

# Public Document Pack

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 19 November 2018 from 2.30 pm - 4.04 pm**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)  
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Jim Armstrong  
Councillor Glyn Jenkins  
Councillor Wendy Smith  
Councillor Marcia Watson  
Councillor Cate Woodward

##### Absent

Councillor Nicola Heaton  
Councillor Sue Johnson  
Councillor Neghat Khan

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

Gillian Black	- SOVA
Clive Chambers	- Head of Children in Care
Gabriel Hall	- The Children's Society
Kathryn Higgins	- Greater Nottingham Clinical Commissioning Group
Kelise Knowles	- Care Leaver representative
Alison Smith	- The Children's Society
Claire Tagg	- Greater Nottingham Clinical Commissioning Group
Jordan Whatman	- Project Officer, Children in Care
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

#### **30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Nicola Heaton – work commitments  
Councillor Sue Johnson - unwell  
Councillor Neghat Khan – leave  
Helen Blackman, Director of Children’s Integrated Services  
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#### **31 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **32 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **33 THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN CARE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY 2017/18**

Kathryn Higgins and Claire Tagg introduced the report providing the second Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Children in Care annual report providing assurances that Nottingham City CCG is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities to children as outlined in the Children Act 1989 and associated guidance. The following information was highlighted:

- (a) the CCG has commissioned different providers to undertake medical assessments of Children in Care in the city. Medical services are provided by the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust and nursing services are provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. CAMHS services are jointly commissioned by the CCG and Nottingham City Council;
- (b) the CCG also has responsibility for the medical and nursing needs of Looked After Children that are in the care of other local authorities but placed in Nottingham City;
- (c) the Nottinghamshire Children in Care Service Improvement Forum was established in December 2016. It has developed an action plan to look at risks, service gaps and improvements with agreement from city and county local authorities, CCGs and health providers;
- (d) a project is underway to improve the collection and reporting of data on Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Children in Care, following a successful bid to NHS England for funding;
- (e) a Care Leaver workshop was held in July 2017 to review support around health, with a Care Leaver working group being established to review and implement recommendations from the workshop;
- (f) in 2018/19 a priority will be to ensure quality assurance of medical assessments for all Children in Care placed out of the city. There will also be further work to consider young people who do not engage, unaccompanied asylum seeker children and those in secure accommodation.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (g) care for Children in Care placed out of area can vary across the country and Nottingham has no jurisdiction over this. In Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City it has been agreed that all children will receive the same standard of care regardless of who the placing authority is;
- (h) there are many factors when deciding where a Child in Care will be placed, not only medical care. However, more robust data will be useful to identify any problem locations so that the council can take a proactive approach to addressing any issues.

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) note that health providers supported by the Designated Professionals will continue to work with the Service Improvement Forum and associated working groups with the aim to improve the health outcomes for Children in**

**Care;**

- (2) note that revised CCG pathways for out of area placements and other local authority placements in the city are to be implemented in 2019;**
- (3) note that health providers supported by the Designated Professionals will continue to work with the Local Authority, other partner agencies and Commissioners in planning for and ensuring adequate health provision for Care Leavers.**

**34 THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY: INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

Alison Smith and Gabriel Hall introduced the report providing an update on the children's advocacy services provided by The Children's Society on behalf of the council. The following information was highlighted:

- (a) The Children's Society is a national charity that works with the country's most vulnerable children and young people and lobbies for national policy change;
- (b) the advocacy service for Children in Care has been jointly commissioned to by Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Councils. The Children's Society provide Advocacy, Residential Visiting Advocacy, Issue Based Advocacy and Independent Persons services;
- (c) across the county and city there is one manager and 5 advocates. All residential units should be visited no less than once every eight weeks. During June, July and August 2018 a total of 79% of all residential homes were visited within this timeframe and this figure is improving;
- (d) there has been an increase in the number of issues raised by young people, such as issues around placements, lack of support from social workers, requests for placement changes and lack of reviews;
- (e) the advocates have been allocated homes to ensure continuity for the young people, and advocates remain the same when a young person is moved between placements, where possible.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (f) the reason that young people may want to change placement is that they have been placed outside the city and want to come back. There are also issues with young people feeling that social workers are not seeing them often enough;
- (g) the advocacy is always led by the young person and based on wishes and feelings which may not always be in their best interest;
- (h) if a child wants a new advocate they can be provide, and there is a complaints procedure if they are unhappy;

- (i) referrals are triaged by the manager and allocated appropriately to the advocates. Children and young people should be ideally visited within 72 hours, though this is not always possible if they live far away;
- (j) one of the advocates specialises in children with disabilities and special educational needs.

