

## Children and Young People's Committee

**Monday, 30 November 2020 at 10:30**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EtDtg61SHs&feature=youtu.be>

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### AGENDA

- |    |  |              |
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| 2  | Apologies for Absence  |              |
| 3  | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below)<br>(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests<br>(b) Private Interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) |              |
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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>



Meeting CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

Date 2 November 2020 (commencing at 10.30am)

**Membership**

Persons absent are marked with an 'A'

**COUNCILLORS**

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

Samantha Deakin	Paul Henshaw
Boyd Elliott	Roger Jackson
John Handley	John Peck
Muriel Weisz	Liz Plant

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)**

4 Vacancies

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Marion Clay	Service Director, Children and Families Services
Steve Edwards	Service Director, Children and Families Services
Laurence Jones	Service Director, Children and Families Services
Irene Kakoullis	Group Manager, Children and Families Services
Martin Gately	Democratic Services Officer, Chief Executive's

**1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 September 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020 having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and will be signed by the Chairman.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Muriel Weisz substituted for Councillor Errol Henry JP.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

None.

### **4. PROVISION ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER 2019/20**

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

#### **RESOLVED 2020/44**

That:

- 1) A further update on the work of the Young People Looked After Youth Work team be received in 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.

### **5. OUTCOMES OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS – AUTUMN 2019 AND SPRING 2020**

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

#### **RESOLVED 2020/45**

That:

- 1) for the schools identified in the report judged by Ofsted to Require Improvement, the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee and the Corporate Director of Children and Families Services write to the head teacher and chair of governors of Local Authority maintained schools to inform them that the Committee will track closely their progress to become a Good school. In relation to academies, a letter will also be sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- 2) for the schools identified in the report judged by Ofsted to remain Good but declining, the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee and the Corporate Director of Children and Families Services write to the head teacher and chair of governors of Local Authority maintained schools to inform them that the Committee will track closely their progress to become a Good school. In relation to academies, a letter will also be sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

- 3) for schools identified in the report judged by Ofsted to remain Good, or become Good or Outstanding, the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee and the Corporate Director of Children and Families Services write to the head teacher and chair of governors of Local Authority maintained schools to congratulate them on their achievement. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner in relation to academies.

## **6. ATTENDANCE AT THE NATIONAL CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICE CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 2020**

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

### **RESOLVED 2020/46**

That:

- 1) approval be given for the Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen of the Children and Young People's Committee and the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Adult Social care and Public Health Committee to attend the National Children and Adult Services Conference, which will be held virtually, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- 2) a report on the key outcomes of the conference be brought back to the Children and Young People's Committee and the Adult and Social Care and Public Health Committee in due course.

## **7. UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

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

A minor amendment to the second recommendation was duly moved and seconded, reflecting the committee's wish for the update report to come to the first meeting following the May 2021 council elections, rather than in 12 months' time.

### **RESOLVED 2020/46**

That:

- 1) no further actions were identified in relation to the issues contained in the report
- 2) an update report be received at the first Children and Young People's Committee meeting following the May 2021 local election.

## **8. PROGRESS ON THE IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN**

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

### **RESOLVED 2020/47**

That:

- 1) no further actions were required in relation to the information contained in the report on progress against the Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Children's Services Plan.

## **9. JOINT COMMISSIONING TO ADDRESS SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

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

### **RESOLVED 2020/48**

That:

- 1) the proposal to jointly commission speech, language and communication needs interventions for pre-school children with Clinical Commissioning Groups from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be approved.
- 2) the proposal to explore and progress longer term joint commissioning arrangements for Speech and Language Services with Clinical Commissioning Groups from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 be approved.

## **10. CHANGES TO THE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE**

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

### **RESOLVED 2020/49**

That:

- 1) the following changes to the staffing establishment in the Youth Justice Service Outreach and Interventions Team be approved from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020:
  - disestablishment of 1 FTE Area Intervention Worker (Band B) post
  - disestablishment of 0.2 FTE Youth Justice Service Officer (Grade 5) post
  - establishment of 1 FTE Youth Justice Advanced Practitioner (Band C) post

## **11. CHANGES TO THE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN THE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GROUP**

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

#### **RESOLVED 2020/50**

That:

- 1) the disestablishment of 1 FTE temporary Public Health and Commissioning Manager (Hay Band D) post be approved
- 2) the temporary establishment (one-year fixed term) of the following posts within the Service Improvement Group be approved:
  - 1 FTE Project Manager (Hay Band D – subject to job evaluation)
  - 1 FTE Programme Officer (Hay Band B – subject to job evaluation)
  - 1 FTE Social Work Practice Consultant – Workforce Development (Hay Band C)

#### **12. LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES DURING THE PERIOD 13 FEBRUARY TO 27 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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

#### **RESOLVED 2020/51**

That:

- 1) further updates regarding future appointments be received on a quarterly basis in accordance with the constitution.

#### **13. SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN CARE**

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

#### **RESOLVED 2020/52**

That:

- 1) no further actions were required arising from the information contained in the report.

#### **14. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members agreed that a report on child and family poverty would be placed on the agenda of a future meeting.

#### **RESOLVED 2020/53**

That:

- 1) That any amendments required to the work programme be considered.

#### **15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

#### **RESOLVED 2020/54**

That:

- 1) the public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the discussions are likely to involve disclosure of exempt information described in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

#### **16. EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEM - SEXUAL ABUSE ANDE HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN CARE - EXEMPT**

#### **RESOLVED: 2020/55**

That:

- 1) the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 11:24 am.

CHAIRMAN

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 4**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND  
SKILLS**

**PROGRESS OF THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS (2018 – 2021)**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides Committee with an update on the 'Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2018-2021)' in Nottinghamshire during the second year of its implementation (2019-2020). This report supports Members to fulfil their duties as corporate parents and to monitor this Partnership Strategy to ensure Members continue to provide sufficient vision and ambition to allow every looked after child and care leaver ("our children") to thrive and to reach their potential socially, emotionally and in relation to their educational progress and attainment.
2. In addition, this report provides Committee with an update on progress within the Leaving Care Service since Ofsted's inspection of Nottinghamshire's Children's Services in October 2019.
3. This report also seeks to provide Committee with an update on progress in relation to the Local Offer for Care Leavers and the impact to date on improving the wellbeing and wider outcomes for care leavers. Committee approved Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Offer in February 2019.

