

## **EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate  
Street, Rotherham**

**Date: Monday, 20 December 2004**

**Time: 9.15 a.m.**

### **A G E N D A**

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th October, 2004 (Pages 1 - 5)
4. Teenagers to Work - Update (Pages 6 - 9)
5. Get Real Team - Update Report by the Get Real Team Manager (Pages 10 - 12)
6. Date of next meeting - 28th February, 2005 at 9.30 am

**EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN  
MONDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillors Gosling and Kirk.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councilor Littleboy.

**8. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2004 be received.

**9. THE GET REAL TEAM - PROGRESS REPORT**

Katy Hawkins, Manager of the Get Real Team, gave an update on progress and reported on the following :-

**(1) The Team**

(a) A new Social Worker joined the Team on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2004 and a new Admin. Worker had taken up her post and the Team was now fully staffed.

(b) The Management Team continued to closely monitor workloads and action plans to ensure the Team's effectiveness.

(c) During the Summer break, Tony Dewhurst and Sue Dean, DfES Regional Advisors for the Trent Region assessed the Team's performance, action planning and overall effectiveness. A copy of their comments had been put in writing and would be supplied to Members of this Panel. Their only comment for improvement was the development of a Senior Management Steering Group that could make necessary decisions to support the work of the Team. It was confirmed that this Steering Group had been established.

(d) Locality Team meeting dates were being arranged in order to meet regularly and improve liaison and offer additional support directly to Social Work Teams.

(e) The Team will be attending a Chair of Governors meeting in November and would pursue the issue of every school having a Designated Governor for Children in Public Care. Governing Bodies were currently undergoing the process of elected designated members, and it was hoped to have the results of this by the October term break to consider any gaps and help Governing Bodies overcome them.

(f) A comprehensive monitoring system was being explored and developed to enable the Team to track closely all Year 6 and Year 11 pupils. This approach would ensure regular contact, monitoring and assessment to enable the best possible results at key stage 2 and in

GCSE's.

(g) A package of training was being developed for Foster Carers to be started in the New Year. This training was viewed as essential and all carers would be encouraged to attend. Extra training would be developed once the level of need had been ascertained.

(h) The education policy for Residential Units was being revised to ensure that Units had a nominated education person who would be trained and supported.

(i) A new way of collecting attendance figures for all Looked After Children, with support of the Education Welfare Service, had been negotiated. Termly attendance print outs would be brought to the Team within the first week of the new term. This allowed patterns of attendance to be examined and ensured a speedy response to issues of non-attendance.

(j) A new system was being established to improve the school attendance of children who return home on Care Orders. A form was being devised for parents to sign when their child was returned to their care and to inform them of their duties regarding education and the consequences of not following this up.

Resolved:- (i) That a copy of the DfES Regional Advisors' letter be forwarded to Members of this Panel.

(ii) That steps be taken to ensure good communication between designated teachers who have the responsibility for looked after children and the Unit Manager in Residential Units and Foster Carers and that this be monitored.

## **(2) Pupils off School Roll**

There were currently four young people off school roll and the action being taken to meet the pupils' educational needs were explained.

## **(3) GCSE Results**

A breakdown of the GCSE examination results for 2004 was submitted, together with comparisons from last year.

Resolved:- That the Cabinet Member, Education, Culture and Leisure Services, be kept informed of GCSE Results.

## **(4) Local Public Service Agreement**

A reported had been presented to the Cabinet Member for Social Services on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2004 suggesting that, based on the results of 2004 and the Team's predictions for the 2005 cohort, it was most unlikely that the target of 90% would be reached of Care leavers

achieving the required grade of 1 GCSE at grade A to G, by the end of the PSA period.

However, given that a total of eight young people had achieved five GCSE passes at grade A\* - C during 2003 and 2004, it was anticipated that by the end of the LPSA period they would qualify as care leavers and thus enable the target to be met. This represented 70% of the reward grant

Looking at the key stage 2 SAT's results, the Team's results fell short of this year's target, at 29.8%. . The Team is seeking predicted results from school in order for it to be assessed if there were any young people whose grades could be improved with targeted support, to enable the Team to meet the LPSA target of 44%. Not having specific primary teaching experience within the Team was a limiting factor in this case. The team has received predicted grades and at this time the overall attainment is predicted at 57%, however there are some risk factors as this is a highly transient group and the actual cohort who sit the test may be significantly different. As it is such a small cohort size, one or two children entering the system 2 days before the Sat's could have a significant impact upon the results.

