



Nottinghamshire County Council

Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Date: Monday, 29 October 2012
Time: 14:00
Venue: County Hall
Address: County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | <u>Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 July 2012</u>
Details | 3 - 6 |
| 2 | <u>Apologies for Absence</u>
Details | 1-2 |
| 3 | <u>Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below)</u>
(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
(b) Private Interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) | 1-2 |
| 4 | <u>Work Programme</u>
Details | 7 - 10 |
| 5 | <u>Autumn Term Report for the Virtual School for Looked After Children</u>
Details | 11 - 20 |
| 6 | <u>Homefinding Activity in the Adoption Service</u>
Details | 21 - 26 |

(1) Members of the public wishing to inspect "Background Papers" referred to in the reports on the agenda or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act should contact:-

Customer Services Centre 08449 80 80 80

(2) Persons making a declaration of interest should have regard to the Code of Conduct and the Council's Standing Orders. Members or Officers requiring clarification on whether to make a declaration of interest are invited to contact Christine Marson (Tel. 0115 977 3887) or a colleague in the Governance Team prior to the meeting.

(3) Members are reminded that Committee and Sub-Committee papers, with the exception of those which contain Exempt or Confidential Information (on coloured paper) may be recycled.

(4) The agenda, minutes and reports for this meeting are available in a wide range of languages, large print, Braille and audio upon request. For more information please contact:-

Customer Services Centre 08449 80 80 80

minutes



Meeting CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 16 July 2012 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

John Allin
Allen Clarke
Ged Clarke
Bob Cross
Keith Girling

Philip Owen
Stella Smedley MBE JP
Lynn Sykes
Brian Wombwell

Officers in attendance

Rachel Coombs - Group Manager, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department
Christine Marson - Governance Support Officer, Policy, Planning & Corporate Services Department
Marion Clay - Team Manager, Education Improvement Service, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department
Sue Denholm - Co-ordinator, Virtual School, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department
Dawn Godfrey - Children's Services Head, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department
Angela Duffus-Palmer - Commissioning Officer, Placements, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department
Anne Chester-Walsh - Children's Service Manager, Children's Department

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED 2012/001

That the appointment of Councillor Allen Clarke as Chairman be noted.

MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED 2012/002

That the membership of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee as set out on the agenda be noted.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

MINUTES

RESOLVED 2012/003

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 April 2012 having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

- (1) Sue Denholm, Co-ordinator of the Virtual School reported back to the Sub-Committee that there were no Looked After Children in Learning Centres. She also informed the Sub-Committee that Academies were developing good working relationships with the Virtual School.
- (2) Rachel Coombs, Group Manager, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department reported that there was progress being made regarding apprenticeships for Looked After Children both within the County Council and from the private sector.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED 2012/004

That the terms of reference of the Sub-Committee be noted.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY

Dawn Godfrey, Children's Services Head, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department introduced the report by stating that the Strategy had already been seen by Members in draft form. The proposed Strategy had been presented to the Children & Young People's Committee and would be recommended for approval at the next Policy Committee.

Rachel Coombs stated that most of the Looked After Children were within the County with only a small percentage being out of the county which was below the national average. She stated that a Looked After Children Project was looking at analysing each of the LAC's journey to try to ensure that resources are used sooner so the young people are in care for a shorter period.

RESOLVED 2012/005

That the report be noted.

SUMMER TERM REPORT FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Sue Denholm, Co-ordinator of the Virtual School updated the Sub-Committee on current issues involving the Virtual School for Looked After Children. She informed the Sub-Committee that two Looked After Children Achievement Officers had been appointed and had been in post since May. She reported that the Senior Leadership Team in conjunction with headteachers were to revise the Mission Statement. She agreed to circulate the Mission Statement to all members of the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee were pleased to hear of a young person had achieved a prestigious award for agriculture.

Sue Denholm offered to bring a report to the next meeting regarding the work being carried out on careers advice for Looked After Children.

RESOLVED 2012/006

That the report be noted.

