

17 March 2014**Agenda Item: 8**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with information about the Advocacy Service for Looked After Children.

Information and Advice

2. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 s.26A imposes a duty on the Local Authority to make arrangements for the provision of advocacy services.
3. The Advocacy Service for Looked After Children in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City was provided by Barnardo's from February 2011 and is commissioned until 31 March 2014.
4. In September 2013 the Service was re-tendered and in December 2013 the contract was awarded to the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) which will begin work on 1 April 2014.
5. The service specification requires NYAS to visit all children and young people placed in external and internal residential units no less than eight weekly. This is in addition to representing children and young people with specific concerns at Looked After Reviews and enabling them to use the complaints systems.
6. NYAS will employ a combination of paid and volunteer advocates, using staff from other regions where these are based nearer to our young people (for example, using staff from their Cumbria office to advocate for our young people living in Cumbria.)
7. The Service covers Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City looked after children and young people and has additional provision to ensure representation for young people secured at Clayfields House.
8. There is additional provision, which can be spot-purchased, for young people involved in safeguarding processes.

9. The contract was awarded to NYAS following a competitive tendering process. The NYAS bid was scored most highly by the Children in Care Council and the Commissioning Teams from City and County. The bid was favoured because in addition to having years of experience of delivering specialist advocacy services NYAS has a 24 hour helpline which can be accessed by all our LAC and young people.
10. The total value of the contract for City and County is £180,000, with the County paying £120,000 as we have approximately 900 LAC plus a Clayfields House contract (the City have approx 500 LAC). The cost of the contract has been provided for in the 2014/15 budget.

Other Options Considered

11. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the information about the Advocacy Service for Looked After Children be noted.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

14. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 21/02/14)

15. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report, though the financial implications of the tender process reported are contained in paragraph 10 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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