

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	03/10/19
Subject: Action for Children Annual Survey	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

Action for Children completed a survey with children, young people and their families who were open to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service. This survey was completed between April and July 2019. Various methodologies were used to collate the data. The survey covered children who were open to Early Help Services, and Children's Social Care, who were Children in Need, Child Protection, Looked After and Care Leavers. The survey identified that, overall, Children and Families were happy with the service they received, and young people who were looked after and care leavers had good relationships with their social workers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In April through to July 2019, Action for Children carried out the Annual Service User Survey among children and young people supported by the City of London Children's Social Care and Early Help Service. This included Early Help, Children in Need, Child Protection, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
2. The survey also captured feedback from families with children under the age of five using a short questionnaire for parents/carers. The total number of children and young people eligible for the survey was 62. The total number of responses received was 39, making for a 61.2% response rate (compared with 58.7% in 2018, 68% in 2016 and 48.6% in 2015).
3. Overall, the preferred methods of responding were:

- telephone interview: 26 (66.6%)
 - postal questionnaire: 13 (33.3%)
4. Action for Children did not use Survey Monkey this year, as there has been low take-up in previous years. The Children's Social Care and Early Help Service provided contact details of children, young people and families open to the team. Children and families had been contacted prior to the survey, to ascertain their agreement for the information to be shared with Action for Children.

Current Position

Children in Need and Child Protection

5. Children and families were overwhelmingly positive about their social workers. They found their social workers accessible and approachable: both children who completed the 'Under 10s' questionnaire rated them '10 out of 10'; 87% of parents said their social worker was 'very easy' to talk to, and commented positively on their children's engagement with the social worker.

Looked After Children

6. A total of seven responses were received from this cohort this year, which makes for a 46.6% response rate (compared with 73.3% in 2018 and 72% in 2016). In the responses, 85% of the young people expressed satisfaction with their foster placements, though several young people were hoping to live independently soon. The young people had relatively high awareness of the Children in Care Council (71%) and liked this forum as a means of having fun and having their voices heard. All respondents appeared happy with their education provision (100% rating it 'very good' or 'good') and 85% felt that their educational needs are fully or mostly met.

Care Leavers

7. The response rate for this category was 47.8%, that is, 11 interviews were conducted – compared with 9 last year – out of a larger cohort of 23. By comparison, 2018 had a 52.9% response rate, and 2016 had 69%. Comparable with previous years, the great majority of respondents (90.9%; 88.8% in 2018) felt appropriately consulted and listened to; 72% said they were helped to understand the reasons for coming into care; and 81.8% were offered support in understanding their life story (100% in 2018 and 33% in 2016). The overwhelming majority (90.9%) of young people in the cohort felt well supported through the process of leaving care. They spoke positively about their educational goals and were confident in their career aspirations.

Early Help Services

8. This year saw an increased level of participation from families receiving Early Help support. Questionnaires were all completed by the adults in the families. Responses were overwhelmingly positive, with 100% finding it easy to contact

their Support Worker, being appropriately consulted upon referral, and have the service explained to them. Families liked the staff they worked with, and there was a lot of praise for the ability of staff to engage with both adults and children, the quality of their advice and the outcomes achieved.

Conclusion

9. The survey was extremely positive, especially in relation to social work staff and the support they offered to children, young people and their families. There was also positive feedback in respect of looked-after children: they presented as being positive about their education, and the majority felt safe; there was only one young person out of the cohort who did not.
10. In the care leaver cohort, there were three young people who didn't feel safe. This was due to the area, and they cited this as being a reason why they wanted to move their placements. The majority of the care leavers are placed in semi-independent living, and this may be one of the reasons they feel less safe than those young people who have been placed in foster care. Where young people are unhappy or worried about their placement, they are supported by their social worker. Where possible, issues or concerns are resolved without moving placement, but this is an option if required.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Action for Children, Annual Survey

Background Papers

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