

Questioner:	Ms Reid, Hereford
Scrutiny Meeting:	Public question for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting 23 January 2024
Question:	
<p>The first Children’s Services Commissioner’s report was published in March 2023. The <i>Report of the Commission to Consider Families’ Experience of Children’s Services in Herefordshire</i> was published in June 2023. The families’ Commission carried out its work in March and April 2023. The second report of the Children’s Services Commissioner was published in December 2023.</p> <p>The report for Agenda Item 8 states that the Commissioner expects (14a):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Increased parent and children satisfaction and involvement in service developments evidenced by increased proportion of complaints resolved at Stage 1, fewer Stage 2 complaints, feedback from parents and children.”</p> <p>The <i>Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire Annual Survey of SEND Services - Autumn 2023</i> was an excellent survey:</p> <p>https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=v93-we1IAk-O32T1gFZ5h3QDDpwxh9ZAplyFME9HcyhUNkhSQkhNRjFJRDUzN1RVMk9ZRDVBVEVGQS4u&fbclid=IwAR3qXmo_zNX1hGCZNt6DaIVRH_Tx2gvjYS6mHvEvL4TGbM1EvxPIQGlhEj4</p> <p>When will there be an equally well-thought-out survey of the parents and carers who are or have been involved with Herefordshire Children’s Services?</p>	
Response:	
<p>There are numerous ways in which we currently gather feedback from parents and carers including surveys at certain points. Examples of where we have recently used surveys in a successful way are the SEND Annual Survey referred to in the question or a previous survey which informed and assisted us with drafting of our Early Help and Prevention Strategy.</p> <p>Although we are not currently considering sending out a survey to parents and carers who are or have been involved with children’s services, we continuously receive valuable feedback from parents and carers through a variety of channels. For instance, we have established a Parent Group with membership from parents who have previously complained and with whose children we are actively working. When</p>	

appropriate we commission advocates for parents so that they are able to share their views with us and we have our complaints process is now able to accept compliments which are reported on quarterly.

Parental and carer feedback is gathered by the allocated practitioner but also by others working with the family such as Supervising Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers or Child Protection Conference Chairs.

Families who are supported through the council targeted support service are asked at the end of the intervention to complete an evaluation form. Their opinion is asked on the service they received and how the service could improve which we use to develop and evolve the service to meet family's needs

Feedback from parents, carers, young people and families helps us to develop our services and to evaluate our practice. Parents and carers are consulted with and provide us a valuable insight in how we are doing, what difference we are making and how we are improving the lives of children, young people and their families

Questioner:	Ms Reid, Hereford
Scrutiny Meeting:	Supplementary Question asked at Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting 23 January 2024
Supplementary Question: You can see that, quote: <i>"...Parental and carer feedback is gathered by the allocated practitioner but also by others working with the family such as Supervising Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers or Child Protection Conference Chairs..."</i> End quote, I understand that all of them are employed by Herefordshire Council and therefore may not be regarded as independent. Parents may be reluctant to complain because of the imbalance of power etc. Therefore, I urge you to as soon as possible carry out a well thought out survey who are and have been involved with Herefordshire Children's Services. Please disclose details about the Parent Group, for example does it include parents whose child is or was:	

- a) In care
- b) A child in need
- c) On a child protection plan

Initial Response:

Councillor Powell stated that a written response would be provided, but also gave an immediate response as recorded below:

“...In our reply we gave a commitment to consider the value of surveying, it's not in the written answer in fairness, but it should be borne in mind, of course, that we do commission advocacy services to support families in those processes. In terms of the question about the parents group, it does include families of those categories identified by Ms Reid, but we will provide a lengthier written response...”

Response:

As indicated in the original answer, we are not currently considering sending out a survey to parents and carers. However, we will recognise the value of surveys and will continue to consider their use. We have recently commissioned an independent survey seeking the views of our children and young people who are in care (over the age of 4) and of our care leavers. The survey will run over a number of weeks and it is expected that the report produced by the independent provider is available by June 2024.

In respect of obtaining views independently of the council; the council commissions Independent Advocacy services to support children, young people and families where needed and our young people in care can have access to Independent Visitors when required. Where care proceedings are ongoing, parents and carers have access to independent legal advice and an independent court appointed Guardian.

Complaints and compliments by parents and carers are also independently gathered and shared through our compliments and complaints system.

A number of parents/carers representatives from Parent Carer Voice attend the SEND strategy group and there has been involvement from parents and carers in a recent tendering process.

The Parent Group (called Families for Change) includes parents and carers who have previously raised complaints and whose children continues to be supported by Children and Young People's Services as a child in need, a child looked after or a child subject to a child protection plan.