

Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Children's Services Plan

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

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

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

| | Improvement Action | CLT Accountable Officer | Lead Officer | What we hope to achieve | Timeframe | Success Measure | Progress | |
|-----|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1.1 | <p>Increased number of internal fostering placements available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing prioritised support of marketing and communications colleagues with comprehensive campaign through to July 2020 Corporate and partnership approach to improve offer to foster carers (leisure facilities, council tax discount, parking etc). | <p>Colin Pettigrew</p> <p>Marje Toward</p> <p>Anthony May/ Adrian Smith</p> | <p>Steve Edwards</p> <p>Luke Barrett/ Catherine Kelly</p> <p>Derek Higton/ Pete Mathieson/ Chris Ward/ Andy Dawson</p> | <p>Safe, caring and loving placements for children.</p> <p>Higher percentage of foster placements are made internally</p> <p>Any unnecessary expenditure is avoided</p> <p>A net 50 additional internal foster placements</p> | <p>Rolling marketing campaign to July 2020</p> <p>Revised offer for foster carers by April 2020</p> | <p>Savings target achieved</p> <p>A net increase of 50 fostering placements by March 2021</p> <p>Increase in fostering enquiries of 20%</p> <p>Increase in conversion from enquiry to approved foster carer of 10%</p> | <p>The recent recruitment campaign has been successful and there are 45 new foster carers scheduled to go before panel between Sept-Dec 20. Progress has been slowed as assessments in the home have not been able to take place due to COVID19.</p> <p>Targets for increased fostering enquiries of and conversion from enquiry to approval are being met. However, as of July 2020 the net number of foster care placements is minus seven, due to the delays in new approvals (as above) and a higher than anticipated retirement of carers, again in part related to COVID19. A net gain in foster carers of 19 is anticipated by March 2021 against the target of 50.</p> <p>Data on foster carers has significantly improved and work is in train to ensure that this area continues to develop.</p> | Progress compromised by COVID 19. |
| 1.2 | <p>Increase in internal residential children's home capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 4 bed residential home opened. Consideration when remodelling wider NCC estate and in planning applications for housing developments to increase children's home capacity/ accommodation for care leavers | <p>Colin Pettigrew/ Adrian Smith</p> | <p>Devon Allen/ Neil Gamble</p> | <p>Timely mobilisation of new residential home. Four new NCC residential placements available avoiding the need for more costly external residential placements and resulting in good outcomes for the children.</p> | <p>Timeframe is largely dependent on the operating model agreed by Members, but is estimated at between June and September 2020.</p> | <p>Four additional residential placements for Nottinghamshire in a NCC owned home by May 2020.</p> | <p>Further extensions to the placement capacity within the block contract have been successfully negotiated with our trusted providers (see 1.3 below), and approval has been obtained via Policy Committee to increase the Council's internally managed residential estate.</p> <p>Feasibility work commenced but has largely been paused due to COVID19. The specifics of this work, which will recommence ASAP, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the first pair of 2-bed homes on the open market; secure 2 x 2 bed homes as part of the wider development of the Top Wighay site; and considering options for the replacement for the existing Oakhurst residential home | Progress compromised by COVID 19. |