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

### **35 INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE – SOVA**

Gillian Black introduced the report introducing the Board to SOVA as a service provider, updating the Board on the Independent Visitor Service since the contract began in November 2017. The following information was highlighted:

- (a) Independent Visitors (IVs) are adult volunteers who serve as positive role models for Children in Care. They meet monthly and take part in activities, chosen by the IV and child together;
- (b) there are currently 19 active matches in place, with 10 children awaiting a best match.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (c) if an IV has to stop volunteering due to personal circumstances they are asked to contact the child themselves to discuss and explain the situation;
- (d) volunteers are observed during their training to highlight their areas of interest and they are matched to children by SOVA accordingly. Views of social workers and foster carers are taken into account but it is ultimately the child's decision;
- (e) it would be helpful if the child received an information sheet with a photograph and some basic likes and dislikes prior to meeting their IV.

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

### **36 CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2018 – 2020**

Clive Chambers introduced the report providing an update on the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy which sets out how the council will meet its responsibilities as the Corporate Parent for Children in Care. Seven strategic priorities (or promises) have been identified that represent areas that require improvement in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers. The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (a) the promises themselves could be made clearer within the document, and in bold. It could also include contact details for Advocacy and Independent Visitor services;

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- (b) the introduction could include more information on how the council aspires to for children and young people in its care;
- (c) the promises are mapped against directorate priorities, what young people have told the council, and statutory guidance.

It was suggested that assessments and Personal Education Plan meetings during school hours can be disruptive to education and cause problems at school.

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) agree the strategic priorities, and accepting them as ‘corporate parenting objectives;**
- (2) endorse the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2020.**

**37 CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT: QUARTER 1 / QUARTER 2 2018 - 2019**

Clive Chambers introduced the report providing the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data covering the first and second quarters of the 2018-19 financial year.

**RESOLVED to acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care service.**

**38 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL**

Kelise Knowles and Jordan Whatman gave a verbal update on recent and upcoming meetings and events of the Children in Care Council. The Council has recently spoken to Ofsted and worked on the Local Offer for Care Leavers. The Big It Up awards will take place soon, and a Christmas meeting is planned with the Sheriff.

**39 CHAIR'S UPDATE**

A report will be published on Nottingham and Nottinghamshire following the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse early next year, with the overall thematic report, focussing on the role of local authorities generally, being published at a later date.

The Local Offer for Care Leavers will be shared with Board Members for their comments and is attached to these minutes.

**40 FORWARD PLANNER**

The forward plan was noted.

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# Nottingham City Local Offer for Care Leavers 2018/2019



# Foreword

**Cllr David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early intervention and Early Years at Nottingham City Council:**

This leaflet tells you about the support that we will provide in Nottingham for you as a care leaver. Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you. We want to make sure that you feel supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help when you need it.



Local care leavers have helped make this leaflet. We held six focus groups involving different organisations and current care leavers. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need.



# Participation

## Your right to be heard and taken seriously

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. Throughout your time in care you had a right to support from an independent advocate and this is the same even now you are a Care Leaver. Independent advocates can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They are separate from Children's Services. If you already had an independent advocate and would want to continue with this support or would like to get in touch with one please speak to your Personal Advisor and they will assist you with this.

You have a right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care. We will advise you about how to get these records if you want to do this.

## Celebrating Achievements

We hold regular events to celebrate the achievements of children in care and care leavers, including the annual Care Leavers Achievement Awards, where you will receive recognition for your achievements across 6 categories; Education, Employment, Apprenticeships, Employability, Contribution to Service Improvement and Outstanding Achievement. In addition to receiving

awards for your hard work, you and your guest can enjoy celebrating your success with a three-course meal and live entertainment by local artists.

