

Derbyshire County Council
Improvement and Scrutiny (People)
15 January 2014

Children in Care Performance Report

Purpose of the Report

To provide key performance information in connection with services for children in the care of Derbyshire County Council.

Information and Analysis

Numbers of Children in Care:

Numbers of children in care have continued to fall and the overall number in care at the end of October 2013 was below that seen at 31st March 2011.

Disabled Children and South Derbyshire & South Dales have seen small increases in numbers in care since 31st March with all other districts seeing decreases of between 1.9% (High Peak & North Dales) and 12.2% (Amber Valley).

It is worth noting that Derbyshire's rate of children in care per 10k population aged under 18 remains significantly below the statistical neighbour average and England rate.

Numbers of children in care

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	30	36	32	37	▲
High Peak & North Dales	102	103	103	101	▼
Chesterfield	106	113	121	115	▼
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	151	154	134	124	▼
Amber Valley	96	92	82	72	▼
Erewash	118	145	133	120	▼
South Derbyshire & South Dales	57	57	59	63	▲
Derbyshire	660	700	664	632	▼
<i>Statistical Neighbour Average</i>	<i>791</i>	<i>854</i>	<i>902</i>		
<i>England</i>	<i>65500</i>	<i>67080</i>	<i>68110</i>		

Numbers of children in care per 10k population aged under 18

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	94	115	102	118	▲
High Peak & North Dales	35	37	37	36	▼
Chesterfield	52	55	59	56	▼
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	41	43	40	37	▼
Amber Valley	39	38	34	30	▼
Erewash	51	64	59	53	▼
South Derbyshire & South Dales	23	23	24	25	▲
Derbyshire	41	45	42	40	▼
<i>Statistical Neighbour Average</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>63</i>		
<i>England</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>60</i>		

The introduction of multi-agency 'Edge of Care Resource Panels' to better gate-keep admissions to the care system and the introduction of systemic practice training across all districts is intended to reduce the number of children in care to approximately 600 by March 2014. The decreases seen since March 2013 are a positive step in this direction.

Admissions & Discharges:

The number of children being admitted to care has been decreasing. A 9.2% decrease in the number of admissions was seen when comparing 2010/11 and 2012/13 figures. Figures for the 12 months ending October 2013 show a further small (2.2%) decrease compared with 2012/13.

Numbers of children admitted to care

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	3	6	16	19	▲
High Peak & North Dales	52	62	36	33	▼
Chesterfield	63	48	58	54	▼
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	74	51	47	51	▲
Amber Valley	39	35	37	36	▼
Erewash	42	55	54	50	▼
South Derbyshire & South Dales	33	31	30	29	▼
Derbyshire	306	288	278	272	▼

The reasons why children are admitted to care can be as many and varied as the children themselves and the circumstances for each individual child are unique. However, interrogation of the reasons (as recorded in the Care Plan for each child) for children admitted during 2012/13 and during 2013/14 up to the end of October has shown that the top 5 most commonly recorded issues were:

Top 5 Issues – 2012/13		Top 5 Issues – 2013/14 (To 31/10/13)	
Issue	% Of Cases Noted In	Issue	% Of Cases Noted In
Neglect	19.9%	Neglect	38.2%
Physical abuse	17.6%	Physical abuse	22.2%
Substance misuse (including alcohol abuse) by parents	17.6%	Substance misuse (including alcohol abuse) by parents	18.1%
Domestic violence	14.0%	Mental health (parent)	9.0%
Inadequate parenting	12.1%	Unmanageable behaviour	9.0%

Further work is required to identify any trends in these reasons or if any issues are concentrated in particular areas.

The percentage of children admitted to care who have previously been in care (re-admissions) has increased for the 12 months ending October 2013 when compared with 2012/13 and previous year's figures. However, it should be noted that re-admission rates for the 12 months ending October 2013 decreased for Disabled Children, High Peak & North Dales and Chesterfield when compared with 2012/13 rates.