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Anne Chester-Walsh, Children's Service Manager, Children's Department presented the report on the current arrangements for the provision of the Advocacy Service for Looked After Children. She reported that Barnardos had been awarded a three year contract to provide an Advocacy Service. She stated that earlier this year Barnardos were having difficulty supplying independent visitors and were not meeting their targets but have since changed their arrangements and were now meeting their targets. As there had been an increase in the number of Looked After Children there was an increased need for advocacy so funding has had to be increased.

RESOLVED 2012/007

That the Sub-Committee noted the current arrangements for the provision of the Advocacy Service for Looked After Children and Young People and the planned increase of the service in 2012-2014.

FOSTER CARERS ITEMS

No foster carers were present.

The meeting closed at 2.55 pm

CHAIR

29 October 2012

Agenda Item: 4

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the Committee's work programme for 2012/13.

Information and Advice

2. The County Council requires each committee to maintain a work programme. The work programme will assist the management of the committee's agenda, the scheduling of the committee's business and forward planning. The work programme will be updated and reviewed at each pre-agenda meeting and committee meeting. Any member of the committee is able to suggest items for possible inclusion.
3. The attached work programme has been drafted in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and includes items which can be anticipated at the present time. Other items will be added to the programme as they are identified.

Other Options Considered

4. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

5. To assist the committee in preparing its work programme.

Statutory and Policy Implications

6. 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the committee's work programme be noted, and consideration be given to any changes which the committee wishes to make.

Jayne Francis-Ward
Corporate Director, Policy, Planning and Corporate Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Democratic Services Officer -
Christine Marson
Tel: 0115 977 3887

Constitutional Comments (SLB)

7. The Committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (PS)

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

Background Papers

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

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME

<u>Report Title</u>	<u>Brief summary of agenda item</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Report Author</u>
14 January 2013			
Education of Looked After Children	Annual report	Steve Edwards	Rachel Coombs/ Dawn Godfrey
Young People Looked After Youth Work Team		Steve Edwards	Rachel Coombs
11 March 2013			
Spring Term report for the Virtual School for Looked After Children	Termly report	Steve Edwards	Sue Denholm
April 2013 date tbc			
Aftercare Service update	Annual report	Steve Edwards	Michelle Lee
May 2013 date tbc			
To be placed			
Officer groups report	Adoption Panels; Fostering Panels; Joint Solutions Forum, Looked After Reviews; Child Protection Conferences; MAPPA; MARAC – annually		



29 October 2012

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

AUTUMN TERM REPORT FOR THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on the virtual school for the Autumn term 2012.

Information and Advice

Senior Leadership Team and School Development Plan

2. The next meeting of the senior leadership team will be in November 2012. Updates on the virtual school development plan for the academic year 2011/12 will be shared at this meeting as the July meeting had to be cancelled due to end of year commitments for head teachers.
3. A new development plan has been drafted for the academic year 2012/13 with priorities updated. This plan will be discussed at the November meeting of the senior leadership team and refined as seen appropriate. The final plan will be brought to the Sub-Committee at the January 2013 meeting.

Virtual School Staff

4. The virtual school remains in the Education Improvement Service, however, following the promotion of Marion Clay to Group Manager, Linda Foster now line manages the virtual school. Linda will attend the senior leadership team meetings and future Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee meetings.

Termly Designated Teacher Network Meetings

5. To provide ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and information sharing events, Designated Teacher Network Meetings have been organised once again for the Autumn term. These meetings are based in the North and South of the County. The co-ordinator of the virtual school, both looked after achievement officers and Linda Foster will be in attendance. These Autumn term meetings will be providing CPD on the new OFSTED framework and how this will apply to looked after children specifically.

Designated Teacher Memos

6. These continue to be sent out regularly, at least half termly. The coordinator uses this method to communicate information, news and events with designated teachers across the County. Feedback from teachers has been positive on this method and encourages contact from all schools with the virtual school. The Autumn term memo is attached as an **Appendix**.

