

## **NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

#### **MINUTES**

of meeting held on **18 MARCH 2013** at

Loxley House from 2.37 pm to 4.00 pm

- ✓ Councillor Mellen (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Klein (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Campbell
- ✓ Councillor Culley (from minute 38 to 40 inclusive)
- Councillor Dewinton
- ✓ Councillor Jenkins
- Councillor McCulloch
- Councillor Morley
- Councillor Morris

- ✓ indicates present at meeting

#### **Also in attendance**

- Mr Dave Richards - Business in the Community
- Mrs Phyllis Brackenbury - Nottingham CityCare Partnership

#### **Nottingham City Council**

- Ms Paulette Thompson-Omenka - Children in Care Head of Service )
- Mr Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation ) Children
- Mrs Lorna Beedham - Inclusive Learning ) and
- Mr Kwesi Williams - Project Officer ) Families
- Miss Elise Darragh - Quality and Commissioning )
- Miss Kay Sutt - Residential and Targeted Support )
- Ms Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Constitutional Services - Resources

**NOTE: at the time the meeting was due to commence, the meeting was inquorate and remained so until the following minute. Agenda items 'Apologies for Absence' and 'Declarations of Interests' are recorded separately as informal notes.**

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

Miss Kay Sutt presented the report, outlining the requirements of the Regulation 33 Visits to Internal Residential Homes.

The following points were highlighted:

- visits by internal inspectors who had a fresh view of the homes, was often very helpful in identifying potential issues and details which were unintentionally overlooked by staff and young people;

- there were currently 29 internal inspectors, covering 7 residential homes, all of which required monthly visits;
- sensitivity was vital, but members of the Corporate Parenting Board or professional employees were invited to apply to become inspectors, for which training was provided.

Comments from Board members and responses from officers included:

- some members of the Board and colleagues had become internal inspectors and found the experience to be very rewarding;
- it was not always possible to speak with the young people during the visit as they may be attending school or college, or have social activities, but, if they were willing to speak with inspectors, even over the telephone, it was often valuable to hear their points of view and comments, some of which they may not have expressed to staff or social workers, and which, once forwarded, could have a positive impact for the young people.

It was noted that the number of recommendations and action plans required following visits by internal inspectors, had reduced significantly over the past few months. This had been reflected in the recent Ofsted inspections which awarded two homes ratings of outstanding, and several others as good.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the continued involvement of relevant professionals undertaking Regulation 33 visits, be noted;**
- (2) that the outcomes of Regulation 33 visit reports be analysed and monitored by the Service Manager, to identify trends and patterns to improve performance and enable sharing of good practice;**
- (3) that the Corporate Parenting Board receive regular updates in respect of visit outcomes.**

## **37 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that, the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 January 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.**

## **38 PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS OUTCOMES FOR 2012**

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families, informing the Board of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) rates for 2012.

Children in care attended real school settings where they were supported by a designated teacher who liaised with a Virtual Teacher to ensure the child received appropriate training, guidance and support. This joint working enabled the tracking and monitoring of each pupil's progress towards achieving their potential as if they were in a single school.

Mrs Lorna Beedham, as a Virtual School Head Teacher, presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- PEPs were produced for 6 months at a time and while tailored to each child, included social and behavioural targets but with a new focus on numeracy and literacy;
- the Children in Care Team had fully engaged with identifying what made a good plan, and as a result of the joint working between several teams, between 90% and 97% of PEPs had been completed during the year with continued improvements to quality and consistency;
- other Local Authority Virtual Head Teachers within the East Midlands provided a variety of results, some at 70% and some higher than Nottingham's rate but these often had larger teams and so more staff were available. Compared to similar authorities, Nottingham had achieved a good rate;
- some PEP meetings would be cancelled or postponed for a variety of reasons which were not recorded, this could mean that the target would not be met. Some social workers completed PEPs but there had been delays in their submission;
- it was pleasing that more young people, but also carers, were commenting on and contributing to PEPs;
- there had been an extension of PEPs for key stage 5 pupils to enable formally structured support and advice to be provided with regard to prospective college courses of training opportunities, often engaging with the potential establishments to ensure they were aware of the young person's circumstances, and help ease the transition;
- there were proposals to move towards an electronic PEP 'E-PEP' but the financial and practical implications were yet to be fully investigated;
- approximately half of Nottingham's young people in care, were placed outside of the City boundary. 70 young people from Nottingham were placed in homes or with foster carer's within the County, and many were placed outside of the region. For some young people it was necessary for them to live away from the City, due to either safety/safeguarding issues, or because specialist facilities were not available closer to Nottingham. There had been some difficulties with other authorities not being willing to assist with PEPs. Where children were placed beyond the East Midlands Region, there were very few examples of reciprocal arrangements although most authorities were willing to help if they received payment. Some authorities were caring for so many of their own children that they were resistant to taking any responsibility for children from other authorities;
- distance was also an issue for social workers and internal inspectors in terms of additional time and cost. Ideally, where appropriate, children would be placed within approximately 20 miles of the City where children could also still be reasonably close to their birth families and social groups.

