

Corporate Parenting Panel

Tuesday, 09 January 2024 at 14:00

County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

AGENDA

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| 3 | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below) | |
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Notes

- (1) Councillors are advised to contact their Research Officer for details of any Group Meetings which are planned for this meeting.
- (2) Members of the public wishing to inspect "Background Papers" referred to in the reports on the agenda or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act should contact:-

Customer Services Centre 0300 500 80 80

- (3) Persons making a declaration of interest should have regard to the Code of Conduct and the Council's Procedure Rules. Those declaring must indicate the nature of their interest and the reasons for the declaration.

Councillors or Officers requiring clarification on whether to make a declaration of interest are invited to contact James Lavender (Tel. 0115 854 6408) or a colleague in Democratic Services prior to the meeting.
- (4) Councillors are reminded that Committee and Sub-Committee papers, with the exception of those which contain Exempt or Confidential Information, may be recycled.
- (5) This agenda and its associated reports are available to view online via an online calendar - <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings.aspx>

Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Tuesday 17 October 2023 (commencing at 2:00pm)

Membership:

Persons absent are marked with an 'Ap' (apologies given) or 'Ab' (where apologies have not been sent). Substitute members are marked with a 'S.'

County Councillor

Sinead Anderson (Chair)
Anne Callaghan BEM
Francis Purdue-Horan
Sam Smith

Country Council Officers

Amanda Collinson - Service Director for Care, Help and Protection

Laurence Jones - Service Director for Commissioning and Resources

Sophie Eadsforth - Group Manager for Looked After Children

Claire Sampson - Group Manager for Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement

Substitute Members

None

Officers and Colleagues in attendance

Rhys Attwell – Democratic Services Officer

Paul Thomas- Service Manager (Secure Accommodation)-

Phillipa Milbourne- Business Support Administrator

Jenny Whiston - Service Manager Commissioning and Placements Team

Beth Downing - Group Manager: Placements and Commissioning

Orlaith Green - Group Manager, Psychology, and Inclusion Services; Principal Educational Psychologist

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declaration of Interests

No declaration of Interests was made.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 18 July 2023, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Fosters Carers Liaison Group Update

Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children, Provided the Panel with a regular update on the recent meetings of the Foster Carers Liaison Group (Flag). The following was discussed:

- a) The most recent FLAG meeting which took place on the 16 October 2023, was considered the most positive FLAG meeting in the past four years. It was noted that the improvements which had taken place in this time, were down to Jenny Whiston (Service Manager Commissioning and Placements Team), and the work she had conducted. The meeting was well attended with 36 different households attending the session. The session consisted of those in attendance sharing success stories, and the being able to ask questions concerning fostering services.
- b) The Panel were informed in an update on its proposal for a nominee from FLAG, to attend the formal meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel. That no progress had been made at the time of the meeting, with there being a requested update made by the Panel for the next meeting.

Resolved (2023/028)

- 1) To note the update on the Foster Carers Liaison Group (FLAG)
- 2) To request that progress is made on the process of seeking a FLAG representative to attend meeting of the Panel.

5. Children In Care Council Update

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on the recent engagement with the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The following points were discussed:

- a) There were questions about the Children in Care Council meetings being formally recorded as minutes. The Panel were informed that there would be feedback concerning the answer to this.
- b) The Panel wished to be informed on whether the Children in Care

Council meetings would appreciate the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, attending the meetings if school and college times permitted.

Resolved (2023/028)

- 1) To note the Children in Care Council Update.
- 2) To feedback on whether the Children in care Council meeting is minute.

6. Visits to Children's Residential Homes

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on the recent visit to Children's Residential Homes. The following points were discussed:

- a) There was one visit to Childrens residential home known as the Big House by Cllr Anderson and Cllr Callaghan, who informed the Panel that they received a warm welcome by staff. The Panel were informed of the work conducted by staff at the residential home, to meet the individual needs of children placed in their care.
- b) The Panel discussed the Ofsted inspection of Children's Residential Homes in the County, with the Panel being informed that Ofsted inspections in the past had not fared well in results but in recent times had improved.
- c) There are plans for future visits to other Children's Residential Homes in Nottinghamshire County.

Resolved (2023/029)

- 1) To note the update on Visits to Childrens Residential Homes.

7. Children's residential homes Update

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented an update to provide an overview of children's residential homes provision in Nottinghamshire. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel were informed in relation to reported incidents at the "Big House," that there had been a period of learning which had taken place. This included identifying for residents what triggers might be. This involved speaking to parents and key workers to understand the history of the child, and what experience certain triggers may be related to. So, in future engagements, there can be a plan put in place to mitigate the risk of overstimulation.
- b) The Panel were informed that the Big House are still trying to recruit 2 Residential Care Workers, a Residential Social Care Worker, and a part time Occupational Therapist. The Panel were told that for the Occupational Therapist, there has been an agreed increase in the grade of pay, due to the level of needs at the residential home.
- c) The Panel were informed that there had been an appeal over the inspectors'

opinions on the use of restraint at Clayfields Secure Childrens Home, which had detrimental effect on the rating it was awarded. The Panel were informed that when the inspection took place, on the issue of using restraint, no member of staff was interviewed. With there being reason to believe that the judgements around the legality of staff using restraint by those inspecting were made with not all the facts and the context of the restraint taking place being presented. It was further noted by Panel that the restraining process at Clayfield's Secure Childrens Home was used to protect others and stop significant damage to property.

Resolved (2023/030)

- 1) To note the Childrens Residential Homes Update.

8. Inspection Gradings of 'Exclusive Use' Children's Residential Homes

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented a report to provide an update on the Inspection Gradings of 'Exclusive use' Childrens Residential Homes. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel were pleased to note that overall, there had been a trend of outstanding grading upon inspection. The Panel noted that two Children's Residential Homes require improvement, with it being explained that the area manager is the same for those awarded both outstanding and in need of improvement. Allowing for there to be a plan of improvement which incorporates learning from Children Residential Homes with an outstanding grading. The Panel noted the improvement Plan for the two homes.
- b) It was noted by the Panel, that due to the nature of working in a challenging environment, upon the day of inspection there is always a risk that there may be room for improvements. With it being noted that an inspection of a Children's Residential Home, is a snapshot of a wider picture that the staff are working under.

Resolved (2023/031)

- 1) To note the Inspection Grading of 'Exclusive Use' Children's Residential Homes Report.

9. Independent Review of Children's Social Care Update

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Care, Help and Protection, presented an update to the Panel on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel were informed that there has been an update on the search for Pathfinder authorities for pillar 1, which was the Family Health pillar. The three Local Authorities which have been identified by the government to evaluate the recommendations from the consultation following the Care Review and subsequent Stable Homes Built on Love document have been named as

Lincolnshire County Council, Dorset Council and Wolverhampton City Council. These Councils will be the design sites for the project and trailing a new approach to Health Finders Authorities. Pillar 2 Pathfinders are currently out for bidding, with Councils being asked to bid to be part of wave 2. The Panel were informed that Nottinghamshire County Council are considering a bid for wave 2.

- b) The Panel were informed that the Local Enterprise Partnership had been working on the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- c) The Panel were informed that Nottinghamshire County Council are one of four Local Authorities working together, with an investment of 1.4 million which will be essential recruitment for a hub and campaign for foster carers across the four authorities.
- d) There is a network of foster carers and their extended families supporting each other called "Mockingbird." Which has been established and supported by an external facilitator, working towards a better network of support.

Resolved (2023/032)

- 1) To note the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Update

10. Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report

Claire Sampson, Group Manager for Safeguarding, Assurance, and Improvement, presented the statutory "Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report." The following was discussed:

- a) The Panel noted that the number of "looked after" children by Nottinghamshire County Council had remained stable, however increases have been seen in Asylum Seeking children.
- b) The Panel noted that one of the main objectives of the service over the last 12 months, have been trying to get meetings back to face to face. The panel were informed that initial review meetings are all conducted face to face.
- c) The Panel noted that the Service had done work on how to better improve meetings with young people and children, and over the next 12 months there will be a continued drive to improve the Service around making meetings more child friendly. An example of this was on modifying documentation to a pictorial document, as a way of making children feel included and listened to in meetings about their wellbeing.

Resolved (2023/032)

- 1) To note the Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report.

11. Virtual School Termly Report

Orlaith Green, Group Manager, Psychology, and Inclusion Services; Principal Educational Psychology presented an update to the Panel on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel noted a summary of the work conducted by the Virtual School to support children previously in care, children in care and children with a social worker. It was explained that the number of children looked after by Nottinghamshire County Council had remained at a stable level, being between 950 and 1000 for the last 2 years.
- b) The Panel noted that the data around attendance, with the average attendance for children of statutory school age being 86.16% for the academic year 2022-23 which compares to 90.55% in 2021-22. The Panel also noted the data around suspensions, with there being 110 of statutory school age children and young people receiving fixed term suspensions in the academic year, in contrasts to 77 the previous year. The Panel had concerns about the number of children who had been excluded and wished to see more alternative options than exclusions.
- c) The Panel noted the good news stories around Pupil Premium Plus, which included additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, and to ensure educational opportunities for all, and the Pupil Premium Plus eligible grants for Nottinghamshire children who are in care totalling over £1.6 million. In addition, there has been improved academic attainment around literacy.
- d) The Panel had concerns that the data used in the report could reflect children who have moved to Nottinghamshire post 16, which could be misleading. With there being a request that data for unemployment to be broken down to further reflect children who did not live in Nottinghamshire before the age of 16.
- e) The Panel requested an update on “Attend Training” and the data relating to attendance.

Resolved (2023/033)

- 1) To update the Panel with the data from children who have moved to Nottinghamshire post-16 and are unemployed.
- 2) To update the Panel with the impact and attendance of Attend Training.
- 3) To note the Virtual School Report.

12. Fostering Service annual Report

Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Care, Help and Protection and Sophie Eadsforth, Group Manager for Looked After Children presented to the Panel the Foster Service Annual Report. The following was discussed:

- a) The Panel noted that the number of Nottinghamshire looked after children had increased from April 2022 at 943 to March 2023 to a figure of 967. The Panel were informed that the increase is due to Nottinghamshire taking on 80 asylum seeking children in the past year.
- b) The Panel noted that there had been a decrease in fostering carers due to advancement in age, with their however being a new influx of fostering carers who have applied, with there being initial assessments taking place.
- c) The Panel questioned marketing practises and initiatives around attracting foster carers to use the Authorities services, with the panel noting that the authority has tried targeted social media as a marketing strategy. It was noted

that private fostering agencies pay a significant more than the authority, making it hard to compete on an economic comparative.

Resolved (2023/034)

- 1) To note the Fostering Service Annual Report.

13. Work Programme Report

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented the Work Programme Report. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel requested that a report on the allocation of services is brought to the Panel for the next meeting.

Resolved (2023/35)

- 1) That the Panel receive a report on the allocation of services for the next meeting.
- 2) To note the work programme.

Chair:

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH COUNCILS' APPROACH TO
CORPORATE PARENTING****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present an update from District and Borough Councils on their approach to Corporate Parenting.

Information

2. In February 2018, the government issued 'Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers: Statutory guidance for local authorities' extending the reach of corporate parenting responsibilities beyond those local authorities directly responsible for children's social care to other public bodies including District and Borough Councils. This built upon the Children Act 2004 which specified District Councils as 'relevant partners' in the provision of services to children and families.
3. The guidance states that "A strong ethos of corporate parenting means that sense of vision and responsibility towards the children they look after and their care leavers is a priority for everyone". It goes on to say that "local authorities will need to consider the extent to which the corporate parenting principles are relevant to a particular service area or exercise of a particular function. This should be a reasonable and proportionate evaluation based on the extent to which the service/function is being carried out in relation to looked-after children and/or care leavers. This should include arrangements for ensuring that in two tier authorities that district and county councils work closely together". The work of the County Council and Districts and Boroughs is coordinated through the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership Board, which reports separately to this meeting.
4. **Appendix 1**, authored by Theresa Hodgkinson, Chief Executive at Ashfield District Council on behalf of the seven District and Borough Councils across Nottinghamshire, provides an update on the approach of the second-tier authorities.

Other Options Considered

5. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

6. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers the information contained within the report and provides any feedback.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 97 73570
E: laurence.jones@nottsccl.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (CD 05/12/23)

9. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 29/11/23)

10. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0130

Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils' Corporate Parenting Responsibility Update

1. The seven Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils have a strong track record and acknowledge that care experienced people can face significant barriers that can impact them, and they therefore undertake a range of service measures which aim to support care leavers to prosper. This document sets out the range of measures which have been taken across Nottinghamshire to mitigate the impact of these barriers for those individuals with care experience.
2. The Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils discharge their Corporate Parenting responsibility through various mechanisms. Councils have resolved to treat care experienced people as if they have a protected characteristic; Equality Impact Assessments (EIAS) are undertaken, including this guidance. All District and Borough Councils are signatories to the Nottinghamshire County Council Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2022-2025. The key principles within this strategy are as follows:
 - Adopting the stance of being a Corporate Parent to children and young people with care experience.
 - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made regarding priority to care leavers within the housing system.
 - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made regarding free access to leisure for children and young people with care experience.
 - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made to children and young people with care experience, as far as discounts on Council Tax is concerned.
 - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made regarding priority for interviews and work experience for children, young people and adults with care experience.
 - Agreeing to integrate people with care experience as a category within our EIA process on all new policy developments.
 - Making the commitment to ensure we include people with care experience in general engagement exercises and discussions on new policy, so they have opportunities to shape and influence what we do.
3. The Nottinghamshire Districts and Boroughs are committed to the principles and share some examples detailed below:

Partnerships/Having a Voice

4. As with all parents, we can call on our partners within our own partnerships, for example Broxtowe Partnership offer additional help and assistance in supporting our Looked After Children and care leavers where applicable.
5. Youth Council/Citizen Panels exist across the county. In Gedling, following a consultation exercise in 2020/2021, a responsive action plan was delivered to improve the lived experience of young people in the Borough, focusing particularly on those who experience barriers to accessing services. This example encompasses the

scrutiny of mental health and wellbeing services for young people who are more at risk.

6. Also, as part of the annual programme of events, Gedling Borough Council also includes stalls and information relating to parenting advice, fostering and support for families, including the Nottinghamshire County Council Families Service; the Healthy Families Team; Nottinghamshire County Council Reducing Parental Conflict Team and the commercial fostering service, Nexus Fostering – each of which promote the support services available for parents.
7. Bassetlaw District Council provides support for the Bassetlaw Youth Council. Recently, the Bassetlaw Children and Young People Mental Health Alliance has launched a “Mental Health Toolkit” which is specifically designed by and for young people.

Council Tax Support

8. The Care Leavers Policy for Council Tax across Nottinghamshire has been in place since 2018 and supports care leavers with up to 100% reduction in their Council Tax charge until they are the age of 25.
9. As an example, Rushcliffe Borough Council have awarded Council Tax discounts to 46 people totalling £100,244. There are also others that have benefitted from the scheme.

Housing Support

10. From a rehousing perspective, care leavers with an identified housing need are placed into a high housing need band to enable them to be rehoused quickly.
11. Care leavers are placed in Band 2 (an urgent rehousing band) for a period of eight weeks. During this time, care leavers are encouraged to bid for suitable properties. If the care leaver is not rehoused during this time, their application is moved to the highest priority band, Band 1, to enable their rehousing to be expedited.
12. In accordance with the Nottinghamshire County Wide Care Leavers Protocol, care leavers do not need to have a local connection to the district or borough in which they wish to be rehoused. This means that if a care leaver wishes to live elsewhere (from where they currently reside), they will be accepted onto the relevant housing register.
13. Each council has a point of contact through either a Champion of the protocol or through Tenancy Support Officers, who offer additional support. A referral can be made to this team if a care leaver requires helps with their new tenancy.
14. Most councils have a Temporary Accommodation Facilities Improvement Programme, which focuses on reducing the effect of homelessness on children. Mansfield District Council offer a Child Home Safety Scheme, which is offered to families with young children to reduce accidents in the home through practical measures. In line with this, Mansfield District Council staff have also received Domestic Abuse Awareness

training and the Council has recently been awarded Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.

Complex Case Panel/Safeguarding

15. The joint Nottinghamshire District and Boroughs “Childrens and Adults Safeguarding Policy” was updated in January 2023 and safeguarding processes and procedures have been revised.
16. Where referrals for care leavers are made to the Complex Case Panel, the referrals are prioritised.

Employment/Skills

17. All councils encourage job applications from care leavers. When a care leaver applies for a job, they can indicate this on the application form. A guaranteed interview will be offered if they:
 - Meet the definition of a care leaver; and
 - Meet the essential criteria of the person specification for an advertised role.
18. As part of its Apprenticeship programme, Newark and Sherwood recruited a young person leaving care who subsequently secured permanent employment and went on to win one of the annual Employee Awards.

Leisure

19. As part of a county-wide scheme, all council owned leisure centres offer free gym, swim and classes to care leavers. The offer is described below:
 1. **Looked After Children** aged 0 to 15 years are eligible, with a letter from a social worker required.
 2. **After Care Pathway** aged 16 to 24 years are eligible, with a letter from a social worker or from Nottinghamshire County Council required.
 3. **Carer of a Child** must accompany their ‘Looked After Child’ to be eligible to attend an activity free of charge.
20. Recently, the new Leisure Management Contract in Ashfield was reviewed to ensure that those from a Care Experience are embedded into the new contract. In 2021/2022, 359 users from a care experience and 85 users in care used the leisure facilities free of charge.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

21. People with care experience are treated as if they have protected characteristics through all District and Borough Councils EIAs for the purposes of policy and service decision making.
22. Finally, as previously highlighted, a Care Leavers Motion has been taken through various council committees and as such, councils have pledged to treat ‘care

experience' as if it was a protected characteristic, which will help to protect care leavers from discrimination, despite national legislation not yet being in place. These measures endeavour to further represent and assist people with care experience across the Districts and Boroughs.

ACTION:

Councillors have expressed a desire to undertake training to understand more about the responsibilities of being a Corporate Parent. If Nottinghamshire County Council would like to consider co-ordinating this training across Nottinghamshire, it would be very helpful.

**Theresa Hodgkinson
Chief Executive, Ashfield District Council**

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S
RESIDENTIAL HOMES****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides information on the outcome of visits by Members to Nottinghamshire children's residential homes.

Information

2. The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel state that "Members will be expected to lead regular visits to care settings in line with local guidance accompanying as appropriate other Elected Members beyond membership of this Panel. Guidance and training will be made available".
3. Members who have made visits have received training to support their approach to the visits and engagement with young people in the homes. Written guidance on visits and providing feedback to the Panel were made available.
4. Visits have been made to The Big House and Caudwell House and their feedback is detailed below.

The Big House on 12 October 2023

5. Councillor Sinead Anderson and Councillor Anne Callaghan visited The Big House on 12 October 2023 at 4pm and the following represents their observations during the visit.
6. The staff were well informed and knowledgeable about the children's needs and knew exactly the provision that each child required. There was discussion about care and management and staff spoke about the See Saw System they use to record data.
7. Councillors were shown around the premises, which were well maintained and very inviting, and saw children having dinner and staff interacting with them.
8. The children were non-verbal, so Councillors observed the interactions between the staff and children as well as a parent who was visiting with their child as part of the preparation

for overnight stays. The children do have phones with symbols in order to communicate. The interactions led Councillors to believe that the children were happy and well cared in their setting.

9. The care home can only be accessed by staff/authorised visitors and all visitors were signed in and out of the facility. The children had identified safe spaces to use if they required time away from other young people or staff. It was felt that the children were safe.
10. All children were in wheelchairs and all the facilities within the care home were well adapted and the bathrooms had hoists and other facilities to meet the needs of the children using them. The bedrooms were also secure, with alarms on the corridors in case children came out of their bedrooms in the night, so staff were then aware of their movements. The bedding and decoration of each room was catered to the likes of each child.
11. The children's key workers go into the schools they attend to share and receive information regarding progress or any identified difficulties they are dealing with.
12. The visit was very pleasant, staff were warm and welcoming and clearly knew a great deal about the children that they were caring for. A parent spoke to the Councillors to say that their child was moving on due to their age and how they were going to miss the staff and amazing support they had received during their time at the home.
13. There were no concerns at the time of this visit.

Caudwell House on 23 October 2023

14. Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan and Councillor Sam Smith visited Caudwell House on 23 October 2023 at 2pm and the following represents their observations during the visit.
15. The staff gave their time to fully explain the day to day activities and introduced the Councillors to the residents in a helpful manner during a typical day. The Councillors engaged with residents with helpful assistance from staff members and were left with a strong impression that the residents were very happy; they did not have one-to-one conversations with residents.
16. The visit was extremely positive and there was obvious dedicated commitment by all the staff and an environment of pleasant and professional teamwork. Residents were felt to be in extremely safe hands with a very professional, well-motivated team.
17. Councillor Smith noted minor niggles on some building issues and perceived over the top Health & Safety practice on a couple of items.
18. There were no concerns at the time of this visit.

Other Options Considered

19. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

20. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability, and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

22. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there is any feedback that it wishes to give and any actions that it recommends in relation to the information contained in the report.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 9772590
E: laurence.jones@nottsgov.uk

Constitutional Comments (SF 13/12/23)

23. The recommendation in this report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel (Constitution Section 7 Part 2 Terms of Reference).

