

Public Document Pack

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 19 June 2017 from 2.30 pm - 4.06 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Marcia Watson
Councillor Sam Webster

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

BB

Helen Blackman	Director of Children's Social Care
Sonia Cain	Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption
Clive Chambers	Head of Service – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Sharon Clarke	Service Manager
Sam Oliver	Children in Care Council
Sameer Patel	Employment, Education and Training Personal Advisor
Lynn Pearce	Team Manager, Leaving Care Service
Jon Rea	Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
James Welbourn	Governance Officer
Jordan Whatman	Project Officer, Children in Care

1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Ginny Klein was appointed as Vice-Chair for 2017/18.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson - personal reasons

TM

Steve Comb
Larelle Flowers
Sally Porter
Julia Stachowiak

Kay Sutt

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

5 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all new and returning Members, and Officers to the first meeting of 2017/18.

6 QUALITY ASSURANCE VISITS OF REGULATED AND NON-REGULATED RESIDENTIAL PROVISIONS

Clive Chambers, Head of Service – Quality and Assurance introduced a report on Quality Assurance (QA) Visits of Regulated and Non-regulated Residential Provisions.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) there is a requirement in residential care for regulation 44 visits to be undertaken – this is one element of the quality assurance framework for residential childcare;
- (b) there is a rota for staff that undertake regulation 44 updates, including people from across, and outside the department;
- (c) Residential provision provided by Nottingham City Council is based around small residential homes. Respite care is an exception to this;
- (d) a parallel process for undertaking quality assurance visits for semi-independent provision from childhood into adulthood has been introduced. This is not a regulatory requirement but was introduced as it was deemed good practice;

Following questions from Members, further information was provided:

- (e) there are a number of ways in which the recommendations of QA reports are followed up on. OFSTED monitors reports, as it provides them with an ongoing sense of what is happening in a home. They also look at actions taken to make sure they have been addressed properly. Recommendations are always looked at in subsequent visits and are discussed with unit managers;
- (f) a visit to a children's home is to be arranged for Members later in 2017;

- (g) private homes where Nottingham City Council do not have children placed are monitored by the Children in Care Police Officer. These homes are within the City boundaries.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) support continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals undertaking Regulation 44 visits and to welcome member's involvement in quality assurance visits of unregulated semi-independent homes for care leavers;**
- (2) continue to receive regular updates in respect of outcomes of visits.**

7 ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY

Sonia Cain, Service Manager Fostering and Adoption introduced a report on Adoption and Permanency.

The report provided an overview of the permanency performance of the Local Authority, particularly with regard to the number of adoptions. The report focused primarily on adoption activity and the plan for a Regional Adoption Agency.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) there have been 7 children adopted from 1 April 2017;
- (b) government policy has a strong national drive on adoption. Case law requires that adoption should not be the plan for a child until all efforts with the birth family had been exhausted. However, this affected certain children as in some cases relatives can be presented at a late stage in proceedings, which can cause delay;
- (c) it is expected that children with an adoption plan will be placed with adopters in a timely way and performance is measured in this regard. Each child is tracked through legal processes, so that there is an idea of when that process will end. In Nottingham City adoption will continue to be sought as an outcome for older young people. Not all authorities have this approach;
- (d) Nottingham City Council always try and place sibling groups together, but there may be reasons why this is not possible. A sibling assessment may be necessary;
- (e) work is done with children to support them on what is a challenging journey.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the performance to date in relation to Permanency Planning for Children in Care, this can be in the form of Adoption, Permanent Fostering or Special Guardianship;**

- (2) **present the Adoption and Permanency report to the Corporate Parenting Board on a regular basis.**

8 PILOT OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services introduced a report on the Pilot OFSTED inspection of Children's Services.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) Nottingham City Council were last inspected in April 2014, with the annual rotation being a three-yearly inspection. The 2014 inspection judged that overall Nottingham City Council required improvement;
- (b) Children's Services volunteered to take part in an inspection piloting a new methodology. Four OFSTED inspectors undertook this over a two week period from 23 January 2017;
- (c) Inspectors reviewed 270 cases, and tracked them through the system. OFSTED gave positive feedback and highlighted that one of the biggest drivers for improvement had been the move to have one directorate;
- (d) this pilot inspection does not change Nottingham City Council's official rating. However, the pilot letter received back from OFSTED can be published – this gave an overall effectiveness score of 'Good';
- (e) 'Early Help' is not rated as part of this inspection, but it was indicated that this work was 'Outstanding';
- (f) areas for improvement were identified, with a key one being that around 20 individuals made a choice that they didn't want to work with the Leaving Care team. OFSTED felt that enough hadn't been done to try to re-engage with these individuals given their vulnerability.

Members thanked all staff members and partner organisations for the pilot rating.

RESOLVED to note the findings of the inspection.

9 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer provided Members with an update on the activities of the Children in Care (CiC) Council.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the design of the 'Have Your Say' survey will be looked at from July this year;
- (b) in April, the CiC Council was busy with a music workshop, and a run-around workshop. These helped children with confidence, and development skills;

- (c) there are currently 15 active members of the CiC Council; several others are being assessed for suitability. There is strong Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) representation;
- (d) the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) profile of the CiC Council is strong; seven out of 15 members have a BME profile. The oldest member is 19, and the youngest is 13.