## Support that we offer

### Where you live

- Staying with your former foster carer after you turn 18. If this is what you and your foster carer(s) want, we will support you to remain with your foster carers under what is called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last until you are age 21.
- We have many different ways for you to get suitable housing, including supported accommodation if you are not ready for your own tenancy. If you are ready for your own flat, we will work with Nottingham City Homes to ensure that you are a priority when you are bidding for properties up to the age of 25 years. If you require supported accommodation, we will support you to do this by referring to the Housing Gateway and supporting you through the assessment process, including coming to appointments with you.
- We will help you to set up home and provide you with financial support to buy the items you need when moving into your new home and in choosing these items.
- We have an agreement with Nottingham City Homes that all care leavers in a Nottingham

City Homes tenancy will have 2 carpets provided (for 2 rooms of your choice) and decorating vouchers for their properties where needed.

- We will give you practical help moving in and looking after your home, including advice about decorating, minor repairs and cleaning. We will give advice about paying rent and bills regularly.
- We will give advice about your tenancy (the official agreement or contract between you and your landlord that lets you live in a property as long as you pay rent and follow the rules). If you are in a Nottingham City Homes property, the Housing Patch Manager will also support you with this.
- If you have a Nottingham City Homes tenancy with a garden, all grass and hedges will be trimmed for you when you move in. You will get an hours support from the NCH caretaking team if you need it and the free hire of garden tools. You will also be able to go on a Tenant Academy course to learn more about gardening and organisations which support tenants with growing projects.

## **Your Money**

We have an agreement between Nottingham City Council and the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) to make sure that we do our very best to work together to support you. This includes:

- Being able to claim for benefits before you are 18 so that you are not waiting for them when you become 18.
- The DWP understanding that sometimes things might go wrong so they will always contact your Personal Advisor and Job Centre Leader before thinking about imposing any sanctions.

The Leaving Care Service will also ensure that:

- All Personal Advisors are trained on Universal Credit and able to give you the support you need to get your benefits.
- If you are claiming Universal Credit you will have access to online facilities at our Leaving Care Centre at Isabella Street.
- We will make sure that your rent is paid directly to your landlord where possible.
- We support you with setting up a bank account and accessing your savings.
- We help you to get identification documents, (important pieces of paper about you) to help you open up a bank account and other important things you need to do.

Nottingham City Council will also exempt you from paying Council Tax up to the age of 20 years.

## **Education, training and employment**

We want to support you with whatever you decide you want to do when you are 18 so we will make sure that you are getting the right advice and guidance about what you want to do next and have options available to you to pursue education, training or employment. We have a dedicated employment advisor in our Leaving Care Team who can help you with those decisions, but you can also talk to your Personal Advisor.

### **Employment**

If you want to get a job we will support you by:

Making sure you have access to the Leaving Care Service employability programme to make positive steps towards training and employment. The programme is recognised by the Department of Works and Pensions as a genuine job seeking provision for care leavers. The programme provides opportunities that aim to build your confidence so that you feel able to move onto training or employment. You will be involved in all aspects of planning your programme which could involve a mentor.

Offering delivery of ASDAN courses where you will have the opportunity to achieve employability qualifications (from entry level to level 2).

Sometimes if you are not quite sure what you want to do work experience can help you make a decision. Our care leavers thought this would be a

good idea so we have worked with education providers in the city to help give you a range of work experience opportunities. For example, the Work Inspiration scheme at Nottingham Trent University runs throughout the year and provides opportunities across a wide range of work experiences. In addition, Nottingham College will, where possible, seek work placement or experience opportunities for care leavers not enrolled at the college. The DWP will also offer work experience if you are getting benefits and health organisations can offer work experience to care leavers who wish to pursue a career in health. Nottingham City Council will also offer work experience and taster opportunities within the Council. Please talk to your Personal Advisor if you want to find out more about work experience.

## **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are a really good way of getting into work. In Nottingham there are lots of opportunities for apprenticeships with Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes as well as other businesses.

- Nottingham City Council know that these are hard to get so will make sure that you and your Personal Advisors are told about any apprenticeship opportunities within the City Council at the same time as going to recruitment partners. You will also be offered wrap around support. This would include regular review meetings with apprentice managers and PA's; and where needed,

access to the additional support e.g. Maths / English support, resilience coaching and mentoring sessions.

- Apprenticeships are very popular and securing an interview can be difficult enough. With this in mind we will guarantee you an interview should meet the minimum criteria of the role.

