

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Date: Monday 18 June 2012

Time: 2.30pm

Place: Committee Room, Ground Floor at Loxley House

Members of the Board are invited to attend the above meeting on the date and at the time and place stated to transact the following business.



Acting Corporate Director of Resources

Constitutional Services Officer: Zena West Direct dial - 8764305

AGENDA

- 1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**
- 2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**
- 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
Councillors, colleagues or other participants in meetings are requested to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any matter(s) on the agenda
- 5 MINUTES** Attached
Last meeting held on 19 March 2012 (for confirmation)
- 6 PERFORMANCE REPORT** Attached
Report of Director of Quality and Commissioning
- 7 RISE PROGRAMME - BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY (BiTC)** Attached
Report of Director of Operations BiTC
- 8 ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN IN CARE IN 2011** Attached
Report of Director of Schools and Learning

- 9 COMMISSIONED WORK IN FOSTERING AND ADOPTION - SUPPORT** Attached
FOR FOSTER CARERS AND ADOPTIONS
Report of Director of Children's Safeguarding

10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

2012

17 September

19 November

2013

21 January

18 March

IF YOU ARE UNSURE WHETHER OR NOT YOU SHOULD DECLARE AN INTEREST IN A PARTICULAR MATTER, PLEASE CONTACT THE CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES OFFICER SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEETING, WHO WILL PROVIDE ADVICE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

CITIZENS ATTENDING MEETINGS ARE ASKED TO ARRIVE AT LEAST FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF THE MEETING TO BE ISSUED WITH VISITOR BADGES

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NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES

of meeting held on **19 MARCH 2012** at

Loxley House from 2.35 pm to 4.15 pm

- ✓ Councillor Mellen (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Klein (Vice-Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Culley (from minute 37-42 inclusive)
- ✓ Councillor Dewinton
- ✓ Councillor Heaton
- ✓ Councillor Jenkins
- Councillor McCulloch
- ✓ Councillor Morley
- ✓ Councillor Morris

✓ indicates present at meeting

Also in attendance

Mr D Richards) Business in the Community
 Mr J Shrivastava)

Miss S Barber)
 Mr M Harrison)
 Mr J Garner) Children in Care Council
 Mr D Parish)
 Mr N Smith)

Mrs L Beedham)
 Ms S Bond)
 Mrs S Clarke)
 Ms E Darragh) Children and Families (City Council)
 Ms Liu-Smith)
 Mr J Rea)
 Ms P Thompson-Omenka)
 Mr K Williams)

Ms I Denton - Communities (City Council)
 Ms S Thompson - County Health Partnerships Children in Care Service

Mrs P Brackenbury - Nottingham Citycare Partnership

Mrs Z West) Resources (City Council)
 Ms C Ziane-Pryor)

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McCulloch, Carol Arme, Candida Brudenell, Gill Moy, Evonne Rogers, and Heidi Watson. Councillor Cully sent apologies for her predicted late arrival.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

36 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1 February 2012, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

37 PERFORMANCE OCTOBER 2011-JANUARY 2012

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Quality and Commissioning, copies of which had been circulated and that was complemented by an updated performance report which included statistics for February 2012 and which was circulated at the meeting and submitted to the online agenda following the meeting.

Ms Paulette Thompson-Omenka presented the report and provided the following information:

- there were 538 children in care. The number fluctuated around 535 and had been as high as 547. An unplanned event could potentially bring a sibling group of 5 into the system;
- further work was required in regard to the discharge programme for 17 years olds in preparation for their exiting the system at 18 years old. Semi-independent support was a favoured option for many care leavers, with the alternative being support from edge of care services;
- performance indicator NI63 (Stability of placements of children in care: length of placement) had achieved 72.9%, which was considered good compared to most similar local authorities;
- performance indicator NI66 (Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales) was at 96.3% and had shown good improvement;
- performance indicator PAF C63 (Participation in reviews) was at 83.8%. This indicator remained a priority. There was an increasing focus on participation of the young people, including involvement in designing of services;
- there had been a significant increase in participation of the "Strengths and Difficulties" questionnaire, which focused on children's emotional wellbeing. Replies were at 75.9%, which was up from 63.7% due to the massive efforts of colleagues.

Ms Thompson-Omenka responded to the Board's questions and comments as follows:

- in regard to performance indicator NI61 (Timeliness of placements of Children in Care for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption), the 12 month 'timely placement' period, was not realistic as the adoption process was very complicated. A more relevant indicator would refer to the number of children moving through the system;
- there was some work done on speeding up the adoption process. While babies were easily placed, older children, sibling groups, children from ethnic minorities, and especially children with disabilities, were much harder to place. The process needed to be safe and secure, with minimal disruptions. Nottingham had low levels of adoption disruptions;
- it was believed that the target for performance indicators NI147 and NI148 (Care leavers in suitable accommodation – 100%, and Care leavers in employment, education or training – 95.00%) were unrealistic but could not ethically be set any lower;
- there had previously been discussion on how benefit reforms may affect children in care and people's ability to adopt. It was believed that the benefits reforms may have had a detrimental effect. Local Authorities would have powers to remove tenancies where children had been taken into care but it was suggested that central government first needed to consider the impact of children being taken into care and then returning home at a later date, if tenancies had been removed in the intervening period. Sometimes it would not be in the child's best interests to return to the family home, or the parents would not want the children back. Under these circumstances there would be no reason for over-occupancy, but it would not be known initially if the children were due to return;
- while the Chair aspired to reduce the number of children in care by 5%, greater financial support would be needed for positive reductions in numbers of children in care. The preferred position was for children to remain with or return to their parental home, but this often placed greater strain on other resources such as drug/alcohol abuse services, domestic violence and mental health services which were also under financial restraints. In all cases, the main priority remained the child's safety;
- more support was needed for facilitating people to adopt who currently could not. A lady in a 1 bed council house was not able to adopt as she did not have enough rooms, and could not be provided with a larger house because she had not yet adopted.

The Chair was pleased to greet a care leaver at his ward surgery and that she had felt confident to approach her ward Councillor for assistance in resolving an issue.

Councillor Klein commented that during her 6 years as a member of the Adoption Panel, she had found that there were a multitude of uncontrollable issues which could delay the adoption process at every stage, and also many issues which prevented potentially mutually successful adoptions.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the information provided in the report be noted;**

- (2) that, regarding the complete process of adoptions, Mrs Thompson-Omenka arrange for more detailed information to be provided to the Board at a future meeting;
- (3) that the positive work between Children in Care colleagues and Health colleagues be acknowledged, with particular thanks to Sharon Clarke.

