

Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan

The overarching objective of this improvement plan is to ensure that the Children and Families Department is taking the necessary steps to provide safe, effective, efficient and cost-effective services to vulnerable children, young people and their families in Nottinghamshire, with enabling support and challenge from the Chief Executives, Adult Social Care and Health and Place Departments.

The plan should be read in conjunction with the existing highlight reporting against the Department's major change programmes: Remodelling Care and Remodelling Practice. These programmes detail the specific benefits to be delivered in respect of financial savings/cost avoidance and efficiency.

1. Addressing the in-year financial challenges

	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
1.1	Regularly review the need for agency staffing through Agency Challenge Panel.	Colin Pettigrew	Steve Edwards	Reduce agency spend. Ensure that any agency deployment is absolutely necessary and is targeted at our highest priority areas.	Quarterly. Next meeting 24 September 2019	All social work caseloads are within the set manageable number when measured each month. The forecast on agency staffing spend for 2019-20 is carefully monitored and does not exceed the number of agency staff required to ensure that Social Workers have manageable workloads.	Quarterly reviews in place. Ongoing need for current levels of agency staff due to need for manageable caseloads.	Departmental continuous improvement plan Workforce strategy
1.2	Quarterly reviews of non-essential spend.	Colin Pettigrew / Nigel Stevenson	Laurence Jones / Sue Summerscales	Identify and eliminate unnecessary spend.	Completed every quarter.	Completion of review and advice issued to staff on changes needed to expenditure approvals.	Quarterly reviews in place.	
1.3	Audit of financial management processes and culture within the department.	Colin Pettigrew / Nigel Stevenson	Simon Lacey	To understand if any changes are required to deliver the optimum oversight of value for money within the department.	November 2019	An action plan is approved and implemented to take forward any recommendations within the report.	Fieldwork has commenced.	
1.4	Benchmark current service outcomes and financial performance against statistical neighbours who are rated good or outstanding in an OFSTED ILACS.	Colin Pettigrew / Nigel Stevenson	Laurence Jones	This will help understand how the department is performing relative to others and prompt a deeper challenge of balancing children care need and staying within budget.	November 2019	An action plan is approved and implemented to take forward any recommendations as a result of the benchmarking.		
1.5	Independent review of 20 most recently accommodated children.	Colin Pettigrew	Steve Edwards	Assurance that only those children who need to come into care do so.	Report completed July 2019	Only children that need to come into care do so.	Audit undertaken and draft report submitted for consideration by the Service Director.	Children and Families Departmental Strategy

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1.6	Senior managers to regularly review the most expensive care placements.	Colin Pettigrew	Laurence Jones	Effective use of budget and appropriate investment in long term outcomes for children.	Monthly	The top 20 most expensive placements are reviewed monthly.	Reviews are underway	LAC and Care Leavers Strategy

2. Effective delivery of change programmes, accelerating pace where possible, and improving ability to track benefits realisation

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2.1	<p>Increased number of internal fostering placements available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing prioritised support of marketing and communications colleagues with comprehensive campaign through to July 2020 Corporate and partnership approach to improve offer to foster carers (leisure facilities, council tax discount, parking etc). 	<p>Marje Toward</p> <p>Anthony May/ Adrian Smith</p>	<p>Luke Barrett/ Catherine Kelly</p> <p>Derek Higton/ Pete Mathieson/ Chris Ward/ Andy Dawson</p>	<p>Safe, caring and loving placements for children.</p> <p>Higher percentage of foster placements are made internally</p> <p>Any unnecessary expenditure is avoided</p>	<p>Rolling marketing campaign to July 2020</p> <p>Revised offer for foster carers by April 2020</p>	<p>Savings target achieved</p> <p>A net increase of 50 fostering placements by March 2021</p> <p>Increase in fostering enquiries of 20%</p> <p>Increase in conversion from enquiry to approved foster carer of 10%</p>	<p>Marketing campaign has been planned and will commence in September 2019.</p> <p>Initial meetings have taken place with stakeholders to explore potential improvements to offer.</p> <p>Paper to be taken to next Chief Executives meeting on 6 September by Adrian Smith (Steve Edwards to draft).</p>	<p>LAC and Care Leavers Strategy</p> <p>Care Sufficiency Strategy</p>
2.2	<p>Increase in internal residential children's home capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 4 bed residential home opened. Consideration when remodelling wider NCC estate and in planning applications for housing developments to increase children's home capacity/ accommodation for care leavers 	<p>Colin Pettigrew/ Adrian Smith</p>	<p>Devon Allen/ Neil Gamble</p>	<p>Timely mobilisation of new residential home. Four new NCC residential placements available avoiding the need for more costly external residential placements and resulting in good outcomes for the children.</p>	<p>Timeframe is largely dependent on the operating model agreed by Members, but is estimated at between June and September 2020.</p>	<p>Four additional residential placements for Nottinghamshire in a NCC owned home by May 2020.</p>	<p>Policy Committee has approved the purchase of a new residential home (17/7/19). Next step is to develop the operating model for the new home whilst pursuing the purchase.</p>	<p>Care Sufficiency Strategy</p>
2.3	<p>Increase the number of "block contract" residential placements with external providers. The total number of new homes under this arrangement will be four.</p>	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	<p>Contracts which provide a better cost per placement (as long as occupancy is maintained) and therefore help reduce placement costs.</p>	<p>First two homes by September 2019</p>	<p>Savings target achieved</p> <p>New homes operational and fully occupied by February 2020.</p>	<p>The first two homes became operational from July 2019.</p>	<p>Care Sufficiency Strategy</p>

