Minutes of Meeting

FOSTERING ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP
Held on: Friday 21st June 2019 at 10,00
Venue: Breckland Council Offices, Dereham, NR19 1EE
Present | Post Title | Dept/Organisation | Part attendance
---|---|---|---
Julia Spinks | Chair- has stepped down and handing over to Rochelle Brophy | NFS Foster Carer | 1-6
Rochelle Brophy | Chair as from today | NFS Foster Carer |
Laura Gavrila | Fostering Development Manager | NCC |
Antonella Parker | Advice and Mediation Worker | The Fostering Network |
Mike Woodward | Fostering Team Manager | NCC |
Boo Dickens | Foster Carer | NFS |
Debbie Burrell | Foster Carer | NFS |
Anne Ritchie | Foster Carer | NFS |
Stephan Rice | Foster Carer | NFS |
Irene Kerry | Children and Family Participation Co-ordinator | NCC |
Lara Simpson | Social Worker | NCC |
Theresa Lavery | Carer Support Worker | NCC |
Sarah Hunter | Learning Development Consultant | NCC |
Pam Weyer | Foster Carer |
Craig Secker | Foster Carer | NFS Foster Carer & Care Provider |
Keeley White | Head of Virtual School | Virtual School |
Amanda Goldsmith | Children and Young people’s health services |
Catherine Sutton | Early Years LAC Advisor | NCC |
Sue Burrell | Business Support | NCC- minutes taker |

1. **Declarations of Interest**
   Craig Secker declared a conflict of interest being both a provider and a foster carer

2. **Apologies for absence**
   Owen Garrod, Sharon Donoghue, Gary Shorter and Roni Kingston-Miles. Tracy Collins sent apologies for her absence but is dealing with an emergency at County Hall. She would have really liked to be present at this meeting. She rang Laura first thing in the morning as she needed to drive straight to the office following an emergency occurred within the service. She was planning on arriving
at 9 and then leave to attend the celebration event for the newly approved carers. She is now sending her apologies.

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 Items**

   5. Action Points from previous meeting
   6. Conference planning
   7. Charter – final version following feedback
   8. Tracy’s points to discuss:
      A. Enhanced fostering Model – stepping young People down from Residential to fostering
      B. Foster carer payments
      C. Foster carer consultation
      D. Review of the ambassador service
      E. Feedback from the fostering work streams – Marketing and recruitment: support and supervision of foster carer

   9. Self-evaluation – points raised; agree, dismiss, revise?

   10. Groups feedback (CPD, Norwich, Kings Lynn, Lincolnshire sent with agenda)
         a. Stair gates
         b. Use of online photo services e.g. photo books
         c. Reunification/LT transitions – payments in line with adoption bridging?
         d. Carers ID cards?
         e. Carers feeling unsupported.
         f. CSW expectations around carers dropping everything for last minute visits/meetings.

   11. Handbook progress

   12. AOB

5. **Action Points from previous meeting**

   - Add Social Worker Retention to the agenda quarterly
     Ongoing - Jan, April, June and Oct. – Sharon Donoghue
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Sharon Donoghue to contact Joanne from Fostering Network to see if she can perform an independent evaluation of FAP in 2019.  
  **Ongoing 21/06/2019** |   |
| • Working group set up to look at updating handbook.  
  Stephan Rice said that there are some issues for carers using Mac’s and some Dells, when accessing the hyperlinks  
  • Laura Gavrila said that Camilla Frost is working offsite on Monday and the hyperlinks will be working and the titles highlighted and hyperlinked too  
  • There are reports that the link is not working NFS website and some documents; Coram BAAF home safety assessment are not on there and an error message comes up. Mike Woodward to check this.  
  **Ongoing 21/06/2019 Mike Woodward** |   |
| • Tracy Collins to contact Irene ICC to organise a meeting between Vicky, Rochelle, Sharon and a child/YP to discuss/devise a child friendly carer profile. – Irene Kerry said that she has had a conversation about SNAP and the Local offer with Tracy Collins, the item is on the agenda under AOB  
  **Ongoing 21/06/2019 Irene Kerry – Laura Gavrila** |   |
| • Keeley White and Tracy to speak regarding using PETXI for English/Maths for LAC and wider.  
  **Ongoing Stephan Rice said that as there are some foster carers who don’t have great IT skills they could organise revision workshops.** |   |
| • Poor quality paperwork being sent to children - Boo Dickens to speak with duty to locate the source of this.  
  Boo Dickens said that this is in hand. The children’s feedback from LAC reviews is of poor print quality. Irene advised that Kim Able is looking at a different way of distributing feedback to young people.  
  **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 in the meeting she is attending on the 5th July** |   |
| • Points from self-evaluation discussed, dismissed or agreed. (on agenda)  
  **ongoing 21/06/2017**  
  • Stephan said that following meeting with Tracy, it was clear that TAC in its format is no longer working. The way forward is to extend FAP and anything that comes out of FAP can be actioned at TAC as a Task and finish piece of work. The next TAC will be on the 19th of July, Stephan cannot attend as he will be away |   |

