Fostering Advisory Partnership meeting on Wednesday  
26th April 2017  
@ South Green Park, Mattishall, NR20 3JY. 9.30-1.15

Attended – Julia Spinks (Chair), Peter Ronan (Vice Chair), Sharon Donoghue (Minutes), Pam Weyer, Fiona Fitzpatrick, Stef Rice, Anne Richie, Roni Kingston-Miles, Debbie Burrell, Lori Ong, Anja Grau, Antonella Parker, Keeley White, Owen Garrod, Frances Whymark.

Apologies – Mike Woodward, Catherine Sutton, Theresa Lavery, Don Evans, Dan St John, Irene Kerry.

1. Introductions - Welcome to Fiona who is the new Interim Assistant Director to cover sick leave for Cathy.

2. Previous Minutes checked and online.

3. Action Points: Placement endings - carry forward to next meeting.

   Staying Put – Owen has advised his team to ensure that a timely meeting takes place between worker and child. Sarah C has fed back the last discussion on fostering friends. Information on staying put still to be put on to the hub – Owen will chase this. Peter has emailed all Supervising Social Workers to remind that conversations should be taking place for staying put at age 16 if not before. Owen added that a payment increase is being agreed for carers to a maximum of £250, which is made up from housing benefit (approximately £90) and the remainder from Children’s Services. The process of claiming housing benefit can start six weeks prior to the child is 18, so it’s in place by their birthday.

4. Fostering Network – have asked that two carers attend a Mental Health focus group day on the 24th May in London. Pam and Julia agreed to attend this.

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5. **Data protection and confidentiality** – Several incidents have come to light where carer’s confidential details (name and home address) have been inadvertently given to parents. The main issues have been for medical appointments where addresses were read out in front of parents. There were also instances of parents being sent out paperwork with carers details on. In most instances it is perfectly acceptable for parents to have the address of carers, for example if the child is placed long term and there is no risk. However where a child is waiting for court proceeding to be finalised and there being a possibility of adoption, or if there is a clear risk, details should not be passed. Anne suggested using a card stating that you are a carer and didn’t want personal information shared verbally for appointments. The card could contain your personal details so that the worker doesn’t need to ask.

*Anne will ask her Supervising Social Worker to forward a letter to Dr Steel who can advise Health Professionals of the need for confidentiality.*

*Peter will also speak with Health/Dr Steel to follow this up.*

6. **Conferences** :

The recent education conference for designated teachers and social workers was a success. The speaker Sir John Jones who was inspirational and had the audience laughing and crying throughout. Keeley wanted to thank the members of FAP who attended and Julia for her speech.

On July 11th Virtual School and Fostering will be holding an event at Green Britton Centre, Swaffham. This will be an interactive experience with drop in workshops to attend such as Sensory and Science.

The annual Conference for the Team Around the Child will be organised for November. Venue to be advised. We would like to book Sir John Jones as the guest speaker. We will have longer breaks and a 2.30pm finish. Further details to follow.

7. **Fostering Friends update**

The Facebook group now has 125 members.

*Norwich* - A craft afternoon and “bring your child to work” took place in the holidays where the children attended the breakfast club with their carers. This was really helpful for the children to build relationships with other children who do not live with birth parents. Weekly breakfast club is still well attended. A “Friday Therapy” carer support session has been set up monthly; some carers go along and paint pebbles or colour in books whilst others just like to chat.
Fiona asked whether it would be beneficial for staff from the In-Care council to come along to the bring you child to work during the holidays to do an activity and get to know the children and spread the word of the In-Care council. All agreed that this would be appropriate during the holidays.

Kings Lynn – held a get together with carers and children at a play area which was successful. Breakfast clubs still take place bi-weekly and are going well.

Gt Yarmouth – have now held their second breakfast club as the first was successful.

Thetford – A get together took place at high lodge which was a nice informal way for carers and children to get to know each other; thanks to Roni for organising this.

Men who foster – the next date for this will be announced and shared soon.

8. Respite: There are various forms of respite and these differ between formal and informal, regular or ad hoc. The best way for respite to be organised is between carers using delegated authority. With delegated authority the child would know the carer, friend or family member so this impacts less on them. An exemption can be applied for via the Supervising Social Worker if needed. An exemption is not required if the respite is just for one night as this is more like a sleepover rather than respite. Carers can make their own financial arrangements or alternatively they could not have a financial arrangement and exchange the favour. Tax implications should be taken into account if money changes hands.

Where this is not possible, a more formal approach is needed. The supervising social worker or child’s social worker will organise this and advise the placement team, who will organise for another carer to do the respite. The payment to the existing carer decreases and the payment to the respite carer is made and subsidised by Children’s Services. Carers have reported that recently there have been delays in finding respite carers and this has caused considerable stress to carers. Additionally carers who said they have space for respite have not been contacted and the reasons for this are unclear.

Regular respite, which has to be formally approved by panel via the child’s social worker is still used where there are problematic placements. The specialist fostering team which ceased 6 years ago used to allow carers a regular break because of the nature of the placements. Carers who used to be under this scheme were upset that this service was not continued and felt that they were not consulted when this stopped.

Respite will be discussed at Team Around the Child on the 11th May and solutions sought.

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9. Network group updates –

**Watton** – took place on the 23\(^{rd}\) March. This was a great meeting with 11 attending, and three children. Jackie Cushing facilitated a discussion on the different therapeutic approaches used by carers. We would like to see this repeated in all areas as all found this useful. “A fab meeting”.

**Gt Yarmouth** – 12 carers, Rachel and Theresa (Duty Workers) presented on wellbeing for carers, including myths about stress and secondary trauma. An excellent meeting which we would like to replicate in all NWG areas.

