, a rise of 14% on the previous year. 41% were from children and young people placed outside of Derby.

### Advocacy Matters...

CGL report quarterly on the matters raised by young people. Derby City Council identified a number of themes they wish to record:

- 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







Classification: Non Derby City Council document

Category “other” includes matters about:

- Support in transition – ensuring services / support in place
- Age assessments
- Development of grounds
- Contact with family
- Restrictions of liberty
- Support at secure review
- Support to obtain passport

15% related to “placement” matters including:

- Overcrowding – young person feeling lost in placement
- Change of staffing arrangements within children’s home
- Transition from care, preparing for independent living
- Facilities
- Stability / uncertainty of placement
- Wish to change placement
- Relationship breakdowns with foster parents



Classification: Non Derby City Council document

**2018-19** seven complaints were raised against DCC on behalf of young people; one was escalated to the ombudsman, three were signposted to legal services, and three were resolved to the young person's satisfaction.

### Advocacy at Residential Children's Homes

We provide monthly advocacy clinics at all local authority residential homes in Derby. Advocates are warmly received by staff and have a positive relationship with young people. **2018-19** saw 10 % self-referrals arising from clinics. What the staff say:

"I can't speak highly enough of the service. I really do believe the help, support and guidance they offer the young people is so important. I've also seen first-hand how having an advocate has really helped the young people and given them a sense of empowerment and a sense of control back into their life "I would definitely recommend the service! As a residential care worker I have seen first-hand how important and valuable the service is for our young people. In my opinion it is an Essential service for our children in care".

"We have found that it has been of great use to the home for our young people to have an advocate and they have been able to highlight areas that we as a service can improve in order to further enhance the experiences that we give to our young people. One of the young people in particular at the home has been able to voice their wishes and make the staff team aware of what they would like in their home. We believe that young people should be able to feel that they can voice their opinions and tell staff how they feel about how they get looked after, and any areas of their care that they would like to change or improve. Having someone independent visit the young people and advocate for them is vital to us so we can ensure that they are happy as we continue to strive to deliver the best service possible".



Classification: Non Derby City Council document

## Advocacy at Initial Child Protection Conference

We provide independent advocacy support for children in need at initial child protection conference and thereafter at reviews if requested to do so. We work in partnership with Derby University providing volunteering opportunities for students to enhance their degree studies, focusing on best practice and developing employability.

**2018-19** we supported 78 children/young people to participate in 56 separate conferences far exceeding funders target by 56%;

### **What the professionals say about our service:**

“Having an advocate collate and express the wishes and feelings of these 3 children who were subject to an ICPC enabled the mother to hear in an unbiased manner exactly how her actions were impacting on her children, before this she was unaware just how severe the situation was for her children. This service is vital to myself as a social worker, it is unbiased and the parents know this and they know there is no way I could turn the words of the children. Also due to our own workload it enables us to collate the wishes and feelings of the children in an extensive manner. Plus all the children I have worked with and asked for the advocate to come and see really like her”. Social worker

“I am just emailing you to ask you what tools you use when completing direct work with children as you get some really good information and it would be handy to know what tools you use to aid this”. Thanks, social worker

## The Independent Visitor Service

“I like trying new things and having the chance to talk to someone”

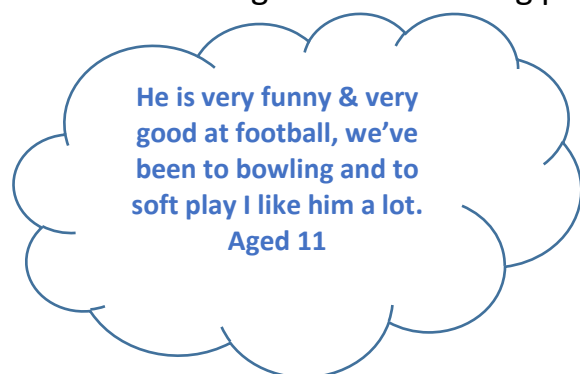
- Young Person aged 16

Independent Visitors are heroes to our young people. They provide on-going tailored companionship, role models offering a long term supportive

relationship. They meet with the child/young person on a monthly basis and engage in activities they both enjoy with a view to raising the self-esteem of the child/young person and help their confidence to grow.

