Fostering Advisory Partnership

Meeting on the 20th April 2018

@ South Green Park, Mattishall NR20 3JY. 10 am Start

Present: Peter Ronan, Julia Spinks (Chair), Sharon Donoghue, Terri Denington, Roni Kingston-Miles, Owen Garrod, Keeley White, Boo Dickens, Mike Woodward, Lori Ong, Anne Ritchies, Michaela Fysh, Stef Rice, Antonella Parker, Craig Secker.


Invited: Carey Cake, Irene Kerry.

1. Welcome to Terri who is the Health representative and to Carey, IRO Manager and Irene, In-Care Council. Introductions.

2. Minutes of previous meeting agreed, have been shared and will go on NCC website shortly.

3. **SGO** – Peter said that things haven’t been running as smoothly as they should have been and delays in the following areas have meant that not 1 SGO case has completed yet since the first application 11 months ago. Delays particularly in relation to a) Social Workers doing the assessments; this has now been sped up because Social Workers have been commissioned to take on this role. b) Solicitor representation; it is anticipated that in the future 5-6 solicitors across Norfolk will be used to vet the support plan and ensure carers are making an informed decision. C) Courts being busy and scheduling a date.

Peter has a meeting this afternoon to discuss SGO with a view to providing a better service and quickening the process which currently falls short of the standards expected, by the group.

Foster carers who have taken up this SGO no detriment offer are still able to participate in training and outings. For guidance and information there is a wealth of literature regarding SGO on the Hub and there is another SGO information session next week.

Mike has prepared a graph which tells us how many cases there are. It seems there is no one else collating concrete data on numbers of those waiting and what stages the cases are at.

Carey reminds Carers that they can contact CoramBAAF for advocacy and the Carers can pass to IRO for dispute resolution. Additionally Carey said we should feel able to contact the IRO on any issue where help is required.

Also, if carers collectively feel that something isn’t happening as it should they are perfectly allowed to hold a meeting and make representations to Peter or via Antonella if preferred. Primary focus should always be the child and benefit to them of SGO.  

PG1
Owen added that young people now want support to 25 rather than up to 21 which means more Support Workers are needed to enable this to be achievable. There are no SGO requests at the moment for Leaving Care Service.

Craig arrived at the meeting and declared his interest which is in Insignia Health Care.

4. **MOMO – Mind of My Own:**

Irene said that app has been used in the UK for the last 5 years and in Norfolk since November. Any young person can access the app which can be used to share anything including good news! It can be used to make a complaint and this app ensures that complaints are dealt with speedily. Where complaints are raised by the child a restorative meeting will take place with Coram included to advocate for the child, which is a better procedure with enhanced outcomes, rather than the child just receiving a letter. The app can be used for any age; currently the youngest is 6, which means a carer probably supports the child to use it. Carers are encouraged to go to “Test Profile” and try out the app alongside the child preferably so that you can both see what it offers. The child can then use it for preparing for their review, planning for Social Worker visits etc.

http://mindofmyown.org.uk/

Under the “About me” section, if the child has an issue they can chose which workers they want to send the issue to.

It is closely monitored by Irene who will regularly pull out key themes for the Children/Young People and ensure these are addressed. The “Wordology” is very positive right now and says things like we are Happy and relaxed, from our Children and Young People.

Terri and Keeley (Health and Virtual School) asked if their services could link in with the app so that any problems relating to the Health and Virtual School are address quickly and efficiently.

We said it sounds like a really useful tool for those children who do not like to engage face to face and an excellent tool for gaining the wishes and feelings of children as well as making complaint.

There are currently 110 users and it is hoped that all looked after children will participate eventually.

5) **Independent Visitor Service – Sova**

The new providers of the service are Sova; young people were asked what they wanted from the service and were able to ask questions when a new service provider was sought due to the procurement process. Most of the IV’s have moved along to the new provider as has most of the staff who previously worked for Action for Children.

Carey apologised that carers were not asked their opinions on what we want from the IV service and said that she has learnt by this and will consult with carers if there are changes that affect us in the future. Carers are grateful for this and the apology.

There will be 3 specialist recruiters in the new service so the aim is to have a larger stronger and more culturally and ethnically diverse service. Mencap offer a “Gig buddies” service for 16+. Antonella asked “Have Coram changed their remit for age?” Carey replied “No there are no age limits for looked after children”.

Pg2
Carey and Irene left the meeting. Break for coffee.

6) **Peters Update**
The 12 million pound transformation fund is being used in four ways:

a. To increase in-house Fostering. A Team Manager has been appointed and advertising will take place soon for Foster Care Champions.

b. Reduce the number of children/young People in Residential settings using “Step Down” Fostering placements.

c. Reduce the need for being looked after.

d. Social Worker retention – ensure offer is better. Lighten the workload by introducing duty workers and business support.