**North Walsham** – Helen Maund – Theraplay again very well received, all carers positive about this meeting.

**Norwich** – 5 carers attended and one child who was supervised by a carer in the crèche. Beth Sollard from the Library services attended – a fantastic selection of books. There is a library just for carers and free packs available for our children. Carer can use the Corporate Guarantor Scheme to obtain more books, this also allows for damaged or lost books. A drop in day will be organised at the Forum Library so that Beth can show carers what is available. Debbie will help set this up and advise carers of date/time.

**Kings Lynn** – well attended with 8 carers and due to the meeting taking place in half term – 7 children. A LAC team manager attended and this was very informative. Carers enjoyed the meeting.

10. **Kinship Support** - A Special Guardian Support Group was set up and these take place monthly, alternating between Kings Lynn and Norwich. Peter explained the differences between family and friends fostering (Kinship) who are essentially foster carers but look after the named children rather than any child, Special Guardianship who are usually family members (similar to adoption) and Special Guardianship where carers no longer foster but have a SGO for the same child who was fostered. With Special Guardianship a support plan is put in place at the outset through to age 21 which will include things like life story work. Children’s needs can be reassessed throughout. Where payment is applicable, this stops at age 18.

For carers who want to change to SGO from fostering, the implications of this must be explained to them.

Anja has some aims for the Kinship group of carers such as linking the carers with others in their areas to provided mutual support.

Keeley said that designated teachers are often confused about the different types of fostering available and entitlements. Antonella confirmed that there is help available on ‘Signposts’ on the Fostering Network website. Family rights group also has further information.

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Anja will draft a letter to go out to all Family and friends foster carers (Kinship) to introduce herself and advise them that she is their FAP representative.

Peter will speak with Clare from Kinship Team so that she is aware of Anja’s role and look at Anja’s ideas.

11. **CPD feedback**: A meeting took place on the 20th March and the Social Care Academy was discussed. The group felt that there should be some involvement and suggested that Jackie Venables represented the CPD group on the Academy board to have input into the training needs of carers. Jackie would then feedback to the CPD group. Fiona added that the Academy will be scaled down before it comes into action. Responsibility for training would still lie with CPD group. The new training programme is now live and good feedback received from carers. Carers said that it is clear that their wishes in respect of changes to training have been taken on board which is pleasing. A lot of hard work has gone into the training directory, so thanks to all involved for this.

Peter said that there is always room in the budget for child based need bespoke training and this can be applied for via the supervising social worker. Mentoring and online courses are also available.

The learning hub is being piloted at the moment and this will allow carers to apply for courses themselves, it is hoping to go live in September.

Suzy Holman is devising an induction pack for new carers.

CPD portfolio headings - was discussed and it was decided that carers could adapt the form however they wanted as long as the information was there. Lori will pass this onto carers. Suzy and Anne are meeting to provide some examples of the CPD to show carers.

Keeley asked if delegated teachers could use the course “Helping looked after children learn”. Anne confirmed that this is possible and a cost of around £60 applies.

The group is looking into training for supervising social workers regarding compassion fatigue. Details of the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting have been shared on the Hub and Fostering Friends.

12. **CWD Group** — Four carers have come forward to say they would like to join the group and a meeting will take place in May.
13. **Network Groups and Social Events sub group.** Sharon has contacted all the workers and carers involved in this group and all agreed that a meeting is no longer required since carers are organising their own social events now. A duty worker will attend FAP every May to discuss how the Network Groups are progressing and also in October to take back any ideas on what sort of things carers would like to see at the Network Groups for the following year.

14. **AOB**

- The FAP pull up board has been produced, we all thought it looked great. Thanks to Antonella for organising this. Sharon is storing this.
- How long should a child be without a social worker? There should be no gaps, a child should always have a social worker.
- Contact Centres – Portacabins have been used for contact. These are not suitable and other suitable venues are being sought.
- There will no longer be LAC assistant team managers. Instead teams sizes will be halved and ATM’s will become managers. Court work will now be carried out by LAC team rather than family intervention team and there will be more staying put teams. Minimum disruption is expected.
- Early help and edge of care is being restructured and Barnardos are running this. Support foster care may be reinvigorated. *Barnardos to be invited to FAP in the summer.*
- 2 new posts in the Kinship care team agreed.
- Recruitment of carers taking place, it is hoped that this will lead to at least 40 fostering households. A question was asked about why the focus on new carers when there are still carers with empty beds? An effort will be made to recruit agency carers. This often means that when agency carers join they already have children in their homes. Recruitment means more choice and ensures a good match for the child. Martyn Lovett is working on a system which would see us bringing back children from out of county and providing additional support for these carers.
- Disability Living Allowance – guidance can be found on the website [https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/care-support-and-advice/money/disability-living-allowance](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/care-support-and-advice/money/disability-living-allowance) Carers have saved money for children in a savings account. For purchases under £100 carers should let social worker know what it’s spent on. Purchases over this can be for things like holidays, bigger cars etc, and these should again be made with agreement from social worker.
• Savings accounts for the child are usually in the child’s name and can be opened online or in the bank. Discussion around what happens if a young person returns home and what happens to the money in their account. The money goes with the child unless it is spent before. The saving book or details should be given to the child's social worker. Identification for the child such as passport or birth certificate will be required when opening an account. It would be wise to not allow too much money to accumulate in the account as there may be tax or other implications in adulthood. When money is spent it is prudent to keep a log detailing amounts, dates and reason for purchase.

• Medical forms will soon be live.