**Information**

4. The DfE Publication 'Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers' (February 2018) states that "Local Authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers". This statutory advice also states that local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting culture, recognise that the "care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being". Members are reminded that the Council continues to make a pledge to all children and young people who come into care and can be accessed at:  
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/2408/safeguardingreportapp6.pdf>
5. The Council's Partnership Strategy (2018-2021) reflects the seven corporate parenting principles that must inform all actions undertaken by Members as they fulfil their duties as 'corporate parents':

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people to gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

6. A full inspection of Nottinghamshire’s Children’s Services was undertaken by Ofsted in October 2019. The judgement was as follows:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires Improvement
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>

7. It is of note that the area judged to Require Improvement in both the 2015 inspection as well as the focussed Ofsted visit in January 2018, is now judged to be Good and reflects the priority and focus on improving provision and outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The Local Offer has made a significant contribution to improving the experience and outcomes for our children and young people (care leavers) thus improving their life chances into adulthood.
8. The Looked After Children and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy 2018-2021 continues to be a key driver which identifies partnership priorities and actions.
9. This is the second report to Members presenting an update from the Partnership Board in relation to the Strategy’s ambitions. Whilst all partners have endeavoured to continue to deliver the Strategy’s priorities throughout the current pandemic crisis, it is nonetheless the case that progress in relation to ambitions have been compromised and delayed. No scheduled Partnership Board meeting was cancelled during 2019-2020 as a result of the crisis and the most recent Partnership meetings have met virtually with generally good attendance by partners.
10. The remainder of the report will provide an update on the progress made in relation to the Strategy’s ambitions and the September 2019 to August 2020 partnership revised action plan. In addition, the report provides Members with an update on the effectiveness of the Local Offer for Care Leavers. It should be noted that Looked After Children and Care Leavers will be referred throughout as ‘our children and young people’.
11. The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership Board continues to be chaired by the Service Director for Education, Learning and Skills. This Board is also attended by the

Vice Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee, Councillor Tracey Taylor. This Board has met bi-monthly since January 2018 and is well attended by both internal services and external partners which, in addition to internal education and social care colleagues, also includes District Council representation, public health, health commissioners, higher education and Futures. A key objective for the Board during 2019-2020 was to secure appropriate membership from the Police and this was achieved during the last Board meeting of the academic year (29<sup>th</sup> July 2020). The Terms of Reference which includes membership of the Board is available as a background paper. This was reviewed and updated at the first Board meeting of the 2020-2021 academic year on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

12. Since 2014, local authorities have had a duty (Children Act 2004 section 10) to promote cooperation between relevant partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of all children and young people in their area. At its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Board agreed a two-year delivery plan as a key tool to ensure a shared understanding of this duty with relevant partners in relation to our children and young people. Section 10 defines relevant partners as including: the district council; the local policing body and the chief officer of police; probation board; any provider of probation services; youth offending team; NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups; and the governing bodies of publicly funded schools. This report highlights some of the key achievements to date, driven by the Partnership, to improve the experiences and life chances of our children through the 2019-2021 delivery plan, which is available as a background paper.
13. The Strategy has been driven by a partnership delivery plan which has been 'owned' by strategic partners. This delivery plan is structured around the six Ambitions with the Local Offer for Care Leavers incorporated into the sixth Ambition:  
  
Ambition 1: Looked After Children and Care Leavers are safe and feel safe  
Ambition 2: Looked After Children and Care Leavers experience good physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing  
Ambition 3: Looked After Children and Care Leavers fulfil their potential  
Ambition 4: Looked After Children and Care Leavers achieve sustained and fulfilling employment and economic independence  
Ambition 5: Looked After Children and Care Leavers make a positive contribution  
Ambition 6: Looked After Children and Care leavers have a positive transition to adulthood.
14. This 2019-2021 delivery plan was revised to focus on key partnership objectives/actions as follows:
  - i. To develop, commission and launch a new supported accommodation offer for Looked After Children with complex needs and 18 - 20 year-old care leavers, to be achieved by July 2022 (Ambition 1)
  - ii. To deliver training to teachers (wider than designated teachers) and initiatives in school to improve our children's experience in school and of education by July 2020 (Ambitions 1, 2 & 3)
  - iii. To champion and represent the needs of our children, influencing strategic development and commissioning decision, as well as project implementation decision, to ensure relevant, effective and targeted provision for Looked After

Children and care leavers via the Nottinghamshire's Service Improvement Forum (SIF) for Children in Care (Ambition 2)

- iv. To support and challenge health, education and youth service partners and professionals to ensure there is a range of evidence-based non-clinical early intervention emotional health and wellbeing 'projects' specifically targeted at our children, that complement Mental Health Teams in schools and to ensure that all partners know about these 'projects' and understand how to support our children to access them (Ambition 2)
  - v. To support and challenge health partners to ensure that there is a clear health pathway for our children who are 18 - 24 years in relation to access to specialist mental health services, in line with physical services (Ambition 2)
  - vi. To develop partners' understanding of effective pathway planning for our children and of how they can contribute to the pathway planning process, as well as individual plans. This is to contribute to ensuring that Pathway Plans are effective in supporting our children's successful transition to adulthood (Ambitions 3 & 5)
  - vii. To provide support and challenge to all partners to work individually and collaboratively, to ensure all our children are in education, employment and/or training at 16, 18 and 21 years (Ambitions 2, 3, 5 & 6)
  - viii. To contribute to promote partner engagement in our local offer for our children and young people aged 18 - 24 years to ensure the local offer remains dynamic and relevant to the changing needs of this cohort (all ambitions).
15. It should be noted that several key actions in the 2019-2021 development plan have been impacted as a direct result of Covid-19. For example, the whole day event jointly funded by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and the County Council for teachers and social work practitioners planned for April 2020 has been postponed. NTU's Institute of Education is working to move the conference online; progress is still ongoing and will be reviewed at regular intervals.
16. A particular ongoing challenge for the Partnership Board has been to develop a relevant set of impact indicators and this remains an ongoing task. Members already receive quarterly performance reports which include relevant education and social care data. It was agreed by the Board that there would not be a replication of existing statutory data being presented to the Board. The Board remains focussed on improving strengthening transitions, particularly to adulthood and ensuring that the Board remains focused on securing strong transition to adulthood with improved training, education and employment opportunities, a secure housing offer and improved mental health and wellbeing as key partnership outcomes. In relation to statutory data, the last performance report which summarised the most recent education performance data for looked after children is available as a **background paper**.
17. Impact reports and/or relevant case studies for 2019-2020 have been received from:
- a) Nottinghamshire Children's Social Care and Commissioning and Resources (Looked After Children Service, Leaving Care Service, Independent Chair Service, Commissioning and Placements)
  - b) Nottinghamshire education (Virtual School, Psychology Services, West Notts College)
  - c) Nottinghamshire County Council Public Health Children's Integrated Commissioning Hub

- d) Health care commissioners and providers including Nottinghamshire CCGs (Mid and Greater Nottinghamshire & Bassetlaw)
  - e) Supported Accommodation Provider (NCHA).
18. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) has continued to shape and inform the ongoing development of this Strategy. Throughout 2020-2021, the Youth Service will lead a comprehensive review of the current Strategy with our children through the Children in Care Council (CiCC) with a view of co-producing the priorities for any new Strategy from 2021. The Board will be advised by the CiCC as the academic year progresses and will ensure that any revised Strategy from Autumn 2021 is informed by the views and ambitions of our children. This is a significant piece of work being led by the CiCC and the Youth Service and will ensure that all partners are able to hear the wishes and feelings of our children and young people when ratifying and finalising the revised Strategy from Autumn 2021.

