

Children and Families Select Committee

Monday, 15 April 2024 at 10:30

County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

AGENDA

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| 1 | Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 05 February 2024 | 3 - 14 |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below) | |
| 4 | Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND | 15 - 38 |
| 5 | Developing the approach to meeting children's needs through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub | 39 - 46 |
| 6 | Progress with the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers | 47 - 56 |
| 7 | Children & Families departmental performance, risks and financial position Quarter 3 2023-24 | 57 - 70 |
| 8 | Work Programme | 71 - 90 |

Notes

- (1) Councillors are advised to contact their Research Officer for details of any Group Meetings which are planned for this meeting.

- (2) Members of the public wishing to inspect "Background Papers" referred to in the reports on the agenda or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act should contact:-

Customer Services Centre 0300 500 80 80

- (3) Persons making a declaration of interest should have regard to the Code of Conduct and the Council's Procedure Rules. Those declaring must indicate the nature of their interest and the reasons for the declaration.

Councillors or Officers requiring clarification on whether to make a declaration of interest are invited to contact James Lavender (Tel. 0115 854 6408) or a colleague in Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

- (4) Councillors are reminded that Committee and Sub-Committee papers, with the exception of those which contain Exempt or Confidential Information, may be recycled.

- (5) This agenda and its associated reports are available to view online via an online calendar - <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings.aspx>

Meeting: Children and Families Select Committee

Date: Monday 05 February 2024 (commencing at 10:30am)

Membership:**County Councillors**

Mike Introna (Chairman)
Francis Purdue-Horan (Vice Chairman) (**Apologies**)

John Cottee	Johno Lee
Anne Callaghan BEM	Mike Quigley MBE
Robert Corden (Absent)	Nigel Turner (Apologies)
Debbie Darby (Apologies)	Michelle Welsh (Apologies)
Errol Henry JP (Apologies)	

Education Representatives

Nigel Frith (**Absent**) James McGeachie

Substitute Members

Jim Creamer for Errol Henry JP
Eric Kerry for Nigel Turner
Mike Pringle for Michelle Welsh
John Wilmott for Debbie Darby

Other County Councillors in attendance:

Sinead Anderson - Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Nigel Moxon - Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Sam Smith - Cabinet Member for Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Tracey Taylor - Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Officers and colleagues in attendance:

Amanda Collinson - Service Director for Help, Care and Protection
Martin Elliott - Senior Scrutiny Officer
Irene Kakoullis - Group Manager, Early Childhood Services
James Lavender - Democratic Services Officer
Peter McConnochie - Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion
Rachel Miller - Interim Service Director for Commissioning and Resources

- Lucy Peel - Service Director for Transformation and Improvement
- Mandy Stratford - Early Years Strategic Manager
- Jenny Whiston - Service Manager, Commissioning and Placements

Others in attendance

- John Bennett - Chair of Parent/Carer Forum Trustees

1 TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT AT FULL COUNCIL ON 7 DECEMBER 2023 OF COUNCILLOR MIKE INTRONA AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2023/24 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED (2024/001)

That the appointment of Councillor Mike Introna as Chairman of the Children and Families Select Committee for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year, be noted.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Councillor Debbie Darby - other reasons
- Councillor Errol Henry JP - other reasons
- Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan - other reasons
- Councillor Nigel Turner - other reasons
- Councillor Michelle Welsh - other council business

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16 October 2023, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Mike Quigley MBE declared an interest in Agenda Item 5, Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, in that he was the Chair of the Diverse Academies Trust, which included two special schools both based in Mansfield.

5 PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS IN IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Peter McConnochie, Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion, presented a report that detailed the progress being made by the Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership to deliver the joint SEND Improvement Plan that had been developed in response to the findings of the Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection that had taken place in January/February 2023. It was noted that the Local Area Partnership was committed to improving the experiences and

outcomes of children and young people with SEND and would continue to focus on implementing the improvement plan and wider improvement arrangements moving forwards. The report provided information on work that had been carried out in delivering the SEND Improvement Plan since the last progress report had been received at the October 2023 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee. Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and Councillor Tracey Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families were also in attendance for this item.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- Members sought further information on the work being carried out to ensure that children and young people who had additional needs, but who did not have an EHC Plan, had their needs identified, met, and monitored effectively.
- When would the funding streams to deliver the jointly commissioned sensory therapy service funding be confirmed?
- The long waiting lists for children and families to access dyslexia referrals and mental health referrals through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), as well as ADHD assessments were of a concern.
- Members considered whether the Council should focus on support in areas of SEND which they currently do not do, such as ADHD assessments, to alleviate the waiting times in those areas.
- What were the outcomes of the recent meeting, between the Council, the Department for Education and NHS England that had been carried out to as part of routine assurance and oversight processes.
- What staff support was provided to children with SEND, both with and without an EHC Plan, within schools?
- That the number of responses that had been received to a survey families in order to obtain feedback about EHC Plan provision in place was slightly disappointing at 139 responses.
- Members sought further information about the Council's recruitment of Educational Psychologists and the challenges of recruitment of the specialist staff that would be required to deliver improvements in performance around the delivery of EHC Plans.

In relation to the points raised by the Committee, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, and Officers provided the following responses:

- The identification and monitoring of children and young people with SEND within a mainstream education setting was currently underway as a pilot

scheme, with the aim of full implementation in September 2024. The results of the pilot scheme would be provided to the Committee in September.

- The information on the funding streams for the jointly commissioned sensory therapy service sat with the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). Officers stated that this information would be circulated to members outside of the meeting.
- The number of children and young people receiving their EHC Plan within the required 20-week timeframe had increased from 4.5% in 2022 to 28.3% in 2023.
- The recent meeting that had been held between the Council, the Department for Education and NHS England meeting had been largely positive. Once the data from had been collated, the feedback from the meeting would be provided to the Corporate Director for Children and Families and the SEND Improvement Board.
- All schools employed a SENCO. The level of support that a SENCO could deliver was related to each schools' budget, there was additional funding within the High Needs Block to support SENCOs. Educational Psychologists provided direct support and training for teachers in identifying and supporting children with SEND.
- The Children and Families Department ran many surveys, and families with children in receipt of a EHC Plan would have already had an annual review process where they had been able to provide feedback. The objective of the survey had been to hear from people who have a EHC Plan for their children, but do not provide regular feedback.
- The Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group included parent and carer representatives, educational settings, health care providers and other leaders within the system. Since its establishment, the group had met twice and had already commissioned a survey of all parents in Nottinghamshire around SEND, the results of which would be shared with the Committee.
- There were three full-time trainee Educational Psychologists within the Children and Families Department who would soon be fully qualified. Nine additional full-time Educational Psychologists were also planned to be recruited. The Council made use of agency Educational Psychologists to write the EHC Plans, and this had contributed to the increase in the number of EHC Plans processed this year.
- There were challenges in allocating funding to children who were identified as having SEND or additional needs in a nursery setting but have then moved into a primary setting by the time the funding was made available. The Council sought to change the policy to ensure that when a child with SEND or additional needs moved into a different educational setting, the funding would go with the child to that setting.

- There were several pathways to recruiting Educational Psychologists into the Council. It was expected that the trainee Educational Psychologists would obtain their degree and then undertake 'on-the-job' training. Whilst it was hoped that once qualified that the Educational Psychologists would stay with the Council, this could not be guaranteed.

The Chairman thanked Peter McConnochie - Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion, Councillor Sam Smith - Cabinet Member for Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Councillor Tracey Taylor - Cabinet Member for Children and Families for attending the meeting and answering member questions.

RESOLVED (2024/002):

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That further progress reports on Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities be received at the April and July 2024 meetings of the Children and Families Select Committee.
- 3) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities be progressed:
 - a) That further information on the jointly commissioned sensory therapy service be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee.

6 THE EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE SECTOR IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Councillor Tracey Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Irene Kakoullis - Group Manager, Early Childhood Services and Mandy Stratford - Strategic Early Years Manager attended the meeting to present a report that provided information on the new Government childcare reforms and the Council's plans for their roll out across Nottinghamshire. The report also provided information on the findings and recommendations of the 2023 Nottinghamshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and how this informed activity around the implementation of the reforms.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- Members highlighted that there would be a varied level of coverage of accessible childcare across Nottinghamshire, particularly in Mansfield. This was due to the closure of nurseries, the struggles of private providers to meet staffing requirements, and the inability of parents to fund the wraparound care in schools.

- Were the Council and childcare providers confident that providers could meet the demands of the new entitlements to childcare that were being introduced?
- Was an alternative funding arrangement being considered in the event that the Government funding that had been provided was insufficient.
- Members considered if there would be an additional burden on the County Council's childcare provision if childcare services within Nottingham City Council were reduced.

In relation to the points raised by the Committee, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, and Officers provided the following responses:

- The wraparound care in schools was not funded care. In schools and that offered breakfast and afterschool clubs, parents paid for the service as the numbers of children accessing the services could vary day-to-day.
- The work that had been carried out to assess sufficiency of childcare access across Nottinghamshire had identified eight areas where less than 10% of childcare places were empty. Within Mansfield, a number of childcare providers were operating out of council-owned children's centres, to support vulnerable children in deprived areas, however the take-up from families had been less than had been hoped and as such was impacting on the sustainability of these services. A balance needed to be struck between providing childcare places, but not setting up childcare services that were not sustainable.
- When the Government announced the provision of a service, local authorities were required to shape and implement the plans towards that service. The Government used short-term funding streams to get that service established but depending on what services the Government decided to fund, it might be that the local authority would have to fund the service without ongoing Government support.
- The aim of the County Council's childcare service was to provide sufficient childcare based on the County's population. However, parents from other local authorities used the County Council's childcare provision for a number of reasons, such as closeness of the childcare provider to the parents' place of work. Likewise, parents in the County used other local authorities' childcare provision for the same reasons.
- There was no obvious correlation between a cut in the childcare provision at Nottingham City Council and any increase in the numbers of families using the County Council's childcare provision. Nottingham City Council funded their Early Years Team through the Dedicated Schools Grant, so their funding would continue. The only County Council-led provision was through maintained primary schools who have nurseries, the funding of which would continue.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Tracey Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Irene Kakoullis - Group Manager, Early Childhood Services and

Mandy Stratford - Strategic Early Years Manager for attending the meeting and answering member's questions.

RESOLVED (2024/003):

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire be progressed:
 - a) That a progress report be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee after the introduction of Early Years funded childcare places for 15 hours for the two-year-olds of working parents.
 - b) That a further report on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire be received at the January 2025 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.

7 STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Peter McConnochie, Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion, presented the SACRE Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The reports detailed SACRE's activity in fulfilling its role in advising the local authority on matters relating to religious education.

RESOLVED (2024/004):

- 1) That the SACRE Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23 be noted.
- 2) That the SACRE Annual Report for 2022/23 be received at the January 2025 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.
- 3) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the SACRE Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23 be progressed:
 - a) That further work be carried out through SACRE with the Multi-Academy Trusts regarding their delivery and provision of Religious Education.

8 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE, RISKS AND FINANCIAL POSITION – QUARTER 2 2023/24

Councillor Tracey Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, introduced a report that detailed the financial position of the Children and Families department, its performance against the ambitions of the Annual Delivery Plan, and a summary of the department's key risks to performance and delivery, covering the Quarter Two period of 2023/24.

In the discussion that followed, members of the raised the following points and questions:

- How was the activity progressing to improve the number of EHC Plans that were completed within the required 20-week timeframe. Members also asked how many families had approached the Ombudsman due to concerns about around the production of EHC Plan
- Members noted that the number of care leavers in Nottinghamshire aged 19 – 21 who were in education, employment or training was 50.9%, compared to the national average of 56%, and asked what more could be done to increase this number.
- That of the recent Ombudsman cases that had been noted at Governance and Ethics Committee, there had been no cases that had ruled against the County Council for not meeting the requirements of an individual EHC Plan.
- Further clarification and information and clarification around:
 - The number of child protection cases reviewed within the appropriate timescale.
 - The number of children looked after in kinship placements.
 - The attainment gap at age 16 between pupils in receipt of free school meals and those who weren't.
- Members observed the overspend of £2.5 million within the Children and Families Department and how this had been impacted by the high cost of some residential placements.
- The levels of persistent absenteeism from schools and how in Nottinghamshire, like the rest of the country were concerningly high and had been since the pandemic.
- What would be the impact on the assessment of the needs of children with SEND within the statutory timescales if the Council continued to face workforce recruitment and retention difficulties.

In relation to the points raised, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, and Officers provided the following responses:

- The number of EHC plans completed within the 20-week timeframe had increased. Activity was being carried across the SEND Local Area Partnership to increase this further by recruiting more Educational Psychologists, working with SENCOs in schools and academies, and working with Early Years settings to improve the support for children with SEND. The partnership is also building on relationships with the ICB and other healthcare partners.

- Annual reviews of the EHC Plans were undertaken by the education setting through their SENCOs and Council caseworkers.
- The Council had established a £40 million programme to deliver more SEND schools in Nottinghamshire, with an academy trust recently appointed to run a 160-place SEND school in Mansfield that was due to open in September 2025. Whilst there was a rise in the demand for SEND support services, mainstream schools and academies within Nottinghamshire were good at catering for children with additional needs until they found a SEND school place.
- 12.4% of children in care for at least 12 months achieved the same 9-5 grades in English and Maths as children not in care, which was above the national average of 11%. Further work would be carried out with educational settings to support the education of children in care.
- Looked after children were supported by Council Achievement Advisors who helped them with their education and career aspirations. Taster days were organised by the Council with various employers that enabled young people to learn more about different careers. Care leavers were supported by an advisor until the age of 21 to help them achieve their aspirations.
- There were a number of Child Protection Coordinator staff absences, as such some child protection review meetings had been delayed. Within the Child Protection Team, there had also been a shift in approach to focus on needs rather than process, for example it was preferable to have more impactful meetings that were not necessarily within the timescale rather than having a less impactful meeting to within timescale.
- With regards to kinship care, there might not be the extended family network for a child to be taken on in a kinship setting, and therefore need a formal placement. The target of having 12% of children in care with a kinship carer was ambitious. Wider family was always considered as the first option for a child's care.
- Whilst the attainment gap at age 16 between pupils in receipt of free school meals and other children had narrowed, it was still greater than the national average. The Council hoped to further address poor attendance by reviewing the Council's Improving Education for All Strategy and focusing on improving attendance.
- Some children had very complex needs. Whilst action was needed at national level to support local authorities with the cost of high needs placements, the Council sought to build an internal specialist support service which would mean that children with complex needs could be fully supported by the Council within their own facilities.
- Good attendance at schools was vital for a child's education. The Improving Education for All Strategy would be reviewed to make attendance a Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

- Workforce supply was a challenge, as it was for local authorities across the country. The long-term strategy was to train and maintain in employment the Council's own Educational Psychologists, however, to address the interim capacity issues, Educational Psychologists had been hired through agencies. The Children and Families Department had to find a balance between providing capacity in the short-term and providing a long-term sustainable recruitment process.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, as well as officers, for presenting the report and for answering members questions.

RESOLVED (2024/005):

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That an externally facilitated workshop be arranged for the members of the Children and Families Select Committee with the Cabinet Members for Children and Families and for Education and SEND in order to further develop members understanding around performance indicators relating to children and families.
- 3) That further reports on the Children and Families Department's performance, risks and financial position be received on a quarterly basis by the Children and Families Select Committee.

9 PROVISION OF SUPPORT TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE CARE SYSTEM

Councillor Tracey Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, presented a report that a provided a response to recommendations that had been made at the 19 June 2023 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.

- a) That further information and case studies that illustrate the success and achievements of young people who have transitioned out of the care of the Council be shared with members of the Committee.*
- b) That the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, in consultation with Officers, gives further consideration to how more young people could be encouraged to remain with their foster family after turning 18, and also to the activity that would also be required to ensure that a sufficient number of foster family placements were still maintained and available for children and young people who are under 18.*
- c) That further information be circulated to members of the Committee on the work being carried out with both residential homes and foster carers to support them in ensuring that the children in their care are not potentially criminalised through being referred to the Police unnecessarily in relation to their behaviour."*

The full responses to the recommendations were detailed in the Cabinet Member's report.

In the discussion that followed, members of the raised the following points and questions:

- What support was available to looked after children after the age of 21.
- How many of the 138 care leavers who had attended the Council's Employability Briefings had then gone on to secure employment.
- Whether the refreshed Local Offer for Care Leavers had yet been published.
- Members noted how there were strong support measures in place for care leavers within their divisions.

In relation to the points raised, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, and Officers provided the following responses:

- The Council provided support to care leavers up to the age of 25, after which support ended. As part of the work to support care leavers transitioning out of the care system there was always the objective to find an adult within the young person's wider family or support network who could act as a supportive adult and role model.
- The Employability Briefings were not meant to guarantee jobs to care leavers; but to motivate care leavers to learn about different careers and to undertake workshops and other activities to increase their employability skills and job readiness.
- The Local Offer for Care Leavers was ready to be published and would be published shortly.
- The district and borough councils provided support measures that care leavers could access such as council tax exemptions and free leisure passes.
- The work that was currently being carried out to for increase the number of foster carers within Nottinghamshire was a priority area of activity for the Council.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Children and Families for presenting the report and for answering members questions.

RESOLVED (2024/006):

That the report be noted.

10 OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW OF THE REVISED ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION POLICY

The Chairman introduced a report that detailed the outcomes of the Scrutiny Task and Finish review that had been carried out around the draft revised Elective Home Education Policy.

RESOLVED (2024/007):

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) considers and takes into consideration the findings of the scrutiny carried out by the Children and Families Select Committee when making their decision on the draft Nottinghamshire Election Home Education Policy 2023.

11 WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the Committee's current work programme.

RESOLVED (2024/008):

- 1) That the Work Programme be noted.
- 2) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with officers and the Chairman of the Overview Committee, give consideration to adding the following items to the Children and Families Select Committee Work Programme:
 - a) Fostering recruitment
 - b) Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- 3) That the pending item on "Children's Transformation - Front Door/Family Hubs" be scheduled for a future meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.

The meeting closed at 1:18pm.