38 NCC FOSTERING SERVICES INSPECTION 2011 – OFSTED REPORT

Consideration was given to the Ofsted Local Authority Fostering Agency inspection report, copies of which had been circulated.

Ms Paulette Thompson-Omenka introduced the report and was very pleased to inform the Board that the Local Fostering Agency was graded good overall in every category, and excellent in some features including support to care leavers.

Recommendations were made which included consistent training portfolios for foster carers and consistent supervision records. As a result, an action plan was to be produced and implemented, addressing all issues raised in the recommendations, by the next unannounced inspection later this year.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the information provided in the inspection be noted;
- (2) that the congratulations of the Board to all staff and carers involved in the fostering inspection be recorded;
- (3) that, at a future meeting, Ms Thompson-Omenka inform the Board of progress made against the action plan.

39 CARE LEAVERS IN, AND NOT IN, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (NEET/EET) AND SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director for Children's Services, copies of which had been circulated,

Ms Sharon Clarke introduced the detailed report. The following information was provided:

- Nationally and locally there was concern with employment of young people. 1 in 5 (16,000) young people were out of work. This was proportionally reflected in care leavers;
- there was a multi-agency focus group in Nottingham, who committed to ensuring that young people were prepared for employment or education by providing practical skills. This included personal advisers providing group sessions on employability and sustaining tenancies;
- there was success with commitment to apprenticeships, and with jobs for care leavers at entry level. PATRA, Nottingham City Council and Nottingham City Homes had provided apprenticeships to care leavers, while the RISE programme

provided young people with a taster sessions in the workplace environment. In the last week, 3 young people had gained employment through RISE;

- suitable accommodation remained a priority with an increased demand in supported lodgings for the most vulnerable young people, including living with a host family. Nottingham City Council had invited tenders from private providers for a range of housing to meet young people's needs, including semi-independent accommodation. This included a menu of options with a tailored support package;

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

- training and education was discussed, planned and reviewed with children in care as part of their Pathway Plan and two careers officers worked at the 15+ service;
- there were currently 19 of Nottingham's children in care at university. Young people in care had opportunities to visit the universities and meet with connexions advisors. Some universities offered student mentors at local schools, with children in care a priority and schools were encouraged to engage children in care in university related activities and opportunities and making colleges and universities aware that they were in care;
- it was sometimes difficult to raise young peoples' aspirations and motivation with regards to university. Many young people did not want to go to university but from 280 care leavers (aged 18-24), approximately 5 were due to start university in 2012;
- in the past week 3 young people had successfully gained employment through RISE;
- the six personal advisors were realistic with children in care with regards to their educational attainment and potential careers. Support was also provided if further or higher education was not believed to be the right path for the child or if they were not academically able. Although RISE were focused on local job opportunities rather than education, they could signpost young people to education advice if they were academically qualified;
- pre-employment experience and support helped young people in care to compete 'on a level playing field' where they would have the same opportunities as any other young people.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- (1) remain the lead body in driving action across Nottingham City in respect of employment and education for Children in Care;**
- (2) note the National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) report and commits to working towards the Quality Mark for Nottingham City;**
- (3) offer commitment in ensuring the on-going multi-agency focus group continues to drive employment and education for care leavers;**

- (4) continue to offer commitment in support of the implementation of the Framework of semi-independence accommodation for 16-18 year olds.**

40 PERSONAL EDUCATION ALLOWANCE (PEA) FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Schools and Learning, copies of which had been circulated, outlining how children in care had benefited from the Personal Education Allowances which could be applied for up to £500 within criteria decided by each Local Authority, to fund activities linked to educational objectives which a parent of a child not in care would normally pay for, such as one-to-one tuition, school trips, vocational training, music lessons, laptops etc.

The report provided the following information:

- PEAs were originally funded through an Area Based Grant, with the amount set at £500 per child in care and approx 72% of Children in Care expected to benefit;
- in 2010 Nottingham City extended its eligibility criteria to include pupils up to 19 years old in further education or sixth form;
- as of February 2012 there were over 120 applications in 2011/12, totalling approximately £50,000;
- although no longer a statutory requirement, as PEAs were having such a positive effect on the outcomes for children's educational attainment, self-esteem and ability to learn, it was felt that the positive effect of the PEAs represented a sound investment for children in care;

The recommendation was to continue PEAs but at a reduced rate of £350 to enable wider access. This amount was enough to purchase a laptop and basic software and it was suggested that donations could be sought for software, including via the Children in Care Christmas appeal.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the increased uptake of Personal Education Allowances (PEA) and the opportunities they offer children and young people, be acknowledged;**
- (2) that the reduction of the individual PEA limit from £500 to £350 for 2012/13 to support a larger cohort of children in care, be approved.**

41 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL – CHILDRENS CHARTER

Mr Jon Rae introduced the presentation, copies of which had been circulated and which was delivered by Stacey Barber and Dyeater Parish, members of the Children In Care Council which had created the questionnaire, marked and collated the answers and rated them.

The detailed presentation included the following information and 'traffic light' colour coded headings:

- 714 questionnaires were sent out, with 134 usable returns, which gave an 18.8%

response rate;

- 88.5% felt that their social workers treated them with respect; 96.8% felt that their carers treated them with respect;
- 86.6% felt that where they were living was the right care place for them; 41.8% said that waiting time for their care places was less than one month;
- 97% felt safe where they lived; 94.8% felt safe at school and 96.8% felt safe in their neighbourhood;
- 77.5% felt that their social workers had enough time for them. However, this means almost 1 in 4 felt that their social workers did not have time for them; 95.2% felt that their carers had enough time for them;
- 91.6% felt that their social workers listened to what they said; 97.7% felt that their carers listened to what they said; 94.6% felt that their designated teachers listened to what they said;
- 87.9% felt their opinions were heard and made a difference to decisions made in their lives;
- only 65.7% attended their Looked After Review; of those 85.7% felt that they always gave their opinions in their Looked After Review; 84.1% felt that they got help in preparing for their Looked After Review;
- 41.6% worried about their lives all the time or often; 97% felt generally healthy all the time or often;
- 77.7% felt they were doing ok, well, or very well at school;
- for those of school age, 24.1% did not know about their Personal Education Plan; 23.8% were not happy with their Personal Education Plan; 36.1% felt they were not involved in drawing up their Personal Education Plan;
- 68.6% felt they would do better at school with more help;
- 44% of children had experienced a change of social worker in the last 12 months; 33.6% of children had experienced a change of home in the last 12 months; 24.6% of children had experienced a change of carer in the last 12 months; 18.7% of children had experienced a change of school in the last 12 months; 26.9% of children had experienced no changes in the last 12 months;
- for those who had experienced a change, 60.9% felt the help they received was very good or good; 23% felt the help they received was OK;
- 1 in 4 young people (aged 15 or over) were unhappy or very unhappy with the levels of support they received for planning their future; they had the basic practical skills to become independent such as cleaning, cooking, ironing, washing clothes etc. but would like more help preparing for work and further education;

