

Theme	Position Statement	Strengths ¹	Challenges & Priorities
<p>Children in Care</p>	<p>There were 950 Children in Care in November 2022, a fall of 35 for the same period in the previous year. Nottinghamshire continues to be lower than the national average. Nottinghamshire has seen significant increases in the number of children aged over 16 becoming looked after, more than double the rate seen in 2017/18 and 2018/19. We continue to perform very well in the stability of placements for our looked after children, with the proportion of 3 or more placements in-year remaining well below our statistical neighbours and the East Midlands and England averages. For those children becoming looked after and new placements during 2021/22, the proportion of children placed outside Nottinghamshire is higher than statistical neighbours. The proportion of children achieving 9-4 pass in English and Maths is 23.4%, which is below statistical neighbours.</p>	<p>Our social workers have positive and consistent relationships with their children, and they talk about them with genuine warmth and care. There is a stable leadership team who manage and support staff in the service to provide strong management oversight and supervision to ensure children experience positive outcomes in care. There are varied standard functions in place to ensure that creative and innovative placement support solutions are continuously being offered to sustain placements and secure long-lasting secure care and relationships for children. Young people report improved levels of emotional and mental health well-being through support secured through the “You Know Your Mind” project which have helped to stabilise placements. Our transitional personal advisor team means there is effective transition planning to our leaving care service with all young people being allocated a personal advisor by 17 to plan the transition and being able to develop the skills and self-confidence required to function more independently when they cease to be looked after. We continuously strive for our children in care to have access to a wide range of education, employment and training opportunities through strong partnerships with schools, further</p>	<p>Develop Pathway Plans to be more strengths-based and focused, improving the quality and timeliness so young people engage with them more. Respond to the growing complex care needs of our children by maximising the funding allocated for a multi-disciplinary approach to children placed in supported accommodation. Due to the rise in the number of UASC we will increase our capacity for the national transfer scheme to ensure we are transferring young people to be cared for safely and promptly. Review and refine the process for children in care placed out of the County to receive timely and appropriate mental health support. Agreeing and implementing our Sufficiency Strategy which aims to develop provision to meet the needs of children and</p>

¹ Strengths are derived from audits, feedback, reviews, Mind of My Own, surveys, performance information and consultation groups

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Fostering	<p>The Fostering service continues its efforts to grow by recruiting new foster carers across the D2N2 partnership and continue to develop the support offer to retain existing carers</p> <p>There has been a slight decrease in the number of children placed in foster care. Of the Children Looked After on 31st March 2022, 636 children were in a fostering placement. This equates to 66.1% of the overall LAC population on this date, down from 66.7% who were in a fostering placement on 31st March 2021 – this mirrors the national picture.</p> <p>Despite the decrease overall in the percentage of children in care living in the same placement for more than two years (58.4% for 2021-22 compared with 89% for 2020-21) there continues to be a stable rate of children with the same carers with 4/5 of those children living in the same placement made up of children placed with internal foster carers</p>	<p>education settings and both national and local businesses.</p> <p>The take-up of training for foster carers is high and cover a variety of topics to meet our foster carers' and service's needs including D2N2 pre-approval and therapeutic training. There is a huge sense of support and camaraderie amongst Nottinghamshire foster carers created by effective support mechanisms, such as fostering conferences, virtual fostering support hubs and a Fostering Liaison Advisory Group (FLAG) run by foster carers. Foster carers feel an invaluable level of support from their supervising social workers and the fostering team. Staff go above and beyond to plan new placements and maintain existing placements with local foster carers through weekly meetings with the placements team, offering positive challenge and support where needed.</p>	<p>young people in care locally, as far as is possible.</p> <p>The overriding challenge we experience is being able to recruit and retain the number of local foster carers for our children in care, especially during the cost-of-living crisis. We are prioritising the following to overcome this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploring different and more collaborative ways of recruiting foster carers across the D2N2 partnership ○ Regularly reviewing foster carer allowances to keep up with the competitive market ○ Reviewing the support offer to retain as many foster carers as possible ○ Targeting communication and marketing campaigns across different social media platforms to promote and raise awareness about the advantages and rewards of becoming a Nottinghamshire foster carer ○ Although improved, secure increased attendance of secondary carer and SSW at reviews to ensure they are as inclusive, beneficial

