

## 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 17 July 2018 from 11.01 am - 12.29 pm**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor Sue Johnson (Chair)  
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)

##### Absent

Councillor Jim Armstrong  
Councillor Azad Choudhry  
Councillor Brian Parbutt  
Councillor Georgia Power  
Councillor Chris Tansley

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

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services  
Councillor David Mellen - Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years  
Jane Garrard - Senior Governance Officer  
Alison Michalska - Corporate Director for Children and Adults  
Kate Morris - Governance Officer  
Tracy Nurse - Head of Children's Social Work

#### **10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Jim Armstrong – Other Council Business  
Councillor Azad Choudhry – Personal  
Councillor Brian Parbutt – Personal  
Councillor Georgia Power – Personal

Becky Cameron – NCVS

#### **11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **12 MINUTES**

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

#### **13 SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS**

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years introduced the report on support for care leavers. Along with Helen Blackman,

Director of Integrated Children's Services, he gave a presentation outlining how the Council is implementing the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 relating to care leavers to ensure that care leavers are appropriately supported. They highlighted the following points:

- (a) Nottingham City Council (NCC) currently cares for around 620 young people. Until recently the Council had a duty to offer support to care leavers until they reached 21 years old or 25 years old if they were studying. This has now extended to 25 years old for all care leavers;
- (b) there are approximately 281 care leavers currently, all of whom have a personal advisor who signposts care leavers to services and coordinates support offers;
- (c) the duty to provide support until the age of 25 years is retrospective and NCC has written to 166 people aged 21-25 to inform them that they now have access to this support. These are the care leavers who have turned 21 and whose up to date contact details the Council holds;
- (d) all care leavers who make contact with their personal advisor will be involved in drawing up a Pathway Plan which aims to identify the areas of support they need or wish to access;
- (e) all local authorities are required to publish a Local Offer, detailing services and support available to care leavers. This offer is broken down into 5 separate areas:
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Relationships
  - Education and training
  - Employment
  - Accommodation; and
  - Participation in society
- (f) partner organisations are already engaging with the process and are contributing to the Local Offer and care leavers and young people are being engaged in co-production of the Offer.

Following questions and comments from the Committee the following information was given:

- (g) Nottingham City Council is ambitious for all of the young people who are, or have been, within its care. For example, with this new legislation if a care leaver decides at the age of 22 that they wish to return into education then they will be supported to do so;
- (h) Ofsted challenged the City Council to be more determined to make contact with those care leavers who had fallen out of touch with the Council. It is a fine balance between being determined to stay in touch and respecting the wishes of the care leavers who may not wish to be in touch with services;

- (i) the 166 care leavers who have been written to are those people whose address is held by the Council. There will be other people whose contact details the Council no longer holds because they were previously not required to do so;
- (j) 21 care leavers within the 22-25 year old category have so far made contact with the Council after receiving their letter explaining the Council's extended duties to them.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) request that information is provided to the Committee on the number of care leavers aged between 21 and 25 years that the Council does not have up to date contact details for and therefore is unable to contact regarding the extended provision of support;**
- (2) request that the draft Local Offer for Care Leavers is circulated to Committee members prior to publication so that they have opportunity to make comments and suggestions; and**
- (3) thank David Mellen and Helen Blackman for their attendance and to note the content of their report.**

**14 SOCIAL WORKER CASELOAD AND RETENTION**

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years and Tracy Nurse, Head of Service for Children's Social Work introduced the item on social worker recruitment, retention and case load management. They gave a presentation outlining the current position of the social worker workforce and work over the last year to try and ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the workforce to deliver services. They highlighted the following points:

- (a) there are currently 150 children's social work posts across Nottingham City Council;
- (b) the use of agency social workers has reduced from around 65 to just 21 in recent years and staff turnover has reduced from 20% in 2015 to be in line with the national average of 15% in 2017;
- (c) in its most recent inspection, Nottingham City Council was described by Ofsted as an "employer of choice" for social workers;
- (d) the Council has a strong ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year of Employment) programme for newly qualified social workers which has achieved national recognition. It provides newly qualified social workers with experience across the different teams allowing them to build knowledge and skills, and offers a protected caseload of 15 cases;
- (e) the fast track Grow Our Own social work degree provided in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University allows family support workers to gain formal qualifications in social work over 2 years and then allows them to

become registered social workers. The first cohort contains 22 people, and the second contains 10;

- (f) Nottingham City Council also has a bespoke recruitment programme for social workers. It is an open advert and allows streamlined recruitment of experienced social workers;
- (g) for existing experienced staff there is the Progression Panel, which aims to invest in staff. It aims to meet with the more experienced social workers, discuss their aspirations and look at succession planning, then deliver a programme of support and development;
- (h) regular practice improvement sessions run which ensures consistent service allowing different parts of the service to support each other at times of need. It also ensures that social workers feel that they are practicing safely and are supported;
- (i) robust management of caseload ensures that social workers do not get overwhelmed. Performance reports look at case load across all of the teams every week allowing for early identification of pressure points which then allows extra measures to be taken to offer support if necessary. A lot of focus is on the early intervention stage to reduce demand further down the line.

Following questions and comments from the Committee the following points were made:

- (j) current caseloads range from 15 to 25 but the average is between 18 and 23 cases per social worker;
- (k) a Committee member spoke about having met social workers from across the different teams and commented that their dedication and commitment to their roles was evident;
- (l) it is important that work to promote Nottingham City as a good place to live and work continues in order to encourage social workers to live and work in the City;

The Chair concluded that, having reviewed progress over a number of years, the Committee was satisfied with the management focus on, and investment in recruitment and retention of children's social workers and that there was no need for the Committee to scrutinise this issue further unless any particular issues arose.

**RESOLVED to thank Tracy Nurse and David Mellen for their attendance and to note the content of their report.**

## **15 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer introduced the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

**REOLVED to note the content of the work programme**