

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

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

Date: Monday, 27 February 2006

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 12th December, 2005 (copy attached). (Pages 1 - 3)
4. Get Real Team Report (copy attached). (Pages 4 - 7)
- Katy Hawkins, Get Real Team Manager, to report.
5. Date of next meeting - Monday, 10th April, 2006 - 9.30 am

**EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
12th December, 2005**

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burton and Littleboy.

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH OCTOBER, 2005

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th October, 2005 be agreed subject to amendments being incorporated as reported in respect of examinations data.

8. GET REAL TEAM REPORT - EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Katy Hawkins, Team Manager of the Get Real Team gave a summary of the educational achievement of Looked After Children for the period October to December, 2005.

The report summarised information in respect of the following :-

(a) Staffing

The situation regarding the Teenagers to Work support worker post was noted and members requested that they be kept informed of progress on filling of the post.

Concerns were again expressed at the implications for Looked After Children with external grant funding due to expire in March 2006.

It was important for the situation to be clarified in order to plan future strategies.

The Assistant Chief Executive was apparently drawing together the various strands in respect of external funding. Members were to be informed of the up to date situation regarding this.

(b) Partnership with Schools

A small number of comprehensive schools have taken up the offer of consultation with the Get Real Team and schools would be contacted next term to formulate a schedule.

(c) Partnership with Connexions

The development of the role of the Connexions PA within the Get Real Team was outlined, regular meetings being initiated to ensure effective joint working with all partners involved with the education of Looked After Children.

Any issues involving Connexions which may affect Looked After Children to be reported to members.

(d) Out of Authority Placements

It was noted that all out of authority placements continue to be monitored in line with the agreed protocol and that appropriate provision was in place for individual young people.

(d) Teenagers to Work

Due to lack of accommodation currently with the NCH Bridges Project Teenagers to Work has yet to make the transition as anticipated. This issue would be addressed in the New Year and the Teenagers to Work project will move accordingly.

Particular reference was made to apprenticeship schemes and the development of Modern Apprenticeship. It was important that Looked After Children were not overlooked regarding apprenticeship schemes.

(f) LPSA Performance

It was noted that the Council is on target to meet two out of the three agreed LPSA targets.

Initial targets for 2008 have been set in the draft Local Area Agreement submission. Consultation is in place to inform these and other targets before the final deadline of the agreement in March 2006. The initial target is taken from the Community Strategy in respect of GCSE passes for Looked After Children who achieve 1 GCSE A* - G. It is likely that other targets will be included relating to Key Stage 2 and attendance.

(g) Improvement Plan

- Attendance

In line with the improvement plan highlighted at the previous meeting, attendance remains high profile within the work of the Get Real Team. Identified children and young people at risk of high absences are being monitored weekly by the admin team, this allows for corrective action to be put in place by the appropriate professional. In addition to this school registers for every Looked After Child are monitored by the Get Real Team to identify any issues around attendance.

Consultation is being held with Government Office by Senior Officers in the council about the disparity between the absence reporting from schools and absence reporting in respect of Looked After Children. This is an issue which will be discussed as a proposed target for the Local Area Agreement.

The view was that the system in Rotherham needed to be improved, better response/information required from schools.

- Off School Roll

Currently there is one Year 8 pupil who has been permanently excluded from a mainstream school. This pupil will now go on the role of Fenton Wood whilst a significant package of work will be undertaken in order to prepare him for reinstatement into another mainstream school. Due to the severity of the incident involved, reintegration into the existing school was not an option.

(h) Currently the LPSA money provides funds towards the full cost of one full time teacher in the Get Real Team. This funding ceases on 31st March, 2006 and the 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.

Resolved:- That the report be received and further information be submitted to the next meeting in respect of (a), (c) and (g) above

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for Monday 27th February, 2006 at 9.30 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Education of Looked After Children
2.	Date:	Monday 27th February
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 December 05 – February 06

5. Recommendations

That Members receive this report.

7. Proposals and Details

Staffing

The Teenagers to Work project is now being managed by the NCH Bridges Leaving Care Team, as from 24th January 2006. This is following extensive discussions and consultation. The project will be able to reach more young people based within the Leaving Care Team as it is town centre based. Due to accommodation issues the physical transition of the project is yet to happen but it is anticipated this will be resolved in the near future. As agreed previously Members will be kept informed of the new reporting protocols which will need to be developed.

