

Nottinghamshire County Council
Allegations of historical child abuse in Nottinghamshire
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What if I'm affected by abuse?

A. We understand how difficult it is for abuse victims and survivors to come forward and would assure them they would be listened to, taken seriously and action taken wherever possible.

The County Council always encourages anybody aware of or affected by abuse, current or historical, to come forward via our [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) on 0300 500 8090, or the Police by calling 101. All calls will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

There are opportunities to provide evidence to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse under the Truth Project - for more information go to the Inquiry [website](#).

Q. What is the background of these allegations?

A. Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire Police are looking into allegations of child abuse in children's homes going back to the 1940s.

In 2010 five individuals lodged civil claims in respect of allegations of abuse at Beechwood Community Home, Woodborough Road, Mapperley (a former approved school, observation and assessment centre, remand home, and latterly a community home). Beechwood closed in 2006. The allegations are subject to a joint investigation by the City Council and Nottinghamshire Police.

In 2011 a former resident made allegations of abuse relating to their time at Beechwood in the 1980s. At this stage Nottinghamshire Police launched **Operation Daybreak** to investigate all allegations in respect of Beechwood and related matters.

Operation Daybreak involves allegations ranging from emotional, physical and sexual harm between the 1950s and 2000, with more than 100 allegations to the Police. A significant number of civil claims have also been received by Nottinghamshire County Council (and the City Council).

Operations Xeres was launched by Nottinghamshire Police in early 2015 looking at similar allegations in the north of the county dating from the 1940s to the 1990s.

Operation Daybreak and Operation Xeres are now being managed by the police under the umbrella of **Operation Equinox**.

Q. What homes do the allegations relate to?

A. Allegations (criminal or civil) have been made against individuals (including members of staff) at a number of council run institutions in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, almost all of which are now closed. These institutions have been listed below. We will not list any homes that Nottinghamshire Police advise the publication of which could compromise ongoing investigations.

Home	Current status
Amberdale (Stapleford)	became Clayfields House Secure Unit
Ashley House (Worksop)	now closed
Beechwood Complex (Mapperley) <i>Units at one time individually called, Lindens, Redcot and Enderleigh formed what was then known as Beechwood. The Beechwood unit was also later known as Woodborough Road</i>	now closed
Berry Hill Open Air School (Mansfield)	now closed
Bracken House , may also have been known as Crabtree Farm (Bulwell)	now closed
Brick House (Radcliffe on Trent)	now closed
Caudwell House (Southwell)	closed, then became home for children with disabilities
Cobblestones (St Ann's)	now closed
Forest Lodge (Hyson Green)	now closed
Greencroft (Clifton) / The Leys	now closed
Hazelwood , also linked to Forest Lodge (Forest Fields)	now closed
Laybrook/Somersall Street (previously known as Brooklands/Layton Burrows)	now closed
Ranskill Gardens , previously known as Farmlands (Top Valley)	now closed
Redtiles , later known as Beckhampton Road (Bestwood Park)	open
Repton Lodge (Worksop) (later known as Sparken Hill)	now closed
The Ridge (Mansfield)	now closed
Risley Hall (Risley)	now closed
Skegby Hall (Sutton in Ashfield)	now closed
South Collingham Hall (Newark)	now closed
Sycamore House (Sherwood)	now closed
Wollaton House , later known as Radford Bridge Road (Wollaton)	now closed
Wood Nook , also known as Beechdale Road and Lady Bay (Nottingham)	now closed
Woodyard Lane , formerly known as Cherry Orchard (Nottingham)	now closed
Whatton Young Offender Institute (Whatton)	now a prison for adults

Q. Who was responsible for running these homes?

A. Over the decades, due to local government reorganisations, the responsibility for running some of the homes in Nottinghamshire has passed between the City and County Councils, and other organisations. The County Council was responsible for all of the homes between 1974 and 1998.

Q. What is being done to investigate these allegations?

A. A police investigation, was launched in 2011 to investigate the criminal allegations. It is ongoing and so far has resulted in several arrests, charges and convictions.

