

Warwickshire



Notes from meeting on Tuesday 4th April, 6.30pm, Shirehall, Warwick

Present:

- Nagina A
- Alicia
- Tehetena T
- Mia W
- Katherine W

Supporting Staff:

Shin Bhangal (Practice Leader Participation)
Emily Inns (Apprentice Participation Worker)
Andy Mclean (Part time Youth Worker)

Visitors

Rita Luck (Policy Development Officer)
Tracy Avill (Operations Manager Fostering Services)

Apologies

- Sophie H, Katherine W, Gabrella T, Keely G, Megan D, Jack O, Shakore H, Jack E

• **Hellos & Intros**

Everyone introduced themselves to the two visitors; Rita and Tracy.

Rita explained that she has attended because she is doing an audit on foster placement stability and was there to listen to the CiCC members.

• **Fostering- Operational Manager- Tracy Avill**

At the last CiCC meeting the group had agreed to invite the Fostering Service to this meeting to discuss the points raised at the March meeting. Shin explained the issues raised in the last meeting which were as follows:

- Training for foster carers
 - Favouritism
 - Rules in the home
- Information about the care leaver
- Information about foster carers
 - Knowing your entitlements
- Star rating for foster carers
 - Different needs
- Teaching "us" independent skills
- Meet foster carers in advance

One member, started by suggesting that the Fostering should create a pack/profile that should be filled with information about a foster carer, any other children in the house, any pets, house rules (that everyone has to sign), day-to-day activities and anything else that seems relevant.

Tracy thought this was a very good idea but mentioned that there already is a very basic profile to suit all ages and abilities, but thought Mia's, more detailed, version would work better.

Another young person talked about how her recent move went and what would have made it easier. She spoke about the things that she found most difficult and that she only knew a little bit about the foster carer she was going to. Before moving in, she wanted to know more about the home situation, who lived there and if there were any pets in the home.

A third member said that every foster child should know all the details about the family they are moving to no matter how long they are going to be living there; even if it is only for short term.

Tracy spoke about the difficulty trying to recruit foster carers.

Members of the group felt that no one should make promises to a young person on how long they are going to be in a placement.

Tracy explained that fostering has introduced a 'Placement Hub'; this is since a member of the Fostering team last attended a CiCC meeting. Tracy described the old system in regards to referrals that it could sometimes focus on a child's negative aspects in comparison to a child's positive aspects. She explained that that new system means that the referral gets completed by the social worker; their manager now has to read it before sending it off to the Placement Hub. However, if the Placement Hub is not satisfied with the referral, they are able to send it back to be re-evaluated if they believe there is too much negativity or something else needs to change.

Tracy then went on to explain that Fostering are now working in partnership with a psychologist who helps to look at referrals and works alongside foster carers to look at supporting them in developing skills to manage sensitive situations. Tracy spoke of many positive comments which had been made about the role of the psychologist so far; it has been helpful to have someone outside of Fostering to support placements.

Another member said that if a young person heard a social worker and foster carer speaking negatively about them, this would be a stigma and they would act out this behaviour. Tracy explained that is why there is a new Placement Hub to prevent negativity and start speaking in more positive language.

One young person said that she would not be confident telling personal things to her social worker in case the social worker told the foster carer. Another member mentioned that a different CiCC member had a 'worry box' in their foster home. The member explained that you could write down a worry and put it in the worry box. The

foster carer can read what you have written later which means the situation doesn't heat up and there is no awkwardness. She also said that texting works in a similar way too.

Tracy took the worry box idea on board, and then spoke about wanting to involve young people in foster carer training as well as asking experienced foster carers to deliver training. Shin said that there had already been discussions with Lynn Rowston in Fostering training about an idea to create a video with young people talking about their personal experiences in foster placements to show at fostering training events.

The topic of conversation then changed to young person's fostering referrals. Tracy said that in any future referrals she plans to get all professions who are involved with a young person (Teachers, Nurse, etc...) to contribute to a referral form.