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| 1.3 | Increase the number of "block contract" residential placements with external providers. The total number of new homes under this arrangement will be four. | Colin Pettigrew | Jon Hawketts | Contracts which provide a better cost per placement (as long as occupancy is maintained) and therefore help reduce placement costs. | First two homes by September 2019 | Savings target achieved New homes operational and fully occupied by February 2020. | The first 4 in-county homes for the exclusive use of Nottinghamshire children-in-care are now fully operational. All are fully occupied (11 placements in total). Two further homes are en-route to becoming exclusively for Nottinghamshire (timeframes dictated by the care plans for CYP in the care of other local authorities who are currently placed at these homes). An additional home has been sourced by the provider to become a specialist unit to accommodate a Nottinghamshire child in care who is deaf and presents with a range of special needs. The provider is presently seeking planning and regulatory approval for this bespoke facility | Complete. |
| 1.4 | Establish a D2N2 Commissioning Framework for residential and Independent Fostering Agencies. | Colin Pettigrew | Jon Hawketts | To use economies of scale to reduce the cost of placements. To develop the market across the D2N2 footprint to increase diversity, availability and quality. This will also reduce costs per placement overall. Further development of block arrangements may also reduce unit costs. | February 2020 | New D2N2 Framework in place | This framework is now live with contract management arrangements agreed. | Complete |
| 1.5 | Develop enhanced models of semi-independent accommodation for the most complex care leavers in smaller units. | Colin Pettigrew | Jon Hawketts | The most complex care leavers often fail to make a successful transition from residential care to supported accommodation. By providing smaller units an earlier successful transition could be made which is better for the young person as they reach adulthood and is also significantly cheaper than residential care. It also frees places in residential care for those who need it the most. | Some already operational; others planned to be so by 2020/21 | 14 new units in place by April 2020 Reduced instances and level of evictions Improved outcomes for individual young people (as evidenced via Outcome Star scores) Unit cost reduction (average for 16/17 yo placements taking into account inflation etc.) | 1 smaller 5-bed 24 hour staffed setting has been developed and is operational. A site has been identified for Core plus service and ongoing discussions with Strategic Business Partner and current provider regarding its development Approval sought to commission spot placements via the DPPS to meet the needs of the most vulnerable care leavers aged 18+. Guidance note developed. Teenage parent service is now staffed 24/7 (6 bed unit), Plans for recommissioning for 2022 are being progressed and a market position statement has been produced. | Ongoing programme of work |

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| 1.6 | Delivery of the Social Impact Bond Model (jointly with Nottingham and Derby City Councils). | Colin Pettigrew | Jon Hawketts | To reduce the number of young people in high cost residential placements and therefore reduce the pressure on the placements budget. To make use of up to £3m of Big Lottery (LCF) funding. | SIB to be operational by Feb 2020 (revised) | SIB to become operational, receiving referrals and delivering positive outcomes for individual CYP and delivering budget savings Positive change in placement mix / reduction in high cost placements | The SIB and related services have now commenced. | COMPLETE |
| 1.7 | To ensure that the corporate Digital Development Programme supports delivery of the Children and Families Department's "Digital Development Plan" | Adrian Smith / Colin Pettigrew | Katharine Smith Tracy Hill Sue Milburn Jon Hawketts | Using technology to achieve simple and immediate access and better support for service users More efficient access to relevant information between organisations within the children's partnership (e.g. social care and CAMHS). Care leavers better able to access information about local offer. | An 18 month delivery plan will be developed for the period September 2020 to March 2022. | Delivery of the Children and Families Department's "Digital Development Plan" | A Digital Development Plan for the department. The plan was presented as a part of the department's annual update to Improvement and Change Committee in January 2020 and will be implemented and review regularly over the next few years. Significant progress has been made on the use of digital and technological approaches as a result of necessity during COVID19 to the extent that a review of the Plan will take place in autumn 2021 will take place to extend our ambitions. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How technology can be used to enhance communication with children, families and partner agencies • Integration of care planning and sharing key information across agencies • Supporting, motivating and monitoring service user progress through technology • Using technology to maintain accurate records whilst reducing bureaucracy | Ongoing programme of work |
| 1.8 | Ensuring there is sufficient/prioritised capacity to develop the BI reports required to meet Ofsted requirements (including workforce reporting), baseline and track benefits of change programmes, and facilitate management decision- | Nigel Stevenson | Rob Disney | Reduction in manual tasks undertaken within frontline services thus freeing up management and business support capacity. Better data on which to inform decision making. | End of September 2019 for Ofsted reporting Further development by June 2020 | A suite of appropriate reports and dashboards available including forecasts of future need. | BI reporting continues to be developed in line with priorities agreed by the departments Digital Development Board and takes into account the available capacity in the team. Whilst there is a list of work waiting to be completed this is not having any immediate operational impact. COVID19 has led to the diversion of some resources. | Ongoing programme of work |

