

16th September 2019**Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES****2019/2020 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the current budget position for Children and Families, setting out the in-year financial challenges being faced and the actions being taken to mitigate these.
2. To agree the Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan (the Plan), attached as **Appendix C**, and to receive progress updates against the Plan every three months.
3. To consider whether there are any further actions Committee requires in relation to the information contained in the report.

Information

4. As a service children's social care is working within an environment which is facing considerable pressure. The National Audit Office issued a report, Pressures on children's social care, in January 2019 which set out recent trends in pressures on children's social care with rising demand, increased spending and reported overspends by local authorities for the period 2010/11 and 2017/18. It stated that the proportion of local authorities that overspent on children's social care had risen from 63% in 2010-11 to 91% in 2017-18.
5. Nottinghamshire is still significantly below statistical neighbour levels in terms of looked after children (LAC) as a proportion of the 0-19 population and has been since 2009. In 2018 Nottinghamshire's LAC level was 22% lower than statistical neighbours (Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Lancashire, Worcestershire, Cumbria, Northamptonshire, Essex, Kent, Cheshire West and Chester and Warwickshire) and 25% below the England average. As LAC levels increase nationally this places pressure on the Independent Fostering Association (IFA) and residential placement markets. This is making it difficult and expensive to place children with the most complex needs.
6. There is the additional challenge of increasing numbers of care leavers and new burdens for them. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, local authorities have a statutory duty to provide Personal Advisor support to all care leavers who request it, up to the age of 25 years, with little additional funding to provide this. Prior to the new legislation the local authority had a duty to support care leavers up to the age of 21 years.

7. The recruitment and retention of child and family social workers continues to be a national challenge with the National Audit Office reporting that the workforce is characterised by high vacancy and agency rates. Recently published data suggests a national vacancy rate of 16% and a national agency rate of 15.4% at 30 September 2018¹.
8. **Appendix A** provides a number of graphs which illustrate the Nottinghamshire growth in demand between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and the demographic of the LAC population.
9. Nottinghamshire children's services were impacted by these demand pressures and at the end of 2018/19 the Children & Families department reported a net overspend of £6.266m equivalent to 5.22% of the final budget. This was mainly due to the rise in the number of looked after children and the need for external foster and residential placements. This increase accounted for £5.4m (86%) of the overspend with the net balance attributable to spend on agency workers in the hard to retain social work teams.
10. As part of the 2019/20 budget setting process an additional budget allocation of £7.1m for known and anticipated budget pressures was approved and included £4.8m for LAC external residential placements to fund growth in 2018/19 and projected inflationary increases and population growth. Despite this additional funding the department is currently forecast to overspend by £8.5m (6.65%). This was reported to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee in July 2019 when it received the 2019/20 Period 2 corporate budget monitoring report. The overspend comprised of:
 - £7.5m overspend in relation to external residential placements for LAC due to the continued and sustained growth in external residential and fostering placements which commenced in early 2018. Part of this relates to the full year effect of the external residential placement budget overspend in 2018/19 due to the increase in LAC numbers and;
 - £1.0m overspend on social work staffing due to a combination of staffing challenges including additional capacity staff to respond to demand challenges and agency workers to cover vacancies and other gaps e.g. maternity leave.
11. Since that report the budget forecast for Period 4 has been undertaken and the overspend is now £8.3m (6.54% of the budget), a reduction of £0.2m, which will be reported to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee on 16th September 2019. The reduction in the overspend relates to external residential placements.

External Residential Placements

12. The external placements budget overspent by £5.477m (budget of £22.4m) in 2018-19 which included £0.941m of temporary funding, therefore the underlying permanent overspend was £6.418m.
13. During 2018/19 LAC numbers rose from 807 at the start of the year to 875 by March 2019, peaking at over 890 and averaging 856. During the same period the number of external placements, in foster care or residential, increased from 332 to 398 with an average of

¹Department for Education. *Experimental Statistics: Children and family social work workforce in England, year ending 30 September 2018*. 28 February 2019.

371. As well as the increase in volume of placements, the average weekly cost also increased and the mix of placements changed as internal and external fostering placements reached capacity and external residential placements were sought instead.

