

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Amended by the Board at its meeting on 17 September 2012

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES

of meeting held on **18 JUNE 2012** at

Loxley House from 2.34 pm to 4.01 pm

- ✓ Councillor Mellen (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Klein (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Campbell
- ✓ Councillor Culley (from minute 3-10 inclusive)
- ✓ Councillor Dewinton
- ✓ Councillor Jenkins
- Councillor McCulloch
- ✓ Councillor Morley
- ✓ Councillor Morris

✓ indicates present at meeting

Also in attendance

- Mr J Shrivastava)
- Mr L Street) Business in the Community
- Miss H Watson)

- Ms S Thompson - County Health Partnerships Children in Care Service

- Mr K Banfield)
- Mrs L Beedham)
- Ms E Darragh)
- Miss R Dyson) Children and Families (Nottingham City Council)
- Mr S Gautam)
- Miss K South)

- Mrs A Wilson - Communities (Nottingham City Council)

- Mrs E Rogers)
- Mrs Z West) Resources (Nottingham City Council)

- Ms G Moy - Nottingham City Homes

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Mellen be appointed Chair for the municipal year 2012/13.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Klein be appointed Vice-Chair.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Campbell, Phyllis Brackenbury (Nottingham CityCare Partnership), Paulette Thompson-Omenka (Nottingham City Council) and Dave Richards (Business in the Community).

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made at this point, but prior to consideration of the item on Commissioned Work in Fostering and Adoption – Support for Foster Carers and Adoptions, Councillor Mellen declared an interest which is recorded in minute 9.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 19 March 2012, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

6 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Quality and Commissioning, copies of which had been circulated. This was complemented by an updated performance report which included statistics for May 2012, which was circulated at the meeting and submitted to the online agenda on the City Council's website following the meeting.

Miss Darragh from the Quality and Commissioning Team at Nottingham City Council presented the report and provided the following information on performance for May 2012:

- figures for March 2012 and Quarter 4 were provisional, and would not be finalised until they were submitted to the Department for Education (DfE), which was happening as the meeting took place;
- the number of Children in Care (CIC) was 545, which was higher than the target and last year's outturn figure;
- when the number of CIC was converted to a rate of children in care per 10,000 children for comparison to other local authorities, Nottingham City Council's rate was 97.5, whilst their average statistical neighbour's rate was 101;
- the number of discharges from care was 33, which was higher than the number of admissions to care at 21. This was bucking recent trends for Nottingham;
- the stability of placements of CIC was 73.7%, which was better than that of Nottingham City Council's statistical neighbours, and an improvement on last year's figures of 62.3%;
- the percentage of CIC cases which were reviewed within required timescales was 98%, which was an increase on previous months;
- the percentage participation in reviews was 92.9%, which had been a marked improvement on recent months due to significant work in this area;

- the percentage of CIC for 3 months or more who had an up-to-date health assessment was 79.5%, a continued improvement on recent months and approaching the target of 80%;
- the percentage of CIC for 3 months or more who had an up-to-date Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Assessment to evaluate their mental and emotional wellbeing was 85.4%. This measure was increasing due to an improved process;
- the percentage of CIC who had a completed Personal Education Plan (PEP) was 95%;
- the percentage of CIC aged 16¼ and above who had a completed Pathway Plan was 96.5%. This figure was for April 2012 as this measure was reported bi-monthly;
- the percentage of CIC with a named social worker was 100%;
- adoption of CIC was 9.5%, which equated to 28 adoptions and 14 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs);
- the timeliness of placements of CIC for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption was 62.1%;
- the stability of placements of CIC based on number of moves in a rolling 12 months was 11.1%. This was in line with statistical neighbours and slightly higher than the 2010/11 outturn percentage;
- the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation was 80.4%, but the definition of what constituted suitable accommodation was an ongoing issue;
- the percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training was 60.7%. The work done by RISE (Routes Into Sustainable Employment) to improve this measure would be discussed later in the meeting.