Percentage of re-admissions to care

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	16.7%	0.0%	6.7%	5.3%	▼
High Peak & North Dales	17.1%	13.6%	16.7%	12.1%	▼
Chesterfield	17.9%	23.3%	15.9%	13.0%	▼
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	5.4%	12.2%	13.6%	15.7%	▲
Amber Valley	11.1%	19.4%	11.1%	16.7%	▲
Erewash	7.7%	14.5%	21.8%	30.0%	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	7.9%	10.0%	3.2%	6.9%	▲
Derbyshire	11.6%	15.6%	14.3%	15.8%	▲

The number of children being discharged from care has been increasing. A 13.5% increase in the number of discharges was seen when comparing 2010/11 and 2012/13 figures, and current figures for the 12 months ending October 2013 show a further increase of 5.8%.

Numbers of discharges from care

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	4	2	11	10	▼
High Peak & North Dales	50	52	31	32	▲
Chesterfield	55	48	80	86	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	66	43	42	49	▲
Amber Valley	41	39	62	53	▼
Erewash	34	40	62	70	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	25	26	24	30	▲
Derbyshire	275	250	312	330	▲

Children in Care Placed More Than 20 Miles From Home:

The percentage of children in care who were placed more than 20 miles from home at the end of October 2013 (15.6%) was a small decrease when compared with the percentage at the end of March 2013 (17.0%). Statistical Neighbour and England figures for 2011/12 and 2010/11 show that Derbyshire's percentage placed more than 20 miles from home has consistently been in-line with or just below the average for our statistical neighbour authorities and the percentage for England overall.

Percentage placed more than 20 miles from home (regardless of whether inside or outside LA)

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	25.0%	30.8%	26.7%	18.4%	▼
High Peak & North Dales	19.5%	19.6%	27.7%	27.3%	▼
Chesterfield	10.4%	6.8%	5.6%	3.4%	▼
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	11.4%	14.1%	15.0%	11.4%	▼
Amber Valley	14.6%	18.5%	18.5%	11.7%	▼
Erewash	15.7%	17.9%	14.3%	21.3%	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	17.0%	24.1%	27.1%	19.7%	▼
Derbyshire	14.6%	16.2%	17.0%	15.6%	▼
<i>Statistical Neighbour Average</i>	<i>17.0%</i>	<i>18.0%</i>			
<i>England</i>	<i>16.0%</i>	<i>16.0%</i>			

The percentage of children in care who were placed outside the Derbyshire LA boundary at the end of October 2013 (27.4%) was a small increase when compared with the percentage at the end of March 2013 (25.5%) but this figure has varied little over the last three financial years. Available statistical neighbour and England figures for 2011/12 and 2010/11 show that Derbyshire's percentage placed outside the LA boundary has consistently been slightly higher than the average for our statistical neighbours, but below the overall England percentage.

Percentage placed outside the LA boundary (regardless of distance from home)

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	20.8%	23.1%	23.3%	21.1%	▼
High Peak & North Dales	19.5%	16.5%	20.8%	21.2%	▲
Chesterfield	14.6%	13.0%	12.7%	17.2%	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	21.1%	24.2%	26.3%	22.8%	▼
Amber Valley	27.6%	36.1%	27.2%	37.7%	▲
Erewash	34.7%	36.4%	36.8%	41.0%	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	34.0%	35.2%	32.2%	29.5%	▼
Derbyshire	24.2%	25.9%	25.5%	27.4%	▲
Statistical Neighbour Average	20.0%	23.0%			
England	33.0%	34.0%			

It should be noted that the percentage of children in care who were placed in agency placements at the end of October 2013 (23.3%) was lower than the percentage placed outside the LA boundary (27.4%). This indicates that Derbyshire has been able to recruit foster carers who live outside the LA boundary.

Visits to Children in Care:

As with child protection visits, statutory visits to children in care have been a major priority for the service.

The percentage of children in care where all of their visits during the 12 months ending October 2013 were carried out within timescales (51.6%) shows continued improvement when compared with outcomes from 2012/13 and previous years.

