Minutes of Meeting

FOSTERING ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP
Held on: Friday 19th July 2019
Venue: Breckland Council Offices, Dereham, NR19 1EE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Post Title</th>
<th>Dept/Organisation</th>
<th>Part attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle Brophy</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>NFS Foster Carer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia Spinks</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NFS Foster Carer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Gavrila</td>
<td>Fostering Development Manager</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Donoghue</td>
<td>Minute taker. Carer</td>
<td>NFS</td>
<td>1-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Woodward</td>
<td>Fostering Team Manager</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Bartholomew</td>
<td>NFS Duty Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Burrell</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
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<td>Anne Ritchie</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
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<td>Roni Kingston-Miles</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NFS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracy Collins</td>
<td>Head of Fostering and Adoption</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<td>Lara Simpson</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<td>Scott McKay</td>
<td>Fostering Marketing Manager</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>1-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sally Gallop</td>
<td>Manager Social Work Norwich</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>6-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pam Weyer</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NFS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeley White</td>
<td>Head of Virtual School</td>
<td>Virtual School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Goldsmith</td>
<td>Children and Young people’s health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Sutton</td>
<td>Early Years LAC Advisor</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rochelle added that she would like to use this format for future minutes – Scott to send the template to Sharon. Rochelle wanted to add a further column to the Actions Points “Impact/review at 6 months”. Sharon to carry out these requests. Rochelle asked to ensure that everything discussed remains confidential until the action points have been agreed by the Chair

2. **Apologies for absence**

Owen Garrod, Gary Shorter, Antonella Parker, Michaela Fysh, Sarah Hunter, Stefan Rice, Boo Dickens.

3. **Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on were agreed.

Rochelle Brophy
_______________________________(Chairperson)

19th July 2019
_______________________________(Date)

4. **Agenda:**
3. Action points
6. CPD/Conference Update
7. Update on recruitment
8. Groups feedback
9. Social Care update
10. Imagination Library
11. Voice of Child
12. Foster Carer Portal
13. Foster Carer Newsletter
14. Foster Carer Payments
15. AOB

5. **Action Points from previous meeting**

- Independent evaluation – We will dedicate half of the September FAP meeting to discuss the points suggested in May. Once this internal evaluation is complete we will ask Joanna to attend and carry out the Independent evaluation.
- The Handbook is ready and will be launched once the search facility is completed.
- Tracy and Laura wanted to thank everyone for their hard work in proof reading particularly Anne and Sharon. It was very much a collective effort.
- If carers spot any errors or problems with links once it is up and running, please contact Scott or Laura.
- **Team Around the Child** will be looking at devising a new carers profile this afternoon.
- The Charter has now been shared and signed off.
• Poor quality paperwork. Ongoing Boo Dickens to feedback to Jasmine Hughes at Whiting Road about the quality of reviews and reports.

• Reminder to Social Care that confidential emails should be encrypted when sent to carers. (Tracy)
  *Ongoing – Laura Gavrila to remind managers at her next managers meeting*

• Guidance on disruption procedure – rewording of this document has been collectively carried out with carers and Tracy and it is now awaiting approval.

• The use of photo books and online media -Mike has sent the current policy to information management and quality assurance and is awaiting a response from Debby McKechnie.
  *The problem is with the identification of locations from some devices when sent electronically.*
  *Until a reply is given, carers are requested to print photos at home or in shops.*
  *Carers pointed out that printing at home isn’t always good quality and can be costly.*
  *Anne pointed out that there is a £75 allowance for life story photos. Some carers didn’t know this.*
  *Mike will check that this amount is still current and NFS will advise carers that they shouldn’t be using online services for photos/books at the moment. This is inline with current procedures.*
  *Carers must also be advised that they should not be sending photos to Social Workers of children and vice versa because this is not secure.*

6. **Conference Planning & CPD**

• A CPD meeting was held on Monday and the conference was discussed at length. A template proposal of the day was provided to the group. Anne said that in the past the key note speakers have been excellent and we wanted to make this conference as good but slightly different.
  *The focus is on mental health and wellbeing and will be jointly held with adoption. Different ideas have been put forward from a variety of sources including parents from adoption.*
  *Please see [appendix a](#) for the layout of the day.*
  *Feedback from this group; the day looks very well planned and the mix of workshop together with the market focusing on mental health is excellent.*
  *Any ideas and feedback to Sarah or Anne ASAP*

7. **Update on recruitment – Scott**

Scott has kindly prepared a presentation for the Partnership which is attached. Additional points discussed:
  *Carers attended their one year anniversary celebration which they enjoyed. This was also attended by the leader of the Council and Chairman. All carers were presented with a certificate.*
  *Since the start of the recruitment drive our inhouse placements have increased to 85% compared to six months ago where they were at 54%. We all thought this is excellent news.*
  *Discussion took place about a placement request which was put on the hub. The aim is to ensure that the availability of all inhouse*
carers is explored before approaching independent agencies. Laura asked whether this is the right way of communicating to carers when there are similar situations. Some days in duty are very busy and we are concurrently looking at several children. This is a way of letting our carers know where the need is.