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| | making and need / pressure forecasting. | | | <p>Better data upon which to inform benefits monitoring of projects</p> <p>Fulfil Ofsted requirement.</p> <p>Ability to track impact of project initiatives on recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>Better decision making on use of agency staff.</p> | | | | |
| 1.9 | <p>Additional project management capacity/financial resource for capacity within the department to be established to deliver the following change projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing whole family safeguarding teams between children's and adults; Making the front door delivery model sustainable within the context of increasing demand; Taking a joint commissioning approach with health for children with complex needs; Delivering a five year SEND transformation strategy and Developing a coherent approach to supporting children living in | Nigel Stevenson /Colin Pettigrew | Sue Milburn/ Lucy Peel / Marion Clay | <p>More timely delivery of a range of projects intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve practice and through this children's outcomes; release capacity within frontline teams; and make more efficient use of resources and avoid cost where possible. <p>SEND budgets are managed so that large budget deficits do not appear in the Dedicated Schools Grant.</p> | <p>To be determined once projects initiated. Next step for progressing family safeguarding is joint CFS and ASCH leadership team meeting on 17 September.</p> <p>SEND strategy – initial phases are being delivered following Higher Level Needs budget review. This is being developed into a formal 5 year strategy for implementation from spring 2020.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing whole family safeguarding teams between children's and adults; Making the front door delivery model sustainable within the context of increasing demand; Taking a joint commissioning approach with health for children with complex needs; Delivering a five year SEND transformation strategy and Developing a coherent approach to supporting children living in kinship arrangements. | <p>Over recent months much of this programme of work has stalled due to the prioritisation of COVID19 and the need to divert resources to the emergency response. These projects are being considered within the context of the Recovery and Transformation work happening corporately and some may form part of "cross cutting" corporate approaches to change.</p> <p>Joint commissioning work with health will be particularly important as an area of future work given the number of very high costs placements where the young people have significant mental health problems and the significant decrease in the contribution made by Continuing Care in recent years.</p> <p>The resource for capacity to deliver change projects will need to be considered as a priority as part of the establishment of the revised model for transformation and change within the Council. Currently there is no resource in place to deliver the whole family safeguarding project and project management resource for the fostering project has been diverted due to COVID 19.</p> | Progress compromised by COVID 19. |

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| | <p>kinship arrangements.</p> <p>Anticipated additional capacity requirements: 2 project managers, 3 programme officers within programmes and projects, plus funding for 2 project manager posts to be hosted within the department, graduate trainee.</p> | | | | | | | |
| 1.10 | Ensuring that sold services are achieving full cost recovery in all instances | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Accurately calculating full costs and having charges which reflect these | 1 April 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full cost calculated • income achieved | <p>An initial review of all sold services has been conducted within the department during and recommendations established to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maximise income - identify services where services are running at a loss and where recovery is unlikely and change is required - identify services that are generating surpluses but below the level anticipated where the business model may require review <p>This will include looking at the short and long term impacts of COVID19.</p> | Ongoing programme of work |
| 1.11 | Pilot the Safer Families for Children model to reduce the increases in children entering care | Colin Pettigrew | Steve Edwards | Reduction against the forecast for children entering care | Pilot until March 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics to be agreed | Awarded and pilot identified to take place in Ashfield | NEW – Just commenced |
| 1.12 | Conduct a review of the departmental process for joint funding decisions with health in respect of Continuing Care for children. | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Increased health contributions where relevant and appropriate | March 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater consensus and satisfaction in respect of CCfC funding outcomes | This review has been completed and new processes have been put into place. | Complete |

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2. Creating the conditions for good practice to flourish