Answers to questions raised at last meeting added to appendix a.

7) **Action Points from previous meetings:**

- Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy. There is a lack of faith in the current procedure, as some carers had made complaints years ago and these have still not been resolved.
  
Where Antonella has supported Carers with complaints the results have been positive and where a relationship between the Carer and Worker was not viable the Worker has changed. Antonella can provide anonymised examples of those she has helped. Peter has contacted Chris Heasman to ask him to attend a FAP meeting so that we can discuss this further.

- Media training – Anne and Julia will be doing this.

- Keeley will bring Term Time Holidays guidance to May’s meeting.

- Sharon to resend FAP dates to Catherine Sutton who has returned after maternity leave.

- Fostering Stocktake on next agenda.

- Health and Virtual School to liaise on bags for under 5’s. (Keeley and Terri)

8) **Groups and Fostering Friends:**

Watton network group was well attended with 9. The group continues to go from strength to strength, more would have attended but this was held on the same day as training. Ian Wright from Lado attended which was informative.

Stefan is there still a male carers group for this area?

CWD - Claire and Leslie attended and talked about short breaks.

Kings Lynn – feedback received prior to meeting, thanks Anne. See appendix b.

Norwich – has been cancelled this month.

Fostering Friends – Is still very busy and used by many carers for things such as covering courses when another carer can’t attend. Feedback about the Solihull course if that it would be better to be 7pm rather than 6pm, and that the Willow Centre can be noisy.
9) **CWD Subgroup:**
A meeting took place on the 22nd March resulting in a large wish list. Priority will be to focus on building a proposal for training specifically for carers who look after CWD and costing this. Some of the areas which need to be covered under training are moving and handling, sign along, recording, and peg. Where training has been given to a carer initially for instances such as Peg following discharge from hospital, this should be followed up regularly at health assessments, LAC reviews, during supervision, because procedures are updated constantly and failure to use correct procedures may result in sickness or death.
Craig to attend CPD and provide the proposal.
Health to attend this subgroup.
Future meeting dates of CWD group; 5/6 3/7 20/9 20/11

10) **AOB** – None.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix a)**

Questions for Peter from FAP 16th March:

**Stepping Stones:**
There was a lot on discussion about this course and the wealth of information this contains, which is beneficial to both foster carers and all staff, including social workers but particularly supervising social workers (according to those at FAP who had participated on the course).

1. As part of their professional development, should/could this be mandatory for supervising social workers to attend? **Peter asked Mike if he could advise workers that over the next 2-3 years he would like all workers to complete Stepping Stones with at least 2 workers attending each course.**

2. With regards to new carers, because there is information within the course which is highly relevant should it be mandatory for this course be completed before carers can take on a placement?

   It would not be feasible to do this. However at the next CPD meeting the possibility of the course being mandatory for carers to complete within their first year will be discussed. There are now 3 courses per year providing approximately 45 places. The feasibility of presenting more will depend on the course trainers cascading to newer foster carer trainers.

3. Could this course be done instead of the Fostering Standards, or could the course be added to, to incorporate FS?
   The course already includes links to FS. It covers a large proportion of the standards already but could not entirely replace these. **PG4**

**New placements:**
Carers are still experiencing a lack of communication at not being advised when a new placement goes elsewhere or a child doesn’t come into care and are left waiting for days and sometimes weeks before an answer is given, if at all. Carers said that the duty workers were in the dark too. Please could you speak to relevant parties to ensure carers are kept up to date? Duty workers to devise a tracking tool for this. Care first should be able to provide an update on placements if the SW is unavailable.

Data Protection:
You’ll remember the problems Anne had with the Kings Lynn Hospital, where her personal details were given out in front of the parent. The Hospital has been very proactive and has now sent a card out for all carers in their area so that the carer can enter their details onto and hand these over when they are booking in a child. We discussed the easiest way of rolling this out across Norfolk and decided it would be less complicated if NFS designed our own and gave these out, one to each carer. Business card format would be suitable. Is this possible? This was discussed but no action was decided, therefore this will roll over to next month’s agenda.

Appendix b)

Kings Lynn Network Group

Wednesday 28th March 2018 from 10-12.

The meeting was held at Tesco Hardwick Community Room in Kings Lynn.

It was very well attended with some new carers present which was good to see. There were 13 carers and 9 children present as well as 3 workers from fostering support (Gemma Smith, Helen Smith and a student SW).

The guest speaker was Beth Southard who manages the LAC programme for the library service. She had examples of books sent out to children in their initial library pack and showed resources available to carers including the Babble Bags specifically designed for children with communication issues. She told us of an idea she has to have sensory bags available at local libraries. Several useful leaflets were handed out detailing library resources available. A very informative morning with time for carers to chat and catch up!

PGS

Written by Sharon Donoghue 22.4.2018

Checked by Julia Spinks 23.4.2018