### **Ambition 1: Looked After Children and Care Leavers are safe and feel safe**

19. The impact reports from partners have supported the Board to secure some assurances that the ambitions are continuing to drive improved experiences for our children and young people. Ambition 1 underpins the whole Strategy as children and young people who are safe and feel safe are clearly equipped to maximise opportunities and experiences provided by services and stakeholders. Several of the impact reports from partners, as was the case in last year's report, have continued to highlight successful resilience projects which have met short term needs as well as contributing positively to preparation for adulthood.
20. The Virtual School has continued to work closely with educational psychologists to ensure that designated teachers (DTs) in schools have had access to appropriate training to support our children in feeling safe and ready to learn throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. This training is now part of a DT Curriculum offer which covers all aspects of understanding the needs of those who have had experience of the care sector. This training continued to be delivered despite the pandemic with extra supportive sessions for all schools to access with DTs receiving email reminders to access the bespoke and broad virtual training offer during Covid-19. The course on loss and bereavement was delivered five times virtually, mainly to school-based staff but open to other relevant professionals. These were extremely well attended with over 100 participants on each and with one session attended by 175 teachers and relevant practitioners.
21. 'New to role' or 'refresher' training continued to be offered to all DTs on a termly basis and during the academic year 2019/2020 over 69 DTs received this training. The Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) project, now renamed to 'Relational Schools: Becoming Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed', is a positive intervention when meeting the needs of vulnerable children; there were 45 schools who had either undertaken or about to start the programme during last academic year.
22. The Independent Chair Service (ICS) provides independent reviewing of Looked After Children Care Plans. The primary task of the Independent Review Officer (IRO) is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child. There are two clear and separate aspects to the function of the IRO:
- chairing the child's review; and

- monitoring the child's case on an ongoing basis.

In exercising both parts of this role, the IRO ensures that the child's current wishes and feelings have been established and considered, where appropriate.

23. During 2020, the ICS has initiated a review of Looked After Child reviews to ensure they are child-focused and strengths-based. As a result, there will be a greater focus on supporting children to take part in and attend their reviews, and on review meetings being a place where decisions can be made to ensure that the child's plan is about what needs to be in place to support them to be safe and reach their full potential. Processes are being put in place to ensure our children are able to influence these changes.
24. To date, the Service has re-written its vision and principles in-line with that of the department. They have begun to review documents used in Looked After Reviews, for example, writing minutes for the child, and ensuring reports from partners are written in the same way.
25. Positive experiences and learning from the increased levels of remote contact between IROs and children and young people using technology during Covid-19 has helped to inform how review meetings will run in the future. For example, initial reviews will be face to face for the social worker, child and IRO, with other agencies attending remotely; consideration will be given to the use of technology to support children attending subsequent reviews. The IRO is now expected to make contact with the children's service team manager and social worker at least once between reviews to ensure the plans are on track; and more frequent contact by the IRO with the child and carers between reviews, and with birth parents where appropriate.
26. Work is underway to improve the IRO's 'critical friend' role to social care teams, developing a more structured and strengths-based approach to the IRO as independent scrutineer with individual teams to improve practice and outcomes for children and young people. This also includes working closely with the Virtual School to develop continuous quality assurance of Personal Education Plans.

## **Ambition 2: Looked After Children and Care Leavers experience good physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing**

27. The impact report from the Public Health Commissioning Manager in 2019 reported on how Ambition 2 has driven the 'Integrated Personal Commissioning Pilot ('You Know Your Mind' (YKYM) Project) for our children and young people aged 0-25 years with mental health needs to find alternative and timely support arrangements for their mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. This project has continued into 2020 - 2021 and is a way of exploring person centred alternatives to traditional mental health interventions.
28. Between April and July 2020, 83 of our children and young people in Nottinghamshire have received a personal health budget and personalised support plan in order to support their mental and emotional health needs through the 'You Know Your Mind' Project. The support arrangements through this project have been driven by the children and young people. Some examples of the self-directed support include: gym memberships, bicycles, music lessons, photography equipment, hoverboard and safety equipment, Lego, genealogy

subscription, personal sensory equipment, trampoline, football coaching, singing lessons, kickboxing membership and specialist disabled-friendly bicycle.

29. Previously, reviews of the YKYM funding were led by a specialist youth work apprentice. However, the apprenticeship has now ceased and so feedback from young people is being gathered directly from Social Workers and Personal Advisors. Of the 83 children and young people who have participated in YKYM between April and July 2020, feedback from young people has been positive with the following being identified by young people who accessed the YKYM funds:
- a) one female 21Plus care leaver is diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and as such isolates herself from others. She experiences anxiety, anger issues and self-harm and identified that she did not leave the house often. YKYM issued funding for some photography equipment, which has meant she is now going out of the house more, on long nature walks especially during lockdown and this has increased her mood and reduced her self-harm. The young person was very happy to get the equipment and said "thank you so much, you don't understand how much this means to me, this is such a great opportunity for me...Thank you so much"
  - b) a 14-year-old looked after girl has received singing lessons via her YKYM funding which she said to her Social Worker "I started the singing lessons before lockdown and really enjoyed them. They tried to continue them over the phone during lockdown, but this didn't work very well so they were cancelled for the time being, but they really made me feel happy during the lessons and after I'd had them, I would like to start to do them again soon".
  - c) an 18-year old care leaver had previously experienced some mental health accommodation provision and experienced a sensory room whilst there. They received YKYM funding to make their own sensory 'chill out' room in their current accommodation and they feel that this has made a significant difference to their health and wellbeing, especially during lockdown. The young person experiences a significant Personality Disorder, and this has enabled them to find ways to manage their anger and ongoing mental health conditions to sustain levels of independence and their own accommodation provision.
30. Nottingham Trent University published their external review of the YKYM project in July 2020. This evaluation took place between January and July 2020 and due to Covid-19, was undertaken virtually. 403 children and young people engaged with the evaluation across the County and City. Key findings included the following.
- clear strategic support for the project at senior management level
  - increased embeddedness within existing health and social care provision for young people with mental health needs
  - the need for more specialist and costly interventions from CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services (AHM) reduced as a result of offering alternatives to placing children and young people onto pathways to health services
  - distress and escalation at a point of crisis decreased as a result of the 'early intervention' approach of the project

- a structure for the ongoing monitoring of how well a young person is progressing in managing their mental health and wellbeing integral to the project through the ongoing contact of the personal adviser.
31. The evaluation also sought to establish what inputs are most important from the perspectives of young people, their care givers and staff. Key findings included the following:
- the active involvement of the young person in their support plan and being ‘listened to’ was key to the success of the project. 91% of the young people reported feeling listened to in the development of their plan
  - typically support plans consisted of indoor, outdoor learning or a mix of one or more activities
  - the age of the young person did not significantly influence the cost of the plan
  - ongoing monitoring of the support plan undertaken during direct work offered the key worker the opportunity to regularly ‘check in’ with the young person which supported the monitoring and effectiveness of the project.
32. Key outcomes reported by the evaluation by partners suggested that prior to engagement with the project, 63.5% of the cohort identified as having experienced a CAMHS input; post project data suggested that only 26.9% of the cohort were receiving support from CAMHS. Other successful outcomes reported by the Police suggested that prior to engagement with the project, 48 young people in the sample of 402 were identified as having ‘going missing’ episodes calculated at a cost to the Police of £98,910; post project costs incurred by the Police for ‘going missing’ episodes had reduced to £46,629.
33. More importantly key outcomes reported by the young people were as follows:
- 61.8% of the young people surveyed said they felt more independent following the project
  - many reported an improvement in their wellbeing with 66.7% suggesting that receiving the support was ‘having fun’ followed by increased happiness (62.2%)
  - 48.9% reporting improvement to their mental health.
34. The full NTU evaluation of the project is available as a **background paper**. A video of the You Know Your Own Mind can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/ZS-nD02pXGM>
35. Improving the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing has continued to be a key driver across health partners. The Children’s Integrated Commissioning Hub (Public Health Nottinghamshire, Nottingham CCG and Bassetlaw CCG) have supported the delivery of training to teachers and schools. Nottinghamshire County was successful in being selected to take part in the national roll out of Mental Health Services and Schools Link Programme facilitated by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. This programme brought together CCGs, Councils and other service providers with schools and colleges to provide mental health support through brokering contact, sharing expertise and developing a joint vision for children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing in the locality. As of March 2020, approximately 50% of schools and colleges had attended the Anna Freud workshops. Whilst the programme has been interrupted by Covid-19, the workshops will continue later in the year.

