

Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Tuesday 16 April 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

Amanda Collinson	-	Service Director for Care, Help and Protection
Ap Beth Downing	-	Group Manager for Placements and Commissioning
Sophie Eadsforth	-	Group Manager for Looked After Children
Rachel Miller	-	Service Director for Commissioning and Resources
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

Officers and colleagues in attendance:

Heather Bennett	-	Executive Officer for Children and Families
Orlaith Green	-	Group Manager for Psychology Services and Head of the Virtual School
James Lavender	-	Democratic Services Officer
Davinia Lawton	-	Service Manager for Residential and Contact Services
Paul Thomas	-	Service Manager for Secure Accommodation

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2024, having been circulated previously, were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sinead Anderson - Other reasons
Beth Downing

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

4 DESTINATIONS OF YEAR 12-13 LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE COHORT 2023/24

In a change to the order of the published agenda, the Chair accepted a request that Item 12 – Destinations of Year 12-13 Looked After Young People cohort 2023/24, be heard first due to the availability of the report author. Orlaith Green, Group Manager for Psychology Services and Head of the Virtual School, presented the report which provided information on the education destinations of Nottinghamshire looked after young people who left statutory education at the end of the academic year 2022-2023 and went into Year 12, and those in Year 13 of post-16 education for academic year 2023-24. The following points were discussed:

- Nottinghamshire was above the national average in terms of academic achievements for this cohort.
- There were also positive updates regarding the post-16 Pupil Premium, which was used to support care leavers in their educational journey.
- The Panel noted the positive developments in the destination of this cohort, particular the number of looked after young people progressing into higher education.
- Data on the destinations for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children could be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

RESOLVED 2024/013

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That data on the destination of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children be provided.

5 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE

Rachel Miller, Interim Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The following points were discussed:

- The CiCC was a body which represented the interests of children in the care of the County Council, and was made up of chairs and vice chairs of children in care groups representing Under 11s, 11 – 16-year-olds, and 16 years and over. The CiCC provided feedback on policies and programmes aimed at children in care. Since the last meeting of the Panel, two meetings of the CiCC had taken place.
- The CiCC were involved in several programmes organised by the Children and Families Department. They included undertaking training with students at University of Nottingham who were studying for degrees in social work and contributing to the Care Leavers Cookbook to encourage healthy eating amongst care leavers. They provided feedback on national government consultations on childcare policies and on the Council's Education Plans process aimed at children in care.
- The work of CiCC representatives was profiled on Notts TV, which included a feature about one of the CiCC representatives who provided a mentoring role to young people on youth mentoring courses at West Notts College.
- A new Chair for the CiCC aimed to be in post by next month.
- Members of the Panel believed it would be beneficial to have Councillors involved in the focus groups for improving fostering provision. Members also noted that there were plans for a Children and Families Select Committee task and finish group into the Council's fostering placement sufficiency which councillors could also be involved in.

RESOLVED 2024/014

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That further involvement of councillors in the fostering provision focus groups and the Children and Families Select Committee Task and Finish Group into the Council's Looked After Children and Care Leaver placement sufficiency be explored.

6 FOSTER CARERS LIAISON GROUP UPDATE

Jenny Whitson, Group Manager for Fostering, Residential and Secure Accommodation, presented the Panel with a regular update on the recent meetings of the Foster Carers Liaison Group (FLAG). The following points were discussed:

- Staff had regular calls with the FLAG on Microsoft Teams, where they provided feedback on the Council's current foster carer support. The team had learnt much from these feedback sessions and had gained a greater confidence in managing the expectations of foster carers.
- The news of D2N2's successful application to the Department for Education (DfE)'s Fostering Recruitment and Retention Programme, bringing £1.8 million of central government funding into the region for improvements in fostering recruitment and retention, was welcomed by the FLAG. The D2N2 local authorities would trial a process for the support and retention of foster carers, known as 'Mockingbird'. The Mockingbird model involved several foster families linked together in an extended family network or 'constellation community'. Led by a Hub Home Carer and Liaison Worker, with the support of their fostering service, the constellation community would offer vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships, stability, and permanence.