It was noted that, as a result of placements outside of the County, Mrs Beedham had commissioned two tutoring services, one to cover the City, and one to work nationally, wherever else Nottingham's children in care were placed.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the following be noted:**
  - (a) the maintenance of PEP completion figures at over 90%, and the actions taken to address the quality of PEPs;**
  - (b) the developments planned to enhance the quality of the written records of PEP meetings, to include:**
    - (i) consideration of commissioning an e-PEP which would enable more efficient transfer of information and produce reminders for social workers and designated teachers to complete their sections;**
    - (ii) extension of attendance and attainment data to include all City schools;**
    - (iii) training sessions for new Designated Teachers and social workers on completing a good quality PEP;**
    - (iv) designated teachers and social workers of out of City children, to be informed of PEPs out of date status to ensure completion;**
- (2) that a report outlining where in the country Nottingham's Children in Care were placed, be submitted by the Head of Children in Care to a future meeting.**

## **39 PERFORMANCE REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2012 -FEBRUARY 2013)**

Consideration was given to the revised report of the Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families, copies of which were placed around the table and submitted to the online agenda following the meeting. The report provided monthly performance information, including for February 2013, of both nationally and locally required indicators, enabling comparisons to be drawn against previous months and statistically comparable local authority neighbours.

Miss Elise Darragh, Quality and Commissioning, presented the report and informed the Committee that changes were to be made to the performance reporting framework so, in future, performance details would be presented every other meeting but in more detail.

Miss Darragh clarified that, with reference to National Indicator/Local code CSS147, (Representation Black, Minority, Ethnic (BME) children in care to BME population) the figure of 6.1% related to the over representation of BME children in care (CiC).

The performance statistics are summarised below:

<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Outturn 11/12</b>	<b>Target 12/13</b>	<b>Jan - 2013</b>	<b>Feb - 13</b>
Number of Children in Care	541	524	<b>559</b>	<b>556</b>
Rate per 10,000 of Children in Care	86.6	83.8	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>
Number of Admissions to Care	243	No target set	34	<b>17</b>
Number of Discharges from Looked After	221	No target set	24	<b>18</b>
Representation BME Children in Care to BME population	9.6%	No target set	5.4%	<b>6.1%</b>
Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of placement	73.1%	67.0%	68.2%	<b>67.9%</b>
Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales	94.6%	97.0%	94.3%	<b>94.5%</b>
Participation in Reviews	85.9%	90.0%	92.7%	<b>92.4%</b>
% of Children in Care for 3 months or more with an up-to-date health assessment	77.6%	80.0%	81.1%	<b>83.3%</b>
% of Children in Care after for 3 months or more with an up-to-date dental check	82.7%	80.0%	79.5%	<b>79.5%</b>
% of Children in Care after for 3 months or more with an up-to-date Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	90.0%	100.0%	82.5%	<b>82.9%</b>
% CiC with a completed Personal Education Plan	98.0%	98.0%	92.0%	<b>90.0%</b>
Percentage of eligible CiC who have a Pathway Plan commenced (age 15 ¾ - 17)	New from Sep 12	100.0%	78.2%	<b>76.8%</b>
% CiC allocated to a named social worker	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %	<b>99.8%</b>

<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Outturn 11/12</b>	<b>Target 12/13</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>
Adoptions of CiC (including Special Guardianship Orders)	9.9%	13.0%	1.4%	6.1%	<b>10.5%</b>
Timeliness of placements of Children in Care for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	62.1%	68.5%	33.0%	71.4%	<b>48.0%</b>

Stability of placements of Children in Care: number of moves (based on rolling 12 months)	11.5%	12.0%	9.8%	10.1%	<b>10.9%</b>
Care leavers in suitable accommodation	80.4%	95.0%	100.0%	95.2%	<b>95.2%</b>
Care leavers in employment, education or training	60.7%	60.0%	77.8%	52.4%	<b>45.2%</b>

It was noted that:

- there were currently 556 children and young people in the care of Nottingham City Council, following an exceptionally high intake of 34 children during January. It was noted that 8 of those children were babies linked to one area of the City;
- while there appeared to be a slight rise of children taken into care during November of some years, it was very difficult to predict intake, although it was often higher following a nationally reported case when everyone became more aware. It was very unusual for as many as 34 children to be taken into care in a single month at any time of year;
- there could be several reasons why babies were taken into care, including that the pregnancy had been concealed as it was not planned and would result in cultural stigma, or that the child was at risk of harm or neglect;
- occasionally, work had been completed but there had been delays in reporting of performance information. The team were working hard to encourage prompt reporting and it was noted that all children in care did have an allocated Social Worker.

## RESOLVED

- (1) that, the performance information provided be noted;
- (2) that, in relation to the intake of 8 babies during January 2013, the Head of Service of Children in Care, arrange for Board Members to receive non-identifying information regarding:
  - (a) the area of the City from which the babies came;
  - (b) an outline of the circumstances by which the babies were relinquished or taken into care;
- (3) that further information be provided to the Board at a future meeting, regarding the instances where pregnancies were concealed and the baby relinquished.

