

Children and Young People's Directorate

Children and Young People's Advocacy Service

Service Specification

CYP Joint Commissioning Team

3rd Floor

Laurence House

Catford

SE6 4RU

020 8314 9254

Lewisham.Procurement@lewisham.gov.uk

January 2020

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. NEEDS ANALYSIS	4
3. LEGAL CONTEXT	5
4. POLICY CONTEXT	6
5. OBJECTIVES OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICE	7
6. PRINCIPLES OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICE	7
7. SERVICE MODEL	8
8. HOW THE SERVICE WILL OPERATE	11
9. PARTNERSHIP WORKING	13
10. FINANCE	14
11. SOCIAL VALUE	15
12. STAFFING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	15
13. SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION	16
14. QUALITY OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICE	17
15. SAFEGUARDING	17
16. OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS FRAMEWORK	18
17. PERFORMANCE MONITORING	19
APPENDIX 1: OUTCOME AND OUTPUTS FRAMEWORK	21

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The London Borough of Lewisham (“the Council”) is seeking to commission an Advocacy Service to provide time-limited support, information and representation from independent advocates. This will support children and young people when decisions are made about their lives, or when they wish to raise a concern about a service they have received from the Council. This can be provided in a planned way, or in a crisis, but will usually be short-term, one-off involvement, dealing with a specific issue in the young person’s life.
- 1.2 Advocacy is about empowering children and young people to make sure that their views and wishes are heard at all times and represented in decision making processes. The Council’s vision is that all children and young people in Lewisham feel listened to and empowered, have choice and control over their support, and have their rights upheld. Furthermore, the views put forward by children and young people should inform the development of the Council’s services.
- 1.3 The Advocacy Service will meet all of the statutory requirements placed on the Council in relation to the provision of independent advocacy for Looked After Children and children Leaving Care. The service will work mainly with Looked After Children, but also children that are eligible for a Leaving Care service and those who are subject to Child Protection Plans.
- 1.4 The service will be fully inclusive, and will be open to children and young people that span a range of age-groups, needs and settings. Advocates will use a variety of communication methods to meet a wide range of needs. The service will work with children in Lewisham, out of borough and out of London if necessary.
- 1.5 This specification sets out the requirements for the Advocacy Service for the next two years (2nd January 2020 to 31st December 2021) with the option to extend for an additional two years at the Council’s discretion. Regular performance monitoring and reviews will be conducted throughout this period to ensure compliance with the Contract and Service Specification. The Council reserves the right to vary the content of this service specification on an annual basis if required to reflect service needs, following discussion with the provider.

2. NEEDS ANALYSIS

2.1 Population

- With a population of 301,300 people, Lewisham is the 6th largest borough in London by population size. The population is set to continue to grow, and by the time of the 2021 census it is expected to reach 318,100.
- Lewisham has a large and growing population of young people, with 25% aged 0-19.
- 48% of residents are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and this proportion is expected to increase be equal to the White population by 2028, moving on to exceed this. Within the young population, the percentage of 0-19’s of BME background is much higher, at 65%. This is projected to reach 67% by 2031.

2.2 Deprivation

- In the latest overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015), Lewisham was ranked the 48th most deprived borough in the country placing Lewisham amongst the top 20% of all Council areas in England that are the most deprived. Of the specific indicator of income deprivation affecting children, 32 (of 169) of Lewisham's super output areas are in the 10% most deprived in the country.
- In Lewisham, 27.6% of under 16s live in poverty compared to 19.2% nationally and 23.7% in London. Almost 26% of children in Lewisham's primary and secondary schools are in receipt of Free School Meals, a proxy indicator for child poverty.
- 4.7 in every 1,000 households in Lewisham are homeless households with dependent children or pregnant women compared to 3.6 in London and 1.7 nationally.

2.3 Children and young people who are Looked After or identified as in need of help or protection

- In recent years, the number of Looked After Children in Lewisham has remained broadly stable. At last count in 2018, Lewisham had 482 Looked After Children. The number of LAC per 10,000 of the population is 71, which is comparable to our statistical neighbours. In addition, there were 263 Care Leavers.
- The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children becoming looked-after in Lewisham is increasing rapidly (34 UASC became looked after in 2018, compared to 11 in 2017).
- Around 60% of young people are in placements outside of Lewisham, in surrounding boroughs. The majority of young people placed out of borough are in inner London, plus a significant proportion in Kent and outer London. A minority of young people are placed further afield, across the UK.
- The number of Initial Child Protection Conferences in 2018 was 521, a rate of 76.3 per 10,000 children aged under 18. This is higher than both the London and England rate.
- In May 2019, 2450 Lewisham children had needs so complex that they required Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) to respond to their needs.