RESOLVED 2024/015

- 1) That the update be noted.

7 ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Help, Protection and Care, noted that there had not been any visits by elected members to children's residential homes since the last meeting of the Panel in January. The Panel noted that the process for organising these visits needed to be clarified, the invitations should be made available to members of the Children and Families Select Committee, and that training should be provided to members prior to these visits.

RESOLVED 2024/016

- 1) To that the report be noted and any feedback on the process of organising elected member visits be considered.

8 UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES AND SECURE ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

Jenny Whiston, Group Manager for Fostering, Residential and Secure Accommodation, Paul Thomas, Service Manager for Secure Accommodation, and Davinia Lawton, Service Manager for Residential and Contact Services, presented an update on the status of children's residential homes and secure accommodation within Nottinghamshire. The following points were discussed:

- Clayfields Secure Children's Home received an Ofsted visit on 23 and 24 January 2024 and the overall judgement was 'Good', which was a positive improvement on the previous 'Inadequate' judgement. The comments made by

Ofsted were very positive as was the feedback from parents, carers, professionals, and the children themselves.

- The monthly Regulation 44 visit took place. The inspectors spoke to managers, young people, health professionals, and youth workers. They noted the positive feedback and a significant change in the culture at Clayfields. The Service Development Plan continued to strengthen the positive work in improving the service provision at Clayfields.
- Recruitment continued to be a high priority, but the senior leadership team continued to take actions that were reasonable and practicable to address the shortfalls in staffing. The service set up a Workforce Development Board to address issues and discuss solutions to recruitment. This included support from colleagues across the County with specialism in human resources and communication.
- Since 29 February 2024, Clayfields had been operating on 68.01% occupancy level, with an overall bed night loss of 934 nights. This decrease was due to operating two house units (Sherwood and Loxley) and prioritising the Ministry of Justice contract. However, with the DfE Capital Building Programme, this would continue throughout the programme, which was currently estimated as a 46-week building programme and expected to be completed by 31 March 2025.
- The Big House in Edwinstone was inspected by Ofsted in November 2023 and it received an Outstanding judgement. It was its first Outstanding judgement in ten years and had demonstrated great work in meeting the needs of children with severe intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, medical, and sensory needs. The manager of The Big House had planned to retire, but was now planning to stay on in light of the recent Ofsted inspection. The Big House was in the process of a garden transformation and a new set of play and gym equipment would be installed.
- Caudwell House had received an 'Outstanding' Ofsted judgement for the thirteenth year in a row. The team continued to provide outstanding team support for children with psychical disabilities, learning difficulties, and healthcare needs. Recruitment was underway for a new manager.
- Lyndene, a mainstream children's home had received a 'Good' Ofsted judgement. The Children and Families Department were confident in the provision of the home.
- Oakhurst had received a 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgement, which had been 'Good' in a previous inspection. There had been several changes in staff which had affected the service provision. The Ofsted inspectors noted that whilst improvements were needed in leadership and management, they had received positive feedback from the children resident in the home.
- West View was a registered specialist disability home, but it was not currently occupied.

- It was noted that young people in secure accommodation had committed the same level of crime as adults.
- Members of the Panel reiterated that it was incumbent on the Council to provide as much support to home managers as possible, particularly with regards to safeguarding.
- The Service Manager for Secure Accommodation remained optimistic about future recruitment at Clayfields. He also stated that he would arrange Members' visits to Clayfields. There would be a further Ofsted visit for a three-day inspection in July.
- The Panel noted that there was a delay with the processing of registering children and specialist care homes with Ofsted. It was also noted that a manager was registered as the manager of a specific home and that it could not be transferred to another home.
- There was a poor Wi-Fi connection at Oakhurst as the IT system had not been considered as part of the refurbishment process. The Panel noted that the fixing of the Wi-Fi connection at Oakhurst was a priority.
- The Panel noted that an empty home was not an unregulated home as it was still registered with the regulators. It was also noted that some local authorities register properties with Ofsted on a temporary basis, usually in the case of emergency child placements.

