Fostering Advisory Partnership meeting on 22nd February 2017

@ South Green Park, Mattishall, NR20 3JY.  9.30 onwards.

Attended – Julia Spinks (Chair), Peter Ronan (Vice Chair), Sharon Donoghue (Minutes), Pam Weyer, Stef Rice, Anne Ritchie, Roni Kingston-Miles, Lori Ong, Keeley White, Owen Garrod, Francis Whymark, Sarah Cressey, Catherine Sutton, Matt Dunkley (Interim Director of Children’s Services),

Invited – Councillor Roger Smith (Chair of Children’s Services Committee), Karen Searle (Passport to Independence), Dr Emily Wilkens (Compass), Mark Gregory (NIPE).

Apologies – Mike Woodward, Debbie Burrell, Theresa Lavery, Cathy Mouser, Antonella Parker.

1. Welcome to Francis, our new Supervising Social Worker FAP member, and welcome also to Roger Smith, Emily Wilkens, Mark Gregory and Matt Dunkley. We appreciate your attendance and thank you all for coming along.

2. January minutes agreed.

3. **Norfolk Institute for Practice Excellence (NIPE):**
   
   Mark attended to talk about the work of NIPE which is the service Norfolk offers for newly qualified Social Workers. NIPE was set up three years ago and has seen 150 workers during this time which makes up ¼ of the workforce, and is unique to Norfolk. Workers are part of NIPE for 6 months and then gradual transition to a Social Worker role. Whilst in NIPE workers will gain experience in a wide range of duties such as those within the family intervention and assessment teams.
   
   It was set up to:
   
   a) Ensure that our Social Workers receive a consistently good experience in terms of support, nurture and training.
   b) To develop good practice and ensure the work is of a high standard and that workers are retained.

   A further 30 newly qualified workers will be starting in April and these are made up of 20 locally and 10 from neighbouring counties with some moving up from London. NIPE would ideally like to expand to accommodate a greater number of Social Workers but has a shortage of Managers at the moment.

   Sharon said that her worker is newly qualified and is excellent; others have said the same that the standard of newly qualified social workers is very high. Owen added some good news, that one of the NIPE workers Francesca Rye has won Silver in a national award for newly qualified workers.
We discussed ways in which FAP/Carers could work with NIPE:

- NIPE representative to attend Network Group Meetings – Sharon to provide dates.
- Shadowing a carer.
- NIPE representative to attend Stepping Stones and/or skills to foster. To be discussed at CPD meeting on the 20/3, Anne to forward meeting information onto Mark. mark.gregory3@norfolk.gov.uk

4. Compass

Dr Emily Wilkens has attended today to tell us about the work of Compass and recent developments. There are currently two main components to Compass which are:

a) Compass Schools which started in 2009 and provide a therapeutic education provision for young people who have been unsuccessful in maintaining a mainstream educational placement. There are currently three Compass schools based in Belton, Lingwood and Kings Lynn.

b) The Compass Outreach Service – which was developed in 2015 following DfE innovations funding and the success of the Compass Schools. The aims of this extended service are to reduce the levels of need and risk for children who are currently looked after (who are at high risk of placement breakdown) and those considered to be on the “edge of care.” Children and their families who are referred to the Outreach Service are offered a bespoke multidisciplinary package of care depending upon their individual needs. This could include (but is not exhaustive):

- Direct therapeutic input to the young person and/or their parents,
- Intensive practical parenting support from a Family Development Worker.
- Positive activities.
- Family therapy/family work.
- Dyadic sessions between child and parent.
- Supervision/training/reflective practice with the professional network, including social workers, foster carers, education staff.

The Compass Approach is based on the clinical application of attachment theory, supporting families and professionals working with them to achieve meaningful and sustainable change. This requires therapeutic interventions from staff who are provided with the training and supervision necessary to help families understand the obstacles and to progress and accept their responsibility for overcoming these. For this to be possible professionals need to have the levels of skill and self-awareness to get alongside families who are often understandably mistrustful of services.
The fundamental principle of the Compass approach therefore is the recognition that relationships within families and between families and professionals are crucial to achieving successful outcomes.

Currently, any foster carer who cares for a young person open to any of the Compass Services is eligible to attend an ongoing foster carer psychotherapy group. In addition, in April Compass will extend this invitation to any NCC foster carer who is experiencing difficulties with their child’s behaviour, and where the placement is of risk of breakdown. It is likely that there will be three groups, based in Norwich, Kings Lynn and Gt Yarmouth and will meet on a fortnightly basis. Any carer who feels that they would meet eligibility for the group should discuss this directly with their SSW. We all welcomed this service which is needed.

Questions & Answers:

- Is there any support for children who are in mainstream education? Yes, many of the young people referred to Compass outreach remain in mainstream education, and every effort is made to maintain this placement where possible. In this way the Compass team will endeavour to attend all associated meetings relating to the child’s education, such as PEPS and if required, will also offer training, consultation and supervision to both foster carers and the child’s mainstream school.
- How can this happen? All Compass referrals are made via CCAS through the child’s social worker.
- If a child was coming from out of county and a need was already highlighted when could the service start? Immediately, although a referral would still need to be made via CCAS.
- What is the capacity? Compass outreach do not hold a waiting list so there is an immediate start or if there is no capacity the work will be commissioned elsewhere. It is hoped that the current demand on the capacity of the team will be met by additional staff recruitment.
- How many families are Compass currently working with? Compass Outreach currently holds a caseload of 56, however this figure represents individuals not families, therefore there may be multiple family members that clinicians are working with.
- What happens in the support groups for foster carers? The psychotherapy group look at the emotional impact on the carers and our relationship with the child and why we might be feeling that way. It is not a how to, but looks at the whole picture family dynamics.
- What ages do Compass work with? Up to 18 years, although there are crossovers with PIMHS and we also work with parents, in addition to the children.
What can Compass offer to reduce exclusions especially for our Looked After Children? Compass will work alongside the school providing training and supervision of staff and the professional network to ensure that resources are inputted now rather than wait for exclusion. There are currently some mental health practitioners employed directly by certain schools or clusters of school for this remit but it is recognised that in the future this needs to be more widespread.