School Links

7. The virtual school co-coordinator continues to deliver training to primary and secondary schools. Evaluations continue to be positive from these events.
8. The virtual school co-ordinator continues to support out of County schools which have Nottinghamshire looked after children (LAC) and adopted children/young people on roll with any educational issues. This autumn term, the co-ordinator will be working with city schools to support looked after children placed in Nottinghamshire.
9. The virtual school co-ordinator will attend the primary and secondary head teacher briefing events throughout the Autumn term 2012 and will support the Closing the Gap Marketplace event in November 2012.

Social Care Links

10. The co-ordinator and service manager for the Through Care Team are now working together to ensure appropriate training is delivered to the workers who will be part of the dedicated LAC social care team. Place planning and admission colleagues will also support this training.
11. LAC achievement officers for the virtual school will also be working closely with the new team and supporting social care colleagues in all matters relating to education.

Frontier

12. This is an online resource for schools, foster carers and adoptive parents. It is regularly updated by the virtual school co-ordinator with important information and developments as they occur.

Floor Target Schools

13. The virtual school continues to monitor looked after children in below floor target schools.
14. The Autumn term checks by education improvement advisors will be made as their programme of visits to support these schools begin. Should any issues arise with the progress of these children or young people, the virtual school will support the designated teacher to address these difficulties.

Teacher Assessment Data Collection

15. Following a review meeting with the data team, changes are to be made to the collection form to enable appropriate tracking to take place. This will include the addition of prior attainment data.

GCSE results

16. We do not receive GCSE results at pupil level until early October. Evaluative progress reports will be available in November 2012.

Areas for monitoring

17. The mission statement: this will be reviewed by the senior leadership team to ensure that it meets the needs of the children and young people it serves.
18. School Moves: This will continue to be a focus for the virtual school. Alerts are now in place to enable the co-ordinator to discuss with workers the reasons for moves and ensure that these pupils are placed in appropriate schools and in a supportive manner.
19. Attendance at Personal Education Planning meetings and LAC Reviews: The LAC achievement officers will attend both reviews and Personal Education Plan meetings as appropriate. Reports on this will be issued to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee at the end of each academic year, beginning in July 2013.
20. Looked After Children Strategy 2012-2015: The virtual school holds a number of key areas in the Strategy. These areas will be monitored through the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.

Achievement Event

21. This was once again a very successful event at Rufford Park. The No Labels group will be evaluating the event and feeding back to the co-ordinator. The consensus is that Rufford Park as a venue suits all and the initial evaluation from the children and young people agrees with this. A meeting is to be held in the Autumn term to establish a date for next year's event.

Projects

22. The multi modality project: this project is to run for the third year in Nottinghamshire with Dr Bwojani heading the project again. This year a resource has been produced to support schools and the participants. It is envisaged that this will secure sustainable literacy development for looked after children in the project schools.
23. Intensive Mentoring Project: the funding for this project has been extended to further evaluate the success of this project. Feedback to date has been very positive with carers and workers valuing the support the mentor has been offering to some of the most vulnerable post 16 students.

24. Letterbox Club: the first parcels for this year's project have now been sent out. All young people have received them including those who were in care but have now left at the beginning of the project.

LAC Education Enrichment Fund

25. The LAC Education Enrichment Fund has now been running for a term. Social workers and schools fully understand the need for the funding to be focused on closing the educational attainment gap for looked after children. Social workers are requesting funding for ICT and extra tuition. In addition, a number of educational trips have also been funded for GCSE students and equipment for such courses as media, art or food technology.

Personal Education Plan

26. The plan to trial this first draft with the Mansfield/Ashfield social care teams has been delayed to coincide with the launch of the Through Care Team. It was felt by the co-ordinator and the service manager that the trial would be best focussed with this dedicated team. This will make feedback and evaluation easier.

Children in Care Council

27. The coordinator attended the No Labels meeting in September 2012 to both introduce herself and discuss items such as the update on personnel for the virtual school, the revision of the personal education plan and ways in which the Council can ensure the virtual school is operating effectively. Any consultation on the personal education planning document will be worked through the sub-groups when it is ready.