#### **(5) Personal Education Plans**

The Team were undertaking a number of initiatives aimed at improving performance, examples of which were:-

- Team managers were being given monthly up to date statistics which included Pep's out of date for that month.
- Contacting individual Social Workers for year 11 and Year 6 pupils who had out of date plans, as this was a LPSA proxy measure.
- Attending team meetings to ensure Social Workers were clear and able to undertake their responsibility in regard to Personal Education plans.
- Working with the Planning and Protection Section to look at a plan to improve admin support for the sending out of completed Pep's, and ensuring each statutory review checked the date of PEP and gave a short timescale for it to be completed.

#### **(6) Activities for Looked After Children**

It was a disappointing summer; some of the activities offered had to be cancelled due to poor take up, despite extensive advertising through Carers, the Fostering Team and Locality Teams.

A Saturday Club was being developed from the end of October, 2004 which would be focussing on 8-14 year olds. It would be held once per

month and offer a number of taster activities for young people to try out. Advertising had commenced and there had been a positive response.

Criminal Records Bureau checks on two Driving Instructors were awaited and upon satisfactory return of these checks, driving lessons would commence. There was a significant list of young people who wanted to undertake driving lessons.

Meetings had taken place with the Swimming Co-ordinator, Education, Culture and Leisure Services regarding the provision of swimming lessons for young people who could not swim. Contact had been made with parents and carers and lessons were being arranged at their local pools. There were 50+ pupils in this Group.

### **(7) Teenagers to Work**

The Rotherham Trainee Initiative pilot project, funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund had begun. Five young people had been engaged to the project and they had recently undertaken a residential course aimed at preparing them for the world of work. Reference was made to the success of one young teenager who had joined the Streetpride Team.

The Team was still pursuing the issue about the lack of placements to offer young people within the Council and that a more comprehensive report on this would be submitted to the next meeting.

Resolved:- That a report be submitted, as early as possible, to the Delegated Powers Meetings of both the Cabinet Members for Education, Culture and Leisure Services and Social Services, on the current position of the Teenagers to Work Project, including a full breakdown and the next steps for its implementation, as requested at Minute No. 43 of the Cabinet Member, Social Services, Delegated Powers Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2004.

### **(8) Diary Dates**

The following events had been planned and Members of this Panel were invited to attend:-

Consultation Evening with the Young People in the theme of Halloween – 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2004

Designated Teacher Conference - 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2004

Post 16 Awards - 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2004 (subject to change)

Members expressed a preference for the Post 16 Awards to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2004 at 4.30 pm after the Council Meeting, this being a more convenient date for Elected Members to attend.

It was reported that the Annual Book Fair held on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2004 had

been very successful with 130 young people attending.

Resolved:- That the events be noted and that the Post 16 Awards event be re-arranged to take place on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2004 at 4.30 pm.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Panel will take place on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 at 9.30 am.

## Teenagers to Work Update report

Compiled by Katy Hawkins Get Real Team Manager

### **Introduction**

Young people in the care of the Local Authority traditionally under achieve in education and go on to be over represented in vulnerable groups as adults, namely homeless and unemployed.

This was highlighted in the Quality Protects research (1998) which identified significant barriers to achieving in education and hence going on to gain sustainable employment.

Attention was turned to improving outcomes for these young people in Education Employment and Training.

In 1999 Rotherham Social Services piloted a project where Looked After Young People spent a day work shadowing Elected Members and Managers within the Council. This proved to be a valuable experience for all involved.

In 2001 a Support Worker was appointed to develop and support young people into placements.

### **Project Aims**

The project aims to improve the employability of this vulnerable group of young people by providing work experience placements which help young people learn the skills necessary to sustain gainful employment.

The project offers support in a number of different ways;

- Work placements for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils, this can be as a one off package, placements during school holidays, or as a combination of education and employment to enable a young person to successfully completed statutory schooling.
- Work experience placements for school leavers
- Support into training packages
- Support around gaining specific skills required for gaining employment. e.g. We recently helped a young person gain a fork lift truck operating licence

### **Project Methods**

Teenagers to Work operate a client centred approach. In order to maintain young people's motivation placements must be centred on their needs and wishes. Initially placements were sought within the Council providers; this was extended to external providers in order to meet young people's needs.

The project also works in partnership with training providers such as Phoenix Enterprises, Princes Trust and Morthern training providers etc in order to ensure our vulnerable Young people can access valuable resources.