Financial Comments (CDS 13/12/23)

24. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0088

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES AND
SECURE ACCOMMODATION SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an update on Nottinghamshire children's residential homes.

Information

2. There are five internal children's residential homes in Nottinghamshire comprising two providing for children with disability and three mainstream homes. Nottinghamshire also has a secure accommodation service, which houses 20 young people who are placed on remand, on welfare grounds across England and Wales.
3. The current children's disability homes are Caudwell House and The Big House, although there are plans agreed to convert West View to become a specialist disability home in the future.

The Big House

4. The Big House is a short break home in the village of Edwinstowe. At present the home provides overnight short breaks for 23 children. Each child has a bespoke package of care ranging from 24 overnights to 156 overnights a year. Allocation is dependent on need and is subject to change dependent on the changing needs of the children.
5. Any child who comes to The Big House will have a significant intellectual disability. They may also display risk behaviours when distressed or have an unmet need. They may also have moderate physical disabilities and sensory and medical needs. Children must be of school age, attend their own school and can be up to 18 years of age. At present, short breaks are being provided for 4 out of county children. One of these is PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy) fed through the night and training has been organised for the night staff in preparation for their first overnight stay at the end of November.
6. The last Ofsted inspection was November 2023, and the home received a judgment of Outstanding. The home is absolutely thrilled with this outcome, and it shows the extent of the hard work that the staff team have put in since November 2021 when the home required

improvement. The feedback from the Ofsted inspector was very positive and she acknowledged how well the children are looked after, encouraged to take part in a range of activities and the progress they have made and how this is evidenced.

7. The monthly reports from the Regulation 44 visitor also evidenced the improvements that have been made and continue to make. The feedback in these reports acknowledges the commitment and dedication of the staff team to make a difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable children. The atmosphere around the home is one of warmth and care with a proactive staff team working to provide a high quality of care for the children.
8. The children continue to enjoy a variety of activities including Captain Jacks soft play, trips to Nottingham on the tram to see the Christmas lights, trampolining, swimming, bowling, fun golf, park walks etc. The staff continue to encourage the children to do lots of different activities. All the children work to their own individual Measurable Outcomes (MO) which are planned in line with their Education, Health and Care plan. These MO include preparing snacks, road safety and dressing themselves. It is great to see what progress the children are making and how happy they look when they achieve something.
9. The level of incidents remains low even though there has been a 2-week school holiday which the children struggle with due to lack of routine and structure. The staff have well established, positive relationships with the children and are able to understand the body language and change in demeanour, enabling them to diffuse situations before they develop into incidents, which is why there are not many.
10. A new residential care worker has recently started. Recruitment is still taking place although the home is fully staffed due to having the support of the staff from Minster View, who are still working with The Big House.

Caudwell House

11. Caudwell House (Southwell) is registered as a 12 bedded home, with 4 resident beds and 8 short break beds, although to provide the necessary and safe 1 to 1 care the children at Caudwell House need, the current staff team can only provide a service for a maximum of 9 children at any one time. It provides residential care and short breaks for children with physical disabilities and associated learning difficulties and health care needs.
12. There are currently 4 resident children, one of whom is due to move to an adult placement on 9 December. There has been a delay due to having to await a court ruling to agree the placement along with other concerns related to care and contact with their mother. This has now been given and the transition plan has begun, and visits have started. They are very excited about their new placement and the move will be very positive for them. A new child will be moving in mid-December in residential so the home will be up to 4 residents again. Assessments and transition visits have started and it is thought the new resident will be a good match with the 3 other residents.
13. Another resident who has leukaemia will be 18 in March 2024, and is currently on a maintenance plan which entails Caudwell House working very closely with health professionals and the transitions team to ensure any move to adult care is managed sensitively and that they have sufficient knowledge about their condition. This will probably mean an extension in placement to prepare for this. The resident has been on a short

break in Blackpool to see the illuminations and is already talking about further trips they want to do.

14. Another resident has been part of a community dance group, attending rehearsals over October half term with a performance on the Sunday afterwards in Lincoln. This is a child who when they came to us would not wear clothes, would not bath, and spent much of their time screaming and avoiding any noise or contact with people, needing 3 or 4 people to support their personal care. They have progressed beyond belief, now wearing clothes, accepting being bathed, less anxious around people and loving being part of the dance group. Their parents and grandparents sent the home a wonderful email and card recognising the positive changes and thanking the home for what it does.
15. A fourth resident is making excellent progress with communication and is making their needs known more which has then seen a change in a behaviour, showing less distress. A relative who was always the main carer is at end of life so the home is working with the school to try and prepare the child for this loss. The home has 2 County residents, 1 Rutland and 1 Derby City.
16. The short breaks service offers accommodation for a maximum of four or five children (depending on need), which allows the home to provide the 1 to 1 support needed to care for the children safely, considering the support they need with moving and handling and medical needs. All staff undertake moving and handling and health training to support the children's needs which includes peg feeding, medication, yankur suctioning, anaphylaxis, managing epilepsy and the use of VNS (Vagus Nerve Stimulation), giving oxygen in addition to child specific training such as deep suctioning, catheter care and giving injections. All staff must be assessed as competent with each procedure three times by health professionals before they are able to perform the tasks.
17. There are 6 new children due to access the short break service but there is some delay due to waiting for either child specific training to be delivered and staff to be assessed as competent or for an Occupational Therapy assessment to be completed to determine appropriate bed, bathing equipment and other seating equipment/plan. There is a part time Occupational Therapist (OT) employed at Caudwell House who left, and the home has been unable to recruit, and have therefore been reliant on buying in a service from county OT services who were undertaking these assessments as additional work. However, due to a shortage of OTs this results in the waiting list for the service extending and long waits for the admissions to progress. Consideration is being given to using an agency but this is proving challenging as there is a shortage of OTs. A meeting will be taking place with the Service Manager, Integrated Children's Disability Service, to discuss possible solutions. There are still lots of activities being enjoyed by resident and short break children both within Caudwell house and outside; they regularly go to the theatre, cinema, bowling, parks and swimming.
18. The new sensory walkway has been completed but was disturbed due to the heavy rain and needs a further coat to smooth out the ridges that were produced as a result. The bottom of the garden where the old sensory walkway was removed needs a layer of topsoil and grassing when the season is more appropriate. News is still waited on the two kitchen refurbishments which has been escalated due to Ofsted raising them at the last two inspections.

19. A new Residential Social Worker has been appointed from within Caudwell House from Residential Care Worker (RCW) staff and a Residential Care Worker is leaving. 2 RCWs have been appointed and are undergoing pre-employment checks. There are still 2 vacancies for RCW posts which are currently being advertised, in addition to the part time OT post.

Mainstream Homes

Lyndene

20. The home is at full capacity accommodating 3 young people, 2 males and a female. The staff team remain committed to the home. There is currently one vacancy in the home for a Residential Social Care Worker. Several staff from Lyndene are currently supporting Oakhurst due to staffing shortages. Managers are supporting managers at Oakhurst to identified bespoke training to new staff and experienced staff to develop practise and work therapeutically with children. Both homes are very proactive in supporting each other to ensure that all shifts are fully covered, and all children receive a good standard of care.
21. Education plans are in place for each child. All children are in full-time education. Two children go to mainstream school. One child was in an alternative provision in school, but has gone into year 10 and is now accessing all mainstream classes. Another child is at Nottingham hub completing childcare level 3 and has a placement at a nursery on Mondays and Fridays but is currently waiting for a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) to be completed so that they can start the placement. The staff team link incentives to education and celebrate all achievements no matter how big or small. Staff work with children to complete homework and attend Personal Education Plan meetings. All staff support children in school to manage behaviours and emotional issues when they arise.
22. Two children are working on independence tasks; this consists of a weekly budget to plan their menu, shop and cook their meals. Getting children ready for post 18 involves using public transport and working through their independence file and assisting them with problem solving.
23. All children are kept busy and stimulated. The children go to the gym, swimming, ice skating, walks, local parks, cinema, clip and climb, scooter parks and trampolining. One child attends Mansfield Stags disability football team and attends games and training weekly, achieving man of the match and receiving trophies. The children all baked for a Macmillan coffee morning and raised money towards a good cause.
24. Children have weekly activity planners which provides structure and guidance for each child to know what activities they are doing daily. Providing nurture and reassurance for children is extremely important and this is embedded in all children's plans to support children to feel valued, safe and to build positive relationships which supports staff to manage behaviours. The children have all been involved in pumpkin picking and creating intricate designs, they dressed up and went into the local community with staff for Halloween, returning with lots of goodies. The children attended the festival of lights at Rufford Park which was themed The Wizard of Oz. One child visited Leeds Armoury and enjoyed the day out. The children visit Doncaster Dome weekly swimming and ice skating in one session keeping them active and ensuring they have a good night's sleep.

25. In November the children visited Walesby scout camp for bonfire night, watching the fireworks and going on fair rides which was enjoyed by all. Celebrating achievements is important for all the children and there were two birthdays to celebrate in September and November - staff work to personalise each birthday with banners and balloons, choosing a theme with each child. One of the night workers bakes themed cakes and it was ensured the children received gifts and had a super day. Families are involved in the children's plans and attend Lyndene to celebrate children's achievements and celebrations joining the home for parties or calling in for a cup of tea and building positive trusting relationships.
26. The home had one missing episode this year. Staff and managers work closely with children to support them to understand risk and encourage positive choices. Staff complete keywork sessions with children daily. Monthly catch-up meetings are planned. Taking children outside the home and listening to their wishes and feelings is also key to ensuring that children feel valued and respected.
27. Multi-agency working is a strength of the home and working monthly with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is essential to discuss any issues/concerns relating to any of the children and supports staff to understand trauma and attachment. Managers continue to work a variety of shifts having oversight of the team and children and they continue to complete spot checks in the early hours of the mornings and support night staff with extra supervision. Managers are completing in-house training with staff around the Children's Regulations and how this is embedded into their roles and practise.

Oakhurst

28. Oakhurst is a four bedded home that is fully occupied and has four children. The home continues to provide a range of care for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties with or without moderate learning disabilities.
29. Oakhurst officially moved to West View on 13 October 2023 due to the refurbishment of Oakhurst. Prior to the move a lot of thought and careful planning had been discussed by the team to manage the stress for the children during the transition. Each young person was invited to West View to look round and choose their bedroom to reduce any concerns or worries about the house move. The commitment and dedication of managers and staff to manage a house move included preparing children well, managing performance issues, inducting new staff and taking two new children (siblings) within this time frame.
30. Three children currently attend full-time education, two of the children are accessing additional support through school and the home to improve their predicted GCSE grades. The third child continues to attend Alternative Provision four days a week accessing a learning schedule bespoke to their needs, including support from therapeutic and pastoral support workers. Having signed off the child's Education, Health and Care Plan, it is anticipated that they will commence full-time education in the New Year. A similar arrangement has now been agreed for a fourth child who arrived at Oakhurst in October that they are to commence full-time from the New Year.
31. The home continues to encourage children to participate in hobbies and leisure activities that will help their physical and emotional wellbeing. The home has an emphasis on health and fitness activities and all the children attend weekly gym sessions with a staff member, for some of the children this is a new experience. Menus that reflect tasty and healthy

meals are now fully embedded in the home and each child takes it in turn one night a week to prepare a meal for the home, under the supervision of a staff member.

32. The children have enjoyed varied and exciting half-term activities. They attended a weekend holiday to Matlock to support the move from Oakhurst to West View, visited Drayton Manor Park, Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Eden Camp modern history museum, Doncaster Dome and Roller World.
33. There have been two breaches of safeguarding, an allegation that was unfounded and the second concluded with the employee receiving a formal warning. During the past few weeks the manager's drive has been focused in raising contextual safeguarding specifically incident reports, timeline chronologies, management audits and analysis. There are no reported incidents of children leaving the home. The staff team has worked tirelessly with a child who when they are feeling distressed will walk to the top of the drive and sit at the bus stop, returning to the home after 10-15 mins to allow them to process events. On each occasion staff have acted quickly to safeguard and ensure that the child returned home safely. Oversight of such incidents has ensured robust challenge to practice has taken place when required. Ongoing team discussion, supervision and training ensure that lessons learned, and reflective practice are constant to improve practice moving forward.
34. The home continues to have the support of two members of staff from Lyndene to drive improvements and good practice within the home. A further two new staff members have joined the team which has enabled the home to alleviate the pressures of workloads, improved morale and helped the team to get back to their peak capabilities. An intense induction programme has been devised jointly with Lyndene to support new practitioners entering the role as Residential Social Care Worker (RSCW), this consists of mandatory training, case file discussion, shift planning, shadowing opportunities, role play, and feedback from employees and children as to each individual's progress and development.
35. The home has successfully recruited two RSCWs and one night wake staff that will commence towards the end of December 2023.
36. The home continues to anticipate the imminent arrival of Ofsted.

Clayfields Secure Children's Home

37. Clayfields Secure Children's Home is a national resource providing Secure Accommodation for up to 20 vulnerable young people between 10 and 18 years of age. Within the service, a total of 12 beds are available for purchase by the Ministry of Justice for children and young people on remand or sentenced to custody and eight for local authorities under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989, for example, where children frequently abscond from care, are at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) or are involved in child criminal exploitation (CCE) e.g., gang activity. Clayfields House also accommodates young people from the police under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 legislation for young people who are deemed vulnerable.
38. Clayfields House had a further full Inspection on 24 & 26 October, where the judgement remains to 'Inadequate', which primarily is around how children and young people are being 'managed away' and single separation, which is around regulation 20 (Restraint and

the Deprivation of Liberty). Ofsted reported that children were managed away and locked on corridors for extensive periods of time when the legal criteria was not being met and that children had questioned why they were being managed away. Ofsted also noted that the leaders and managers in the centre were not having thorough oversight of the recording and reports in relation to the episodes of managing away. This again related to one young person who was being managed away at the time of their visit and resulted in a compliance notice, which has already been met and satisfied following a further visit from Ofsted on 22 November. Clayfields has achieved the work through discussions in staff briefings and the establishment of a Behaviour Management Oversight panel, which the Service Manager chairs weekly, so senior leaders' oversight of the records and practice can be evidenced. Ofsted are likely to revisit again around week commencing 22 January 2024, which will give the opportunity to showcase the positive work that continues to be evidenced through these inspections and to satisfy inspectors of managerial oversight, which relate to the regulation 13 compliance notice. Whilst Ofsted provided a negative judgement, there were many positive observations that inspectors evidenced, and below are a few comments which have been taken from the report:

Overall, children benefit from strong and trusting relationships with staff. Staff work hard to develop these relationships, and they recognise how their relationships impact positively on children's experiences. As a result of this, children feel able to go to staff if they have worries or concerns. Children say they are happy living at the home and they feel safe.

From the point of their admission, children make progress.

A child who has recently come to live at the home has already told his social worker that he has staff he can talk to. Additionally, a child said that the staff are the best thing about living there.

Children are helped to prepare for moving on. Their moves are well planned, and importance is placed on finding the right next placement. This makes sure that children are provided with the right support to meet their needs and gives them the best chance to succeed going forward.

Children going to their next placement benefit from the staff working with the new carers before the move. This ensures that the new carers are better equipped to provide suitable support and care for the child.

Children are physically restrained only when required to keep themselves and others safe. Staff make concerted efforts to avoid restraint and physical interventions, using a range of de-escalation strategies.

Feedback from professionals and parents is very positive. Children benefit from seeing and/or having telephone contact with their families routinely. Parents feel that their children are safe. This regular contact helps children to maintain important relationships and essential support networks.

Children's complaints are taken seriously. If a child makes a complaint, swift action is taken to look into it.

Safeguarding concerns are referred to local authority children's services in a timely manner. Records are detailed and show that actions are taken to keep children safe.

Safe recruitment practices are in place. This ensures that the staff employed to care for children are suitable to do so.

Consistent care of the children is achieved as a result of the regularly held and purposefully planned meetings. These meetings are used to disseminate crucial information and share the decisions made about the care of children, practice and the running of the home.

Staff are able to routinely access managers for support and guidance. The staff value regular formal supervision sessions, where there remains a focus on staff welfare, care practice, training and development.

Staff knowledge and skills are extended through the provision of induction, mandatory and more specialist training. This enables the staff to meet the individual needs of the children who come to live at the home.

39. The monthly Regulation 44 visits continues by an independent person and provides a healthy challenge to the service. The visitor summarised their visit in November 2023 as follows:

What an inspirational visit. I absolutely loved speaking with (A CHILD) who was very reflective about where she was a year ago. Christmas is a really tough time for children in care not least (A CHILD) who was remembering where she was last Christmas. She clearly has a long way to go in terms of stabilizing her emotional well-being, but she has done amazingly well and is showing signs that life is not as consistently tough for her. The team around her have done what they do well with all children. They have been consistent and reliable in their support; they have been honest and not indulged her when she is edging toward behaving in a risky way. The home are doing well to meet the diverse needs of the children and at times challenged to manage the dynamics some children and their families bring together but there are some great pieces of work being done to help children make progress and keep them safe.

I do really like the combination of the positive steps to improve RPI recording and oversight, managing away and reflect and repair which collectively harmonises the principles of the statement of purpose and more consistently reinforces the life lessons young people need about dealing with crisis and challenges in a manner that is restorative.

There are no worries or concerns on my part since I can see what is in hand to be addressed in terms of staff mistakes or errors, I can see children are safe and being managed with sensitivity and care.

The home have delivered staff briefings regarding a number of themes but including the implementation of a centre wide restorative approach. This will require staff to encourage 'reflect and repair' when unwanted behaviour occurs. It was shared that two opportunities for this will be offered to young people and if this is refused as a last resort a sanction will be applied.

40. There continues to be a really positive commitment from the current Senior Leadership Team who are working together to address the Ofsted Compliance notices and whilst this has been disappointing for them, they have not let this affect their attitude, and are resolute to get this right for the children and young people. The positive attitude seems to be creating a much more positive culture throughout the centre and staff report that they are happy to be at work even when it is hard work. The young people continue to have a positive input into their life at Clayfields and their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account whenever possible and in particular through Clayfields Council and young people's meetings.
41. Behind the scenes the independent investigations are coming to a conclusion, with the disciplinary hearings due to conclude on 11 December 2023. This will leave one outstanding investigation.
42. Whilst the service continues to have vacancies across different departments e.g., care, education, intervention, support services and health, every effort is being made to advertise and appoint to these positions on a permanent basis. The service is exploring all possible avenues to recruit and retain staff including work with human resources around considering market factor supplement payments or the return of the secure allowance for frontline staff, which is in place for other local authority secure children's homes.
43. As of 30 November 2023, Clayfields has been operating on 83.5% occupancy level, with an overall bed night loss of 194 bed nights. This is an increase from the last reporting period of 58.06% in August. However, with the Department for Education (DfE) Capital Building Programme, this will reduce throughout the programme, which is currently estimated as a 47-week building programme.
44. Whilst staffing is an ongoing issue for the service due to recruitment challenges, the centre has been reduced to running two house units to full capacity, this means that there has been a difficult decision made to reduce the number of welfare children and prioritise the beds of the Ministry of Justice contract. Operating two house units has given the staff more confidence in keeping the young people safe, reducing incident numbers and ensuring that staff can undertake the training prioritised for the service. The Ministry of Justice contract remains a high priority and current bed availability across the secure children's homes is low, currently 10 beds available nationally across England and Wales.
45. The successful DfE Capital Building Programme continues, and an update has been provided to the DfE, which includes an updated financial position with a 'change request' for additional funding of £409,430. Part of the funding agreement is the works will need to be completed by 1 April 2025, so that all outstanding finance and other queries can be addressed. This building programme will ensure the Loxley and Sherwood house units are refurbished to the same standard as Scarlet house unit. The personal protection funding is underway and is progressing at pace and will be fully operational by April 2024, which will improve the security and communications across the centre. The personal protection revised system will incorporate a Dect telephone, as part of the minder system.

Developments

46. A property bought last year has been leased to the Council's largest provider of children's homes. Following refurbishment, it will seek Ofsted registration with a target to open as a

two-bed home in early autumn. This will provide much needed capacity to provide more Nottinghamshire children with a good quality home environment in the County, enabling them to maintain links with their communities and support networks. Plans are also advancing for the refurbishment of some of the Council's existing children's homes.

47. They will be supported in their aim to provide homes for some of the children with the most complex needs by the newly appointed Specialist Social Worker. The postholder will offer direct help to children who have experienced trauma and ensure staff providing care are trained to help those children thrive.
48. Clayfields outlined in the previous report to the Corporate Parenting Panel that they had been given permission by the DfE to undertake an initial feasibility study, which is part of the '*Secure Children's Homes Estate Review – December 2022*' and has been led by Atkins (DfE Architects). The Council's property commissioning team, alongside Arc Partnership, have put in a bid of £17,000, which will increase the administration block, especially with the increased staffing and facilities required for the future. Whilst this has not been given the full agreement, at least considerations are being made looking ahead and future proofing the environment for the future. This will be undertaken with the support of colleagues in the Council's Property Commissioning team and Arc Partnership.

Other Options Considered

49. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

50. The report provides an opportunity for the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

51. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability, and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

52. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information contained in the report.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 9772590
E: laurence.jones@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (GMG 14/12/23)

53. This report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider under Section 7, Part 2, para 36 on p.125 of the Council's Constitution.