As a result of questions and discussion with the Board, the following additional information was provided:

- the number of children adopted and the timeliness measures were concerning as they were both below target. An adoption scorecard had been released to compare local authorities, and Nottingham City Council was mid-table for the last three years. The past year had not seen good results for timeliness, but work was being done in this area in order to improve this performance measure;
- it was difficult identifying new adopters. Two dedicated home finders had recently been appointed to help with this challenge;
- the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire asked foster carers to assess the mental state of children entering care, which was challenging to measure;
- an improvement had been seen in the take up of health assessments which was encouraging;
- it was felt that there were many positives in the performance report;

- a large number of CIC were known to have mental health problems. It was felt that it would be useful to have figures on the number of children referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the length of the referral.
- it was felt that there was little feedback received by carers after the SDQs, and that it was important that it should not become a “tick box” exercise;
- SDQ results should inform the health assessments, and work was being done to ensure this would happen in future;
- foster carers were fully aware of options available for children with dentist phobias;
- care leavers aged 16 or 17 tended to bring down the performance figures for health and dental checks. Appointments were made for care leavers but it was difficult to make them attend;
- the cut-off age for free dental care for CIC at salaried dentists used to be 16 but was recently increased to 18;
- medical and dental appointments for children in residential care were made very quickly, but failure by children to keep to appointment times was an issue;
- the Board felt that there were significant improvements to the performance figures and that congratulations were due to all colleagues involved;
- it was felt that it may be useful to report on performance less frequently as the same issues were discussed at each meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the information provided in the report be noted;**
- (2) that, regarding the number of children referred to CAMHS, Elise Darragh and Satinder Gautam arrange for more detailed information to be provided to the Board at a future meeting;**
- (3) that the positive work of the Children in Care Team be acknowledged.**

7 RISE PROGRAMME – BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY (BiTC)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Operations BiTC, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Mr Shrivastava from BiTC presented the report and provided the following information:

- BiTC was started by the Prince of Wales in 1982 in response to the Toxteth Riots in Liverpool;
- BiTC advised businesses on how to improve the impact they had on their local community by using volunteering programmes, reducing their carbon footprint, and using employment and employability events for local youths;

- nationally there were 2.68 million unemployed people in the UK, and youth unemployment was at 1.4 million;
- nationally there were 83,000 CIC and 6,000 care leavers each year, with 225 care leavers each year in Nottingham;
- 53% of care leavers had no significant qualifications and only 7% went on to higher education;
- 27% of the prison population were former CIC and it had never been harder for former CIC to gain and maintain employment;
- the RISE programme was based on Ready For Work, a scheme which helped those at risk of homelessness;
- over the last 10 years, Ready For Work had 6,000 clients. 2,459 of these were successfully employed. Of those, 75% were still in employment after three months, 67% were still in employment after six months and 32% were still in employment after one year;
- 14 people per city were helped into work each year by the Ready For Work programme;
- the RISE model was adapted for young people in the care system and a few changes to the model were made;
- a large number of young people in care lacked motivation or an awareness of work ethic;
- the programme had seven steps, including the following:
 - CIC were referred to Jamie Shrivastava;
 - an informal interview was conducted to identify CIC interests;
 - CIC were matched to relevant work experience placements, preferably with a more hands-on approach;
 - CIC completed two days training on employability and presentation;
 - CIC completed a two week relevant work placement;
 - further support, including six months job coaching, was delivered from a volunteer business mentor;
- the RISE programme was a two year pilot scheme which was soon coming to an end;
- over 60 referrals had been received, and 36 people had started the programme. 29 had completed training days, 22 had started placements, and 13 had completed placements. Two were still on placement;

- seven young people who had started the programme had now gained employment, three were volunteering, and seven had gone on to further education;
- local businesses were very understanding of the issues facing CIC and very supportive of the programme. Nottingham City Homes (NCH) and John Lewis had accepted 14 placements from the RISE programme between them in the last two years;
- awareness of the job market, along with social activities and social issues were important parts of the RISE programme.

Mr Leighton Street, who had benefited from the RISE programme, shared his experience with the Board:

- Leighton previously struggled with a lack of motivation, poor time keeping and being easily distracted. He was headed down the wrong path but was unsure how to turn his life around and achieve more;
- Leighton learned respect for himself and others, alongside his work skills and on-the-job training;
- during his two week work placement with NCH he felt constructive and part of a team;
- after his work placement, Leighton worked on a building site for a short while, then was offered an apprenticeship at NCH;
- his manager and colleagues at NCH had been very supportive, and Leighton had also met the Prince of Wales.

Arising from questions and comments from the Board, the following additional information was provided by Mr Shrivastava:

- direct referrals were not being taken from NG1 MyPlace, but this could potentially be a valuable partnership in future;
- each provider of services to CIC nominated one person to act as the allocated worker, who represented their organisation at RISE meetings to discuss upcoming opportunities;
- field trips were also organised for CIC aged 15 or older to local businesses;
- Nottingham City Council's role as a corporate parent was very important in the lives of young people, and activities by RISE and apprenticeships for CIC made a huge impact ;
- there was a degree of interaction with the Prince's Trust as the Prince of Wales was the patron of RISE, but referrals would not be received from the Prince's Trust as they ran separate residential courses;

- when a young person dropped out of the programme, that did not end their involvement, and they could rejoin the programme at a later date when they were ready.

RESOLVED

- (1) that more emphasis be placed on incentivising young people under the care of the Local Authority to engage in employability and social activities;**
- (2) that coordination and communication between RISE and allocated workers be improved and sustained;**
- (3) that promotion of BiTC's RISE programme dates and cut-off times across Children's Services be improved, both internally and externally;**
- (4) that employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, available within the local community be shared with the RISE manager;**
- (5) that Mr Street be thanked for his contribution to the presentation.**

8 ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN IN CARE IN 2011

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Schools and Learning, copies of which had been circulated.

Mrs Beedham from the Inclusive Learning Team at Nottingham City Council presented the report and provided the following information:

- each year group mentioned on the report had a small number of CIC, so a small change in the number of children achieving standards could have made a very large difference to the percentages;
- the emotional trauma of coming into care could be very disruptive to a child's education;
- three quarters of children who entered care did so in their senior school years;
- two thirds of children who entered care did so in year 9 or above. GCSEs were taken in year 10, and entering care could result in a school move;
- by the end of Key Stage 2, of 14 CIC in year 6, nine had attended two different schools, and six had attended three or more schools;
- a significant number of CIC in year 6 had Special Educational Needs (SENs) which required additional support;
- half of the CIC in year 11 had SENs;
- there were some positive stories surrounding CIC's educational attainment and a CIC who was a student at South Notts College had been recognised as Student of the Year;

- in year 6, Mathematics levels were maintained, but English results had dipped;
- reading was judged on comprehension as well as word and letter recognition, which could be challenging;
- a “Big It Up” award was being introduced for primary CIC;
- at Key Stage 4, 7% of CIC had achieved level 2 (five or more A* to C grades at GCSE) including English and Mathematics. This was consistent with previous years;
- 7% of CIC had achieved level 2 excluding English and Mathematics, or 10% if the pupils with SENs were excluded from the equation. This was a slight dip on previous years;
- 25% of CIC achieved level 1 (five or more A* to G grades). This was a slight improvement on previous years;
- 42.9% of CIC achieved at least one pass. This was a slight improvement on previous years;
- nationally, 12.2% of CIC achieved five A* to C grades including English and Mathematics;
- attendance and exclusion rates of Nottingham CIC were favourable compared to national outcomes and statistical neighbour authorities;
- in Spring 2012, additional one-to-one tuition was offered to year 10 and 11 CIC. 46 pupils had benefited from this provision;
- further one-to-one tuition provision was planned for the Autumn, and in Spring 2013 the provision would also be extended to year 5 and 6 CIC;
- study skills sessions would also be provided in Spring 2013;
- a homework club would be introduced for CIC in years 9-11 from November 2012;
- in Spring 2011 six CIC achieved a recognised Sports Leadership Award, four at level 1 and two at level 2. This award would be offered again this year;
- collection of attendance and exclusion data for all CIC external to the Local Authority was carried out by Welfare Call and, in 2012, this provision was extended to include CIC in City academies and schools that did not use the Local Authority’s electronic transfer of attendance information sheet;
- 41 out of 47 year 12 CIC were on courses, apprenticeships, or training programmes such as RISE;
- though performance was similar to previous years, the aim was still to raise attainment levels;

Arising from questions and comments from the Board, the following additional information was provided:

- the figures represented the lowest achieving group, and improving educational attainment of CIC was always a challenge;
- a large percentage of the prison population was made up of former care leavers. Literacy levels in prison were low, which would not result in a good outcome;
- in year 10 and 11, 20% of the CIC were in secure institutions or prison. They received education whilst detained;
- the reinvestment of efficiency savings was considered to be a very positive thing;
- information on the RISE programme would be shared with Mrs Beedham's team so that CIC could continue to be supported past year 11;
- a field had been added to the Personal Education Plan (PEP) form which asked how the pupil premium had been used to support this child;
- funding was paid to schools on a termly basis to ensure the money went with the child and was not all spent at the start of the year;
- sessions had been arranged with residential homes and foster carers on study skills and homework help;
- a child's natural parent would want to do everything in their power to support their child's educational attainment so, as a corporate parent, it was felt it was important for the Council to do everything in its power to improve the situation and support individual CIC;
- it was suggested that the 3,000 business volunteers could potentially offer homework support to CIC. Miss Watson and Mr Gautam would discuss this possibility and link to foster carers if feasible;
- some members of the Board felt that the percentages were misleading due to the small numbers in each year, and that numbers of children may be useful. A request was made for the data to be presented in table form;
- the Council acted as corporate parent in cases of exclusions of CIC. An Achievement Consultant worked with excluded CIC and monitored individual cases on a daily basis. They ensured that CIC were not out of education, and that none slipped through the net;
- social workers conducted statutory visits to CIC in detention

RESOLVED

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted;**
- (2) that information on the RISE programme be shared with Mrs Beedham's team;**
- (3) that Mr Gautam and Miss Watson discuss the possibility of RISE Business Volunteers offering homework help to CIC**

9 COMMISSIONED WORK IN FOSTERING AND ADOPTION – SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CARERS AND ADOPTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Children’s Safeguarding, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Miss South from the Fostering and Adoption Team at Nottingham City Council presented the report and provided the following information:

- Fostering Network (FN) acted as an independent partner and mediator if allegations were made against foster carers;
- a number of allegations were made last year, and feedback from affected foster carers on the help and support provided by FN was positive;
- FN have been the sole providers of this service to the City Council for 11 years, with no alternative providers available;
- individual foster carers had FN membership, so the cost of the service was dependent on the number of foster carers;
- there was no competition for the services offered by FN;
- in August 2011, Social Work Choices (SWC) were contracted to undertake a three year pilot to assess potential foster carers and adopters on behalf of Nottingham City Council’s Fostering and Adoption Service;
- the number of assessments carried out by SWC was higher than the number carried out in-house during recent years;
- Nottingham City Council would not have been able to conduct as many assessments to as high a standard due to other work commitments;
- the work provided by SWC was generally felt to be very positive.

At this point Councillor Mellen declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as he was acquainted with an employee of Fostering Network. He left the room prior to discussion of the item by the Board. Councillor Klein took the Chair for the discussion of this agenda item.

As a result of further questions and comments from the Board, the following additional information was provided:

- the cost of services provided by FN depended on the number of foster carers, but varied between £8,000 and £10,000 per year, which was manageable within current budgets;
- quicker assessments provided by SWC meant that targets set by central government at the end of the year were on course to be met. This was better for potential adopters, better for children waiting to be adopted, and better for the City Council;

- it would not be possible to bring the assessments back in-house to similar timescales or quality as those provided by SWC;
- the Board requested that detailed performance reports on SWC be provided after the first 12 months of operation;

RESOLVED

- (1) that ongoing support to foster carers be offered through the provision of advice and mediation service as statutorily required;**
- (2) that the positive work undertaken by commissioned partner Social Work Choices be noted;**
- (3) that an end of contract year performance report on the number of assessments and approvals undertaken by Social Work Choices be provided, with specific consideration given to timescales and quality;**
- (4) that the Fostering and Adoption Service be supported in managing its ongoing relationship with commissioned partners to ensure national and local strategic priorities were met.**

Councillor Mellen returned to the room and resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED that meetings be held at 2:30pm on the following dates:

**17 September 2012
19 November 2012
21 January 2013
18 March 2013**