Getting young people into work experience placements is one issue which the project undertakes with great success. Maintaining them in placement has proved to be a testing experience. Looked After Children often have very chaotic lives, with limited experience of the world of work and how to operate within those boundaries. and the move into independent living often is a pivotal point for them dis-engaging in services.

In order to address some of these issues the following initiatives have been put into pace;

- The development of work place Mentors, this is an identified individual within the placement who supports the young person as they learn.
- Specific training courses for young people; experience has taught us that young people do not respond to a classroom style of learning so we have adjusted our techniques to reflect this. Recently a group of young people attended a residential week where they undertook specific training, the response from this was very positive.
- Intensive support in placement, weekly meetings to address any early issues that arise and more regular support if required.
- Working in close partnerships with schools and other staff in the Get Real Team to provide placements which support education. Young people who find it difficult to maintain an education placement find the balance of work experience and key skills in school help them to understand the relevance of education to their future lives and complete their statutory education.

### **Project Outcomes**

The project has proven to be a positive investment. The support worker has since become a Project Officer and a temporary support worker post has been taken on this year.

To date one hundred and four young people have experienced work experience placements ranging from one day to many months. Seven Care Leavers have been assisted into full time employment and a further nine have gone on to find themselves sustainable employment. These are just the figures that we know of from those young people who have kept in touch once they have left Care.

Young people often visit the project time and time again before really finding themselves ready to face the work place in a sustained and committed way. Their lives as stated before are often very chaotic and their expectations of working very unrealistic. The project works to try and keep a young person engaged but can not force this if other influences in their lives are so strong. A young person is never rejected permanently from the project.



In 2003 we entered into a partnership project with Phoenix Enterprises who were running a Government led training scheme aimed improving employment for young people aged 16-19 who were disadvantaged. This scheme provided five, twelve month placements for our young people. These placements were well paid and encouraged young people to undertake training. One young woman successfully completed the course and now has full time employment within the caring profession. This project taught us many valuable lessons about engaging young people in full time long term training schemes, which we have gone on to utilise in the project.

The project was also instrumental in helping the Authority gain Beacon Status in removing barriers to Work. This has generated a lot of interest from other authorities who have made contact. In Particular we have been involved with assisting Darlington Council in setting up a similar scheme.

### **Rotherham Trainee Initiative**

This is a pilot project aimed at ten young people to be intensively supported through work placements a number of which will be within Rotherham Borough Council. The trainees have tight boundaries and are given performance related pay and encouraged to undertake training.

This project has been funded by the Neighbourhood renewal fund, along with match funding from a number of different sources. The breakdown is as follows;

- £99,000 NRF
- £5,000 Teenagers to Work development budget
- £5,000 NCH Bridges Project (Leaving Care Team)
- £2,000 Activities for Looked After Children Budget
- £38,000 Objective 1 funding through Phoenix Enterprises, this was initially agreed dependent upon a bid they had made, however it is proving difficult to get confirmation now of payment.
- £10,040 from placement providers which equates to £20 per week per placement. (As the project came late in the financial agreement has been reached that this will be paid from next years budget.

The lack of contributions has proved to be a barrier to the success of this project but work is ongoing to find funding to continue to support it. £2,000 has been secured from the ABC Police fund.

Placements within the Council are coming forward but very slowly, we have secured and placed young people in the following placements;

- Streetpride
- Sports and Development
- Education and RDGH, this is a shared placement
- Libraries

In addition two young people will be given the opportunity to learn construction skills and work on a rented property, supported by a worker funded through the project to specifically oversee the project. At the end of the

project the Trainees will have the opportunity to rent the accommodation, with the NCH Bridges project being registered as an agent.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The project has gone from strength to strength over the three years of its existence. It has demonstrated the need for intensive support a flexible and supportive approach and the need for incentives to get young people to but into the work pace instead of relying upon benefits.

The project needs positive promotion within the Council to enable us to provide training placements in house for Looked After young people and Care Leavers. Supporting the theme of corporate parents where we ensure the best possible outcomes of our young people.

One future plan would be to provide a working café which would enable young people to gain skills in all areas of catering, business management, and other related area as well as having a positive environment to promote work placements. This would initially need a considerable financial contribution but with on going low level funding it could be self sustaining and provide a source of employment or local people.

With the substantial growth of the project the need to make the support worker post permanent has become apparent as has the need for admin support to the project.

**Education of Looked After Children Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2004****Report compiled by Katy Hawkins Team Manager****The Team**

The team is currently fully staffed. We recently undertook a Team Away day where we spent time looking at issues of Quality provision, feedback from stakeholders and developing a Team Mission Statement. This is still in its early stages and I hope to report back to this meeting in the New Year our team mission statement.