- young people said they would like help with: budgeting their money (44%); writing a CV (54%); preparing for interviews (47%); finding information about a job (53%); applying for higher education (46%); choosing subjects for higher education (44%);
- if young people had a problem with their social workers or their carers they would talk to: their carers (64.3%); their social workers (46.9%); their school (40.3%);
- overall 79% were very happy or happy with the way Nottingham City Council took care of them;

The following issues were raised, comments made and responses given at the meeting:

- the “red” rating for advocacy was a known 'red' indicator which was being addressed to have an understanding of who this applied to i.e. internal/external providers;
- further investigation using unique identifying numbers on returned questionnaires would take place for those who were unhappy or very unhappy;
- commentary was only sought when children were unhappy, it would be useful to ask for positive commentary on the areas in which children were happy;
- the positive feedback on having a healthy lifestyle reflected well on carers;
- activities that children took part in read like normal childhoods and the free time activities reflected well on the support from staff;
- consistency of support and time was a common theme and when asked if there was one single theme to focus on, the Children In Care Council representatives said that consistency of social workers was a very important issue and of ways in which changes in social workers could be reduced, should be considered;
- in addition to learning basic skills it was felt that managing social relationships was an important skill towards achieving successful independent adulthood;
- consideration should be given to enable a representative of the Children In Care Council to attend the Corporate Parenting Board, but this may mean a change in future meeting times, as meetings were typically held during school hours;
- information regarding the Advocacy Service had been sent to both young people in care and their carers for them to highlight with them;
- separate safeguarding issues had been identified from the survey and there was concern at some of the views expressed regarding social workers. These would all be followed-up.

The Chair asked that if the Children In Care Council representatives wished to raise any issues for the Corporate Parenting Board to consider, they speak to John Rea who would ensure that an item was listed on the agenda.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the results of the Children in Care and Care Leavers 'Have Your Say' survey, as identified in the presentation, be noted;
- (2) that one of the main issues raised in the survey of the importance of consistency of Social Workers, be noted;
- (3) that the hard work and contribution of the Children In Care Council be acknowledged and thanks of the Board be recorded;
- (4) that the original response information of children in care be made available to Board members.

42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the proposed date of the next meeting of Monday 18 June 2012, at 2:30pm in Loxley House, be noted.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – PERFORMANCE REPORT

MAY 2012

CONTEXT

The purpose of this additional report is to provide the Board with the most up to date performance overview performance information in relation to Children in Care and to highlight results as of April 2012.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The tables below show performance against key monthly and quarterly Children in Care measures. Performance for April 2012 is shown along with the previous year's targets and year end provisional out-turn. The provisional out-turn figures will be validated and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) at the end of June 2012. Over the summer, we are expecting finalisation of the Munro recommended performance framework and with this, new outcome performance measures will be developed.

Performance against key monthly measures is listed below:

NI/Local Code	Short Name	Responsible Officer	Stat Neigh (10/11)	Outturn 10/11	Target (10/11)	Jan -12	Feb - 12	Provisional Mar - 12	Provisional Q4	Apr – 12
CSS101(a)	Number of Children in Care	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	737	519	480	532	538	541		545
CSS101(b)	Rate per 10,000 of Children in Care	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	101	92.8	85.8	95.2	96.2	96.8		97.5
CSS114	Number of Admissions to Care	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	Internal measure	256	-	24	24	13	61	23
CSS115	Number of Discharges from Looked After	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	Internal measure	251	-	24	23	12	55	19
CSS147	Representation BME children CiC to BME population	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	Internal measure	10.20%	-	9.5%	9.4%	9.6%		10.1%

The majority of data in the report is obtained from CareFirst. CareFirst is a live database, as such the information is subject to change and fluctuations are not uncommon, this is due to records being amended, added or removed. As a consequence, the data presented in this report only represents a snapshot of the performance picture for the month that the report was run. Previous monthly performance figures are not re-calculated, therefore the monthly figures may not always equal the year-to-date totals.

NI/Local Code	Short Name	Responsible Officer	Stat Neigh (10/11)	Outturn 10/11	Target (10/11)	Jan -12	Feb - 12	Provisional		Apr - 12
								Mar - 12	Q4	
NI63	Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of placement	Joy Chambers	65.40%	62.30%	67.00%	74.1%	72.9%	72.5%		73.6%
NI66	Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales	Dome Collinson	86.00%	85.00%	90.00%	96.9%	96.3%	96.4%		97.8%
PAF C63	Participation in Reviews	Dome Collinson	Not published	71.10%	85.00%	75.1%	83.8%	85.9%		98.6%
CSS158	% of Children in Care for 3 months or more with an up-to-date health assessment	Helen Blackman	Internal measure	84.00%	80.00%	77.0%	75.2%	77.6%		78.5%
CSS159	% of Children in Care after for 3 months or more with an up-to-date dental check	Helen Blackman	Internal measure	87.00%	80.00%	79.0%	85.1%	82.7%		82.4%
CSS160	% of Children in Care after for 3 months or more with an up-to-date SDQ	Helen Blackman	Internal measure	54.80%	100.00%	63.7%	75.9%	90.0%		87.5%
CSS153	% CIC with a completed PEP	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	Internal measure	91.00%	100.00%	95.0%	97.0%	98.0%		96.0%
CSS151	% CIC (aged 16 ½ and above) who have had a Pathway Plans (DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEASURE)	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	Internal measure	Not available	100.00%	-	84.7%	-		96.5%
CSS155	% CIC allocated to a named social worker (New)	Helen Blackman	Internal measure	99.6%	-	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%

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Performance against key quarterly measures is listed below:

NI/Local Code	Short Name	Responsible Officer	Stat Neigh (10/11)	Outturn 10/11	Target (10/11)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 Provisional
PAF C23	Adoptions of CIC (including SGO's)	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	13.0%	10.4%	13.0%	1.1%	2.7%	5.4%	9.5%
NI61	Timeliness of placements of Children in Care for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	68.5%	93.3%	75.0%	33.3%	62.5%	45.0%	62.1%
NI62	Stability of placements of Children in Care: number of moves (based on rolling 12 months)	Joy Chambers	11.2%	10.0%	12.0%	9.2%	9.8%	11.7%	11.1%
NI147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	88.8%	82.0%	100.0%	81.8%	78.3%	74.3%	80.4%
NI148	Care leavers in employment, education or training	Paulette Thompson-Omenka	58.0%	54.1%	95.0%	63.6%	65.2%	62.9%	60.7%

Whilst performance in many areas has improved, significant focus is being placed on areas where performance is weaker. Robust action plans, monitored by senior management, are being implemented to drive performance improvements.

