

**NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**MINUTES**

of meeting held on **21 JANUARY 2013** at

Loxley House from 2.30 pm to 3.45 pm

- ✓ Councillor Mellen (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Klein (Vice-Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Campbell
- Councillor Culley
- ✓ Councillor Dewinton
- ✓ Councillor Jenkins
- ✓ Councillor McCulloch
- ✓ Councillor Morley
- Councillor Morris

✓ indicates present at meeting

**Also in attendance**

- PC Sam Flint - Nottinghamshire Police
- Ms Gill Moy - Nottingham City Homes
- Ms Phyllis Brackenbury - Nottingham CityCare Partnership.

**Nottingham City Council**

- Ms Paulette Thompson- ) Children in Care ) Children and Families
- Omenka ) )
- Ms Kay Sutt - Children's Residential )
- Mrs Lorna Beedham - Inclusive Learning )
- Miss Elise Darragh - Quality & Commissioning )
- Ms Helen Blackman - Safeguarding )
- Miss Kelley Connolly - Schools & Learning )
- Mr Kevin Hatherley ) Youth Offending Team )
- Ms Glynis Storer ) )
  
- Mrs Evonne Rogers - Business Strategy & Support )
- Ms Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Democratic Services ) Resources
- Ms Lisa Black - Head of Revenues, Benefits )
- and Welfare Rights )

**29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Culley and Morris, Ms Sharon Thompson, Designated Nurse Children in Care, Miss Heidi Watson, Business in the Community, and Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer.

**30 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made.

### **31 MINUTES**

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

### **32 WELFARE REFORMS**

Ms Lisa Black, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Welfare Rights, was in attendance to deliver the presentation, copies of which had been circulated, informing the Board of the proposed measures to ensure that young people leaving care were adequately supported, in view of the major changes to be made under welfare reform.

Ms Black highlighted the following issues which may affect care leavers and/or foster carers:

- the introduction of Universal Credit (possibly in October 2013 for Nottingham City) meant that welfare entitlements were to be paid once a month directly to the individual, and they would be responsible for budgeting and ensuring that all of their bills were paid, including rent and Council Tax;
- the Social Fund was to be abolished but Nottingham City Council were planning to allocate £1.8 million for use as an Emergency Hardship Fund with strict criteria, and partnering with credit unions to support an Emergency Loan Scheme for those who did not meet the criteria for the Emergency Hardship Fund. It was expected that, on current information, approximately 60% of young people leaving care would need to access the Emergency Hardship Fund;
- for working age people in social housing, from 1 April 2013, there were to be changes to Housing Benefit, including reductions for under occupying their homes (i.e. a 'spare' bedroom tax) for which there were to be no exemptions. This was predicted to affect approximately 7,000 households in the City;
- the changes to Council Tax benefit would result in residents of a Council Tax band 'A' property paying approximately £1.79 of their income per week towards their bill;
- it was expected that 80% of universal credit applications would be made managed online.

The Board's questions and concerns were responded to as follows:

- up until the end of March 2013, there were to be welfare rights support sessions for young people leaving or preparing to leave care. However, it was noted that the Independent Living Preparation Plan for such young people needed to be quickly strengthened with a new emphasis on the budgeting skills required;
- in regard to the under occupation penalties for social housing, as there were to be no exemptions, Nottingham City Homes (NCH) had arranged a budget of £697,000 to provide discretionary housing payments which would temporarily balance the shortfall in financial support in very specific circumstances, such as preventing homelessness for the most vulnerable, while other, long term, sustainable solutions were sought;

- with the introduction of Universal Credit, thorough budgeting skills would be required. It was anticipated that only vulnerable people in specific circumstances, such as substantial rent arrears, would be eligible to have their rent paid directly to the landlord. However, as the definition of vulnerable in this context was yet to be determined by Central Government, and, although preferable to potentially accruing debt, it was uncertain if care leavers could be included. It was noted that most parents would assist their children with budgeting, so, as corporate parents, it was important to provide the same support;
- NCH's Care Leavers Protocol would ensure that one of the first contacts for care leavers approaching NCH would be a financial liaison officer who would assist, guide and support young people through the welfare process;
- approximately 4% of foster carers in the City would be affected by the under occupancy penalties during periods between placements so, in an effort to ensure that fostering did not become over complex, which could potentially deter people, it was anticipated that any under occupancy penalties would be paid from the Discretionary Housing Fund. However, this was yet to be confirmed and forms would still need to be completed by the foster carers for each period of under occupancy for which discretionary payments were made, which was not ideal;
- options were still to be determined in regard to ensuring that the 20% of Universal Credit applicants who were not expected to apply online could access the system. This included the possibility of using facilities at libraries, joint service centres and partner organisations;

It was suggested that a proportion of the £1.8 million Emergency Hardship Fund be set aside specifically for the benefit of supporting care leavers.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that Central Government be lobbied to include care leavers within their criteria for vulnerable people, in regard to rent payments and the ability to pay the landlord directly;**
- (2) that, as Head of Revenues, Benefits and Welfare Rights, Lisa Black be requested to update the Board on the implementation of the welfare reforms in regard of children in care and foster carers, at a future meeting;**
- (3) that, the thanks of the Board to Lisa Black for her attendance and presentation, be recorded.**

## **33 REDUCING REOFFENDING**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Director of Family and Community Teams, the Director of Children's Safeguarding, and Nottinghamshire Police, a revised version of which was circulated at the meeting, and submitted to the online agenda following the meeting.

Police Constable Sam Flint, presented the revised report and was accompanied by Mr Kevin Hatherley and Ms Glynis Storer of the Youth Offending Team, and Ms Elise Darragh who presented the statistical information.

The following points were highlighted, and responses given to questions and comments of the Board:

- Debbie Barton of Nottinghamshire Police Restorative Justice, was facilitating a 3 day, full time 'Children in Care Restorative Justice course' to train 12 people from partner services, at no charge, with a view to them being able to train/inform other colleagues in their organisations;
- the quarterly 'Reducing Offending Network Meetings' with statutory and private partners had proved a valuable route for raising concerns about providers, and also for sharing information and good practice;
- the Sexual Exploitation Group included partners across the City and aimed to raise awareness of exploitation and how it could be identified, identify reporting and advice routes, and suggesting what measures could be taken to prevent it. Training on these points was proposed to be made available and, if funding could be secured, it was possible that a theatre group would perform a play which would work with children in care and at schools etc, to raise awareness and understanding among those young people who were likely to be targeted. There was also the possibility of promoting young people champions as young people may be more likely to discuss concerns with someone their own age;
- the Safeguarding Children in Care event held on 27 March 2012, had been well attended by a variety of partners and proved a great success so it was proposed to hold a further event in 2013 which would build on the issues previously covered, address additional topics, and further promote and enable multi-agency working;
- with regard to the rise in the rate of children in care over the age of 10 years who had been cautioned or convicted to 9.8% from 9% the previous year, it was noted that Nottingham City had the third highest rate amongst the eleven statistical neighbours. A member of the Board commented that criminal behaviour was not necessarily as a result of being in care, and that some young people would have been criminally active prior to being taken into care;
- while violence against the person was the highest recorded crime of children in care, the Board were informed that in regard to peer incidents, which would probably occur in a parental home between siblings, the judgement of the care workers was applied in regard to reporting incidents to the Police. The majority of violent incidents occurred against care staff. Police were not called unless the permission of the Duty Manager had been sought and given. PC Flint was informed of any 'unnecessary' incidents reported to the Police. This, along with the improvements of children's homes, had resulted in a reduction of reported incidents;
- prior to charges being brought, Police would exhaust an eight point check list of alternative routes such as sanctions and restorative justice. For incidents where charges were brought, before progressing to a court hearing, further investigations would take place to ensure that this was the appropriate course of action.

