

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

12 October 2015

CHILDREN'S HOMES: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (2015) SUNDERLAND

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. From 9 February to 4 May 2015, Ofsted carried out an online questionnaire nationally with children and young people placed in children's homes. Ofsted sought the views of users and key stakeholders in Sunderland Children's Services.

The findings from the questionnaires were to inform Ofsted ahead of any future inspections of these services. Children and young people, parents and carers, children's home staff and independent reviewing officers, placing social workers and other interested parties completed a multiple choice questionnaire. Any written comments were not included in the feedback summary to ensure anonymity.

2. The children's home summary is an amalgamation of all the responses with the exception of those sent by parents and carers in respect of Children's Homes. Parents and carers summary is not included as Ofsted received less than 10 responses.
3. The summary only included: responses where 10 or more people responded to a particular question (to maintain anonymity); data on the responses to the multiple choice questions (written comments were not included in order to maintain anonymity); and it amalgamated responses from every establishment or agency of the same type. For example, the responses for all staff about all 5 children's homes appear as one summary.
4. Some of the overall indicators in the report show the following:

Children and young people summary

- 78% of children and young people said that they always feel safe living in the children's home. 0% said that they never feel safe.
- 78% of children and young people said that staff always look after them well. 0% said that staff never look after them well.
- 81% of children and young people said that staff always deal well with bullying. 0% said that staff never deal with bullying well.

- 37% children and young people who go missing felt that staff always welcome them back and help them understand why this happened, 4% said most of the time (1 young person) and 4% (1 young person) said sometimes. 52% said that this question was not for them indicating that they do not go missing.
- 41% of children and young people said that staff always help them to learn the things they will need when they are an adult. 0% said that this never happens. 52% did not answer this question.

Independent reviewing officer and placing social worker summary

- 71% strongly agreed with the statement that “improving outcomes for children is a clear priority for staff.” 0% disagreed with this statement.
- 65% strongly agreed with the statement that “staff care and support children well, they understand their needs.” 0% disagreed with this statement.
- 71% strongly agreed with the statement that “if children go missing or are at risk of sexual exploitation, staff respond appropriately.” 0% disagreed with this statement.
- 35% strongly agreed with the statement that “children’s learning is improved by the care they receive and their educational needs are well met. The remaining 65% agreed with this statement.
- 29% strongly agreed with the statement that “children don’t take alcohol or drugs, or if they did when they arrived at the children’s home they are being helped to stop.” The remaining 71% agreed with this statement.

Children’s home staff summary

- 77% of staff strongly agreed with the statement “the children’s home I work for continually strives to improve the services we provide.” The remaining 23% agreed with this statement.
- 68% of staff strongly agreed with the statement “I know the difference the children’s home makes to children’s lives and how we help them to make progress and have good experiences.” 28 % agreed with statement and 2% (1 staff member) disagreed.
- 40% of staff strongly agreed with the statement “my supervision supports and challenges my performance enabling me to improve.” 51% agreed with this statement, 6% disagreed (3 people) and 2% strongly disagreed (2 people)
- 47% of staff strongly agreed with the statement “managers listen to and consider my views about how we can improve the children’s home.” 49% agreed with statement and 2% (1 person) disagreed.

- 45% of staff strongly agreed with the statement “senior staff of the organisation are contactable and approachable.” 36% agreed, 11% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

5. Whilst the summary gives a flavour of some of the generic issues in the children’s homes that we are currently addressing, for example improving the supervision of staff, it is not entirely helpful in the way that all of the homes are presented as one summary. In addition, comments made by those completing the questionnaires provide extremely useful context to the decision made in the multiple choice questions and it is difficult to view only the scores in isolation.

It is worth note that there have been some “rogue” or “spoiled” questionnaires submitted. Ofsted raise this with individual managers during the homes inspection but these are still included in the summary.

The lack of response from parents/carers is extremely disappointing. Whilst we cannot in any way enforce compliance in completing the questionnaires, we can offer support and emphasise the importance and value we place on this feedback. This is something that will be raised with the children’s homes managers and staff.

6. Recommendation

The Corporate Parenting Board are asked to note the contents of the report.

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