There is currently a vacancy within the team for a full time Learning Mentor post following the resignation of the post holder early January for health reasons. Interviews for this post will be taking place on 24th February.

Partnership with Schools

Schools have been written to offering individual meetings with the Management Team from Get Real to discuss issues pertinent to their individual cohorts of Looked After Children. As yet we have received no response to this. Looked After Children are on the agenda for the next Primary, Secondary and Special Heads Meetings and I will be attending these meetings too facilitate discussion. With particular reference to attendance and Children with part time provision.

Partnership with Connexions

The second Year 11 transitions meeting took place in January with all partners who will be supporting young people through Year 11 and their transition to adulthood. This meeting ensures any issues of concern are identified and all young people have the appropriate support packages in place. Partners include, the Get Real Team, NCH Bridges Leaving Care Team Connexions Lifetimes and Connexions Young Peoples Services.

Out of Authority Placements

Looked After children in out of authority placements continue to be monitored. There is a small cohort who live in specialist residential units which do not have education provision on site. It is these young people that pose a challenge, they have very complex educational needs and the support from the Local LEA is limited as they have large cohorts of extra district children with complex needs. Consultation with the Inclusion Team is taking place in order to ensure the educational needs of these children are best met.

Looked After Children on part time time tables

Following an investigation into this issue it transpires there are twenty three Looked After Children on reduced times tables. These individualised time tables range in type of provision and numbers of hours offered. There are a small cohort of children who do not access anything on school site and need a very specific approach to re-integration back into school. This issue has been raised at the Joint Leadership Team and a number of strategies both long term and short term have been explored. Each young person has been looked at in detail and an individualised plan put

forward. The issue here is one of funding as some of the packages involve one to one support which is significantly expensive.

LPSA Performance

Members will be aware following our previous discussion the Council is on target to meet two out of the three agreed LPSA targets.

GCSE targets in the Local Area Agreement have been aligned with Government targets set for CARE Leavers with GCSE's. Consultation is taking place around a further target linked to the Attendance of Looked After Children, there is in existence a government target which is reported to on a yearly basis but this is a very restrictive target.

Improvement Plan

Attendance

Following the previous meeting a letter was drafted for Sonia Sharp to send to schools expressing concern that absences were not being reported. However Sonia has requested we make personal contact with schools who do not provide the information and we work with Education Welfare Services and School Improvement to address this. Personal contact has been made to attendance officers in all Secondary schools requesting they e-mail the attendance of all Looked After Children to the Get Real Team on a weekly basis. This has been met with some resistance from some schools but these issues are being dealt with. This item will be on the agenda of the Head teachers meetings.

Information regarding pupils who have currently missed 25 days or more of schooling will be presented to the LAC Scrutiny panel on 9th February, following a request from this panel for the information.

Off School Roll

There are currently no young people who are not on a school roll.

Forthcoming Events

Multi agency Conference

A multi agency Conference has been arranged for 17th March 2006, please see the attached programme which outlines the speakers at the event. The Get Real Team are delighted to be able to offer the high calibre of speakers at this event which demonstrates the importance of education of Looked After Children. To date we have 76 delegates requesting places. The conference hall will hold up to 150 delegates.

Young Champions of Rotherham

Once again the Get Real Team are delighted to announce the Young Champions of Rotherham event which will be held at the Bailey Suite on the evening of March 6th 2006. This event seeks to celebrate the success of Looked After Children in all areas of their lives and promotes self esteem and confidence in those young people aged 2- 24 who receive awards.

Community Care Live event

This event is taking place in London in May 2006; requests were made for LA's to put in workshop ideas at this event. A workshop which will be a collaboration between Get Rea and The NCH Bridges project showcasing innovative ways of engaging Looked After Children and Care Leavers in order to improve outcomes, has been submitted to the event and we await the outcome.

8. Finance

The issues of concern regarding finance for the teaching post has been resolved and both Teachers have had it confirmed that their contracts will be extended until March and August 2007. This has provided some degree of continuity for the team; however the number of temporary contracts still presents levels of concern and uncertainty over the future.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Despite closer monitoring of attendance figures for Looked After Children the Government target in relation to this presents a particular challenge. Much work has been undertaken from the Get Real Team to improve this figure; however this is an issue which has far wider implications than just the Get Real Team and collaborative working and awareness raising of the roles of others within this needs to be under taken.

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

Children Act 2004

2001 LPSA Agreement

Local Area Agreement provisional documents

11. Background Papers and Consultation

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