

Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Tuesday 9 January 2024 (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 Councillors

Ap Sinead Anderson (Chair)
Anne Callaghan BEM
Francis Purdue-Horan
Mike Introna

County Council Officers

Ap	Amanda Collinson	-	Service Director for Care, Help and Protection
Ap	Laurence Jones	-	Service Director for Commissioning and Resources
	Sophie Eadsforth	-	Group Manager for Looked After Children
	Claire Sampson	-	Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review
	Jenny Whiston	-	Group Manager for Fostering, Residential and Secure Accommodation

Substitute Members

S Tracey Taylor (Chair)

Officers and colleagues in attendance:

Heather Bennett	-	Executive Officer for Children and Families
Katherine Browne	-	Senior Public Health and Commissioning Manager
Theresa Hodgkinson	-	Chief Executive, Ashfield District Council
James Lavender	-	Democratic Services Officer
Davinia Lawton	-	Service Manager for Residential and Contact Services
Philippa Milbourne	-	Business Support Administrator
Paul Thomas	-	Service Manager, Secure Accommodation
Jo Toomey	-	Advanced Democratic Services Officer

In the absence of the Panel's Chair, Councillor Tracey Taylor was the Chair for this meeting.

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023, having been circulated previously, were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Sinead Anderson (illness/medical)

RESOLVED 2024/037

That Councillor Mike Introna has replaced Councillor Sam Smith as a Member of the Corporate Parenting Panel, be noted.

3. Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers

None.

4. Nottinghamshire District and Borough Council's approach to Corporate Parenting

Theresa Hodgkinson, Chief Executive of Ashfield District Council and the Representative for Children and Young People at the Nottinghamshire Chief Executives' Board, presented the report which outlined the approach to Corporate Parenting taken by the districts and boroughs of Nottinghamshire. The following was discussed:

- Members requested the total number of care leavers within Nottinghamshire. However, it was noted that the districts and boroughs could only record numbers of care leavers when they engaged with their services directly. The figures would also be skewed by the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Increasing employment opportunities for care leavers in Nottinghamshire councils, including examples of successful appointments.
- A Member raised a case about a family who had taken some children from their extended family into care but were still awaiting suitable council accommodation. A report on the prioritising of council accommodation for carers can be presented to the Nottinghamshire Chief Executives' Board meeting.

RESOLVED 2024/001

- 1) To note the report.

- 2) To present a report to the Nottinghamshire Chief Executives' Board meeting on the prioritising of accommodation for carers who require it.
- 3) To request training for County/District/Borough Councillors on their corporate parenting responsibilities.

5. Foster 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:

- Arrangements for financial assessment of prospective foster carers.
- Opportunities to get council foster carers onto higher rates, which were lower than those of independent providers.
- Officers would assess the financial process for kinship care support. The County Council had secured some funding for kinship carers. The Government had chosen half a dozen local authorities to undertake pilot schemes for a more formal structure of kinship funding.
- Members sought clarification on the employment status for the council's foster carers and officers confirmed that they were considered as self-employed.
- There was a national shortage of foster places. Historically, council foster carers would take children with complex needs and independent foster carer providers would take whatever children could not be placed internally. There were national foster carer agencies which are signed up to a foster carers framework. Whenever the County Council sought arrangements outside its own foster care, they would use the independent providers.

RESOLVED 2024/002

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To request that officers assess arrangements for the financial means testing for foster carers.
- 3) To request that officers provided a list of the local authorities selected for the funding pilot for kinship carers.

6. Children in Care Council Update

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, provided an update on the recent engagement with the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The following points were discussed:

- Two actions were outstanding from the last Panel meeting which involved CiCC. These were whether formal minutes of the CiCC were recorded and whether they could be shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel, to which the answer to both was yes.
- There would be a new Chair of the CiCC by February, so Members requested that the new Chair be invited to the next panel meeting.
- Further consideration was needed about how the Corporate Parenting Panel would engage with the CiCC.

RESOLVED 2024/003

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To discuss with the new Chair of the Children in Care Council engagement with the Corporate Parenting Panel and attendance at Panel meetings.

7. Elected Member visits to Nottinghamshire Children's Residential Homes

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, presented the report on the visits of Councillors Sinead Anderson and Anne Callaghan to The Big House and Councillors Francis Purdue-Horan and Sam Smith to Caudwell House. The following points were discussed:

- Members reported that on their visits to both homes, they were impressed by the relaxed and informal atmosphere of the homes, the excellent care packages offered to the children, and the dedication of the staff.
- Members wished to see further recognition of the good service of the staff working in the children's residential services.