Financial Comments (CDS 13/12/23)

54. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0136



9 January 2024

Agenda Item: 9

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CARE, HELP AND PROTECTION

PROGRESS OF THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS (2022 – 2025)

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides an update, attached as **Appendix 1**, on the Partnership Strategy for Looked after Children and Care Leavers 2022 - 2025, including the progress and some of the key achievements by the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership to date.
2. The report includes information on the Council's Virtual School, Youth Service, the Youth Justice Board and Police in relation to Looked after Children and Care Leavers.
3. An update is included on The Care Leaver Offer and its impact to date on improving the wellbeing and wider outcomes for care leavers.

Information

4. The Council remains committed to delivering a genuine, multi-agency, child-centred strategy to achieve its shared ambition and delivery of commitments. As a Partnership, the collective commitment is to give every one of our children and young people the foundations and support to thrive in adulthood.
5. Over the last four years, services for children in the care system have improved and the offer for children leaving care has significantly increased by being the first two-tier area in England to publish a 'Joint Care Leaver Local Offer'. Nottinghamshire councils and partners have worked to embed into communities the importance of equipping, assisting and preparing care leavers for adulthood and independent living.
6. However, there are some areas where progress has not been as expected over the last three years, with the pandemic contributing to this. For example, there is more to do to ensure young people have responsive and effective mental health support (particularly if they are living out of Nottinghamshire), and that timely and good quality health assessments are provided when they come into care and that there are enough of the right kind of homes in Nottinghamshire for young people to live. There will be a continued focus on these areas through this delivery plan.

7. Over the next few years, there is a requirement for partners to work together in the wider community to create systemic change: a better, more cohesive way of thinking and with agencies and organisations working towards a common goal. This must include the early dignified help and support that families need and trust, to enable better relationships.

Other Options Considered

8. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information which forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reasons for Recommendations

9. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Corporate Parenting Panel:

- 1) considers whether there are any actions it requires to further strengthen the Leaving Care service.
- 2) considers how it wishes to further monitor the implementation of the Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire (2022-2025).
- 3) agrees to receive six monthly updates on the impact of the Local Offer for Care Leavers.
- 4) agrees to receive an annual report on the work of the Partnership Board and the impact of the Strategy on Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2022-2025).

Amanda Collinson
Service Director, Care, Help and Protection

For any enquiries about this report contact:

Heather Bennett
Executive Officer
T: 0115 9774647
E: heather.bennett@nottsccl.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (SF 13/12/23)

12. The recommendation in this report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel (Constitution Section 7 Part 2 Terms of Reference).

Financial Comments (VC 19/12/23)

13. There are no additional financial implications arising as a result of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

DfE statutory guidance for local authorities Local Offer for care leavers:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance>

DfE statutory guidance for local authorities, Applying parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers>

[A Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers \(2022-2025\)](#)

The Terms of Reference and Membership of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategic Partnership Board.

The Partnership Pledge – A Guide for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0137

PROGRESS OF THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS (2022 – 2025)

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides an update on the Partnership Strategy for Looked after Children and Care Leavers 2022 – 2025, including the progress and some of the key achievements by the Looked after Children and Care Leavers Partnership to date. A previous update was provided to the Children and Young People's Committee in March 2022.
2. The report includes information on the Virtual School, Youth Service, Youth Justice Board and Police in relation to Looked after Children and Care Leavers. In addition, an update on The Care Leaver Offer and its impact to date on improving the wellbeing and wider outcomes for care leavers.
3. The Council's 10-year vision for Nottinghamshire captured in "The Nottinghamshire Plan: Our plan for healthy, prosperous and greener Nottinghamshire;" is committed to prioritising the needs of our children and young people. Members are asked to note their responsibilities as corporate parents defined by The Children and Social Work Act 2017. This is to help enable better outcomes for looked after children and young people which apply throughout the child's upbringing and into adulthood as follows:
 - to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of the children and young people.
 - to encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
 - to consider the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
 - to help children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the Local Authority and its relevant partners.
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people.
 - for children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work and
 - to prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Information

4. The Council remains committed to delivering a genuine, multi-agency, child-centred strategy to achieve its shared ambition and delivery of commitments. As a Partnership, the collective commitment is to give every one of our children and young people the foundations and support to thrive in adulthood.
5. Over the last four years, services for children in the care system have improved and the offer for children leaving care has significantly increased by being the first two-tier area in England to publish a "Joint Care Leaver Local Offer". Nottinghamshire councils and partners have worked to embed into our communities the importance of equipping, assisting, and preparing care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

6. However, there are some areas where progress has not been as expected over the last three years, with the pandemic contributing to this. For example, there is more to do to ensure young people have responsive and effective mental health support (particularly if they are living out of Nottinghamshire), and that timely and good quality health assessments are provided when they come into care and that there are enough of the right kind of homes in Nottinghamshire for young people to live. We will continue to focus on these areas through this delivery plan.
7. Over the next few years, there is a requirement for partners to work together in the wider community to create systemic change: a better, more cohesive way of thinking and with agencies and organisations working towards a common goal. This must include the early dignified help and support that families need and trust, to enable better relationships.

The Looked After Children and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy (2022-2025)

8. The Nottinghamshire Looked After Children and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy 2022-2025 continues to drive and build upon the previous 2018-2021 strategy and the ambitions of the partners in relation to their priorities for looked after children and care leavers in Nottinghamshire. The strategy has been informed by children, young people and care leavers working together with NCC and partners through a county-wide consultation.

Nottinghamshire's Delivery Plan for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2022-2025)

9. The partnership strategy will be robustly driven by the partnership delivery plan currently being developed and 'owned' by all the partners. Since 2014, local authorities have had a duty (Children Act 2004 section 10) to promote cooperation between relevant partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of all children and young people in their area. Over the three years of this Strategy, partners are ensuring the ambitions for improved outcomes for looked after children and care leavers are prioritised within their respective organisations. Section 10 defines relevant partners as including the district council; the local policing body and the chief officer of police; probation board; any provider of probation services; youth offending team; NHS England and Care Leavers Clinical Commissioning groups; and the governing bodies of publicly funded schools.
10. The Looked After Children and Leaving Care Delivery Plan 2022-2025 will supersede the 2020/1 Delivery Plan and will include ambitions and objectives that will provide services, support, and change to looked after children and care leavers in Nottinghamshire and will add value to partners' existing service and/or multi-agency plans. It is structured around the six Ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan:
 - Ambition 1: LAC and Care Leavers are safe and feel safe.
 - Ambition 2: LAC and Care Leavers experience good physical, emotional and mental health, and wellbeing.
 - Ambition 3: LAC and Care Leavers fulfil their potential.
 - Ambition 4: LAC and Care Leavers achieve sustained and fulfilling employment and economic independence.
 - Ambition 5: LAC and Care Leavers make a positive contribution.
 - Ambition 6: LAC and Care leavers have a positive transition to adulthood.
11. These ambitions and objectives are intended to complement other Nottinghamshire partnership plans focused on looked After children and care leavers, as well as other vulnerable children and young people and are only possible by all partners working together effectively.

12. The delivery plan is intended to be implemented by early 2024 and will be used as a 'tool' by the Board to ensure internal and external stakeholders secure a visible and explicit commitment to the Strategy's vision and ambition to improve provision and outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in their relevant strategic services' core work. As such, all partners have been invited to determine their individual key performance indicators in line with each of the Nottinghamshire Plan's desired outcomes and ambitions. A rich and wide 'data' set will be developed which seeks to capture wider achievements of Looked after Children and Care Leavers in relation to their social and emotional wellbeing, with a strong focus on preparation for independence and a fulfilling adulthood.

The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategic Partnership Board

13. The Partnership Board is chaired by Amanda Collinson, Service Director for Help, Protection and Care and vice chaired by Peter McConnochie, Service Director for Education, Learning and Skills and attended by Councillor Sinead Anderson. The Board continues to meet bi-monthly and is well attended by both internal services and external partners with the aim of working effectively together to ensure improved outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in Nottinghamshire and that these are prioritised within their respective organisations.

The following partners attend in addition to internal education and social care colleagues:

- Nottinghamshire County Council •
 - Newark and Sherwood District Council on behalf of the seven Nottinghamshire district and borough councils •
 - Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust •
 - D2N2 and East Midlands Chamber of Commerce •
 - Nottingham Trent University • Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust •
 - Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust •
 - Nottinghamshire Futures •
 - Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Care Leavers Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Bassetlaw Care Clinical Commissioning Group •
 - Nottinghamshire Police
 - Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
 - National Probation Service
 - West Nottinghamshire College on behalf of further education colleges •
 - A care leaver champion
 - Fostering Liaison Advisory Group
 - Department for Work and Pensions
 - SIF and Assurance Group
14. The corporate parenting principles underpin the work of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers strategic Partnership Board. They also set an expectation of Board members to use their voice to influence and advocate on behalf of looked after children and care leavers in partner's wider organisations, taking all opportunities to amplify the understanding of the experiences and needs of looked after children and care leavers at a local, regional, and national level.
15. A Nottinghamshire Partnership Pledge - A Guide for Looked After Children and Care Leavers was developed in January 2023, which explains how partners will support looked after children and care leavers in and from the county. This has already been identified in

the partnership strategy and has been created by and for looked after children and care leavers. Partners have pledged how they will meet their commitments, and how they will work with and communicate the pledge to all children and young people in care and in ways that suit them.

Progress and Partnership Updates Provided to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategic Partnership Board.

16. Regular meeting updates relating to Care Leavers and Looked after children are provided to the Board from both internal and external partners:

The Integrated Care System Service Improvement Forum (SIF)

17. The SIF provides a progress report on looked after data on a six-monthly basis. This multi-agency children's forum was established in 2016 and continues to meet quarterly. The SIF has developed a pathway specifically for Children in Care ensuring professionals work together collaboratively to improve the health and outcomes of looked after children and young people. It has agreement and commitment from both Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, relevant health providers, Designated Doctors, and Nurses for looked after children for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CCG and Bassetlaw CCG, and commissioners.
18. The SIF progresses and prioritises programmes of improvement and work informed by national guidance and locally identified pressures and challenges, sharing local/national updates, and ensuring good partnership working, responding to rapid reviews and other safeguarding reviews, and hearing the voice of young people. It ensures initial and review health assessments are undertaken within statutory timescales; providing a holistic review of health and development and to gather information about emotional and physical health, engaging the child or young person in their own healthcare, and to provide information and advice to the child, their social worker and carers regarding their specific health needs.
19. A recent SIF update to the board provided in September 2023, explained that a streamlined action plan has been developed including timescales of health assessment pathways for young people, ensuring the health needs of children placed in this area from other areas, with high quality CAMHS access, quality assurance work around transitions, and an ongoing discussion around KPIs and reporting. The mandatory training document for looked after children or professionals is due to be rewritten, and changes to statutory guidance are currently being proposed when working together to safeguard children, with the intention of this being shared with the board on an ongoing basis. This mirrors operational partnership working in other regions.

The Integrated Care System Looked After Children Assurance Group

20. This group provides regular updates to the Board and drives forward improvement and obtains system assurances the health needs of looked after children and care leavers within the remit of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System are being met. The purpose of the group is to ensure that the health needs of looked after children and care leavers are integral across the Integrated Care System offering strategic direction and support, provide constructive challenge.

Other Reports to the Looked after and Care Leavers Strategic Partnership Board include:

Police and Youth Justice

21. In September 2021, the Board agreed with the local Youth Justice Partnership Board its role in the local accountability structure to help implement the National Protocol on Reducing Unnecessary Criminalisation of Looked-After Children and Care Leavers. Local measures included the convening of the Reducing Offending Children in Care and Leaving Care Oversight Group on a biannual basis. The meeting is co-chaired by service managers from The Youth Justice Service and The Children in Care and Care Leavers Service.
22. In the paper to the September 2022 Board, we reported that, in the full year July 2021/June 22 there were 127 children and young people who entered the justice system for the first time, receiving a youth caution or above, of which 11 (9%) were recorded as being Children in Care. Considering the small number of children, it was agreed an audit would be completed to better understand the needs of the Children in Care. Upon completion, the report was presented to the May Oversight Group which highlighted the multiple and overlapping needs and vulnerabilities of children in care and how these may combine to increase the risk of offending. Principal risk indicators included children in care being not in education, employment, or training; using substances; having previous involvement with the Police; and having underlying emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns. It was evident that where these factors existed, particularly where the child is facing transition of placement or entering care, that they may face an increased risk of offending and/or exploitation.
23. A summary report was presented to both the Youth Justice Partnership and Children in Care and Care Leavers Boards in September 2023, which included key recommendations; including the promotion of greater support for children in care deemed to be at risk of offending, before and during transition; increased training to relevant staff to promote trauma informed responses to children in care and care leavers; and consideration of additional process measures to slow or stay the introduction of children in care into the justice system. The oversight group reconvened in November 2023 and agreed initial steps to begin implementing delivering against these actions, alongside strategic actions agreed in the boards.
24. Partnership working is supported by a Children in Care team which consists of a Police officer and two civilian grades (both former police officers). This team offer support, advice, diversion and signposting to placement providers and caregivers, who works closely with Police colleagues to support child centred decision making. As this role has matured it has led to the forming of established relationships with providers across the county as well as providing the opportunity to brief and upskill new providers as and when they are commissioned. The work of the Children in Care Police Officer is underpinned by a child centred approach with a focus the impact of adverse childhood experiences and how that influences a trauma informed approach. The Children in Care team follow the Reducing Offending Behaviour of Children in Care and Care Leavers protocol.
25. No child in care in Nottinghamshire should receive either an Out of Court or a statutory outcome without the completion of a ten-point plan. This is a nationally agreed document which promotes good decision making by OICs and partners. The use of this document within Nottinghamshire police is under review to ensure quality of completion and to identify areas for improvement from those completing it. With the review into the use of the ten-point checklist, It is anticipated that there will be remedial action to strengthen the process moving forward. No child in care in Nottinghamshire should receive an Out of Court or a statutory outcome without the case being discussed at a multi-partnership panel first.

26. A jointly agreed Out of Court Protocol is currently being revised by Nottinghamshire police, with both City and County Youth Justice Services. This will include guidance to all officers in relation to the management of investigations and disposal outcomes for Children in Care. The changes within the Out of Court Protocol will support and align with reducing offending protocol, with the aim being to reduce first time entrants of young people into the Court Justice system. This will support a child centred approach to the Youth Justice arena, with a focus on reducing offending through diversionary and intervention measures, opposed to formal criminal sanctions.
27. To support a consistent approach to Children in Care across the City and County, Nottinghamshire police are considering moving to a thematic Youth Interventions section in the future. This will potentially provide greater partnership working opportunities, improve consistency in police decision making, and allow for cross agency training and development. Should such a move take place, both City and County Youth Justice Service partners will be fully consulted with, and there will be no reduction in policing resources to these areas.

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) Partnership Board Update - September 2023

28. The first JSNA steering group took place in September with the aim of taking place every six weeks and included a wide variety of members. Its purpose is to bring system wide changes to: -
 1. Understand the health of Children in Care, those leaving care and following the transition to independence including adult health services.
 2. Enable service improvement: pathways and processes to support healthcare service provision.
 3. Inform Commissioning organisations of the provision needed and to procure appropriate services.
 4. Improve health and social outcomes across the life course for Children in Care.
29. JSNA data analysis is due to be completed by December 2023 and a finalised report is due to be completed by February 2024. Further updates will be provided to the Looked after and Care Leavers Partnership Board in March 2024, which will be briefed to the Health and Wellbeing board for formal public approval in June 2024.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report -September 2023

30. There is a statutory requirement to bring this report to the Looked after and Care Leavers Partnership Board and is presented at the Corporate Parenting Board after. Looked after numbers have stayed quite stable, but unaccompanied young people fluctuate. Quality assurance was provided that ongoing reviews with young people are held within good timescale, moving forward there is a need to ensure meaningful meeting participation.
31. Independent Reviewing Officers have regular meetings with Team Managers and the service to ensure there is consistent practice with the Children in Care Council, Participation Group Children Disability Service, Local Family Justice Board and Adoption Service and Foster carers meetings/CAMHS.

Looked After Children and Access to Dentists – September 2023

32. A recent Board update explained that current dental issues for looked after children and care leavers included:

- Difficulty in accessing an NHS dentist.
 - Being unable to return to previous dentist as the child has moved placement so dentist is nowhere near placement.
 - Long wait times for dental treatment through community dental services.
 - Aim is for every child must be seen by a dentist every 12months.
33. The outcome action for Board members to agree for the Local Authority to pay for and support Looked after children and care leavers accessing a dentist whilst there continues to be an issue accessing treatments.

Skills Development and Employment Opportunities Strategy and associated actions regarding care experienced young people - July 2023

34. The Skills and Development strategy was implemented in December 2021. However, there has always been a commitment to finding placements for looked after children and children in care and the Apprenticeship levy has been in place since 2017. The Achievement Service works with the team to seek an apprenticeship which meets their aspirations. NCC pays the living wage which is higher than the apprenticeship rate of pay.
35. Many care experienced young people aspire to enter into work but sometimes lack the skills to be able to do that, as do those who have been out of work for some time or are the furthest removed from employment. The strategy was implemented to consider how NCC can provide a progression route into proper employment, through apprenticeships, the graduate programme and standard recruitment.
36. The team are currently working on a pre-employment work experience offer which will be put on a virtual platform, involving case studies and exercises to do as well as our mandatory staff training. This is because physical placements are becoming harder to identify. They are also working more with schools/colleges/universities to offer placements that link to courses.
37. Recent approval has been provided for the budget to be ring-fenced for those most removed from employment, including care experienced young people. Apprentices are also guaranteed a job role at the end of their apprenticeship, at which point the team will work with departments to identify a job role – ideally in the same team as they did their apprenticeship in.

Good News Stories – Regular Bi-Monthly Agenda Item.

38. All partnership board members are invited to share their looked after and care leavers success stories. An update provided by the Looked After Team at November's meeting included:
- A 9-year-old looked after girl is having her first contact with her mum after no contact for four years.
 - In 2022, a looked after boy only attended school for an hour a day and now he goes full time, has made fantastic progress and is only about eight months behind others.
 - A child had their first holiday abroad to Egypt and 'loved it'.

- A care leaver had their RAF passing out parade at which the Social Worker attended, and photos were taken.
- A child has had their first face to face contact in many years with their father, they started with a photo, then the child made a video.
- A young person has commenced a carpentry course after being removed from education for a significant amount of time.
- Excellent positive feedback from an Independent Reviewing Officer to the Social Worker including:

*"I just wanted to share it was an absolute pleasure to chair * meeting recently. It was evident from these discussions, speaking with the foster carer and chairing the meeting that * and his Social Worker have an excellent working relationship. The Social Worker successfully supported * alongside the foster carer to share his thoughts and feelings throughout the review. The banter between Social Worker and * put him at ease and encouraged him to engage throughout the meeting".*

39. The foster family were very pleased that * is the children's Social Worker. They said * is the best Social Worker and communicates very well with the children. Both the foster carer and Supporting Social Worker thanked * for her support despite the situation being difficult (health wise) and the boys have continued to thrive in the Social Worker's care.

The Virtual School

40. The Virtual School held its fourth annual conference in partnership with Nottingham Trent University in April 2023. Two hundred delegates attended the Doing What Matters: Leadership Counts conference which consisted of inspirational keynotes from Hayley Care Leavers (Spenn Valley Headteacher), Jaz Ampaw-Farr (keynote speaker and author), and Jamie (Chair of No Labels, Children in Care Council), and workshops delivered by local authority, school and Nottingham Trent University colleagues. The number of delegates attending this academic year, doubled when compared to last year. The average rating of the quality of the conference in evaluation was 4.73 out of 5. Example quotes from delegates in response to, what worked well:
 - *Keynote speakers excellent. Nice to have secondary head this year to balance primary head last year.*
 - *Very informative and thought provoking. Great to network and time to think.*
 - *Incredibly knowledgeable. There was lots to take away from this conference and put into practice. Lots of thought-provoking moments.*
 - *Very strong keynote speakers and topics including workshops had a wide scope to impact on day to day running of school.*
 - *Raising profile of trauma informed practice*
41. Since the implementation of an online Personal Education Plan platform in September 2021, the number of Personal Education Plans completed for the children and young people has increased termly. 89% of children and young people aged 3-18 years had a PEP completed in the summer term compared to 53% in autumn 2021 when accurate completion figures were first extractable. Collaborative working between education and social care colleagues has enabled improvements to continue termly and barriers to be identified and addressed.

