

Children and Young People's Committee

Monday, 21 June 2021 at 10:30

County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 1 | To note the appointment by Full Council on 27 May 2021 of Councillor Tracey Taylor as Chairman for the 2021-22 municipal year and Councillors Sinead Anderson and Sam Smith as Vice-Chairs | |
| 2 | Terms of Reference and Membership | 1 - 4 |
| 3 | Minutes of the last Meeting held on 19 April 2021 | 5 - 8 |
| 4 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 5 | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below)
(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
(b) Private Interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) | |
| 6 | Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse Action Plan | 9 - 14 |
| 7 | Thank You to Foster Carers | 15 - 18 |
| 8 | Fostering Service Annual Report and National Minimum Fostering Allowance for Foster Carers 2021-22 | 19 - 24 |
| 9 | Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service - April 2020 to March 2021 | 25 - 50 |
| 10 | Changes to Staffing Establishment at Adoption East Midlands - Adoption Support Worker Posts | 51 - 54 |

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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:-

Customer Services Centre 0300 500 80 80

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

Councillors or Officers requiring clarification on whether to make a declaration of interest are invited to contact Martin Gately (Tel. 0115 977 2826) 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>

21 June 2021

Agenda Item: 2

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Purpose of the Report

1. To set out the membership and terms of reference of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Information

2. The following Councillors have been appointed to the committee:

Chairman: Councillor Tracey Taylor
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Sinead Anderson
Councillor Sam Smith

Councillor Matt Barney
Councillor Anne Callaghan
Councillor Samantha Deakin
Councillor Errol Henry
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Andy Meakin
Councillor Michelle Welsh

3. At its meeting on Thursday 27 May 2021, the Council agreed to update the terms of reference for the Children and Young People Committee, as set out below (changes are shown in bold):
 1. The exercise of the powers and functions set out below are delegated by the Full Council to the Committee in relation to children and young people.
 - a. All decisions within the control of the Council including but not limited to those listed in the Table below
 - b. Policy development **and approval** in relation to children and young people, subject to **any necessary** approval by the Policy Committee or the Full Council
 - c. Review of performance in relation to the services provided on a regular basis

- d. Review of day to day operational decisions taken by Officers
 - e. Approval of consultation responses except for responses to day-to-day technical consultations which will be agreed with the Chairman and reported to the next available Committee following their submission.
 - f. Approval of departmental staffing structures as required
 - g. Approving all Councillor attendance at conferences, seminars and training events within the UK mainland for which a fee is payable including any expenditure incurred, within the remit of this Committee and to receive quarterly reports from Corporate Directors on departmental officer travel outside the UK within the remit of this Committee.
2. If any report comes within the remit of more than one committee, to avoid the report being discussed at several committees, the report will be presented and determined at the most appropriate committee. If this is not clear, then the report will be discussed and determined by the Policy Committee.
 3. As part of the detailed work programme the Committee will receive reports on the exercise of powers delegated to Officers.
 4. The Committee will be responsible for its own projects and may establish steering groups to consider projects. Where it considers it appropriate, projects will be considered by a cross-committee project steering group that will report back to the most appropriate Committee.

Table
Responsibility for the strategic and operational effectiveness of the County Council's children's services
Responsibility for ensuring that the County Council's children's services meet the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable
Responsibility for the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the County Council in relation to educational matters
Responsibility for overseeing the County Council's responsibilities as the corporate parent of children and young people in care and for championing their interests

5. The Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee will be designated the lead Councillor for Children and Young People's Services in accordance with Section 19 of the Children Act 2004.
4. As referenced in the Report to the Annual Council meeting in May, Children and Young People's Committee also has the authority to appoint the following representatives: One representative of the Church of England Diocese, one representative of the Roman Catholic Diocese, and two Parent Governors.

Other Options Considered

5. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

6. To inform the committee of its membership and terms of reference.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee membership and terms of reference are noted.

Marjorie Toward

Service Director, Customers, Governance and Employees

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Martin Gately, Democratic Services Officer

Email: martin.gately@nottsc.gov.uk

Tel: 0115 977 2826

Constitutional Comments (KK 27/05/21)

8. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 26/05/2021)

9. There are no specific financial implications arising directly 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.

- Report to full Council on 27 May 2021 (published)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

Meeting CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

Date 19 April 2021 (commencing at 10.30am)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with an 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Philip Owen (Chairman)
Tracey Taylor (Vice-Chairman)
Sue Saddington (Vice-Chairman)

A	Samantha Deakin	Paul Henshaw
	Boyd Elliott	Roger Jackson
	John Handley	John Peck
	Errol Henry JP	Liz Plant

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

4 Vacancies

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Colin Pettigrew	Corporate Director, Children and Families Services
Marion Clay	Service Director, Children and Families Services
Steve Edwards	Service Director, Children and Families Services
Laurence Jones	Service Director, Children and Families Services
Claire Sampson	Group Manager, Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement

Martin Gately Democratic Services Officer, Chief Executive's

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021 having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and will be signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Deakin, who was unwell.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

4. HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR BY CHILDREN

The Chairman introduced the report and responded to questions and comments from Members.

RESOLVED 2021/034

That:

- 1) An annual report of Nottinghamshire's response to Harmful Sexual Behaviour by children be received and that this included in the work programme.

5. PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE TO ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION DELIVERY MODEL

The Chairman introduced the report and responded to questions and comments from Members.

RESOLVED 2021/035

That:

- 1) the permanent establishment of 3 FTE Elective Home Education Professional Practitioner (Grade 5, subject to Job Evaluation) posts in the Fair Access Team structure.

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO ADDITIONAL POSTS WITHIN THE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP TEAMS

The Chairman introduced the report and responded to questions and comments from Members.

RESOLVED 2021/036

That:

- 1) approval be given for the permanent establishment of an additional 2 FTE Education Other than at School Practitioner (Grade 5) posts within the Education Partnership Teams.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman introduced the report and responded to questions and comments from Members.

RESOLVED 2021/037

That:

- 1) no further amendments were required to the work programme.

The meeting closed at 11:30 am.

CHAIRMAN

21st June 2021**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
SERVICE****INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – ACTION PLAN****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report updates the Committee on the progress made in completing the recommendation to Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in its report 'Children in the Care of Nottinghamshire Councils'.
2. The report also seeks approval from the Committee that all steps set out in Action 12 of the IICSA Action Plan have been completed and the Committee will not require future updates in relation to this action.

Information

3. IICSA is an independent statutory Inquiry which is investigating whether public bodies and other non-state institutions in England and Wales have taken seriously their responsibility to protect children from sexual abuse, and make meaningful recommendations for change in the future. The Inquiry was announced in 2014 and led by Professor Alexis Jay, with the Nottinghamshire Councils (Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council) investigation being announced in November 2015. The Inquiry consists of 15 investigations across a wide range of institutions including Local Authorities, the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Immigration Service, the armed forces, schools, hospitals, churches, charities and voluntary organisations. The Nottinghamshire Councils investigation focussed on children who were sexually abused whilst in the care of the Councils and lived in residential homes or with foster families. The Inquiry published the 'Children in the Care of Nottinghamshire Councils' report in July 2019.
4. The report set out the findings from their investigation into the institutional response of Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to allegations of sexual abuse made by children who were abused whilst in the care of the Councils and who lived in residential homes or with foster carers. IICSA provided one recommendation to Nottinghamshire County Council and requested a response within six months of publication of the report.
5. In response to the IICSA report's findings and its one recommendation for the Council, 12 specific actions were identified under five key themes as previously reported to Policy Committee in September 2019 and in more detail to the Children and Young People's

Committee in December 2019. The Council informed IICSA that its identified actions were contained within the published report to the Children and Young People's Committee. By publishing the Action Plan, the Council met its requirement to IICSA, under its power of the Public Hearing Act, to publish the Council's response within six months. IICSA has acknowledged this and published a summary of the actions agreed in response to the recommendation.

6. Nottinghamshire County Council's Action plan went further than the recommendation and identified five themes which are: Support for Victims and Survivors; Governance and Scrutiny; Harmful Sexual Behaviour; Current Residential and Fostering Services and the Council's response to the specific IICSA recommendation to seek assurance regarding those working with children in residential care and foster care.
7. This report is focused on the planned actions undertaken in response to the IICSA recommendation. The IICSA report had one recommendation for Nottinghamshire County Council. This was to assess the risk posed by current and former residential care staff and foster carers. The recommendation also stated that the County Council should ensure that residential care staff and foster carers provided by external agencies should be assessed by those agencies. The Council's response to this recommendation was established as Actions 10, 11 and 12 in the IICSA Action Plan.

Staffing Review

Action 10 – Complete review of existing residential staff and take any necessary actions.

Action 11 – Review information available in relation to former members of staff and determine any necessary actions using a risk-based approach.

8. Prior to the publication of the IICSA report, a process had already begun to review the existing children's residential workforce in order to be assured of their suitability. It was clarified for staff that the methodology would be to consider information held on personal files and any employment procedures, as well as seeking the views of line managers. The findings were considered by a Panel chaired by the Corporate Director of Children and Families Service and including the Service Director for Youth, Families and Social Work and the Service Director Customers, Governance and Employees. The Panel meetings were concluded in March 2020. An independent social work consultant was engaged to consider any issues raised related to:
 - a. if any residential staff had not been appointed in accordance with safe recruitment practice and if so whether further action was required?
 - b. if any residential staff had given rise to safeguarding concerns that had not been dealt with appropriately and if so whether further action was required?
9. This review is being considered in two phases. Phase one covered Clayfields House and phase two the remaining residential children's homes. Phase one has been completed and work has now commenced on phase two.
10. In respect of former employees, work has begun to gather information to underpin this next stage. It is planned that Panel meetings will resume to give consideration to these

individuals, particularly in relation to ensuring that relevant notifications have been made to safeguarding bodies as appropriate. This phase will be completed by the end of September this year.

Foster Carer Review

Action 12 – Senior managers will scope the approach to the assessment of the potential risks posed by current and former foster carers, for incorporation into the comprehensive action plan.

11. The previous report to Committee, in September 2020, updated that an Independent Consultant had completed the review of current and former Nottinghamshire County Council foster carers. A report was completed providing an overview of the findings and recommendations to continue to develop and improve practice. This was followed by a seminar hosted by the consultant with the Council's fostering service in October 2020. The fostering service developed an action plan to undertake the recommendations. Current foster carers will also continue to be subject to ongoing annual reviews of their suitability to foster in line with current regulations.
12. In respect of Independent Fostering Agencies, a joint-approach has been taken with Nottingham City Council, who had the same recommendation in the IICSA report. Engagement with relevant Independent Fostering Agencies to undertake their own internal reviews has been completed and their responses collated. A report was brought to a joint meeting of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board. This board will provide recommendations if further actions are required.
13. In regard to this action, all steps set out in the Action Plan have therefore been completed.

Next Steps for IICSA

14. The Nottinghamshire Councils investigation is one of 15 IICSA investigations and is one of three investigations that focusses on events within named local authorities. The other two local authority investigations are the 'Cambridge House, Knowl View and Rochdale' investigation and 'Children in the Care of Lambeth Council' investigation.
15. The Rochdale investigation report was published in April 2018. The public hearing for the Lambeth investigation concluded in July 2020, an investigation report is due to be published in the summer of 2021. At the conclusion of the Children in the Care of Lambeth Council investigation, the evidence from the three local authority investigations (Rochdale, both Nottinghamshire Councils and Lambeth), as well as further relevant evidence from research workstreams, will be considered by the Inquiry. This may lead to further recommendations by the Inquiry for all local authorities.
16. All of the investigations' public hearings have concluded, with the investigation reports continuing to be published through 2021. A Chair and Panel's Final Report is expected to be published upon conclusion, but a date has not yet been made available.

Other Options Considered

17. No other options were considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. The County Council is supportive of the report by IICSA and will fulfil the recommendation in order to produce assurance that any risks posed by current and former residential staff and foster carers have been addressed in order to keep children in the Council's care safe.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. 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

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

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

21. The assessment of potential risks posed by current and former residential staff and foster carers should strengthen arrangements for the safeguarding of children and adults.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) notes the update on progress made in response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommendation for Nottinghamshire County Council in its report 'Children in the Care of Nottinghamshire Councils'.
- 2) agrees that Action 12 of the action plan has been completed and the Committee will not require future updates in relation to this action.

Colin Pettigrew
Corporate Director, Children and Families Service

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Ed Goodson
Project Manager, Programmes & Projects Team
T: 0115 9775710
E: Edward.goodson@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (GR 07/06/21)

22. Pursuant to the Nottinghamshire County Constitution this Committee has the delegated authority to both receive this report and make the recommendations contained within it.

Financial Comments (SAS 28/05/21)

23. There are no financial implications arising directly 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.

[Staffing Resources for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - report to Policy Committee on 15 June 2016](#)

[Responses to Historical Child Abuse – Resources - report to Policy Committee on 20 December 2017](#)

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - report to Full Council on 18 January 2018](#)

[Response to Historical Child Abuse – Resources - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 March 2019](#)

Children in the care of the Nottinghamshire Councils Investigation Report – July 2019

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Initial Response – report to Policy Committee on 18 September 2019](#)

Guidance for Elected Members – Visits to Children's Residential Homes - report to Children's Homes Governance Board – September 2019

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – action plan – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 16 December 2019](#)

[Establishing a Managing Allegations Service – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 15 June 2020](#)

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – action plan – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 21 September 2020](#)

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(IICSA\) - Independent Fostering Agencies review – June 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1472

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

THANK YOU TO FOSTER CARERS

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks approval for a one-off payment to be made to the Council's foster carers in recognition of their commitment to caring for some of the Council's (as the corporate parent) most vulnerable children during the Covid 19 pandemic. Foster carers would be notified of the payment by letter from the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Information

2. The Council's foster carers have demonstrated remarkable resilience and commitment in caring for looked after children during 2020-2021, in very challenging situations due to the Covid 19 pandemic and national lockdown restrictions. This has included maintaining placements and continuation of promoting contact with birth families, in accordance with children's care plans.
3. It is requested that an additional one-off 'thank you' payment is made to the Council's foster carers which will cost approximately £100,000 and funded by a request from contingency. It will be one off payment per household, with all approved foster carers receiving the same amount of approximately £300. Other local authorities have also made similar payments to their foster carers, at amounts set at their own discretion.

Other Options Considered

4. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

5. The one-off payments for the Council's foster carers would be a gesture of good will to recognise their support for looked after children, which goes beyond the proposed payments.

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. The cost of a one-off payment of approximately £300 will cost approximately £100,000 and will be met by a request from contingency.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Committee gives approval for a one-off payment to be made to the Council's approved foster carers in recognition of their commitment to caring for some of the most vulnerable children during the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 2) foster carers be notified of the one-off payment by letter from the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Steve Edwards

Service Director, Youth, Families & Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Ty Yousaf
Children's Service Manager Fostering
T: 0115 9772516
E: ty.yousaf@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (EP 07/06/21)

8. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (LCD 10/06/21)

9. The cost of a one-off payment of approximately £300 will cost approximately £100,000 and will be met by a request from contingency. The Fostering Service budget for Foster Carer allowances is £4,098,495.

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.

C1468

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK****FOSTERING SERVICE: REPORT FOR APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2021 AND
NATIONAL MINIMUM FOSTERING ALLOWANCES FOR FOSTER CARERS
2021/22****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides information on the activity and performance of the Fostering Service from April 2019 to March 2020, as the annual report last year was postponed owing to the limited number of Committee meetings held due to Covid-19 restrictions. The report also provides information for the period April 2020 to March 2021.
2. The report proposes that Nottinghamshire County Council continues to pay its foster carers the National Minimum Fostering Allowances, at the rates prescribed by the Department for Education. Allowances are payments made by the Local Authority, to its foster carers, for the living costs of fostered children.

Information

3. The table below shows that the number of children in the Council's care has increased over the last two years.

Number of children in the Council's care	
April 2019: 877	March 2020: 923
April 2020: 929	March 2021: 996

4. The percentage of children in foster care who are living with a carer approved by the Council has increased in the last two years, as shown in the table below, although the percentage figure has decreased in the context of the overall number of children looked after by the Council increasing.

	Total children in care	Total children in foster care	Living with a carer approved by NCC	Living with a carer approved by an external agency
March 2019	875	658	403 (61%)	255 (39%)
March 2020	923	664	405 (63%)	259 (37%)
March 2021	996	717	437 (60.9%)	280 (39.1%)

5. The internal fostering service is the Council's highest provider of placements at the lowest cost.
6. During April 2020 to March 2021, the Family and Friends Fostering Team accepted 101 referrals, compared with 88 referrals for the previous year, as part of Regulation 24 (the temporary approval of a connected person as a foster carer) assessments under the 2010 Care Planning Placement and Review Regulations. The percentage of children living with family and friends carers is 7%, which is consistent with 2019-2020. Despite undertaking a significant number of assessments of family and friends carers, relatively few remain as approved foster carers. This is for a number of reasons: children may be rehabilitated back to their parents' care, carers may withdraw from the assessment process or carers may go on to achieve Special Guardianship Orders/ Child Arrangements Orders.
7. The recruitment and retention of foster carers is the core activity and focus within the Fostering Service and recruitment continues to be challenging, with lots of competition from private providers. The service has seen an increase in the number of households approved at fostering panel; 34 households were approved in 2019/20 compared with 27 in 2018/19 and 32 in 2017/18. This comprised 23 (8 more than 2018/19) mainstream applications and 11 Family and Friends applications.
8. For 2020-2021, the Council has recruited 55 new foster carers, of these 21 are Family and Friends foster carers.
9. The Council follows National Standards when assessing and reviewing its foster carers, which includes all foster carers having an annual review undertaken by a Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer.
10. Outcomes for children fostered by Nottinghamshire foster carers are generally positive, the Council provides high quality supervision and support to its foster carers, ensuring foster carers access relevant training, are provided with support, advice, guidance and, when necessary, challenge. Ensuring that looked after children are safe is the Council's highest priority. During 2019/20, the Council terminated the approval of three foster carers following concerns. For the period 2020-2021 the Council terminated the approval of three foster carers following concerns, and four foster carers resigned following concerns being raised with them. One of the strengths of the Fostering Service is that they work closely with the children's Social Work teams and the Independent Reviewing Officers to identify any issues and deal with them swiftly and appropriately.
11. Special Guardianship Orders were granted to nine Family and Friends fostering households which is a positive outcome for the children in securing permanence during 2019-20 and seven during 2020-2021.

12. In terms of recruitment in 2019/20, there were 152 enquiries made (that were recorded on Mosaic records) compared with 121 during 2018/19, which resulted in 123 initial visits. For 2020-2021, there were 127 enquiries made and 112 initial visits.
13. Nationally the recruitment of foster carers is challenging. The Council's Marketing and Communications Team works very closely with the Fostering Service on the recruitment and retention strategy. The Recruitment and Assessment team has been facilitating weekly virtual information events for most of 2020 and 2021, which has included input directly from other foster carers. In addition, social media is used extensively to promote fostering in Nottinghamshire; all Nottinghamshire foster carers are encouraged to promote fostering for Nottinghamshire County Council with their family and friends. Work has also been undertaken with a charitable organisation to promote fostering via churches in the County to further increase fostering households.
14. The children and young people for whom there is a continued struggle to find placements are teenagers and sibling groups. Child specific adverts have been used to attract potential foster carers for some younger children in residential care and for children with more complex needs. This method of recruitment has been successful on a number of occasions and has attracted potential foster carers to request to be assessed.
15. Retention of foster carers continues to be challenging with the service losing a total of 40 foster carers during 2019/20. This includes foster carers resigning, retiring, being deemed no longer suitable to foster and leaving the service having secured a legal order to provide the child/young person in placement permanency. For 2020-2021, 36 foster carers left the fostering service.
16. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the Council was unable to facilitate the annual Sons and Daughters event for foster carers' birth children, host the Fostering's got Talent showcase, or facilitate a fostering conference. It is planned to re-commence all three events for 2021-2022.
17. The Fostering Service has a good reputation in respect of the support it provides to its foster carers. The service continues to engage foster carers in service developments and continues to support its foster carers in their professional development and professional identity through a varied programme of learning, training and developmental opportunities, which includes a clear training pathway for the first three years of their fostering career. The service is training all of the Council's foster carers in therapeutic parenting approaches, as a therapeutic fostering service is developed. Supervising Social Workers and fostering team managers have also been trained to ensure a consistency in the approach to managing behaviour and developing relationships in the same methods and approach to benefit the Council's looked after children.
18. The fostering Family Support team was created within the Fostering Service in April 2020. The team provides a range of relationship-based therapeutic interventions, specialist training and consultancy for children in care and foster carers. The team consists of 1 Team Manager, 6 Fostering Family workers, 1 Dyadic Development Psychotherapy Clinical Practitioner and 2 Training Coordinators.
19. The team provides attachment focused interventions underpinned by Play, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy (PACE) and Dyadic Development Psychotherapy originally developed

by Dr Dan Hughes (Child Psychologist and founder of Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy).