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7

Corporate Parenting Board – 18 June 2012

Title of paper:	RISE Programme – Business in the Community	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Heidi Watson (Regional Director) Business in the Community	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Jamie Shrivastava RISE manager Business In the Community 3 rd floor 30-34 Hounds Gate Nottingham NG1 7AB	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Lynn Owen (National Operations Manager) Heidi Watson (Regional Director) Dave Richards (Employability Manager)	

Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:

World Class Nottingham	✓
Work in Nottingham	✓
Safer Nottingham	
Neighbourhood Nottingham	
Family Nottingham	✓
Healthy Nottingham	
Leading Nottingham	

Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):

The RISE programme is a partnership and jointly funded programme between Nottingham City Council and Business in the Community (BTC). We continue to develop and deliver solutions that narrow the gap between care leavers and their peers by raising their aspirations, offering high quality work experience and creating long lasting employment opportunities. Many of those leaving the care system will not succeed in building successful working lives without the proactive intervention of business, alongside the voluntary sector, to build their motivation, confidence and experience of the world of work.

The RISE Programme in Nottingham will be entering its third year.

Business has a vital role to play to engage, support and enable young care leavers to achieve their goals.

Being business led, BITC can change the lives of care leavers forever. With leadership and support from business we have the power and influence to collectively make a lasting difference for young people leaving care.

BITC's RISE programme works with both local and national businesses in Nottingham. Together we offer a wide variety of opportunities for young care leavers in the area. By inviting care leavers into various businesses to see what the world of work is all about, offering work placements that give young people the chance to build their knowledge of the workplace, develop new skills, gain valuable work experience; through to supporting the young person with a role model from business who acts as a job coach and work mentor. We are seeing some fantastic life changing results happening for care leavers that are supported by RISE, who often start off with multiple barriers to work.

http://www.bitc.org.uk/community/employability/care_leavers/index.html

Recommendation(s):

1	More emphasis to be placed on incentivising young people under the care of the local authority to engage in employability/social activities.
2	Improve co-ordination/communication between RISE and allocated workers
3	Improve the promotion of BITC's RISE programme dates and cut off times across Childrens' Services in general and especially to young people in foster provision. (Both internally and externally)
4	Employment opportunities including apprenticeships available within the local authority to be shared with RISE manager.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 More emphasis to be placed on incentivising young people under the care of the local authority to engage in employability activities.

The local authority has access to services that appeal to young people in care. Gym membership, travel cards etc could be used a catalyst for young people to progress in other areas of their life such as employability and social development.

Young people in care are used to receiving something in return for positive actions/engagement. This is not a true reflection of society but many young care leavers simply do not understand this or have the resilience to cope. Therefore any incentive should be realistic in terms of measure.

1.2 Improve co-ordination/communication between RISE and allocated workers

In terms of behaviours and issues that are relevant to young people's participation to group work, the more information we receive, the more we can effectively tailor the work we do with the young people to address their needs and barriers to employment. Shared communication between RISE and other workers as part of the Team Around the Young People approach will ensure its success.

1.3 Improve the promotion of BITC's RISE programme dates and cut off times across Childrens' Services in general and especially to young people in foster provision. (Both internally and externally)

After successfully setting up BITC's employability care network (consisting of representatives from all relevant care providers both internal and private) the promotion of the program and events require further embedding. RISE works with NCC's 15 plus team to ensure the message is translated to young people.

1.4 Employment opportunities including apprenticeships available within the local authority to be shared with RISE manager.

Our aim is to equip as many care leavers as possible so they can make the most of any opportunity, as and when one appears. There is some further work to ensure that RISE knows of all opportunities for employability. By doing this the net of opportunity is cast wider and as a result will increase positive outcomes across the leaving care population.

BACKGROUND

2.1 Business in the Community stands for Responsible Business

We are a business-led charity focused on promoting responsible business practice. We ask our members to work together to transform communities by tackling issues where business can make a real difference. We offer our members practical support to help them to integrate responsible business practice wherever they operate.

Care Leavers face some of the worst outcomes in life. There are approximately 83,000 children looked after by local authorities across the UK. 53% of care leavers leave care with no qualifications with only 7% of care leavers going onto University.

Many young people leaving the care system will not succeed in building successful working lives without the proactive intervention from business to build their motivation, confidence and experience.

We are working with businesses to be the pioneers that really make the difference; starting the campaign that enables care leavers to build successful working lives.

2.2 Ready for Work (the blueprint)

Piloted in Nottingham since August 2010, Routes into sustainable employment (RISE) took its roots from Business In the community's leading employability programme for people at risk of homelessness - Ready for Work. Ready for work currently runs across 20 cities both in the UK and Ireland.

The following statistics are taken from Ready for Work 2001- 2011:

- 6500 clients started the programme
- 2459 clients successfully gained employment
- 75% sustained employment for more than 3 months
- 57% sustained employment for more than 6 months
- 32% sustained employment for more than a year

Based on this evidence Ready for Work is the most successful employability programme in the UK for people at risk of homelessness.

The vision was to adapt this existing model, or alternatively develop a new model that would address the needs of care leavers.

Many Ready for Work clients have been in care, although by the time they come onto Ready for Work they are already a number of years down the line, which subsequently increases the risk of multiple barriers in to employment.

One thing we are certain of is that by reaching care leavers at the point of leaving care, supporting them into a structured and sustainable lifestyle. We can support them to become more employable, giving them access to experience the world of work in ways which would be unattainable for them for them without our business connections.

