

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

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

**1. Addressing the in-year financial challenges**

	<b>Improvement Action</b>	<b>CLT Accountable Officer</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>What we hope to achieve</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Success Measure</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.1	Regularly review the need for agency staffing through Agency Challenge Panel.	Colin Pettigrew	Steve Edwards	Reduce agency spend.  Ensure that any agency deployment is absolutely necessary and is targeted at our highest priority areas.	Quarterly. Next meeting 24 September 2019	All social work caseloads are within the set manageable number when measured each month.  The forecast on agency staffing spend for 2019-20 is carefully monitored and does not exceed the number of agency staff required to ensure that Social Workers have manageable workloads.	The deployment of agency social care staff is forecast to have dropped from 83.9 full time equivalents, the actual figure as at April 2019, to 69 fte at March 2020. All but four of these deployments are in teams specified as being “hard to recruit” to.  Recruitment and retention issues have led to caseloads in the majority of the District Child Protection teams being too high. Additional capacity agency staff have been recruited to those teams and as a consequence we are seeing caseloads reduce towards our aim of 20, although this remains an ongoing challenge. Caseloads in the LAC service remain at 18-24 children depending on complexity.	Ongoing
1.2	Quarterly reviews of non-essential spend.	Colin Pettigrew / Nigel Stevenson	Laurence Jones / Sue Summerscales	Identify and eliminate unnecessary spend.	Completed every quarter.	Completion of review and advice issued to staff on changes needed to expenditure approvals.	Quarterly reviews are in place. Where there have been delayed returns these are being followed up. No significant areas on non-essential spend have been identified.	Ongoing
1.3	Audit of financial management processes and culture within the department.	Colin Pettigrew / Nigel Stevenson	Simon Lacey	To understand if any changes are required to deliver the optimum oversight of value for money within the department.	November 2019	An action plan is approved and implemented to take forward any recommendations within the report.	Fieldwork has is well underway and a report should be available prior to the next quarterly report.	Ongoing
1.4	Benchmark current service outcomes and financial performance against statistical neighbours who are rated good or outstanding in an OFSTED ILACS.	Colin Pettigrew / Nigel Stevenson	Laurence Jones	This will help understand how the department is performing relative to others and prompt a deeper challenge of balancing children care need and staying within budget.	November 2019	An action plan is approved and implemented to take forward any recommendations as a result of the benchmarking.	Nottinghamshire spends £757 per head of 0-17 population compared to a statistical neighbour average of £703. There are discrepancies within the way that budgets are reported and so further analysis will be required in order to establish if this is a like-for-like comparison and produce a meaningful action plan. We will review this once we have the updated LAC Benchmarking Club report from CIPFA, which is due in the new year.	On track

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1.5	Independent review of 20 most recently accommodated children.	Colin Pettigrew	Steve Edwards	Assurance that only those children who need to come into care do so.	Report completed July 2019	Only children that need to come into care do so.	The Independent audit concluded that thresholds for admission into care are appropriate. It is expected that the recent Ofsted inspection will also comment on the appropriateness of thresholds.	Complete
1.6	Senior managers to regularly review the most expensive care placements.	Colin Pettigrew	Laurence Jones	Effective use of budget and appropriate investment in long term outcomes for children.	Monthly	The top 20 most expensive placements are reviewed monthly.	Reviews are underway. In one case a successful negotiation with health has decreased local authority contributions to a care package by £50,000.	Ongoing

