

13th September 2021

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES

ELECTED MEMBER OVERSIGHT OF CHILDREN IN LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE: CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER GOVERNANCE BOARD – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose of the Report

1. To agree the Terms of Reference for the Children Looked After Governance Board.

Information

2. At Children and Young People's Committee it was agreed that that the current Children's Homes Governance Board which provides Elected Member oversight of the seven children's homes directly operated by the County Council should be reconfigured to provide an oversight of all places where our children who are looked after live. This would include those children's homes and foster placements directly provided by the Local Authority and those commissioned from external providers including the Youth Custody Service. The focus of this 'Children Looked After Governance Board' would be on safety and those aspects of children's wellbeing that have a direct impact on their safety. It was further agreed that the Board should have Elected Member representation from all parties represented on the Children and Young People's Committee in recognition of the commitment to corporate parenting.
3. Draft Terms of Reference for the Board are presented as **Appendix 1**. It is recommended that the Vice Chair of Children and Young People's Committee who leads on social care should chair the Board with additional membership from each of the parties on the Committee and an additional place for an Elected Member not on the Committee. It is proposed that this should be offered to non-aligned Independents in the first instance so that there is demonstrable corporate parenting responsibility taken across the political spectrum.
4. The Terms of Reference give a lead role to Elected Members on the Board in leading visits to care settings accompanied by other Elected Members. This is in line with an agreed recommendation from the report to Committee in June that in order to develop better insights into the lives of children who are looked after all Elected Members on the Children

and Young People's Committee should visit a children's home setting annually, in line with the already agreed guidance, and Members on the Children Looked After Governance Board should visit quarterly. Briefings and trainings will be made available to Members prior to visits being undertaken and a schedule of visits will be available by November 2021. An officer will also accompany Members on these visits.

5. Children and Young People's Committee has previously agreed to receive a report annually on the sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour involving children in the care of the Council. Due to the risk of identifying individual children the detail in this report has been in the form of an Exempt Appendix. It is recommended that this report is now presented to the Children Looked After Governance Board where more in depth scrutiny can be provided with close support from officers and that any issues arising from it are escalated to the Committee. It has been agreed that the Board would continue to report back to Children and Young People's Committee with recommendations at least every six months.

Other Options Considered

6. The Terms of Reference have been constructed with reference to the previous decision of the Children and Young People's Committee and as such other options have not been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

7. Having clear Terms of Reference will allow a consistent and thorough approach to achieving the outcomes set for the Children Looked After Governance Board by Committee.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

10. The proposed Children Looked After Governance Board will allow increased Elected Member oversight of the children in the care of the Local Authority and would complement other aspects of oversight undertaken by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership Board.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the Terms of Reference for the Children Looked After Governance Board, attached as **Appendix 1**, are agreed
- 2) the annual report on sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour involving children in the care of the Council be presented to the Children Looked After Governance Board in future with relevant issues escalated to the Children and Young People's Committee.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 977 3921
E: laurence.jones@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LPW 19/08/21)

11. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 17/08/21)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

[Staffing Resources for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - report to Policy Committee on 15 June 2016](#)

[Responses to Historical Child Abuse – Resources - report to Policy Committee on 20 December 2017](#)

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - report to Full Council on 18 January 2018](#)

[Response to Historical Child Abuse – Resources - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 March 2019](#)

Children in the care of the Nottinghamshire Councils Investigation Report – July 2019

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Initial Response – report to Policy Committee on 18 September 2019](#)

Guidance for Elected Members – Visits to Children’s Residential Homes - report to Children’s Homes Governance Board – September 2019

[Review of Elected Member oversight of children in Local Authority care – report to Children & Young People’s Committee on 21st June 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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