6. **Conference Planning**
• Sarah Hunter is busy preparing for this year’s conference which is a joint Fostering and Adoption Conference at the John Innes Centre.
• No key note speaker has currently been booked. There have been suggestions someone from CAMHS to offer reassurance, or someone to speak about PTSD. There is one young person who will speak to both the groups for a short period of time – 15 minutes.
• Looking at ways that the conference can be split into different workshops with the theme being on Wellbeing. Sarah Hunter said that as it is a joint conference the market place is going to be much smaller this year and asked how the members felt about having the book stalls this year? They have 4 tables and many foster carers now buy their books online. Stephan Rice suggested that Sarah Hunter asks them if they can have 2 tables this year and ask them to bring books specific to the theme of the conference – Mindfulness and Wellbeing
• Carers have been asked via Fostering Friends about what workshops they would like and many ideas were given. Addition to the usual stalls, Scentsy (Julia has a name of a contact), a stall with sensory toys, and Sensi (Sensory Integration Therapy).

7. **Charter – final version following feedback**
   • Mike Woodward said that the final version has been distributed and if everybody is happy with the version they can vote on whether to accept the Charter. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

8. **Tracy Collins points to discuss:**
   A. **Enhanced fostering Model – stepping young People down from Residential to fostering**
   • The Enhanced fostering team and initiative is looking at moving children currently in residential care into foster care (where the plan is LT fostering). Work is being undertaken to understand who the children are, what their needs are, what support needs to be put in place to help the child’s understanding of his plan as well as the child’s timeline. SWs have been invited along to present their child and the first took place yesterday. It was a very vivid experience where the child’s voice was clearly presented. Laura Gavrila said that the department is looking to recruit foster carers for these type of placements, those who have been living in long term residential care. The youngest child is 9 years old and the oldest is 16-year-old. We are also looking and finding other creative ways to recruit and we would really like foster carers to help with suggestions of finding a way to bring the child’s presence when talking about this scheme.
   • This will be a specific type of fostering.
   • Scott McKay the Marketing Manager is on holiday this week but is going to run a niche targeted campaign to find foster carers for these children.
   • Laura Gavrila said they are looking at a target of placing 10 children currently in residential care into foster care in the next year.
   • There will be a dedicated team around these children including a clinical psychologist.
• Looking at the Birmingham Model 2014 which stated that communication and support are critical.
• Laura Gavrila was asked if these children will be placed in single placements and said that it would depend on the individual child, some children said they would like other children around [older] and some would like to have pets and animals.
• Careful matching will be essential
• Stephan Rice said these seem to be high risk placements and it will be difficult to maintain relationships. Laura reassured that the planning, transitioning and supporting stages are essential and that work will be undertaken with those who are significant in the child’s life to preserve continuity.
• Boo Dickens suggested a stall at the conference about the different types of fostering or perhaps the young people could make videos like those used in adoption.

B. Foster carer payments – deferred

C. Foster carer consultation
• It was suggested that they could survey the voice of foster carers using survey monkey equivalents around support from the team around the child. Laura asked if we could consider this task for TAC. She would be happy to support, should carers feel this is the right forward. Laura suggested a SOS format where carers can voice what is working well, what the worries are, frustrations and what support may need to be put in place. This is essential to ensure that the foster carers feel listen to and that the service also knows what the experience is.

