

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 21 May 2018 from 2.31pm – 4.07pm

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Neghat Khan

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

BB - Foster Carer representative
Clive Chambers - Head of Children in Care Service
Larelle Flowers - Children in Care Council Young Person representative
Gill Moy - Director of Housing and Customer Services, Nottingham City Homes
Michael Rowley - Market and Contracts Lead Officer
Kay Sutt - Service Manager, Residential and Targeted Support
Audrey Taylor - Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption
Jordan Whatman - Project Officer, Children in Care
Phil Wye - Governance Officer

1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Ginny Klein as Vice-Chair for the 2018-19 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson – leave
Councillor Neghat Khan – other Council business
Helen Blackman
TM (foster carer representative)

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE VISITS OF REGULATED AND NON-REGULATED RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Kay Sutt, Service Manager, Residential and Targeted Support, introduced the report highlighting the following:

- (a) monthly Regulation 44 visits are required of all children's homes and units run by a local authority, or independent registered children's home provider. The visits must be undertaken by a person not employed by the home or directly responsible for it, and a written report of findings must be completed within a month;
- (b) in April 2016 a rota was also created for Nottingham City Council's semi-independent homes to be quality assured on a regular basis. This rota includes relevant professionals from various teams across the Council and Nottingham City Homes as well as Councillors;
- (c) young people in residential care and semi-independent provision are often highly vulnerable, so it is imperative that this provision is scrutinised independently to ensure that it is improving outcomes for children in care and delivering cost-effective services. Visits also ensure that young people have access to somebody independent should they need to complain or disclose information about the care they are receiving;
- (d) before being recruited onto the rota for visits, they are assessed to establish that they have the relevant experience, skills and qualifications before attending a training course on the standards and regulations;
- (e) since April 2011 residential services have been reconfigured into a Small Group Homes model. There are now 13 settled beds in five children's homes, four emergency beds and 21 semi-independent beds. Having more beds in the local authority area is better for stability of the young people and also cost-effective for the Council.

RESOLVED to

- (1) support continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals undertaking Regulation 44 visits and to welcome members' 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;**
- (3) liaise with Board members about the possibility of undertaking visits of children's homes and semi-independent homes.**

6 ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY

Audrey Taylor, Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption, introduced the report providing an overview of the permanency performance of the Local Authority and the number of adoptions, highlighting the following:

- (a) Nottingham City Council continues to make adoption plans for a significant number of children in its care, many of whom have complex medical conditions, belong to a sibling group, have a range of disabilities or have birth parents with complex histories;
- (b) in Nottingham City there are currently 98 children with adoption plans, 37 children who are currently matched with adopters, and 316 children who are being supported by means of a Special Guardianship allowance;
- (c) there were 34 children adopted in the last financial year which is fewer than the previous year where 42 were adopted. Neighbouring local authorities have also reported a reduction in adoptions. There has been an increase in the number of Special Guardianship Order placements, and also an increase in the number of contestor hearings from birth parents;
- (d) plans are underway to establish an East Midlands regional adoption agency by 2020. Initially, Nottingham City is working with Derbyshire, Derby City and Nottinghamshire to establish a D2N2 adoption agency from September. Children will still belong to Nottingham City but workers will come under the agency, which will also provide post-adoption support services;
- (e) a Permanency Panel has been established in order to make sure that adoption, Special Guardianship or fostering plans meet the needs of children and young people. Members of the Panel have commented on the recent improvement of cases presented to them;
- (f) there are 21 adoption matches to be considered between April to July which is a significant increase on last year, so the number of adoptions should rise this financial year.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (g) birth parents very rarely win their case when they contest adoptions, but it does slow the process for at least a few months;
- (h) the regional adoption agency is being created at the behest of the government. This should be in place for the 2019/20 financial year, and Nottingham City, along with Derbyshire, Derby City and Nottinghamshire, is ahead of other local authorities nationally;
- (i) the decision for a child to be adopted goes through many stages of scrutiny before being finalised, including a review by an independent reviewing officer, a court process and the adoption panel with an independent chair.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the performance to date in relation to permanency planning for children in care, which can be found in the form of Adoption, Permanent Fostering or Special Guardianship;**

- (2) receive updates through the Adoption and Permanency report annually. The report will enable the Adoption Leadership Board data to be considered for the previous year, and performance in this area to be reviewed.**

7 COMMISSIONING OF SEMI-INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES 2018

Michael Rowley, Market and Contracts Lead Officer, introduced the report that informs the Board on a procurement process that has been undertaken to establish a set of accredited providers of semi-independent living services locally and across the country, highlighting the following:

- (a) high quality, value for money placements are required for young people in order to prepare them effectively for independent life. The new service specification sets out clear standards for accommodation and support and stipulates quality monitoring and contract management requirements;
- (b) approximately 30 providers have been successful in their applications and contracts are now being drawn up;
- (c) an open accreditation process offers an opportunity to improve outcomes, improve local sufficiency and consistency of quality and provide greater value for money.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (d) semi-independent living is available for young people up to the age of 18, although this can be extended for a short period whilst independent accommodation is arranged;
- (e) there is an expectation of providers that they will provide support to ensure a successful transition to adulthood. Provision will be consistently quality-assured to ensure that this happens;
- (f) the Council is investigating whether Care Leavers could be exempted from paying council tax. However, if this happens they must still be prepared for when they will need to begin paying tax;
- (g) historically, many Care Leavers' tenancies fail, but this is reducing due to improvements in the package of support available from Nottingham City Hokes and the Leaving Care Service.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the progress made in improving the quality and choice of provision of semi-independent living services for 16-18 year old young people in care;**
- (2) note the more robust contractual arrangements being put in place in respect of this provision.**

8 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Jordan Whatman, Project Officer, Children in Care, informed the Board that there will be 2 workshops at NGY on 21 May: a session with SOVA and the Children's Society, and a

workshop on presentation and public speaking to prepare for a 5 minute speaking slot in Mansfield.

A regional Children in Care Council event will take place on 1 June at Mansfield Myplace with 9 representatives from Nottingham City. The Children's Commissioner for England will be in attendance.

Larelle Flowers, Children in care young person representative, informed the Board that he has recently returned from Tanzania as part of the International Citizenship Service learning about sustainable development, helping businesses and living with a host family. More details can be found at the following links:

<https://raleighinternational.org/blog/tanzania-ics/international-day-forests-rural-tanzania-save-tree-save-future/>

<https://raleighinternational.org/blog/tanzania-ics/world-creativity-innovation-day-finding-business-niche/>

RESOLVED to thank Jordan and Larelle for the information provided.

9 CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WORK ACT STATUTORY GUIDANCE

Clive Chambers, Head of Children in Care, delivered a presentation on changes to statutory guidance for Corporate Parenting, highlighting the following:

- (a) Seven principles have been outlined for Corporate Parenting of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as outlined below:
 - to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people;
 - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people;
 - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
 - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living;
- (b) these principles are already reflected in the business of Nottingham City Council, but the Children in Care Strategy is being revised to cover them;
- (c) young people are now entitled to ask for a service up to the age of 25. There is no requirement to keep in touch with them on an ongoing basis, but they must be reminded annually about their entitlement;
- (d) there is a requirement to publish a Local Offer for Care leavers, including statutory services and additional support available on health and wellbeing, relationships,

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education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society;

RESOLVED to thank Clive for the information provided.

10 FORWARD PLANNER

The forward planner was noted.

11 DATES FOR THE 2018-19 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED to meet at 2.30pm on the following Mondays:

2018

16 July

17 September

19 November

2019

21 January

18 March