

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 17 July 2017 from 2.31 pm - 3.40 pm**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)  
Councillor Liaqat Ali (left after item 5)  
Councillor Jim Armstrong  
Councillor Nicola Heaton  
Councillor Ginny Klein  
Councillor Jackie Morris  
Councillor Wendy Smith  
Councillor Sam Webster (from item 6)

##### Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson  
Councillor Marcia Watson

#### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Sonia Cain	-	Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption
Clive Chambers	-	Head of Service – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Sharon Clarke	-	Service Manager, Children in Care
Steve Comb	-	Head of Children in Care
John Cooper	-	Fostering Recruitment Consultant
Sam Oliver	-	Children in Care Council
Jon Rea	-	Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
James Welbourn	-	Governance Officer
Jordan Whatman	-	Project Officer, Children in Care

#### **14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Sue Johnson	-	other Council business
Councillor Marcia Watson	-	other Council business

business

Helen Blackman	-	annual leave
Gill Moy	-	other Council business

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#### **15 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

## **16 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **17 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017**

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance introduced the annual report summarising activity and impact during the course of 2016/17 for the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs).

The following information was highlighted:

- (a) the number of temporary staff that the service had was a key issue, and created a financial challenge; significant work has been undertaken in this area and it is anticipated that by the end of October 2017 the service will be fully staffed with permanent officers;
- (b) it is really important that young people feel that review plans match their aspirations;
- (c) the service is moving from its efficacy framework to a live audit. This live audit will focus on fundamental issues such as the IRO seeing the Personal Education Plan;
- (d) 2016/17 has been a very busy year; the number of meetings listed in the annual reports is below the true number of meetings attended by the service as it does not include, for example, meetings chaired by the Local Authority Designated Officer;
- (e) the 'cause for concern' service is being reviewed, with an anticipated completion date for this review being October 2017;
- (f) the figures for emotional abuse in children fell in 2017; this is thought to have been due to how information is now captured, as there was an increase in the number of children with multiple categories;
- (g) the purpose of the IRO is to oversee implementation of the care plan. They may meet young people that they are responsible for outside of their reviews, but this would be down to the young person in question.

**RESOLVED to note the content of the report.**

## **18 PATHWAY PLANNING**

Sharon Clarke - Service Manager, Children in Care and Leaving Care Service introduced a report including the current issues in relation to the legislative duties required by Nottingham City Council, in respect of those children eligible for a Pathway Plan. It focuses on the work required by Social Workers and Personal Advisors in relation to the assessment, planning, implementation and reviews of

Pathway Planning in order to ensure young people have a robust plan to aid transition into adulthood.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the Children and Social Work Act 2017 received royal assent in April 2017. Children's Services are still awaiting government guidance on this, particularly in regard to the care offer to support young adults up to the age of 25;
- (b) children in care have a social worker responsible for their pathway planning; post 18 years of age they have a personal advisor;

Following questions from Councillors, further information was provided:

- (c) there is nothing to suggest at this stage that additional funding will be made available from Government with regard to the extension of care leaving entitlement. If there are going to be extra responsibilities for staff, then extra resource may be required.

Previously, when there has been a change of this magnitude, officers would be involved in a consultation but there is again no information about this currently;

- (d) in terms of care leavers, the number in employment, education or training is higher than in other areas.

**RESOLVED to continue to support and understand the required duties of Corporate Parents, in relation to Pathway Planning for children in care and care leavers.**

## **19 FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Sonia Cain, Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption introduced a report addressing the strategies for the recruitment and retention opportunities of foster carers.

The following information was highlighted:

- (a) the Nottingham City Council (NCC) website is restrictive in terms of the content that can be presented to potential foster carers; as a result, there is now a dedicated website set up for this purpose;
- (b) working with other partners enables a wider audience to be reached; this can be seen through sharing posts on social media for example. The social media reach of NCC on its own goes so far, but if partner organisations are also sharing these posts, then more individuals can be reached;
- (c) a toolkit has been put together to help the "word of mouth" campaign for fostering. This toolkit can help people that might have already considered

fostering take their interest to the next stage, as well as being able to influence others that are likeminded;

- (d) the customer journey, that starts with an email or a phone call, is in the process of being reviewed to see if there can be any improvements; the service is looking to speed up the process of initial visits and cut delays
- (e) the service will look to call potential foster carers back on the same day if capacity allows;
- (f) at stage 2 of the fostering process the potential carer will be 'buddied up' with an existing carer to help them through the process;
- (g) there are around 28 people in assessment to be foster carers at the moment, indicating that the increased activity around recruiting foster carers is working. This in turn has led to a projected increase in panel approvals;
- (i) the East Midlands Local Authority Foster Carer Recruiter Forum looks at fostering recruitment. Staff from NCC will be attending this forum in the future, along with the West Midlands forum;

Following questions from Councillors, further information was provided:

- (j) two carers have retied since April, but this has been more than balanced out by new carers that have joined;
- (k) NCC advertises for foster carers through the East Midlands Shared Services (EMSS) jobs page. In addition to this, there has been a stand at the NCC Jobs Fair. It may also be possible to advertise through Nottingham Jobs;
- (l) around 25-30% of potential foster carers drop out of the assessment process nationally. Some will be filtered out at stage 1, some may change their minds about whether fostering is the right thing for them, and some have a change in circumstances.

The Fostering and Adoption service are aiming to eliminate any reasons why it hasn't been robust or thorough enough during the process;

- (m) a number of foster carers with private agencies have decided to come and foster for NCC; NCC can offer direct support such as the virtual school. We can also guarantee a constant placement in certain age groups, providing that the foster carer is suitable. A number of carers also have the position of principle to not foster for money making organisations.

**RESOLVED to note the recruitment and retention performance of the Fostering Service and the activities undertaken by the service to recruit and support foster carers.**

## **20 CHILDREN IN CARE JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

This item was removed from the agenda by the Chair and wasn't considered.

## **21 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL**

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer gave an update to the Panel on the work of the Children in Care (CiC) Council. Since the last meeting, the following had taken place:

- A representative from the Department for Education was very impressed with young people's involvement in the Step up to Social Work assessment process;
- The CiC Council had a discussion about placement services. A key issue arising out of their session was the importance of ensuring that families were safe together;
- A corporate CiC Council was intended for July, but this was postponed until September because of other commitments;

The remaining members of the corporate group will be enjoying a night at the cricket. The group has worked really hard, and kept the membership going. The night at the cricket also gives potential new members a chance to get to know others in an informal way.

## **22 CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Board were shown a video featuring Larelle Flowers, someone who has previously been through the Children in Care service at Nottingham City Council.

## **23 FORWARD PLANNER**

The forward planner was approved.