

meeting **Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Board  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT RICHARD HERROD  
CONFERENCE CENTRE, CARLTON**

date **20 September 2010**

**Present:**

Councillor Philip Owen (Nottinghamshire County Council) in the Chair, Anthony May (Nottinghamshire County Council), Chris Few (Chair - Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board), Maggie Pape (Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Unit), Chris Jones (Nottinghamshire County Council), John Thorn (Children's Centres), Richard Cooper (Education Trust Board), Gill Saville (Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges), Ruth Marlow (Mansfield District Council), Keith Tansley (Gedling Borough Council), Ruth Hyde (Broxtowe Borough Council), Chris Kenny (NHS Nottinghamshire County and NHS Bassetlaw), Fiona Simpson (Networking Action with Voluntary Organisations), Geoff Hamilton (Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Unit), Nigel Hill (Nottinghamshire Probation Trust). Frank Horsley (Ashfield District Council), Allen Graham (Rushcliffe Borough Council), Chris Wall – minutes (Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Unit)

**ACTION**

The meeting began at 2.00 pm

**1a Welcome and Introduction**

Councillor Philip Owen welcomed Children's Trust Board (CTB) members and thanked Gedling Borough Council for providing the venue and refreshments.

**1b Apologies for absence**

Rob Mayall (Government Office East Midlands), Paul Farrell (CAMHS, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust), Andrew Muter (Newark & Sherwood District Council), Helen Jebb (Nottinghamshire Police), Graham Sheppard (Jobcentre Plus).

**1c Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2010 and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2010 were accepted as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

**2 Standard items including summary of action from Executive and Business items update from NSCB**

Anthony May (Chair of Children's Trust Executive) updated the CT Board on the following items discussed at the CT Executive meetings on 1 July and 1 September 2010:

The Safeguarding Improvement Programme progress and Pathway to Provision would be picked up as an agenda items at this meeting.

The Review of disabled children's services was conducted as a follow up action from the recent Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services.

The work with missing children would be included in the agenda item on Safeguarding at this meeting. The Executive had received a presentation on the implementation of a countywide early intervention and prevention service to improve performance. Further financial analysis and evidence would be presented to the Executive at a future meeting.

New statutory duties concerning tackling child poverty in Nottinghamshire would require CYPS to have a strategic policy in place by 2011. Tackling child poverty and missing children were woven into the existing Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

The Future of the Children's Trust and CYPP would form an agenda item at this meeting. Anthony explained that this government had announced its intention to repeal an element of the Children's Act affecting the future of the Children's Trust and level of partnership.

Chris Few (Independent Chair, Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB)) gave an update on business items from the NSCB. He confirmed that issues to be discussed were already on the agenda for this meeting. The missing children protocol had been approved by the NSCB and was now on the website. The emphasis on prevention with missing young people made good economic sense. In response to recommendations made by Ofsted, the NSCB had held a development session to look at challenge. A joint event between the CT Board and NSCB had been considered and a conclusion reached that the Boards had different purposes and therefore different approaches were needed.

An Extra-ordinary meeting had been convened to sign off a Serious Case Review, ref CN10, that arose from the death of a four month old child in February 2010.

### **3 Safeguarding Improvement Programme update**

The CT Board discussed the Safeguarding Improvement Programme. A summary of the Safeguarding Improvement Programme Board meeting that monitors progress can be viewed at:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/safeguardingimprovementboard.htm>

### **4 NSCB Annual Report**

Chris Few (Independent Chair, NSCB) presented the NSCB Annual

Report and Executive Summary. He pointed out that the report covered all the requirements of the Working Together guidance, an important issue for the CT Board and Executive. He highlighted the content of the report and safeguarding arrangements for the county. It contained work to be taken forward as recommended by Ofsted and issues subject to the Improvement Programme that primarily looked at front-line provision for vulnerable children and young people.

The key areas of focus for the NSCB were to ensure effective scrutiny and challenge of the Board and partners to demonstrate effective working together and impact on outcomes. The purpose of the report was to emphasise main priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14. The two main areas of importance were as follows:

- (1) Capacity in terms of financial resources, maintaining effectiveness and the need to support and mentor staff in the early stages of their career. There needed to be up to date awareness of child protection issues and safeguarding for all involved with Children and Young People's Services. Serious Case Review audit arrangements and degrees of compliance with policy and practice guidance need to be effectively managed and shortcomings addressed.
- (2) Agreed thresholds in all agencies across the partnership. The Pathway to Provision launch and roll out would be taking place over the next few months. It would provide the right framework but needed to be underpinned by all staff working with children and young people in partnership. Action needed to be taken to reduce the number of children into child protection to enable agencies to cope with capacity. Planning for early years and parenting support would help keep the levels down and provide a more manageable situation in the future.

Chris referred to page 7 of the Executive Summary for consideration. This stated areas of development for the CT Board. He pointed out that the Annual Report had yet to be proof read before final publication on the website but confirmed the content had been agreed by the NSCB.

### **The Board agreed to accept the NSCB Annual Report**

## **5 Pathway to Provision**

Chris Jones (Nottinghamshire County Council) gave a presentation on the Nottinghamshire Pathway to Provision and circulated to the group Appendix 1 to be included with the Report for this item. The Pathway to Provision, Joint Access Team (JAT) and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) handbooks had been produced to provide guidance on thresholds and a toolkit to support practitioners working with children and young people (CYP). They had been commissioned as part of the Department for Education (DFE) Improvement Notice and would be rolled-out in the Autumn. All documentation was now on the

Nottinghamshire County Council website.

The Board discussed Nottinghamshire's Pathway to Provision and made the following comments:

Ruth Hyde (Broxtowe Borough Council) queried who undertook the CAF and whether it could be done by a District Housing Lead. Chris confirmed that the guidance stated it was the most appropriate person working with the family and that Housing Leads could do this.

Anthony May stated that to avoid duplication it was preferable for one person to take the lead on completing the CAF, with the consent of the parent and also the child (depending on the age), and to gather as much information as possible. He pointed out that the CAF had been reduced in size to a six page document.

Chris outlined for the Board the content of all pages in the CAF and the information required for each section.

Ruth Marlow (Mansfield District Council) commented that Mansfield District Council had discussed the issue of who should complete the CAF within the authority and a lead person would take referral from the frontline eg. housing officer or other person who raises concerns.

Ruth Hyde (Broxtowe Borough Council) asked about whether there was a set timescale for CAF completion. Anthony confirmed that there was no national timescale for the completion of a CAF.

Ruth Marlow asked if increased numbers of CAFs resulted in less children being taken into care, and whether this had been risk-assessed.

Anthony pointed out there was evidence to show that when more CAFs were completed there was a reduction in referrals and initial assessments but not in the number of CYP going into care. Nottinghamshire was lower than the national average in terms CYP going into care. Currently, some referrals to social care did not meet thresholds and completion of a CAF would enable Social Workers to promptly decide on action to take, avoiding any waste of time for frontline staff.

John Thorn (Children's Centres) commented that Children's Centres had found the use of CAF to be a good source of information to support the volume of referrals, giving a more comprehensive view of the whole family.

Fiona Simpson (Networking Action with Voluntary Organisations) pointed out that the CAF would provide options and signpost people in the right direction rather than assumptions being made to contact Social Care & Health.

Anthony explained that every school in the county was covered by a

Joint Access Team (JAT) which met on a monthly basis. The new JAT Handbook would give clear guidance on thresholds that to support members of the JAT. Social Workers were part of a JAT and could act in an advisory capacity to support the JAT chair.

Chris Jones referred to an earlier point made by Ruth Marlow regarding the completion of a CAF by District Housing Leads. He pointed out that partners may want to identify a key person within their organisation to join the CAF Champions programme.

Chris Kenny (NHS Nottinghamshire County and NHS Bassetlaw) confirmed that there would be a sophisticated training programme to make improvements and look at the appropriate action required.

Chris Jones explained the CAF handbook offered performance management and quality assurance to support organisations with completion of the CAF. It included a checklist and contact information for queries.

Chris Few (Chair - Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board) emphasised the important function of the CAF was to identify a child's needs and give guidance on action to take. It should be used as an effective communication tool across all agencies and not just be viewed as a route into social care. Partners needed to consider how they would embed the CAF within their organisations.

Richard Cooper (Education Trust Board) commented that schools had difficulty in accessing the detail of the CAF or to check if a sibling was known to agencies. Support was needed to address any communication problems.

Anthony acknowledged that communication was important in order to overcome any bureaucratic concerns. The Frameworki Social Care electronic records system was being piloted in a number of schools and if successful would be rolled out across the county.

Frank Horsley (Ashfield District Council) referred to the CAF Champions programme and stated that a number of officers from Ashfield District Council Well-Being Training would be the most appropriate staff to attend.

Anthony added that once Pathway to Provision was embedded it would ensure that referrals were made in a consistent way. An electronic version of the CAF would be considered in the future to speed up the referral process.

**The Board agreed to:**

- (i) support the implementation of the Pathway to Provision across the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust**
- (ii) support the proposed roll-out programme for the Pathway to Provision document.**

## **6 Joint Strategic Needs Analysis**

Geoff Hamilton (Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Unit) presented the new CYP chapter of Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) which had been refreshed in the last 12 months. The JSNA would provide an evidence base for the next Children and Young People's Plan (2011-14) and was an important document for other strategic planning across the Trust. Geoff pointed out that in order for it to stay 'live' it would need to be updated on an annual basis. He thanked Nottinghamshire Primary Care Trust and other colleagues in the partnership for their contribution.