Good News

28. Book tokens have been sent out regularly for outstanding achievements. These have included high attainment grades, accelerated progress and 100% attendance for a number of students who had very low attendance on entering care,

Other Options Considered

29. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

Statutory and Policy Implications

30. 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the report be noted.

Sue Denholm
Co-ordinator of the Virtual School

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Sue Denholm
Co-ordinator of the Virtual School
T: 01623 434149
E: sue.denholm@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (NDR 28/09/12)

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

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0090

Memo

From: Sue Denholm

To: all Designated teachers for Looked After Children

Date: 11 September 2012

Dear Colleague

Welcome back to the 2012/13 academic year I hope you have had a restful summer.

This memo is to inform you of up and coming events and news from the Virtual School for the Autumn Term.

Events:

The virtual school is running a course for headteachers, senior leaders or staff that may be new to the role of designated teacher for looked after children. The events are being held on 18th October 2012 at Edwinstowe House and 18th March 2013 at Bestwood Lodge. If you would like to attend please apply to Dace Birzgalis-Liegis on 01623 434149 or dace.birzgalis-liegis@nottscc.gov.uk.

If any member of staff attended the designated teacher training in June 2010 or February 2012 this event is not applicable.

LAC Achievement Officers:

The virtual school is pleased to inform colleagues that two Looked After Children Achievement Officers have been recruited full time to the service from May 2012. Ian Stewart will be covering the South of the County, Broxtowe, Rushcliffe Gedling and Newark. Ian will also be supporting the authorities residential homes. Marice Gillespie will be covering Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw areas. You will find their contact details at the end of this memo.

Both LAC Achievement Officers are available for support and advice on all matters concerning a looked after child's education and the education of adopted children/young people where the parent wishes. These posts cover primary and secondary and if appropriate early years and post 16.

One to One Tuition:

Letters will be sent out, following the census date at the beginning of October, informing you of the looked after children and young people who are entitled to one to one tuition. Please return the confirmation as quickly as you can so that monies can be vired to schools as early as possible in the school year. Academies will be invited to invoice us to receive the monies once confirmation has been received of their children and young people. Should this cause any difficulties please contact me directly.

Pupil Premium:

The pupil premium is calculated on a return the authority completes to the Government in February of each year. To date the spreadsheet informing me of the children and young people entitled to pupil premium has not been received. It may well not be available until October 2012 according to guidance issued recently. You will be informed by letter which children will be receiving pupil premium as soon as we are able to do so.

On Fronter there are useful ideas of how colleagues both in and out of the County have used the pupil premium to support the progress of their looked after cohort in the school.

Programme of Work:

The virtual school will be proactively checking on cohorts of looked after children through the academic year. The proposed plan is as follows:

Checking GCSE results week beginning 10th September 2012

Checking Year 7s and how they have settled week beginning 1st October 2012

Checking years 12 and 13 week beginning 15th October 2012

Checking reception pupils week beginning 5th November 2012

Checking years 10 and 11 week beginning 14th January 2013

This will be done either through email, telephone or personal contact by me and the LAC Achievement Officers. We shall be ensuring that we are providing any support necessary to help schools and our looked after pupils through early identification of any possible issues. However, please contact us prior to these dates if you are concerned about any pupil in the meantime.

Fronter:

This site remains a source of information for colleagues and will be continually updated.

LAC Enrichment Fund:

This new scheme has replaced the old Personal Education Allowance (PEA). Guidance and forms have gone out to social workers who will be the main contact for you when applying for this extra funding. Social workers have been informed that this funding is to be targeted at 'closing the gaps' for looked after children and young people. Therefore, technology, one to one tuition, work schemes etc are the sorts of interventions that should be applied for. I am very happy to look at 'value added' applications for high flying pupils, however, there is far less funding available than before and with pupil premium and one to one tuition available I would hope this fund will be able to target some very vulnerable looked after pupils to help their educational achievement.

