

**SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Education of Children in Care

Updates to the Mayor's response letter (30th April, 2013)

1. Education of Children in Care – Jo Moxon and Christine Hargreaves

Recommendation B – Production of support to school governors

A programme of training was produced which involved a general workshop on Children in Care (CIC) and their education as well as training targeted at the named governor for the responsibility CIC. All were marketed via the agenda for the governor forums and schools that had not previously been represented at governor training were targeted by letter.

The sessions were delivered by the end of September 2013. Attendance was relatively low - 19 governors attended the workshop and 10 governors attended the designated training for CIC. This involved a further 10 schools being represented at training - a total of 91 Doncaster schools.

All the sessions were evaluated to determine their effectiveness and the information was used in conjunction with the evaluations from previous training and workshops. This step was taken to ensure a broader sample of delegate's opinions to inform future developments of the training programme and this is in progress.

100% of responses reported the information as useful; criticisms related to the need for additional time to explore the subject in more detail - this was particularly evident after the workshop. Marketing in respect of the target audience also needed to be improved.

Training plans for 2014 now include an awareness raising session on CIC and their potential barriers to learning and a training session for the named governor with a sharper focus on the role and responsibility and how this might be carried out in school. There is also an opportunity for the named governor to attend training alongside their school Designated Teacher – especially in relation to data tracking.

'Bespoke' training is offered and has been delivered for governing bodies where the Head is new to the role of Designated Teacher (2 schools in autumn 2013). There is also the potential for on-line learning opportunities in 2015.

Recommendation C – Ongoing support to the Council's leadership, in ensuring all schools accept children into care onto their registers

Since the Mayor's response letter (30th April) until January 2014 the Local Authority has directed one Doncaster school to admit a Child in Care (less than .5% of the compulsory school age cohort). In the same period, two other schools worked closely with the Local Authority (LA) to develop appropriate alternative plans for the children concerned and as a result this prevented the need for direction by the L A.

The process is monitored via the LA admissions team who forward all admission requests for children in care, including those children 'belonging' to other Local Authorities to the Children and Young People in Care Education Service; particularly where the school is full or the child may be difficult to place. The latter service

consults and discuss with Head teachers directly or through the In Year Fair Access Policy. As such, the issue has reduced significantly.

Further work needs to be carried out, in Doncaster, in respect of 'delayed admissions'. This applies mainly for young people in Year 11 where a change of school is required in the autumn or spring term.

In addition, in the last 3 months 4 out of area schools have been reluctant to admit a Doncaster child (CIC) – this has been in relation to the child's age and the timing for the start of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Recommendation D – A review to be undertaken into what access is available for children in care into IT equipment and games consoles

All the residential units have access to computer hardware for the young people to access the internet or software to support home learning/work. The homes have either one or two PCs. These are part of the DMBC network and as such the young people are not able to add software. However they can access their school's Learning Platform and the on line learning package suggested by Children and Young People in Care as being useful in supporting learning (IAM Learning). There are also laptops and access and although usable, they require updating especially as no home has more than two PCs. All the homes have games consoles for which the young people can choose software which reflects their interests. The young people at Morrison Drive are currently involved in a project with the library service which may result in the girls acquiring tablets.

There is a programme of distribution of IT equipment from Capital funding for all children in care (not just those in residential homes) for purposes of education. This involves the distribution of laptops to targeted year groups with due consideration for best value for money. Children in key Stage 5, 4 and 2 are prioritised. Care Leavers were consulted on the features they would expect on a laptop. Consideration was also given to software and support accessories such as memory sticks and case.

Recommendation E – investigating how access by children in care to after school activities is affected by fixed home to school transport arrangements

An investigation into how transport arrangements impact on additional activities has not been undertaken. However, there is evidence to suggest that children do take part in after school or community based activities.

The Local Authority achieved the Canterbury University Quality Mark in Study Support at 'Emerged' level. This scheme is nationally recognised and focuses on the development of the extended curriculum (also known as Study Support provision). This was led by the 'Virtual' School behalf of Education, Fostering and the Residential Homes providing evidence of the range of opportunities for children and how children are involved in this process i.e. consultation, shaping the offer to make it 'fit for purpose'.

The Children in Care Council and young people in the residential homes, in discussion with the Corporate Parenting Board, produced a list of activities which they thought a child should experience by a certain age (based on the National Trust

model). This was distributed via the Fostering newsletter and the residential homes. It will be available on the CICC website.

The Personal Education Plan has been amended to enable reporting on participation of the child in additional school or community activities and interests. This information will provide trend data on the children's interests to shape events organised by the LA such as the 'Summer school' and Fostering day as well the age, number and % involvement in such activities. Provisional data based on the 149 PEPS completed for compulsory school age children during the autumn term suggests 44.9% (67) of CIC engage with some form of additional activity and 16% (24) do not. It is not clear if the remainder engage as the section has not been completed.