



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 20th NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

INFORMATION PAPER - ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS SERVICE 2013-14

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Board of the 2013-14 annual reports of the Children's Rights Service and to seek the support of the Health and Wellbeing Board's membership to contribute, as relevant, to the successful delivery of the actions identified in the Work Plans.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. This is the first time the Children's Rights Service Annual Reports have been submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board – it is proposed that this will now be the approach taken on an annual basis. It is not a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to produce a Children's Rights Service Annual Report but it is considered good practice in relation to ensuring children's needs around their rights and advocacy are met. All agencies working with children should pay due regard to their rights.

Background

3. The Children's Rights Service in Leicestershire has been established since 1987. The service is located in the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit in the Children and Family Services department. Up until June 2013 it provided an advocacy service for children in care and care leavers but has now been extended, to provide advocacy on behalf of children subject to a child protection plan also.
4. The service focuses on aiding children and young people's voices to be clearly heard, listened to and acted upon so that they are a central part of the planning for their safety, care, health and wellbeing and they contribute to the development and improvement of the services designed to meet their needs.
5. The reports provide an analysis of the effectiveness of the Children's Rights Service in Leicestershire; identify good practice but also highlight issues for further development and identify actions required to achieve this.

Consultation/Patient and Public Involvement

6. Consultation with children in care, care leavers and children and young people subject to child protection plans and child protection processes is a key feature of the work of the Children's Rights Service and is reflected in the annual reports.

Resource Implications

7. None of note at this stage

Conclusions/Recommendations

8. The Board is requested to note the content of the Annual Reports and the improvements and developments planned for 2014-15 as set out in the Work Plans. The main priorities considered relevant for the Board:
 - Ensuring up to date information about the Children's Rights Service is widely available, readily accessible for all children and young people and actively promoted.
 - The need for the Children's Rights Service to develop a robust evaluation process in order to review the impact and effectiveness the service is having for children and young people to determine how best it can support improved outcomes.
 - Improve accessibility and availability of suitable accommodation for care leavers; there is a recognised benefit to emotional wellbeing as a result of security and stability. This is currently being addressed through the Children and Family Services Transformation Programme as part of the remodelling of Children's Social Care, including the Placements Service.
 - Improved and timely work around preparation for independence and healthy transitions into adulthood. This forms part of the work being developed as a result of Leicestershire's commitment to the Care Leavers Charter.

Officer to Contact

Judith Jones
Acting Service Manager
Safeguarding and Improvement Unit
Telephone: 0116 3057411
Email: judith.jones@leics.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Children's Rights Service Annual Reports 2013-14

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

9. These are addressed throughout the reports as the aim is to improve standards and outcomes for all children and young people in care and those with safeguarding needs, including disabled children, young children and those from minority and harder to reach groups.

Risk Assessment

10. There are some national and local political implications given the work of the Children's Rights Service is subject to the scrutiny of Ofsted inspections.

This page is intentionally left blank