

Nottingham City Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the meeting held remotely and livestreamed on YouTube on 18 January 2021 from 6.37 pm - 8.03 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Cheryl Barnard (Chair)
Councillor Jay Hayes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Maria Watson

Absent

Councillor Cate Woodward

(minutes 25 to 29 inclusive only)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Sharon Clarke	- Children in Care Service Manager
Helene Denness	- Consultant in Public Health
Sam Flint	- Children in Care Police Officer
Jasmin Howell	- Virtual School Service Manager
Mark Leavesley	- Governance Officer
Tajinder Madahar	- Head of Children's Duty and Targeted Services
John Matravers	- Head of Service, Safeguarding
Natalie Pink	- Leaving Care Service Manager
Jon Rea	- Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
Debbie Richards	- Housing Aid Service Manager
Audrey Taylor	- Fostering and Adoption Service manager
Catherine Underwood	- Corporate Director for People
Alison Wakefield	- Acting CHS Service Manager

25 Apologies for absence

Councillor Woodward - other Council business
Helen Blackman
Sophie Russell

26 Declarations of Interests

None.

27 Minutes

The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

28 Reducing Offending Behaviour (Children in Care)

Natalie Pink, Leaving Care Service Manager (LCS), and Sam Flint, Children in Care Police Officer (CiCPO), presented the report, which detailed:

- the published data for 2019/20 regarding reducing offending behaviour within the Children in Care population (published 21/12/2020);
- the activity of the CiCPO and LCS Senior Personal Advisor 2020, working together to reduce offending and safeguard Children in Care (including how this had been impacted by COVID-19);
- an update on the review of the Multi-agency Protocol for Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County to reduce the criminalisation of Children in Care.

In response to questions and comments, the following additional information was given:

- i. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) packs shared with staff at Children's Homes, aimed at educating staff and showing the correct pathways to use when there are CCE/CSE concerns, are also available to foster carers;
- ii. to try to prevent CCE and CSE and stop 'county lines' issues, activities to help children feel more involved and part of a 'family' are available, but it is difficult to get them to engage;
- iii. the Police have an SEIU (Sexual Exploitation Investigation Unit) and a 'Disruption Team', with respective responsibility for training to identify the signs of CCE/CSE and visiting identified 'grooming' addresses to warn / arrest.

Resolved to note the data regarding reducing offending behaviour within the Children in Care population and the importance of sustaining the work of the CiCPOs, supported by the LCS Senior Personal Advisor, to continue to improve outcomes for Children in Care, as detailed in the report.

29 Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report 2019/20

John Matravers, Head of Service, presented the Annual Report 2019/20, which detailed the contribution of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to quality assuring and improving services for children that Nottingham City Council are responsible for, including evidence relating to the services in Nottingham City as required by statutory guidance, and stated that the core business of the team included chairing of Children in Care reviews and monitoring the activity of the Local Authority, as outlined in the IRO Handbook 2010.

In response to comments and questions, Mr Matravers gave the following additional information:

- i. ethnicity is not always stated within the data his team receives, but they are currently working with the analysis and insight team to ensure that the system

returns a 100% ethnicity (in this annual report there are only 3 out of 620 that do not give an ethnicity);

- ii. the IRO Handbook states that the caseload at any one time should be 50-70, and this is the first year the team have had number. There is a need for 2 more IROs for when the caseload goes above 70, but the funding is not available at present for any additional officers;
- iii. the 'Dispute Resolution Policy' will be re-launched by end January/beginning February 2021.

Resolved to note the Annual Report 2019/20.

30 Foster Carer recruitment and retention

Audrey Taylor, Fostering and Adoption Service Manager, presented the report, which detailed the strategies for recruitment and retention of foster carers.

In response to questions and comments, Ms Taylor gave the following additional information:

- i. in respect of low numbers of adoptions, nationally, courts are favouring family members rather than adoption and granting Special Guardianship Orders, although the Council still put forward adoption plans where it feels that is the best option for the child and will challenge the courts if necessary. There was also an impact on numbers due to courts closing for a time due to the pandemic;
- ii. Therapeutic Relationship Training is provided by a foster carer and the content of the course should be available to be emailed to members;
- iii. due to the pandemic, recruitment is now being done online through the '100 Homes' campaign – numbers of applicants are lower than normal, but there are still people applying;
- iv. the 'Fostering Sunday' event will still take place in May, although it is not currently known whether this will be face-to-face or online, and information will be sent to members to publish on their websites etc;
- v. if a carer needs to move to a larger property to be able to foster a child, the team work with Nottingham City Homes to try to expedite a move;
- vi. the current backlog is mainly due to Foster Panel capacity and waiting for medical checks. Looking at how to resource additional Panels and have asked local GPs to assist with medical checks – 2 have agreed to start undertaking health assessments and a contract is currently being drawn up;
- vii. for children with more challenging, complex needs, foster carers can access support through 'Starz Project', a scheme run jointly with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Councils, which looks at the additional support that may be required to move a child from residential to foster care, with support for up to 2 years to maintain the placement. There is also support available through 'Safer Families', and a therapeutic training programme will shortly be rolled out.

Resolved to note the recruitment and retention performance of the Fostering Service, and the activities undertaken by the service to recruit and support foster carers, as detailed in the report.

31 Fostering and Adoption Panel: Chair's report

Resolved to note the report, which summarised the activity of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, without discussion.

32 Children in Care Council update (including Health & Wellbeing themed discussion feedback)

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, updated the Board as follows:

- i. following the engagement meeting held prior to this meeting between service users and members of this Board, notes will be circulated to all members and Heads of Service, and discussions had on how best to respond to the matters arising;
- ii. further engagement meetings are proposed every 4 months, the themes of which will be agreed between members, the CiC Council and carers;
- iii. the CiC Council will continue to meet monthly, online during the pandemic but, hopefully, returning to face-to-face as soon as covid regulations allow;
- iv. the Recruitment and Selection Panel for a new Head of Children in Care is being held in February.

Resolved to note the update.

33 Work plan

The Board noted the work plan without discussion.

34 Next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Monday 15 March 2021 at a time and venue to be notified.