

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

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

Date: Monday, 10 April 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 27th February 2006 (copy attached).
(Pages 1 - 4)
4. Get Real Team Report (herewith) (Pages 5 - 8)
5. Date of next meeting - 19th June 2006 (provisional)

EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
Monday, 27th February, 2006

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

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER, 2005

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th December, 2005 be agreed as a correct record.

11. GET REAL TEAM - PROGRESS REPORT

Katy Hawkins, Team Manager of the Get Real Team, gave a summary of the educational achievement of Looked After Children for the period December, 2005 to February, 2006.

The report summarised information in respect of the following :-

(a) Staffing

The Teenagers to Work project was now being managed by the NCH Bridges Leaving Care Team as from 24th January, 2006.

The project would be able to reach more young people based within the Leaving Care Team as it was town centre based.

Due to accommodation issues the physical transition of the project was yet to happen but would be resolved in the near future.

Members would be kept informed of reporting protocols which were still being developed.

The full-time Learning Mentor post had been filled. However, a part-time postholder had been successful resulting in a vacancy for a part-time post current funding for which expired in July, 2006.

(b) Partnership with Schools

Schools had 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. The latest position was reported.

Looked After Children were on the agenda for the next Primary, Secondary and Special Heads meetings. Discussion would be facilitated with particular reference to attendance and children with part-time provision.

The latest position regarding request for information regarding attendance

issues was outlined.

(c) Partnership with Connexions

The second Year II transitions meeting had taken place in January, 2006 with all partners who would be supporting young people through Year II and their transition to adulthood. Partners included the Get Real Team, NCH Bridges Leaving Care Team, Connexions Lifetime and Connexions Young Peoples Services.

Concern was expressed that, although not finalised, some Connexions time within the NCH Bridges Leaving Care Team would be removed.

It was agreed that Rod Norton and Joyce Thacker be requested to attend the next Cabinet Members' briefing meeting to discuss this matter.

(d) Out of Authority Placements

Looked After Children in out of authority placements continued to be monitored. Reference was made to a small cohort (3) who live in specialist residential units which do not have education provision on site that were posing a challenge. Specific concerns were highlighted regarding one child with complex needs although education provision had recently been implemented.

Members would be kept informed.

(e) Looked After Children on Part Time Tables

It was noted that 23 Looked After Children in Year II were on reduced timetables. The individualised timetables ranged in type of provision and numbers of hours offered. Whilst a full-time timetable was not practicable, all had got individual plans and one to one workers ensuring the necessary links were in place.

Specific reference was made to two Year 8's with very specific needs. It was noted that specific actions had been put in place for the two Year 8's and everyone else had individual plans.

Some packages involving one to one support were significantly expensive but finances requested had recently been approved.

(f) LPSA Performance

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

GCSE targets in the Local Area Agreement had been aligned with Government targets set for CARE leavers with GCSE's. Consultation was taking place around a further target linked to the Attendance of Looked

After Children. The existing Government target, reported on a yearly basis, was very restrictive.

(g) Attendance

Following concerns that absences were not being reported, it was noted that the request to all secondary schools to e-mail attendance of all Looked After Children to the Get Real Team on a weekly basis had been met with some resistance. The matter would be on the agenda for the Head Teacher's meetings.

(h) Off School Roll

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

(i) Forthcoming Events

- A multi-agency conference had been arranged for 17th March, 2006 at Silverwood. The calibre of speakers, including HMI demonstrated the importance of Looked After Children in the forthcoming JAR
- The Young Champions of Rotherham event, to celebrate the success of Looked After Children in all areas of their lives, had been arranged for the evening of 6th March, 2006 at the Bailey Suite. Presenters had not yet been finalised but arrangements were in hand
- The Community Care Live event was taking place in London in May, 2006 and ideas for workshops had been requested. Submitted was a workshop idea that was a collaboration between Get Real and the NCH Bridges project showcasing innovative ways of engaging Looked After Children and Care Leavers in order to promote outcomes. A response was awaited.

The report also indicated :-

- the issues of concern regarding finance for the teaching post had been resolved with the contracts of both teachers extended until March and August, 2007. However there were continuing concerns regarding the number of temporary contracts
- despite closer monitoring of attendance figures for Looked After Children and work undertaken from the Get Real Team to improve the figure in relation to the Government target, this was an issue with far wider implications than just the Get Real Team and collaborative working and awareness raising of the roles of others within this needed to be undertaken.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for Monday, 10th April, 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 10th April 2006
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 February 06 – April 06

5. Recommendations

That Members receive this report.

7. Proposals and Details

Staffing

The Team Manager has now secured a new position as Service Manager for Looked After Children's Resources in Rotherham. This post has lead responsibility for driving standards and developments in Residential, Education of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Areas of responsibility include the Get Real Team, NCH Bridges Project and Children's Residential services, enabling the Education agenda to be driven across the Service.

Clearly this leaves a gap with the Team Manager post, negotiations have taken place with existing staff and some areas of work have been delegated. Clearly as a matter of urgency the post will be recruited to.

One of the key areas of focus for the Service Manager will be to secure the funding to enable all staff in the team to be on permanent contracts and so increase continuity of service.

There is currently still a vacancy for a part time Learning Mentor in the Team and negotiations are in place to consider this post and how the resource is best used before moving to recruitment. It is envisaged that clear progress on this situation will be reported to Members at the next meeting.

Partnership with Schools

Attendance issues have been raised at a variety of forums in an attempt to improve the reporting of absence on the first day. A large number of schools were represented at the recent Get Real Conference, where the importance of Looked After Children's education in the forthcoming Joint Area Review, was outlined by an HMI Divisional Inspector.

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 a presentation to Dr Sonia Sharps Joint Leadership Team, further consultation has taken place regarding the Children and Young People on part time programmes. As an interim measure extra funding has been secured to enable specific work to take place with those most challenging individuals in order to provide specific programmes which act as a bridge into full time education. All Children and Young People on this list have very clear plans in place which are being monitored

LPSA Performance

Number of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with five or more passes at GCSE Grade A-C, target was seven young people over the two year period.

Outcome; Eight young people met this target.

Increase in average SATs results outcomes for Looked After Children aged 11 Years, target was 44% of children achieved level 4.

Outcome; 52.9%

Number of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with one or more passes at GCSE Grade A-G or GNVQ, target was 90%

As with previous information to Members this target which was particularly stretching was not met.

Improvement Plan

Attendance

As outlined earlier specific Head Teacher forums have been targeted to pursue the issue of first day response to an absence.

At a halfway point in the academic year our performance against the indicator stands at 7% with a target of 13% by the end of the academic year this is a very positive outcome at this point.

The LAC Scrutiny Panel continues to be advised on the issues regarding children and young people who have missed 25 days or more of schooling. Members of this panel are due to visit the Get Real Team in May 06.

Off School Roll

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

Get Real Team Events

Recently the Get Real Team hosted a Young Champions event which saw 75 children and young people aged from 4years to 21 years gain awards for individual and group achievements. This is an important event in terms of raising self esteem and confidence in our children and young people and was a really positive event. Many thanks to staff and Members across the Council who supported this event.

A multi agency conference was also held in March which had a successful turn out of staff from across the agencies. Key note speakers included, Dr Sonia Sharp, Terry Holland, HMI Regional Director for Joint Area Reviews, Ken Campbell who discussed Aim higher a project in Leeds aimed at raising academic achievement of Looked After Children and Mr Tom Johnson who shared his life from Care to University. Again Many thanks to staff and Members across the Council who supported this event.

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. This is top of the agenda to resolve as a matter of urgency.

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

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