20. The team provides many areas of support including sleep and routines, behaviour management, therapeutic life story work, support with eating, self-harm, diet, risky behaviours, self-esteem and helping children to explore their feelings.
21. During April to August 2020 the team delivered six-weekly therapeutic training courses focusing on: Therapeutic parenting vs Standard parenting, De-escalation / Promoting Positive Behaviour, Proprioception (regulation and selfcare), and Emotion in the Brain (understanding Fight, Flight & Freeze). These sessions were scaled back to some extent due to the need to focus on the Promoting Resilience and Recovery through therapeutic relationships mandatory training which continues to be delivered to foster carers.
22. In line with the vision to develop the service as a therapeutic fostering service, fostering managers and staff from the looked after and permanency teams have been trained in therapeutic approaches. A key task for the team during the period covered in this report has been to provide the same training to foster carers. The training provides an in-depth look into the early attachment experiences that children form with primary caregivers and exploration of the restrictive effects of negative early attachment experiences and comparison to secure relationships formed in early years and pre-birth. The training provides insight into those thoughts, feelings, communications, behaviours, and interpersonal exchanges that some children have learned to suppress or avoid, magnify and exaggerate as a result.
23. The Fostering Service has experienced some changes in staffing due to retirements and vacancies. The level of passion and commitment within the service is outstanding. The service is committed to providing high quality care for children and young people in a family environment.

National Minimum Fostering Allowances for Foster Carers 2021/22

24. The Children Act 2004 (Section 49) introduced new powers for the Government to compel local authorities to pay foster carers at prescribed rates.
25. On 27th July 2006, the Department for Education and Skills announced the recommended rates for the National Minimum Fostering Allowances for Foster Carers. These rates were effective from 1st April 2007. The Council has previously agreed to pay the recommended rates each year since 2007. Prior to March 2011 other additional/specific fostering allowances and fees to foster carers were annually inflated by the rate of inflation as determined by the County Council.
26. The report proposes that the Council continues to pay its foster carers the National Minimum Fostering Allowances, at the rates prescribed by the Department for Education for 2021-2022. These allowances are payments made by the Local Authority to its foster carers to cover the costs involved in looking after a fostered child. Nottinghamshire currently pays its foster carers a weekly allowance of £135 (for a child aged 0-4 years), £149 (for a child aged 5-10 years), £170 (for a child aged 11-15 years) and £198 (for a child aged 16-17 years). The weekly allowance, as of 1st April 2021, will increase to £138 (child 0-4 years), £152 (child 5-10 years), £173 (child 11-15 years) and £202 (young person 16+).

Other Options Considered

27. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

28. The fostering service is required to complete an annual report on its performance and to agree payments to our foster carers.

Statutory and Policy Implications

29. 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

30. The increase in the National Minimum Fostering Allowances rates the Council pays its foster carers will be contained within the overall 2021/22 Fostering budget.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information on the activity and performance of the Fostering Service from April 2019 to March 2021.
- 2) agrees to receive a further report on the activity and performance of the Fostering Service in 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.
- 3) gives approval for Nottinghamshire County Council to continue to pay foster carers a weekly fostering allowance, as detailed in **paragraph 26**, at the national minimum rates, as prescribed by the Department for Education.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Youth, Families & Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (EP 20/05/21)

31. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference. If Committee resolve that further actions are required it should ensure that such actions are within its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 24/05/21)

32. The increase in the National Minimum Fostering Allowances rates the Council pays its foster carers will be contained within the 2021/22 fostering budget for child specific payments which is £3.999m.

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.

C1466

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 9

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO)
SERVICE: APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an update on the activities and performance of the Independent Reviewing Officer service from April 2020 to March 2021.

Information

2. The Independent Review Officer (IRO) service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the Review process to a wider overview of the case including regular monitoring and follow-up between Reviews. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for Looked After Children and for challenging drift and delay. The IRO's role is to ensure that Nottinghamshire County Council acts as a responsible corporate parent and provides good standards of care and services to the children they care for.
3. The annual report, attached as **Appendix 1**, contains information in respect of the structure of the service, the work the IRO service has been involved in throughout the year, and the profile of Looked After Children in Nottinghamshire. It also outlines the challenges undertaken by IROs as part of the concerns resolution process and how the service is developing with key findings for the past year and priority areas for 2021/22. Additional to this report, attached as **Appendix 2**, is the child friendly report for April 2020 - March 2021 which outlines some information from the annual report to share with children and young people.

Other Options Considered

4. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

5. The report provides an opportunity for the Committee to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

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 financial implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information contained in the report

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Izzy Martin

Independent Chair Service

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Constitutional Comments (EP 27/05/21)

8. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required it should ensure that such actions are within its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 27/05/21)

9. There are no financial implications arising directly 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.
C1471



From Strength to Strength

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Annual Report of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service
April 2020 – March 2021

Independent Chair Service vision statement:

The aim of the Independent Chair Service is to promote best outcomes for children through support, review, and challenge. We will deliver this commitment by providing a strength based Independent Chair Service that will promote best outcomes for children and young people by working with them, their families, carers and professionals to ensure they are kept safe and achieve their potential.

1. Introduction

The Independent Chair Service in Nottinghamshire is part of the Safeguarding and Independent Review Service, it is positioned in the Commissioning and Resources Division thus achieving greater independence. The Independent Chair Service is responsible for quality assuring practice in relation to children in public care and children subject to child protection and safeguarding plans. It ensures that appropriate care and safeguarding plans are in place for these children and promotes effective interagency working. There are two groups of staff within the Independent Chair Service and this report will focus on the statutory function of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). A separate report is available in respect of the Child Protection Coordinator part of the service.

2. Purpose and legal context

Since 2004 all Local Authorities have been required to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers under S118 of the Adoption Act 2002, to protect children's interests throughout the care planning process.

The Independent Reviewing Officers' (IRO) service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, 2010 linked to the revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011 (amended 2015).

The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the case including regular monitoring and follow-up between reviews. The IRO ensures and child's current wishes and feelings are given full consideration and where necessary challenges where the child's care plan has not been acted upon or progressed in a timely way. They are responsible for chairing care plan reviews at regular statutory intervals. It is not the responsibility of the IRO to manage the case, supervise the social worker or devise the care plan. However, it is important for the IRO to develop a consistent relationship with the child. The IRO's role in essence is to ensure that Nottinghamshire County Council acts as a responsible corporate parent and provides good standards of care and services to the children they care for.

3. Profile of team - Specialisms/training/seminars/national group

The establishment for the IRO group at year end 2020/21 is 15 (full time equivalent) and the team is currently up to full capacity. Within the IRO Handbook 2010 it states for an IRO to fulfil the overall roles and responsibilities as defined in the Care Planning Regulations a full time IRO should have responsibility for the care plans of 50-70 children/young people. Due to the continuing growth of the looked after population over the last few years IROs in Nottinghamshire have had responsibility for at least 70 and sometimes more care plans for children and young people.

In terms of diversity, the profile of the service does not mirror the composition of the looked after population but is representative of a range of protected characteristics including gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity, and cultural backgrounds. The team has a good balance of experienced IROs and those new to the team. They offer a wide range of skills and knowledge which enriches the service offered to the children and young people of Nottinghamshire. The role of the IRO is seen as significant especially for those children who have been looked after for many years and can be the most long-standing professional relationship they experience.

Due to the emergence of the coronavirus in March 2020 and in line with the government guidance the service adapted quickly to the use of technology to ensure services continued to be delivered in the most appropriate and effective way. All meetings have been undertaken remotely either via email, telephone, video or skype and where the risk to the child was significant, and if it was safe to do so, then a face to face meeting could be considered. During this unprecedented time the service has shown a great commitment to the looked after children and young people whilst facing challenging personal circumstances at the same time. The protection of vulnerable children has remained a shared responsibility with social care and our partners during the periods of lock down to ensure they are safe and feel protected.

4. The key priority areas for 2020/21

Below are the priorities identified for the last year, these have been addressed in the body of this report with some having been completed with others either in the development or implementation stage. Inevitably the global pandemic has impacted on the progression of some of the planned work, but we have continued to progress and implement as much of the work as possible.

1. Work to be undertaken with Childrens Social Care to incorporate a strength-based approach when working with Nottinghamshire's looked after children population
2. Revisit all documents produced from the review and undertake more detailed work with the Children in Care Council on how to provide child friendly reports, records and care plans for children and young people of all ages.
3. Work with partner organisations in respect of implementing "Nottinghamshire's Children, Nottinghamshire's Future" strength-based approach-to include the implementation of an electronic portal for organisations to submit reports on a consistent template in advance to meetings.
4. Review of current escalation process within the Independent Chair Service to a strength-based model that will offer high support and high challenge to improve practice and outcomes for children
5. To strengthen and improve the quality assurance role of the IRO so that its contribution to improved practice and outcomes for looked after children is transparent and evidence

based. This will primarily focus on improved relationships with operational social work teams using strength based restorative practice.

6. Create capacity by reviewing the processes currently in place to support IROs so they can visit children more and quality assure plans in between reviews
7. To improve the work around the IRO lead roles and promote the importance of their role within the Authority.
8. To continue to work with young people directly and encourage them to attend reviews and chair them.
9. Offering the Post 18 service to those who need it and ensuring we are working in a strength-based way.

5. Strengths based developments within the service

The department has continued to deliver training to all staff in line with its commitment to the implementation of strength-based practice. In addition to the departmental training the Independent Chair Service has undertaken ongoing sessions within team meetings to develop their knowledge and skills to work within a strength based and restorative model of practice. This has been facilitated with the support of the Educational Psychologist Service and has been instrumental in driving cultural change and practice improvement within the service.

The commitment to the above has meant that the service has been and continues to be instrumental in leading and supporting their operational social work colleagues with adopting a strength-based model. Within the service the initial work has focused on child protection conferences and in April a phased implementation began in the south of the county using the new model of practice. This included revised, agendas, reports, records of meetings and additional expectations on Child Protection Coordinators to have contact with families prior to conference and to hold mid-way reviews to track the progression of plans. Within this we have worked closely with our partner agencies and there is an ongoing piece of work to revise agency reports and to support and facilitate more effective multi-agency working specifically in respect of children in need of protection and care.

The work that has taken place in respect of conferences will provide preparation and groundwork for the same changes to be made to our reviews for looked after children over the coming months.

Other developments within the service have included

- The review of the process used to challenge and raise concerns with operational social work teams, fostering and external agencies to ensure that it is transparent and accountable but also restorative focusing on the child's needs thus improving practice and consequently outcomes.
- The implementation of a quality assurance framework within the service including practice observations, regular peer audit of the chair's role, reflective group supervision and individual professional development.
- Improved quality of the data and feedback provided to our social work colleagues with a focus on how this is used to improve practice and outcomes for children and families and the importance of relational based practice to achieve this. As part of this process the IROs are linked to individual social work and fostering teams and regularly attend team meetings as well as meeting with service managers on a quarterly basis to identify and share examples of good practice and areas for improvement and put plans in place to address these.

As part of their practice development role the IROs participate in regional seminars. These involve facilitators from neighbouring local authorities presenting specific topics around looked after children and occur four times a year. The focus of the seminars is to enable IROs to reflect upon their own practice with other colleagues within the region and share good practice. The regional group met more frequently from March 2020 to offer support to each other and share different practices whilst working remotely with our looked after children and young people.

The assistant director for Leicestershire County Council has recently joined the regional group and will provide a direct link between operational managers and service directors across the East Midlands. The group is currently contributing to the regional improvement and innovation alliance plan 2020/21, which is reviewed quarterly throughout the year. The plan focused on key achievements and activities of the group prior to lockdown and the achievements during the priority areas for group the year head.

Ambitions for 2021/22

- To fully embed a strength based restorative model of practice into our work with looked after children
- To ensure this is a collaborative process initially working with the Children in Care Council and the young people placed in Nottinghamshire residential children's homes.

6. Voice of Nottinghamshire children and young people

Nottinghamshire is committed to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people, whilst focusing on their strengths and celebrating their achievements. The Independent Chair Service is promoting a reflective learning culture and encouraging high support and challenge. IROs have become more creative with their contact with children and young people to enquire about their wellbeing, this has resulted in different forms of communication; by a regular phone call, an email, a WhatsApp message, by video or by letter or pictures. The IROs embrace creative practice and praise the positive work undertaken with looked after children. They are central to ensuring children are safe, happy, healthy and are being supported to build a promising future. The IRO service ensures the voice of children and young people are listened to and any issues raised are addressed and responded to appropriately. Every effort is made to ensure their voice is reflected within the looked after process, some choosing to speak with the IRO on their own, some come to their review and some ask an advocate to speak on their behalf.

Below is a table showing the percentage of Nottinghamshire children who attended and participated in their review over the past three years

Total number of reviews held	2018-19 1850	2019-20 2159	2020-21 2635
Definition of participation	% of total reviews	% of total reviews	% of total reviews
Child under 4 at time of review	NA	NA	NA
Child attends and speaks for themselves	40.1	41.9	42.0
Child attends and an advocate speaks for them	1.0	0.2	0.5
Child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	0.2	0.2	0.1
Child attends; does not speak for themselves/convey their views	0.4	0.4	0.6

Child does not attend but asks advocates to speak for them	5.3	4.5	4.2
Child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the review	44.1	44.3	45.2
Child does not attend nor convey their views to the review	6.0	6.3	5.4

The picture around participation continues to be consistent and stable over the past 3 years 43.2 (at end of 2021) attending their reviews and verbally participating or asking their advocate to speak on their behalf. Whilst those who have not attended 49.4 (at end of 2021) asked someone to advocate on their behalf or convey their feelings to the review, or convey their views through using Mind of My Own app. Of those who did not participate, IROs will elicit how they are feeling through their social worker or carer, these tend to be young people who either do not want to be involved with the process or are happy to be informed of the review outcome from carers or workers afterwards.

The IROs continue to promote the Mind of My Own app which was launched in 2019. IROs encourage children and young people to use this app although many prefer to verbalise their views or ask someone else to speak on their behalf. This tool makes it easier for children and young people to express their views, thoughts, and feelings to social workers/IROs and any other staff working within Nottinghamshire. They can send their views, wishes and feelings to their workers at any time they want.

IROs continue to encourage young people to chair/co-chair their own review with their own agendas where appropriate. Although many of the young people have found their reviews being conducted remotely quite a challenge and have preferred for their carer or another adult to speak on their behalf. IROs will continue to encourage them to consider co-chairing their reviews.

IROs have a responsibility to ensure children and young people are made aware of the complaint's procedure which they can use if they are not satisfied with the service they are being provided or if they wish to raise any issues. IROs are notified by the complaints team when any issues arise. Over this past year there has been a handful of complaints made which have been acted upon and addressed swiftly leading to a satisfactory resolution for the children.

IROs are represented at the Children in Care Council every time it meets, and they participate in projects being undertaken. As a service we are continually looking at ways to improve the service being offered to children and as part of the service's new vision we are going to explore our ideas on how we do meetings differently to the Children in Care Council and undertake some work with a small group of young people so we can listen to and incorporate their views. Last year we took a proposal to the Children in Care Council about completing two films, one for younger children and one for older adolescents. Work was progressed on the film for older adolescents but has been delayed on several occasions due to the three periods of lockdown over the past year. The aim of the film is to explain to children and young people which adults will support them through their looked after journey and the reasons why. The films will also be suitable to inform a broader audience of professionals (health, schools, carers, social work teams, voluntary services) and anyone interested in how looked after children are cared for within Nottinghamshire. It is hoped if there are no further interruptions with production this film will be completed by the summer.

7. Ambitions for 2020/21

- To actively support more children and young people to access independent advocates.
- To create capacity and a culture where IROs speak to young people at least once between reviews and two weeks prior to the review to ensure they are fully prepared and can participate.
- To hold child focus reviews where the child is empowered to participate, and their voices heard including child friendly agendas, reports, and minutes.

8. Achievements of children and young people



Below is a poem written by a young person who gave permission for this to be included in this annual report. This is being published through a Poetry Odessey, a collection of Verse which will be in the National Library. This is a powerful poem and the young person is very proud of this achievement.

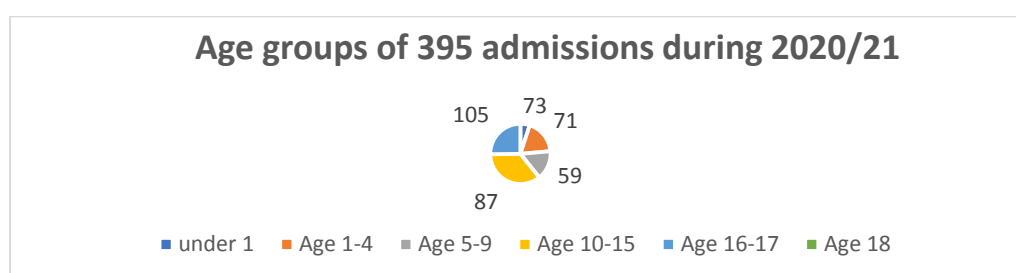
The Smile

The smile you see isn't always true
The sadness I feel is nothing new
My feelings are unnoticed
Because I never show this
The thoughts that go through my head
Feelings like I'm numb and dead
Sometimes I want to scream and shout
But I never let these feelings out
The smile you see is never true
But the sadness I feel is something I'll get through



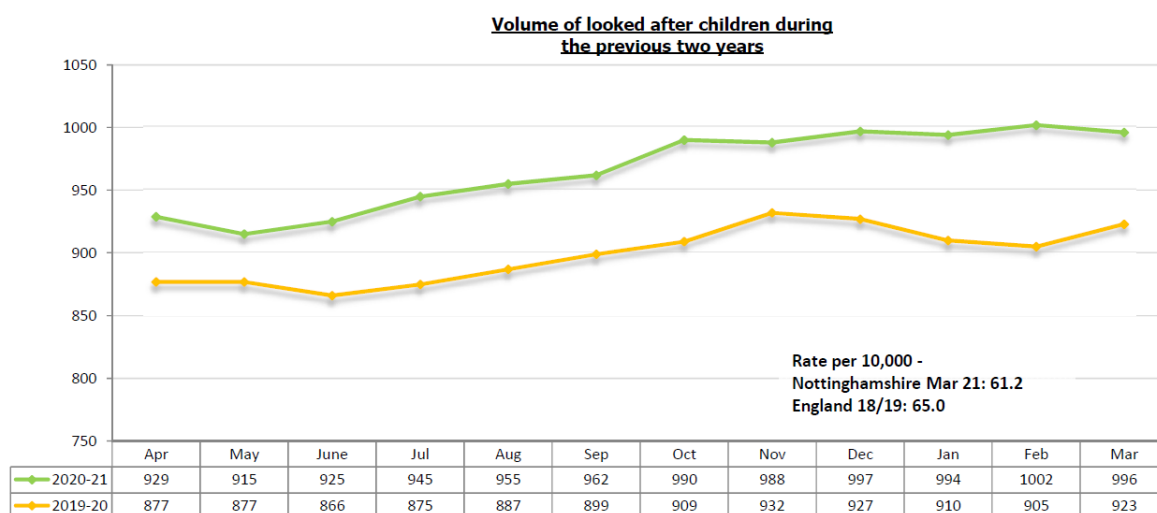
9. Nottinghamshire Children and Young People Data 2020/2021

At the end of March 2021, Nottinghamshire had responsibility for 996 looked after children and young people (a rate of 61.2) per 10.000 children in comparison to last year there were 923 looked after children at a rate of 56.8 per 10.000 children. When considering the age groups of admissions as in previous years there are more boys 50.1% of the total for year with 41.5% of girls who become looked after, this figure reflects children who may have been admitted more than once in the year.



