

Membership

Councillors

Fiona Asbury (Chair)

Barrie Cooper

Jim Creamer

Bob Cross

● Vincent Dobson

● Tom Pettengell

● Mel Shepherd

● Keith Walker

Chris Winterton (Vice-Chair)

● absent

Officers

Paul Davies – Governance Officer

Helen Lee – Scrutiny Officer

Pam Rosseter - Head of Child Protection, Children and Young People's
Department

Mike Law - Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People's
Department

Judi Juno - Commissioning Officer, Supporting People Partnership, Adult
Social Care and Health Department

1. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 6 December 2010, having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dobson and Shepherd (both on other County Council business).

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Continuation of the Review (a) Education and Employment

Mike Law introduced members to the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) in chairing reviews for all young people in care. He explained that the first review took place within 28 days of the young person coming

into care, the second within three months, and thereafter reviews were at least every six months. Each review would consider the young person's Care Plan, evaluate the extent to which it was meeting needs and identify any changes required, the young person's development, family and social relationships, assessment and progress records, birth family, parenting capacity and environmental factors. Key issues to be discussed might include accommodation, budgeting, training and education, benefits, alcohol and smoking, emotional wellbeing, missing from care, learning difficulties and disability.

Preparation for a young person leaving care began around the age of 15½, when their social worker would start to prepare the needs assessment and pathway plan. Young people who leave care aged 16-19 would have a leaving care review chaired by the IRO to ensure that support was in place for the young person. A further leaving care review could be held if the IRO was not satisfied with the plans.

In reply to questions, Mr Law explained that young asylum seekers would be reviewed within 28 days of coming into care. The service could access interpreters.

In relation to children over 18, Mr Law explained that they would no longer be in care, but if in foster care, their placement could continue until the end of the academic year by making use of the supported lodgings scheme. Ms Rosseter stated that the system was more flexible than previously, to recognise that not all young people were ready to move on at 18. However this was balanced with the authority's wish to maximise the use of foster carers for children in care. She referred to the IRO's key role in assuring the quality of a care plan, and raising concerns with managers where appropriate.

(b) Accommodation for Care Leavers

Judi Juno outlined the work of the Supporting People Team. Supporting People would commission, fund and monitor services for vulnerable adults, who could include young people aged 16-25 (including care leavers). Services for young people had been tendered in 2010, resulting in a range of support being available:

- Supported housing with staff on site 24 hours a day
- Supported housing with visiting staff who visit, eg a shared house for five residents
- For low level needs, staff who visit perhaps once a week
- Young parents would have some six hours of visits per week
- Supported lodgings: funding from Supporting People to Children and Young People to turn a foster placement into supported lodgings
- Floating support service, for young people in private rented accommodation. There would be help to the young person to set up home, and then less frequent visits

Ms Juno referred to proposals in the draft County Council budget for reductions of 47-67% in the Supporting People programme. The

consequences of this were unclear, but one might be that the service would be unable to pay for support at Framework's new building in Sutton-in-Ashfield.

In reply to questions, Ms Juno informed members that:

- Elizabeth House on Mansfield Road, Woodthorpe was commissioned to provide 24 hour supported accommodation for people from Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. The average stay might be 6 - 12 months, with a maximum of two years. Young people might move on from Elizabeth House to accommodation with lower levels of support.
- There had been a rigorous tendering process in 2010. Contracts required providers to prioritise 16-18 year olds, care leavers, children in need and services users from the Youth Offending Team. Supporting People was working with 135 new 16-17 year olds, of whom at least 11 were care leavers, plus 191 18-25 year olds. Their services were usually fully taken up, with a waiting list. However, turnover of service users meant that places did become available. Children and Young People was seeking to create a list of accredited providers. The County Council supported some 14,000 places overall, of whom 312 were young people.
- In relation to the ending of Education Maintenance Allowance, and whether this might mean more young people leaving the parental home, Ms Juno observed that the number of young people coming forward for Supporting People services did increase at the end of the summer term.
- Framework would ensure that the new flats in Sutton-in-Ashfield would be used. However, they were unsuitable for 16-17 year olds, or people needing high level support.

(c) Next meeting - 28 February 2011

The next meeting would receive evidence from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team, Norman Chessman, Children and Young People, and possibly Connexions. It would also be the occasion to discuss conclusions arising from the review. The draft final report would be considered in March, on a date to be finalised.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

CHAIR