2.4 Advocacy

- Currently around 80 referrals per year are made to the commissioned Advocacy Service.
- The average age of young people receiving advocacy support is 17 years old.
- 54% of these young people are female and 46% are male.
- 35% of these young people report having a disability
- The young people are from a mix of ethnic backgrounds, with 19% being White British, 15% Black or Black British African, 15% Other Ethnic Group and 8% Black or Black British Caribbean.

3. LEGAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 The LB of Lewisham has a statutory duty to ensure that advocacy services are made available for Looked After Children and Care Leavers that are making or intending to make a representation or complaint about Council services.

- 3.2 The following references to legislation underpin the legal requirement to deliver the service:
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) 2010 make clear that where children have difficulty in expressing their wishes and feelings about any decisions made about them, consideration must be given to securing the support of an advocate
 - The Children's Homes: National Minimum Standards 2011 and the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011 include standards that emphasise the importance of children's knowledge about their right to independent advocacy and how to access an advocate
 - The Adoption and Children Act 2002 placed a duty on local authorities to make arrangements for the provision of advocacy services for care leavers and other children using children's services who are making or intending to make a complaint under section 24D or section 26 of the Children Act 1989
 - The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 requires responsible authorities to make sure young people have access to independent advocacy services to support them through complaints procedures

4. POLICY

- 4.1 The provision of advocacy is consistent with the Council's Corporate Strategy (2018-2022) priorities around '*Giving children and young people the best start in life*', in particular the aims to:
- *We will improve our children's social care services to provide support for families at the earliest opportunity.*
 - *We will ensure that the children in our care are safe and supported to achieve the very best in life.*
 - *We will work with our partners to ensure that young people transitioning into adulthood achieve the best possible outcomes in relation to education, work, healthy lives and strong community connections.*
- 4.2 In addition, Lewisham's Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) establishes how partner agencies will continue to work together to improve those outcomes that will make significant improvements to the life-chances of our children and young people. The provision of advocacy contributes towards the following priorities:
- *Build resilience* - we want our children and young people to be resilient, knowing when and where to go for help and support when faced with challenges and adversities as they arise.
 - *Stay safe* – as a partnership, we will support the right of every child to live in a safe and secure environment, free from abuse, neglect and harm
- 4.3 The new CYPP is in draft, but will include a focus on children in Lewisham feeling listened to, understood and respected, which is the primary aim of the Advocacy Service.
- 4.4 Central to Lewisham's priorities and objectives for children and young people is a focus on closing the gaps and inequalities in outcomes achieved, and ensuring that children and young people's needs are prevented from escalating. The Advocacy Service will contribute towards this by:

- Providing an inclusive service that is easy to access, regardless of the young person's needs, circumstances and background
 - Intervening at the earliest stage, where possible seeking effective informal resolutions to concerns raised by children and young people
 - Providing positive role models for young people in their journey towards independence
 - Supporting young people with a positive transition out of care, and into adult services where relevant
- 4.5 It is expected that provider and the Council will work in line with 'Getting the Best from Complaints', guidance and good practice put forward by the DfE on social care complaints and representations for children.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICE

- 5.1 The Advocacy Service is available to support children and young people when they wish to raise a concern about the service or support they are provided by the Council, or to support them to get their views heard during formal review and decision making meetings.
- 5.2 This advocacy can be provided in a planned way, or in a crisis, but will usually be short-term, one-off involvement, dealing with a specific issue in the young person's life. When this has been done the advocacy partnership is ended, until it is required again.
- 5.3 The key objectives of the Advocacy Service are to:
- Ensure that young people feel listened to and empowered, and have choice and control over their support
 - Ensure children and young people's rights are upheld and achieve positive change for them
 - Provide positive role models for young people in their journey towards independence, including modelling respect, decision making, constructive challenge and social interaction
 - Support the Council to learn from young people's feedback to improve how Children's Social Care is experienced and delivered, by producing data and analysis that can be used in a meaningful way

6. PRINCIPLES OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICE

- 6.1 The core principles of the Advocacy Service will be to:
- Focus on discussion, negotiation and resolution, not escalation by default.
 - Support self-advocacy and empowerment through its work.
 - Uphold the young person's wishes and feelings and be aspirational, whilst adopting a realistic approach that takes into account what is possible to be achieved
 - Take a questioning approach with the Council, and provide constructive challenge where necessary
 - Value partnership working with the Council and other professionals, seeing this as essential for achieving the best outcomes for children and young people.

