

Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Tuesday 16 May 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 Councillors

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

County Council Officers

	Amanda Collinson	-	Service Director for Care, Help and Protection
	Laurence Jones	-	Service Director for Commissioning and Resources
Ap	Devon Allen	-	Group Manager for Regulated Services
	Sophie Eadsforth	-	Group Manager for Looked After Children
	Claire Sampson	-	Group Manager for Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement
	Jon Hawketts	-	Group Manager for Commissioning
	Charles Savage	-	Group Manager for Psychology and Inclusion Services

Substitute Members

None

Officers and colleagues in attendance:

	Heather Bennet	-	Executive Officer
	Davinia Lawton	-	Service Manager for Residential and Contact Services
	Adrian Mann	-	Democratic Services Officer
	Stephanie McGill	-	Assistant Head of the Virtual School
	Philippa Milbourne	-	Business Support Administrator
	Paul Thomas	-	Service Manager for Secure Accommodation

1. Apologies for Absence

Devon Allen

2. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 24 January 2023, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Foster Carers Liaison Group Update

Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children, provided an update on the Foster Carers Liaison Group (FLAG). The following points were discussed:

- a) The FLAG meets on a quarterly basis to enable foster carers to engage with Council officers and members, ask questions, consider specific topics in depth and share good news stories. The meetings are being held in a virtual setting and are progressing well, with between 30-40 households represented at the last session (where, previously, solely in-person meetings had been attended by fewer than 10 households). However, it is important to identify clearly which questions from foster carers should be addressed at FLAG meetings and which should be raised with the Panel.

Resolved (2023/009):

- 1) To note the update on the Foster Carers Liaison Group and confirm that no additional actions are required in relation to the points raised.

5. Children in Care Council Update

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

- a) The Chair of the CiCC has been invited to attend the meetings of the Panel, and is able to raise any related topics with the Panel as required.

Resolved (2023/010):

- 1) To note the update on the Children in Care Council and confirm that no additional actions are required in relation to the points raised.

6. Member Visits to Children's Residential Homes

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on visits by members to both the Council-run children's residential homes

and those homes run by external providers for the sole use of the Council. The following points were discussed:

- a) A schedule of visits to the Council's children's residential homes has been produced and, as all members have now received the appropriate training, dates are being set for the first visits to take place. The visits will be announced to the homes and will take place when the children are likely to be present, with members being accompanied by the appropriate officers.

Resolved (2023/011):

- 1) To note the update on member visits to Children's Residential Homes and request that the visiting dates are established as soon as possible.

7. Update on Nottinghamshire Children's Residential Homes

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented a report providing an overview of the internal children's residential homes in Nottinghamshire. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Council operates seven homes in Nottinghamshire, and their overall performance is good.
- b) West View is closed currently due to flood damage, but it is planned to replace it with two new 2-bed homes and for the site to be converted to make it suitable for children with learning disabilities. Plans are underway to open two further 2-bed homes in Nottinghamshire – a suitable property for one of these has now been identified and the search for a second is underway. Improvement works are also progressing at two existing homes, with one undergoing a significant refurbishment while another is being converted to make it suitable to support children with learning disabilities.

Resolved (2023/012):

- 1) To note the report on the internal children's residential homes in Nottinghamshire and confirm that no additional actions are required in relation to its contents.

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

Jon Hawketts, Group Manager for Commissioning, presented a report on the current performance of the children's residential homes that are operated by Homes2Inspire for exclusive use by children in the Council's care. The following points were discussed:

- a) The majority of the Council's children's placements are commissioned from residential homes operated and managed by companies from the private and voluntary sector. The Council has a longstanding relationship with Homes2Inspire, which is part of a national charity and is a large provider in the Nottinghamshire area. In a number of cases, the Council has acquired a property

for use as a residential home exclusively for Nottinghamshire children, which is then operated on the Council's behalf by Homes2Inspire.

- b) Robust monitoring arrangements are in place for the homes operated by Homes2Inspire, which will now include visits by Panel members to the properties either owned by the Council or operated by Homes2Inspire for the Council's sole use. Clear management plans are put in place for any home identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement.
- c) Ofsted's latest inspection of Holly House identified requirements for improvement because some of the children experienced difficult relationships with their fellow residents that resulted in them being placed at risk of harm. As a result, some of the children at the five-bed home have been transferred to other placements (all but one still within Nottinghamshire), for the purposes of safety. Five-bed homes like Holly House can give rise to challenges in ensuring positive relationships between the residents, so it is sometimes best to move some of the children into residential homes with fewer residents to ensure that everyone has a safe and stable placement. The Ofsted inspectors have since returned to the home and noted the improvement work carried out to date.
- d) The Panel considered that it was very positive to see that most of the residences operated by Homes2Inspire were rated as either 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and was provided with assurance that the appropriate management plans were in place to achieve the required improvements at the two homes where this was currently not the case.

