

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 20 July 2015 from 14.33 - 15.45

Membership

Present

Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Sam Webster

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Sally Longford,
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Marcia Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

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| Steve Comb | - Head of Children in Care |
| Sharon Clarke | - Service Manager for Children in Care and Leaving Care Service |
| Clive Chambers | - Head of Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance |
| Malcolm Wilson | - Virtual School Headteacher |
| Kwesi Williams | - Children in Care Project Officer |
| Evonne Rogers | - Head of Business Support |
| Jon Rea | - Early Intervention Engagement and Participation Lead Officer |
| Gill Moy | - Director of Housing, Nottingham City Homes |
| BB | - Foster Carer Representative |
| Mary Lewis |) |
| Jennifer Hanby |) National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) |
| Heather Walker |) |
| Seren Artykova | - Children in Care Council |
| Natalia Stachowiak | - Children in Care Youth Cabinet, Virtual School Board |
| Catherine Ziane-Pryor | - Governance Officer |

10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Sally Longford (Leave)
Councillor Wendy Smith (Personal)
TM – Foster Carer

11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

12 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2015 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

13 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 15

Clive Chambers, Head of Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, delivered a presentation to accompany the report which informs the Board of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service activity during 2014/15 and provides the Independent Reviewing Officer Service Plan for 2015/16.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) are a legal requirement and:
 - (i) undertake Looked After Reviews;
 - (ii) oversee and ensure quality compliance to the requirements of service provision, care planning and child protection;
 - (iii) ensure that the needs of the individual child are appropriately met;
 - (iv) consider and scrutinise the quality of Foster Care to ensure that the legal requirements are met;

- (b) the Annual Report outlines the key achievements during the past year as follows:
 - (i) an increase in service capacity;
 - (ii) improvement of the Administration Unit;
 - (iii) further embedding of 'Signs of Safety' and the provision of reports within a reasonable time;
 - (iv) increased monitoring and balancing of IRO case load;
 - (v) a system to provide an overview of outcomes for Looked After Children;

- (c) Areas of work which were identified as requiring further attention included:
 - (i) complete compliance with the IRO handbook;
 - (ii) more children taking part in making decisions and producing plans which affect them;
 - (iii) better performance evaluation and oversight to enable service improvements;
 - (iv) ensuring that outcome focused planning leads to timely interventions.

While consistency of IROs for young people is preferable, it is noted that some of young people in attendance who were in, or had left care, reported to have had two or three Independent Reviewing Officers. Young people felt that it was helpful if the Reviewing Officers met them prior to the reviews taking place so they could build a relationship and understanding. Some young people do not feel that the Independent Reviewing Officers are actually independent as they can appear to be part of the care system.

RESOLVED to note the activity of the Independent Reviewing Service during 2014/15.

14 PATHWAY PLANNING

Sharon Clarke, Service Manager for Children in Care and Leaving Care Service, presented the report which identifies the legislative requirements placed on the Council City as the Corporate Parent, and the work to create Pathway Plans for children in care from the age of

15 ¾, to help ensure that the transition to adulthood and independence is as easy as possible.

Attached to the report is statistical information illustrating the improvements made to the pathway planning process since the same period during last year.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the new E-Pathway Plan system has recently been launched and will ensure that plans are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely;
- (b) the new e-pathway plan ensures that the following are considered and incorporated into the future planning for young people:
 - (i) health and development;
 - (ii) education training and employment;
 - (iii) contact, support and accessible networks;
 - (iv) financial capabilities and money management capacity;
 - (v) young people's views;
 - (vi) input from parents/carers, housing providers, personal adviser, health, education and Independent Reviewing Officer;
- (c) for unaccompanied asylum seeker children, it is crucial that their pathway plan prepares them for the outcome of their asylum application which may not be provided until these young people are in their 20s;
- (d) pathway plans must be provided for young people, even if they choose not to engage with the process.

RESOLVED to note the report and to continue to support and understand the required duties of corporate parents in relation to the pathway planning for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

15 MUNICIPAL JOURNAL APPRENTICESHIP AWARD

Evonne Rogers, Head of Business Support, informed the Board that the City Council had won the 'Municipal Journal' National Children's Services Award for its innovative business support programme.

The programme addressed the following priorities for the Council:

- (a) to improve the outcomes for Children In Care through sustainable employment opportunities;
- (b) to support Small Medium Enterprises(SMEs) with their resource challenges including recruitment and business development;
- (c) reduce unemployment within the city;
- (d) raise the profile of the programme to a national level.

By realigning the operating structure of business support across the Council £1.6 million efficiency savings so far have been realised.

This operating model has generated great interest amongst other local authorities who are seeking to emulate Nottingham's success.

The innovative resource model has created employment opportunities for our local residents whilst generating income through working with and supporting a national community interest company called 'The Community Gateway' and our local SME's. This income creates ring fenced apprenticeships for Nottingham's Children in Care.

The judges described the model as "highly innovative" adding that "It ticked all of the boxes with regards to helping young care leavers as well as the community and economy and showed ambition and inventiveness".

Gill Moy, Director of Housing, Nottingham City Homes, informed the Board of recent awards won by young people in care and care leavers who are employed with Nottingham City Homes.

An apprentice who had previously been in care was nominated by his peers for an NCH internal 'Star Award' for transforming neighbourhoods, and won;

The NCH apprenticeship team entered the 'Brathay Apprentice Challenge', and from over 300 teams was placed third which is a prenominal achievement for the apprentices and NCH. The apprentices included young people who had left care.

A care leaver apprentice with NCH accompanied NCH Directors to the National Federation of Arm's Length Management Organisations where NCH won an award for 'Small group homes for young people leaving care' Chief Executives and Directors of other organisations commented during the event that they were very impressed with the young person.

Members of the Board welcomed the positive reports and the achievements of young people.

16 VIRTUAL SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY UPDATE

In the absence of Councillor Longford, the Chair informed the Board that the governing body for the Virtual School has now been established.

Malcolm Wilson is the Headteacher of the Virtual School which also employs 4 staff who work with designated teachers of Children in Care pupils with the aim to produce the best possible outcome for these young people.

To date so far there have been three meetings of the governing body which consists of a membership including the Local Authority, Primary School Head Teachers, Nottingham Futures, Foster Carers, and Councillors.

One of the findings so far is that an improved data collection system is required to capture and share with relevant partners, academic information of pupils.

An update report will be presented to a future meeting.

17 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL ACTIVITY UPDATE AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jon Rea, Early Intervention Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, was accompanied by several members of the Children in Care Council who provided the following summary:

- (a) the Corporate Children in Care Council, as referred to at the previous meeting, will meet on 27 September 2015 and then once every term, and will work with the Virtual School, to consider how best to encourage and assist care leavers in going to university as currently only 6% of Children in Care enrol at University. The aim is to raise aspirations for young people so that they at least consider further education;
- (b) Youth Council member Uzair Hashmi, who has been involved in climbing Kilimanjaro to raise money for charity, has been diagnosed with a brain tumour. Residents of Ashleigh House Residential Care Home, who have been inspired by Uzair, organised and held a cake Bake Sale in Loxley House to support his chosen charity, raising £250;
- (c) the promotion of the Children in Care Council has resulted in one new member with 2 further young people expressing an interest. It is expected that an accreditation scheme will encourage more young people to engage with the Children in Care Council;
- (d) Board members are welcome to attend a Children in Care Fairground Festival event being held at Colwick Race Course on 5 September 2015;
- (e) on 29 September 2015, an 'Aspirational Evening' event will be held for Care Leavers with motivational speakers focus on the topics of pathways to success, and direction.

Members welcomed the update of the Children in Care Council activity, praised the ingenuity of the young people from Ashleigh House who were involved in the Bake Sale and wished Uzair a speedy recovery.

18 FORWARD PLAN AND SUGGESTED FUTURE ITEMS

The Chair introduced the item and asked Members that if there were any specific items which they would like on the agenda, they should contact Clive Chambers.

RESOLVED for the following suggested subjects to be considered for inclusion on a future agenda:

- (i) how changes to the Independent Living Allowance may affect care leavers;**
- (ii) the impact on care leavers of Housing Benefit changes.**