FOSTERING ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP

Meeting at South Green Park, Mattishall,

9.30 – 1pm on 19th July 2017

Present: Julia Spinks - Chair, Peter Ronan - Vice Chair, Sharon Donoghue - Minutes, Pam Weyer – TAC, Stef Rice – TAC, Owen Garrod – Leaving Care Team Manager, Fiona Fitzpatrick – Interim Assistant Director, Keeley White – Head of Virtual School, Anne Ritchie – CPD, Rachel Bartholomew – Fostering Duty Worker, Sarah Hunter – Learning & Development Consultant (LAC), Antonella Parker – Advice and Mediation, Lori Ong – Fostering Friends.

Invited: Charlotte Driver - Head of the West Locality, Norfolk Children and Young Peoples Health Services, Carolyn Watts – Specialist Advanced Public Health Officer, Rachel Cubitt – Communications Dept and Raising Learners lead.


1. Welcome to Charlotte, Carolyn and Rachel & introductions.
2. Previous minutes of 24th May are checked and can now go online.

3. Continuous Professional Development:

   Anne said that a meeting was held on the 5th June and Dan Reeve from NIPE attended. NIPE are keen to participate in some of the training. Two more carers will now help deliver Stepping Stones, Sue Hogg and Caroline Sexton. CPD are looking at recruiting more foster carer trainers and anyone who would like to do this can please contact Anne or Sarah Hunter.

   Foster Carer Forum:
   The Forum was discussed at the meeting. Sarah provided FAP with feedback from the day which confirmed that carers thought the content was perfect, but a Crèche and a venue nearer Norwich would have helped with numbers. Feedback from the event:

Foster Carer Forum – Learning is Fun! – 11/07/17 – Feedback summary

1. What was good?
   - Well organised
   - Excellent workshops and workshop space
What was good continued.....

- Time for networking and discussion
- Friendly and Informative
- Practical and interactive workshops
- Opportunity to speak to Peter (Ronan)
- “Feeling very motivated!”
- “All the workshops were excellent”
- “I loved the practical nature of everything”
- “So much to take away”

2. What could we improve?

- Handouts for communication exercise – would have been helpful to take exercise away in written form to help remember and try out
- Perhaps include a crèche for carers with very young children to allow them to attend (this is something we have explored; not a viable option due to insurance, Ofsted regulations, expense and finding an organisation who is fee to run a creche in the week)
- More advertising (the event was put up on the Fostering Hub x 3 times, the Fostering Friends network, and was sent to all SSW to forward to their carers 3 times. Also sent to RU staff. For future events L&D will request up to date email lists for all NCC carers from a Figtree run and email all carers directly)
- Maybe an idea to put any forums and conferences in the TAC programme(this is a good idea, if we have guaranteed funding)

3. What would you like to see at future Conferences?

- Variety today and quality was excellent – keep growing from this strong foundation
- Interactive workshops
- Practical, hands on practice sessions
- Information for children with disabilities
- More of the same!
- “A great day, thank you!”
- More people – but only because lots of carers have missed out on a great day

Carers have commented (on Fostering Friends) that the workshops were extremely useful, the Eaton Mess was delicious and has been recreated by Lori which was recorded and shared so that other who weren’t at the Forum could see.
Other carers posted pictures of all the incredible contents of the goody bags and prizes which were a really big hit with carers. The information within the goody bags is very useful with plenty of ideas on things to do and places to visit during the summer holidays. Also within the ‘Sensory Room’ additional goody bags were given out containing various practical things to do with children to build on their sensory awareness. All FAP members who attended thought the day was fun, the venue was good as was the food and it was informative.

A carer commented that she didn’t know about the Forum, however it was advertised several times on the Hub and Fostering Friends. Peter offered a ‘Surgery’ with carers where they could discuss any concerns they had in private with him. This was popular and he found that 20 minutes was not long enough, therefore at the TAC Conference slots will be half an hour.

Bookings for courses will soon be done online and there is concern that those carers who do not use the internet do not get to hear about these events and will not be able to access training. Suggestion was made that a training course should take place to help these carers or they could use adult education services. All agreed that the Forum should be replicated again annually.

