

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 17 January 2017 from 11.03 - 12.39**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)  
Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Chris Tansley  
Maria Ward (3<sup>rd</sup> Sector)

##### Absent

Councillor Azad Choudhry  
Councillor Josh Cook  
Councillor Georgina Culley  
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim  
Councillor Neghat Khan

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

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services  
Chris Cook - Chair of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board  
Rav Kalsi - Senior Governance Officer  
John Matravers - Safeguarding Partnerships Service Manager  
Alison Michalska - Corporate Director for Children and Adults  
Michelle Roe - Executive Officer  
Kate Morris - Governance Officer

#### **28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Josh Cook – personal  
Councillor Neghat Khan – other Council business

Councillor David Mellen  
Councillor Sam Webster

#### **29 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Maria Ward, Network Officer for Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service declared that she was a member of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board. This did not preclude her from speaking on the item.

#### **30 MINUTES**

The committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2016 as a correct record and they were signed off by the chair.

#### **31 NOTTINGHAM CITY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

Chris Cook, Independent Chair of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board introduced the Annual Report 2015/16, highlighting the following:

- (a) partnership work within Nottingham City continues to be a strong feature in the work of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board (NCSCB). Partner agency relationships are good and challenges resolved professionally. This, along with the extensive information sharing, is one of the main features that makes NCSCB effective;
- (b) in September 2015 separate independent chairs were appointed to the Children Safeguarding Board and the Adult Safeguarding Board allowing a better focus on child safeguarding issues. The two boards continue to work together on cross cutting issues;
- (c) individual member agency performance is broadly good on inspection by the relevant bodies. Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) continues to be judged as 'good' by Ofsted;
- (d) Nottinghamshire Police plays a lead role in a number of sub groups including the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group and are key contributors to information sharing across the region;
- (e) Schools and Education services provide a range of training aimed at staff, volunteers and governors within education providers;
- (f) Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group (NCCCG) are key partners, contributing across a large range of issues including domestic violence, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation;
- (g) NCCG are also involved in a piece of work altering the mind-set of clinicians. This work aims to note children as "not brought to appointment" rather than "did not attend" and they are looking at the impact this change in mind-set may bring about. There has been interest from other clinical commissioning groups around the UK in this work;
- (h) the Child Death Overview Panel are pleased with the reduction of natural deaths within the reporting period and continues work on educating parents around preventable deaths such as unsafe sleeping;
- (i) the Quality Assurance Sub-Group is planning a series of audits of the key partner agencies;
- (j) a range of training covering various topics continues to be offered to staff and volunteers from across the partnership, including the voluntary sector. In particular the "Every Colleague Matters" training has already been, or will be delivered to every person who works within the Children and Vulnerable Adults workforce in the city of Nottingham;
- (k) future priorities will remain the same. Work will continue to prioritise keeping children safe from harm, including child sexual exploitation and missing children.

Following questions and comments from the board the following points were made:

- (l) a newly commissioned sub group has been set up looking at emerging issues such as trafficking, modern day slavery and refugees;
- (m) at present the NCSCB is well resourced. There are financial challenges, but partnership agencies are currently able to fund projects and programmes that are necessary;
- (n) the support of the voluntary sector is essential in the work of the NCSCB. There are financial challenges around resources and how the voluntary sector as a whole can contribute to the Board financially;
- (o) all members organisations of the Volunteers Network have certain standards that their volunteers have to meet before they start working with young people. The Quality Forum ensures that this is standard across the organisation and basic standards are written into organisations policies. These basic standards can be assessed by the NCSCB but they cannot affect the allocation of resources;
- (p) Councillor David Mellen, portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years regularly attends an Assurance meeting where the NCSCB feed back to him about ongoing work. This can then feedback to ward councillors to keep them informed on what is happening in their ward;
- (q) a robust system of feedback to partner agencies is in place. This covers work at a corporate level as well as work taking place at a local level;
- (r) there is a good level of awareness of safeguarding issues at a local level and in local meetings including those not specifically addressing services for children or child safeguarding;
- (s) a rigorous assessment of protocols within sports clubs and leisure activities is now underway to ensure that the safeguarding is fit for purpose, this includes faith groups and uniformed groups;
- (t) standard training around recognising signs of child sexual exploitation for taxi drivers and security staff has been broadly welcomed and has gained interest from a number of local councils across the UK.