Children in care visits – Percentage of cases where all visits were completed within timescale

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	26.7%	34.3%	69.8%	85.1%	▲
High Peak & North Dales	27.5%	36.4%	44.0%	43.3%	▼
Chesterfield	19.8%	16.8%	28.9%	45.1%	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	13.3%	17.4%	52.0%	73.6%	▲
Amber Valley	8.3%	27.3%	42.9%	54.4%	▲
Erewash	11.9%	15.6%	35.9%	42.6%	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	17.5%	24.4%	36.6%	33.7%	▼
Derbyshire	15.9%	22.2%	41.0%	51.6%	▲

Current performance measuring the percentage of all visits made during the 12 months ending October 2013 shows that 92.6% of all visits made were within timescales. This is an improvement when compared with outcomes for 2012/13 and previous years.

Children in care visits – Percentage of visits completed within timescale

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	70.0%	72.8%	96.9%	97.5%	▲
High Peak & North Dales	84.3%	85.9%	89.1%	91.2%	▲
Chesterfield	72.6%	74.5%	82.8%	89.2%	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	71.6%	81.5%	87.6%	97.4%	▲
Amber Valley	81.0%	85.0%	78.9%	93.9%	▲
Erewash	76.9%	79.9%	81.3%	92.0%	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	75.8%	78.7%	89.3%	87.2%	▼
Derbyshire	76.9%	80.8%	85.1%	92.6%	▲

Reviews of Children in Care:

Children in care reviews conducted within timescales continue to be of concern. The latest figures, for the 12 months ending October 2013, show an improvement in performance when compared with outcomes for 2012/13 but are still below outcomes for 2011/12 and 2010/11.

Children in care reviews – Percentage of cases where all reviews were completed within timescale

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	93.1%	88.6%	80.6%	79.4%	▼
High Peak & North Dales	96.8%	76.0%	59.4%	70.2%	▲
Chesterfield	95.9%	81.1%	62.6%	75.3%	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	91.9%	90.5%	75.2%	73.2%	▼
Amber Valley	98.8%	85.2%	67.1%	87.5%	▲
Erewash	100.0%	94.8%	89.2%	85.6%	▼
South Derbyshire & South Dales	96.1%	87.0%	55.6%	72.4%	▲
Derbyshire	96.2%	86.6%	70.7%	77.5%	▲

Information available for the 2013/14 year to 31st October shows that 93.4% of children in care reviews that have taken place did so within timescales. This should translate to further improvements in the percentage reviewed on time throughout the year (i.e. children who had all of their reviews on time during the previous 12 months) for future reports.

Children in care reviews – Percentage of reviews completed within timescales (2013/14 to date)

District	No. Of CiC Reviews Since 1 st April 2013	No. Of CiC Reviews On Time	% Of CiC Reviews On Time
Disabled Children	55	48	87.3%
High Peak & North Dales	166	147	88.6%
Chesterfield	196	186	94.9%
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	238	226	95.0%
Amber Valley	146	132	90.4%
Erewash	223	214	96.0%
South Derbyshire & South Dales	115	111	96.5%
Derbyshire	1139	1064	93.4%

Adoptions

Numbers of Adoptions:

The number of children who are discharged from care as a result of an adoption has been increasing. During 2012/13 75 children in care were adopted, a 92.3% increase when compared with the number adopted during 2010/11 (39). Continued increases have been seen for the 12 months to October 2013.

Numbers of adoptions of children in care

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	2	0	1	1	◀▶
High Peak & North Dales	10	3	10	11	▲
Chesterfield	7	7	17	19	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	12	13	17	21	▲
Amber Valley	6	11	10	8	▼
Erewash	1	12	19	15	▼
South Derbyshire & South Dales	1	6	1	3	▲
Derbyshire	39	52	75	78	▲

It should also be noted that the number of children who are placed for adoption has also increased. At 31st October 2013 there were 59 children placed for adoption, a 13.5% increase from 52 children placed at 31st March 2013, and a 63.9% increase when compared with the number placed at 31st March 2011 (36).

