

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Children's Trust on the evaluation of the Looked After Children Strategy 2012-2015 and to seek endorsement of plans for the development of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy for 2015-2018.

Information and Advice

2. The LAC Strategy 2012-2015 and its associated action plan were developed by a multi-agency group in order to deliver improved outcomes for looked after children in Nottinghamshire. It has been monitored on an ongoing basis by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee and the multi-agency LAC Strategy Group.

Evaluation Report

3. The Evaluation Report has been produced by the Planning and Quality Assurance Team. It considers achievements, progress and areas for further improvement within each of the eight themes covered by the LAC Strategy 2012-2015.
4. It brings together local and national statistical data; updates from partner agencies; intelligence gathered as part of case audits and service user comments to provide a holistic picture of progress in relation for outcomes for Looked After Children.

Key Points from the Evaluation Report

5. There are many positives to report in relation to outcomes for LAC, which include:
 - the voice of children and young people continues to be heard through a variety of forums
 - placement stability remains very good in Nottinghamshire
 - attainment of children at Key Stage 1 is above average
 - our 'Staying Put' policy is well embedded and supports young people to remain in stable placements beyond the age of 18 years.
6. The report also highlighted a number of areas for improvement which will be incorporated into the revised strategy for 2015-18, including:

- the completion of dental checks and immunisations is low compared to national and statistical neighbours.
- there continues to be a significant attainment gap between LAC and their peers, and attainment at GCSE for LAC requires improvement.
- we do not know enough about the emotional health of our LAC because completion and submission of SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) scores is poor.

Development of the New Strategy

7. Over the coming months, learning from this evaluation will be brought together with the views and ideas of children and young people and the expertise of professionals across agencies to develop our new Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy which will be ready for publication by Summer 2015.
8. The new strategy will consider Care Leavers as well as children who are currently looked after; this reflects the importance of our role in preparing young people in our care for adulthood. It will also address important and current issues affecting children and young people which were not previously included as part of the strategy. Child Sexual Exploitation and substance misuse will both feature in the new strategy.
9. The development process will be an opportunity for all those across the Council and in partner agencies to consider what they as Corporate Parents can offer looked after children in Nottinghamshire. The focus of the strategy will be on outcomes, placing children and young people at the centre of our thinking as the strategy develops.

Next Steps

10. The next steps will be as follows:
 - the evaluation will report be shared with relevant stakeholder groups, including the Children's Trust and the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
 - feedback from children and young people on the current strategy will be collated and analysed
 - consultation and discussion will take place across partner agencies via the LAC Strategy Group and other forums
 - consultation work will be undertaken with children and young people to gather their views and ideas
 - a revised outcomes-focused strategy will be drafted for LAC and Care Leavers
 - the new Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2015-2018 will be presented to the Children and Young People's Committee for comment and will subsequently be presented to the Policy Committee for approval.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That;

- 1) The Looked After Children Strategy 2012-2015 Evaluation Report be noted
- 2) Plans for the development of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy for 2015-2018 be endorsed by the Sub-Committee.

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