

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 1 February 2016
from 14.31 - 15.45**

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Wendy Smith

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Jeren Artykova	- Children in Care Council
Sonia Cain	- Service Manager, Children's Social Care
Clive Chambers	- Head of Service, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Steve Comb	- Head of Looked After Children
Jon Rea	- Engagement and Participation Officer
Caroline Riley	- Service Manager, Children's Safeguarding Quality Assurance
James Roberts	- Youth Offending Team
Bob Uden	- Youth Offending Team
Kwesi Williams	- Project Officer, Children in Care
Phil Wye	- Constitutional Services Officer

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Wendy Smith- Personal reasons
Elise Ashworth
TM
Gill Moy

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

38 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED to note the appointment of Councillor Jim Armstrong

40 FOSTERING AND ADOPTION PANEL - CHAIRS REPORT

Sonia Cain, Service Manager Children's Social Care, introduced the report providing an update on the work of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, which has a primary responsibility to safeguard children and young people placed in foster care and adoptive homes by Nottingham City and beyond. Sonia highlighted the following:

- (a) the primary function of the fostering and adoption panels are to:
 - recommend the approval of prospective adoptive parents;
 - recommend the approval of prospective foster carers;
 - recommend the placing of children with approved adoptive parents;
 - recommend the approval of adoption plans for relinquished children;
- (b) the number of panels per month has been reduced from 4 to 3, with a fourth panel every quarter. It is felt that this would still allow accessibility and flexibility to the panel throughout the year;
- (c) the number of adoptions in 2014/15 was high at 70 children placed. So far in 2015/16 there have been 34 adoption orders, with an expectation of this rising to 45-50 by the end of March 2016;
- (d) performance reports produced by the Panel Chairs have highlighted that timescales for adoption assessments are improving and adoption reports are of a good standard. Service Managers meet with the Chairs quarterly to discuss any needs;

The following responses were given in answer to questions from the Board:

- (e) the definition of 'connected persons' is foster carers who are related to the child, i.e. family members;
- (f) resignations and deregistrations of foster carers were due to various reasons including long service and no longer being able to commit time. The number of foster carers is remaining steady overall, with advertising campaigns to recruit new carers being particularly targeted to teenage fostering where there is a shortfall. Some of the foster carers go on to be Special Guardians or adopters, and figures for the number of these can be provided to the Board;
- (g) panel members are recruited from a broad range of sources, with relevant professionals such as teachers, psychologists and current carers targeted particularly. Attempts are made for a balance of gender and ethnicity.

RESOLVED to note the activity of the fostering and adoption panels which is a statutory requirement

41 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Jeren Artykova, Children in Care Council, gave an update on the Children in Care Council, highlighting the following:

- (a) 130 young people responded to a Have Your Say survey set up by the council. These responses have been analysed and assessed, with RAG ratings and recommendations being compiled for the meeting in March;
- (b) the Children in Care Council has been working with NSPCC on Life Story, which compiles a book for children in long-term care based on their background and experiences;
- (c) the next corporate Council meeting is on 21 March which will be discussing independent visitors services;
- (d) the Children in Care Council works with many partners and its sessions are often split. It has a growing number of both older and younger voices and is always looking for new young people to join;

RESOLVED to note the update

42 REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR: STRATEGIC PRIORITY STATEMENT (SPS6)

Bob Uden and James Roberts, Youth Offending Team, introduced the report detailing the work completed in 2015 to continue to drive a reduction in offending behaviour by children in care. The following was highlighted:

- (a) the percentage of Children in Care aged 10 years or older with convictions/cautions and reprimands has reduced over the past 10 years from 19% to 6%. The rate of improvement in the last year is three times the national average;
- (b) daily checks are carried out to see if any Children in Care have been arrested so that services can get involved as early as possible and identify opportunities for diversion from crime;
- (c) a cross-authority protocol is being developed with a view to reducing the criminalisation of children in care through restorative justice and early intervention. Alongside this, 'traffic light' practice tools have been developed for carers and young people which communicate the principles of the protocol;
- (d) 100 local authority residential staff were trained in restorative approaches over four courses in November and December 2014;
- (e) Concern Network meetings are led by the Children in Care Police Officer (CiCPO), and discuss low level information indicating a risk of sexual exploitation with NSPCC, police, social care, health, education, housing, taxi licensing, voluntary sector and the Youth Offending Team (YOT);

- (f) the post of CiCPO is funded jointly by Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham City Council. Reduction of offending has a great financial benefit across the authority and partners;
- (g) whilst the YOT continues to be committed to having a YOT lead post, scope to provide the same level of service in the future is dependent on budget restraints as budget cuts are anticipated.

