Minutes of Meeting

FOSTERING ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP
Held on: 20th September 2019 10-12.30
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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<tr>
<td>Rochelle Brophy</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>NFS Foster Carer</td>
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<td>Sarah Hunter</td>
<td>Learning and Development</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<td>Laura Gavrila</td>
<td>Fostering Development Manager</td>
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<td>Sharon Donoghue</td>
<td>Minute taker. Carer</td>
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<td>Boo Dickens</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<td>Theresa Lavery</td>
<td>NFS Duty Worker</td>
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<td>Lori Ong</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
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<td>Anne Ritchie</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
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<td>Roni KingstonMiles</td>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
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<td>Irene Kerry</td>
<td>Children and Young Person’s Participation Coordinator</td>
<td>NCC</td>
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<td>Nicola Frost</td>
<td>Children and Young People’s Health Services</td>
<td>NHS</td>
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<td>Jade Cubbitt</td>
<td>Children and Young Person’s Participation Officer</td>
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<td>Amber Knowles</td>
<td>Children and Young Person’s Participation Officer</td>
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<td>Antonella Parker</td>
<td>Advice and Mediation Worker</td>
<td>Fostering Network</td>
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<td>Keeley White</td>
<td>Head of Virtual School</td>
<td>Virtual School</td>
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1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Welcome to Nicola, Jade and Amber who are new to the group. Welcome to Lori who is a carer and new member of FAP representing the North Walsham Network Group. Sharon read out a statement made by Pam who has now left the group after five years as a FAP member and three years as Chair of Team Around the Child Group:
   “I wonder if you would be good enough to send my thanks to the fap group for sending me some flowers and a card, they are beautiful and still going strong. Also could you pass on how much I enjoyed the work with the partnership and colleagues, I wish it continued success for the future. One more thing, I would like to thank Lorraine for taking over as representative for the North Walsham group. I hope she enjoys doing it as much as I did. Your sincerely and with the kindest of regards Pamela Weyer”

We would like to thank Pam for her hard work and dedication to the group over the last few years. She has been a pleasure to work with.

2. **Apologies for absence** – Julia Spinks, Debbie Burrell, Michaela Fysh, Tracy Collins, Scott McKay, Mike Woodward, Stefan Rice, Sally Gallop, Lara Simpson.

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

   **The minutes of the meeting held on were agreed.**

   Rochelle Brophy
   ________________________________ (Chairperson)

   ________20.7.2019________________________ (Date)
AGENDA

a) Conference and CPD update – Sarah/Anne

b) Mike - Provider Portal, Emergency FC payment process, Information Hub update, Valuing Care skills measurement tool.

c) Laura – Newsletter, Recruitment of foster carers and placement requests, Use of SNAP Document.


e) Aob
   Coffee 11am

f) Review Terms of Reference – Antonella/all

a) Conference Update – Sarah
The Speakers are confirmed; Sara Tough, Ryan a care experienced young person, & CAMHS, will speak and an update is needed from the Fostering Advisory Partnership. Carers can sign up now and will need to chose a workshop and an optional workshop in the afternoon. Laura asked if Special Guardians are welcome which Sarah confirmed and they have the opportunity to mix/get involved within the foster carers workshops.
Laura provided an update on the Portal and Valuing Skills Measurement Tool, and Information Hub, in Mikes absence.

- The Portal will allow carers to view their payments and expenses and record on the daily log which the child’s social worker will be able to see. It will have a facility to send secure messages to child’s social worker.
- It is hoped that the Portal will be live by the end of the year.
- Workshops are ongoing.
- Carers can use laptops or iPad.
- IRO and children’s social workers can use the portal to add comments for carers annual review.
- If carers in the west would like workshops closer to them, they are advised to contact james.beiley@norfolk.gov.uk or ring on 01603 222325.

Emergency Foster Carer Payment Process – Defer to Oct agenda.

Information Hub Update – This hub will incorporate the whole service but there will also be closed groups and a section to ask questions and communicate with each other. There will also be a Fostering Network section.

Valuing Skills Measurement Tool – At the last meeting Sally Gallop explained that this tool is being used to analyse areas where the child might need help and support. Carers were recently advised via the Hub that a similar version will be used to measure their skillset to enable a better match. For example; if a child scores 8 in health needs he/she would be matched with a carer who has similar abilities in health. It will enable all to see what the foster carers potential is and if there are any training needs. This will be a joint assessment with the carers and their supervising social worker and will be used for panel and annual reviews.

Several questions were asked by the group:

- Antonella asked if it was linked to pay structures and is Valuing Skills being introduced to incorporate this? Laura added this is primarily relevant in assessments and that is where we shall start completing these tools. We know that there is a description for achieving level 5 but nothing for the lower bands and this will be based on evidencing skills. We need this tool to support a better match.
- Theresa added that supervising social workers and duty workers know the carers offer, preferences and skills set well, but if these workers are unavailable, it will be easy using this tool to see which carer is a suitable match when a placement request comes in.
- Lori added, if a new supervising social worker is allocated, they will not know the carer as well. Additionally a carer may attend
training and realise that this particular area is not going to be part of their preferences. Carers preferences are still considered within the matching process.

