

**22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021****Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL  
WORK****CHANGES TO THE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL  
CARE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to permanently establish, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021:
  - 2 FTE Social Worker (Band B) posts within the Assessment Service
  - 1 FTE Children's Services Manager (Band E) post, 1 FTE Team Manager (Band D) post and 4 FTE Social Worker (Band B) posts within the Looked After and Leaving Care Service.
2. To seek approval to disestablish 1 FTE Social Worker (Band B) post and to permanently establish 1 FTE Advanced Practitioner (Band C) post within the Specialist Social Work Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

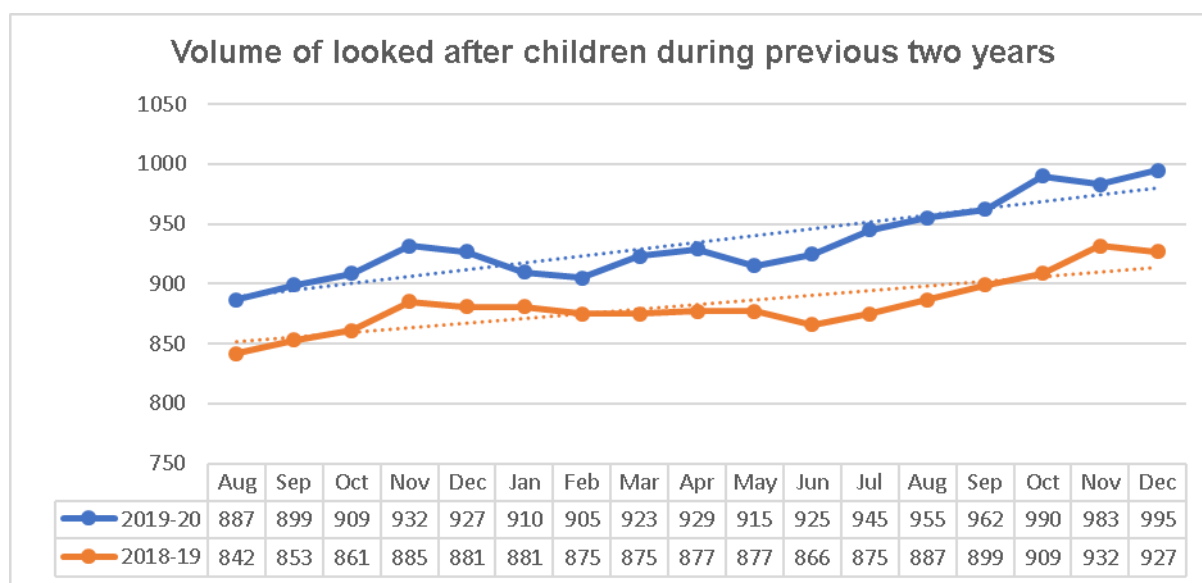
**Information****Assessment Services**

3. The Local Authority has responsibilities in line with the April 2018 statutory guidance: 'Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation'. When a 16 or 17 year old presents as homeless, the guidance stipulates that:
  - if there is an imminent threat of homelessness or if the young person is actually homeless, a child in need assessment must be carried out and the child accommodated under section 20 [of the Children Act 1989]
  - within one working day of a referral being received, a local authority social worker should make a decision about the type of response that is required
  - at the point when the need for an assessment under the 1989 Act is identified for either a young homeless person, or a young person threatened with homelessness, it will be necessary for the social worker leading the assessment to inform the young person and their family of the action to be taken.

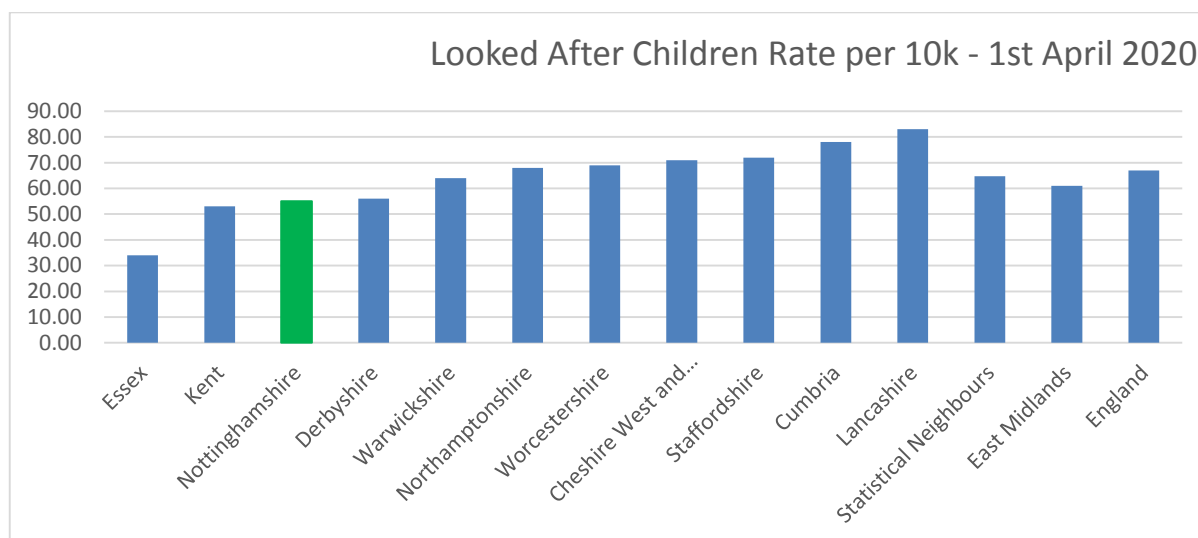
4. Current practice in Nottinghamshire when a 16/17 year old presents as homeless is that a 'child in need' assessment is completed by Youth Justice and Family Service Rapid Assessment Workers, who do not hold a social work qualification. In order to comply with statutory guidance, it is therefore necessary to create additional social work capacity to complete the child in need assessments of homeless 16/17 year olds. This capacity would need to be developed within the Assessment Service.
5. The Assessment Service saw a significant increase in caseloads prior to the coronavirus pandemic; in January-February 2020 (prior to national lockdown measures), the Assessment Service was reaching a critical point with average caseloads around 26 – 32; the local aim for the Assessment Service is caseloads of no more than 15. Placing additional assessment duties on an already pressured service would therefore not be sustainable without securing additional social work capacity.
6. It has been calculated that the additional capacity required to complete the additional duties would be 2 FTE Social Workers. The proposal is therefore to establish 2 FTE additional Social Worker (Band B) posts within the Assessment Service.
7. While the child in need assessment would be removed from the roles and responsibilities of the Family Service Rapid Assessment Workers, their wider remit in relation to homeless 16/17 year olds will remain unchanged.

### Looked After and Leaving Care Services

8. The Looked After and Leaving Care Service is responsible for providing dedicated social work assessment, planning and support for children who are looked after by the Local Authority, and who become care leavers upon transitioning into adulthood. The last two years have seen a steady increase in the numbers of young people coming into care, from 842 in August 2018, to 995 in December 2020:



9. For context, at the time of the last available benchmarking data (2019/20), Nottinghamshire continued to have a comparatively low rate of children in care when compared with statistical neighbours:



10. An experienced social worker in the Looked After Service is expected to support 18-20 children, although this number will be lower if the social worker is supporting children who are placed out of area or where there are young people with significant levels of risk due to missing episodes or risk of child criminal exploitation. There are currently 543 children open to the Looked After Service with a further 48 waiting to be allocated. 335 children are currently placed out of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The current social work establishment is 28 social workers, which is insufficient capacity to enable young people to be effectively supported and for caseloads to be manageable. It is therefore proposed that a further 4 FTE Social Worker (Band B) posts are established, along with an additional 1 FTE Team Manager (Band D) post.
11. In addition, the Service Manager for the Looked After and Leaving Care Service now has 9 direct reports, resulting from growth to the staffing establishment within both services and from innovations such as the Children in Care police offer post. There is also an ambition for the Service Manager to take on line management responsibility for the Team Manager for CAMHS for Children Looked After, so that the service becomes multi-disciplinary and more effectively able to meet the holistic needs of children. Given the pressure on the Service Manager post, it is proposed that an additional Service Manager (Band E) post is established. Each post will manage team managers across both the Looked After and Leaving Care teams, to ensure consistency of transition for young people between the two services. It is proposed that this post will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

### Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team

12. The Developmental Trauma & Attachment Team (DTAT) was launched in January 2020 providing systemically focused work with children and young people up to the age of 18 years and their families where there are concerns about the young person's emotional and mental health being impacted by trauma and attachment associated to a history of abuse and disrupted attachment. Developmental trauma is used to describe the impact of early, repeated abuse, neglect, separation and adverse experiences that occurs within the child's significant relationships.

13. The team consists of 8 Specialist Social Workers and 1 Team Manager, each having additional therapeutic training. The team criteria consists of either an open referral to social care, 'edge of care' presentation or kinship care where there has been previous or current social care involvement.
14. Since the team was launched, there has been significant demand for the range of evidence based interventions that the team offers, notably non-violent resistance therapy (NVR), theraplay, family work, dyadic developmental psychotherapy (DDP) and trauma and attachment groups. In addition, there has been significant demand from both social work and CAMHS colleagues for consultation, advice and training to support decision-making around how to effectively support the emotional and mental health needs of the children and young people that they are working with. In order to meet these demands, it is proposed that the skill-mix within the team is altered to develop an Advanced Practitioner role (Band C), which will replace one of the Social Worker (Band B) posts. The team currently has one vacancy which can be converted. This Advanced Practitioner post will enable a greater level of training and consultation to be provided thus upskilling social work colleagues, as well as working directly with the children and families who have the most complex needs.

### **Other Options Considered**

15. The alternative option is no change, however, this would mean that the service would struggle to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in respect of safe staffing levels.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

16. The establishment of the additional posts will create the social work capacity required to effectively support vulnerable children and young people.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

17. 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**

#### Assessment Service

18. The total costs of 2 FTE Social Worker (Band B) posts will be £100,178 per annum plus £2,400 set up costs. These costs will be met from the Youth, Families and Social Work staffing budget, pending approval of the additional costs as part of the budget setting process at Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

#### Looked After and Leaving Care Service

19. The total cost of the additional posts is £314,000 per annum, plus one-off set up costs of £12,000. These costs will be met from the Youth, Families and Social Work staffing budget, pending approval of the additional costs as part of the budget setting process at Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

#### Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team

20. The difference in cost between a Social Worker (Band B) post at £46,235 and an Advanced Practitioner (Band C) post at £52,298 is £6,363. These costs can be met from the Youth, Families and Social work staffing budget.

### **Human Resources Implications**

21. A recruitment exercise would be undertaken for posts identified as requiring this.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Committee:

- 1) approves the permanent establishment, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, of:
  - 2 FTE Social Worker (Band B) posts within the Assessment Service
  - 1 FTE Children's Services Manager (Band E) post, 1 FTE Team Manager (Band D) post and 4 FTE Social Worker (Band B) posts within the Looked After and Leaving Care Service
  - 1 FTE Advanced Practitioner (Social Worker) (Band C) post within the Specialist Social Work Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team.
- 2) approves the disestablishment of 1 FTE Social Worker (Band B) post in the Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

**Steve Edwards**  
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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 08/02/21)**

22. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 09/02/21)**

### Assessment Service

23. The total costs of 2 FTE social workers (Band B) will be £100,178 per annum plus £2,400 set up costs. These costs will be met from the Youth, Families and Social Work staffing budget, subject to approval of the County Council's budget for 2021-22 at Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The Assessment Service budget is currently £2.725m.

### Looked After and Leaving Care Service

24. The total cost of the additional posts are £314,000 per annum, plus one-off set off costs of £12,000. These costs will be met from the Youth, Families and Social Work staffing budget, subject to approval of the County Council's budget for 2021-22 at Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The Looked After and Leaving Care Service budgets are currently £9.072m in total.

### Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team

25. The difference in cost between and Social Worker post (Band B) at £46,235 and an Advanced Practitioner post (Band C) at £52,298 is £6,363. The additional cost can be met from the Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team budget of £0.631m.

## **HR Comments (BC 08/02/21)**

26. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Posts will be recruited to in line with the Council's vacancy control and recruitment procedures.

## **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.

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