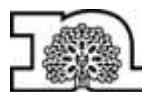


MINUTES OF MEETING



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Meeting	FLAG Meeting	
Date and Time	Monday, 16 January 2023	
Location	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting	
Attendees	Rachel Cutts – Chairperson Liz Keogh – Vice-Chairperson Laura Redfern – Treasurer Amanda Collinson – Service Director Sophie Eadsforth – Group Manager Ty Yousaf – Fostering Service Manager Councillor Tracey Taylor – Cabinet Member for Children and Families Linda Rushby – IRO Representative Tracey Rawlings, Deborah Ratcliffe, Evie Roberts – SSW Representatives Sarah Bostock – LAC Team Manager (Guest Speaker) Judy Appleton – Fostering Support Officer (Minute Taker) 22 Fostering Households	
Agenda	Welcome and Introductions 1. Previous Minutes and Outstanding Actions 2. Service Update - Children's and Fostering Services 3. Finance Update from Treasurer - Laura Redfern 4. Guest Speaker - Sarah Bostock, LAC Team Manager, You Know Your Mind 5. Good News Stories Date of Next Meeting	
Agenda Items		Action
1. Previous Minutes and Outstanding Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You Know Your Mind Project – Guest Speaker Sarah Bostock to address queries from previous FLAG during the meeting. Requests for Annual Review Papers to be completed On-Line Ty advised that papers would be sent out according to individual carers' wishes – either emailed to be completed electronically or posted out. There is currently work in progress to create an electronic case recording system, which, once in place, will enable carers to complete documentation in their own on-line portal. 		
2. Update from Amanda Collinson, Service Director Amanda welcomed all Foster Carers, particularly those joining FLAG for the first time. Some very positive news was shared - that the business case recently presented in relation to Foster Carer allowances has now been signed off by Councillor Taylor, resulting in increases in allowances in 4 areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the Foster Carers Allowance from April 2023 Increase in the Holiday Allowance from April 2023 Increase in Babysitting rates from April 2023 A one-off payment of £1,000 to carers - once mechanisms have been put in place to pay this. Amanda explained that the Projects Team is developing communication to Foster Carers to outline the increases in the allowances.		

Ty thanked Councillor Taylor for the work that had gone into this over the year, an outcome which will hopefully make us more competitive, and will also recognise the hard work carried out by Foster Carers.

It was explained that the increase could not be made until April, as the budget for 2022-23 had already been committed when the case was first proposed, and without knowing the outcome, it has not been possible to share sooner.

3. Update from Ty Yousaf, Fostering Service Manager

Ty announced some staffing changes –

Fostering Family Workers Team Manager, Andrea Dore has moved to Adoption East Midlands, with Gavin Taylor, Advanced Practitioner, covering this role.

There is capacity within the SSW resource to cover for colleagues where needed.

STARS Project have asked for representatives to help rehabilitate children, and support children currently in residential to step down to foster care.

The Recruitment team are working hard to recruit Foster Carers, linking in with businesses to explore the option of promoting Fostering within their networks, and thus raise our profile in different settings.

4. Update from IRO Service

Linda reported that IRO Mike Law had retired in January after many years with the authority.

Three new IRO's have recently started –

Paul Scott (Previously SSW in Fostering)
Tabitha Price
Michelle Franks

The IRO service continues to work with a strength-based approach and are working with children and young people to establish whether they would prefer a face-to-face or online review meeting. It is their review, and they are eager that their wishes and feelings should be reflected.

Children and young people have a review twice a year (possibly more if they are new to fostering). The IRO service would like to see both carers attending at least one of these, or at least meet with the IRO so that the views of both carers can be heard.

Linda invited any thoughts from the meeting on ways to be more creative in involving young people, which could put forward to the team, however there were none offered at this stage.

5. Finance Update from Treasurer – Laura Redfern

Laura reported that the bank account currently stood at £1,886.44

Anyone who has outstanding requests for payments (from before the hubs were set up) should email Laura – (laura_redfern11@hotmail.com) – or ask their SSW to contact her.

Carers to contact Laura re outstanding payments due to them

6. Guest Speaker – Sarah Bostock – You Know Your Mind Project

Sarah explained that this is a project which started in 2018 and is jointly funded by the Local Authority and NHS. Its purpose is to support young people with their emotional and mental health and offer them more choice in what support they need to help them. It is available for young people and care leavers up to their 25th birthday, and funding of up to £500 per person is available. No official diagnosis is required, and the money does not have to be applied for all at once.

There is currently a pause in referrals, but this will resume at the start of the next financial year in April. This is while feedback is being sought from carers who have experience of the project, which is passed on to the NHS. Feedback has been very positive, and the project has been shown to be a very good tool for getting young people to open up.

