**Minutes of Meeting**

**FOSTERING ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP**

Held on: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019 10am
Venue: Breckland Council Offices, Dereham, NR19 1EE

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<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Post Title</th>
<th>Dept/ Organisation</th>
<th>Part attendance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle Brophy</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>NFS Foster Carer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antonella Parker</td>
<td>Advice and Mediation Worker</td>
<td>Fostering Network</td>
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<td>Scott MacKay</td>
<td>Fostering Marketing Manager</td>
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<td>Sharon Donoghue</td>
<td>Minutes/administration</td>
<td>NFS Carer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Woodward</td>
<td>Fostering Team Manager</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Sutton</td>
<td>Early Years LAC Advisor</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<td>Stefan Rice</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NFS Carer</td>
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<td>Anne Ritchie</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NFS Carer</td>
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<td>Roni Kingston-Miles</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NFS Carer</td>
<td>1-6</td>
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<td>Tracy Collins</td>
<td>Head of Fostering and Adoption</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Fendley</td>
<td>Children and Young People’s Health Services 0-5’s</td>
<td>NHS</td>
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<td>Julie Brooks</td>
<td>Enhanced Fostering Manager</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Welcome to Julie Brooks Enhanced Fostering Manager who is new to her role and FAP.

2. **Apologies for absence:** Keeley White, Lori Ong, Boo Dickens, Laura Gavrilla, Sally Gallop, Julia Spinks, Kate Apperley, Sarah Hunter, Michaela Fysh, Debbie Burrell.

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

   The minutes of the meeting held on **20th September** were agreed.

   Rochelle Brophy
   _________________________________(Chairperson)

   18.10.19
   _________________________________(Date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENDA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Welcome and introductions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Apologies.</td>
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<td>3. Previous minutes agreed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Action points from previous meetings.</td>
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<td>5. Virtual School – Tracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Terms of Reference for FAP – Antonella/All</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Emergency Foster Carer Payment Process - Mike</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Recruitment of Foster Carers and Placement Requests – Mike</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Valuing Care Tool – All</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. New Fostering Service Information HUB – Scott</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Fostering Update - Tracy</td>
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<td>14. AOB</td>
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4. **Action Points from previous meeting:**

   - Handbook – Sharon thought that the new online handbook would have a search facility, but Stef confirmed this was a misunderstanding and not the case and that you can search using word.
   - Online Photo Services - Advice to carers is not to use them as this is not secure and has data protection implications. Carers can use services in stores with phones or purchase a camera to use. Items stored on clouds are not safe or secure.
   - Rochelle said that on a course yesterday she was advised that 02 shops have a guru who can put parental controls on all devices, including laptops whether you shop with 02 or not.
5. **Keeley is unable to attend today’s meeting but has sent this email which Tracy read out:**

The Imagination Library is up and running with 200 books scheduled to be sent out!

I also had a meeting with a representative of a company who produce resources for looked after children.

They have a new programme which involves learning resources linked to different key stage and year groups and which can be set up to meet the needs of individual children. The foster carer also has a log in so can work with the young person to support their learning. Some LAs are piloting this and I am thinking of doing the same. I haven’t scoped it out at all yet but wondered if FAP colleagues would be part of the pilot group if I go ahead? *The group replied, “Yes they’d like to be involved”.*

The log in gives access to some additional resources for foster carers which forms a ‘cpd library’ and they are still building content for this. For example, currently they have a foster carer who is also a teacher writing something about phonics. I made the point that people might find it helpful to have someone who is not a teacher to write something covering the sorts of topics that foster carers wanted to know about education. Rachel thought it was a good idea and asked if Norfolk would like to write something. Again, nothing more than an idea at present but if there is interest from FAP will see how it might be taken forward. *Reply “Yes we would definitely be interested, it’s a good opportunity for us to have an input – can we ensure this covers all ages”*

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<th>6.</th>
<th><strong>Terms of Reference:</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Points of discussion:</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>Stefan to ask Paul from Compass to attend FAP instead of TFG.</em> *</td>
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<td>• Suggestions on how we can gain new members, so that the group is more inclusive and attractive to newer carers and social workers. NIPE attend FAP as part of their induction, a six-monthly tea and cake meeting to attract carers, FAP to be represented at events for new carers, mention on stands at conference, social workers to rotate attendance.</td>
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<td>• Duration of carers on FAP – previously ideas were put forward to enable new carers to take on a role within FAP and a timescale of three years was suggested before the carer found a replacement for their role. It is recognised that this may have offended existing carers, and this was not the intention. A way to include new carers whilst retaining the existing base will be sought. The duration for the Chair will be 2 years and can be voted in again to serve a maximum of 4 years.</td>
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• A further meeting to take place with Antonella, Tracy and Rochelle will take place to rejuvenate the ‘Aims of FAP’.*
• Aims to be revisited ever two years.

7. **Emergency Foster care payment process** – Mike has identified a system that enables a form to be completed and a cheque to be posted. This will help carers manage financially as it is quicker than the current system. When the payment portal goes online the problem with delayed payments will be resolved. The portal will be live as soon as the technical issues are resolved. It is positive that 90 carers attended training for the portal.