## **Where we have fun!**

A selection of activities this year include:  
Playing football, Cadbury's World, Alton Towers, The Light Cinema, Playing Pool, Cinema , Ashover Rock Wooley Moor Show, Barton & Willington Marina - mug painting,



Markeaton Craft village, Recording studios, Dove dale, Pic-nics, Walking, Canal side Heritage Centre, National Videogame Museum, Tutbury Castle Ghost Walk, Derby Quad - Plus One Scheme, Derby Theatre Plus One Scheme, Nottingham Arts Centre, City Farm , Eating out , Rugby matches,

Football Matches, Horse riding, Go Karting, Window Shopping, ComicCom, Exhibitions, City walks, Crazy golf, Sledging,

## **Young People Matched with Independent visitors**

We end 2018-19 with 38 young people matched and \*8 on our waiting list; the longest running match is in its sixth year. We are delighted that volunteers remain involved notwithstanding changes around their young person. We have examples of placements breaking down and young people moving counties but the independent visitor remains committed opting to travel the extra distance to maintain the friendship; \*In addition, when young people turn 18 though their match officially ends we

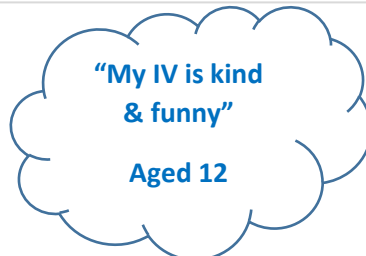
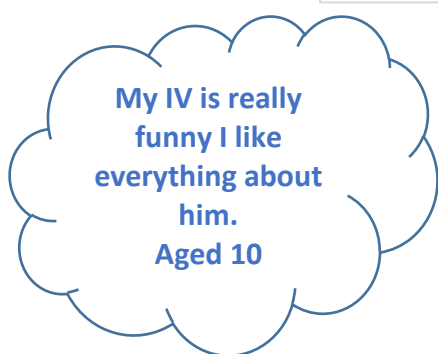
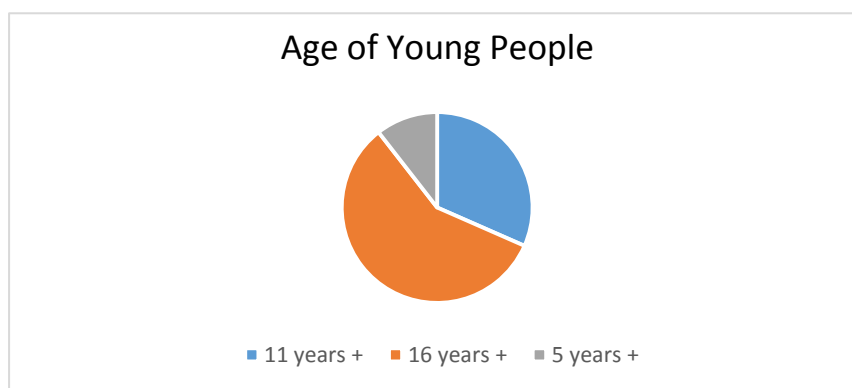


**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

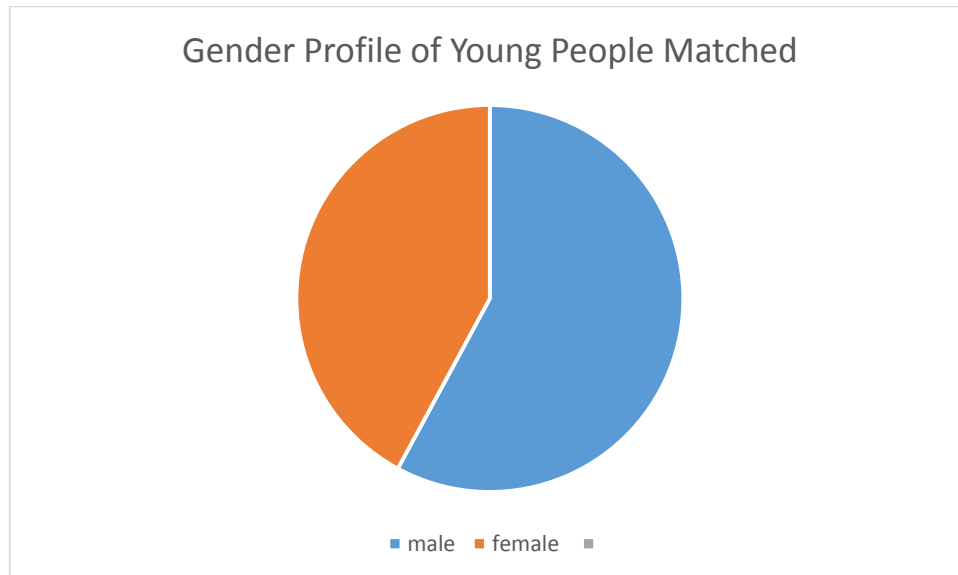
have several volunteers who choose to maintain their relationship demonstrative of the friendship that has been built.

**\*NB: At time of writing 3 on the waiting list have now been matched**

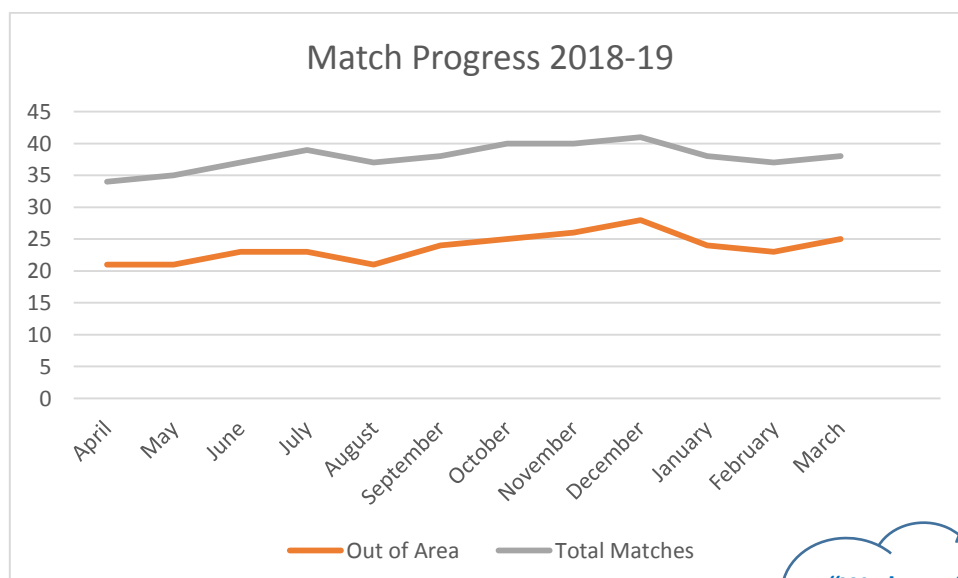
**\*NB: Where a young person has additional needs, we support them to continue meeting their independent visitor until age 25, we currently have two examples of this arrangement.**



Classification: Non Derby City Council document



**2018-19** DCRS received 26 referrals on behalf of young people and made 21 new matches.



"We have fun, we  
talk about 101  
things!" Aged 14



### Classification: Non Derby City Council document

We provide case studies at quarterly meetings to illustrate the quality of the matches made and the enjoyment the young people have. Distance is no barrier to our service, 25 of our matches are for young people placed out of area, including Kent, Birmingham, Nottinghamshire, Newark, Sheffield, Corby and Ilkeston.

## What do our Independent visitors say?

Over the last twelve months X and I have enjoyed spending time together and she has grown in confidence and visited new places. When I arrive at her foster carer's she is always ready and waiting with a big smile. We usually have a drink and snack and chat about which places she has enjoyed the most. Visiting Santa on the narrow boat comes out pretty high!

I've thought for very many years that looked after children and young people get a raw deal (having taught for 35 years) so when I retired I began as an IV. A few things have changed for the better since then (9 years ago) but I still think it's really important for X (and others) to have a person they trust who is independent from the foster carers. IV Out of Area

Being an IV means that I might just be doing someone else some good during my life, it means that I can invest the experiences I have from my past, and to some degree feel as though my own time being brought up in what would now be classed as an institution, is now being reinvested to positive effect. I have grown to appreciate how lonely it must be inside for a YP who does not have a guaranteed place to live, and could be asked to leave at any moment, which birth parents cannot just do, it must feel like being on permanent trial. We have had some good times doing stuff – walking along the Trent, Wall Climbing, Cycling, Mini Golf and the Cinema. YP is not at all demanding and just as happy to operate on a low budget as to have money spent, this is important to me because I see this as a signal that we both turn up because we get on, and not because there is something in it for us. To some degree, because as an IV I operate under choice, the relationship between YP and IV is real, and not in place because the system places us there, so as an IV, I do feel



**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

as though I can speak to, and respond to the YP in a more straight forward manner than those who have a greater level of responsibility, I hope bring some normalised adult interaction to the world of the YP. IV Out of area at a distance

The supervision I've had has been great, positive and helpful and I know if I'm unsure about anything I'll get a quick response. IV Derby

## **Conclusion**

**“When everything is going well for the young person it's good to just enjoy our time together, talk about things, building trust. If things go very wrong for the young person that is when an IV can be the one bit of stability in their life” Belinda IV**

**2018-19** has been a successful year for the Children's Rights service.

Participation is at the heart of what we do,

- We facilitated two young people to travel to London to participate in a focus group coordinated by Article 39 sharing their experience of independent advocacy with a view to raising awareness and benefiting all looked after children;
- Young people were contacted a minimum of three times by staff to seek their views on the service in addition to a written invitation to participate in “feedback fortnight” with a prize drawer incentive for responding to our survey
- Four young people participated in our volunteer training providing guidance and advice to future independent visitors;
- We welcomed senior care leavers from all local authorities to our volunteer team willing to share their own care experience for the benefit of all.





