

Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Tuesday 17 October 2023 (commencing at 2:00pm)

**Membership:**

Persons absent are marked with an 'Ap' (apologies given) or 'Ab' (where apologies have not been sent). Substitute members are marked with a 'S.'

**County Councillor**

Sinead Anderson (Chair)  
Anne Callaghan BEM  
Francis Purdue-Horan  
Sam Smith

**Country Council Officers**

Amanda Collinson - Service Director for Care, Help and Protection

Laurence Jones - Service Director for Commissioning and Resources

Sophie Eadsforth - Group Manager for Looked After Children

Claire Sampson - Group Manager for Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement

**Substitute Members**

None

**Officers and Colleagues in attendance**

Rhys Attwell – Democratic Services Officer

Paul Thomas- Service Manager (Secure Accommodation)-

Phillipa Milbourne- Business Support Administrator

Jenny Whiston - Service Manager Commissioning and Placements Team

Beth Downing - Group Manager: Placements and Commissioning

Orlaith Green - Group Manager, Psychology, and Inclusion Services; Principal Educational Psychologist

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

None.

## **2. Declaration of Interests**

No declaration of Interests was made.

## **3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 18 July 2023, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **4. Fosters Carers Liaison Group Update**

Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children, Provided the Panel with a regular update on the recent meetings of the Foster Carers Liaison Group (Flag). The following was discussed:

- a) The most recent FLAG meeting which took place on the 16 October 2023, was considered the most positive FLAG meeting in the past four years. It was noted that the improvements which had taken place in this time, were down to Jenny Whiston (Service Manager Commissioning and Placements Team), and the work she had conducted. The meeting was well attended with 36 different households attending the session. The session consisted of those in attendance sharing success stories, and the being able to ask questions concerning fostering services.
- b) The Panel were informed in an update on its proposal for a nominee from FLAG, to attend the formal meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel. That no progress had been made at the time of the meeting, with there being a requested update made by the Panel for the next meeting.

Resolved (2023/028)

- 1) To note the update on the Foster Carers Liaison Group (FLAG)
- 2) To request that progress is made on the process of seeking a FLAG representative to attend meeting of the Panel.

## **5. Children In Care Council Update**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on the recent engagement with the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The following points were discussed:

- a) There were questions about the Children in Care Council meetings being formally recorded as minutes. The Panel were informed that there would be feedback concerning the answer to this.
- b) The Panel wished to be informed on whether the Children in Care

Council meetings would appreciate the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, attending the meetings if school and college times permitted.

Resolved (2023/028)

- 1) To note the Children in Care Council Update.
- 2) To feedback on whether the Children in care Council meeting is minute.

## **6. Visits to Children's Residential Homes**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on the recent visit to Children's Residential Homes. The following points were discussed:

- a) There was one visit to Childrens residential home known as the Big House by Cllr Anderson and Cllr Callaghan, who informed the Panel that they received a warm welcome by staff. The Panel were informed of the work conducted by staff at the residential home, to meet the individual needs of children placed in their care.
- b) The Panel discussed the Ofsted inspection of Children's Residential Homes in the County, with the Panel being informed that Ofsted inspections in the past had not fared well in results but in recent times had improved.
- c) There are plans for future visits to other Children's Residential Homes in Nottinghamshire County.

Resolved (2023/029)

- 1) To note the update on Visits to Childrens Residential Homes.

## **7. Children's residential homes Update**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented an update to provide an overview of children's residential homes provision in Nottinghamshire. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel were informed in relation to reported incidents at the "Big House," that there had been a period of learning which had taken place. This included identifying for residents what triggers might be. This involved speaking to parents and key workers to understand the history of the child, and what experience certain triggers may be related to. So, in future engagements, there can be a plan put in place to mitigate the risk of overstimulation.
- b) The Panel were informed that the Big House are still trying to recruit 2 Residential Care Workers, a Residential Social Care Worker, and a part time Occupational Therapist. The Panel were told that for the Occupational Therapist, there has been an agreed increase in the grade of pay, due to the level of needs at the residential home.
- c) The Panel were informed that there had been an appeal over the inspectors'

opinions on the use of restraint at Clayfields Secure Childrens Home, which had detrimental effect on the rating it was awarded. The Panel were informed that when the inspection took place, on the issue of using restraint, no member of staff was interviewed. With there being reason to believe that the judgements around the legality of staff using restraint by those inspecting were made with not all the facts and the context of the restraint taking place being presented. It was further noted by Panel that the restraining process at Clayfield's Secure Childrens Home was used to protect others and stop significant damage to property.

Resolved (2023/030)

- 1) To note the Childrens Residential Homes Update.

## **8. Inspection Gradings of 'Exclusive Use' Children's Residential Homes**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented a report to provide an update on the Inspection Gradings of 'Exclusive use' Childrens Residential Homes. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel were pleased to note that overall, there had been a trend of outstanding grading upon inspection. The Panel noted that two Children's Residential Homes require improvement, with it being explained that the area manager is the same for those awarded both outstanding and in need of improvement. Allowing for there to be a plan of improvement which incorporates learning from Children Residential Homes with an outstanding grading. The Panel noted the improvement Plan for the two homes.
- b) It was noted by the Panel, that due to the nature of working in a challenging environment, upon the day of inspection there is always a risk that there may be room for improvements. With it being noted that an inspection of a Children's Residential Home, is a snapshot of a wider picture that the staff are working under.

