

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 21 July 2014 from 2.33 pm - 3.53 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Marcia Watson

Absent

Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Eileen Morley
Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Wendy Smith

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Mary-Kate Gavin	- Children in Care Council member
Heidi Watson	- Business in the Community
Sharon Clarke	- Service Manager, Children in Care
Jon Rea	- Early Intervention and Partnerships Officer
Evonne Rogers	- Head of Business Support
Kay Sutt	- Service Manager, Children's Residential and Targeted Support
Gill Moy	- Director of Housing (Nottingham City Homes)
Sonia Sandiford	- Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption
Viv McCrossen	- Head of Service, Family Community Teams Central
Kwesi Williams	- Project Officer, Children in Care
Tania McDonald	- Team Manager, CAMHS Co-ordinator, Children Looked After
Elise Ashworth	- Insight Manager
Alan Monaghan	- Senior Personal Adviser, 15 Plus Team
Caroline Riley	- Principle Manager, Quality Assurance
Bev Beatie	- Foster Carer Representative
Councillor Dewinton	- Observer
Cath Ziane-Pryor	- Constitutional Services

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Eileen Morley
Councillor Jackie Morris
Helen Blackman
Councillor Wendy Smith
Amanda Edmonds
Tanya Mackley

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

14 IMPROVING AND ACHIEVING GOOD HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY'S CHILDREN IN CARE

Tania McDonald, Team Manager of Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Children Looked After, and Viv McCrossan, Head of Service Family Community Teams Central, presented the report and summary presentation, outlining the progress to date on improving and achieving good health outcomes for Nottingham City's Children in Care.

The team, who offer guidance concerning health and social care, consists of:

- team co-ordinators
- consultant psychiatrist
- clinical psychologist
- specialist nurse
- specialist social worker
- art psychotherapist
- business support.

The following points are highlighted;

- (a) the CAMHS Children in Care Team have received positive written and verbal feedback from both the recent Care Quality Commission and the OFSTED inspections;
- (b) it is noted that 13% of Children in Care are located in other districts, so it is important to ensure that the appropriate health support is available for these children;
- (c) Nottingham University is piloting a scheme call 'Listen Up', which is focusing on the experiences of self-harm with a view to helping shape services and encourage a better understanding of the issue;
- (d) the team want to ensure that all children and young people living in care outside of the area, have access to CAMHS;
- (e) the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) screening tool will provide indicators for the health of each child;
- (f) to enable a speedy response to issues, psychologists provide acute slots on a weekly basis for children and young people.

The Board's questions were responded to as follows:

- (g) for some of the younger children, the SDQs are completed in conjunction with their foster carers/adoptive parents or carer home workers;
- (h) before children are placed outside of the area, the Placement Board consider the services required by the child and the services available from that local authority or provider to ensure that provision in that area will meet the needs of that child. Not all local authorities have a bespoke children in care CAMH Service such as Nottingham;
- (i) the required services must be in place before Nottingham City Council withdraws from providing mental health services;
- (j) if a child is to be placed with a private organisation, as part of the commissioning, that organisation must confirm that appropriate services/provision is in place;

- (k) if a child is to be placed into a therapeutic community, it is ensured that the full range of services, including mental health, can be provided to meet the required, or potentially required, needs of that child;
- (l) where emergency placements are required, formal reviews of those placements take place at 20 days, 3 months and then 6 monthly.

The Board expressed concern that some young people are placed a long way away from Nottingham.

RESOLVED

- (1) for the CAMHS Children Looked After Team to ensure that:**
 - (i) every Child in Care has an Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) completed at the Initial Health Assessment;**
 - (ii) six monthly monitoring of SDQ scores is introduced to ensure that a robust screening process is embedded in the looked after child reviews;**
- (2) to ensure that, in partnership with the Health Teams, all Children who are placed out of the Nottingham area receive robust monitoring in relation to their emotional and mental health needs;**
- (3) for out of hours emergency appointments to continue to be seen by the CAMHS medical on-call system and for the Children In Care Team to provide acute appointments for consultations on a weekly basis;**
- (4) for a drop-in service for Post-Adoption to be developed;**
- (5) for a report to be submitted to a future meeting regarding the consideration of and process for placement of young people outside of the local authority area.**

15 SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION

Alan Monaghan, Senior Personal Adviser in the 15 Plus Team, presented the report updating the Board on the continuing work to provide suitable accommodation to Nottingham City's care leavers.

The following points were highlighted;

- (a) the partnership between the Children in Care Team of the City Council and Nottingham City Homes (NCH), is increasingly robust;
- (b) NCH offer a range of services and support to help young people leaving care to establish and maintain independence as tenants;
- (c) semi-independent supported housing is available for some 16-18 year olds although some may choose to live in shared houses with or without support;
- (d) further work is being undertaken on the 'staying put' policy for the vulnerable young people in residential homes, the Care Leavers Team can provide supported accommodation for young people who are not ready to live independently;

- (e) NCH are to investigate the possibility of operating Houses in Multiple Occupation to help support young care leavers;
- (f) work with unaccompanied asylum seekers is progressing well with a responsibility of care continuing for local authorities until the age of 21;
- (g) when young people choose not to maintain contact and do not have a NCH tenancy, it is impossible to know if they are living in suitable accommodation;
- (h) young people in custody are the responsibility of local authorities but cannot be considered to be living in suitable accommodation by the DFE.