- Rachel to email all SSW to find out how many carers do not use internet, and why their carers did not attend the Forum.
- Peter will ask SSW to stress the importance of telling carers who do not use email/hub/fostering friends about any events in the future so they are not left out.
- A personal invite by email to the next Forum or Conference from Peter.
- A different venue for the Forum so that other parts of Norfolk are targeted.
- Contact Children’s Centres to ask if they could offer a bespoke service providing venues or staff to alleviate the crèche issue.
- Involve Communications department in the advertising of the next Forum.

Thank you to all those at Virtual School and Learning and Development for making this workshop such a success.

All carers must participate in Childhood Sexual Exploitation and Missing from Care training. The format will be either the choice of one of three face to face courses or carers can access an online version if they prefer. Peter will email all workers to tell carers there is an expectation that carers do the course as part of CPD. Carers are to be reminded that if they do not have an up to date CPD they will not be given future placements. One Carer who hadn’t submitted their CPD portfolio at their review has been advised that they will not receive future placements until this is complete.

Fiona added that work is going on at the moment to identify those young people at risk of CSE, the figure is anticipated to be around 100. Carers will be contacted and risk assessments will take place. Peter will be doing a stocktake and will be asking for carer’s views probably via a survey.
Conference 2017

The guest speaker from the Education Conference John James was incredibly popular with those who attended. He was highly entertaining and moved the audience to tears of joy and sadness throughout the speech. Designated Teachers who attended the conference learnt a great deal from him. For the TAC Conference, Sarah Naish is an alternative to John and many of the FAP carers are already familiar with Sarah as she has a Facebook support group, has written two books which many carers have and has several helpful ‘You Tube’ programs. Carers feel she might be a better fit as she could talk more specifically about fostering and about therapeutic reparenting and compassion fatigue. Sarah and her team will liaise with Sarah Naish and organise a date and venue – possibly the 21st or 30th November at John Innes and give a ‘Save the date’ to carers so that they have plenty of time to organise childcare. This Conference will be using the online booking system.

4. Raising Learners – Rachel Cubitt

Raising Learners is an ongoing initiative to help raise children’s numeracy and literacy levels across the county by encouraging children to continue learning through the summer holidays. Here are the details from the website https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/raising-learners. Last year there was a writing competition which had over 200 entrants aged 5-13. Write On is going ahead this year too and there are three prizes up for grabs. A new Count On service is happening at libraries this summer to help children and parents/carers with making Maths fun. The website gives ideas on how we can encourage Maths in day to day situations like shopping and baking and has lots of resources and useful websites.

Fiona asked if we could do this type of competition for Looked After Children only to encourage participation and help increase attainment. We could find sponsors such as shops, places to visit or apprentices/work experience which would give an incentive and a choice of suitable prizes.

To close the attainment gap for our Looked after children, Keeley and Rachel to work together and Rachel to attend the annual Foster Carers Forum organised by the Virtual School. Rachel will forward information to NFSduty@norfolk.gov.uk so that this can go on the Hub. Sharon to send Rachel the dates of FAP meetings.

Thanks to Rachel Cubitt for attending, Rachel left the meeting.
Pg4
5. **Team Around the Child:**

Meeting took place at County Hall on the 13th July. Pam is stepping down as Chair of the group. Stef agreed to take over as Chair if Pam agreed to become Vice Chair. Sharon has advertised the post but has not had a response. Therefore Stef was proposed by Julia and seconded by Sharon, and Pam proposed by Peter and seconded by Anne.

A meeting was held with Pam and members of staff to discuss respite. Some guidance is being written and will be published soon. Fostering will aim to work towards two weeks’ notice for respite to allow introductions to take place before the respite happens. This is difficult to achieve presently due very few carers having vacancies. Via the hub and fostering friends, duty workers have asked carers to check that Figtree reflects their current situation. Supervising social workers can check and amend if necessary. Francis is speaking with fostering managers to see if supervising social workers can ask carers if they can consider increasing capacity at all.

**Peter to ensure that Figtree is up to date for all carers.** It is disappointing that Pam was the only carer at this meeting; several were keen to attend but did not.

