

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES

of meeting held on **17 JANUARY 2011** at

Loxley House from 2.30 pm to 4.07 pm

Councillor Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Collins
Councillor Griggs
Councillor Ibrahim
Councillor Klein
Councillor Marshall
Councillor Morley
Councillor Urquhart

indicates present at meeting

Also in attendance

Mr I Curryer)
Miss E Darragh) Children and Families
Ms P Thompson-Omenka)

Ms S Ayrey - Communities

Ms J Dearing - Development

Mr K Banfield) Resources
Miss C Jackson)

Ms G Moy - Nottingham City Homes

PC Sam Flint) Nottinghamshire Police
Chief Inspector Andy Rooke)

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Collins, Candida Brudenell, Colin Monckton and Satinder Gautam, all from Nottingham City Council.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

33 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 November 2010, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

34 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CHILDREN IN CARE, DECEMBER 2010

Consideration was given to a matrix produced by the Head of Insight and Improvement, copies of which had been circulated, which updated the Board with performance information in relation to Children in Care, showing the figures as at October 2010.

The following key figures were highlighted to the Board by the Miss E Darragh, Intelligence Manager (Targeted and Specialist Services):

- the number of Looked After Children (LAC) was 508 as at 17th January 2011. This was still above the targeted figure of 480;
- this number represented a rate of 93.6 of LAC per 10,000 children. This was above the target rate of 85.8 per 10,000 children;
- the number of LAC admissions was 23 and the number of discharges was 20;
- the stability of LAC placements in terms of length of placement was 62.9% against a target of 67%. The statistical neighbour comparison was 65.4%;
- the proportion of LAC cases which were reviewed within the required timescale was 85.6% against a target of 90%. The statistical neighbour comparison was 86%;
- the percentage of children looked after for more than three months with an up to date health assessment was 65.8%, against a target of 80%;
- the percentage of LAC looked after for more than 3 months with an up to date dental check was 77.8%, against a target of 80%.
- the percentage of care leavers with a Pathway Plan was 90%, against a target of 100%;
- the percentage of LAC with a completed Personal Education Plan (PEP) was 71%, against target of 100%.
- the percentage of LAC looked after for more than three months with an up to date Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was 39.4%, against a target of 100%.

The figures for December were still with Heads of Service and Directors for confirmation but showed an improving trend in some categories. Performance against LAC measures remained challenging and significant focus was being placed on areas where performance was weaker. Robust action plans had been put into place to drive performance improvements and were being monitored by senior management.

In the discussion which followed, a number of further points were made:

- all local authorities were required to provide information on the emotional and mental health of children and young people in their care. This data was collected through

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ's) and new processes were being put into place to collect the information on a rolling basis throughout the year with a view to improving the performance figures in relation to these. There was a need to see the outcomes of the SDQ's, as well as the statistics;

- it was noted that the Government was removing the requirement for performance reports in many areas, with a move away from National Indicators, towards measurement at a local level. As a result, outcome measures were currently under discussion with Heads of Service, which may result in some indicators being taken out and replaced with new ones. The Chair emphasised that any new measures should be approved by the Board;
- it was queried as to why there was a time lag in the data which was being submitted to the Board. The figures in the report were as at October 2010. This was partially due to the need to publish the agenda and reports within the statutory time limits but also due to the time taken to obtain approval of the figures by senior management before publication. More sophisticated performance monitoring was being developed. In the meantime, the usual reports would be prepared for agenda and any updated figures which were available would be tabled at Board meetings;
- weekly reports were now being produced on the number of LAC admissions and discharges, with a view to giving more control to managers.

RESOLVED

- (1) **that the figures in the matrix be noted and updated at the next meeting of the Board on 21 March 2011;**
- (2) **that the Board be consulted on any new performance measures to be used in the future**

35 REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

Consideration was given to a joint report of Chief Inspector Andy Rooke, Nottinghamshire Police and the Director of Safeguarding, copies of which had been circulated, explaining the improvements made in the reduction of criminalisation activity of children in care focussing on the role of the Children in Care (CiC) police officer in improving outcomes for young people, and the effectiveness of multi-agency meetings/forums to drive improvement.

PC Sam Flint, CiC Officer, highlighted the following key issues to the Board:

- Nottingham City Council was the only local authority in England to benefit from having a dedicated CiC police officer. The role was a model of best practice and had contributed to the reduction of offending behaviour and instances of missing reports for children in care;
- the development of local performance measures to regularly monitor the criminalisation of CiC would provide a more accurate view of performance and evidence outcome improvements;
- new protocols were being put into place with offending CiC, the Police and staff in children's homes to talk through incidents and avoid CiC getting criminal records wherever possible;

- quarterly Reducing Offending meetings were held with local authority children's homes and private providers. The designated Youth Offending Team (YOT) Lead and CiC police officer attended meetings with providers, looking to promote a consistent and quality approach to communication behaviour management, substance misuse issues and responses to children and young people missing from home;
- a 'concerns group' had been established to address concerns raised by any agency in relation to the placement of young people in residential care. This had already resulted in the closure of one unsuitable children's home;
- restorative justice approaches were used where appropriate to prevent and divert young people from management within the Youth Justice System. This would assist residential staff to provide a consistent approach across statutory and private providers;
- work was being undertaken with offending post-adoption children to avoid them having to return into care wherever possible.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the Board acknowledged the importance of the role of the CiC police officer in the drive to reduce the criminalisation of CiC and improve their outcomes;**
- (2) that the Board was committed to the need to continue annual multi- agency events, and quarterly Reducing Offending meetings with a view to reducing the criminalisation of young people in care and to ensure that attendance at these forums was more inclusive;**
- (3) that new quality assurance checks be developed to allow field staff to feedback positive and negative experiences and enhance commissioning arrangements;**
- (4) that local performance measures be developed to ensure improved monitoring of the CiC cohort, to further reduce criminalisation and to provide more local analysis;**
- (5) that the Board was committed to using the restorative justice principles within residential units in the City.**

36 PATHWAY PLANS - CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Families and the Director of Safeguarding, copies of which had been circulated, setting out the statutory entitlement for young people in the care of the Local Authority and those leaving care who were 15+ to have a compliant Pathway Plan.

Paulette Thompson-Omenka, the Head of Children in Care highlighted the following key issues:

- the statutory entitlement to have a compliant Pathway Plan followed the Judge

Munby 2005 ruling which necessitated the need for local authorities to work with young people who were 15+ to complete a compliant Pathway Plan which was an extension of care planning and which was a future route to adult services, setting out the hopes, aspirations and desires of young people and how they could be achieved;

- key strands of the pathway planning process were to ensure that children in care:
 - moved seamlessly into education, employment or training;
 - were supported with financial management or budgeting;
 - had suitable accommodation;
 - had a smooth transition into adult services;
- Pathway Plans were initiated at the Looked After Child Reviews (LACR) and reviewed six monthly with the young person prior to the subsequent LACR;
- the percentage of care leavers with Pathway Plans in Nottingham City was currently 90% and the target for 2010/11 was 100%;

Several issues were raised and points made in the discussion which followed:

- it was not sufficient for care leavers just to have a Pathway Plan. The Plan needed to be ambitious enough and care had to be taken to ensure that the objects of the Plan were achieved wherever possible;
- targets set out in the Pathway Plan needed clear outcomes and needed to be tracked;
- it was acknowledged that the Council had made great progress with pathway plans since the Munby Ruling, but there was still room for further improvement and this was being worked on.

RESOLVED that the report and the progress over the last 6 months be noted.

37 FEEDBACK ON STARS APPEAL

The Head of Children in Care reported on the success of the Stars Appeal for Christmas presents for Children in Care and Children in Need. Colleagues had been invited to take a star from the Christmas tree in the atrium at Loxley House and buy a present for a child or young person within the age range from 0 to 16+ years. The target had been 2,000 presents and over 2,100 presents had been received, wrapped and distributed. Tribute was paid to the colleagues who had assisted with the wrapping and distribution of the gifts and thanks was given to the generous colleagues who had contributed one or more gifts to the Appeal. It was hoped that a similar appeal would be launched next Christmas but may be limited to gifts for Children in Care.

RESOLVED that the success of the Appeal be noted and the thanks of the Board to both colleagues who had contributed gifts and colleagues who had assisted with the wrapping and distribution of gifts.

38 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

The Head of Children in Care reported that the members of the Children in Care Council (CICC) who had attended the Board in September 2010 had expressed a desire to attend a future meeting of the Board with a view to updating the Board on progress and,

in particular, to discuss with the Board the relationship between children in care and social workers.

RESOLVED that the CICC be invited to attend the Board meeting in either March 2011 or June 2011.

39 REGULATION 33 (CHILDRENS CARE HOME REGULATIONS 2001) TRAINING

The Head of Children in Care reported that visits to the Council's children's homes in accordance with Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 could be undertaken by members of the Board who had received appropriate training for the task. Those members of the Board who still had not been trained could attend a further training session due on 25 February 9.30 am.

RESOLVED that those Board members who had not received training under Regulation 33 be encouraged to attend the next session.