Your Voice is another participation group that also work with children; however they are more aimed at children who are leaving care;

- (e) work is ongoing to develop a digital newsletter which will provide monthly updates from the CiC Council, as well as signposting young people to services. This will be for staff, as well as young people and carers, and will hopefully launch in the autumn of 2017;
- (f) joint work is being carried out with the Placements Service, with Corporate CiC Council themes being fed into this work. Specifically, the work is focusing on how issues highlighted by young people can be incorporated into the quality assurance of homes;
- (g) a KICC (Kids in Care Council) is imminent. This is an ad-hoc group that undertakes events for younger children in care. This will be on August 1 – there are a group of 8 children around the age 11-12 who are interested in taking part.

RESOLVED to note the update.

10 KEEP ON CARING

Lynn Pearce and Sameer Patel gave an update on 'Keep on Caring'.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) Nottingham City is one of 85 authorities were involved in the leaving care forum, which provides an opportunity for benchmarking and sharing practice;. There is currently no East Midlands forum, so Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire are meeting to discuss creating one;
- (b) there are three satellite homes for 'staying close' – this id about having a close connection with staff that children have worked with. There is also a satellite home used for short transitional accommodation – young people who want a sample of what living independently would be like;
- (c) partnerships with external agencies can secure funding for young people; one such example of this is a partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). A further example was Sportivate – activities around health, such as sports memberships;
- (d) the employability programme was based around improving access to education, training and employment;

In 2014/15 figures for education training and employment were around 50%. Through the employability programme, bespoke programmes were delivered for the most disengaged young people. The figure for 2016/17 was 70.7%;

- (e) the employability programme will be continued, as will the housing gateway, and improved access to mental health support;

Following questions from Members, and a video onscreen, further information was provided:

- (f) Futures advisors are actively engaged with the leaving care service. They have helped to set up opportunities in the apprenticeships scheme at Nottingham City Council. There is help for care leavers to access this scheme;
- (g) not all children take up the offer of the employability programme but there is ongoing encouragement and support for them to explore other options.

RESOLVED to thank Lynn and Sameer for the update.

11 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed those present that a lot of work has been put into finding and recruiting foster carers. Three events had been held at primary schools, attended by around 17 people.

There has also been work with the faith communities; the event of St. Nicholas' Church involved a visit from the Bishop of Southwell. There was also an event held at the mosque in Bobbers' Mill.

12 FORWARD PLANNER

RESOLVED to agree the forward planner for 2017/18,

13 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED to approve the following meetings in 2017/18:

**17 July 2017;
18 September 2017;
20 November 2017;
15 January 2018;
19 March 2018.**

Ofsted Pilot Inspection of Children's Services

23rd January - 3rd February 2017

Key Areas of Positive Feedback

- Catalyst for our improvements was move to become 'One Directorate'.
- Regional peer review and challenge is well used to inform services and shape future provision.
- We continue to work hard to recruit a permanent workforce. They particularly liked our plans for Grow your Own and our ASYE programme.
- Resources are deployed strategically, where it will make the biggest difference to children and young people.
- The Local Authority has invested heavily in an integrated model for effective partnership working.

Key Areas of Positive Feedback

- We are becoming an employer of choice and our reliance on agency workers is reducing.
- We have successfully created an environment where good and outstanding practice can flourish.
- The diverse needs of children are well understood.
- Listening to the voice of the child across our work is a real strength.
- Access to a wide range of effective early help services for children and their families results in risks being minimised and children's welfare improving.

Key Areas of Positive Feedback

- Our Integrated Locality Hubs offer accessible, responsive and effective forum to support multi-agency services.
- Children's assessments are consistently good which lead to meaningful indicative plans.

Page 10

The support offer for disabled children is good, sensitive work leads to children and their families receiving tailored support.

- MST/MST-CAN offer and the Edge of Care Hub are two examples of creative use of resources. The support they provide improves the lives of children and families and is reducing the number of children coming into care.

Key Areas of Positive Feedback

- Social Workers know their children well and have the capacity to undertake direct work, whilst ensuring that they are listening to the voice of the child.
- Children live with carers who are proud and ambitious for them, and their achievements are celebrated.
- Children's emotional needs are regularly considered and children are supported by wrap-around services like CAMHS and Targeted Support.
- Educational outcomes for children in our care are improving due to the efforts of our excellent carers and the Virtual School.
- Early Help is seen as outstanding

Areas For Further Development

- Doing more to sustain contact and support care leavers who aren't currently engaged with us,
- Providing a more robust response for young people who present as homeless,
- Further work to understand the reasons for children going missing and ensuring that they receive the help they need
- Reviewing the capacity of our IRO service to ensure sufficient monitoring of children's plans between review meetings.

Areas For Further Development

- More work needs to be done to ensure that multi-agency information ensures decision-making at the 'front door' to Children's Integrated Services informs a shared view of need and risk.
- All partners, particularly Nottinghamshire Police and Schools, need to contribute to initial fact finding, assessment and planning in a more timely manner.
- Social Care will engage with partners to set clear expectations for responses.

Summary

- Feedback from inspectors highlighted the great progress that our service has made since its last inspection.
- Inspectors were clear that our workers complete meaningful work with children and their families, which leads to improved outcomes in all areas of their life.
- Throughout the inspection process inspectors credited the passion, enthusiasm and positivity of our staff.

Judgements

The impact of leaders on practice with children and families – Good.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection – Good.

The experiences and progress of children looked after and care leavers and achieving permanence – Requires Improvement .

Overall effectiveness – Good

This page is intentionally left blank