- The hub will soon be remodelled and will include placement alerts with a questions and answers section.
- All carers have an individual approval and are reminded that they cannot go beyond their approval and must keep within regulations, which they may be tempted to do but with the best intentions.
- A message will go out to carers saying that this method will only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- This new hub should be in service by end of 2019. Training will be given to carers who would like it. Scott will need 6 people to help with this and Pam volunteered as she feels she is technically less able and would therefore make a good candidate.
- Ambassadors said that, at events, questions were asked by public about training, pay and various myths that needed to be dispelled. We seem to have an influx of IFA carers expressing an interest in fostering for Norfolk.
- Whilst the figures are good for recruitment there are some deregistered carers; the reason can be Staying put, SGO, retirement and those who decided not to foster any longer, usually due to changes in personal circumstances.
- Tracy is preparing the Annual Report for the corporate parenting board, which she will share with us at a later meeting.
- Anne asked if there is data on how many carers are available at a given time? Laura said yes; careful matching and other restrictions can mean that whilst some carers may have approval for more children they are not always able to take any more. The service understands each the reason beyond each restriction.
- Siblings bedroom sharing, it depends on their needs (each child over 3 has their own bedroom or, where this is not possible, the sharing of the bedroom has been agreed by the placing authority), mixing with other children in home. Risk assessments are being undertaken by SWs.

8. **Group feedback** – Lincolnshire minutes provided, other groups to feedback at September’s meeting.
   - Pam asked if anyone came forward to take over as representative at North Walsham Network Group and Mike confirmed that Lori Ong has agreed to do this. Pam will contact Lori and it is assumed that Lori will commence from September. Pam will continue in the Team Around the Child Group for the time being.

9. **Social Care Update** - Sally
The last two years have seen significant changes that have impacted on Social Workers.

- Firstly – Court work was taken from FIT and placed under the responsibility of LAC Teams. The impact of this was immense due to workers not having been trained in court work and being fairly inexperienced. Sally gave an example; on one day there were 12 sets of care proceedings. This additional workload meant that other important work could not be completed, many workers felt under pressure and 1/3 of the teams left. Now court work is back with FIT which means LAC Teams have more time for direct work, permanence planning and care planning. The two LAC Teams in Norwich Sally and Becky’s teams have 179 children. They are now fully staffed much to everybody’s relief.

- LAC teams are looking at reunification and whether the permanence plan is right for the Child. They are looking at creative ways of working together, for example inviting parents to bring someone to support them to meetings. The Foster Carer’s views are integral to this process. Pam asked if the voice of the Child is heard – Sally gave a recent example of where the Child’s views were heard. Social Workers use risk classification system from NSPCC.

- Social Worker Assessments are being updated. In some cases these haven’t been done for 5 years. Foster Carers will be asked to contribute to assessments.

- Networks for the Child – Keeping in contact with important people in the Child’s life and encouraging those links which may have previously not been allowed such as teachers. Catherine asked if guidance is given to schools so that teachers aren’t left in a vulnerable position and are protected. Sally said that everyone will have clear expectations set out.

- Valuing Care Tool – has recently been adopted by Children’s Services. This assists in thinking about the different needs of LAC. There are 13 categories for example Health, Education, Emotional health and these are scored 0-100 currently but will change to 0-10. This is useful tool for matching and allowing a potential carer to see where any difficulties are and what support the child needs. There should not be any sections missed off and if there are the placements team are encouraged to return the document to the Social Worker. The gold standards would be for each Valuing Care Tool to be signed off by the Manager of the Social Worker. This form will be updated at reviews and within the new portal there will be a section for carers to complete for reviews, which means a ‘carer’s report’ is no longer necessary.

- Tracy said that there has been a Social Worker recruitment drive and commitment to increase the stability of Social Workers, therefore staffing levels should be much better across the County. NCC are endeavouring to be the employer of choice and are investing in NIPE, recognising that if training completes in Norfolk Social Workers are much more likely to stay here.
Roni mentioned that he UEA “Step UP” course for potential Social Workers does not take applicants within their second year of degree. Sally will feed this back.

An apprentice route to Social Work is now available for Assistant Practitioners and is open to all AP who are over 18 and is free. Two Social Workers at today’s meeting entered Social Work in this way and were very complimentary of this route.