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) thank the Independent Chair of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board, Chris Cook, for his informative report;**
- (2) add Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2016/17 to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18;**
- (3) congratulate Chris Cook on his recent OBE, recognising his dedication to safeguarding children throughout his career.**

## **32 POST SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION PROGRESS**

Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services presented a report updating the Committee on Post Safeguarding Inspection Progress since the Ofsted inspection carried out in 2014. The following points were highlighted:

- (a) In 2014 Ofsted judged that there was lots of good work taking place in Nottingham City with room for improvement in some aspects;
- (b) the workforce had issues with capacity despite the Council taking on 10 additional social workers shortly before the inspection started. This remains a challenge for the Council despite steps being taken to ease caseloads;
- (c) the IT system used, Carefirst, was considered increasingly unsuitable, no longer intuitive to the increasing workloads being experienced. A new system called Liquid Logic was commissioned and went live in December 2016. Members of staff have received training but it will take time for new system to be embedded. The system is far more intuitive and will reduce screen time;
- (d) assessment and planning issues were made worse by the issues with inadequate computer systems. This issue is being addressed with the new system and will improve as staff become comfortable with the software;
- (e) the 'voice of the child' approach was applied widely but the recording was not always done well enough. It did highlight good practices with younger children. As a result, all recording templates have been reassessed and re-written. The introduction of the Liquid Logic software has also improved the quality of staff recording. Additionally, the Council has introduced an app called Mind of My Own (MOMA), which is designed to enable Children in Care to be better heard;
- (f) there was an issue with the governance and capacity of the Virtual School used by Children in Care. Following a peer review of this service there is now extra capacity and a governing body place. In addition to this, all Children in Care have a full education plan alongside a full health plan;
- (g) in the past, the Fostering Service suffered from a lack of technical leadership. This has been addressed with a restructure to ensure technical lead is in place. There is also an increased focus on finding local fostering families and a change in the way payments are made to make it easier for foster carers;
- (h) Adoption Services was also involved in the restructure to ensure technical leadership and development of specialist skills;
- (i) strategic tools like Carefirst have now been updated and corporate business plans are better communicated;
- (j) a recent peer review of Children's Services showed that children in Nottingham City were safe, and that the Council was not risk averse. An Ofsted inspection of the Youth Offending Team in 2016 judged them to be a good service, offering innovative work and good leadership;

- (k) new Multi-Systemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect has been introduced to work intensively with the most in need families. This work looks to break the cycle of abuse and breakdown of families and to support change for the whole family;
- (l) children's residential homes are inspected annually and reviewed every 6 months. All have been found to be safe and meeting the needs of the children living there.
- (m) Ofsted are arriving on 23 January 2017 to conduct a pilot inspection using a new, more proportionate approach. In April 2018 the new framework will be in place and the timetable for inspection will restart. By inviting Ofsted to inspect at this stage it will allow the Council to assess progress made since the last inspection and will also mean that the Council will be one of the last to receive mandatory inspection following the April 2018 introduction of the new framework.

Following comments and questions from the committee the following information was provided:

- (n) in work with priority families the Council used the government funding to create and fill Co-Ordinator posts that are working to change the culture of approaching social work. The aim was to alter the way everyone works not just those working with these priority families to take a systemic approach to make an enduring difference. These Co-Ordinators will remain in post as long as funding exists and the change in approach to the work will continue;
- (o) families needing extra help are increasingly signposted to the voluntary sector to seek help directly. The increase of self-referrals to voluntary services is increasing with resources already stretched within this sector. More work can be done between the Council and the voluntary services to deliver work on a whole family approach;
- (p) social worker retention is on par with the national average. 40% of social workers in the Council are agency staff but there is some variation to this figure across the year. Reasons for the nationally high turnover are well documented and include high workload/caseload;
- (q) the Council is taking part in a key piece of work along with 8 other councils across the region to standardise terms offered to agency staff within the East Midlands. The work aims to create a regional agreement ensuring standard pay, rewards and experience requirements are the same between the authorities;
- (r) the Council has a robust set of checks before employing agency Social workers. Agency staff are unable to work as social workers without being registered, which requires recognised Social Work Qualifications. The Council also requires a certain level of experience before it will employ agency staff and will hold interviews for all agency staff prior to appointment. Newly Qualified Social workers are not employed through an agency. The Council

also completes independent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in addition to those held by the agency, and requires full references;

- (s) the Council has recently agreed a distance learning course with Manchester Metropolitan university to develop existing staff and train new social workers. The Council has loan arrangements in place for staff taking up the distance learning allowing experience to remain within the Council workforce.

**RESOLVED to note the content of the report and thank the Director of Children's Integrated Services for the informative presentation.**

### **33 WORK PROGRAMME**

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer, updated the Committee on the work programme.

**RESOLVED to agree the work programme for 2016/2017**