42. The Virtual School work in partnership with the Educational Psychology Service to deliver many of the training sessions available to Nottinghamshire education settings. 324 education and social care professionals attended Virtual School training this academic year. Average delegate evaluation feedback for all courses was 4-5 out of 5 when asked about usefulness and quality of the course. For 2023-24, a Building Relational Nurseries course is being developed with the Early Years Service to develop trauma informed approaches in settings where our youngest children attend which has been identified as an area of need through contextual knowledge, termly and end of key stage data. Example of feedback quotes from delegates at Relational Schools training this year:

- *Good balance of research and reflection combined with knowledge.*
- *A very useful reminder and some new ideas and resources.*
- *Feeling inspired.*

Course	Delegates 22-23
Building Relational Schools: Attachment Aware & Trauma Informed	47
Building Relational Colleges: Attachment Aware & Trauma Informed	11
Emotion Coaching	75
Understanding Behaviour & Responding to Distress (new for 22-23)	42
Statutory Role of the Designated Teacher	93
Meaningful Personal Education Plans	42
Mediated Learning Support Assistant training (new for 22-23)	14

43. At the end of the academic year 2021-22, 12.4% of children and young people achieved GCSE 5+ in both English and maths which is 1.4% above the national average. Children achieving GCSE 4+ in both English and maths is 2.6% above the national average.
44. Through the Department for Education's post-16 pupil premium pilot, the Virtual School has funded a care experienced mentor at West Nottinghamshire College for two years. This role is now well established and support for young people is extensive and includes support to complete and share their voice in Personal Education Plans; working with tutors to make reasonable adjustments and provide flex to enable achievement; supporting transitions including university visits and securing work placements. West Nottinghamshire College have developed excellent practice in supporting care experienced students to succeed and they were shortlisted for an Attachment Research Community Award following a nomination from Nottinghamshire Virtual School. West Nottinghamshire College have enthusiastically engaged with training and support provided by the Virtual School and implemented learning into practice including Emotion Coaching, 16 trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants and Building Relational Colleges work. Plans for 2023-24 include West Nottinghamshire College and Virtual School continuing to work together to share good practice with other settings.
45. In January 2023, 73% of year 12 and 13 looked after children and young people were in education, employment or training compared to 75% last academic year. There were 303 children and young people in year 12 and 13 in January 2023 and this figure is increasing year on year. 18 children and young people transitioned to university in September 2022. 8 young people secured first year places at university for September 2023. The Universities the first-year students will be attending include Sheffield Hallam, Nottingham Trent, University of York, to name a few. The young people will be studying courses such as

criminology, art and design, drama and theatre, and health and social care. There are currently 35 Nottinghamshire care leavers studying at university.

46. The unaccompanied children seeking asylum group increased this academic year which initiated a pilot project with Inspire to provide ESOL and transition support to post-16 for 8 young people who were new to the country. The main project aims were to develop speaking in English, provide an opportunity to build relationships with peers, and to prepare for post-16 education settings starting in September. The Virtual School worked with the Achievement Service to support 16 unaccompanied young people seeking asylum to access summer ESOL project run by Winchmore tutors. Evaluations from these projects will be used to inform further opportunities and support for our unaccompanied children and young people in 2023-24.

Local Offer for Care Leavers

47. The Leaving Care service promotes relationship-based practice when supporting young people resulting in positive, sustained relationships between care leavers and their personal advisors. We hear from young people that they receive support when they need it and they value the relationship that they develop over time with their personal advisor. As such, we follow a solution-focussed strengths-based approach to pathway plans to best identify individual support needs when planning their transition to independence and adulthood.
48. As at the end of September 2023, Leaving Care support over 1000 young people aged 16 – 24 years, with 475 care leavers aged 18 – 20. In Nottinghamshire we aim for the young people to know their personal advisor before they commence their transition to leave care at 18 years. We have therefore increased our personal adviser establishment to ensure all looked after children have a named personal adviser before they are 16½ years old or earlier if there is a need for this. As such there has been an agreed expansion of the team to meet demand and recruitment has taken place of an additional 6 personal advisors.
49. Nottinghamshire have a higher-than-average proportion of care leavers living in either semi-independent transitional accommodation or in a 'staying put' arrangement, compared with our statistical neighbours and England average¹. This is due to Nottinghamshire having its own countywide supported accommodation provision that can be accessed by young people from 16 – 21 years old, alongside the promotion of young people continuing to live with their foster carers post-18, enabling young people's transition into independent living being better planned and at the right time for them.
50. Nottinghamshire has continued to see an improvement in the proportion of care leavers deemed to be in suitable accommodation, with this figure being 95% in 21/22, compared to statistical neighbour average of 92% and national average of 90%. There are two specialist homelessness prevention personal advisors (one funded through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities until March 2024) who work across the leaving care service to help reduce the risk of and prevent homelessness, as well as our self-developed Care Leaver Emergency Accommodation (CARE LEAVERSEA), a wrap-around intense 12-week support in a supported tenancy to develop skills before moving into social housing.

¹ We have 51% in semi-independent transitional accommodation compared to 29% of our statistical neighbours. And Nottinghamshire has 25% staying put compared to 15% statistical neighbour average.

51. We continue to improve our approach to pathway planning through practice development and research that is centred on what our pathway planning should look like and feel like for young people. We intend a new model to be in place by the end of 2024 and will be co-producing this model with young people and all involved services. It is our priority to identify the people the young person wants to remain in contact with, in their pathway plan.
52. We actively promote pathway plans that are relevant, engaging, visual, inclusive and strength based positive. A young person's first Pathway Plan will commence after a young person is 15½ years and will be in place before they are 16¼ years and any young people who requires additional transitional support toward independence is referred to the specialist Transitional Personal Adviser Service (TPA). We are mindful of the continuous need to improve how well we keep life story records of events or experiences important to young people who are care experienced. We are working with Personal Advisors to recognise life story discussions and to keep important documents, photographs etc for young people for future access. We are also exploring options of a Virtual Memory Box which will act a bit like a personal social media page for young people where both themselves and professionals can upload pictures, important documents, and memories for them to be able to reflect on. Life summaries are also identified within a young person's Pathway Plan which helps set the context of the pathway plan, but also gives the young person an opportunity to reflect on their journey so far.
53. Alongside our health partners we will be introducing 2.5 (FTE) Wellbeing Workers commissioned through Barnardo's. They will support care leavers by offering support, counselling, signposting to services and enable wellbeing support to those young people who need it and cannot access other mental health services, or for instances when they wish to access their historical social care journey records. One of these Wellbeing Workers will be a specialist, dedicated to supporting our care leavers who were identified as unaccompanied children seeking asylum.
54. Our Leaving Care Team engage in continuous professional development to promote better emotional, health and wellbeing outcomes (for example, participating in the LIFT Study with the University of Bristol about better health outcomes for care leavers). We also look for alternative conversations around what works for the young person and celebrate young people's achievements personally by attending graduations, sending congratulations cards, contact from our councillors and senior leadership team, and sharing positive outcomes with all our partners at the Looked After and Leaving Care Strategic Partnership Board. We have a bi-monthly 21Plus interactive e-Newsletter for young people and the success of this means we are looking to expand this for younger 18+ leaving care cohort.
55. We listen to the young people through their relationships with personal advisors, multiple communication (via phone, email, WhatsApp, social media etc.), promotion of the Mind of My Own application and the contact facilities through Notts Next Steps application. We work alongside advocacy services to address issues and complaints that young people may raise with the service. Our internal complaints process is explained and accessible to young people and we use this as an opportunity to reflect and learn, so that we can improve our service.
56. Our Local Offer for Care Leavers is a robust and co-produced approach to supporting our care leavers. We have worked with our seven district councils to ensure fairness, equity, and a shared sense of corporate parenting to young people who are care experienced. We offer Council Tax exemptions for all Nottinghamshire care leavers living in our area until their 25th birthday, as well as free leisure centre access (regionally and nationally), and priority access to social housing and tenancies. We hear from care leavers that this has a

real impact on their lives financially, but also makes them feel cared for and supported whilst they are transitioning into independence. We have been reviewing the Local Offer since Sept 2023 ready for a relaunch in Jan 2024. This has also led to the development of more specialist local offers focusing on employment, education and training (Achievement Offer), 21Plus (for young people aged 21 – 24 years and beyond), Custody Offer (for young people in custody/leaving custody), Parents' Offer (for those who are parents or parents to be) and our UASC Offer (for young people identifying as children and young people seeking asylum).

57. Our Achievement Offer reflects our aim of encouraging children and young people to think about, work towards, and sustain employment, education, and training. We engage in structured support to improve circumstances for young people who are Care Leavers as not being in employment education, or training (NEET). We start conversations with young people about their aspirations early. We have a Business Engagement Achievement Advisor to improve employment opportunities and work with local, national, and international organisations to co-produce a range of options including work experience, apprenticeships, traineeships, job opportunities, and employability briefings. Our educational psychology service provide support to educational establishments to develop their capacity to provide emotional literate mentoring and coaching to looked after children and young people. We effectively use tools (such as the Personal Education Plan) and Pathway Plans to help young people identify and then work towards realising their potential. For summer 2023, 90% of PEPs were completed within timescales, which is an increase from 79% at our last spring term.
58. The Achievement Service support the care experienced into work and apprenticeships, including a top-up for apprentices to match the national living wage. We recognise our role as a corporate parent so offer employment opportunities for young people within NCC. Care leavers are offered guaranteed interviews for employment vacancies where they meet the job criteria. Upon successfully achieving employment within NCC, we consider any impact that care leavers' history and experience may have on them within their role and engaging with others and look to support this appropriately. We ensure all care leaver apprentices can access an independent mentor upon starting a role with NCC in addition to their personal and achievement advisor who are also employed by NCC.
59. The Virtual School and Achievement Service work closely together to increase educational placement stability and resilience and increased line of sight through transition to post-16 support. We continue to supplement the Higher Education Bursary for Care Leavers with a £10k annual financial support package for those accessing Higher Education pathways. The number of our care experienced people accessing higher education pathways between 2022 and 2023 is 36.
60. We have established a 'children in education' board to monitor and understand children who are excluded or who do not have an education place. This is a relatively small number of children (as of Oct 2023 this was 24 children) but senior managers in the virtual school, leaving care and looked after teams will regularly meet to explore options and look for solutions to ensure education provision for all our looked after children.
61. Young people over 21 have support from our dedicated 21Plus Service with experienced personal advisors who are proactive in keeping in touch with young people and ensuring that they can access support, advice, and guidance when they need it. These named 21Plus personal advisors offer both duty response as well as allocated case holder support and proportional pathway plan reviews when this is needed. We also offer young people to have continuing contact with their previous personal advisor(s) as part of the transition

to the 21Plus Service or after when this is preferred. We re-launched drop-in sessions in 2023 so young people can link with previous named workers and professionals, access advice from our Achievement Service, homelessness prevention personal advisor(s) and the 21Plus Service.

62. If a young person is approaching 21 years and there are continuing additional support needs, then they can stay with their allocated leaving care personal advisor post-21. During this time, we look to introduce the 21Plus Service to have a planned and supported transition to 21Plus support when this is suitable. We hold reflective group supervisions within the team and work alongside our quality assurance team to benchmark, reflect and improve our offer. We held an internal reflective audit led by an independent service manager as part of our learning and growing review.
63. As a service, we explored the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (May 2022) and voluntarily agreed to the extension of Staying Put for care leavers until the age of 23 with the ethos of this being opt-out as opposed to opt-in expectation.
64. For our 21Plus care leavers, we use a variety of tools to engage and communicate including hand-delivery, email, e-newsletters, and WhatsApp where we share important information, tips and advice, including any updates about our local offers or employability briefings. We have a dedicated app called "Notts Next Steps" which contains our Local Offer information, how to contact Leaving Care Services and other useful advice and opportunities for our young people. We ensure all looked after children and 21Plus young people have got plans for key dates such as birthdays and religious festivals and are not alone (unless they want to be). We also arrange at least 4 open access activities during holidays per year via the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding.
65. The cost-of-living crisis is significantly impacting on care leavers and their ability to live independently with levels of financial stability. We have developed a bi-monthly e-newsletter with hints, tips, and cost-saving advice for our 21Plus care leavers and will be sharing this with our younger care leaver cohort. We have also developed a 'cookbook' to promote recipes for easy-cook and affordable meals. We work with support funds and local charities, providing young people access to additional grant-funding, supermarket vouchers, and My Boxes (issued quarterly by My Bag Charity) to those young people in independent/semi-independent accommodation. We also offer bespoke financial support for education, employment, and training such as suitable interview Care Leavers specific work/uniforms, apprenticeship top-ups, specialist equipment, transport, computer equipment, access to Wi-Fi, study materials, Higher Education grants and accommodation funding. We are working with our partners at the My Bag Charity to explore free 4G internet access for young people who are on low income or benefits and are usually responsible for paying for this themselves.

NCC's Youth Service

66. The Council's Youth Service works with looked after children and care experienced children in several contexts to enhance youth resilience, improve health outcomes and reduce escalation into statutory services, and to meet with other young people. Youth Work provision, No Labels (Children in Care council), the Young People's Board, early help and preventative youth work, C-Card, and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme are all coordinated through the Youth Service.

67. We promote active engagement and participation with 'No Labels' Children in Care Council through the Local Offer and through social worker interactions. When seeking input from No Labels, any service both internal and external to the Council can request support from young people through an expression of interest (Eofl). This is to enable active engagement with children and young people to hear their views about what matters to them and provides an opportunity for young people to offer insight into how changes can be made to better meet their needs. The Young People's Board (made up of eight Members of Youth Parliament, the Chair of the Children in Care Council and a representative from the D2N2 Voice of Adoption, who have all been elected to these roles by their peers), review each request with the support from their youth workers. This allows the board to take ownership of the agenda, establish the information required and the time needed to enable their active involvement, they then determine the next steps of engagement.
68. Our looked after and leaving care teams also actively seek the voices of young people who do not participate in the Children in Care council offer to gain the voice of those whose lived experiences would not otherwise be heard. No Labels reaches out to young people through events, activity days, family days, and social worker referrals. The children and young people who sit on our Children in Care council shape their own activities and are engaged through a range of methods such as drama, sports, and arts.
69. No Labels is attended by senior leaders, council members as well as representatives from children's services. No Labels attendees are also invited to participate in a range of other activities, for example, foster carer training and the chair of No Labels shared their experience of being a Looked After at the Designated Teachers conference in April 2023. The group was also involved in the delivery of Childline training in May 2023 and hope to present at the 2024 foster carer conference.
70. No Labels helps to ensure young people can be involved at all levels of youth participation and our care experienced young people have expressed appreciation for the consistency provided No Labels and report their own development around public speaking, building friendships and increased confidence in a 'safe space'.

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR BY CHILDREN ANNUAL REVIEW 2023****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides an outline of the progress and challenges of the work being undertaken by the Local Authority and relevant partner organisations regarding sexually harmful behaviour by children during the year April 2022 - March 2023 and the commitments for the following 12 months.

Information

2. Nottinghamshire has adopted the NSPCC's definition of harmful sexual behaviour by children:

"One or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults."

3. Nottinghamshire is committed to working together with partners to improve the lives and experiences of children, young people, and families by empowering them to make their own choices, being fair, open, and honest and building safe and nurturing relationships.
4. This includes children who display harmful sexual behaviour receiving a consistent multi-agency response focused on achieving the best outcome for the child and their family whilst reducing the risk of any further harmful sexual behaviour and addressing the needs of the child who has committed harmful sexual behaviour and those of the child who is the victim.
5. The full annual report written for the Safeguarding Assurance and Information Group and the lead member for Children and Families is attached as **Appendix 1**. It contains information regarding the governance of Harmful Sexual Behaviour work in Nottinghamshire, the work being undertaken, as well as reflections upon achievements and areas of challenges and their impact. There are clear ambitions set out for the next 12 months and a plan to achieve these is in the process of being agreed within the HSB steering group.

Other Options Considered

6. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its duties in respect of children who sexually harm others.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

7. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there is any feedback that it wishes to give and any actions that it recommends in relation to the information contained in the report.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Jenni Campbell
Independent Chair Service
T: 0115 8041462
E: jennifer.campbell@nottsgov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LPW 20/12/23)

10. The recommendation falls within the remit of Corporate Parenting Panel by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 19/12/23)

11. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0128

HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR BY CHILDREN ANNUAL REVIEW 2023**Purpose of the Report**

1. This is an annual report written for the Safeguarding Assurance and Information Group and the lead member for Children and Families. It provides an outline of the progress and challenges within the work being undertaken by the Local Authority and relevant partner organisations regarding sexually harmful behaviour by children during the last year (April 2022-March 2023) and the commitments for the following 12 months.
2. The Service Manager, Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review, has strategic responsibility for harmful sexual behaviour and manages the Child Protection Co-ordinators who chair the Harmful Sexual Behaviour panels. The operational responsibility for work within Children's Social Care sits within the social work teams. The Service Manager role includes having strategic oversight and offering support in respect of harmful sexual behaviour across the wider system including early help and working with partner agencies.

Information

3. Nottinghamshire has adopted the NSPCC's definition of harmful sexual behaviour by children:
"One or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults."
4. Nottinghamshire is committed to working together with partners to improve the lives and experiences of children, young people, and families by empowering them to make their own choices, being fair, open, and honest and building safe and nurturing relationships.
5. This includes children who display harmful sexual behaviour receiving a consistent multi-agency response focused on achieving the best outcome for the child and their family whilst reducing the risk of any further harmful sexual behaviour and addressing the needs of the child who has committed harmful sexual behaviour and those of the child who is the victim.

Governance

6. The partnership arrangements for assessment and intervention continue to be overseen by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). The Harmful Sexual Behaviour steering group with senior representatives from the involved organisations continues to provide the direct oversight of this work including the Harmful Sexual Behaviour panel, procedures, tools, and training. The panel ensures that there are sufficient trained staff to complete both specialist assessments and interventions as well as commissioned services where required. It considers learning from relevant practice and safeguarding reviews and the support across the system for harmful sexual behaviour in Nottinghamshire. Progress is regularly monitored by reporting to the NSCP Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG).

7. The membership of the group consists of a Consultant Paediatrician, Harmful Sexual Behaviour Specialist from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Safeguarding Children in Education Officer, the Police, the Youth Justice Service and the Service Manager for the Safeguarding Partnership. The steering group continues to maintain close relationships with third sector partners who offer support to both children who commit harmful sexual behaviour and those children who are victims although they do not attend every meeting.

How We Work and What We Do

8. Two Child Protection Co-ordinators (CPCs) continue to take the lead for chairing Harmful Sexual Behaviour panels and advising Team Managers whether presentation of a child's circumstances to panel is required. The panel is made up of partner agency representatives.
9. Panel is held monthly as standard but due to the volume of referrals some additional panels have also been held throughout the year. This appears to have addressed the delay in children waiting for panel. In the quarter running from January to March 2023 the average wait time had reduced to approximately 8½ weeks, from the date it was identified a panel was required. This is about the time it takes to undertake a thorough and quality assessment. Some children are waiting longer, but this is usually because of delay in the assessment being completed in a timely manner. Panels have now returned to taking place monthly.
10. 132 children were assessed in relation to Harmful Sexual Behaviour during 2022-2023 and 102 of these went to panel. This compares with 149 the previous year and 123 going to panel. Anecdotally it is felt there have been less enquiries raised for Harmful Sexual Behaviour within the last 3-6 months. Over the year 2022 -2023 there has been a marginal decrease in numbers in comparison with the previous financial year. This suggests that children and young people who had been less visible because of Covid restrictions have now moved through services, and referrals have started to return to pre-pandemic levels.
11. 11% received interventions from the preventative team in Youth Justice, 8% from Head2Head, 6% from the Safer Living Foundation and 25% from the Family Service of Children's Social Care.
12. The Local Authority has identified three Lead Social Work Practice Consultants who have developed specialist knowledge in Harmful Sexual Behaviour and are linked to specific social work teams to provide advice, consultancy, and support and to co-work specialist assessments. This has assisted in both improving practice within Children's Social Care and with shortening timescales for assessment and panels. It has assisted with ensuring the correct children are being heard at panel at the right time. The Practice Consultants are also responsible for quality assuring the work being presented.
13. The lead Child Protection Co-ordinators continue to work closely with the lead Social Work Practice Consultants and panel members to ensure consistency of practice around thresholds and decision making, to ensure information sharing with practitioners is timely and effective, and to support the development of policy and procedures along with the Harmful Sexual Behaviour steering group.

14. IMARA¹ are now attending certain panels where it is felt appropriate based on the individual child's circumstances. This also ensures the voices of the victims are being heard, and how the impact upon them is considered and what support is required.

Our Statutory Duties

15. NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellent) guidelines published in 2016 state Children's Social Care should refer children and young people who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour for an early help assessment, in line with local thresholds and referral procedures and coordinate early help and subsequent assessments and develop the care plan to avoid unnecessary or repetitious assessments that may be stigmatising.
16. If harmful sexual behaviour is displayed, professionals should refer to harmful sexual behaviour services, child protection services and the criminal justice system, if necessary.
17. Responsibility for co-ordinating the multi-agency group rests with three safeguarding partners (local authority, clinical commissioning group for an area, and chief officer of police for a police area) who have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

Reflecting on our Achievements and the Impact of this Progress

18. Over the last 12 months we have continued to embed strength-based practice within assessments undertaken with families and panels.
19. The membership of the Harmful Sexual Behaviour steering group has been extended to include the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Service Manager, a Consultant Paediatrician from Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, and the Safeguarding Children in Education Officer. There is a wide variety of different agencies represented on the panel and agency attendance continues to be good.
20. In last year's annual report, we intended to make changes to the process to implement a risk management approach to safeguard children, alongside reducing the wait times for panels. However, we have successfully managed to reduce panel waiting times by increasing the number of panels per month for a period. The work undertaken by the Lead Practice Consultants has supported area teams and appears to have improved social workers and managers knowledge of how to identify if a child would benefit from the support provided by the Harmful Sexual Behaviour panel and has improved the timeliness of the assessments being presented at panel.
21. Head2Head CAMHS are providing specialist assessment and intervention for young people with complex unmet needs that present within Harmful Sexual Behaviour including online harm. The specialist assessments that Head2Head offer are AIM3 Under 12's and AIM3 Technology Assisted Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments as well as various specific Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments focusing on risk. They also provide specialist safety planning so that young people can remain in an environment that best suits their needs – this can include home, school and residential settings.