Designated Teacher Network Meetings

The summer term 2012 saw the first two of these meetings being held in the North and South of the County. They were well received, thank you to Worksop Priory C of E primary and Jesse Gray primary who hosted the events. These meetings will carry on and for the later half of the autumn term 2012/13 two more dates will be set, I will forward these dates as soon as they are available. Please feel free to send me any ideas for subject material that you feel it would be useful to cover.

Themes the Virtual School will be monitoring:

The virtual school has been asked to monitor a number of areas that were identified as issues for Nottinghamshire in both recent LA OFSTED inspections and are now included in the revised LAC Strategy which will be released in the near future. These are:

1. School moves

This is the first key area that was highlighted and I will be having discussions with social workers concerning school moves to try to prevent inappropriate moves. I would ask colleagues to alert myself or the LAC Achievement Officers to any school moves that you feel would not be in the best interests of a looked after child.

2. Use of Pupil Premium

This is the second key area identified by Ofsted. Colleagues have asked in the past for good practise around the use of pupil premium to be shared. We therefore intend to make this an area for discussion at the Designated Teacher training sessions in the autumn term. I am also required through the OFSTED framework regarding looked after children to monitor the use and the impact of the pupil premium. Once the premium has been issued to schools I will therefore write out approximately 6 months later to request data on your use of the pupil premium, its impact and the evidence base.

Personal Education Planning

New trial documentation is ready to be issued to social workers to aid better educational planning for looked after children and young people. Colleagues in schools already have quality planning documents such as IEPs and I am hoping to sharpen up the PEP documentation to reflect and support school planning. The quality of educational planning for looked after children will also be a focus for future LA Ofsted inspections. The evidence for this judgement will be gathered in schools as well as from the LA.

Music Lessons

I have been asked by colleagues in the LA to remind all schools that music lessons for LAC are free. If you would like further information please contact Elaine Atkinson at Elaine.atkinson@nottscc.gov.uk

Other news from the virtual school:

With the promotion of Marion Clay to Group Manager of the Support to Schools Service, Linda Foster, EIS Team Manager will be linked to the virtual school and will continue to support the planning and direction we shall be taking in the future. Linda will also be on the Senior Leadership Team that supports the virtual school. One special school, one secondary and two primary headteachers are also remaining on the team. These colleagues are also supported by John Slater Service Director for Education Standards and Inclusion and Elaine Hack Senior Educational Psychologist for the virtual school.

The virtual school will continue to work closely with the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and to that end LAC Achievement Officers will attend EPS team meetings to highlight any children/young people who are new into care. A link EP will then be allocated. The virtual school will contact school by email or phone for up to date information on new into care children and young people to ensure the right service is allocated from the EPS. May I ask that if you are contacted by the virtual school for this information you support us by providing the information as soon as possible so that we can ensure that both you and the child/young person are given the correct level of service as soon as possible.

Achievement Event.

We had a wonderful day on the 14th July 2012 with over 100 children and young people attending Rufford Park to receive certificates. The virtual school is always keen to acknowledge any achievement made by our looked after children/young people (and any adopted children/young people the virtual school may be supporting) and will send out book tokens in recognition. Please feel free to highlight any achievement by sending me an email or informing a member of the virtual school.

New Designated Teachers

If anyone is new to the Designated teacher post since the beginning of this autumn term or names and email addresses have changed, please email Dace.

I hope that you have found this memorandum useful in setting out the coming year. I will continue to update you regularly as the school year progresses.

I look forward working with you all this academic year.

