

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 25 September 2017 from 2.31 pm - 3.56 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Wendy Smith

Absent

Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Marcia Watson
Councillor Sam Webster

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Clive Chambers - Head Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Steve Comb - Head of Children in Care
Larelle Flowers - Children in Care Council
Matthew Jenkins - CAMHS Children Looked After Team Manager
Gill Moy - Nottingham City Homes
Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
Jordan Whatman - Project Officer, Children in Care
Aileen Wilson - Head of Early Help Services
Phil Wye - Governance Officer

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jackie Morris – personal reasons
Councillor Marcia Watson – work commitments
Councillor Sam Webster – leave

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25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

26 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

27 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT

Steve Comb, Head of Children in care, introduced the report updating the Board on services provided to young people transitioning from care into adulthood, highlighting the following:

- (a) it is anticipated that there will be a government requirement to offer services to Care Leavers for longer, and this is outlined in a recently approved strategy document entitled 'Keep on Caring'. This will require Local Authorities to offer guidance and support to all care leavers up to the age of 25. It is not clear when this will be implemented;
- (b) Nottingham City Council has a good record of finding appropriate accommodation for Care Leavers, and has a strong relationship with Nottingham City Homes. There has been a slight decline recently in the proportion of those children deemed to be in suitable accommodation. This is partially because of the way suitable accommodation is defined by government;
- (c) the council also has a good record with employment and training for Care Leavers, and attains a much higher level of employment or training than statistical neighbour authorities. This is in part due to apprenticeships within the council, and a strong relationship with Futures. Financial assistance and personal advisors are available to help with education;
- (d) 'Staying Put' arrangements allow Care Leavers to remain with foster carers beyond the age of 18, which can be positive for the young person but potentially leads to the loss of a foster carer for the authority;
- (e) the Leaving Care Service works closely with the Children in Care Police Officer and other relevant agencies to ensure that if there are concerns, then the relevant support is implemented.

RESOLVED to

- (1) continue to support and understand the duties required of the Leaving Care Service, and forthcoming changes in legislation;**
- (2) be aware that the government recently approved a new strategy document entitled 'Keep on Caring - Supporting Young People from Care to Independence (July 2016), which will require Local Authorities to offer guidance and support for all care leavers up to the age of 25.**

28 IMPROVING AND ACHIEVING GOOD OUTCOMES FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY'S CHILDREN IN CARE – MENTAL HEALTH

Aileen Wilson, Head of Early Help Services, introduced the report highlighting the following:

- (a) the CAMHS Team specifically to work with children in care is jointly funded and governed by Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

and consists of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a community health nurse and six specialist social workers;

- (b) the current priority for the team is a refresh to ensure resources are being used effectively and compliance with the national transformation plan based on the Future in Mind report;
- (c) upcoming and ongoing tasks for the team are the implementation of the Choice and Partnership Approach, use of performance measures as evidence of the effectiveness of support, and developing/sharing knowledge and skills around the impact of developmental trauma.

Board members recognised the importance of consultation work that the team carries out to guide practitioners and foster carers in their support of children in care. It was suggested that service users could be referred to the Children in Care Council or a similar group to build their confidence.

RESOLVED to continue to implement the CAMHS transformation plan in line with the Future in Mind Report to ensure appropriate and timely access to support.

29 CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT: QUARTER THREE AND QUARTER FOUR 2016 - 2017

Steve Comb, Head of Children in Care, introduced the report providing the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data, highlighting the following:

- (a) the number of children in care is above the council's target of 90 per 10,000, but better than that of similar councils;
- (b) there is a lot of ongoing activity around recruiting foster carers, with a council plan priority being to increase the number of foster carers. Additional recruitment events are being held in schools and faith groups across the city;
- (c) the Department for Education has ceased support for inter-agency adoption payments which is a financial challenge, but adoption activity continues to be strong with 48 adoptions in the last year;
- (d) all of the city's children's homes have been judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. Semi-independent homes now have their own monitoring framework in place;
- (e) the percentage of children in care with an up to date health assessment stands at 89%, with 83% having an up to date dental check and 92% having the relevant immunisations;
- (f) 4.6% of children in care have had a conviction or been subject to a youth caution during the year, which is good performance for the city. Continued part funding of the Children in Care Police Officer has had a significant contribution in this area;

- (g) the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation and in employment, education or training are both better than statistical neighbours.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (h) raising the percentage of children in care who have an up to date dental check has historically been a challenge, and it can be difficult to ensure older children attend their appointments. This is regularly tracked and children are incentivised to attend;
- (i) there is likely to be an impact on children in care and children on the edge of care from the introduction of Universal Credit and changes to benefits.

RESOLVED to acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care Service, against identified key performance indicators.

30 ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Valerie Marshall, NYAS Service Manager, introduced the report summarising activities undertaken to date of the Advocacy and Independent Visitor (IV) services provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) during the year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. Valerie highlighted the following:

- (a) NYAS's contract to provide advocacy services and independent visiting services will be finishing at the end of September 2017;
- (b) NYAS have been working to maintain the Independent Visiting service by supporting current volunteers, recruiting new volunteers, and delivering training;
- (c) there has been a significant increase in the number of residential visits over the last year. There is a barrier to visiting young people in semi-independent accommodation as they often move or do not wish to engage;
- (d) NYAS has met with the new Independent Visitor provider to ensure a smooth transition. It is hoped that a large number of volunteers will be going over to the new provider.

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 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer and Larelle Flowers, Children in Care (CiCC) representative, gave a verbal update highlighting the following:

- (a) This year's Have Your Say survey will be conducted between 9th October and 17th November for children in care. Responses will be assessed by the CiCC in January 2018 and come back to the Board in March 2018;
- (b) there was no CiCC meeting in July but members did go to Trent Bridge to see cricket and meet with young people from Woodview residential home;
- (c) the first meeting of the Autumn term was a Corporate CiCC on the theme of placements and how the best placements can be achieved. Many senior officers attended the meeting, where CiCC members performed sock puppet dramas looking at the issues of splitting up siblings in care, and how foster carers can help children have a more natural relationship with their friends and birth family through better decision making;
- (d) following the session, managers made a commitment to share more real life children's stories in management meetings to inspire colleagues (making sure these are anonymised), and to make sure more young people are involved in training and developing foster carers;
- (e) the next few meetings will have the theme of preparation for adulthood. On the 18th December the annual award ceremony will take place with the Lord Mayor and Sherriff.

RESOLVED to thank Jon and Larelle for the update.

32 CHAIR'S UPDATE

None.

33 FORWARD PLANNER

The forward planner was noted.