

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 15 September 2014 from 14.33 - 15.40

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Sally Longford
Councillor Eileen Morley
Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Marcia Watson

Absent

Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice-Chair)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Dewinton - Observer
Mary-Kate Gavin - Children in Care Council member
Heidi Watson) Business in the Community
Jamie Shrivastava)
Amanda Edmonds - Designated Nurse for Children in Care Health Partnerships
Bev Beatie) Foster Carer Representative
Tanya Mackley)
Paul Clark) National Youth Advocacy Service
Emma Dacres)
Helen Blackman - Director of CSC and Vulnerable Children
Gill Moy - Director of Housing (Nottingham City Homes)
Jon Rea - Early Intervention and Partnerships Officer
Elise Ashworth - Insight Manager
Lynn Pearce - Senior Personal Advisor, Leaving Care Team
Kwesi Williams - Project Officer, Children in Care
Malcolm Wilson - Virtual School Head Teacher
Cath Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Ginny Klein
Evonne Rogers
Kay Sutt
Joy Chambers

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

23 SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE PLACED OUTSIDE OF A 20 MILE RADIUS FROM NOTTINGHAM CITY

Holly Macer, Lead Contract Officer for Placement Service, Quality and Commissioning, presented the report which outlines the circumstances where children are placed outside of the City, and details the measures in place to ensure that the needs of these children are met.

It is noted that 70% of residential placements are within 20 miles of the City Centre, and that 86% of fostering placements are more than 20 miles from the City Centre.

Holly Macer responded to the Board's questions as follows:

- (a) a local placement is considered a priority, however this is not always possible. Where children and young people are placed away from the City, there is a multi-agency approach to ensure the appropriate services can be provided. Nottingham City Council will provide as many services as is feasible but where this cannot be achieved services such as Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in the area that the child is placed, are commissioned;
- (b) the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), will ensure that all necessary services and support are in place for each child, and where gaps appear, services will be found;
- (c) it is in the best interest for everybody to ensure that there is local placement capacity;
- (d) block placements are being considered as an option;
- (e) Social workers generally request that school places are maintained every effort is made to find travel or volunteer driver scheme to accommodate this.

Members of the Board commented that;

- (f) maintaining school places is very important as is enabling the child to maintain friendships and relationships in their local area;
- (g) placing children as close to the City as possible is in the best interests of the child.

RESOLVED to acknowledge the activities undertaken to support services for children in care placed outside of the 20 mile radius from Nottingham City.

24 RISE PROGRAMME - BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

Jamie Shrivastava and Heidi Watson, from 'Business in the Community'(BitC), presented an update report on the activity and achievements of the Routes Into Sustainable Employment (RISE) Programme from July 2013 to June 2014.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) during the period, 21 care leavers and 1 youth outreach team (YOT) participant have been supported into employment;
- (b) there has been a 15% increase in participation of children in care and care leavers from the previous year, however activity has increased following the introduction of a roll-on, roll-off programme for all young people to access;
- (c) since June 2014, referrals have increased significantly and there was a 90% attendance rate for the last programme;
- (d) it is predicted that the target of 40 young people attending/completing the rise programme through to June 2015, will be achieved;
- (e) in the 1st year of operation 15 young people were supported into work, in the 2nd year 31, and this year 50% of participants;
- (f) the programme continues to develop, building on the knowledge of what works best for the young people engaged;
- (g) there has been between a 35 and 50% dropout rate with young people disengaging from the programme although there are often complicated issues including some young people realising that they are not ready to engage;
- (h) working jointly with children in care teams, the Leaving Care Team pass details of young people to BitC then inform them of the programmes available;
- (i) if young people are not initially interested or ready to engage in the programme, the personal advisers will remind them at a later date that the option is available to them;
- (j) there has recently been a refreshed focus on young people leaving foster care;
- (k) BitC also promotes fostering to its partners in business as those who volunteer are more likely to foster;
- (l) courses including anger management and debt and financial skills, can be provided to prepare young people for engaging on the RISE programme.

Bev Beatie, Foster Carer Representative, informed the board that she was aware young man whose confidence was significantly boosted by attending the RISE programme.

The Chair welcomed the report and the opportunities which the RISE programme offers children in care.

RESOLVED to note:

- (i) the activities undertaken to identify in a timely manner young people eligible for the RISE programme;**
- (ii) the streamlining of the referral process in order to encourage increased participation on the RISE programme.**

25 NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE (NYAS) ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR (IV) SERVICE NOTTINGHAM - RESIDENTIAL VISITING

Paul Clark, NYAS Operations Manager, East Midlands, presented the report which outlines the following commissioned services:

- issue based advocacy;
- independent persons service;
- Independent visitor service;
- residential visiting advocacy service;

- sport purchase referral basis;
- service transfer.

The service visits all of Nottingham's residential children, wherever they are placed, including Southampton, Essex and Cumbria.

It is a challenging service which does not focus on the best interests of the child but on ensuring that the wishes and feelings of the child are heard and considered. Sometimes the service is required to support communication between decision-makers and the young people.

Independent visitors (IV) are carefully chosen and trained volunteers who have committed their services for a minimum of 2 years although some continue the match with the young person for longer. A two-year commitment ensures a level of consistency for young people.

Referrals are made through a national helpline and passed to the local co-ordinator for allocation. There is a target for an advocate allocation to be made within 24 hours of the referral and for that advocate to make contact with the child or young person within 72 hours.

Between 1 April 2014 and 30 June 2014, fifty referrals were made to the service. To date this has increased to 270 referrals.

Priority issues raised during visits include:

- child protection meetings;
- LAC reviews;
- relationship problem, including not feeling as though their social worker listens to them;
- contact with family;
- placement moves.

The report provides a detailed breakdown of gender, ethnicity, referral route and legal status of the young people.

The Board's questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) the service is available to all looked after children regardless of age;
- (b) all of the city's children in care with learning disabilities are visited at least every 2 months. They are asked for their preferred communication method to ensure the service can adapt to their needs;
- (c) it is the age of 18 young people are still looked after, they are able to access the service, but are not eligible once they leave care;
- (d) when a referral is made and an advocate allocated, it is intended that the advocate continue to work with the child until the case is closed. If a new case is opened, the same advocate is not necessarily allocated that case depending on availability, however the majority of children do receive the support of the same person;
- (e) independent visitors are volunteers while advocates are self-employed and paid, but all receive the same comprehensive training and testing;
- (f) a young person can view the profile of available Independent Visitors and choose who they would prefer to support them.

The point was made that it is autumn that the young people know that a volunteer chooses to see them without financial reward.

RESOLVED

- (1) for the advocacy and Independent Visitor activities undertaken by NYAS to be acknowledged;**
- (2) for the importance of the advocacy and Independent visitor services in safeguarding helping children in care to get their views heard to be recognised.**

26 TRAINING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

Lynn Pearce, Senior Personal Advisor, presented the report which informs the Board of the multi-agency focus group which meets every 6 weeks, taking the strategic lead to improve the number of Care Leavers in education, employment or training (EET).

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) it is vital that young people who are considered 'hard to reach' are engaged at the earliest opportunity to ensure the best outcomes;
- (b) bespoke packages are developed to ensure that young people in specific circumstances, such as young mothers who may need assistance with child care, are able to access work or training;
- (c) all bespoke packages are monitored and evaluated, including the input of the young people, their social worker and the provider, to enable successful approaches to be shared;
- (d) a database identifies young people between the ages of 19 and 21 who are then individually encouraged to engage in EET;
- (e) initially the target was to have the database and packages in place by December 2014 but this has already been achieved and the system is progressing well;
- (f) the aspiration is to engage all Care Leavers in EET but the target of having 55% of Care Leavers in EET may appear low as this figure has been identified from the benchmarking of other Local Authorities.
- (g) as of May 2014, performance in relation to Care Leavers in EET is as follows:
 - (i) at 19 years of age, 80% (Target 55%);
 - (ii) at 20 years of age 55.5% (Target 55%);
 - (iii) at 21 years of age 66.8% (Target 55%).

Comments at the meeting included:

- (h) for the young people, employment needs to be sustainable and paying £2 per hour for a 30 hour week does not reflect a 'living wage';
- (i) work/training with the statutory agencies, including the City Council and Nottingham City Homes (NCH), has proved valuable for young people but external bodies including Rise and Futures are also able to source excellent opportunities for care leavers;

- (j) NCH sets targets for the construction companies it engages to take on young people. Targets small but are better than nothing and can be considered as Corporate Social Responsibility;
- (k) consideration should be given to including targets for employing/training young care leavers within a large contracts awarded by the City Council.

RESOLVED

- (1) to continue to support the work of the multi-agency focus group that takes the strategically lead to improve the number of care leavers in to education, employment or training;**
- (2) for the Director of Safeguarding to contact the City Council's Procurement Team and investigate the possibility of large City Council contractors being encouraged to engage a percentage of young people from care backgrounds as apprentices.**

27 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE

Jon Rea, Early Intervention and Partnerships Officer, was accompanied by Mary-Kate Gavin, member of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), who updated the Board on the activity of the children in care Council.

Members of the CiCC had taken part in the initial stages of 'Passport to Parliament' event arranged by the 'Who Care Trust' which aims to ensure that the valuable contribution of children in care councils can be considered by the all- party Parliamentary group.

One of the issues raised as the event questioned whether children in care with special educational needs received adequate care and support. In summary, one of the conclusions of the event is that is these young children and young people need a better understanding of the support which is available to them. Also debated was the pupil premium. Conclusion from the discussion will be submitted to the all-party group and members of the CiCC will be invited to attend the meeting at Westminster on 22 October 2014 to see how their work can potentially influence national policy making.

Other activities included promoting the 'have your say survey' and encouraging more children in care to register on the electoral roll.

Board members are requested to encourage children in care and care leavers to consider joining the CiCC to ensure the views, experiences and perspectives of looked after children and young people can be available to inform partner organisations and policymakers in issues relating to the care system and the young people involved. The CiCC also host events and activities for its membership. A taster event is to be held on 29 September people in care aged 14 years and older.

28 REPORTING SCHEDULE UPDATE

Subject to 'educational attainment of children in care' being submitted to the next meeting, the reporting schedule is noted.