Board members commented on how encouraging progress had been and asked that representatives of foster carer organisations have the opportunity to attend the restorative justice and sexual exploitation training sessions.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the importance of the roles of the Children in Care Police Officer and the Youth Offending Team Lead for Children in Care, in driving to reduce criminalisation of children in care and improve their outcomes, be noted;**
- (2) that the development of a further Safeguarding Children in Care event for 2013, be approved;**
- (3) that continuation and review of multi-agency network meetings with care providers be approved;**
- (4) that the thanks of the Board to PC Sam Flint, Mr Kevin Hatherley, Ms Glynis Storer and Ms Elise Darragh, for their report and attendance, be recorded.**

### **34 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL**

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

### **35 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Quality and Commissioning, revised copies of which were circulated at the meeting, providing the latest available information.

Ms Elise Darragh, Quality and Commissioning, presented the performance figures and highlighted the following points:

- there were, as of the date of the meeting, currently 557 Children in Care in Nottingham City. This figure was still below the rate of statistical neighbours but, at 88 per 10,000 of children in care, was above the target of 83.8%;
- while the 10.9% 'stability of placements of children in care: number of moves based on a rolling 12 month period' (National Indicator 62) had not met the target of 12%, the 'Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of Placement' (National Indicator 63) at 69.2% had exceeded the 67% target. It was noted that children were not moved unless it was absolutely necessary;
- 45.2% of care leavers (19 years of age) were in employment, education or training (eet), (NI148), but the target was 60%. The actual numbers were in eet was 19 young people out of 42.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that in addition to the figures of representation of BME children in care to the BME population, the representation of white children in care to the white population, also be provided for future reports;**
- (2) that the percentage figures for adoption and special guardianship be provided for both BME and white children in care, be circulated with the minutes.**

**Breakdown of the Adoptions and SGO this year to show BME representation.**  
**(Against the 10.5% Q3 measure – 25 adoptions and 22 SGOs)**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Adoption</b>	<b>Special Guardianship Order</b>
Black / Black Brit - any other black background		1
Mixed - any other mixed background		3
Mixed - White & Asian		2
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	3	5
White - Any other White background	1	1
Any other ethnic group	1	
White British	20	10

**What percentage of the Adoptions and SGOs this year were sibling groups?**  
**(Against the 10.5% Q3 measure – 25 adoptions and 22 SGOs)**

In the table below the child is part of a sibling group when they have a sibling relationship and their discharge from care is the same.

<b>Sibling Group</b>	<b>Adoption</b>	<b>Special Guardianship Order</b>
YES	12	9
NO *	13	13

\*Please note, 2 of these children and young people were adopted into homes where birth siblings had PREVIOUSLY been adopted

**Against the representation BME CiC to BME pop measure, can we calculate the same measure but for white children to act as a comparator?**

The definition below may help to explain what the BME CIC measure represents.

**CSS147 Definition**

Performance measure CSS147 (Representation BME children CIC to BME population) compares the CIC BME population to the Nottingham City BME population. CSS147 for December was 5.9%. This means that the CIC population has proportionally 5.9% more BME when compared to Nottingham City.

### Breakdown of NEET/EET for 19 year old care leavers

Status	Main Activity on 19th Birthday	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Total
EET	Young person engaged full time in education other than higher education	2	2	4	8
EET	Young person engaged full time in higher education(i.e. studies beyond A level)			1	1
EET	Young person engaged full time in training or employment	3	1	3	7
EET	Young person engaged part time in education other than higher education	1			1
EET	Young person engaged part time in training or employment	1	1		2
NEET	Young Person Not In Education, Employment Or Training, Because Of Disability		2		2
NEET	Young Person Not In Education, Employment Or Training: Other Circumstances	3	5	12	20
NEET	SSD Not In Touch With Young Person		1		1
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>