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

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2.1	<p>Increased number of internal fostering placements available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing prioritised support of marketing and communications colleagues with comprehensive campaign through to July 2020</li> <li>Corporate and partnership approach to improve offer to foster carers (leisure facilities, council tax discount, parking etc).</li> </ul>	<p>Marje Toward</p> <p>Anthony May/ Adrian Smith</p>	<p>Luke Barrett/ Catherine Kelly</p> <p>Derek Higton/ Pete Mathieson/ Chris Ward/ Andy Dawson</p>	<p>Safe, caring and loving placements for children.</p> <p>Higher percentage of foster placements are made internally</p> <p>Any unnecessary expenditure is avoided</p>	<p>Rolling marketing campaign to July 2020</p> <p>Revised offer for foster carers by April 2020</p>	<p>Savings target achieved</p> <p>A net increase of 50 fostering placements by March 2021</p> <p>Increase in fostering enquiries of 20%</p> <p>Increase in conversion from enquiry to approved foster carer of 10%</p>	<p>The new marketing plan was signed off at the start of November and is now underway.</p> <p>Foster carers were asked if discounted transport, car parking and access to leisure facilities would be welcomed, and the response was overwhelmingly positive, so this is progressing.</p> <p>Recently the fostering recruitment team managed to secure free child's cycle hire from the National Trust at Clumber Park for foster families, a potential saving of £16.80 for a days' cycling</p> <p>Work is still underway to establish a baseline of available placements on which to calculate an increase in placements.</p>	Ongoing
2.2	<p>Increase in internal residential children's home capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional 4 bed residential home opened.</li> </ul>	Colin Pettigrew/ Adrian Smith	Devon Allen/ Neil Gamble	Timely mobilisation of new residential home. Four new NCC residential placements available avoiding the need for more costly external residential	Timeframe is largely dependent on the operating model agreed by Members, but is estimated at between June and September 2020.	Four additional residential placements for Nottinghamshire in a NCC owned home by May 2020.	A review has been undertaken and there is now being consideration as to whether two two-bedded homes might provide better value. This is in light of one young person who needs ongoing accommodation in a specialist setting which cannot be provided in the market. The estimations on completion date remain unchanged.	Ongoing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration when remodelling wider NCC estate and in planning applications for housing developments to increase children's home capacity/ accommodation for care leavers</li> </ul>			placements and resulting in good outcomes for the children.				
2.3	Increase the number of "block contract" residential placements with external providers. The total number of new homes under this arrangement will be four.	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	Contracts which provide a better cost per placement (as long as occupancy is maintained) and therefore help reduce placement costs.	First two homes by September 2019	Savings target achieved  New homes operational and fully occupied by February 2020.	The first two homes became operational from July 2019 and are fully occupied.  The third home became operational from November 2019 and admitted its first placement at that point. The second placement will be made in December 2019.  A fourth home is being sourced by the provider to become a specialist unit to accommodate a Nottinghamshire child in care who is deaf and presents with a range of special needs.	On track
2.4	Establish a D2N2 Commissioning Framework for residential and Independent Fostering Agencies.	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	To use economies of scale to reduce the cost of placements. To develop the market across the D2N2 footprint to increase diversity, availability and quality. This will also reduce costs per placement overall. Further development of block arrangements may also reduce unit costs.	February 2020	New D2N2 Framework in place	The tender process is nearing completion and a wide selection of providers of provider have applied and will be eligible for the framework. Contract management arrangements are in place.	On track
2.5	Develop enhanced models of semi-independent accommodation for the most complex care leavers in smaller units.	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	The most complex care leavers often fail to make a successful transition from residential care to supported accommodation. By providing smaller units an earlier successful transition could be made which is better for	Some already operational; others planned to be so by 2020/21	14 new units in place by April 2020  Reduced instances and level of evictions  Improved outcomes for individual young people (as evidenced via Outcome Star scores)	1 smaller 5-bed 24 hour staffed setting has been developed and is operational.  Potential site identified for Core plus service and ongoing discussions with Strategic Business Partner and current provider regarding its development  Approval sought to commission spot placements via the DPPS to meet the needs of the most vulnerable care leavers aged 18+. Guidance note developed.	Ongoing

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				the young person as they reach adulthood and is also significantly cheaper than residential care. It also frees places in residential care for those who need it the most.			Making teenage parent service staffed 24/7 (6 bed unit), existing provider is currently in the process of recruiting night workers for this service.	
2.6	Delivery of the Social Impact Bond Model (jointly with Nottingham and Derby City Councils).	Colin Pettigrew	Jon Hawketts	To reduce the number of young people in high cost residential placements and therefore reduce the pressure on the placements budget. To make use of up to £3m of Big Lottery (LCF) funding.	SIB to be operational by Feb 2020 (revised)	SIB to become operational, receiving referrals and delivering positive outcomes for individual CYP and delivering budget savings	A new social investor has been identified and the final stages are now being undertaken so that the new service can be mobilised. This is expected by February 2020.	On track
2.7	To ensure that the corporate Digital Development Programme supports delivery of the Children and Families Department’s “Digital Development Plan”	Adrian Smith / Colin Pettigrew	Katharine Smith Tracy Hill Sue Milburn Joe Foley	Using technology to achieve simple and immediate access and better support for service users  More efficient access to relevant information between organisations within the children’s partnership (e.g. social care and CAMHS).  Care leavers better able to access information about local offer.	Details	Delivery of the Children and Families Department’s “Digital Development Plan”	These programmes are aligned and the Digital Development Plan for the department has been consulted on and signed off by the Digital Development Board and implementation has begun. The plan will form part of the department’s annual update to Improvement and Change Committee.	On track
2.8	Ensuring there is sufficient/prioritised capacity to develop the BI reports required to meet Ofsted requirements	Nigel Stevenson	Rob Disney	Reduction in manual tasks undertaken within frontline services thus freeing up management and	End of September 2019 for Ofsted reporting	A suite of appropriate reports and dashboards available	Business intelligence reports for Ofsted were completed in line with requirements. There is further work to do on improving workforce reporting and developing the required BI reports as part of the Department’s transformation and change programme. The Department will work with	Ongoing

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	(including workforce reporting), baseline and track benefits of change programmes, and facilitate management decision-making.			<p>business support capacity.</p> <p>Better data on which to inform decision making.</p> <p>Better data upon which to inform benefits monitoring of projects</p> <p>Fulfil Ofsted requirement.</p> <p>Ability to track impact of project initiatives on recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>Better decision making on use of agency staff.</p>	Further development by June 2020		Performance and other stakeholders to agree the set of priorities for the next six months.	
2.9	<p>Additional project management capacity/financial resource for capacity within the department to be established to deliver the following change projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing whole family safeguarding teams between children's and adults;</li> <li>Making the front door delivery model sustainable within the context of increasing demand;</li> <li>Taking a joint commissioning approach with health for children with</li> </ul>	Nigel Stevenson /Colin Pettigrew	Sue Milburn/ Lucy Peel / Marion Clay	<p>More timely delivery of a range of projects intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve practice and through this children's outcomes;</li> <li>release capacity within frontline teams; and</li> <li>make more efficient use of resources and avoid cost where possible.</li> </ul> <p>SEND budgets are managed so that large budget deficits do not appear in the Dedicated Schools Grant.</p>	<p>To be determined once projects initiated. Next step for progressing family safeguarding is joint CFS and ASCH leadership team meeting on 17 September.</p> <p>SEND strategy – initial phases are being delivered following Higher Level Needs budget review. This is being developed into a formal 5 year strategy for implementation from spring 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing whole family safeguarding teams between children's and adults;</li> <li>Making the front door delivery model sustainable within the context of increasing demand;</li> <li>Taking a joint commissioning approach with health for children with complex needs;</li> <li>Delivering a five year SEND transformation strategy</li> <li>and</li> </ul> <p>Developing a coherent approach to supporting children living in kinship arrangements.</p>	<p>Additional capacity agreed in principle at Transformation and Governance Group on 26 July. 3 additional programme officers have been appointed and this has enabled work to commence on the front door development plan, the kinship project and additional capacity for the Children's Centres project. Recruitment to the two project manager posts within P&amp;P is pending, and this will enable the project work to commence on the joint commissioning and SEND projects. A kinship project has been initiated however medium-term resource with this is to be established. The Department is preparing a resourcing proposal to be considered by the next Transformation and Governance Group on 29 November.</p> <p>SEND strategy in development.</p> <p>Following the review of the High Needs Budget and underpinning Strategy by Peter Grey published June 2018, there has been a comprehensive consultation with the schools sector and with parents and as a result the Education, Learning and Skills Service has been reviewed and a new structure agreed by CYP in June 2019. In addition, this review, including the parent and stakeholder feedback of the high consultation undertaken between Dec 2018 – Jan 2019, it was agreed that there should be a move to</p>	Ongoing

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	<p>complex needs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering a five year SEND transformation strategy</li> <li>and</li> <li>Developing a coherent approach to supporting children living in kinship arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>Anticipated additional capacity requirements: 2 project managers, 3 programme officers within programmes and projects, plus funding for 2 project manager posts to be hosted within the department, graduate trainee.</p>						<p>locality working by the Schools and Families Specialist Services and the Service is now in the process of advertising for 7 district SENCOs and to move to a locality working model. Also, “Nottinghamshire SEND Policy” (0-25 years) 2020 – 2023 will go to consultation on 16th September which will open until the 29 November 2019. This consultation will inform the final Policy which will be taken to the December 2019 Policy Committee.</p>	
2.10	Ensuring that sold services are achieving full cost recovery in all instances	Colin Pettigrew	Laurence Jones	Accurately calculating full costs and having charges which reflect these	1 April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>full cost calculated</li> <li>income achieved</li> </ul>	A review of the nightly bed price for disability homes and Clayfields House is complete. Sold services to schools are being reviewed based on updated demand information.	Ongoing

**3. Creating the conditions for good practice to flourish**

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3.1	Taking a corporate approach to parking at all sites to ensure social workers have prioritised access to parking.	Adrian Smith	Derek Higton	Better efficiency of social work time. Improved staff morale.	To be determined.	Improved staff satisfaction ratings as measured through feedback via annual health check and through Practice Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking pressure at Padge Road, Beeston, has been significantly alleviated to support parking access for social work staff</li> <li>The Investing in Nottinghamshire Board has established a workstream to establish a corporate staff parking policy that will support priority access for key staff groups</li> </ul>	On track

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3.2	Ensuring that the smartphones for social workers function as smartphones at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than the current planning go live date of October 2019.	Nigel Stevenson	Nigel Harlow	Social workers better able to work efficiently. Would mean that Apps that have been commissioned (Mind of My Own, Guardian 24) can be used on work phones. Reduction in risk of IG breaches. Improved staff morale.	All social workers to have smartphones by October 2019	All relevant staff having functioning smartphones  Improved staff morale as measured through feedback via annual health check and through Practice Forum	Of 250 users who had smart phones that weren't enabled, the majority are now functional. These users will need to be upgraded to the fully managed service in early 2020. There are still a number of users of non smart enabled phones who have not yet upgraded their phones. The Department is working with ICT to progress this. Once the above is complete, a new process will be implemented for new smart phones to be ordered for those that do not have one.	Ongoing
3.3	Introduction of Guardian 24 on smartphones to improve personal safety for workers during visits in the community	Nigel Stevenson / Marje Toward	John Nilan	Improved staff morale. Reduction in cost (current solution more expensive).	Implementation from September 2019	All relevant staff have access to Guardian 24.  Improvement in percentage of staff feeling safe as measured through annual health check (baseline through health check of 79%).	Despite some issues with procurement, due to issues with the provider, costs have now been received and are being considered. The use of Guardian 24 is being considered as a review of personal safety for staff across the local authority and a new framework will be established and in place by spring of next year.	Ongoing
3.4	Introduce a clear values-based framework within which to work and support in managing the challenges of complex case work (rollout of reflective group supervision).	Colin Pettigrew	Lucy Peel	Improve case progress and successful outcomes therefore over time reducing the number of cases requiring a social worker. Increase job satisfaction and therefore social worker retention. This then reduces the need for expensive agency workers.	Rollout across District Child Protection Teams and the Children's Disability Service by September 2019.  Further roll outs to follow.	Social work caseloads are within the set manageable number  Reduced drift and delay (average duration of child in need and child protection cases)  Improved staff retention during 2020-21  Continued reduction in use of agency staff during 2020-21	A strengths-based practice development day was held in October 2019 and attended by 550 members of staff from Children and Families. A working group overseeing the plan to implement and embed this way of working. This will include revising the approach to child protection conferences and having a comprehensive training offer. Group reflective supervision has been rolled out across safeguarding teams. An evaluation will be completed in May 2020.	Ongoing
3.5	Provide support recognising the emotional toll of the work that social workers do (piloting Schwartz Rounds,	Colin Pettigrew	Lucy Peel	Reduce stress related absence and therefore for the need for expensive agency worker cover. Improve	Pilot commences June 2019. Full rollout out January 2020 pending evaluation.	Improved staff retention  Improved staff wellbeing as measured through health check	Schwartz Rounds begun in the North and South of the county since June 2019. Ten rounds have been held. Feedback from staff and the Point of Care Foundation has been extremely positive. A proposal for mainstreaming the Rounds is being considered	Ongoing

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	access to counselling support and a health and wellbeing hub).			social worker recruitment and retention through the offer to social workers.		Reduction in stress related absence	by the Remodelling Practice Steering Group in November 2019.	
3.6	Good continuing professional development and career progression opportunities through a refreshed CPD offer for experienced social workers and new team managers, and developing additional advanced practitioner roles.	Colin Pettigrew / Marje Toward	Lucy Peel / Helen Richardson	Improved social worker recruitment and retention through the offer to social workers.	Detailed action plan being developed.	Improved staff retention during 2020-21  Quality of practice as assessed through the Quality Management Framework	<p>We support practitioners and managers throughout their career by providing continuous professional development opportunities which align with the Post Qualifying Standards for Child and Family Practitioners and Practice Supervisors (Knowledge and Skills Statements). The comprehensive programme includes a variety of opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nottinghamshire county council online and classroom training courses</li> <li>• Internally commissioned online and classroom training courses</li> <li>• University (30 –credit) modules</li> <li>• Workplace shadowing</li> <li>• Workplace briefings and workshops</li> <li>• Professional discussions and reflective opportunities</li> <li>• Self-directed learning</li> <li>• Supervising students or mentoring NQSWs</li> <li>• Access to best practice through Policies, Procedures and Guidance</li> <li>• Training delivered by the Safeguarding Partnership</li> <li>• Membership of Community Care Inform</li> <li>• Membership of Research in Practice</li> </ul> <p>Our priority moving forwards is to further develop our training offer to ensure that it embeds strengths-based practice and addresses training needs practitioners and managers may have in respect of the knowledge and skills statements.</p> <p>A budget pressure for advanced practitioner roles will be considered as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process. Job descriptions are being developed in preparation.</p>	Ongoing