

Meeting CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date Monday 2nd March 2015 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with an 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Liz Plant (Chairman)

John Allin		Philip Owen
Boyd Elliott	A	Sue Saddington
Kate Foale	A	Andy Sissons
Alice Grice		Jacky Williams

Foster Carer

Sarah Maiden
Aleks Jackowska

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rachel Coombs	-	Group Manager, Children's Social Care
Helen Daft	-	Service Manager, Children's Social Care
Sue Denholm	-	Co-ordinator of the Virtual School
David Ebbage	-	Assistant Democratic Services Officer, Policy, Planning & Corporate Services Department
Steve Edwards	-	Service Director, Children's Social Care
Linda Foster	-	Team Manager, Education Improvement Service
Michelle Lee	-	Aftercare Service Manager
Philippa Milbourne	-	Business Support Assistant, Children, Families & Cultural Services Department.
Shelagh Mitchell	-	Service Manager, Adoption

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2014, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sissons and Councillor Saddington.

Councillor Alice Grice replaced Councillor Colleen Harwood for this meeting only.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPRING TERM REPORT FOR THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Sue Denholm updated the Sub-Committee on the Virtual School for the Spring term 2015. She highlighted the following updates from the report:-

- A fourth Looked After Achievement Officer was recruited in December 2014. This now allows more capacity for managing out of county children and young people as well as extending to the post 16 sector where appropriate.
- Pupil Premium is being distributed to all schools with eligible Looked After Children in and out of the Local Authority. 540 pupils will be eligible.
- Each plan is specifically designed for an individual and all plans have to be agreed before distributing. If we feel the plan is not being met then the LA are able to challenge it.
- Training continued for designated teachers new to post, delivered by the virtual school co-ordinator and the team manager for the virtual school. The first event took place in December 2014 and was well received with excellent feedback and the event on 15 March 2015 had over 20 participants registered to date.

Following questions from Members the following points were made:-

- Members were informed that if the Pupil Premium plan was not happening, then the money would not get sent until a different package was agreed.
- Members raised concern over the amount of Looked after Children attending required improvement or inadequate schools. They were informed that the school the child is sent to is on an individual basis, to best suit their individual needs. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) process helps with their progress also.

RESOLVED 2015/001

That the update on the Virtual School for the Spring Term 2015 be noted.

SUPPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WITH SELF-HARMING BEHAVIOUR

Helen Daft provided information to the Sub-Committee regarding self-harming behaviour in young people and the support they receive.

She explained how children in care are more likely to have had adverse life experiences, frequent moves, fractured family and care relationships all of which increase their vulnerability to adopting unhealthy coping behaviours.

Of the 255 young people currently open to Child & Adolescent mental Health Services (CAMHS) CLA & Adopted Team (December 2014), we are aware of 46 young people with active or recent self-harming behaviours. Some of these young people harm on an almost daily basis to relieve stress or tension. There are 31 females and 15 males currently open to the team.

Of those 46 young people, 19 are placed in highly specialist residential care, because of their self-harming behaviours and overall 'risky' presentation. Seven of this cohort has been admitted to hospital because of their self-harming behaviour. One young person currently remains in an in-patient setting, one young person moved from an in-patient setting directly to a long term foster placement and five young people moved from a hospital in-patient setting to specialist residential care.

The project 'Listen Up' is a self-harm project that is supported by both Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council. The project is encouraging young people who self-harm to get involved. All young people are made aware of this project and the option of accessing support through it.

Following questions from Members the following points were made:-

- The Listen Up project is jointly commissioned by CAHMS and Nottinghamshire County Council.
- There has been such a big increase in self harming over the past few years. It becomes the norm for individuals once they start and try to contain it.
- The table in paragraph 7 of the report are the number of cases open at the minute. The team are not aware of any case below 10 years of age.
- Training is available for Foster Carers to help with self harm if it was ever an issue for them. Officer consultations also work with social workers and carer.

RESOLVED 2015/002

That the information about Looked after Children with self-harming behaviour and the support available to them be noted

PROVISION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER 2014/15

Steve Edwards gave a brief overview of the work of the Young People Looked after (YPLA), Youth Work team, situated within the Youth Service.