We are currently at full capacity within the team particularly the teaching resource. We have the highest number of Year 11 pupils since the team began, and with the number that are not able to access mainstream teaching this has had a major impact upon the resources within the team. I am in discussions with senior management in Education and Social Services regarding this issue.

We have had some increase in our teaching capacity to help us cope with the amount of time being put into the 2 pupils unable to be taught by Whiston Grange and these lines of communication remain open.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of Year 8 pupils displaying extremely challenging behaviour in school, which has further added to the team's workload.

**Pupils off school roll**

We currently have four pupils off a school role

- A Year 10 pupil who we are trying to get on roll at Rawmarsh Comp. This has been a very complex process with Rawmarsh having some difficulty in committing to this placement. They have agreed to a 10 week trial; however this is not appropriate as trials are for excluded pupils or where Head teachers agree a trial period at another school to try to avoid exclusion. This young man was educated in Sheffield until his placement broke down it is not appropriate for him to return to this school.
- Another Year 10 who is in Pocklington York was permanently excluded 1st November. We are currently trying to communicate with the appropriate LEA to try to ensure the resolution of this situation
- The Year 3 pupil who is in a specialist placement in Shrewsbury, as I explained at the last meeting this will be an ongoing situation
- A Year 9 pupil who was permanently excluded from Whiston Grange in June 04, he is offered some level of teaching by our team but his attendance is erratic. Negotiations are in place between Health, Social Services and Education regarding funding an out of Authority placement.

### **Local Public Service Agreement**

We have completed an analysis of predicted key stage 2 SAT's results and currently we are looking at achieving 52.9%. This takes us above the figure required for the PSA agreement which is 44%. However there are many risk factors between now and the sitting of these tests which are beyond our control and can negatively impact upon the final outcome.

End of Quarter 2 'Proxy measures' data were at

1. Completed Personal Education Plans

Year 6 target 100%, actual 100%

Year 11 target 100%, actual 91.8%

2. % of school attendance

Year 6 target 90%, actual 86.8%

Year 11 target 90%, actual 86.9%

3. Extra Curricular Support

Year 6 target 100%, actual 100%

Year 11 target 100%, actual 100%

### **Activities for Looked After Children**

After considerable lobbying by young people to undertake a further drama production we have been attempting to find a way to fund another. We were unsuccessful with a bid put into Yorkshire Arts. However we have negotiated with RCAT and they have agreed to reduce their costings by £2,000. Having further negotiated with Social Services there is commitment to fund the venture. This is without some of the extra's we have funded before such as an after show party, limousine hire and visits to Productions at Local Theatres.

The Driving lessons are now being offered to young people and we have nineteen young people registered for lessons with eight already started. Local driving school has just put another two drivers through CRB checks and it is hoped we can accommodate all nineteen as soon as possible.

We have had significant lobbying from young people, schools, Social Services staff and foster carers for another Young Champions award ceremony. However funding for this event is not easy to find, we are looking in the region of £20,000. This event has been held twice in Rotherham since the development of the team and has proven to be highly beneficial to children and young people's self esteem; many other Local Authorities hold the event on a regular basis.

### **Teenagers to Work**

Please find enclosed a report regarding the progress of Teenagers to Work with this report.

### **Designated Governors**

We now have 100% designated governors in all our schools now, and are just about to re-issue our questionnaire regarding their training needs.

We have also located a model governor's policy from the DFES website and are hoping to encourage a small number of Chair of Governors to work with us to develop this policy for Rotherham schools.

### **Planned Training.**

A days training for Social Workers around the education of Looked After Children has been planned for 17<sup>th</sup> January 05, it is hoped we can roll this out on a regular basis.

A conference for Social Services staff, foster Carers and residential staff is being planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> March 05, along similar lines to the designated teacher and governors conference held in November 04. From this we hope to hold a joint conference later on in the year, encouraging a more joint approach.

After consultation with the Provider Services Manager it has been agreed that in order to continue receiving enhanced payments or to work towards that level of payment, foster carers must attend a minimum of two hours training around education issues. From this we can then develop more comprehensive packages based upon their need and engage carers' further. This is planned for early next year.

We are also planning to set up termly drop in sessions for designated Teachers, and a termly briefing note starting next term to enable us to engage them more fully.

I would like to end this report by thanking member for attending the Post 16 awards ceremony which highlighted some of the very positive outcomes for our young people. Also to thank them for their continuing commitment to Looked After Children.