Kind regards
Sue Denholm
Co-ordinator of the Virtual School

For more information please contact:

Sue Denholm, Co-ordinator of the Virtual School, 07946244426, sue.denholm@nottsc.gov.uk

LAC Achievement Officers:

Marice Gillespie, 07946244542, marice.gillespie@nottsc.gov.uk
Ian Stewart, 07836671491, ian.stewart@nottsc.gov.uk
Elaine Hack, 07753630070, elaine.hack@nottsc.gov.uk

LAC Achievement Officers and Co-ordinator based at Lawn View House supported by Dace Birzgalis-Liegis, 01623 434149, dace.birzgalis-liegis@nottsc.gov.uk

**REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, REGULATED AND CORPORATE
PARENTING**

HOMEFINDING ACTIVITY IN THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the range of homefinding activity currently taking place and the results achieved in April – September 2012.

Information and Advice

2. A new post of Homefinder was created within the adoption service in 2012 and was recruited to in November 2012. The post holder is involved in all home finding activity for children who cannot be placed within our own resources (i.e. Notts approved families). In some local authorities a homefinder carries a small case load of children s/he is finding families for. Due to the volume of children we homefind for, the post in Notts has the most impact by maximising our homefinding activity for all children, and is not a case holding post.
3. Every month a homefinding meeting is held, which is chaired by the Adoption Service Manager and attended by the Homefinder, Recruitment and Publicity Officer, Permanence Team Managers and Adoption Team Manager.
4. Every child who has an adoption plan agreed by the agency decision maker, but has not yet had a match presented to adoption panel, is discussed in the meeting.
5. As the table overleaf shows, the total number of children discussed is between 100 and 120. The number on hold varies as it includes those children not subject to a placement order yet. We are limited in homefinding for these children until a placement order is obtained.

2012 - Month	Children Waiting	Match	Hold	Total
February	47	34	0	81
March	46	39	17	102
April	51	43	0	94
May	32	58	14	104
June	40	51	10	101
July	39	62	9	110
August	39	60	17	116
Sept	37	68	13	118

6. What is pleasing to note is that the number in a match has steadily increased this year, whilst the number waiting has slightly reduced.
7. The homefinding options are as follows, and usually follow this order:-

- a) An in-house family may be identified within the meeting. We consider all families due to be approved within the next 3 months, and will share information about the specific child prior to approval. In some cases we take approval and match to the same adoption panel, thus minimising delay.

If there is no Nottinghamshire approved family, and a child is subject to a placement order, the next stage is:

- b) Referral to the local Consortium. This is a group of local authorities and voluntary agencies within the East Midlands who will work co-operatively to place children within their pooled resources. The limitation of this is the current demand for placements local authorities are experiencing which means they are unlikely to be able to give a family to a neighbouring authority.

For example only one Notts family has taken a non Notts placement in the past 15 months at least.

- c) Detailed profile sent to one of our local Voluntary Adoption Agencies that we are working closely with, Family Care and Adopt Together. We recently held a joint recruitment event with Family Care. We have contributed to the Adopt Together preparation programme, and expect to use several of their families in 2012. A member of their staff will start to attend our homefinding meeting so that matches can be discussed alongside our own – further reducing delay.
- d) Referral to the National register, and responses followed up immediately. There are a limited number of approved adopters on the register and their details are sent out for many children. When the Service Manager was first in post (July 2011) the register produced no families for Notts children but was generating a high level of work in referring children. (It is a requirement to refer children where no family has been identified within 3 months). As we can now accurately predict our future resources available we do not wait 3 months before referring children. If there is no in house link, and stage b and c achieve nothing we refer immediately. The homefinder has developed a system to reply immediately to all register possibilities, with a concise and professional profile which has sufficient information for adopters to make a decision regarding our children. This means that families who are not a match are ruled out early on, but also that everyone has a timely response. This in turn has improved our reputation, and increasingly other agencies are seeking to work with us.
- e) If there is still no family we will feature children in Be My Parent or Children Who Wait and on the Website of both. We will repeat feature if necessary.
- f) In addition we attend national register exchange days, where adopters attend and view profiles. (Leeds, Cardiff, London) and we hold local exchange events, in the same way at County Hall.