**Scoring:** Pam, Stef and Sam will be going to an IRO meeting to put our concerns regarding scoring at LAC Reviews to Carey and her team.

**Mental Health:**

Pam and Caroline attended a meeting on 24th May in London set up by the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Together with an Expert Working Group pf professionals, policy makers and young people, Social Care Institute for Excellence has worked since March 2-16 to develop care pathways, models of care and quality principles to help improve access to high quality services to address the mental health and wellbeing needs of children in care, children who have ceased to be looked after under special guardian orders and through being adopted from care, and care leavers. The aim of the day was to hear the views of carers primarily on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Several questions were asked of carers such as what works well in placement where children have mental health needs and in an ideal world what would good support look like? Pam and Caroline felt that where the Mockingbird Model was being used, those carers said that things were working well, whereas others said that inconsistencies exist. Website for Social Care Institute for Excellence [http://www.scie.org.uk/children/care/mental-health/findings/call-evidence-findings](http://www.scie.org.uk/children/care/mental-health/findings/call-evidence-findings) Dr Sarah Steel and Anita Bagge will be publishing a paper for the recommissioning of CAMHS. The TAC is keen to speak with them – **PAM/Stef to invite to next TAC.**
The group is frustrated that we have been discussing Mental Health for such a long time and feel it is not moving forward. Fiona said we should think about what it is we want (those in the Team Around the Child; carers, social workers, IRO, virtual School etc) and Keeley added that in understanding the issues we can target a new service. Carolyn advised that CAMHS reprocurement is happening at the end of September and stakeholder engagement is sought. Carolyn will invite Amy to FAP meeting 27th September (Mattishall) or TAC on 14th September (County Hall).

6. **Healthy Child Programme offer & Under 5’s Health Assessments:**

Charlotte presented the following to the meeting - In January 2016 the Health Service program was redesigned and enhanced to provide a service by a team of 13 staff who were either Health Visitors or School Nurses, and now carry out the same role. The age range is 0-19. The staff are allocated to Tier 1 Schools which are those that have a high rate of vulnerable children. For those schools which do not have a designated nurse this doesn’t mean they do not get a service, they can text the school nurse on 07480635060 for confidential advice and support. The advice can be for relationships, drugs, bullying, alcohol, healthy eating, self-harm, smoking and so on. Furthermore, a designated phone number for children, young people or carers to call for advice on any matter relating to Health 0300 300 0123. The line is open from 9 – 6pm weekdays and 9 – 1pm on Saturdays. The service has already received 10,000 calls.

**Health review assessments** will be carried out 6 months after the initial health assessment which is to capture any issues which might be evolving and put in strategies for support. Health assessments are now carried out in a timely manner and part of Charlotte’s role is to check them all for quality.

**How can we as carers help?** One whole day is allocated for the health assessment so that the nurse can prepare and write up the report, so if the appointment is not kept that impacts on other days assessments. Carers, please make every effort to keep the appointment or give notice if the appointment cannot be made. Where carers miss two appointments Peter will be notified. FAP can help by spreading the word, letting carers and workers know about these services.

Here is a you tube video which describes the service: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7c9gCJ0Gj0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7c9gCJ0Gj0)
Shared Review - At age 2 ½ two carers will be contacted to complete a questionnaire and arrange a meeting to discuss the child’s health with the Healthy Child Programme Health visiting team. Progress checks are carried out at services used by the child (Preschool etc) and shared with carer. Any issues with the child’s development are then addressed.

Pathway to parenting – is a free antenatal fun and interactive four week programme covering labour, delivery, baby care, and the role of the professionals you will meet along the way which is particularly useful for mother and baby placements.

Carolyn/Charlotte provided a pack for each carer at FAP containing leaflets of the above and phone numbers.

Anne has used a drop in Speech & Language service that does an assessment without the child having to go on a long waiting list. Carers can access information about this service via the family health visitor. A drop in service is offered in each locality.

- Carolyn to contact Sarah Hunter to have a stand at the Conference
- Charlotte to attend TAC and FAP. Sharon to forward dates.
- Rachel Bartholomew to send dates of Network Groups so that health representative can attend these.
- Charlotte to liaise with Keeley to get the message through to designated teachers.
- A children and young peoples survey on wellbeing to go out and data will be tracked. Carolyn to attend FAP termly and in the spring so that feedback can be given on this.