The topic of conversation changed to MOMO. Shin explained that MOMO is app that allows young people to share their feelings, thoughts and views digitally with fostering, IRO'S, social workers, care leaving service, making complaints, etc. This app could benefit children and young people and professionals better than current methods. All the CiCC members agreed that this is a good idea. Rita mentioned that it would take out the emotion of filling in forms etc.... Rita asked the question, what if children and young people don't have phones/tablets to access. Shin explained that MOMO would need to be promoted with foster carers too; however, a hard copy version could still be made available to those who may not have access.

One member asked Tracy how many training courses foster carers need to go on... Tracy said that in foster carers in their first year need to complete all their core training. Tracy also explained that all foster cares are on different fee levels dependent on their background experience and training courses completed. Another member asked if foster carers do training on their own self-esteem, to which Tracy replied, not a specific one but it is something worth exploring, some therapeutic training courses touch on this issue.

Tracy mentioned 2 projects that are coming up in the near future. The Mentoring Project and the Ambassador Scheme, Tracy explained that the Mentoring Project would involve experienced foster carers mentoring newly trained foster carers; this would be completely voluntary. The Ambassador Scheme would also help to improve the service provided by foster carers.

Shin mentioned that Peer Reviewers came to the last CiCC meeting and read Beate's blog which helped to show the changes being made since the Peer Reviewer's attended. For example,

- No child should be moved without the permission of the relevant operations manager

- Any placement move should be reported to the next case decision meeting to ensure there is a clear rationale and to help identify themes
- Foster carers will be given the opportunity to flag potential placement disruption concerns without the need to give notice to end the placement
- If foster carers give notice or flag concern, a meeting between the children's team, the fostering team and the foster carers needs to be set up within 5 days.

Shin then asked Tracy what action points she is going to take away with her from this meeting. Tracy summed up the following:

- Children's voice to be included in fostering training events more clearly
 - Consider developing profiles and packs of information about foster carers (including private carers)
 - Provide an update on the work of the Placement Hub (is this helping to match young people and foster carers better?)
 - Provide an update on the voice of the child in Fostering Annual Reviews
 - Send out a list of foster carer training events to the CiCC
 - Consider introducing phone call conversations with foster carers prior to children and young people moving in/visits
 - Worry Box/Worry Monster idea
 - Update on Ambassador Scheme and Mentoring Project
 - Emergency Tins (late suggestion)
- **Health Passport**
Shin gave out the NHS Health Passports to everyone at the meeting to have a look at. There was a general satisfaction on the layout of the health passport with only one suggested change: Mia suggested making "allergies" and "intolerances" as two different sections. Other than that, the group were content with the new form. Shin will feedback to the Designated Nurse.
- **Important dates**
 - Tee as the Co-ordinator of the CiCC had agreed that the CiCC will focus on the areas of education, work experience, life skills and fostering for the moment
 - Mon 8th May, Care Leaving Operational Manager interviews - Nagina/Tee/Alicia/Mia were interested in taking part
 - CiCC regional event June 1st - Shin explained what was involved and that there were only 5 places. One member said she had been before and it was really good. All present members were interested in going to the event.
 - The Safeguarding conference is planned for 4th July. CiCC have a role to play in this event.
 - Virtual School Awards - Shin explained to the group that Drayton Manor was not available for the Virtual School Ceremony. Steve Pendleton had tried to

negotiate a deal but did not manage to reach an agreement. The CiCC second option of lots of different activities put on for the day was now being worked up. The Award Ceremony will take place on 10th or 17th September - yet to be confirmed. One member said that there should be team activities to get different young people interacting with others. The activities suggested were:

- 'Pie in the professionals face'
 - Total wipe out
- Circuit training course
 - Rodeo Bull
- Inflatable table football
 - Photo booth
- Online graffiti/ graffiti artist
 - Silent disco
 - DJ
- Giant board games
 - Dance mats
 - Air hockey
 - Penalty shootout
- Savoury food - not all sweets
- Vouchers alongside trophies

Emily would pass these ideas on to the Virtual School.

- **Future meetings**

Shin reminded members that all previous guests to CiCC meetings are invited back to explain what they have done since attending their last CiCC meeting.

One member suggested that the visitors come back to present their changes on a PowerPoint like presentation as she thinks (and others agreed) that talking at them, they won't listen but if there is something visual to see they will listen and take in the information.

Any Other Business

None