

Corporate Parenting Board

Meeting to be held on 22 November 2023

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and Independent Visitor Service
Annual Report**

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is commissioned to deliver the Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service across Lancashire and support a wide cohort of young people including;

- Children in our Care and Care Leavers
- Children in Need including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)
- Children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan
- 16/17 Homeless Young People

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) annual report describes the number of advocacy referrals for each eligible cohort but what is evident is that both referrals and complexity of advocacy need has increased significantly from 257 referrals in 2021/2022 to 338 in 2022/2023.

In terms of Independent Visitors, the service received 40 referrals in 2022/2023.

There is a waiting list of 18 young people awaiting a match. The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) are providing ongoing communication and support to children and young people who are awaiting an Independent Visitor and are promoting the service as fully as possible.

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) annual report (Appendix 'A') also describes the types of referrals that have been received and from which service within Children's Services.

A significant priority for the Service is to explore innovative recruitment processes as recruitment to the Independent Visitor is challenging. The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) has comprehensively promoted opportunities to volunteer. However, the National Youth Advocacy Service's (NYAS's) involvement with other local authorities and the National Independent Visitor Network (NIVN) shows this to be a national issue post covid pandemic with significantly less applications.

Recommendations

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to:

- (i) Comment and receive the report.
- (ii) Consider the suggestions made within the Annual Report (Appendix 'A') regarding the necessity to recruit more Independent Visitor Volunteers through Lancashire County Council which could be achieved through the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership.

Detail

The Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service has had another successful year of delivery as detailed in the Annual Report (Appendix 'A') and the PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 'B'). Awareness raising continues across a broad range of providers and services which is strengthening understanding of the provision.

The Service has an increased number of referrals in 2022/2023, compared to 2021/2022, undertaking 338 referrals.

- 74 Child Protection
- 264 Issue Based (205 for Children in our Care and Care Leavers)

Young people are supported on a wide range of topics including the most common:

- Children Looked After reviews
- Homeless Protocol
- Change of placements
- Living arrangements
- Local Authority Stage 1 complaints

Feedback from young people and professionals is overwhelmingly positive, with young people reporting that they feel that their rights and entitlements were clearly explained, and they felt more equipped and confident to attend meetings and understand decision-making.

Children and Young People who are supported by Independent Visitors also report long-lasting matches to IVs who get to know them well and provide a wide range of creative and supportive opportunities.

Appendices



Appendices 'A' and 'B' are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised as below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

| Appendix | Title |
|-----------------|---|
| Appendix 'A' | National Youth Advocacy Service Annual Report 2021/2022 |
| Appendix 'B' | Presentation |

