

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting	FLAG Meeting	
Date and time	Monday, 5 July 2022	
Location	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting	
Attendees	Rachel Cutts - Chairperson Laura Redfern – Treasurer Steve Edwards – Service Director Amanda Collinson – Group Manager 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 representative Deborah Ratcliffe – SSW representative 25 Fostering Households attended	
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and introductions 2. Service Update Children’s & Fostering Services 3. Carers Concerns and Matters arising 4. AOB and positive news stories 5. Date of Next Meeting 	
<u>Agenda Items</u>		
<p>1. Service Update – Children and Young People’s Services – Steve Edwards</p> <p>Steve confirmed that this will be his final FLAG meeting due to his impending retirement after 13 years in his current post and 39 years working in social care in total. He will be finishing in August and Amanda Collinson, group manager, will be taking over his post.</p> <p>2. Update from Ty Yousaf, Fostering Service Manager</p> <p>Ty confirmed that the changes made to the carers’ millage allowance had come into force with immediate effect. Carers can now claim for all the millage they use for trips relating to their foster children and they do not have to take the first 25 miles off. This change has been made in recognition of the rising cost of living and increased fuel costs. We have previously looked at trying to negotiate a reduction in Council Tax for foster carers as part of the ongoing Fostering Project but due to the large number of parish councils, town councils and district councils within Notts it was not possible to get them to all come together to agree a discount for carers. It is still an aspiration for our carers but not something we could confirm at the moment. The fostering project has evolved, and we are now working with Nottingham City, Derby City and Derbyshire County Council on the</p>		<p>Action Ty to ask Steve Scott (projects team) to set up a forum with willing foster</p>

“D2N2” project where we are trying to align our fostering services together to increase our recruitment and training capacity. Therefore, future changes to our offer will be looked at in comparison with the other D2N2 authorities.

Since the last FLAG meeting we have had Fostering’s Got Talent event and also the foster carers long service celebratory lunch. These were both really positive events, and it was lovely to celebrate our community in these ways after two years of no events due to Covid restrictions. The foster carer conference is being planned for 5th October and further details will be in next months’ Fostering News email bulletin.

We are filling the SSW vacancies across the service so by September these will have been recruited to. There has been a vacancy for one SSW in the South Team, two in the family and friend’s team and a half time SSW post in Central Team.

Ty added that he is meeting with the Comms Team to evaluate Foster Care Fortnight shortly and asked that any foster carers who would be interested in being advocates for the service and participating in future campaigns email fostering@nottscc.gov.uk.

Laura Redfern asked that foster carers are worked with (co-production) when it comes to service changes and improvements and consulted at earlier stages. Steve Edwards suggested a FLAG working group with foster carer representatives from each locality team to send over suggestions and feedback to senior managers ahead of the meeting. Another carer suggested that Support Hubs are a good place for carers to submit their FLAG questions and these be passed through to the Chair from their SSW.

3. Concerns and Matters Arising

- Some of the foster carers commented that the level 3 payments is more for over 5 year olds and less for 0-5 year olds which they think is unfair and should be revised. Also, the weekly fostering allowances that have a smaller payment for babies doesn’t reflect the true costs of caring for a baby when there are additional items required, such as nappies, formula, additional clothes, equipment etc. Ty said that they are looking at foster carers’ payments are reviewing the package behind the scenes but there is nothing to update at the moment.

carers for their input into future changes

Action Rachel/Ty
– to set up pre FLAG meeting ahead of next date

- The Chair informed the meeting that carers had raised concerns with her in relation to the new supervision policy that says the secondary carer should be present for every other supervision. Carers felt this would be very difficult for some families and would mean supervision taking place at inappropriate times or secondary carers having to forfeit work to attend. Ty confirmed that it is part of the fostering regulations that all household members are seen as part of supervision, it is not a new requirement but something we are ensuring is done going forward. Steve Edwards added that supervising social workers do not work fixed 9-5 hours and need to be flexible when arranging supervision meetings with foster families. One carer added that in her last supervision, her husband was video called for ten minutes during the meeting to gain his views and this was sufficient for the SSW to have spoken to him in this way.

4. AOB

Positive stories were shared –

Owen, North Team carer, said they had recently moved a child onto adoption, and it had been a perfect match. The adopters were really good at keeping in touch and referring to the foster carers for advice, it had been a really positive experience for everyone.

Stephen, South Team carer, said they had taken on an SGO for a child earlier this year and it was going really well. They were able to access some support still and it was the right decision for their family, they were pleased to also be continuing with fostering.

Mark and Elizabeth, North Team carers, informed the meeting that they have grown their extended family through fostering. They have kept in contact with many of the people they've met through fostering, as well as the children they've cared for and they are grateful for having all these additional people in their lives. Ty shared that an NCC foster carer looking after a child with additional needs had build a sensory room in her garden and the pictures looked fantastic. It is another example of the exceptional care and dedication our carers give our looked after children.

5. Next meeting

Next date Monday 10th October 2022 via Microsoft Teams [Click here to join the meeting](#)