Of the 395 children and young people accommodated, 326 (82.5%) were white, 6 (1.5%) were of Asian/Asian British, 2 (0.50%) black or black British, 36 (9.1%) mixed heritage and 18 (4.5%) were of other groups.

As illustrated in the graph below, over the past year there has been a steady growth in the looked after population. When comparing these figures to our statistical neighbours and nationally these figures reflect the same trend of growth but continue to remain lower than our neighbours and nationally.



Of the 996 looked after children as of 31st March 17 (1.7%) were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and 2 (0.20%) were placed in a secure children's home.

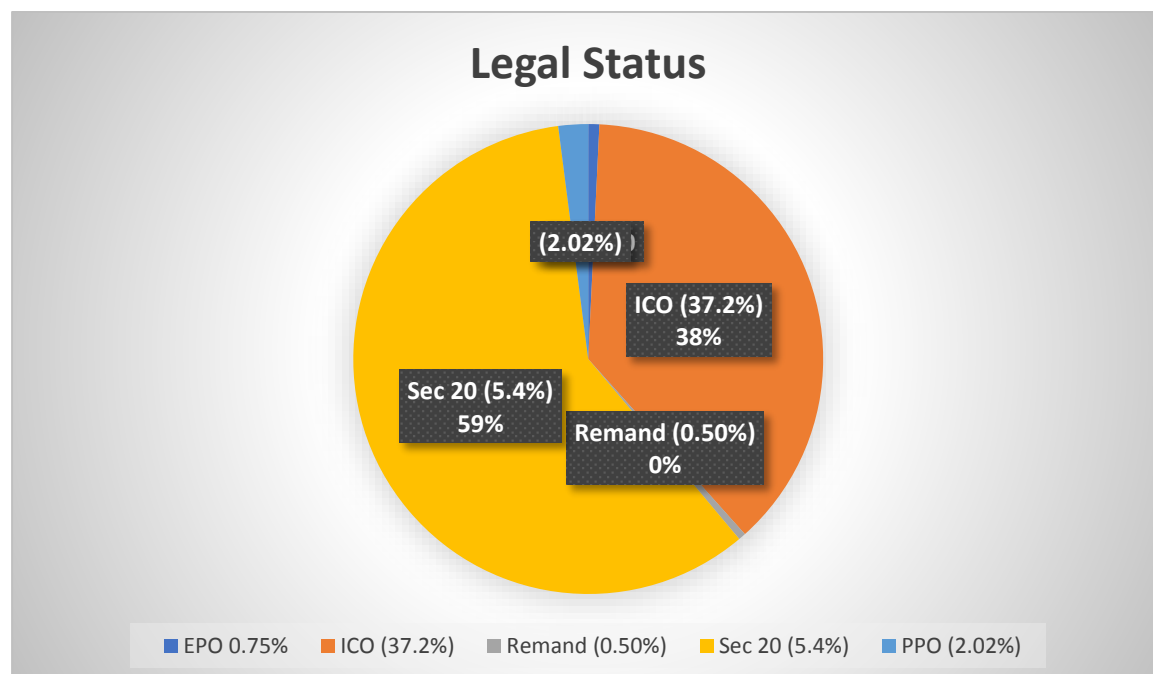
Of the 308 children and young people who were discharged in the year, 52 (16.8%) returned to the care of their parents, 86 (27.9%) went onto independent living, 31 (10.06%) were made subject to a Special Guardianship Order and 2 (0.6%) were sentenced to custody.

Child Protection Coordinators within the service have an overview of children who are subject to child protection plans, they will ensure plans are progressed and in reducing the risk of significant harm. They will make recommendations about considering alternative care when it is clear the risk is not able to be managed and is having a detrimental impact on the overall wellbeing of the child/ren. As IROs and Child Protection Coordinators are part of the same service they regularly liaise with each other about children on dual plans and ensure a single plan is appropriate unless the children are to be rehabilitated back home. The Service Managers in the Independent Chair Service review all the plans of children who have recently come into local authority care to ensure these are being progressed in a timely manner and the appropriate assessments are being undertaken to consider their long-term care.

At the point of coming into care usually an agreement with parents under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 is made. This is a short-term measure pending either a return home or the commencement of care proceedings. IROs need to confirm what the plan is by the second review at the 4 months stage to prevent drift, delay, and secure permanence for the child. As soon as the plan changes from the child returning to the care of their parents then consideration is given to initiating a Legal Planning Meeting. The IROs role is crucial during this period in ensuring there is no delay regarding assessments being completed and to consider the legal status of the child.

Of the total number of children becoming looked after during the past year (395), 147 (37.2%) were made subject of an ICO and 231 (58.4%) had a single period of accommodation under sec 20.

Legal Status of 395 children admitted into care during 2020/21



As identified in the above diagram the IROs ensure that children have the right legal status at the time to reflect their immediate and long-term needs.

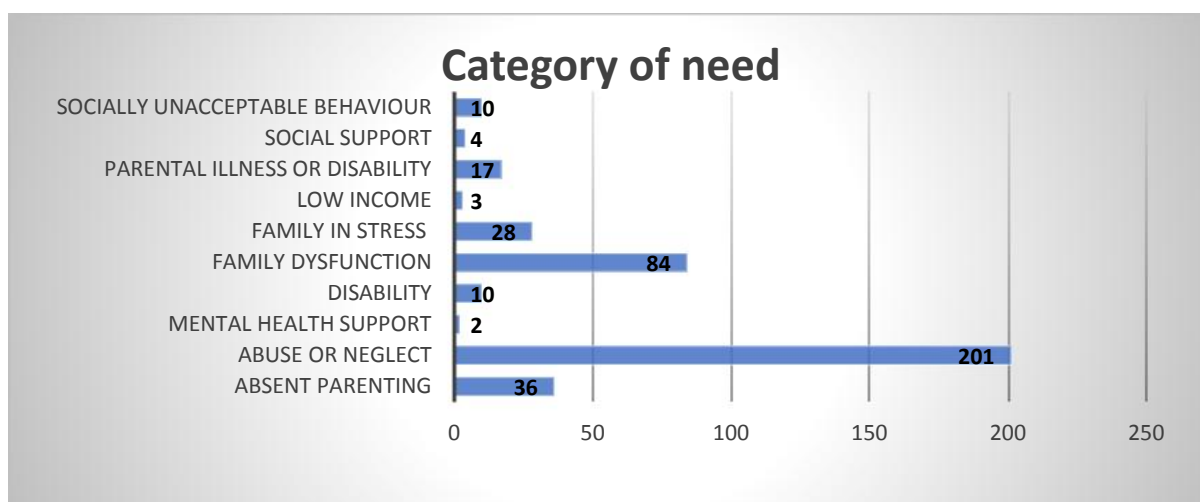
10. Our children and young people's statutory reviews-timeliness and participation

Looked After Reviews

A total of 2635 reviews were chaired by IROs in the year ending of March 2021, (this is a significant increase from the year before where 2159 reviews were held) of these 97.6% were held in timescale, which is a similar percentage from last year.

It is not surprising that the main reason for children becoming looked after is due to neglect, of the 395 in total for the year of 20120/21 50.8% were due to neglect and abuse which is a similar figure to last year. Other factors involved family dysfunction, absent parenting and family in acute stress featured highly 37.4%.

Nottinghamshire children category of need at time of admission to care



11. Identifying good practice and the Concerns Resolution Process

The IRO handbook sets out that one of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. Where an IRO has significant concerns about practice or other issues affecting a child's care plan then the IRO can instigate a concern. In the first instance, the IRO will initiate a concern and seek to resolve the concerns with the social worker or their team manager informally but if this is not achievable then a formal concern is raised. A record of this concern and outcome is placed on the child's file. If the matter is not resolved within the required 10 working day timescale the IRO with their manager will then consider escalating to the operational service manager.

During this year only 63 formal alerts were initiated by IROs with Social Care practitioners, data suggests, (as noted in the table below) this is significantly lower than the previous year but reflects the percentage raised in previous years before that.

Alerts by year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number initiated	68	55	68	113	63

The themes that have emerged from the alerts for this year relate to a range of issues; Lack of clear plan in respect of child (14.3%), care plan not being implemented fully (12.1%), drift and delay (31.9%), usually due to change over of social workers and any poor practice identified (16.5%). When alerts are initiated the concerns raised are acknowledged and responded to within the period of the next review, of the alerts initiated this year, 74.6% were responded to in timescale and 25.4% out of timescale, 3 were escalated to stage 1, Service Manager level and were resolved promptly.

The alert process has been reviewed in line with using strength-based approach (refer to paragraph 5). The principles of this new process focus on the safety and wellbeing of the child and young person being paramount. Throughout all conversations taking place between parties involved the child is central and the aim is to resolve any disagreements using a restorative approach which includes appropriate challenge and respect. There are 6 stages in the process and within the preparation for the review there is time for the IRO to have discussions with the social worker and team manager to resolve any concerns before it is progressed to stage 1. The main objective is to ensure the appropriate discussions take place in trying to resolve the concerns without the need to escalate to the next stage of the process

and to learn from the concerns to drive practice improvement and better outcomes for our looked after children.

IROs continue to send emails to celebrate good practice noted from the work undertaken with looked after children with their social workers. Some of these have included the following comments.

- Court Team Social Worker has been so committed and focussed throughout
- Excellent work from the Adoption and Permanence Social Worker in identifying appropriate carers for children's needs.
- Social Workers working effortlessly to meet the needs of our looked after children and ensuring they are safeguarded and protected through the last challenging year.

12. Summary and achievements in 2020/21

- During this year there have been many challenges within the team due to the corona virus pandemic including staff absences, high workloads, and inability to see children people face-to-face. However, the services continue to provide a high-quality service and to provide scrutiny, challenge, support to social work teams.
- There has been a growth in the looked after children population in Nottinghamshire over the past year, an additional IRO has been appointed to the establishment which partially meets this demand.
- IROs continue to scrutinise plans and challenge where necessary and 97.6% of reviews were held in timescales.
- Participation of children and young people at the looked after children reviews continues to be stable with majority share their wishes and views as part of the looked after children process.
- The use of technology has been embedded to hold reviews. The ambition moving forward is to have an individual approach to how meetings are held using a blended approach of face-to-face and technology.
- We have embedded a strength-based model of practice into our service. This has included developing a quality assurance framework.
- IRO lead roles have been identified and now in place, with IROs linked to different social work teams to provide quality assurance on a quarterly basis through relational based practice.
- A revised quality assurance report to improve the quality of data and thus the quality of practice and outcomes for children and families.
- IROs have completed a presentation about their role and expectations in line with the IRO handbook which will be used with new employees to Nottinghamshire, Assessed & Supported Year in Employment and other professionals.

13. Key priority areas for 2021/22

- To fully embed strength-based and restorative model of practice into our work with looked after children.
- To ensure there is a collaborative process initially working with the Children in Care Council and the young people placed in Nottinghamshire residential children's homes.
- To actively support more children and people to access independent advocates.
- To create capacity and a culture where IROs speak to all children and young people at least once between reviews and two weeks prior to the review to ensure they are fully prepared and can participate.
- To hold child focused reviews where the child is empowered to participate, and their voices are heard including child friendly agendas, reports, and minutes.

- To embed the concerns resolution process within children's social care and our partners whilst offering high support challenge to improve outcomes for children.
- To reinforce the quality assurance role with children social care and with our partners using an evidence-based approach.

17.05.21
Izzy Martin
Service Manager
Independent Chair Service
Safeguarding and Independent Review



**Independent
Reviewing Officer
Service Annual Report**

**A Summary Report for Children
and Young People**

April 2020 to March 2021

May 2021





Our vision for all Looked After Children and Young People

"To ensure that, through the independent review process, protection and care plans for children meet their individual needs and secure better outcomes for children and young people."

Your IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) will ensure your protection and care plans will meet your individual needs which will make sure you have the best outcomes possible.

We are committed to you and will help you to achieve your best by focusing on your strengths and celebrating your achievements.

IROs work creatively and praise the positive work undertaken with looked after children, which is very important to make sure children are safe, happy, healthy and are being supported to build a promising future.

The Voice of Nottinghamshire Children and Young People

The IRO service ensures the voice of Children and Young People are listened to and any issues they raise are talked about and the right action is taken for them.

Every effort is made to make sure the voice of Children and Young People is heard, some Children and Young People choose to speak with their IRO on their own, some come to their review and some ask an advocate to speak on their behalf.

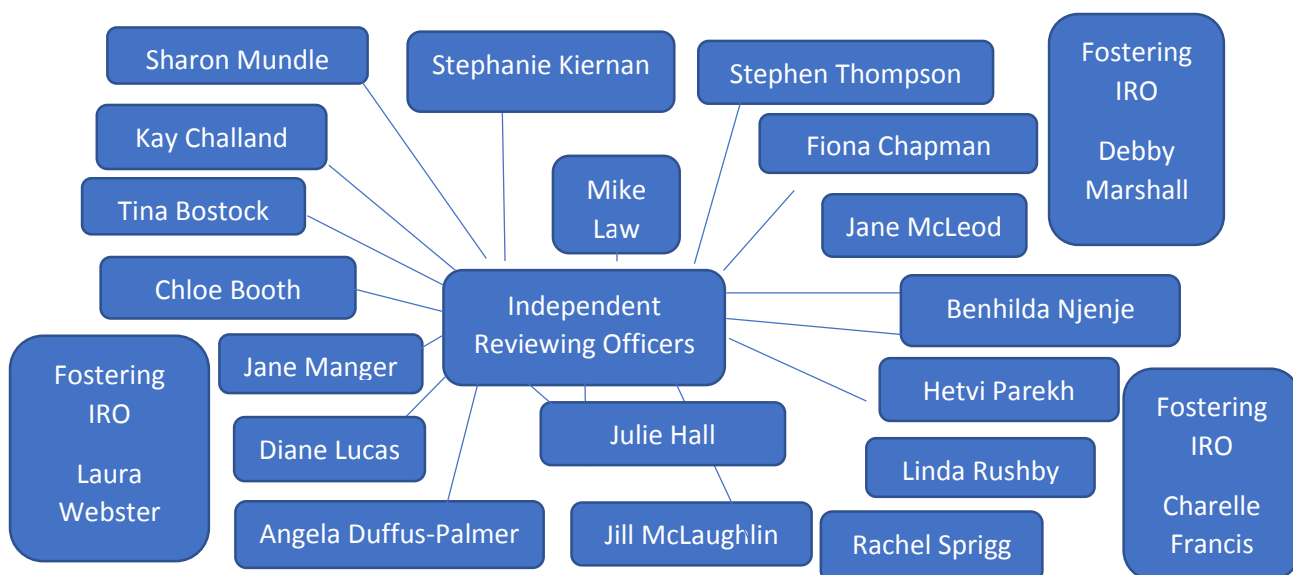
A report is written every year on how we are doing.

This report talks about:



What is the Independent Reviewing Officer Service?

The Independent Chair Service makes sure that Children and Young People who are Looked After or going through the Child Protection process are listened to and get the care and support they need. We make sure people work together and share what works well to make things better for Children and Young People.



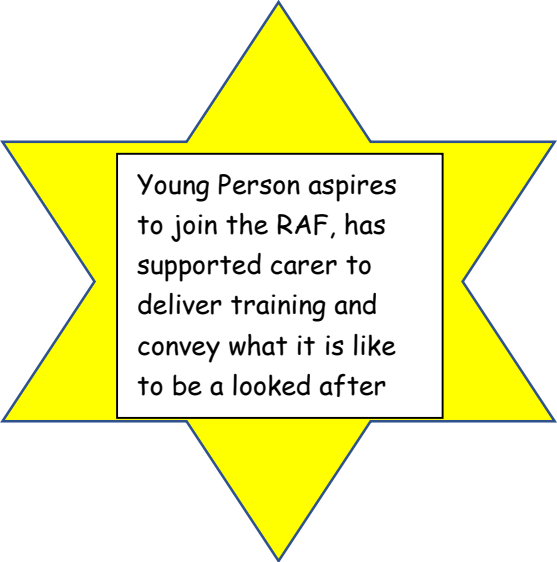


Children and Young People who are Looked After

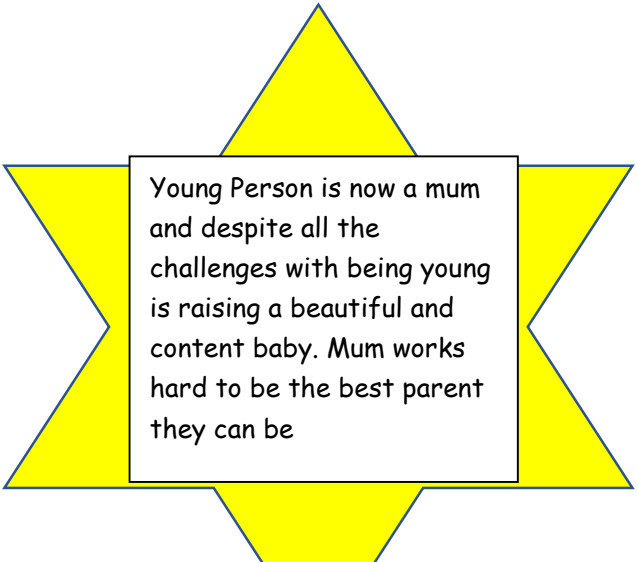
- At the end of March 2021, there were 996 Children and Young People being looked after by the Local Authority.
- 43.2% of Children and Young People attended their reviews
- 49.4% of Children and Young People did not attend their reviews, but asked for their wishes and feelings to be shared at their review
- IROs continue to work to ensure all Children and Young People's Care Plans are meeting their needs and changes to their Care Plans are made when needed.
- IROs continue to promote Mind of My Own app which was launched in 2019.
- IROs make sure they ask about Children and Young People's wishes and feelings through talking to and visiting them, also through their social worker or carer, these tend to be young people who either do not want to be involved in their review or are happy to be told how their Care Plan is meeting their needs by their IROs, or by their carers or their social workers afterwards.



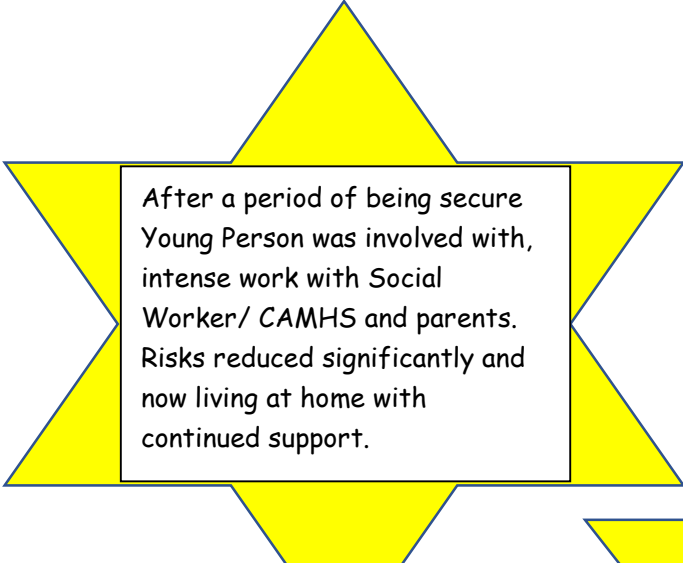
Achievements of some Children and Young People



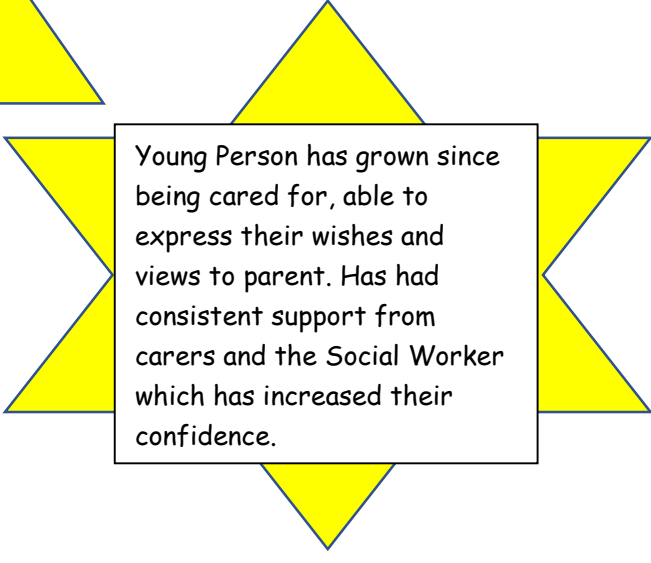
Young Person aspires to join the RAF, has supported carer to deliver training and convey what it is like to be a looked after



Young Person is now a mum and despite all the challenges with being young is raising a beautiful and content baby. Mum works hard to be the best parent they can be



After a period of being secure Young Person was involved with, intense work with Social Worker/ CAMHS and parents. Risks reduced significantly and now living at home with continued support.



