

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 20 June 2017 from Time Not Specified - Time Not Specified

Membership

Present

Councillor Sue Johnson (Chair)
Councillor Josh Cook (Vice Chair)
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Maria Ward

Absent

Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Brian Parbutt
Councillor Chris Tansley

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Nancy Barnard - Governance Manager
Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Sarah Fielding - Director of Education
Judith Harris - Leadership Support Officer
Kate Morris - Governance Officer
Tracy Nurse - Head of Child Protection
Michelle Roe - Executive Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Azad Choudhry – Personal
Councillor Georgina Culley - Personal
Councillor Neghat Khan – Council Business
Councillor Brian Parbutt – On leave
Councillor Chris Tansley - Personal

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Josh Cook as Vice Chair for the municipal year 2017/18

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Nancy Barnard, Governance Manager, introduced a report on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED to note the Terms of Reference for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

6 EDGE OF CARE SERVICES

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years introduced a report on the Edge of Care Services. Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services and Tracey Nurse, Head of Children's Social Work provided additional narrative and information. They highlighted the following information:

- (a) there has been a national rise in the number of children and young people who need to be accommodated and those involved in Care Proceedings. In response to this increase the Council has developed a range of services, known as Edge of Care Services, which work with children and families to ensure that, where it is safe to do so, children remain with their families and avoid the trauma of family breakdown;
- (b) the reasons that children and young people come into care are numerous and complex. As such a multi discipline approach centred around the child is necessary along with sustained work, continued support and a gradual withdrawal to offer effective edge of care services;
- (c) abuse and neglect are the top reason for younger children coming into care, however as the child gets older, generally, the main reasons change, and family breakdown, offending behaviour and mental health become the main driving factors to young people being accommodated;
- (d) the Edge of Care Panel was established in 2011 to respond to the increased demand for care alongside challenging budget restrictions. It aims to identify families in crisis and in need of urgent intervention and families that are at risk of breakdown in the foreseeable future where intervention will build resilience and prevent the breakdown;
- (e) Following the implementation of Edge of Care services the Edge of Care Hub was developed and MST (Multisystemic Therapy) introduced. The hub works with children and young people and their families between the ages of 0-18 and the focus is on families in crisis and Priority Families;
- (f) additional services such as MST standard are involved with children aged 11-18 and focuses on families where the young person is either offending or at risk of offending, risk of exclusion, has mental health issues or substance misuse issues. It also targets parent who have unresolved trauma and aims to tackle the underlying causes of family breakdown. This can involve mental

health support and substance misuse support for the parents as well as the young people within the family;

- (g) Safe Families is a faith based group that targets families with children 0-12 years old. They use trained volunteers to befriend troubled families offering flexible mentoring, respite, support within the home etc;
- (h) there has been a significant increase in interventions targeting children and young people most at risk of coming into care. These range from robust packages of support and intervention to accommodation. There are many services available to offer the tailored support that each family, and family member requires to improve their outcome;
- (i) the Edge of Care Panel is a weekly, multi-agency meeting chaired by the Head of Children's Social Work. There is representation from across Council Services, the Police, NSPCC and CAMHS and it works closely with those children and young people who are on the brink of being accommodated due to family break down;
- (j) Edge of Care Services allow multiple teams to approach a family collectively which enables the right combination of services to be matched to families. In 2012 57% of children and young people presented to the panel were accommodated. In January 2017 just 11% presented to the panel were accommodated.

Following discussion and questions the following points were highlighted:

- (k) the Edge of Care services date back to around 2010. The services were originally commissioned out but it quickly became apparent that the Edge of Care Hub would be a better model. MST is a programme that was started in America and was reported to be hugely successful, it came over to England, initially in the North East where results were very encouraging and has spread from there. In Nottingham it has reduced short term care by about 10%;
- (l) the cost of accommodating a child or young person in care is very expensive. The Council cannot afford for the care costs to increase and as such, the Edge of Care services save on care costs despite having their own costs;
- (m) the faith based groups do not only support families of the same faith, they support all families who are in need. Recruitment is being pursued through Mosques and temples as well as churches throughout Nottingham, and people of all faiths, and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to volunteer. When a child or young person is taken into care, where possible the cultural needs of the child are taken into account on placement, and social workers are generally reflective of the community;
- (n) Safer Families training is rigorous. The training is a programme similar to foster care training and can take up to 17 weeks to be complete, checks are made with the local authority to ensure that volunteers are not in contact with Care services themselves and other safeguarding checks are made. There is a lot of support and supervision for these volunteers;

