

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 10 October 2016
from 14.30 - 15.57**

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Sally Longford
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Marcia Watson
Councillor Sam Webster

Absent

Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Jim Armstrong

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman	- Director of Children's Integrated Services
Roxy Browne	- Governance Officer (observing)
Sharon Clarke	- Service Manager, Children in Care
Steve Comb	- Head of Children in Care
Hayley March	- Complaints Officer
Valerie Marshall	- Service Manager, NYAS
Anna Masding	- CAMHS Service Manager
Gill Moy	- Nottingham City Homes
Sam Oliver	- Children in Care Council member
Julia Stachowiak	- Children in Care Council member
Jordan Whatman	- Project Officer, Children in Care
Phil Wye	- Constitutional Services Officer

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Ginny Klein

Clive Chambers
Pat & Sarah Fielding
TM
Patrick Skeete
Kwesi Williams

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2016 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

25 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT

Sharon Clarke, Service Manager, Children in Care, introduced the report outlining the work undertaken and progress made by the Leaving Care Service since the Ofsted Inspection in March 2014. It is the annual report updating the Board on services provided to young people transitioning from care into adulthood. Sharon highlighted the following:

- (a) Nottingham City Council has a duty to provide services to Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers, which includes children placed on Special Guardianship Orders;
- (b) the Council has a duty to provide Care Leavers with suitable accommodation. In Nottingham performance on this is good, with the majority gaining their own tenancy, and given priority for suitable housing;
- (c) the Leaving Care Service works closely with Nottingham City Homes (NCH) in order to have support in maintaining tenancies, and support in terms of finance. NCH also sometimes provides apprenticeships to Care Leavers;
- (d) the transition to adulthood can be difficult for Care Leavers, and there is a significant increase in the number of young people 'staying put', meaning they are remaining in placement post-18 if assessed as not ready for their own tenancy. There is a dedicated Personal Advisor to help young people to exit residential care;
- (e) the Leaving Care Service has recently been reconfigured to include a Dedicated Personal Advisor for employment and education, which has increased performance in this area. Other changes include a successful bid for piloting counselling and coaching sessions, a refurbished duty room and a bespoke participation group called 'Your Voice' which is increasing in membership;

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (f) 'Keep on Caring', the new government guidance, recommends extending support to all care leavers up to the age of 25, promoting 'staying put', proposing that residential care is kept for young people up to the age of 21, and more active corporate parenting;
- (g) the Health Passport has been introduced by the government, and is a summary of a young person's health history all in one document should they need it after leaving care;
- (h) the ASDAN qualification is a qualification that young people can gain to help them gain access to apprenticeships or employment. This is available to all care leavers.

RESOLVED to

- (1) continue to support and understand the duties required by the Leaving Care Service;**
- (2) be aware of that in the recent Government document ‘Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence’ (July 2016), it is intended to implement a legal framework setting out for the first time what it means to be a good Corporate Parent.**

26 IMPROVING AND ACHIEVING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY’S CHILDREN IN CARE

Anna Masding, Service Manager, CAMHS, introduced the report, highlighting the following:

- (a) the CAMHS Team ensure that the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of Children in Care (CIC) are integral to their health plans and the review process. They also provide support and training to CIC networks to improve the resilience of children and young people and the stability of their placements;
- (b) there is now a Nottinghamshire CAMHS transformation plan, progress against which is monitored by the Clinical Commissioning Group. The aims of the plan are to:
 - promote resilience, prevention and early intervention;
 - improve access to effective support – a system without tiers;
 - provide care for the most vulnerable;
 - ensure accountability and transparency;
 - develop the workforce to deliver the aims;
- (c) in the current system there are 4 tiers of assessed need. This will be eradicated so that any child will be able to access the system at any level through a single point of access, with consultations arranged appropriately as quickly as possible. This will join together services more effectively and avoid having to wait a long time for a specialist;
- (d) Routine Outcome Measures (ROMs) ensure that CAMHS are helping children as effectively as possible. Children complete a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire, where they can tell how they feel they are progressing, what they are happy about and what they are not;
- (e) the service and model is working well and reaching lots of young people, with 1453 consultations last year;

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (f) Children in Care who are placed outside the city must access treatment in the areas where they live. Each child has a Care Plan so if needs are identified they are referred to relevant services and then monitored;

- (g) when children are approaching their 18th birthday, the CAMHS team will work with other services to make sure that everything is in place for their transition to adulthood.

RESOLVED to implement the CAMHS transformation plan in line with Future in Mind to ensure appropriate and timely access to support: to include the integration of all CIC CAMHS referrals into the Single Point of Access (SPA), the implementation of The Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA), and the completion of Routine Outcome Measures (ROMs) to measure the effectiveness of the support provided.

27 CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2016 – 2017 (ONE YEAR REFRESH)

Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services, introduced the report giving an overview of the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy and its strategic priorities.