Young Person has grown since being cared for, able to express their wishes and views to parent. Has had consistent support from carers and the Social Worker which has increased their confidence.



What's happened during this year?

The IROs Chaired 2635 Children and Young People's Looked After Child reviews by the end of March 2021.

This is many more than the year before when there were 2159 reviews held.

IROs use of technology has been used more with Looked After Child reviews because of Covid- 19, we are now using Microsoft Teams which enables everyone to see each other. Some Children and Young People can join teams for their review whilst others prefer to have someone advocate on their behalf.

IROs continue to work to make sure that Children and Young People are encouraged and supported to participate in their review. All Children and Young People continue to be offered the opportunity to complete a Listen to Me consultation booklet or through other creative ways to include them in their Looked After Child review.





The IROs continue to promote the MOMO app which was launched in 2019. IROs encourage Children and Young People to use this app although many prefer to verbalise their views or ask someone else to speak on their behalf as a means of conveying their views. This tool makes it easier for Children and Young People to express their views, thoughts, and feelings to social workers/IROs and any other staff working within Nottinghamshire.

At the beginning of last year, we took a proposal to the Children in Care Council who have agreed for the making of a short film, one for younger Children and one for Young People. These films will provide Children and Young People with an easy to understand film about who is involved in their care and how they will be supported when they become looked after. The films will also be used with professionals who are involved in providing care and support to Looked After Children.

The making of the film for the Young People has been slowed down by Covid-19, but we are working to finish this over the next 3 months.

The introduction of 2 IROs in the Independent Chair Service who review Foster Carers has increased to 3 temporarily, they are managed by one manager and continue to work independently focusing on Foster Care Reviews.



What Children, Young People and their carers said:



Children and Young People, their carers and parents continue to make positive comments about the involvement of the IRO in their lives and for many the IRO has been the most consistent professional in their life.

Here are some Good Social Work Practice Stories shared by IRO'S:

- Court team Social Worker has been so committed and focussed throughout their involvement with the children
- Excellent work from the Adoption and permanence Social Worker in identifying appropriate carers for children's needs.
- Social workers working effortlessly to meet the needs of our looked after children and ensuring they are

safeguarded and protected through the last challenging year.

- Young child supported by social worker to give evidence in court.
- Lovely celebratory leaving care review, Young Person has had the same social worker and foster carer since the age of 5 and has always lived with their siblings.
- Young Person reunified back into the care of their family after intensive support from the Looked After Team Social worker on the dynamics of their relationship and a clear plan of support



Our Key Plans for Children and Young People for 2021-2022 are:

To fully embed strength-based model ensuring positive language is consistently used in all the conversations had in your looked after reviews.

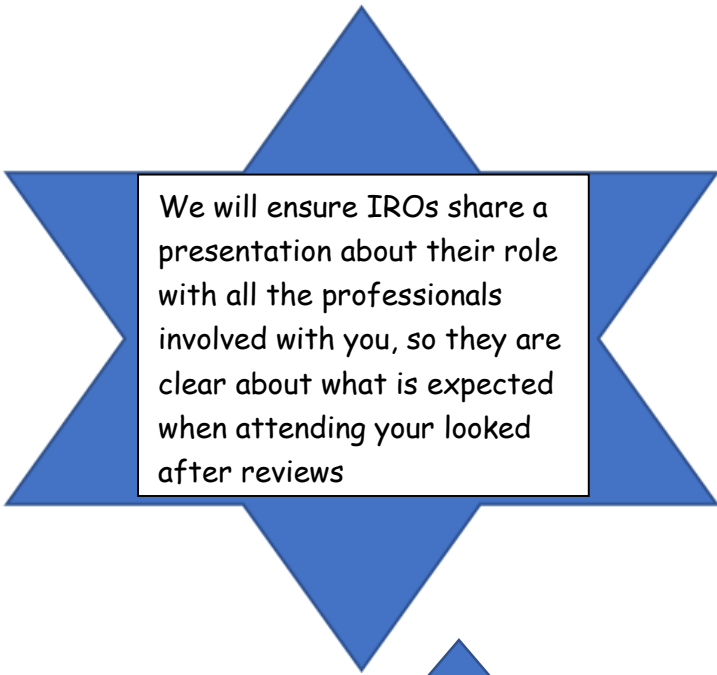
To hold child focused reviews where you will be encouraged with support to chair your own reviews if you wish and your views and ideas will be included in developing child friendly agendas, reports, and minutes.




To ensure any concerns you have about your care plan is discussed fully with the right people and your wishes are listened to.

To actively support more children and young people to access independent advocates.

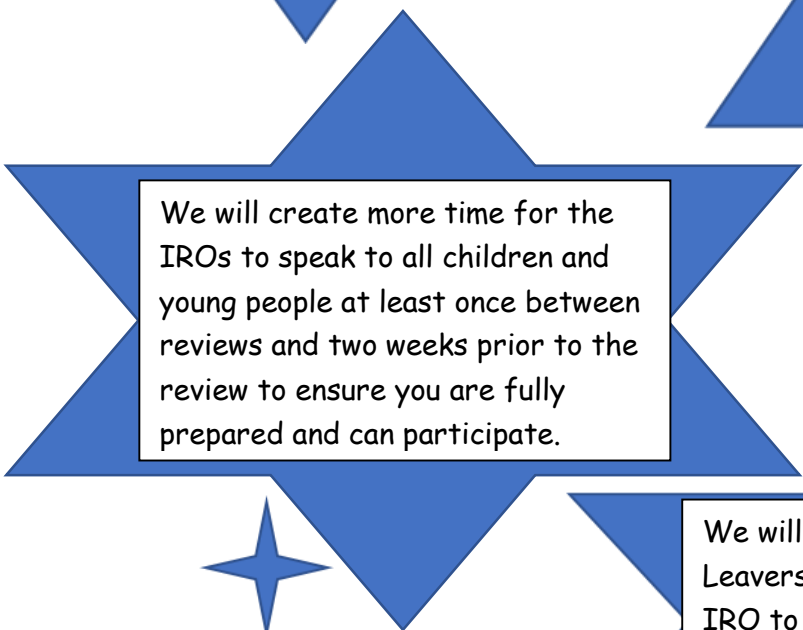
We will ensure the support being provided to you by our partners and children's social care is able to meet your needs and support you in achieving your aspirations.




We will ensure IROs share a presentation about their role with all the professionals involved with you, so they are clear about what is expected when attending your looked after reviews



We will continue to work with the Children in Care Council to explore different ways your reviews can be held and share our plan to work with a small group of young people placed in residential children's homes



We will create more time for the IROs to speak to all children and young people at least once between reviews and two weeks prior to the review to ensure you are fully prepared and can participate.



We will continue to ask all Care Leavers if they wish for their IRO to provide a Post 18 service as many have taken up this offer during 2020/21

Below is a poem written by a young person who gave permission for this to be included in this annual report. This is being published through a Poetry Odessey, a collection of Verse which will be in the National Library. This is a powerful poem and the young person is very proud of this achievement.

The Smile

The smile you see isn't always true
The sadness I feel is nothing new
My feelings are unnoticed
Because I never show this
The thoughts that go through my head
Feelings like I'm numb and dead
Sometimes I want to scream and shout

Independent Chair Service



21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 10

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

CHANGE TO STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT AT ADOPTION EAST MIDLANDS - ADOPTION SUPPORT WORKER POSTS

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks approval to convert 2 FTE Social Work (Band B) posts to 2.5 FTE Adoption Support Worker (Grade 5) posts in the Adoption East Midlands staffing establishment.

Information

2. Adoption Support Worker posts exist within the Permanence team and similar fostering support worker posts exist within the Fostering Service.
3. These are post holders who have relevant qualifications to deliver direct work with children and families that does not necessitate a social work qualification.
4. Having a skills mix such as this within a service allows Qualified Social Workers to focus on the work which requires the protected title of social work, such as statutory assessments, and reviews, and complex work or support.
5. In particular there is a range of work within the adoption support service which could be undertaken by Adoption Support Workers.
6. Adoption East Midlands seeks to create a multi-skilled team to deliver the services in the most effective way, and therefore convert 2 FTE Social Work posts to 2.5 FTE Adoption Support Worker posts. This would require the following:
 - the disestablishment of 2 FTE Social Work (Band B) posts
 - the establishment of 2.5 FTE Adoption Support Worker (Grade 5) posts.

Other Options Considered

7. Consideration has been given to other types of post, such as Social Work Support Officer. Adoption East Midlands already has some Social Work Support Officer posts and these posts do not undertake direct work with children. Another option considered was Social

Work Assistant posts, however, the job description which exists for Adoption Support Workers best describes the tasks required within the Adoption Service.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

8. The use of Adoption Support Workers has always been received positively by adopters and social workers. The Adoption Support Workers can spend the necessary time directly with children and families, and support placements, as well as contribute to preparation of adopters, their support, and group activities for children and young people. Having these posts directly sitting within Adoption East Midlands would enhance the service offer.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. 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

10. The disestablishment of 2 FTE Social Work (Band B) posts and the establishment of 2.5 FTE Adoption Support Worker (Grade 5) posts will save £8,583 pro-rata per annum.

Human Resources Implications

11. As these are vacancies there is no implication for any individual.

Implications for Service Users

12. Service will be enhanced by more readily available wider range of interventions.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee approves the following changes to the Adoption East Midlands staffing establishment:
 - the disestablishment of 2 FTE Social Work (Band B) posts
 - the establishment of 2.5 FTE Adoption Support Worker (Grade 5) posts.

Steve Edwards

Service Director, Youth, Families & Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Shelagh Mitchell

Group Manager, Adoption East Midlands

E: Shelagh.mitchell@adoptioneastmidlands.nottscg.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (CEH 24/05/21)

13. The recommendation falls within the delegation to Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (LD 04/05/2021)

14. The disestablishment of 2 FTE Social Work (Band B) posts and the establishment of 2.5 FTE Adoption Support Worker (Grade 5) posts will save £8,583 pro-rata per annum. The current Adoption East Midlands staffing budget is £3,406,692.

HR Comments (BC 05/05/2021)

15. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The 2 FTE Social Worker posts that will be disestablished are currently vacant so there will be no redundancies 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.

C1465

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 11

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

PROVISION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER 2020/21

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an overview of the work of the Young People Looked After Youth Work team, situated within the Youth Service. The Young People Looked After team is responsible for:
 - the Children in Care Council structure which ensures that young people looked after are represented at all levels in the Nottinghamshire system of Youth Participation
 - encouraging and enabling young people, who are looked after, adopted, or living in residential care, to engage in positive activities provided by the Young People Looked After team and to independently access universal provision
 - working in partnership with Children's Social Care.

Information

2. The Young People Looked After team is responsible for the planning and delivery of a range of positive activities outside of the school day for looked after and adopted young people. This is to enable young people to come together to participate and have fun in events throughout the year as well as to have a voice about their life in care through the work of the Children in Care Council. The Children in Care Council structure includes a number of sub-groups, which provide a mechanism for a range of groups of looked after young people to be involved in Nottinghamshire's system of Youth Participation. Representatives from each sub-group then meet as the formal Children in Care Council board (also known as No Labels). The opportunities on offer for young people to engage are designed to promote and support them to build their confidence and self-esteem as well as to develop new experiences.

3. Young people looked after are signposted to universal services across the County, as well as encouraged to participate in group work activities. This assists young people to develop positive relationships with other young people and youth workers to help broaden their horizons, learn new skills, and access new experiences. Looked after young people have participated in a wide range of activities throughout 2020/21, which are detailed in **paragraph 8**.
4. Activities are designed to help support a holistic assessment of children and young people's needs and to help their personal and social development through participation in activities outside of the school day. The positive activities young people participate in provide a platform for young people to share their views about life in care, which helps to promote placement stability, as young people are actively engaged, and have a trusted Youth Worker to talk to. A number of these young people will go on to be members of the sub-groups of the Children in Care Council and attend No Labels meetings. This is where sub-group representatives come together with a range of senior officers and Elected Members to design and shape services available to them.
5. The Children in Care Council provides the Council with an opportunity to listen to what children and young people are saying, consequently these views are taken forward and acted upon. There is also an expectation that the membership of the Children in Care Council will be encouraged to have an active role in the Young People Board.
6. The development of the Children in Care Council has direct links to Nottinghamshire's Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021 with regards to the importance placed on active participation and engagement of children and young people, and in seeking their views to improve outcomes and to shape services. This approach is also concurrent with the vision of the Service Director for Youth, Families and Social Work.
7. From April to September during lockdown the Young People Looked After team refocused their work and delivered youth work interventions to help stabilise young people's living arrangements and raise their aspirations, to help avoid further breakdown. This was through supporting the Council's internal residential homes, including Clayfields, and delivering 1:1 youth work intervention to support young people who are most at risk.
8. The Children in Care Council sub-groups and No Labels have met 27 times in 2020/21. Due to the pandemic this has mainly been digital interaction which has involved creative ways of maintaining engagement. The Children in Care Council sub-groups and No Labels members have been actively involved in several events or participated in sharing their views and making decisions on a variety of strategic and business agenda items such as:
 - a steering group of young people leading on the consultation of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021. This was to review the ambitions, pledge and action plans, and to gain a wider view from young people across the County to inform the next version of the strategy from 2022 onwards.
 - creating a new pathway plan with the Leaving Care team to ensure the leaving care process remains a robust transition for young people in Nottinghamshire. This will enable young people to lead their own plan, ensuring strength based language is used throughout, and to develop an electronic version to promote greater engagement by young people.

- an ongoing piece of work to further develop the local offer for care leavers by co-producing a practical guide for young people leaving care in preparation for adulthood. Care leavers are provided with opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge through the 16 plus Children in Care Council sub-group, as well as through individual support by their personal advisors.
- an ongoing piece of work which will be a joint Youth Service/Independent Reviewing Officer Service film featuring care experienced young people, introducing the role and responsibilities of professionals involved in the care of children and young people who are looked after and enabling those new to being looked after to have greater understanding of what they can expect from the professionals they meet.
- participating in the Children's Commissioner care review and meeting with the Children's Commissioner's office during her first week in post to discuss their own experiences of being a looked after young person and the support young people will need post Covid.
- creating a Children in Care Council promotional leaflet to promote the work of the Children in Care Council, the opportunity for children and young people to shape services and positive engagement. This will be distributed amongst the partnership and across the department for professionals to share with children and young people, and to new foster carers at training events
- young people including children in care continue to use the Mind of My Own app as a way of communicating with their social worker. On average 65 statements are received a month. Young people have used Mind of My Own to share both good experiences (such as winning an award at school) or to express concerns; or their views for a meeting
- following consultation with the Children in Care Council, the Leaving Care Service launched the 'Notts Next Steps' App, which is an application that can be downloaded to all smart devices and is a version of Nottinghamshire's Local Offer for Care Leavers. This also promotes events, participation activities, contact details of professionals and organisations and offers for young people, and this is regularly updated. The new 'Achievement Offer' now features on the Notts Next Steps App and is promoting employment, education and training opportunities, training events and vacancies available for young people.

9. Expression of Interest forms were introduced by young people following a review of the process in relation to how young people are invited to participate in shaping the services available to them. The Children in Care Council has received four Expression of Interest forms, allowing young people to:

- take ownership of the agenda and their involvement in the design and delivery of services
- establish the information required and the time needed to enable young people to actively participate
- keep track of individual projects they are involved in.

- **Youth Service/Independent Reviewing Officer Service film** - filming has continued (see **paragraph 8**) throughout the pandemic; the purpose of the film is to introduce children and young people who are new to care to the professionals who will be involved in their lives as a looked after child or young person in Nottinghamshire. The film aims to communicate and re-assure children when they come into care, including to contact and talk to if they have a concern. So far four young people and professionals have been filmed.
- **Quality & Audit team Notts County Council** – this was commissioned by a Senior Practitioner for Quality and Audit. This piece of work involves young people developing a young person's charter/list of expectations for placement moves ensuring transitions are smooth, and which consider the individual needs of young people. This work is due to start in early 2022.
- **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) looked after & adoption service** – this was commissioned by the Team Manager for the CAMHS Looked After and Adoption team, inviting young people to help design leaflets, a website and video. This material will help explain what the team offers, breakdown any myths about the service, and advise young people on how they can provide feedback to improve the service. This work was paused during the pandemic and will restart later in the year.
- **Emily Moore (Woodland Trust)** - invite for young people to take part in tree planting at the young people's forest to help fight climate change, connect with nature and be part of watching the young people's forest grow. This will also provide opportunities for children and young people to learn more about nature and the outdoors. This opportunity has been on hold throughout the pandemic but is expected to recommence in November 2021 in line with the Woodland Trust's planting schedule.

Other Options Considered

10. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. The report seeks approval to further update the Committee on this work in 12 months.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) considers whether there is any further information or actions they require in relation to the information contained in the report.
- 2) agrees to receive a further update report on the work of the Young People Looked After Youth Work team in 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 25/05/21)

13. The recommendations fall within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (LD 28/05/21)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents:

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

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1469

21st June 2021**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****REVIEW OF ELECTED MEMBER OVERSIGHT OF CHILDREN IN LOCAL
AUTHORITY CARE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present the recommendations of the cross-party Elected Member working group on their review of the governance arrangements of Looked After Children care settings, including an evaluation of the current Children's Homes Governance Board

Information

2. The report of the Leader of the Council to Policy Committee on 18th September 2019 outlined the background of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and in particular the investigation into the institutional response of Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to allegations of sexual abuse made by children who were abused whilst in the care of the Councils and who lived in residential homes or with foster families. In line with one of the recommendations of this report Members agreed to a review of the governance arrangements for the Council's Looked After Care settings, including consideration of whether the Council should re-establish the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.
3. In order to undertake the review it was recommended that a cross-party working group, comprising Members and senior officers, should be established to agree the scope, oversee the work and formulate recommendations. The establishment of the working group was approved at Children and Young People's Committee on 16th December 2019 with representatives of all four parties on the Committee participating. It was initially scheduled that the group would report back to Committee by July 2020 but unfortunately the global pandemic delayed the process.
4. The working group met on four occasions with Elected Members reflecting on their own experiences and taking evidence from several senior managers across the Children and Families Department to formulate recommendations. These meetings were chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee and were minuted.