CHAIRMAN

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
AND THE CHIEF NURSE, NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
INTEGRATED CARE BOARD**

**PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS IN IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCES AND
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES - UPDATE**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update to Committee on the progress made by the Nottinghamshire local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Partnership in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

Information

2. Progress reports were presented to Committee on 16 October 2023 and 5 February 2024, outlining the activity of the Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership to deliver the joint SEND Improvement Plan, which was developed in response to the [findings](#) of the Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection that took place in January/February 2023.
3. Per the SEND Improvement Plan, there are six key outcomes that the Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership is seeking to achieve, split across two Areas for Priority Action:
 - a. *Area for Priority Action 1 (APA1): Leaders, NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board and education, health and care providers should cooperate to urgently identify, assess and provide for the needs of children and young people with SEND. This includes assessment of needs, timely issuing of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and holistic oversight of these plans through annual reviews.*
 - Outcome 1: Children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire have their needs identified and assessed in a timely way through statutory processes.
 - Outcome 2: Ensure our children and young people with SEND receive robust and consistent support through their EHC Plans, which have the right input, at the right time and from the right place.
 - Outcome 3: Children and young people with additional needs, but without an EHC Plan, have their needs identified, met, and monitored effectively.

- b. *Area for Priority Action 2 (APA2): Leaders, including commissioners and providers, should act urgently to identify and address the delays and gaps in access to some health services, particularly speech and language therapy, neurodevelopmental pathways and equipment services. They should also ensure that they use available performance data to identify where gaps exist and whether actions taken to address these are effective.*
- Outcome 4: The needs of children and families with SEND are clearly understood so that immediate and long term changes to health service provision can be made through effective joint commissioning.
 - Outcome 5: Children and young people receive timely assessment and treatment offer for assessment by the Neurodevelopmental Support Team Service (NST) (formerly known as the Neurodevelopmental Behaviour Service).
 - Outcome 6: Children, young people and families with SEND experience services that are easy to navigate, free from duplication and are adaptive to their needs.
4. These outcomes are underpinned by additional requirements for the Partnership to ensure there is a stronger focus on embedding data, quality assurance, coproduction and shared leadership and governance across all SEND improvement activity.

Refresh of the SEND Improvement Plan

5. Following the publication of the local area inspection report on 16 May 2023, the Partnership was given 35 working days to develop the SEND Improvement Plan (also known as a 'Priority Action Plan' or 'PAP' under the inspection framework) detailing the actions that would be undertaken to achieve the Areas for Priority Action and Outcomes. The SEND Improvement Plan was formally approved by CQC and Ofsted on 14 July 2023 and was subsequently [published](#) online.
6. In January 2024, it was agreed between the Partnership and the SEND Partnership Improvement Board that the SEND Improvement Plan requires a refresh, in order to remain fit-for-purpose and provide sufficient assurance of progress and impact. In February 2024, the Partnership refreshed the SEND Improvement Plan in order to reflect current and planned activity; while no material changes were made to the Areas for Priority Action or Outcomes, the aims, actions, action owners and timescales were updated. The updated Plan was approved by the SEND Partnership Improvement Board in February 2024.

SEND Stocktake

7. As part of routine assurance and oversight processes, the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) undertook a six-monthly 'Stocktake' on 12 January 2024. This provided an opportunity for the DfE and NHSE to undertake a strategic review of progress, assess Partnership governance arrangements and receive assurance that wider SEND systems are effective. Formal feedback was received on 27 February 2024 and can be found in **Appendix 1**. Key highlights include:

- *We were pleased to hear that you have made progress against the activity in your PAP and how the partnership has matured with stronger collective leadership of the improvements needed across the county.*
- *It is the view of the Department for Education and NHS England that you are making progress in line with the PAP you agreed with Ofsted/CQC and in enhancing your partnership's leadership and governance of SEND. Considering the progress demonstrated and the ongoing commitment of your partnership, the department is assured that no additional intervention is required at this time.*
- *[There is] clear senior corporate interest and engagement reflected in regular meetings between the local authority and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) at Chief Executive level. This is coupled with changes to the County Council cabinet to reflect the Leader's priorities with the creation of two children focused members (one for Education and SEND and one for CSC and Families).*
- *A strong sense of partnership, and leaders working more collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.*

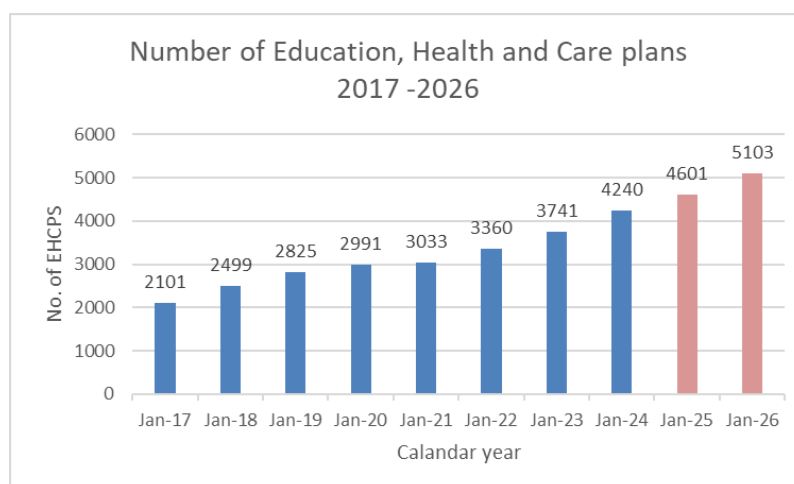
8. The findings of the Stocktake were supplemented by an operational, six-monthly 'Deep Dive' on 19 March 2024. This allowed the DfE and NHSE to review the Partnership's progress against the SEND Improvement Plan at an operational level. The feedback from this is expected in early April.

Partnership Progress To Date

Outcome 1 (APA1): Children and Young People with SEND in Nottinghamshire have their needs identified and assessed in a timely way through statutory processes

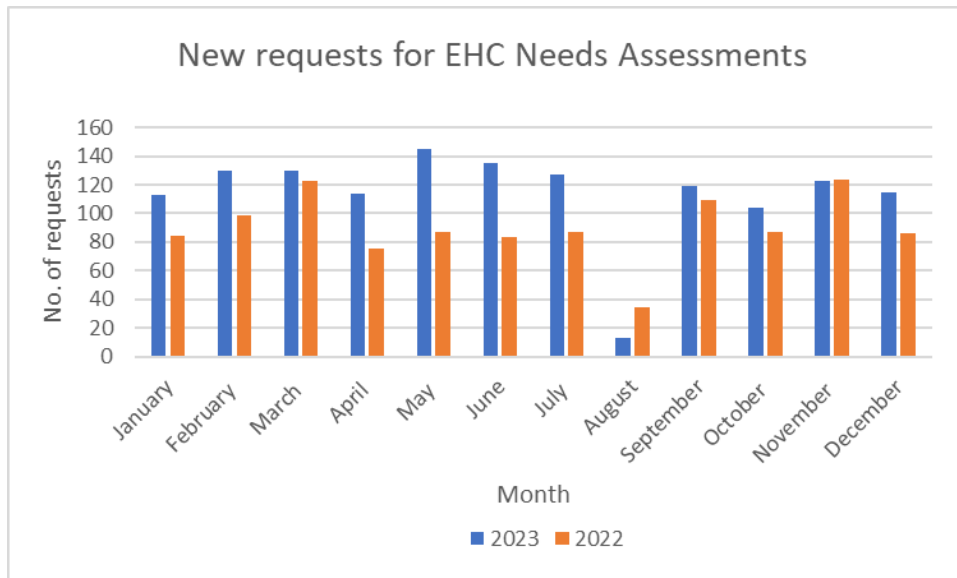
9. Over the last seven years the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) that the Local Authority maintains has increased significantly. The total number of EHCPs has increased from 2,104 in January 2017 to over 4,240 in January 2024. 35% of these EHCPs were made in the previous 2 years.

Table 1 shows the increase in EHCPs maintained by the County Council including projections until January 2026



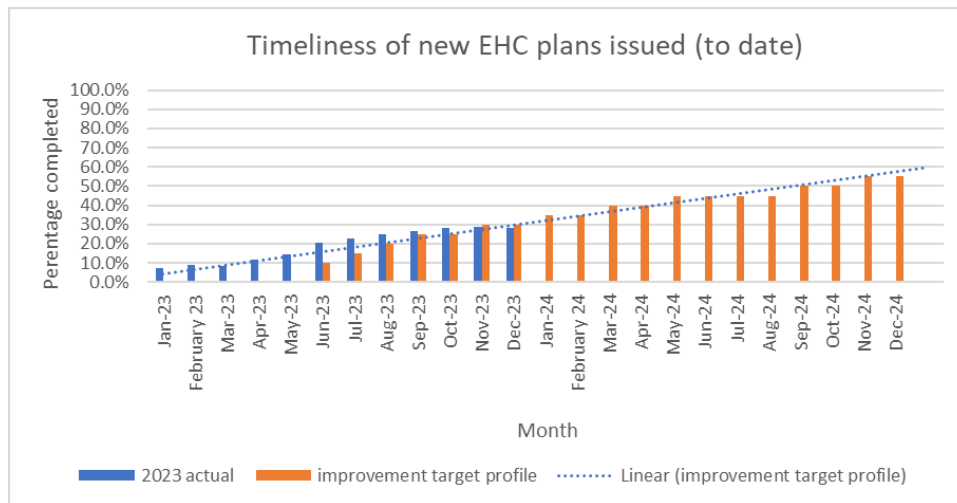
10. The demand for statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments continues to increase. In 2023, the Local Authority received 1,368 requests for EHC Needs Assessments, an increase of 26.9% from 2022. In the month of January 2024, the Local Authority received 166 new EHC Needs Assessment requests compared with 113 in January 2023. These increases continue to place services and provision for children and young people under significant pressure.

Table 2 shows the increase in new requests for EHC Needs Assessments



11. An overview of Nottinghamshire’s EHC Needs Assessment performance to date:
- a) During 2022, Nottinghamshire issued just 4.5% of new EHCPs within 20 weeks. The County Council is fully committed to reducing the length of time it takes to complete EHC Needs Assessment requests through statutory processes and reduce the length of time it takes to issue EHC Plans. The County Council has provided additional funding to increase the capacity of the Educational Psychology (EP) Service and the Integrated Children’s Disability Service (ICDS) EHC assessment team.
 - b) This had had a positive impact: more families are now receiving EHCPs within timescales; in 2023, 28% of our children and young people received their EHC Plan within 140 days compared with the year-end position of 4.5% in 2022; the backlog for EHC Needs Assessments has reduced; and more Educational Psychology assessments are now being completed each month.

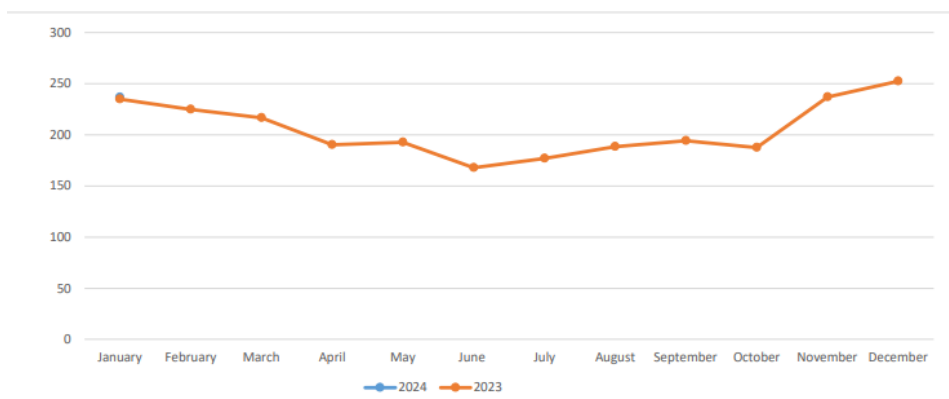
Table 3 shows the percentage of EHCPs completed within 20 weeks (to date) with the County Council's improvement target projections until December 2024



c) Nottinghamshire remains below the national and statistical neighbour averages for 2022 of 49.1% and 47.8% respectively, though it should be noted that these figures are lower than the averages in 2021 of 59.9% and 55.2% respectively. The Local Authority expects to see the timescale improve in 2024 to be in line with the national average, reaching 55% by December 2024.

Table 4 shows the average wait time for an EHC Plan to be produced

Average wait time (days)



d) The average wait time for an EHC Plan to be produced dropped significantly following commencement of SEND improvement activity and throughout 2023. By November 2023 we saw the increase in demand mitigate that reduction, with the average wait time rising again to over 250 days.

Table 5 shows how many families have waited longer than 30 weeks for an EHC assessment and plan



e) In addition to considering the average wait time, we also focused on our longest waiting families. Since March 2023 no families have had to wait over 30 weeks.

12. Factors impacting on performance are as follows:

- a. There are continuing delays to the EHC Needs Assessment process in Nottinghamshire largely due to the County Council, as well as other local authorities nationwide, experiencing a significant increase in the number of EHC Needs Assessments being requested and agreed.
- b. The Educational Psychology (EP) assessment is a key piece of information required to inform the assessment of a child or young person’s special educational needs and the provision they require to meet their specific needs. The Local Authority is required to seek psychological advice from an educational psychologist to inform the EHC Needs Assessment, and only then will the Local Authority be able to make the decision on whether to make special educational provision in accordance with an EHC Plan.
- c. The increase in demand for EHC assessments is occurring at a time of a national shortage of Educational Psychologists. Subsequently, the delay with carrying out the EP assessment is preventing the Local Authority from completing EHC Needs Assessments within statutory timescales.

13. Mitigating activity that has been undertaken to address these issues are:

- a. The Local Authority has taken steps to address the delays being experienced as a result of a local and national shortage of Educational Psychologists. This includes expanding and recruiting additional internal EP capacity and commissioning locum EPs at significant additional cost. The number of children and young people waiting for educational psychology EHC Needs Assessments reduced from 488 in September 2023 to 338 January 2024. The longest predicted waiting time also reduced from 12 months to 5 months during this period, with the mobilisation of additional locum EP capacity.

- b. The Educational Psychology service will continue to increase its capacity over the next two years. It is expected that by September 2025 the Educational Psychology Service will have secured nine additional full-time posts. 3.6 of this full-time capacity has already been recruited for start dates in September 2024 and 2025 and further recruitment has just begun in March 2024.
- c. In addition to increased staffing and a long-term recruitment drive, the Educational Psychology Service is continuously considering ways to improve efficiency in their assessment systems. To reduce waiting times, the Local Authority has set a four-week deadline for the EP to complete their assessment from the date of allocation, reducing this timescale by two weeks. More educational psychology assessments are being completed each month; on average 93 young people received an assessment each month so far in 2023/24 compared with 72 in 2022/23 (academic years).
- d. Five SEND Education Pathway Officers commenced their role in January 2024. When a request for an EHC Needs Assessment is made, these officers now engage with young people, parents and carers and offer support and challenge to education settings to ensure that children and young people receive the right support at the right time. These officers are connecting with activity under Outcome 3 of the SEND Improvement Priority Action Plan to help children and young people have their needs better met within the Graduated Response Pathway, helping them to access support earlier rather than through an EHC Plan.
- e. Despite the measures put in place, the Council is still having to operate a waiting list to access EP input for EHC Needs Assessments at present. To ensure fairness to all children who are waiting for an EHC Needs Assessment to be completed, this waiting list operates on the basis of when the request for assessments is received, however exceptional circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis. All children and young people who are waiting for an EP assessment have their needs and circumstances reviewed to assess whether they are considered as being in 'exceptional circumstances' before being added to the EP waiting list.
- f. The Local Authority has also made a significant financial investment in the EHC Assessment team. Six additional EHC Co-ordinators have been secured in this area to increase capacity to draft new EHC Plans and communicate effectively with parents and carers. Three Senior Practitioner posts have also been secured to ensure that there are appropriate levels of support and supervision across the service.
- g. For children and young people who do experience a delay in their EHC Needs Assessment, parents and carers are contacted at regular eight-weekly intervals to explain the delay and the actions that the Local Authority is taking to reduce them.

Outcome 2 (APA1): Ensure our children and young people with SEND receive robust and consistent support through their EHC Plans, which have the right input, at the right time and from the right place

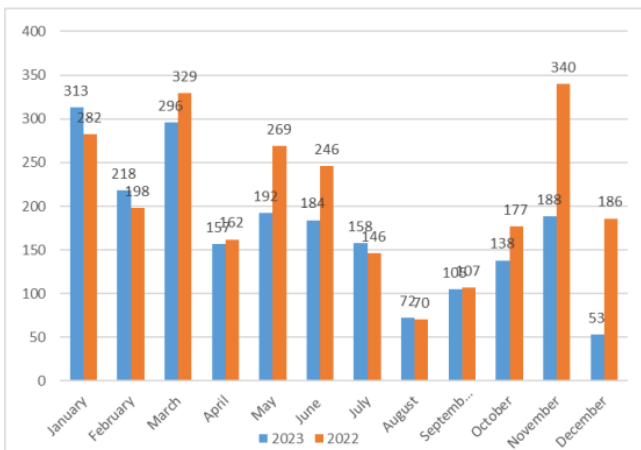
- 14. Over the last six years the number of EHCPs that the Local Authority maintains has increased significantly. The total number of EHCPs has increased from 2,101 in January 2017 to 4,240 in January 2024, an increase of more than 101% in 7 years (See *table 1*

above). Current forecasts suggest we will continue to receive approximately 500 additional requests each year.

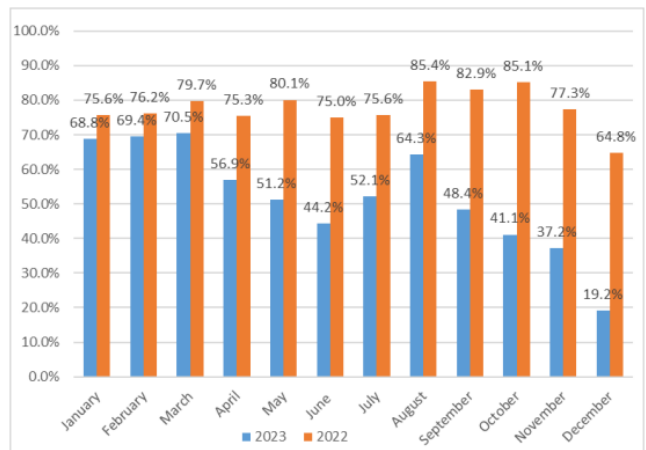
15. As the number of EHCPs grow, so therefore does the number of Annual Reviews. In the previous years, the Local Authority has responded to the increasing demand for EHC Needs Assessments and EHCPs by investing in additional staff. However, the significant increase in requests for EHC Needs Assessments and EHCPs has outstripped the predicted increases. As a result, the additional resources secured did not have the expected impact. This is considered the root cause of the complaints made from 2021 and 2022 that have been escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
16. The Annual Review process can be described as follows:
 - a) EHCPs must be reviewed, and the process completed by the Local Authority as a minimum within every 12 months. For pre-school children with EHCPs, this review must be within six months. Schools must co-operate with the Local Authority in the review process and, as part of the review, the Local Authority can require schools to convene and hold annual review meetings on its behalf. The educational setting is required to prepare a report of the meeting, this is the record of Annual Review.
 - b) After receiving the Annual Review report from the education setting, the Local Authority must issue a decision within four weeks whether to (a) make no amendments to the EHCP and simply maintain it without change or (b) amend the EHCP or (c) cease to maintain the EHCP. If the Local Authority agrees to amend the EHCP, this must be issued and finalized within eight weeks of the decision being made.