36. The Children's Integrated Commissioning Hub and Bassetlaw CCG have worked with partners across health, education and social care to successfully bid for and be awarded NHS England transformation funding to deliver Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) throughout Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. From January 2021, MHST coverage across the County will equate to approximately 48,000 pupils having access to MHST.
37. Approximately 45 new mental health posts will be established through the programme which is a significant increase to the workforce supporting school aged children and young people. During Covid-19, the MHSTs have provided a flexible offer which has included creating a self-referral mechanism for families to MHST, extending operating hours outside of the school day including holidays and offering fortnightly Schools Mental Health Lead network meetings. As of March 2020, 61 schools across the County have received support from the MHSTs.
38. Support for the ongoing development of whole school resilience programmes has continued. 93 schools are currently engaged in these programmes which include Take Five at Schools Programme, mainly in the north and west of the County and the Young Minds Academic Resilience Approach in the south of the County.

### **Nottinghamshire Children in Care Service Improvement Forum (SIF)**

39. The SIF was established in December 2016 and meets quarterly. It is a multi-agency Looked After Children system-wide forum with agreement and commitment from both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County local authorities, health providers and the membership also includes the statutory Designated Doctor and Nurses. The objective of the forum is for partners to hold to themselves to account in meeting and improving the health needs of looked after children. An action plan is overseen by the Children in Care health commissioners and designated professionals. The SIF has highlighted their effective multi-agency partnership work to the Board and has included reference to their current audit activity. The SIF will report the progress via the board action plan at key milestones in January, April and June 2021.
40. The SIF has also agreed to focus on system-wide changes to enable health providers to meet the statutory timescales of health assessments as a key priority in 2020/21, acknowledging that to achieve this it must be a partnership approach.
41. A piece of work was undertaken in 2019/20 to improve the number of Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaires returned by the local authority to inform statutory Routine Health Assessments (RHAs) and to support children and young people's emotional mental health and wellbeing.
42. Our year end statistics for 2019/2020 for immunisations and dental checks was as follows:
  - in 2019/20 94% of our children had up to date immunisations. This is an area of focus for the Local Authority and health providers.
  - in 2019/20 89% of our children had up to date dental checks. This is an area of focus for the Local Authority and health providers.

43. An audit is currently being undertaken by all partners in the SIF on how health is being discussed at statutory Looked After Review meetings. This audit includes reviewing whether the latest health assessment is available, whether health needs are discussed, and relevant health professionals invited. This audit complements the work being undertaken around performance of Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) and Routine Health Assessments (RHAs).
44. Additional health improvement activity during 2019/20 has included:
- implementation and on-going review of the Out of Area (OOA) process (pathway)
  - audit of the documentation used for the care leavers health summary
  - quality assurance audits undertaken of Routine Health Assessments (RHAs) by the Designated Nurse (Mid and South) for Children in Care completed six monthly
  - implementation of a joint health/local authority Decliner Pathway (when young people decline statutory health assessments)
  - development of the revised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable comparable health data and performance from all providers across the County
  - designated professionals contributed to the design and delivery of Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership multi-agency training 'awareness raising around Looked After Children'
  - designated professionals supporting with the Nottinghamshire General Practitioners (GP) Practice Learning Time (PLT) events
  - designated professionals have been influencing locally, regionally and nationally for equity of access to health services for looked after children whether placed in area or out of area.
  - the Designated Nurses are currently reviewing how information is shared between health and the local authority in relation to residential care (private and local authority), especially in relation to children placed into Nottinghamshire from other areas. They have reported on this with some key recommendations which are being taken forward in partnership with the both local authorities and the Police.
45. The SIF has also been working on ensuring that there is a clear health pathway for our children who are aged 18 to 24 years in relation to access to specialist mental health services as well as adult physical health services. Transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services has been a focus over the past two years due to the national CQUIN (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) within the Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust mental health contract. This has aided the development of a transition process and transition panel. The transition process was due to be added to the 2020/21 contract, however, this has been delayed due to the recent Covid-19 contracting restrictions.
46. Further transition improvements focus on key reporting requirements which have been developed to be included within the contract. Progress against the outcome measures will be reviewed once normal contracting procedures resume with Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust. Learning from this pilot will inform developments which the CAMHS subgroup of the service improvement forum (SIF) manages.

**Ambition 3: Looked After Children and Care Leavers fulfil their potential and  
Ambition 4: Looked After Children and Care Leavers achieve sustained and fulfilling employment and economic independence**

47. This ambition to ensure our children and young people fulfil their potential has continued to be a priority for the Virtual School which has developed evidence-based guidance for schools on the effective use of the Pupil Premium to ensure that 'fulfilling potential' is a key driver for all additional requests for funding. The work readiness and careers ambition programme has now been developed by the Virtual School supported by the Education Psychology Service. All schools and pupils engaging in the programme (12 Year 8 children) provided positive feedback of their experience. The programme, reviewed and revised in the Autumn term 2019 for implementation from Spring 2020, has been interrupted by Covid-19 but will resume when appropriate during 2020-2021. The programme has been revised for delivery online which will allow more secondary aged young people to engage with the programme during 2020-2021.
48. A key activity undertaken by the Virtual School, in partnership with all children social care teams and the Leaving Care Service, has been the comprehensive review of the Personal Education Plan (PEP). PEPs were identified as an area for development during the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services in October 2019, although the review of the PEP process documentation was already underway at that time. The documentation is now age and phase appropriate (i.e. early years, KS1-2, KS 3-4 and post-16) with the option of a targeted document to support those pupils in alternative or specialist provision. All PEP meetings will be undertaken three times per year (termly) and for children and young people from ages 3 to 18 years. There has been a comprehensive guidance document written to provide a framework for strength based and consistent discussions for these meetings. A robust co-constructed quality assurance process has also been developed which will see Children's Social Care and the Virtual School working together on improving the quality of personal education planning. Members can review these and access other education based information and advice at <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/virtual-school/nottinghamshire-virtual-school>
49. The Virtual School and Leaving Care team, along with other partners, have developed an 'Employability Achievement Personal Education Plan (EA PEP) for 16 and 17-year-old young people in care which explores interests, employability ambitions, achievement and educational pathway for young people. This plan and process supports a more holistic discussion around career aspirations, and pathways into the world of work. This plan will be completed with education and other relevant professionals on a termly basis and will replace the Education, Employment and Training (EET) part of the current Pathway Plan. This will enable data to be collected on both the young person's trajectory into the world of work and training and will also identify SMART targets towards securing EET status. This process and documentation has been developed during 2019-2020 and will be rolled out from September 2020.
50. In addition, the 'Employability Assessment Tool' (EAT) for care leavers aged 18-20 years will also ensure that our young people who are care leavers are supported into work tasting sessions, the WERK programme, apprenticeships, employment opportunities or further and higher education. This data will be used to provide clearer insight into the EET needs and opportunities of care leavers and will be used by the Leaving Care team to approach and agree increased work opportunities with companies and businesses.
51. The EET will also be used by the 21Plus Service to assess and support the needs of care leavers at 21 years+. This will ensure that any identified needs following completion of further and higher education can be identified and supported as well as identifying care

leavers who may have been not in education, employment or training (NEET) but are now ready to prepare for employment or further education.