5. The conclusions of the working group and the rationale for these are presented below. There was no dissent from any party regarding the recommendations.
- **Recommendation 1:** that the current Children's Homes Governance Board which provides Elected Member oversight of the seven children's homes directly operated by the County Council should be reconfigured to provide an oversight of all places where our children who are looked after live. This would include those children's homes and foster placements directly provided by the Local Authority and those commissioned from external providers including the Youth Custody Service. The focus of this 'Children Looked After Governance Board' would be on safety and those aspects of children's wellbeing that have a direct impact on their safety. The Board would continue to report back to Children and Young People's Committee with recommendations.
 - **Recommendation 2:** that the proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' should have Elected Member representation from all parties represented on the Children and Young People's Committee in recognition of the commitment to corporate parenting.
 - **Recommendation 3:** that the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee should not be re-established. Elected Members felt that in order to provide proper scrutiny of the safety of children in care they would need to be in receipt of a significant amount of information that would be exempt from public disclosure and as such a public committee would not be the right vehicle. They noted that other issues related to looked after children, such as educational progress, were being reported in an effective way to Children and Young People's Committee.
 - **Recommendation 4:** that the proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' should develop a strong relationship with the Foster Carers Liaison Group (FLAG).
 - **Recommendation 5:** that in order to develop better insights into the lives of children who are looked after all Elected Members on the Children and Young People's Committee should visit a children's home setting annually (in line with the already agreed guidance) and Members on the proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' should visit quarterly.
 - **Recommendation 6:** that all Elected Members should receive training or another formal input regarding the importance of their corporate parenting role within four months of their election or as soon as practicable thereafter and that this should be repeated annually.
 - **Recommendation 7:** that a report of the Children and Families Commissioning and Contracts Board should be presented to Children and Young People's Committee annually to provide assurance of the quality assurance oversight of external providers.

Other Options Considered

6. The option of re-establishing a Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee was considered. The reason for this not being recommended is described above.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

7. The reasons for each recommendation are described above.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. 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

9. There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

10. The proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' would allow increased Elected Member oversight of the children in the care of the Local Authority and would complement other aspects of oversight undertaken by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership Board.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the current Children's Homes Governance Board should be reconfigured to provide an oversight of all places where our children who are looked after live and with a focus on safety and those aspects of children's wellbeing that have a direct impact on their safety. The Board would continue to report back to Children and Young People's Committee with recommendations at least every six months
- 2) the proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' should have Elected Member representation from all parties represented on the Children and Young People's Committee
- 3) the proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' should develop a strong relationship with the Foster Carers Liaison Group (FLAG)
- 4) all Elected Members on the Children and Young People's Committee should visit a children's home setting annually and Members on the proposed 'Children Looked After Governance Board' should visit quarterly
- 5) all Elected Members should receive training or another formal input regarding the importance of their corporate parenting role within four months of their election or as soon as practicable thereafter and that this should be repeated annually. This Committee therefore provides the Monitoring Officer with the authority to make any additions to the

Councillor Induction and Development Programme to incorporate this recommendation as she considers necessary to ensure the delivery of good governance.

- 6) an annual report of the Children and Families Commissioning and Contracts Board should be presented to Children and Young People's Committee.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (GR 08/06/21)

11. Pursuant to the Nottinghamshire County Council constitution this Committee has the delegated authority to receive the report as well as make the recommendations contained within it.

Financial Comments (CDS 08/06/21)

12. There are no financial implications arising directly 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.

[Staffing Resources for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - report to Policy Committee on 15 June 2016](#)

[Responses to Historical Child Abuse – Resources - report to Policy Committee on 20 December 2017](#)

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - report to Full Council on 18 January 2018](#)

[Response to Historical Child Abuse – Resources - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 March 2019](#)

Children in the care of the Nottinghamshire Councils Investigation Report – July 2019

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Initial Response – report to Policy Committee on 18 September 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1462

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 13

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES

CHANGES TO THE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES AND THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENTS SERVICE

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval for the staffing changes within the Commissioning and Resources Division as set out below.

Within Early Childhood Services to:

- disestablish the 1 fte (full-time equivalent) Early Childhood Services Contracts and Performance Officer (Band B) post with effect from 31st August 2021
- establish a new 1 fte Early Years Senior Technical Specialist (Band A) post with effect from 1st September 2021.

Within the Looked After Children Placements Service to:

- establish a new 1 fte Commissioning Officer (Band C) post with effect from 28th June 2021
- establish a new 1 fte Payments Assistant (Grade 3) post with effect from 28th June 2021.

Information

Background

2. Early Childhood Services fulfil the statutory childcare duties placed on the Council to ensure there is sufficient high-quality childcare provision across Nottinghamshire including the provision and promotion of funding entitlements for children and families. The Service also provides the Children's Centre Service and the Families Information Service.
3. The Looked After Children Placements Service provides the departmental 'hub' for securing foster care and residential home placements for children in care, together with management of the payment process for all forms of care placement - from individual foster carers, adopters or guardians, to large organisations who operate and manage children's homes and independent fostering agencies in the private sector.
4. This staffing changes outlined in this paper within these two services reflect:

- the recent transfer of the management of key early childhood services; and to address as an increased priority in relation to financial audits of the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant; and
- the continuing increase in the number of children placed in the care system is an acknowledged national issue and for which the impact locally is evidenced by a 25% increase over the past four years. The consequent increase in workload that this has brought to the placements service has reached the point where additional resource is now required in order for the service to fulfil its statutory duties to secure homes for the Council's children in care in an appropriately efficient and timely manner.

Proposals

Early Childhood Services

5. The Children's Centre Service and Families Information Service have historically been procured via external providers; however, both have been brought back under the direct management of the Council over the course of the past year. The Children's Centre Service, in particular, required the Council to manage substantial performance and contracting responsibilities that fell to the Early Childhood Services Contracts and Performance Officer. Many of these are no longer required now that the service is being delivered by the Council. Furthermore, the Children's Centre Service has 1.8 fte Data and Performance Officer posts to fulfil the current performance and monitoring functions.
6. The Families Information Service formed part of the service contract for Inspire Culture, with a budget of £90,000. The small Families Information Service team transferred under the management of the Council on 1st April 2021, alleviating the need for additional contract and performance capacity in this area too.
7. Early Childhood Services currently commission a speech, language and communications needs programme called Home Talk with an annual budget of £500,000. The Council jointly commissions speech, language and communication needs services and activities with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Children's Integrated Commissioning Hub located in Public Health. Other commissioning activity includes ad hoc commissioning of training, evidence-based programmes and childcare provision.
8. The Contracts and Performance Officer focuses on the procurement of evidence-based interventions, training, and procurement of early years providers to operate from our properties. They have also been given additional tasks to support communications activities; however, however these tasks are required on an ad hoc basis and can be picked up by existing staff members. Therefore, the post is no longer essential, and funding is required to increase capacity of the small Early Years Technical Specialist Team.
9. Early Childhood Services also includes a small team of 2.2 fte Early Years Technical Specialists (Grade 5) who process Dedicated Schools Grant payments to the early years sector, data and monitoring of take up rates, childcare sufficiency, guidance in relation to financial auditing, Provider Agreements and data analysis. Capacity of the team is stretched and despite the requirement to complete financial audits this year, this has not been possible because other tasks have taken precedence.
10. It has become evident in the last 12 months that the functions required of this team have increased to include more audits, additional financial reporting and tracking of vulnerable children in receipt of childcare funding.

11. It is proposed that a new 1 fte Senior Early Years Technical Specialist (Band A) post is established to carry out the following key functions:
- to lead and manage the team of Early Years Technical Specialists to ensure the delivery of Early Years provision is conducted in accordance with national policy, guidance, and the Council's statutory duties
 - to have overall responsibility to ensure that relevant data and performance information is collated, recorded, and reported to Senior Managers
 - to manage and monitor the funding streams, budgets and payments associated with the provision of Early Years services up to the value of £16 million
 - to establish and manage financial audit processes to ensure that the use of Early Years funding complies with the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency and any other relevant local and national regulations.
12. The new Senior Technical Specialist post has been evaluated as an indicative Hay Band A. The new job description and person specification for the Senior Early Years Technical Specialist are available as Background Papers.
13. The proposals within this paper will ensure that statutory duties are prioritised, and staffing budgets are used appropriately to meet the changing demands and requirements of the service.
14. The proposed structure of Early Childhood Services is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Looked After Children Placements Service

15. The number of Commissioning Officers and Payments Assistants within the Placements Service has remained unchanged for a number of years during which time the number of children in care within Nottinghamshire has risen by 25%. Whilst this increase is in line with national trends, the care system - and in particular the private sector market through which the majority of placements are secured - has changed immeasurably during this time and the process of securing placements is increasingly challenging.
16. Additionally, a number of internal audit reviews conducted during the past year that have covered the work of the payments team has identified a shortfall in resource / capacity that is impacting on the effectiveness of the payments process, including financial controls. It noted the proportional increase in the number of carers (and therefore the volume of individual payments) is even greater than the headline increase in the number of children in care referred to above.
17. The service took on additional staff on a temporary basis during the past year and used the evidence from this to secure permanent funding for these two posts. The situation will remain under review during the current year to determine whether any further staffing changes are required. The cost of running the Placements Service remains very low with overall staffing costs representing just 1% of the spend on externally procured placements alone.

Other Options Considered

18. The workload of the Contracts and Performance Officer has reduced following the transfer of the Children's Centre Service and Families Information Service to the Council. Consideration has been given to widening the role to include more work regarding communications,

however the Commissioning and Projects Manager and the Families Information Service have taken on these tasks. The Commissioning and Projects Manager will also lead on any ad hoc commissioning tasks and will work closely with Commissioners in the Children's Integrated Commissioning Hub to performance manage the Speech, Language and Communication Needs contract.

19. Maintaining the current capacity of the Early Years Technical Specialist Team has been considered, however demands on this small team have increased substantially with increasing requests from central Government for data collection and analysis, as well as increased demands for financial reports to the Early Years and Schools Forum and Early Years Consultation Group.

Reasons for Recommendations

20. There is no longer a requirement for the Council to deliver contracting and performance functions for the Children's Centre Service following transfer to the Council. The Service has two dedicated Data and Monitoring Officers and all managers have duties to performance manage their teams and targeted activity. Other commissioning and procurement activities will be delivered by the Commissioning and Projects Manager who also now has responsibility for managing the Families Information Service following transfer to the Council on 1st April 2021.
21. The workload of the Early Years Technical Specialists has increased in the last year or so, which has meant that financial audits have not been carried out. By establishing a Senior Early Years Technical Specialist post, the intention is to provide some dedicated senior capacity to lead on auditing, funding reports and helping to plan and prioritise tasks for the team.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. 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

Early Childhood Services

23. The Contracts and Performance Officer post is funded through the local authority revenue budget. The funding allocated for this post will be used to fund the new Senior Early Years Technical Specialist post.
24. Disestablishing the 1 fte Contracts and Performance Officer post (Band B) will save £47,228 with on-costs, and the 1 fte Senior Early Years Technical Specialist post (Band A) will cost £41,212 with on-costs, making an overall saving of £6,016 to contribute towards further promotion of childcare entitlements and work to increase the take-up of early education places by 2 year olds from low income households.

25. Funding for the additional Commissioning Officer and Payments Assistant posts (£77,000 in total) is contained within the Placements Service budget, having been included within the growth in external placements budget pressure that was approved as part of the budget setting process for the current year.

Human Resources Implications

26. If this proposal is approved, the deletion of the 1 fte Contracts and Performance Officer post would result in redundancy for the current post holder unless they can be redeployed into another vacant post within the Council. The post holder will be supported by their line manager to find alternative employment.
27. A formal consultation meeting will be held with the post holder affected, and further consultation is planned with other members of the service that could be impacted on by this proposal.
28. Recruitment for the three new posts arising from this report will follow normal procedures and be advertised internally in the first instance.

Implications for Service Users

29. By making these staffing changes, children and families will still be able to access the Children's Centre Service, online information, and their free childcare entitlements. These services and interventions will enable parents to work, to better support their families and, help children achieve a good level of development.
30. Equally, the staffing changes within the Placements Service will enable the Council to continue to fulfil its statutory duties as corporate parent to secure homes for children in care in an appropriately efficient and timely manner.

Data Protection and Information Governance

31. Data protection and information governance are key roles for Early Years Technical Specialists and the new Senior Technical Specialist will take on the lead role in relation to Privacy Notices, Data Protection Impact Assessments and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
32. The Contracts and Performance Officer also has duties in relation to GDPR when commissioning services and performance management. These tasks have reduced over time and are only required on an ad hoc basis when commissioning tasks are planned, this function will therefore fall to the Commissioning and Projects Manager and all other managers within the service.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1) approves the following changes to the staffing establishment in the Early Childhood Services:
- disestablish 1 fte Early Childhood Services Contracts and Performance Officer (Band B) post with effect from 31st August 2021

- establish a new 1 fte Early Years Senior Technical Specialist (Band A) post with effect from 1st September 2021.
- 2) approves the following changes to the staffing establishment in the Looked After Children Placements Service:
- establish a new 1 fte Commissioning Officer (Band C) post with effect from 28th June 2021
 - establish a new 1 fte Payments Assistant (Grade 3) post with effect from 28th June 2021.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 21/05/21)

33. The report and recommendations fall within the delegation to Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 28/05/21)

34. Disestablishing 1 fte Contracts and Performance Officer post (Band B) will save £47,228 with on-costs and establishing 1 fte Senior Early Years Technical Specialist post (Band A) will cost £41,212 with on-costs, making an overall saving of £6,016. The net staffing budget for the Early Years team is £156,828.
35. The cost of 1.0 fte Commissioning Officer (Band C) and 1.0 fte Payments Assistant (Grade 3) is £77,000 in total and this will be contained within the Placements Service staffing budget of £527,895.

HR Comments (BC 09/06/21)

36. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Newly established posts will be recruited to in line with the agreed recruitment and vacancy control procedures. Formal consultation will occur with the employee who will be displaced by this proposal, and every effort will be made to find them alternative employment via the redeployment process.

Background Papers and Published Documents

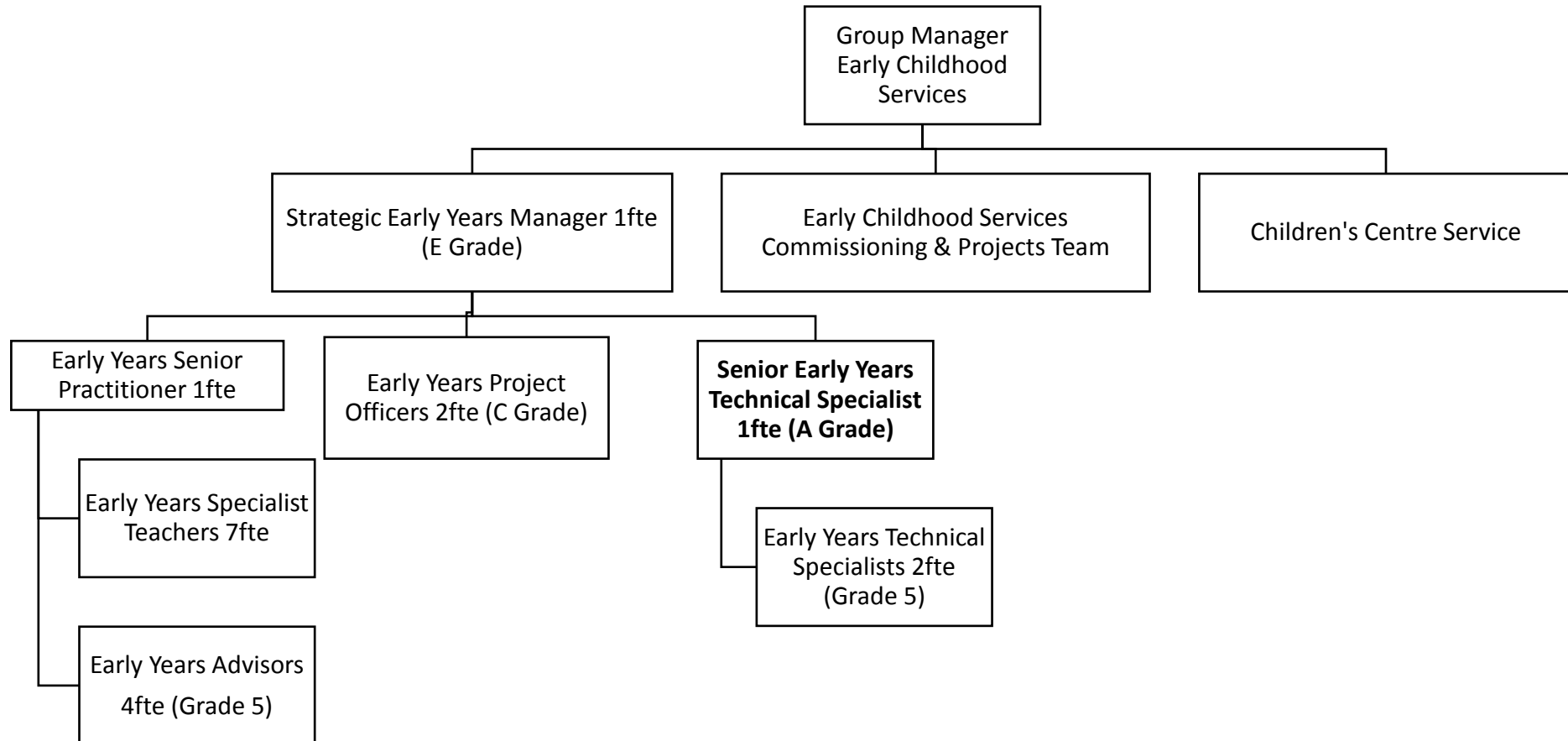
Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Job Description and Person Specification for the Senior Early Years Technical Specialist post

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

All.

C1467

Nottinghamshire County Council Early Childhood Services Team Structure from September 2021

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 14

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**CHILD POVERTY UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report invites Committee to consider the latest data relating to children in low income families in Nottinghamshire.
2. The report also invites Committee to consider the progress so far of the 2020-2022 Improving Life Chances for Children and Families Action Plan and to confirm if annual reports to Committee are required.

Information

3. Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. It is known that the most disadvantaged children are less likely to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future financial security. They are more likely to suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments. It is not surprising that children in poverty alongside other vulnerable groups continue to be prioritised in Nottinghamshire.
4. This report stems from a request at Children and Young People's Committee to provide an update in relation to child poverty. A further report will be presented in the autumn focusing specifically on how Covid-19 has impacted on child poverty levels and outcomes for children and families previously identified as experiencing poverty.

Measuring Child Poverty

5. There are various ways of defining poverty and no single definition is universally accepted. In the UK, local authorities use the Government definition and the data they publish through Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs which does include some in-work poverty.
6. Child Poverty is measured by Government as¹:
 - being in **relative low income** (or relative poverty) if children are living in a household with income below 60% of median household income in that year. (The median

¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn07096/>

household's income for 2018/19 was £29,400 according to the Office for National Statistics, this means children living in a household with an income less than £17,640 are identified as living in relative poverty).

- being in **absolute low income** (or absolute poverty) if children are living in households with income below 60% of the 2010/11 median, uprated for inflation (this measure looks at how living standards of low income households are changing over time).

7. The measure for relative low income is widely used to compare data with other councils and across localities, so this report refers to this measure.

Children in Low Income Families Data

8. The latest published data is based on 2018/19. In 2018/19, 15% of children were identified as living in low income families in Nottinghamshire, compared with 18.4% across England, and 15.3% in the East Midlands. The trends in Nottinghamshire show that low income levels remain fairly static within a range of 15% -18% of children living in low income families.

Nottinghamshire	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Relative Low Income (Poverty): % of children aged 0-15 in low income families	15%	17%	18%	17%	15%

9. Ashfield and Mansfield districts continue to have the highest levels of children under the age of 16 years living in low income families as detailed in the table below.

Local Authority Name	% of Children in low income families 2018/19
	Under 16 years
England	16.8
Nottinghamshire	15
Ashfield	19
Bassetlaw	18
Broxtowe	12
Gedling	13
Mansfield	19
Newark and Sherwood	14
Rushcliffe	7

Source: HMRC and DWP 2020

10. A map of Nottinghamshire showing data for children living in low income families by district and census ward is included in **Appendix 1**. Detailed district level maps are available to download from [Child poverty | Nottinghamshire County Council](#).
11. There are areas of Nottinghamshire that do have greater numbers of children in low income households. Data by ward level has been used to confirm the top 10 priority areas which are targeted by services and organisations. Partners of the Life Chances Partnership Group

are prioritising these wards when commissioning, developing, and delivering services and interventions. For example, work will be undertaken with partners to establish pilot Family Hubs in one or two priority areas to enable families to access a range of early help services provided through improved integrated work. The top 10 priority wards are included in **Appendix 1**.