In addition:
- Compass currently offer clinical supervision for IRO’s on a monthly basis
- Compass clinicians currently offer supervision/reflective practice to some NCC residential homes.
- Compass will be taking over the Looked After Children’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) service, although it is still not formalised how this service will operate.
- Emily will return to FAP in May to talk about how the new services are progressing.

5. **Action Points from previous minutes:**

   Term time holidays – Local authority do not support holidays in term time, and the head teacher approves any requests. DFE have restated their position on this and are clear that this decision is based on research. A conversation should happen with the carer and school and if necessary Children’s Services before a carer tells the child.

   In Care Council – has been revamped. *Sharon to invite Irene Kerry to a FAP meeting so we can discuss how we can work together with the ICC.*

6. **Passport to Independence:**

   Karen Searle has devised the ‘Passport to Independence’ following discussions at several focus group meetings which included a range of staff & carers as well as young people. The objective is to help our young people move into adulthood more smoothly. It is currently being piloted with 5 young people who live with foster carers and 1 young person who lives in residential. The IRO has overall responsibility for overseeing the passport and because it is paper based the carer keeps the document safe until the young person moves on and it goes with them. The process starts at age 12.

   There are six areas covered which are evidenced on a checklist, written by the carer:
   1. Legal matters – rights and why we have laws
   2. General – such as riding a bike and safety
   3. Housekeeping and accommodation
   4. Health
   5. Education – planning for the future career path
   6. Money – savings
The objective is that once a young person reaches independence they are able to demonstrate understanding and tasks to the best of their ability. During March, Karen has set up briefing sessions across the county for any carer who has a child of 12+ and this will go live from then. The document can be used at PEP’s, for example to support requests for additional help, but this is not the primary function.

Roger added that “your own place” has a tenancy awareness course, which is held at 23, Johnson Place, Norwich, NR2 2SA.

7. **Fostering Friends Facebook page:**
   Pebbles are being painted by carers and children with the idea of getting the child to think about how the recipient might feel to receive the pebble and build empathy. Foster carers meet up at regular intervals to paint the pebbles and provide support to each other if needed. To launch the “Love Rocks” project, Lori left a painted pebble on each seat for all participants to take with them and additionally some carers are going on a walk Saturday to leave pebbles for others to pick up to. There are 116 members on the page. Social events are being organised like a craft day in the Easter break.

8. **Network Groups:**
   Kings Lynn – a last minute change of venue might have been the reason for less carer, but still 6 carers, 3 staff and 2 children attended. No guest speaker but general discussions including FAP.
   Norwich – 8 carers and 2 children, no speaker but various subjects covered. Sharon played with the children and will do this next time.
   Gt Yarmouth – 12 carers and 3 children. Library services attended which carers found useful as some didn’t know that 12 books can be borrowed and that the corporate guarantor scheme covers losses, late payments and damage.

9. **Recording:**
   Anne and Suzy have finished devising the booklet and guidance on recording. We all thought this was excellent and thank you to Anne and Suzy for all their hard work in producing this. Sharon suggested Anne’s name should appear in the document but Anne wasn’t keen on this. **Anne will ask Suzy to upload the document on the website and Supervising Social Workers will be advised so that they can tell their carers.** The medical forms which Linda Everitt devised will be included too.

10. **Terms of reference:**
    Peter and Julia have made some changes to this which will go on the website soon. Group make up will be at least 6 Children’s Services staff and more carers than employees.
11. **Signs of Safety – Scoring:**
The use of scoring at reviews was discussed by carers with a variety of different views with many carers not comfortable with this whilst others could see a benefit. Due to the time constraints today, and the need to discuss the concerns with an IRO, it was decided that TAC would discuss in greater depth at the next meeting on the 9th March.

12. **CPD recording:**
Some carers were unsure how to use the form and were confused by the headings but following discussions with other carers they now seem clearer. One carer has adjusted the wording in her form, which she said helps her and a copy of this will be given to Anne so that she can show her CPD team and use the new wording if they agree. *Lori to forward to Anne.*

**AOB:**
- CH13 there will be changes to the long services award in that a payment will no longer be made and a better certificate will be produced for the carer to retain.
- Changes will be made to Staying Put payments to ensure that carers are treated fairly and consistently. Staying Put is to plan ahead at an early age what the long term plans are for the placement and permanency is if for the young person regardless of whether they will leave at 18 or stay in placement.
- Permanency Panel – this is continuing but now some are ratified at Reviews rather than at Panel.
- Respite – Is the use of respite being scaled down? No, there has been no policy change regarding respite. Wherever possible carers can use delegated authority for breaks so that the child goes to someone they know. Where this is not possible and a carer needs to be found, the social worker will ask the placement team will deal with the request and organise the debit of funds from the foster carer, crediting the respite carer. If a carer makes a private arrangement (without going through fostering services) with another carer and wishes to pay out of their own funds then this is acceptable, but the social worker should be kept informed.
- FAP members – Some of the members have now left the group and have been replaced with others. When other carers express an interest in seeing what happens at a meeting, up to three can attend at a time for up to six months.