14. It was recognised that the increase in LAC external placements during 2018-19 would have an ongoing impact on future years' budgets and a pressure bid was submitted and approved as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process. The early timetable for the pressure bids meant that the data available to inform the external placements financial projection was only available up to August 2018 and it was not anticipated that LAC numbers and consequently demand for external residential placements would continue to rise through the year, exacerbated by the temporary closure of Oakhurst.
15. Reference was made in the pressure bid to the risk associated with a modest growth in the LAC rate per 10,000 of 2.0% in 2019/20 and 0.5% in each of the following two years – which would place a further financial pressure in excess of £1.7m on the external placements budget over this period. However, this growth was not included in the bid as it was impossible to predict accurately how the LAC rate per 10,000 would move over the coming years.
16. At the time the pressure was calculated, the number of external placements was 349 with a forecast overspend of £3.8m and by the end of the year the number of placements had increased to 398 (an additional 49 external placements) with a corresponding increase in the overspend to £6.4m (excluding temporary funding).
17. The unexpected sustained increase in LAC and consequently the demand for external placements has resulted in additional pressure on the 2019/20 external placements budget. The overall LAC numbers appear to have stabilised over the last few months but there has not been a corresponding stabilisation of the external placements and numbers continue to grow. In addition, the average weekly cost of placements are rising due to, market conditions, inflation, complexity of need and limited capacity within the Authority's own internal residential and foster care provision.
18. The first financial monitoring report for 2019/20 to be presented to Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee on 17 June 2019 drew attention to the significant pressures continuing to be experienced in Children's Social Care in respect of the rise in Looked After Children external placements for the reasons mentioned above and that this high risk area would continue to be monitored closely during the year through the robust monthly budget management process and reported back to Committee.
19. Work was undertaken on projections for 2019/20 and a range of scenarios modelled to inform the forecast out-turn position for external placements. The forecast for Period 2 of £7.5m was based on the knowledge of the first two months of the financial year and assumptions for the remainder based on trend data and current and planned initiatives to reduce spend. This was considered a reasonable forecast for Period 2 on the basis that the stabilisation of the LAC numbers over the last few months has not seen a corresponding stabilisation of external residential placement numbers with growth still experienced in April and May and trend data indicating that the numbers will continue to grow.

20. The latest forecast for Period 4 is showing a slight improvement at £7.3m, a reduction of £0.2m. It is based on the following data and assumptions:
- the actual number of children in placement at 31 July 2019 which is 411 (398 March 2019)
 - projected net growth for August 2019 – March 2020 of 25 children
 - projected number of external placements at March 2020 436 (398 March 2019) based on past trend data from January 2017 and current and planned initiatives to reduce spend
 - 420 average number of external placements for the financial year.
21. This is a difficult service to forecast for because it is demand led and volatile in nature. It is highly sensitive to changes in numbers, weekly costs and placement mix due to the high cost of placements. There is a risk that if any of the assumptions change the forecast position will also change. There is however a robust monthly monitoring process to track trend data, average costs and actual numbers of children in placement to highlight potential issues as soon as possible.

Activity Already Being Undertaken and Proposed Actions

22. There are a significant number of initiatives planned or already being undertaken by the department to manage the overspend in this year and aimed at delivering increased value for money in future years. Some of these will take time to implement and, given legislative and regulatory constraints may not impact significantly on the current year financial position. Whilst the number of looked after children in Nottinghamshire continues to be below statistical neighbours there remains a very significant challenge in respect of the number of children in care, the growing complexity of need they present and the mix of placements available. A key challenge is to manage and develop the care market to ensure sufficient cost effective placements. This will lead to reduced spend although it may not produce cashable savings given the wider context. The Remodelling Care change programme is underway to increase the number of internal placements available so that reliance on the external market is minimised. Action to make progress in this area as well as the other challenging area of social worker recruitment and retention are detailed in the Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan at **Appendix C**.

Social Work Staffing

23. The staffing challenges in 2018/19 led to an overall overspend on social work staffing of £1.8m (budget of £18.841m) with £1.5m (budget £13.348m) relating to the hard to retain teams. This arose due to a combination of using additional capacity staff to respond to demand challenges and agency workers to cover vacancies and other gaps e.g. maternity leave.
24. As part of the 2019/20 budget setting process there was a pressure bid for social work staffing which included a structural budget shortfall for 3.4 posts required in the context of service demands. In addition, the service had a recurrent overspend on agency social work posts due to the increased caseloads that the service was managing. Whilst a range of measures were initiated to mitigate this, for example the introduction of additional Social Work Support Officers and the development of a case progression model, it was

recognised that this would take time to embed in practice, demand pressures continued to be a challenge, and therefore a temporary budget pressure of £467,000 was agreed (equivalent to 7 agency social work posts).

25. For 2019/20 social work staffing continues to be a challenge and the department still has a significant number of agency staff. The overall Period 2 forecast overspend on social work staffing was £1.0m (budget of £20.3m) with £0.9m (budget £14.6m) relating to the hard to retain teams. The latest forecast for Period 4 is showing an increase in this overspend by £0.1m to £1.1m although this has been offset by other underspends within the Youth, Families & Social Work division.
26. At the end of July there were 77 agency Social Workers and Team Managers in the hard to retain and Looked After Children teams. The assumptions in the forecast are for agency numbers to reduce to 66 by March 2020 which takes into account a number of newly qualified social workers, the continuation of additional capacity to maintain sustainable caseloads and to cover vacancies etc. Also included is a reduction to reflect the annual leave, sickness and bank holidays to be taken by agency workers.
27. The Department for Education's children's social work workforce report suggests a national vacancy rate of children's social workers on the snapshot date of 30 September 2018 of 16%, against which Nottinghamshire has a relatively favourable vacancy rate of 6%², although it should be noted that these are experimental statistics.
28. On the snapshot date of 11 June 2019, Nottinghamshire's vacancy rate in hard to retain teams was 16%. Hard to retain teams are the Council's child protection teams, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Assessment Services, District Child Protection Teams, Court Team and Children with Disabilities Team. Vacancy levels in the Council's other children's social work teams are very low, hence contributing to the overall children's social work vacancy rate as nationally reported of 6%.
29. Positive progress has been made in recruiting newly qualified social workers to the authority, with 40 new recruits already due to start in September 2019. This is in part due to the success of the Teaching Partnership, and the Authority's ability to successfully recruit students who have been on placement with the Local Authority, either from one of the local universities or through a programme such as Step Up to Social Work.
30. The D2N2 Teaching Partnership, launched in 2016 with Department for Education funding, currently encompasses four local authorities, an NHS Trust, three Universities, a Housing Association and two service user and carer organisations – with Nottinghamshire County Council being the lead partner. Building on its success to date, the Partnership's ongoing mission is to deliver excellent social work practice and education in the East Midlands region. Its vision is for social work excellence that can be co-produced, recognised and evidenced - improving the quality of social work by training high quality social workers to address local need, enhancing opportunities for ongoing learning and career development and using research to understand "what works" and achieve good outcomes.

