

## **54 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **55 THE RESPONSE TO MISSING CHILDREN**

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, introduced a report setting out the local arrangements in place to respond to children who go missing from home or care.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the local multi-agency guidance needs to be updated, with the key change being replacing the term 'Absent'. It was introduced to reflect national Association of Chief Police Officers which was developed to differentiate between different types of missing persons. The national guidance has been updated and the term 'Absent' has been replaced with 'Missing' (no risk) When the 'Absent' category is amended, there will not be a huge change to local practice as in Nottingham, absence and missing children are treated in the same way;
- (b) when a child goes missing, the circumstances around what encouraged the child to leave are looked at (otherwise known as the 'push and pull' factors). A return interview will be used when a child goes missing on two or more occasions (or potentially one occasion where the child is vulnerable, e.g. child sexual exploitation is possible). The return interview will always been conducted by an independent party;
- (c) a significant proportion of those children/young people who did not have a return interview failed to agree to engaging in this process;
- (d) a letter will be sent out to first time missing people offering support, as well as signposting to the relevant organisations that can provide this help. If there is a second time missing person (or a first time vulnerable person), then they will be offered a return interview;
- (e) after subtracting the children who were reported missing for the first time there were 1,484 episodes regarding 354 individual children in the city that should have had return interviews;
- (f) there was approximately a 60% completion rate for the return interview when figures were last available;
- (g) Nottingham City Council have worked alongside the Police to develop a leaflet that is child friendly and focuses on the expectation that a return interview will be carried out;

Following questions from Councillors, further information was provided:



- (i) there is no definitive time period where children have to be missing before a media appeal would be put out. There is a risk assessment approach taken on a case by case basis at a senior level. There have been occasions when it has been decided not to use the media, where this is felt to have the potential to increase the young person's vulnerability;
- (j) as a result of a return interview, there are several actions that could arise. Sometimes, it could be signposting to relevant support. At the other end of the scale, an adult of concern could be identified;
- (k) there is an overlap between missing children and children at risk of sexual exploitation. Analysis of return interviews considers whether a name is given that is unknown, connections can be made in this way and additional child sexual exploitation concerns can be identified.

**RESOLVED to note the content of the report.**

## **56 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN IN CARE**

Jasmin Howell, Service Manager of the Virtual School introduced a report on the educational attainment of children in care (CIC). This report provided an update of the work of the Nottingham City Virtual School and provided details of attainment in the 2015-16 academic year.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the Virtual School ensures that CIC are receiving appropriate education, and that they have a 'smart' action plan to see what interventions are needed. This action plan also ensures that these interventions are put in place;
- (b) currently, 80% of CIC have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place. Those that are in Further Education or higher education are being supported with plans;
- (c) a strategy for early years CIC is being developed to enable a smooth transition to school;
- (d) Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) is money received from central government. Applications come into the Virtual School for funding for CIC. All schools have been able to reapply for funding over and above £1,900 (which applies to years 5, 6, 10 and 11). 17 schools in total applied for the funding, which totals around £17,000 of additional money;
- (e) so far, no applications for PPP have been declined, but every request has been monitored, and in some cases returned to the school if their initial proposal wasn't satisfactory;
- (f) at Key Stage 1 (KS1) CIC are:
  - performing in line with schools nationally;
  - Performing above average for all measures related to CIC, but below average for non-disadvantaged children;