Tables 6 and 7 below show the volume of Annual Reviews completed in 2022 and 2023.

Annual Reviews Completed in Timescale



Percentage of Annual Reviews Completed in Timescale



17. Mitigating actions that are being taken to improve Annual Review performance are as follows:
- a. Following the Nottinghamshire local area inspection in January 2023, there has been a significant financial investment to support the timely issuing of EHCPs and holistic oversight of these plans through Annual Reviews.
 - b. In June 2023, the Local Authority invested in six new EHC Plan writers. These positions have been secured to solely focus on the Annual Review process. This is to ensure that the decision following an Annual Review is made within four weeks and, if required, the amendment to the EHCP will be completed within a further eight weeks. Since securing the additional staff, approximately 96% of EHCPs that have required amendments following an annual review have been completed within timescale.
 - c. A further six EHC Co-ordinators have been secured to reduce the high number of children and young people a single worker is responsible for. These posts will improve the level of service and communication that children, young people and their parents or carers receive. The caseloads of EHC Co-ordinators have reduced from over 220 to approximately 150.
 - d. Three Senior Practitioner posts have also been secured to ensure that there are appropriate levels of support and supervision across the service. Senior Practitioners now have the capacity to support, and quality assure complex casework.
 - e. An Outcome 2 working group continues to promote a multiagency approach to improving the annual review process, as feedback from across Health, Social Care and Education partners has indicated that more should be done to understand collective challenges and constraints around the process in order to work more effectively together.
 - f. Work is currently underway to hold a cross organisation workshop during April, which will focus on potential process and system improvements, communication and training.
18. Activity remains ongoing to ensure that the impact of improvement activity is being measured, including the impact on the experiences of children, young people and families:
- a. To ensure the additional staffing can be deployed as quickly as possible agency staff were recruited. Recruitment to fixed term two-year contracts with the County Council is ongoing. Most Annual Review meetings with educational settings are held virtually on Microsoft Teams. These arrangements make the best use of the resources within the team; there is a significant saving in travelling time and as a result the service is more efficient.
 - b. The additional EHC Plan writers that commenced employment in summer 2023 cleared a backlog of 450 EHCPs that needed to be amended following their Annual Review; while the backlog has been cleared, increasing demand has meant this increased resource must now be deployed to deal with incoming cases also.
 - c. For children and young people who are not on a school roll the Local Authority must convene the Annual Review. The Local Authority has arranged Annual Reviews for all

children who are electively home educated or educated otherwise than at school for this academic year.

- d. The Annual Review performance monitoring group meets every month to review the progress that is being made. The aim and ambition are for 100% of annual reviews to be completed within 12 months and building from current performance in a staged approach to improvement, in 2024 the Local Authority seeks to ensure over 80% of annual reviews are completed within 12 months.
19. Further steps that are being undertaken to improve Annual Review performance: the Local Authority's Annual Review performance relies on educational settings and partners to ensure that Annual Reviews are held on time. To improve performance the Local Authority will be using additional resources to improve partnership working and offer support and challenge to educational settings to ensure that the Annual Review timescales are met. This will include the Local Authority seeking direct confirmation that Annual Reviews have been arranged and have taken place.

Outcome 3 (APA1): Children and young people with additional needs, but without an EHC Plan, have their needs identified, met, and monitored effectively.

20. Children and young people receiving SEN support (but without an EHC Plan) account for around 80% of our overall SEN population. EHC Plans utilise statutory processes to formalise the assessment and provision of support to our children and young people with special education needs or disabilities. For many years, children and young people in Nottinghamshire have been able to access additional support in educational settings (e.g. additional funding, input from specialist services) without the need for an EHC Plan, resulting in us having a lower number of EHC Plans when compared nationally.
21. Whilst we have been able to provide evidence which supports this approach and have demonstrated effective outcomes for our children and young people with and without EHC Plans, during the February 2023 inspection the SEND Partnership was criticised for not having sufficient data or reporting information concerning the progress and outcomes for the 'SEN support' cohort. In addition, it has been identified through feedback from families and professionals that there are inconsistencies in the identification and provision of 'SEN Support'.
22. Identification and provision of SEN support is predominantly made within schools and educational settings, with support from Education, Health and Social care professionals and is usually referred to as '[The Graduated Response Pathway](#)'. School budgets contain notional per pupil funding and schools can request [additional top-up SEND funding](#) from the Local Authority High Needs Budget. In Nottinghamshire, SEND funding processes can be accessed by schools and educational settings via their SENCO and Family SENCO, without the need for an EHC Plan.
23. Work is underway to improve SEN support reporting, through combining pupil funding information with academic performance, attendance, and exclusion data. Once complete this reporting will form part of the strategic SEND performance reporting.

24. Through this work we have identified an opportunity to collate SEN support pupil information directly from schools using new technology, rather than rely on information retrieved quarterly from the school census.
25. Working in conjunction with the 'Early Help Redesign' work, multiagency workshops have commenced to create a map of the Nottinghamshire Graduated Response processes, which will be shared as accessible infographics in July 2024 to help parents, carers and professionals understand what to expect from our local SEND processes. The Early Years and School Age workshops are complete, and the final Post 16 workshop is pending.
26. Activity remains ongoing to ensure that the impact of improvement activity is being measured, including the impact on the experiences of children, young people and families:
 - a) A pilot with a small number of schools is underway to monitor funding provision and pupil, and parent/carer feedback. This pilot will help us inform next steps around data and feedback collation following Spring Term.
 - b) A survey of the views of SEND leaders across educational settings has been completed, with a follow up scheduled for Autumn Term. The output of this survey will help us better understand training gaps or opportunities for workforce development.
 - c) A significant part of this workstream is focused on developing new reporting metrics which previously did not exist. Although some surveys and feedback are available, the new performance monitoring is not expected to be complete until the end of Summer.

Outcome 4 (APA2): The needs of children and families with SEND are clearly understood so that immediate and long term changes to health service provision can be made through effective joint commissioning

27. Following the Partnership refresh of the PAP, colleagues met in early February 2024 to review the collective understanding of the local SEND population within Nottinghamshire, in order to ensure that both immediate and sustainable, long-term improvements can be made that best support local needs.
28. Collaboration between the Partnership and local providers and services has facilitated the development of a SEND System Intelligence Report detailing local understanding of services and experiences for children, young people and their families with SEND in Nottinghamshire. This has allowed for a system-wide understanding of areas of challenge and for targeted work to be considered and agreed by the Partnership.
29. Specific focus areas for integrated service development and/or joint commissioning have been agreed for 2024/25 and has been approved through the Strategic Partnership Group (SPG). These focus areas are:
 - an integrated sleep support pathway for children and young people with SEND.
 - the development of a sensory support service and understanding of local therapy services; and

- the redevelopment of local Speech, Language and Communication Needs services to reduce long wait times and enhance patient experience.
30. The Integrated Care System Children and Young People's Programme Board, responsible for overseeing joint commissioning arrangements, will be established by April 2024. The proposal to jointly commission a sensory occupational therapy service will be considered by the Board by July 2024. This will include decision-making in respect of funding contributions, subject to individual organisational governance arrangements.
 31. To support in these ambitions, a key priority for Outcome 4 is for the publication of an up-to-date Joint Commissioning Strategy. Work on this will commence from 8 April 2024, where a Partnership meeting is planned, with aims for the final strategy to be published in July 2024.
 32. Alongside collation of service data, engagement with families has been undertaken to understand, from the perspective of those with lived experience, areas of concern and challenge so that improvement measures can be put in place that are reflective of their voice. Key messages shared by families through extensive engagement around the redevelopment of Speech, Language and Communication Needs services include the need for education staff to be more aware of early indicators of need, so that early intervention strategies can be put into place. In response, the Partnership has explored jointly commissioning support for education staff through existing resource within the System. A memorandum of understanding for this work has been written and is awaiting signature for work to commence within the summer term (capacity within services allowing).
 33. Alongside Outcome 4, and to support the system understanding of our local population of children, young people and their families with SEND, and their needs, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHT) (local specialist provision provider) has developed a SEND dashboard that highlights to the Trust children and young people on current caseloads (and multiple caseloads) who have SEND. This aims to ensure appropriate oversight and understanding of needs and to support enhancing their experiences whilst engaged with specialist provision. This work will feed into Partnership work to develop the system-wide dashboard that can be utilised by everyone working within the system to further understand and drive improvement.
 34. Specific read-codes for SEND have been developed by Providers, and training shared to ensure that all staff interacting within children, young people and their families understand the importance of coding SEND onto a patient's electronic patient record. This will allow for easier data collation and a more sustainable, and accurate, understanding of the local population of children, young people and their families within SEND in Nottinghamshire. This will also enhance a patient's experience with healthcare providers, as the codes allow for immediate recognition on acceptance onto a caseload of any additional needs. Read coding is currently being done within NHT and the 0-19 Services. Work is ongoing to support other services within Nottinghamshire to do the same (communications are being disseminated regularly from 27 March, including to GP practices and Acute Trusts). Further work on coding specific diagnosis, such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, is ongoing within Acute Trusts to further support local understanding of this cohort. This has been completed in Nottingham University Hospital Community Paediatric Services and Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals, while Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust aims to complete the work by April 2024.

35. In order to facilitate a long-term Partnership understanding of the local population of children, young people and their families with SEND in Nottinghamshire amendments to local contracts have been made to require regular reporting into the Partnership through the SEND Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group (PAIG). Reporting requirements have also been amended to provide more reflective information around services that support children, young people and their families with SEND, so that areas of success, challenge and opportunity can be shared through Partnership governance arrangements to promote ongoing improvement as business as usual.
36. Work continues to develop the Partnership understanding of the local population of SEND children and young people and their families, through the ongoing development of a SEND Partnership Dashboard, and the production of quarterly data pack reporting to PAIG and the Improvement Board. The next iteration of which will include a further breakdown of waits for Speech, Language and Communication Needs and a broader understanding of local authority commissioned occupational therapy services.

Outcome 5 (APA2): Children and Young People receive timely assessment and treatment offer for assessment by the Neurodevelopmental Support Team (NST)

37. Development and improvement activity in relation to the review of the neurodevelopmental pathway continues to focus on ensuring improved experiences for children, young people and their families. This includes:
 - a. Any inappropriate referrals or missing information are now being identified at the point of referral receipt (previously being identified at the point of triage), reducing frustrations and prolonged wait times for families.
 - b. 3-year-olds and under with red flag indicators such as developmental delay or regression are now being prioritised and triaged within 2-3 weeks of referral receipt for direct referral to the Community Paediatrician (where appropriate), previously being identified at the point of triage, which is currently a 5 month wait.
 - c. Children aged 4 years and under who are referred for an ADHD assessment are now being identified upon receipt of the referral and no longer at the point of triage. These children are then referred to the Health Family Team for support, as the Community Paediatrician does not accept referrals for ADHD assessment for those under 5 years and 9 months of age.
 - d. There is no waiting list for parental workshops; these are all now on an opt-in basis, giving quicker access to support for families.
38. Improvements continue to be made to communications with children, young people and families who are waiting. NST newsletters are now being sent to all families at the point of referral receipt. From April 2024 a monthly newsletter will be sent to all families, highlighting average and maximum wait times, along with signposting resource support information. Feedback forms are submitted to families once the assessment process is complete and following parental workshops.

39. A recent survey has gone out to families to determine communication preferences and support needs. A 'you said we did' action plan is to be developed in response to this. Neurodevelopmental pathway infographics are also being disseminated to families at the point of referral receipt for the NST pathway along with the Community Paediatrics pathway information (where appropriate).
40. Risks and mitigations continued to be managed across Outcome 5. This includes referral data not being up-to-date due to a lag in processing referrals. This is impacting on some elements of the quarterly reporting. Additional resources have been targeted on this part of the service to resolve the issue, with a plan to get this up to date from March 2024 with full reporting commencing in quarter 1 2024/25, in line with the new online referral form.
41. Additional investment to increase capacity is non-recurrent, therefore the service has been relying on the use of agency staff to fill additional posts quickly. There is a risk the pace of progress will be lost due to high turnover of agency staff, which is already being experienced as staff find longer-term employment.
42. There is also an increased risk of waiting times increasing if additional recurrent investment is not made to support the sustainability of the capacity and demand needs of the service when the contract ends in May 2025.
43. In mitigation for the risks outlined in points 41 and 42 above, our focus in 2024/25 will be taking forward the recommendations of the pathway review - including capacity and demand analysis - to develop and agree our pathway and service model and specifications, for ICB agreement to procure/award contracts post-May 2025. This will ensure that services are sustainable and meet the needs of our population.
44. The NST improvement plan is available upon request, outlining ongoing and planned actions as part of the neurodevelopmental pathway review.

Outcome 6 (APA2): Children, young people and families with SEND experience services that are easy to navigate, free from duplication and are adaptive to their needs

45. Following the Partnership refresh of the priority action plan, colleagues met in early February to review and agree areas for priority under this outcome.
46. In January 2024, funding was secured to support the development of an integrated sleep pathway across Nottinghamshire, free from duplication and gaps in offer. System Partners have identified a proposed service model and mapping work to better understand the current offer in Nottinghamshire has been undertaken. Partners will meet in May 2024 to workshop the development of an integrated pathway with final recommendations being presented to SPG in June 2024.
47. Occupational Therapy (OT) service providers from across the Partnership have met on several occasions to collaboratively map out a joint understanding of roles and responsibilities across the system, with an aim to identify areas of duplication and opportunities for more efficient, integrated commissioning arrangements. Plans are underway to jointly develop a system resource that can be shared with professionals and families to support a broader understanding of services and be used to actively signpost

to support that is available. This will be a collaborative piece, that all services across the Partnership contribute to, and aims to be completed during May 2024.

48. Significant feedback from families has highlighted a gap in current commissioning arrangements for children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire around accessing support where there are sensory processing difficulties. A universal offer is under development which will sit on the Minds of All Kinds website. This will aim to support families understand sensory processing difficulties, to share management techniques and to empower self-management where possible.
49. Learning from other areas and from pilots that have previously been commissioned within the Partnership has been considered, and an options appraisal has been developed alongside recommendations to the Partnership for long-term and sustainable commissioning of a Sensory Support Service. The Integrated Care System Children and Young People's Programme Board responsible for overseeing joint commissioning arrangements will be established by April 2024. The recommendations and proposal to jointly commission this service will be considered by the Board by July 2024. This will include decision-making in respect of funding contributions (subject to individual organisational governance arrangements).
50. Feedback from professionals and families highlighted challenges related to missing or amended equipment. Work has been completed to develop a proforma and photographic checklist for each piece of equipment to ensure what is received by the service is complete and quality assured and that subsequently what is shared with families meets individual requirements. Broader scoping of potential improvement measures within services sharing equipment with children, young people and their families with SEND in Nottinghamshire has begun and recommendations aim to have been identified and made by July 2024.
51. Waiting times for Specialist OT and Physical Therapy (PT) are currently at 13 weeks. For specialist Speech, Language and Communication Needs services the average waits are:
 - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pathway - average of 45 weeks
 - Complex Care Pathway – average of 9 weeks
 - Community Pathway – average of 20 weeks (working towards 18 weeks from September 2024).

Capacity and demand modelling has been undertaken for the ASD pathway with a recovery plan produced based on a system requirement for additional workforce and funding.

52. Additional funding has been secured to support the recovery of local Speech, Language and Communication Needs services, where long wait times have been identified as requiring urgent improvement. Additional, short-term resource will be recruited into the specialist service to support a waiting well ethos. Increased capacity will target long waiters in order to reduce the back log in waiting lists, and to offer generic support sessions and an advice line that can be accessed by families, children and young people awaiting intervention. Furthermore, key messages shared by families through extensive engagement around the re-development of Speech, Language and Communication Needs services include the need for education staff to be more aware of early indicators of need,

so that early intervention strategies can be put into place. In response, the Partnership has explored jointly commissioning support for education staff through existing resource within the system. A memorandum of understanding for this work has been written and is awaiting signature for work to commence within the summer term (capacity within services allowing).

53. Additional support for schools will be available through a jointly commissioned pilot project from September 2024. The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools project will test an innovative model for the effective, efficient deployments of the specialist health workforce and strengthening of parent/carer and school partnerships in mainstream education settings, focusing on supporting neurodiverse pupils who represent a fast-growing group among the children most likely to benefit from more inclusive mainstream environments.
54. Feedback from young people has identified the need for strengthening and individualising support received on transitioning from paediatric to adult health services. A statement of intent has been co-developed with young people and will be added into the SDIP (Service Development Improvement Plan) or all health held contracts for services that support children and young people with SEND in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Aims for a Transitioning Support Strategy to be developed by December 2024 are to be incorporated into all speciality service specifications and for a Transitions Network to be implemented (first meeting held in Summer 2024) that will feed into the Integrated Care System Children and Young People's Board.

Data and Insights

55. Focussed activity continues in relation to the development of a combined data set for our SEND population in Nottinghamshire, incorporating data sets from across organisations and providers. This is intended to enable the Partnership to better understand where gaps may exist in our reporting, deliver targeted improvement activity, better understand the needs of our population and ensure that areas of risk or pressure can be more clearly understood.
56. By ensuring that this infrastructure is in place as part of SEND improvement activity, this has set the foundation for an ongoing culture of meaningful data sharing; in turn, this can be used to drive service improvement locally, whilst also ensuring there is effective strategic oversight of the services offered to our children, young people and families.

Leadership & Strategic Development

57. Following the development of the draft outcomes for the new SEND Strategy as part of the RISE Support programme, the outcomes were consulted with families and practitioners across the local area between during December 2023 and January 2024.