8. **Recruitment of foster cares and placement requests** – deferred Nov (Laura)

9. **Valuing care tool** –

Mike provided some background for the benefit of those who were not at previous meetings: Valuing Care has been running for 2 months and was piloted with 2 Foster Carers and 2 Supervising Social Workers. There was a need for this to be implemented quickly as the need’s assessment tool is up and running for children coming into care. The Valuing Care tool looks at the needs of child profiled and enables a good match with Independent Fostering Agencies, Residential Homes, and inhouse Foster Carers. Both the Childs Needs Assessment Tool and the Carer/Residential documents must be used together to evidence needs for child and highlight appropriate carers.

Ultimately the aim is to improve life of child by getting the match right first time. Catherine pointed out that when a match is wrong this has a detrimental effect on the fostering family as well as the child therefore the importance of getting the match right first time.

Until carers use the Valuing Care tool, they will naturally be anxious but Supervising Social Worker Jeanette has completed about 15 and no there were no issues.

Mike presented a video made by *Emma* a Foster Carer where she explained her experiences of using the tool.

The exercise is not ‘done to’ the carer, it’s completed together.

As Norfolk is probably the first authority to do use this, improvements may occur over time.

This is not a tool to grade payments or to prevent carers working with children but will be explicit about what the home offers and areas of development required. It is an additional tool to be used when selecting placements not the only tool for matching. FAQ’s will be provided to carers. Help is required from carers to develop this further. The video and FAQ will be put on the hub - Mike.
It is a tool which can be updated, and changes made throughout year, not just for the annual review.

This tool when looked at as a whole for fostering, will also allow NFS to see where the gaps are in placements needed and where we need to target recruitment.

The focus is on the child’s needs and over time as any changes occur for the child, further gaps may be highlighted through supervision and reviews. Additional needs will then be addressed through training etc.

It is not linked to payments of carers. Can be a benefit when used as evidence to enhance payment processes.

Anne said that a Supervising Social Worker may assume a Carer doesn’t wish to take a certain placement, so this tool gives an opportunity to discuss more thoroughly than before.

Conversation may sometimes be challenging but openess leads to a mutual understanding. Where problems exist the Supervising Workers Team Manager and Advice and Mediation Worker should be contacted for help find a resolution.

Stefan was disappointed that the FAP group wasn’t consulted prior to instigation and added that FAP is the forum for agreeing this kind of process – and it is acknowledged that consultation could have been better. Mike said that 2 members engaged in the pilot including one FAP member. The Child’s Valuing Care Tool was discussed at July’s meeting, but the Carers version was not.

Different Supervising Social Workers will approach from various angles but will be consistent through the service and evidence of this will be transparent with the same bench mark for each carer. To ensure consistency the Fostering Team Manager will carry out checks. Hertfordshire Council have commissioned a Psychologist to look at each descriptor and what skill are needed, this can be used as a reference point.

Carers in the past have disliked the scoring element of Signs of Safety which is like this tool, for example because the Carers performance was being scored at reviews by all in attendance. Mike reassured that it is not ‘done to’, it’s done together and is matching through discussion rather than matching by numbers, thus providing a picture of your placement and what can be offered as well as giving a narrative to the family.

FAQ to be circulated via FAP for comment and sent on to other carers within two weeks.
Furthermore, there is no overall score. Carers can see the scores for each section and are party to the discussion. It’s a spider diagram and whilst each family will be different each family is equally valuable.

The Valuing Care document will be incorporated within the annual review and carers should view this just as they would the annual review.

*Review every 2 Months at FAP.*

Support and supervision group – more representation needed on this group. Create greater enthusiasm; meet in January, FAP to promote and attend. Date to be arranged. Progress of VC can be discussed.

10. Groups Feedback -

Task and Finish Group – minutes provided before meeting. Additionally, it was pointed out that some of the items discussed were repetitive for those who have attended the FAP meeting in the morning. Therefore, a brief summary from chair will be given for the benefit of those who aren’t at the FAP.

The group are working on a new Foster Carer profile based on the new SNAP Child’s profile. Catherine said that it would be hugely beneficial if schools could have a copy of the Child’s SNAP document.

Continuous Professional Development - Ideas for next year’s training Anne will ask carers via Fostering Friends.

Tracy would like more analysis on why carers aren’t attending courses, especially those who do not show up. Anne will discuss within next CPD meeting and provide feedback.

Suggestion from Catherine for training – ‘Watch me play’.

Watton Feedback

We had a good network meeting yesterday at Watton. There were 13 Carers present, also Cat Halliday, Fostering Manager, Team 2.

Cat came and gave a talk on the Valuing Care documents both for the children and for foster carers. This led to an in-depth talk including areas of concern. Could this document be devised in to age bands?, as for some questions a carer might score 0 with teenagers, but could score highly with under 5’s. it was also felt that how this is presented to foster carer is very important as one carer was left feeling deflated by the experience.