- g) At the same time we will identify children for Adoption Activity Days.
8. Adoption Activity Days are a new home finding initiative for harder to place children, being run as a pilot project for two years by the British Agency for Fostering and Adoption. It is based on principles of empowerment of children waiting for a new family and adopter-led linking. The project is based in the East Midlands Adoption Consortium, which embraces 9 local Authorities, although initially only 5 were willing to take part.
 9. Nottinghamshire is one of the lead authorities in the pilot project steering group, and has been well regarded both locally and nationally for the commitment to developing practice and placement of children in this area. Staff from the Authority have been involved in well-received radio and newspaper broadcasts as well as being a part of a video of the first event, which is used for national training purposes, and securing additional sponsorship for the project.
 10. There have now been three Adoption Activity Days with two more planned for October 2012 and March 2013. As expertise has developed and children have been matched and placed, so Government interest and support for the days has grown. Martin Narey, adoption champion for the Government, is planning to attend the event in October 2012.
 11. So far the Adoption Activity Days have offered 128 places to children, several of whom have attended twice. Between 23 and 27 adoptive families have attended each event. Each day has given the children a memorable day of activities. Each child has a trusted carer with them, as well as their social worker and activities are geared around age and interest. The event finishes with food and singing for the children, a buffet for all the adults, and the children all go home with a small bag of toys. The event has been held in different large venues with the capacity for about 180 people. General feedback from the children has been that they have had a great day out.
 12. Specifically, Nottinghamshire had places for 23 (out of 39) children at the first day, 13 (out of 41) children at the second day, and 9 (out of 48) children at the third day. As more authorities witnessed the success of the days, so more East Midlands Agencies signed up to take part, giving less child places per authority.
 13. Our children included a range of children with additional needs, some had profound disabilities, others were older, and some were brothers and sisters wanting to stay together. Many were boys. Although the children were predominantly white, a few Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children also attended. We have also sent two sets of Nottinghamshire adopters to the events, as they had been waiting a long time to find the right child for them.
 14. Feedback from all participants has been balanced, constructive and largely very positive. One of the positive spin offs has been children being pleased to see so many children waiting for families, like them, which makes it feel more normal.
 15. In terms of matching children, 22 children have found families from the three events. Specifically, Nottinghamshire will have matched 5 children, representing 23% of children placed so far in the pilot. Nottinghamshire children consisted of 2 sibling groups and a single child, 3 boys and 2 girls in the age range 3 to 6 years, and with a range of different additional needs.

16. The Homefinder produces a full detailed, accurate and attractive profile of all children. We use professional photographs, but taken in the child's home, and have had very positive feedback about these.
17. The profiles again have raised our reputation, and the response other adopters and agencies experience from all our staff has made us a desirable agency to work with.
18. This year, from April to September, 42 children have had a match approved by panel. For 2011 – 12 it was 51 in total.
19. Of those, 33 have been placed in house and 6 of those were presented as approval and match (i.e. minimising delay).
20. 9 have been placed with other agencies, both local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies.
21. These families were identified by the adoption register, other than one who responded to a feature. This clearly demonstrates we now have useful activity from the National Adoption Register.
22. Of the adopters we used internally, 18 had their match confirmed in less than 4 months post approval. 3 were 5 months, 1 was 6 months, 1 was 7 months, and 2 were 10 months. The longer time is due to adopter's choice, i.e. considering more than one match, having specific matching requirements, or a match previously not proceeding.
23. To the end of September 2012, 22 families were approved to adopt and 18 are booked to panel before the end of the year. In 2011-12 31 families were approved in total.
24. The media campaigns locally and general high profile of adoption are benefitting us greatly, as is our continued reputation of offering a good service.
25. We have matches due to come to panel of older children, siblings, and children with disabilities. These were obtained via register exchange days, features, and internal matches.

Other Options Considered

26. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

Reasons for Recommendations

27. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

28. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That the report be noted.

Rachel Coombs
Group Manager, Regulated and Corporate Parenting

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (NDR 17/10/12)

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

Background Papers

Update on progress in the Adoption Service – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 8 October 2012
Anonymised Profile.

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.

C0094