2.3 Routes into sustainable employment (RISE)

*"If you're thinking about coming on the RISE programme but aren't sure, do it!" Care Leaver
We need to take action now to help as many of this vulnerable group as possible:*

- current care population = 83,000 (UK and Ireland)
- currently in foster care provision = 73%
- young people leaving care each year = 6,000
- care leavers with no qualifications = 53%
- care leavers in higher education=7%
- 27% of the current prison population were previously in care

The challenge from the start was to engage Nottingham City Care leavers and businesses. It made no real difference as to what type of opportunity was on offer if young people failed to recognise or place any value on them. Businesses also had a part to play in looking at their recruitment processes and assess if the opportunities and processes were out of reach to many care leavers.

The objective was to bring both local and national businesses together to gain support for a new programme that required not only a deeper sense of understanding for these disadvantaged, vulnerable young people but also a completely new approach by way of engaging and achieving the best outcomes possible. My job was to educate and inform businesses of this hidden reality; a growing concern, our future work force.

It's true that the usual route into employment requires certain indicators whether it's qualifications or previous experience; however talking to businesses, we established that qualifications and experience did not necessarily guarantee that the best candidate got the job. Enthusiasm, commitment and a willingness to learn are just as, if not more important.

RISE is based on this principle.

We have been successful in the implementation of work experience placements both within the local authority and a number of local and national businesses.

- 33 on Behind the Scenes events
- 36 onto RISE
- 29 completed RISE training day 1 and 2
- 22 started work placements
- 13 completed work placements
- 2 are still currently on work placements
- 7 gained employment
- 3 went onto volunteering
- 7 went onto further education

(Data taken from the pilot phase- Nottingham City)

Business in the Community's RISE Programme helps care leavers to gain and sustain employment and enjoy successful lives. Whether they want to find out more about the world of work or are looking to improve their chances of gaining and sustaining employment, RISE offers care leavers:

Behind the scenes events to inspire the care leavers to start on their journey towards sustainable employment, further training or education.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

RISE is now moving to a phase where we are planning to integrate some of the young people who have been assessed as suitable into our Ready for Work programme which will give enhanced support to help care leavers access sustainable employment.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

The RISE programme is jointly funded between NCC and BITC. This has been the case since 2010. Discussions will begin regarding the re-commissioning for a year three programme. The cost per young person to date of being part of the programme is £1667: less than the cost of 30 weeks Job Seekers Allowance.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

Risk management has been closely monitored by BITC and Nottingham City Council Childrens' Services being mindful of safeguarding, data protection and confidentiality.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

6.1 As a partnership between 2 organisations both parties have a duty to ensure that equality of access to all young people is fair and equitable. The programme is run in line with all equalities duties.

Business in the Community values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation. We believe that diverse teams are more creative and dynamic and more successful. Embracing diversity makes Business in the Community a better business. We aim to be a true reflection of the communities in which we operate both in terms of the services we provide and the people we employ.

We respect all individuals and are opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, disability, religion and belief, age, work pattern, family status and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

6.3 Equal Opportunities Policy

BITC wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and service delivery. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, disability, religion and belief, age, work pattern or family status.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

Ready For Work (BAOH Leaflet)

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Data on children in and leaving care covering the last calendar year 2010/11 Has just been released (28 September 2011). This is an overview of the figures relating to young people's transition from care. (NCAS)

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001026/index.shtml>

8.2 DfE: Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) - year ending 31 March 2010 (This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides information about looked after children in England for the year ending 31 March 2010. The figures are based on data from the SSDA903 return collected from all local authorities)

81

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT

June 2012

Title of paper:	Attainment of Children in Care in 2011	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Gill Ellis, Director Ian Curryer, Corporate Director	Wards affected: ALL
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lorna Beedham, Adviser for the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups 	
Other officers who have provided input:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		
Neighbourhood Nottingham		
Family Nottingham		✓
Healthy Nottingham		✓
Serving Nottingham Better		
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<p>This report explains the recent trends in education attainment of children in care by analysis of their performance at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. It provides a commentary on the context for these results and the barriers to achievement children in care face. Finally, it summarises the interventions now underway to improve attainment.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	<p>It is recommended that the Board note and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recent trends and current levels of educational attainment for Nottingham City's children in care; 	
2	<p>The proposed interventions to improve attainment and secure a narrowing of the gap between CiC performance and that of other pupils in City schools.</p>	

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Absolute attainment outcomes of Nottingham City's children in care (CiC) are low compared to non-CiC City pupils. This is replicated nationally and in part will reflect the troubled lives many of these children lead. Higher special education needs (school action plus and statemented) are over-represented in CiC cohorts, especially at Key Stage 4. This makes attainment of benchmark educational standards particularly challenging.

- 1.2 This report will now consider the detail of current attainment and trends at Key Stages 2 and 4. It should be remembered when considering the data that numbers in the CiC cohort groups are very low and the individual performance of one child (or the removal of several children from a cohort group) can have a disproportionate effect on percentages; it is prudent, wherever possible, to look at numbers **and** percentages.
- 1.3 **a. Context**
Achievement levels are low, but it is worth reflecting on the make up of these cohorts whilst considering effective actions to increase the rate of improvement.
- 1.4 The Virtual School has a responsibility to monitor the achievement of all school age children in care (over 300 pupils) and not just those who are included in DfE statistics at the end of Key Stages. The Virtual School had only been in place for one year when the above cohorts sat their assessments. Since then it has developed practices aimed at raising attainment for individuals and groups (see Section 2 – effective intervention)
- 1.5 Tracking data indicates that the majority of CiC made at least satisfactory progress across their education. Many of those who performed below national expectations at Key Stage 4 had performed below national expectations at previous Key Stages. A higher proportion of CiC have special needs than the total school population, some requiring specialist provision. These pupils make good progress but perform significantly below nationally expected outcomes. At Key Stage 2, 14% (2 pupils) had statements of special needs and 42.8% (6 pupils) were at school action plus or higher on the special educational needs register. The majority of their special needs related to behaviour and emotional and social difficulties. In Year 11, 7 young people (14.5%) had statements of special needs and over 50% were at school action plus or higher.
- 1.6 Three quarters of the Year 11 children entered care at secondary school with two thirds (65.9%) from Year 9 upwards which is almost twice the percentage of 2010 (38%). For many of them the challenges associated with being placed in care had to be dealt with at the same time as starting or undertaking their GCSE studies.
- 1.7 The trauma involved with coming into care cannot be underestimated. For many young people the reasons for coming into care are disturbing and damaging. They have to adjust to a different home environment, may lose contact with family and friends and may also have to change schools.
- 1.8 Whilst the majority of children at Key Stage 2 had been in care for several years many experienced changes of school over their educational experience. 90% (9 pupils) attended 2 or more schools with 42.9% (6 pupils) attending 3 or more schools. These multiple transitions are disruptive and affect academic progression.
- 1.9 For those entering care in Key Stage 4 a move of school can have a significant impact upon their outcomes. It can result in missed assessments/modules/units and changes of examination boards which all impact on the individual's chance of success, let alone the social and emotional trauma experienced. Although statutory guidelines state that CiC should not move placement during Years 10 and 11 because of the impact on provision and the resulting outcomes this is not always possible. Although almost half the Year 11 had one placement over the 2 year period of Key Stage 4, over half did not with nearly 34% having 3 or more placements.
- 1.10 Some children in care in Key Stages 3 and 4 find a school environment increasingly challenging and require alternative provision to maintain their engagement. This often

results in qualifications that are not GCSE equivalent but can lead onto apprenticeships and college places that prove successful.

b. Looked after children at Key Stage 2 :

2011 attainment

- 1.11 Results were suppressed (not published) in 2011 for English and combined results. It is not unusual for figures to be suppressed with the low numbers of pupils involved but it does suggest that very few pupils achieved the age related Level 4.
- 1.12 The City's own data records that 14 children were looked after at the time of the 2011 key stage 2 assessment tests. Of these:
- 36% (5 pupils) achieved Level 4 or above in the English test
 - 50% (7 pupils) achieved Level 4 or above in the Mathematics test
 - 29% (4 pupils) achieved Level 4 in both subjects
- 1.13 2011 saw a drop in English results by 14% (2 pupils) on 2010. Prior to this the English results had annually been similar to those in mathematics. The drop in the English results in 2011 impacted on the combined percentage of children attaining level 4 in both subjects which has also seen a drop in 2011. However, in mathematics the 2011 results maintained the trend seen over the past 5 years and was 2% **above** national outcomes.
- 1.14 The 2011 English results were significantly below the average attainment over 5 years (-16.4%) but mathematics was +1.6% above the average attainment over 5 years.
- 1.15 Nationally 50% of children in care achieved a Level 4 in English, 48% in mathematics and 40% in both English and mathematics. The statistical neighbours group (SNG) performance closely mirrored the national picture; therefore in 2011 Nottingham City was outperformed by peers, especially in relation to Key Stage 2 English attainment.

c. Looked After Young People at Key Stage 4

2011 attainment

- 1.16 Results were suppressed in 2011. It is not unusual for figures to be suppressed with the low numbers of pupils involved but it does suggest that very few pupils achieved the expected GCSE or equivalent benchmarks.
- 1.17 Nottingham City had 28 children in care who were eligible to sit Key Stage 4 (GCSE) based on those who were aged 15 at the start of the academic year (31st August) and had been in care for 1 year at 31st March 2011.
- 7% (2 pupils) achieved level 2 (5+A*-C grades at GCSE) including English and Maths.
 - 7% (2 pupils) achieved level 2 (5+A*-C grades)
 - 25% (7 pupils) achieved level 1 (5+A*-G grades)
 - 42.9% (12 pupils) achieved at least one pass
- 1.18 The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 including English and mathematics in 2011

was an improvement on the percentage in 2010 (6.4%). The number and percentage gaining level 2 not including English and mathematics was lower than in 2010 (17%).

- 1.19 The results compared to the 5 year average in Level 2 5A*-C outcomes, although not as high as for CiC in England, is positive at +1.5%. The result compared to the 5 year average for at least 1 A*-G qualification is +4%. Because the requirement for Level 2 including English and mathematics has not been in place for 5 years there is no 5 year average but the results are in line with the 3 year average.
- 1.20 Nationally 31.2% of children in care achieved 5 or more GCSEs A*-C grades, 12.2% achieved 5 grades A*-C including English and mathematics and 13.4% achieved an A*-C in both English and mathematics. Of the SNG 2 other local authorities had suppressed figures but from the data available 37% of eligible CiC achieved at least 5 or more GCSEs at Grade A*-C.
- 1.21 Attendance and exclusion rates of Nottingham City CiC are favourable compared to national outcomes and its SNG authorities. The challenge is that absence for Year 10 and 11 CiC is higher than for other year groups, as are fixed term exclusion rates.

2.1 **Effective Intervention**

It is clear that a sustained effort will be needed to make a meaningful impact on the educational attainment of Nottingham's looked after children and young people. The following actions are directed at securing improvement, some have begun and others are planned for the academic year 2012-13.

- 2.2
- The installation of an IT system for recording PEP, PEA, attainment and attendance information is almost complete. This will allow better tracking and analysis of data and store in one place information on the educational experience of children in care.
- 2.3
- A scoping exercise is being undertaken to identify high quality tutoring provision for children in care in the City and surrounding area for those awaiting school places or requiring additional support to improve their attainment.
- 2.4
- In Spring 2012 additional 1:1 tuition was offered to Year 10 and 11 children in care. 46 pupils benefited from this provision and reports are expected in by the end of June indicating the programme's impact on outcomes for pupils. If the Virtual School budget allows, a similar provision will be made available to educational establishments in Autumn 2012 for Years 10/11 pupils and a similar provision in Spring 2013 for Years 5/6 pupils.
- 2.5
- PEA funding is available for 2012/13 and designated teachers and social workers are encouraged to complete PEA applications for those who are underachieving to ensure additional support is provided through either additional tuition or the purchase of ICT study equipment.
- 2.6
- Study packs were distributed to Yr10/11 pupils to assist with their revision for exams and a successful study skills session offered. A similar resource pack and study skills session will be provided in Spring 2013. A homework club is also being planned for Year 9-11 pupils from November 2012.
- 2.7
- Activities are provided to engage young people through sport and the creative

arts:

In Spring 2011 - 6 young people (yrs 9-11) achieved a nationally recognised Sports Leadership Award (4 at Level 1 and 2 at Level 2);

In Autumn 2012 Yr8/9 pupils and their foster families will be offered a creative arts project:

In August 2012 Yr4-6 pupils will be offered an Artsmark 5 day creative arts project.

2.8

- Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion rates have improved significantly. The focus is now the quality of the education section of the PEP to ensure it identifies the actions to be taken to improve literacy and numeracy skills of children in care.

2.9

- Closer working relationships have been developed between the virtual school and social care colleagues especially regarding the educational considerations required when arranging the placement of CiC.

2.10

- Welfare Call is commissioned to collect attendance and exclusion data on all CiC placed external to the Local Authority. In 2012/13 this has been extended to include CiC in City academies and schools that do not use the Local Authority's electronic transfer of attendance information system.

2.11

- A named officer in the Admissions team for CiC has sped up the admission process for the majority of children in care, including those placed in other local authorities.

2.12

- Letterbox Club was extended to include Year 7 pupils in 2011-12 which now provides mathematics materials as well as literacy resources for year 3, 5 and 7 children in care. This has been purchased for 2012-13.

2.13

- Over 2012-13 the Virtual Headteacher will liaise with her equivalents in the Local Authority's statistical neighbours to identify provision and contributory factors that have resulted in improved outcomes for their Children in Care.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 There are no further options to those detailed in the report

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

4.1 There are implications for the Virtual School budget, funded through DSG, regarding the payment of 1:1 tuition costs (£66000 if all Yr5, 6,10 and11 pupils accessed it) and other activities for children in care. Because the Virtual School is part of the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups Team, the budget is impacted upon by schools choosing to become academies and the budget is reduced accordingly.

4.2 As much of the work of the Virtual School is about enabling schools to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and supporting social workers with the identification of good quality educational provision for children in care the opportunities to sell services are limited. This means that the ethnic minority achievement team, also within the Vulnerable Groups Service, is required to raise enough income to provide the financial resources to maintain staffing levels and fund activities for the children. The EMAG

team has been reduced by 2 consultants in 2011 so the capacity available to sell services is reduced.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 As the Serving Vulnerable Groups' budget diminishes as schools become academies and if schools decide not to de-delegate its funding source there may be staffing implications in the future as the budget may not be able to sustain staffing and pupil activities.

6 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

6.1 None

7 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

7.1 Insight and Improvement Service Attainment Report 2011

9,

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT

Title of paper:	Commissioned Work in Fostering and Adoption – Support for Foster Carers and Adoptions	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Satinder Gautam, Director Childrens Childrens Safeguarding Ian Curryer, Corporate Director And Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Wards affected: ALL
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	Katie South – Service Manager Fostering and Adoption <u>Katie.south@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</u> Paulette Thompson-Omenka – Head of Service Children in Care <u>Paulette.thompson-omenka@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</u> 0115 915 8765023	
Other officers who have provided input:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara Dellar – Practice Manager Fostering & Adoption • Kwesi Williams – Project Officer CiC • Paul Wilkinson – Business Manager, CiC • Lynn Spencer (Adoption Manager – Social Work Choices) • Liz Hawthorne (Fostering Manager – Social Work Choices) • Sarah Furby – Fostering Network • Simon Stubbs – Social Work Choices 	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		✓
Safer Nottingham		
Neighbourhood Nottingham		
Family Nottingham		✓
Healthy Nottingham		✓
Serving Nottingham Better		
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<p>This report will provide an overview of the commissioned work between Nottingham City Council and two of its partners. The report will provide information regarding productivity, positive relationships and areas for development.</p> <p>Fostering Network Advice and Mediation Service provides independent, confidential advice and support to our foster carers.</p> <p>Social Work Choices is our commissioned partner who undertakes assessments on prospective foster carers and adopters in preparation for approval at the appropriate panel.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	To offer the ongoing support to our carers through the provision of the Advice and Mediation Service as statutorily required.	
3	To note the positive work undertake by commissioned partner Social Work Choices	
4	To produce an end of contract year performance report on the number of assessment and approvals undertaken by Social Work Choices with specific consideration given to timescales and quality.	

5	Commitment to support the Fostering and Adoption Service in managing our relationship with our commissioned partners to ensure our national and local strategic priorities are met.
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1 **BACKGROUND**

1.1 Fostering Network

Under standard 22.12 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (NMS) a Fostering Service is required to provide support and mediation in the event of an allegation against a foster carer that is independent of a Fostering Service. In order to meet this obligation, NCC commissioned the services of Fostering Network in April 2001.

NCC purchase household membership to foster carers to ensure they receive the information and advice they need. The package includes:

- Comprehensive legal protection insurance
- 24 hour helpline
- Access to information and advice services
- 6 free 'Signposts in Fostering' leaflets
- Subscription to 'Foster Care' magazine
- Regular information and newsletters
- Access to members only content at www.fostering.net

At the last Foster Carer Business Meeting in March 2012, Sarah Furby and Gill Cronin from Fostering Network gave a presentation on the services offered and recent updates. Feedback received from carers has been positive. In a consultation paper circulated to carers in June 2011, of the 31 responses, 64% felt their membership was of benefit in their role as foster carer. Only 13% felt it was of no benefit in their role (with 23% providing no response).

Social Work Choices

1.2

In August 2011, Social Work Choices (SWC) were contracted to undertake a pilot to assess potential foster carers and adopters on behalf of Nottingham City Council's Fostering and Adoption Service. This is a three year pilot. During year 2, NCC will evaluate the project in all aspects and specifically all areas of VFM with the beneficiaries and workers.

The Services to be supplied by SWC in accordance with the contract comprises the delivery of an adoption assessment service.

The assessment of each applicant to become an adoptive parent must be carried out by the Contractor pursuant to:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- Fostering National Minimum Standards and the associated Regulations
- The Adoptions with a Foreign Element Regulations 2005;
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005;
- The Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 with regard to the preparation of adoption reports for the purposes of section 94(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; and
- The Suitability of Adopters Regulations 2005.

For the purpose of the regulations, each adoption assessor will be supervised by a qualified social worker who has at least 5 years post-qualifying experience in child care

social work, including direct experience of adoption work, together with relevant management experience.

The same process in NCC is in place for all fostering assessments.

A comprehensive pricing structure was agreed within the contract. Early indications show that the net price to NCC of fostering and adoptions assessments is considerably less than NCC were paying previously.

Regular quarterly monitoring meetings are held with SWC to ensure quality of service and adherence to the contract. These meetings enable us to address specific issues relating to the service. These meetings have proved invaluable in managing referrals, building relationships, reaching agreements, and monitoring performance and value for money.

Since commencement of the contract NCC are now at the stage where assessments have been completed and brought to the appropriate panels for approval. Initial feedback from adoption panels has been positive. Panel chairs and members have commented on the high quality of the assessments coming through.