As part of a range of budget savings across the Council it was agreed that the Service would continue to offer strong specialist youth work services, including participation work for children and young people and youth work services for Looked After Children.

The YPLA team is responsible for the planning and delivery of a range of positive activities outside of the school day for looked after and adopted young people.

A recent review and development had taken place of the process in how young people are invited to participate in shaping the services available to them. This was to assist young people in:

- taking ownership of the agenda and their involvement in the design and delivery of services
- identifying how requests link to the PLEDGE
- establishing the information required and the time needed to enable young people to actively participate
- organising and keeping track of individual projects they are involved in.

Services requesting young people's participation needed to complete and send an expression of interest form (devised by young people) six weeks prior to the published date for the sub-group meeting(s).

A committee, consisting of the Chair of No Labels, Vice Chair of No Labels, Members of the YPLA Youth Work team and a representative from the Children's Social Care management team will look at all the expression of interest forms and organise when and if it will be possible to participate in the project, based on aims, links to the PLEDGE, and time scales. This process will be in effect from April 2015.

RESOLVED 2015/003

That the overview of the work of the Young People Looked After team be noted.

ADOPTION SERVICES BI-ANNUAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2014 TO FEBRUARY 2015

Shelagh Mitchell provided a general update to Members on the recent activity on the service from September 2014 to February 2015.

She outlined the following points in the report:-

- The Service remained stable, with some very experienced staff, and newer members of staff becoming established in their roles. There had been some recruitment to social work vacancies, and Recruitment and Project Officer temporary vacancies.

- Table 1 in the report showed the year on year increase in adopter approvals. The majority met the six month timescale for approval. The local authority adopters had placed 10 children from other local authorities by April 2015.
- There had been a rise in Special Guardianship Orders, those children had the same backgrounds and circumstances as adopted children, but their families do not have the same rights to support assessments.
- There had been a great improvement with regards to placing children. The total number of children with an adoption plan, needing a placement, had fallen by over 50% from 2013, to the end of 2014, and the number waiting had fallen to single figures.
- Those waiting to be adopted who had been matched have an average number of days of 294 days compared with the latest quarter 3 figure of 338 days.

Following questions from Members the following point was made:-

- Members asked if there were any figures on adoption breakdowns; an estimated 3% of all adoptions broke down. This could be down to a number of factors, but breakdown on a whole is very low in Nottinghamshire.

RESOLVED 2015/004

That the bi-annual update on activity in the Adoption Service from September 2014 to February 2015 be noted.

LEAVING CARE SERVICE UPDATE

Michelle Lee provided an update to Members on the Leaving Care Team.

There had been no change to the team structure or specification since the previous report which came to the Sub-Committee on 22 September 2014.

Over the past year the numbers of young people the Team had worked with had increased from 290 to 325. An increase was predicted due to the higher numbers of looked after young people, especially the growing number of 16 and 17 year olds in care.

Our latest local data (as of December 2014) indicated that 200 of our over 18s are engaged in some form of education, employment or training.

Following questions from Members the following points were made:-

- In the report it stated 'In January 2015 staff from Barnardo's undertook a peer review of the service in order to support our preparation for Ofsted inspection and initial feedback was positive. One observation they made was that the link between the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee and the service needed to be more robust and this is currently being taken forward and will be reported on at a future Sub-Committee meeting'.

What came out of that was largely positive, no major issues for the Sub-Committee to look at.

- Looking at the wider picture, child sexual exploitation which would involve wider Member scrutiny, working on a plan to do that. The Children & Young People inspection of safeguarding will come to committee also.

RESOLVED 2015/005

That the update on the Leaving Care Service be noted.

WORK PROGRAMME

The updated work programme was considered by Members.

RESOLVED 2015/006

That the Committee's work programme be noted.

FOSTER CARERS ITEMS

The Foster Carers present at the meeting had nothing to report to the Sub-Committee.

The meeting closed at 2.50pm

CHAIRMAN

2 Mar 2015