D. Review of the ambassador service
• Laura Gavrila said the scheme started with 25 fostering ambassadors of which 14/16 are active.
• Laura Gavrila was asked if they have enough ambassadors to attend events and said that Sundays can be quite difficult. Laura suggested that a meeting took place on Scott’s return with the ambassadors and recruitment workers to look at the fostering events, which ones are meaningful and where we need to focus our attention.
• If new ambassadors are needed they will look to have a new cohort of ambassadors who will have the training which will be easier this time around as they now know what they are looking for in ambassadors. Laura will undertake the training preparation training with current ambassadors.
• Anne said that Reflective listening training was excellent.
• Laura Gavrila will look at this again in July, it’s about ‘closing the loop’. She will invite ambassadors to an event, decide about the required numbers and relaunch the scheme and then train new ambassadors.

E. Feedback from the fostering work streams – Marketing and recruitment: support and supervision of foster carers
• Defer discussion. Scott could put a presentation together every quarter with: where we are now, feedback from workstreams. Agreed that this will be a good idea

9. Self-evaluation – points raised; agree, dismiss, revise?
• Defer
10. **Groups feedback (CPD, Norwich, Kings Lynn, Lincolnshire sent with agenda)**
- Anna Ritchie said that the minutes of these meeting were sent out with the agenda and she would respond to any comments. There were no comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. <strong>Stair gates</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boo Dickens said that there was one carer who had a health and safety assessment and was told to put the stair gate back. She had taken it down as the child was climbing over it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theresa Lavery said that in her opinion it is dangerous to have a stair gate across the top of the stair, she encourages carers to have them near the top of the stairs to stop access to the stairs but not actually across the top step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have a new child in placement you may use a stair gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It needs to be consistent and as part of your assessment with the child in placement, refer to your SSW and the CSW for advice and the decision needs to be agreed. It depends on the child’s abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety regulations say that there should not be at stair gate at the top of the stairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate between foster carers around this on the Face book page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. <strong>Use of online photo services e.g. photo books Memory books done online – free print</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Ritchie query on fostering friends was told by a CSW should not be using these as it is compromising the confidentiality of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carers using online photo services – snap fish – all done automatically, and none are kept. GDPR regulations – servers in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Woodward said this is one for the information management team to investigate – who owns the data the photographs – IT policy for foster carers – iCloud, drop box etc- Mike read out paragraphs of the IT policy for Foster carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Woodward to speak to the information management team and feed back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children will not miss out, Mike Woodward thinks that there are other ways of doing that – it’s about how its managed safely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. <strong>Reunification/LT transitions – payments in line with adoption bridging?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Ritchie said the adoption service have got very clear guide lines about bridging –and payments to carers for 2 weeks for transitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster carers have done these transitions and there have been queries regarding payments for transitions to adoption and reunifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to look more carefully when a child moves onto long term fostering or reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Woodward read from the from the fostering payment document and said that foster carers shouldn’t have to fight for these payments, Anna Ritchie said that foster carers and Social workers are not aware of the payment process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d. <strong>Carers ID cards?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Self is working on sorting out the ID cards, they will be given to the SSW’s and they should be given out next week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e. <strong>Carers feeling unsupported?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A FAP carer said that a newly qualified foster carer who she is a buddy to was feeling unsupported as she had a new SSW and a CSW who hadn’t been in touch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- There are new families in fostering with very little support
- Having a new foster carer with new social worker is not ideal and they need to sit down and look at what isn’t happening? There was a discussion regarding carers not getting on with their SSW.
- Mike Woodward said that an email should be sent to the SSW’s team manager as soon as there is a problem. Antonella Parker can help with this. A FAP carer clarified that this is not a case of the carer not getting on with the SSW. This carer also has been having difficulties around payments and Laura Gavrila is now following this up. Martyn Lovett is aware and he has been dealing with this particular issue.
- A FAP carer said that the carer was being asked to show the SSW the ropes.
- A FAP carer said that the foster carer was thinking about giving up fostering but she has encouraged and supported her and this shows the value of the buddy system.
- The carer needed to feel empowered – fostering is a learning experience for new carers
- Anne Ritchie said that foster carers gain lots of insight from the buddies at they have proved to be very positive.
- SSW’s say that new foster carers are gaining lots of knowledge and confidence from their fostering buddies. Lara Simpson gave feedback on her positive experience of supporting a newly approved carer who had had help from a buddy.
- Laura Gavrila also explained that a celebration event is underway and carers were also given questionnaires regarding their experience in assessment, supervision and support, so that we understand where we got it right, where we could do more of and where the gaps are, so that together we understand the needs of the carers, service and address any shortcomings. Communicating with each other is crucial, so that we can be responsive rather than accumulate frustrations along the way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>f. CSW expectations around carers dropping everything for last minute visits/meetings.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Ritchie said that foster carers are getting pressure from CSW to have last minute and short notice meetings. The know that the CSW have a lot of pressure but the foster cares have lives and commitments and it’s not always easy or convenient to drop things on demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Ritchie said that they know the CSW are under pressure, but unplanned meeting is sometimes inconvenient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Woodward said that the answer should be that where you can help, you will and it is great when compromises can be made but also if these appointments cannot be made, the foster carers to feel that they can also say this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you can compromise that’s fine and if you can’t fit in, you have to say no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephan Rice said that since the introduction of Liquid Logic which is process driven, the social worker is feeling more under pressure as there is more reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara Simpson said that CSW’s should have things booked in 2 weeks in advance and the Introduction of LCS is no different from any system SWs had to comply with before its introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings should be documented at the placement planning meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Secker said that the outcomes are much better for the child when Liquidlogic type systems are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online recording will be introduced this year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. **Handbook progress**
- This item was discussed as part of action points
12. **AOB**  
- **Foster carer – welcome to becoming a Norfolk foster carer**  
  Celebration event today for new foster carers – cream tea at County Hall. The take up was very good – around 30 with children, celebrating their 1st year of fostering.