- Roni asked if the form can be amended during the year for example following attendance on an unaccompanied asylum seeking child course? Laura answered yes it can be amended throughout the year as it is a live document.

- Anne and Roni queried; where there is not much information known about the child such as an emergency placement, will this VS form still be used? – This form is now being used instead of the placement profiles which carers used to receive, the social worker will still have to put as much information as they have and it will need to be signed off by their manager but in cases where little information is known because it’s an emergency placement the social worker will need to enter “we do not have this information at the current time”. Social workers can only enter information they know.

- Antonella asked - How fostering could reassure carers of consistency across the board of supervising social workers? Other carers added that carers are concerned about how their relationship with supervising social workers might affect the scoring. Laura confirmed carers will have an input and there will be existing records to help form an opinion. The forms will be signed off by managers who will check consistency.

- Sharon added – The tool assumes there will be a choice of carers available for the match, is this the case now or are there few carers available? Laura said that occupancy has increased. We currently have 35 vacancies. Also, will IFA be using a similar tool so that when a placement comes in a best match is found through looking at IFA’s as well as in house carers? Laura said that IFAs receive the child’s valuing care form for children, it would make sense to have some consistency and there may be some appetite for this but cannot confirm as this is out of her area.

- A carer who was absent from the meeting sent a lengthy email querying points related to Valuing Skills. These points will be discussed at October’s meeting. Laura asked if the email could be shared with Tracy, so that we have an opportunity to address some of the issues. Antonella asked if the members need to seek permission first.

- Lori asked if the tool will be shared – Rochelle added that her SSW has already shared it with her.

- Carers are concerned about the level of consultation prior to implementing this tool. It would have been helpful for carers to be told about the tool prior to being asked to complete and
advised of the reasons for using it. The VC tool was introduced on the 15th August on the Hub.

Moving forward, we agreed that it would be prudent for supervising social workers to email the form with an explanation to their carers to alleviate any concerns. Where the VC tool has been used it has proved helpful.
Sharon to add Valuing Skills Measurement to the next agenda.

c) **Newsletter** - We all thought this was nicely presented and good quality. It was good to receive a hard copy which could be read at leisure. For the next edition the In-Care Council have agreed to send an update of projects and where the meetings are held to encourage more young people to attend. Also include and children’s page, updates on parties and book reviews. Laura is collecting items for the November newsletter, please forward these to her by end of October.

Recruitment of Foster Carers and Placement Requests – deferred to Oct meeting.

**SNAP** – The In-Care council have developed a children and young person’s personal profile named SNAP which is soon to be going live. Every child should be given one by their social worker. It is used for placement moves but can also be uploaded and potentially used for reviews and peps which will save the child having to compete numerous forms and stop duplication. Irene will send to children in residential settings. SNAP (or partial SNAP) would be a very useful tool if sent to schools when there has been a change as it will inform school of likes dislikes and potential triggers etc.

Boo described how the poor quality and repetitive nature of forms causes tension for children. An example of very poor quality paperwork was presented. We were all concerned about the impact of this on the child’s sense of worth. Irene will look at how SNAP can be used widely throughout Children’s Services. All agree that a truer reflection of the child’s voice must be heard through conversation, for reviews, PEP’s and other meetings, rather than as a tick box exercise.

Irene mentioned that the Virtual School are leading the way in making things easier for young people which is highlighted in the way Virtual School embraced changes to the PEP form by adding a summary section at the end for the young people.

d) Savings for children, Laptops and the e-safety program, Communication. – deferred for October.

e) **Terms of Reference for Fostering Advisory Partnership** revisited as this has not been done since the partnership commenced five years ago. Each point from ‘Aims’ and ‘Method of communication’ discussed and amended where necessary. Antonella to forward the amendments to Sharon to be distributed to FAP members. Remaining Terms of Reference to be revisited in October’s meeting. *Please see appendix a for the amended version so far.*
AOB -
Fostering Network were due to hold their annual conference in Norfolk this year on Monday 23rd September, however due to low numbers this has had to be cancelled. We were all disappointed and feel this is a wasted opportunity as it is rare for Norfolk to be prioritised for a conference and because a young person from the region was due to speak. The Young Person concerned had won an award the National Outstanding Achievement Award from Fostering Network. Antonella will check to see if all participants have been advised of cancellation and check how low the numbers were. Feedback on reasons for non-participation to Antonella.

Health Visiting – Review Health Assessments.
Foster Carers are reminded that these are a statutory requirement and should not be cancelled, for example, in instances where a child is attending nursery this does not take priority over the Review Health Assessment. If an appointment needs to be cancelled please call the number on the letter and not the 0300 number. Lori to advise carers via Fostering Friends and the Hub.
Nicola said that the virtual school discovery bags are being rolled out through Health Visiting. They contain a book, resources, a teddy, developmental information etc. Imagination library – Feedback from carer has been very positive with carers asking how this can be taken forward for older children.

Virtual School Conference – there will be two next year; first in February with two care experienced young people and the next in March for post 16, colleges, 6th forms, personal advisors – this will be smaller, and Sarah Naish is key note speaker.

Language for Care - has now been signed off, Irene thanked FAP for their input. LAC teams will be rebranded. NICC will be relaunched.

Bright Spots survey – results expected Monday.

Passport to independence – electronic version and a new version for CWD and those who are unable to reach the end point.

Service users – UEA project and adult social care to training every social worker at UEA, foster carer input required for the project.

Momo – is coming to the end of 3rd year. Very few statements raised which indicates it is not being used. As it is an expensive resource Irene would like some feedback on whether carers have felt it is worthwhile. Sharon will ask carers what they think of Momo.

Date, time and venue of next meeting:
Venue Breckland Council Offices, 18th Oct. 10am
Appendix a)
How we work - Norfolk Fostering Advisory Partnership

1. Aims

a. Maximise the welfare of children in our care through the promotion of good practice and partnership working. To adopt a culture of continuous improvement, to offer ideas on new and innovative ways of working. The clear objective being to achieve a better outcome for every child placed within Norfolk County Council Fostering Service.

b. Promote working partnerships though facilitating good communication.

c. Working in partnership with the In Care Council and others to create opportunities for children and young people to meet together for the purpose of growth and development through activity and learning.

d. Provide opportunities for the team around the child to meet together for the purpose of service growth and development.

2. Methods of consultation and actions resulting from:

a. Support groups for foster carers and membership on the Advisory Partnership.

b. Management and social worker representation on the Advisory Partnership.

(Annual conference taken out)

c. Methods of consultation with the wider TAC to be continue to be developed.

e. Recording feedback raised and who or which group will action.

f. The working groups should find a way of consulting with members of the team around the child who have expressed a particular interest in that particular area.

g. Including the voice of the child.

3. Compilation of Advisory Partnership.
a. There will be a total of 17 members including an advice and mediation worker.

b. There will be 6 staff members from Children’s Services, these being the Director or assistant Director, Operations Manager for adoption and fostering, Foster support team Manager, a member of the IRO management team and a social worker from the TAC group.

c. There will be 10 foster carer representatives, there will be a representative from each of the five support groups, a chair person and representatives from each of the working groups. Each person may have more than one role.

d. There will also be an Advice and mediation worker from the fostering network invited to every meeting.

4. Frequency and type of meeting.

a. The Advisory Partnership will meet monthly.

b. The working groups will meet as required to be decided by the group.

5. Service of committee.

a. Foster Carer chair, maximum term three years, reselected every 18 months by voting of the membership of the Advisory Partnership members. Replacement to be selected from existing membership of Advisory Partnership. If more than one person stands for position a vote will take place of the AP members.

b. Operations Manager vice chair or nominated deputy.

6. Selection of Advisory Partnership members.

a. By recommendation/invitation/volunteering.

b. Moving in because of work undertaken in a specialist group.

c. Members leaving the Advisory Partnership should, where possible, provide a notice period, replacements will be selected on the basis described above.

d. Members leaving the Advisory Partnership, who are also members of a specialist working group, should where
possible, provide a recommendation of a replacement from that group to provide continuity.

e. Any member of the Advisory Partnership or working group can be asked to leave the group at any time should they cease to be a foster carer or their conduct is seen as unsatisfactory by the group.

7. Relationship and communication with specialist groups.

a. Via representation on Advisory Partnership.

b. Via membership of Advisory Partnership people in these groups.

c. Minutes of Advisory Partnership and working group meetings to be sent out as soon as possible following a meeting. The minutes will be agreed by the appropriate group prior to being sent out or posted onto web page.

8. Communication method

All minutes and information from meetings of the Advisory Partnership and the working groups will be posted on the NCC fostering and adoption website. A new button will be created to facilitate ease of access. The proposal is that all we undertake should be open to all in Children’s Services and foster carers.

9. How do we measure the effectiveness of the Advisory Partnership and the working groups?

a. Develop short, medium and long term goals and objectives which can be used as benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the groups.

b. There should also be some form of self and perhaps external evaluation.

c. A record of achievements, issues resolved to be kept – minute taker to do this.

10. A decision making quorum will be defined as 4 foster carers and 1 Children’s Services staff.
11. Each working group will have representation on the Advisory Partnership to facilitate communication and direction if issues raised at AP require action from working group. 12. Expense and compensation for participation.

a. Mileage to and from meetings will be covered.

b. An allowance for lunch will be provided where people are away for the whole day and lunch is not provided.