There are 7 strategic priorities in the strategy:

- to actively seek the wishes and feeling and feelings of our young people and use this information to influence the care and support they receive. The Children in Care Council contributes this, and the new Corporate Children in Care Council which can summon officers to meetings;
- to help our young people achieve educational success and ensure those leaving care are engaged in either employment, education or training. The Council has a Virtual School and Head with a commitment to getting the best for its children;
- to ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support in order to facilitate the best possible transition into independence. Nottingham has a number of semi-independent settings for this;
- to keep young people safe and avoid the criminalisation of young people through strong collaborative partnership work. This Council is one of the few in the country which has a dedicated Children in Care Police Officer;
- to ensure young people are healthy through the delivery of appropriate intervention and health services. All Children in Care receive timely medical checks and are monitored;
- to reduce delays in securing stability and permanency for our young people. This can be difficult as it can rely on movement of Social Workers which is outside of the Council's control. A significant number of adoption placements are made annually;
- to increase use of internal foster and residential placements through the recruitment and retention of foster carers, and to explore if the types and numbers of residential placement can be increased, in order to offer more local homes. A number of recruitment campaigns and information evenings are held for foster carers, and the number of children in external residential care has reduced significantly;

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (a) for the amount of time that children are awaiting adoption, there is a scorecard set by the government. The Council does not always achieve this as they will always try to successfully place difficult children such as sibling groups. Some other local authorities cancel adoption plans when they are taking a long time;
- (b) for older children adoption is not always an option, so finding the right foster carers is very important, as is working together and being flexible. There are misconceptions about who can be a foster carer and these need to be challenged.

RESOLVED to

- (1) agree the strategic priorities, accepting the strategic priorities as ‘corporate parenting objectives’;**
- (2) endorse the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2016-2017.**

28 CHILDREN IN CARE SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT

Hayley March, Complaints and Mediation Officer, introduced the report summarising the statutory Social Care complaints procedure, as well as highlighting complaints made specifically by Children in Care. Hayley highlighted the following:

- (a) the aim of the Social Care Complaints Team is to resolve dissatisfaction, and learn from complaints in order to improve service delivery. The Team also checks that the person making a complaint has consent from the citizen or service user if required, and establishes whether a Power of Attorney is registered or not if this is raised as a right to make a complaint on another person’s behalf;
- (b) there are 3 statutory stages to the Complaints Procedure:
 - stage 1- provide a written response within 10 working days, which may be extended to 20 working days;
 - stage 2 - an investigation of the complaint by an independent investigator with a report produced within 25 working days, if the complainant remains dissatisfied after stage 1;
 - stage 3 - an Independent Panel of 3 review the complaint and investigation , should the complainant still be dissatisfied after stage 2
- (c) there have been 14 complaints received from Children in Care during 2015/16, which is double the number from the previous year. All of these have been resolved at stage 1. A noticeable issue raised by the complaints has been the sporadic and inconsistent nature of some social worker support;
- (d) the Team is hoping to increase access to the complaints service in the near future through introduction of social media and texting facilities.

RESOLVED to continue to support the effective complaints handling of young people in care, and understand required duties of Corporate Parents in relation to addressing the concerns of young people in care.

29 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Julia Stachowiak and Sam Oliver, members of the Children in Care Council, gave an overview of the National Citizen Service (NCS), highlighting the following:

- (a) NCS is available to all children and young people who have left secondary school. The programme lasts 4 weeks at a cost of £50, and consists of 2 weeks residential and 2 weeks working towards a social action project;
- (b) Sam took part in the project this summer and it helped him to challenge his fears, make friends and gain skills and experience;
- (c) The programme may not be for everybody as some young people may not have the confidence to leave home for so long. The programme should be developed to be more attractive to a wider range of young people;

Committee members commented that the £50 charge could be a barrier for some young people, particularly those from Nottingham City who tend to be from lower income families.

RESOLVED to thank Julia and Sam for their update and note the information

30 NYAS ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR (IV) SERVICE

Valerie Marshall, NYAS Service Manager, introduced the report summarising the activities undertaken to date of the Advocacy and Independent Visitor (IV) services provided by NYAS during the year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. Valerie highlighted the following:

- (a) only 3.2% of Children in Care are matched to an IV nationally, which is very low. National research has shown that the role is under-recognised;
- (b) there are many young people waiting for an IV, with data showing that over two thirds of local authorities have a waiting list;
- (c) NYAS is responsible for all IV services for children in care of Nottingham City Council, regardless of where they live. If they live outside Nottingham, they try to recruit IVs locally. There are currently 16 young people waiting to be matched;
- (d) last year there were 63 referrals to advocacy services, a number which has already been reached this year. Referrals are made by young people, social workers or foster carers. The top reasons for advocacy were child protection and placement moves;
- (e) next week an app will be launched which will allow young people to refer themselves;
- (f) NYAS attends new inductions for qualified social workers to promote the service as they have not historically been made aware of it;

- (g) Nottingham City is unique nationally in that it holds 'keeping in touch' visits every 8 weeks, which often resolve issues on the spot;
- (h) some parents are unwilling to give consent for IVs and advocates, which can make it difficult for some young people to access the service. NYAS is working with commissioners to address this.

RESOLVED to

- (1) acknowledge the Advocacy and Independent Visitor activities being undertaken by NYAS;**
- (2) recognise the importance of the Advocacy and Independent Visitor Services in safeguarding and helping children in care to get their views heard.**

31 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED to note the forward plan

32 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item(s) in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

33 NYAS ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR (IV) SERVICE - EXEMPT APPENDIX

RESOLVED to note the information contained in the exempt appendix