- Recognise that advocacy is not just about achieving the specific goal of the young person identified at the outset, but about achieving changes and benefits and developing their wider potential. This includes increased confidence, choice and control, regardless of the outcome.
- Be responsive and flexible to changes in Children's Social Care service delivery, with a willingness to test innovative approaches to supporting young people

7. SERVICE MODEL

Advocacy hours

- 7.1 The Advocacy Service is expected to provide a minimum of 1000 hours of advocacy support per annum. The provider will be paid a quarterly block rate for these 1000 hours. The provider will also supply an hourly rate for any hours over this block – i.e. a spot purchase rate – to be used at the Council's discretion. This is set out in the Pricing Schedule.
- 7.2 The expectation is that the block of 1000 hours will support between 60 – 80 young people per year, with 60 being the minimum number supported. It is expected that the service will provide up to a maximum of 12 hours of advocacy support for each referral accepted to the service. This should be inclusive of all aspects of preparation, research, travel, consultation, direct casework, attendance at meetings and hearings, and administration.
- 7.3 If the provider feels that more than 12 hours are needed, this will need to be approved by the relevant Service Manager (LAC/Leaving Care or FSW) before being delivered. The Council will establish a process by which efficient approval will be given to the provider. When an advocacy case reaches 8 hours in duration, a review process will be triggered. These processes are detailed further in the 'case review and closure' section below.
- 7.4 The level and duration of support received will be led by need, but it is essential that some parameters around duration and type of support are set, to ensure that limited resources are distributed fairly across all eligible children and young people.

Service eligibility

- 7.5 Eligibility for the service will be:
- Children under the age of 18 that are Looked After
 - Children and young people that are subject to Child Protection Plans aged 11 to 16 years old
 - Young people that are eligible for a Leaving Care service up to their 21st birthday (or up to the age of 25 if in employment or education) or young people that require Personal Adviser support to address a need under the new Children and Social Work Act 2017, up to their 25th birthday.
- 7.6 The Advocacy Service will work with children and young people in the above eligible groups who are:
- Looked After Children who want or need to be supported to attend formal meetings, such as LAC Reviews, in order to get their wishes and feelings heard

- Looked After Children who have a concern about their care that they don't feel has been sufficiently addressed by the Council, and so wish to raise a complaint
- Children and young people that are subject to Child Protection Plans where the child or Social Worker feels support of an advocate would be beneficial at conferences
- Care Leavers that have a concern about the support they have received from the Council, that they wish to be addressed

Advocacy support

- 7.7 To support these children and young people, the Advocacy Service will undertake the following activities:
1. Help children and young people to clarify and express their needs and concerns, and the outcomes they are seeking to achieve through the advocacy process
 2. Make contact with the relevant staff within the Council to ensure the advocate has a full and accurate understanding of the need or concern raised. This should include the Social Worker or Personal Advisor and their Team Manager. If the allocated worker is not clear, the relevant Group Manager can also be contacted. The Council will provide a list with these contact details.
 3. Provide information, signposting, and support to the child or young person to enable them to advocate for themselves. This includes:
 - a. Information about their rights and research into relevant legislation
 - b. Support to communicate with the Council themselves, including to make phone calls and write emails expressing their wishes and feelings
 - c. Support to prepare for attendance at meetings
 4. If the child or young person is not able to communicate their wishes and feelings with the Council themselves, the service will do this on their behalf, either through correspondence or through attending meetings with them.
- 7.8 The Advocacy shouldn't undertake work with young people where:
- The child is in secure provision where an alternative advocacy service is available
 - The work is required in statute to be provided by the Council (i.e. tasks or functions that are the responsibility of either the allocated social worker, independent reviewing officer or a corporate parenting responsibility of the Council).
- 7.9 Where there is a need for advocacy outside the terms of this specification:
- When the need is identified by the service provider, they should contact the Commissioner who will liaise with the relevant Service Manager and the Director of Children's Social Care.
 - When the need is identified by the Council, the Commissioner (who will liaise with the relevant Service Manager and the Director of Children's Social Care) will agree the terms of the service to be provided with the successful provider on an individual case basis.

Complaints

- 7.10 If a referral is received concerning a dispute between the child/young person and Lewisham's Children's Social Care, it is expected that the Advocacy Service will initially spend time attempting to resolve the dispute informally, through the steps set out in section 7.10 above.

- 7.11 The provider and Council should act in line with the DfE 'Getting the Best from Complaints' guidance around Alternative Dispute Resolution (section 6). In line with this guidance, the expectation is that the provider will support the child/young person and work with Council to resolve complaints by Alternative Dispute Resolution wherever possible.
- 7.12 Even once the complaints procedure has been initiated, it is vital that the Advocacy Service employs or continues attempts to informally resolve complaints.
- 7.13 If informal resolution is not possible through these routes then the issue will need to be dealt with through the Children's Social Care complaints procedure as outlined on the Lewisham website: <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/complaints-and-feedback/complaints-procedure-for-our-children-and-young-people-s-services>

Advocacy at Child Protection Conferences

- 7.14 A time-limited and fixed offer of advocacy will be delivered for children who are subject to Child Protection Plans and wish to have advocacy support at Child Protection Conferences, or where it is deemed by a Social Worker that this support is needed. This will be available for children aged 11 to 16 years old.
- 7.15 The Advocacy Service will provide an independent advocate to:
- Meet with the child ahead of the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) to ascertain their wishes and feelings. They would then report this to the Conference Chair ahead of the meeting.
 - Attend the ICPC and any review conferences to present the views and wishes of the child (either with or without the child). There will ordinarily be around 3 conferences per child.
 - If the child did not attend themselves, meet with the child after the ICPC or review conference to discuss what happened and any decisions made
- 7.16 Cases will be closed following the final conference. Advocates will only be permitted to work with children in these cases for a maximum of 15 hours (inclusive of all aspects of preparation and travel, as listed in 7.4). If the provider feels that more than 15 hours are needed, this will need to be approved by the relevant Service Manager before being delivered.
- 7.17 Social Workers will be responsible for ensuring that all eligible children are aware that an independent advocate is available for child protection conferences, and for supporting them to access the service if required.
- 7.18 For this form of advocacy, parental consent will be on an opt-out basis.

Children with complex needs and disabilities

- 7.19 The Council will establish a specific referral process for children with complex needs and disabilities, which will be confirmed ahead of the contract start. It is expected that between 15-

20% of the overall cohort of service users will be from within the Children with Complex Needs Service.

- 7.20 The provider will have the capability, tools, skills and experience to deliver the service through a variety of different communication methods, to meet a wide range of needs and circumstances for children and young people with complex special educational needs and/ or disabilities. The Advocacy Service will have appropriate written information, including introductory information for children and young people with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, which is accessible and available for service users and any referring agencies
- 7.21 The Advocacy Service will provide non-instructed advocacy by suitably trained and experienced staff, in cases where a young person has a special educational needs and or disability that means that they do not have the capacity for instructed advocacy.
- 7.22 Cases may arise where a child or young people requires and is eligible for advocacy from an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate or Independent Mental Health Advocate. In this cases the provider should contact the commissioner for a decision on which form of advocacy is most appropriate.

8. HOW THE SERVICE WILL OPERATE

Access

- 8.1 All eligible children and young people in Lewisham will be made aware of the Advocacy Service by the Council, including either by their Social Worker, Personal Advisor, Participation Manager, Independent Reviewing Officer or CP Conference Chair. Where necessary, these professionals will support the child or young person to access the Advocacy Service.
- 8.2 The Advocacy Service will accept referrals from two sources:
 - a) Self-referrals from children and young people
 - b) Referrals from the Lewisham Participation Manager, who will be responsible for reviewing requests for advocacy from the professionals listed in 8.1
- 8.3 The provider must put in place a simple referral process including concise and accessible referral forms for all referrers, and ensure that the service is easily accessible for children and young people by Freephone number and email. The service should have clear and simple publicity materials for service users that they are able to understand and engage with.
- 8.4 When a referral is received and accepted, the Advocacy Service must, within 72 hours of agreement, contact the child or young person to arrange a meeting to progress the advocacy work. The provider should operate a waiting list system that prioritises based on the urgency of the action required from the service.
- 8.5 The service should be available at a minimum 52 weeks a year from 9am to 5pm during normal working days, except public holidays. During the hours where the service is not in operation, the

provider must make provision to provide enquirers with basic information on how to contact the service during core hours, and where to find information and other resources online.

- 8.6 The service will be expected to work with young people out of borough and out of London if necessary. The service should be able to meet the young people at their placements, as well as in the community, based on the young person's preference. It is acknowledged that much of the preparatory work for advocacy will be delivered remotely. The provider will be expected to adopt working practices which maximise the use of flexible working practices to minimise time and costs.
- 8.7 Where possible, an advocate who matches the linguistic and ethnic characteristic of the child or young person should be made available, if this is desired by them.
- 8.8 Where possible, the Advocacy Service will provide continuity in the advocate from the start of the case through to resolution.

