

## Membership

- absent

### Councillors

Ged Clarke (Chairman)  
Fiona Asbury (Vice-Chair)

- Victor Bobo
- John Clarke
- Barrie Cooper
- Mike Cox
- Jim Creamer
- Bob Cross
- Vincent Dobson
- Rod Kempster
- Geoff Merry
- Carol Pepper
- Tom Pettengell
- Alan Rhodes
- Mel Shepherd
- Chris Winterton
- Brian Wombwell

### Officers

Steve Edwards - Service Director, Children's Social Care  
Jon Wilson - Service Director, Personal Care and Support (Younger Adults)  
Elaine Bond - Service Manager, Older People  
Lisa Swift - Business Support Officer, Information and Development  
Martin Gately - Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
Paul Davies - Governance Officer

## 1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 and 20 September 2011 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cross (unwell), Creamer (urgent domestic business) and Bobo (other reason).

## 3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. Child Protection: Update on the Safeguarding Improvement Programme**

The report which been circulated updated the committee on continued progress in the improvement programme for safeguarding and looked after children, during a period when demand for services had remained high.

In his presentation to the committee, Steve Edwards focussed on the findings of Ofsted's re-inspection of safeguarding services, which had been published that morning. The inspection had lasted from 19 to 23 September, when inspectors had looked at a wide range of cases, and met young people, families, employees and councillors. Services which had been identified as "inadequate" in the previous inspection were now classed as "adequate", and as "good" under three headings. Ofsted believed that the authority had the capacity to become classed as "good". Mr Edwards stated that the findings recognised significant progress over the 18 months since the previous inspection. The overall Ofsted rating would be "adequate", which would help the County Council's overall score. The authority would ask the Secretary of State to lift the current improvement notice. Mr Edwards responded to members' questions and comments:

- Had the 45 new staff been deployed to cover inadequacies in particular? - These were new posts, which addressed inadequacies and increased demand, and helped by reducing caseloads.
- How were agency staff used? - The authority continued to use some agency staff, in circumstances such as where it was not possible to recruit a qualified social worker, or where there was long term sickness or an employee had been suspended. As permanent appointments were made, the authority continued to reduce its use of agency workers. However, Mr Edwards pointed out that, given the high priority for safeguarding, he could not say that there would be a time when agency staff would never be used.
- Sickness absence remained high. - Long term sickness absence had reduced from 22 days per year to 14½ in the last two years, with managers, HR and Occupational Health working closely together. Mr Edwards pointed out that other East Midlands authorities had similar or higher sickness absence rates, and that sickness did not always result from work pressures.
- Had problems in Ashfield/Mansfield been addressed? - There were a lot of children in the care system at the current time, which had prompted extra staffing and new management arrangements. Caseloads had reduced as a consequence.
- What were the financial implications of the demand and improvement programme? - Financial pressures continued to be significant, with around 700 looked after children currently. Costs ranged from £30,000 pa for an in-house foster care placement to £145,000 pa for an out-county residential placement. However the number of children in care in Nottinghamshire was below the national average. The authority was seeking to slow the rate increase in demand, and the hold it level. Mr Edwards emphasised that the right sort of children were coming into care.

- Had the authority asked the government for increased funding to met the demand? - The county's level of funding was similar to its statistical neighbours.

It was agreed

1. to note the report and the successful outcome of the Ofsted inspection;
2. that the committee's thanks be conveyed to all staff who had contributed to this achievement;
3. that a copy of the Ofsted inspection report be circulated to Committee members.

## **5. Rota Visits**

Lisa Swift and Elaine Bond introduced the report which outlined current arrangements for members' rota visits in the Adult Social Care, Heath and Public Protection and Children, Families and Cultural Services Departments. The report recommended that a review group examine issues associated with rota visits.

During discussion, points raised by members included whether there should be rota visits to privately owned establishments, whether the review group might meet at a home, whether it might look at the role of the Care Quality Commission and how members' rota visits complemented CQC inspections.

Jon Wilson offered to report to the review group on current inspection arrangements, and on the authority's own contractual responsibilities and relationships.

It was agreed that a review group be established to examine issues connected with members' rota visits, that members interested in joining the review group inform Martin Gately, and that Business Managers be asked for further nominations if necessary.

## **6. Work Programme**

A copy of the committee's work programme for 2011/12 had been circulated. Members noted an exchange of correspondence with the Department of Health, following the referral at the last meeting of the Newark review.

Martin Gately stated that the date for an extra meeting to discuss the Bassetlaw Clinical Services review was being discussed with NHS Bassetlaw. The meeting might be in Worksop, with the possibility of visiting Bassetlaw Hospital.

NHS Nottinghamshire County was planning to start consultation on 31 October on proposals to co-locate five West Bridgford GP practices onto a single new site. It was agreed to establish a review group to consider the proposals. Members interested in joining the review group were asked to inform Martin

Gately. Business Managers would be asked for further nominations if necessary.

Ambulance services in rural areas were suggested as a possible new topic for review. The Chairman indicated that this should be given further consideration following East Midlands Ambulance Service's presentation to the committee in relation to the Newark review.

It was agreed to approve the work programme, subject to the establishment of the review group about West Bridgford GP Practices.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am.

CHAIR