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| 2.1 | Taking a corporate approach to parking at all sites to ensure social workers have prioritised access to parking. | Adrian Smith | Derek Higton | Better efficiency of social work time. Improved staff morale. | To be determined. | Improved staff satisfaction ratings as measured through feedback via annual health check and through Practice Forum | The increase in home working due to COVID19 and a reflection on the longer-term implications of this will need be reflected in future plans. | Withdrawn |
| 2.2 | Ensuring that the smartphones for social workers function as smartphones at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than the current planning go live date of October 2019. | Nigel Stevenson | Nigel Harlow | Social workers better able to work efficiently. Would mean that Apps that have been commissioned (Mind of My Own, Guardian 24) can be used on work phones. Reduction in risk of IG breaches. Improved staff morale. | All social workers to have smartphones by October 2019 | All relevant staff having functioning smartphones Improved staff morale as measured through feedback via annual health check and through Practice Forum | 250 devices were upgraded to an interim smartphone solution prior to Oct 2019 as planned. During December 2019 all of the devices were upgraded to the fully managed solution to bring them into line with NCC security policies'. | Complete |
| 2.3 | Introduction of Guardian 24 on smartphones to improve personal safety for workers during visits in the community | Nigel Stevenson / Marje Toward | John Nilan | Improved staff morale. Reduction in cost (current solution more expensive). | April 2020 | All relevant staff have access to Guardian 24. Improvement in percentage of staff feeling safe as measured through annual health check (baseline through health check of 79%). | This work has been re-launched and roll out of the application will begin imminently | Delayed due to COVID19 |
| 2.4 | Introduce a clear values-based framework within which to work and support in managing the challenges of complex case work (rollout of reflective group supervision). | Colin Pettigrew | Lucy Peel | Improve case progress and successful outcomes therefore over time reducing the number of cases requiring a social worker. Increase job satisfaction and therefore social worker retention. This then reduces the need for | Rollout across District Child Protection Teams and the Children's Disability Service by September 2019. Further roll outs to follow. | Social work caseloads are within the set manageable number Reduced drift and delay (average duration of child in need and child protection cases) Improved staff retention during 2020-21 | Implementation of the practice model has been delayed due to COVID 19 however work has now recommenced on the following areas of project activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths-based training for managers • Virtual group reflective supervision • Virtual development day planned for October • Virtual group reflective supervision for team managers • Work initiated on use of strengths-based language | Ongoing programme of work |

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| | | | | expensive agency workers. | | Continued reduction in use of agency staff during 2020-21 | | |
| 2.5 | Provide support recognising the emotional toll of the work that social workers do (piloting Schwartz Rounds, access to counselling support and a health and wellbeing hub). | Colin Pettigrew | Lucy Peel | Reduce stress related absence and therefore for the need for expensive agency worker cover. Improve social worker recruitment and retention through the offer to social workers. | Pilot commences June 2019. Full rollout out January 2020 pending evaluation. | Improved staff retention Improved staff wellbeing as measured through health check Reduction in stress related absence | Schwartz Rounds were paused due to COVID 19 however virtual sessions have now started to take place, initially focusing on newly qualified social workers and the looked after team. | Ongoing programme of work |
| 2.6 | Good continuing professional development and career progression opportunities through a refreshed CPD offer for experienced social workers and new team managers, and developing additional advanced practitioner roles. | Colin Pettigrew / Marje Toward | Lucy Peel / Helen Richardson | Improved social worker recruitment and retention through the offer to social workers. | Detailed action plan being developed. | Improved staff retention during 2020-21 Quality of practice as assessed through the Quality Management Framework | A revised workforce plan for Children and Families is being developed which will incorporate strengths-based practice and integrate the requirements of the knowledge and skill statements (KSS) for practitioners and supervisors. Dedicated information about the training offer linked to each KSS has been developed and will be promoted to staff. CPD delivery has been revised in light of social distancing with the training plan currently being reviewed. The creation of advanced practitioner posts was approved by CYP Committee in June 2020 and an implementation plan is being developed. | Ongoing programme of work |
| 2.7 | NEW ACTION Develop a better and more consistent the understanding of outcomes from different placement settings through extension of the use of outcome stars | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Increased understanding of the outcomes from different placements and providers | April 2021 | Introduction of outcome start to providers Annual reporting to inform commissioning and sufficiency | | Not yet commenced |

