

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 16 July 2018
from 2.30 pm - 3.29 pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Marcia Watson
Councillor Cate Woodward

Absent

Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Wendy Smith

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Sharon Clarke - Service Manager, Residential Development
Audrey Taylor - Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption
Alison Wakefield - Service Manager, Children's Social care
Phil Wye - Governance Officer

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Glyn Jenkins – unwell
Councillor Wendy Smith – other Council business
BB
Clive Chambers

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15 PATHWAY PLANNING

Sharon Clarke, Service Manager, Residential Development, introduced the report including the current issues in relation to the legislative duties required by Nottingham City Council in respect of those children eligible to a Pathway Plan, highlighting the following:

- (a) Local Authorities are now required to support Care Leavers up to the age of 25 although this is dependent on the views and wishes of the young person. They must also formally produce a Local Offer for Care Leavers;
- (b) the Council's Staying Put policy encourages young people who are not ready emotionally or financially for independence at age 18, to sustain their tenancies with foster carers or in semi-independent placements until they are ready to live independently;
- (c) a Pathway Plan must be produced for all eligible young people as they transition from care into adulthood. This includes disabled children, children in custody and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The Pathway Plan includes the young person's health and development, education, training and employment, contact, supports and networks, financial capabilities and money-management capacity;
- (d) young people leaving care should have a Health Passport which gives their full medical history in consultation with a Looked After Nurse. A number of young people refuse medical appointments, which is a challenge both locally and nationally, and the Council is working in partnership with health colleagues to improve this;
- (e) the Leaving Care team employs a qualified social worker who acts as a dedicated Transitions Worker who works with social workers, personal advisors, young people and other professionals on Pathway Planning for young people who may require Adult Services or further support in their transition.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (f) Care Leavers' aspirations, such as wishing to learn to drive or swim, are included in Pathway Plans. The Leaving Care team works with young people to make sure that the Plans are meaningful;
- (g) the Council has a legal duty to support young people who are remanded into custody prior to the age of 18, as they are identified as vulnerable.

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

16 FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Audrey Taylor, Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption, introduced the report addressing the strategies for the recruitment and retention opportunities of foster carers, highlighting the following:

- (a) the majority of the children in care in the City are placed with foster carers, at nearly 500. The preferred option is to use in-house mainstream carers rather than an independent fostering agency as this can save on average £17,000 per year;
- (b) the City has a recruitment strategy to recruit more in-house foster carers. This includes social media, information evenings, and promotion at local faith groups,

schools and with the police. Information stalls are run at events such as the Riverside Festival, Pride and the Caribbean Carnival;

- (c) a dedicated Recruitment Consultant has been appointed on a year's contract to assist with recruitment. A target to recruit 12 foster carers last year was exceeded as 20 were recruited. Due to this success the target for this year has been increased to 40;
- (d) support groups are run in Clifton and Lenton for foster carers, where foster carers can meet with other carers in the area. A buddy scheme has also been introduced for newer foster carers, offering peer mentoring by approved foster carers;
- (e) a Therapeutic Support Team has been developed which provides therapeutic based interventions, support and advice. They offer monthly consultation slots for foster carers and also offer home visits;
- (f) six-weekly Fostering Business meetings are held that alternate between day and evening sessions. These offer the opportunity to meet with senior managers, and for the Council to share current issues and concerns and consult on new initiatives;
- (g) the training programme for foster carers has recently been fully reviewed and revised. New foster carers must complete the core training programme within 3 years;
- (h) the Works Perks employee benefits scheme has recently been extended to include foster carers, including discounts at well-known shops, cinema and travel.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (i) parent and baby placements are usually done as part of a care plan and assessment. These are usually short term and it is difficult to recruit in-house foster carers for them as the demand is not consistent;
- (j) retention of foster carers has improved, with the number of in-house foster carers increasing. There are very few resignations other than for retirement.

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.

17 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q3 / Q4 2017/18)

Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services, introduced the report providing the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data, highlighting the following:

- (a) the number of children in care has remained stable in Nottingham City despite an increase nationally, although this is still above the target and high demand continues;

- (b) compared to the previous year, the number of Adoption Orders has decreased, although this should increase next year;
- (c) the percentage of children in care that have had three or more placement moves in the past 12 months is lower than the statistical neighbour average (SNA), and the percentage who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years is higher than both the SNA and the all-England average;
- (d) the percentage of children in care with up to date Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires or Personal Education Plans needs improvement. Sometimes these have been completed but not recorded correctly, and the Council is working jointly with schools to make improvements;
- (e) the percentage of placements that are under 20 miles from Nottingham and the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation have both improved on last year;
- (f) the percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training has dropped from last year to 57.7% but remains above the SNA and all-England average.

The two main areas for focus to improve are completion of Personal Education Plans and care leavers' employment, education or training.

RESOLVED to acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care service against identified key performance indicators.

18 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE

Item withdrawn from the agenda.

19 FORWARD PLANNER

The forward planner was noted.