² Department for Education. *Experimental Statistics: Children and family social work workforce in England, year ending 30 September 2018*. 28 February 2019.

31. Involvement to date has generated a number of beneficial outcomes including access to free Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for hundreds of Nottinghamshire social workers from Adults and Children's Social Care.
32. At a time when the recruitment and retention of children's social workers is presenting a significant challenge for many local authorities, Nottinghamshire children's services has recently received some very positive feedback from its frontline staff about their experiences of working for the Council:
- 98% said their manager was accessible when they needed them
 - 93% felt supported, and listened to
 - 90% said new technologies were saving them time and travel
 - 80% said flexible working benefited their work:life balance and their well-being
 - 83% said they valued the support offered by our social work support officers
 - 98% stated that they received regular supervision
33. As an employer in the social care sector, it is also recognised that frontline staff face unique challenges, both professionally and emotionally, and the Council has therefore continued to invest in the support infrastructure, so that staff have a range of options if they are needing personal or emotional support – with the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders, Schwartz Rounds, counselling, a workplace chaplaincy service, and an Employee Wellbeing Hub.
34. Collectively, the focus on improving work-place practices and developing support services has helped both with recruitment and retention, and the Council's reputation as an employer of choice is growing.
35. Whilst it is extremely positive that the Local Authority is seen as an employer of choice for graduate social workers, there is also a need to recruit and retain experienced social workers, to progress child protection cases and those going through care proceedings. The department is involved in a Grow Our Own social work scheme through which experienced child and family workers already employed by the Council can do a fast track social work qualification through Manchester Metropolitan University. There are currently seven students on this course, with a further 10 joining the next cohort. The benefit of this course is that students tend to be more experienced and are committed to Nottinghamshire, hence are more likely to stay working within the Local Authority.
36. In order to maintain safe services, the Council recruits agency social workers to cover vacancies, or staff absence due to other reasons such as maternity leave or long-term sickness. Agency social workers are also employed when teams have newly qualified social workers within their skill mix, as they are not able to independently hold child protection cases in the first 3-6 months. Agency workers are also used to provide additional capacity where the number of open cases within teams are higher than the numbers of social workers who can safely manage them (a manageable caseload for experienced social workers in the assessment service is considered to be 15, whilst in the child protection teams it is 20; caseloads also need to be reduced for newly qualified social workers, which given the proportion of the workforce which is newly qualified, is a challenge).

37. According to the DfE Children's Workforce Return (September 2018), Nottinghamshire has an agency rate of 14%, compared with a national rate of 15.4% and a statistical neighbour rate of 11.3%. The East Midlands average rate is 13.6% and the agency rate for neighbours with whom the Local Authority "competes" for both permanent and agency social workers, ranges from 4% (Lincolnshire) to 25.7% (Northamptonshire).
38. Use of agency staff is scrutinised at a quarterly agency challenge panel involving the Youth, Families and Social Work Leadership Team, Finance and HR.
39. **Appendix B** provides the trend data of agency usage and agency spend.

Activity Undertaken and Actions Proposed

40. The strategy for retaining experienced children's social workers is being driven through the department's Remodelling Practice Programme. The Children and Young People's Committee received a progress update on this programme in July 2019. The actions associated with this are detailed in the Plan at **Appendix C**.

Other In Year Budget Pressures and Risks

41. There are other areas of underlying pressure which will need careful management to avoid a negative impact on the forecast in future months. These are currently being managed within the overall budget by temporary underspends in other areas or grant funding and are explained below.

Care Leavers

42. The Leaving Care service is facing significant challenges. From April 2019 new legislation has meant that the Council must offer support to all care leavers to age 25 years and little additional Government funding has been provided to do this. A report was presented to Children and Young People's Committee in July 2019 which approved the establishment of 6 FTE posts to service this new burden to be funded by a request from contingency. The full year effect of this will need to be considered as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process. In addition to the staffing costs there are also support costs e.g. accommodation, higher education, and home establishment grant which pose a risk to the budget.

Elective Home Education

43. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) conducts an annual survey of Elective Home Education (EHE)³. Across 106 (of 152) local authorities responding the number of known home-schooled children and young people has increased in each of the last five years (recorded on schools October census day), by an average of approximately 20% each year. In Nottinghamshire the numbers of EHE pupils registered on 1 September has seen an overall increase of 89% from 359 in 2014 to 680 in 2018. At 1 May 2019 this had increased again to 842 indicating that this is a continuing trend.
44. This increase in numbers means that the budget to monitor the suitability of the education and to enable the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory safeguarding duty is under considerable pressure. The budget for 2019/20 is £77,000 and this will be subsidised by

³ ADCS Elective Home Education Survey 2018 (November 2018)

£175,000 from the School Improvement Grant to fund the forecast cost of £252,000. There is a risk that this will leave insufficient funding to support school improvement in maintained schools.

Sold Services to Schools and Other Income Generation

45. The provision of sold services present a risk to the department if the level of buy back is not as projected. An example of this is the School Improvement service whose achievement of its income target is a concern for this financial year.
46. The children with disabilities homes have an income target of £0.8m which includes continuing health care contributions, bed sales to other local authorities and recharges to Adults Social Care & Health for young people over the age of 18 years. The current income target is at risk due to the withdrawal/reduction of continuing health care funding and the uncertain nature of bed sales.

Savings still to be delivered

47. As well as the savings attached to specific Children & Families projects there have been other savings allocated to departments since 2016/17 as a departmental levy. In total £1.4m has been allocated to the department for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 and of this £0.9m has been saved with the remaining balance of £0.5m proving difficult to address in light of the current challenges facing the department.

Academy Conversions

48. The Local Authority is responsible for funding any deficit balances of sponsored academy conversions. There is currently one school with a sponsor attached and another for which a sponsor is being sought, both have projected deficits and recovery plans in place. If a deficit remains at the point of conversion this may be charged to the department dependent on the timing (i.e. financial year) of the conversion.

Clayfields

49. Clayfields is experiencing difficulties in the achievement of its income target and further work is needed to assess the implications of this on the trading position. This work is currently being undertaken and the outcome will be reported for the Period 5 budget monitoring.

High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant

50. The High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds provision for children and young people with special education needs and disability (SEND) from their early years to age 25 years. It is also intended to support alternative provision for pre-16 pupils who because of exclusion, illness or other reasons cannot receive their education in mainstream or special schools. The HNB continues to experience considerable pressure due to the increase in the number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and consequently alternative provision. Part of this increase is due to the extension of local authority responsibility for supporting young people with an EHCP from age 19 to 25 years which has been accompanied by little additional funding. The HNB is

forecast to overspend in 2019/20 by £0.6m which will be met by the DSG Non Individual School Budgets reserve.

51. Analysis from the County Councils Network⁴ has found 27 out of 31 county authority members responding to a survey by the Society Of County Treasurers (SCT) reporting a deficit had a total shortfall of £123m on their HNB for 2018/19. Nottinghamshire ended that year with a £1.4m underspend. However, it remains the case that Nottinghamshire's high needs budget is under significant strain as Special School provision is at capacity and the current proposed expansions, including the rebuild of the Newark Orchard School which will provide additional places, remains insufficient to meet projected need. The cost of Independent Non Maintained school placements also continues to rise and Members are advised that without the additional emergency DfE high needs funding of £1.7m provided in December 2018 and the transfer of £2m from the schools block to the High Needs Block, Nottinghamshire's High Needs Block would have overspent by £2.7m.
52. Growth trend projections suggest that the HNB will be overspent in 2020/21 unless the Authority's funding allocation is significantly increased. This will need to be considered as part of the wider schools funding consultation with the Schools Forum in autumn 2019.

Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan

53. As a result of the financial challenges facing the department and Local Authority an improvement plan has been developed. The overarching objective of the 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 Executive, 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. The plan is due to be reported to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee on 16 September 2019.

The improvement actions in the plan are grouped under the following headings:

- I. Addressing the in-year financial challenges
- II. Effective delivery of change programmes
- III. Creating the conditions for good practice to flourish.

54. In conclusion the department for Children and Families Services, despite it looking after fewer children than similar councils, being a preferred good employer, having transformation programmes of practice and care and having similar levels of vacancy as the national average, continues to experience significant budget pressures. Children who are looked after numbers have risen by 8% (an additional 68) whilst reliance on the independent sector provider market to meet this demand has risen by 20% (an additional 66) reflecting that the Council's in-house care capacity is full and therefore required to buy placements and need, in the medium term, to increase the Council's own provision. There is a continued need to supplement the permanent workforce with temporary but expensive

⁴ CCN Analysis Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: The Challenge Facing County Authorities

agency staff and a need to review whether this is genuinely all temporary or an underlying staff shortage. These two factors of increased demand for LAC and workforce represent the two largest pressures on the budget. The attached action plan describes what is being done to mitigate these pressures.

Other Options Considered

55. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

56. These recommendations provide the range of measures being taken by the Children and Families department via the Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan, to address the financial and service challenges currently being faced.

Statutory and Policy Implications

57. 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

58. The financial position of the department is reassessed every month as part of the monthly budget monitoring process. The department is currently forecasting an overspend of £8.3m against a budget of £126.9m which is 6.54%. This will be incorporated into the Financial Monitoring Report to be reported to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee on 16 September 2019 together with the Improvement Plan.
59. There are risks associated with the forecast in relation to external residential placements and social work staffing due to the volatile nature of the demand on these budgets. The forecast is highly sensitive to changes in e.g. numbers, weekly costs and placement mix. There is a robust monthly monitoring process to track trend data, average costs and actual numbers of children in placement to highlight potential issues as soon as possible.
60. There are other areas of underlying pressure which will need careful management to avoid a negative impact on the forecast in future months.
61. The impact of the overspend on future years' budgets is currently being assessed and will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2020-21 and beyond.
62. The Improvement Plan has a number of actions which are part of the department's current major change programmes and already have savings attached to them for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. The ongoing deliverability of savings are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Improvement and Change Sub-Committee.

63. There may be some Improvement Actions which will potentially have a financial impact but it is too early to say what they are or the timing of when they will occur.
64. Of the additional project resources identified in paragraph 2.9 of the plan the three Programme Officers and two Project Managers will be contained within the existing Programme & Projects team resources. Further scoping work is required to assess the need for the other two Project Managers and if additional posts are required this will be the subject of a separate report.

Human Resources Implications

65. The human resources implications are set out in **paragraph 64**.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) considers whether there are any further actions required in relation to the information contained in the report.
- 2) approves the Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan, attached as **Appendix C**.
- 3) agrees to receive progress updates against the Plan every three months.

Colin Pettigrew
Corporate Director, Children & Families

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Constitutional Comments (GR 30/08/19)

66. Pursuant to the County Council's Constitution the Children and Young People's Committee has the delegated authority to receive the report and make the recommendations contained within this report.

Financial Comments (SAS 29/08/19)

67. The financial position of the department is reassessed every month as part of the monthly budget monitoring process. The department is currently forecasting an overspend of £8.3m against a budget of £126.9m which is 6.54%. This will be incorporated into the Financial Monitoring Report to be reported to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee on 16 September 2019 together with the Improvement Plan.
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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.

Financial Monitoring Report Period 1 2019-20 - report to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee on 17 June 2019

Financial Monitoring Report Period 2 2019-20 - report to Finance & Major Contracts Management Committee on 15 July 2019

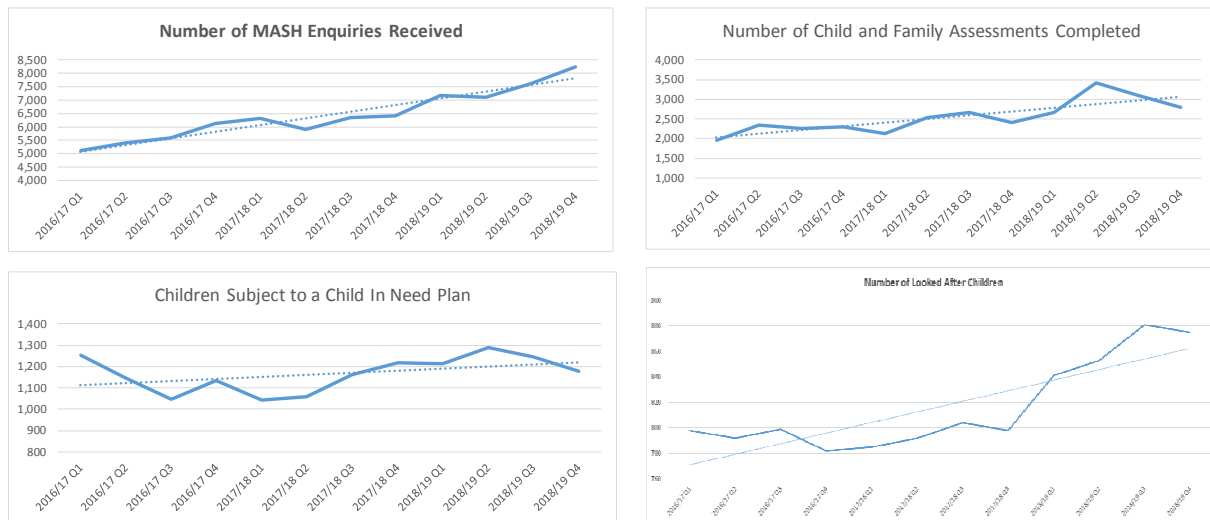
Update on the Remodelling Practice Programme - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 15 July 2019

