

11 March 2013

Agenda Item: 5

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE
PROGRESS ON THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY**

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on the progress of the action plan for the Looked After Children Strategy.

Information and Advice

2. It was identified that our approach to Looked After Children would benefit from the development of an over-arching strategy which outlines the commitment of the Council and our partner agencies to supporting children in care. The strategy has been developed based on what young people have told us is important to them in The Pledge for Looked After Children, published in October 2010.
3. Nottinghamshire's commitments to Looked After Children, as set out in The Pledge, underpin the Looked After Children Strategy which was published in August 2012. This strategy identifies the Council's ambition for its Looked After Children and young people, ensuring that they receive placements that meet their needs, have access to high quality education and enjoy positive activities that support them to achieve their full potential. For those children who require permanent alternative families it means ensuring that effective plans are made so that they achieve permanence as quickly as possible.
4. The LAC Strategy action plan had a number of work streams which included piloting new panel arrangements for entry to care, reviewing the support in place for kinship care and care leavers, and the wider range of options for permanency available to children and young people in the care system.
5. Key actions in all priority areas have been completed, as detailed in **Appendix 1**, which include:
 - All new Looked After Children and existing Looked After Children with significant changes to circumstance will have a designated Educational Psychologist
 - Produced a new review booklet to ensure young people have their voices heard and that they shape their own care plans

- Established a new Family Assessment and Contact Service which provides a consistent approach to contact across the County
- Increased leave available for Nottinghamshire County Council staff who are taking on the care of a child through a special guardianship order
- Increased availability of apprenticeships within Nottinghamshire County Council for care leavers: 7 care leavers are engaged in the National Apprenticeship Scheme across a variety of job roles, including construction and social care; 2 care leavers are engaged in Nottinghamshire County Council apprenticeships in business support and youth work.
- The Staying Put policy has been developed to enable more young people to remain with foster carers post-18 years of age.

Other Options Considered

6. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

7. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

9. Looked After Children will benefit from clear commitments from the County Council and partner agencies which support them, based on what young people in care have told us is important to them in The Pledge.

Equalities Implications

10. The Strategy commits Council and partner services to giving Looked After Children the same opportunities as any other group of children and young people.

Safeguarding of Children Implications

11. The Strategy strengthens the commitment of the Council and partners to effectively safeguarding this vulnerable group of children and young people.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee notes the update on the action plan for the Looked After Children Strategy.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Children's Social Care

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Rachel Coombs
Group Manager Access to Resources
T: 0115 87 83590
E: rachel.coombs@nottsc.gov.uk

Dawn Godfrey
Group Manager Social Work Services
T: 01623 520223
E: dawn.godfrey@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

12. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 28/02/13)

13. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

A Pledge for Children and Young People who are looked after by Nottinghamshire County Council – delegated decision report 18 October 2010
Looked After Children Strategy – report to Policy Committee on 18 July 2012

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0195