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3. Improving departments longer term efficiency and effectiveness

| | Improvement Action | CLT Accountable Officer | Lead Officer | What we hope to achieve | Timeframe | Success Measure | Progress | Status |
|-----|---|-------------------------|----------------|---|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 3.1 | A review of the financial culture across the department is undertaken including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A "stock take" against the recommendations identified by Newton in 2018 A development programme for all budget holders to improve confidence and consistency in financial matters | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Consistent attention to the potential financial consequences of decisions so that there can be planned for. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newton stock take by June 2020 Development programme roll out from September 2020 | <p>Reduced levels of budget variance</p> <p>Contingency plans are in place where adverse financial conditions are predicted</p> <p>Budgets are managed in line with guidance and financial regulations</p> | <p>A stock take against Newton's recommendations has been undertaken as part of the new review process by Newton. These are feeding into new transformation plans.</p> <p>Funding that had been identified for a new Strategic Planning manager post will and this post is no longer available. Alternative ways of delivering the proposed programme of work are under discussion.</p> | At risk |
| 3.2 | To develop a revised vision and mission for the department for the period up until 2023 supported by key plans or strategies to support areas of financial risk including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement sufficiency and commissioning Social care delivery and demand management Workforce sufficiency | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Improved long term, planning around areas that influence financial risk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental Vision and mission by June 2020 Revised supporting "strategies" by November 2020 | Vision and strategies in place and communicated appropriately across the department | A draft of a revised departmental vision is currently being consulted on. This will drive future departmental change and service development work and will align with wider Council transformation. | In progress but delayed by COVID19 |
| 3.3 | To implement a rolling "challenge process" for all Group Managers in relation to budget management. This will be strengths based and will adopt an appreciative enquiry approach. | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Improved attention and accountability for budget issues and support in identifying improvement actions | Every 6-months from July 2020 | <p>Meeting schedule and methodology in place</p> <p>Improvement plans being implemented at group level</p> | Funding that had been identified for a new Strategic Planning manager post will and this post is no longer available. Alternative ways of delivering the proposed programme of work are under discussion. | At risk |
| 3.4 | To review the medium-term capacity required to drive a more financially aware performance and transformation culture across the department. | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Cultural change so finance becomes an embedded element of all change and performance management | Capacity in place by August 2020 | Capacity identified and in place with a time-limited programme of work | Funding that had been identified for a new Strategic Planning manager post will and this post is no longer available. Alternative ways of delivering the proposed programme of work are under discussion. | At risk |

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| 3.5 | To continue to identify key financial data, unit costs and benchmarking for both externally commissioned services (through the Commissioning and Contracts Board) and for those services provided by the Council itself. | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | An understanding of how departmental spend and performance are linked and if greater efficiency or better outcomes can be achieved. | September 2020 | Framework in place that can identify areas for challenge in relation to spend vs performance | Work to analyse average costs, cost trends and remedial action is being undertaken at a regional level through the ADCS group, chaired by a Nottinghamshire Service Director. | Work underway |
| 3.6 | NEW ACTION For a dashboard to be developed that shows occupancy in our internal residential homes and block contract beds | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones / Rob Disney | To ensure occupancy is maximised whenever possible and appropriate. | January 2021 | Dashboard in place Regular review by senior managers | | Not yet commenced |
| 3.7 | NEW ACTION Develop a "shadow budget" for our internal residential homes that allows for reports that offer a comparison against commercial providers | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Develop a better understanding of unit costs in our internal homes and a price comparison with provision in the external sector | March 2021 | Basis of calculations agreed Quarterly report in place | | Not yet commenced |
| 3.8 | NEW ACTION Produce a revised placement sufficiency strategy with close alignment to regional work and market development | Colin Pettigrew | Laurence Jones | Improve future planning of the market | March 2021 | Sufficiency strategy produced and presented to Committee | | Not yet commenced |