Case reviews and closure

- 8.9 Where any advocacy case reaches 8 hours, the Advocacy Service will provide an update to the Council, detailing work undertaken so far, future planned work, an estimate of hours required for this, and any barriers that are delaying or preventing resolution of the case. A template will be provided for this by the Council ahead of contract start, and will include following as a minimum:
- Case number
 - Referral date
 - Date of first contact
 - Initials
 - Date of birth
 - Name of advocate
 - Presenting need and outcomes requested by young person
 - Cumulative hours with young person
 - Summary of work undertaken and outcomes achieved to date
 - Estimated time remaining until case closes
 - Future planned work
 - Any barriers or delays
- 8.10 Additionally, if at any point during the advocacy process there are significant delays or barriers to resolution caused by the Council, the Advocacy Service will inform the Council as soon as possible so that this can be escalated appropriately.
- 8.11 It is expected that the service will provide up to a maximum of 12 hours of advocacy support for each referral accepted to the service. If the provider feels that more than 12 hours are needed, this will need to be approved by the relevant Service Manager (LAC, Leaving Care or FSW) before being delivered. A request for additional hours will be made in the format referenced in 8.9. The Council will establish a process by which efficient approval will be given to the provider. This will be agreed before contract start.

- 8.12 Regardless of the duration of the case, cases should be closed when:
- The issues or concerns raised by the child or young person have an outcome. This may not mean that the initial outcome requested by the child or young person has been achieved.
 - The child or young person is able to advocate for themselves and so no longer requires the support of an advocate
 - The child or young person no longer wants the support of an advocate
- 8.13 Periodically the service provider may be invited to attend meetings with the Council to review a small sample of active cases, particularly where they are complex or have been open for a significant period of time without resolution. The aim of these meetings is to ensure good communication and establish a plan for how to resolve any ongoing issues, so that the case can be resolved as quickly as possible for the benefit of the young person. Ahead of these meetings, the provider will provide an overview of each case to be discussed, using the template referenced in 8.9. These meetings will be held at the request of the service commissioner, with a minimum notice period of 15 working days.
- 8.14 Staff within the Advocacy Service should ensure that children and young people are aware throughout the process that the support provided is time-limited and will come to an end once one of the above conditions is met. They should be skilled in managing the closure of cases with young people and have an effective case closure policy in place.

9. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 9.1 The Advocacy Service should adopt an ethos of partnership working, and recognize the importance and benefits of working closely with Council professionals in order to achieve the best outcomes for young people. This includes the Social Worker, Personal Advisor, Independent Reviewing Officer and professionals within Children's Social Care, as this will be critical for the success of the service.
- 9.2 The provider should take a positive, problem-solving approach when working with partners, and recognize that it is possible to do this whilst also maintaining their independence and being young person-led.
- 9.3 The provider will be proactive in identifying and developing relationships with key stakeholders of the service, to support the development of the service and achieve the service outcomes. This may include liaising with partner agencies and services outside of the Council, to help to resolve the concerns raised by the child.
- 9.4 The provider will ensure that the child or young person's Social Worker or Personal Advisor is kept well informed of arrangements in relation to provision of an advocate, and are advised when arrangements with one of its advocates comes to an end, including in cases where the child disengages.
- 9.5 The Advocacy Service will have a strong link with the Lewisham Participation Manager, who will:

- Be a key link between the service provider, Children's Social Care, and the young person.
 - Ensure all young people are aware of their rights around advocacy and have easy access to the service.
 - Be a first point of contact for young people that would like to speak to someone independent about the support they are receiving in an informal way, or would like to participate more in their care or in Children's Social Care generally.
 - Help to escalate concerns within Children's Social Care from the young person or the service provider
 - Have oversight of all young people that are receiving advocacy
 - Help to review feedback and issues arising from young people to identify key areas for service improvement
- 9.6 The provider will share non-confidential information on individual cases at the request of the service commissioner, including the names of service users.
- 9.7 The Council will ensure that we support this partnership working approach through clear and responsive communication with the Advocacy Service, providing information requested in a timely fashion where appropriate.
- 9.8 The Advocacy Service should ensure that the young people they advocate on behalf of, and partner agencies, are clear on the scope, and limitations, of their role as advocates.

10. FINANCE

- 10.1 The Advocacy Service is expected to provide a minimum of 1,000 hours of advocacy support per annum. The provider will be paid a block rate for these 1,000 hours. The expectation is that these hours will support between 60 – 80 young people per year, with no fewer than 60 young people supported.
- 10.2 Bidders are asked to submit a proposed annual cost for the block element of the contract, based on an hourly rate for delivering 1,000 hours of advocacy support per year. All aspects of service delivery should be included in this cost, including preparation, travel, consultation, direct casework, attendance at meetings and hearings, administration and other overheads.
- 10.3 Bidders are also asked to provide an hourly rate for any hours purchased over this block – i.e. a spot purchase rate – to be used at the Council's discretion. Again, this hourly rate should be inclusive of all of the aspects of service delivery listed in 9.2.
- 10.4 In relation to spot-purchased hours only, the provider is only permitted to invoice the Council for travel time of up to 25% of the total hours (advocacy support and travel) spent on each case. So for a total of 12 hours of support delivered, up to 3 hours of travel time will be paid within this. Once this limit has been reached, any additional hours of travel should not be charged to the Council.