Resolved (2023/013):

- 1) To note the report on the current performance of the children's residential homes operated by Homes2Inspire and confirm that no additional actions are required in relation to its contents.

9. Update on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Care, Help and Protection, provided an update on the Government's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSS). The following points were discussed:

- a) The Government's formal response to the findings of the IRCSS is anticipated to be released on 23 May. Once the response has been published, a report will be brought to the Panel to set out any implications arising for the Council in its role as a corporate parent and to establish any resulting, ongoing regular reporting and monitoring requirements.

Resolved (2023/014):

- 1) To note that, following the publication of the Government's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, a report will be brought to the Panel to set out any implications arising for the Council in its role as a corporate

parent and to establish any resulting, ongoing regular reporting and monitoring requirements.

10. Care Leavers Annual Report

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Care, Help and Protection, presented the annual report on the experience of care leavers in Nottinghamshire. The following points were discussed:

- a) In 2018, the Leaving Care Service launched a local offer for care leavers, and this has progressed well. The Council is now reflecting on its related services in the context of Ofsted's new Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework to identify what it should be proud of, to consider how the activities carried out can be best evidenced, and to assess whether the services provided to care leavers are in line with Ofsted's revised expectations.
- b) The local offer is being reviewed in consultation with young people to find out what potential services have the most value to and impact on them. There will also be more specific local offers targeted towards unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, young people aged over 21, care leavers in or leaving custody, and care leavers who are parents. Further links with Adult Social Care have been developed to improve the transition experience of care leavers moving to those services from Children's Social Care.
- c) The Council has developed a bespoke 21Plus Service using the Additional Burdens Grant from the Department for Education, which is a means of support that care leavers can choose to opt into. A number of young people are participating in the scheme and the Council contacts them over 12 times per year with information concerning employment opportunities, education and training, tips on managing the increasing costs of living, birthday cards and interactive newsletters.
- d) The Council has received a funding commitment from health partners to continue the 'You Know Your Mind' offer, which is designed to facilitate conversations with care leavers about mental and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as to commission a specialist mental health practitioner. A funding bid to the 'Staying Closer Staying Connected' scheme has also been successful, which will build upon plans around multi-disciplinary teams and assistance within Supported Accommodation Provision.
- e) The Panel requested that a specific report on the work and outcomes of the 21Plus Service is brought to a future meeting. Members also suggested that the issue of what makes a good care leavers service, and the associated best practice, could constitute a valuable topic for review by an appropriate Select Committee, given that the Council has resolved to consider care experience as equivalent to a legally protected characteristic.

Resolved (2023/015):

- 1) To note the annual report on the experience of care leavers in Nottinghamshire.

- 2) To request that a report on the work and outcomes of the 21Plus Service for care leavers is brought to a future meeting of the Panel.
- 3) To suggest that an item on what constitutes a good care leavers service, and the associated best practice, is considered for review by an appropriate Select Committee.

11. Destinations of Year 12-13 Looked After Young People Cohort 2022-23

Charles Savage, Group Manager for Psychology and Inclusion Services, presented a report on the education destinations of children in care who left statutory education at the end of the 2021/22 academic year, and those in post-16 education during the 2022/23 academic year. The following points were discussed:

- a) A new online platform has been introduced for the improved gathering and more detailed reporting of information in relation to the educational and training destinations of care leavers. The Virtual School, the Achievement Service and Children's Social Care work together closely to further improve the effectiveness of the transition of young people from Year 11 to post-16 settings, and specific structures are in place to support care leavers who are not currently in education, employment or training.

Resolved (2023/016):

- 1) To note the report on the education and training destinations of children in care who have left statutory education and confirm that no additional actions are required in relation to its contents.

12. Work Programme

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

- a) Priority items for future Panel meetings will include a focus on the performance of Adoption Services across Nottinghamshire and the wider D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership area, the Independent Reviewing Officer's annual report, the health of children in care, the activity and achievements of the Children in Care Council, and the work carried out by District and Borough Councils in relation to their corporate parenting responsibilities – including how support is provided in the context of Council Tax, and access to leisure and housing.

Resolved (2023/017):

- 1) To note the Corporate Parenting Panel's Work Programme, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2) To request that a report on the work and outcomes of the 21Plus Service for care leavers is brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 2:29pm.

Chair: