

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham

Date: Monday, 17 October, 2005

Time: 9.30 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 20th June, 2005 (copy attached). (Pages 1 - 5)
4. Education of Looked After Children - Get Real Team - Progress Report (copy attached). (Pages 6 - 10)
- **Katy Hawkins, Get Real Team Manager, to report.**
5. Date of next meeting - Monday, 12th December, 2005 at 9.30 am

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
Monday, 20th June, 2005

Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillors Burton and S. Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Littleboy.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH APRIL, 2005

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th April, 2005 were submitted.

Ann Clegg, Acting Head of Inclusion Support Services, reported the Executive Group for Children & Young People's Services had discussed a report about the education of children in public care, along with various other issues.

The Executive Group had agreed that the minutes of the Education of Looked After Children be submitted to the Children's Executive Group so that issues can be tracked and also to assist with the sharing of information between departments.

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th April, 2005 be received.

(2) That the minutes of the Education of Looked After Children be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services Delegated Powers Meetings and also the Executive Group for Children and Young People's Services.

(3) That a report on the impact of the work relating to Education of Looked After Children be submitted to the Children's Executive Group at a later date.

2. GET REAL TEAM - UPDATE REPORT

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

(1) 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 the 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.

(2) 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.

(3) Out of Authority Placements

Work had been undertaken to examine the number of out of authority placements of which there were 31, the breakdown being as follows:-

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) was being undertaken for these placements.

Visits to judge the educational input were 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, the data will be monitored 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.

(4) Work Placements

Work was still ongoing on improving the number of work placements within the Council. There had been an offer of 4 placements within Social Services. Unfortunately a training half day for potential mentors has had to be cancelled due to lack of participants, but it is hoped to be running it again in the near future with more attendees. A placement day was being explored for 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.

It was noted that there were up to 17 placements but there was a possibility of this increasing to 25. This issue was being discussed at the Corporate Management Team to-day and the outcome would be reported to the next meeting of this Group.

(5) LPSA Performance

Key Stage 2 SATs had all been undertaken and results were awaited in July but validated by the end of September, 2005. On predicted results at present are 52.9% against our target of 44%.

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.

(6) 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. The expected Target is 13.5%

In order to address this, a cohort of young people had been identified and Senior Managers in Education and Social Services were examining what can be done 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. Work is taking place with another Manger in

Social Services to look at creating a volunteer scheme where volunteers support children into school and transport them.

Officers are working on a proforma to create a post within the team which monitors attendance on a daily basis and a copy of the duties of the post together with costings was submitted. This would enable the daily facts and figures to be recorded and to react more speedily to an 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.

(7) GCSE Attainment

Significant support had been given to those young people who were sitting GCSE examinations, ensuring young people know where and when their exams are and that they can get there. Results are expected in August, 2005 to be validated by the end of September, 2005.

(8) Off School Roll

There was currently 1 young person off school roll and the action being taken to meet the pupil's educational needs was explained.

(9) Art Exhibition

Katy reported on proposals to hold the Art Exhibition to display pupils' art work and asked for Members' support for art work to be displayed in the Town Hall at the beginning of July, 2005. Cabinet Members supported this and agreed to discuss the arrangements at the Leader's Meeting.

(10) Funding of the New Admin Attendance Post

It was noted that discussions were taking place with officers regarding funding for the above post which could be met from the Vulnerable Children's Grant.

(11) Children Act

Reference was made to Section 52 of the new Children Act – Duty on Local Authorities to improve the educational outcomes of Looked After Children which comes live on 1st July, 2005. Details of the guidance has not yet been seen. The importance of this Section has been raised with all Social Work Teams and is included in the training for Foster Carers and Schools.

3. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:-

It was noted that future meetings of this Group had been scheduled in the Council's diary as follows:-

Monday 17 th October, 2005	9.30 am
Monday 12 th December, 2005	9.30 am
Monday 27 th February, 2006	9.30 am
Monday, 10 th April, 2006	9.30 am

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Education of Looked After Children
2.	Date:	Monday 17th October 2005
3.	Title:	Education of Looked After Children
4.	Programme Area:	Children and Young People's 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 June 2005 – October 2005.

5. Recommendations

That Members receive this report.

7. Proposals and Details

Staffing

The additional Learning Mentor has commenced employment on 19th September and is currently undertaking an induction period. Equally the new admin post was successfully appointed to and the post holder commenced work on 12th September. Unfortunately this post is only for 27 hours not the 37 we had hoped. (See later in the report for a discussion around this.)

Partnership with Schools

All Comprehensive Head Teachers have been written to following the pilot at Clifton last term requesting a meeting with the Head and Designated Teacher. To date four schools have made appointments for meetings. Head teachers are under considerable pressure this term from the demands of the new Ofsted framework and the staffing restructure, in the light of this I anticipate that the schedule for these meetings will run into next term.

I will be attending the Secondary Heads meeting on Thursday 6th October and will report at the meeting accordingly.

Partnership with Connexions

I have held meetings with key personnel within the Connexions organisation and we have shared with all school based Personnel Assistant's the names of Looked After Children in their schools, in line with the information sharing protocol developed last year. I am undertaking training in November with these PA's and will encourage the flow of communication between our agencies. We have guaranteed that all Looked After Children are classed as Priority 1's and will get careers guidance in Year 9 Year 10 and 4 guaranteed sessions with the PA in Year 11. We are also negotiating with schools and the Connexions service the need for PA's to be involved with all young people on part time programmes.

We have initiated regular meetings between the Connexions Service, NCH Bridges Leaving Care Team and the Get Real Team to track all Year 11 pupils and ensure a smooth transition from statutory education to Leaving Care Service.

Out of Authority Placements

There is currently 27 Looked After Children in Out of Authority Placements. Of these seven children are placed in adoptive placements and eight are in family placements. I am directly involved in provision for a number of these placements and we have set up a monitoring system to ensure the educational needs of these young people are being addressed.

Teenagers to Work

Following extensive discussion it has been agreed in principle that the Teenagers to Work Project should be located within the remit of the NCH Bridges project. This would allow easier access to young people as they are town centre based and

further build on the service which works predominantly with Care Leavers. I will keep Members informed regarding this process, as new protocols are developed regarding the reporting of this service to Members.

LPSA Performance

Key Stage 2 SATs, the final outcome was 52.95% of children achieved Level 4 or above in all three subjects. This exceeds our target of 42% set by the LPSA agreement.

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, Following the results of the GCSE 'S this year (see below), we are on target to meet our LPSA Target of 7 Young people leaving Care within a two year period, with 5 or more GCSE passes Grades A* - C.

Improvement Plan

Attendance

Members will be aware following our previous discussion regarding the need to develop additional monitoring systems by admin resources within the team; we were not able to identify the funding for a full time worker to undertake this.

In response to this situation we have identified funding for an additional 9 hours which has been added to the existing admin post and allows us to monitor weekly those Looked After Children for whom attendance is an issue. An improvement plan has been developed and circulated to all Children and Families staff.

GCSE Attainment – 2005 Examinations

We were particularly pleased with the performance of young people in relation to GCSE's this year. The break down is as follows;

Year	Cohort	No not sitting	No entered	1 A* -G	5 A* - G	5 A* - C
2004	27	15	12	12 44%	7 26%	4 15%
2005	38	10	28	26 68.4%	11 28.9%	2 5.6%

The issue with comparison is that no 2 years are ever the same for our Year11 pupils in regards to ability. Therefore this type of comparison is not always statistically significant given the tiny numbers in each cohort.

In terms of qualitative data,

- Five young people who received at least 1 A*-G were persistent non-attenders and were taught exclusively by the Get Real Team,
- The Get Real Team directly supported eighteen of young people who sat GCSE's
- Ten Young people did not sit GCSE's due to their personal circumstances, the majority of which were learning difficulties in special schools.
- Two young people sat the examinations and failed to achieve a pass grade, which meant 73% of our young people actually sat an examination; this is the highest number we have had sitting exams since the Get Real Team came into force.

Off School Roll

We currently have no young people off a school role.

8. Finance

The Team will be running the annual bookfair once again this year, whilst we have been able to reduce some costs for this year Members need to be aware that it may not be possible to continue to fund this high cost annual event in the future.

There is a concern regarding access to training for Team members particularly training through ECALS and Behaviour support. As there is now a cost attached to all this training the staff are not as able as they were to access it due to cost.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is clear that we meet the LPSA target in two out of the three categories, we have successfully met the target in the 7 A*-C category which is the one with the highest weighting. Currently the LPSA money funds £20k towards the full cost of one full time teacher in the team. This funding ceases on 31.03.06 and her current contract ceases on the same date. There is clear evidence that the post holder has been instrumental in enabling and supporting some of the Y11s towards their successes at GCSE. If there is no funding to extend the post it will severely affect Get Real's capacity to support and teach Key Stage 4 learners.

In 2004/2005 the Local Authority progressed from a 2 band to a 4 band performance in relation to Care Leavers with at least one GCSE.

In the same period the Local Authority achieved a 5 band performance in relation to Care Leavers in Education Employment and Training.

Unfortunately school attendance for Looked After Children during this period has deteriorated from a band 3 performance to a band 2 performance.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Children Act 2004 has significant impact on the Education of this vulnerable group of young people. S52 places a duty on Local Authorities to improve the educational outcomes of Looked After Children was implemented 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 Carers and schools.

Children Act 2004

2001 LPSA Agreement

11. Background Papers and Consultation

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