

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 17 September 2018 from 2.30 pm - 3.42 pm

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Clive Chambers - Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Matthew Jenkins - CAMHS CLA Team Manager
John Matravers - Service Manager, Safeguarding Partnerships
Gill Moy - Nottingham City Homes
Alison Wakefield - Acting Head of Service, Children in Care
Phil Wye - Governance Officer

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson – other Council business
Alison Michalska
Aileen Wilson

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

22 CHANGE OF MEETING DATE

RESOLVED to change the date of the January meeting from 21 to 14 January at 2.30pm.

23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24 UPDATE REGARDING NATIONAL ENQUIRY

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, delivered a presentation on the National Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, highlighting the following:

- (a) the enquiry was set up to address increasing concerns about responses to child sexual abuse nationally, following a range of allegations. It is accepted that mistakes were made and the enquiry is investigating failings in the response to these mistakes;
- (b) the enquiry is composed of 13 investigations into individuals, services and local authorities. One of these investigations is into Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council (jointly referred to as Nottinghamshire Councils);
- (c) the focus of the local investigation is institutional failure as there were a high number of reports to the police and allegations of child sexual abuse and exploitation, with particular focus on one particular children's home and covering children abused whilst in foster care and child on child abuse;
- (d) public hearings will begin on 1 October at Trent Bridge cricket ground and will continue in London. The Truth Project also gives victims an opportunity to come forward with their experiences. The outcomes of the enquiry are expected to be published in April 2019;

Board members were reassured that, whilst there is never a complete guarantee, Nottingham City Council now undertakes robust recruitment of foster carers and has strong care settings. Ofsted has said that children are listened to and taken seriously regarding any concerns.

RESOLVED to thank Clive for the information provided.

25 CARE LEAVERS' SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Alison Wakefield, Service Manager, introduced the report outlining the work undertaken and progress made by the Leaving Care Service since the pilot Ofsted inspection in January 2017, highlighting the following:

- (a) 31 young people have decided to 'stay put' with their foster carers, residential homes or in semi-independent residential placements this year;
- (b) 95.7% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation for 2018/19 which is an increase on the previous year. Young people in custody are not counted as being in suitable accommodation;
- (c) new statutory guidance requires local authorities to consult on and publish a Local offer for its care leavers. This has been assembled with the help of focus groups and will be published in October 2018;
- (d) young people may not wish to keep in touch when they have left care but the Council must give them every opportunity to do so if they wish. All care leavers up to the age of 25 have been written to make this clear.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (e) the Council has the names of all care leavers and their care history on its records but not necessarily their addresses, which can be a challenge for the keeping in touch protocol;
- (f) when care leavers 'stay put' it could have a knock on effect on the number of foster carers available for younger children. The Council is undertaking a recruitment drive for foster carers;

- (g) a proposal has been agreed to make care leavers exempt from paying council tax for 2 years in order to give them a good start. Their personal assistants will prepare them for when they do begin to pay tax at the age of 20.

RESOLVED to

- (1) continue to support and understand the duties required of the Leaving Care Service;**
- (2) note the proposals for service redesign of the Leaving Care Service;**
- (3) circulate the Local Offer to Board members by email.**

26 CHILDREN IN CARE CAMHS TEAM REPORT

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance, introduced the report providing an update on the development and implementation of an offer from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to all who support Children in Care to ensure there is an effective strategy in place to enable placement stability and permanency in which a child or young person can thrive. Clive highlighted the following:

- (a) a Clinical Commissioning Group quality visit was undertaken in May 2018 which had positive outcomes and gave a number of recommendations for strengthening the service and making better transitions from child to adult mental health services;
- (b) there has been a slight increase in the number of open cases to the team since March 2018;
- (c) referrals can be accepted by the team even if children have normal Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores as there may be other concerning factors beyond the SDQ score;
- (d) there has been an increase in the number of referrals for children in the 6-10 age range, which is positive as evidence suggests that early CAMHS intervention is linked with better outcomes;
- (e) the team consistently meets its target of offering a Choice appointment within 2-4 weeks of referral despite having reduced staff currently.

Board members welcomed the positive outcomes outlined in the report.

RESOLVED to continue to develop an offer in line with the countrywide CAMHS transformation plan (as set out in the national Future in Mind Report and the Directorate Plan for Children in Care to ensure appropriate and timely access to support.

27 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT

John Matravers, Manager of Safeguarding Partnerships, delivered a presentation on the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Annual Report 2017-18, highlighting the following:

- (a) the core business of the team includes chairing of Children in Care reviews, Initial and Review Child Protection conferences, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal

Exploitation strategy meetings;

- (b) the team plays a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for children in care as well as ensuring a process for challenging drift and delay. The views of children, parents and carers are always given weight in care planning;
- (c) the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works in the team and looks at allegations against individuals who work with children;
- (d) the service has played a critical role in moving forward the criminal exploitation agenda, developing a toolkit for referrals, developing a training package and representation at Child Criminal Exploitation Panels;
- (e) all Independent Chairs are now linked to area teams and attend regular team meetings, enabling clear communication and ensuring issues are addressed in a timely manner;
- (f) 93% of Children in Care Reviews took place within the statutory timescales and 92% of children in care participated in their review. These figures are positive as compared to statistical neighbours;
- (g) a new escalation policy has been introduced which consists of an informal process followed by a more robust formal process whenever it is warranted. 79 concerns have been raised in the last year, none of which needed to be escalated beyond Service Manager level;
- (h) plans for 2018-2019 include the launch of the 'Coming into Care' packs for both children and their parents/carers.

The following points were discussed during the discussion which followed:

- (i) most concerns are around communication problems and come through the reviewing process, though some may come from telephone calls from children;
- (j) it would be difficult to complete 100% of Children in Care reviews in statutory timescales as sometimes they are rearranged so that all appropriate people can attend. This only happens in rare cases and is always close to the timescales.

RESOLVED to

- (1) thank John for the information provided;**
- (2) circulate the 'Coming into Care' pack to Board members.**

28 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

29 FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted.