ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

22ND June 2016 @ South Green Park, Mattishall, 9.30 – 12.45

Present: Julia Spinks (Chair), Sharon Donoghue (Minutes), Pip Wells (Virtual School), Stefan Rice (Carer), Mark Buckle (Carer), Cathy Mouser (Head of Social Work), Anja Grau (Carer), Mike Woodward (Fostering Team Manager), Anne Ritchies (Carer), Ann McKendrick (Social Worker Manager), Sarah Hunter (Manager – Learning & Development), Michael Rosen (Director of Children’s Services)

Apologies: Carey Cake, Caroline Sexton, Nick Crick, Don Evans, Carola Doy, Antonella Parker, Peter Ronan.

1. Introductions.
2. Minutes of 25th May agreed.
3. Review action points:
   - Sharon will chair the Network Group and Social Events team, until a new chair can be found.
   - An email was sent on the 27th May, asking for the legalities of carers recording to be checked on. As yet Anne has not received a reply. Anne to forward a copy of the email to Cathy.
   - All other points still ongoing.

4. Charter – Health and Wellbeing:
   a. The Team Around the child were unsure who should be involved and who to target the questions at for a deep dive in this part of the Charter. It was decided that Ricky Cooper would be the best person to assist with this. Ricky could advise on what has been done so far at the next TAC meeting. Julia to pass on Pam’s details to Ricky. Pam to invite Ricky and Jo Creaser to the next TAC on 11th July.

   b. Michael - Health overview:
      Initial health assessments are now being completed in time and the focus is now on the quality of these and the form is being rewritten. Michael acknowledges that CAMHS have been under-resourced and there is still work to do. Point 1, schools and other tier one services may be used more for those children who need help with emotional wellbeing. Pip added that for those children where their behaviour is concerning but not at the level which would trigger CAMHS involvement there is a package linked to EPEP which can be used to provide strategies to help with issues such as explosive behaviour. A full version of the report into the review of Health Assessments will be available soon. Michael to share this once available.
c. What happens with the strengths and difficulties questionnaire which carers complete? There is concern that the questionnaire is being under-utilised and not used to its full potential.

Michael is keen to know what the common health problems are for our children. Carers replied with the following;

- Managing a child who doesn’t wish to attend appointments and ensuring that where appointments are not kept that a child doesn’t lose that service.
- Helping a child keep themselves hygienically clean.
- Helping a child manage a healthy balanced diet.
- Problems with bedwetting, soiling, and daytime wetting.

With regards to appointments for health, and ADHD 6 monthly checks, it is the responsibility of the corporate parent to ensure that this is actioned in a timely manner. A LAC review will pick up any failings and the social worker must take action. What is needed is a more joined up way of communicating so that resources are targeted to those children who need it them most.

Anne is a carer who looks after under 5’s, and from her perspective those little ones are bombarded with services, such as midwife, health visitors, doctors, adoption and these are often repetitive.

A Health Passport will be launched soon.

A member of Health to be invited to AP.

5. **Team Around the Child:**

   “This is me”

A social worker has devised a profile of herself, the purpose being when a child gets a new social worker they will send this to the child so they have a bit of background information before any handover, or introduction meeting takes place. This is now being piloted in the Breckland area and Ann will feedback on the effectiveness of this at the next meeting. All liked the idea of this and agreed that handovers are an area which could be managed better. Schools should also be getting a phone call from the social worker introducing themselves but we generally felt that this wasn’t happening.

*Cathy will get the message out that a proper handover is expected.*

**Continuous Professional Development:**

A meeting is being held this afternoon. Karen Cooper who is a worker in the west is setting up a steering group for unaccompanied children and more complex placements. CPD will also be discussing Online Training and the Charter. The new CPD programme was launched at a LAC Managers meeting on Friday and is was very well received. They suggested setting targets for Social Worker training to ensure that workers attend.

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**Network Groups and Social Events:**
A formal meeting hasn’t taken place. Several carers have been approached to see if they wanted to chair this group and as none were entirely happy to do this role Sharon has volunteered. **A meeting will be set up in the next month – Sharon**

- A picnic has been organised by carers in the Norwich area at Eaton Park which took place on the 11\(^{th}\) June. This was well attended, carers and children thoroughly enjoyed the day.
- A picnic is being held at Sandringham on the 11\(^{th}\) August and Kings Lynn open day will take place on the 12\(^{th}\) July.
- A picnic is currently being organised by the duty workers, at Wroxham Barns during the August holidays.
- The annual Fostering and Adoption day at Gressenhall is happening on the 2\(^{nd}\) July.
- Some Norwich based carers have organised a get together (via NCC Fostering Friends) which happens every Tuesday at the Village Inn in Little Melton. This is working really well with a mixture of carers every week. It is informal and this week carer shared books. This is an open invitation and carers can come and go as they wish.
- Sharon has asked carers via the Wordpress hub if they “would use a buddy system”. So far 20 carers have said yes and 2 no. The idea of this is to build friendships with other carers and prevent isolation. As the response is favourable it seems this will go ahead. **Sharon and Mike to speak about how we can take this forward.**
- **AP to take a bigger role in feeding back at NWG and on the new Blog using “Themes” from the AP.**

**Network group feedback:**

Kinship – no other meetings have taken place yet.

Kings Lynn – A LAC Team Manager attended and was very well received. There were 8 carers 4 LAC and 2 birth children.

Gt Yarmouth – the guest speaker did not show up which might put people off attending in the future. **Mike to check how often this happens and if the presenter can be contact before to check if they are attending and if not what substitute plans could we put in place.**

Norwich – Ladies from “Staying put” attended - where a LAC approaches 15 they will have conversations and lots of help with planning for their future. This was very interesting and informative. 5 carers attended.

North Walsham – next meeting 20\(^{th}\) July.
**New Wordpress Hub/Blog:**

Carers have expressed that the email notices have too much information all at once, and to facilitate better communication, Mike has set up a blog. This has replaced the existing newsletter and so far 96 people, a mixture of NCC carers and some employees are using this. Mike will send another email out so that carers who haven’t already done so a reminded to use it.

The blog is set up so that items can be posted and also has a section for information and resources which carers will find useful. Media can be added but not photos of our LAC. There is also a statistics section. Carers from AP who are authors on the blog must ensure that they use it to notify carers of what is happening.

We are all agreed that this will prove to be an asset for carers and is exactly what is needed to improve communication. Many thanks to Mike for setting this up.

**6. Fostering Network review of AP and recommendations:**

On the 4th May, Fostering Network attended the AP and made some suggestions on what could be done to improve the ways we work. These were discussed today:

- Find incentives for carers to attend the various groups. A financial reward is not always the answer – to be discussed further at NWG and Social Events.
- Are the AP meeting to large? Agreed that the size frequency and structure of the groups is sufficient.
- Should NWG and Social Events be added together or separate? Keep together.
- Should the NWG have a business/learning and development element? Targeting the carers to the guest speaker might not work. Yes we could get all NWG to work in the same way and identify themes. The same speaker could be used for each group. A foster carer could lead the discussion on a given theme. Sharon to ask on the blog what themes carers might like.
- Can carers without placements be better utilised? The buddy system may help with this. Support Foster Care is being used already.
- Anonymous feedback so that carers can voice concerns?
- AP more structural and revisit objectives, with an operational and business slot. Add to the agenda.
- Voice of the child has not been heard. To ensure this happens carers to visit ICC to see how we could obtain their views. Sharon to contact Irene for next meeting date and advise Julia and Pam. Are the views of all LAC being heard? How can this happen if not? York ICC have a website does Norfolk ICC know about this and have they seen it?
- Achievement log to go online. Sharon
- Getting the word out at events and raising the profile – attending events with a stand and pull out notice. Leaflets to contact centres, sure start, hamlet centre, recruitment, carrow house. Antonella can we help distribute the leaflets?
7. **Conference:**
Funds have been secured for a Foster Carers Conference this year. Agreed that this should happen in November, venue either John Innes, Holiday Inn or Mercure. Theme – Health and Wellbeing. 10-4pm with table discussions, and celebrations of good practice. Guest speaker to be decided. Press to be invited.

8. **LAC and Children Leaving Care:**
Inspectors have recently carried out a review of some cases and saw improvement, especially with PEPs and Health Assessments. They were generally excited and positive about the work which has been done so far. Looking forward, the next sufficiency is the range of foster carer placements as there are still a number of challenging teenagers who are difficult to place. In addition, there is a proposal for 120 asylum seeker children to be placed (age range mostly 16-17). Michael asked what resources carers might need to support a placement, for example the young people may be experiencing PTSD. AP representative to ask carers at our support groups, and on the blog, what resources might be needed.

9. **Children’s Centres:**
Lynn Friel is Community Capacity Coordinator for North Norfolk and Broadland has sent an email to AP. Lynn is concerned that carers aren’t using the services offered by the centres and asked what might be the reasons for this, and what could be done to improve this. We discussed the obstacles carers might have and these are:

- There are very few placements now for younger children and especially baby placements.
- Carers have lots of other appointments, especially regular contact for the younger children.
- Where the intention is that a child is going to be adopted, this now happens very quickly, so the child may only be with the carer for a few months.
- The biggest barrier is confidentiality issues. The services on offer are open to all, and carers therefore run the risk of seeing friends or family members of the children, or previously looked after children. Which then becomes awkward and means the carers cannot talk freely.
- A carer was receiving notifications about children’s centres addressed to children that had left a few years earlier, even though she had gone in and advised the children’s centre. Is the mailing list up to date?
We think the range of services on offer is very good and would like to be able to use the Centres more. Some suggestions on what could be done to improve this were:

- A foster carer’s morning/get together or events specifically for carers.
- Use of rooms for contact.
- Members of AP to spread the word at Network Group Meetings.
- Information can be posted on the hub about activities and events, so that carers can see what is happening in their locality.
- Children’s centre representatives could visit our Network groups and advise of the services on offer.

Members of AP could visit Lynn and her team to discuss this and for do the same for all the other Centres within Norfolk.

**AOB**

Where a complaint has been made against a social worker, it is the responsibility of the supervising social worker to feedback to the carer the outcome, so the carer should refer back to them if they have not heard anything.  
*Cathy and Mike to devise a blog post to reiterate that she wants to hear when things are not working, as she doesn’t want carers to be put off complaining and so that things can be improved.*

The duty worker who covers the Watton Area is currently looking for AP representative for the Watton Network Group.

Charter – send out electronic copies of the charter to Designated Teachers LSGB and Learning and Development so that all in TAC received this.  *Sharon to send to relevant parties.*

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Written by Sharon Donoghue 22\textsuperscript{nd} June 2016

Checked by Julia Spinks 23\textsuperscript{th} June 2016