¹ [Imara](#) is an independent specialist service that supports children, young people and their safe family members following a disclosure or discovery of child sexual and domestic abuse.

22. All young people referred to Head2Head receive a global CAMHS assessment to identify their needs including mental health, emotional, neurodevelopmental, learning needs and conduct. From this assessment further specialist CAMHS assessments can be completed including screening for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), assessments for autism and autism spectrum disorder, speech and language assessment and access to a CAMHS medic for a medication review. In 2022 three children were assessed for Autism by Head2Head, out of the 10 new referrals received that year. Five children already had pre-existing diagnoses.
23. This work is supported by specialist consultation from Harmful Sexual Behaviour practitioners including attendance at the panels, so oversight and guidance is offered to all Harmful Sexual Behaviour cases as well as specific Harmful Sexual Behaviour consultation to cases referred to Head2Head. In the last 12 months this service has continued to offer this Harmful Sexual Behaviour service to everyone referred with no waiting list and no restriction on service, despite increased demand. There have been occasions where individual children may have fallen outside the usual Head2Head process and there have been direct conversations between Children's Social Care and Head2Head service. This has been as a direct result of the working relationships between Head2Head and Children's Social Care, focusing on the needs of children rather than being driven by process.
24. The commissioning arrangements for Head2Head contracts are currently under review to include a joint arrangement with Nottingham City and the Integrated Care Board in relation to neurodiversity assessments.
25. There has been improvement in the timeliness of assessments being completed. This is currently at 59% whereas for the previous year this was around 46%. This is an area of work we wish to continue to improve upon over the coming year and would aim to have the number of assessments being completed in timescale to increase by a further 15% over the next 12 months.
26. Timelier panels have reduced previous difficulties in respect of consent, which meant whilst waiting for panel, families may not be willing to agree to ongoing social care intervention for extended periods of time. The decrease in panel has resolved this in most circumstances.
27. The system has demonstrated an ability to be flexible and respond to an increase in demand, allowing for assessments and panels to be completed and respond to individual need and reduce delay, and for children to get the right levels of support and intervention at the right time.

Training and Workforce Development

28. We have continued to promote our training offer and the identified Lead Social Work Practice Consultants are delivering three different Harmful Sexual Behaviour focused training sessions on a rolling programme. This is aimed at frontline social work teams.
29. The programme for the NCSP Training for Harmful Sexual Behaviour recommenced from January 2023, with further training scheduled over the coming months. Again, uptake is good with several different agencies, including schools, foster carers, Adult Social Care and Early Help services being represented.

30. There is no proposal to increase the training offer currently. There is a need to ensure that the uptake is there, how this is then translated in to practice and how we evidence the success and impact of any training delivered in our interventions with children and young people.

Voice and experiences of children, young people and their families

31. The voices of children and young people presenting with harmful sexual behaviours are being heard by professionals and there is a wider understanding of the issues affecting them. The voices of victims also form part of the holistic assessment.
32. This is an area of focus for development over the next 12 months to work with children and young people to gain understanding of their experience of our services and to use this to inform improvement and development of practice and services across the system.

Evidence of Challenges and Impact

33. The challenges continue to be in respect of availability of resources for young people who sexually harm. The Safer Living Foundation is currently not accepting any further referrals and the mentoring programme has ended. Challenges around waiting times for panel have begun to resolve themselves but for several families they had to wait some time before a decision has been able to be made. This results in families remaining open to Children's Social Care longer than necessary.

What Are Our Ambitions

34. Over the coming months a needs assessment is being undertaken by Public Health. This will look at the numbers of young people in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire engaging in harmful and /or problematic sexual behaviours and any relevant trends; any wider health issues of this cohort; current service provision and best practice as well as any unmet needs or gaps in service. It will consider the voices of children and young people. The focus will be on the period from January 2019 – December 2022 to allow for a comparison of pre and post pandemic numbers. This is due to be completed mid/end July 2023 and will inform future work plans and priorities across the partnership.
35. Initial conversations with the Office of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner have taken place and once the needs assessment has been completed, further discussion around the role they may take in relation to the prevention of harmful sexual behaviour across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City.
36. The NSPCC is undertaking a piece of work that will focus on early intervention work in respect of problematic sexual behaviour with a focus on delivering on this work to schools across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. They have consulted with the Local Authorities and partners in respect of this.
37. Work is being undertaken to understand and improve the journey a child takes through Children's Social Care when an assessment for Harmful Sexual Behaviour is undertaken. This includes consideration of the number of transfer points a child experiences and how this can create delay.

Our Commitments for the Next 12 Months

- To continue to improve social work practice in respect of timeliness of assessments and panels including improving a child's journey of support for harmful sexual behaviour through the social care system.
- To consider the recommendations of the needs assessment once completed across the partnership and with Nottingham City and agree a work plan for the steering group.
- To work with partners (including the third sector) and Nottingham City to improve the early help offer in respect of problematic sexual behaviour particularly within schools.
- To improve the gathering and influence of the voices of children and young people who have lived experience of harmful sexual behaviour.

The steering group will develop a detailed action plan in relation to the above ambitions and the measures for progress.

Jennifer Campbell
Service Manager
Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review
19.06.23

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND
RESOURCES****ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING SERVICE: APRIL
2022 – MARCH 2023****Purpose of the Report**

1. Members requested an annual report following high profile enquiries into child sexual exploitation and missing children in several local authorities. This report provides an update against the Council's 2022 - 23 priorities and analysis of the statistical data for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Information

2. Child exploitation and children missing from home and care continue to be priority areas for the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services have a focus on local responses and resources to address child exploitation and it is a particular area of focus in the annual self-evaluation that the local authority provides to Ofsted.
3. The annual report, attached as **Appendix 1** and with **Appendix 2**, provides an outline of the progress and challenges within the work being undertaken by the Local Authority and relevant partner organisations to tackle child exploitation and children who go missing from home and care during the last year and the commitments for the following 12 months.

Other Options Considered

4. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

5. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

6. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human

rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

7. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there is any feedback that it wishes to give and any actions that it recommends in relation to the information contained in the report.

Laurence Jones

Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Hannah Johnson

Service Manager, Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review

T: 0115 8546351

E: hannah1.johnson@nottsgov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LW 20/12/23)

8. The Corporate Parenting Panel is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (CDS 19/12/23)

9. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0127



From Strength to Strength

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Annual report of Strategic Safeguarding Service for
Child Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care
April 2023 – March 2023

Purpose of the Report

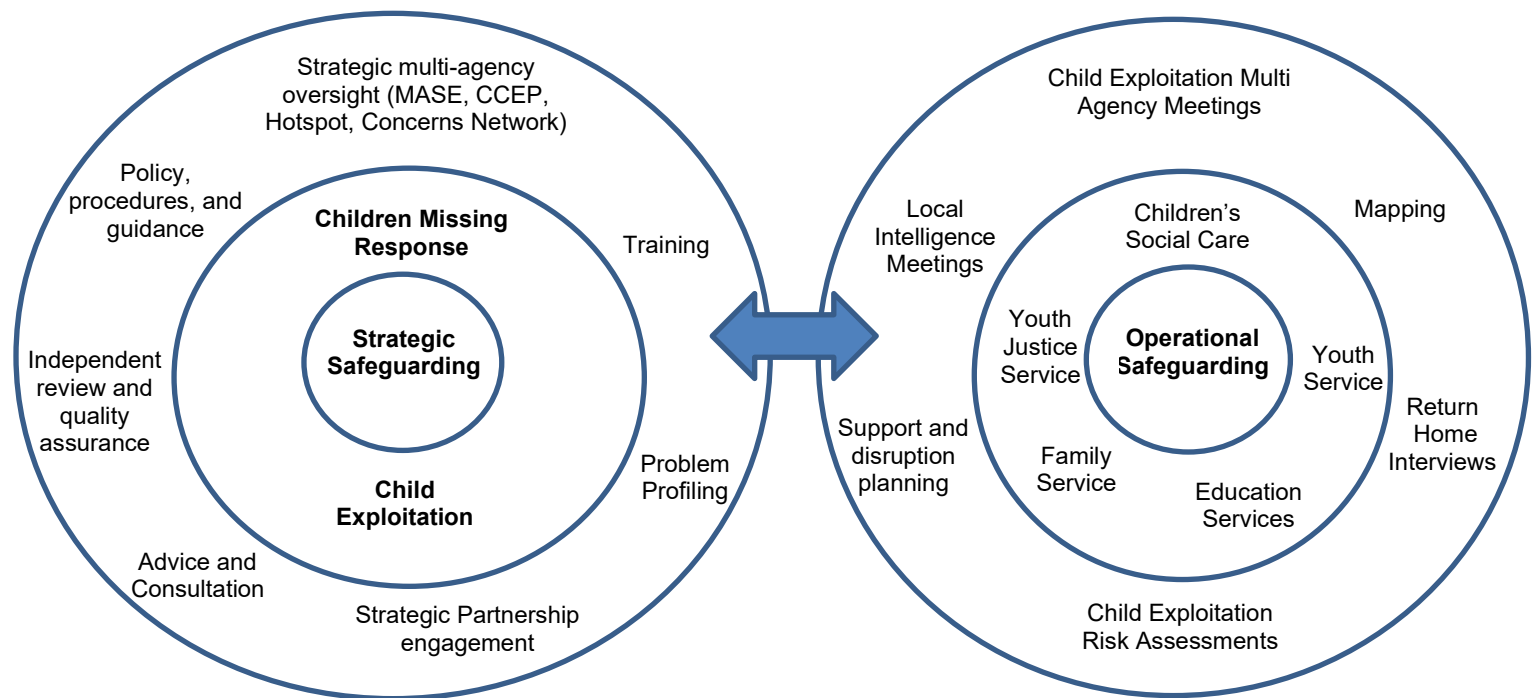
1. This is an annual report written for the Safeguarding Assurance and Information Group and the lead member for Children and Families. It provides an outline of the progress and challenges within the work being undertaken by the Local Authority and relevant partner organisations to child exploitation and children who go missing from home and care during the last year (April 2022-March 2023) and the commitments for the following 12 months.
2. Child exploitation and children missing from home and care continue to be a priority for the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services have a focus on local response and resources to address child exploitation and it is a particular area of focus in the annual self-evaluation that the local authority provides to Ofsted. In addition, joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) are taking place in respect of child criminal exploitation.
3. The Service Manager has strategic responsibility for child exploitation. The operational responsibility for work within Children's Social Care sits within the social work teams. The role includes having strategic oversight and offering support in respect of child exploitation across the wider system including early help and working with partner agencies.

Information

Strategic Partnerships, Governance and Service Provision

4. The Child Exploitation Steering Group (Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire) provides overarching governance for the various work streams for children where risk of harm is located outside of the family or home.
5. Currently work concerning children missing from home and care and child criminal exploitation is overseen by the County Missing Children Steering Group and the Child Criminal Exploitation Steering Group respectively both of which meet quarterly and take a strategic lead in the coordination of inter-agency work as defined in the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership/Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership joint procedures.
6. Statistical information for Child Exploitation and Children missing from home and care is reported quarterly to the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

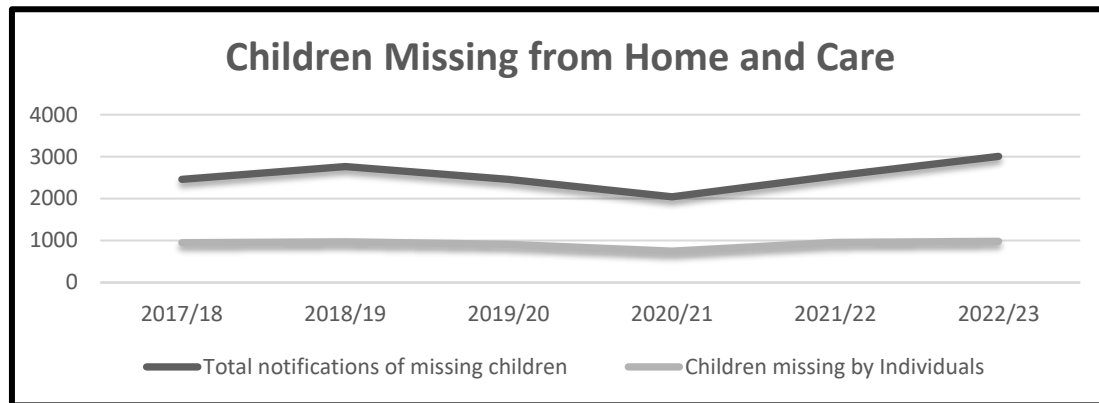
Nottinghamshire's strategic and operational model for responses to children missing and child exploitation



7. The model above illustrates the whole system approach to addressing risks to children who go missing from home and care and child exploitation in Nottinghamshire. There is a strategic safeguarding team with responsibility for designing and co-ordinating the required response, and the mobilisation of the work is completed by operational teams including Children's Social Care, the Family Service and the Youth Justice Service.
8. Multi-agency child criminal exploitation procedures and child sexual exploitation procedures provide a joined-up process for supporting victims of exploitation and disrupting the perpetration of harm; these procedures are separate but aligned with Nottingham City's Safeguarding Children Partnership.
9. Nottinghamshire is committed to working together with partners to improve the lives and experiences of children, young people, and families by empowering them to make their own choices, being fair, open, and honest and building safe and nurturing relationships.
10. This includes children and young people who experience exploitation and go missing from home and care receiving a consistent multi-agency response focused on achieving the best outcome for the child and their family whilst reducing the risk.
11. Exploitation requires a different response to child protection. Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire and partners are committed to using the nationally recognised Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Principles to underpin all practice (see paragraph 23). [Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](https://researchinpractice.org.uk)

How We Work and What We Do

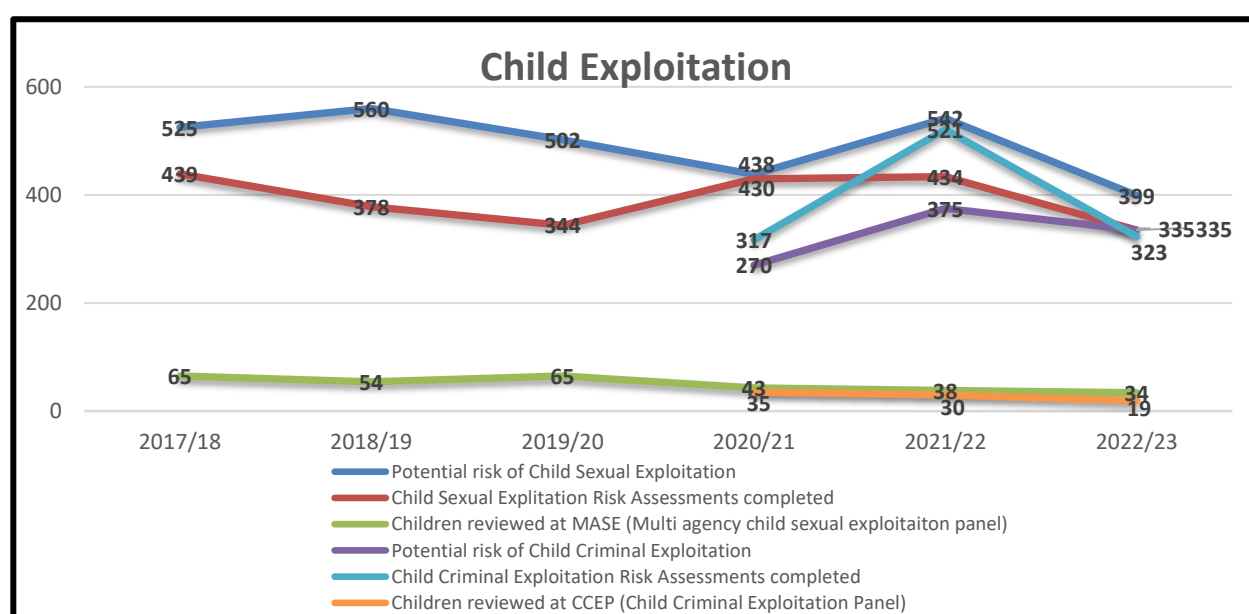
Children Missing from Home and Care



12. The number of missing incidents has increased slightly for the year 2022/23, though the individuals this relates to has remained stable (detailed data found in **Appendix 2**, Table 1)). A small number of children have repeatedly been reported missing during this period and those children have been subject to the strategic oversight of the Multiple Missing and Hotspots panel. Most children who go missing abscond from home (approximately 0.4% of the child population in Nottinghamshire) but children in care are at an increased risk of going missing due to their adverse childhood experiences and disruption to family life; 19% of Nottinghamshire County Council's children in care population have been reported missing in the year 2022/23.
13. On most occasions, children who go missing are found at the home of a friend or relative, or at a known location and found within 4hrs. Most children are not harmed during their missing episode but a small number of children who go missing are harmed. From information gathered during Return Home Interviews (RHI), the main risk issues identified for children include adults who may pose a risk to children, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and offending behaviour. The main reasons provided by children in care and at home for going missing is due to boundary issues and conflict within family relationships. RHI's are requested for all children after they have been found to establish the reason for their missing incident, and to assess if there have been any additional safeguarding concerns.
14. Regular multi-agency meetings are requested for children who go missing more than 3 times in 90 days which seeks to work with the family to process the reasons for the missing incidents and identify support for the child and carers. A monthly 'multiple missing and hotspots' meeting is held to provide strategic oversight for children most at risk of missing which includes intelligence sharing of any patterns of concern around the County. When risks associated with child exploitation are identified, the group will require assurances that there are plans in place to support the child and disrupt the harm.
15. A recommendation from the last annual report was to introduce a scheme which would provide better information about children in care who go missing called the 'Philomena Protocol'. The purpose of the protocol is to be aware of the children in residential care who at risk of going missing and have a good understanding of the important people in their lives and places they

might run away to. The Philomena Protocol has now been implemented and though in its infancy, has been well received. Further improvements could be made for children in care from other local authorities hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council, so that we have a consistently clear understanding of children's missing risks who are placed in Nottinghamshire by another local authority. According to information gathered about missing incidents via Police reports and RHI's for 2022/23, 18% of children missing from home and care were 'at risk' of exploitation. Police systems are in place to identify children at risk of exploitation and so this increases the level of missing risk and therefore response provided. It is particularly important that when a child in care goes missing, their level of risk of exploitation or harm should be clearly understood so that every effort to find the child can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Child Exploitation



16. Reports of child exploitation has decreased for the year 2022/23 (detailed data found in **Appendix 2**, Tables 2&3). A similar pattern has been noted by other local authorities across the East Midlands region. A Police Problem Profile for Nottinghamshire has not been produced yet this year and so there is no available Police data to corroborate crimes investigated by Nottinghamshire Police.
17. The 'potential risk of child exploitation' figures above are taken from notification flags recorded across a range of referrals and assessments. Children who are exploited are often vulnerable due to adverse childhood experiences and therefore, although a child may present as vulnerable, this does not necessarily mean the child is impacted by exploitation. Child exploitation risk assessments are completed when there are reported incidents or indications of exploitation; it is therefore appropriate that the completed risk assessment figures are fewer than the flags for 'potential risk of exploitation'.
18. According to data gathered by Nottinghamshire County Council, lower-level threats of child exploitation have been flagged in all districts of the County. Children at the highest levels of risk from child criminal exploitation are discussed at the monthly Child Criminal Exploitation

Panel (CCEP) and those reviewed are in the main from the Gedling and Rushcliffe districts, notably areas that border Nottingham City. Children at the highest levels of risk from sexual exploitation are discussed at the monthly Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel and those discussed have primarily been based in the Mansfield and Ashfield areas. Consequently, resources have been focused on these areas including targeted work by the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children team in schools and Police led Neighbourhood Safeguarding and Disruption (NSD) meetings in those districts. Work is currently underway within the Police to extend the NSD model in all districts of the County as this provides better local information sharing and tailored localised responses in collaboration with district-based partners.

19. The response to child exploitation is now well embedded across the Pathway to Provision though most mature at tiers 3&4. When a child is identified at a medium or high risk of exploitation then partner agencies promptly come together around the child to provide support and disrupt the harm but the challenge for Nottinghamshire is to develop a consistently robust response to vulnerable children on the cusp of exploitation. At a participation day (April 2023) to ascertain the views of operational staff who work across the spectrum of the Pathway to Provision, colleagues expressed that they were confident about identifying signs of exploitation and thought the strategic oversight of children at the highest risk of exploitation provided strong support and direction but would like to see better analysis and problem profiling for children at the cusp of exploitation.
20. **Nottinghamshire's ambition** for children at risk of exploitation is to be able to recognise indicators of child exploitation at the earliest opportunity and intervene to support children and their families at risk of harm whilst disrupting any suspected exploitation. Work is currently underway to review and further develop Nottinghamshire's response to child exploitation via the multi-agency collaboration of a cross partnership steering group between Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council. Like other local authorities around the country, Nottinghamshire recognises the need to review its structural and cultural response to the evolving threat of child exploitation. The aim of this development work is for children to feel safe in their local communities and to equip colleagues with the confidence and skills to respond using a strengths-based and trauma informed approach.

Training and Workforce Development

21. Multi-agency training for child exploitation and children missing from home and care is offered via the NSCP and is available through e-learning packages and virtual training sessions. Appetite for the training remains positive from a cross section of partners including children's social care, schools, foster carers, Police and early help services. Continued training for colleagues is an essential element of Nottinghamshire's strategy to equip colleagues with the knowledge and skills to respond to child exploitation with understanding and confidence.
22. A Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) support programme was commissioned by the Department for Education in 2019 to develop a set of multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm. They are designed to support effective partnership working across different local contexts, providing a common language and framework to better respond to child exploitation and extra-familial harm. These have been recently published and Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire are committed to embedding the evidence-based principles into practice. These principles complement the

commitment of Nottinghamshire County Council to embrace strength-based practices and a trauma informed response to children and families impacted by abuse and neglect.

Voice and experiences of children, young people and their families

23. A notable strength of Nottinghamshire's response to child exploitation is the support offered to children and families impacted by child sexual exploitation. Nottinghamshire continues to commission a specialist service from The Children's Society to provide this work. 66 children have been supported by the service for the year 2022/23 and 97 parents attended online parenting sessions with an additional 16 parents having engaged in direct parenting work with the team. This is the feedback from a young person who accessed the support offered by The Children's Society:

'To be honest, if it wasn't for the hospital and The Children's Society, I probably wouldn't be here. I don't think I would. My mum helped me a lot, but she knew that I needed a lot more than she could give me. My mum had my sister to look after as well. My mum's not a professional, she only knows what she knows.' (Aged 15yrs)

24. Added value from The Children's Society contract has involved bespoke training to the Police Sexual Exploitation Investigation Unit in how to effectively support and engage victims and also to colleagues working in residential children's homes to strengthen the response of those providing a caring role to children who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation given childhood experiences and disruption to their family lives and relationships.
25. Children impacted by child criminal exploitation would equally benefit from the level of support provided by this project which is currently being considered.
26. The voices and experiences of children and young people who are exploited or go missing from home and care is an area of focus for development over the next 12 months.
27. This work will include gathering the views of children, young people and their parents about their experience of our services and to use this to inform improvement and development of practice and services across the system.

Supporting Best Practice

28. In addition to The Children's Society, Nottinghamshire benefits from specialist support and collaboration with colleagues from Barnardo's and the National Working Group. The knowledge and expertise from these organisations provide support and guidance to strategic thinking and operational responses, setting out expectations and challenge for best practice. This collaboration has been particularly helpful for some Nottinghamshire children who have been exploited across borders with a wider network of partners and projects working across the country to enable continuity of support to the child and disruption of harm in other areas.
29. Nottinghamshire is also part of an East Midlands regional group which is chaired by one of the regions Directors for Children's Social Care and is a forum to share best practice. Operational

staff are regularly provided with details of additional training opportunities and best practice guidance such as via the #LookCloser Campaign and other resources available to assist them in their work.

Evidence of Challenges

30. Anecdotal information from strategic oversight panels have noted that a significantly high number of children listed for review have neurodiverse conditions including autistic spectrum conditions and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. This has also been raised by The Children's Society as programmes of support have required adaptation to meet the needs of these children. Children with neurodiverse conditions are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and further work is needed to develop a better response for these children both reactively and proactively. Neurodiversity impacts differences in social preferences, ways of learning and ways of communicating or perceiving the environment. As such, the concept of exploitation may have the appearance of safety and security rather than risk and danger.
31. Whilst support for children impacted by exploitation is improving, further work is required to strengthen efforts to disrupt exploitation including the prosecution of offenders. The Government produced a child exploitation disruption toolkit in 2019 which sets out a range of disruption tactics for those working to safeguarding children from sexual and criminal exploitation and these options need to be exhausted. These include tools and powers available to District Councils as well as legislation that can be used by the Police. There are examples of excellent practice and creative thinking by Local Districts, but this is not consistent or well communicated strategically within the partnership. It is often the case that suspected perpetrators of sexual exploitation remain undisrupted as there is an overdependence on children providing Video Recorded Interviews for sexual offences; children who have experienced significant trauma are unable and/or fearful of engaging with this process.
32. Work to address child exploitation in Nottinghamshire tends to be reactive and there is a need for better profiling of children at risk of exploitation and other contextual safeguarding analysis. Development in this area could produce a much more proactive response which could prevent incidents of child exploitation through early identification of patterns of concern.

Reflecting on our Achievements

What we said we would do in 2021/22	What we did in 2022/23
Embed the use of the Philomena Protocol for children placed in care in Nottinghamshire who are at risk of going missing and review its impact over the coming year.	Complete – see paragraph 12 for further details
Agree the vision and strategy for addressing child exploitation	A vision and values document has been agreed by the group and development work is underway to review the

across all levels of the Pathway to Provision through the Child Exploitation Cross Partnership Group.	current systems in place to address child exploitation. Progress has been slower than anticipated but there is a strong will by the group to develop a response that seeks to prevent child exploitation and recognise the harm and trauma experienced by children impacted by exploitation.
Promote the use of a trauma informed approach across the partnership for supporting children and families impacted by child exploitation.	Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council Violence Reduction Unit produced a Trauma Informed Strategy in 2022. This complements Nottinghamshire's commitment to strengths-based practice and work is currently in development to implement this approach. The principles of a trauma informed approach are being used in the work to develop Nottinghamshire's response to child exploitation. The impact for victims of exploitation is that they are seen as children first.
Raise the profile and significance of a community safety approach to child exploitation.	Progress is being made to increase connectivity between county wide intelligence and local area responses. The NSD model has been seen to be particularly effective in addressing local threats to children and work is being done to develop the use of this model further.

Our commitments for the next 12 months

The response to tackling child exploitation is an ever evolving and complex picture that requires a flexible system and creative practice with a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to meet the needs and protect those children, young people and their families who are affected. Earlier this year together with Nottingham City we began a piece of work to further develop our responses. This work will shape our commitments for the next 12 months:

- To undertake a self-assessment of Child Criminal Exploitation in line with the JTAI criteria and the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Safeguarding Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation. We will use this to better understand the developments since the 2021 audit and to drive an action plan for further practice improvements.
- To form stronger strategic relationships and governance with partners and Nottingham City including a re-launch of the cross authority steering group on 4th July 2023.
- Consideration of a Police led exploitation team with co-location of partners.
- To embed the TCE principles that is trauma informed.
- A commitment to learning from the experiences of children and young people and parents who have experienced exploitation.
- To improve methods of disruption and consistency of practice across district councils.
- A stronger response to children and young people at risk of exploitation at an earlier stage.

The steering group will develop a detailed action plan in relation to the above ambitions and the measures for progress.

Appendix 2: Statistical Data

Table 1: Children Missing from Home and Care 2022/23

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total incident reports of children missing	2,461	2,764	2,462	2,043	2,539	3007
*Relating to individuals	951	967	911	747	956	982
*Ratio males to females	54:45	53:47	56:44	55:44	53:47	58:42
*Peak age range (yrs.)	13-17	14-17	14-17	15-17	14-17	14-17
Total incident reports of Children missing from home	1,269	1,230	1,078	802	1138	1276
*Relating to individuals	695	686	646	496	655	863
Total incident reports of NCC Children missing from care <i>NB includes NCC looked after children missing from out of area</i>	764	973	774	857	1017	1194
*Relating to individuals	140	173	166	180	187	340
Other Local Authority Children missing from care in Notts	427	582	610	385	360	519
*Relating to individuals	119	147	124	110	137	205

Table 2: Child Sexual Exploitation

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total children identified as potentially at risk of CSE	525	560	502	438	542	399
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals re CSE	324	361	326	308	361	211
CSE Risk Assessments completed	439	378	344	430	434	335
Children considered at CSE Strategy Meetings	108 + 20 ICPCs	64 + 38 ICPCs	56 + 42 ICPCs	50 + 25 ICPCs	60 + 23 ICPCs	52 + 37 ICPCs
Peak age range (yrs)	15-16	15-17	14-17	13-16	13-17	13-17
Female: Male ratio	79:21	74:26	89:11	76:24	84:16	81:19
Children monitored at Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel	65	54	65	43	38	34

Table 3. Child Criminal Exploitation

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total children identified as potentially at risk of CCE*	270	375	335
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals re CCE	*report in development	199	144
CCE Risk Assessments completed	317	521	323
Children considered at Child Protection Coordinator led CCE Multi Agency Meetings	155 (56 initial mtgs and 97 review mtgs)		140 (39 Initial mtgs and 101 review mtgs)
Peak age range (yrs)	*report in development	14-17	14-17
Female: Male ratio	*report in development	14:86	18:82
Children monitored at Child Criminal Exploitation Panel (CCEP)	35	30	19

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 13****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY AND COMMISSIONING
STRATEGY 2023-25****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present to the Corporate Parenting Panel the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for the years 2023 to 2025 which was approved by the Cabinet Member as a Key Decision on 17 April 2023.

Information

2. A 'Sufficiency Duty' is placed on local authorities under the Children's Act 1989 (Section 22G). The Sufficiency Duty requires local authorities to ensure that there are sufficient placements within their geographical area to meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care locally as far as is possible.
3. In 2010 the government published 'Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children' (DCSF 2010) as part of a suite of statutory guidance documents which, together with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 set out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for young people.
4. The Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy, attached as **Appendix A**, provides the framework and priorities for officers in delivering on the duty described above. Many of the updates and reports provided to the Panel relate back to actions identified through the strategy and formal monitoring of progress of actions is through the Council's Annual Delivery Plan.

Other Options Considered

5. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

6. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers the information contained within the report and provides any feedback.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 97 73570
E: laurence.jones@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (CD 05/12/23)

9. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 29/11/23)

10. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Looked After Children Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023-25 – report approved by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families on 17 April 2023](#)

Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children' (DCSF 2010) [Securing sufficient accommodation for looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

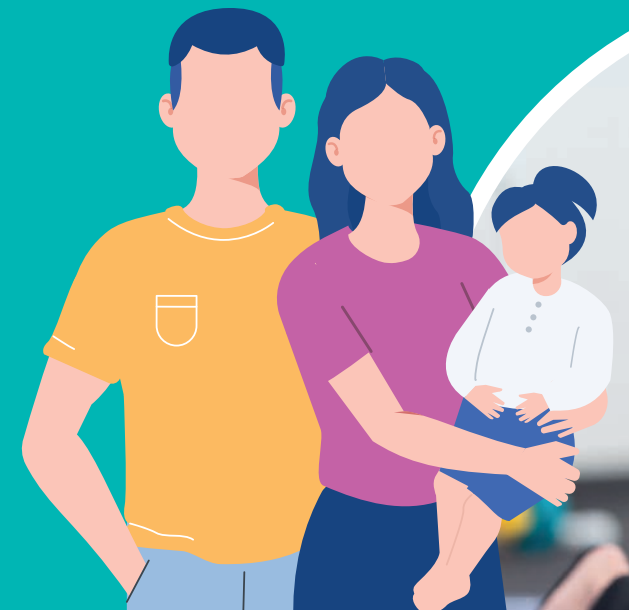
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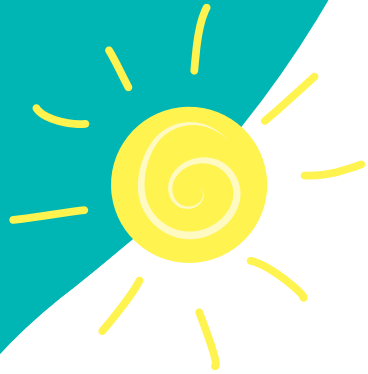
A vibrant, stylized illustration of a park scene. In the foreground, a large purple semi-circle contains the title text. Behind it, a diverse group of people of various ages and ethnicities are depicted in a park setting. There are children playing, adults walking, a person in a wheelchair, a person pushing a stroller, and an elderly couple. The background features a city skyline with a large modern building, a playground with a blue structure, and a bright yellow sun with rays in the top left corner. The overall tone is positive and inclusive.

Sufficiency & Commissioning Strategy

for children in Nottinghamshire
2023-25





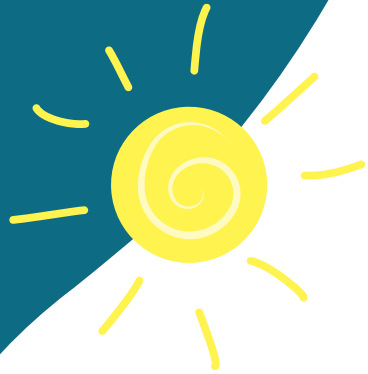


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Purpose



A 'Sufficiency Duty' is placed on Local Authorities under the Children's Act 1989 (Section 22G). The Sufficiency Duty requires local authorities to ensure that there are sufficient placements within their geographical area to meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care locally as far as is possible.

In 2010 the government published 'Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children' (DCSF 2010) as part of a suite of statutory guidance documents which, together with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 set out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for young people.

The guidance identifies what best practice in securing sufficiency would look like:

- ④ All children are placed in appropriate placements with access to the support services they require in their local authority area, except where this is not consistent with their welfare;
- ④ The full range of universal, targeted and specialist services work together to meet children's needs in an integrated way in the local area, including children who are already looked after, as well as those at risk of care or custody;
- ④ Where it is not reasonably practicable for a child to be placed within his/her local authority area, there are mechanisms in place to widen the range of provision in neighbouring areas, the sub-region or region which is still within an accessible distance (i.e. based on transport links and community boundaries), while still being able to provide the full range of services required to meet identified needs;
- ④ All children with adoption recommendations are placed with an adoptive family within 12 months of that recommendation;

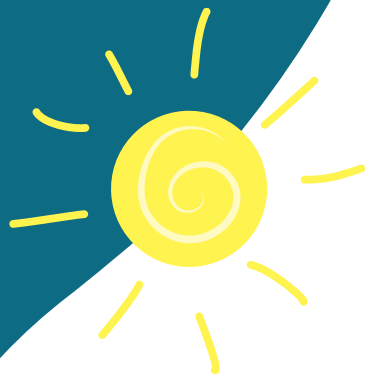


- ⑨ Partners, including housing, work together to secure a range of provision to meet the needs of those who become looked after at the age of 16 and 17, and support the continuity of accommodation beyond the age of 18;
- ⑨ Services are available in adequate quantity to respond to children, including predicted demand for a range of needs, and emergencies;
- ⑨ In addition to meeting relevant national minimum standards, services are of high enough quality to secure the specific outcomes identified in the care plans of looked after children;
- ⑨ Services are situated across the local authority area to reflect geographical distribution of need;
- ⑨ All placement providers (including private, voluntary and public sector providers) are linked into the wider network of services and work with these services to offer appropriate support to deliver identified outcomes for Nottinghamshire children;
- ⑨ Universal services know when a child is looked after and have good links with the range of targeted and specialist services which support him/her, including placement providers;
- ⑨ There are mechanisms in place to ensure that professionals involved in placement decisions have sufficient knowledge and information about the supply and quality of placements and availability of all specialist, targeted and universal support services within the local authority area; and
- ⑨ The local authority and its partners collaborate with neighbouring Children's Trusts to plan the market for services for Nottinghamshire children and commission in regional or sub-regional arrangements. (DCSF 2010)

This strategy for Nottinghamshire children sets out how we intend to meet the Sufficiency Duty by developing our own local authority provision and by working with external providers and other partners to shape a local market that will meet the needs of children close to where they live whenever this is appropriate.



Vision and Principles



Whenever possible we want our children to grow up in stable homes with a loving family, close to their birth family and community and with the additional support of professionals whenever they need it. Where possible, this should be through extended family or family friends, and where that isn't achievable, through foster care. A small number of children may need a residential care setting either temporarily or on a longer-term basis.

Our aim is to have foster care homes with appropriately skilled and experienced carers close to home, so that family relationships, friendships and education are disrupted as little as possible, for any children who need it. We would never want to see a child enter residential care only because a foster placement wasn't available. We know at times children in foster care can feel understandably upset or frustrated and we would always want to have timely, effective support on hand for children, young people and carers.

Where a residential setting is right or necessary in the short term, to provide some stability or as an opportunity to solve problems or change circumstances, or the long term as a permanent home this should be local, high quality, a "family size" and style of home and ensure emotional warmth alongside professional skills. We recognise for some older young people that neither residential or foster provision will achieve good outcomes and we will always reflect whether our focus should be on investing in additional support with birth families, especially for those older young people whom neither residential nor foster provision is achieving good outcomes.

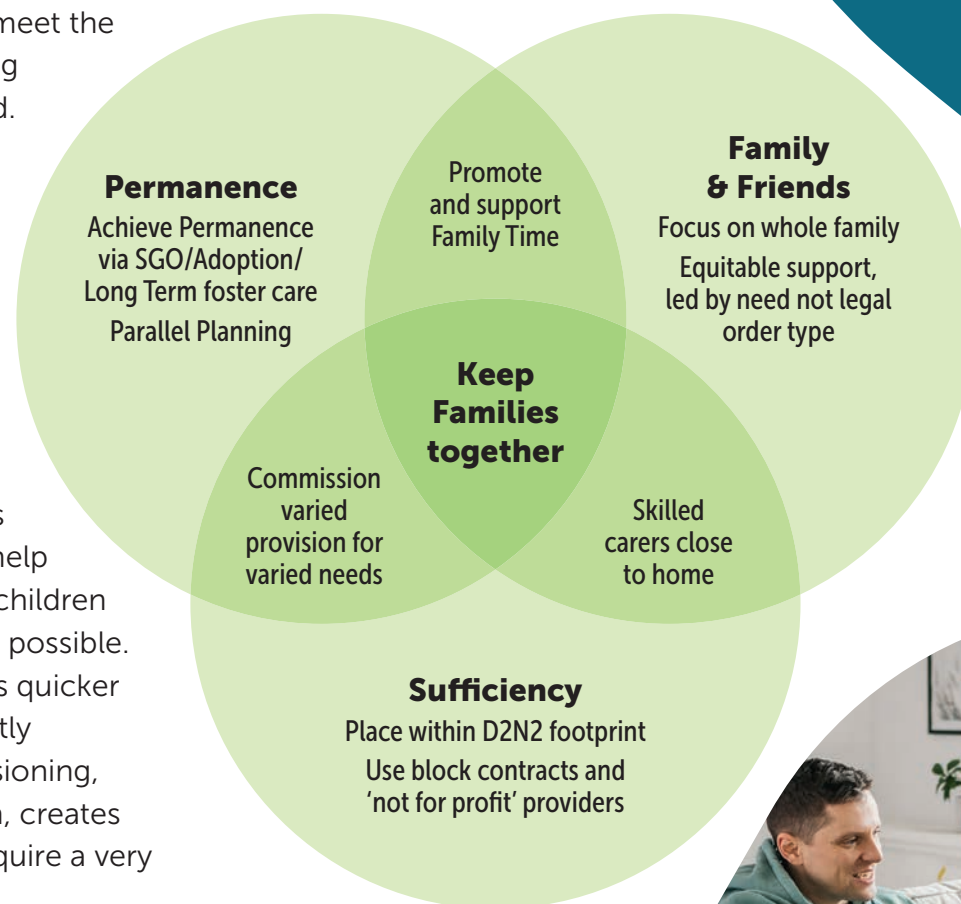
We recognise that for some young people the type of accommodation that they require as they approach adulthood will change with the need for greater autonomy and support, rather than care in many instances. Some young people will also require care into adulthood. We will make sure that we have a range of semi-independent accommodation that can meet the very different needs into early adulthood, and we will develop strong pathways to ensure consistent provision for those entering adult social care.



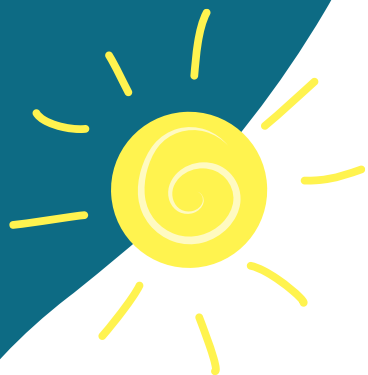
In making provision we will always make the very best use of our resources to get the best outcomes for children. We will grow the number and skills of our internal foster carers so that we have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of our children with the independent market providing more specialist placements or at times of increased demand. We will look to build alliances with residential providers, particularly in the not-for-profit sector, and look to incentivise the development of good, local homes including through joint ventures and block contracts that provide certainty. We will continue to have provision of local authority staffed homes that provide the best possible care for children that are hardest to place in the external market.

Where we identify a shared interest with other organisations such as the NHS or neighbouring local authorities that will help us make the best quality and value for money provision for children we will seek to work jointly and in a strategic way whenever possible. This would be with the aim of helping meet children's needs quicker and reducing the need for more intensive care settings, jointly assessing individual and population level need and commissioning, and providing in a way that minimises underuse of provision, creates economies of scale and caters for children whose needs require a very specialist response.

In reading this strategy, it is important to understand how it interfaces with our strategic approach to providing permanent, loving homes for young people and mitigating the need for Local Authority care, as depicted in the diagram above.



Headline Summary and Key Approaches



- Of our 953 children (at July 31st 2022) 55.2% are in unrelated foster care, 17.1% are in residential care, 11.5% are in semi-independent accommodation and 8.8% are fostered by a relative or friend.
- The most common category of need is abuse and neglect, across all our age cohorts.
- Most children originate from the Ashfield District, at 22.5% of the total children looked after population, followed by Mansfield at 19.3%.
- 11.5% of CLA are previously Looked After; there are 42 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (4.4%) and 6.2% of all our young people are recorded as having a disability.