- 10.5 The service will be paid quarterly in arrears, on receipt of an invoice and evidence of how the service was delivered as per contract monitoring arrangements.
- 10.6 If there is a significant decrease or increase in referrals, the above arrangements can be reviewed on an annual basis.

11. SOCIAL VALUE

- 11.1 The provider should support the Council to achieve additional economic and social benefits for local residents through the delivery of the Advocacy Service, known as 'social value'.
- 11.2 The provider will deliver social value through initiatives such as:
- Providing work experience, volunteering and/or employment opportunities for young people that use the Advocacy Service.
 - Enabling young people to influence and be involved in the wider activities of the provider's organisation, including involving them in recruitment processes and initiatives up to Board level.
 - Providing wider support and initiatives for young people to benefit from outside of the Advocacy Service, including training sessions, workshops and consultation work.

12. STAFFING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- 12.1 All those who access the Advocacy Service will have a named advocate and a means of contacting them. The Advocacy Service provider should assign to the service staff that have the requisite skills, knowledge and expertise for the safe and effective delivery of the service. They should ensure that there is consistency of quality across all staff.
- 12.2 The provider must ensure that a training plan is in place which ensures that all staff are trained to a high standard and have an in-depth understanding of the legislation in relation to the provision Children's Services. The provider must ensure that this training is refreshed on a regular basis, including in line with changes in relevant legislation and standards. This includes as a minimum:
- Children Act 1989, including Volume 3 on requirements for local authorities around transitions and financial commitment
 - Children's Social Work Act 2017, including on duties of Personal Advisors
 - Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
 - Children and Young Persons Act 2008
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection
 - Health and safety at work
 - Confidentiality and equality issues
 - Social Work and roles of Social Workers and other staff
- 12.3 The advocacy worker role is pivotal to the success of the service and it is essential that they provide positive role models for young people in their journey towards independence, including modelling respect, decision making, constructive challenge and positive social interaction throughout their work. Independent advocates must also:

- Be non-judgemental and respectful of young people's needs, views, culture and experiences
- Be consistent over time
- Be honest, open and clear with young people, including managing expectations if necessary
- Develop confidence and celebrate success
- Be able to identify and reinforce the young person's strengths and assets

12.4 The service provider should ensure that all staff have relevant checks completed on their suitability, experience and ability (including DBS – to be updated every 3 years). This information must be made available for audit following a reasonable request made by the Council.

Staff supervision

12.5 The provider should ensure staff receive regular formal supervision and performance management, undertaken by senior staff or managers who are skilled, experienced and suitably qualified.

12.6 A minimum of two of the staff undertaking supervision with advocates will hold the Level 2 and Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Independent Advocacy. Training for two staff will be funded by the Council as part of the contract, if qualifications are not already held within the staff team.

12.7 The Advocacy Service does not replace the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer and therefore does not need to be staffed by qualified social workers, but advocacy workers who have worked in a social care setting and who can share their knowledge and expertise amongst the wider team would be preferred. All staff will need access to advice from a qualified social worker who may or may not be their line manager.

13. SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

13.1 The Advocacy Service should be co-produced, and support received should be informed by the child or young person's views, particularly when setting achievable goals and objectives. These goals and objectives will be monitored accordingly in partnership with them. Young people who access the service should have a say in the level of involvement and style of advocacy support they want, within the remits of this service specification.

13.2 It is expected that children and young people will be involved in continually shaping and reviewing the Advocacy Service. Many advocates are working alone with young people, so it is necessary to ensure that the young people are given the opportunity to give their views on the quality of the service received and how it impacted on their life. Young people's views on the impact and outcomes of the service will form a significant part of the overall outcomes monitoring framework. The provider will ensure that young people who want to, can influence and be involved in the wider activities of the organisation up to and including at Board level.

13.3 Feedback on the service should be collected routinely from service users at case closure, using creative methods to gather this. Feedback gathered at case closure will be presented in the quarterly reporting to service commissioners, and results of the annual consultation will be

presented as completed. This feedback will be used to evaluate service delivery and inform service improvements. It is expected that the service provider will make adjustments and adaptations to the service model in response to this feedback, in partnership with commissioners, and that they will endeavour to inform service users of any changes made as a result.

