

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

### **KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

1. The report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to the Children and Young People's Services portfolio.

#### **Ofsted inspection of safeguarding services**

2. Earlier this year, the Council wrote to Ofsted requesting a re-inspection of our children's safeguarding services, following a successful unannounced inspection of our contact, referral and assessments arrangements, and a peer challenge. The wide-ranging re-inspection took place during September 2011 and included an analysis of documentation, an audit of case files, and a week of on-site inspection activity across the County. The Ofsted report arising from the re-inspection has since been published and I am delighted to inform you that it confirms the positive informal feedback provided by the inspection team.
3. The report states that, "In a relatively short period of time the local authority, and the full range of partners, have made significant progress in understanding and improving safeguarding services within the county". It judges our services to be adequate or good across all of the areas assessed through the inspection, noting many strengths along with some areas for development which are consistent with our improvement plan. We will continue to tackle these areas for development and I am confident that the improvement will continue. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 1
4. The improvements in our safeguarding arrangements have now been recognised by a number of independent assessments during the course of this year – the unannounced Ofsted inspection in February 2011, the Peer Challenge in May 2011, and now the full Ofsted re-inspection in September 2011. The re-inspection outcome has a direct bearing on the Ofsted Annual Children's Services Assessment (CSA) - the only element of the former Council annual ratings which remain, and in respect of which our current rating has been limited by our previous inadequate rating for safeguarding. The provisional rating for 2011 does take account of the outcome from this re-inspection and I am hopeful that it will be reflected in the final assessment, which will be published on 8 November 2011. I am equally optimistic that it will be taken into account by the Secretary of State when he reviews our progress against the DfE Improvement Notice.

5. Finally, I would like to thank all colleagues who have worked so hard to secure the improvements in our safeguarding services. The Ofsted report rightly recognises that it has been a team effort across Council and partner services. That said, I want to give particular thanks to our colleagues in Children's Social Care, whose job is vital and often thankless - so it is fitting to reserve the bulk of our thanks and appreciation for them.

### **Latest Ofsted Inspection of Children's Residential Centres**

6. Our residential homes continue to provide good placement stability, and a high level of service to support young people to feel valued, listened to and involved in their future care plans including a move on to a more semi-independent placement, or return home to their family, foster carer(s), or extended family when it is the right time to do so.
7. Recent Ofsted inspections for all our children's homes evidence this good work by the following ratings:
- |                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| Minster View     | - | retains judgement of outstanding.   |
| Caudwell House   | - | inspected 4 July 2011; overall effectiveness judged as outstanding                                |
| The Big House    | - | inspected on 2 June 2011; overall effectiveness judged as outstanding                             |
| Clayfields House | - | inspected 21 June 2011; judged as satisfactory  |
| Lyndene          | - | inspected 27 April 2011: overall effectiveness judged as good with some outstanding features      |
| West View        | - | inspected 23 March 2011 - overall effectiveness judged as good with some outstanding features and |
| Oakhurst         | - | inspected 24 June.2011:overall effectiveness judged as good with outstanding features             |

### **Safeguarding Strategy Meeting – Boughton Pumping Station – 4 October**

8. Councillor Clarke attended the fourth strategy day of 2011 for Children's Social Care managers which took place on the 4 October. The event built on previous events in January, March and June and was again well attended by around 100 managers from Children's Social Care.
9. These events are intended to give managers the opportunity to review service performance, receive updates on key issues and contribute to the wider development of the service. The strategy days have been key to the development of the division's vision and mission (the statement of intent approved by Council in March 2011), business planning and transformation programme.
10. The October event was also timely as it gave the Service Director the opportunity to update managers on the findings of the Ofsted re-inspection of Safeguarding Services, and to seek their input into the areas for development which have been identified by the inspection.

## **Celebrating the achievements of Looked After, adopted children and care leavers**

11. The annual achievement event took place on 24 September 2011 and was a resounding success. Rufford Park was an excellent venue and over 90 children and young people, ranging in age from 4 to 20, attended with their parents and carers. Certificates were presented by Councillor Owen and Councillor Allin supported by Steve Edwards (Service Director, Social Care) and Rachel Coombs (Group Manager, Regulated Services and Corporate Parenting).
12. Sue Denholm, Co-ordinator of the Virtual School, opened the day and there were lively presentations from a number of guests including an inspiring address from a young man who had previously been in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council and told those present how he had overcome difficulties in his life and was now a successful businessman with a settled home life.
13. Positive feedback was received from participants on how much the day had been enjoyed and the importance of celebrating achievements was noted by all who attended.

## **SEN Pathfinder**

14. Nottinghamshire County Council, in partnership with the County and City PCTs, has been selected through competitive tender, as one of 20 local authorities to pilot the reforms set out in the Government's Green Paper on special educational needs. These reforms are prompted by the findings of recent reviews of and inquiries into the workings of the existing statutory assessment processes, undertaken amongst others by Ofsted and Brian Lamb, Chair of the Special Educational Needs Consortium.
15. Each pathfinder project will run for 18 months from September 2011 until April 2013 and will attract £225,000 of central government funding. At present the Project Board is seeking to appoint a Project Manager and to identify a voluntary/community sector partner using some of the funding allocated by the DfE. The project will involve health, education and social care professionals, working with colleagues within the voluntary and community sector, to engage parents and carers in the development of a new single assessment and planning process. The DfE has also identified a number of optional areas it wants to test through the pathfinders. These include:
  - Access to personalised budgets;
  - Banded funding;
  - Extending the age range for support (from 0-25 years) and improving employment opportunities;
  - Support to parents and young people; and
  - Support to vulnerable children.
16. Nottinghamshire is one of three pathfinders asked by the DfE to pilot all of the above and this will present an exciting opportunity to radically overhaul existing systems for supporting children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities.

## **Young People's Awards Night – 30 September 2011**

17. The 2011 Nottinghamshire Outstanding Achievement 4Uth awards presentation took place on the evening of Friday 30 September in the Assembly Hall at County Hall. This was the culmination of the search for young people who have had a positive impact on their local communities and acted as positive role models for their peers. Many of the 57 young people who were nominated for an award had overcome difficulties in their personal lives and used their experience to help others.
18. The evening was the culmination of several months of selection, starting with nominations from organisations or members of the public, which were assessed in each of the seven Districts by young people on the local Scrutiny, Advisory and Development Groups. The District winners were in turn assessed by groups of judges, including members of the Young People's Board, The Leader and Chair person of the County Council, the Children and Young People's Services Cabinet member, Cllr Philip Owen and the Editor of the Nottingham Evening Post.
19. There were eight awards presented to young people at the ceremony, in front of an audience of Families, Friends, Elected Members and Invited guests. Entertainment was provided by a Youth Dance Troop and a young singer/song writer. An award was presented to the winner from each District and the overall award went to Laura Hickman of Ashfield, who has campaigned to gain greater understanding of the needs of young people with Asperger's Syndrome.

## **The 37<sup>th</sup> Shadow 2011 Night Orienteering Event in Sherwood Forest for Young People**

20. The event took place on 15/16 October and saw 270 Young People from a variety of Youth organisations within Nottinghamshire ranging from NCC Youth Club, Uniform Services and voluntary sector clubs descending into Sherwood Forest to take part in this annual night orienteering exercise involving a 20 kilometre course over 7 hours in the dark, as well as completing tasks at incidents throughout the night. The event organised by Nottinghamshire Children, Families and Cultural Services, was supported on the night by the Chair of the County Council and myself and we joined into the spirit of the event by participating in a number of incidents

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

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