52. The capacity of the Looked After and Leaving Care Service has increased from 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts to 4 FTE Personal Advisers and an Achievement Coordinator. This has increased the capacity of the service area to work more closely with the Virtual School to intervene earlier at 16½ years.
53. West Nottinghamshire College (WNC) works closely with the Virtual School and other local schools to support our children as they progress into Key Stage 5. During 2019/20 the College provided education to 46 of our young people. On enrolment each of our children is automatically assigned a support coach who takes the lead on transition, liaison with social care and ensuring a smooth transition into college. Support coaches meet with young people as and when needed and for the most more vulnerable on a weekly basis. During lockdown the College distributed laptops and Wi-Fi dongles to some of our children so they could continue with their learning and in one case provided Fritchley Court with a Wi-Fi hotspot (at the College's cost) so that students there could access Wi-Fi and their online lessons. The College works closely with the Local Authority to ensure financial support, skills for independent living and general life skills are also part of the offer at college.
54. West Notts College has also supported the development of the WERK project, piloting the first cohort of 10 students who are looked after. Feedback from the students was incredibly positive. The second cohort was suspended due to Covid-19. However, WNC is set to build on the pilot this year with the intention that all of our children and young people at the college have the opportunity to access the programme.
55. NTU remains committed to working with partners to achieve the key priorities in the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy. The Institute of Education within Nottingham Trent University has identified key university representatives to target and report on actions in the 2019-2021 development plan.
56. The Director of the Institute of Education, Dr Chris Rolph, has raised with the Vice-Chancellor the principle of contextualised offers for our children and young people and these discussions are ongoing.
57. Early Childhood Services continue to work with early years settings, schools and young people to promote careers in early years, through engagement at jobs fairs, recruitment days and targeted events. Further work is now taking place to recruit apprentices to work in the Children's Centre Service now that the service is managed by the Council, with local young people not in education, training or employment being the priority for engagement.

#### **Ambition 5: Looked After Children and Care Leavers make a positive contribution**

58. Ambition 5 continues to be the focus of the Partnership. On entering care, all our children have the opportunity to complete the 'Listen to Me' booklet which seeks their views in relation to Looked After Children Reviews and other planning processes. Both Looked After Children's Service and the Children's Disability Service continue to ensure the views, thoughts and feelings of our children inform Care Plans and Pathway Planning processes.

59. Whilst the 'Listen to Me' booklet has been used for some time now, over this last year bespoke participation sessions have been held with care leavers to ensure their views directly influence planning for the future.
60. Mind of My Own was launched in Nottinghamshire in July 2019. This app provides an online platform for our children and young people to directly communicate their views, wishes and feelings to their Children's Service worker<sup>1</sup> 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Our children were the first group of children in the County to benefit from the app. Since the Board's last report to Committee, the app has been rolled out to the majority of services and teams in the Children and Families department. The app will be rolled out to our care leavers in October 2020.
61. Since Mind of My Own was launched:
- 462 children and young people have set up their own One App accounts
  - around 1,250 statements have been sent by children and young people to their workers
  - 244 statements have been sent by our children to share their views, thoughts and feelings
  - our children and young people of all ages are using the app/sending statements. Those between the ages of 11 and 14 years are sending the most statements
  - 722 workers have been trained to use the app and have worker accounts
  - Looked After Children's Service social workers are amongst the highest ranking users of the app
  - new and existing Council foster carers have completed e-learning so they are able to support our children to register with and use the app.
62. When using the One app, our children continue to report, as they did last year, that they feel 'happy', 'supported' and 'settled' at home. They also report that home and friends are what's good in life'.
63. In May 2020, the Council was awarded the "Swiftest Implementation Award" at the national Mind of My Own VoxCon Awards. Judges praised the Council for getting the app up and running quickly and for getting a high volume of use by children, young people and workers in a short space of time.
64. The Youth Service Countywide Participation and Engagement team has used the Partnership Strategy to drive further meaningful engagement with our children and young people. This service has continued to work with them to better understand their experiences and to ensure that this ambition to make a positive contribution continues to be relevant to them. During 2019 – 2020, they attended a range of positive activities outside the school day, with 558 attendances at forums, activities and events. This has provided a safe and supportive environment in which our children and young people can come together to participate and engage in constructive and fun activities as well as having an opportunity to express their views and feelings about life in care and how it can be further improved. An example of this was recently articulated in a film created by the Children in Care Council, following work undertaken in 2019/20:
- <http://home.nottsc.gov.uk/working/departments/cf/children-families-covid-19-updates/promoting-a-fair-and-just-society>

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<sup>1</sup> social worker, IRO, supervising social worker, complaints officer, Children in Care Council worker or social worker's manager

65. The Youth Service also actively encourages and enables our children, young people, and those who are adopted or living in residential care, to engage in positive activities and to independently access mainstream provision through the Platinum Card system of free entry to Young People's Centres. Platinum cards are issued to our children and young carers to give free access to the Youth Service's open access provision and is available to young people from the age of 10 to 19 years, up to 21 for our children, and up to 25 years for young people with disabilities. During 2019-2020 113 Platinum cards were issued to our children and young people. In addition, there have been four care leaver Youth Work apprentices in post during 2019/20 within the Youth Service. Three apprentices have completed their Level 3 Youth Work qualifications and will be going on to higher education in September 2020; two apprentices have secured a place at Derby University to study a degree in Youth Work, and one apprentice going on to Nottingham Trent University to study a degree in Psychology.
66. In addition, there are currently 14 young people who are progressing to Higher Education courses for 2020 - 2021, 14 young people that are continuing their university studies (Years 2, 3 and/or 4), whilst four young people are looking to start post-graduate degrees in 2020, and one young person is continuing their post-graduate degree (Year 2).

**Ambition 6; Looked After Children and Care Leavers have a positive transition to adulthood, and the Local Offer for Care Leavers**

67. This ambition is reflected in the Local Offer for Care Leavers. Preparing our children for adulthood remains the overarching objective of the Partnership Strategy. The Local Offer is driven by the ambitions that ensure every young person (care leaver) can become a resilient and confident young adult, in secure work, with financial independence along with permanent and secure housing, either through long-term tenancy or by buying their own homes. Moreover, the Local Offer supports the development of a healthy lifestyle that brings confidence and fulfilment and seeks to support care leavers to develop the ability to forge and maintain friendships and relationships and be able to engage positively with their wider communities.
68. The Care Leaver Offer was developed through strong partnership working, particularly with the district councils and health partners, and was approved by the Children and Young People's Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and published on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019. This Offer will continue to evolve as partners seek to constantly refresh and strengthen the offer. There was an update of the printed booklet in March 2020 and Members can view the current offer at: [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/careleaverslo](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/careleaverslo).
69. The communication of the Offer to our young people has been boosted by the recent introduction of the 'Notts Next Steps' application (App) which was entirely co-produced with Nottinghamshire care leavers. The app has been designed to work without an internet connection, meaning that our young people have access to information about the Nottinghamshire Local Offer to Care Leavers on a 24/7 basis without needing to rely on Wi-Fi availability or using their phone data. Notts Next Steps will be used as an outreach tool to attract and encourage young people to apply for opportunities within the world of work including the WERK programme, work experience, apprenticeships, taster days, traineeships and mentoring activities as well as a helpful resource regarding contact

information about the Leaving Care team, help and support, advice and guidance and other organisations that can offer support during their transition into independence.