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

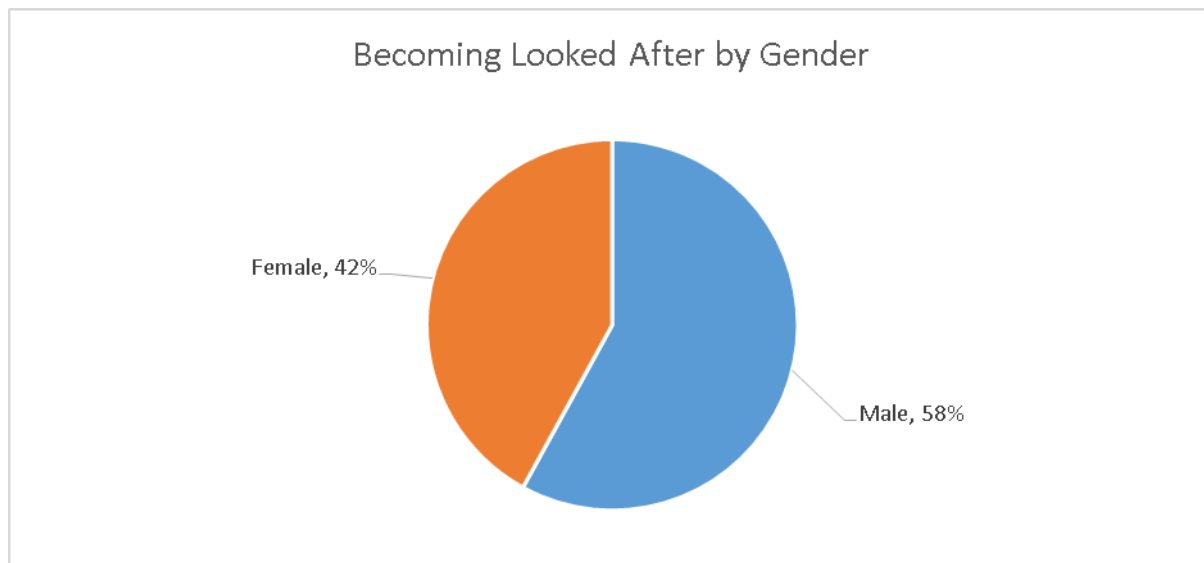
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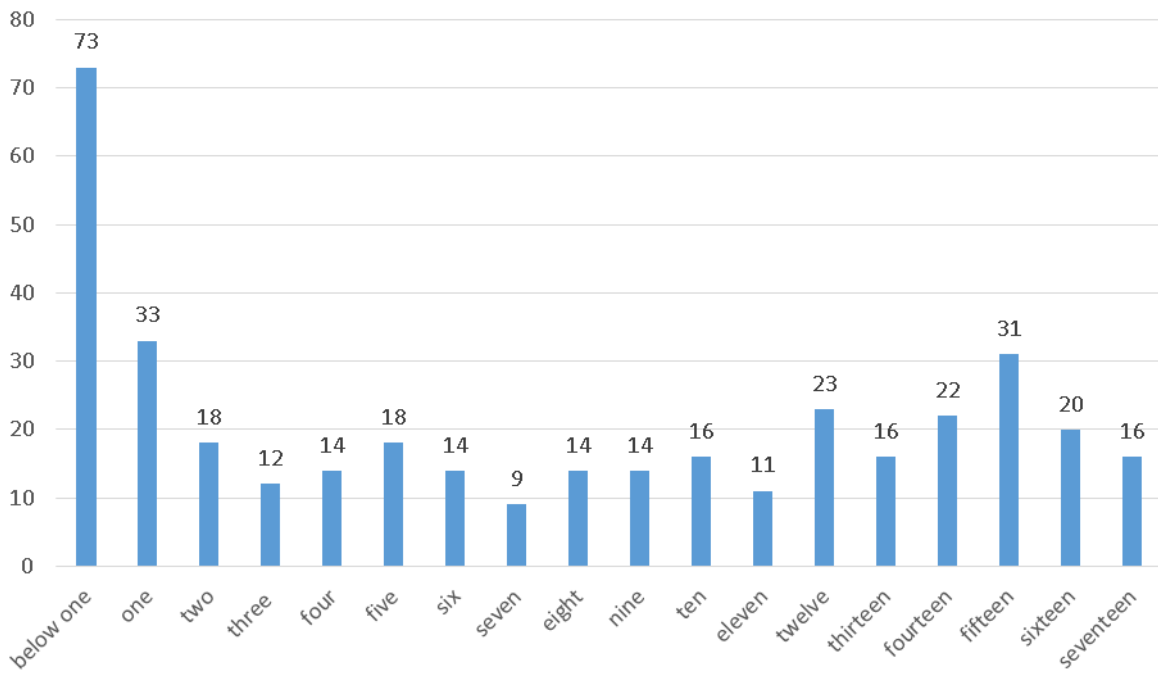
Nottinghamshire Growth In Demand between 2016/17 and 2018/19



