

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting	FLAG Meeting	
Date and time	Monday, 26 April 2022	
Location	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting	
Attendees	Rachel Cutts - Chairperson Laura Redfern – Treasurer Steve Edwards – Service Director Sophie Eadsforth – Group Manager Ty Yousaf – Fostering Service Manager Councillor Sinead Anderson – V/C Children and Young People’s Committee Prue Oakden – Fostering Support Officer (Minute Taker) Linda Rushby – IRO Debby Marhsall – FIRO Deborah Ratcliffe - SSW 23 Fostering Households attended	
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and introductions 2. Financial Position 3. Guest speaker/Visitor – Terry Hayes from Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group 4. Service Update Children’s & Fostering Services 5. Carers Concerns and Matters arising 6. AOB 7. Date of Next Meeting 	
Previous Minutes and updates		Action
<p>Rachel Cutts (Chairperson) opened the meeting and introduced herself. There were 23 fostering households in attendance and a round of introductions were made.</p> <p>Previous outstanding issues addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ty confirmed that the query about how many days a weekend of support care constitutes had been resolved and the details had been shared in the February edition of Fostering News. He met with the management group who confirmed there had been no change in the way this was calculated and it remained the same. This was the information shared in the newsletter - <p><i>The number of nights the child is away is equivalent to the number of days which will be taken off the allowance.</i></p> <p><i>For example; if a child goes to support care on a Friday and they return to their mainstream carers on Sunday, this will count as 2 days of care.</i></p> <p><i>The support carer will get paid for three days of care but the mainstream carer will only have used 2 days out of 28 as the child has been away for 2 nights.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Redfern informed the meeting that she had received an information leaflet from The Fostering Network and that confirmed that having a young person with you on a Staying Put policy is viewed as the same as having a foster child for tax and national insurance purposes. 		

Agenda Items

1. Financial Position

Laura Redfern confirmed that there is currently £3,210 in the FLAG account. She can only write cheques for people wanting to access the funds for support groups, so carers should email her with the details of their events and costs and she can write a cheque to send to them to fund this. Ty informed carers that the youth centres are available to carers for free so they can make use of this to make the funds go further.

2. Guest speaker/Visitor - Terry Hayes from Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group

Terry informed FLAG that the government is making changes to the NHS; the boundaries and commissioning groups will change. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's CCG will become Integrated Care Board [ICB] and this is where clinical decisions will be made, it won't change any health care or care pathways. You will notice correspondence has ICB written on it instead of CCG and the aim of the changes is that care and health services will work better together under the new changes which will come into effect in July.

Terry informed FLAG about the new children and young peoples wellbeing and mental health early intervention service which is a website called Nott Alone - [Local mental health advice and help for young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. | NottAlone](#) There are different pages for young people, carers and professionals with lots of advice and guidance, peer support groups, 1:1 therapeutic support, self-harm support as well as other virtual and online support.

3. Service Update – Children and Young People's Services – Steve Edwards

Steve informed the meeting that OFSTED will be inspecting this week. They are looking at the help and protection we give our looked after children and not the fostering service this time. They will be with us from Tuesday morning until Wednesday evening but whatever the outcome he is very proud of all the front-line workers who have worked incredibly hard over the last two years to keep children safe under very difficult circumstances.

Steve announced his retirement after 13 years in his current post and 39 years working in social care in total. He will be finishing in August and interviews to fill his

post will take place this week. He will have a leaving do and details will be shared when it has been planned.

4. Update from Ty Yousaf, Fostering Service Manager

Ty gave a service update in relation to changes to the team managers - Marie Dean is the team manager in the South, she has been supporting MASH but she is back now and that means Ruth Goodison is back to managing training co-ordinators and family workers; Andrea Dore has returned to her substantive post in the recruitment team. Lucy Andrewartha is back from maternity leave and has returned to her post in the Short Breaks and Central Team. Rachel Taylor-Murray is now the manager in the Family and Friends team.

Fostering's Got Talent is coming up on 20th May and so far we've got 11 acts, so it's going to be a great evening. If you have child who would like to enter or you would like to sit in the audience, please email fostering@nottscc.gov.uk.

5. Concerns and Matters Arising

- Concerns were raised by a carer about how many support carers there are and the difficulty some mainstream carers have in accessing support care. Ty responded by saying we haven't got as many carers across the county due to retirements, resignations and carers being de-registered after concerns and allegations. Most of the carers are in the South Team with established links. Support is not as freely available as it previously was. We recognise this as an issue and working hard on our recruitment activity. If we can't make a placement in our internal carers we will contact the external providers to seek a placement there, so support care can still be accessed.
- Issue arising with carers concerned about the cost-of-living crisis, they are worried that fostering payments won't cover the rise in prices. Steve Edwards responded by saying it's very challenging at the moment, the chief exec Anthony May is asking the government if they have taken into account the challenges foster carers will be facing. This hasn't been resolved yet, but it is recognised as a concern that a lot of carers feel. It is under review. A carer asked whether NCC could look at some fees that haven't been changed for years, such as £3.50 per hour baby sitting fees.
Steve replied that there is a budget setting process where we can try to look at it although we can't guarantee that those requests will be met as there is only so much money in the pot, but Ty and Sophie could look at this with some carers to see where the pinch points are and look at providing an updated and improved service. We want as many of our own

Action – Ty and Sophie to review any payments that are felt to be outdated

carers as we can get and not have to use IFA carers. But we haven't been given any more money to pay for staff and carers. One carer suggested that cuts to council tax for foster carers would be a good way for carers to financially benefit without having to be paid more by the service. Steve Edwards said he thought this was a good idea and something he could take to meetings with local district councils to raise there.

- A carer raised the question around SGO's and funding for these, which is means tested for carers and may mean that a carer wouldn't get any money for this kind of placement. Steve Edwards confirmed that this is being looked at by the new Family and Kinship Care Strategy. We want carers to take SGO's and we want to support them with this as much as possible so the new strategy and kinship team will be looking at all of these issues in their new role.

6. AOB

Positive achievements were shared – Rachel Cutts informed the meeting that she has a looked after young person who is doing really well at university and wants to be a social worker when they qualify. Laura shared that she had a visit from a young person she fostered 20 years ago, he has just gained employment with Maclaren motor racing as an engineer and is also doing really well.

- Prue Oakden informed the meeting that there is still space for any late entries for Fostering's Got Talent or if anyone else would like to come and sit in the meeting, they just need to get in touch via fostering@nottscc.gov.uk. Laura Redfern confirmed that the costs of the event could be covered by FLAG and the details should be sent to her to raise a cheque following the meeting.
- There is an upcoming Foster Care Fortnight Campaign which carers and staff are asked to be involved with and should contact the team if they would like to be a part of it. The theme is "Fostering Communities" and there will be a social media campaign as well as some media releases.
- Carers were asked to give any suggestions for the 2022 FC conference as the initial planning for this event has begun. Any ideas can be emailed to fostering@nottscc.gov.uk

7. Next meeting

Next date Monday 4th July 2022 [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Action Steve to go to district council meetings and raise this idea

--	--

Action – Ty to confirm the number of days a weekend of support care counts as