10. **Imagination Library - Keeley**

- This is based on the charity work of Dolly Parton.
- The proposal is that for under 5’s a free book is given every month. Carers thought that it is a lovely idea and would like to see this rolled out in some way to older children too.
- Pam asked if there could be something to focus on Maths. Keeley said that there will be a Maths booster which will soon be rolled out to year 6. Apps such as Mathletics and Cool Maths are popular.
- Keeley would like carers to put their ideas forward and email her.

11. **Voice of Child – Defer to September**

12. **Foster Carer Portal – Mike**

- Carers are currently testing the portal
- Debbie said that it is easy to navigate but the password set up is less easy and a separate code is also needed.
- The portal provides past records of payments, reports, service details, care packages. Carers can enter mileage and stop overpayments.
- If Carers are expected to train each other they will need a greater depth of training than what has been received already.
- Training will be very flexible depending on what carers want.
- An additional day has been built in to Stepping Stones to train Carers on this.

13. **Newsletter - Laura**

- The proposal is for a hard copy newsletter to be given to Carers, Social Workers and Supervising Social Workers, quarterly.
- The newsletter will welcome new carers, advertise events, provide information and updates from the Team Around the Child.
- All agree that this would be a worthy venture

14. **Foster Carer Payments – Tracy**

This is still being updated -- skill sets are being looked at, payments will include the support Children/Young People needs, to enable Carer’s to fully meet the Child/Young person’s needs. New applicants can see what is needed to enable them to progress through the levels - this will be done using a similar values as the value of care tool. Tiering up training offer to evidence impact. This will include looking at what has been needed. **THIS IS A LARGE PIECE OF WORK**
15. **AOB**

Discussed exemptions and approvals - Approval can only be changed at a carer’s review. Exemptions are no longer used.

According to the children’s act there is a maximum of three children. More can be placed if these are siblings and this can only be agreed and changed by the agency decision maker. [https://corambaaf.org.uk/updates/usual-fostering-limit-exemptions-and-terms-approval-foster-carers-england](https://corambaaf.org.uk/updates/usual-fostering-limit-exemptions-and-terms-approval-foster-carers-england)

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**Date, time and venue of next meeting:**
Friday 20th September 2019. 10:00 am
at Breckland Council Offices, Dereham, NR19 1EE

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Appendix a.
### Emotional Health and Wellbeing Conference for Adoptive Parents and Foster Carers

**30th October 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Registration and Marketplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00am</td>
<td>Welcome – Sara Tough?</td>
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<td>10.15am</td>
<td>Ryan Jones</td>
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<td>CAMHS update</td>
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<td>11.00am</td>
<td>Changeover</td>
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<td>11.10am</td>
<td><strong>Adoptive Parents</strong></td>
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<td>Adoption Buddies</td>
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<td>Adoption East Update</td>
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<td><strong>Foster Carers</strong></td>
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<td>PATHS for secondary</td>
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<td>Messy Sensory play</td>
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<td>Drumming</td>
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<td>Sleep Workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Me First!</td>
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<td>Mindfulness</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.55am</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
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<td>12.25pm</td>
<td><strong>Adoptive Parents</strong></td>
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<td>Messy Sensory play</td>
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<td>Me First!</td>
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<td>Mindfulness</td>
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<td>1.10pm</td>
<td>Plenary</td>
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<td>Panel Discussion</td>
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<td>1.30pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>SGO workshop</td>
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<td>Speed dating</td>
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<td>2.30pm</td>
<td>PATHS for secondary</td>
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<td>Messy Sensory Play</td>
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<td>Havening Technique</td>
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<td>Sleep Workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Me First!</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.30pm</td>
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**LUNCH TIME** - Speed Dating, 5 minute slots (Bookings taken in Morning at registration, A4 sheet with picture of person and role.)
Virtual School, Inclusions, Adoption and Foster Carer Advisors
Karen Searle
Amanda King - Housing
Leaving Care  PA
Tracy Collins
Compass
PATHS
SGO workshop

MARKET PLACE
Unthank
Library Service
Museums
Childrens University
UEA Outreach - Liz Ferguson
ID Badges - Foster Carers
Learning Hub
FAP
Summer Camps for Children
Adoption Service/SGO/Kinship
Rooted in Nature
Forest Schools
Compass
Changing Places/Information in packs
Family Voice
sensi
Linked Families
Virtual School
Autism/PATHS
Able to Be
Ambassadors/Buddies
Fostering Network/Adoption UK, Adopt East
NATP
Nelsons Journey
Benjamin Foundation
Guinea Pigs
SOVA - Independent Visitors Scheme
Verbatim
Debbie Burrell - Horse Therapy Leaflets

AOB - Christine announced this would be her last meeting. We would all like to Thank her for her work and contributions to the meeting.