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			and supportive as possible to our foster carers
Kinship	<p>A kinship care review was commissioned in January 2020, seeking to review, strengthen and re-design the current arrangements for kinship care in Nottinghamshire (children in friends and family placements). In order to promote and support kinship arrangements a post order specialist Kinship Support Service has been implemented.</p> <p>Kinship placements are an essential plank of Nottinghamshire's placement sufficiency almost 50% of new Foster carers are Family and Friends, and there are around 750 live Special Guardianship Orders in the county alongside child arrangement orders.</p> <p>Between October 2021 and March 2022, Special Guardianship Orders have accounted for 14 cases where a child has ceased to be Looked After by Nottinghamshire.</p>	<p>There has been an increase in the number of children and young people living in kinship arrangements in Nottinghamshire., with such orders now in excess of those children placed for adoption.</p> <p>We are currently developing a Permanence Strategy and Family and Friends Strategy; these will be coproduced with Children in Care and Care Leavers and will reflect our increasing recognition of Kinship Care.</p> <p>The authority has created a more robust process for overseeing unregulated placements since 2019, and we have reduced the number of these placements. As part of the Kinship Review, and as the outcome of a recent audit, we will ensure that these unregulated placements have access to support.</p>	<p>Implement a dedicated kinship support service and ensure the support offer and remit of the team is clearly understood by professionals and families.</p> <p>Continue the work to assess the budgetary impact of changing our means testing of kinship carers, with a view to making a more generous and well understood offer of financial support.</p> <p>Ensure kinship carers have robust support plans which are regularly reviewed, and access to support regardless of the child's legal status.</p>
Adoption	<p>Nottinghamshire is the host of and provides leadership for Adoption East Midlands, the regional adoption agency (AEM), which is a partnership arrangement between Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, and Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>Adoption East Midlands works closely with the permanence team in Nottinghamshire to track children</p>	<p>Timeliness of adoption key performance measures continues to be in line with or better than national or statistical neighbours' figures.</p> <p>AEM is able to use the best practice from each local authority to provide the best service. There is collaborative working between the Local Authorities, as managers, to improve practice.</p> <p>AEM has a pool of adopters, across the geography and if there are no suitable adopters, then works together with local midlands</p>	<p>Developing agreed practice across the geography, for example on transitions, changing culture, embedded practice habits.</p> <p>Recruiting and retaining staff in the permanence teams who have the required skills to undertake this work.</p>

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	<p>who may have an adoption plan, and to home find for those children who do have an adoption plan, without delay. Dedicated Adoption East Midlands staff meet with the permanence team regularly. Adoption East Midlands recruit and prepare adopters, and then offer support throughout childhood. A comprehensive support offer, ranges from information, through to commissioning specific therapeutic support via the adoption support fund. This is in place from the point of placement.</p> <p>Adoption panels are held five times a month, and any can be booked, thus ensuring there is no delay in panel availability.</p> <p>Adoption East Midlands will deliver services for Birth Families impacted by adoption, living in Nottinghamshire.</p>	<p>Regional Adoption Agencies, and searches beyond, when necessary, to identify adopters.</p>	<p>Increasing adoptive families for all children.</p> <p>Introduce therapeutic parenting plan for all children at placement for adoption.</p> <p>Improve the quality of adoption support plans, to ensure adopters are involved in their support plan, seek support as they need it, and understand the tiered offer.</p> <p>Incorporating the views of Birth family and adopted adults into service development.</p> <p>Develop the adoption community of AEM, making AEM easily accessible.</p> <p>Improve the whole service approach, so adoption support is embedded from the very first contact adopters make to AEM.</p>
Care Leavers	<p>There are currently 318 care leavers aged 19-21 currently open to the Leaving Care service as at end of November 2022, an increase of 86 from this time last year.</p> <p>Nottinghamshire have a higher-than-average proportion of care leavers in semi-independent transitional accommodation and in 'staying put' arrangements compared with our statistical neighbours and England average.</p>	<p>There are strong links with both national and local businesses to enable our care leavers to feel prepared for employment or training and confidently enter the world of work.</p> <p>There is a specialist, dedicated team for UASC to focus and respond to the needs of UASC and former UASC. This enables our young people to feel as if their care needs are personalised to their situation and help them adjust to their life in the UK.</p> <p>This service has embedded strengths-based working with young people resulting in positive, long-lasting relationships with personal advisors.</p>	<p>The cost-of-living crisis means that there will be a greater strain on our care leavers to live independently. We will review and expand the Local Offer with our young people to respond to the impact of this and meet local, regional and national needs.</p> <p>Complex mental health needs for young people continues to be a challenge which we will try to overcome securing</p>

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	<p>The proportion of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (full and part time) increased by 7 percentage points to 55% to put us in line with the national level but 2 percentage points below statistical neighbours. 16 former relevant care leavers went on to higher education. For 2021/22, Nottinghamshire has a lower-than-average proportion of care leavers deemed to be in suitable accommodation, with 16% deemed to be in unsuitable accommodation compared with 11% for our statistical neighbours.</p>	<p>An effective 21+ service that continually stays in contact with our care leavers until and sometimes past their 25th birthday to offer specialist, personal support so that they can live successful independent lives and develop positive support networks.</p>	<p>dedicated mental health support where appropriate and “You Know Your Mind” funding to help young people manage their mental health. To support young people to sustain healthy relationships we have dedicated funding for a project called “Staying Closer” which enables young people to stay connected with key contacts when they have left residential accommodation.</p>