RESOLVED 2024/017

- 1) That the reported be noted.
- 2) That the Service Director for Care, Help and Protection resolve the internet provision at Oakhurst.

9 INSPECTION GRADINGS OF 'EXCLUSIVE USE' CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES – MARCH 2024

Rachel Miller, Interim Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented the report which provided an update on the current performance of homes operated by Homes2Inspire for the exclusive use of Nottinghamshire children in care. The following was discussed:

- The County Council had a long and well-established partnership with Homes2Inspire that was underpinned by a Block Contract for the Council to 'block book' and pay for twelve homes across the Homes2Inspire residential estate.
- Out of the twelve homes, two have been judged 'Outstanding', eight were judged 'Good', one 'Requires Improvement' and one had not been graded yet as it was awaiting registration. The delays to the registration of Lantern House

were due to the Ofsted backlog for registering properties. Two children had been already placed in the home.

- The Panel noted that further contact was needed with Ofsted to ensure that Lantern House would be registered as soon as possible.

RESOLVED 2024/018

- 1) That the report be noted.

10 LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children and Leaving Care, introduced the report which provided an update on the review and expansion of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers, which was aimed at those young people who have been looked after by Nottinghamshire and were aged 18 – 24 and identified as ‘care leavers’, receiving support, advice, and guidance from the Leaving Care Service. The following was discussed:

- The Local Offer was developed through feedback from the CiCC. It was also tailored to meet the needs of different Looked After Children and Care Leavers. There was the Achievement Offer for care leavers aged 16 – 25 years in relation to their employment, education, and training opportunities. There was the 21Plus Offer aimed at care leavers aged over 21 to allow them to access support, advice, and guidance to help them set up a home. There was the Parenting Offer aimed at care leavers who identified parents or parents to be. There was the Custody Offer aimed at care leavers aged 16 – 25 years accessing support, advice, and guidance due to being in custody, released from custody, or involved with the Youth Justice and/or Probation Services. Finally, there was the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Offer aimed at care leavers who identified as coming to the UK as asylum seeking children and were in the care of the County Council.
- The Panel noted that the Local Offer for Care Leavers had received positive feedback from several areas in Nottinghamshire.

RESOLVED 2024/019

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Local Offers for Care Leavers be circulated to Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

11 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, provided an update of the Government’s response to the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care. The following was discussed:

- The Illustrated Guide to the Children’s Social Care National Framework was helpful for children and families. The principles outlined under the four outcomes of the document hold true for Looked After Children and set a standard for the Council to provide for children in council care. It was easy for children to read and understand.

RESOLVED 2024/020

- 1) That the update be noted.

12 CARER LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT

Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children and Leaving Care, presented the report which updated the Panel on the review and expansion of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers aimed at those young people who have been looked after by Nottinghamshire and are aged 18 – 24 and identified as ‘care leavers’, receiving support, advice and guidance from the Leaving Care Service. The following points were discussed:

- The Leaving Care Service consisted of three teams covering geographical areas of Nottinghamshire (South, North and Central), as well as the 21 Plus team. The Service also had an Achievement Service which provides information and advice about training, education, and work opportunities. The Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Team offered a more dedicated and specialist service to UASC under the age of 18 and to UASC care leavers aged over 18.
- The service was assisting care leavers in providing links to further education, employment, and training opportunities. Taster Days were set up with local employers and links were established with sixth form colleges, such as West Notts College. The service also assisted care leavers into living accommodation.
- The figures regarding the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation did not fully reflect the destinations of care leavers as student accommodation and army barracks did not count as suitable living accommodation.
- The Panel noted that the number of care leavers going to university was a positive development. They also noted that not many local authorities had a Specialist 21 Plus Team to support their care leavers.

RESOLVED 2024/021

- 1) That the report be noted.

13 WORK PROGRAMME

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Help, Protection and Care, presented the Work Programme.

RESOLVED 2024/022

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

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 3:52pm.

Chair: