

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham

Date: Monday, 20 June 2005

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Appointment of Chairman for the ensuing year.
2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.
3. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
4. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th April, 2005 (copy attached).
(Pages 1 - 6)
6. Get Real Team - Update Report (copy attached) (Pages 7 - 13)
- Katy Hawkins, Get Real Team Manager to report.
7. Dates of Future Meetings:-
 - Monday 17th October, 2005 9.30 am
 - Monday 12th December, 2005 9.30 am
 - Monday 27th February, 2006 9.30 am
 - Monday 10th April, 2006 9.30 am

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
18th April, 2005

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

Also in attendance:

Katy Hawkins, Get Real Team Manager.

Dave McGee, Locality Manager North, Children & Families Services

Ann Clegg, Acting Head of Inclusion Support Services.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kirk.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2005 be received.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES - TEENAGERS TO WORK PROJECT

Reference was made to Minute No. 2 of the minutes relating to Teenagers to Work which this Panel had requested be referred to the Corporate Management Team expressing the Panel's concerns that the Teenagers to Work Project was progressing very slowly.

It was reported that the Corporate Management Team at its meeting held on 11th April, 2005 had considered a report presented by the Executive Director Social Services seeking support to increasing the number of places from 15 to at least 20. The Corporate Management Team agreed as follows:-

(a) That support be given to the establishment of an increased number of work experience placements, in a variety of settings, across the Council.

(b) That support be continued for the provision of £20 per week, for up to 12 months, per placement.

(c) That modern apprenticeships be ring-fenced within the Council for those Care Leavers who have undertaken the above work experience training schemes.

Resolved:- That the Corporate Management Team be thanked for their considerations and proposals and be asked how this is intended to be taken forward in terms of the different Programme Areas and the work experience being offered to various young people who are in the Council's care.

3. DUTY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Ann Clegg, Acting Head of Inclusion Support Services, submitted a report relating to new statutory guidance produced by the DfES relating to the Education of Children in Public Care.

The guidance described the essential actions which local authorities were expected to take in order to comply with this new duty and brings the responsibility for the education of children in public care directly under the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member.

The report set out the proposals and details as follows:-

The Guidance emphasises the joined up approach now needed and the requirement on Children's Services Authorities to prepare and publish a Children and Young Peoples Plan. This plan needs to include:

- Outcome measures contributing to the national target to improve the educational achievement of LAC.
- Outcome measures to narrow the gaps between LAC achievement and their peers.
- Actions to be taken by the Local Authority or Children's Trust to support the educational achievement of LAC.
- Resource allocation to meet actions

The Director (DCS) and Lead Member (LM) for Children's Services will be respectively, professionally and politically responsible for ensuring that their local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC is properly discharged.

The report emphasises that this is a commitment across the Council and brings the education of looked after children firmly under the newly emerging Children's Services. The new Joint Area Reviews will look at how Children's Services are working to raise the educational attainment of CiPC. In addition, school inspections will also look at the levels of support for vulnerable children, which will include those in public care. The Government expects schools to take a proactive approach to co-operating and supporting local authorities in discharging this duty.

In particular there is mention of pre-school education plans (PEPs), that there are clear written expectations about homework in children's homes and foster placements, LAC have top priority in school admissions and where there are difficulties that Social Workers work with the School Admissions Forum, all children should have a clear, up to date and suitable PEP. For those leaving care a Pathway Plan must be in place.

Schools have a powerful role to play and the guidance advocates designated teacher training, that designated governors are fully involved and there are appropriate policies in place to support this agenda.

Finally the guidance looks at children in out of authority placements and reminds the home authority of their responsibility to monitor the standard and quality of education each child is receiving. This is especially

pertinent where children are placed in independent schools or homes with education attached.

Research shows that these children tend to achieve poorer educational and other outcomes. The report recommends that local authorities should take steps to reduce their dependence on external placements where they are not in the best interests of the child.

The Panel made particular reference to monitoring procedures for those children in out of authority placements and it was reported that a review of out of authority placements was being undertaken at the present time. The Panel suggested that it would be useful for them to receive details of those children's educational achievements.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and referred to the Rotherham Children and Young People's Board and the Executive Group.

(2) That there is a need to identify all CiPC placed outside of the Borough and to ensure that each is accessing good quality and appropriate education and that the Get Real Team Manager provide a breakdown and details.

(3) That a further programme of awareness raising with Headteachers should be run to ensure that the Council and schools are working together.

(4) That existing information protocols and systems including PEPs need to be looked at in the light of the guidance and tightened as necessary.

(5) That this Panel be kept informed of the education achievements of those children in out of authority placements.

4. GET REAL TEAM - UPDATE REPORT

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

(1) The Team

(a) The team was now fully staffed and the learning mentor capacity had been increased by one further full time post funded from Social Services. The team was in the process of getting this post established to fill as soon as possible. It was envisaged that this post would undertake the support needs of all year 11 and year 10 pupils from Christmas in an attempt to prevent the drop in grades that were regularly seen between end of year 10 and actual results gained.

(b) Rehearsals for GREASE were going well. Despite early concerns, the situation was very much resolved with the RCAT students mentoring

the young people and taking on support roles. There were 17 young people aged between 6 and 17 years involved in the project to date.

(c) The team was still struggling to engage well with Designated Teachers in school. Three consultation sessions were offered in the South, North and Central locality and unfortunately no-one attended. These were publicised in a recent LAC matters newsletter especially for Designated Teachers and Head Teachers. Developing this role in schools was pivotal to the success of the young people.

(d) From Easter, the Team was piloting a termly meeting with the Designated Teacher and Head teacher from schools which had a higher population of Looked After Children or were involved in significant difficulties. This was being piloted for the rest of the Academic Year with Clifton Comprehensive school and if proved fruitful would be rolled out to all relevant schools from September. This was an attempt to support schools to recognize their responsibilities towards young people particularly in Year 10 and Year 11.

(e) Placements within the Council were now up to 11 young people. Katy attended the Social Services Senior Management Team Meeting on 12th April, 2005 to explain the scheme and had been promised 3 - 6 placements across Social Services. The information was presented to the Corporate Management Team on Monday, 11th April, 2005 seeking support for further placements. Katy did not actually attend but there was a promise of 3 placements within Social Services building up to 6.

There was currently a young man on placement in the Town Hall kitchen for two half days per week.

(2) LPSA Performance

GCSE grades A* - G, as reported at the previous meeting actual achievement for this target was 56.5% and unlikely to change.

5 A-C, the target being 7 young people. There were currently 6 young people with the grades who qualify for this target. There were possibly 6 young people who could get 5 A* -C this summer and each young person's Care Plan would be investigated to see if this target could be reached. An internal management meeting had been held on Friday, 15th April, 2005 to look at the resources deployed within the team and if they can be re-deployed to ensure these young people reach their expected grades.

Key Stage 2 SATs results. It had been a busy 2 months for this year group and a number of children had left Care and entered Care. There are presently 17 young people. This is now quite a different group and the team was still investigating predicted results and the worst case scenario was to meet 41.1% and the target was 42%.

The internal management team would be discussing support needs for these young people to see if expected levels could be raised.

Resolved:- That the Acting Head of Inclusion Support Services submit a report to this Panel on the achievements of looked after children.

(3) Improvement Plan - Attendance

The new monitoring system was allowing the Team to be more vigilant around attendance. The last half term saw an increase of 100% attendance from 101 children to 104 children. The certificates and activity vouchers had been received very positively.

Katy had recently attended a presentation from an independent organization that provided daily monitoring for Authorities for each young person in the Looked After system. They contact each school daily morning and afternoon if required to check on the child's attendance. If the child is absent contact is made with the Carer and Social Worker to determine the reason for absence. This information is then presented to authorities in whichever format they need and at the frequency they require. The cost is £1 per child per day. For Rotherham this would be just over £10,000 per year. The team did not have the resources to undertake this task and in areas where the company had worked there had been a significant reduction in absences. This, combined with the resources in the team, could significantly improve attendance figures.

Resolved:- That the Acting Head of Inclusion Support Services and the Get Real Team Manager be asked to explore the feasibility of having a dedicated person to monitor attendances, including costings, and submit a report thereon to this Panel.

(4) Off School Roll

Details of two pupils currently off school roll and action being taken to meet the pupils educational needs were explained.

(5) GCSE Attainment

The last quarter had seen a significant change round. There were currently 40 pupils in this cohort.

The breakdown of the cohort was as follows

- 7 young people in Special Schools, 17.5%
- 5 in Whiston Grange school, (one of whom was being taught by the Team so will be sitting 3 GCSE's) but the others have not been entered 10%
- 2 young people who have not been entered due to poor attendance 5%
- 6 with possible 5 A*-C 15%
- 5 who are taught exclusively by the Team max 3 GCSE per child 10%
- 27 predicted at least 1 A* -G 67.5%

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Panel will take place on Monday, 20th June, 2005 at 9.30 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Education of Looked After Children
2.	Date:	Monday 20th June 2005
3.	Title:	Education of Looked After Children
4.	Programme Area:	ECALS/Social Services

5. Summary

This report summarises progress relating to the educational achievement of Looked After Children, which are supported by the Get Real Team for the period April 2005 – June 2005.

5. Recommendations

That Members receive this report.

7. Proposals and Details

Staffing

The additional Learning Mentor Post has been advertised and if an appointment is made on Monday 27th June 2005, the post holder should take up post by September 2005. The Learning Mentor will support the needs of pupils undertaking GCSE's and ensure that every Looked After Child in Year 10 AND Year 11 gets at least one mentoring session per term. This will be complimented by our Connexions PA who is due to undertake a Diploma in Careers Advice. Both posts will ensure young people receive relevant and timely careers advice promoting entry to further and higher education.

A part time Administrative Assistant vacancy will be advertised in order to continue to provide the statistical information required by the Council, maintain the database and provide administrative support to the team.

Partnership with Schools

Dedicated Training has been offered to all schools in Rotherham once again; to date we have had 6 dates set up 5 in the Primary Sector and 1 to Whiston Grange. There has been no take up of the training opportunities by secondary schools. We will ensure that all schools are aware of the training available so that where appropriate it can be included in their annual CPD planning cycle.

To date we have had one meeting with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher at Clifton Comprehensive School, to explore issues such as communication and we are exploring ways in which we can improve partnership working. The Head Teacher is willing to support us in raising the issue of Children in Public Care at Secondary Heads meetings where appropriate.

Out of Authority Placements

I have been undertaking some work in examining our out of authority placements of which we have Thirty one. To date we have the following breakdown

Nature of Placement	Numbers of Primary Aged Children	Numbers of Secondary age Pupils
Out of Authority Foster placement or family placement mainstream school	11	11
Jointly funded specialist Placements	1	3
Out of Authority Specialist placement Social Services Funding only	1	
Out of Authority Foster placement of family placement specialist school	1	3

Baseline data collection (statements, Annual Reviews, timetables, attendance, and nature of educational provision) is being undertaken for these placements. Visits to judge the educational input are being undertaken by LEA staff, case officers and Educational Psychologists, where the child has a statement and an annual review.

Where the placement is a mainstream school we will monitor data around attendance and school timetable linking in with the Designated Teacher in School. Attendance at some Statutory reviews where there are issues around educational provision will be undertaken by the Team Manager.

Work Placements

We are still working on improving the number of work placements within the Council we have had the offer of 4 placements within Social Services which we are exploring. Unfortunately a training half day for potential mentors has had to be cancelled due to lack of participants, but we hope to be running it again in the new future with more attendees. One idea we are exploring is a placement day in September. This would be a day where all Looked After Children and Care leavers not currently involved in education training and employment can come along and look at the variety of placements available within the council. This is only in embryonic stage at present.

LPSA Performance

Key Stage 2 SATs have all been undertaken and we are awaiting results in July but validated by the end of September 05. On predicted results at present are 52.9%, against our target is 42%.

GCSE grades A – G, as has been reported the predicted outcome for this is 56.5% which leaves us below our target of 90%

GCES 5 A*-C, we currently have 6 young people who meet the target which is for 7 young people to achieve 5 A*-Cs. Much support has been put into this year's year 11 and we are hoping that we will be able to meet the target. There is a possible 6 young people who may be able to get 5 A-C grades this academic year.

Improvement Plan

Attendance

At the end of March 13% of children who were Looked After 12 months or more had had 25 days or more off for any reason. Our expected Target is 11%

In order to address this we have identified this cohort of young people and Senior Managers in Education and Social Services are examining what services can do in order to improve this attendance. One big issue is physically getting to school, young people are moved placement in crisis and often this placement is a considerable distance from their school which can affect their attendance. I am working with another Manger in Social Services to look at creating a volunteer scheme where volunteers support children into school and transport them.

I have worked on a proforma with Ann Clegg for a post within the team which monitors attendance on a daily basis. Please see the attached report and costings. This would enable us to have daily facts and figures and to react more speedily to attendance issue as well as raising the issue with parent's carers and Social Workers. This would be in line with best practice in schools.

GCSE Attainment

Significant support has gone into those young people who are sitting GCSE examinations. We are currently involved in last minute ensuring young people know where and when their exams are and they can get there. Results are expected in August 05 to be validated by the end of September 05

Off School Roll

We have 2 young people currently off school roll,

- One young man for whom a specialist placement has been identified for his very specific needs and it is planned he will be moving mid to end of June.

8. Finance

Funding of the new admin attendance post needs to be identified.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Meeting the LPSA targets on current data is a risk. 2 of the three targets are possible depending upon young people's results this summer however the third is beyond our reach.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The new Children Act as outlined at the last meeting has significant impact on the Education of this vulnerable group of young people. S52, Duty on Local Authorities to improve the educational outcomes of Looked After Children comes live on 1st July 2005. I have yet to have sight of any guidance around this section yet I have been involved in the consultation process. The importance of this section has been raised with all Social Work Teams and is included in the training for Foster Cares and schools.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

**Contact Name: Katy Hawkins Team Manager, Get Real Team ext 4613,
katy.hawkins@rotherham.gov.uk**

Attendance Monitoring Admin Post Rationale

Aim

To improve the school attendance of all Looked After Children of statutory school age.

Current activities

Half termly meetings with Education Welfare Officer where each Childs attendance record is examined.

This happens the 2nd week into the new half term.

Information is then entered onto the database, datasheets are produced for Social Workers and concerns raised.

Advantages

Each child's record is individually seen allowing for patterns of absence to emerge and be addressed.

Education Welfare Officers are aware of all LAC in their pyramid of schools, and can be alerted to any concerns.

Disadvantages

Data is always half a term out of date by the time all the information is entered, printed out commented on and sent to Social workers.

Proposed New System

To employ an admin assistant to contact schools on a daily basis to check on attendance. Where a child is absent personal contact is made with Carer or Social Worker to ascertain reason why. This information is entered onto a daily spread sheet and a daily and weekly report is given to the Get Real Team Manager. At the end of each half term period this information is matched with the register of attendance from school to ensure we have the same data and then entered onto the Get Real Database

Advantages

This allows the Team to have daily data regarding attendance.

It raises the importance of attendance with Carers and Social Workers emphasising their responsibilities around attendance and making them more accountable.

Response to implement remedial action can be instigated within a day of identifying any concerns regarding absence.

Disadvantage

The work could not be undertaken if the post holder is absent and remedial work would have to be put into place on their return possibly slowing down the speed of information for a short period of time.

Resources required,

Desk
Access to Computer
Personal Telephone point in the team.

The Get Real Team room can be re-arranged in order to accommodate these with no extra costs.

Support and supervision of the post can be incorporated into the duties of existing Team Members.

Clerical Officer , Attendance Data Collection.

Duties of Post

- Collection of data on the school Attendance of Children in Public Care
- Daily contact with schools to ascertain attendance of named children.
- Contact with Social worker/ Carer in event of absence to ascertain reason
- Individual recording of every child's attendance onto spread sheet
- Daily reports of attendance, including reasons for absence, trigger points for letters to be sent and investigation, i.e. 10day point, 12 day point, 15 day point.
- Weekly entering onto database any recorded absences and contacts.

Hours of post

Based on 284 LAC of school age breaks down as

- 22 Comprehensive Schools, daily contact, this is all Comprehensive schools where Rotherham CiPC attend.
- 18 Special schools and residential, weekly contact
- 56 Primary schools, weekly contact.
- If the attendance of any children in the last two sections here becomes an issue they will be moved onto daily monitoring.

Split down this works out at

- 37 calls per day, based on 3minute call 2hours
- Calls to Carers/ Social Workers estimated at 10 per day 3mins per call ½ hour
- Entry onto database daily of a minimum of 177 pupils per day, 21/2 hrs
- Daily report, weekly report , with triggers, 1hour

Total 6hours per day.

Costings

Scale 1 /2 Admin 30 hours per week 38 weeks per year = £9,863.93 (with on cost)