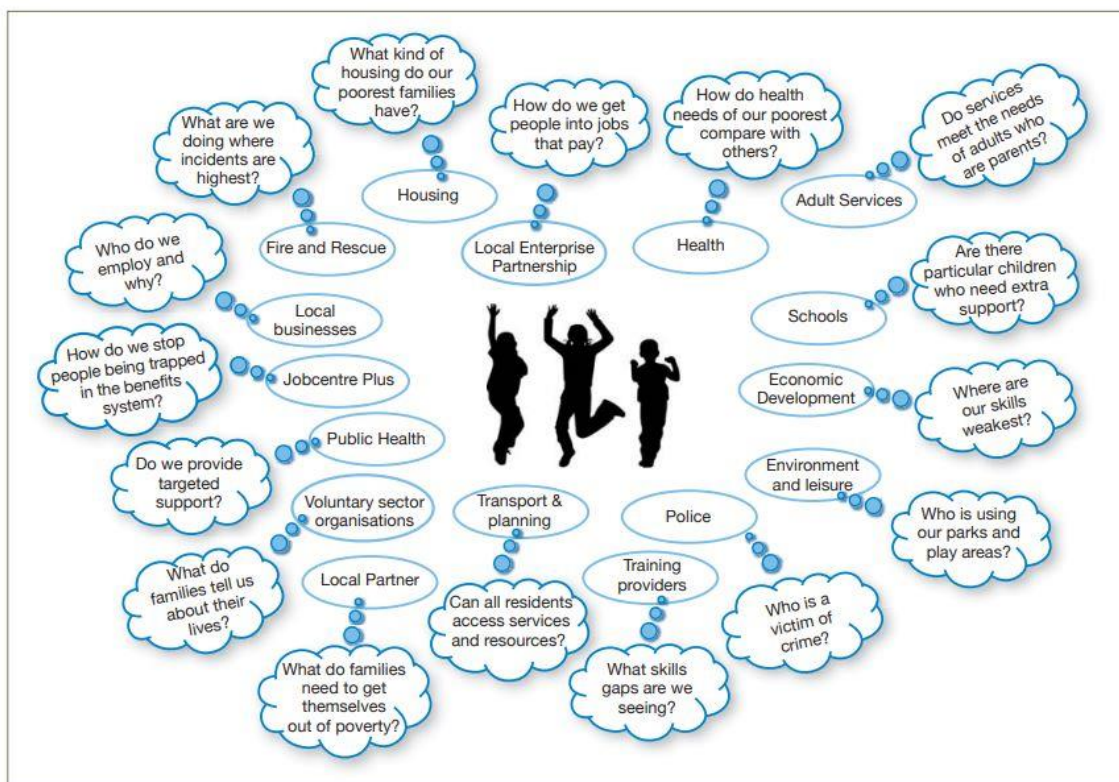
The Impact of Covid-19

12. The 2018/19 children in low income data cannot evidence the trends in relation to the pandemic although it is understood nationally that child poverty levels have increased since the pandemic started in March 2020. There are some local measures which have been suggested as proxy indicators of child poverty such as eligibility for funded childcare and free school meal claims; this data will be presented in the report to Committee in the autumn following further discussion and work with neighbouring and statistically similar local authorities.

Improving Life Chances for Children and Families Action Plan 2020-2022

13. There is a local partnership group called the 'Improving Life Chances for Children and Families Partnership' which focuses on tackling child poverty by building on the previous Nottinghamshire Child Poverty Strategy 2010. The partnership has been in existence since 2009 under different names. The group is managed by the Council and reports to the Children and Families Alliance and more recently the new Best Start Partnership Steering Group as supporting parents into employment is a priority within the Best Start Strategy².
14. Every two years, the group develops, delivers and monitors an action plan bringing together activity from a range of services including the Citizen's Advice Bureau, District and Borough Councils, the Voluntary and Community Sector, education, economic regeneration and community health services to name but a few. A partnership approach is required as the following diagram suggests.

² [Giving Children the Best Start in Life | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)



15. The latest Improving Life Chances action plan for 2020-2022 includes the following ambitions:

Children and Families experience fewer negative outcomes from the effects of poverty

- Improve the life chances of children and families by working in partnership to reduce levels of child poverty and reduce the impact of poverty
- Workers recognise the importance of tackling child poverty in improving outcomes for families and sharing information about 'what works'
- Children, young people, and families in poverty have improved health and wellbeing outcomes
- To improve the quality and quantity of private sector rented housing for those in housing need, reducing the need for temporary accommodation used by families.

Families and Children are able to move out of poverty

- To increase uptake of funded childcare provision to and support parents into work
- To provide opportunities for parents to be job ready, by improving skills, confidence, and aspirations for their families
- More parents into sustained employment
- Working across agencies to consider the effectiveness of work programmes in helping those furthest away from the labour market back into work, in particular adults with mental health difficulties
- Increase families' money management skills and build financial resilience for children and families in poverty
- Support families reliant on welfare to navigate the system
- Increase families' income and improve outcomes through tackling fuel poverty
- Support families' income and improve outcomes through tackling food insecurity.

The Cycle of Poverty is broken as children are prevented from becoming poor adults

- To improve educational outcomes for our poorest children and close the attainment gap for children eligible for Free School Meals and their peers
- Have a collaborative approach to support young people (16-18 years) to not become not in education, training, or employment (NEET) and Not Known, maximising opportunities
- Consider how to effectively support couple relationships and identify successful models for achieving this.

Children and Families are effectively supported during the Covid-19 Pandemic in relation to poverty

- To understand the impact of Covid restrictions to reduce the negative impact of Covid-19 on children and families.

16. The full Improving Life Chances for Children and Families Action Plan is included in **Appendix 2**.
17. Progress against the Action Plan has been broadly good and progress against some of the priority actions are included below:
18. **Supporting parents to be ready for work** is a priority within the action plan and several services and interventions are in place. Progress so far includes:
 - a) 866 families have achieved Positive Outcomes, meeting the target for 2020/21 for the Supporting Families Programme (previously known as Troubled Families). 830 of the families have achieved significant progress towards employment and 36 have achieved continuous employment, moving off benefits.
 - b) 67% of parents contacted by the Children's Centre Service³ three months after undertaking an intervention linked to work readiness reported an improvement in their employment status.
 - c) There were 4,910 'hits' on the Notts Help Yourself Work and Volunteering section⁴ with a 100% increase from Quarter 1 to Quarter 4 2020/21, showing that families are becoming more aware of the resource, a fact reflected in the recent Families Information Service annual survey, which showed awareness had increased from just 18% in 2019/20 to 30% of respondents in 2020/21.
 - d) Take up of the funded 30 hours childcare⁵ for working parents has increased to 94.4% of those eligible, enabling more parents to work without the barrier of childcare costs.
19. **Addressing food insecurity** for families has been a substantial task for the group and the following activity has taken place in the last year:

³ [Children's Centre Service | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

⁴ [Work and Volunteering | Notts Help Yourself](#)

⁵ [30 hours funded childcare for three- and four-year olds | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

- a) By Spring 2022, Nottinghamshire will have the largest number of FOOD Clubs, supporting families to access healthy, affordable food. Currently more than 150 families are already benefiting from a weekly parcel worth £15 - £20, costing them just £3.50. This has been made possible by Nottinghamshire being successful in achieving the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme, one of just five local authorities in the country.
- b) Healthy Start⁶ take-up was above the national figure (Notts 56% compared with nationally 54%).
- c) Over Easter 2021, 4,184 children and young people eligible for Free School Meals accessed food and activity packs, as part of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)⁷ programme, funded by the Department for Education and delivered by the Young People's Service and Children's Centre Service.
- d) From December 2020 to the end of April 2021, 87,357 supermarket vouchers were provided to vulnerable families through the Covid Winter Grant scheme funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. The scheme provided supermarket vouchers to families struggling financially because of Covid during the school holidays as well as during term time. Its replacement, the Covid Local Support Grant⁸, has provided Free School Meals to children during May half term and the scheme ends on 20th June 2021. A report about both schemes is due to be presented to Committee later this year.

20. Committee is invited to consider if annual reports of the Improving Life Chances action plan are required.

Other Options Considered

21. No other options have been considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

22. Children living in low income families are at risk of a range of poor outcomes and these outcomes can also impact on aspirations and future economic status. Children living in low income households are less likely to do well at school, which in turn reduces their opportunity to gain meaningful employment. Improving social mobility is therefore a priority for Nottinghamshire; and reducing the impact of poverty is important to achieve a wide range of positive outcomes for children, their families, and future generations.
23. Families living in low income households can be more likely to need support from services. Tackling the root causes of poverty is key to achieving future savings across a range of public services. According to the [Child Poverty Fact Sheet \(local.gov.uk\)](#), child poverty costs about £12 billion a year to the public sector. 6.7% of primary education and 7% of secondary education spending is as a result of child poverty. £1.653bn is spent on social housing (not including housing benefit). £0.926bn is spent on fire and rescue and estimates on crime and policing range from £1.06bn to £4.16bn.

⁶ [Health start food and vitamins | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

⁷ [Nottinghamshire Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021 | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

⁸ [Covid Local Support Grant: Information for members of the public | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

Statutory and Policy Implications

24. 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.

Crime and Disorder Implications

25. There is a correlation between areas with high levels of deprivation and high levels of domestic violence and crime, suggesting that tackling poverty is key to reducing offences.

Financial Implications

26. There is currently no direct funding for work to tackle child poverty and improve life chances; work relies on core funding streams from across partners with the exception of recent short term Covid related grant schemes.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

27. National research indicates that there is a probable link between poverty and child abuse and neglect. The recently published report by the National Child Mortality Database identifies a 10% increase in child mortality for each increase in deprivation decile.

Implications for Service Users

28. Reducing levels of child poverty and reducing the negative impact of poverty on children and families will benefit service users as they will be better off, more children will achieve and will be able to make a positive contribution; there will be less stress, debt and difficulty and there will be increased wellbeing and improved long-term outcomes.
29. Communities will also be better off, as there will be less deprivation and disadvantage, more spending in the community, increased investment in the local economy and reduced reliance on services.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

30. Economic regeneration is key to improving life chances, as access to sustained, well paid employment is still recognised as a key route out of poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 1) notes the latest children in low income families data and supports further work with other local authorities to help better understand the impact of Covid-19 on child poverty levels in the absence of published data covering the period from March 2020.

- 2) considers the progress to date of the 2020-2022 Improving Life Chances for Children and Families Action Plan and confirms if annual progress reports are required.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 08/06/21)

31. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 08/06/2021)

32. There are no financial implications arising directly 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.

Child Poverty Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016 [Child poverty - Nottinghamshire Insight](#)

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

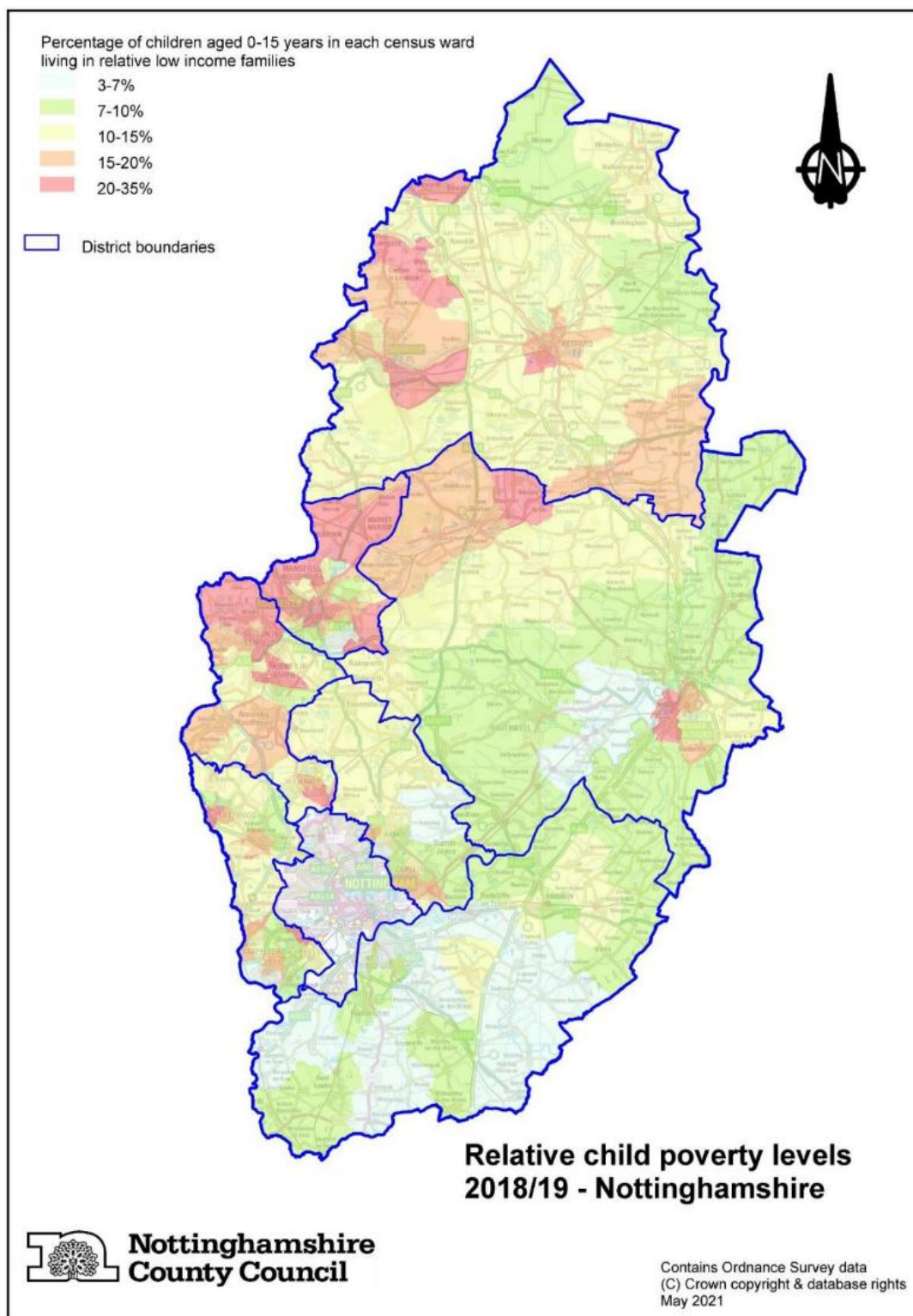
All.

C1474

Appendix 1

Nottinghamshire Children in low income households by Census Ward

Figure 1: Percentage of children aged 0-15 in each census ward living in Relative Low-Income Families 2018/19



District Level maps are available to download from [Child poverty | Nottinghamshire County Council](#).

Figure 2: The ten Nottinghamshire Wards with highest levels of children living in low income households (2018/19)

Ward	District	2018/2019
Castle	Newark & Sherwood	34%
Oak Tree	Mansfield	31%
Worksop South East	Bassetlaw	28%
Carr Bank	Mansfield	28%
Portland	Mansfield	27%
Newgate	Mansfield	27%
Abbey Hill	Ashfield	27%
Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill	Mansfield	27%
Broomhill	Mansfield	26%
Devon	Newark & Sherwood	26%

Appendix 2



Improving the Life Chances of Children, Young People and Families Action Plan 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2022

This action plan is part of the Nottinghamshire Child Poverty Strategy and is performance managed and developed by the Nottinghamshire Life Chances for Children and Families Partnership. The plan focuses on improving life chances and social mobility with a particular focus on tackling child poverty in Nottinghamshire.

This action plan has been informed by the Child Poverty and Life Chances JSNA 2016 (updated 2021) which can be found here:

<http://www.nottinghamshireinsight.org.uk/themes/child-poverty/>

For more information for professionals please go to <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-childrens-trust/child-poverty>

Information for children, young people and families is available at: www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
1. Children and Families are effectively supported during the Covid-19 Pandemic in relation to poverty	To understand the impact of Covid restrictions to reduce the negative impact of Covid 19 on children and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To keep abreast of national/ local data and research reports circulating these where appropriate.• To act on the recommendations made in data and research reports to help improve outcomes for families during Covid.• To work together to enable families to continue to access services digitally, over the phone or face to face where safe to do so.• Support, promote and champion schemes and projects which help children and families during Covid e.g. food insecurity support,	Early Childhood Services	Bi-annual review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of families supported by Covid Winter Grant and the Covid Local Support Grant.• No. of families supported by the Covid Winter Grant Scheme to pay for utility bills• No. of children/young people supported by Holiday Activities and Food Scheme (HAF). <p>Delivery of targeted parenting programmes, 1-2-1 family support</p>

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
		educational support, digital access, fuel poverty etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to actively target and engage vulnerable families during Covid. 			and review of referrals during lock down restrictions and recovery. Supporting Families Outcome targets achieved.
2. Children and Families experience fewer negative outcomes from the effects of poverty	Improve the life chances of children and families by working in partnership to reduce levels of child poverty and reduce the impact of poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to facilitate the Life Chances for Children and Families Strategic Partnership group. Develop, implement and review the Life Chances Action Plan across the partnership. Actively target and direct resources to localities and community groups with higher rates of child poverty. Assist local organisations to understand and raise awareness of work to improve life chances and reduce child poverty Support the Health and Wellbeing Board to progress activity to fulfil the priority of giving children the Best Start in life. 	Early Childhood Services, NCC All partners NCC Early Childhood Services & Public Health	Review annually	Engagement of all key partners through the Life Chances Partnership. Numbers of children in low income families decline in Notts, including reductions in each district and in the top 10 target census wards. Inequalities are reduced across localities, evidenced through data in relation to children in low income families' data and other outcomes. Launch of the Best Start Partnership with engagement from necessary range of multi-agency partners, including at sub-groups.
	Workers recognise the importance of tackling child poverty in improving outcomes for families and sharing information about 'what works'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and publicise the Child Poverty webpages on the NCC website to ensure most recent data and information is included. Promote the findings of the Child Poverty JSNA on Notts Insight so workers are aware of range of information available and recommendations agreed. 	NCC Early Childhood Services	annually	Page reviewed and refreshed No of views increases, including a spike after promotion (source Google Analytics).

