

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House on 31 March 2014 from 3.02pm to 4.42pm**

- ✓ Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Georgina Culley
- ✓ Councillor Emma Dewinton (minutes 41-48 inclusive)
- ✓ Councillor Glyn Jenkins
- ✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch
- ✓ Councillor Eileen Morley
- ✓ Councillor Jackie Morris
- ✓ Councillor Wendy Smith

✓ indicates present at meeting

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

Councillor Thulani Molife

- Heidi Watson - Business in the Community (BITC) Regional Director
- Evonne Rogers - Business Strategy and Support
- Larelle Flowers - Children in Care Council Member
- Katy Ball - Early Intervention, Quality and Commissioning
- Jon Rea - Early Intervention and Partnerships
- Tanya Mackley - Foster Carer
- Sharon Thompson - Health Partnerships
- Elise Darragh - Insight Manager
- PC Sam Flint - Nottinghamshire Police
- Gill Moy - Nottingham City Homes
- Joy Chambers ) Placement Service, Quality and Commissioning
- Holly Macer )
- Kwesi Williams - Project Officer, Children in Care
- Kay Sutt - Residential and Targeted Support
- Dorne Collinson - Safeguarding
- Sharon Clarke - Service Manager, Children in Care
- Malcolm Wilson - Virtual School, Education
- Cath Ziane-Pryor - Constitutional Services

#### **41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Ginny Klein  
Bev Beatie  
Helen Blackman

#### **42 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None

#### **43 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **44 PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS**

Malcolm Wilson, Virtual School Head Teacher, introduced the report which outlined the statistical and quality achievements in completing Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Care.

The following points were made:

- (a) as detailed in the report, during October and December 2013, the target of 90% or more completed PEPs had slipped to 89%. However, the latest available figures showed that during February 2014 94% of PEPs had been completed, raising the year average to 92.5%;
- (b) it is not just the number of PEPs which are completed but also the quality of the PEP and what is being done to address any identified educational need;
- (c) quality does currently vary but this is to be addressed;
- (d) the feasibility of commissioning an e-PEP system was investigated but rejected due to complicating factors including internet access at some sites;
- (e) schools are able to attach additional information such as behaviour and attendance but this needs to include how the child is progressing and what is planned to address any issues.

The Chair extended the Board's congratulations to everyone involved in achieving the high level of completed PEPs.

**RESOLVED to note:**

- (a) the maintenance of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) completion figures at over 90% and the actions undertaken to address the quality of PEPs;**
- (b) developments planned to enhance the quality of the written records of PEP meetings.**

#### **45 REGULATION 33 VISITS - INTERNAL RESIDENTIAL**

Kay Sutt, Service Manger for Residential and Targeted Support, presented the report which updated the Board on the outcome of 'Regulation 33 visits' which are undertaken monthly by voluntary independent inspectors to examine children's homes, including records, and where children are willing, informally interview the children in care in the home.

The report outlined;

- what the visits involve;
- performance issues identified from Regulation 33 visits;
- the feedback from the children and visitors.

Ms Sutt highlighted the following points:

- (a) the Regulation 33 visits are useful as visitors enter with a new perspective than the staff and young people, and see alternative ways to improve things;
- (b) the children and young people generally enjoy the visits and meeting the visitors and have the opportunity to provide information, give opinions and lodge complaints;
- (c) the recent Ofsted grading for care homes resulted in 1 outstanding, 2 good and 3 adequate. While outstanding is the ideal, the aim is to raise the 'adequate' homes to at least 'good' ratings;
- (d) while the visitors have to be independent of the Local Authority, Councillors do have the opportunity to shadow Children in Care colleagues who visit the homes.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) to continue involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals to undertake Regulation 33 visits including making reciprocal arrangements with a neighbouring local authority;**
- (2) for outcomes of reports to be analysed and monitored by the Residential Service Manager to identify trends and patterns to improve performance as well as to share good practice;**
- (3) that in order to increase the understanding of Corporate Parenting Board members into the running of internal Residential Homes, arrangements will be made for the following Board members to visit the homes with an Officer in the near future:**  
  