**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

CGL will continue to work closely with stake holders to ensure delivery to the highest possible standard of service as they continue to exceed expectations of commissioners.



**Derby Children's  
Rights Service  
Independent Advocacy**

**What does an Independent Advocate do?**

- Provides free, independent & confidential support
- Helps you express your wishes and feelings
- Meets with you where you feel comfortable
- Champions your rights & makes sure you are fairly treated
- Helps you prepare for meetings & attend with you if you wish
- Help you make a complaint
- Negotiate with others on your behalf
- Follows the National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services

**What an Independent Advocate does not do:**

- Tell you what to do
- Tell others what you said – unless you ask us to \*
- Take over
- Take control

\* Advocates follow strict principles of confidentiality, however we have a duty to report information if we consider there to be a safeguarding concern

**If you would like to speak with an Independent Advocate:**

Contact DCRS: 01332 294534 / 07966293316  
gillian.black@sova.org.uk  
Or speak to your social worker or IRO for more information

## APPENDIX



**Press release. For immediate release**

### **Award-winner urges others to leave a lasting footprint**

A man who has been presented with an award after dedicating his spare time to supporting vulnerable children is appealing for more people to volunteer their time. Simon Evans, who works at Lubrizol, in Hazelwood, has been given the Christine Sewell Charity and Community Award by the firm in recognition of his dedication to children in Derbyshire.

Simon and his wife, Alison, spent five years fostering children before the pair both began volunteering as independent visitors for looked after children with the charity Sova.

The work sees them spending time individually with young people who are living in children's homes or foster care giving them support and someone independent to talk to.

Simon, who has three grown-up children and three grandchildren, said: "Every looked after child is entitled to an independent visitor, who isn't paid or part of the system, such as a teacher or a social worker. Our role is to be a friend and someone who listens without being judgemental.

"We take them out for some fun, perhaps for a McDonald's or to the cinema, and give them a break from their everyday lives. Sova also have Advocate roles, these are different from Independent Visitors, as Advocates become the voice of the child during review meetings.

"None of the children we work with made the choice of being in the position they are in, what we accept as normal is very different for some children. These children all have different backgrounds, quite different from many of us, and as a Sova volunteer you have the opportunity to make a difference, and that's what we do."

**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

**The Children's Rights Service 2018 – 2019 Annual Report**

Simon, who has worked for Lubrizol for 29 years, previously worked in the Royal Engineers as a corporal in bomb disposal serving in many areas of the globe, including the Falklands in a number of roles and tours between 1982 to 1986. He now works as a Regional Business Manager with responsibilities for a team across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and India.

The firm has honoured his efforts outside of work with the award, which entitles him to a designated car parking space of his own at the Hazelwood site and a donation of £500 for a charity of his choice.

Simon added: "I intend to donate the £500 to Derbyshire Children's Holiday Home in Skegness and I will raffle off the parking space which will raise a little more money for the cause.

"I was fortunate to have a good upbringing and there are so many young people who aren't so fortunate. I would encourage anyone to consider volunteering with Sova, either as an Independent Visitor (IV) or Advocate.

"although you don't do this for the kudos, it is great to know that I have made a positive impact on the children in our care and I would urge anyone who is passionate about young people to help these young people to have a better, brighter future. To provide them with positive role models is the only way we can help break the cycle and leave a lasting footprint."

For more information about volunteering with Sova please visit the website [www.Sova.org.uk](http://www.Sova.org.uk)

<https://www.Sova.org.uk/who-we-are>

<https://www.Sova.org.uk/Pages/Category/how-you-can-help>

**ENDS**

**For further information please contact Sarah Newton at Penguin PR on 01332 416228 or email [sarah@penguinpr.co.uk](mailto:sarah@penguinpr.co.uk)**




**Classification: Non Derby City Council document**

The Children's Rights Service 2018 – 2019 Annual Report

## Derby Children's Rights Service – Young Person Survey

you.plus  
**Sova**



Please look at the sentences below Think about yourself and your visits with our volunteer Which of the boxes would you say is most like you? Tick one box against each question		 Not like me	 A bit like me	 A lot like me
1	"I look forward to seeing my Independent Visitor (IV)"			
2	"My IV listens to me, <b>we</b> choose where we go"			
3	"My IV and I choose together how we spend our time"			
4	"I understand what my IV can and can't do" <i>e.g. budget, frequency of meetings, personal boundaries</i>			
5	"I would recommend having an IV to other young people"			
6	"I feel better about myself since having an IV"			
7	"I am more able to speak up since having my IV"			
8	"I have tried new things since having my IV"			
9	"If I need help or want something to change, I feel more able to ask others if needed."			
10	"Overall – I feel more confident since having an IV"			
11	"Overall – I have developed new skills since having an IV"			
12	"Overall – I feel better about myself since having an IV"			