## The Local Offer for Care Leavers

70. The exemption from Council Tax for all care leavers up to 25 years is key to supporting care leavers to secure independent living. This benefit has been delivered by district councils who have committed to absorbing the additional costs for this. Whilst individual districts are recording data using different methodologies, feedback does suggest that care leavers are taking up this offer. Leaving Care share monthly information with the district and borough councils to identify care leavers who should have exemption from Council Tax charges (if they are eligible to pay Council Tax in the first instance). As of August 2020, the data for the number of care leaver exempt from Council Tax charges is as follows for the period between April and August 2020:

Ashfield	106
Bassetlaw	84
Broxtowe	43
Gedling	49
Mansfield	103
Newark	69
Rushcliffe	29

71. In addition to the Council Tax exemption, district and borough councils have continued to offer support for our young people to live on their own if this is what they desire. During 2019-20, all Nottinghamshire Councils secured Member approval to prioritise care leavers on their social housing waiting lists. This offer is flexible and allows care leavers to secure housing in any Nottinghamshire district regardless of their existing address. Having secured local authority housing, our young people are now also eligible for priority for repairs and other tenancy support that may be required from their local social housing provider.
72. West Notts College has initiated work to create an independent living 'flat' that the Student Support Team will use with groups of our young people to promote independent living skills. This team now has regular meetings with the Leaving Care Team and direct contact with the Looked After Children Service and has established strong processes to aid transition.
73. Our young people have historically been able to access a range of financial support which has included contributions of approximately £3,500 towards university fees with all accommodation paid for throughout the duration of the course including holiday periods. When setting up home, our young people also access a home establishment grant of approximately £2,000 and practical support and advice is given for budgeting. In addition, all of our young people have a Child Trust Fund or Junior ISA bank account which comprises government and Council and/or carers' contributions that have been made over the course of the time each child has been in care. This account can be accessed at 18 years or left by the young person for future use.
74. The Local Offer provides information, advice and guidance in relation to health and wellbeing. Since the launch of the Local Offer, and through a strong partnership between the Leaving Care Service and district and borough councils, our young people are now able to join their local leisure centre gyms and wider facilities including swimming and other

fitness classes at no cost. This was introduced as of July 2019 and was thought to be the first leisure offer across seven districts within a two-tier authority. The leisure offer take-up has been promoted to all our 18 - 24 year-old young people and currently there is feedback from our leisure centre partners that nine young people are currently accessing Gedling Borough Leisure Centres for free, with a further nine young people accessing a Newark and Sherwood Leisure Centre. In Mansfield district, 13 now have free access to council leisure centres, with three more referrals pending. In Ashfield, 21 young people are accessing free leisure centre access and in Bassetlaw we have had seven young people enrol free at their leisure centres with comments from young people being really positive, especially around the swimming and gym facilities.

75. The Leaving Care Service will also support young people to take a friend or in some cases their child/children in order to engage with leisure facilities and gym classes. There have been restrictions on access during the Covid-19 lockdown, but all district and borough leisure centres are looking forward to continuing this offer for our young people. One of our young people is currently working towards their Gold level Duke of Edinburgh Award.
76. The Leaving Care Service's Achievement Service has received a boost in 2020 by securing 4.2 fte new posts, including an Achievement Adviser Co-ordinator and an Achievement Adviser linked to each of the geographically located Leaving Care Teams. They will also be taking on the support role for EET plans for 21Plus. In addition, there will be a full-time Achievement Adviser for 16 and 17 year olds as well as a 0.4 fte post dedicated to Business Engagement and opportunities in the world of work. This is all underpinned by the continuing effective partnership between the Leaving Care Team and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) which allows the Achievement Adviser within the Leaving Care Team to act on the young person's behalf as and when necessary. This has made a significant difference to ensure that our young people secure additional support when looking for employment and training. This support includes access to work readiness programmes, access to work experience, support to complete job applications, preparation for interviews, access to life skills courses, and support for apprenticeship applications.
77. This is the first year that the progression of our Year 12 young people from their GCSE results and EET plans have been tracked, supported by the Virtual School. This will be a focus in the future bespoke Employability Assessment Personal Education Plan (EA-PEP) for 16/17 year-olds which launches in September 2020 for all 16 and 17 year-olds to be reviewed on a termly basis. Between August 2019 and July 2020, 90 young people were EET (76.3% EET) and 28 young people were NEET (23.7% NEET). These July 2020 figures include the 26 new Year 12s who have been accommodated by the Local Authority since August 2019. Out of the 26 young people, there were 15 in EET (57.7%) and 11 young people NEET (42.3%).
78. At this time, 59 of our young people aged 18 - 21 years are in employment, training or apprenticeships, 103 are accessing educational courses, and 13 are in Higher Education. 59.5% of the 18 - 21 years cohort is in employment, education and training (EET), with plans for the new Achievement Adviser Co-ordinator to lead the development of the Care Leaver Offer around further opportunities including mentoring, industry taster days, work experience (and the Work Experience Readiness Programme), apprenticeships and other educational opportunities. This will also support the launch of the new Employability Assessment Tool (EAT) to help identify aspirations, developmental needs

and actions for young people from 18 - 24 years in successfully progressing into the world of work.

79. Securing permanent employment remains a driving ambition of the Local Offer. A key approach has been the development of stronger partnerships with local employers. In March 2019, the Council facilitated a business breakfast attended by 60 local employers ranging from small and medium sized companies to multi-nationals. The event was hosted by Sir John Peace, the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, supported by the Council's Chief Executive, Anthony May. This event led to formal commitments and support by local employers to provide work placements, work experience, work mentoring, apprenticeships and jobs. Due to the increase in resource within the Leaving Care team, they are now leading on a local database of employers and opportunities to help match pledges made by businesses and aspirations/needs for young people from their Employability Assessment Tool. In addition, the Leaving Care team has worked with Keepmoat Homes, East Midlands Airport and the Armed Forces to provide employability taster sessions for young people. Following the Armed Forces taster day, one looked after young person was offered a work experience opportunity on the RAF base in relation to physical exercise and instruction.
80. The previous report identified the development of a tool which would identify and quantify the employment skills, including 'soft' employment skills of each of our young people (care leavers) and to match them with relevant opportunities from local businesses. The Employability Assessment Tool is being launched from September 2020 and has directly linked with the development of the new Personal Education Plan (PEP) process thus providing a structure on assessing education and employment needs from Early Years until 21Plus.