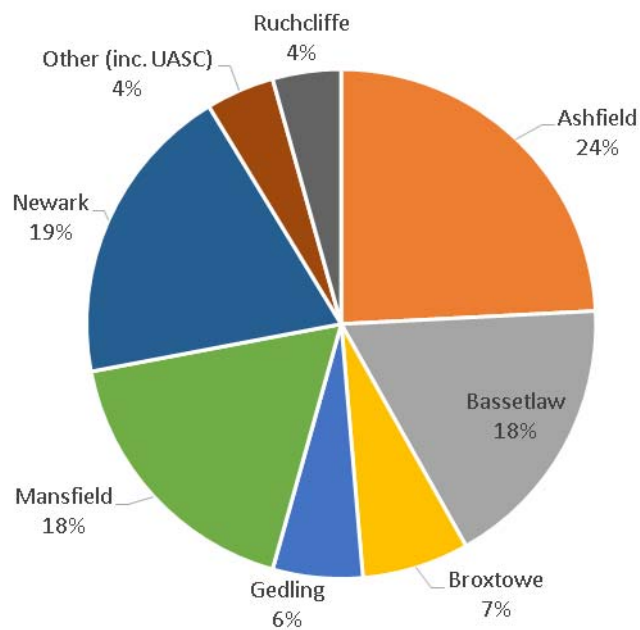
Demographics of Children Becoming Looked After (2018-19)

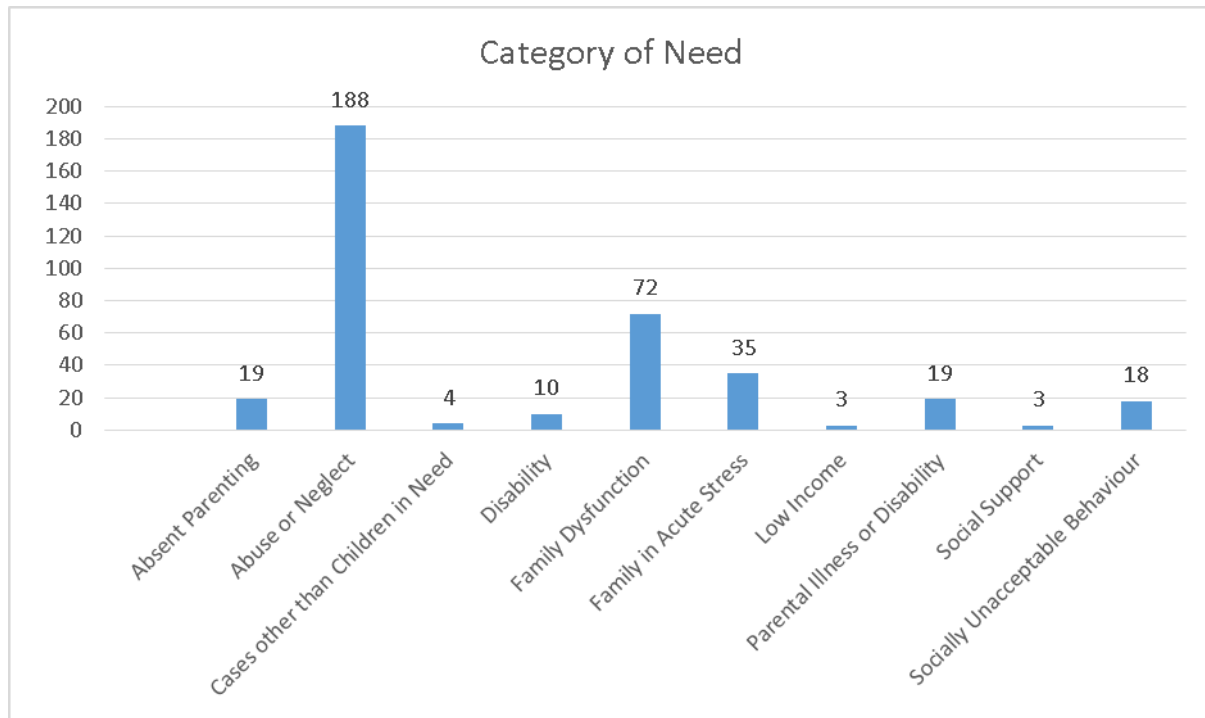


Age of Children Entering Care



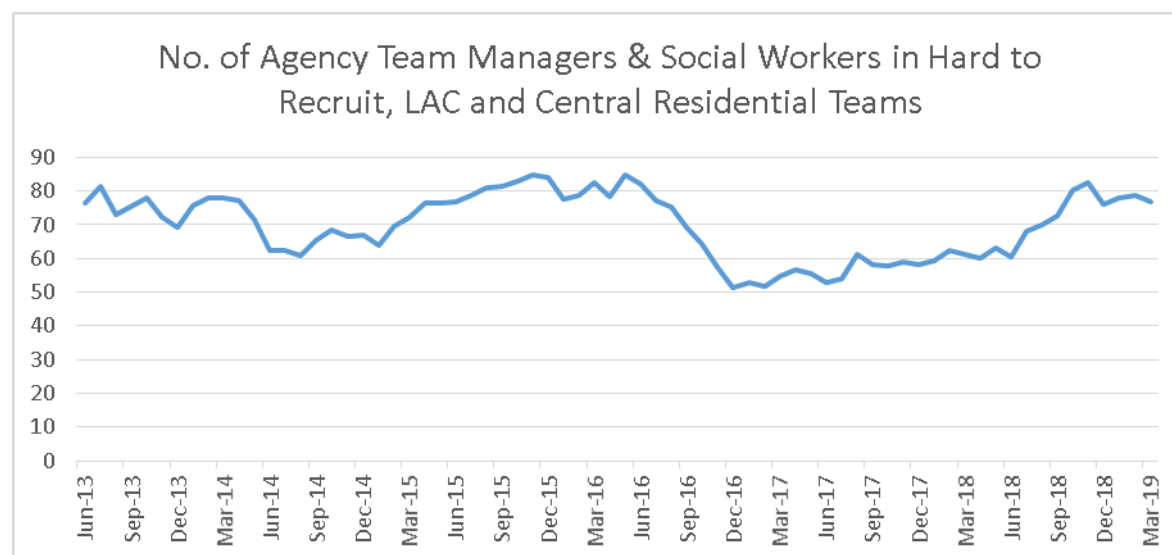
Origin of Looked After Children





Trend Data for Agency Workers

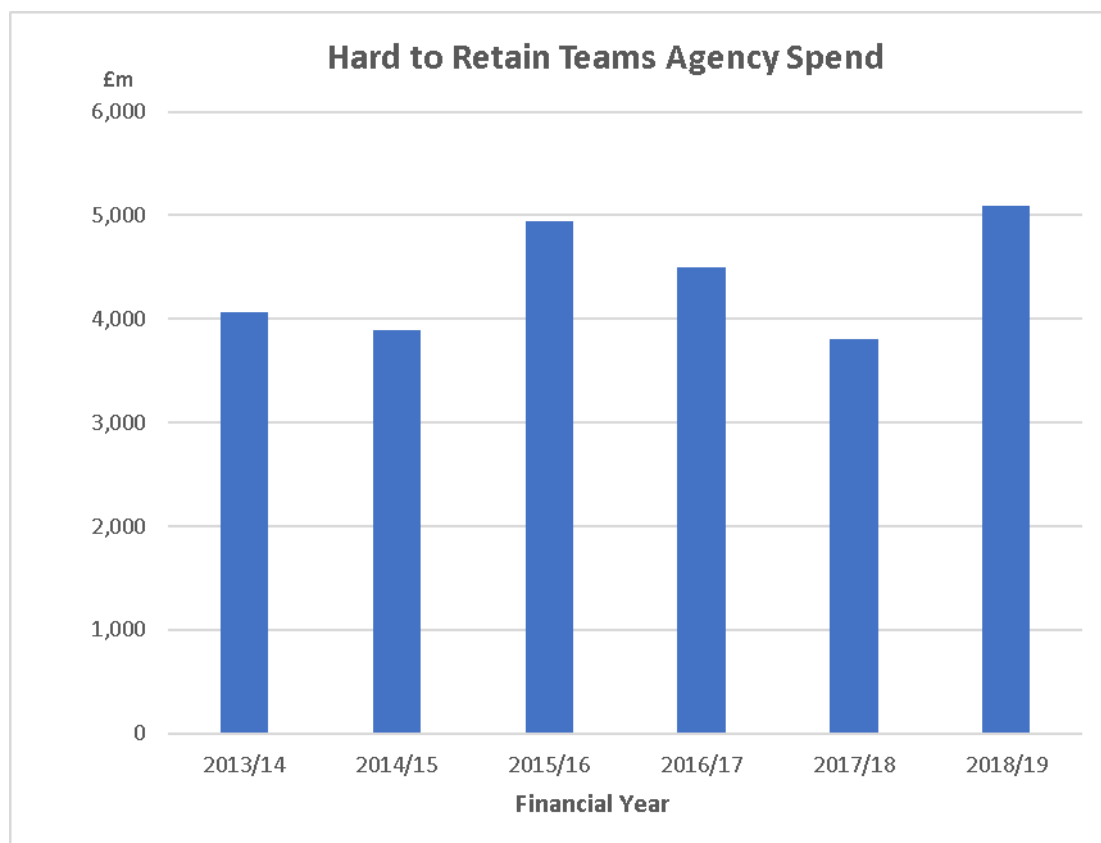
Number of agency workers since June 2013.



Reasons for the engagement of agency workers

Reasons for Agency in Hard to Recruit, LAC & Central Residential Teams- Yearly Average							
	Additional Capacity	ASYE Cover	LTS	Maternity	Suspension	Vacancy	TOTAL
2013/14	15.59	3.36	3.78	8.36	0.71	44.92	76.72
2014/15	3.33	3.33	4.58	5.03	0.50	50.54	67.33
2015/16	0.79	10.03	5.50	6.29	0.67	56.86	80.14
2016/17	3.79	13.82	2.79	7.75	0.08	38.40	66.63
2017/18	9.66	11.74	5.42	6.78	1.03	23.72	58.35
2018/19	14.72	6.48	8.00	8.00	0.43	34.46	72.09

Actual spend on agency workers since 2013-14



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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	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
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

	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
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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	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
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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	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
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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	Improvement Action	CLT Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	What we hope to achieve	Timeframe	Success Measure	Progress	Links to other plans and strategies
	<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