Initial issues relating to IT accessibility and secure emails have been resolved.

Further discussions are planned to consider the introduction of concurrent planning and dual approval, the development of a leaflet to distribute to prospective foster carers and adopters, and appropriate training and development support.

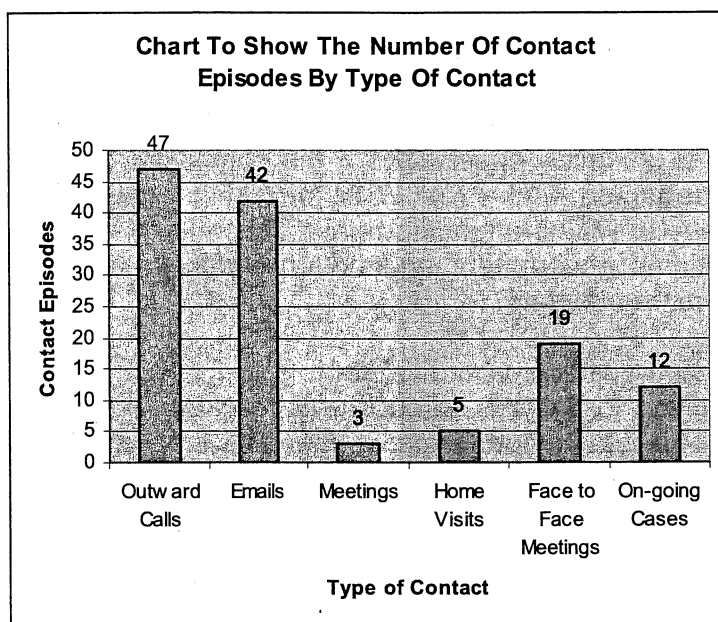
2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 Fostering Network

Fostering Network produce an Annual Performance Report for Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council with an obligation to ensure it is received by the end of June. In addition to the Annual Performance Report, a quarterly monitoring report is produced and submitted by. The quarterly report details the type and amount of contact between the Advice and Mediation Service and foster carers and current matters of interest within the fostering community. Figures in the most recent report, which covers activity between December 2011 and February 2012, show there were 128 contact episodes. These range from email correspondence to face-to-face meetings with carers. (See Chart 1)

Information provided in both the annual performance and quarterly monitoring reports, as well as evidence obtained through consultation with foster carers, are used to direct our decisions regarding re-commissioning.

Positive work and relationships built over an 11 year period have enabled NCC and its foster carers to utilise the resources and expertise offered by the Fostering Network. Feedback received indicates that they offer flexibility and support to our carers when it is most required.



2.2 Social Work Choices

NCC has agreed for an end of year report to be submitted at the end of September 2012. The report will incorporate statistical data relating to referrals, outcomes and approvals. It will also include timescales and explanations for anomalies i.e. where difficulties have been encountered and financial breakdown of cost incurred. This information will inform targets for the following year and will help establish whether the arrangement continues to offer value for money.

As part of CiC Services 'Reshaping Prevention and Safeguarding Services for Children Transformation Programme', the Fostering and Adoption Service aims to demonstrate the potential to make savings through a timely adoption process.

The outcomes from the Pilot with SWC will be made available to the Board in late 2012.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Fostering Network

Availability of other service providers has been considered. With regard to independent Advice and Mediation, they are only two providers nationally. Throughout the coming year it is proposed that further assessment of both providers will be undertaken. Foster Carers and young people in foster care will form part of the process for deciding on the organisation that will provide the service for a following 3 year period.

3.2 Social Work Choices

The current staffing infrastructure in Fostering & Adoption does not support in-house assessments and to change direction now would significantly delay approval of new foster carers and adopters. The pilot is for 3 years and will be extensively evaluated.

A full tendering process would be needed to consider other providers in this field beyond the pilot.

Current statistical evidence is showing that during the period April – Nov 2011 when Nottingham City Fostering & Adoption Service undertook the assessments, 13 applicants were taken to adoption panel. Since the commissioning of Social Work Choices, during the same period April – Nov 2012 (including those already booked to attend) 21 applicants have or will be attending panel. This reflects an increase of 53% which supports the national government agenda on reducing adoption timescales through the provision of more adopters.

Mainstream foster carer approvals remain consistent.

Part of the imperative given to SWC is to cut the timescales for both fostering and adoption assessments. This is a key performance measure that will be fed back to the Board.

4 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)**

4.1 Fostering Network

The independent advice and mediation service is a statutory requirement under Fostering National Minimum Standards. Currently the contract is provided through Fostering Network which from statistical evidence and feedback is delivering the quality and level required. Foster Talk is another provider offering this service and further work will take place over the coming year to ensure the right provider is contracted to the Fostering & Adoption Service and the appropriate services are deployed with Value For Money (VFM) being achieved. This will be completed through consultation and a thorough VFM exercise

4.2 Social Work Choices

SWC are providing the services required within the financial framework identified and agreed within the contract as a pilot. Where issues have occurred, these have been addressed on an individual needs basis and will be reconsidered at the point of contract renewal to ensure the service provider continues to offer VFM.

5 **RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)**

5.1 The potential risks presented by the services currently contracted to Nottingham City Council include the following:

- Poor quality assessments
- Under performance
- Financial overspend

- Failure to meet Fostering National Minimum Standards
- Failure to meet Adoption Regulations

These risks have been minimised through regular quarterly monitoring and review, the provision of statistical performance reports and consultation and feedback from the service users. Financial monitoring is undertaken to ensure budgets and targets are met.

6 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

- 6.1 Quarterly Fostering Network monitoring statistics – Dec 2011 – Feb 2012
- 6.2 Nottingham City Council and Social Work Choices contract
[Contract Reference: 260-ADOPT-SD-08-2011]
- 6.3 Adoption data from SCW Ltd as at 23.05.12 (Adoption quarterly review of contract 24.4.12)
- 6.4 SWC Fostering Contract and quarterly minutes 2011-2012

7 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 7.1 Fostering Network – Advice & Mediation Service publication
- 7.2 Fostering National Minimum Standards
- 7.3 The Nottingham Plan to 2020
- 7.4 Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- 7.5 The Adoptions with a Foreign Element Regulations 2005;
- 7.6 The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005;
- 7.7 The Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 with regard to the preparation of adoption reports for the purposes of section 94(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; and
- 7.8 The Suitability of Adopters Regulations 2005.