Board members wished to pass their thanks to the CiCPO and the YOT Lead for Children in Care, who were not present at the meeting, for their hard work in reducing offending.

RESOLVED to

- (1) recognise the importance of the role of CiCPO and YOT Lead in Children in Care working together to reduce offending and safeguard Children in Care;**
- (2) acknowledge the contribution of the CiCPO in reducing the risk of sexual exploitation for Children in Care;**
- (3) note the continued drive for early identification and intervention in offending within the Children in Care population, to target resources and inform service development, and support the development of restorative approaches to reduce the risk of offending in child care settings. This mirrors the YOT plan 2015-17;**
- (4) support the sign off and launch of a cross-authority protocol and piloting of practice tools to reduce the criminalisation of Children in Care in 2016. Residential workers, young people and Social Care managers have been consulted.**

43 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Caroline Riley, Children's Safeguarding Quality Assurance Team, introduced the report giving an update on continued development of the Child |Sexual Exploitation (CSE) action plan that includes training for staff and carers, awareness raising for young people and information sharing where there are worries around possible CSE. Caroline highlighted the following:

- (a) the Child Sexual Exploitation Cross Authority Group (CSECAG) is a sub-group of the Nottingham Safeguarding Children Board and meets bi-monthly to progress the CSE strategy. The current strands of the CSECAG's work plan are:
 - prevention and response;
 - safeguarding and protection;
 - public confidence;
 - bringing offenders to justice;
- (b) in addition to the CSECAG, the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation panel tracks children at risk of CSE and collates information relating to perpetrators and

locations. The group meets monthly;

- (c) the theatre production LUVU2 has been rolled out to schools, with 32 performances projected this year;
- (d) the Concerns Network Meeting, which offers staff the opportunity to share low level concerns with a view to preventing any risks of CSE has grown in attendance and now has representatives from the Missing Children's Team, Youth Offending Team, NSPCC, Health, Police, Social Care, Housing, Taxi licensing and the voluntary sector;
- (e) Operation Make Safe has delivered training to hotels, ice stadiums, taxi firms and public houses across Nottingham;
- (f) the Assessment of Sexual Harm Arrangements (ASHA) panel meets every three weeks to discuss cases of harmful sexual behaviour perpetrated by children, and to identify ways of preventing adults offending;
- (g) Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) are issued by the police to prohibit an adult from contact with a child where the child is perceived to be at risk from that adult. 15 were issued last year in Nottingham City.

The following answers were given in response to questions from the Board:

- (h) the role of the Children in Care Police Officer is not statutory. The post is funded jointly by the council and the police;
- (i) the CSE co-ordinator role is also not statutory but it is expected for somebody to lead on this. The current CSE Co-ordinator is a qualified social worker and has Youth Offending Team experience;
- (j) there are no particular hotspots for CSE within the city. The Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel identifies risk areas;
- (k) the training offered to taxi firms is also available in neighbouring authorities, but a check will be done to see whether this is happening in practice.

RESOLVED to

(1) note the performance in the current action plan;

(2) note proposed future developments.

44 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED to note the forward plan, subject to the report on Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Review being taken off the agenda for 21 March

45 SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

Councillor Mellen gave an update on activities over the Christmas period to support vulnerable children:

- (a) a special Santa Train was arranged for Children in Care and other vulnerable children in partnership with East Midlands Trains. The children could meet Santa and could participate in other games and activities;
- (b) free tickets to the pantomimes at Nottingham Playhouse and the Theatre Royal were offered to Children in Care;
- (c) the Christmas Stars Appeal was again successful with a huge number of donations and all Children in Care receiving a gift.