40 SUITABLE ACCOMODATION 15+YOUNG PEOPLE

A presentation was given by Sharon Ayrey, Strategic Commissioning, on the development of accommodation and support options for Nottingham City's care leavers. The following key issues arose out of the presentation:

- the market was currently characterised by a diverse range of providers all operating under different rules of engagement and agreements including private organisations, registered social landlords and the local authority;
- the strengths of the current situation included having a mixed market of provision offering a range of different types of accommodation and the number of experienced providers with some excellent services and practices. The weaknesses included the absence of a business relationship with providers, lack of clear guidelines around quality expectations, lack of robust quality assessment, demand outweighing supply, and lack of process around planning for care leavers, meaning that the market model operated in reverse;
- the drivers for change included providing better value for money, to stop being financiers and become investors in young people and providers, to develop a business relationship with providers, to co-produce services with children in care and providers, to increase the volume and choice of provision available to offer care leavers, to improve outcomes for young people and to provide more stable placements;
- the required outcomes included better value for money, a wider menu of accommodation, an increased volume of accommodation, improved relationships with the provider sector, an enhanced pathways planning process and a better ability to meet National Indicators, NI 147, NI 162, NI 100 and NI 101;
- the proposals were to work with providers and operational staff to develop a pool of accommodation and support services for care leavers 16+. This would be achieved by working collaboratively, strategically forecasting need and developing services in accordance with that need. The result would be a commissioning and procurement process which would enhance Pathways Planning and accommodate care leavers in a timely way using a three stage process:

- 2011 - developing provision to deal with current provisions, including immediately moving 17+ care leavers into more appropriate accommodation;
- 2011/12 - working with the operational 15+ team to develop the process;
- 2012/13 - process and pool matures, allowing those who turn 16 to move into the pool;
- the model, which had been based on best practice and benchmarking, included providing: supported lodgings, small shared homes, semi-independent accommodation and training accommodation, all depending on the level of support required;
- analysis was intended to meet need over the next two years. There were some difficulties with the data as there was a lack of robust needs data outlining what support needs were, length of stay was difficult to predict and it wasn't known if service users would have moved on sooner if there was more choice;
- future needs for 15-16 year old, 17 year old and 18 year olds had been assessed. The most immediate need was in relation to 17 year olds;
- to deal with the current pressure the immediate need was for 10 units of semi-independent accommodation based services, 15 units of training accommodation and 35 units of supported lodgings. By working with the 15+ team, it had been possible to identify within a 6 month period when care leavers would be exiting care services and to be able to shape accommodation in accordance with their needs and wishes. This would ensure that a wider and more appropriate range of service could be offered;
- support elements would need to be flexible enough to deliver the following outcomes: Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Making a Positive Contribution, Achieving Economic Wellbeing and Being Healthy;
- 3 types of contracting option were being considered:
 - block contract services – providers were guaranteed a certain amount of business and were paid regardless of whether or not the service was used;
 - framework contract services - providers were part of a pool of accredited providers and when services become required, they undertook a mini tendering exercise to provide the required service;
 - framework contract services - accommodation and support within separate frameworks;
- the costs of the various levels of service depended upon the type of accommodation being provided and the level of support provided, ranging from £145-£165 per unit per week for the supported lodging standard to £640-£720 per unit per week for the small shared houses where a high level of support was required;
- it was proposed to submit the proposals to the Executive Board in March 2011, with a view to being able to begin to operate and move the 17+ group into services from July 2011 onwards.

Arising from the presentation, a number of issues and questions were raised:

- it was confirmed that funding for this project was unlikely to be affected by the proposed cuts to the Supporting People Programme as it was financed from mainstream funding;
- there was a possibility that existing foster carers could provide supported lodgings but, as they would be required to offer a lower level of support in these cases, the fee would be affected and there may be a low take up rate because of this. A cultural shift would be required to encourage more foster carers to offer supported lodgings and work would have to be undertaken to address this;

RESOLVED

- (1) that Ms Ayrey be thanked for the informative presentation;**
- (2) that the presentation be noted and the approach being taken be approved.**

41 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item on the basis that it was likely in view of the nature of the of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed.

42 CHILDREN IN NEED AND CHILDREN IN CARE INSPECTION 2010

The Head of Children in Care gave a brief report to the Board on the preliminary findings of the Ofsted Inspection in 2010. The final report was due to be published in the near future and would be discussed in detail at the March meeting of this Board.

The Chair gave thanks on behalf of the Board to the Head of Children in Care, her Team and everyone else involved in the Ofsted Inspection for their hard work.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

FOOTNOTE : the next Board meeting was to be held at 2.30pm on 21 March 2011 in Room 1.11 Loxley House.