Resolved (2023/031)

- 1) To note the Inspection Grading of 'Exclusive Use' Children's Residential Homes Report.

## **9. Independent Review of Children's Social Care Update**

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Care, Help and Protection, presented an update to the Panel on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel were informed that there has been an update on the search for Pathfinder authorities for pillar 1, which was the Family Health pillar. The three Local Authorities which have been identified by the government to evaluate the recommendations from the consultation following the Care Review and subsequent Stable Homes Built on Love document have been named as

Lincolnshire County Council, Dorset Council and Wolverhampton City Council. These Councils will be the design sites for the project and trialing a new approach to Health Finders Authorities. Pillar 2 Pathfinders are currently out for bidding, with Councils being asked to bid to be part of wave 2. The Panel were informed that Nottinghamshire County Council are considering a bid for wave 2.

- b) The Panel were informed that the Local Enterprise Partnership had been working on the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- c) The Panel were informed that Nottinghamshire County Council are one of four Local Authorities working together, with an investment of 1.4 million which will be essential recruitment for a hub and campaign for foster carers across the four authorities.
- d) There is a network of foster carers and their extended families supporting each other called "Mockingbird." Which has been established and supported by an external facilitator, working towards a better network of support.

Resolved (2023/032)

- 1) To note the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Update

## **10. Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report**

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Safeguarding, Assurance, and Improvement, presented the statutory "Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report." The following was discussed:

- a) The Panel noted that the number of "looked after" children by Nottinghamshire County Council had remained stable, however increases have been seen in Asylum Seeking children.
- b) The Panel noted that one of the main objectives of the service over the last 12 months, have been trying to get meetings back to face to face. The panel were informed that initial review meetings are all conducted face to face.
- c) The Panel noted that the Service had done work on how to better improve meetings with young people and children, and over the next 12 months there will be a continued drive to improve the Service around making meetings more child friendly. An example of this was on modifying documentation to a pictorial document, as a way of making children feel included and listened to in meetings about their wellbeing.

Resolved (2023/032)

- 1) To note the Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report.

## **11. Virtual School Termly Report**

Orlaith Green, Group Manager, Psychology, and Inclusion Services; Principal Educational Psychology presented an update to the Panel on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel noted a summary of the work conducted by the Virtual School to support children previously in care, children in care and children with a social worker. It was explained that the number of children looked after by Nottinghamshire County Council had remained at a stable level, being between 950 and 1000 for the last 2 years.
- b) The Panel noted that the data around attendance, with the average attendance for children of statutory school age being 86.16% for the academic year 2022-23 which compares to 90.55% in 2021-22. The Panel also noted the data around suspensions, with there being 110 of statutory school age children and young people receiving fixed term suspensions in the academic year, in contrasts to 77 the previous year. The Panel had concerns about the number of children who had been excluded and wished to see more alternative options than exclusions.
- c) The Panel noted the good news stories around Pupil Premium Plus, which included additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, and to ensure educational opportunities for all, and the Pupil Premium Plus eligible grants for Nottinghamshire children who are in care totalling over £1.6 million. In addition, there has been improved academic attainment around literacy.
- d) The Panel had concerns that the data used in the report could reflect children who have moved to Nottinghamshire post 16, which could be misleading. With there being a request that data for unemployment to be broken down to further reflect children who did not live in Nottinghamshire before the age of 16.
- e) The Panel requested an update on “Attend Training” and the data relating to attendance.

Resolved (2023/033)

- 1) To update the Panel with the data from children who have moved to Nottinghamshire post-16 and are unemployed.
- 2) To update the Panel with the impact and attendance of Attend Training.
- 3) To note the Virtual School Report.

## **12. Fostering Service annual Report**

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Care, Help and Protection and Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children presented to the Panel the Foster Service Annual Report. The following was discussed:

- a) The Panel noted that the number of Nottinghamshire looked after children had increased from April 2022 at 943 to March 2023 to a figure of 967. The Panel were informed that the increase is due to Nottinghamshire taking on 80 asylum seeking children in the past year.
- b) The Panel noted that there had been a decrease in fostering carers due to advancement in age, with their however being a new influx of fostering carers who have applied, with there being initial assessments taking place.
- c) The Panel questioned marketing practises and initiatives around attracting foster carers to use the Authorities services, with the panel noting that the authority has tried targeted social media as a marketing strategy. It was noted

that private fostering agencies pay a significant more than the authority, making it hard to compete on an economic comparative.

Resolved (2023/034)

- 1) To note the Fostering Service Annual Report.

### **13. Work Programme Report**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented the Work Programme Report. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel requested that a report on the allocation of services is brought to the Panel for the next meeting.

Resolved (2023/35)

- 1) That the Panel receive a report on the allocation of services for the next meeting.
- 2) To note the work programme.

**Chair:**