58. In total, 557 responses were received from the SEND Outcomes Survey. Overall, over 85% respondents supported the proposed 6 strategic outcomes for children and young people with SEND around which the revised Strategy will be developed. These were:

SEND Strategic Outcomes	Percentage rated 'very important'
1. I want to be well physically and emotionally.	92%
2. I want to be and feel safe.	93%
3. I want to be loved and valued by someone I trust.	89%
4. I want to be prepared for the future I want.	81%
5. I want to be able to play and have fun.	83%
6. I want to be asked first.	73%

59. Subsequently, six SEND Strategy Engagement Events (five face-to-face events and one virtual event) were held during March 2024, with a focus on developing Nottinghamshire's SEND outcomes-based Strategy, which is due to be published by the end of June 2024. Nearly 300 colleagues from across the local area, including parents and carers, were able to take part, with the opportunity to review the draft outcomes, shape the SEND Strategy and determine our key actions for delivering the strategic outcomes.
60. On 18 March 2024, the SEND Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group (PAIG) agreed the final wording for the agreed strategic outcomes, based upon the feedback provided by respondents to the survey and the SEND Strategy Engagement events. The agreed outcomes are:
- I need to be listened to and heard.
 - I need to be the healthiest I can be.
 - I need to be safe and feel safe.
 - I need to be accepted and valued by people I trust.
 - I need to be prepared for my future.
 - I need to enjoy life and have fun.

Engagement with Children, Young People and Families

61. A SEND Parent and Carer Reference Group is in place to support SEND improvement activity. This Group meets bi-monthly and allows the Partnership to conduct focused consultations with SEND families and provide us with an opportunity to coproduce solutions. There are in excess of 140 families on the mailing list for the Group.
62. The SEND Parent Carer Reference Group held a virtual meeting on 19 February 2024, which focussed on how the SEND Improvement Programme can determine the impact of its improvements, as well as what success looks like for parents and carers. Feedback from the 14 families in attendance was invaluable and supported the refresh of the SEND Improvement Plan, in order to ensure that impact measures and success criteria reflected the feedback of parents and carers. Broader feedback included:
- *"Thank you for your time in the meetings. These are hugely appreciated, and I know it's really helpful for parents to feel heard"*

- *“The more we have face to face (onscreen) the more I hope they get to understand. I’ve been that person”.*

63. The next meeting of the SEND Parent Carer Reference Group is scheduled to take place in April 2024.

Other Options Considered

64. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

65. The local area partnership is committed to improving the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND and will continue to focus on implementing the improvement plan and wider improvement arrangements moving forwards.

Statutory and Policy Implications

66. 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

67. Local authority costs associated with the improvement programme and associated partnership governance arrangements have been subject to the relevant approvals in line with financial regulations.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Children and Families Select Committee:

- 1) considers the content of the report and confirms whether Members have any further questions or recommendations in relation to progress with the required improvements.
- 2) agrees to receive a further update on progress on SEND improvement activity in July 2024.

Colin Pettigrew
Corporate Director, Children and Families

Rosa Waddingham
Chief Nurse, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (LW 29/03/24)

68. The Children and Families Select Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (SS 27/03/24)

69. Local authority costs associated with the improvement programme and associated partnership governance arrangements have been subject to the relevant approvals in line with financial regulations.

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.

[Improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) - report to Cabinet on 25 May 2023

[Progress in Improving the Experiences and Outcomes for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) – report to Cabinet on 22 June 2023

[Partnership Progress In Improving The Experiences And Outcomes For Children And Young People With Special Educational Needs And Disabilities](#) – Report to Children and Families Select Committee on 16 October 2023

[Partnership Progress in Improving the Experiences and Outcomes for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) – Report to Children and Families Select Committee on 5 February 2024

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CFS0021



Department for Education

Regions Group
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Colin Pettigrew,
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Nottinghamshire County Council,
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Rosa Waddingham,
Chief Nurse, NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board,
rosa.waddingham@nhs.net

27 February 2024

Dear Colin and Rosa

Thank you for meeting with DfE colleagues on 12 January 2024 to review the progress you have made against your Priority Action Plan (PAP) and your strategic plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across Nottinghamshire.

As requested, we have noted and officials have discussed with NHSE, your frustration that NHSE were unable to attend the stocktake. As you are aware, NHSE joined the planning meeting our team hosted to review the information you submitted, and a member of NHSE's regional team had intended to attend the rescheduled stocktake but was unwell on the day.

We were pleased to hear that you have made progress against the activity in your PAP and how the partnership has matured with stronger collective leadership of the improvements needed across the county. The documentation you submitted and the evidence you provided during the stocktake, demonstrated evidence of progress, including:

- Clear senior corporate interest and engagement reflected in regular meetings between the local authority and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) at Chief Executive level. This is coupled with changes to the County Council cabinet to reflect the Leader's priorities with the creation of two children focused members (one for Education and SEND and one for CSC and Families).
- A strong sense of partnership, and leaders working more collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

- Leaders investing in new roles focused on local area SEND transformation and improvement, including a SEND programme lead, an independent SEND Improvement Board Chair and pathway leads.
- A focus on the wider SEND system in Nottinghamshire including undertaking a SEND Improvement Programme 'Reset' to evaluate progress since the inspection. Leaders have made a decision to restructure programme activity to enable a greater focus on the Partnership's six key coproduced outcomes.
- Knowing it can be difficult to maintain a stable SEND workforce following an outcome of this nature, we were pleased to hear that professionals remain dedicated and committed to improving provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Improved 20-week timeliness through an increase in resource to support EHC needs assessments, on average families were waiting five weeks less to receive their EHC Plans in September 2023 than they were in January 2023 (36.8 weeks down to 28.3).
- At the time of inspection, 4.5% of EHC Plans were issued within 20 weeks. This has increased to 28% in line with planned improvements, and the leadership ambition is to exceed the national average, currently at 49%.
- Co-production with families and young people has improved with effective working relationships with the parent carer forum (PCF) and Young Pioneers. Leaders have committed to additional investment in the PCF to expand the offer to local families.

However, as discussed in the Stocktake feedback meeting, there are further specific improvements we would like to see in the near future:

- SEND governance structures and reporting processes should ensure robust oversight, monitoring, and responsiveness to escalation in relation to the PAP and wider SEND Transformation.
- Effective capturing of the SEND Improvement Programme 'Reset' narrative to demonstrate how it will support the Local Area Partnership's progress.
- The partnership should refine how it reports progress against the PAP to describe clearly the meaning of 'at risk' activities and to ensure any reporting has a clear narrative demonstrating current position and next steps.
- Improved and consistent communication about progress and plans with families and the workforce.

Based on the evidence provided, it is the view of the Department for Education and NHS England that you are making progress in line with the PAP you agreed with Ofsted/CQC and in enhancing your partnership's leadership and governance of SEND. Considering the progress demonstrated and the ongoing commitment of your partnership, the department is assured that no additional intervention is required at this time.

As you acknowledged during the stocktake, post-inspection activity has required a level of critical, and at times uncomfortable, self-analysis for the partnership, and you clearly articulated the leadership's desire and commitment to build on these reflections and to move into the 'performing' phase of your partnership's development.

Your next Area of Priority Action (APA) Deep Dive is scheduled for 19 March which will gather and interrogate detailed evidence on both APAs at the operational, working level, and the next Stocktake meeting should take place in June 2024.

In the meantime, SEND and NHS England Advisers, and Gemma Foster as your DfE Case Lead, will continue to provide you with support and challenge. If you have any questions or need any further support, please contact Gemma Foster in the first instance.

I am copying this letter to your SEND / NHSE Advisers, and to your DfE Case Lead.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Copley' and 'C Gray', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Kate Copley and Carol Gray

**Regional Director, East Midlands (Jobshare)
Regions Group**

CC

Rebecca Hogan DfE commissioned SEND Adviser aspireall@mail.com

Tina Ward NHSE SEND Adviser Tina.Ward6@nhs.net

Gemma Foster VCU EM SEND Case Lead Gemma.Foster@education.gov.uk



15 April 2024

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

DEVELOPING THE APPROACH TO MEETING CHILDREN'S NEEDS THROUGH THE MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)

Purpose of the Report

1. To brief Children and Families Select Committee on work being undertaken to further develop the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Nottinghamshire so that the approach enables more children to be able to access the right early help support through signposting, advice and guidance to community-based professionals or direct access to early help services, in addition to it providing swift and timely access to social work assessment and support.

Information

2. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was established in December 2012 as the single point of contact for safeguarding concerns to be reported about vulnerable children and adults, with the aim of improving information sharing between key partners (local authority, police, health and probation) to help protect the most vulnerable from significant harm and abuse. The last time the MASH was inspected by Ofsted (October 2019), it was reported that: "Children identified as being in need of urgent protection and considered to be at risk of significant harm receive a quick and effective response from the multiagency safeguarding hub (MASH)." Reviews and audits since have supported this view. An independent social worker was commissioned to audit 100 children's cases in November 2023 and the outcome provided assurance that this remains the case, with a timely and effective response to risk seen in all of the referrals reviewed.
3. Over the ten years that the MASH has been operational, the number of safeguarding concerns reported about children has doubled, from 15,642 to 31,652, however the number of Child and Family Assessments (completed if there is evidence of significant risk of abuse or neglect of a child) has not increased significantly in the same period, suggesting that need has not increased. This has created significant operational pressure on colleagues working within the MASH, and whilst agencies have increased the staffing resources in the MASH to accommodate this rise in workload, continuing to grow the MASH is not a sustainable option. The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) commissioned a high-level review from the Service Director, Transformation and Improvement in April 2023. The review primarily involved discussions with key stakeholders individually and in groups, coupled with some

limited reviews of models in other areas and data analysis. SLG considered the recommendations in July 2023.

4. The review noted *that there appear to be a number of key areas of challenge around thresholds and the roles and responsibilities of partners. These seem to be culturally embedded and will require significant partnership commitment over a long period of time to work through. Understanding human motivation, the operational contexts that colleagues are working within and being able to understand each other's perspectives will be key to making progress in this area.* SLG accepted this view and delegated project oversight to the Service Director for Help, Care and Protection from Nottinghamshire County Council, the Deputy Chief Nurse from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Detective Superintendent for Nottinghamshire Police's Public Protection Unit. The group is known as Platinum and an external organisation, Public Digital, was commissioned to work with the partnership for 3 months in in autumn 2023 (dates) in order to support in addressing this identified challenge. This work was funded from the NSCP reserve with SLG (through Platinum) maintaining the governance oversight of the project.
5. The first phase of the project involved 26 interviews (some single and some groups) with professionals who refer to the MASH, who work in the MASH, partnership leaders and the teams providing support such as data reporting and recording system design. They also read reviews, reports and documents from across the partnership providing the background and context for the MASH. A series of workshops were facilitated to identify the pain points for referrers and develop opportunities to address these, as a partnership.
6. A multi-agency working group (referred to as Diamond) was established with an operational manager from each of the agencies and teams in the MASH: police, health, probation and from NCC Children's Social Care, Early Help, Adult Social Care, Business Support, MASH Operations and an open invitation for colleagues from other disciplines (such as Mosaic (case management system) design). A Project Manager and Project Officer were allocated by NCC to support the project, along with the NSCP Service Manager and the MASH Operations Manager. These four act as the project team supporting Platinum and Diamond. The approach taken by the multi-agency working group involved coalescing around an agreed problem statement and set of operating principles:

What we are solving:

- Children, young people and families who are referred to the MASH often need support beyond safeguarding or social care.
- These needs aren't always being met because until now, the MASH has been optimised to identify safeguarding and social care service needs.
- The NSCP wants to be able to identify these other needs and provide the right support earlier, to prevent children, young people and family's situations from deteriorating further and from needing social care in the future.

How we work:

- Children, young people and families come first
- We make decisions based on needs, not thresholds
- No big bangs. We are improving our service one step at a time
- We learn through doing. When we don't know, we test safely and learn
- We are open and honest; we are proactive about showing people what we are doing
- We won't be restricted by technology or process

- We thrive with high support, and high challenge
 - Our partnership is one team. We involve everyone who has a stake in the service or how it's delivered when we are making changes.
7. Working in an open and honest way combines involving everyone with a stake within the approach to improvement, with a transparent approach to communicating. Each Friday of the project (27 weeks to date) the project officer sends 'week notes' which are a brief, accessible summary of what has happened in the project that week and what is coming up. The current distribution list is to 400 professionals from across the County. Diamond also run a 'Show and Tell' session every 6-8 weeks which is both in person in the MASH and on MS Teams, where they provide a more detailed project update and a Q and A session. The week notes and show and tell slides are also available on the NSCP website. Members of Diamond also rotate in attending various forums, such as the NSCP Safeguarding Children Today seminar and the Joint Notts ICB group, to seek wider views.
8. Learning through doing involves taking a 'test and iterate' approach to making change. Decisions about what to test are made within the Diamond working group. Tests are then designed with a wider operational group, including referrers. To date the following tests have been run:

Test 1: A Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) on duty reviewing and responding to referrals together based on the needs of the child

What was involved

In the normal operating environment, professional disciplines sit separately and information is requested and shared via email with minimal discussion. The process is transactional rather than relational. This test involved reconfiguring the workplace so that health, police, children's social care, business support, a MASH officer, an early help officer and the Education Adviser in the MASH sat together to review, discuss and confirm actions on each referral.

What was learned

The test was small scale, short and designed rapidly leaving the team to work out many of the details and how the processes would work during the test. This meant that the process was not as efficient as it could have been, the number of referrals seen was low, and the data collected was inconsistent. Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that having a multi-agency team at the front door receiving referrals, triaging and making joint outcome decisions have:

- Built and strengthened partnership relationships and ways of working, which led to improved partners experience
- Enabled faster development of multi-agency action plans which documented how the needs-led outcomes were made by the team
- Contributed to a cultural shift among the partners involved in the test, focusing on the needs of the child rather than just deciding if the child's situation met the threshold for an assessment by Children's Social Care or not.

Feedback received

From the test team:

“We talked about children :)”

“We genuinely improved outcomes for children yesterday”

“Conversations today have led to informed decisions”

“We identified who could help with fam[ily] straightaway.”

“We identified the most appropriate team - helped to have everyone’s input and find the most appropriate service.”

Test 2: Optimising the MDT and Recording Proportionately

What was involved

The same group of professionals from test one, with the addition of adult’s social care and probation being on call for the MDT where needed. The police colleague was also available remotely. The test focussed on education referrals for the first week and health referrals in the second. The test also used a shorter form on the Mosaic case management system which simplified how the referral was recorded, so it was proportionate to the needs identified, and allowed the analysis, actions and decisions from the multi-disciplinary discussion to be noted.

What was learned

The same positive learning was taken as in Test 1. By refining certain aspects of the test, such as the members of the MDT and the structure of discussions, more efficient and effective discussions were held that did more to ensure that children received the right support at the right time. In addition, more team members were involved in testing, helping to build relationships between individuals and teams in the MASH.

During the test colleagues from the Mosaic team were present which enabled them, with the help from team participants, to find an interim solution to simplify recording on Mosaic. This has now been implemented to the wider MASH team and received positive feedback.

Feedback received

From the test team:

“We genuinely made kids safer today”

“I didn’t get why we were doing this (test), partners sit in the same room anyway. But we don’t do this”

“Can I do testing all the time please?”

“It looks like a real team” - referring to the test team.

Test 3: Routes In, which was run in tandem with testing an outreach role, currently referred to as Team Around the Family Support Officer (TAFSO), led by the Early Help System Redesign project team.

What was involved

In the current operating model non-urgent referrals are received via online form or email. Telephone calls where the referrer believes the situation to be urgent (requiring a same day social work response) are triaged by a MASH officer. In this test all of the schools in the Newark area were asked to phone through all referrals. The phone calls were answered by social workers and the test was to look at how social workers might be able to coach and support referrers to feel safer in managing appropriate needs and risk in the community and to signpost to the services best placed to meet children's needs. An early help officer sat with the test social workers to provide advice as needed. At the same time, the Early Help System Redesign Project ran a test of an early help unit officer working with the same group of Newark schools to provide advice and support to them in working with families they were concerned about before referring to the MASH.

What was learned

Anecdotally, it is clear from the test team and referrer feedback that this approach created a positive user experience for referrers. Significant improvements were also made to the process for gaining referrer feedback compared to the first two tests. The in-depth learning from the test including impact and outcomes for children and families is still being pulled together and will inform next steps in terms of decision-making around future ways of working.

Feedback received

Reflections and feedback shared from referrers:

“Being able to speak about concerns directly with someone, getting an outcome straight away, with much faster service, means we can feedback to students straight away...”

“The test referral process is so much more efficient, the quick and easy process gives a clear outcome at the point of referral. We find out immediately if this is being taken as a referral or information only.”

“We were able to discuss as professionals the best way forward to meet the needs of the children...”

“...I was asked if things had been done by the school that hadn't been done, this gave me thoughts about what we can improve on for the next time.”

“...felt confident talking about a situation which led to immediate action and a Social Worker coming to school that same day”

“Preferred this way of referral as I felt I was having a conversation with someone who could give their opinion of where they felt it should go, able to have that two-way conversation”

9. Whilst running the tests to iterate and scale towards an improved operating model, Diamond are also working on workstreams known as 'upstream', 'culture shift and identity' and 'how we know how we're doing'.

10. 'Upstream' is work on how to influence a shift in the mindset of those working with children in the community who are likely to contact the front door to move from a focus on thresholds, to identifying needs and thinking about the best way to meet those needs. The key artefact for this workstream is re-working the Pathway to Provision thresholds document away from a threshold-based ladder to a needs-based map of services in collaboration with professionals working in the community. The rollout of Family Hubs across the County will be critical in supporting community-based services to provide effective, joined up support to families at the earliest point of need being identified. The TAFSO test referred to previously also forms part of the 'upstream' work.
11. 'Culture shift and identity' is work on supporting those working in the existing MASH and the professionals around it to move to a truly needs-based rather than threshold driven culture. The strengths-based practice team from NCC are starting work in the MASH on changing language and the Diamond group are encouraging change through the professional disciplines sitting together as a multi-disciplinary team.
12. 'How we know how we're doing' looks to create a partnership set of qualitative and quantitative data with an agreed set of measures that the partnership leaders can use to understand the health of the MASH. In the past data from different partners has not matched, prompting uncertainty about the true performance of the MASH and an over-reliance on misleading measures, such as the proportion of referrals resulting in 'no further action'.