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
					identified additional collection points developed Feedback from recipients
	To improve the quality and quantity of private sector rented housing for those in housing need, reducing the need for temporary accommodation used by families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To champion the needs of children and families at District Homelessness Groups. To undertake a survey to collate the activities and interventions offered by all District Councils to improve the quality and quantity of housing for families in need. 	District & Borough Councils	Measured annually	Statutory Homelessness and households in temporary accommodation (Public Health Outcomes Framework 1.5ii)
3. Families and Children are able to move out of poverty	To increase uptake of funded childcare provision to and support parents into work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the barrier of the cost of childcare for working parents with 3 and 4 year olds by continuing to promote the extended offer of 30 hours per week term time only. Promote the funded entitlement to increase take up of early education for 2 year olds from low income families to support parents to consider employment, raise aspirations and improve outcomes for children. Promote the Care to Learn programme for young parents in education/training aged under 20 at start of course. Run social media campaigns across multiple channels to encourage families back into formal childcare provision, following the relaxation of Covid-19 lockdown. Through the Childcare Sufficiency Audit identify any gaps in provision at a local level, due to closures linked to Covid-19 and address where feasible. 	NCC Early Childhood Services	Reviewed termly	<p>Increased take up rates across all districts of 3 and 4 year olds from working households claiming their 30 hours funded childcare entitlements.</p> <p>Increased take up of early education entitlements by 2 year olds from low income families.</p> <p>Create a Care to Learn webpage and review the number of hits following promotion.</p> <p>Review trends for take up following social media campaigns.</p>

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
	To provide opportunities for parents to be job ready, by improving skills, confidence and aspirations for their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued delivery of the Building Better Opportunities (BBO) 'Towards Work' programme. Continued delivery of District/Borough Council Job Clubs and local Employment and Skills Provider Groups Promotion of DWP work coaches and the DWP direct referable programmes (Work and Health Programme and Jobs, Entry, Targeted Support Children's Centre Service volunteering programmes will be successfully delivered to support parents to be ready for work. Continued upskilling of practitioners from Troubled Families Employment Advisors across workforce. 	<p>NCC Economic Development</p> <p>District & Borough Councils</p> <p>DWP</p> <p>Early Childhood Services</p> <p>Supporting Families</p>	Reviewed annually	<p>Increased employment rates</p> <p>Evaluation of DWP Work Coaches.</p> <p>Children's Centre Service reports progress re. work readiness outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>Supporting Families Programme outcomes are achieved.</p>
	More parents into sustained employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Support provision, confidence building and work preparation input through NCC Family Service and NCC Children's Centre Service (CCS), in partnership with DWP and WNC moves parents towards employment. Local organisations promote volunteering to parents, low income families and care leavers Embedded promotion and referral routes into Building Better Opportunities – Towards Work and Money Sorted in D2N2 programmes in place with NCC FS and NCC CCS. 	<p>Supporting Families</p> <p>All</p> <p>DWP, Chamber of Commerce, & NCC Economic Development</p>	Reviewed annually	<p>Successful Supporting Families claims indicate parents in employment.</p> <p>No. of active Children's Centre Service volunteers.</p> <p>No. of active Family Service Volunteers</p> <p>No. of hits on the NHY Work and Volunteering pages www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/apprenticeships www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/workandvolunteering</p>

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, update and actively promote the 'Work and Volunteering tile' on the Notts Help Yourself website. Continued upskilling of practitioners from Troubled Families Employment Advisors across workforce. 	Building Better Opportunities Stakeholder Manager and DWP		
	Working across agencies to consider the effectiveness of work programmes in helping those furthest away from the labour market back into work, in particular adults with mental health difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active promotion of schemes to support parents with mental health problems into work 'health and work programme' IAPT EA's, 'Recovery College' Towards Work, Money Sorted and Futures Positive (Notts Help Yourself) Update and review of programmes such as <i>CCS Opening Doors to Employment /Confidence and BBO</i> Active promotion of the Disability Confidence scheme to support employers 	NCC Economic Development & Chamber of Commerce, Building Better Opportunities (BBO) Broxtowe Borough Council DWP	Reviewed annually	Gap in the employment rate between those with a long- term condition / mental health and the overall employment rate (Public Health Outcomes Framework 1.08i, 1.08ii, 1.08iii)
	Increase families' money management skills and build financial resilience for children and families in poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of money management tools and information through Building Better Opportunities Money Sorted programmes. Organisations signpost families and support them to access online benefit eligibility checkers, money management tools and advice services. Local partners are aware of and using money management tools in their settings. 	Building Better Opportunities Stakeholder Manager, Chamber of Commerce	Reviewed annually	Increased use of money management tools and resources. More families report increased confidence in money management

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and (if required) develop a county wide financial resilience group to share good practice across the county. 			
	Support families reliant on welfare to navigate the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Access Points across Nottinghamshire are promoted, supporting families to apply for Universal Credit and childcare online. Alternative arrangements to be explored during Covid in relation to shared points and infection control. TFEA Workshops to key agencies (Children's Social Care, Family Service, Children's Centre Service) keep partners up to date. Financial advisors support families to access benefits CAB Help to Claim Scheme through CAB supports families. 	<p>DWP & Borough/ District Councils, CAB, Building Better Opportunities stakeholder manager</p> <p>CAB</p>	Reviewed annually	<p>Digital Access points are mapped and promoted.</p> <p>No. of families supported to obtain correct benefits by DWP Supporting Families staff.</p>
	Increase families' income and improve outcomes through tackling fuel poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and circulate information to ensure services are aware of programmes to support families affected by fuel poverty and refer routinely, as part of whole family working. Successful delivery of the Big Difference Scheme Promotion and delivery of the CAB Energy intervention and Nottinghamshire Energy Partnership (NEP) 'Save and Switch' campaigns 	<p>NCC District Councils; Nottinghams hire Energy Partnership (NEP), CAB NEP</p> <p>Nottingham Energy Partnership</p>	Reviewed annually.	<p>Staff are aware of relevant schemes and refer families accordingly.</p> <p>Fuel Poverty levels decline across Nottinghamshire (measured annually).</p> <p>No. of Notts residents with children, referred and supported through Affordable Warmth programme</p>

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of fuel and water payments through the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme 			Number of households accessing support through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme
	Support families' income and improve outcomes through tackling food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active promotion of social eating, food banks, Food clubs, Fair Share schemes, holiday kitchens etc across the county by services working with families. Support the work of the Food Insecurity Strategic Group, including interventions due to Covid-19 in priority areas of disadvantage. Produce briefing note for multi-agency staff on Food Insecurity and local support systems. Contribute to the ongoing work of the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme (COTP)– including development and evaluation of the FOOD Clubs/school meals initiative at pilot CCS sites, the Food for Life programme and the development of a community of practice across all early years providers. Raise awareness of and embed the Healthy Start programme to raise awareness amongst families and professionals. 	<p>NCC Public Health and all Life Chances partners</p> <p>Early Childhood Services</p> <p>Public Health and Early Childhood Services</p>	Reviewed annually.	<p>No. of FOOD Clubs developed in Notts (part of COTP)</p> <p>No. of families becoming members of FOOD Clubs.</p> <p>No. of families signed up for Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins</p> <p>No. of Healthy Start vitamins distributed increases from Dec 2020 baseline.</p>
4. The Cycle of Poverty is broken as children are	To improve educational outcomes for our poorest children and close the attainment gap for children eligible for Free School Meals and their peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful implementation of 'Improving Educational Opportunities for All' Strategy with an enhanced focus on partnership working with all stakeholders, including businesses and parents. 	NCC School Improvement	Autumn Term annually	<p>Attainment levels increase across all Key Stages (Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1-5).</p> <p>Attainment gap reduces across all key stages.</p>

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
prevented from becoming poor adults		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and increase take up of Free School Meals, by supporting low income parents to assess their eligibility and register, through the work undertaken by the Schools Co-ordinators and others. 	NCC School Admissions and NCC School Catering Service	Termly	FSM Claimant trends.
	Have a collaborative approach to support young people (16-18 years) to not become not in education, training or employment (NEET) and Not Known, maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better awareness and understanding of range of opportunities and programmes, including promotion of careers fairs and work programmes. Target interventions to priority groups within this cohort, e.g. Care Leavers, teenage parents ensuring all relevant services engage. Targeted work by the Family Service and Futures to support young people into education, training or employment. Collaborative work with Schools, the Family Service and Nottinghamshire Futures to capture data, including destination info and target localities and target groups least likely to be in education, training or employment. Increase provision and take up of apprenticeships and other employment programmes, such as KickStart announced as part of the Job Support schemes. Increase in employers from public, private and voluntary sector offering apprenticeships and kickstart placements 	<p>BBO Stakeholder Manager</p> <p>Family Service and Futures</p> <p>Building Better Opportunities Stakeholder Manager/ DWP</p>	Annual data analysis/ review	<p>Reduced number of target groups (namely looked after children and care leavers and teenage mothers) who are not in education, training or employment.</p> <p>Increase number of young people in education, training or employment that are 'not known' by Futures.</p> <p>Improved outcomes for Troubled Families.</p> <p>Number of young people in Nottinghamshire in apprenticeships.</p> <p>Number of young people in KickStart placements in the area</p>

Expected Outcome	Aims (what do we want to achieve?)	Objectives (How)	Lead (By Who)	Deadline (By When)	Measure of success
	Consider how to effectively support couple relationships and identify successful models for achieving this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully deliver Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) training, raising awareness and upskilling the workforce to deliver interventions including EPEC Being A Parent Together, Reducing Parental Conflict, Me, You & Baby Too etc Promote online resources across all channels that support parents to consider the impact of conflict on their children and help them modify their behaviour, including development of specific RPC domain on NHY Parent/Carer Zone. 	NCC Family Service and Early Childhood Services	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of staff trained as Train the Trainers No. of staff trained from across the children's workforce No. of programmes delivered Feedback from parents <p>Development of 'Relationships Really Matter' tile on NHY – launch Spring 2021</p> <p>No. of hits to NHY Relationships Really Matter tile (launch Spring 2021).</p>

This action plan complements and has interdependencies with the following plans and strategy

- Nottinghamshire County Council – Council Plan
- District/ Borough Council plans
- Nottinghamshire SEND Strategy and SEND Local Offer
- Nottinghamshire 'Improving Educational Opportunities for All' Strategy
- Nottinghamshire Early Years Improvement Plan
- Nottinghamshire Best Start Strategy 2021-2025
- Nottinghamshire Early Help Strategy 2021-2025
- Nottinghamshire Health and Well Being Strategy
- Nottinghamshire Care Leaver Local Offer
- Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit
- [Nottinghamshire Employment and Health Strategy](#)
- Nottinghamshire Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 15

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND
SKILLS****PROPOSED CONSULTATIONS ON OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF NORTH
CLIFTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE ALTERNATIVE USE OF THE
MANNERS SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks Committee approval to undertake an initial statutory consultation in order to explore options for North Clifton Primary School, Newark, including possible closure.
2. This report also seeks Committee approval for the Council's officers to investigate options for the future use of the Manners Sutton Primary School site and to undertake a statutory consultation on proposals.

Information**North Clifton Primary School**

3. North Clifton Primary School is a small rural school in the Newark and Sherwood district. The school has a published admission number of eight and the school building has the capacity to educate 56 pupils. At the last Ofsted inspection, in March 2018, the school was rated as 'good'.
4. North Clifton Primary School primarily serves the small villages of North Clifton and South Clifton and is alone in a rural planning area. The school is isolated; the next nearest Nottinghamshire school is Dunham on Trent Primary which is 4.3 miles away by car.
5. There are significant concerns about declining pupil numbers at North Clifton Primary School. Recent years have seen the number of children on the roll of the school reduce from 36 to 26. In October 2020, only three pupils were in the school's Reception year, despite a Published Admission Number of eight. This number is expected to reduce to two Reception pupils for academic year 2021/22.

Table 1: Number on roll (NOR) at North Clifton Primary School on October census date

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
NOR	36	31	29	24	26

6. There is no housing proposed for the immediate area in the Newark Local Plan. It is therefore not expected that admission numbers will increase in future years.
7. With such low numbers on roll, the school's Governing Body, Headteacher and Council officers have serious concerns as to the school's viability with such small cohorts in the future.

Table 2: Numbers on roll of North Clifton Primary School by year group

Year	Yr R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6
NOR	3	4	4	3	6	4	2

The school also currently has four non statutory school aged (early years) children on roll

8. The school ended the 2019/20 financial year with a small deficit revenue balance. However, this deficit increased significantly by the end of the 2020/21 financial year.
9. Following a meeting between North Clifton Primary School's Governing Body, Executive Headteacher and Council officers to discuss concerns over the sustainability of the school, it is recommended that options for the future of North Clifton Primary School should be explored. This could include amalgamation, federation or closure.
10. If it is decided that closure should be explored, then the consultation recommended in this report would constitute the first stage of the statutory process for closure, as set out in the Department for Education's guidance document; 'Opening and closing maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers' (November 2019).

Manners Sutton Primary School

11. In March 2021, Children and Young People's Committee approved a recommendation for the closure of Manners Sutton Primary School with effect from August 2021. The decision was predicated by the low and falling numbers on roll at the school in recent years. The school has had no pupils on roll for the 2020/21 academic year.
12. Manners Sutton Primary School operates from a site of 0.47 hectares and has a building consisting primarily of three classrooms and a larger school hall.
13. Due to increasing demands on the Council's services, the Council would like to explore options for the reconfiguration of the school site for alternative uses.

Other Options Considered

14. The initial consultation on options for the future of North Clifton Primary School will include the exploration of other options including federation with another maintained school, amalgamation with another maintained school, academisation and closure.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. The Council has a statutory responsibility to work with the governing body to address their concerns regarding sustainability, viability and the capacity to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

16. The Council is unable to financially support its schools which are required to provide high quality education within the allocated schools budget. The low number of pupils on roll is impacting on North Clifton Primary School's ability to set a balanced budget in the future.
17. The reconfiguration of the Manners Sutton Primary School site for alternative use will assist the Council in meeting the increase in demands for services for the benefit of the population of Nottinghamshire.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. 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

19. Where a school reports a deficit the Children & Families finance team work with the school to develop a three year deficit recovery plan. The expectation is that the deficit will be recovered from future years funding and efficiencies where necessary. The scope for the deficit to be addressed would be an increasing challenge where there is a projected ongoing reduction in pupil numbers and consequently funding.
20. The Local Authority Scheme for Financing Schools stipulates that the local authority cannot write off the deficit balance of any school. Any financial support should be from the overall schools budget from a contingency specifically held for this purpose and agreed by the Schools Forum. Currently no such contingency has been agreed with the Schools Forum and if one is created this could reduce resources available to other schools.
21. It is anticipated that there will not be any costs for the consultation, but if there are they will be minimal and contained within the service's allocated budget and centrally via the Council's Communications team.

Human Resources Implications

22. The decision on the future of North Clifton Primary School may result in changes to the staffing structure of the school.

Implications for Service Users

23. There are currently 26 statutory school aged children on the roll of North Clifton Primary School.
24. Should it be decided, following consultation, that North Clifton Primary School should amalgamate or federate with another school or join a multi academy trust then the impact on service users will be minimal.

25. Should it be decided, following consultation, that the Council should further investigate closure, pupils on the roll of North Clifton Primary School may be required to continue their education at another school or academy in the future.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Committee approval is given to undertake an initial statutory consultation in order to explore options for North Clifton Primary School, Newark, including possible closure.
- 2) Committee approval is given for Council officers to investigate options for the future use of the Manners Sutton Primary School site and undertake a statutory consultation on proposals.

Marion Clay
Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 07/06/21)

26. The recommendations fall within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (MDN 08/06/21)

27. Where a school reports a deficit the Children & Families finance team work with the school to develop a three year deficit recovery plan. The expectation is that the deficit will be recovered from future years funding and efficiencies where necessary. The scope for the deficit to be addressed would be an increasing challenge where there is a projected ongoing reduction in pupil numbers and consequently funding.
28. The Local Authority Scheme for Financing Schools stipulates that the local authority cannot write off the deficit balance of any school. Any financial support should be from the overall schools budget from a contingency specifically held for this purpose and agreed by the Schools Forum. Currently no such contingency has been agreed with the Schools Forum and if one is created this could reduce resources available to other schools.
29. It is anticipated that there will not be any costs for the consultation, but if there are they will be minimal and contained within the service's allocated budget and centrally via the Council's Communications team.

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.

Opening and closing maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers (Department for Education; November 2019)

[Manners Sutton Primary School, Averham, Newark – outcome of consultation on proposal for closure: report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 15th March 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1475

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 16

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLACEMENT STABILITY YOUTH WORK TEAM

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to establish a 12-month pilot from September 2021 for a youth work placement stability team, promoting placement stability for Children Looked After in Nottinghamshire County Council's care.

Information

2. The Young People's Service has offered youth work interventions to Children Looked After experiencing placement instability since March 2020. This followed a 25% comparative increase of placement change requests likely due to COVID-19 restrictions.
3. Youth work interventions have been requested by the Fostering Service, Children's Residential Homes and the Placements & Commissioning Team at Complex Case Meetings. Capacity within the Young People's Service has been made available by refocussing normal provision due to COVID-19 restrictions.
4. Youth Workers offer a tailored intervention for Children Looked After who would not otherwise proactively work with professionals. This approach offers a trusted relationship, safe space, engaging activities and a shared power dynamic.
5. The shorter and medium-term results of this youth work have demonstrated a positive correlation with increased placement stability (see **Table 1**). Of 57 Children Looked After engaged in tailored youth work interventions, **75%** were considered stabilised in the short term, with **89%** experiencing one or zero placement moves by October 2020¹.

Table 1 Young People's Service COVID-19 Engagement and Efficacy between March and June 2020

	Number of Children Looked After	Percentage
Referred to YPS at Complex Case Meetings	82	100%
Accepted YPS interventions	57*	78%*

¹ Current data does not demonstrate if these moves were planned or unplanned.

Signposted to other professionals	7	8.5%
Engaged in tailored youth work interventions	57	69.5%
Engaged in tailored youth work interventions considered stabilised at Complex Case Meetings	43	52.4%

** Some Children Looked After were unable to participate due to shielding and/or self-isolation.*

6. The success of a youth work led approach to supporting placement stability during COVID-19 has been clear, with strong anecdotal feedback from professionals supporting the statistical evidence. It is recognised however that:
 - the efficacy of the approach outside of COVID-19 circumstances has not been fully evidenced
 - the longer-term impact of youth work on placement stability has not been fully evidenced
 - many factors around placement stability are unique to individual Children Looked After, requiring further data analysis for both the wider cohort and individuals engaged
 - the potential for this approach to incur cost avoidance through de-escalation of placements, thereby positively impacting Placement and Commissioning's future budget pressures, has not been fully explored.
7. It is therefore proposed to pilot a placement stability youth work team for 12 months, from September 2021, further exploring the non-financial and financial benefits of a youth work led approach to placement stability.

Proposed Pilot

8. The pilot will employ 2 full time equivalent (FTE) Youth Workers for 12 months. 1 FTE Youth Worker will work in residential homes (internal and external) and 1 FTE would work within fostering settings; both Youth Workers will have a focus within the Mansfield district.
9. The proposed operating model would build on experience gained supporting placements during COVID-19, for instance:
 - Complex Case Meetings between the Young People's Service, Fostering Service, Residential Homes and Placements & Commissioning would identify Children Looked After who may benefit from a tailored youth work intervention
 - the Young People's Service would approach identified Children Looked After with a short term (typically 12 weeks) offer of tailored youth work intervention building on their strengths and aspirations
 - during the tailored youth work intervention, Children Looked After would be stepped down into universal youth work provision to offer and provide longer term contextual support outside of their placement by their local Youth Worker
 - Complex Case Meetings would continue to monitor the short and longer-term impact of the tailored youth work intervention.
10. Youth Workers would offer tailored youth work interventions to Children Looked After aged 10+. It is anticipated that 2 FTE Youth Workers could offer between 12 and 16 Children Looked After, dependent upon complexity, 12 weeks tailored youth work at any one time.

11. Within residential homes, the STARS Programme will work with 8-12 children per year whose residential placement is stabilised with a view to stepping them down into a placement with foster carers where this is in line with their care plan. Typically, around 10% of Children Looked After within residential homes would be at the other end of the spectrum, experiencing very challenging behaviours and increased instability (often experiencing 3+ placements per year). This 10% of the cohort accounts for around 18% of total placement spend annually.
12. It is this cohort that Youth Workers would offer tailored interventions to, aiming to prevent further placement cost escalation and de-escalate challenges within current placements. Feedback from Children's Residential Homes during COVID-19 to similar work has been extremely positive, highlighting the ability of Youth Workers to build trust and consistency, as well as promoting independence and a sense of normality for Children Looked After.
13. Within fostering settings Youth Workers would maintain placements through emotional and wellbeing support, enabling strengthened relationships. The agile, creative and strengths-based approach of Youth Workers has been shown to be particularly effective where Children Looked After are not responding to carers/professionals, risking placement destabilisation.
14. Complex Case Meetings would manage interdependencies between STARS, Fostering Family Workers and youth work interventions. Focussing the pilot within the Mansfield district would also enable these interdependencies to be further mapped in practice and identify where the Young People's Service can add additional value.

Anticipated benefits of pilot

15. The financial and non-financial benefits of each tailored youth work intervention would be monitored both during and after the 12-week interventions. It is anticipated that the below benefits will be incurred, but that more may be identified through the course of the pilot:

Benefit	Tracking Methodology
Reduction in average cost of placements	Placement Commitment sheets
Increased placement stabilisation	Placement Commitment sheets and Mosaic
Reduction in risk taking behaviours	Recorded by professionals on an individual basis
Reduction in criminal incidents	
Reduction in missing episodes	
Reduction in self-harm	
Reduction in Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation risk	
Attendance at open access provision	Youth Service attendance record
Relationship building	Testimony from key workers and Youth Worker

Other Options Considered

16. The establishment of a countywide placement stability youth work team was considered; however, it was agreed that evidence to support longer term financial and non-financial benefit of this approach would be invaluable in the first instance.