Young people are supported by their worker to complete the referral and fill out the support plan. The committee meet once per month, so decisions/outcomes are achieved swiftly.

Examples of purchases made include bikes, sensory equipment, photographic equipment, gym membership, swimming, boxing and horse-riding lessons.

It was asked whether children going for adoption were eligible, and the response from Sarah was yes, if they are Looked After Children at this time.

Sophie confirmed that information about the project had been distributed to all relevant teams, and there would be a reminder in April when referrals resume. One carer raised that there appeared to be Social Workers who were not aware of the project and Sophie advised that she would address this.

Sophie to address gaps in awareness

7. Good News Stories

Carers shared the following –

Jodie, a Central team carer was proud that her young person, who had not been in education for over 2 years, had recently not only started in mainstream school, but has also recently visited a college with a view to enrolling to study to become a nurse.

Steve in the South team was delighted that a child they were moving on to adoption had just met with her adopters this week. This went extremely well and was rewarding to see after all the hard work leading up to this.

Further examples of young people moving to independence – Rachel in the North team reported that one of her young people, now at university, had just gone off to Venice today, and a SSW told of a young person who had taken an intensive driving course, passed his test and bought his own car.

Carers Carl and Zoe were delighted to have been asked to be grandparents to the new-born baby of their first placement, who had recently moved on at the age of 20 to her own flat.

Owen, a carer in the North team has started a Support Group for secondary carers. This is designed to be a meet-up in a social setting, to share experiences that may be different to those of primary carers, and possibly fill some training gaps. The group starts this Thursday in Worksop, and it is hoped that it will meet every 4-6 weeks. Contact SSW Sandra Dickinson (Sandra.dickinson@nottscce.gov.uk) if you are interested.

Carers to contact North team SSW if interested in joining support group.

AOB - Query Regarding Delegated Authority Form

Rachel from North team asked about the delegated authority form in relation to children staying with friends/family who are DBS checked.

Ty responded that the SW and SSW agree on what is delegated to the carer in terms of their decision making for the child. This is outlined on the form; all children are individual but the information on the form helps to shape conversations.

Tracey, North carer, pointed out there may be some confusion between friends of the carer, (relating to babies and younger children) and friends of the child (for older children in the context of a sleepover).

Ty summarised that the children are looked after so we need to know where they are, and it is good practice to let the SW/SSW know this, but that there shouldn't be an issue if they are covered by the delegated authority.

Further to the meeting, Ty has provided the following to address issues raised regarding Delegated Authority. Carers are encouraged to speak with their SSW in the first instance, if needing any clarification on this.

The following is from the DA form:

3.2 Overnight with friends (Sleepovers)	Local Authority and Foster Carer	Foster carers must satisfy themselves of the safety and appropriateness of the arrangement, also inform social worker each time child stays at a friend's house. If any concerns, social worker to assess.
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To ensure there is no confusion about delegated authority and support care, I have included details here from our policy:

5. Governance of Support Care Arrangements

The Department for Education's Statutory Guidance (Volume 4: 3.23) states that "there is no requirement that where a Looked After Child visits or spends a holiday with their foster carer's friends or relative that the individual must be approved as a Local authority foster carer, as the child will remain formally placed with their usual foster carers.

It is this authority's policy that such arrangements should be subject to safeguarding governance and that all support care arrangements will fall into one of three categories.

Support care will be provided in one of three ways'

- *With a foster carer who is not connected to the main foster carer and who has been approved by the fostering panel for the task of support care (Regulation 26 Fostering Services Regulations 2011);*
- *With a temporary foster carer who is connected to the child/main foster carer and whose temporary approval has been approved by the child's Service Manager and the Fostering Service Manager (Regulation 24 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010). If the intention is for this temporary foster carer to provide care, on an on-going basis, Regulation 25 (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010) may apply or Regulation 26 (Fostering Services Regulations 2011) will apply;*

Carers to speak to their SSW if further clarification is needed

- With a person connected to the main foster carer (e.g. with a relative or close friend), under delegated authority the foster carer can agree up to 4 consecutive nights, or for a period of up to 14 consecutive days with the agreement of the Fostering Team Manager and Childcare Team Manager. A discussion should take place to consider whether a Viability Assessment is required to seek further information of the proposed carer. The above discussion should be recorded on the foster carers file with a clear rationale of any decision.

8. Matters for the next FLAG meeting

Please email one of the following with any matters you would like to be raised -

Rachel Cutts (Chair) rachelcutts@btinternet.com

Liz Keogh (Vice Chair) elizabethkeogh1@hotmail.co.uk

Laura Redfern (Treasurer) laura_redfern11@hotmail.com

9. Close and Next Meeting Date

Next date – Monday 24th April 2023 at 7pm via Microsoft Teams. [Click here to join the meeting](#)