The police investigation continued and in early 2015 started looking into similar allegations in north Nottinghamshire. Both councils are taking the allegations very seriously and are helping the Police with their investigations to try and get to the truth and, hopefully, bring perpetrators to justice. Operation Daybreak and Operation Xeres are now being managed by the police under the umbrella of **Operation Equinox**.

Both councils and the police have previously taken action in earlier cases of historical abuse.

Q. What is the status of civil claims to date?

A. Civil claims for compensation, relating to historical physical and sexual abuse, are underway against both councils, centring on but not exclusive to Beechwood Community Home.

There have been more than 100 claims submitted to the Councils to date a number of which have already been settled. The Council is continuing to respond to these appropriately.

Q. How do I take forward legal or civil claims about abuse suffered in my childhood?

A. If you experienced abuse in your childhood you are entitled to see the perpetrators brought to justice, and if that abuse took place within institutions you may be entitled to civil compensation.

If you want to make a criminal complaint you should contact Nottinghamshire Police on 101. If you wish to pursue a civil claim against an organisation, you would be advised to seek independent legal advice either by contacting a solicitor directly, or via the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

It is possible to make either a criminal or a civil claim on their own, or to or to progress both at the same time.

Q. What about the national Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse?

A. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), announced on November 27 2015 the first phase of investigations into the extent to which institutions have failed to protect children from sexual abuse. IICSA announced that Children in the Care of Nottinghamshire Councils would be one of the Inquiry's first 12 investigations.

See the announcement and supporting documents here: [IICSA investigations](#).

There is further information on the focus, scope and approach of the Inquiry's Nottinghamshire investigation here: [IICSA investigation into Nottinghamshire councils](#).

Responding to the Inquiry's announcement, Anthony May, Chief Executive at Nottinghamshire County Council and Ian Curryer, Chief Executive at Nottingham City Council said:

"We welcome the independent scrutiny that the Goddard Inquiry (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) will bring to cases of historical sexual abuse and will engage fully with it. We have been jointly investigating allegations of historical abuse, some of which are of a sexual nature, for a number of years now with Nottinghamshire Police.*

"From the outset, we have taken these allegations seriously, some of which date back to the 1940s when predecessor organisations were in charge of children's homes.

"The safety and well-being of children in our care today must be, and is, of the highest priority. The safety and quality of care for such children is nowadays closely regulated and scrutinised by Ofsted and our Children's Safeguarding Boards."

* n.b Lowell Goddard resigned from leading the Inquiry in August 2016

Q. What is the process for responding to any new allegations of historical abuse?

A. All new referrals should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and we have dedicated Social Workers who are able to respond appropriately.

The service follows a clear process designed to ascertain key information in relation to the concern that is being highlighted. Staff will also seek to clarify whether the survivor has appropriate support or access to support such as counselling.

If there are concerns regarding current contact with children then an assessment of risk would be undertaken.

Relevant information is shared with the Local Authority Designated Officer who will support agencies to respond appropriately when there are concerns about the suitability of individuals who work/worked with children and young people, and will work closely with colleagues from the Councils and the Police.

Q. What support is being provided for victims and survivors?

A. All victims and survivors will continue to be listened to and their concerns and allegations taken seriously. We understand that different individuals will have differing needs and we want to help them access the right support for them.

A support pathway for victims and survivors has been developed by local health colleagues. Information regarding this will be sent to all of those who have made contact with us. A leaflet explaining this is also available [here](#).

There is a dedicated victim and survivor section of the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse website](#)

Q. What else are the councils doing?

A. There is a strategic group of local authority directors, senior police and health colleagues supporting all aspects of these investigations, including offering support to victims and survivors.

Work overseen by this group is underway to ensure that any lessons are learnt from what happened in the past at children's homes in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, how services at those homes were delivered, and how local agencies have responded to allegations of abuse. Victims and

survivors or representative groups will be engaged in this process. This work will be independently reviewed, but not until the active police investigation has concluded.

The councils will cooperate fully with the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#).

Q. What are councillors doing about this?

A. Councillors at Nottinghamshire County Council are committed to looking into allegations of child abuse and supporting Nottinghamshire Police's investigations.