Nottinghamshire has several approaches to better meet our Sufficiency Duty whilst also improving outcomes for young people in care; these have been developed by analysing our current placement mix and understanding our most vulnerable cohorts of young people:

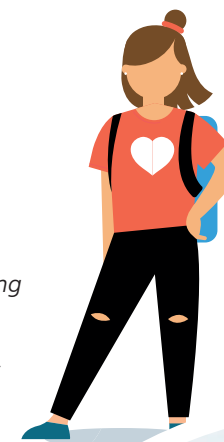
- We will look to place young people in kinship arrangements (with relatives or friends) wherever possible.
- Where young people have been placed in residential care against the recommendations of their care plan, we will look to 'step down' to a family-based placement, or reunify with birth parents where it is appropriate to do so.
- We will increase the number of foster placements that are with in-house carers rather than externally provided.
- We will aspire to increase the proportion of 12 to 15 year olds who are in family based placements.
- We will place more young people within the D2N2 footprint, and avoid placing outside of the D2N2 footprint wherever possible.

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- 🌀 We will provide better support to those families on a non-Looked After care order, ie Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Orders, and increase the number of families exiting care via these placement types.

Current Position (July 2022)	As Percentage	Actual Number of Young People
% of children fostered by a relative or friend	9.1%	84
% of children in residential care where the care plan recommends a different placement type	23.9%	39
% of foster placements that are external	57.7%	303
% of 12–15-year-old children in family based placements	68.7%	204
% of OLA placements that are outside the D2N2 footprint	58.8%	290
Number of exits from care due to Special Guardianship Order	N/A	48
Total	2,061,429	2,377,429

Due to differing data sources and rounding numbers may not match exactly.



In seeking continuously to improve how Nottinghamshire sets about meeting its sufficiency duty, we have established the following strands of work that seek collectively to:

- 🌀 Ensure we are providing all of the necessary support to children and families to prevent young people coming into care unless absolutely necessary, and to ensure their stay in care is no longer than it needs to be.
- 🌀 Growing and developing our internal fostering and residential provision and ensuring it is complementary to, and not competing with, the independent provider market.
- 🌀 Working with the independent provider market to ensure it can provide us with sufficient quality and quantity of local provision to meet current and future demand.

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Approach to Preventing Care Admissions

Family Networking

We know that most families are supported best in the long term from those who care about them such as friends, families and their wider support network. We will ensure that, from the beginning of their journey with us, families are supported to fully participate in developing their own plans and are empowered to work together to identify their own solutions. This is demonstrated through our commitment to a Family Networking approach, initially within the Assessment Service, but with this being the way of working throughout Children's Social Care.

We will consider Family Networking with families from the very first contact with have with them and support them to identify family and connected persons who may be able to offer support. It may be that this includes a Family Network Meeting which is facilitated and supported by a social worker.

Multidisciplinary Teams

We are developing a multi-disciplinary team approach to supporting children in need of help, protection and care. The multi-disciplinary teams will consist of social workers, plus partner agencies who provide services to families relating to the three main areas of familial risk: adult mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.

The approach will improve the help and support provided to vulnerable children and young people in need of help, protection or care, i.e. those children and families known to Children's Social Care.

The new model will be based on the following commitments:

- ① A person-centred approach which will be guided by the voice of the child.
- ① A shared vision and plan for working with children and families.
- ① Equal recognition and respect of everyone's role.
- ① Retention of specialist roles, knowledge and skills.
- ① Information sharing between agencies.
- ① A model of group supervision.
- ① A Strengths-based approach putting relationships at the centre of our work with children and young people, together with their families and our partners.

This approach will build on what we know works successfully in other Local Authorities where professionals working as one team to keep more children safely at home has reduced the period of intervention by providing support to children and families at an earlier stage which is focused on their needs. This has reduced the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans and the number entering care within these Local Authorities.

Stronger Families Team

The Stronger Families Team (SFT) is a multidisciplinary team consisting of a social work team manager, parent and family workers and youth workers. The team offer a voluntary, bespoke approach to provide families with support that is specific to them and their current situation, for better outcomes. The young person's social worker will refer a family and remains the lead professional throughout the team's involvement.

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A short term, intensive support plan is created jointly with the family following Creative Solutions Panel.

The support package explores with family members their strengths and identifies areas where support and interventions can be offered. The team aims to support families continue to build on their families strengths. This is achieved by the parent and family worker working with parents and carers and youth workers supporting the children and young people (10-18 years), with the hope of finding common ground to improve their home environment. Youth workers prioritize and ensure children and young people are seen and listened to, working with them in relation to their own strengths and helping to identify activities and interests outside of the home environment.

The overall goal of this team is to encourage and support families to remain living together both improving and building on lasting family relationships.

Kinship Care

In Nottinghamshire, we understand that kinship carers make a huge contribution to our placement sufficiency, keeping young people out of local authority care and providing stable permanent homes within their own family and community. We have invested in a new Kinship Support Service, which will deliver and review support plans for kinship families and deliver and commission support to ensure placement stability. We are committed to raising awareness of the challenges faced by Kinship carers and making our policies and processes fairer and more comparable to how we treat adopters and foster carers. As the Kinship Support Service becomes embedded, we will look to encourage more families to apply for Special Guardianship Orders now that there is a viable support offer for them to access.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

Place young people in kinship arrangements (with relatives or friends) wherever possible.

Provide better support to those families on a non-Looked After care order, ie Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders.

Restoring Family Relationships

For some children their stay in a care setting may be quite short and for others it can be much longer. Whenever there is a possibility of a child returning to their birth family it is important that we support that process with support, challenge and practical advice to parents and emotional support to children and young people about that possibility. We recognise that new approaches to how we work with a birth family whilst a child is in care need to be developed to create the best possibilities of reunification and that clear offer of post reunification support needs developing alongside our refreshed kinship offer. We commission STARS (Supporting Children and Young People to Achieve Resilience and Success'), a Social Impact Bond funded initiative which can work with families where children can safely return home.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

Aspire to increase the proportion of 12 to 15 year olds who are in family based placements.



Approach to Supporting Placements



Developing Our Fostering Services

Following the pandemic we have found that the recruitment and retention of foster carers has become more difficult but we remain committed to growing our internal capacity. We have already achieved some collaboration across D2N2 on recruitment and training but will explore how we can build on this so that the collective efforts of all four council's helps grow our ability to attract and keep foster carers. We will continue to reflect on the benefits that foster carers receive to make sure that they appropriately support their caring activity.



We have made improvements to our traditional recruitment campaigns and digital marketing techniques to reach various groups of people and will reflect in and refine our methodology. We have streamlined our enquiry forms and processes and offer to meet with enquirers at their earliest convenience. We have created a dedicated Recruitment and Assessment team to enable us to complete good quality assessments within an appropriate timeframe and regularly provide both virtual and face to face information events across the County. We will continue to reflect on the effectiveness of this approach and to look at best practice from elsewhere including identifying a high performing critical friend to support and challenge our process,

Whilst we have put resource into recruiting and assessing future carers we have also developed a good support service to our internal foster carers to ensure that carers feel valued and committed to caring for Nottinghamshire. Support hubs and events such as our foster care conference, sons and daughter's event, Fostering's got Talent are highly valued. Fostering Liaison and Action Group (FLAG) meetings are well attended; foster carers can talk to senior managers including service director and councillors, listen to invited speakers and agree future agenda items.

We have reviewed our training offer to our foster carers based on feedback to ensure we have a clear pathway of what training our foster carers need to complete during the first three years of their fostering careers. We continue to evolve as a therapeutic fostering service and ensure our training is evidence based on trauma informed practice and interventions, such as Theraplay, PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) model, Dyadic Development Practice (DDP), Polyvagal and attachment theory. We also access support via our education psychology service, to inform some of our training or provide workshops on specific topics on therapeutic parenting.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

A strategic direction is agreed in relation to the D2N2 collaboration on fostering provision.

We will increase the number of Foster placements that are with in-house carers rather than externally provided.

Developing Our Relationship with the Independent Fostering Market

Through our partnership with Derbyshire, Nottingham City and Derby City, we have a D2N2 framework that provides the basis for much of our relationship with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). The review in 2024 offers us an opportunity to think about how we want to engage with the IFA market in the future, how we set out the needs for our children and how we achieve the best value for money from the market.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

We will place more young people within the D2N2 footprint, and avoid placing outside of the D2N2 footprint wherever possible.

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Mainstream Residential Care

Many of the children who need residential care have experienced trauma or attachment issues stemming from circumstances in early life and need skilled care and support. Some of these children and young people will with the right care be able to move to foster care settings whereas some will remain in children's homes until they reach adulthood. We have two homes, Oakhurst and Lyndene, that will continue to provide homes for these children and we have firm plans to introduce two further two-bedded homes. We intend to invest in our workforce to make sure we have consistent use of PACE, DDP and other parenting approaches and to employ a therapeutic social worker specifically to improve planning and delivery of care in these homes.



Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

We have a clear operating model, recruitment, retention, CPD and career progression strategy to support our children's home workforce.

Children's Disability Provision

Over time we have developed a significant skill set for children with profound and multiple disabilities, an area where there is limited provision within the market. We have and will continue to provide for Nottinghamshire children but also to provide these specialist services to neighbouring authorities where capacity allows. This is delivered through our home at Caudwell House.

We know that one of the key features to keeping children with disabilities at home with their birth families is by providing respite from caring in the form of short breaks, including overnight. We will continue to ensure we have the capacity and skills to care for these children to provide that break for carers where necessary at Caudwell House and The Big House.

Whilst there is provision nationally for children with learning disabilities and autism we would always wish for children to be close to their families and to have continuity of education and healthcare. As such we need to continue to have local provision that can meet those requirements. We have a workforce skilled at working with these children. Thus the current four bedded home known as West View will be developed to become a specialist provision for these children.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

For the current West View to become a 4-bedded learning disability and autism specialist home.

That we make the very best use of our capacity at Caudwell House and offer additional capacity to local authority and health partners across D2N2.





Developing Our Internal Residential Estate

It is important that we continue to develop our internal residential estate so that we retain within the council the skills and capacity to deliver these services in what can be a volatile market and so that we can fill areas where the market is least able or willing to deliver.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

That two new two-bedded mainstream children's homes are established to replace the current West View.

We have a clear operating model, recruitment, retention, CPD and career progression strategy to support our children's home workforce.

Developing Our Relationship with the Wider Residential Market

Nottinghamshire has developed some excellent relationships with residential providers both in its own right and through our D2N2 partnership with Derbyshire, Nottingham City and Derby City Councils. Our current contractual framework is due for review in 2024 and this gives us an opportunity to think about the relationship we want with the market in terms of frameworks, block contracts, and areas of specialism where we might work as a collaborative and with health partners to make provision. Our aspiration will be for children needing residential care to receive it within the D2N2 footprint, that the care they receive is outstanding and that costs are transparent with clear accountability for how money is spent. We know that in order to support some areas of the market we need to think about how the local authority can achieve the environment for SMEs and not-for-profit providers to flourish.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

Review our block contracting arrangements for residential care.

A strategic direction is agreed in relation to the D2N2 framework both for the break in 2024 and the end of the current contractual term in 2026.

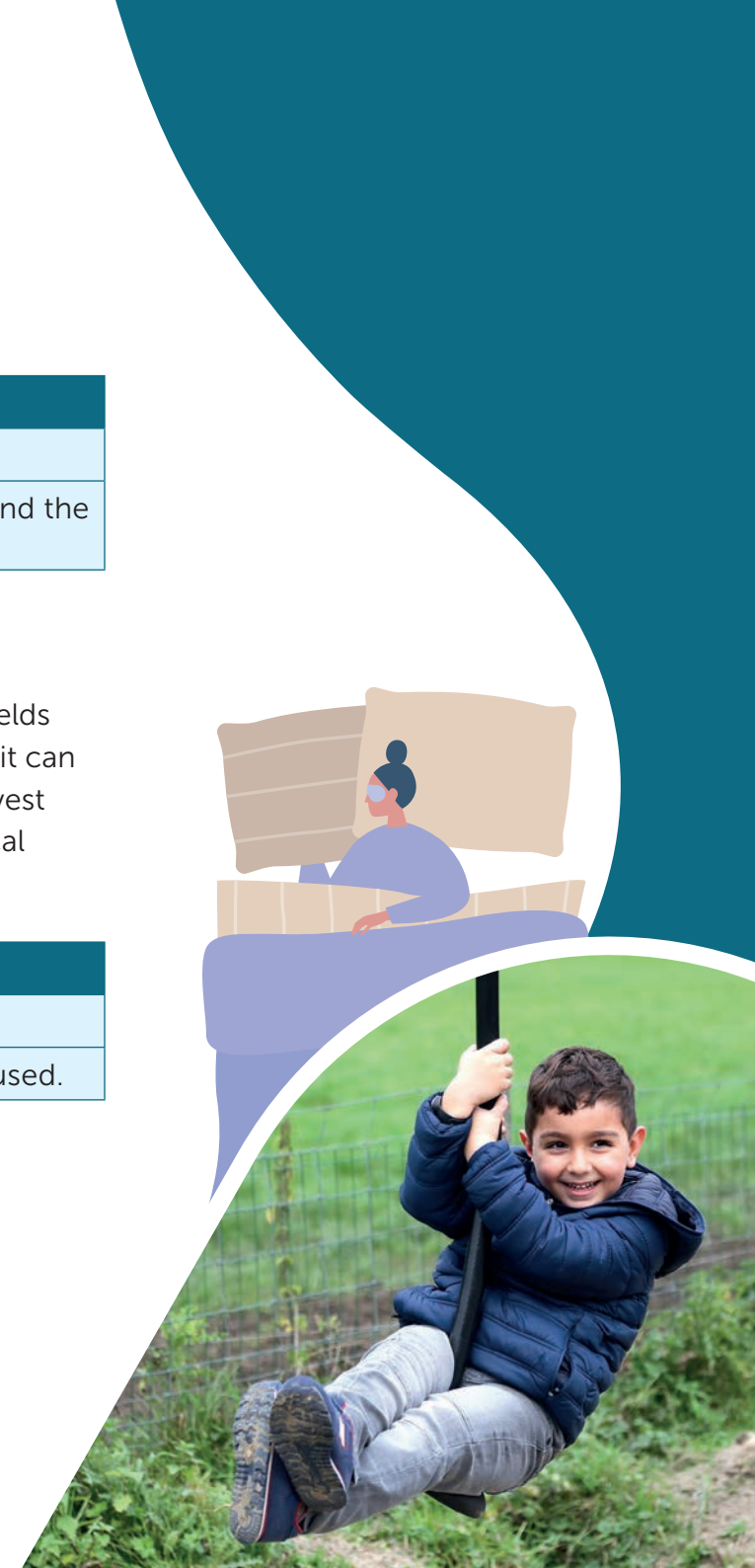
Secure Provision

The local authority remains committed to providing a local and national resource through Clayfields House with a mixture of justice and welfare secure beds. The unit will continue to consider how it can build areas of specialism that help serve our local children and areas of national need. We will invest in advancing the use of technology to support care and education in the home and in the physical environment so that it is the best it can be including reviewing overall capacity.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

The physical environment at Clayfields is improved.

Clayfields House staff have electronic recording systems that allow more time to be care focused.



Developing Our 16+, Staying Put and Staying Close Services

We have recommissioned our 16+ supported accommodation provision, and will be entering into a minimum of a 5 year contract with providers who will be able to offer individualised tailored flexible support to young people leaving care, and homeless young people aged 16 and 17. We aim to build on an already strong base to continue to drive service improvements in this field and look forward to implementing our 'Staying Close, Staying Connected' approach in Nottinghamshire. Enhancing the service offer to care leavers by ensuring improved planning and transition processes from residential settings into supported accommodation, embedding a strengths-based and trauma informed approach to service delivery and developing multi-agency teams to provide a more responsive, flexible service to improve outcomes for care leavers.

For many care leavers longer term housing options will be the responsibility of district and borough councils and it is important that they have a picture of the level and type of need that we forecast for the future. The needs of care leavers also need to be part of any plans around housing strategies for a devolution deal and combined authority.



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

We have developed specific provision for our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and former Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children care leavers, which helps us focus on their specific needs as well as holistic support to integrate with life in the UK. There is an increasing need for this type of provision due to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for accommodating new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children arrivals now being mandatory for local authorities. Within the East Midlands region Nottinghamshire, alongside our other 9 regional local authority partners, are working together to research and develop capacity building for suitable and sustainable provision. Nottinghamshire is identified as the lead authority for a Home Office exceptional funding grant for a Senior Business Analyst to work on behalf of the East Midlands region to explore this capacity building and accommodation options as individual authorities or options of a regional approach.

We also participated within the East Midlands "A Place To Call Home" project, which via grant funding from the Home Office, was tasked to identify new potential foster carers specific to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and assist them through the fostering process. This project funding has now ended, but the East Midlands will continue to fund ongoing recruitment marketing for potential Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children foster carers within the East Midlands, as to expand provision and attract carers who are specifically interested in supporting those seeking asylum.





Emergency Placements

We know that for a small number of children emergency placements are needed at very short notice, for example for transfer overnight from police custody or due to emergency protection orders. This can place a pressure in our Emergency Duty Teams and more appropriate provision is needed for when this need occurs. We need to develop both foster carers and a residential setting that have appropriate facilities for these circumstances and clear protocols for safe and effective care in what can be very difficult circumstances.

Alignment to Key Approaches and Action Plan

Identify and support emergency foster carers.

Identify a setting and operating model for very short-term emergency residential provision.

Develop a model of specialist mental health focused children's homes (across D2N2) co-commissioned with the NHS.

Investing in Our Children and Our Staff

In order to continue to provide the care that our children need and deserve we know that we need to continue to invest in our services. Areas of development over coming months and years will include ensuring that we have the optimum staffing model, a clear programme of continued professional development led by our service manager as the residential practice lead, clear career pathways for staff so aspirant care managers can acquire the skills they need to advance and a clear recruitment and retention strategy that means we recruit the staff we need and that they stay and develop strong relationships with our children. Where possible we should do this with key strategic partners in the local children's home market.



Profile of Nottinghamshire Children in Care at March 2022

What we know about our young people in our care

	Age Cohort of CLA				
	0-3	4 to 6	7 to 11	12 to 15	16-17
Cohort Size	148	84	178	296	259
% of total population of children in care	15.4%	7.9%	18.5%	30.70%	26.90%
Proportion (%) by district	Mansfield is highest (26.4%) followed by Ashfield (19.6%)	Ashfield is highest (28.9%) followed by Mansfield (27.6%)	Ashfield is highest (25.3%), Mansfield is 20.2%	Ashfield is highest (21.3%) followed by Mansfield (19.6%) and Bassetlaw (17.6%). Other LA placements are 6.8%	Ashfield is the highest (20.1%) followed by Mansfield (17%) and Bassetlaw (16.6%)
% in first placement (based on cohort at April 1st 2022)	97.3%	89.5%	89.3%	13.9%, a significant drop from the age 7-11 cohort	84.9%



	Age Cohort of CLA				
	0-3	4 to 6	7 to 11	12 to 15	16-17
% that have had 3 or more placements (based on cohort at April 1st 2022)	0%	0%	1.69%	1.69%	3.1%
Two highest Primary factors for being LAC and %	The most common category of need is abuse or neglect (78.4%); Family dysfunction is the second highest (10.1%)	The most common category of need is abuse or neglect (69.7%); Family dysfunction is the second highest (21%), which is the most significant spike in family dysfunction between age cohorts	The most common category of need is abuse or neglect (57.9%); Family dysfunction is the second highest (23.6%) Family in acute stress rises to 9.5%	The most common category of need is abuse or neglect (38.1%); Family dysfunction is the second highest (24.7%), Family in acute stress rises to 15.2%	The most common category of need is abuse or neglect (34.7%); Family dysfunction is the second highest (25.9%)





	Age Cohort of CLA				
	0-3	4 to 6	7 to 11	12 to 15	16-17
% in in-house provision, highest 2 placement types within that	75.7% in house; 43.2% are in in-house fostering and 21.6% are in family and friends placements	40.8% in house; 22.4% are with in-house Foster Carers and 13.2% are in family and friends placements or placed with parents	41.6% in house; 25.3% are with in-house FCs and 15.7% are in family and friends placements or placed with parents	37.8% in house; 25.7% are with in-house FCs, 8.1% are in family and friends placements or placed with parents and 1.7% are in NCC residential homes	64.9% in house; 15.1% are with in-house FCs, 5% are in family and friends placements or placed with parents and 1.9% are in in-house residential
% in external provision, types this tends to be	24.3% external; 18.2% are in IFA and 2.7% are in a fostering for adoption placement	59.2% external; 51.3% are in IFA and 6.6% are in external fostering for adoption placements	58.4%; 51.7% are in IFA, and 6.7% are in non-NCC residential settings	62.2% external; 33.8% are in IFA, and 24.7% are in external residential settings	35.1% external; 42.1% in independent or semi-independent accommodation, 20.1% are in external residential placements and 12.7% are in IFA

Action Plan

Desired Outcome	Action(s)	Who	When?
For the current West View to become a 4-bedded learning disability and autism specialist home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define staffing and property changes including training and skills Develop an implementation plan 	David Andrews Devon Allen	By 2024
That two new two-bedded mainstream children's homes are established to replace the current West View	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and purchase properties Define staffing and operating model including training and skills Develop an implementation plan 	David Andrews Devon Allen	During 2023
We have a clear operating model, recruitment, retention, CPD and career progression strategy to support our children's home workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a staffing and skills review 	Devon Allen Davinia Lawton Paul Thomas	April 2023
That we make the very best use of our capacity at Caudwell House and The Big House and offer additional capacity to local authority and health partners across D2N2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define realistic capacity and adjust the Statement of Purpose Plan options for future for occupancy Liaise with D2N2 about need Devise a marketing strategy if required 	Davinia Lawton	April 2023





Desired Outcome	Action(s)	Who	When?
The physical environment at Clayfields is improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver on the DfE capital bid 	Paul Thomas	October 2024
Clayfields House staff have electronic recording systems that allow more time to be care focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and purchase a stand alone system 	Paul Thomas	June 2024
A strategic direction is agreed in relation to the D2N2 framework both for the break in 2024 and the end of the current contractual term in 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a short, medium and long term strategy for D2N2 care 	Service Director, Commissioning and Resources	
Identify and support emergency foster carers		Group Manager and Service Manager Fostering	
Identify a setting and operating model for very short-term emergency residential provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver assessment places through our residential block contract • Create a facility for EDT to use for overnight and weekend placements 	Group Manager, Commissioning and Placements Service Manager, Residential and Contact Services	Jan 2023

Desired Outcome	Action(s)	Who	When?
A strategic direction is agreed in relation to the D2N2 collaboration on fostering provision	Agree a short, medium and long term strategy for D2N2 care	Service Director, Commissioning and Resources	March 2023
Review our block contracting arrangements for residential care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review LA specific arrangements Review D2N2 strategy for block contracting Agree a detailed forward plan of actions including scope and size of tenders 	Service Director, Commissioning and Resources Group Manager, Commissioning and Placements	March 2023
Develop a model of specialist mental health focused children's homes (across D2N2) co-commissioned with the NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver the Joint Commissioning business case Conclude funding and resource discussions with the NHS Tender for new service provision 	Service Director, Commissioning and Resources Group Manager, Commissioning and Placements	May 2023



9 January 2024

Agenda Item: 14

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGING ALLEGATIONS SERVICE: APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides an update on the performance and activities of the Managing Allegations Service from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Information

2. The statutory duties of the LADO and the corresponding requirements on partner agencies are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Local Authorities are required to:
 - have arrangements to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations and agencies on how to deal with allegations against people who work with children
 - have a designated officer or team of officers to be involved in the **management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children**. Any such officer or team of officers should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to be able to fulfil this role effectively, for example, qualified social workers
 - have appropriate arrangements in place to liaise effectively with the police and other organisations and agencies to **monitor the progress of cases** and ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process
 - ensure allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation and that actions are taken to **address the corresponding welfare concerns in relation to the child** or children involved in a co-ordinated manner and without delay.
3. The annual report, attached as **Appendix 1**, contains information in respect of the vision of the service and a reflection on the Council's achievements and the impact of the progress. It also considers the challenges and commitments for 2022/23.