## 40 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL - CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS 'HAVE YOUR SAY' SURVEY RESULTS 2012

Having been postponed from the meeting held on 21 January 2013, Mr Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Officer, presented the report regarding the results of the

'Have your Say' survey 2012. Of the 631 surveys sent out, 152 were usable, which equated to a 24% return with a near equal split between the genders.

As a reflection of the Children in Care and Care Leavers' Charter, the survey sought the views of young people to inform and therefore enable service provision to progress in a direction which best catered for the needs of the young people.

Mr Rea also delivered a presentation, a copy of which was submitted to the online agenda following the meeting.

To enable a comparison, the survey had asked the same questions as the previous year, with tick box responses for 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' and space for comment. To reflect where responses had showed a positive, negative or static movement, the traffic light system of green, red and amber was applied.

The young people's responses to the City Council's commitments were rated as follows:

	2011	2012
we will treat all our children and young people with respect and with regard to their age and understanding	Green	Green
we will keep our children and young people safe and well by:	Green	Green
Seeing that they have the right place to live as quickly as possible	Green	Green
Making sure that this home is stable and keeps them safe	Green	Green
we will help them to achieve at school and elsewhere to the very best of their ability	Amber	Green
we will help our children and young people to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood	Amber	Amber/Green
we will listen to our children and young people and involve them in planning for their care	Amber	Amber
we know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person so we promise to do all we can to prevent such changes unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well	Amber	Amber
we will give our children and young people enough time and help to understand (and be happy) with their circumstances	Amber	Red
we will make sure they know about the advocacy and complaints services in case they want help to have their views heard or are unhappy with us	Red	Red
we will keep our children and young people safe and well by giving them the right support to be as healthy as possible.	Amber	Red

The verdict from the children and young people in care was that there had been an improvement of 9.8% from 2011 (79.1%) to 2012 (88.9%) for very happy or happy on the

overall rating for Nottingham City Council taking care of them. This produced a green rating, but there was still capacity for improvement.

The following points were highlighted and additional information provided:

- with regard to the whether the young people who completed the survey felt they were listened to, the responses varied from the statistical information provided earlier in the agenda. This may have been a reflection of the differing interpretation or understanding between what the young people and carers/social workers considered as 'listened to'. It was possible that some young people did not consider their informal comments or requests as being considered;
- while the information provided by the performance report did not match the rating from the survey regarding the participation of young people, it was noted that there were 7 categories of participation for children and young people from the age of 4 years, and it was possible that their perception of participation did not include all the aspect of the categories;
- it was noted that the survey did not ask about the layers of young people's participation in that while some young people may not have attended their Looked After Review, they may have submitted a letter/note or held it over the telephone;
- the disturbance of changes to social workers, placements and schools was recognised and only happened as a last resort. However, 60% of children had experienced some sort of change and did not like it;
- it was a concern that one in four children in care did not feel that their social worker had enough time for them. It was a greater concern that, of the young people aged 15 years plus, 45% of didn't feel their social worker had enough time for them. This area needed further investigation;
- nearly 60% of surveyed children in care indicated that they were not aware of the independent advocacy service. This appeared to be a particular issue with children in foster care. The providers had informed the Board that they were doing everything they could to raise awareness of their service, however, if the young people didn't know that the service was available to them, further work was required. It was important that all children and young people in care, knew which services were available to them, including opportunities for their voice to be heard, so, consideration should be given to the broader issue of how this information was presented, preferably with all staff tasked with informing the young people and improving awareness;
- with regard to the 31.5% of surveyed children saying that they felt healthy but worried often or all the time, about their life, it was possible that some of their concerns would be generic of teenagers, but also that this was as a result of deeper issues such as the trauma of their personal circumstances. Either way, it was important to consider what was being done to address these anxieties and alleviate or mitigate their worries;
- it was intended that, for the 2013 children in care survey, some of the questions would be revised to ensure that more specific information was obtained to better enable the support of the young people.



The Board welcomed the intention to revise the survey for 2013, agreeing that further consideration was required to the wording, breadth and detail, of questions, specifically in regard to topic areas where substantial differences were apparent between the performance statistics, provided by officers, and the children in care survey results.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the assessment results be used to inform the 2013/14 Corporate Parenting Action Plan, with priority given to areas highlighted by the assessment;**
- (2) that the significant work done by the Children in Care Council, in the planning, delivery and analysis of the 'Have Your Say survey, as part of their role in the co-production of services across children's social care, be noted;**
- (3) that the findings of the survey be acted upon as appropriate;**
- (4) that the Head of Children in Care, invite the Advocacy Team to a Foster Care Business meeting to inform Foster Carers of the advocacy service available;**
- (5) that an update report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board, outlining the progress made in addressing the issues raised from and around the survey.**