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2.4	Establish a D2N2 Commissioning Framework for residential and Independent Fostering Agencies.	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	To use economies of scale to reduce the cost of placements. To develop the market across the D2N2 footprint to increase diversity, availability and quality. This will also reduce costs per placement overall. Further development of block arrangements may also reduce unit costs.	February 2020	New D2N2 Framework in place	Currently on track. First round of tenders due back in August. A further round of tenders planned for November prior to the new arrangements going live from 01 February 2020 (upon the cessation of the current East Midlands-wide Framework on 31/01/20)	Children and Families Departmental Strategy
2.5	Develop enhanced models of semi-independent accommodation for the most complex care leavers in smaller units.	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	The most complex care leavers often fail to make a successful transition from residential care to supported accommodation. By providing smaller units an earlier successful transition could be made which is better for the young person as they reach adulthood and is also significantly cheaper than residential care. It also frees places in residential care for those who need it the most.	Some already operational; others planned to be so by 2020/21	14 new units in place by April 2020 Reduced instances and level of evictions Improved outcomes for individual young people (as evidenced via Outcome Star scores)	1 smaller 5-bed 24 hour staffed setting has been developed and is operational. Core+ specification developed and being negotiated with current provider (3/4 bed with intensive staff support). Initial plans to commission a model within a £500K budget envelope (current spend on spot purchase) to meet needs of most vulnerable care leavers aged 18+ Making teenage parent service staffed 24/7 (6 bed unit)	Care Sufficiency Strategy LAC and Care Leavers Strategy
2.6	Delivery of the Social Impact Bond Model (jointly with Nottingham and Derby City Councils).	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	To reduce the number of young people in high cost residential placements and therefore reduce the pressure on the placements budget. To make use of up to £3m of Big Lottery (LCF) funding.	SIB to be operational by Feb 2020 (revised)	SIB to become operational, receiving referrals and delivering positive outcomes for individual CYP and delivering budget savings	The implementation of this intervention programme has been delayed as a result of the selected commissioned provider having to re-procure a social investor following the withdrawal of its original partner	Care Sufficiency Strategy

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2.7	To ensure that the corporate Digital Development Programme supports delivery of the Children and Families Department's "Digital Development Plan"	Adrian Smith / Colin Pettigrew	Katharine Smith Tracy Hill Sue Milburn Joe Foley	Using technology to achieve simple and immediate access and better support for service users More efficient access to relevant information between organisations within the children's partnership (e.g. social care and CAMHS). Care leavers better able to access information about local offer.	Details	Delivery of the Children and Families Department's "Digital Development Plan"	Programme Board to be convened in September which will identify priority "asks". Departmental Digital Development Board is well established. Consultation on plan is complete.	Departmental Digital Development Plan
2.8	Ensuring there is sufficient/prioritised capacity to develop the BI reports required to meet Ofsted requirements (including workforce reporting), baseline and track benefits of change programmes, and facilitate management decision-making.	Nigel Stevenson	Rob Disney	Reduction in manual tasks undertaken within frontline services thus freeing up management and business support capacity. Better data on which to inform decision making. Better data upon which to inform benefits monitoring of projects Fulfil Ofsted requirement. Ability to track impact of project initiatives on recruitment and retention of staff. Better decision making on use of agency staff.	End of September 2019 for Ofsted reporting Further development by June 2020	A suite of appropriate reports and dashboards available	Meeting scheduled 19 August to progress.	Departmental Digital Development Plan
2.9	Additional project management capacity/financial resource for capacity within the department to be established to deliver the following change projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing whole family safeguarding teams between children's and adults; Making the front door delivery model sustainable within the context of increasing demand; Taking a joint commissioning approach with health for children with complex needs; 	Nigel Stevenson / Colin Pettigrew	Sue Milburn / Lucy Peel / Marion Clay	More timely delivery of a range of projects intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve practice and through this children's outcomes; release capacity within frontline teams; and make more efficient use of resources and avoid cost where possible. 	To be determined once projects initiated. Next step for progressing family safeguarding is joint CFS and ASCH leadership team meeting on 17 September. SEND strategy – initial phases are being delivered following Higher Level Needs budget review. This is being developed into a formal 5 year strategy for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing whole family safeguarding teams between children's and adults; Making the front door delivery model sustainable within the context of increasing demand; Taking a joint commissioning 	Agreement in principle at Transformation and Governance Group on 26 July. SEND strategy in development. Following the review of the High Needs Budget and underpinning Strategy by Peter Grey published June 2018, there has been a	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering a five year SEND transformation strategy and Developing a coherent approach to supporting children living in kinship arrangements. <p>Anticipated additional capacity requirements: 2 project managers, 3 programme officers within programmes and projects, plus funding for 2 project manager posts to be hosted within the department, graduate trainee.</p>			SEND budgets are managed so that large budget deficits do not appear in the Dedicated Schools Grant.	implementation from spring 2020.	<p>approach with health for children with complex needs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering a five year SEND transformation strategy and <p>Developing a coherent approach to supporting children living in kinship arrangements.</p>	comprehensive consultation with the schools sector and with parents and as a result the Education, Learning and Skills Service has been reviewed and a new structure agreed by CYP in June 2019. In addition, this review, including the parent and stakeholder feedback of the high consultation undertaken between Dec 2018 – Jan 2019, it was agreed that there should be a move to locality working by the Schools and Families Specialist Services and the Service is now in the process of advertising for 7 district SENCOs and to move to a locality working model. Also, "Nottinghamshire SEND Policy" (0-25 years) 2020 – 2023 will go to consultation on 16th September which will open until the 29 November 2019. This consultation will inform the final Policy which will be taken to the December 2019 Policy Committee.	
2.10	Ensuring that sold services are achieving full cost recovery in all instances	Colin Pettigrew	Laurence Jones	Accurately calculating full costs and having charges which reflect these	1 April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> full cost calculated income achieved 	Full cost reviews underway	

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3. Creating the conditions for good practice to flourish

	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
3.1	Taking a corporate approach to parking at all sites to ensure social workers have prioritised access to parking.	Adrian Smith	Derek Higton	Better efficiency of social work time. Improved staff morale.	To be determined.	Improved staff satisfaction ratings as measured through feedback via annual health check and through Practice Forum	Initial meeting held with Derek Higton and John Hughes to identify potential solutions to parking challenges at key sites (Prospect, Meadow House, Lawn View House, Piazza, Chancery Lane).	
3.2	Ensuring that the smartphones for social workers function as smartphones at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than the current planning go live date of October 2019.	Nigel Stevenson	Nigel Harlow	Social workers better able to work efficiently. Would mean that Apps that have been commissioned (Mind of My Own, Guardian 24) can be used on work phones. Reduction in risk of IG breaches. Improved staff morale.	All social workers to have smartphones by October 2019	All relevant staff having functioning smartphones Improved staff morale as measured through feedback via annual health check and through Practice Forum	Agreement reached to pilot mobilising smartphones with 10 users.	Corporate Health and Safety Plan.
3.3	Introduction of Guardian 24 on smartphones to improve personal safety for workers during visits in the community	Nigel Stevenson / Marje Toward	John Nilan	Improved staff morale. Reduction in cost (current solution more expensive).	Implementation from September 2019	All relevant staff have access to Guardian 24. Improvement in percentage of staff feeling safe as measured through annual health check (baseline through health check of 79%).		Children and Families Departmental Strategy
3.4	Introduce a clear values-based framework within which to work and support in managing the challenges of complex case work (rollout of reflective group supervision).	Colin Pettigrew	Lucy Peel	Improve case progress and successful outcomes therefore over time reducing the number of cases requiring a social worker. Increase job satisfaction and therefore social worker retention. This then reduces the need for expensive agency workers.	Rollout across District Child Protection Teams and the Children's Disability Service by September 2019. Further roll outs to follow.	Social work caseloads are within the set manageable number Reduced drift and delay (average duration of child in need and child protection cases) Improved staff retention during 2020-21 Continued reduction in use of agency staff during 2020-21	Pilot in Bassetlaw completed and evaluated. Facilitators trained for rollout in September.	Children and Families Departmental Strategy

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3.5	Provide support recognising the emotional toll of the work that social workers do (piloting Schwartz Rounds, access to counselling support and a health and wellbeing hub).	Colin Pettigrew	Lucy Peel	Reduce stress related absence and therefore for the need for expensive agency worker cover. Improve social worker recruitment and retention through the offer to social workers.	Pilot commences June 2019. Full rollout out January 2020 pending evaluation.	Improved staff retention Improved staff wellbeing as measured through health check Reduction in stress related absence	Initial Schwartz Rounds have taken place with positive feedback from staff and Point of Care Foundation.	
3.6	Good continuing professional development and career progression opportunities through a refreshed CPD offer for experienced social workers and new team managers, and developing additional advanced practitioner roles.	Colin Pettigrew / Marje Toward	Lucy Peel / Helen Richardson	Improved social worker recruitment and retention through the offer to social workers.	Detailed action plan being developed.	Improved staff retention during 2020-21 Quality of practice as assessed through the Quality Management Framework	Cross-council steering group established. Extended offer for NQSWs developed. CPD portfolio for experienced social workers and team managers being developed	Children and Families Departmental Strategy