

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held on 19 May 2014 at Loxley House
from 2.30pm to 4.02pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor Emma Dewinton
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Marcia Watson

Absent

Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Eileen Morley
Councillor Jackie Morris

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Jeren Artykova	- Children in Care Council
Ben Attfield	- Senior Duty Officer Safeguarding Children's Residential Services
Helen Blackman	- Director for Children's Social Care
Kay Challand	- Principal Manager for Fostering and Adoption
Sharon Clarke	- Service Manager (Children in Care)
Jon Rea	- Early Intervention and Partnerships Officer
Evonne Rogers	- Head of Business Support
Kay Sutt	- Service Manager, Children's Residential and Targeted Support
Gill Moy	- Director of Housing (Nottingham City Homes)
Lee Whitehead	- Principle Analyst (Social Care)
Malcolm Wilson	- Virtual School Headteacher
Kwesi Williams	- Project Officer (Children in Care)
Cath Ziane-Pryor	- Constitutional Services

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor David Mellen is appointed Chair for the municipal year 2014/15.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Councillor Ginny Klein is appointed Vice-Chair.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Eileen Morley
Councillor Jackie Morris
Heidi Watson
Sharon Thompson
Tanya Mackley
Bev Beatie

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2014, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

Helen Blackman, Director for Children's Social Care, informed the Board that the findings of the Ofsted inspection have now been published and are available on the Ofsted website. A short booklet has been produced by the Children and Adults, summarising the inspection findings. It is noted that the Corporate Parenting Board are seen as strength for driving improvement.

6 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL - 2013 HAVE YOUR SAY SURVEY RESULTS

Jeren Artykova, representing Children in Care Council, was accompanied by Jon Rea, Early Intervention and Partnerships Officer, in delivering a presentation of findings from the 'Have Your Say Survey' of children in care and care leavers, which has been analysed by the Children in Care Council. A red, amber and green (RAG) rating system has been used to illustrate how children in care and care leavers perceive the quality and value of the services they receive.

The overall 'RAG' rating of the survey result is green, The Children in Care Charter Commitments were rated as follows for 2013:

Charter Commitment 1: We will treat all our children and young people with respect and with regard to their age and understanding. **Green;**

Charter commitment 2: We will give our children and young people enough time and help to understand (and be happy) with their circumstances. **Amber;**

Charter commitment 3: We will make sure they know about the advocacy and complaints services in case they want help to have their views heard or and are unhappy with us. **Amber;**

Charter commitment 4: We will listen to our children and young people and involve them in planning for their care. **Green;**

Charter commitment 5: We will keep our children and young people safe and well by:
(a) seeing that they have the right place to live as quickly as possible. **Green;**
(b) making sure that this home is stable and keeps them safe. **Green;**
(c) giving them the right support to be as healthy as possible. **Amber;**

Charter commitment 6: We will help our children and young people to enjoy themselves. **Participation in a range of activities and an increase in sport and physical activity;**

Charter commitment 7: We will help them to achieve at school and elsewhere to the very best of their ability. **Amber;**

Charter commitment 8: We know that a change of home, carer, social work or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person so we promised to do all we can to prevent such changes unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well. **Red;**

Charter commitment 9: We will make sure that the child or young person stays in touch with her birth family and friends as much as possible, considering their safety and well-being. **Nearly half of the respondents see their families as much as they want to, satisfaction with the ability to spend time with their old friends is growing;**

Charter commitment 10: We will help our children and young people to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood. **Amber.**

The Board's questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) 87 responses from a possible 600 is considered reasonable and equates to nearly a 15% return which is considered a good sample;
- (b) children and young people are able to get help completing the survey from their carers or social worker this is what they want although questions about their social worker, are included in the survey;
- (c) each survey has an identification reference which enables it to be completed online but very few young people choose to do this and instead submit handwritten forms;
- (d) there is an easy read version under 10-year-olds;
- (e) there is now a care leavers websites so a link to the survey will be included;
- (f) all submitted surveys are quality assured and any issues regarding safeguarding or issues of well-being concern are pursued;
- (g) the questions are about the children and Young People's perception and you do not necessarily reflect the actual statistics. As 50% of children who responded said that they had pathway plans, while the actual statistics are nearer 80%;
- (h) a more representative sample across the age range of children in care would better inform the overall results of the survey. Incentives to complete the survey include free sports membership;
- (i) Strong support is available to ensure good mental and emotional health as this is taken very seriously. Currently children and adults are working with RSPC to help support young people before problems escalate;
- (j) where emotional and mental health problems do escalate, fantastic support is available from Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- (k) the number of changes of social worker for young people is a concern and the probability of changes increase where children are in care for a long period;
- (l) it is not always safe for children and young people in care to have contact with their previously known friends and family;
- (m) the amounts of help that children want to with their schoolwork varies considerably, with some young people wanting less assistance.

The Board made the following comments:

- (n) having helped 2 fostered young people to complete the survey, the questions are very clear and easily understood. It is positive that came with handsets and

support young people to complete the form as this raises issues which may not otherwise have been highlighted;

- (o) it is a concern that so few young people have responded to the survey;
- (p) a large proportion of children in care are under 5 years old so maybe what information is required or how much they understand;
- (q) good emotional support is vital especially for the most vulnerable.

RESOLVED

- (1) to use the findings of the survey and 'RAG' rating assessments to inform the 2014/15 Corporate Parenting Action Plan, with priority given to areas highlighted by the assessment;**
- (2) to acknowledge the hard work of the Children in Care Council in the planning and delivery analysis of the Have Your Say Survey, along with the vital role in co-production of services across Children's Social Care, of the Children in Care Council;**
- (3) to support all aspects of the forthcoming 2014 Have Your Say survey and to implement its findings as appropriate;**
- (4) to include a report on the mental health of young people in care, to a future meeting.**

7 FOSTERING AND ADOPTION PANEL CHAIRS REPORT

Kay Challand, Principal Manager for Fostering and Adoption, presented the report of the Fostering and Adoption Panel Chairs, outlining the function of fostering and adoption panels, the overall adoption statistics since April 2011, the quality of reports submitted by social workers, and areas identified for improvement along with the strengths of the service.

The Board's questions received the following responses:

- (a) the amount of information provided to panel members has been streamlined. A new IT system is being piloted for 3 months, after which consideration will be given to whether its use should be continued;
- (b) applicants are assessed with checks made to medical states, employment, their friends and family, in fact every aspect of their life is looked at in detail and the panel may request clarity or further information;
- (c) adoption applications involve an intense and robust process;
- (d) as the focus for fostering and adoption is making the most appropriate decision, sometimes the panel may say no to applicants;
- (e) there are yearly campaigns to recruit further foster carers but, as long as there are no safeguarding concerns, it is preferable for a child to remain within their extended family.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the activity of Fostering and Adoption Panels and note the appreciation of the board for the work done by Fostering and Adoption Panels;**

- (2) **for an action plan, with timescales, of the proposals to improve the fostering and adoption 'areas for development' identified by the Chairs of the Fostering and Adoption Panels, to be submitted to a future meeting.**

8 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTERS 3 AND 4 2013/14

Overall, it is noted that the performance has generally improved, with a robust action plan in place to address areas needing attention.

As of March 2014, there were 584 Nottingham City children in care.

It is noted that children on remand are now considered as being in the care of the Local Authority and must be included within the performance report, it is not always appropriate to apply all of the performance indicators to these children's circumstances.

With regard to the statistics for care leavers, as independent adults, they do not have an obligation to continue contact with the Local Authority so it is not always possible to provide complete information.

The Board made the following points;

- (a) the progress made is welcomed, especially regarding education and employment training;
- (b) it is disappointing that young people's perception and the actual figures regarding pathway plans differ so much;
- (c) there has been a substantial focus on physical health but not as much attention is paid to mental health; this needs to be addressed.

Resolved to note the report.

9 URGENT ITEM – YMCA OUTDOOR PURSUITS PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with section 100(b)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that the scheme could not be confirmed until all safeguarding and risk assessment had been successfully completed and it is important that the scheme is promoted prior to the spring and summer sessions to ensure the best outcomes.

Ben Attfield, Senior Duty Officer Safeguarding Children's Residential Services, informed the Board of the joint programme between Nottingham City Council and the YMCA, which has been funded by 'Children In Need'.

The project consists of 18 outdoor education activity sessions held during the school holidays for children in care, giving them the chance to experience outdoor activities that they may not have had access to within their life circumstances.

The activities promote self-esteem and develop confidence within the individuals as well as provide one of experiences that encourage trust and build on essential qualities which they will later rely on in life such as teamwork and problem-solving.

The Board welcomed the project as a valuable experience for young people in care.

RESOLVED that the Board receive an update on the project within a year.

10 FORWARD PLAN

Resolved to note the forward plan, subject to the inclusion of future items identified at the meeting.

11 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED to note that the Corporate Parenting Board is scheduled to meet at 2:30 pm on the following Mondays at Loxley House:

2014

21 July

15 September

17 November

2015

19 January

16 March