**Heidi Watson (Business in the Community)**  
**Councillor Wendy Smith**  
**Councillor Carole McCulloch**  
**Councillor Glyn Jenkins**  
**Councillor Eileen Morley**  
**Councillor Emma Dewinton**
- (4) for the Corporate Parenting Board to be updated regularly in respect of visit outcomes.**

## **46 CHILDREN IN CARE PLACEMENTS - COMMISSIONING AND SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2014-2016**

Holly Macer, Lead Contact Officer, Katy Ball, Head of Early Intervention and Market Development, and Joy Chambers, Placement Service, all of Quality and Commissioning, jointly presented the report and delivered a presentation which has been added to the online agenda following the meeting.

'The strategy lays out the City's vision and commitments to all children and young people requiring a care placement and explores the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands to signal to the placement market'.

The following points were made and responses given to Councillor's questions:

- (a) Each year there are over 600 new placements made. Typically, 250-300 of these are children and young people entering care, with the remainder being moves between existing placements. The Looked After population has been increasing at an average rate of 3.9% each year.
- (b) all providers are quality assured, including internal providers, and every placement is checked to ensure that the children and local authority are receiving what has been agreed and paid for;
- (c) the Quality and Commissioning Team state the standard expected and the payment band available, in line with the East Midlands Regional Provider Framework;
- (d) the types of placements needed is monitored but it is difficult to predict the number of places that will be needed;
- (e) 83% of placed children are resident within 20 miles of Nottingham in placements that are judged as 'good' or 'outstanding'. If a provider ranks lower, the Team will liaise with the child, provider and social care team;

Councillors and Carer representatives made the following comments:

- (f) the opportunities which providers offer for young people to engage with the local community should be considered;
- (g) it is ludicrous that the child's behaviour can impact on a providers' Ofsted rating and so this deters some external providers from offering placements to children with more complex needs such as high risk behaviour and requiring higher levels of support;
- (h) the progress to date is welcomed.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the comments of the Board;**
- (2) to endorse the Children in Care Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014-2016.**

## **47 ADOPTION SCORE CARD UPDATE**

Dorne Collinson, Safeguarding, and Sharon Clarke, Children in Care Service Manager, presented the report which summarises the performance of the local authority during the year from April 2013 to date against internal targets and in line with the DfE scorecard which has been introduced as part of a new approach set out in 'An action plan for adoption: tracking delay' (March 2012). It also outlines the impact of some of the activities introduced within the context of the Government's adoption and fostering reform agenda to minimise delay in adoption.

Since 2010, Nottingham City Council has consistently reduced the time scales between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (indicator 1), and the average time between a local authority receiving a court order to place a child, and the child being matched to an adoptive family (indicator 2).

The following measures are being taken to improve performance and reduce adoption delays:

- (a) a new Foster Carer and Adopter Marketing and Recruitment Strategy including staff communication plan;
- (b) two Customer Service Officers to support adopters and prospective adopters, also managing the Adopter's Application Process (AAP) – Adopters Application Journey (AAJ);
- (c) a more co-ordinated and systematic use of the AAJ throughout the service.
- (d) implementation of the 2 Stage Adoption Application Procedure.
- (e) use of the temporary fast track Social Workers at key stages of the child's journey through the adoption process.
- (f) from Jan 2014 increase the number of Approval and Matching Panels and the number of cases per panel.
- (g) introduction of robust performance management systems to incorporate key stages of the adoption journey.
- (h) Adoption Activity Flow Chart – Extension of the AAJ and AAP to incorporate better planning and increase staff awareness of the overall process
- (i) review of Post Order Services to increase the confidence and ability of adopters in taking on more challenging children
- (j) a rolling programme of information evenings, matching events and activity days.

During discussion of the item the following points were made:

- (k) 44 adoptions will have been completed by this year end;
- (l) the main delay is finding an appropriate place for each child as many have complex needs;
- (m) there are currently 161 children in the adoption process at the moment;
- (n) standard assessments are not impacted by time scale targets and continue to be robust resulting in very few adoption breakdowns;
- (o) where appropriate and following means testing, an adoption allowance can be paid as the Team do not want people to be deterred by the financial implications.