Other Options Considered

4. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

5. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

6. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

7. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there is any feedback that it wishes to give and any actions that it recommends in relation to the information contained in the report.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Hazel McKibbin
Managing Allegations Service
E: hazel.mckibbin@nottsgov.uk

Constitutional Comments (KA 19/12/23)

8. This report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider, being a panel set up to assist the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties to ensure the Council and partner agencies act as effective corporate parents.

Financial Comments (CDS 13/12/23)

9. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CF0134

Children and Families Services

Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement Service

Managing Allegations Service End of Year Report 2022/23

Purpose of the report

1. This is an annual report written for the Safeguarding Assurance and Information Group and the lead member for Children and Young People. It provides an outline of the progress of, and the challenges faced by the Managing Allegations Service during the year April 2022 to March 2023.
2. I am the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) and Service Manager for the Managing Allegations Service. I have line management responsibility for the LADO Allegations Officers and the Team Manager of the Managing Allegations Team of Social Workers and strategic oversight of wider safeguarding concerns arising in the children's workforce in Nottinghamshire.

Our Statutory Duties

The statutory duties of the LADO and the corresponding requirements on partner agencies are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

3. Local Authorities are required to:
 - have arrangements to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations and agencies on how to deal with allegations against people who work with children;
 - have a designated officer, or team of officers to be involved in the **management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children**. Any such officer, or team of officers, should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to be able to fulfil this role effectively, for example, qualified social workers;
 - have appropriate arrangements in place to liaise effectively with the police and other organisations and agencies to **monitor the progress of cases** and ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process;
 - ensure allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation and that actions are taken to **address the corresponding welfare concerns in relation to the child** or children involved in a co-ordinated manner and without delay.
4. Partner agencies are required to **have clear policies** in place to deal with allegations against people who work with children and arrangements to ensure that any **allegations** about those who work with children **are passed to the designated officer, or team of officers, without delay**. Such policies should make clear distinctions between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice and a complaint e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 for schools.

Governance

5. The Managing Allegations Service reports annually to the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) through the Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group. Allegations relating to Nottinghamshire Children in Care are also reported directly to a cross-party group of Elected Members.
6. The LADO and LADO Allegation Officers attend the Regional LADO Meeting to share good practice, develop effective cross border communication and maintain a level of consistency in the work undertaken.

7. The National LADO Network is currently working with Department for Education to develop a LADO Handbook to promote a shared understanding of the role of the LADO and the scope of the work to be addressed.

Managing Allegations Service (MAS)

Scope of the work

8. All allegations and concerns, contemporaneous and non-recent*, against adults who work or volunteer with children.

*Non-recent abuse refers to an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse made by or on behalf of someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident which took place when the complainant was under 18 years old.

9. The threshold for referring an allegation/concern, contemporaneous and non-recent, to LADO is set out in WT2018 and KCSIE 2022 :
 - Behaved in way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children; or
 - Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
10. There are three strands to the management of allegations against adults or volunteers who work with children :
 - Protection of children
 - Criminal investigation
 - Employment/disciplinary process

How we work

11. The Managing Allegations Service offers a comprehensive service to all professionals who work with children and young people, the service is well received and valued by those who have contact with it. Over the last four years there has been a consistent increase in demand particularly for the LADO Allegations Officers but through audit work we are confident that the referrals are appropriate and the work of the LADO Allegations Officers effective. (see paragraph 22).
12. The Managing Allegations Service aims to :
 - provide a proportionate response to concerns referred;
 - gain assurance that the child(ren) linked to the adult of concern are safeguarded;
 - gain assurance that a duty of care is offered to the adult of concern;
 - offer a fair process to the linked children and the adults of concern.
13. The Service works closely with Employers, Nottinghamshire and other Local Authorities and Police colleagues and aims to progress referrals in a timely manner. In some situations, lengthy police investigations have resulted in processes continuing for longer than expected, this proves difficult for the child, the adult of concern and the employer and can result in strained relationships. While case by case discussions are undertaken with police colleagues, further exploration through the Partnership may be beneficial.
14. In Nottinghamshire, and nationally, the child(ren) and adults of concern do not attend the MA meetings. A Social Worker from MAS is allocated to the child(ren) and the adult of concern, meets with them and conveys their views to the meeting. This practice, in respect of the adult, has been

queried in the light of 'natural justice' and strengths-based practice, given this, consideration is being given to whether the process should be amended to ensure those adults involved experience a fair process.

15. This is a complex and challenging area of work with the outcome of the process having a significant and potential long-term impact on the adult involved. The service has previously received a high number of complaints some of which have been complex and protracted. As a result, we have focused on improving practice to ensure the allegations are specific and evidence-based and decision making is clearly recorded. While this area will by nature continue to attract complaints, it is pleasing to note a reduction in complaints in the current period. (see 2.9 pages 8,9)
16. This year we held the first Managing Allegations Practice day in conjunction with the Independent Chair's Service and we plan to continue development work particularly in relation to our value base and best practice in the service. This work will focus initially on making the redacted output from meetings more accessible to the adults involved.

Our achievements and challenges in 2022/23

Training and Workforce Development

17. The MAS remains a fairly new service, 2022/23 is the second full year of operation, and we continue to develop our practice. January 2023 saw our first Managing Allegations Practice Day joint with the designated Independent Chairs. An NCC Solicitor gave valuable guidance on clarifying the allegations made by children and a professor from Nottingham University's School of Forensic Psychology gave useful insights into adults who groom and abuse children.
18. The Managing Allegations eLearning was launched in November 2022 as first stage training provided by the NSCP. Work with NSCP to develop Stage 2 Multi Agency training will begin in 2023/24 now Stage 1 is embedded. MAS has developed and delivered training to ASYEs and Foster Carers annually and further role specific briefings and training is delivered to Social Work Teams on request.
19. An electronic leaflet explaining the MA service and the Employer's responsibilities has been developed and will soon be ready for release.

Priorities from 2021/22

20. **Understand and address the increase in work being managed by the LADO Allegations Officers.**

This has been a priority throughout 2022/23 and several methods have been employed to understand this increase in work. An online referral form has been developed and came into operation in April 2023, while initial views are positive the full benefits will be reported in the next financial year. The results of a LADO Audit confirmed the challenges were a continued increase in demand rather than ineffective practice and there were some good examples of practice by the LADO Allegation Officers. They also regularly receive positive feedback from partner agencies.

Given the outcome of the above measures and the further increase in the LADO AOs workload seen in the current data 2022/23, a business case will be made to increase the capacity of the LADO AO function.

21. **Complete the LADO Audit process and incorporate learning to improve practice.**
See 22 above. Audit findings relating to more efficient case notes will be incorporated into practice.
22. **Develop further the reporting format and the BI reporting facility.**
We continue to work with BI colleagues to develop the reporting facility.

23. Develop a Multi-Agency Managing Allegations Briefing with NSCP partners.

Now the Managing Allegations eLearning is embedded, this next stage briefing will be a priority for this year.

Commitments for 2023/24

- To continue to develop the maturity of the service and what best practice looks like through development days, reflective supervision and evidence-based research and to draw on the expertise of the wider system such as Legal Services, Human Resources and relevant colleagues across the partnership.
- To address the ongoing impact of the increase of work on the LADO Allegation Officers.
- To work with the Independent Chair Service to improve the quality of information provided to the adult of concern on the conclusion of the Managing Allegation Meeting process.
- To develop an effective method to gather the voice of the children and adults who experience the Managing Allegations process.
- To work with NSCP to develop a Multi-Agency Managing Allegations Briefing and to further increase the MAS training offer.

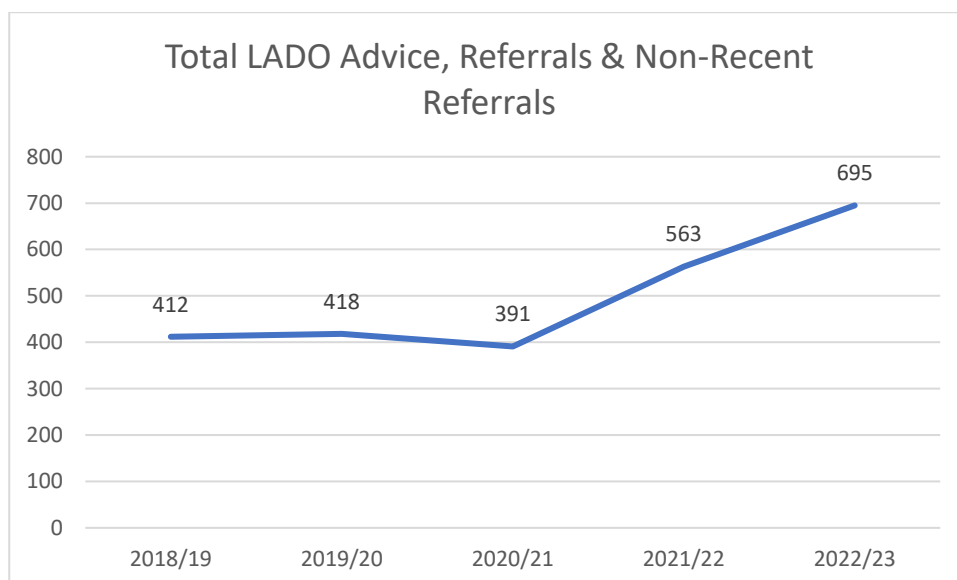
Hazel McKibbin
Service Manager
Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review
3.8.23

DATA

Key findings 2022/23

1. Work coming in to MAS

1.1 Total Advice, Referrals – Contemporaneous and Non Recent work



The total work coming in to MAS has increased by 43% in 2021/22 and again in 2022/23.

LADO ADVICE BY QUARTER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2018/19	73	70	72	94	309
2019/20	70	69	66	95	300
2020/21	58	75	79	53	265
2021/22	103	90	98	127	418
2022/23	112	92	161	164	529

LADO Advice, where the concern is reported to LADO but remains with the employer to address, increased significantly in this financial year. Most of the Advice relates to colleagues in Education settings followed by Residential, Fostering, Sports and Health.

REFERRALS (CONTEMP) BY QUARTER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2018/19	14	35	25	20	94
2019/20	19	19	30	35	103
2020/21	22	24	17	39	105
2021/22	39	27	31	37	134
2022/23	44	46	31	39	160

LADO Referrals have increased in 2022/23, the LADO AO tracks all these concerns to employment outcome with the more complex concerns progressing to Managing Allegations multi-agency meetings.

Educational settings account for most of the referrals followed by Fostering, Residential, Sports and Health.

The main reason for LADO Referrals remains physical abuse followed by sexual abuse, suitability and emotional abuse.

REFERRALS NON-RECENT BY QUARTER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
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2018/19		2	3	4	9
2019/20	3	5	5	2	15
2020/21	4	7	5	5	21
2021/22	3	3	3	2	11
2022/23		3	3	3	9

Non Recent Referrals to LADO have decreased slightly on 2021/22, this continues the expected downward trend. Most of these Non recent referrals relate to colleagues in an Educational setting followed by colleagues in the Faith and Sports settings.

The main reason for Non recent referrals remains sexual abuse.

Civil Claims	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022-22	2022-23
	46	36	28	31	13

Annex C	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	82	50	25	6

Linked with Non recent work, Civil Claims and Annex Cs have reduced markedly in 2022/23.

2. Managing Allegations meetings

2.1 Number of MA meetings

The decision to convene a Managing Allegations Meeting in both non-recent and contemporaneous cases, is made at a multi-agency Strategy Discussion. In contemporaneous cases, where necessary and possible, the S47 and the LADO Strategy Discussions will be combined, for those cases where children are not open to Children's Social Care, the MAS Team Manager will chair the S47 Strategy Discussion.

In 2022/23, the MA Service chaired a total of 67 Strategy Discussions (TM chaired 58 and CSM chaired 9 in the TM's absence). The Team Manager attended a further 25 Strategy Discussions chaired by other Children's Services Team Managers; the LADO AOs attended additional Strategy Discussions.

The MA service convened a total of 196 contemporaneous meetings, 63 initial meetings and 129 reviews, these included cases involving foster carers where a couple is considered in one meeting.

A total of 22 non-recent meetings were convened, 6 initial meetings and 16 reviews.

2.2 Work with children linked to the adult of concern

MAS Social Workers are allocated to children linked with the adult of concern, the adult's own children and the children making allegations, to undertake focused Child and Family Assessments.

Where children do not have an allocated Social Worker, the MAS Social Worker will undertake the Child and Family Assessment and in cases where the child already has an allocated SW, the MAS SW will liaise with the allocated SW to agree how best to obtain the account from and views of the child.

These assessments are focused and proportionate and where a need for ongoing work to support or protect is assessed, the children are allocated to a long term CSC SW team.

Children allocated to MAS SWs

Children allocated to MAS SWs	2022/23
CAFA	29 (+16)*
Co-allocated - LAC	28
Co-allocated - OLA	42
Co-allocated - CSC	51
Total	150

* an additional 16 children remain allocated linked to ongoing MAS processes starting pre April 2022

2.3 Work with Adult Complainants making Non recent allegations

During this period, MAS SWs have worked with 14 adult complainants linked to non-recent abuse disclosed in 2022/23.

2.4 Case Outcomes

A total of 105 Managing Allegations processes were closed, 100 Contemporaneous and 5 Non recent. This is a slight increase in Contemporaneous case closures and a consistent picture for Non recent cases.

The outcomes for Contemporaneous cases remain largely consistent on 2021/23 with 54% Substantiated; 29% Unsubstantiated and 14% Unfounded. Very few cases are considered either False or Malicious.

Of the 5 Non recent cases, 2 were Substantiated, 2 Unsubstantiated and 1 had no outcome, this can occur given the passage of time and the difficulties in assessing and investigating non recent allegations.

2.5 Police outcomes

Contemporaneous work has seen an increase in no police action, a decrease in the police investigation resulting in no further actions and very slight increases in the police investigations resulting in either cautions or prosecutions.

The Non recent work saw no police action in 2 cases, investigations no further action in a further 2 and 1 prosecution.

2.6 Employer outcomes

The LADO AO tracks and monitors the MA process to the Employer outcome.

In Contemporaneous work, 20 colleagues were dismissed, 24 resigned as an alternative to dismissal, 14 received a sanction and 33 were offered additional support or training.

Of those colleagues subject to Non recent allegations, 1 was not employed, 1 resigned, 1 received support or training and 2 others received no sanction.

2.7 Case duration

Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022 (Sept 2022) states these processes should be 'thorough and fair' and 'dealt with as quickly as possible', timescales are no longer specified. The available data measures the duration of cases from initial referral to the LADO to when the LADO AO closes a case following the tracking and monitoring of the employment process.

Every attempt is made to address concerns in a timely manner and resolve cases promptly however timeliness remains a challenge particularly in those cases requiring forensic interrogation of electronic devices.

Duration of Closed Contemporaneous referrals	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23

Less than 1 month	10	3	4	2	6	8
1 to 3 months	25	21	14	18	13	26
3 to 6 months	38	25	18	20	26	21
6 to 11 months	34	27	20	30	26	36
1 year+	26	36	12	17	20	15

There has been an increase in Contemporaneous cases closed within 3 months, before 11 months and a decrease in those cases open for more than 12 months.

The difficulty in assessing and investigating Non recent work results in cases being open for longer with 3 cases open up to 11 months and 2 cases open more than 12 months.

2.8 Referrals to DBS and Regulatory Bodies

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
DBS Referrals	34	26	44	36	29
Professional Regulatory Body					4

2.9 Complaints

The number of complaints coming to MAS has reduced by 50 % in the period 2022/23.

During this period, 5 complaints were received, of these, 1 has been withdrawn and 4 have been investigated.

Of the 4 investigated, 2 were complaints shared with the Fostering Service, 1 had Group Manager agreement for a reconvened MA meeting process and both went to Stage 2 complaint processes before they were resolved.

The other 2 complaints both had Group Manager agreement for reconvened MA meeting processes resulting in partial alteration of the outcomes.

In response to these complaints, and with advice from colleagues in Legal Services, the MAS now ensures the allegations and the evidence supporting these are outlined clearly.

9 January 2024**Agenda Item 15****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE
AND EMPLOYEES****WORK PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the Corporate Parenting Panel's current work programme, as set out in **Appendix 1** to the report.

Information

2. The work programme assists in the management of the Panel's agenda, the scheduling of its business and its forward planning. It includes business items that can be anticipated at the present time, while arising issues are added as they are identified. The work programme is reviewed and updated regularly with the Chair and at each Panel meeting, where any Panel member is able to suggest items for inclusion.

Other Options Considered

3. To not maintain a work programme for the Panel: this option is discounted as a clear work programme is required for the effective management of the Panel's agenda, the scheduling of its business and its forward planning.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. To assist the Panel in managing its business effectively.

Statutory and Policy Implications

5. This report has been compiled after consideration of the implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and, where such implications are material, they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

- 1) Note its current work programme, attached as **Appendix 1** to the report.
- 2) Make any further suggestions for items for inclusion on the work programme for consideration by the Chair, in consultation with the relevant officers and partners.

Marjorie Toward

Service Director for Customers, Governance and Employees

For any enquiries about this report, please contact:

- Adrian Mann, Democratic Services Officer
adrian.mann@nottsc.gov.uk
- Phillippa Milbourne, Business Support Administrator – Children and Families
philippa.milbourne@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (CEH)

7. The Panel has the authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its Terms of Reference.

Financial Comments (SES)

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

9. Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.
- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

Title	Sponsor/ Report Author
Standing items for each meeting:	
Foster Care (FLAG) items	Amanda Collinson
Children in Care Council items	Laurence Jones
Visits schedule and observations from visits	Laurence Jones
Update on Nottinghamshire Children's Residential Homes	Laurence Jones
Looked After Children and Care Leavers Board update	Amanda Collinson
Inspection gradings of Children's Residential Homes commissioned solely for Council use (verbal update + reports every 6 months)	Laurence Jones
Government response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care	Amanda Collinson
16 April 2024	
Care Leavers annual report	Amanda Collinson
Destinations of Year 12-13 Looked After Young People Cohort 2022-23	Orlaith Green
2 July 2024	
Performance of Adoption Services	Shelagh Mitchell
Health of Children in Care	Katharine Browne
Children in Care Council – activity and achievements	Pom Bhogal
To be placed	