Next steps

13. The Diamond group are working on a decision about the next test. This will either involve iterating and scaling one of the previous tests or joining the previous tests together. The decision will be made by Diamond on 28/03/2024, following which the test will need to be designed and any approvals sought from Platinum as needed.
14. Within NCC, governance of the front door project and the early help system re-design project has been joined into one Board meeting to carefully map and address interdependencies. There are also colleagues from the adult safeguarding front door project in the Platinum and Diamond Groups to map and address interdependencies there. Project Managers from the respective projects meet regularly to manage interdependencies and share ideas. This will remain ongoing and will ensure that changes to the children's front door and adults front door will be carried out in a co-ordinated way, recognising that many partner agencies make referrals about both adults and children.
15. There are some proven areas from the tests that are currently being or have been implemented. These include a change to the Mosaic recording process to save NCC professionals time and social workers being allowed to sign off specific pieces of work without management oversight. The team will continue to implement 'quick wins' where testing proves their safety and effectiveness whilst working towards the larger implementation.
16. Diamond and colleagues from the early help system re-design project are in frequent touch with other areas to both understand what others are doing and to share what is happening in Nottinghamshire. Colleagues from the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

visited the MASH recently to understand the ongoing work, and meetings are arranged with Staffordshire and Lincolnshire in the next two weeks to understand their equivalent of a TAFSO role, which is well embedded in both partnerships. This relationship building and learning from others will continue.

17. Within NCC the Business Intelligence Unit and the Mosaic design team from Information and Systems are working together with the front door project team to design a workshop to review the Mosaic and reporting requirements for a child's journey through Early Help and through a MASH referral. The goals are to create more streamlined processes for the practitioners recording the information on Mosaic, a clearer record of the child's journey and for the reporting from the Mosaic records to better align with the Local Authority's practice standards and vision for children.
18. Diamond colleagues are also focussing on how best to respond to needs identified through Public Protection Notifications from the police. PPNs represent a significant proportion of referrals to the MASH. The demand from these has increased and is forecast to continue to do so, but is more complex (as with all emergency service referrals) to respond to because Police Officers attending the incident have limited information at the time of submitting the PPNs. This is a particularly challenging area for the partnership to work together on because it reflects the very different operating contexts for different referrers, but positive solutions are being sought.
19. The project will continue to work in open, sending an update each week in the form of weeknotes, and regular show and tells. Representatives will continue to attend partnership events to provide updates and build relationships with the wider community.

Financial Implications

20. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Children and Families Select Committee considers and comments on this report.

Councillor Tracey Taylor
Cabinet Member – Children and Families

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Sam Harris
Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager
E: samantha.harris@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (CM 28/03/2024)

21. The report falls within the terms of reference of the Children and Families Select Committee.

Financial Comments (CDS 27/03/24)

22. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CFS0022



15 April 2024

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

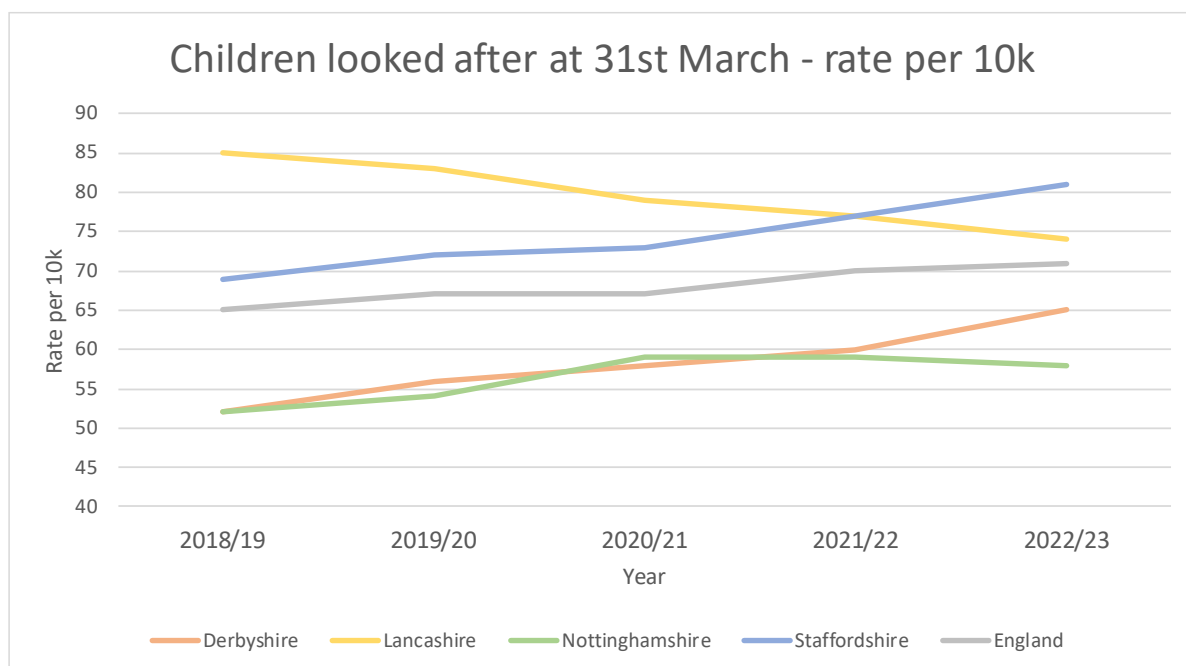
PROGRESS WITH THE SUFFICIENCY AND COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the progress made since the publication of the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Children in Nottinghamshire 2023-2025 and of any barriers to delivery.

Information

2. The Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Children in Nottinghamshire 2023-2025 (herein referred to as the 'Sufficiency Strategy') sets out how Nottinghamshire intends to meet the Sufficiency Duty placed upon it under the Children's Act 1989 (Section 22G), informed by 'Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children' (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2010)' and 'Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010'.
3. Improving placement sufficiency through the implementation of the Sufficiency Strategy is one of Nottinghamshire's Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) improvement priorities and the majority of improvement activity sits within the Safeguarding, Inclusion and Support Programme.
4. Nottinghamshire's ambition is that more children and young people are able to live in family-based placements, close to home. This means continuing to focus on strengths-based approaches to preventing care admissions by supporting children to remain safely at home where it is safe to do so or identifying and supporting kinship/family and friends arrangements. Alongside this Nottinghamshire is endeavouring to improve the recruitment and retention of Foster Carers, as well as growing the internal residential estate, and working with industry leading partners in establishing value for money block contracts which meet the needs of our children for whom it is right or necessary in the short term to be in residential care.



Source: Children looked after return (SSDA903) 2022/23

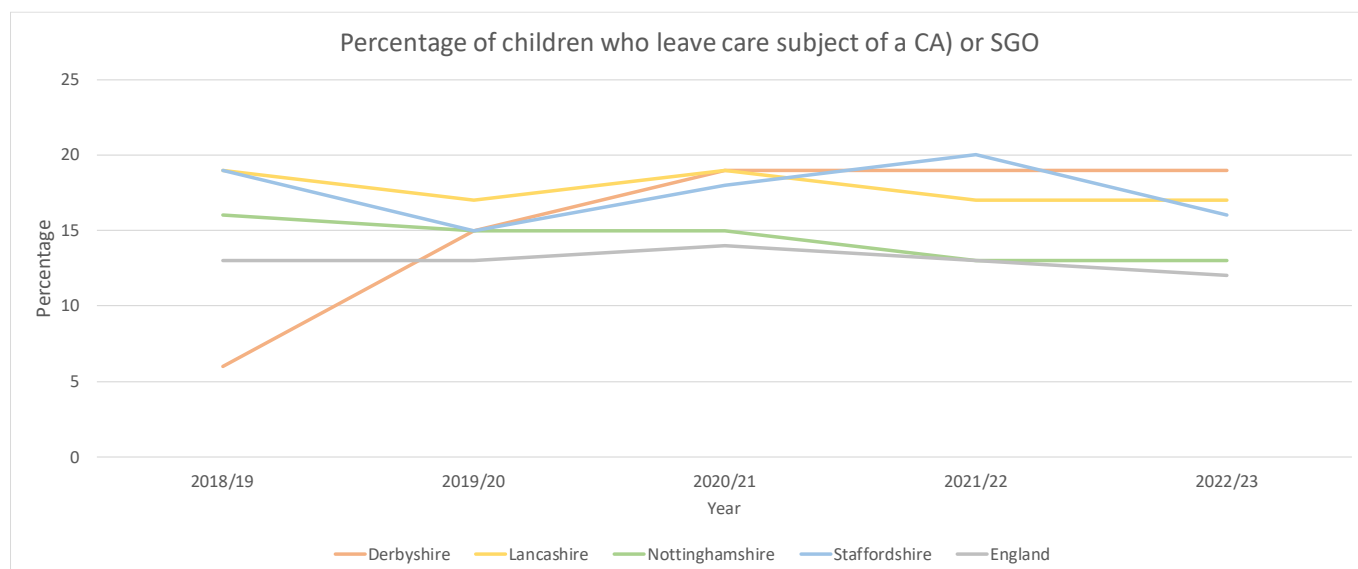
- Nottinghamshire has seen the rate of children looked after remain broadly stable at between 58 and 59 per 10,000 since 2020/21. The current rate per 10,000 remains 14% below the statistical neighbour and East Midlands average, and 18% below the England average. If Nottinghamshire was to match the statistical neighbour average, it would mean 1,110 children in care, an increase of 149. Decisions on whether to take a child into local authority care are always informed by the circumstances of the child and their safety and wellbeing, not on what placements are available.

Update on priority areas of the Sufficiency Strategy

Family Networking and Kinship Care

- A Family Networking Approach has been rolled out across the Assessment Service and District Child Protection Teams. The intention is that family members and connected people (including extended family, friends and neighbours) are invited to contribute to the plans for children from the beginning of their journey with Social Care, and so where alternative care options are required then the opportunity to place the child within a kinship arrangement is maximised. The Kinship Support Service was established in 2023 to ensure the support offer to those caring for children in kinship arrangements is commensurate to that which Foster Carers receive.
- A key priority for Nottinghamshire is to support Looked After Children to instead be cared for under a Special Guardianship Order (SGOs). An SGO is a private law order made by the family court which awards parental responsibility to a named adult which can include an extended family member, connected person or foster carer. When an SGO is granted then the child ceases to have a looked after status and would reduce the requirement for social worker involvement.
- Success in this area is measured through the proportion of children who leave care subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order. At 13%, Nottinghamshire

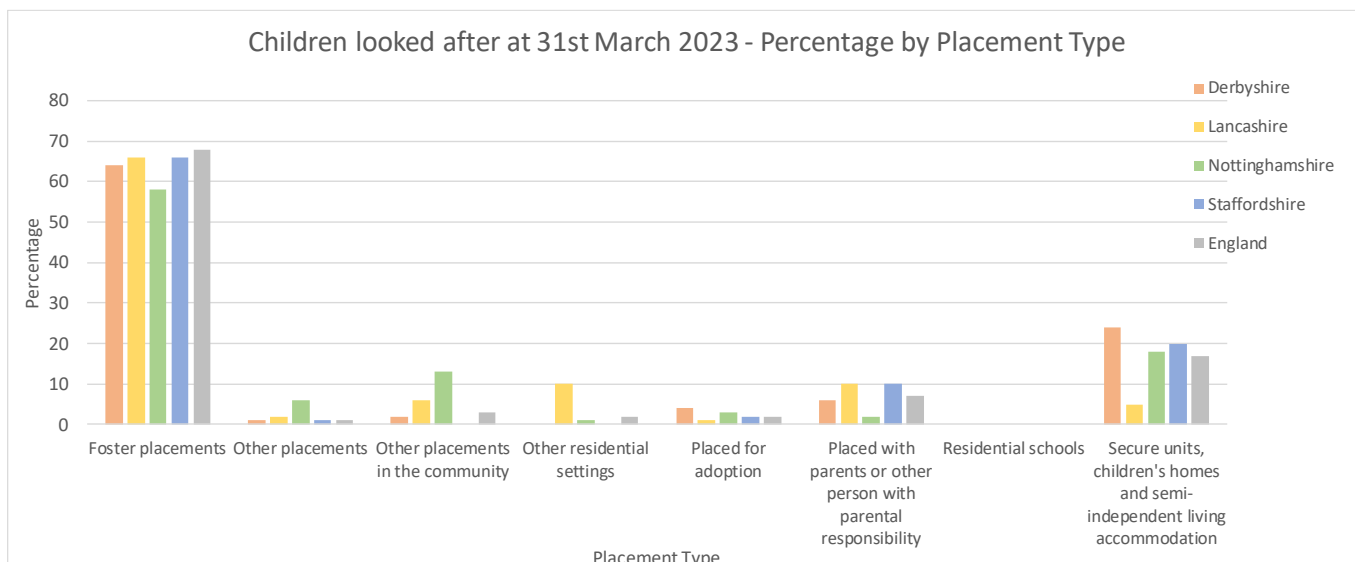
remains in-line with the England (12%) and statistical neighbour (13%) averages but below that of the closest statistical neighbours. This measure does not include children who are diverted from care (which is not currently reportable), so the more work that is done at the edge of care, the more it is expected that this will reduce.



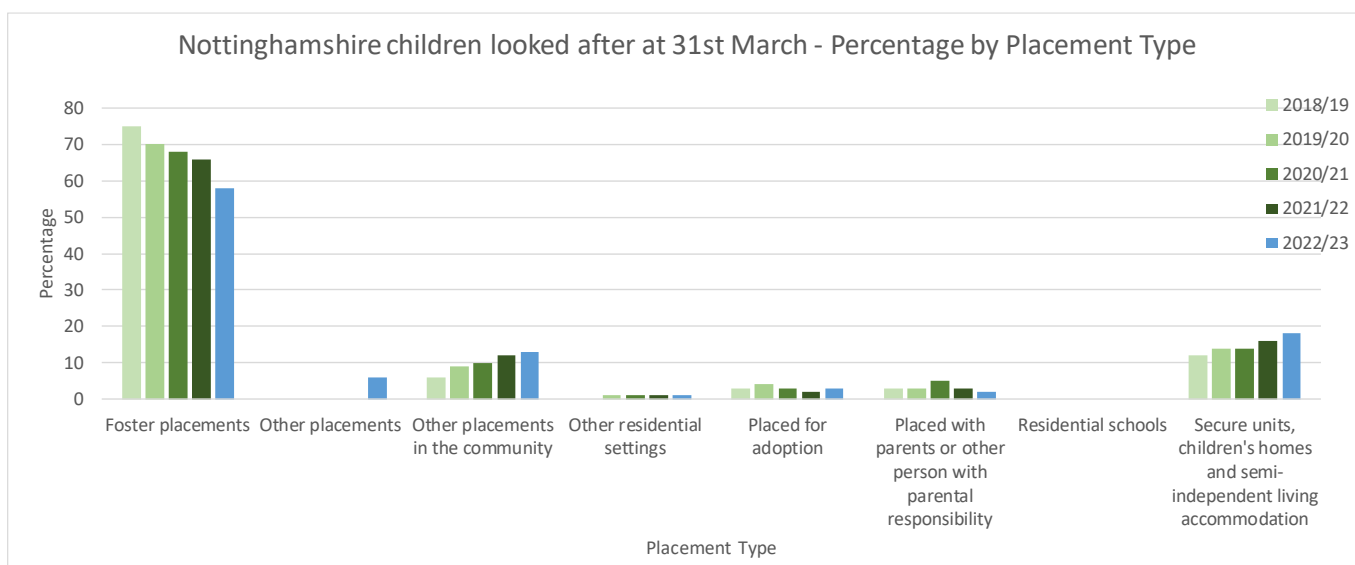
Source: Children looked after return (SSDA903) 2022/23

Fostering

- Compared with national average and statistical neighbour comparators, Nottinghamshire has a lower rate of children in foster placements and a higher proportion in residential children's homes and semi-independent supported accommodation placements suitable for some young people over the age of 16. With the exception of Lancashire, all of Nottinghamshire's closest neighbours have seen reductions in the proportion of fostering placements and an increase in residential and semi-independent placements over the last five years. The pattern is also repeated when looking at England as a whole, but the scale of change in Nottinghamshire is more pronounced with a reduction of 17 percentage points for children in fostering placements compared with 3 percentage points Nationally, 6 for Staffordshire and 8 for Derbyshire.



Source: Children looked after return (SSDA903) 2022/23



Source: Children looked after return (SSDA903) 2022/23

10. Since the publication of the Sufficiency Strategy, a successful D2N2 application to the *DfE Fostering Recruitment and Retention Programme* has brought £1.8 million of central government funding into the region for improvements in this area. This should result in an increase in the number of available foster carers across the four local authorities, improving outcomes for children in care by ensuring more children can be in family-based placements close to home.
11. To address the region wide challenges with recruiting and retaining high quality Foster Carers, the D2N2 local authorities (Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, and Derby City Council) have partnered to launch a new regional approach to Fostering. The D2N2 fostering recruitment support hub 'Foster for East Midlands' launched in March 2024. Foster for East Midlands serves as the central point for all enquiries from prospective Foster Carers interested in fostering for Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Derby City Council.

12. Funded through the Department for Education (DfE) grant, the Foster for East Midlands team includes Social Workers, Recruitment Officers, a Performance Information Analyst, a Digital Marketing Officer, a Marketing Officer, and a Business Support Officer. Foster for East Midlands has a newly designed recruitment website ([Foster for East Midlands](#)) to represent the four local authorities, and will develop fostering-specific D2N2 social media pages, online advertising, outreach events and associated physical resources.
13. Working with the DfE and The Fostering Network, the D2N2 local authorities will also trial innovative approaches to the support and retention of Foster Carers. Each authority will develop a 'Mockingbird constellation' to support up to 10 fostering families. The Mockingbird model sees several foster families linked together in an extended family network or 'constellation community'. Led by a Hub Home Carer and Liaison Worker, with the support of their fostering service, the constellation offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships, stability, and permanence.
14. The D2N2 authorities have worked with the DfE on establishing targets and key performance indicators for Foster for East Midlands. The team aim to attract 660 enquiries, and from these approve 15.45% which will be 103 new Foster Carers across the region. The target 103 approvals represent an 89% increase on the baseline of 54 anticipated D2N2 mainstream approvals for financial year 2023/24. Additionally, the hub will be measured against timescales for responding to enquiries and processing applications, with an improved drop-out rate and target turnaround time of 6 months from enquiry to approval.
15. Nottinghamshire is seeking to understand and address the rate at which Foster Carers have been leaving the Local Authority and have established an additional local Foster Carer retention project running concurrent to the D2N2 project. Quality assurance activity and engagement events with Social Workers and Foster Carers has identified that there are opportunities to improve the communication and relationship between Social Workers and children's Foster Carers. Work is now underway to co-produce solutions with Foster Carers and other professionals involved in Fostering, involving feedback from Children in Care about their experiences; what worked well with their foster families and what could have been better. The aims of the project are to raise the profile of Foster Carers so that other professionals gain a greater understanding of their role and have a more positive attitude towards them. The ambition is that the Foster Carer will be treated as an essential member of the team of professionals around the child. The training and support offer for Foster Carers will be made more accessible, and work will be undertaken to improve the timeliness, quality and quantity of the information a Foster Carer receives about a child before they arrive in their care. Having undertaken the scoping, the next set of workshops for the project are scheduled for May 2024.
16. The success measures for this project will be improved Foster Carer retention rates, a greater level of placement stability, and increased positive feedback about the experience of working as a Foster Carer for Nottinghamshire gained through workshops and questionnaires.

Internal Residential Estate

17. Nottinghamshire owns and operates 8 internal residential homes, including emergency accommodation, specialist disability homes and a secure children's home. The Sufficiency

Strategy sets out plans to expand and improve the internal residential estate and these ambitions have evolved and are being delivered through the Safeguarding, Inclusion and Support Programme.

18. Through the lifetime of the Sufficiency Strategy Nottinghamshire intends to undertake improvements to existing homes whilst expanding its estate by 6 homes and has been successful in attracting £900,000 of DfE match funding from the *DfE Children's Homes Capital Programme 2022-25* to support the intentions.
19. The plans include the development of 5 new 2-bed residential homes which will provide care and support for 10 Looked After Children. The properties will be purchased by the Local Authority and either run as internal homes or leased to strategic partner Homes2Inspire (H2I) to be run as part of a block-contract arrangement (more details on this arrangement can be found in **paragraph 23**). Two of the properties have been purchased and are in operation by H2I, giving homes to four Nottinghamshire Looked After Children – Sudbury House opened in Spring 2023 and Lantern House opened in November 2023. The target completion date for the remaining properties is 1 April 2025.
20. There have been delays in the internal homes development project and continue to be risks associated with Nottinghamshire's ability to deliver by the target date. One property, Ellesmere House, has been purchased but awaiting planning permission for renovation to a 2-bed home. Cost estimates for this home have increased, reducing the overall budget available for the remaining homes. Two further properties have been identified and are undergoing surveys and renovation cost estimation before an offer to purchase can be considered in the context of other forecast overspends.
21. To mitigate the risk of drift and delay, a Children's Property Group has been established, chaired by Service Director for Place (Green Growth, Investment and Assets) and with membership from Children's Residential Services, Commissioning, and Property Services. The group will oversee the delivery of the Council's residential homes expansion with additional project support. A Children's Home Specification document has been developed to support the survey and cost estimation process for any purchases, and a workflow responsibilities chart has been developed to agree accountability for officers responsible delivering the project.
22. The final residential home Nottinghamshire is developing will be a specialist home for teenagers with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. Nottinghamshire is partnered with the D2N2 authorities and the NHS in delivering this new provision, with each authority identifying a property for the service to be delivered from, and jointly commissioning the care package. The relevant Integrated Care Boards will be commissioning dedicated emotional and mental health services for children in the placement. Across the region the project will provide for 8 Looked After Children who have previously been sectioned under the Mental Health Act, commonly referred to as being in 'tier 4 beds', and who are stepping down into local authority care. Nottinghamshire has identified a property to be converted to a 2-bed home and is in the process of undergoing surveys and renovation cost estimation before an offer to purchase can be considered. This aspect of the project will be overseen locally by the Children's Property Group, with a regional group established and lead by Derby City overseeing the commissioning and procurement.

Commissioning

23. The Commissioning and Placements Group leads on the strategic commissioning, market facilitation and contract management of a range of externally commissioned services for Looked After Children. Nottinghamshire has developed some excellent relationships with residential providers both in its own right and through the D2N2 partnership which has led to commissioning a framework of approved providers of Foster Carers and residential homes at a pre-agreed price across the region. In addition to this framework Nottinghamshire has a Block Residential Care Contract currently delivered by Homes 2 Inspire which provides 31 residential care beds for Children in Care, and therefore provides more placements than the Council's own internal residential estate.
24. The 2023-25 Sufficiency Strategy sets out that a strategic direction would need to be agreed in relation to the D2N2 framework, both for the contract extension required in 2024 and the end of the contractual term in 2026. Furthermore it sets out the need to review the block contracting arrangements for residential care.
25. Progress has been made in this area, with an extension of the D2N2 commissioning framework to 2026 and establishment of a new commissioning manager post to lead work on commissioning several essential services with imminent scheduled contract end dates. This will include the block residential care contract (scheduled to end February 2025) and D2N2 children in care contract for fostering and residential placements (scheduled to end March 2026).
26. A strategic review will commence in April 2024 to identify a future commissioning strategy for these services. It is crucial to look at the recommissioning of both the block contract and the D2N2 contract in parallel as the scope of the block contract will have a direct correlation to the use of the D2N2 framework. The review will seek to identify solutions to the increasing complexity of young people requiring residential care and the increase in demand for single occupancy placements, of which Nottinghamshire has none available internally nor in the block contract, which increases likelihood of high-cost spot purchased placements for such children. Links will be made between the Fostering projects and Commissioning work to identify and manage interdependencies as well as capitalising on opportunities for collaboration.

Other Options Considered

27. A 'Sufficiency Duty' is placed on local authorities under the Children's Act 1989 (Section 22G). The Sufficiency Duty requires local authorities to ensure that there are sufficient placements within their geographical area to meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care locally as far as is possible.

Statutory and Policy Implications

28. 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

29. Whilst there are no additional costs to the Council identified within the strategy, it is underpinned by the continuing financial commitment of the Council to children in care and care leavers. The increasing cost of residential care placements, a nationally recognised issue, is exacerbated in Nottinghamshire by the greater rate at which the internal Foster Carer cohort is reducing. Outcomes of children in care are better for children in family-based placements, which are also significantly cheaper than both internal and external residential placements.
30. The average weekly cost of a foster placement is between £500 and £1,000 depending on the unique needs of the child and on whether the Foster Carer is internal or recruited through an independent fostering agency. The average weekly cost of a residential placement is currently around £6,000 (with a range of £3,000 to over £10,000). Whilst some children need to be in high-support high-cost residential placements, the recent reduction in available Foster Carers is leading to children who could be supported in family based placements being accommodated in residential care as a costly alternative.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children and Families Select Committee:

- 1) considers and comments on the current plans that are in place for Looked After Children and Care Leaver placement sufficiency.
- 2) considers the establishment of a task and finish review that would enable members to examine in detail the issues surrounding Looked After Children and Care Leaver placement sufficiency and to offer subsequent recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

Councillor Tracey Taylor
Cabinet Member for Children and Families

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SF 25/03/24)

31. The recommendations fall within the scope of the terms of reference for the Children and Families Select Committee.

Financial Comments (CDS 25/03/24)

32. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report. The total budget for Children Looked After placements for 2024-25 is around £100million.

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.

[Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy-2023.pdf \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Looked After Children Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023-25 – report to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families on 17 April 2023](#)

[Nottinghamshire Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2023-25 – report to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 9 January 2024](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

CFS0019



15 April 2024

Agenda Item: 7

**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE, RISKS AND
FINANCIAL POSITION – QUARTER 3 2023-4**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Committee with a summary of Children and Families Department's performance against the Ambitions set out in the Annual Delivery Plan.
2. To provide the Committee with a summary of Children and Families Department's key departmental risks.
3. To provide the Committee with a summary of the Children and Families Department's financial position for the current financial year.

Information

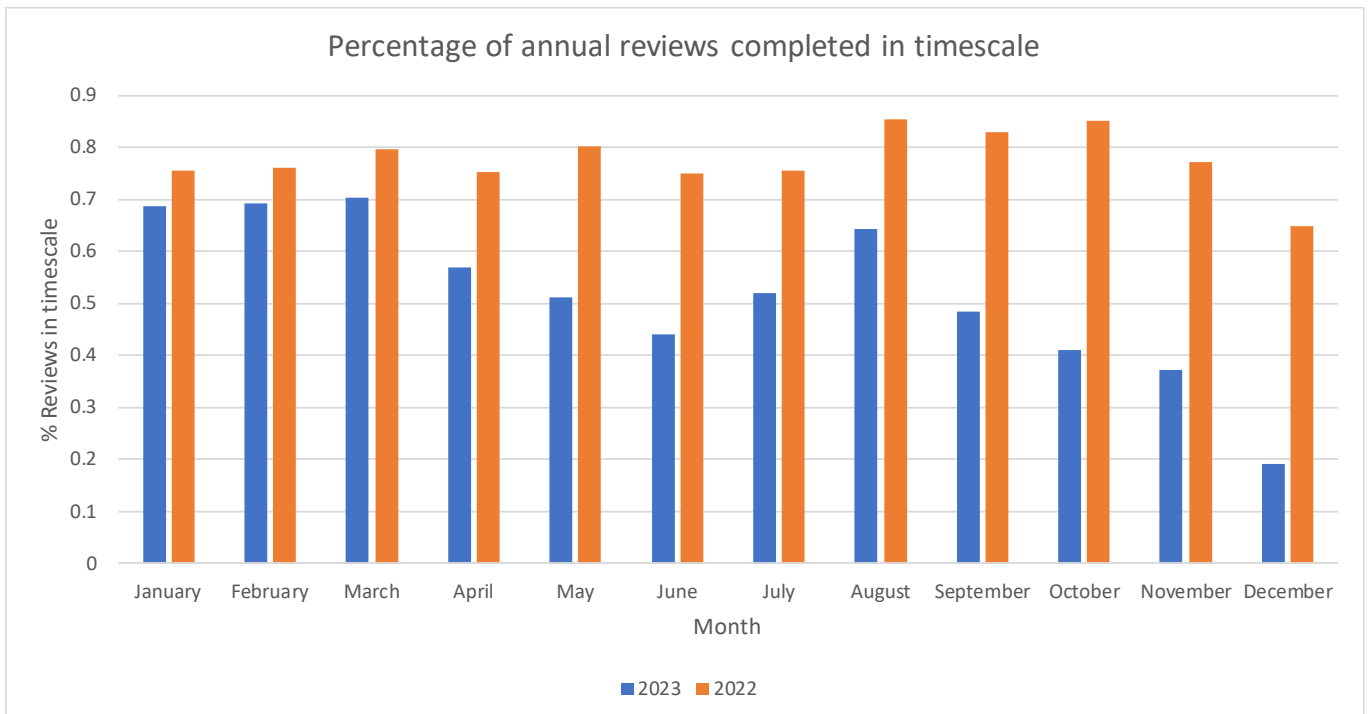
Performance against the Ambitions set out in the Annual Delivery Plan

Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 2 - Supporting Children and Families

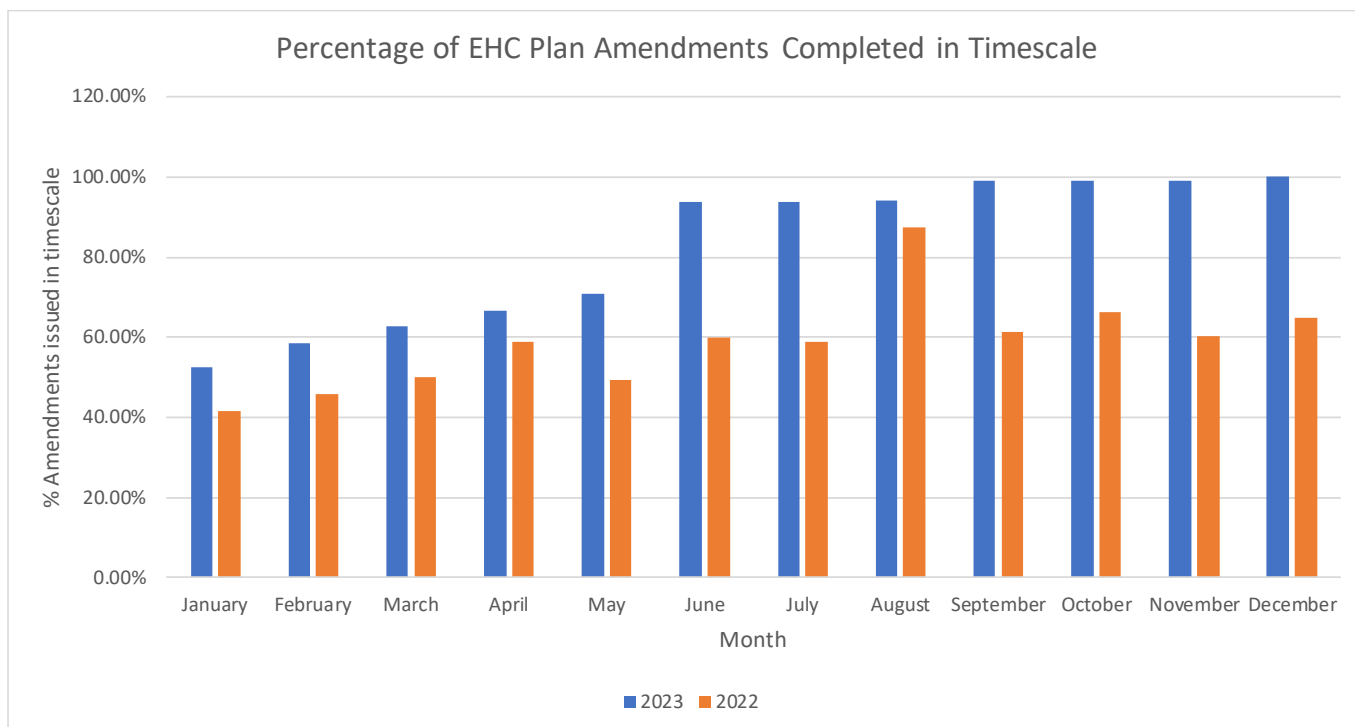
4. Almost 1 in 4 assessments undertaken for children and young people and their families were targeted early help assessments by children's centres and the family service, rather than a social care assessment, and 18.4% of children who have started a child in need (CIN) plan or child protection plan (CPP) this year received one of these targeted assessments in the previous two years.
5. Although there has been a sizeable increase in the proportion of children starting on a CIN or CP Plan who had received a targeted early help assessment in the previous two years, suggesting more families accessing early support, the ambition is to increase this further. The Department is working with partners to support children and families at the right time and at the right level and to provide help at the earliest opportunity based on need rather than an application of threshold. Support is provided through early help services where it is appropriate to do so, increasing the number of families receiving support and reducing the number who experience social work assessments that do not result in meaningful

support. The Needs Led Front Door and Early Help Redesign transformation programmes are at the forefront of making these changes.

6. There is strong evidence that early help is effective in Nottinghamshire because the percentage of families supported making significant sustained progress through the Supporting Families programme has increased again this quarter, up to 86.7% for the year to date. This means that more than eight out of ten families supported by early help have made and sustained significant progress in all identified areas of need for six months after closure, with more making progress against some areas.
7. The proportion of new Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued in timescale for the calendar year stands at 28.0% compared to just 3.6% at the end 2022. This cumulative figure includes weaker performance earlier in the year. Performance was at or above 40% for four months in the last six and is on track to achieve the targets set out in the SEND improvement plan.
8. Over half of the annual reviews due for EHCPs have been completed in timescale so far this year. This is down on the 77% achieved last year, but this reduction is mostly attributable to delays in the recording of annual reviews once completed, so this is expected to improve in later quarters. Of the cases reviewed where amendments were necessary, 79.8% resulted in amended EHCP Plans being issued within 12 weeks in 2023. This shows really good performance in this area with performance more than 20 percentage points higher than the 55.3% of amendments issued in timescale in 2022. As can be seen in the chart below, more than 99% of amended plans have been issued in timescales since September 2023.



