

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at LH 2.11 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 19 October 2015 from 2.30 pm - 3.31 pm**

#### Membership

##### Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)  
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Liaqat Ali  
Councillor Glyn Jenkins  
Councillor Sally Longford  
Councillor Wendy Smith  
Councillor Sam Webster

##### Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson  
Councillor Marcia Watson

#### Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Jennifer Hanby - Nottingham Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)  
Jeren Artykova ) Children in Care Council Representatives  
Mary-Kate Gavin )  
Gill Moy - Director of Housing (Nottingham City Homes)  
Evonne Rogers - Head of Business Support  
Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Social Care  
Steve Comb - Head of Children in Care  
Clive Chambers - Head of Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance  
Sharon Clarke - Service Manager of Children in Care and Leaving Care Services  
Lynne Pearce - Senior Personal Advisor to Children in Care  
John Rea - Engagement and Participation Officer  
Kwesi Williams - Children in Care Project Officer  
Elise Ashworth - Insight Manager  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

#### **19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Marcia Watson (ill health)  
Councillor Sue Johnson (personal)  
Malcolm Wilson  
TM  
Natalia Stachowiak

#### **20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **21 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2015 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **22 SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS SERVICE REPORT**

Clive Chambers, Head of Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, presented the report which informed the Board of the statutory complaints procedure, the complaints received during 2014/15 and the outcome of those complaints.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) where issues arise solutions are usually sought at a local level before the issue is progressed to a formal complaint;
- (b) the complaints procedure has three stages:
  - (i) a formal complaint is submitted and a written response is provided by the department within 10 working days;
  - (ii) if not resolved, the complainant can progress the complaint to be investigated by an Independent Investigator with a report, including recommendations, usually provided within 25 working days;
  - (iii) if still unresolved the complaint can be considered by an independent panel of three members;
- (c) during 2014/15 seven formal complaints were received although it should be noted that young people also have access to NYAS advocacy support if they have any issues they wish to discuss;
- (d) when young people first enter care they are informed of the complaint service and how it can be used, but also, especially for younger people, it is open for other people to lodge a complaint on their behalf. The age at which a child or young person is considered able to lodge their own complaint is in line with the health guidelines;
- (e) a breakdown of information regarding the nature of complaints and where young people are placed is not immediately available but can be provided, although the NYAS figures show there is no difference with the nature of complaints if a young person lives away from the city in another authority area;
- (f) when complaints lodged against other young children in care are upheld, it is generally the perpetrators who would be moved and not the victims, but the safety of the children is paramount at all times;
- (g) with regard to the complaints chart, 'undecided' indicates that the complaint has been resolved but the outcome is not necessarily in favour of the complainant. This terminology will be reviewed prior to the next Complaints Service report;
- (h) where complaints are formalised they are reported to the Heads of Service Meetings and where themes appear to emerge, these are reported to the Directors on a quarterly basis to enable a broader review of circumstances.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) to continue to support the effective complaints handling of young people in care;**

- (2) to acknowledge the required duties of corporate parents in relation to addressing the concerns of young people in care;**
- (3) for Clive Chambers to provide Councillor Sally Longford with detailed information regarding the nature of complaints by the area in which complainant's are located;**
- (4) for an update on children in care social care complaints to be submitted to the board in one year's time.**

### **23 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT**

Sharon Clarke, Service Manager of the Children in Care Team, presented the report which outlines the work done and improvements achieved regarding the transitional support services provided for young people leaving care.

A summary of the statutory guidance for care leaver's services is provided within the report.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) 88.4% of care leavers, aged 17 to 21 years old, were considered to be living in suitable accommodation. Realistically this equates to 100% of care leavers who are still engaged with the service and not in custody as it is not possible to include young people who are in custody or no longer wish to engage with the service;
- (b) there has been a national focus on young people 'staying put' once they leave care. Approximately 10 care leavers are currently staying put. Foster carers and care leavers need to be fully aware of all the implications of 'staying put' and supported if this option is chosen. Providing 'staying put' is not an option for all foster carers and care providers as it may impact on future fostering arrangements, however where it is mutually agreed, the Care Leaver Team liaise between the carer and young person with regard to expectations and financial contributions;
- (c) Nottingham City Homes works closely with the care leaver's service to ensure where possible care leavers have suitable accommodation;
- (d) Semi-independent placements for young people are commissioned but the Service is considering a 'matching panel' to investigate the opportunities currently available and to ensure all options are explored to best meet young peoples' needs;
- (e) a dedicated Personal Advisor (PA) post has now been established to work on a one-to-one basis to assist to support young people into education or training as they leave care. To date this has proved great success, including securing a grant of £2,000 to enable young people to have bespoke access to leisure as an incentive to maintaining engagement. The PA has successfully re-engaged some hard to reach care leavers who previously had stopped accessing the services offered;
- (f) a new care leavers group named 'Your Voice' has been established and will consider issues which affect care leavers and how services and support can be improved including individual health and well-being information and support;