RESOLVED 2024/004

- 1) To note the report and consider any feedback from the Elected Member visits.
- 2) To provide feedback to the children's residential homes about the positive experiences of the Elected Member visits.
- 3) To investigate methods of recognition for staff who work in residential homes.

8. Update on Nottinghamshire Children's Residential Homes and Secure Accommodation Service

Jenny Whiston, Service Manager Commissioning and Placements Team, and Paul Thomas, Service Manager (Secure Accommodation), presented an update on the status of children's residential homes and secure accommodation within Nottinghamshire. It included details of refurbishment work at Oakhurst, potential renovations at West View, the construction of a new children's residential home, and the recruitment challenges at Clayfields. The following points were discussed:

- Members were assured that staff and managers were doing everything they could do manage the workload despite the vacancies at Clayfields.
- Members were assured that improvements could be made at Clayfields before the next OFSTED visit later in January.

RESOLVED 2024/005

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To meet with property colleagues regarding the development of the new children's residential home.

9. Progress of the partnership strategy for Nottinghamshire Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2022 - 2025)

Heather Bennett, Executive Officer for Children and Families, presented the report which provided an update on the progress and key achievements of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy, as well as further information on the Council's Virtual School, the Youth Justice Partnership Board, and Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) Partnership Board.

RESOLVED 2024/006

- 1) To note the report on the progress of the partnership strategy for Nottinghamshire Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2022 – 2025) and consider whether there are any actions the Panel required to further strengthen the Leaving Care service.
- 2) To consider how the Panel wished to further monitor the implementation of the Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire (2022-2025).
- 3) To receive six monthly updates on the impact of the Local Offer for Care Leavers.
- 4) To receive an annual report on the work of the Partnership Board and the impact of the Strategy on Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2022-2025).

10. Independent Review of Children's Social Care Update

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, introduced the report which provided the Government's response regarding the independent review of children's social care. The following points were discussed:

- Members felt that the key themes and principles of the Children's Social Care Independent Review were a step in the right direction. The service would produce a summary of the review and bring a report back to the next panel meeting about how the recommendations of the review will be implemented.

RESOLVED 2024/007

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To email the links to the core papers to the Panel.

11. Harmful Sexual Behaviour by Children - Annual Review 2023

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, presented the report on the progress and challenges of the work being undertaken by Nottinghamshire County Council and relevant partner organisations regarding sexually harmful behaviour by children from April 2022 to March 2023. The following points were discussed:

- The Council should aim to improve the influence of children and young people who experience the care system so they can voice their input into the work of the care service.

RESOLVED 2024/008

- 1) To note the report.

12. Annual report of the Strategic Safeguarding Service - April 2022 to March 2023

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, presented the report following high profile enquiries into child sexual exploitation and missing children in several local authorities. This report provided an update against the Council's 2022/23 priorities and analysis of the statistical data from April 2022 to March 2023. The following points were discussed:

- Whilst there was a slight increase in the number of missing children, this was a fluctuation in the figures, and did not suggest a rising number of missing children. If the numbers continued to rise, the Strategic Safeguarding Service would investigate.
- Members requested that for future reports, the figures should be broken down into different categories, such as children living with parents/family and children living in care, as well as geographical areas where children were going missing and which local authorities were responsible.

RESOLVED 2024/009

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To provide a further breakdown of the data based on living arrangements, geographical areas and local authority area for future reports to the Panel.

13. Annual report of the Managing Allegations Service April 2022 to March 2023

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, presented the report on the performance and activities of the Managing Allegations Service from April 2022 to March 2023. The following points were discussed:

- If any Members were interested in a visit to the service and meeting social workers, then the service was happy to arrange them.

RESOLVED 2024/010

- 1) To note the report.

14. Nottinghamshire Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2023-25

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, and Jenny Whiston, Service Manager Commissioning and Placements Team, presented the report which highlighted the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for 2023 to 2025. The following points were discussed:

- Members wished to reiterate that when the report referred to children being placed in unregulated placements, the term was used to distinguish from a placement which was registered with OFSTED.

RESOLVED 2024/011

- 1) To note the report.

15. Work Programme

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, presented the Work Programme. The recommendations from this meeting would be fed into the Work Programme.

RESOLVED 2024/012

- 1) To note the Panel's Work Programme.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 4:00pm.

Chair: