

## Children and Families Select Committee

**Monday, 13 October 2025 at 13:00**

County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

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### AGENDA

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| 1 | Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 July 2025  | 3 - 12  |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence   |         |
| 3 | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below)  |         |
| 4 | Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25   | 13 - 34 |
| 5 | Progress in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities – Update | 35 - 50 |
| 6 | Children and Families Departmental Performance, Risks and Financial Position – Quarter 1 2025/6   | 51 - 70 |
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#### **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:-

- (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 & Families Select Committee

Date: Monday 14 July 2025 (commencing at 10:30am)

**Membership:****County Councillors**

Richard Darrington (Chairman)  
Christopher Adegoke (Vice-Chairman)

Teresa Cullen	Hari Om
Jan Goold ( <b>Apologies</b> )	Joseph Rich
John Lee ( <b>Apologies</b> )	Mrs Sue Saddington
Richard Lowe ( <b>Absent</b> )	Jody Stoll
Andy McCormack ( <b>Absent</b> )	

**Education Representatives**

Nigel Frith (**Items 6 – 7 only**)      James McGeachie

**Substitute Members**

Councillor Keith Girling for Councillor John Lee

**Other County Councillors in attendance:**

Councillor Hana John - Cabinet Member for Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (**Item 7 only**)

**Officers and colleagues in attendance:**

Amanda Collinson	- Service Director – Help, Care and Protection
Martin Elliott	- Senior Scrutiny Officer
James Lavender	- Democratic Services Officer
Peter McConnochie	- Service Director – Education, Learning and Inclusion
Rachel Miller	- Service Director – Commissioning and Resources
Colin Pettigrew	- Executive Director for Children and Families
Claire Sampson	- Head of SEND
Rosa Waddingham	- Chief Nurse, NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board

**Others in attendance:**

Dame Christine Lenehan - Chair of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board

## **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

That the appointment of Councillor Richard Darrington as Chairman and Councillor Christopher Adegoke as Vice-Chairman of the Children and Families Select Committee at Full Council on 22 May 2025 be noted.

## **2 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee noted its membership for the 2025/26 municipal year.

## **3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2025 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

## **4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor John Lee	-	other reasons
Councillor Jan Goold	-	other reasons

## **5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In the interest of transparency, Colin Pettigrew, Executive Director for Children and Families, noted that following his retirement from Nottinghamshire County Council, he would be joining the Department for Education (DfE) on a part-time basis.

## **6 PRESENTATION – INTRODUCTION TO THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMING**

Colin Pettigrew, Executive Director for Children and Families, introduced the presentation which highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the Council's Children and Families Department as well as potential areas for the Committee to consider for inclusion in the committee's Work Programme for 2025/26 as part of its work programme. The following information was highlighted:

- The Nottinghamshire Approach to children, young people and families was to build strong relationships between them and the Council through listening to their feedback and adapting services accordingly.
- The Statutory Duties of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children and Families under the Children Act 2004.
- All elected members and council staff had responsibility as corporate parents to the 1,800 children in care and care leavers. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 gave corporate parents the responsibility of acting in the best interests of children in care and care leavers, as well as promoting their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- The Children and Families Select Committee received reports on the performance, finances and risk reporting of the Children and Families

Department.

- The Children and Families Department was subject to two inspection regimes: the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by Ofsted and the Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability Inspection (LA SEND) by Ofsted & the Care Quality Commission (CQC). An LA SEND Inspection was expected in the near future and the Children and Families Department had a target of providing an 'Outstanding' service in time for that inspection.
- Some of the work of the Children and Families department was highlighted, including the Family Hubs, the Families First Partnership Programme, the graduated response to SEND support in mainstream education settings and other multi-disciplinary approaches.
- With regards to children's public health, there were four areas of concern which the Department was aiming to address:
  - Smoking in pregnancy was higher than national average (smoking status at time of delivery was 11.8% vs 7.4% nationally) with variation across Nottinghamshire districts and boroughs.
  - Childhood obesity in Nottinghamshire was high and the trend increasing (year 6 prevalence of obesity including severe obesity (10-11yr olds) was 22.0% locally, 22.1% nationally).
  - Childhood Vaccination rates were dropping across the country, for example, the population coverage of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine, especially the one dose at 2 years old, was 91.1%, but decreasing.
  - Children and Young People (CYP) Mental health was a priority nationally and locally, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) provided data to the Children and Families Department who then developed the following responses to these challenges:

- Best Start Strategy - The new strategy for 2025-2030 would continue to support the delivery of Ambition 1 of the Nottinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Give every child the best chance of maximising their potential) and was supported by a refreshed 1001 days JSNA and delivery plans.
- CYP Mental Health – System work via transformation plan and a strategic partnership.
- System response – Integrated Care System CYP Board and strategy development, Strategic commissioning for CYP, Maternity and Neonatal Boards, Child Death Overview Panel.
- Public Health commissioned services for CYP and families - Healthy Families Programme, substance use support, Integrated Wellbeing Service, sexual health services and the C-card.

- The Healthy Families Programme that provided support to children and families from the ages of 0-19.
- The following list of potential work programme priorities was presented to the Committee:
  - Children's Social Care Reform (Families First Partnership Programme).
  - Low sufficiency of care places, especially the difficulty in recruiting foster carers.
  - The significant rise in demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
  - High demand for school places, especially in secondary schools.
  - The sustainability of small schools, especially in rural areas.
- The Senior Scrutiny Officer detailed the process of how members could suggest items for inclusion in the Work Programme and the cross-party discussion that would be involved in its creation.

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

- There was a cyclical rise and fall in the children's population of Nottinghamshire over a number of years which affected the number of school places.
- Whilst it was welcome that 98.7% of Nottinghamshire's 16-17 year olds were in employment, education and training, members noted that there were many 16 to 17 year olds who were enrolled at school or college for one to two days a week, but not necessarily attending and were at risk of expulsion.
- Transport provided by the Council for children and young people with SEND was a crucial service.
- Members noted the possibility of looking into support for kinship carers, who were typically grandparents and family members of children in care.
- What items had been left over from the Work Programme of the 2024/25 Children and Families Select Committee?

In relation to the points raised, the Executive Director for Children and Families, the Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion, and the Chief Nurse for the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) provided the following responses:

- The cyclical rise and fall in the numbers of pupil places meant that the Council focused on expanding existing schools in a particular area to accompany a local rise in pupil numbers, which was cheaper than building a new school. A briefing for elected members on the Capital Programme would take place soon and it would explain how the Council utilised its

schools and academies within Nottinghamshire to accommodate pupils. During the 2024/25 municipal year, the Children and Families Select Committee had conducted a review into the Council's processes for secondary school pupil place planning. The report produced from this review would be circulated to members of the current Committee.

- A deep dive into the exclusion or truancy rates amongst 16 to 17 year olds could be examined by the Committee. It was an important topic as those children who were at risk of exclusion were more likely to receive poorer outcomes in life and also be at risk of exploitation.
- The 2024/25 Work Programme for the Children and Families Select Committee was published on the Council website. Any outstanding items from the 2024/25 Work Programme could be considered for inclusion in the new Work Programme.

The Chairman thanked the officers from the Council's Children and Families Department for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

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

Colin Pettigrew, Executive Director for Children and Families, Rosa Waddingham, Chief Nurse for the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board, and Dame Christine Lenehan, Independent Chair of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board, attended the meeting to present a report that detailed the progress being 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.

The Nottinghamshire Local Area SEND Partnership brought together the organisations from across education, health, care, and the voluntary sector, that provided services to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire. The two leading partners were the County Council and the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). Regular progress reports had been presented to the Select Committee quarterly since October 2023 outlining the progress of the Partnership in delivering improvements in response to the findings of the January / February 2023 Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) local area SEND inspection

In the meeting the following points were highlighted:

- The report focused on the significant progress that had been made against the two priority areas for improvement which the Ofsted/CQC inspection had identified the Partnership had been failing. The first priority area which needed improvement was the assessment, planning and delivery of EHCPs in a timely manner. The second priority area was reducing the delays and gaps in access to some health services, particularly speech and language

therapy, neurodevelopmental pathways and equipment services. The SEND Partnership Improvement Board was regularly asking representatives from the Council, the ICB, the education sector and other stakeholder organisations about what actions were being undertaken to reduce the waiting times and what support was available to the families of children and young people with SEND whilst they waited for either an EHCP or further health support.

- 5,688 children in Nottinghamshire were in receipt of an EHCP, which was half the national average. However, the number of children in Nottinghamshire in receipt or awaiting a EHCP had grown by 50% during the past two years, which reflected the national picture of rising demand for EHCPs and SEND health services. Previously, the number of EHCP assessments completed by the Partnership to the statutory timescales stood at 4.5%. At present, this number was at 47%. Nationally, the best which was ever seen by a Local Area SEND Partnership was 60% in 2016. The current national average was 46%. The Executive Director noted that whilst this improvement was welcome, the Partnership was not complacent and was still aiming to deliver further improvements to the service that children and families received.
- The Partnership had invested in supporting young people outside of the statutory process through a strong graduated approach, which involved assessing, planning and delivering a support plan for a child with SEND within their classroom. These support plans would be reviewed regularly and if it was felt that further adjustments and support was needed for that child, then the process for acquiring a EHCP would be launched.
- Improvements within the Partnership which had already taken place included more accurate data collection and contacting parents at the earliest opportunity after a referral for support had been made to make sure the information about their child was as accurate as possible in order for that child to receive the right support. There had also been a strengthening and development of the relationship between the Local Authority, the ICB and parents/carers.
- The presentation made to representatives of Ofsted and the CQC ahead of the monitoring inspection currently taking place would be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee as it demonstrated the improvement journey of the Partnership.
- The focus of the Independent Chair of the Board was on how far Nottinghamshire could deliver on its statutory and legal requirements of providing support to children and young people with SEND within the current context of the national SEND system. Secondly, the Chair was clearly focused on what had gone wrong locally with the Partnership in order to make it right.
- The presence of local elected members and representatives from the Department of Health and Social Care and DfE on the Board had been

important in improving oversight of the Nottinghamshire Local Area SEND Partnership. Elected members had been updated, engaged and involved at every step of the improvement journey.

- The Partnership had met with CQC/Ofsted monitoring inspectors as the first part of the wider monitoring visit that had just started. Significant oversight was also provided by the DfE and NHS England through regular stocktake and deep dive exercises every six months. There was six-weekly scrutiny through the SEND Partnership Improvement Board and the Nottinghamshire Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group, the latter of which involved partners from across the SEND system.
- The Partnership aimed to improve its work in localities, with children and families, with education settings from early years through to further education, with health colleagues and in Family Hubs. This would make SEND support more responsive and adaptable to local needs.

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

- What were the timescales for finding out the results of the Ofsted/CQC's monitoring inspection?
- Guarantees were sought that the funding for specialist school education places and transport for children and young people with SEND would continue to be provided by the Council.
- When would the new SEND School in Mansfield be open?
- Members praised the work of officers, elected members and stakeholders in getting the Partnership into a positive place over the past two and a half years. It was also observed that the results from the previous SEND inspection before 2023 and before the change of the inspection framework had been positive.
- Members requested further details about the Government's plans for reforming the national SEND system. Particular concerns had been raised around the possibility of the abolition of EHCPs.
- Why were so many EHCPs were going to tribunals?
- Whilst headteachers and staff in mainstream schools were passionate and dedicated to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, school budgets were under immense pressure and there was the constant challenge of teachers balancing the needs of pupils with SEND alongside the needs of the rest of their class.
- Members requested further information on the referral process from a mainstream school setting to a specialist school setting, as well as further

information on the catchment areas for specialist provision and how the referral process for an EHCP worked.

In relation to the points raised, the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, representatives of the Nottinghamshire Local Area SEND Partnership and officers provided the following responses:

- After the completion of the Ofsted/CQC monitoring inspection, a letter would be provided to the Council within 30 days. The full report would be published by the next Committee meeting.
- The Council would provide ongoing support to specialist education settings, transport for children and young people with SEND and support for delivering EHCPs. Ravensdale Horizons Academy was due to open in January 2026. The handover to the building to the Diverse Academies Trust would occur towards the end of November and would provide 160 SEND pupil places. A visit to the Ravensdale Horizons Academy for elected members was planned for July/August.
- Members were encouraged to visit St Giles school in Retford or Foxwood Academy in Bramcote to see examples of existing SEND education settings. These schools have been hosting the SEND Partnership Improvement Board meetings to great success. St Giles School had recently been inspected by Ofsted and the result of the inspection would soon be published. It was expected that the results of the inspection would be largely positive.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 enshrined EHCPs in law. The Government, the SEND system and the education sector at the time did not foresee that the number of pupils being diagnosed with a special education need or disability would increase by 40% over the next 10 years. The current SEND system was financially unsustainable for local authorities, so reform was needed to ease those financial pressures. Likewise, the SEND system was not delivering the ideal outcomes wanted for children and young people with SEND. For example, children with SEND aged 16 – 19 were eight times more likely not to be in education, employment or training than those without SEND. The Government was looking at every aspect of reform to the national SEND system including SEND provision in mainstream education settings.
- Nottinghamshire had not only some very good SEND schools such as St Giles' in Retford, but also very good mainstream schools which provided excellent SEND support such as Alderman White School in Bramcote. Some of these mainstream schools had a process of rewriting EHCPs to adapt the support to a child based on their specific needs. Children and young people with SEND would still have their needs met without EHCPs through the graduated approach. The Government's Schools and SEND Reform White Paper would be published in October.

- One of the points raised by the Ofsted/CQC inspectors in 2023 was that the Partnership was not good at keeping data, especially on the number of tribunal cases it was subject to, how many they had won and how many they had lost. Data gathering and analysis had vastly improved over the past two and a half years. The Partnership had a strategy of trying to resolve any issues with the support for a child or young person with SEND at the first available opportunity, as to avoid going to a tribunal. There were no tribunal cases in Nottinghamshire so far this year. Nationally, 97% of tribunal cases were not lost, but were conceded or not challenged by the local authority.
- Members were reminded that SEND and EHCPs were not the same thing. There were 16,000 children in Nottinghamshire with a diagnosed special educational need or disability. 11,500 of those children were having their needs met without the need of an EHCP.
- The Council invested 25% of its High Needs Block funding (HNB) into mainstream schools to help them provide support to children and young people with SEND. Ofsted noted that many mainstream schools in Nottinghamshire had high expectations for children and young people with SEND and identified specific needs accurately with appropriate support being put in place.
- The Partnership recognised that whilst the system was doing a lot better than two and a half years ago, much more needed to be done to support parents and carers whose children were not in receipt of an EHCP. It was hoped that the planned SEND reforms would improve the situation for these parents/carers. The Partnership would continue to listen to the voices of parents/carers and children and young people with SEND in order to improve the level of support offered by the Partnership.
- The catchment areas for SEND schools in Nottinghamshire was county-wide, but the Council would aim to provide local SEND provision so that children and young people with SEND could be educated closer to home. There was an increase in the number of mainstream education settings with specialist SEND provision contained within them.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, representatives of the Nottinghamshire Local Area SEND Partnership and officers for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

#### **RESOLVED 2025/08**

- 1) That comments and considerations of the committee on the progress being made by the SEND Partnership to the required improvements around SEND services be noted.
- 2) That a further update on the progress being made on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities improvement activity be received at a future meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee.

- 3) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report be progressed:
- a) That the presentation made to representatives of Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission ahead of the monitoring inspection be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee.
  - b) That the October 2023 scrutiny review around Education, Health and Care Plans be circulated to members of the Children and Families Select Committee.
  - c) That once open, a visit be arranged to the new special educational needs school at Ravensdale, Mansfield for members of the Children and Families Select Committee.
  - d) That visits to special educational needs schools across Nottinghamshire be arranged for members of the Children and Families Select Committee.

The meeting closed at 12:10pm.

**CHAIRMAN**



**13 October 2025**

**Agenda Item: 4**

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report 2024-2025, attached as **Appendix 1**, sets out what the NSCP has achieved over the 2024-25 reporting period and is provided for the Committee to scrutinise and to provide assurance that the NSCP is fulfilling its duties.

#### **Information**

2. The NSCP provides the safeguarding arrangements required under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'. The statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023' was published in December 2023 and therefore the reporting period covered falls under both documents. The purpose of safeguarding arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The NSCP is required to prepare an annual report and to submit this to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The Annual Report has been approved by the NSCP Strategic Leadership Group.

#### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

3. 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**

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

## **Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications**

5. This report demonstrates how the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements have impacted on the safeguarding of children and young people in Nottinghamshire in the 2023-24 reporting period.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the Select Committee considers the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report 2024/25, attached as **Appendix 1**, and advises of any further assurance required.

**Anne Coyle**  
**Executive Director, Children and Families**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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## **Constitutional Comments (GMG 12/09/25)**

6. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The report falls within the remit of the Children and Families Select Committee for consideration under Section 6, Part 2, paragraph 4(a) on page 88 of the Council's Constitution.

## **Financial Comments (CDS 11/09/25)**

7. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report. Similarly, there are no Local Government Reorganisation implications.

## **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.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 – HM Government, December 2023](#)

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

CFS0045



## Annual Report 2024 – 2025

## Foreword from the NSCP Strategic Leadership Group Chair T/ACC Leona Scurr

I am pleased to introduce the NSCP annual report for 2024 – 2025 which outlines the progress we have made this year across the safeguarding partnership.

It outlines the work of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group which has completed rapid reviews where required and is developing a mature approach to learning by considering themes which will help us have a responsive approach to safeguarding locally. The group continues to build on its commitment to ensure the learning from reviews is shared widely across the partnership.

The NSCP Learning and Workforce Development Group's dedication allows us to have an expert local training pool, supported by knowledgeable practitioners from across the partnership which allows us to have an excellent training offer, despite the challenges with the supporting systems this year.

I have reflected on the comments by the Independent Scrutineer within this report which outlines his view that safeguarding in Nottinghamshire remains strong, particularly highlighting the engagement from all of the safeguarding partners and the commitment of those working across it. I also acknowledge this continued work, as evidenced in the progress towards our business plan priorities. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Dr Mark Peel, Independent Scrutineer for his invaluable support and challenge over his time in this role. I note his comments about Independent Scrutiny going forward.

## Independent Scrutineer overview

Dr Mark Peel Independent Scrutineer

I am delighted to accept this annual report as an accurate and fair summary of the position of the safeguarding Partnership in Nottinghamshire. I am pleased that the report is both data rich, clearly evidencing the impact of the Partnership, and laudably free of the sort of self-aggrandising waffle that has become so endemic in this sort of review in recent years.

As Independent Scrutineer for the NSCP the data supports the view that the Partnership is working effectively in Nottinghamshire, is meeting its statutory requirements and, more importantly, is very much a 'learning' organisation that incorporates lessons learnt into future safeguarding practice.

But data only captures so much.

People make this Partnership work, and Nottinghamshire has good people at all levels, who work well together, who challenge one another to do better and all of whom are deeply committed to helping our children prosper through keeping them as safe as possible.

I would highlight three aspects of our Partnership as indicative in this sense.

- The NSCP demonstrates clear and consistent strategic leadership which unifies our approach to safeguarding at the highest level across the three statutory agencies (Police, Health and the Local Authority). It has been especially valuable for example to have Assistant Chief Constable Griffin chairing the Partnership Senior Leadership Group over the past couple of years, and the improvements made under his leadership at the 'front door' (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) have been very considerable. Having a senior police officer chairing the SLG has also communicated very clearly the commitment of the police to safeguarding, and that there is no primus inter pares on the part of the Local Authority.

- The NSCP demonstrates a commitment to learning from safeguarding reviews and disseminating and improving safeguarding practice as a result. The popularity and positive evaluation of training offered by the NSCP evidences this, and I would like to say a personal 'thank you' to everyone involved.

- The NSCP demonstrates the active engagement of all three statutory partners, for example in both the membership of the panel that takes forward Rapid Reviews, and the quality of debate and dialogue which underpins agreements reached, but also fairly represents our different perspectives and agencies.

This annual report will be my last as Independent Scrutineer for the NSCP as my term will come to a conclusion at the end of January 2026. I have always felt that one's ability to remain truly 'independent' must inevitably decline over time, and that after six years as Independent Scrutineer, it is now time for me to step aside and for a new person to bring a new perspective to this task.

The present edition of Working Together (a government publication that sets out requirements for safeguarding Partnerships nationally) is more direct than was previously the case in strongly suggesting that Independent Scrutiny is best achieved by a person,

rather than via a range of separately commissioned audit processes, and this certainly coincides with my own view.

There is however less clarity about what the role of Independent Scrutineer should comprise on a day-to-day basis, and there is certainly a limit as to what can be achieved in the 36 days per year of IS time available in Nottinghamshire. One of the most difficult aspects of the role therefore is deciding what to focus on and where to use time most effectively.

I have taken the view that the IS role is NOT inspectoral, as the Police, Health and Local Authority are already subject to comprehensive statutory inspection via OFSTED, the CQC and HMICFRS, and, as a result, that only in circumstances where an IS felt a Partnership was comprehensively failing in its duties would this not be the case.

For me the IS role is therefore fundamentally around encouraging and enabling effective Partnership. This is not a 'sugar-coated' role, and does not require an IS to simply be a 'fan boy' (or girl) for the Partnership. It is a balance between recognising where safeguarding is working well, and sometimes having very direct professional conversations when that is not the case. The 'independence' and status of the role allows an IS, I would suggest, to encourage and enable a Partnership to reflect, self-check and self-correct in a manner that eases and lubricates the process as a whole. Clearly, in my view, this is a role that can only be held effectively by a person, and is not likely to be achieved via administrative process.

Consequently, I would advise the NSCP to appoint a new IS on my departure and, whoever that person is, I wish them well, asking them to reflect carefully on what is set out above, in determining how they will interpret and approach being the Independent Scrutineer NSCP.

Finally, it has been my privilege to be the Independent Scrutineer over the past six years for many reasons, but most centrally to have worked with the amazingly talented people who make up the Partnership. I thank you all most warmly, but would like to mention in particular, Colin Pettigrew, Rosa Waddingham, Rob Griffin, Sam Harris and Haley Thompson.

Dr Mark Peel 30.08.25

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## Introduction

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) provides the safeguarding arrangements required under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'. The purpose of safeguarding arrangements is to support and enable local organisation's and agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Partnership set out its vision in the safeguarding arrangements: -

***'That children and young people in Nottinghamshire grow up in a safe and stable environment and are supported to lead healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives.'***

The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership will:

- Work effectively as a partnership to protect children from harm.
- Build working relationships between partners which support a culture of high challenge and high support.
- Be transparent and self-critical.
- Learn from local and national safeguarding practice and improve the way children are safeguarded.
- Listen and respond to children and young people and adult victims and survivors of child abuse to guide how services are delivered.
- Ensure services for children and families in Nottinghamshire support children and young people to stay safe, healthy, and happy.
- Ensure services for children and families in Nottinghamshire support parents and carers to provide the best possible care for their children.

This report sets out what the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has achieved over the past year, including the following:

- An update on progress in relation to the safeguarding priorities for 2024-2025.
- A summary of the decisions made in relation to local case reviews and the learning, and actions taken from those reviews and national reviews.
- The effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in practice.
- Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers.
- Examples of the ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

The safeguarding arrangements in Nottinghamshire are fully detailed in our document published in line with national requirements. They were updated in December 2024 in compliance with Working Together 2023 and can be found here [safeguardingarrangements.pdf](#) They include details of the partners to the arrangements and explain how the functions of the Partnership are carried out.

Safeguarding Partnership activities and progress

Progress towards to commitments over the review period is outlined below.

<b>Commitment 1: We will work together to keep young people safe in their homes and communities</b>	
	<b>What we have done</b>
<p>Children at risk of or experiencing exploitation will be supported through a joined-up response from the partnership. Children and young people will feel supported, safer and heard and parents and carers will be valued partners in our work to keep children safe from exploitation</p>	<p>Our work is guided by a whole-system approach that prioritises early identification, prevention, and disruption of harm. Strategic oversight and operational delivery are aligned to ensure that children at risk of exploitation receive timely and effective interventions. Multi-agency panels and intelligence-sharing forums provide robust governance and accountability, enabling us to respond dynamically to emerging risks and patterns of concern. A tackling child exploitation conference was held in March 2025 which focused on the lived experience of children and their families impacted by exploitation.</p> <p>We have enhanced our tools and processes to better assess and monitor risk, and we continue to develop trauma-informed, strengths-based practices that promote recovery and resilience. Parents and carers are acknowledged as vital partners in safeguarding efforts. Their feedback has directly influenced developments such as the “Not My Shame” public awareness campaign, which aims to reduce stigma and increase understanding of exploitation.</p>
<p>Children with emotional or mental health difficulties will receive joined up support. Children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families will receive earlier intervention about identified safeguarding risks. Children showing their distress through severe self-harm will receive a more timely response in the right setting for their needs.</p>	<p>In the last annual report, there was work being undertaken about development of an ICS pathway. The decision has been made that this will not be progressed as there is no suitable governance in place, and the current trust pathways allow for young peoples needs to be met. Children who require admission in relation to their mental health have their needs met via an approved pathway within the relevant trust. There are strong links to CAHMS where admissions may be expected and oversight from the ICB and strategic safeguarding.</p>

<p>Schools, colleges and alternative education providers will become an integral part of the partnership. This will enable exploration of how the partnership can better work to meet the safeguarding needs of children in their education space.</p>	<p>Two NSCP engagement events took place with education colleagues to explore options for integrating education within the partnership. The outcome of this was a decision to co-opt the Director of Education into the Strategic Leadership Group. As part of the education workstream of Families First Partnership there will be further work to codesign and embed stronger operational and strategic input of education within the partnership.</p>
<p>We will review our neglect strategy and toolkit to make sure it helps professionals and families understand when things are going wrong and see what the data tells us about whether it is working.</p>	<p>Following the update in the last annual report regarding the findings of CSPRs in both City and County, and a partnership audit, a cross-partnership steering group was established with the remit of exploring in depth the barriers to effective consistency in addressing neglect in Nottinghamshire. Commitment to the steering group has been consistent from all agencies, including education. A strong response rate to a practitioner survey and attendance at two practitioner events has allowed for user-focussed research which is now being actioned. Key elements are: toolkit versions for various disciplines; the development of improved multi-disciplinary training focussed on case studies; a communication strategy launching both of these elements and ensuring that the learning and actions are taken forward in the Families First Programme. It is anticipated that all elements will be launched at an event in October 2025 with a period of embedding through comms and review over the following 6 months.</p>

**Commitment 2: We will work together to ensure each child who needs support or help receives the right service at the right time for them and their family**

	What we have done
We will stop talking about ‘thresholds’ and instead talk about what children and families need and how to provide it.	We have continued to build on the work in the last year to support staff to embed strengths-based language in their everyday practice. Training took place with MASH staff, and it has continued to be shared in Safeguarding Children Today training which reaches many multi-agency staff. The Pathway to Provision has been redesigned to focus on the needs of the children, and uses strengths based language throughout. It will be published in the next reporting year 25-26.
We will create a new front-door, with a greater focus on early help. Within this re-design, we will work together to think about how many referrals for children are made and whether some of these needs could be better met in the community or by early help	Work has continued on the MASH redesign project, building on the progress last year. Towards the end of this reporting year, the government Family First Partnership reforms were introduced with a plan for a transformation year to take place during 25-26. The MASH is one of the workstreams which will be considered as part of this wider reform programme.
Too many children in Nottinghamshire have child protection plans. We will rethink how we work together and with families to avoid so many situations reaching a child protection plan.	The numbers of children subject to a child protection plan In Nottinghamshire has been relatively stable during the year, ranging between 32.6 and 35.2 children per 10,000. The reductions in numbers of children subject to a child protection plan that were seen in 2022/23 and 2023/24 have been sustained. A great deal of work has been undertaken by children’s social care to consider when it is appropriate to convene an initial child protection conference. Quality of practice reviews and other audit work throughout the year has demonstrated that our Child Protection Chairs continue to make appropriate decisions about child protection plans for children. Work at the front door (MASH) has been substantial to ensure that families are directed at the earliest point to services that can meet the needs of children and carers as early as possible.
We will improve the quality, attendance and timeliness of strategy discussions and make sure that the needs of all of the children relevant to the discussion are considered	As part of the MASH redesign strategy discussions have continued to be a focus of the work to achieve the outcomes outlined.

<p><b>Commitment 3:</b> We will work together to ensure the partnership reflects, learns from and acts on the experiences and feedback from children, young people and their families.</p>	
	<p>What we have done</p>
<p>In developing these commitments, we asked some of Nottinghamshire’s children and parents/carers what they thought. We will build on so that we can keep listening to as many voices as possible.</p>	<p>An NCSP representative is now linked into the NCC Participation Network, which has a reach into several avenues for seeking the views of children and parents/carers. Utilising the key participation groups from across the partnership means that we can seek views on any key issues, however it is the intention of the NSCP to complete some proactive work itself around participation so there is a direct method of engaging with families.</p>
<p>We will focus on making the recommendations from our statutory reviews as clear and SMART as possible and address any themes reviews reveal. We will make sure what is learned in reviews is available to everyone working with children in Nottinghamshire.</p>	<p>The way learning and recommendations from reviews was updated this year, with a shift towards thematic learning and tracking any emerging issues. As part of this, the NSCP identified a theme of neglect and were able to escalate and prioritise this workstream. Learning continues to be shared via learning briefings, newsletters and the Safeguarding Children Today training sessions which take place five times a year.</p>
<p>We will develop an NSCP understanding of what trauma informed practice means and develop a plan to integrate this into practice</p>	<p>The Learning and Workforce Development group have been asked to consider any further training or development needs, following on from the successful Trauma Informed training which took place in the last reporting year. This remains a key issue for the Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement group and scheduled for oversight there is October 2025.</p>

## Case reviews

There is a statutory requirement on safeguarding partners to conduct a 'Rapid Review' when serious child safeguarding cases are identified. The reviews should be completed within 15 working days and a report provided to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (National Panel). The NSCP remains committed to gathering as much learning as possible during the rapid review process and to only progressing to a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) where necessary. The NSCP development manager is responsible for writing the reviews based on the learning and analysis by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review group leads.

There have been four rapid reviews within this reporting period. The 15-day timescale was not met for these reviews due to availability and completing work pressures, but also the development manager post being vacant for three of these reviews. There is now a worker in post.

### *Rapid review 24-3*

A rapid review has been completed following the death of a one year old baby, who was born prematurely. As a result of his prematurity, he had health needs including chronic lung disease. He and his older siblings were subject to Child Protection Plans. There has been a cycle of improvement and deterioration in the home conditions and concerns about neglect of the children. Two older siblings were removed previously due to neglect. Prior to his death, there were increasing concerns about his parents meeting his health needs. Home conditions were poor at the time of his death. Key learning was around recognising and responding to neglect and understanding the vulnerabilities of premature children. A LCSPR was not recommended. Further assurance was provided to the National Panel around the work being progressed locally, which led to them agreeing with this recommendation.

### *Rapid review 25-1*

A rapid review was completed in February 2025 following the death of a nine year old male. He was found deceased at home in December 2024. He had been living under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) following early childhood abuse. Prior to his death, he disclosed to a school that he was unhappy at home. Key learning was around partner agencies using chronologies to understand the experiences of children, and practices around SGO's and information sharing. A LCSPR was recommended and is currently being completed. The National Panel agreed with this recommendation, noting it was a "clear and thorough review".

### *Rapid review RR25-2*

A rapid review was completed in January 25 in relation to a one year old child who was not known to social care. There were concerns about home conditions when services visited the home, and around mental health for mother's partner and herself. Learning from this review also related to neglect and the response to this has been used to inform the Neglect Steering group. A LCSPR was not recommended. The National Panel agreed with this recommendation.

### *Rapid Review RR 25 – 3*

A rapid review was completed in relation to the death of a two month old baby. Following the ambulance service being called to the home, there were serious concerns about the condition of the home, which was deemed unsuitable for a child. Poor conditions had also been noted previously by health professionals attending the home. The response to Neglect was again the key learning theme, emphasising the importance of this being a priority for the NCSP. An LCSPR was not recommended. The National Panel agreed with this outcome.

#### Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

A LCSPR was completed following a rapid review in the previous year where a young person died by ligature in a health setting. Learning was identified in this review, however, there has been a delay in publication due to additional information being required from the coroner which may require changes or an addendum.

#### Dissemination of learning from rapid reviews and LCSPRs

- We have continued to produce learning briefings for the rapid reviews held during this period when the recommendations were agreed. Although we have considered other ways of sharing information, due to the nature of the learning from these reviews being quite specific it was felt that a written learning briefing best suited that purpose. However, we are in the process of commissioning an LCSPR and there is a commitment to holding virtual training and learning events with the outcome of this.
- We have created bulletins and a newsletter available on the Nottinghamshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership website where key learning is shared.
- Regular updates regarding learning are also shared through Safeguarding Children Today.
- Learning from rapid reviews have also been shared within the neglect steering group and the safer sleep steering group to inform changes and policies in approach to these areas.

## Multi-agency training, guidance and procedures

Training provided through the NSCP is informed by the learning needs identified through the NSCP Learning and Improvement Framework, which includes Rapid Reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR), Child Death Reviews, Audits, National Reviews and feedback from partner agencies.

The NSCP is part of the Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) contract for the– Learning Management System (LMS) which allows our users to book onto courses, access eLearning and access data. The LMS is key to all learning and development activity. In 2024-25 NCC went out to procurement for an LMS provider. This meant that the NSCP had a gap between providers from the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024 - 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Despite having no LMS for over 7 months we have been able to continue to offer some face-to-face events over the last year by introducing a new process of booking onto our events via e mail. In relation to our face to face/virtual training events we had 1,985 practitioners attending events over the year. E-learning courses offered between 1 April – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024 had 2,149 course completions

The NSCP offered 51 events which is slightly lower than the previous year (60 events), so this will reflect on the decrease in attendance, as we offered less events. The reduction in events offered is due to the change to our new LMS and a period of time initially when we couldn't promote and advertise events as efficiently as we would usually do. Overall attendance at our training events has decreased much more than the previous year. This is mainly down to the changeover of the LMS, but we had also noticed a slight decrease in attendance prior to this. The previous year 3,032 places were taken up in comparison to 1,985 this reporting year.

In relation to the three safeguarding children partners statistics, there has been a significant decrease in attendance from Nottinghamshire County Council staff from 1,680 the previous year to 979 and a slight decrease in relation to Police colleagues from 111 to 73. In comparison we have seen a slight increase from health colleagues from 372 to 389. In relation to schools/colleges we have seen a significant decrease in attendance from 635 delegates the previous year to 342 this period. Feedback from colleagues across the partnership suggests that pressures on staff has impacted on attendance.

Over the last year we have had 40 partners support us with delivering our annual training programme, without this support we would struggle to offer such a comprehensive multi-agency Training Programme. We have also commissioned 4 external training providers with specialist knowledge to enhance our training offer.

## Participant feedback

Feedback from attendees continues to play a vital role in shaping future training needs. Please see below some examples from the training programme delivered during 2024/25 including any feedback we received from delegates about events. Feedback has continued to be overwhelmingly positive.

### **Working Together to Safeguard Children**

“Course gave me clarity of information relating to current guidance and LA pathways and processes.”

“I’ve took away the impact from the case studies and to be mindful of the trauma some children have been through”

### **Safeguarding Children in a Connected World**

“I intend to share information with team, and early years providers to help keep children safe. Lots of very useful information provided thank you.”

“I will use all knowledge gained particularly when working with families with older children and young parents.”

“I have shared the advice to parents on parental locks on devices.”

### **Reducing Parental Conflict Awareness and Resources Training**

“Following the course I have now been more thorough in assessing if it is domestic abuse or parental conflict.”

### **Safeguarding Children and Neglect Course**

“I gained more awareness of the different types of neglect and feel more confident to begin noting/using the neglect tool as small niggles/concerns begin to build as a measure of change.”

“This course updated my knowledge around good practice in Neglect matters. It was great to have the time to reflect on neglect and modern social work theory and practice. I found that very useful. It will be front and centre at the next neglect conference I chair.”

## Reflections, next steps and priorities

### *Priorities for 2024- 2025*

The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership priorities for next year will be to continue to work towards the commitments identified in the business plan.

**Commitment 1:** We will work together to keep young people safe in their homes and communities.

**Commitment 2:** We will work together to ensure each child who needs support or help receives the right service at the right time for them and their family.

**Commitment 3:** We will work together to ensure the partnership reflects, learns from and acts on the experiences and feedback from children, young people and their families.

The reviews completed identify Neglect as an important priority for the partnership and work by an established steering group is looking to seek learning from practitioners and the available data to ensure a robust response.

## Costs involved

Working Together 2023 outlines that safeguarding partnership annual reports must include and publish financial arrangements. Detailed below is the expenditure for 2024/2025 and the projected spend 2024/2025.

### **Expenditure 2024/25**

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Original budget</b>	<b>End of year</b>	<b>Variance (+ over or - below budget)</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSCP Administrator</li> <li>• Portion of CDOP Administrator</li> <li>• Online procedures and ECDOP system</li> <li>• Printing/Publicity</li> <li>• General running costs</li> </ul>	£56,085	£47,682	-£8,403	NSCP Administrator left part way through year, gap while recruitment to replace took place.
CSPRs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Reviewer</li> </ul>	£10,000	£15,087	+ £5,087	NSCP share towards joint Adult/Children Safeguarding Review not forecast at start of year
SCIMT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 x FTE Sc3 posts</li> <li>• 1 x Temporary Sc4 post</li> </ul>	£127,755	£130,368	+£2,613	Pay increase for all staff, details of which were not known at start of financial year partly offset by some changes in personnel and new starters not at top of salary scale
Independent Scrutineer	£24,375	£24,375	0	
Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training Coordinator</li> <li>• Training Administrator</li> <li>• Learning Management System, including E-learning</li> </ul>	£112,542	£106,119	-£6,423	Reduction in hiring face to face training venues, reduction in cost of online training licences (hosted by NCC) whilst migrating to new online system, partly offset by pay increase for all staff, details of which not known at start of financial year
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£330,757</b>	<b>£323,631</b>		

Contribution from NSCP towards costs associated with work on Neglect Strategy/MASH Needs Led Front Door, Working Together 2023 alignment & revised Pathway to Provision	£31,284	£18,033	-£13,251	Work ended earlier than originally planned due to personal circumstances of staff involved
<b>Total</b>	<b>£362,041</b>	<b>£341,664</b>		

The budget for 2023/24 was £20,377 underspent.

## Contributions 2024/25

	Income	Anticipated	Actual	Variance (+ over or - below budget)	Notes
Annual contributions	Nottinghamshire	£149,804	£152,647	-	Pay increase for directly paid staff
	Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB	£83,657	£83,657	-	
	Police	£17,612	£17,612	-	
	Probation	£3,647	£3,647	-	
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£254,720</b>	<b>£257,563</b>		
Income generated	SCIMT checks (fostering childcare agencies)	£8,000	£5,479	-£2,521	
	Training income (attendance & non- attendance charges etc.)	£30,700	£23,045	-£7,655	Pause in online training during migration to new provider hosted by NCC
	City contribution to CDOP administration	£12,743	£12,743	0	
	Remainder of DfE grant not used in 2023/24 b/f to cover work with schools (breakfast meetings)	£4,801	£4,801		
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£56,244</b>	<b>£46,068</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£310,964</b>	<b>£303,631</b>		
Use of reserve		£51,077	£38,033		

## Proposals for 2025/26

<b>Expenditure</b>		<b>Comments</b>
Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSCP Administrator</li> <li>• Portion of CDOP Administrator</li> <li>• Online procedures/eCDOP</li> <li>• General running expenses</li> </ul>	£49,246	
CSPRs/Learning Reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Reviewer</li> </ul>	£10,000	
SCIMT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 x FTE Scale 3 posts</li> <li>• 1 x FTE Temp Scale 4 administrator</li> </ul>	£130,091	
Independent Scrutineer	£24,375	
Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training Coordinator</li> <li>• Training Administrator</li> <li>• Venue costs</li> <li>• External training providers</li> <li>• E learning</li> <li>• Learning Management System</li> </ul>	£118,061	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£331,773</b>	

	<b>Income</b>		
Partner contributions	Nottinghamshire Local Authority	£152,060	
	Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board	£83,657	
	Police	£17,612	
	Probation	£3,647	

	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£256,976</b>	
Income generated	SCIMT checks (fostering childcare agencies)	£5,500	
	Training income – e learning, non- attendance etc.	£18,500	
CDOP	CDOP Coordinator & supervision - contribution from City Partnership	£13,500	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£294,476</b>	
	<b>Reserve from 2024/25</b>	<b>£39,919</b>	<b>Proposed use of reserve: £37,297</b> <b>Reserve for remainder of 2025/26: £2,622</b>

Additional expenditure and funding related to the Partnership but not fully included in budget

<b>Post</b>	<b>Cost (including costs and expenses)</b>	<b>Funding source</b>
Service Manager Partnerships & Planning (inc running expenses)	<b>£71,132</b>	Funded 50/50 by Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB
NSCP Development Manager (inc running expenses)	<b>£67,080</b>	Totally funded by Nottinghamshire County Council
CDOP Administrator	<b>£33,866</b>	Funded by Nottinghamshire County Council, uplift funded by NSCP and included within Administration expenditure figure
<b>Total</b>	<b>£172,078</b>	

13 October 2025

Agenda Item: 5

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND THE DIRECTOR OF NURSING, NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE INTEGRATED CARE BOARD****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 inform Select Committee of the findings of the joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) monitoring inspection, undertaken in July 2025.
2. To update the Select Committee on activity underway by the local area SEND Partnership to respond to, and address, the findings of the monitoring inspection and ensure improvement activity is embedded across the Partnership.

**Information**

3. In January / February 2023, Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) undertook a local area [inspection](#) of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership; inspectors had determined that there were '*widespread and/or systemic failings*' and '*significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND*' which needed to be addressed urgently.
4. Inspectors identified two Areas for Priority Action (APA) which required urgent attention by the local area Partnership. These Areas for Priority Action were underpinned by additional requirements for the Partnership to ensure there was a stronger focus on embedding data, quality assurance, co-production and shared leadership and governance across all SEND improvement activity.
5. The local area SEND Partnership brings together the organisations from across education, health, social care and the voluntary sector, which provide services to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire. The two leading partners are the County Council and the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). Following the 2023 inspection, a SEND Improvement Programme was launched across the local area SEND Partnership.

6. In line with the [Area SEND Inspection Framework](#), which was revised and updated in June 2025, Ofsted and CQC undertake monitoring inspections in local areas that are found, at a full inspection, to have widespread and/or systemic failings; these monitoring inspections should be undertaken around 18 months from the date of the local area's final report following full inspection. However, in December 2024, Ofsted paused inspection activity in order to develop and consult on an enhanced inspection framework, thus resulting in a delay to the commencement of Nottinghamshire's monitoring inspection.
7. The purpose of the monitoring inspection is to assess the extent to which the local area partnership is taking effective action to address the Areas for Priority Action set out in the inspection report. If inspectors identify any new, widespread and/or systemic failings during the monitoring inspection, these will be raised to the local area partnership and referenced in the monitoring inspection outcome letter.
8. Ofsted and CQC undertook Nottinghamshire's Area SEND monitoring inspection between 14 July and 22 July 2025. Inspection activity included: discussions with local area leaders, parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, and education, health and social care professionals; meetings with representatives of the parent carer forum (PCF), the DfE and regional NHS England (NHSE); and the examination of relevant documents and correspondence about the performance of the area in addressing the areas for priority action identified at the initial inspection, including the area's priority action plan and self-evaluation.
9. The inspection report was published on 3 September 2025 and can be found in **Appendix 1**. Ofsted and CQC inspectors found that "*the local area has taken effective action as it has taken reasonable steps to address all the areas for priority action identified at the initial inspection*".
10. Per the inspection framework, effective action does not mean that the area for priority action is no longer a concern or that the local area can stop taking action to address it, as inspections are a point-in-time evaluation. Areas for Priority Action that receive an effective action outcome may still be identified as areas for priority action in future inspections if the local area does not continue to act and/or the action does not continue to have a positive impact on the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
11. The key inspection findings are outlined below:

**Area for Priority Action 1 (APA1): 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.**

**Inspection Finding: effective action taken**

- a. The PCF feel listened to and valued, including active participation in workstreams as part of the SEND Improvement Programme;
- b. The revised governance arrangements have enhanced the way in which leaders are held to account;

- c. The partnership uses a range of data and performance information effectively, feeding into governance structures to enable effective oversight and allowing professionals to develop a better understanding of children and young people's needs;
- d. Improvements to the structures and ways of working of the Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS), as well as the 'grow your own' model to recruit and retain educational psychologists, has helped to increase the proportion of EHC plans completed within the 20-week statutory timescale; at the time of inspection, 47.3% of EHC needs assessments were completed within statutory timescales, compared to 28.01% in 2023.
- e. The new multi-agency quality assurance process provides useful learning to help improve the quality of EHC plans, with newer plans being typically better quality;
- f. The partnership's vision is increasingly well understood by education, social care and health partners;
- g. Areas for ongoing development and improvement:
  - i. The variable quality of children and young people's EHC plans, particularly the advice provided by education, health and social care professionals about children and young people's needs that should inform their EHC plan;
  - ii. The annual reviews of EHC plans for most children and young people are not timely, with some of the EHC plans sampled having not been updated for a significant length of time despite children and young people's needs, educational placements or living arrangements changing. Improvement activity in this area is underway as part of the ICDS review;
  - iii. Variable experiences of parents, carers and professionals in relation to the online platform that was introduced to support EHC plan processes, with some issues reported in relation to the platform and associated user guidance;
  - iv. Improvement actions and progress towards milestones are not communicated to professionals, parents and carers consistently well, meaning some do not know about the successes and planned next steps in relation to the partnership's improvement work;
  - v. Variable experiences from parents and carers in relating to the communication from dedicated professionals in ICDS, with both positive feedback and continued frustration reported.

**Area for Priority Action 2 (APA2): 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.**

**Inspection Finding: effective action taken**

- a. Revised governance structures and workstreams have enabled the partnership to better identify and address gaps in health services across Nottinghamshire, with improved access to data and information enabling health leaders and key stakeholders, including the PCF, to identify joint commissioning priorities;
- b. Health leaders and partners have established an offer of support for children and young people waiting for their neurodevelopmental (ND) assessment, including a

range of online resources, workshops and face-to-face support sessions in district family hubs. A monthly newsletter outlines current wait times as well as signposting families to further support, alongside prompt notifications to parents and carers when their child has been placed on the waiting list;

- c. Improved cataloguing of equipment used by children and young people in the community, and refreshed protocols, help to ensure that children and young people get the equipment that they need;
- d. Areas for ongoing development and improvement:
  - i. Children and young people continue to wait too long for their ND assessment. This is being addressed by the Partnership through the redesign of the ND service;
  - ii. There has been a slow pace of action to improve waiting times for speech and language therapy (SLT) services, with some parents, carers and professionals still unclear about how to refer to and access SLT. While there has been some upskilling of staff to support children and young people with eating and drinking difficulties, some children and young people wait well over the national standard of 18 weeks for assessment and support. Although a pilot project has been underway to test an advice line and drop-in service for children and young people who are awaiting assessment, this is yet to be fully evaluated.

## **Next Steps**

12. The Nottinghamshire local area SEND partnership remains committed to improving the experiences and outcomes of children and families and ensuring that the positive progress made is maintained and built upon following inspection. New and ongoing improvement activity is underway to address the findings of the inspection report and ensure that improvements are embedded across services. The outcomes of children, young people and their families continue to be monitored in order to inform practice.
13. Improvement work will continue to be overseen by the independently chaired SEND Partnership Improvement Board, while the local area Partnership seeks further advice and guidance from the DfE and NHSE regarding transitions to business-as-usual governance and assurance arrangements, with the aim of ensuring that such arrangements continue to drive forward improvements, monitor outcomes and continue to hold the Partnership to account.
14. In line with the Area SEND Inspection Framework, the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership can expect a full SEND inspection in 18 months' time.

## **Reason for Recommendation/s**

15. 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**

16. 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**

17. 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.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Children and Families Select Committee:

- 1) considers and comments on the feedback from the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission local area SEND monitoring inspection;
- 2) agrees to receive a further progress report on SEND improvement at the December meeting.

**Anne Coyle**  
**Executive Director, Children and Families**

**Rosa Waddingham**  
**Director of Nursing, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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## **Constitutional Comments (GMG 09/09/25)**

18. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. This reports fall within the remit of the Children and Families Select Committee under Section 6, Part 1, paragraph 4(a) on p.88 of the Council's Constitution.

## **Financial Comments (SS 16/09/25)**

19. 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. There are no identified increase or decrease in costs and the current cost are within the scope of the budget. The Education and Special Needs &

Disabilities (SEND) Portfolio budget (as at August 2025) is £17.462m for 2025/26. The High Needs allocation from the Department for Education (DfE) to support the improvement of outcomes is £130.2m for 2025/26 as at August 2025.

20. There are no Local Government Reorganisation implications from this decision.

### **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

[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 15 April 2024

[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 15 July 2024

[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 07 October 2024

[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 02 December 2024

[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 17 March 2025

[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 14 July 2025

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

CFS0044



4 September 2025

Colin Pettigrew, Executive Director Children and Families, Nottinghamshire County Council

Amanda Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)

## **Area SEND monitoring inspection to Nottinghamshire Partnership**

Between 14 and 16 July 2025, Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) revisited Nottinghamshire, to decide whether effective action has been made in relation to each of the areas for priority action detailed in the inspection report published on 16 May 2023. The inspection was conducted under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. The inspection was paused in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy on 16 July 2025. Inspectors resumed and completed the inspection on 22 July 2025.

I write on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Education, Children's Services and Skills and the Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care of CQC.

As a result of the findings of the initial inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, HMCI required the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the two identified areas for priority action.

The local area has taken effective action as it has taken reasonable steps to address all the areas for priority action identified at the initial inspection. This letter outlines our findings from the monitoring inspection.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, accompanied by an HMI from social care; and two Children's Services Inspectors from CQC.

During the inspection, we spoke to local area leaders, parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and education, health and social care professionals. We also met with representatives of the parent carer forum (PCF), the Department for Education (DfE) and regional NHS England. We examined relevant documents and correspondence about the performance of the area in addressing the areas for priority action identified at the initial inspection, including the area's priority action plan and self-evaluation.

## Findings

### Area for priority action 1

Leaders, NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB 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:** Effective action

The partnership has redesigned its governance arrangements and strategic approach to improving services for children and young people with SEND across education, health and social care. The parent carer forum (PCF) is listened to and valued. They contribute as members of workstreams relating to the ongoing SEND improvement programme. This, and the oversight of the SEND partnership improvement board, has enhanced the way that leaders are held to account.

The partnership uses a range of data and performance information effectively. The introduction of a data dashboard now collates ICB and local authority data well. Leaders use governance and oversight structures to interrogate this data closely. Practitioners are working increasingly in a district model across Nottinghamshire. This allows professionals, such as district and family special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and early help workers, to develop an accurate understanding of children and young people's needs.

Partnership leaders have recognised the need to review and improve the structure and capacity of the team responsible for education, health and care (EHC) plan processes in Nottinghamshire, the integrated children's disability service (ICDS). Improvements in ways of working in the ICDS since the 2023 area SEND inspection, coupled with a successful 'grow-your-own' model to recruit and retain educational psychologists, has helped to increase the proportion of EHC plans completed within the 20-week statutory timescale. Some schools, and the SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS), reported an improvement in both the timeliness and quality of recent EHC plans.

Children and young people's EHC plans sampled during this inspection were timely, but their quality was variable. A new multi-agency quality assurance process provides useful learning to help improve the quality of EHC plans. Newer EHC plans are typically of a better quality. However, the advice provided by education, health and social care professionals about children and young people's needs that should inform

their EHC plans, is too variable. At times, this advice is useful in identifying and meeting the child or young person's needs but is not fully reflected in their EHC plan. Conversely, some advice is either not available or is not sufficiently specific about children and young people's needs. This hinders the ICDS's ability to draft an effective EHC plan.

The annual reviews of EHC plans for most children and young people are not timely. The partnership has identified this as a concern and have planned to improve this as part of the ICDS review. Some EHC plans sampled during this inspection had not been updated for a significant length of time, despite children and young people's needs, educational placements or living arrangements changing. This limits the usefulness of these EHC plans.

The partnership uses an online platform to support EHC plan processes. Some parents, carers and professionals welcome the transparency and efficiency that the platform provides. However, others reported problems with the platform and not having sufficient guidance to use it effectively.

The partnership has established several workstreams as part of their SEND improvement journey. The partnership's vision is increasingly well understood by education, social care and health partners. However, actions and progress towards milestones are not communicated to professionals, parents and carers consistently well. Consequently, some do not know about the successes and planned next steps in relation to the partnership's work on improving children and young people's outcomes and experiences. Some parents and carers reported better communication from dedicated professionals in the ICDS. However, others reported a lack of communication and continued frustration with the system.

## **Area for priority action 2**

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, neuro-developmental 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:** Effective action

The partnership has established governance structures and workstreams to identify and address gaps in health services across Nottinghamshire. These are co-chaired by leaders in health and education. By using improved data and information, health

leaders have worked with stakeholders, including the PCF, to identify joint commissioning priorities. The new joint commissioning strategy has a focus on improving the support for children and young people's speech, language and communication; sensory; neurodivergent; sleep and/or occupational therapy needs.

Since the previous inspection, health leaders and partners have established an offer of support for children and young people waiting for their neurodevelopmental (ND) assessment. Children, young people and their families can access a range of online resources, workshops and face-to-face support sessions in district family hubs. A monthly newsletter outlines current wait times as well as signposting families to further support. Health leaders have ensured that once referred onto the ND pathway, parents and carers are notified promptly that their child has been placed on the waiting list. Previously, some families were waiting up to a year to hear if they had been accepted. Despite this work to improve the ND pathway, children and young people are waiting too long for their assessment. Recognising this, health leaders and partners are at the start of redesigning the ND service.

The partnership maintains oversight of the equipment needs of children and young people with SEND. Some school leaders reported that equipment used in schools that is no longer used, such as specialist seating and standing frames, is not recycled appropriately. Since the last inspection, improved cataloguing of equipment used by children and young people in the community, and refreshed protocols, help to ensure that children and young people get the equipment that they need.

There has been a slow pace of action to improve waiting times for speech and language therapy services. There has been some upskilling of staff to support children and young people with eating and drinking difficulties. However, some children and young people with speech, language and communication needs wait too long for assessment and support. Over the past 12 months, a pilot project which consists of an advice line and drop-in service to support children and young people who are waiting for a speech and language assessment has been launched. However, while the advice line is available for all, the drop-in clinics are only available for children who are under four years old. The impact of this pilot is yet to be fully evaluated. Furthermore, some parents, carers and professionals told us that they were unclear how to refer to and access speech and language therapy.

## **Next steps**

Inspectors will reach an effective action outcome if, having gathered and evaluated evidence, they find that the local area partnership has taken reasonable steps to

address the area for priority action since the full inspection, based on the relevant evaluation criteria.

Effective action does not mean that the area for priority action is no longer a concern or that the local area can stop taking action to address it. Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation. Areas for priority action that receive an effective action outcome may still be identified as areas for priority action in future inspections. This can happen if the local area does not continue to take action and/or the action has not continued to have a positive impact on the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Ofsted and CQC ask the local area partnership to update their priority action plan (area SEND) as a result of this inspection.

I am copying this letter to the DfE and regional NHS England.

Yours sincerely

Adam Sproston  
**His Majesty's Inspector, Ofsted, Lead inspector**

Julie Knight  
**His Majesty's Inspector, Ofsted**

Lea Pickerill  
**Children's Services Inspector, CQC**

Lesley Perry  
**Children's Services Inspector, CQC**

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Area SEND monitoring inspection letter: Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership  
14 July to 16 July, and 22 July

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Area SEND monitoring inspection letter: Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership  
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13 October 2025

Agenda Item: 6

**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 1 2025-6**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the Committee with a summary of Children and Families Department's performance against the ambitions in the Annual Delivery Plan as at the end of June 2025.
2. To provide the Committee with a summary of Children and Families Department's key departmental risks as the end of June 2025.
3. To provide the Committee with a summary of the Children and Families Department's financial position for the current financial year as at the end of June 2025.

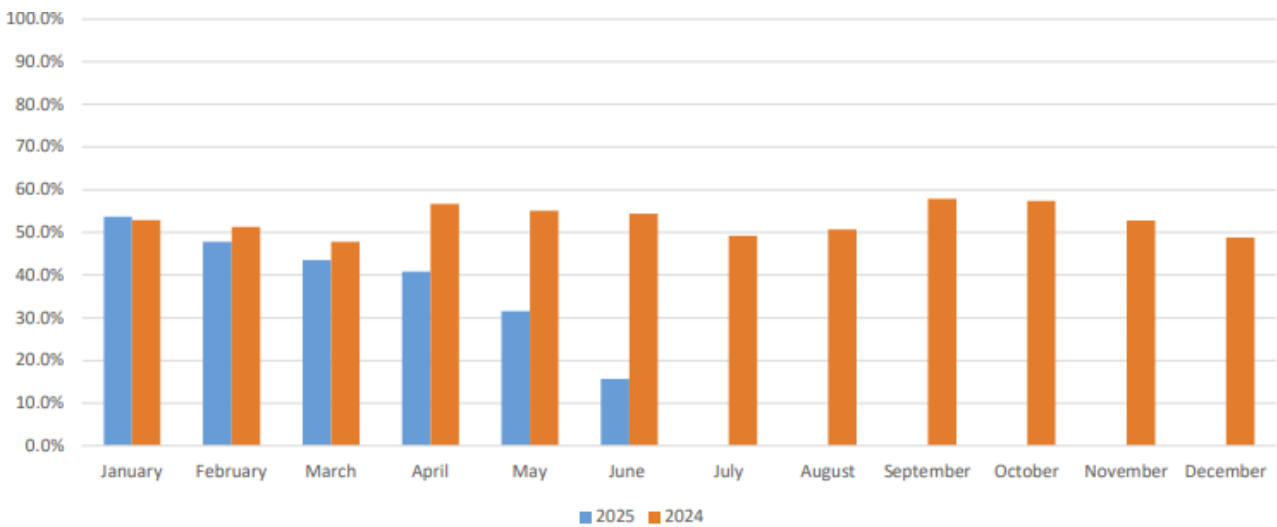
**Information**

**Key Performance against the Ambitions set out in the Annual Delivery Plan**

4. **Appendix 1** shows performance for each key measure as follows:
  - The 'best to be column' shows whether good performance is shown by either a high value or a low value.
  - The 'direction of travel' indicator looks at the long-term trend for the measure and whether the direction of travel is upwards, downwards, or stable. Performance for some measures can fluctuate from quarter to quarter due to a number of factors. This may not be indicative of a change in overall performance, so a longer-term view has been taken in the consideration of this.
  - An additional column shows whether performance is improving, stable or deteriorating based on this long-term trend.
5. 67.7% of children reached a good level of development in their early years' foundation stage assessments in 2023/24, an increase of 0.3 percentage points on the previous year. This is in line with the national average over the same period.

6. The proportion of child and family assessments completed which do not result in ongoing children's social care involvement has reduced by more than five percentage points since the same point last year. Although there has been a slight increase in this measure this quarter, the overall trend over the last 12 months is downward because 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.
7. The impact of this work can also be seen in the proportion of targeted early help assessments rather than a social care assessment. At 29.9% this is six and a half percentage points higher than at the end of 2023/24 as continuing improvement in this measure was shown.
8. This move to provide help at the earliest opportunity can also be seen in the proportion of children becoming subject of a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan who have had a targeted early help assessment in the previous two years. Previously The department have aimed to see this measure increase as the department sought to ensure the department were targeting the families who need the most support. Over the last two quarters the department have seen this proportion decrease, even though the overall proportion of assessments which were early help assessments has increased. This is likely due to the outcomes of this early help support resulting in fewer of these children coming on to a CIN or CP Plan.
9. Where a statutory social care assessment is required, the department continue to complete these in a timely manner with 95.7% completed within the statutory timescale of 45 days. This is more than ten percentage points higher than the national and our statistical neighbour average.
10. Demand for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment remains high, in line with the level of demand seen in 2025, and 25% higher than in 2023. Despite this, the proportion of EHC plans issued in timescale continues to increase with 44.4% of plans issued in timescale in 2025 compared with 35.9% at the same point in 2024. By comparison, Nottinghamshire issued just 4.5% of plans in timescale in 2022.
11. The number of EHCPs that the Local Authority maintains continues to increase, up from 3,741 in December 2023 to 5,744 as at the end of June 2025, a 54% increase in 18 months. As the number of EHCPs grow, so does the number of annual reviews. Because of this, the number of annual reviews completed in timescale were lower in 2024 compared with 2023, with an average of 49.9% completed in time between January – December 2024 compared with 77% during the same period in 2023. This has continued into 2025 with 41.6% completed in timescale in the first six months of the year. Although the County Council has the statutory responsibility for the timely completion of annual reviews the majority are completed by education settings and there is often a delay in the reporting of annual reviews being completed, so it is expected that this performance will improve once all reviews are reported.

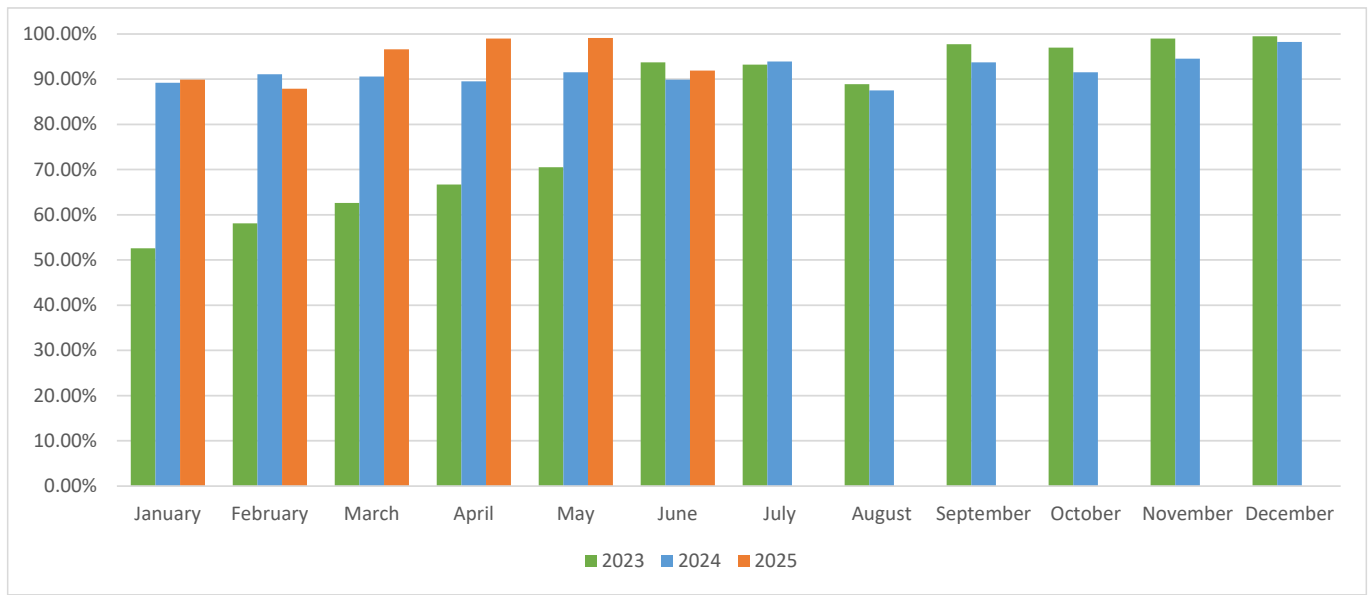
### Percentage of annual reviews completed in timescale



Data Source: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Key Performance Indicators Report – June 2025

12. Of the cases reviewed where amendments were necessary, 93.8% have resulted in amended EHCP Plans being issued within 12 weeks in the first six months of 2025. This is a significant improvement on performance in 2023 and continues the improvements seen in 2024. This is due to the recruitment of dedicated plan writers in June 2023. The chart below shows the improvement made in this measure over the last two years.

### Percentage of EHC Plan Amendments Issued in Timescale



Data Source: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Key Performance Indicators Report – June 2025

13. At 25.3%, the proportion of referrals which were a re-referral within 12 months continues to reduce following a high point of 28.1% in 2022. This is due to work being undertaken through the needs led front door project to ensure referrals are appropriate and that children receive the right support at the right time.

14. The proportion of children becoming subject of a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time continues to reduce. At 26%, the proportion of plans which were repeat plans is six percentage points lower than in quarter one of 2024/25 and is just 1.3 percentage points above the England average.\
15. The proportion of child protection plans lasting two years or more remains very low. At 1.3% this is half of the England average and is due to proactive management of plans to ensure that children and families receive the support they need in a timely manner.
16. 96% of child protection cases have had all of their reviews completed within timescales. This is an increase of 6.2 percentage points and is at least 6 percentage points above the latest statistical neighbour and England averages. This performance is due to proactive management to ensure reviews are scheduled within required timescales.
17. Although there has been a slight reduction in the proportion of children leaving care to live with family members or friends through a special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangement order (CAO) this quarter, performance remains above the England and statistical neighbour average. An approach is being developed to support improved family and extended family engagement for children in care through Family Networking and tracking of potential Special Guardianship Orders and rehabilitation to parents/family. Children in unregulated placements where a placement with extended family would offer better outcomes are already discussed through the monthly care, planning, support, and assurance panel.
18. There has been an increase in the proportion of children looked after in kinship placements – up two percentage points this quarter, meaning 17 more children in kinship placements as the department seeks to ensure as many children as possible in care or on the edge of care are placed in a family-based setting through initiatives such as the creative solutions panel and the kinship support service.
19. As a result of the work detailed above, and despite the issues the authority is facing with placement sufficiency, particularly for fostering placements, the proportion of children looked after in family-based settings has been maintained. At 63.2% this means almost two-thirds of children in care are placed in family-based settings. If The department exclude children aged 16 this increases to more than three-quarters of children in care. Children over 16 may be placed in semi-independent accommodation when it is assessed as being suitable. This assessment will include provision for support to be able to move to adulthood as a positive experience.
20. At the end of the quarter, 15 children were placed in unregulated placements. This is a reduction of 5 children since the previous quarter and equates to just 1.6% of all children in care. Although the Council strives to ensure all children are placed in regulated placements, a lack of suitable regulated placements means this is not always possible. Any unregulated placements are subject to regular scrutiny by senior management to ensure they are safe, suitable and are meeting the needs of the child.
21. 21.9% of children in care are placed more than 20 miles from home. This is slightly above the national average of 20% but below the statistical neighbour average of 26%. The Council strives to place children locally where possible and despite recent issues with placement sufficiency there has not been a large increase in children placed more than 20

miles from home. Of the children placed more than 20 miles from home, one-third are placed within 30 miles, and two-thirds within 50 miles with just 60 children placed more than 50 miles from home. Work is underway through the Homes For Children (H4C) transformational programme to improve the availability of local family-based placements for our children in care.

22. The proportion of children in care remaining in long term placements of 2 years or more remains high. Latest benchmarking shows 85% of children in care for 2½ years or more have remained in their current placement for more than 2 years. This compares with 68% nationally and 67.4% for the statistical neighbour group. In year reporting is calculated differently so is not comparable with benchmark data, but performance remains in line with previous years.
23. The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation remains high. At 87.5% this is in-line with the national average. The Council has continued to expand and improve Supported Accommodation Provision (including the specialist provision for former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children care leavers which is continuously expanding to meet demand).
24. 50.9% of care leavers aged 19-21 are in education, employment or training including 4% (15 care leavers) in higher education. The education and employment status of care leavers is captured each year on their birthday, so these figures exclude 8% of care leavers where their status has yet to be captured so the department expect this figure to increase in line with the national average once this data has been collected. The achievement service work actively with young people who are not in employment, education or training to make plans and take steps towards their chosen aspirations, including working closely with partner agencies to offer opportunities with local businesses including employability briefings and work experience opportunities. Achievement advisors are linked to each of the leaving care teams to support young people into employment. Over the last year a working group with partners has been established to improve education, employment and training for young people living in semi-independent accommodation, focussing on supporting staff members to be aspirational in supporting young people to meet their potential. The Virtual School works with all children looked after and plans for their futures when leaving care with relevant colleagues to enable a smooth transition, to reach the next steps in their education and to enable them to meet their aspirations. The service have recently increased capacity and is working with partners to focus on support for the Post 16 cohort including those in supported accommodation.
25. There were 24 first time entrants to the youth justice system per 100,000 in Quarter 4 of 2024/25, a reduction of 4 compared with the previous quarter. This equates to an annual reduction of 10% compared with the previous year. This would bring Nottinghamshire in line with the latest statistical neighbour average and 15% below the national average.
26. At 18.6%, the reoffending binary rate remains in line with the previous year and almost half the latest available England and statistical neighbour averages.
27. The proportion of Nottinghamshire pupils obtaining grades 9-5 (a strong pass) in English and Maths increased in 2023/24, up 0.5 percentage points on the previous year. This is 1.6 percentage points above the statistical neighbour average over the same period.

28. The proportion of children classed as persistently absent (more than 10% absence) in primary, secondary and special schools has increased substantially nationally since the Covid pandemic. There has been a slight improvement in this measure locally in 2023/24 with a 0.6 percentage point reduction, as the Council seeks to ensure children regularly attend school. This equates to 512 fewer children who were persistently absent. This means the department are now more than 1.3 percentage points better than the England and statistical neighbour average for this measure.
29. 25.7% of looked after children were recorded as persistent absentees in the 2023/24 academic year – the latest year for which data is available. This is above the national and statistical neighbour averages and seven percentage points above the persistent absence rates for all pupils over the same period. Improving attendance for our looked after children is a priority for the Virtual School. More robust data monitoring systems have been implemented to enable earlier identification and intervention for low attendance. Workshops, training and resources to support attendance and a sense of belonging in education continue to be developed and they form part of the Virtual School's offer to schools, settings, carers and social workers. Reducing suspensions has been another key priority for the Virtual School and this work has resulted in a downward trend for suspensions for Nottinghamshire looked after children which will positively impact attendance over time.
30. 4.2% of Nottinghamshire pupils were subject of one or more suspension during the 2023/24 academic year. This is a slight increase on the previous year but performance in this measure remains in line with statistical neighbours. Suspensions are highest for pupils aged 12, 13 and 14, with more than 10 percent of pupils of these ages receiving one or more suspension during the academic year. Suspensions for pupils aged 4 to 9 are much lower at less than 1% or 1 in 100 pupils receiving a suspension. The rate of suspensions is higher in males (5.3%) than females (3.2%).
31. The proportion of children looked after with at least one suspension has also increased, up 1.1 percentage points on the previous year. Latest benchmarking shows the department are between 2 and 3 percentage points above the England and statistical neighbour average which equates to between 10 and 15 more children with a suspension than the average. Over the same period, no children looked after were permanently excluded from school.
32. Just 0.13% of pupils in special schools were subject to one or more suspensions during the 2023/24 academic year. This is in line with previous years and the England and statistical neighbours average as the department continue to ensure some of the most vulnerable children continue to be supported to receive a good education.

### **Departmental Risks**

33. The department continues to manage key risks as reported at quarter two. The table below describes these risks and reports on their status:

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Description	Reporting Comments
CF1	Service/Project Delivery	Inadequate resourcing across Children and Families to enable transformation and change.	The department currently has 3 major programmes: Families First, Homes for Children and SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) Improvement. Many of the Families First Partnership Programme's features form part of the department's direction of travel so a supporting mandate and aligned resourcing for change is a welcome step. Partnership governance is in place and combined oversight will be through the departmental Learning and Improvement Board.
CF2	Compliance & Regulation	Placement sufficiency for children in local authority care, short breaks/respite, and schools.	<p>Market sufficiency continues to be a challenge, leading to increasing care and specialist education placement costs and a lack of short break provider services. The department are continuing to grow our residential estate in partnership with Homes2Inspire (H2I) and have 4 new homes of which all are now open. The department also have 2 solo homes coming online within the next 6-8 weeks. The department also intend to bring West View children's home back into use in the Autumn. Our block residential care contract has been recommissioned and awarded to H2I (the incumbent provider). Approval to procure homes for children the department find hard to place should be in place by the end of July and the tender process should commence in September 2025. this should support our ambition to eradicate the use of unregulated placements. Fostering retention and recruitment is starting to have a positive impact on budget mitigations.</p> <p>Additional scrutiny of high-cost specialist education placements will commence to mitigate increased growth and spend in this area.</p> <p>A monthly strategic pupil place planning board reviews school sufficiency and makes recommendations for project delivery to provide sustainable school places based upon projection data and future anticipated growth.</p>

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Description	Reporting Comments
CF3	Compliance & Regulation / Reputation	Failure to meet statutory responsibilities resulting in poor inspection/regulatory review outcomes for CFS, Partnerships and/or Schools.	The department have invested in SEND Consultants to support with a review and re-design of our systems, processes and delivery model. The department have developed a new strategy, risk register and governance structure with an independent chair in relation to SEND and currently have high levels of monitoring and oversight from external organisations such as the Department for Education, the Care Quality Commission and NHS England.
CF4	People & Wellbeing	Workforce recruitment, retention and development.	The department are continuing to pursue several internal and external initiatives to enable people to train as social workers and to gain employment with the local authority as social workers. These initiatives will hopefully reduce the reliance on agency staff and help create a more stable workforce. Full benefits of the pipeline into social work will not be seen until Winter 2025. The Government and Department for Education are pursuing national reform of children's social care which will impact on the type of work and the social worker and workloads. The full impact of this will not be known for some time.
CF5	Compliance & Regulation	Changing demographics and behaviours driving service demands.	There is a focus on retaining and recruiting foster carers to enable children to have the opportunity to be cared for in family settings if they are not able to live with family members. Events with providers have been held and will continue to be held to encourage more residential homes for children to be set up in Nottinghamshire for looked after children.
CF6	Technology & Digital	MOSAIC replatforming	A programme supported by external consultants is in place for MOSAIC replatforming which is currently not flagging any critical issues. Two areas of work, implementing MOSAIC finance and a new workflow to support redesign of the Front Door will need to be completed by summer. The latter has issues due to requirements not being finalised which will present a risk to change freeze dates. The department are working with the service to agree a finalisation date and will need to prepare

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Description	Reporting Comments
			service areas for the cut-over period, currently planned for June 2026.

### Summary Financial Position – Period 3 2025/26

- 34. The overall Children and Families Department’s Local Authority Revenue budget is forecast to underspend by £0.4 million after planned use of grant reserves but excluding any redundancy costs.
- 35. The Children & Families Portfolio is forecast to be underspent by £0.1 million, and the Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Portfolio Local Authority Budget is forecast to be underspent by £0.3 million.
- 36. The Dedicated Schools Grant is forecast to be overspent by £31.1 million.

### LA Budget

#### *Children and Families Portfolio*

- 37. The Care, Help and Protection Division is forecast to be overspent by £0.1 million, and the Commissioning and Resources Division is forecast to be underspent by £0.2 million.

#### *Education and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Portfolio*

- 38. The Education Learning and Inclusion Division is forecasting an underspend of £0.3m.
- 39. This report has been collated reflecting the departmental structure changes that were implemented from May 2025.

**Table 1 – Summary Revenue Position**

Change in Variance £000	Period 02 Under(-) / Overspend Variance £000	Division	Annual Budget £000	Actual to Period 03 £000	Year-End Forecast £000	Under(-) / Overspend Variance £000	Variance as % of Budget %
		<b>Children and Families Portfolio</b>					
98	24	Care, Help and Protection	59,454	15,434	59,576	122	0.21
(195)	12	Commissioning & Resources	126,798	22,432	126,615	(183)	0.14
0	0	Capital & Central Charges	2,073	(1,159)	2,073	0	0.00
(97)	36	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>188,325</b>	<b>36,707</b>	<b>188,264</b>	<b>(61)</b>	<b>0.03</b>
		<b>Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Portfolio</b>					
(296)	(16)	Education & Inclusion	17,173	4,959	16,861	(312)	1.82
(0)	0	Capital & Central Charges	10,622	0	10,622	(0)	0.00
(296)	(16)	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>27,796</b>	<b>4,959</b>	<b>27,484</b>	<b>(312)</b>	<b>(1.12)</b>
		<b>Traders</b>					
0	0	Clayfields	(605)	(33)	(605)	0	0.00
(393)	20		215,515	41,633	215,142	(373)	(0.17)
0	0	Transfer to/(from) ear marked reserves	0	0	0	0	
0	0	Transfer to/(from) grant reserves	(2,826)	0	(2,826)	0	
0	0	Transfer to/(from) Traders reserves	(46)	0	(46)	0	
(393)	20		212,643	41,633	212,270	(373)	(0.17)

**Forecast Variances**

40. The main variances are explained in further detail below.

**Children and Families Portfolio**

Care, Help and Protection Division

41. The division is forecasting an overspend of £0.1m versus budget, the position has worsened by £0.1 million since the period 2 forecast. The contributing factors behind this underspend are as follows:

42. £0.6m underspend (£0.6m period 2) on Family Hubs and Early Years. This underspend is due to high levels of vacancies and includes a manual reduction in costs of £0.3m to mirror

the effect of the outstanding National Insurance budget increase, which should be processed late July.

43. £0.4m underspend (£0.4m in period 2) on social worker staffing, which includes £0.6m of temporary budget and a manual reduction in costs of £0.6m for the outstanding NI budget increase as mentioned above. **The full year forecast on agency spend across all teams is £4.1m which is £1.6m lower than the £5.7m spent in 2024-25.** As at period 3 there are 49 FTE agency Team Managers and Social Workers and 13.1 FTE non-social work qualified agency workers.
44. £0.3m underspend (£0.3m in period 2) on Early Help due to the expectations that the increase in the School Penalty notice income will be in line with the amounts seen in 2024/25.
45. £0.2m underspend (£0.2m in period 1) on Leaving Care Support due to lower External Placement Extensions.
46. £0.4m overspend (£0.4m in period 2) on Looked After Children placements. This is attributable to £0.5m overspend on Looked After Children and Section 17 support costs for Children with Disabilities (only around a third of our costs funded by the ICB), a £0.1m overspend on Looked After Children Contact and support costs, offset by a £0.2m underspend on personal allowance payments for Looked After Children aged 16/17 living independently.
47. £0.4m overspend on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) (£0.5m in period 2). Costs have reduced in the month due to a number of factors. The over 18 funding has increased by £32,000 following a reconciliation of the UASC who have recently turned 18. The Council received 4 new U18 UASCs in June that qualified for the additional incentive money, resulting in an additional £30,000 of funding, and staff costs reduced by £26,000 due to the exit of a PA with no planned replacement. Steps have now been taken to ensure that over 18's are not placed in the higher priced supported accommodation, and The department also anticipate the arrival of more under 18's in the coming months, which will hopefully allow us to take advantage of more incentive funding and reduce the overspend further.
48. £0.8m overspend on 'Other costs' (£0.7m in period 2). The increase in the month is driven by a rise in the Foster Carer mileage/travel costs in Looked After Children transport (£42,000) and S17 spend (£47,000) across several of the District Child Protection Teams, Court and Assessment North. Overall, staff running expenses are £0.4m over budget, S17 is £0.3m and Transport is £0.1m.

#### Commissioning and Resources Division

49. The division is reporting a forecast £0.2m underspend (£0.0m period 2) after use of reserves and an anticipated £0.4m pay budget adjustment due for National Insurance and Local Government Pension Scheme rate changes. The main variances are as follows:
50. £1.4m overspend (£1.4m period 2) on **Short Breaks** due to the continued increase in demand. Options to adjust the current short breaks offer were considered and rejected last August. The overspend will continue throughout 2025-26 until the revised offer goes live,

possibly from April 2026. As a reminder, the overspend in 2024-25 was £0.9m. Growth of 15% has been incorporated into the forecast, thus accounting for the increase.

51. £0.3m overspend\* (£0.3m period 2) on Safeguarding mainly due to the budgeted Vacancy Level Turnover and use of agency staff primarily within the Independent Chair Service.
52. **£0.1m underspend (£0.0m period 2) External Looked After Children Placements**, after taking account of a £1.0m temporary virement from Westview residential home which is currently closed.
53. Since April 2024, overall Looked After Children numbers have been steadily reducing, however, external residential placements (and unit costs) continue to increase, albeit at a slower rate over recent months. The trend for the 12 months to June suggest that residential placements are now increasing by around 14 p.a. and has been factored into the forecast accordingly.
54. Whilst agency foster numbers (IFAs) used to be fairly constant, they have reduced by around 40 over the 12 months and are now an area for concern. In contrast, children in internal foster placements had been reducing markedly over many years but appear to have stabilised over the last 12 months. In June, 4 children/carers transferred directly from IFAs to internal. Ideally, there needs to be a combined net increase across both.
55. **External Looked After Children numbers reduced by 5 in the month**, whereas they were forecast to stay the same. The placement mix was neutral. IFAs reduced by 4 (to 267), residential reduced by 4 (to 198), semi-independent block contract increased by 3 (to 72) with semi-independent spot remaining unchanged (at 7).
56. At **Table 1** there is a "LAC Today" summary and external placements graph. This also includes a list of the residential placements over £10,000 per week and an indication of likely Health and now Education contributions.
57. External placement numbers to the end of June reduced from 549 to 544 and are now projected to be 569 at the end of March but assume that IFA numbers recover. The weighted average cost of current external placements reduced slightly to £155,000 versus £142,000 a year ago.
58. £0.9m underspend (£0.9m period 2) on Supported Accommodation due to surplus 16+/New Burdens funding within the new consolidated Children and Families grant.
59. £0.6m underspend\* (£0.6m period 2). There is a £0.3m underspend on Internal Residential due to increased income from bed nights sold to other Local Authorities and Health, and £0.3m underspend on Foster Carer fees.
60. £0.2m underspend\* (£0.2m period 2) on Youth Services. There is a £0.1m underspend on Outdoor Adventures due to a drive to maximise sales and reduce staff/running costs in preparation for 2026/27, when the expectation is that the service will become cost neutral. The remaining £0.1m underspend is due to staff vacancies and additional funding.

*\*Figures adjusted to take into account anticipated National Insurance increase budget adjustments which are likely to be processed late July.*

## ***Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Portfolio***

### **Education Learning & Inclusion Division**

61. The division is reporting an underspend of £0.3m (Balanced budget at P2) There are variances within services as follows:
62. £0.1m overspend forecast in the Sold Offer Service due to increased forecast spend and shortfall in income against budget due to academisation of schools.
63. £0.1m overspend forecast in Governing Body Services due to shortfall in income against budget due to academisation of schools.
64. £0.3m underspend forecast within Pre 16 and Post 16 EHCP Assessment Teams. This is due to growth pressure budget given in 2025/26 and savings in non-recruitment of staff due to the impending restructure of Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS). £391,000 is committed for extra recruitment from September. Job evaluations may further impact the forecast in future months.
65. £0.2m underspend within other services within ICDS.
66. The Education Psychology Service forecast has reduced by £0.3 million from period 2 due to a correction to the forecast recharge to the Dedicated Schools Grant.
67. The above forecast includes the expected extra NI Contributions (budget) to the value of £0.2m for 2025/26.

### **Clayfields (no change, almost as budget)**

68. Clayfields is currently forecast to generate a net surplus of £0.6m compared with its budgeted figure of £0.65m, resulting in a use of reserves of less than £0.05m.
69. At this early stage of the year, there is a high degree of uncertainty with precise forecasts (both income and staffing) as building works are still ongoing, thus limiting bed capacity. We expect full capacity for 20 children to be available again by the end of October. Depending on the children's needs, numbers can vary. We charge the MOJ a bed-night which reflects an operational capacity of 18 beds. The Ministry of Justice has confirmed relatively favourable terms for the existing contract extension from October to December 2025, however, the outcome of the new contract from January 2026 may not be known until September. In the meantime, it is anticipated that the limited available Welfare beds will be priced accordingly to help cover costs (as was the case in 2024-25).

### **Capital and Central Charges**

70. Overall, this is reporting a nil variance to budget.

### **Transfer to / (from) reserves**

71. The following £2.9m budgeted use of reserves is currently being reported (over £0.1m detailed below):

- (£0.1m) Use of Higher Needs Strategic Fund
- (£0.1m) Use of Staying Close
- (£0.1m) Use of Early Years Delivery Support
- (£0.4m) Use of Family Hubs Fund
- (£0.4m) Use of the Adoption East Midlands reserve
- (£1.8m) Use of Wraparound Programme Reserve
- (£0.1m) Use of Notts Alone reserve.

### **Dedicated School Grant**

<b>Previous Month's Variance OS/(US)</b>	<b>Funding Block</b>	<b>Budget £m</b>	<b>Forecast Expenditure £m</b>	<b>Forecast Variance OS/(US) £m</b>
-	Schools	705.750	705.750	-
27.851	High Needs	130.734	161.875	31.141
-	Early Years	128.321	128.321	-
-	Central Services	5.919	5.919	-
<b>27.852</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>970.724</b>	<b>1001.865</b>	<b>31.141</b>

## High Needs Block (HNB) £31.141m Overspend

Service	Budget Allocation 2025/26 £000	Forecast Expenditure 2025/26 £000	Variance 2025/26 £000	Forecast Diff P02 to P03 £000
Special School Budgets (Including Academy place funding paid directly by ESFA)	42,244	42,515	271	-
Special School Equipment & Therapies	850	850	-	-
SEND Improvement	299	301	3	(0)
Place Funding for AP, CCP and FE providers (AP Recoupment & FE Recoupment)	1,554	1,554	-	-
Mainstream Enhanced Provision	1,496	1,496	-	-
Inclusion Services	5,021	5,105	84	129
Devolved Partnership Funding	7,086	7,086	(0)	-
Partnership Team	1,753	1,579	(174)	(88)
SEN Home to School Transport	1,764	1,764	-	-
Post 16 High Needs (outside of special schools and academies)	7,890	10,907	3,017	192
Independent Specialist Provision (EHC Plan)	28,693	55,310	26,617	2,091
Independent Specialist Provision (Non EHC Plan)	4,807	5,807	1,000	1,000
Targetted High Level Needs (HLN)	8,623	8,592	(31)	-
Additional family needs (AFN)	14,012	14,181	169	(6)
Family Network Funding (FNF)	1,564	1,564	-	0
Health Related Education Team (HRET)	1,411	1,496	85	(28)
Physical Disability Specialist Service (PDSS)	487	508	21	0
SEND Divisional Costs	1,181	1,261	80	-
Import/ Export Adjustment		-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>130,734</b>	<b>161,875</b>	<b>31,141</b>	<b>3,290</b>

72. The pressure on the high needs block is primarily attributable to continuing increases in the numbers of pupils with EHCPs across mainstream schools, special schools, post-16 provisions and independent specialist provisions. Due to the significant rise in the number of children with EHCPs and increasing complexity of need, it has not been possible to accommodate all pupils with an EHCP in a maintained school or academy placement, despite new places being created in year. This has necessitated an increased use of Independent and Non-maintained Special Schools
73. The number of pupils funded in 2025/26 within special schools and academies is 1,370, an increase of 86 from January 2024 Moderation numbers. There is one new special school due to open in January 2026 (Horizons) which will be able to educate 144 pupils. The 2025/26 budget also includes an allocation to fund a further 85 pupils, to be placed in-year, within existing special schools and academies.
74. **External specialist education placements (EHCP and Looked After Children)** expenditure in 2024-25 was £48m against a budget of £35m, resulting in a £13m overspend. Despite a large increase in the High Needs Block for 2025-26, only £2m was allocated to this area with the vast majority being allocated to 'upstream' services and schools. With a forecast of £66m (against an allocation of £37m) the forecast overspend is currently drafted as £29m. There was an increase of 22 placements for children in independent non maintained settings from period 2 to period 3 with pupil placements in these settings totalling 655 as at period 3. The top five high-cost placements range from £138,000 to £290,000 per year.
75. The Post 16 Budget has seen a rise of £190,000 from period 2 to £10.9m at period 3, based on current numbers on role only. Any growth due to September 2025 intake is not

known at this time. Mitigation work will have an effect on future years expenditure, and it is expected that this will start to reduce costs from the 2026/27 academic year.

76. The forecast is based on current roll numbers within Independent Non-Maintained, alternative provision and Post 16 and has been corroborated by the historic expenditure trend, which has been driven by increasing EHCP volumes. Potential growth has been excluded at this stage, assuming that the investment in other services eases the demand on this provision. Increased challenge of Post 16 college assessments should also help mitigate further cost increases.

### Early Years Block - Net nil

77. For 2025/26 funding local authorities will receive for universal and additional 3 & 4 year olds and 2 year olds of families receiving additional support will continue to be calculated using the existing methodology, Part-Time Education numbers based on January census data taking 5/12ths of the January 2025 census and 7/12ths of the January 2026 census. The funding mechanism for 2-year-old and under children of working parents continues to be different and will be based on termly headcounts in the summer 2025 and autumn 2025 terms, and the January 2026 census.
78. From 1 September 2025 the entitlement of 9-month-olds and older children of working parents will be extended to 30 hours.
79. The expansion of working parents' entitlements in September, having different approaches to calculating entitlement allocations and funding allocations being determined by future counts, adds complexity to forecasting. If the take up of hours in 2025/26 follows the same pattern as previous years, then the Early Years block could underspend by £0.403m. However, there is uncertainty with forecasting future uptake volumes, and an updated position will be presented once summer term data is available.

### Non-Individual Schools Budget (ISB) Reserve

80. The impact of the 2025/26 Dedicated Schools Grant Forecast on the Schools Non-ISB Reserve is as follows:

Non ISB Reserve	Total £m
<b>Balance bought forward 01.04.2025</b>	1.152
Dedelegated Trade Union Facilities	(0.283)
Small Grants c/f	(0.051)
Forecast Schools Block 2025/26	-
Forecast High Needs Block Overspend 2025/26	(31.141)
Forecast Early Years Block 2025/26	-
Forecast CSSB 2025/26	-
<b>Balance carried forward 31.03.2026 surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>(30.323)</b>

## **Spend on Consultants**

81. There was £63,910 expenditure incurred on consultants within Children & Families to 30 June 2025. In the last financial year, the department spent £151,406.

## **Financial Implications**

82. 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.

**Councillor Rory Green**  
**Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

**Councillor Hana John**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and SEND**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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## **Constitutional Comments (SSR 11/09/25)**

83. These recommendations fall within the scope of matters which may be considered by the Children and Families Select Committee.

## **Financial Comments (JG 11/09/25)**

84. There are no Local Government Reorganisation or 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.

CFS0043

Key Performance Indicator	Paragraph in Main Report	Nottinghamshire							Vital Signs		Comparator Data		
		Current Value	Best to be	Direction of Travel	Performance is	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Reporting Period	Vital Sign Measure?	RAG Rating	Nottinghamshire	National Average	Statistical Neighbours
<b>Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 2 - Supporting Children and Families</b>													
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)	5	67.7%	High	↔	Stable	2023/24 Academic	67.4%	2022/23 Academic			67.4% (22/23 Academic)	67.7% (23/24 Academic)	68.3% (23/24 Academic)
% assessments completed which were a targeted early help assessment	7	29.9%	High	↑	Improving	2025/26 Q1	26.8%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Amber	23.4% (2023/24)	-	-
% children becoming subject of a CIN or CP Plan who had a targeted early help assessment in the previous 2 years	8	15.1%	High	↔	Stable	2025/26 Q1	15.0%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Red	18.9% (2023/24)	-	-
% of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (exc. exceptions) - year to date **	10	44.4%	High	↑	Improving	2025 Q2	47.7%	2025 Q1	Y	Amber	37.5% (2024)	46.4% (2024)	32.7% (2024)
% of EHCP Annual review amendments issued within 12 weeks - year to date **	12	93.8%	High	↔	Stable	2025 Q2	98.1%	2025 Q1	Y	Green	-	-	-
% EHCP annual reviews completed within 12 months - year to date **	11	41.6%	High	↑	Improving	2025 Q2	37.4%	2025 Q1	Y	Red	-	-	-
<b>Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 3 - Keeping children, vulnerable adults and communities safe</b>													
% Child and Family Assessments resulting in NFA (cumulative for the year)	6	59.5%	Low	↓	Improving	2025/26 Q1	54.5%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Red	64.3% (2023/24)	30.3% (2023/24)	30.2% (2023/24)
Child and Family assessments for Children's Social Care carried out within statutory timescales	9	95.7%	High	↔	Stable	2025/26 Q1	95.5%	2024/25 Q4			95.2% (2023/24)	84.5% (2023/24)	83.9% (2023/24)
Re-referral rate	13	25.3%	Low	↓	Improving	2025/26 Q1	26.6%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Amber	25.8% (2023/24)	22.4% (2023/24)	20.7% (2023/24)
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan on more than one occasion	14	26.0%	Low	↓	Improving	2025/26 Q1	28.0%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Amber	24.9% (2023/24)	24.7% (2023/24)	22.1% (2023/24)
Children who are subject to a child protection plan for 2 years or more	15	1.3%	Low	↓	Improving	2025/26 Q1	1.6%	2024/25 Q4			1.6% (2023/24)	2.6% (2023/24)	2.3% (2023/24)
Percentage of child protection cases reviewed within timescale	16	96.0%	High	↑	Improving	2025/26 Q1	94.7%	2024/25 Q4			89.8% (2023/24)	89.8% (2023/24)	90.0% (2023/24)
% children looked after in kinship placements	18	10.5%	High	↑	Improving	2025/26 Q1	8.5%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Amber	-	-	-
% children who leave care subject to an SGO or CAO	17	15.9%	High	↓	Deteriorating	2025/26 Q1	19.9%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Amber	17% (2023/24)	14% (2023/24)	15% (2023/24)
% of children looked after in family-based setting	19	62.3%	High	↔	Stable	2024/25 Q3	62.2%	2024/25 Q4			-	-	-
No. of children in care placed in unregulated placements	20	15	Low	↓	Improving	2025/26 Q1	20	2024/25 Q4	Y	Red	23 (2023/24)	-	-
Percentage of children looked after placed 20 miles or more from home	21	21.9%	Low	↔	Stable	2025/26 Q1	21.5%	2024/25 Q4	Y	Amber	20.0% (2023/24)	19.0% (2023/24)	26.0% (2023/24)
Percentage of children looked after remaining in long-term placements*	22	63.2%	High	↔	Stable	2025/26 Q1	64.7%	2024/25 Q4			85.0% (2023/24)	68.0% (2023/24)	67.4% (2023/24)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	23	87.5%	High	↔	Stable	2025/26 Q1	89.9%	2024/25 Q4			93% (2023/24)	88% (2023/24)	90.8% (2023/24)
Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) aged 19-21	24	50.9%	High	↔	Stable	2025/26 Q1	52.3%	2024/25 Q4			51% (2023/24)	54% (2023/24)	56.7% (2023/24)
First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (per 100,000)	25	24	Low	↓	Improving	2024/25 Q4	28	2024/25 Q3	Y	Green	138 (2023)	143 (2023)	122 (2023)
Re-offending binary rate	26	18.6	Low	↔	Stable	2024/25 Q4	12.8	2024/25 Q3	Y	Amber	18.6 (2024/25)	31.2 (2021/22)	30.9 (2021/22)
<b>Annual Delivery Plan Ambition 4 - Building skills that help people get good jobs</b>													
Percentage of pupils achieving 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths at KS4	27	45.5%	High	↑	Improving	2023/24 Academic	45.0%	2022/23 Academic			45.5% (23/24 Academic)	46.2% (23/24 Academic)	43.9% (23/24 Academic)
Percentage of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools classed as persistent absentees	28	18.6%	Low	↓	Improving	2023/24 Academic	19.2%	2022/23 Academic			18.64% (23/24 Academic)	19.95% (23/24 Academic)	19.96% (23/24 Academic)
Percentage of Children Looked After classed as persistent absentees	29	25.7%	Low	↑	Deteriorating	2023/24 Academic	22.1%	2022/23 Academic			25.7% (23/24 Academic)	20.8% (23/24 Academic)	22.7% (23/24 Academic)
Percentage of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools with at least one suspension	30	4.2%	Low	↑	Deteriorating	2023/24 Academic	3.8%	2022/23 Academic			4.23% (23/24 Academic)	4.04% (23/24 Academic)	4.17% (23/24 Academic)
Percentage of Children Looked After with at least one suspension	31	16.9%	Low	↑	Deteriorating	2022/23 Academic	15.8%	2022/23 Academic			16.94% (22/23 Academic)	13.72% (22/23 Academic)	14.33% (22/23 Academic)

Key Performance Indicator	Paragraph in Main Report	Nottinghamshire					Vital Signs		Comparator Data				
		Current Value	Best to be	Direction of Travel	Performance is	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Reporting Period	Vital Sign Measure?	RAG Rating	Nottinghamshire	National Average	Statistical Neighbours
Percentage of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools permanently excluded	32	0.13%	Low	↔	Stable	2023/24 Academic	0.10%	2022/23 Academic			0.13% (23/24 Academic)	0.13% (23/24 Academic)	0.15% (23/24 Academic)
Percentage of Children Looked After permanently excluded	31	0.00%	Low	↔	Stable	2022/23 Academic	0.00%	2021/22 Academic			0.00% (22/23 Academic)	0.1% (22/23 Academic)	0.00% (22/23 Academic)
Percentage not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16-17 (or status not known)	33	2.9%	Low	↓	Improving	2025/26 Q1	3.2%	2024/25 Q4			-	-	-

\* 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.

**13 October 2025****Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT  
COMMITTEE****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 was developed through the use of a workshop session where committee members and other non-Cabinet members had the opportunity to learn about the work and priorities of the department in advance of making suggestions for items for inclusion.
4. The work programme has been approved by Overview Committee and 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.
5. The Forward Plan is available online for members to consider –

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/ForwardPlans/tabid/68/FolderID/20/Current-Forward-Plan.aspx>

**Other Options Considered**

6. 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**

7. 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.

**Councillor Richard Darrington, Chairman of the Children and Families Select Committee**

**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**

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 2025/26 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of the report	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
13 October 2025	Outcomes and Experiences of Children and Young People with SEND – Progress Report	Education and SEND	To receive a report on the progress made in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
13 October 2025	Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) – Progress Report on Priorities and Annual Report 2024/25	Children and Families	To receive and consider the NSCP Annual Report.	Annual item	Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
13 October 2025	Performance, Finance and Risk Update	Children and Families Education and SEND	To provide a progress report on departmental performance, risk and financial position.	Committee meeting	Supporting communities and families Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
1 December 2025	Youth Justice Strategic Plan	Children and Families	To examine the delivery of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
1 December 2025	School attendance and young people not in education, employment or training	Children and Families Education and SEND	To examine the issues around school attendance, persistent absence and the activity being carried out to support young people to access and engage in post-16 education and training.	Work Programming session	Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe Supporting communities and families Building skills that help people to get good local jobs

## WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of the report	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
1 December 2025	Implementation and impact of Family Hubs	Children and Families	To examine the implementation and impact of the roll out of Family Hub networks across Nottinghamshire.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
16 March 2026	Outcomes and Experiences of Children and Young People with SEND – Progress Report	Education and SEND	To receive a report on the progress made in implementing improvements to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.  To include a detailed look at how SEND children and young people are supported in mainstream schools.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
16 March 2026	Performance, Finance and Risk Update	Children and Families  Education and SEND	To provide a progress report on departmental performance, risk and financial position	Committee meeting	Supporting communities and families  Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
16 March 2026	Families First Partnership Programme and Children’s Social Care Reform	Children and Families	To examine the impact and implications of the Families First Partnership Programme and Children’s Social Care Reform on how Children and Families Services are delivered.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families  Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
13 July 2026	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	Children and Families  Education and SEND	To examine the work being carried out on how services delivered by the Children and Families Department will be delivered as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.	Work Programming session	A forward looking and resilient Council

## WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of the report	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
13 July 2026	Child Exploitation Support	Children and Families	To examine the Council's approach to tackling child exploitation.	Work Programming session	Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
13 July 2026	Small Schools Sustainability Strategy	Education and SEND	To examine the implementation and impact of the Small Schools Sustainability Strategy.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
13 July 2026	Fostering recruitment and retention	Children and Families	To receive a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations from the task and finish review carried out in Spring 2025	Committee	Supporting communities and families Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe

### Reviews

Project Start Date	Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of Review	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
November 2025	Kinship Care	Children and Families	To examine how the Council can best support kinship carers.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
February 2026	Transition of Service Users from Children and Families Services to Adult Social Care Services  (Joint item with the Adult Social Care & Health SC)	Children and Families  Education and SEND	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.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe

## WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE

### Items pending scheduling or removal

Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of the report	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
Meeting children's needs through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	Children and Families	To receive a progress report on the approach to meeting children's needs through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.	Committee	Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe

### Items to be scheduled for 2026/27

Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of the report	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
School Readiness	Children and Families Education and SEND	To receive a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations from the joint task and finish review that was carried out in conjunction with the Health Scrutiny Committee.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families

### Items for information briefings for committee members

Item	Cabinet Member Responsibility	Purpose of the report	Issue raised by	Nottinghamshire Plan Ambitions
SEND - Neurodevelopmental pathways and the Graduated approach	Education and SEND	To provide briefing papers on the Neurodevelopmental pathway and the graduated approach used to support children and young people with SEND.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
SACRE Annual Reports	Education and SEND	To share the SACRE Annual Report with committee members.	Work Programming session	Supporting communities and families
Secondary Pupil Place Planning	Education and SEND	To receive a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations from the task and finish review carried out in 2024. <a href="#">Page 78 of 78</a>	Committee	Supporting communities and families