- (g) the care leaver's 'Big It Up' event was considered a success with some care leavers delivering powerful speeches;
- (h) currently there are 193 care leavers aged 17 to 21 years old within the City in contact with the Leaving Care Service. This does not include those care leavers who receive services directly from adult social care;

Children in Care Council members and care leaver representatives in attendance welcomed the 'staying put' option and commented that with regard to the 'health passport' which contains important health information about the care leaver, the information needs to be clearer and simpler to understand.

**RESOLVED to support and understand the duties required by the Care Leaving Service.**

**24 NOTTINGHAM YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE**

Jennifer Hanby, Project Manager for the Nottingham Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS), presented the report which summarised the activity of the service during 2014/15.

NYAS is currently commissioned to provide a residential advocacy service for all of Nottingham City's Children in Care.

The following points were highlighted;

- (a) there were 334 advocacy cases during 2014/15 with contact usually made with the young person within 72 hours of the request for advocacy;
- (b) the independent visitor service experienced some difficulties during the first two quarters of the year with several volunteers withdrawing but work is ongoing to recruit further volunteers;
- (c) an outcomes framework is being put in place which will show specific trends in complaints and positive feedback. Currently the general trend is that young people have issues communicating what they want, this is where advocacy works very well;
- (d) 42 residential visits were made during 2014/15 although there were several instances where visitors arrived to find the young people were not available. In addition, 48 visits were made to children and young people who are placed outside of the County;
- (e) 29 young people were supported through the 'spot purchase' of services.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to acknowledge the advocacy and independent visitor activities undertaken by NYAS;**
- (2) to recognise the importance of the advocacy and independent visitor services in safeguarding and helping children in care to get their views heard.**

## **25 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL ACTIVITY AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, and Jeren Artykova, Children in Care Council member, verbally updated the Board on the activity of the Children in Care Council as follows:

- (a) the Corporate Children in Care Council met during July and considered social workers, including the difficulties and positives which young people in care experienced. This was then followed by a play and group discussion. The play, which was written and performed by young people, was considered extremely powerful and has been suggested for use within social worker training. The next Corporate Children in Care Council will be held on 30 November 2015 and include consideration of 'being at the right placement at the right time';
- (b) a London away-day was held in August which was attended by 12 young people and for staff. It included a workshop on the train journey to London considering the protocol of keeping children in care safe and an information pack on rights and responsibilities which will be passed to all new children in care. The group visited the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, Covent Garden, Westminster and enjoyed a boat ride on the Thames;
- (c) the 'Have Your Say' survey has now been sent out with a focus on young people's experience of care, what works well and what doesn't. All questions are linked to the Children in Care Charter. Responses to the survey help monitor how the charter's aims are being met with results reviewed by members of the Children in Care Council who then rate performance as Red, Amber, Green, the results will then be reported to the Board in the New Year. Officers and councillors are requested to encourage the completion of the survey by children in care. For every completed survey the young person will receive a leisure pass and be entered into a draw for gift vouchers and the latest iPad;
- (d) whilst young people can attend the All-Party Parliamentary Group focusing on children in care, space is limited and cannot be guaranteed. However further visits will be considered in future.

**RESOLVED to note the activity of the Children in Care Council, including forthcoming events.**

## **26 FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the Forward Plan;**
- (2) for a report on 'Care Leavers and Welfare Benefits' to be submitted to a future meeting, to include:**
  - (i) information on Housing Benefit available to care leavers, including those aged 22 years and over;**
  - (ii) data to enable consideration of the comparative rates and payment available against young people who have not been in care.**