**We will also provide additional support by:**

- Making sure that any apprenticeship assessments or interviews are at a place that is right for you.
- Helping with transport costs to attend interviews for training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews.
- Preparation for interviews and where appropriate financial support to purchase suitable interview clothing.

**If you want to go to college:**

We understand that sometimes it is hard to go on your own to enrol at college so Nottingham College is offering you the chance to enrol at a different time if you want to. Nottingham College will also provide you with the following:

- Access to an Achievement Coach, wellbeing support and health advice.
- Support through the college and your personal advisor to support your attendance.
- A named person to support in you to get an appropriate work placement or work experience.

- Support to visit the colleges if you just want to find out more.

**If you want to go to university:**

We will encourage you to go to university and help you choose which one and where.

We will provide you with a Higher Education (HE) bursary of £2,000 if you go to University and we will help you to consider how this is best spent.

We will also provide somewhere for you to stay during University holidays (or funding for this if you would prefer to make your own arrangements) if you are in full time HE and your term time accommodation is not available. This is for 21 weeks of non-term time rent.

We will provide a living allowance equivalent to benefit rate.

We will help you with an application to Student Finance England for tuition fees and student loans; and we give you travelling costs to get to and from University at the start and end of term.

Locally, Nottingham University and Nottingham Trent University will give you lots of information about how they can help you before you apply to them.

Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham University may offer the following through their Growing Lives Programme:



- Campus visits for you before you arrive and/or additional welcome activities if you want to go to them.
- A bursary for financial support of £500.
- A dedicated support officer to help you while you are at University.
- Money advisers to help you apply for all you are entitled to and work out a budget to suit your needs and interests. Nottingham University offer this before you get to university.
- A guaranteed offer of University-allocated accommodation if you have accepted a place at Nottingham Trent University as your first choice - accommodation in halls is available throughout the summer vacation too.
- Nottingham University give you accommodation throughout the year and will help you move in if you are travelling on your own.
- A personal health and wellbeing welcome pack.
- Help accessing all support services.

Nottingham Trent University are also offering opportunities to find out more about the UK higher education system and accessing finance, tours and academic taster sessions, as well as English-language support at evening classes and an annual summer school.

## **Relationships, Health and wellbeing**

We care about your health and we want you to feel supported to be as physically and emotionally healthy as possible. Everyone is unique and we all cope with challenges in different ways, therefore it is important that you have a choice in what type of help you receive around your health and that it suits your needs. To do this we will:

- Give free leisure passes to all 8 city leisure centres for all of our Care Leavers between the ages of 18-21 (4 years)
- Give you a reduced rate of £20 per month for your leisure pass when you reach 22 as hopefully by then you will be settled into a job
- Work really closely with companies in Nottingham to offer some free tickets to sporting events. These will be offered on our website so you will need to keep a close eye on what we are offering!
- We will support you to access the information available about your health and health history
- We will support you, prior to you leaving care, in accessing local and national services so that by the time you have your final health assessment you are confident in having the adequate information needed
- With your consent, support you with accessing a local GP and who will ensure you are offered the necessary services around your health

- Make sure you have a place at Isabella Street where you can go to relax, use the computers and find out more about things that you need and the support that we will offer.
- Advise you about contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past like former foster carers
- Help you to form and keep healthy, safe relationships with family and friends
- Help you access support if you have a child such as parenting groups, access to the Family Nurse Partnership and early years support.
- Make sure that no care leaver is on their own on Christmas Day and will hold an annual Christmas dinner



## And finally...

We will help you to share your views and be involved in improving the way we support you, by

listening to your views in meetings and by surveys. Or you could be part of the Your Voice Group, the Care Leavers consultation group, which takes place quarterly. The group is closely linked to the Children in Care Council, with care leavers regularly feeding back on the work undertaken by the group, to other young people who are approaching leaving care. The Your Voice group has participated in meetings with Councillors regarding access to housing and supported accommodation; education, employment and training and the 'Have Your Say' survey findings.

For any additional information, or to talk through the contents of this leaflet, please contact your Personal Advisor who will be happy to help you.

## The support we must give you by law

### **Advice and Support from a Personal Advisor**

Following changes introduced through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, you will be able to ask for support from a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25, whether you are in education or training or not.

Your Personal Advisor is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. Personal Advisers should talk to you about what support you need and record this information in your pathway plan.