**RESOLVED to note:**

- (a) the activities that are being undertaken to tackle delays in adoption;**
- (b) the progress being made in improving performance against the Adoption Scorecard.**

**48 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE**

Larelle Flowers, member of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), updated the Board on the Council's activity which included:

- (a) consideration of the 'Have your say' survey;
- (b) regional and national work with other CiCC of other Local Authorities, considering and identifying the strengths and challenges of Nottingham City's CiCC;
- (c) consideration of how to recruit young people to the CiCC;
- (d) planning how to engage with and establish a CiCC section of younger children in care under 12 years of age;
- (e) working with the NSPC;
- (f) responding to consultation of the Children in Care Health Team;

- (g) planning engagement events such as summer picnics and days out, including meals out.

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer in Early Intervention and Partnerships, informed the Board that the CiCC had helped to improve arrangements for children in care by assisting with the development of pathway plans of the 'have your say' survey, and contributing the views of young people on consultation regarding mental health and wellbeing.

**RESOLVED to note the Board's appreciation :**

- (a) to Mr Flowers for attending and updating the Board;
- (b) to the Children in Care Council for the valuable work they undertake and the contribution to improving services.

**49 CHILDREN IN CARE - CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2014-2016**

Kwesi Williams, Project Officer - Children on Care, introduced the report which incorporated the Board's amendments and suggestions to the proposed 'corporate parenting objectives'. which were presented for comment at the Board's January 2014 meeting.

In order to fulfil it's obligation of Ofsted's 'Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' (2013), local authorities are required to produce a strategic plan for looked after children that includes corporate parenting objectives.

Strategic Priority		Strategic Priority Statement (SPS)	
1	Reduce substance misuse.	1	To reduce young pregnancy and substance misuse. In addition to ensuring the timely completion of health checks, dental checks, immunisations, and SDQs.
2	Reduce young pregnancy.		
3	To ensure the timely completion of health checks, dental checks, immunisations, and SDQs (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires).		
4	To reduce delays in securing permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence orders and long term fostering.	2	NCC believes that all children should grow up with their birth families. Where this is not able to happen we will secure permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence orders or long term fostering.
5	Provide safe environments and stability in placement.		
6	Ensure children in care and care leavers are better able to deal successfully with significant changes in their lives.	3	To ensure children in care and care leavers are better able to deal successfully with significant changes in their lives. This includes improving transition into independence, and ensuring there are consultation and participation opportunities.
7	Improve transition into independence.		
8	Continue to seek the wishes and feelings of children in care and care leavers, and use this information to		

	influence the care and support they experience.		
<b>9</b>	Ensure children in care know about the Advocacy, Independent Visitor, and Complaints service.		
<b>10</b>	Improve educational attainment.	<b>4</b>	To improve the educational attainment of children in care and to ensure care leavers engage in employment, education or training, including voluntary and work experience opportunities.
<b>11</b>	Support children in care and care leavers into employment, training, work experience and volunteering.		
<b>12</b>	Ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support.	<b>5</b>	To ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support.
<b>13</b>	Reduce offending behaviour.	<b>6</b>	To reduce offending behaviour through strong collaborative partnership work.

It is recognised that once young people have left care and are living independently, many do not want to re-engage with the Local Authority on care leaver related matters.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to agree the Strategic Priorities and corresponding Strategic Priority Statements (SPS) above, (to include linking 'healthy relationships' to 'reducing young pregnancy') and to accepting the Strategic Priority Statements as 'corporate parenting objectives';
- (2) to endorse the 2014 – 2016 Nottingham City Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy.

**50 PROPOSED FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED** to note the proposed forward plan of issues to be considered by the Board for 2014-15.

**51 PROPOSED MEETING DATES IN THE NEXT MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED** to note the following proposed meeting dates of the Board for 2014-15 at 2.30pm in Loxley House as follows:

<b><u>2014</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>
<b>19 May</b>	<b>19 January</b>
<b>21 July</b>	<b>16 March</b>
<b>15 September</b>	
<b>17 November</b>	