### **Increased Support for 21Plus Care Leavers**

81. As of August 2020, 448 care leavers were eligible to request support from the 21Plus Service, and this is predicted to increase to 483 care leavers by August 2021. From April 2019, the 21Plus Service was fully established and included in our Local Offer for Care Leavers. The staffing provision increased to 2 fte experienced Personal Advisors and a 0.8 fte experienced Personal Advisor. Between April 2019 and March 2020 there were 513 requests for support from 207 young people. These requests are measured nationally as the 'returner' rate, meaning the returner rate for 2019 - 2020 was 54.5%. It was originally predicted to be around 20% nationally. Between April and June 2020, 137 requests for support from 86 young people have been received, currently putting the Council's returner rate at around 80% by March 2021. This is a significant achievement.
82. The Department for Education has provided commitment to further new burdens grant to support care leavers aged 21 years plus until 2022. Mark Riddell (National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, DfE) has requested and received further figures around Nottinghamshire's current 21Plus support and returner rates to identify good practice in the County to inform the sharing of this practice in other local authorities.
83. The Council has continued to use funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative fund (MHCLG) to fund the continuation of the Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisor until March 2021 when this post will be fully established within the Leaving Care Service. As part of the MHCLG funding, the Nottinghamshire Leaving Care Team is exploring options for a

designated emergency bed space for our young people to work with the district and borough councils in reducing the need for emergency homelessness accommodation.

84. The Council is required to make at least one contact with all our young people aged 21 years plus per year. Following extensive and proactive work by the 21Plus Service the team is in touch with over 97% of all our eligible young people aged 21 to 24 years, with contact being on average at least every four weeks since the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020. The team has also updated the new Local Offer for Care Leavers booklet and this has been distributed to all 21Plus care leavers, with additional information about government laptops and social distancing / keeping safe during Covid-19 information. The revised booklet is available as a **background paper**.
85. General feedback about the 21Plus Service from our partners remains positive as demonstrated by the following:
- a) we continue to lead and work with our multi-agency partners to protect and safeguard a 22-year-old care leaver from a coercive, controlling and abusive relationship. This includes working with Probation, Police, Women's Aid, Housing and Adult Safeguarding. We have managed to disrupt the relationship and keep the young person safe, with the overseeing Judge commenting that it was some of the best multi-agency working that they had seen.
  - b) a number of young people lost their employment during the start of Covid-19; we have supported them to apply for furlough (if possible), and if not, to navigate the benefits system or support them back to employment opportunities, some of which took jobs as keyworkers.
  - c) a 22-year-old former unaccompanied asylum-seeking care leaver has achieved a 1<sup>st</sup> in a BSc in Mathematics. The young person arrived in the UK from Eritrea when he was just 15 years-old, with no family, educational background and did not speak any English. The young person identified that without the ongoing support from his Achievement Adviser and the Leaving Care team (including 21Plus) then he would not have been able to attain this incredible achievement.

### **Increased engagement and participation with Care Leavers**

86. The Leaving Care Team introduced monthly drop-in sessions (until March 2020 and on hold due to Covid-19) around the County, identified as 'coffee and cake' catch-ups, so that our young people have access to previous secure and developed relationships with Personal Advisors. These sessions provide opportunities to access drop-in advice, guidance and support (open to all 18 – 24 year olds) and have been held in Broxtowe, Mansfield, Bassetlaw (Worksop), Rushcliffe and Bassetlaw (Retford). Five young people have attended these sessions so far who previously did not significantly engage with Leaving Care. Of these, three young people have been prevented from being homeless, one young person's debt issues have been managed, and another young person has been supported around concerns of historical emotional abuse. These sessions are being held at various Youth Service venues at no charge, so that it encourages young people to access other services in their local area. The service is planning to run the sessions again from September 2020.

87. Personal Advisers (PAs) continue to be allocated to our young people (looked after) when they are aged 16¼ years-old. This has supported the development of positive relationships prior to the transition from 'looked after' to 'leaving care' at 18 years of age. There was an increase in staffing agreed in June 2020 to achieve this increased activity and recruitment has now taken place. The interview process included questions input from a care leaver.
88. Ongoing engagement and participation with our young people will continue to be essential to ensure the Local Offer, as well as the overarching Partnership Strategy, continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of each cohort of care leavers, particularly older ones.

### **Pathway Planning**

89. As mentioned above, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) review all Pathway Plans for looked after children and the IRO holds partners to account if there is insufficient attendance and engagement with the Plan. In addition, following a pilot for care leavers, those aged 18 years can now 'opt in' to a process which allows them to retain their IRO to review their Post 18 Pathway Plan; this is now being implemented with additional resources being provided to the IRO Service. The purpose of this is to provide increased independent scrutiny and to strengthen transition into early adulthood. The IRO therefore continues to hold all partners to account for the positive outcomes of the Plan for our young people at a critical transition point into adulthood.
90. There has continued to be a focus on the 'review' element of Pathway Plans to ensure that actions and tasks identified in the Plan have been progressed appropriately. There is an expectation that Team Managers within the Leaving Care Service review all Pathway Plans to ensure that these Plans identify specific tasks that will result in improved experiences and outcomes for our young people. In addition, these Plans are expected to be continually updated and informed by the views of our young people. In October 2019, Ofsted confirmed that Pathway Plans are reviewed regularly and focus on progressing important priorities, with young people's views integrated throughout the plans, ensuring that they are meaningful to young people.

### **Response to risk and managing risk alongside partner agencies**

91. Where risks to our young people are identified, the Leaving Care Service now routinely attends and convenes risk strategy meetings with multi-agency partners and on occasion Multi-Agency Problem Solving meetings have also been held. Managers retain oversight of these risks, and both the risk and safety plans are recorded on Mosaic. The Leaving Care Service is also involved in Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) monitoring and processes and continues to engage with MAPPA (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements) meetings and other relevant safeguarding meetings with multi-agency partners for young people aged 18 - 24 years old.

### **Risks of larger semi-independent settings**

92. A positive development since the Ofsted focussed visit in January 2018 is that a service specification has been co-produced with our children and young people for the 'Core Plus' supported housing. During 2019-2020 work has continued to identify appropriate buildings to deliver this service from. A building has been identified in Mansfield which, when the development is complete, will offer a three-bed unit and a self-contained annex. Two other

properties, located in Colwick, will offer two bedrooms in each house. Initial discussions have also taken place regarding the development of a Core Plus service in Newark.

93. Recognising Ofsted's critique of larger semi-independent settings, a smaller seven bedroom Core Service accommodation has been developed including two self-contained flats. The Direct Purchasing System (DPS) provides an alternative to the main provision, with individual placements commissioned from an approved provider list. These providers can offer smaller settings and solo placements for 16 and 17 year olds and, on rare occasions, for young people aged 18 years plus. These types of placements have been steadily increasing and there are currently 37 young people within these placements.
94. A robust contract management and quality audit system has been established and is driving service improvements within the higher needs DPS provision.