17. Continuing the current business model without youth work intervention was also considered, however it was felt that this would discount the positive outcomes achieved for young people, which were delivered as part of the Young People's Service's COVID-19 response.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. This proposal is recommended due to the successful delivery of tailored Youth Work intervention to help maintain and stabilise young people's placements during the pandemic. It is anticipated that this model can be scaled up to provide strong support for young people in care as well as ease current pressures on the social care workforce.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. 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

20. The costs for this pilot will be up to £100,000, which includes on-costs and running costs over a 12-month period.
21. Recruitment is due to be completed by September 2021 and as a result the cost of the pilot will span two financial years. It is expected that the pilot will cost up to £60,000 in 2021/22 and up to £40,000 in 2022/23.
22. The cost of the pilot will be funded through temporary savings in the Youth, Families and Social Work budget.

Human Resources Implications

23. Recruitment and selection will be in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's employment procedures.

Implications for Service Users

24. This proposal aims to positively impact on a significant number of Children and Young People Looked After in the Mansfield district.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) To approve the establishment of a 12-month pilot from September 2021 for a youth work placement stability team, promoting placement stability for Children Looked After in Nottinghamshire County Council's care.

Steve Edwards

Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (EP 25/05/21)

25. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (LCD 28/05/21)

26. The costs for this pilot will be up to £100,000, which includes on-costs and running costs over a 12-month period.
27. Recruitment is due to be completed by September 2021 and as a result the cost of the pilot will span two financial years. It is expected that the pilot will cost up to £60,000 in 2021/22 and up to £40,000 in 2022/23.
28. The cost of the pilot will be funded through temporary savings in the Youth, Families and Social Work budget which is £60.498m.

HR Comments (BC 09/06/21)

29. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The temporary posts will be recruited to in line with the Council's recruitment and vacancy control procedures.

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.

C1470

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 17

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

HOLIDAY ACTIVITY AND FOOD (HAF) PROGRAMME - ESTABLISHMENT OF HAF DELIVERY COORDINATOR POST

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Committee on delivery of the Holiday Activity and Food Programme within Nottinghamshire and seek approval to establish a Youth Worker post to coordinate the HAF programme on a fixed term basis.

Information

2. The Department for Education funded HAF programme provides free meals, nutritional education and engaging activities for children and young people eligible for Free School Meals, aged 5-16 years, over the 2021 Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The Department for Education has allocated £2,584,070 to fund the programme.
3. The Department for Education has mandated that high quality provision must include healthy food, enriching activities, physical activities, nutritional education and be inclusive and accessible. Nottinghamshire County Council retains the ambition to deliver a provision which:
 - a. levels up communities through an aspirational and inclusive delivery
 - b. utilises existing infrastructure and provision for engaging children and young people, thus maximising cost-effective delivery
 - c. complements and enhances provision through existing providers of holiday clubs
 - d. provides a tailored offer for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability
 - e. delivers a safe and COVID secure model.
4. Over the Easter school holidays, Nottinghamshire County Council delivered the HAF via the Young People's Service and Children's Centres Service through a hybrid approach of limited face to face delivery and remote provision due to the risk of COVID-19.
5. The Young People's Service opened 18 sites across the seven Districts for face to face delivery. Throughout Easter, 4,165 high quality food packs were distributed to children and young people, alongside 3,700 activity packs. Feedback from families has been extremely positive.

6. In keeping with the ambition of levelling up Nottinghamshire, any surplus food packs were distributed to known vulnerable children or via the voluntary sector. Food vouchers from the COVID Winter Grant were also used to support those on Free School Meals under 5 years, and young people over 16 years.
7. Management of the HAF Easter delivery was undertaken by the Young People's Service management team, alongside existing duties, with additional support from the Programmes and Projects team. It is recognised that this is not sustainable for Summer 2021.

Summer 2021

8. Summer delivery of the HAF will be delivered across the Summer holidays, totalling four days of activity per week, for four weeks, in line with Department for Education grant funding. It is anticipated that delivery will include a greater face to face element as Nottinghamshire enters Steps 3 and 4 of the Government's *Roadmap Out of Lockdown*.
9. Summer delivery will take place during the Young People's Service fixed closure, and existing internal infrastructure is unlikely to be able to meet demand for face to face delivery. Nottinghamshire County Council therefore intends to engage with external delivery partners including schools and the community and voluntary sector. This will significantly increase management demand.
10. Under the Department for Education grant conditions for HAF, Nottinghamshire County Council may spend 10% of the total funding allocated to coordinate delivery on costs associated with running the programme, including management capacity.
11. Recognising existing pressures within the Young People's Service management structure, it is proposed that Nottinghamshire County Council establish 1 FTE HAF Coordinator post until February 2022 using this funding. This post will plan and coordinate the operational delivery of the Summer and Christmas HAF programme.

HAF Delivery Coordinator

12. The duties of the HAF Delivery Coordinator post will include:
 - liaising with a wide range of delivery partners
 - supporting all providers to meet a framework of minimum standards including safeguarding requirements and ensuring that meals meet school food standards
 - supporting all providers to improve the quality of their provision
 - promoting and advertising provision, including working with local schools and other agencies to encourage the most at need children to attend and where possible join up other initiatives to improve the outcomes for children and young people, such as the Summer Schools Programme
 - working with local services or agencies to ensure a joined-up and efficient approach, for example, signposting and sharing resources
 - building local partnerships and sharing learning and good practice among local partners
 - ensuring that sufficient, adequate provision is available for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or additional needs.
13. It is proposed to employ the HAF Delivery Coordinator for the duration of the programme. The HAF Delivery Coordinator will report to the Group Manager for Young People's Service. To ensure sufficient experience and local knowledge, the HAF Delivery Coordinator will be recruited to a Youth Worker post:

- 1 FTE Youth Work Grade (JNC) Coordinator post until February 2022 at a cost of £41,690

Other Options Considered

14. No other options have been considered. Existing Young People's Service management capacity is stretched and managing the HAF programme alongside existing duties is presenting a challenge.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. To effectively deliver the HAF programme across Nottinghamshire.

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. The cost of 1.0 FTE Youth Work Grade (JNC) Coordinator post until February 2022 is £41,690 and will be funded from the Department for Education grant provided to deliver the HAF programme. Up to 10% of the allocation, £258,407, can be used to co-ordinate delivery on-costs associated with running the programme, including management capacity.

Human Resources Implications

18. Recruitment and selection will be in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's employment procedures.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee approves the establishment of 1 FTE Youth Worker post to coordinate the Holiday Activity and Food Programme on a fixed term basis for the duration of the programme.

Steve Edwards

Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (AK 20/05/21)

19. This report falls within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 26/05/21)

20. The cost of 1.0 FTE Youth Work Grade (JNC) Coordinator post until February 2022 is £41,690 and will be funded from the Department for Education grant provided to deliver the HAF programme. Up to 10% of the allocation, £258,407, can be used to co-ordinate delivery on-costs associated with running the programme, including management capacity.

HR Comments (BC 11/05/21)

21. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The post will be recruited to in line with the Council's vacancy control and recruitment procedures.

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.

C1463

21st June 2021

Agenda Item: 18

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND
SKILLS****CLOSURE OF THE RESIDENTIAL UNIT AT FOUNTAINDALE SPECIAL
SCHOOL – RESPONSE TO PETITION****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend to Committee the response to the issues raised in a petition, *Stop the closure of the residential unit at Fountaindale SEN School*, which was presented to the County Council at its meeting on 25th March 2021.

Information

2. At the County Council meeting on 25th March 2021, Councillor Deakin presented a petition with over 1,700 signatures against the closure of the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School which took place at the beginning of January 2021.
3. The petition was established following the decision of the Children and Young People's Committee on 30th November 2020 to close the residential unit. This decision followed a consultation process approved by the Children and Young People's Committee on 21st September 2020.
4. The consultation process had followed the Department for Education's statutory guidance on making significant changes to maintained schools which requires Members to consider the results of the consultation on the statutory proposal.
5. A summary of the feedback from the consultation can be found in **Appendix 1**. A total of 81 responses were received to the consultation, and in addition further comments and questions were raised at the public meeting held during the consultation period.
6. The Children and Young People's Committee acknowledged from the responses submitted to the consultation that the residential unit was valued by parents, carers, and young people.
7. The Committee decided to approve the closure of the residential unit for the following reasons:
 - an Ofsted inspection in February 2020 of the residential unit had highlighted several issues with the unit including that:

- the school did not meet several of the national minimum standards for residential Special Schools
 - school leaders have not ensured effective safeguarding and management arrangements. A new senior leadership team have implemented a programme of development. Improvements are evident, but not yet embedded
 - safeguarding practice is not good enough, although there are no serious failures which have resulted in actual harm.
 - following the Ofsted Inspection, the interim Executive Headteacher recommended that the unit should be temporarily closed pending wider discussions with the County Council. The unit therefore effectively closed to Fountaindale students on 24th February 2020 and did not reopen until its closure in January 2021.
- The residential unit was primarily part of the School's curriculum offer, which is not available to young people in any other Nottinghamshire Special School. It should also be noted that the development of life skills and independence can be delivered successfully as part of the ordinary school day curriculum, as it is in all other Special Schools.
 - The provision at Fountaindale Special School is not intended to provide respite care to families. Families who meet the eligibility criteria for short breaks can access the County Council's community Short Breaks offer. The focus of community short breaks is on supporting the independence of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability and providing respite care for their families. Short breaks also provide an opportunity for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability to meet peers and to form friendship groups.
 - The residential unit cost £116,000 per year from the High Needs Block budget which is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant and is used to support the education of all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability in Nottinghamshire. This budget was overspent by £1.002m during 2019-2020 and by £2.473m during 2020-2021 and remains under considerable pressure as demand continues to increase.
 - There is a greater need to increase day places for children and young people requiring specialist provision in Nottinghamshire.
8. Fountaindale Special School joined the Evolve Multi Academy Trust on 1st April 2021, becoming the Harlow Academy.

Issues raised in the Petition

9. The petition raised several issues not covered in the original Children and Young People's Committee report which approved the closure of the residential unit. These issues relate to:
- the original consultation and decision-making process
 - a statement made by the then Leader of the County Council dated 20th January 2021
 - the timing of the information provided to parents and carers about the change in governance status of the school.

10. The Department for Education's guidance on 'Making significant changes to maintained schools' clearly identifies the Local Authority as the decision maker regarding the proposed closure of the residential unit. The consultation process followed the Department for Education's guidance and the responses considered by Elected Members when making their decision.
11. The letter from the then Leader of the County Council dated 20th January 2021 did accurately state that the residential provision at Fountaindale Special School was not specifically named in the provision included in the Education, Health and Care Plans of students attending the school who lived in Nottinghamshire. All the other relevant local authorities were contacted as part of the consultation process on the unit's closure and no objections were received.
12. Parents and carers were aware of the proposed change in governance arrangements of the school following the Ofsted inspection in February 2020, which judged the school to be Inadequate. Once a school is judged to be Inadequate by Ofsted, an Academy Order is issued by the Secretary of State for Education. Governing bodies as a result lose their powers to decide the future of the school. At the time of the consultation the school was under an Academy Order. Details of the Evolve Trust's involvement could not be shared due to commercial sensitivity at the time.
13. Although the Evolve Academy Trust sought confirmation about the status of the residential unit, the County Council has had no discussions with the Trust about keeping the residential unit open beyond January 2021. The decision about how best to use space previously used for the residential unit lies with the Harlow Academy and the Evolve Academy Trust.

Other Options Considered

14. Several other options were considered prior to the consultation on closure of the residential unit. All these options would have required addressing the concerns and additional funding from the High Needs Block budget. Fountaindale Special School joined the Evolve Trust on 1st April 2021 as Harlow Academy, and is no longer a maintained school.

Reason for Recommendation

15. In response to the petition presented at Full Council in March 2021, a review has been undertaken which has found that process was followed, and the original decision was appropriate following the consultation.

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. The High Needs Block remains under considerable pressure with a priority to increase the number of day specialist educational placements. Continuing to fund the residential unit at Harlow Academy would have an impact on the provision of day places for children and young people requiring specialist provision in Nottinghamshire.

Human Resources Implications

18. Following the decision of the Children and Young People's Committee in November 2020 to close the residential unit, the County Council's Human Resource Service undertook a formal consultation with staff and the recognised trade unions. After a full school's staffing reduction procedure and a full supportive redeployment procedure staff were either redeployed into other roles within the school or made redundant.

Implications for Service Users

19. All students at Harlow Academy living in Nottinghamshire can access statutory short breaks through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Local Offer if they meet the minimum criteria. The focus of community short breaks is on supporting the independence of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability and providing respite care for their families.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1) the contents of this report be noted, underlining that due process was followed and the original decision was appropriate.
- 2) the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.
- 3) the outcome of the Committee's consideration be reported to Full Council.

Marion Clay
Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (LW 20/05/21)

20. Children & Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 21/05/21)

21. There are no financial implications arising directly 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.

Ofsted Inspection of Fountainsdale School (February 2020):

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50147955>

[Consultation on closure of the residential unit at Fountainsdale Special School – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 21st September 2020.](#)

[Outcome of Consultation on Closure of the Residential Unit at Fountainsdale Special School - report to Children & Young People's Committee on 30th November 2020](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1464

Appendix 1 – Feedback from the consultation on the proposal to close the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School

The on-line consultation was held between the 22 September and 3 November 2020. The consultation is available via the below link:

(<https://consult.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schools/consultation-on-proposal-to-close-of-the-residenti>)

A total of 75 responses were received in response to the consultation. The breakdown of feedback submitted to the following question is shown below in table 1:

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School, Nottingham Road, Harlow Wood, Mansfield NG18 5BA?

Table 1 – (74 responses)

Option	Total	Percentage
Agree	4	4.9%
Disagree	75	92.6%
Don't Know	0	0.0%
Not Answered	2	2.5%
Total	81	100.0%

The breakdown of responders to the consultation is shown in table 2 below:

Table 2 – (please note that several respondents have placed themselves in more than one of the categories)

Option	Total	Percentage
Parent / Carer	34	40.9%
Governor	1	1.2%
Member of Staff	16	19.3%
Pupil	0	0.0%
Other	32	38.6%
Total	83	100.0%

72 of the respondents provided further feedback comments to support their answer to the question: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close of the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School?

There were several key themes in the responses that were submitted. These are summarised below including some quotes from the responses.

Promoting self-help and independence

Many respondents felt that the unit provided a very good opportunity to develop the skills of self-help and greater independence for the students attending Fountaindale Special School. **(23 responses)**

"Excellent opportunity for our children to transition before leaving Fountaindale and to promote self-help and independence".

Respite care for families

Several families acknowledged the benefit of the unit providing respite care for their families. **(16 responses)**

"Gives so many families a chance for some much-needed rest and to recharge with siblings".

Opportunity to spend time with school peers

Some respondents highlighted the opportunity to spend time with friends. **(11 responses)**

"Facility gives children the opportunity to experience things like sleep overs and time spent with friends".

Lack of opportunities for young people with disabilities

Respondents raised concerns/ or the issue that young people with complex educational needs have limited opportunities. **(19 responses)**

"Please don't take yet another thing away from children with additional needs".

Value for money of the residential unit

A couple of respondents queried the value for money of the residential unit. **(3 responses)**

"Costs involved running the unit out weigh the benefit of the unit to the families, which can be done at home or elsewhere".

Feedback from the public meeting held on 13 October 2020

The meeting was attended by ten people. comprised of; three parents, one Governor and six school staff.

There were also several questions raised by attendees at the public meeting. These covered the following key areas:

- What are the criteria being used by the County Council to close the residential unit?
- Will alternative places on short breaks be funded?
- Could parents / carers use their short breaks funding to pay for the residential unit?
- The facility is unique to Fountaindale Special School
- Ease with transitions in the future.

21 June 2021

Agenda Item: 19

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the Committee's work programme for 2021.

Information

2. The County Council requires each committee to maintain a work programme. The work programme will assist the management of the committee's agenda, the scheduling of the committee's business and forward planning. The work programme will be updated and reviewed at each pre-agenda meeting and committee meeting. Any member of the committee is able to suggest items for possible inclusion.
3. The attached work programme has been drafted in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and includes items which can be anticipated at the present time. Other items will be added to the programme as they are identified.
4. As part of the transparency introduced by the new committee arrangements, committees are expected to review day to day operational decisions made by officers using their delegated powers. It is anticipated that the committee will wish to commission periodic reports on such decisions. The committee is therefore requested to identify activities on which it would like to receive reports for inclusion in the work programme. It may be that the presentations about activities in the committee's remit will help to inform this.
5. The meeting dates and agenda items are subject to review in light of the ongoing COVID-19 period.

Other Options Considered

6. None.

Reason for Recommendation

7. To assist the committee in preparing its work programme.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the Committee considers whether any amendments are required to the Work Programme.

Marjorie Toward

Service Director, Customers, Governance & Employees

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (HD)

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

Financial Comments (NS)

8. 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

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

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR
26 July 2021			
Children and young people core data set - performance and finance for Quarter 4 2020/21	Quarterly performance report	Nigel Stevenson	Dave Gilbert
Outcomes of Ofsted inspections of schools		Marion Clay	Diane Ward
School Holiday & Term Time Dates for Local Authority Maintained Schools in Nottinghamshire 2023/2024, 2024/2025, 2025/2026 and 2026/2027	Outcome of statutory consultation	Marion Clay	Claire Wilcoxson
Variation to school admission arrangements 2021/22 and 2022/23		Marion Clay	Claire Wilcoxson
Nottinghamshire Fair Access Protocol - consultation		Marion Clay	Claire Wilcoxson
Children Missing Education	Six-monthly update	Marion Clay	Karen Hughman/ Sarah Whitby
Nottinghamshire Special Educational Needs & Disability Place Planning Strategy		Laurence Jones	Chris Jones
COVID Winter Grant Scheme final report		Laurence Jones	Irene Kakoullis
EDT Service Review		Laurence Jones	Teresa Godfrey
Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Early Help Strategy 2021 - 2025		Steve Edwards	Rachel Miller
Supporting families update and changes to the Family Service staffing establishment	Includes update on Troubled Families Programme - six-monthly update	Steve Edwards	Rachel Miller
Conversion of social work hours for Social Work Support Officer post		Steve Edwards	Katie Warner
Local Authority governor appointments to school governing bodies	Quarterly report	Marion Clay	Sarah Sayer
Corporate Parenting items:			
Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care: annual report 2020/21	Annual update	Laurence Jones	Joe Foley/ Hannah Johnson

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR
Establishment of additional posts in the Looked After Service		Steve Edwards	Sophie Eadsforth
Virtual School annual report	Annual report	Marion Clay	Sue Denholm
Foster carers items			
September 2021 - date tbc			
Child Poverty and the impact of Covid-19		Laurence Jones	Irene Kakoullis
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	Annual report	Laurence Jones	Irene Kakoullis/ Mandy Stratford
Progress on Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Children's Services Plan	Quarterly update	Laurence Jones	Laurence Jones
Update on the Remodelling Practice programme	Quarterly report	Steve Edwards	Lucy Peel/ Holly Smitheman
Local Transformation Plan for children and young people's emotional and mental health - update	Annual refresh	Jonathan Gribbin	Rachel Clark
Early Years & Schools Forum and Education Trust Board officer group report	Annual officer group report	Marion Clay	Marion Clay
Corporate Parenting items:			
Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2021-2024		Marion Clay	Jo Mathieson
Foster carers items			
October 2021 - date tbc			
Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All – six monthly update		Marion Clay	Koni Rakhit
School Capital Programme progress report: 2022/23 Schools Building Improvement Programme	Six-monthly update	Derek Higton	Phil Berrill/ Mick Allen
Elective Home Education update	Six-monthly update	Marion Clay	Sarah Whitby
Corporate Parenting items:			