The Board's questions were responded to as follows;

- (i) Some care leavers choose to start their adult life without referring back maintain contact with the local authority as a carer. At some point these care leavers do make contact, sometimes with problem, or even just to say that they are okay;
- (j) once young people enter into private tenancies, it is virtually impossible to trace them unless they choose to make contact;
- (k) the 'staying put' policy for children in foster care at the recently reviewed and, on individual needs basis, an allowance can be paid until the young person reaches 21 years of age (or 25 if in full-time education) so that the young person becomes a lodger in their foster home;
- (l) although a young person may wish to live independently, the agreement of the foster carer and/or child support workers is required. If one party does not agree, a contract is drawn out which can be reviewed at the request of either party;
- (m) if a young person aged between 18 and 21 years old leaves care, they are not able to return to the care system and benefit from the 'Staying Put' legislation.

Following points were made by the Board;

- (n) Some young people are not ready to live independently at 18 years old especially if they have learning difficulties, so the extension 21 years of age is welcomed;
- (o) NCH offers support to young people who are setting up home in any NCH tenancy by offering a furnished tenancy scheme which can include linen and furniture packs and a range of services to help them settle, and then to maintain their tenancy.

RESOLVED to continue to support the work undertaken to provide suitable accommodation to Nottingham City's care leavers.

16 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN REVIEW PARTICIPATION

Caroline Riley of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, presented the report which examines the participation of children in looked after reviews.

The Independent Review Officers (IROs) are independent of the local authority and meet with looked after children and young people to hear in person, about how they feel about the care they receive and their life in general.

It is noted that while children aged 4 years and under are not expected to attend a review, from 5 year olds, participation of some sort, including via an advocate, is expected. For 2013-14, 95.5% of eligible young people participated in their review, compared to 92.6% in 2012-13.

Following the implementation of some recommendations previously submitted by IROs, there has been a massive improvement in service operation, assisted by the establishment of 2 extra IRO posts.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the children and young people often independently contact their independent review officers (IROs) between scheduled meetings;
- (b) the meetings are about the young person and are not school focused;
- (c) creative ways of communicating with children and young people are being considered and may include Skype;
- (d) there is an IRO representative who attends the Children in Care Council and feeds back any relevant issues the IRO Team.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the current levels of performance in relation to children and young people participation;**
- (2) to note the following improvements suggested by the Independent Review Offices in relation to performance:**
 - (i) recruitment of staff to reduce caseloads;**
 - (ii) continue to develop ways to engage children and young people making use of other media.**

17 PATHWAY PLANNING

Sharon Clarke, Service Manager for Children in Care, presented the report which outlines the legislative duty of the City Council with regard to pathway planning for children in care and the action taken to address issues raised by a recent peer review/OFSTED inspection.

It is noted that a new electronic Pathway Plan (ePP) has been developed which complies with the updated pathway planning guidance, is smoother, sharper, outcome focused and easier for the young person to understand and respond to. Once legally approved it is predicted to be in place by September 2014. It is hoped that the new format will encourage greater participation and engagement with young people in care, including setting goals and planning their futures.

The Board's questions were responded to and points highlighted as follows:

- (a) pathway plans are reviewed and updated every 6 months;
- (b) since 2012 'looked after children' has included young people in custody. Between April 2012 and March 2013, 30 young people in the City were remanded;
- (c) a life skills programme steers young people towards independence;
- (d) there has been improvement in performance with 83.8% of eligible young people having a compliant pathway plan, and 99% of care leavers having a compliant plan.

RESOLVED

- (1) to continue to support required duties in respect of Pathway Planning;**
- (2) to support the implementation of a new revised e-Pathway Plan.**

18 REPORTING SCHEDULE 2014/15

Kwesi Williams, Children in Care Project Officer, Introduced the reporting schedule for 2014-15 and explained to the Board that the numbers in brackets beside each item referred to a Strategic Priorities Statement.

RESOLVED that subject to the following changes, the reporting schedule is noted:

- (i) Children in care placements, commissioning and sufficiency strategy, is submitted to the September meeting;**
- (ii) activity of the employability education and training focus group is submitted to the November meeting;**
- (iii) the Service Manager for Residential and Targeted Support update the board on the results of the OFSTED Children's Residential Homes Inspection.**

19 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL - VERBAL UPDATE

Mary-Kate Gavin, Children in Care Council (CiCC) member, updated the Board on the recent activities of the Children in Care Council which have included:

- (a) supporting the Youth Offending Team;**
- (b) consideration of Missing Children in Care;**
- (c) involvement with 'Have Your Say';**
- (d) discussions with NCH and looking at what placements are available;**
- (e) encouraging improvements and updates of personal Education Plans (PEPs) with schools.**

Some new members have been recruited to the Children in Care Council but there is still room for more.

The Chair reminded members of the Board that if they would like to observe a session of the CiCC, they should contact Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer.

RESOLVED to note the activities of the CiCC and thank Mary-Kate Gavin for her attendance and contribution to the meeting.