- 13.4 The provider will also help to facilitate any ad-hoc consultation with service users that the Council may wish to undertake, at the request of the service commissioner.
- 13.5 As part of the support provided, the Advocacy Service will encourage participation in wider Children's Social Care forums and initiatives, including engagement with the Care Leavers Forum, Children in Care Council and Participation Manager.

14. QUALITY OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICE

- 14.1 The Advocacy Service will meet with the following quality standards and national regulations:
- The National Standards for the provision of Children's Advocacy Services
 - The Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM) Code of Practice for independent advocacy
 - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). The service provider must contribute and comply with OFSTED inspections and requirements.
- 14.2 The provider will have the capacity, skills and systems to quality assure and monitor services provided. Quality assurance will include testing compliance with safeguarding, financial policies and procedures, and how service users will be engaged in shaping the provision and influencing quality improvement.
- 14.3 The service provider all ensure they hold all relevant operational and management policies that are in accordance with equal opportunities, safeguarding children, staff training and retention, and monitoring and evaluation, including:
- A written equal opportunities policy that recognises the need to be pro-active in tackling all forms of inequality, discrimination and social exclusion
 - A written policy on confidentiality that is in line with the Data Protection Act 1998/General Data Protection Regulations 2018. It should outline how information about a person accessing the service may be shared as well as the circumstances under which confidentiality might be breached. The policy will cover what type of personal/sensitive information will be shared; who will have access to information; who information will be shared with; how information will be shared and how information will be secured
 - A written policy describing how individuals, including relevant stakeholders, can make complaints or give feedback about the service or about individual advocates. The provider will have systems and processes in place for any concerns or complaints made against the service to be investigated, cooperating fully with the service commissioner for any matter to be resolved (all records regarding complaints should be retained by the successful provider for a period of three years)

15. SAFEGUARDING

- 15.1 The successful provider will have clear policies and procedures to ensure safeguarding issues are identified and acted upon. Advocates will be supported to understand the different forms of abuse and neglect, issues relating to confidentiality and what to do if they suspect a client is at risk.
- 15.2 In addition, the provider will:
- Operate recruitment and training policies and procedures that take full account of safeguarding needs and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
 - Agree with the Council a clear escalation policy where they have child protection or safeguarding concerns
 - Operate a child protection policy that is compliant with the Council's safeguarding policies
 - Comply at all times with the provisions of the Children's Act 1989 and 2004, London Child Protection Procedures, Safer Recruitment policies and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Give full regard to the 'No Secrets' guidelines and the 'Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults', where the delivery of the service results in contact with vulnerable adults
 - Ensure staff attend appropriate professional safeguarding meetings and share openly all appropriate information regarding cases with other services and agencies. This includes contributing to Children's Social Care Assessments, Group meetings and Child in Need meetings, and the Team Around the Family meetings

16. OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS FRAMEWORK

- 16.1 The provider is required to demonstrate that the Advocacy Service is being delivered to the highest quality standards and against the requirements of the contract and this specification. Performance of the service will be assessed through an outcomes and outputs framework, a draft of which is set out in Appendix 1.
- 16.2 Appendix 1 sets out the minimum expectations in terms of performance measures for the service. The provider can suggest additional measures as part of the tender process (which will be evaluated as part of the Method Statements), and the outcomes and outputs framework will be finalised ahead of contract start, in partnership with the successful provider. Additionally, the framework and reporting schedules may be adapted over the lifetime of the contract in response to changing priorities within Lewisham Children's Services or issues with the current proposed measures. Changes can be requested by the provider or the commissioner, and this will be reviewed and agreed in partnership.
- 16.3 The service provider should proactively review the performance data and information they are collecting, and put forward suggestions for how the Advocacy Service could be developed in light of this, to ensure it is having the intended impact and meeting its targets. The Council actively encourages innovation and originality in the measurement of service impact.

- 16.4 The service provider should also support the Council to learn from young people's feedback to improve how Lewisham Children's Social Care is experienced and delivered, by producing data and analysis that can be used in a meaningful way.

17. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 17.1 The service provider will closely monitor the performance and quality of the Advocacy Service, ensuring that they raise and respond to any arising issues and risks quickly. The service provider will alert the Council immediately (and following up by email) of any issues that impact service delivery, including issues related to specific cases.
- 17.2 The service provider will submit a quarterly performance report to the Council which will include quantitative and qualitative data on service outputs and outcomes (as set out in Appendix 1) caseload information, service user feedback and analysis including areas for development and actions being taken to address these.
- 17.3 Performance reports will be submitted according to the schedule below:

Monitoring Period 2020-21	Date For Submission	Contract Monitoring Meeting
Quarter 1 (April - June)	Mid-July	End July
Quarter 2 (July – September)	Mid-October	End October
Quarter 3 (October - December)	Mid-January	End January
Quarter 4 (January – March)	Mid-April	End April

- 17.4 The service provider will attend quarterly review meetings arranged by the Council to discuss performance. The provider will also support visits to the service by representatives of the Council, which will be mutually agreed as and when required.
- 17.5 As well as completing the outcomes and outputs framework in Appendix 1, the provider will submit caseload information on a quarterly basis. The exact proforma will be agreed ahead of contract start, but will include as a minimum:
- Case number (format up to successful provider)
 - Referral date
 - Initials
 - Referral Source
 - Social Worker
 - Service (i.e. Looked After Children, Family Social Work etc)
 - DoB
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Location (in/out of borough or London)
 - Self-reported disability

- Asylum Seeker
- Legal status
- Primary reason for advocacy support
- Secondary reason for advocacy support
- Outcomes sought by young person
- Hours spent in quarter and total hours (advocacy work and travel hours)
- Cumulative hours with young person
- Summary of work undertaken by advocate
- Estimated time remaining until case closes
- Outcome (if case closed)

Appendix 1: Outcomes and outputs framework

Outcomes

Objective	Indicator	Measure	Target
Ensure that young people feel listened to and empowered, and have choice and control over their support	Young person felt listened to and felt they contributed to decision-making	Percentage of cases where young people report that they felt listened to and contributed to decision-making	100%
		Number of young people supported to contribute to Pathway Plan	N/A
		Number of LAC Review meetings attended with young people	N/A
		Number of other meetings attended with young people	N/A
		Number of CP Conferences attended with young people	N/A
	Young person supported to get involved with wider participation services and events within LB Lewisham	Number of young people referred to LB Lewisham participation forum or service	N/A
Ensure children and young people's rights are upheld and achieve positive change for them	Young person had a better understanding of processes and of their rights	Percentage of cases where young people report better understanding of Children's Social Care processes at case closure	80%
		Percentage of cases where advocate reports that YP has better understanding of children's social care processes at case closure	80%
		Percentage of cases where young people report better understanding of their rights	80%
		Percentage of cases where advocate reports that YP has better understanding of their rights	80%
	Young person was satisfied with the service and would	Percentage of cases where young people report satisfaction with the service at case closure	100%

	recommend to others		
	Positive change was achieved for the young person	Percentage of cases with a positive outcome for the young person (this may not mean that the initial outcome requested by the child or young person has been achieved)	100%
		Percentage of cases where young people report being satisfied with outcome(s) at case closure	80%
Provide positive role models for young people in their journey towards independence, including modelling respect, decision making, constructive challenge and social interaction	Young person reports improved relationship with Social Worker/Personal Advisor	Percentage of cases where young people report improved relationship at case closure	80%
		Percentage of cases where advocates reporting improved relationship at case closure	80%
	Young person has demonstrated self-advocacy	Number of young people returning to the advocacy service once in the year following case closure	0
		Number of young people returning to the advocacy service at least twice in the year following case closure	0
		Percentage of young people demonstrating self-advocacy in a meeting	100%
		Percentage of young people demonstrating self-advocacy in written correspondence	100%
	Young person feels confident to transition to greater independence and adulthood	Percentage of cases where young people report improved confidence at case closure	80%
		Percentage of cases where advocates report that YP has improved confidence at case closure	80%
Support LB Lewisham to learn from young people's feedback to improve how Children's Social Care is experienced and delivered	Issues raised by young people during advocacy process	Count of issues raised by young people (categories to be confirmed)	N/A
			N/A
			N/A
			N/A
			N/A
			N/A

			N/A
			N/A

Outputs

Number of hours delivered	
Number of individual young people supported	
Active caseload at end of quarter (break down by CWCN, LAC, Leaving Care, CP)	
Number of new self-referrals	
Number of new referrals from Participation Manager	
Number of referrals accepted	
Number of referrals rejected	
Number of cases closed	
Percentage of young people contacted within 72 hours	
Number of active cases exceeding 8 hours	
Number of active cases exceeding 12 hours	
Primary reason for advocacy support	
1	Support for LAC to attend formal meetings to get their wishes and feelings heard
2	Support for children on Child Protection Plans
3	Support for LAC who have a concern about their care
4	Support for Care Leavers that have a concern about the support they have received
Number of cases in complaints process	
1	Stage 1
2	Stage 2
3	Stage 3
Number of complaints in complaints process resolved by alternative dispute resolution	