- Mike Woodward said that Fiona Carter has been doing a pilot and will be offering Theraplay one day a week. This is the first there has been available time and Fiona Carter will be working an additional day a week  
  - Fiona Carter has attended training in Theraplay and will start with one child but will look to offering Theraplay to 6 children a year.

- Antonella Parker apologised as she will not be able to attend the next meeting.

**Safeguarding training**  
- Anne Ritchie said that she had recently attended safeguarding training and was told that all carers should have the Norfolk threshold guide?  
  - This guide is used for children coming into care and can be assessed online  
  - Sarah Hunter will investigate this.

**Can foster carers access the Children’s advice and duty service (CADS) as professionals?**  
- Foster carers can’t access that service even though in the team around the child foster carers are recognised as professionals.
- Craig Secker talked about the difference between professionals as in those who hold a qualification and are highly regulated and professionals as part of a team. 

**Update from Irene Kerry**  
- Local offer for care leavers can be found here it gives useful information about entitlements for college, Uni, apprenticeships etc which may be of benefit to carers having conversations with young people about their futures. The link is [https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/care-leavers-local-offer](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/care-leavers-local-offer)  
  Laura asked if Irene and NICC could work together to design a Children’s guide as it became evident through updating the handbook that there was not one. Irene advised that the Local offer includes everything that children should have, including the new to care section. Alongside this we are now developing a similar local offer for looked after children which will include a section for children new to care. It is in a draft format, but we would very much like 2-3 foster carers to have a look at the layout and provide a short paragraph about what a foster carer is/does. Foster carers who are interested are to email Irene or Laura  
  - The group of children and young people developing this have also begun to develop a comfort pack which will provide the essentials a child will need for their 1st few days in care, for example toothbrush, toiletries etc and aim to add a soft toy, colouring book and crayons etc. If 2-3 carers would be willing I am happy to send them the proposed contents for comment.
• We have 3 level 5 participation apprentices that will be in post towards the end of August. I would very much like one of those to link closely with fostering to ensure any work undertaken on both sides is joined up and if possible would like to bring all 3 along to a FAP meeting once in post.
• We would also like feedback on what carers think of providing an electronic rather than paper version of the passport to independence. Craig and Julia are working on a CWD passport to independence and Irene is happy to help out.
• I have attached the Norfolk response to the TACT language of care document. It is in a 1st draft and I need to tidy it up and add a foreword etc for context. I am happy for FAP FC members to see the content and to offer comment if they wish and it would be great if a FC could offer a short paragraph I can add to the foreword about how important language is from a FC perspective.
• I have also attached the SNAP document as FC present asked for it, I asked the FC there to trial it with children in their care so that we can have a few samples of good practise to share with agency carers.
• I am going to attend the TAC group where we will move forward on developing a similar document for use by FC and their families enabling children and young people to gain some insight into the family they will be living with.

Update from Virtual School
• School training are using play in a therapeutic way with primary schools.
• They also have Secure Base in 10 schools.

Date, time and venue of next meeting:
Friday 19th July 2019. 10:00 am
at Breckland Council Offices, Dereham, NR19 1EE