The Board discussed the JSNA and made the following comments:

Ruth Hyde (Broxtowe Borough Council) stated it was a very thorough and interesting document that did justice to all the issues raised. It was important not to lose sight of what was a vital insight into the lives of children and young people.

Anthony May on behalf of all colleagues gave his support to the JSNA. The content was excellent and the summary of Key Messages an easy read. It was an important planning document and the best picture of the lives of children and young people the Trust had ever had.

Frank Horsley (Ashfield District Council) added that Ashfield District Council workforce would look forward to reading the district profile (due to be published shortly).

Chris Kenny (NHS Nottinghamshire County and NHS Bassetlaw) stated the JSNA was a good reference document but it was important to consider how the document would be updated.

**The Board agreed to the publication across the Children's Trust of the refreshed CYP chapter of the JSNA.**

## **7 Future of the Children's Trust, including joint planning (CYPP) and performance monitoring**

Anthony May thanked Maggie Pape for the very comprehensive and easy to follow report setting out the national background on changes to be made to the Children's Trust. The Secretary of State for Education had indicated that the new administration supported co-ordinated services and effective local partnerships but not what it considered to be unnecessary bureaucracy. There was no longer a requirement to have the current CT Board structure in place, or to produce a CYPP.

Anthony stated it was important to maintain the support of partners as a way forward in order to resolve the issues around child protection and safeguarding.

Anthony referred to the three main options for the group to consider as outlined in the report:

- (1) To discontinue the CT Board and Executive
- (2) Retain the existing structure and governance
- (3) Maintain some formal arrangements but re-shaping to include high level governance and develop as a network with operational planning by key partners through an Executive group.

Anthony pointed out that the report risk-assessed these options. He suggested the middle ground be considered i.e. adopt option (3) to retain the partnership but amend the governance and relationship of the Board to that of a network. The CT Executive would consist of senior officers from key partner organisations to implement strategic decisions and take forward the provision and deployment of resources.

The group discussed the future of the Children's Trust and made the following comments:

Allen Graham (Rushcliffe Borough Council) suggested taking the mid-way option but that it was still too early to understand all issues. He questioned how the aspirations and needs of children and young people would fit into this structure.

Ruth Hyde (Broxtowe Borough Council) acknowledged the importance of the NSCB at district level but was unsure about the role of the CT Board. She questioned the impact the Board would have if it did not meet regularly and raised concerns that high level issues would not be given adequate attention. Other ways of consulting and exchanging information with partners could be considered.

Anthony pointed out that the NSCB had a different role in terms of working together and the future of the NSCB would be considered under the Munro Review, and no changes were planned to the NSCB at present.

Chris Few (Chair - Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board) confirmed that the interim finding of the Munro Review would be known by November 2010.

Chris Kenny (NHS Nottinghamshire County and NHS Bassetlaw) suggested that although the structure to the CT Board was uncertain the proposal to continue the partnership arrangement should be considered, with meetings that were less often rather than not at all. The CT Executive could take forward the work of the Trust with inbuilt accountability similar to that of the Nottingham Partnership Infrastructure.

Ruth Marlow (Mansfield District Council) supported the comments made by Ruth Hyde in terms of Safeguarding. The information received by the CT Board was of value but care should be taken to avoid duplication and to include local decision-making including Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). It was important not to lose the closeness to

issues affecting children and young people and to maintain the Board's understanding of accountability across Nottinghamshire.

Anthony pointed out the differences between providing a service and the role of the Board. The Pathway to Provision was an example of joint implementation by partners as opposed to items coming to the Board for approval or information purposes. He suggested the Board consider how consultation and communication could be maintained between partners when meetings are less frequent.

**It was recommended that:**

- (i) Nottinghamshire continues to operate formal arrangements for the joint oversight of co-operative working in order to provide a robust and accountable mechanism, retaining the name of Nottinghamshire Children's Trust**
- (ii) These Children's Trust arrangements are revised to ensure both their appropriateness in a changed national environment and to promote effective and efficient joint working**
- (iii) The proposals outlined in paragraph 13 of the report are adopted as revisions to the Children's Trust arrangements**
- (iv) The Children's Trust Executive, supported by the Children's Trust Unit, further develops the detail of these outlined proposals, aiming to have completed this by January 2011.**

**The meeting closed at 3.55 pm**

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 2 December, 10.00 to 12.00 pm  
Venue: Town Hall, Beeston, NG9 1AB. Please note this meeting has now been rearranged to Thursday 3 February 2011, 2.00 to 4.00 pm at the Rufford Suite, County Hall, NG2 7QP.**