We also had Sarah Hunter present and she gave a talk and demonstration with a laptop on how to negotiate around the learning hub. This was very useful particularly to new carers. We also got some more information on our upcoming fostering conference. We had 13 Carers present and was good for carer to chat after over coffee and cake. Roni

North Walsham Feedback
The network group went well. Joy Bishop talked about self-settling, sleeping through the night and managing early awakenings. It was well received and gave a great deal of information and ideas. This generated lots of discussions between the carers and the feedback was that it was interesting and helpful. Joy advised that she will be doing some workshops in the future, these are being arranged by Sarah Hunter and her team.

I also asked Carers about speakers for next year’s network groups. The ideas so far are: -
Youth offending team.
EHCP.
Scaling.
Healthy Diet.
The Zones of Regulation and Thrive. From Rachel and Lori

**Norwich Network Group**

10 people attended, it was a great session for all and included some valuable support for carers.
We talked about the 'This is me books’ and Valuing Care.
Paul Johnson from CAMHS was the guest speaker and his care and dedication was well received. He talked about the foster carer reflective group and about his role within CAMHS.
Best session I’ve attended for a while. Debbie

**King’s Lynn Network Group.**

We had a well-attended network meeting with 9 carers, 5 preschool children and 2 members of staff – Sue Russell (SSW) and Jemma Smith (duty worker). Guest speaker was Nikki Jones, team manager of one of the FAST frontline teams in Kings Lynn.
She discussed the new structure of the children’s teams and how referrals are made.

Jemma and Sue told carers about the new Valuing Care form and how it will be used. Also, there was discussion about the new provider portal – submitting claims etc on to the portal. Very interesting and informative with many questions. There was opportunity for carers to chat together after the group discussions. Anne.

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11. **Savings for children** – There is some confusion and inconsistencies with instructions from Supervising Social Workers on savings accounts. Tracy said that Norfolk Fostering Service doesn’t have a requirement for savings, although some carers chose to save – other authorities do have a requirement as do IFA’s and this is built into allowances. The confusion might have arisen where children who are previously placed with IFA’s.
Savings are being looked at alongside allowances and Tracy will bring guidance to us including expectations of savings once this is agreed. All Care Experienced Children have a ISA.

*Laptops – Rochelle to email to Vanessa Fish and Keeley White with her issue.*

12. **New Norfolk Fostering Service Hub:**

- Scott gave a presentation on the new Hub. It is not connected to NCC website it’s standalone in partnership with NFS, Fostering Network and FAP.
- It has a portal for all information similar to the existing Hub but what this has is a forum where carers can post, and workers will be available to answer questions.
- There are additional forums such as FAP forum, which is just for FAP members.
- Upcoming events which will be very useful for Ambassadors.
- Alerts – ‘Notify me when follow up replies by email’ must be ticked if you want notifications.
- Carers will need to sign up and create an account.
- Anna asked if there could be a section for Health which Scott confirmed and asked Anna to contact him after half term.
- Rochelle will mention this at Conference next week.

13. **Fostering Update:**

Tracy provided a plan for Fostering for the coming months is setting up steering groups. She is keen to involve Carers in these groups, as follows:

- **Annual survey** co design q’s – who else would like to participate? This will be led from service, but Tracy would like lead to share what they’ve done and to include Carers in this.
- **Portal** - Foster Carer involvement – evidenced via the doc
- **Refresh Foster Carer Annual Review forms** - All evidence refreshed and in one place, your experience and difference you’re making. Currently not explicit enough.
- **Enhanced Fostering** – bespoke team stepping down from residential – 1 early stage of stepping down, this includes a clinical psychologist. 3 set of carers would like to be involved and have a bespoke training plan.
- **Duty desk** – 1 additional full time Social Worker new to the team.
- **Annual visits** – form to be refreshed.

*Sharon to ask Carers if they received a Newsletter. Let Scott know if not received*

- **Family Time** – carers to meet with Kate Apperley on 19th Nov
➢ **Annual Foscas** and annual events – help from Carers to develop activities.

➢ **Skills to Foster** – Foster Carer involvement

Save the date to go out soon for Foscars.

This plan to be sent out via Hub and FF to attract Carers to the different parts. Plan to be discussed 8 weekly, to check projects are moving forward.

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<th>14. AOB</th>
<th>Tracy: Future agenda item for <strong>November</strong> activity of FC flow vacancy/occupancy – Scott to present with Laura and Tracy.</th>
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Rochelle asked a question about when a Young Person leaves the Foster Home and if the Carer should be paid until the day the leave. Yes, payment is made up to the date of leaving. Rochelle to ask Carer to speak with SSW.

Stefan – Weekly numbers of children in care document used to be given out to carers every two weeks as agreed previously at FAP. Tracy confirmed that currently there are 63% inhouse but this swings weekly. Target is 70/30 in favour of inhouse. Placement request were difficult over summer due to holidays and respite. *Tracy will look at providing these figures for Carers to view.*

Theresa Lavery will be leaving her role as duty worker and will take up a role in early help from 6/11. Maddie Golder will be joining the team. We all wish Theresa Good Luck in her new role and thank her for her dedicated work.

**Next Meeting – 15th November 2019**