At a Full Council meeting on Thursday 26 November 2015 Councillor Alan Rhodes, leader of Nottinghamshire County Council read a statement outlining the County Council's position on historical abuse:

"Council will be aware that a significant number of allegations of historical abuse in children's homes, previously operated by Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City councils and other organisations, have been made, dating back to the 1950s.

"It has also been announced that the Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Lowell Goddard, will make a formal statement tomorrow (FRIDAY) stating which investigations will form the first phase of the Inquiry's substantive work.

"We will find out then if this authority will be examined by this inquiry.

"It is against this backdrop that members will also have received an email from a local abuse survivors group this week.

"As such, I feel the time is now right for me, as the current Leader of this Council, to make a statement on this subject that sets out our position clearly.

"Firstly, I welcome and support the national inquiry that will investigate whether public bodies have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse in England and Wales.

"Any failings of any organisation or institution deserves to be identified and dealt with appropriately.

"If there has been organisational or institutional failings, then there needs to be accountability.

"And, importantly, I am prepared to make an unreserved apology to survivors if our Council is found to have failed in our duty of care to children.

"Currently, there are a significant number of actions, both criminal and civil, that are under way.

"Operation Daybreak, which was launched by Nottinghamshire Police in 2011, is investigating over 100 criminal allegations involving more than 100 victims. Operation Xeres, investigating similar allegations in north Nottinghamshire, was launched in 2014.

"Children's homes should always have been places of safety, so harm in them of any kind is an appalling abuse of duty and trust. Anyone who was abused as a child absolutely deserves our sympathy and support. From the outset, we have taken these allegations seriously, and devoted a great deal of time and effort to look into them, support survivors and the police investigations.

"The safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care must be, and is, of the highest priority.

“It is important to make clear that the landscape of the past bears no resemblance to that of the present.

“The safety and quality of care for such children is nowadays closely monitored and independently reviewed by Ofsted and our Children’s Safeguarding Board.

“Sadly, there will always be individuals who seek to harm children and so we, as a Council, working with our partners, will do everything we reasonably can to protect children from them and keep children in Nottinghamshire as safe as they can be.

“My pledge to all survivors is that we will continue to do everything we can to support them and expose any wrong-doing in the past.

“We will not shy away from these allegations of historical abuse.

“We will work with the police to take our investigations wherever the evidence leads us and we will leave no stone unturned.

“We are committed to helping to bring perpetrators to justice and ensuring professional standards are upheld.

“Please be assured that this Council will do everything in its power to put right any wrongs of the past.”

Q. Has the Council made an apology to victims and survivors?

A. Yes. At the Full Council meeting on Thursday 24 March 2016, Councillor Alan Rhodes, Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council issued an apology to all victims and their families where the Council failed to protect them. Coun Rhodes’ statement in full reads:

“Members will be aware that yesterday saw the sentencing of an ex-employee of Nottinghamshire County Council, former residential social worker Andris Logins, for a string of serious sexual offences committed against children in his and our care in the 1980s.

“Members will also recall that I stood in this chamber last November and pledged to make an unreserved apology if this Council was found to have failed to protect children in its care.

“That moment has now arrived.

“To the victims and their families, I wholeheartedly and unreservedly apologise when, as a Council, we failed in our duty of care to protect you.

“I want to pay tribute to the bravery, courage and persistence of these victims who at last have seen justice prevail with a lengthy custodial sentence for a man who betrayed his position of trust.

“It was our role to keep children safe and we clearly didn’t, which is a deep source of regret. “These offences took place more than 30 years ago and it is important to assure people that residential children’s homes of the 1980s bear no resemblance to those of today.

“The Goddard Inquiry will further examine the scale and nature of historic child sexual abuse in Nottinghamshire and we will cooperate fully with this Inquiry and ongoing police investigations.*

“This case sends out a clear message to the victims of abuse that your experiences are being listened to and believed and I would encourage anyone who has suffered abuse of any kind to come forward and report it to ourselves or to Nottinghamshire Police.

“While we can’t change the past, we can affect the present. Be reassured that as a Council we will do everything in our power to help make sure the children in our care are kept safe.”

* n.b Lowell Goddard resigned from leading the Inquiry in August 2016

In addition, at a Full Council meeting on 18 January 2018, Councillor Kay Cutts, the Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council gave the following apology to victims and survivors of historical child sex abuse:

“One of the greatest duties that can be bestowed on a person or an institution is the responsibility for the safety and upbringing of another’s child.

This is not something that we at Nottinghamshire County Council treat lightly.

And I also know that today, we are doing lots of good work to keep children safe and to ensure that they have every chance to reach their full potential in life.

Sadly, there is a dreadful stain on the history of this Council that we must neither refute nor excuse.

Some children were entrusted to our care and we failed them.

We now know that they were subjected to horrible and heinous abuse that has left many damaged and scarred for life. They suffered at the hands of devious people who had malice in mind.

The fact that this happened is something that leaves me personally feeling deeply saddened and ashamed.

While we cannot eradicate the evil that lurks in our society, we need to be taking every step to keep this away from our children.

This is a period that will be examined in great detail by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse later this year in October and we continue to fully engage in the process, with the next stage being the second preliminary hearing at the end of this month.

The process of laying bare the evidence during this period is undoubtedly difficult for this organisation but there is no question that this is the right thing to do.

Looking back at those times, it very much feels like a different country to the one where we live and work now.

The previous Leader of this council, Alan Rhodes, rightly stood before this Chamber in March 2016 and made an apology for any times that we had failed to adequately protect children in our care. I applaud him for that.

Given the ongoing work with the IICSA inquiry, we continue to understand the nature of our historical failures and it would not be right not to reflect on that further.

On behalf of this Council, as its Leader, I now want to express my deep and heartfelt apology to all of the survivors from this dark period in our history.

While these words today will not change the past, I hope that they will bring some small comfort to those who continue to endure pain as a result.

I hope that survivors of any abuse will listen to these words and feel that they have been heard and, importantly, believed.

My pledge today to survivors is as follows:

- *You will have a voice and be heard*
- *You will not feel that your abuse has happened without steps being taken to address the failings of the past*
- *You will never be left in any doubt that every effort has been made to bring all perpetrators to justice*

While there will always be people who will seek to harm and abuse children and young vulnerable people, we have a duty of care to ensure that we do everything in our power to stop this happening.

I am confident that this is now in place.

While we will never be able to make good what was so clearly wrong at the time, we must do everything that we can to protect the children in our care today.

In so doing we will tirelessly work to lay bare the mistakes of the past and ensure that they are never repeated.

The survivors are rightly demanding truth and justice – we will do everything in our power to make sure that this is delivered.”

Q. What are you doing to protect against this happening again?

A. There will sadly always be individuals who seek to harm children. This council is committed to always doing everything we can to protect Nottinghamshire children from them. The safety and wellbeing of children in our care is our highest priority.

Residential care has transformed over the period these allegations relate to, changing from large institutions intended for providing containment, sometimes punishment, and education through to community homes and to the current provision of small group homes for those children unable to live in a family environment. The use of corporal punishment remained acceptable, and regulation of residential care was minimal, until the 1990s. Child protection procedures were established in the early 1980s, with sexual abuse being included from 1988.

Children's homes now have much tighter scrutiny and controls and any complaints from children in care are always listened to by independent experts. The safety, quality of care and outcome for individual children are now closely monitored and reviewed by Ofsted and local safeguarding children boards.

A 2015 inspection of children's services by the independent regulator Ofsted, has rated Nottinghamshire County Council's services as Good, and praised how we safeguard and protect our most vulnerable children.

Q. What will happen next?

A. The County Council will continue to support the police investigations and will cooperate fully with the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#).

Q. What is happening about a review?

A. Police investigations have been subject to ongoing independent scrutiny and a multi-agency strategic management group has been established to oversee the response to these allegations, with clear terms of reference in line with national child protection procedures.

Both councils are already undertaking work to ensure that any lessons are learnt from what happened in the past at children's homes in Nottinghamshire, how services at those homes were delivered, and how local agencies have responded to allegations of abuse, and will engage victims and survivors or representative groups in this process.

Both councils have welcomed the independent scrutiny that the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse will bring to cases of historical sexual abuse and will engage fully with it. The full scope of any local independent review required will become clearer once we fully understand what ground the national Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse will cover.