7. Fostering Friends:

Breakfast clubs continue to be popular; a new group is being set up in Cromer and possibly in North Walsham. Friday therapy in Norwich is going well. Activities are being organised for the summer holidays.

8. Network Groups:

Kings Lynn – was held on the 6th June which was well attended albeit noisy. The group is considered whether to still have a speaker when the children are off as it is difficult to hear the speaker.

North Walsham – is today!

Norwich – is next week!

CWD – happened last week a new carer who offers respite attended and it was nice to meet her. Also some interest in the new CWD subgroup.

Watton – is tomorrow.

Gt Yarmouth – No speaker but well attended.
9. **Medical Forms:**

These are now available via your supervising social worker in a 3 fold card format. Although these can be found online in the documents section of the NCC website, electronic versions are for reference only and for recording purposes, the 3 fold card versions must be used. *Peter asked Rachel to inform all SSW's so they can issue carers with the forms.*

10. **Peters Update:**

The last Ofsted inspection was better and the full inspection is due from September onwards. *Rachel Bartholomew to put a link on the hub for the Ofsted report and the improvement plan. Elizabeth Broadhurst can provide these.*

**Fiona** – more senior managers have been interviewed and will be starting soon. Matt Dunkley’s replacement has been found and Matt will leave at Christmas. Matt has recently given agreement for more UASC to be placed in Norfolk. Duty workers have asked if carers can take any of these.

**Recruitment** – There is a drive on at the moment for more carers. Advertisements from independent agencies on the radio are not always appropriate as they give an amount that can be ‘earned’. The child can hear this whilst in the car. Also when a google search for fostering is made, NCC doesn’t come up first. *Rachel to advertise for recruitment of friends and families of carers on the Hub.*

11. **Action points:**

**Anja** has decided to leave the group. Anja said “I am so sorry but I am going to have to step back from the FAP. I enjoyed being part of it and thank you for having me on board.” Thank you Anja for all you have done to help kinship carers. *Rachel to organise flowers.*

**Data protection** - Anne received a very thorough response to her complaint regarding confidentiality at hospital appointments. We were glad to see that this matter was treated as serious. Thanks to Anne and her worker for highlighting this problem. As a result of the complaint the hospital said:

PG8
We were all delighted with this response.

12.AOB

On Monday 17th July some carers from FAP and Peter Ronan met with Mark Owers who is leading research on the National Fostering Stocktake for the Department for Education. This is a wholesale, independent review of the foster care system in England. As part of their evidence gathering around the challenges and issues facing the foster care system and wider impact of permanence planning, and potential ways to improve outcomes for children in foster care, the reviewers are making a number of visits to local authorities and independent fostering agencies, alongside other organisations and institutions.

The group explained about FAP and the subgroups and then Mark asked a number of questions/issues raised by other carers and children in care. We felt that in relation to most of the questions that Norfolk had made good progress and with issues relating to some points like delegated authority we felt that we didn’t have a problem at all in this area. This is due largely to FAP and the good lines of communication which are now available between carers, workers, managers and senior managers. We felt the meeting was positive and were glad to be able to be a voice for NCC fostering in such an influential arena.

**Stef - Mobile phones;** Stef is thinking about get an mobile phone and has concerns about what his child can access. Other carers share these concerns. He has researched parental controls and found a company called engine mobile which can put blocks on certain websites and numbers. However there is a concern about what is being done with the data from the company. **Stef to check this out further and get back to us with findings.** In the meantime the decision on this rests with his child’s team and this should be discussed and the next LAC Review or before.
**Owen - Lac Leaving Care;** there is now more management cover and groups are smaller however the changes are impacting on the workloads at the moment of the PA’s in all leaving care teams.

**In-Care Council** – the last two meetings in Norwich went well and were fairly well attended. More young people are needed in all areas. If your young person would like to be involved please speak to the child’s social worker.

Minutes written by S Donoghue on 20/7/2017  
Checked by J Spinks 20/7/2017

PG10