

Nottingham City Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the meeting held at remotely via Zoom -
<https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil> on 21 September 2020 from
2.33 pm - 3.44 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Cheryl Barnard (Chair)
Councillor Jay Hayes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Councillor Lauren O`Grady
Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Maria Watson

Absent

Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Cate Woodward

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Clive Chambers - Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
Kate Morris - Governance Officer

8 Apologies for absence

Councillor Neghat Khan – Council Business – Councillor Lauren O`Grady attending as substitute

Councillor Cate Woodward – Leave

9 Declarations of Interests

None

10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2020 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

11 Leaving Care - Pathway Planning and Supporting Transitions

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, introduced the report exploring the current operating environment for the Leaving Care Service. The report outlined the range of developments linked to the work of the Leaving Care team and plans for further work. He highlighted the following points from the report:

- (a) The performance statistics do show a slight down turn in August compared to the previous year, however Nottingham City still compares favourably with statistical neighbours;
- (b) There are two broad areas of developmental work. With regard to the first Nottingham City Council is working closely with Barnardo's who have been gifted a legacy with the stipulation that it is spent in the county or City of Nottingham. Following analysis of need the Charity concluded that the most benefit could be realised in working exclusively with Nottingham City and focusing on Leaving Care services. There is extensive discussion on how to maximise the benefits of this generous gift ensuring benefits are sustainable;
- (c) The second area of work forms part of the work programme of the Integrated Care Partnership who have identified Care Leavers as a priority cohort. This creates significant opportunities. Senior colleagues within NCC are working with partners from statutory and non-statutory organisations. The focus of this work is around three key areas:
- Accommodation
 - Positive destinations, mainly around EET opportunities but broader; and
 - Transitions for those with mental health needs.
- This work is directly connected to the work being undertaken with Barnardo's;
- (d) Aligned to this is work being done with the Mental Health Foundation to create circles of support and mentoring to develop substantial friendships and support circles for care leavers. The mainstream bid has been paused due to the Lottery fund diverting monies to the Covid response, but since the publication of the report there has been a smaller sum of money allocated to provide resources to facilitate young people keeping in touch.

During discussion and questions from Board members, the following information was highlighted:

- (e) Ensuring services are sustainable is essential. The work detailed in appendix 3 of the published report touches on this issue, there is work to establish an Action Plan focusing on reshaping local service delivery to create sustainable services into the future. Working closely with the CCG, a critical piece of work will be looking at the service specification for the CAMHS team and what young people want services to look like going forward;
- (f) The integrated personal commissioning model is an approach for young people who do not wish to access talking therapies;
- (g) Recently agreed funding through Barnardo's, is a Supported Lodging scheme. This allows young people to live in a family home setting but without being in foster care. This model has been successful in other areas, with young people having the benefits of family setting support but without having to make the same level of emotional commitment. The supported lodgings scheme is cheaper than semi-independent living schemes and can be sustained by savings;

- (h) The Covid -19 pandemic has impacted on accommodation performance for care leavers. Positive work with rough sleeping adults has moved a number of them into accommodation, leading to a reduction in the availability of one bedroom flats, typically the type of accommodation offered to care leavers;
- (i) Although EET destination performances appears to be positive there are likely to be a range of challenges for young people in sustain education, employment or training opportunities because of the impact of Covid. Local organisations have been approached through the One Nottingham Board asking that care leaver opportunities are maximised;
- (j) For all work streams, Officers specifically ask how a service addresses the specific needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people. It is essential to ensure that therapeutic pathways are suitable for the cohort. These services have to allow young people to articulate need, and it is likely that the way forward is to work with community organisations who are well placed to work with the cohort;
- (k) Other ways of supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking young people are around helping them to develop a strong support network by placement within good group living;
- (l) When a young person in care becomes pregnant two social workers allocated, one to the young person and one to the unborn child, this helps in support and preparation for the birth. There is access to parent and child accommodation placements, parent and child foster placements, so that where a young person is capable of and wishes to care for their child they are able to do so in the community;
- (m) The Pause project works with parents who have had more than one child removed. This project works with some care leavers providing support to address issues such as self esteem, employments, education and training opportunities;

Resolved to:

- (1) Note the content of the report; and**
- (2) Consider whether there is further support individual members of the Board can offer good transitions for care leavers into accommodation, education or training and to promote the development of good services to meet their helps and emotional needs;**

12 Children in Care: Key Performance Indicators - April-June 2020 (Q1)

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, introduced the paper detailing the Key Performance Indicators for April 2020 to June 2020 (Quarter 1). He highlighted the following information:

- (a) The number of children in care has increased slightly to 669. This is as a result of children entering the care system throughout the Covid pandemic, but a smaller than usual proportion being discharged through adoption and special

Guardianship orders. Court proceedings have started to run again and since lockdown has been eased, adoptions are going through. Statistical neighbours have reported a similar rise in children in care;

- (b) Visiting frequencies have been fairly high but the target is 95% and so requires ongoing attention;
- (c) There is good performance around statutory reviews being completed within time scales. There is high levels of participation and increasing numbers of young people chairing their own reviews;
- (d) Performance around medical and dental checks performance has been a challenge. Officers are working closely with health colleagues to understand how best to address this dip in performance as a result of Covid 19. These appointments are the annual check ups, and there are no issues with young people receiving medical attention when it has been required;
- (e) The key issue in relation to children in care and the impact that Covid 19 has had is around placement availability. Private sector placement has a strong presence in the market through fostering agencies and private residential care. There has been a significant lack of placements. Lock down restrictions are impacting on stability of placements and is adding pressure to placements;
- (f) Because there is currently a high demand for places there has been an impact on cost. Nottingham City Council manages price via a regional placement commissioning framework shared with Nottinghamshire, Derby City and Derbyshire Councils and placement teams challenge providers when costs are excessive. There is strong competition for places from other local authorities, sometimes at great distance;
- (g) A national review of the care system is planned and it is hoped that this will attempt to address the current challenges in the placement sector;
- (h) A local Placement Capacity review has been commissioned to assess what can be done to ensure best placement matches are delivered at the most competitive prices. The first draft of this report is due to be issued this week and will come back to this meeting;
- (i) National guidance has been issued in relation to how contested court proceedings have to be managed. Work is focusing on ensuring that families in these hearings can attend court in a meaningful way;
- (j) Although lockdown has been difficult for young people in care and their placements, some families have reported that the intensive family time has helped to stabilise the relationships within the family unit and has been a positive time;

Following questions and comments from the Board the following additional points were made:

- (k) Talking about accommodation and placement provision as a market does not sit well with officers or members of the Board but both recognised that that is what it currently is. There are a number of measures taken by the Council to try and address this, the placement commissioning framework previously mentioned, and a regional commissioning meeting where Local Authorities are able to share information. The placement review referred to above will also look at the opportunities to expand internally. The review will also consider whether the Council should make better use of block contracts in this challenging local context;
- (l) The Council continues to invest in therapeutic services, MSTT and work with young people on the edge of offending. This investment of earlier intervention reduces the demand for care placements;
- (m) The East Midlands Lead Members meeting have written a joint letter to the Children's Commissioner asking her to push for the Care Review to take place.

13 Children in Care Council update

Jon Rea, Engagement & Participation Lead Officer, gave a verbal update to the Board on the activities of the Children in Care Council. He provided the following information:

- (a) The Children in Care Council has met following the summer break. Meetings have been taking place fortnightly via Microsoft Teams and this has been successful and has allowed regular contact with the young people to be maintained;
- (b) There has recently been a very successful interactive session looking at feedback materials used by IRO service to capture the voice of young people. The end product will be co designed with the group;
- (c) The Have your say Children in Care Survey will this year be digital with only a small amount of paper based surveys available for those who can not complete it digitally. The survey will be published around October half term through to December. Findings from the survey will come back to the Board early in the new year;
- (d) Members of the Children in Care Council have been invited to take part in the recruitment of the Principal Social Worker post taking place. This will include shortlisting and interviewing candidates;
- (e) Children in Care Council members are also invited to join the youth leadership conference giving an opportunity to build young leadership capacity within the Council;
- (f) There are plans for a special session of the Children in Care Council to run for the Board members to come and meet the young people to share experiences and ideas and challenges. Ideally this will be done face to face, however it will only happen in person depending on the current advice;

- (g) This term the overarching theme is Work futures and education for children in care alongside work on Health and Wellbeing and redevelopment around the city;

14 Forward Plan

The Chair is currently working with officers to look at creating themed meetings. The Board would like to see more officers from different departments attending to feed into the Corporate Parenting agenda across the different services.

15 Dates of future meetings

The Board noted that meetings would be held at 2.30pm on the following Mondays:

16 November 2020

18 January 2021

15 March 2021