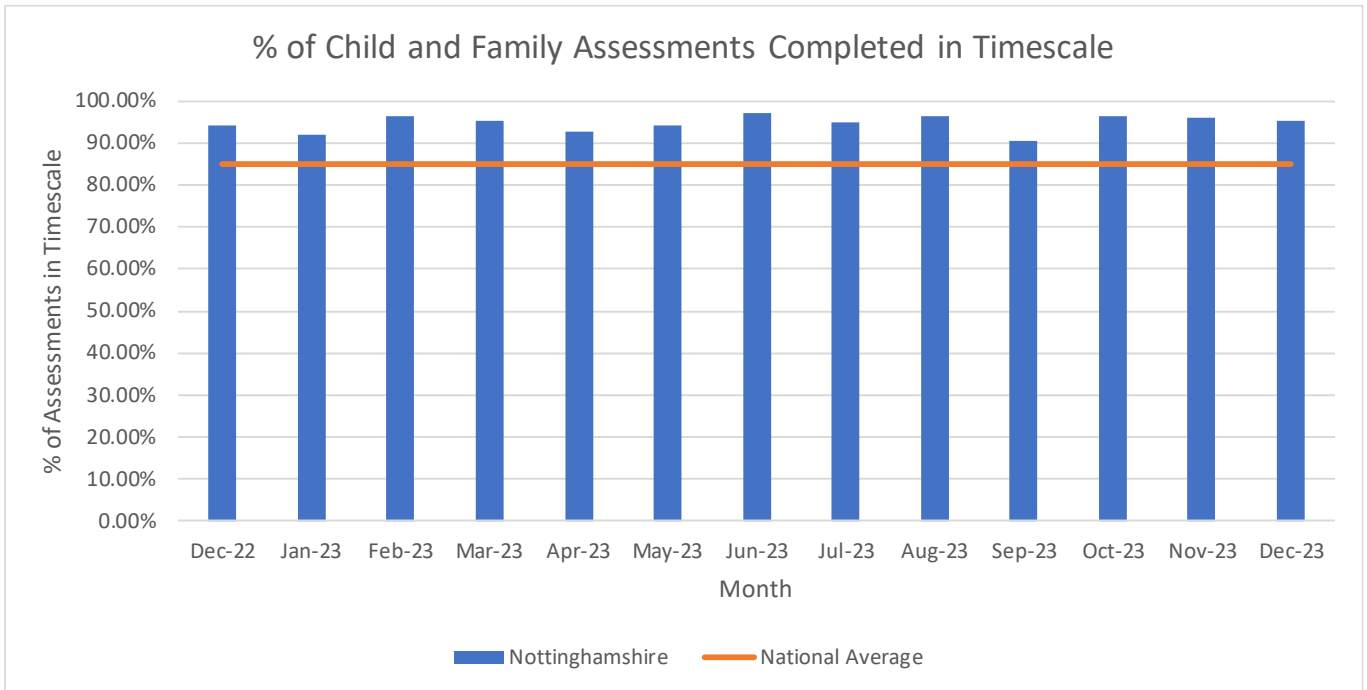
Data Source: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Key Performance Indicators Report – December 2023



Data Source: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Key Performance Indicators Report – December 2023

Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 3 - Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe

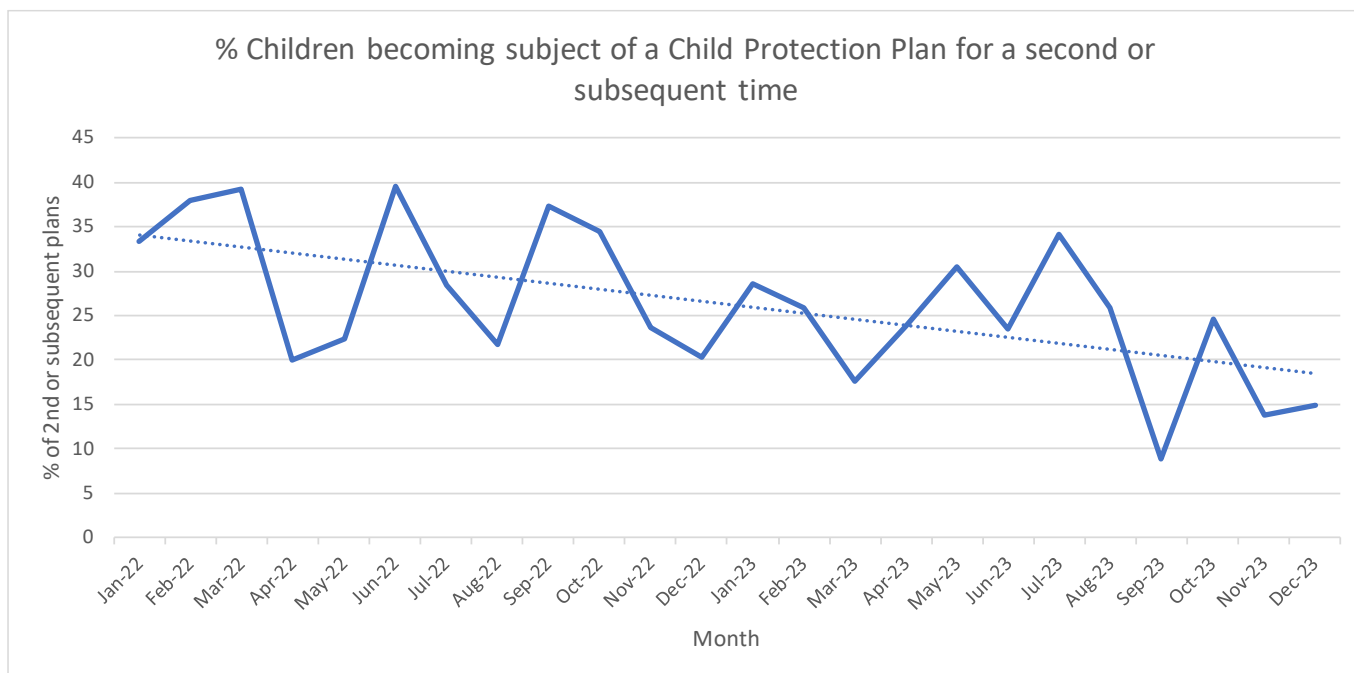
9. The proportion of child and family assessments completed which don't result in ongoing children's social care involvement remains high at 61.1% compared to a statistical neighbour average of 32.9%. This is down more than seven percentage points on the previous quarter, suggesting that the improvement work being undertaken with partners through the Needs Led Front Door and Early Help Redesign is starting to have an effect. These transformation programmes will support children and families at the right time and at the right level and to provide help at the earliest opportunity based on need rather than an application of threshold.
10. The proportion of child and family assessments completed in timescale remains high, with 95.2% of assessments completed within the statutory timescale of 45 days so far this year, as can be seen in the chart below. This is ten percentage points above the England average for 2022/23. Whilst a review is planned on the way that access to a range of children and family services works, there is confidence that when a child needs a social work assessment, they get one because of the high number of assessments that are completed in a timely way.



Data Source: Children’s Social Care Core Performance Measurement Set Monthly – December 2023

11. There has been a small decrease in the proportion of referrals which were a second or subsequent referral within 12 months this quarter, with the long-term trend shows re-referrals are decreasing, evidencing the way that the service is dealing with referrals and assessments is increasingly providing help when it is needed. This is expected to reduce further as more progress is made in transforming the front door.

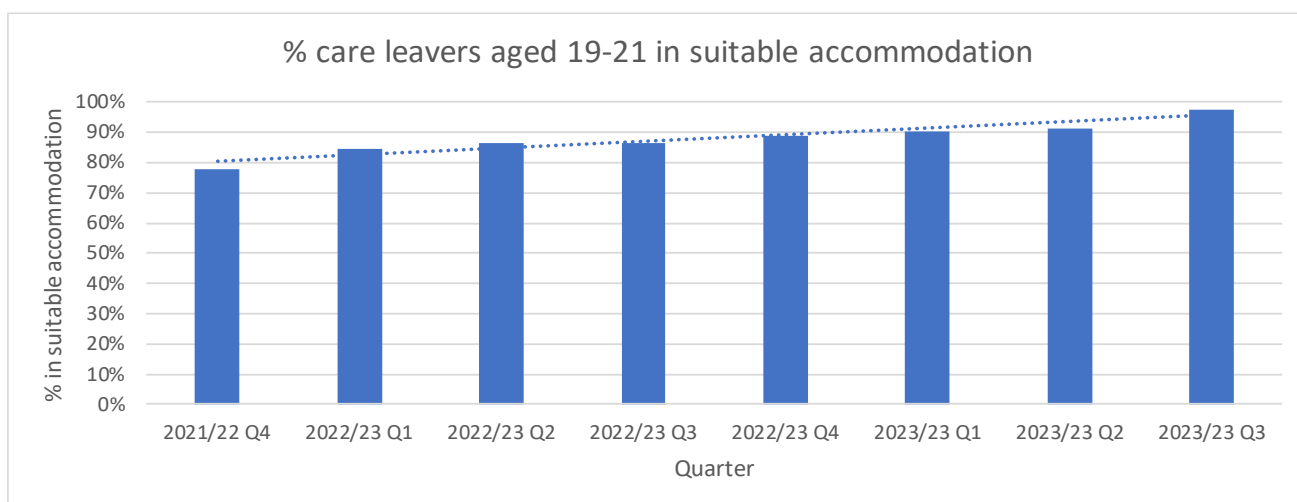
12. There has been a significant decrease in the number of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time. This is now slightly lower than statistical neighbours and the national average for the first time. Independent Chairs are focusing on the needs of children and young people rather than focusing on thresholds. Latest data in the chart below shows the work being undertaken to reduce repeat child protection plans is having an effect, with the trend line on the chart below showing the proportion of repeat child protection plans has decreased significantly over the last two years.



Data Source: Children’s Social Care Core Performance Measurement Set Monthly – December 2023

13. There has been further improvement over this quarter in the numbers of children on child protection plans lasting over 2 years. The numbers have reduced due to plans coming to an appropriate end through de-escalation of concerns, or through children becoming accommodated via the care proceedings process. There is monitoring of this cohort of children at around 15 months, to ensure that children’s plans are being progressed appropriately prior to reaching the 2-year mark.
14. There has been an improvement in the proportion of child protection cases reviewed in timescale, up from 83.6% last quarter to 89.0% currently. As this measure is cumulative across the lifetime of the plan, the impact of staff absences earlier in the year, along with issues such as lack of social work reports and/or social work attendance at meetings and technical issues associated with Microsoft Teams has continued to reflect in the statistics. This improvement is due to no meetings in this quarter being agreed out of timescales.
15. 8.9% of children in care currently reside in kinship placements, that is fostering placements with family and friends. This is below the target of 12% of all children in care but an improvement in performance this quarter means performance is now back in line with performance last year. There has been a focussing of efforts on young people remaining local to and living with family members as kinship placements are an essential plank of Nottinghamshire’s placement sufficiency.
16. There has been an increase this quarter in the proportion of children who leave care subject to a special guardianship order or child arrangement order. Current performance, at 19.2%, remains above both the latest national average of 17% and Nottinghamshire’s statistical neighbour average of 14%. An approach is being developed to support improved family and extended family engagement for children in care through a Family Networking and tracking of potential Special Guardianship Orders and rehabilitation to parents/family via a panel.

17. 66% of children in care currently reside in a family-based setting which remains the ambition for children wherever possible. This includes fostering placements and placements with family and friends. This is an increase of eight percentage points since 2022/23.
18. There has been a decrease in the proportion of children in care placed 20 miles or more from home this quarter. Currently 23% of children are placed 20 miles or more away, in line with performance at the end of last financial year. This is seven percentage points higher than the England and statistical neighbour averages. The majority of these placements are in independent fostering agency and external residential placements as availability of suitable fostering and residential placements more locally remains a challenge.
19. More than half of children in care remain in long term placements – that is in the same placement for more than two years. Children in care have safe, stable, and loving placements because placement stability remains good. There has been an increased number of placements for those children aged below one, driven by more complex care plans as directed by the Courts, and those aged over 16. Whilst not all positive, some of that disruption is due to a well-developed pathway to independence and also, with the higher number of over 16s in care, is reflective of attempts to reconcile with birth families.
20. There has been a further increase in young people identified as being in suitable accommodation this quarter. As can be seen in the chart below, this has been an improving trend for the last two years. There has been an expansion of some of the Supported Accommodation Provision (including the specialist provision for former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children care leavers which is continually expanding to meet demand). This more modern and more suitable accommodation is seen as meeting young people's needs and has decreased the need for other forms of emergency or unsuitable accommodation. Nottinghamshire continue to have Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisor roles which proactively help to prevent accommodation breakdown and risk of homelessness/unsuitable accommodation provision and have been able to identify funding to extend this support to March 2024. There has been a continuing increase in Staying Put extensions (especially educational ones that happen until July 2024).



Data source: Children's Social Care Core Performance Measurement Set Quarterly – Quarter 3 2023/24

21. There has been an increase in the number of young people within education, employment and training (EET) during this period when compared to that of Q2 23/24. This increase is around young people starting courses around October including Higher Education provision. This was identified as a predicted pattern in the Q2 summary which has now been evidenced. There is continuing support for young people to promote opportunities for care leavers within employment, education, and training as part of the Achievement Offer. There has also been the recruitment of the new Business Engagement Achievement Adviser who will continue delivering employability briefings within the world of work. The Achievement Offer will be now launched around March 2024 and so this may also have a further impact on young people considering their EET options from Q1 24-25.
22. First time entrants to the youth justice system remains low and has reduced compared to the same point last year with 85 entrants per 100,000 compared to 112 at the end of quarter 3 2022/23. The reoffending binary rate also remains low, at 19.2% currently compared to an average of 31% Nationally and for Nottinghamshire's statistical neighbours.

Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 4 - Building skills that help people get good jobs

23. Final figures show that 45% of pupils in Nottinghamshire schools obtained 9-5 grades (a strong pass) in English and maths at key stage 4 last year, up from 44.6% included in provisional figures released last quarter. This is a reduction of 5.9 percentage points on the previous year as grade boundaries were brought back in line with pre-pandemic levels. This is above Nottinghamshire's statistical neighbour average of 43% as it has been over the last 5 years.
24. There has been a slight narrowing of the gap in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those who have received free school meals in the last six years) who have achieved grades 9-5 in English and maths, down from 32% to 29.5%. This is still higher than the national average of 26.7%.
25. 92.5% of primary schools and 80% of secondary schools in Nottinghamshire are currently rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Both of these are broadly in line with the national and statistical neighbour averages for these measures and show that the majority of pupils and their families have access to a good quality of education.
26. The proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds in Nottinghamshire reported as not being in education, employment and training remains low at just 1.8%. This has remained consistently low for more than two years now.

Departmental Risks

27. The department continues to manage key risks as reported at quarter two. The table below describes these risks and the mitigating actions being undertaken:

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Description	Risk Mitigations
C01	Service Delivery	<u>Placement Sufficiency</u> The ambition is to have more children and young people able to live in family-based	- Work has commenced across D2N2 to increase recruitment of foster carers and holistic care packages to retain them.

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Description	Risk Mitigations
		<p>placements, close to home. However, the context is a local and national shortage of suitable placements, particularly foster care. This impacts both on the types of placements that can be matched with and whether placements are close to home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The service has focused on kinship, family and friends, Special Guardianship/Care Arrangement Orders to keep young people within their own networks. - The number of children that are coming into local authority care is being reduced through the above and robust arrangements for supporting families in difficult circumstances.
C07	Reputation	<p><u>SEND Area Inspection</u> Nottinghamshire's SEND Area Inspection outcome was poor, so significant improvements are needed in the short and medium term as part of post-inspection monitoring arrangements. The main challenge is around pace of improvements having a tangible impact on the experience of SEND children and their families in the short-term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The partnership is working to an approved improvement plan that is monitored regularly through governance arrangements. - A longer-term SEND Strategy is being developed collaboratively to ensure the partnership can sustain improvements. - There are workstreams focused on working with children and their families to ensure their experiences are improving.
C11	Reputation	<p><u>ILACS Inspection</u> The last full children's social care inspection in 2019 rated Nottinghamshire as 'Good' and the ambition is to at least maintain this rating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a children's social care improvement plan in place with key priorities that are monitored regularly. - There is an inspection preparation plan in place as part of improvement planning to help staff respond to an inspection.
C17	Workforce	<p><u>Workforce Recruitment and Retention</u> There are particular areas of the workforce where recruitment and retention are difficult both locally and nationally. This includes social workers, which impacts on the quality of practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The department have continued with the success for routes into social work and are building on this to try to retain social workers as they progress through their careers. - There is a focus on supporting the training and development of practitioners and to do well in the annual wellbeing check.

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Description	Risk Mitigations
			- A social work academy arrangement is being considered as part of longer-term planning.

Summary Financial Position – Period 10 2023/24

28. In December 2023 it was approved to separate Education and SEND into a separate portfolio. There is now Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children and Families Portfolios.
29. The overall Children and Families Department Revenue expenditure is forecast to overspend by £3.0m (£2.9m period 9) after planned use of grant reserves but excluding any redundancy costs. This variance is 1.6% (1.6% period 9) of the budget.
30. The Children and Families Portfolio is forecast to overspend by £2.3m (£2.2m period 9). Care, Help and Protection underspend has increased from £0.5m in period 9 to £0.7m in period 10.
31. There has been an increase in overspend on Commissioning and Resources from £2.8m overspend in period 9 to £3.2m overspend in period 10.
32. External placements overspend increased by £0.7m. Numbers of children in care placed in external placements increased by 15 in the month, whereas an increase of 5 was forecast. Independent Fostering Agency placements increased by 4, residential by 3, semi-independent block contract by 4 and semi-independent spot by 4 (with one being a change of category from residential).
33. There has been an increase in underspend (£0.1m) on the Children’s Centres budget. The underspend is due to vacancies and more recently, maternity leave and reduced hours.
34. There has been a £0.1m increase in underspend (£0.7m underspend in period 10 compared to £0.6m period 9), on Internal Foster Care.
35. There has also been a decrease in overspend of £0.1m across a range of budget heads within the division. This is mostly due to not being able to achieve the budgeted Vacancy Level Turnover, particularly, within the Independent Chair Service along with use of agency staff, however this has improved slightly in the month owing to an agreed recharge to the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children grant for Independent Reviewing Officer support.
36. Transformation & Improvement continues to forecast an underspend of £0.1m.
37. In the Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Portfolio, Education Learning & Inclusion Division is reporting a forecast £0.7m overspend which has remained unchanged from P9. The main cause of the overspend is in pension

enhancements. The December 2023 CPI rate which the annual increase is based upon is at 5.3%.

Table 1 – Summary Revenue Position

Change in Variance £000	Period 9 Under(-) / Overspend Variance £000	Division	Annual Budget £000	Actual to Period 10 £000	Year-End Forecast £000	Under(-) / Overspend Variance £000	Variance as % of Budget %
		Children and Families Portfolio					
(495)	(185)	Care, Help and Protection	45,461	39,427	44,781	(680)	1.50
2,830	405	Commissioning & Resources	108,087	86,430	111,321	3,234	2.99
(110)	(15)	Transformation & Improvement	4,660	3,990	4,535	(125)	2.69
(60)	(43)	Capital & Central Charges	1,394	1,298	1,291	(103)	7.42
2,165	161	Subtotal	159,602	131,145	161,928	2,325	1.46
		Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Portfolio					
740	(69)	Education Learning & Inclusion	13,768	12,897	14,439	671	4.88
0		Commissioning & Resources	173	173	173	0	0.00
(2)	(0)	Capital & Central Charges	12,332	12,330	12,330	(2)	0.01
739	(69)	Subtotal	26,272	25,399	26,942	669	2.55
		Traders					
0	0	Clayfields	(266)	(424)	(266)	0	0.00
2,903	92		185,609	156,120	188,604	2,995	1.61
0	0	Transfer to/(from) ear marked reserves	0	0	0	0	
0	0	Transfer to/(from) grant reserves	(1,769)	(84)	(1,769)	0	
0	0	Transfer to/(from) Traders reserves	(170)	0	(170)	0	
2,903	92		183,670	156,036	186,665	2,995	1.61

Financial Implications

38. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Children and Families Select Committee considers and comments on:

- 1) the summary of Children and Families Department performance against the ambitions in the Annual Delivery Plan.

- 2) the summary of Children and Families key departmental risks.
- 3) the financial position of Children and Families Department, as at Period 10 2023/24.

Councillor Tracey Taylor

Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Councillor Sam Smith

Cabinet Member for Education and SEND

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SF 25/03/24)

39. The recommendations fall within the scope of the terms of reference for the Children and Families Select Committee.

Financial Comments (JG 27/03/24)

40. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CFS0020

Key Performance Indicator	Nottinghamshire						Vital Signs		Comparator Data		
	Current Value	Best to be	Direction of Travel	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Reporting Period	Vital Sign Measure?	RAG Rating	Previous Annual Performance	National Average	Statistical Neighbours
Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 2 - Supporting Children and Families											
Early years foundation stage attainment (Reaching a 'Good Level of Development' - at least expected in all early learning goals in all prime areas and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics)	67.5%	High	↑	2022/23 Academic	66.9%	2021/22 Academic			66.9% (21/22 Academic)	67.2% (22/23 Academic)	67.4% (22/23 Academic)
% assessments completed which were a targeted early help assessment	23.0%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	23.7%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Amber	24.9% (2022/23)	-	-
% children becoming subject of a CIN or CP Plan who had a targeted early help assessment in the previous 2 years	18.4%	High	↑	2023/24 Q3	11.9%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Red	17.3% (2022/23)	-	-
Percentage of families supported making significant sustained progress through the Supporting Families programme	86.7%	High	↑	2023/24 Q3	69.7%	2023/24 Q2			-	-	-
% of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (exc. exceptions) **	28.0%	High	↑	2023 Q4	3.6%	2022 Q4	Y	Red	4.5% (2022)	50.7% (2022)	47.8% (2022)
% of EHCP Annual review amendments issued within 12 weeks **	79.8%	High	↑	2023 Q4	55.3%	2022 Q4	Y	Amber	55.3% (2022/23)	-	-
% EHCP annual reviews completed within 12 months **	51.8%	High	↓	2023 Q4	77.0%	2022 Q4	Y	Amber	77.0% (2022/23)	-	-
Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 3 - Keeping children, vulnerable adults and communities safe											
% Child and Family Assessments resulting in NFA	61.1%	Low	↓	2023/24 Q3	68.4%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Red	55.4% (2022/23)	29.9% (2022/23)	32.9% (2022/23)
Average Social Worker Caseload - A NEW METHOD OF REPORTING THIS MEASURE IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION		N/A					Y		-	-	-
Child and Family assessments for Children's Social Care carried out within statutory timescales	95.2%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	94.7%	2023/24 Q2			97.4% (2022/23)	84.5% (2022/23)	87% (2022/23)
Re-referral rate	30.5%	Low	↔	2023/24 Q3	31.2%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Red	24.8% (2022/23)	22.4% (2022/23)	20.2% (2022/23)
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan on more than one occasion	23.0%	Low	↓	2023/24 Q3	25.3%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Red	26.2% (2022/23)	23.6% (2022/23)	23.9% (2022/23)
Children who are subject to a child protection plan for 2 years or more	4.0%	Low	↔	2023/24 Q3	5.1%	2023/24 Q2			3.1% (2022/23)	2.2% (2022/23)	1.8% (2022/23)
Percentage of child protection cases reviewed within timescale	89.0%	High	↑	2023/24 Q3	83.6%	2023/24 Q2			87.8% (2022/23)	88.1% (2022/23)	91.5% (2022/23)
% children looked after in kinship placements	8.9%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	8.3%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Amber	9% (2022/23)	-	-
% children who leave care subject to an SGO or CAO	19.2%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	17.8%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Amber	22% (2022/23)	15% (2022/23)	17% (2022/23)
% of children looked after in family-based setting	66.0%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	66.0%	2023/24 Q2			58% (2022/23)	-	-
No. of children in care placed in unregulated placements - THIS MEASURE IS BEING REDEFINED DUE TO A RECENT CHANGE IN THE DEFINITION REGARDING UNREGISTERED SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION							Y				
Percentage of children looked after placed 20 miles or more from home	23.3%	Low	↔	2023/24 Q3	24.2%	2023/24 Q2	Y	Amber	23.0% (2022/23)	17.0% (2022/23)	17.0% (2022/23)
Percentage of children looked after remaining in long-term placements*	53.0%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	53.5%	2023/24 Q2			82.0% (2022/23)	69.0% (2022/23)	67.7% (2022/23)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	97.4%	High	↑	2023/24 Q3	91.5%	2023/24 Q2			89.0% (2022/23)	88.0% (2022/23)	90.4% (2022/23)
Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training aged 19-21	50.3%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	50.9%	2023/24 Q2			53.0% (2022/23)	56.0% (2022/23)	53.8% (2022/23)
First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (per 100,000)	85	Low	↓	2023/24 Q3	112	2022/23 Q3	Y	Green	130 (2022)	144 (2022)	108 (2022)
Re-offending binary rate	19.2	Low	↑	2023/24 Q3	10.2	2022/23 Q3	Y	Green	10.2 (2022/23)	31.2 (2021/22)	30.9 (2020/21)

Key Performance Indicator	Nottinghamshire						Vital Signs		Comparator Data		
	Current Value	Best to be	Direction of Travel	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Reporting Period	Vital Sign Measure?	RAG Rating	Previous Annual Performance	National Average	Statistical Neighbours
Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 4 - Building skills that help people get good jobs											
Percentage of pupils achieving 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths at KS4	45.0%	High	↓	2022/23 Academic	50.9%	2021/22 Academic			50.9% (21/22 Academic)	45.5% (22/23 Academic)	43.0% (22/23 Academic)
Percentage of children looked after achieving 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths at KS4	12.40%	High	↑	2021/22 Academic	9.6%	2020/21 Academic			9.6% (20/21 Academic)	11.0% (21/22 Academic)	-
Attainment gap at age 16 between pupils taking free school meals and the rest (FSM during past six years) 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths	29.5	Low	↓	2022/23 Academic	32.0	2021/22 Academic			32.0 (21/22 Academic)	26.7 (22/23 Academic)	-
% Primary schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	92.5%	High	↑	2023/24 Q3	92.1%	2023/24 Q2			90.0% (2022/23 Q4)	90.8% (2023/24 Q3)	89.2% (2023/24 Q3)
% Secondary schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	80.0%	High	↔	2023/24 Q3	80.0%	2023/24 Q2			77.8% (2022/23 Q4)	82.7% (2023/24 Q3)	81.4% (2023/24 Q3)
Percentage of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools classed as persistent absentees	19.7%	Low	↓	2022/23 Aut & Spr term	21.2%	2021/22 Aut & Spr term			21.3% (21/22 Academic)	21.2% (22/23 Aut & Spr)	20.8% (22/23 Aut & Spr)
Percentage of Children Looked After classed as persistent absentees	19.2%	Low	↓	2021/22 Academic	29.6%	2020/21 Academic			29.6% (20/21 Academic)	19.1% (21/22 Academic)	18.9% (21/22 Academic)
Percentage of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools with at least one suspension	1.71%	Low	↑	2022/23 Autumn term	1.26%	2021/22 Autumn term			2.95% (21/22 Academic)	1.61% (22/23 Autumn)	1.62% (22/23 Autumn)
Percentage of Children Looked After with at least one suspension	11.85%	Low	↔	2020/21 Academic	11.41%	2019/20 Academic			11.41% (19/20 Academic)	9.80% (20/21 Academic)	9.75% (20/21 Academic)
Percentage of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools permanently excluded	0.05%	Low	↑	2022/23 Autumn term	0.01%	2021/22 Autumn term			0.05% (21/22 Academic)	0.04% (22/23 Autumn)	0.05% (22/23 Autumn)
Percentage of Children Looked After permanently excluded	0.00%	Low	↔	2020/21 Academic	0.00%	2019/20 Academic			0.00% (19/20 Academic)	0.03% (20/21 Academic)	0.00% (20/21 Academic)
Percentage not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16-17	1.8%	Low	↔	2023/24 Q3	2.1%	2022/23 Q1			2.0% (2022/23)	-	-

* In year for this measure is not comparable with the benchmark data as this excludes placement changes where the same provider continued to provide the care.

** EHCP Performance is reported on a calendar year basis in line with statutory reporting to the DfE.

15 April 2024**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE
AND EMPLOYEES****WORK PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the Children and Families Select Committee's work programme.

Information

2. The work programme (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) assists in the management of the Committee's agenda, the scheduling of its business and its forward planning.
3. The work programme has been developed using suggestions submitted by Committee members, the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and senior officers, and has been approved by the Overview Committee. The work programme will be reviewed regularly with the Chairman and at each Committee meeting, where any member of the Committee is able to suggest items for possible inclusion.

Other Options Considered

4. To not produce a work programme: this option is discounted as a clear work programme is required for the effective management of the Committee's agenda, the scheduling of its business and its forward planning.

Reasons for Recommendations

5. To assist the Committee in preparing its business effectively.

Statutory and Policy Implications

6. 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

7. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That the Children and Families Select Committee's work programme be noted.
- 2) That Committee members make any further suggestions for items for inclusion on the work programme for consideration by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and senior officers, and subject to the required approval by the Chairman of the Overview Committee.

Marjorie Toward Service Director for Customers, Governance and Employees

For any enquiries about this report, please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (HD)

8. The Committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (NS)

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of this report. Any future reports to Committee on operational activities and officer working groups will contain relevant financial information and comments.

Background Papers and Published Documents

10. Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
<p>16 October 2023</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) – Progress Report on Priorities and Annual Report 2022/23</p>	<p>Cabinet Member - Children and Families</p>	<p>Resolved at the December 2022 meeting:</p> <p>That the Independent Scrutineer of the NSCP attends the June 2023 meeting of the Committee to present a report on the current activities of the NSCP and on the progress being made towards its strategic priorities.</p> <p>To receive the NSCP Annual Report.</p>	<p>1) That the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s 2022/23 Annual Report be noted.</p> <p>2) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the Annual Report 2022/23 be progressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) that the latest report on the on the work being carried out across Nottinghamshire in relation to child exploitation be circulated to the members of the Children and Families Select Committee. b) that the review of safeguarding practice in response to events at Harlow Academy be circulated to the members of the Children and Families Select Committee. <p>3) That the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s 2023/24 Annual Report be received at the October 2024 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.</p>

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

	<p>Outcomes and Experiences of Children and Young People with SEND</p>	<p>Cabinet Member - Children and Families</p>	<p>To receive a report on the progress made in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, informed by the priority areas for action and areas for improvement identified during the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission local area review in Jan/Feb 2023, and to incorporate within this report the new requirements arising from the Government response to the SEND Green Paper – the SEND and Alternative Improvement Plan.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That the report be noted. 2) That a further progress report on the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision be received at the January 2024 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee. 3) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities be progressed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) that further information on the types of needs of children and young people with SEND and/or an EHCP across Nottinghamshire be circulated to the members of the Children and Families Select Committee. b) that information detailing the number of EHCP applications made and the number of EHCPs in place across each of districts and boroughs of Nottinghamshire be circulated to the members of the Children and Families Select Committee. c) that the summary documents that detail the activity carried out at previous Nottinghamshire SEND partnership improvement board meetings be circulated to the members of the Children and Families Select Committee.
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WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

				d) that the members of the Children and Families Select Committee receive the summary document that is created detailing the activity of future Nottinghamshire SEND partnership improvement board meetings as soon as they are available.
	Pupil Place Planning	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	To receive the response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to the resolution made at the March 2023 meeting: That the Cabinet Member, in consultation with officers, gives consideration to how local elected members can be most effectively communicated with and involved with the activity that takes place with academy trusts regarding the pupil place planning.	That the response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families be noted.
	Outcomes of the Review of Education, Health and Care Plans		To consider the outcomes of the task and finish review of Education, Health and Care Plans.	That the recommendations of the scrutiny task and finish review of Education, Health and Care Plans be endorsed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.
	Elective Home Education/Secondary school place planning review scopes		To approve the scopes for a task and finish review on the revised Elective Home Education Policy and Secondary School Pupil Place Planning	That the proposed scopes for task and finish reviews regarding Elective Home Education and Secondary School Pupil Place Planning be approved.

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
5 February 2024	Provision of Support to Looked After Children Transitioning Out of the Care System	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	<p>To receive the response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to the resolution made at the June 2023 meeting:</p> <p>That the Cabinet Member, in consultation with officers, gives further consideration on how more young people could be encouraged to remain in the care of their foster carer post-18, and to the activity that would also be required to ensure that a sufficient number of foster family placements are also maintained and are available for children and young people who are under 18.</p> <p>Also to cover, as detailed in the resolution at the June meeting.</p> <p>That further information be circulated to members of the Committee on the work being carried out with both residential homes and foster carers to support them in ensuring that the children in their care are not potentially criminalised though being referred to the Police unnecessarily in relation to their behaviour.</p>	That the report be noted.

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
5 February 2024	Early Years – Provision of Childcare	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	To make recommendations on how the Council can support the provision of, and access to, affordable and accessible childcare across Nottinghamshire.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire be progressed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That a progress report be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee after the introduction of Early Years funded childcare places for 15 hours for the two year olds of working parents. b. That a further report on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire be received at the January 2025 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.
	Performance, Finance and Risk Update	Cabinet Member - Children and Families Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	To provide a progress report on departmental performance, risk and financial position. To agree how the Committee would like to receive and monitor this information in the future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That an externally facilitated workshop be arranged for the members of the Children and Families Select Committee with the Cabinet Members for Children and Families and for Education and SEND in order to further develop members understanding around performance indicators relating to children and families. 3. That further reports on the Children and Families Department’s performance, risks and financial position be received on a quarterly basis by the Children and Families Select Committee.

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Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
<p>5 February 2024</p>	<p>Outcomes and Experiences of Children and Young People with SEND – Progress Report</p>	<p>Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p>	<p>To receive a report on the progress made in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, informed by the priority areas for action and areas for improvement identified during the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission local area review in Jan/Feb 2023.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That further progress reports on Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities be received at the April and July 2024 meetings of the Children and Families Select Committee. 3. That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on Partnership progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities be progressed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) That further information on the jointly commissioned sensory therapy service be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee.
	<p>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – Annual Report</p>	<p>Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p>	<p>To receive the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – Annual Report</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the SACRE Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23 be noted. 2. That the SACRE Annual Report for 2022/23 be received at the January 2025 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee. 3. That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the SACRE

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

				<p>Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23 be progressed:</p> <p>a) That further work be carried out through SACRE with the Multi-Academy Trusts regarding their delivery and provision of Religious Education.</p>
	<p>Elective Home Education</p>		<p>To consider the outcomes of the task and finish review of the refreshed Elective Home Education Policy</p>	<p>That the Cabinet Member for Education and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) considers and takes into consideration the findings of the scrutiny carried out by the Children and Families Select Committee when making their decision on the draft Nottinghamshire Elective Home Education Policy 2023.</p>

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
15 April 2024	Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	<p>To examine activity in the delivering of the strategy.</p> <p>Also to consider the Children's Transformation sub-regional approach to fostering.</p>	
	Outcomes and Experiences of Children and Young People with SEND – Progress Report	Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	<p>To receive a report on the progress made in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, informed by the priority areas for action and areas for improvement identified during the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission local area review in Jan/Feb 2023.</p>	

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Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
15 April 2023	Children's Transformation - Front Door/Family Hubs	Cabinet Member - Children and Families		
	Performance, Finance and Risk Update	Cabinet Member - Children and Families Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	To provide a progress report on departmental performance, risk and financial position.	

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Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
15 July 2024	Youth Justice Plan	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	To examine the implementation of the strategy.	
	SEND Provision and Sufficiency	Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	<p>Resolved at the December 2022 meeting:</p> <p>That a progress report on the provision and delivery of additional specialist educational placements be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>	
	Outcomes and Experiences of Children and Young People with SEND – Progress Report	Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	<p>To receive a report on the progress made in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, informed by the priority areas for action and areas for improvement identified during the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission local area review in Jan/Feb 2023</p>	

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Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose	Resolutions
15 July 2024	Pupil Place Planning		To consider the outcomes of the task and finish review of how the Children and Families and Place departments can best work together on projects being implemented to deliver additional school places.	
	Performance, Finance and Risk Update	Cabinet Member - Children and Families Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	To provide a progress report on departmental performance, risk and financial position.	

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Items pending scheduling or removal

Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Details	Status
Government Response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in England	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	To consider how the proposals align with Nottinghamshire's current transformation plans around children's social care.	To be considered for scheduling
Small Schools Sustainability Strategy	Cabinet Member - Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities		To be considered for scheduling
Local Authority Approach to Youth Provision in Nottinghamshire	Cabinet Member - Children and Families		To be considered for scheduling

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Reviews

Project Start Date	Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of Review	Current Status and activity
February/ March 2024	Pupil Place Planning	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	Resolved at March 2023 meeting: That members of the Committee carry out a task and finish review on how the Children and Families and Place departments can best work together on projects being implemented to deliver additional school places.	Scope approved by committee. Work being scheduled to be carried out during March/April 2024.

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Project Start Date	Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of Review	Current Status and activity
TBC	Transition of Service Users from Children and Families Services to Adult Social Care Services (Joint item with the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee)	Cabinet Member - Children and Families Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health	To examine the current procedures surrounding the transition of service users from Children’s to Adult Services. To make recommendations on how procedures could be developed to ensure the best possible transition for each service user.	Pending

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Project Start Date	Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of Review	Current Status and activity
TBC	Provision of Additional Specialist Educational Placements	Cabinet Member - Education and SEND	<p>Resolved at the December 2022 meeting:</p> <p>That a task and finish review on the potential locations for the provision of additional specialist educational placements be carried out by members of the Committee.</p>	Pending

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE: UPDATED 12 MARCH 2024

Items for information briefings for Committee members

Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Details	Status
Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) – Ofsted Self-Evaluation	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	ILACS focuses on the local authority functions regarding the help, care and protection of children and young people.	To be circulated twice-yearly
Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	Resolved at the June 2023 meeting: That a report on the delivery of HAF be brought to a future meeting of the Committee, with a focus and at a date to be agreed by the Chairman. March 2023 – Chairman agreed for a briefing note to be circulated to members of the committee.	

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Items to be scheduled during 2024/25

Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Details	Status
Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) – Progress Report on Priorities and Annual Report 2022/23	Cabinet Member - Children and Families	Annual item	To be scheduled for October 2024 meeting
Education, Health and Care Plans	Cabinet Member - Education and SEND	To receive a progress report on the recommendations of the review of Education, Health and Care Plans.	To be scheduled.
All-Age Carers Strategy	Cabinet Member - Children and Families Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care	To review progress after the strategy has been in place for one year.	Joint item with the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee
SACRE Annual Report	Cabinet Member - Education and SEND	Annual item	To be scheduled for January 2025 meeting.
Early Years Provision of Childcare	Cabinet Member – Children and Families	Resolved at February 2024 meeting “That a further report on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire be received at the January 2025 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.”	

