

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 20 November 2017 from 2.30 pm - 3.30 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Sam Webster

Absent

Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Marcia Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Melanie Bracewell - Designated Doctor for Children in Care
Clive Chambers - Head of Service – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Steve Comb - Head of Service – Children in Care
Kathryn Higgins - Designated Nurse for Children in Care
Holly Macer - Children’s Placements Manager
Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation Lead
Jordan Whatman - Project Officer, Children in Care
Phil Wye - Governance Officer

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson - council business
Councillor Nicola Heaton - personal
Councillor Ginny Klein - personal
Councillor Jackie Morris - personal
Councillor Marcia Watson - personal
Councillor Jim Armstong

Helen Blackman, Director of Children’s Integrated Services
Larelle Flowers, Children in Care Council representative
TM, Foster Carer representative

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

36 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

37 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q1/Q2 2017-2018)

Steve Comb, Head of Service, Children in Care, introduced the report providing the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data, highlighting the following:

- (a) there has been an increase in the number of children in care. Exit planning is a key focus, along with reducing the number of high cost external residential placements;
- (b) the current Service Manager for fostering and adoption retires in November. There is significant activity around foster carer recruitment, with a number of prospective carers progressing through the approval process currently;
- (c) 19 children were adopted, 5 were made subject to Special Guardianship Orders and 1 was made subject to a Child Arrangement Order in Quarters 1 & 2 of 2017/18;
- (d) offending by children in care has reduced from nearly 20% in 2006 to 5.4% in 2016. This is better than similar cities, and has been helped by the council's part funding of the Children in Care Police Officer;
- (e) 90% of children in care had a Personal Education Plan (PEP) completed in the past year. The Virtual School Head is currently gathering information regarding PEPs and identifying where they are incomplete;
- (f) there has been an increase in the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation. This will be a key strand in the government's Keep on Caring agenda;
- (g) a significant percentage of care leavers are in employment, education or training, which exceeds statistical neighbours significantly. However, this could always be improved and the focus is to continue to support more care leavers into education and employment.

Board members felt that further opportunities for apprenticeships for care leavers could be explored. The Director of Children's Integrated Services has contacted departments where they may be opportunities, but other local employers such as the Fire Authority or the Police Authority could also provide apprenticeships.

RESOLVED to acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care Service, against identified key performance indicators.

38 THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN CARE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY 2016 / 17 – NOTTINGHAM CITY

Kathryn Higgins, Designated Nurse for Children in Care, and Melanie Bracewell, Designated Doctor for Children in Care, introduced the Clinical Group (CCG) looked after children annual report. This provides assurance that the CCG is fulfilling its

statutory responsibilities to children as outlined in the Children Act 1989 and associated guidance. The following was highlighted:

- (a) an Out of Area Pathway is almost complete, which will make sure that children placed out of area get regular, quality assured, health assessments;
- (b) a data project is well underway, looking at data on the health of children in care, making sure this is accurate and used to inform work to further improve outcomes;
- (c) the Children in Care Service Improvement Forum looks at the health of children in care and has produced an action plan which will deliver improved outcomes for children in care and care leavers;

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (d) previously the CCG was not engaged in the process for monitoring health assessments of children who are placed out of area, but they will now be involved so that they can monitor it;
- (e) mental health assessments are an integral part of all health assessments, and links with mental health services have improved.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note that health providers supported by the Designated Professionals will continue to work with the Service Improvement Forum and associated working groups with the aim to improve health outcomes for Children in Care;**
- (2) note that revised CCG pathways for out of area placements and other local authority placements in the City will be implemented in 2018;**
- (3) note that health providers supported by the Designated Professionals will continue to work with the Local Authority, other partner agencies and Commissioners in planning for and ensuring adequate health provision for Care Leavers.**

39 CHILDREN IN CARE PLACEMENTS

Holly Macer, Placements Manager, introduced the report which provides an annual update on Nottingham City Council's Children in Care placements and progress against the Children in Care Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy. The following was highlighted:

- (a) a priority is to place as many children and young people locally, and the target of 85% for this has been achieved;
- (b) there has been an increase in the number of children in care placed within internal provision, and ongoing efforts to increase this further by recruiting new carers and

expanding the internal residential estate;

- (c) Nottingham City Council is a member of the East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF), which is a consortium of seven local authorities working to achieve consistent, high quality and value for money placements;
- (d) a block contract for ten residential children's homes placements was awarded to Homes2Inspire in April 2015. The placements have been full since October 2016, and a further 2 placements have been negotiated which are also now full;
- (e) four of the homes are currently rated by Ofsted as 'good', and one as 'requires improvement'. This home is subject to increased quality assurance visits and progress against their Ofsted action plan is closely monitored;
- (f) a robust commissioning and contracting approach is required for semi-independent accommodation, which is not inspected by Ofsted. This will be procured via an open accreditation process to improve outcomes, local sufficiency, consistent quality and greater value for money;
- (g) all external placements are subject to an annual unannounced quality assurance visit, which are proving successful;
- (h) Continuing Care funding, for children with complex health needs, increased by 27% in 2016/17, and is forecast to increase again by 15% by the end of 2017/18;
- (i) the council, along with Derby City and Nottinghamshire Council councils, has been successful in obtaining an offer in principle of three million pounds towards outcomes payments from the Life Chances Fund, delivered by the Big Lottery Fund. A social investor is now being sought to create an innovative service to support complex children in care.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (j) there are a number of prospective foster carers who will be assessed soon for suitability. If all are successful then the council's target for foster carer recruitment will be exceeded;
- (k) the block contract for residential children's homes placements was targeted at children who do not have complex needs. Children in care are placed appropriately to best suit their needs.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

40 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, gave a verbal update on the work of the Children in Care Council, highlighting the following:

- (a) the focus of the Children in Care Council this term initially focused on completing the work around the Placements Service, carried over from earlier in the Summer.

The group used drama to explore key issues such as being split up from siblings;

- (b) the group later moved onto the theme of Preparing for Independence, which was one of the areas highlighted for focus in the 2016 Have Your Say survey. This covered two areas: Earning and Learning, and independent living;
- (c) on Earning & Learning, the group recently took part in exercises that contribute to the Council's Employability Refresh. Main areas identified for support include young people being made aware of the different types of jobs they could do and supporting them to access platforms to improve their key skills, ability-levels and behaviours;
- (d) on independent living the group contributed to the national consultation on social housing for the government's Housing Green Paper, on behalf of Nottingham City. This has subsequently been submitted to Nottingham City Homes to form part of their submission to the government;
- (e) the group also saw a presentation from two foster carers about a charity project they have launched aimed at providing every child in care their own bag, containing essential supplies, when they first come into care. The essential supplies include a new blanket or throw, slipper socks, a book, colouring equipment and a notebook. The group agreed to support the development of this project;
- (f) Takeover Challenge Week took place in the second week of November 2017, and Children in Care Council members took over Loxley House restaurant kitchen. One member also worked with the council's communications team to develop a new blog for children in care and care leavers, which will be launched in February;
- (g) the annual awards night is on Monday 18th December at the Council House, with the Lord Mayor and Sherriff presiding.

RESOLVED to thank Jon for his verbal update.

41 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: FOSTERING AND ADOPTION

RESOLVED to note the contents of the Statements of Purpose for adoption and fostering.

42 FORWARD PLAN

The forward planner was noted.