Numbers Awaiting Adoption:

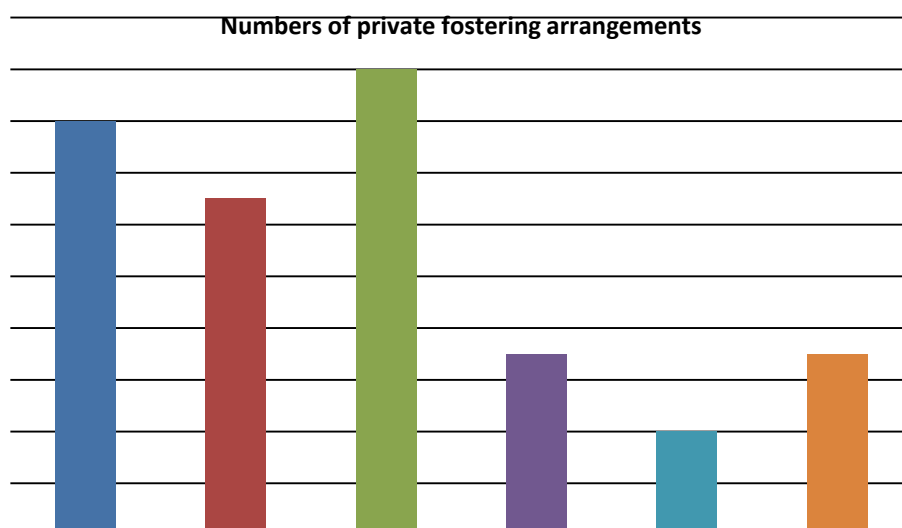
The overall number of children who are awaiting adoption (i.e. those children for whom a decision has been made that adoption is in their best interest but have not yet been adopted) remains high. However, the percentage of these children who have not been placed with an adoptive family has reduced. At 31st October 2013 86 children were awaiting adoption, and 27 (31.4%) of these had not yet been placed with an adoptive family. This compares favourably with the position at 31st March 2011 and 31st March 2012.

Numbers awaiting adoption and the number and percentage who were not placed with an adoptive family

Date	Number Awaiting Adoption	No. Not Placed	% Not Placed
31 st March 2011	90	54	60.0%
31 st March 2012	125	78	62.4%
31 st March 2013	93	41	44.1%
31 st October 2013	86	27	31.4%

Private Fostering

The number of children in Derbyshire who are living under a private fostering arrangement has been consistently low and has decreased since 2011. A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.



Views and Wishes of Children

Participation of Children & Young People in Their Reviews:

Participation by children in care in their reviews (for children aged 4 and over) has increased during the 12 months ending October 2013 when compared with 2012/13. Figures for the 12 months ending October 2013 show that of the 1489 reviews held for children in care aged 4 and over, children participated in 1322 (88.8%). This compared with participation in 83.4% of reviews during 2012/13.

Percentage of children in care reviews where the child participated

District	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Disabled Children	82.1%	86.8%	81.9%	71.9%	▼
High Peak & North Dales	96.4%	92.2%	82.7%	87.4%	▲
Chesterfield	91.0%	87.9%	85.4%	89.7%	▲
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	83.3%	71.5%	84.0%	87.3%	▲
Amber Valley	84.1%	81.6%	76.3%	88.7%	▲
Erewash	92.5%	85.6%	85.8%	93.9%	▲
South Derbyshire & South Dales	79.5%	78.6%	85.3%	93.1%	▲
Derbyshire	88.5%	83.4%	83.4%	88.8%	▲

The majority of children who participated in reviews did so by physically attending and speaking for themselves but the percentage who did so during the 12 months ending October 2013 (76.1%) shows a small decrease compared with 2012/13 (77.9%). The percentages that do not attend but convey their feelings and wishes to the review through a facilitative medium (such as texting the chair, in written format, by phone, via audio or video recording) show a small increase from 19.5% for 2012/13 to 20.8% for the 12 months ending October 2013.

Participation of children in care in their reviews by method of participation

Participation Method	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
Child physically attends and speaks for them self	75.5%	77.0%	77.9%	76.1%	▼
Child physically attends and an advocate speaks on their behalf	0.8%	1.2%	1.0%	0.8%	▼
Child attends and conveys his or her views symbolically	0.5%	1.2%	0.8%	1.7%	▲
Child does not attend physically but briefs an advocate to speak for them	2.8%	2.0%	0.9%	0.5%	▼
Child does not attend but conveys their feelings and wishes to the review by a facilitative medium	20.4%	18.6%	19.5%	20.8%	▲

Available information shows that where children are invited to initial child protection conferences attendance is good. For the 12 months ending October 2013, 94.4% of children who were invited to their initial child protection conferences attended, although this was a decrease from 100% in 2012/13 and 2011/12.

However, the number of initial child protection conferences where children were invited is only a small proportion of the total. During the 12 months ending October 2013, 879 children were the subject of an initial child protection conference. Available information shows that only 18 children were invited to their conference (2.0%). This was a small increase on the percentage for 2012/13 (1.8%).

Attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences

	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
No. Subject to an Initial CP Conferences	851	887	851	879	▲
No. Invited to their Initial CP Conference	24	16	15	18	▲
% Invited to their Initial CP Conference	2.8%	1.8%	1.8%	2.0%	▲
No. of those invited who attended	18	16	15	17	▲
% of those invited who attended	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	94.4%	▼

Available information for the 12 months ending October 2013 shows that where children were invited to review child protection conferences they actually attended in 80.8% of cases. This was a small decrease when compared with 2012/13 (81.5) but a substantial decrease compared with 2010/11 (98.1%).

However, the number of review child protection conferences where children were invited is only a small proportion of the total. During the 12 months ending October 2013, 1806 review child protection conferences were held (count of individual children subject to reviews but children are counted twice if they were subject to two reviews in the period). Available information shows that the child who was the subject of the review was only invited in 26 cases (1.4%). This was a small decrease on the percentage for 2012/13 (1.5%).

Attendance at Review Child Protection Conferences

	2010/11 Outcome	2011/12 Outcome	2012/13 Outcome	Oct 2013 Outcome	Trend 2012/13 to Oct 2013
No. Subject to a Review CP Conferences	1912	1765	1747	1806	▲
No. Invited to their Review CP Conference	52	29	27	26	▼
% Invited to their Review CP Conference	2.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	▼
No. of those invited who attended	51	28	22	21	▼
% of those invited who attended	98.1%	96.6%	81.5%	80.8%	▼

Advocacy:

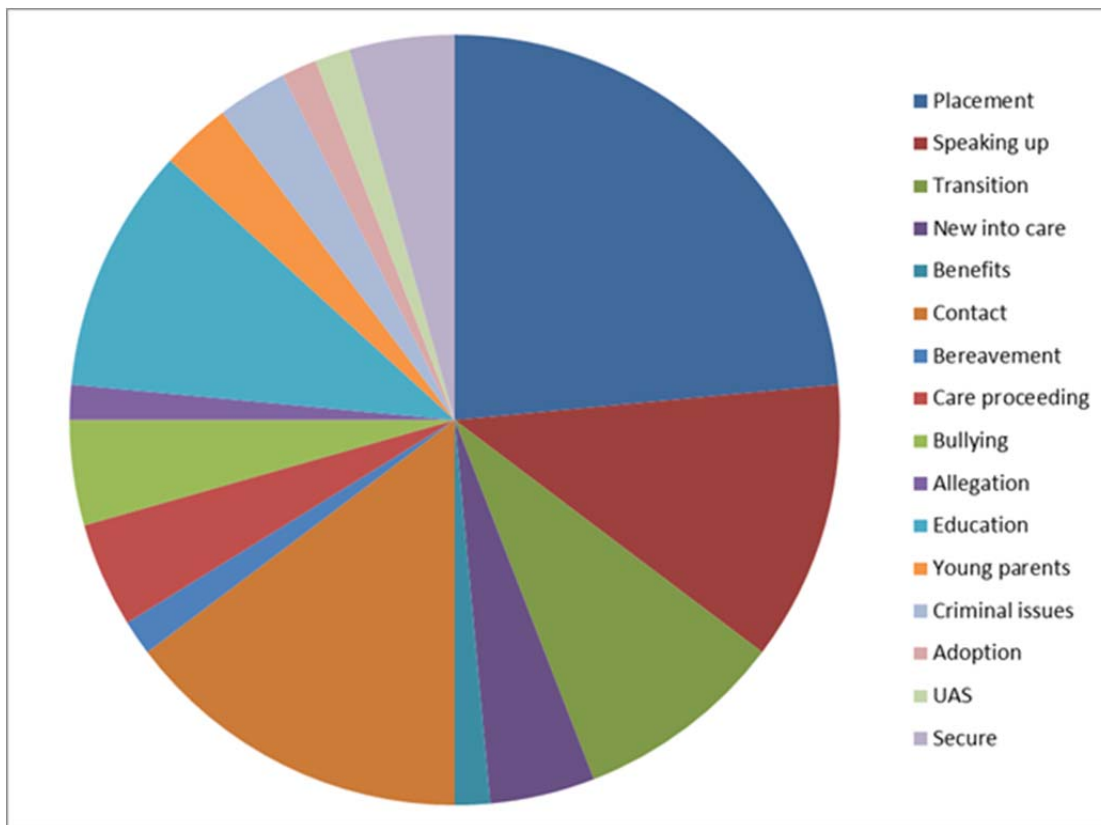
Advocacy for Children is a Statutory requirement as laid out in Section 119 of The Adoption and Children Act 2002 which amended the Children Act 1989 and laid a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to assist looked after children, care leavers and children in need who wanted to make representation “for a change to be made in the service or the establishment they live in without this having to be framed first as a specific complaint”. Subsequently the updated National Minimum Standards for Foster and Residential Care alongside the statutory guidance issued following “The Southwark Judgement” and the IRO Handbook strengthen the requirement for all vulnerable young people to be offered the support of an Advocate.

The key principles of effective Advocacy are choice, timeliness, challenge and best representation. By recruiting a bank of Advocates with a variety of experience we are able to offer choice to children and young people in terms of age, gender, area of expertise and type of approach. Derbyshire’s standard for contact with a child from point of referral to the Advocacy Service is 5 working days and this is met in 97% of cases.

Each year Derbyshire’s Advocacy Service take up between 65 and 80 pieces of new work. At any given moment there are between 115 and 150 open cases. The average length of time an Advocate works with a child is determined by the issue and the age/capacity of the child. Leaving aside work with disabled children the majority of cases are open for 8 weeks. For children with profound learning disabilities Advocates can be involved for anything between 3 months and 5 years.

The intervention of an advocate reduces the need for children to use the formal complaints system, saving both time and money. In 2012/13 advocacy support resulted in low level informal resolution in approximately 50 cases. The cost of an investigation into a formal complaint is between £1000 and £2500 if it reaches stage 2 (Children’s Society 2012). Derbyshire’s Advocacy Service (including on costs and permanent staff) costs £31 an hour to provide. It is estimated that advocacy save the authority around £75k per year.

The biggest area of involvement is help with care planning and living arrangements followed by young people feeling they don’t have a strong voice in decisions being made on their behalf and transition either into or out of care (breakdown below).



These themes are addressed by the Children's Rights Officer through representation to Heads of Service and through the governance arrangements for children in care. In some cases more intense work with groups of young people follows on from issues arising from individual Advocacy cases. Service change that has been informed by Advocacy referrals includes:

- A new policy on how foster carers can be more accountable to children when claiming DLA on their behalf
- Contributing to the evaluation of the Stephenson children's home role and remit based on the experiences of young people who have lived there.
- The Advocacy service has recently been commissioned to provide visiting Advocates at Eastwood Grange School for children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Changes to the missing from home policy in line with recommendations from the Children's Commissioner for England.
- Input into how children in care manage their ISAs and savings with a view to their future.

Uni-Fi:

The Uni-fi project has been focussed on children in care in year 7 (now just starting year 8) and the participation of this group of children has been central to the initiative. Their views have actively been sought and used in development activity and service re-design.

Uni-Fi events have included:

- A launch event attended by 29 children and young people
- Lea Green event in February 2013 attended by 16 young people (and also the Director of Children & Younger Adults)
- An endowment workshop in April 2013 involving 7 foster carers and 5 social workers (and also the Director of Children & Younger Adults)

- An endowment planning event in May 2013 attended by 6 young people
- Mentoring support meetings for volunteer mentors
- Chatsworth events in July 2013 attended by a total of 24 children in care and 23 foster carers
- Whitehall Residential attended by 10 young people

Also, 8 ethnographies have been carried out with young people from the year 7 cohort. These have involved DCC staff trained by ESRO spending a day with a young person to experience what life is like for them. The findings from these ethnographies will be collated and will be fed back into service development and re-design.

Officer Recommendation

That the report be noted.