- (o) families can be referred to services through Children and Families Direct:
 - The number to call is: 0115 8764800
 - You can also email: candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gcsx.gov.uk
- (p) when the child or young person remains with the family careful work is done to ensure that the family remains stable and functional. Withdrawal of services is gradual and fully assessed and monitored by the whole network of agencies involved, social care, school, CAMHS, community protections etc. There are no “check-ups” performed by social care following the end of contact as the situation is monitored by other agencies who will re-engage edge of care services if the family situation deteriorates;
- (q) adult mental health workers are in place within the hub to address mental health needs of parents and extended family members. They are able to fast track referrals to specialist support services where appropriate and link to community groups for lower level need;
- (r) the Edge of Care Panel meets on a Tuesday and has 5 slots each week and is generally always full. There is the facility that if urgent intervention is needed for a family then this can be put in place prior to the next panel;

RESOLVED to thank Councillor David Mellen, Helen Blackman and Tracey Nurse for their attendance and to note the content of their report.

7 SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN AND DUBLIN III UNIFIED FAMILIES

Councillor David Mellon, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years introduced a report on Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Dublin III Unified Families. He highlighted the following points:

- (a) When an unaccompanied child or young person under the age of 18 arrives in Nottingham seeking asylum they are taken into care. This sometimes required an age assessment to verify age. They receive all of the same support as other children in care receive, along with legal advice to progress their asylum claim;
- (b) it is mostly older, male teenagers who are arriving in Nottingham and over the last year there has been an increase in the number of those arriving. It is likely that this slight increase is due to the camp known as “the Jungle” in Calais being dispersed. The Council’s approach is to be compassionate yet firm;
- (c) Dublin III is a regulation set up by the EU whereby if children have a family connection to Nottingham they could come here. These children are not automatically taken into care but placed with the family already resident in Nottingham;

- (d) unfortunately half of these placements break down due to a variety of reasons, mainly lack of money, lack of space/appropriate accommodation, children not knowing the adult they have been placed with. These children are then taken into care, mainly through fostering or for the older teenagers, semi-independent living with support from mental health services, health care, and a Social Care plan. They also have access to education and training and once they reach 18 they are eligible for leaving care services;
- (e) the cost of care is an issue, which is why the Council's stance is compassionate yet firm, fostering placements are limited, and the cost of an agency placement has recently increased. The Home Office does provide funding for these young people's care but this does not cover the whole cost of each child Which is an issue seen across the country.

Following discussion, and questions from the Committee the following information was highlighted:

- (f) When a child comes to Nottingham to be unified with family under the Dublin III Unification the Home Office do not complete checks on the financial status or accommodation of the family member they will be joining. These checks are left to the Local Authorities that the children will be moving in to;
- (g) the Council works well with the Refugee Forum and is forging more links with the community and voluntary sector as work progresses;
- (h) the asylum system is a difficult and expensive system to navigate. Some people have been left for years without legal status, which often means that they are not eligible for financial support and not all children received leave to remain;
- (i) there are concerns that families are accepting children from relatives abroad without being able to care for them, solely for the potential for financial gain. There is also a risk of children remaining with abusive families as they fear being deported if they report their abuse to the authorities;
- (j) there are a very small number of children of these who are currently in Nottingham and are looked after where the Council is in touch with and working with relatives overseas who did not realise that they may be sending their child into a dangerous or abusive environment;

RESOLVED to thanks David Mellen for his attendance and to note the content of the report.

8 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Nancy Barnard introduced the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED to note the work that is currently planned for the municipal year 2017/18.

9 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED to meet on the following Tuesdays at 11am:

18 July 2017

19 September 2017

21 November 2017

19 December 2017

16 January 2018

20 March 2018