### **Case studies**

95. The Partnership Board has recognised the vital importance of capturing the journeys of our children and young people through the development of case studies. Case studies have particular resonance to support professionals to understand the levels of challenge and to explore in more detail how professionals can work with our children and young people to overcome barriers resulting in better experiences and outcomes them. Throughout 2019-20, 10 case studies have been prepared by partners. Every Board meeting is concluded by the formal sharing by partners of the successes achieved by our children and young people, with the objective of fostering a culture of expectation of success and achievement for all our children and young people, and to promote a strength-based approach to all the work of our partners.
96. As part of the formal review of the work of the Partnership Board, case studies have been drafted to a structured format which includes contextual information, recording child's 'story', what difference the support and/or experiences have made, the perspective of the child or young person and most importantly, a request that professionals identify factors that have contributed to better outcomes for the child. Partners identified a range of factors including:
  - a) the importance of bespoke and differentiated education packages to support reluctant learners and children with identified Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to access education
  - b) the positive contribution of technology when engaging some reluctant learners and children with SEND in education
  - c) the importance of strong partnership working when tailoring Alternative Provision (AP) for reluctant learners to ensure that career ambitions inform the education package with packages underpinned by working towards and achieving formal qualifications including vocational qualifications
  - d) the importance of balancing teenage voice with strong 'critical friend' (adult) support to ensure that education pathways really will meet the aspirations and employment ambitions of young people accessing AP provision
  - e) the importance of partnership work across counties when young people are placed in out of county provision. This is essential when planning and delivering bespoke and individualised education with the use of high quality education tutors
  - f) the vital importance of offering multiple opportunities to develop and agree pathway planning Post 21 even when previous plans have failed. This requires agencies to

continue to engage with young people when previous agreements and plans have failed. This is particularly relevant when addressing accommodation and the need to avoid risks of homelessness

- g) the opportunities to 'Staying Put' at 18 years and the positive role it can play when transitioning into more independent living arrangements
- h) bespoke and individualised ongoing support to young people undertaking degree level university courses to ensure that individual barriers can be overcome with courses completed and a degree secured.

97. All of the case studies demonstrate the vital importance of professionals developing and maintaining positive and appropriate relationships with our children and young people. Case studies presented for review and shared by professionals at Board meetings all emphasise the important contributions which professionals can make to the outcomes for young people built upon strong and positive relationships between professionals with our children and young people. There has continued to be a significant input from the Leaving Care Service to the case studies, emphasising again the vital importance of professionals to supporting young adults who have been in care.

### **2020-2021 – Towards Year Three of the Partnership Strategy**

98. The Children's Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire (2018-2021) will continue to drive the Partnership to ensure that all of our children and young people can thrive, achieve and secure a positive transition to adulthood.
99. A review of the second year of the delivery plan has reinforced the importance of the two-year development plan particularly to drive further positive developments in provision for our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are placed out of Nottinghamshire, and when our young people turn 18 years. During the final year of both the Strategy and the development plan, the focus of the Board will be to ensure that our children and young people sustain educational success at school, college, apprenticeships and vocational training with a view to securing fulfilling employment and economic independence. During the third year, the Partnership Board will continue to focus sharply on transition to adulthood, underpinned by stable accommodation, quality education opportunities and successful employment.

### **Other Options Considered**

100. No other options have been considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

101. To ensure that Elected Members are able to fulfil their corporate parenting duties.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

102. 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**

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

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That Committee:

- 1) considers whether there are any actions it requires to further strengthen the Leaving Care service
- 2) agrees to receive six monthly updates on the impact of the Local Offer for Care Leavers
- 3) agrees to receive an annual report on the work of the Partnership Board and the impact of the Strategy on Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2018 to 2021).

**Marion Clay**  
**Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 12/11/20)**

104. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

### **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

105. 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.

DfE statutory guidance for local authorities Local Offer for care leavers:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance>

DfE statutory guidance for local authorities, Applying parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers>

[Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire 2018-2021 – report to Policy Committee on 14 February 2018](#)

[Approval of Nottinghamshire’s Local Offer for Care Leavers - report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 11 February 2019](#)

[Children and young people core data set – performance for Quarter 4 - report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 17 June 2019](#)

[Changes to the staffing establishment within Children and Families - report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 15 July 2019](#)

[Nottinghamshire’s Local Offer for Care Leavers, March 2020](#)

[Evaluation of the You Know Your Mind \(YKYM\) project – Nottingham Trent University, June 2020](#)

Terms of Reference of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership Board

Nottinghamshire Looked After Children and Care Leavers Partnership Delivery Plan 2019-2020

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

All.

C1401



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 5**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS**

### **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)**

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

1. To update Committee on the impact of the work of the Virtual School and its partners for the academic year 2019/20.

#### **Information**

2. The Virtual School (VS) discharges the Council's statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC) in all phases of education. It does this by working in close partnership with schools and other partners to build shared responsibility, and in particular to build capacity in schools.
3. The work of the Virtual School contributes to the achievement of the ambitions summarised in Nottinghamshire's Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children & Care Leavers 2018-21. The Virtual School is a key contributor to the Local Authority's LAC and Care Leavers Partnership Board; this accountability board ensures that key partners come together from across and beyond the Local Authority (LA) to have collective responsibility for the education, health and wellbeing of those children in care to Nottinghamshire LA.
4. The work of the Virtual School, including its structures, processes, planned actions, and outcomes, are recorded in a working document referred to as the Annual Report and Development Plan (ARDP). The ARDP is informed by the Council's three commitments outlined in its Children and Young People's Strategy (2018-21), and the six ambitions outlined in the Council's Partnership Strategy for LAC and Carer Leavers 2018-21. The ARDP is reviewed and updated by the Virtual School's senior leadership team on a termly basis.
5. The Virtual School's Senior Leadership Team oversees the strategic and operational working practices of the team. This leadership team currently comprises the Head of the Virtual School, who is also the LA's Group Manager (Psychology Services), the Assistant Head of the Virtual School and the Senior Educational Psychologist for LAC. The wider team includes a Virtual School Data Officer, and five LAC Achievement Officers (AOs). The

number of AOs has been increased from four to five as a consequence of the statutory extended duties supporting previously looked after children.

6. When compared with other local authorities, Nottinghamshire’s operational Virtual School team remains relatively small in size. This is the justification and rationale for the Virtual School to be focused on building capacity in schools through strong partnership working, rather than the Virtual School carrying primary responsibility at an individual child casework level. Within an increasingly ‘schools-led’ and academised education system, it is essential that the Virtual School promotes a clear, shared vision for developing systems capacity and accountability through strong partnership working, thereby securing good quality educational provision and outcomes for LAC.
7. The Committee already receives updates on validated educational outcomes of Looked After Children through quarterly performance reports to Committee.
8. The current profile of Nottinghamshire’s statutory school-aged LAC and their educational settings or alternative provision is as follows:
  - the number of statutory school aged LAC under the care of Nottinghamshire at the time of writing is 545
  - of these, 401 attend Nottinghamshire schools
  - by Key Stage, 26 are in reception, 181 are primary age, and 338 are secondary age
  - 13 are Nottinghamshire LAC living in Nottinghamshire but educated in other local authority schools (all 13 are secondary age)
  - a further 135 are Nottinghamshire LAC living out of county and being educated in other local authority schools (7 being of reception age, 43 primary age and 85 secondary age). This represents a decrease from 152 at this time last year.
9. The table below shows the percentage of Looked After pupils attending schools by Ofsted category.

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Sept 2020	18%	67%	13%	2%
July 2019	18%	70%	8%	4%
July 2018	18%	74%	8%	1%
July 2017	14%	74%	10%	2%

10. Looked After Children are not moved out of their school if an Ofsted inspection results in the school receiving a less than Good judgement. Any children in less than Good settings are monitored closely.
11. The Virtual School uses pupil level progress and attainment data to support and challenge educational settings to maximise their impact on progress and attainment. The aim is to ensure that all initiatives to drive up attainment and progress are accessible to Nottinghamshire’s LAC both in and out of county. Data systems used by the Virtual School have become increasingly sophisticated, and this facilitates greater challenge of publicly funded schools and other providers when individual pupils do not make educational progress. The Council’s Performance and Review team works closely with the Virtual

School Data Officer to provide support with accessing and analysing data sources locally, regionally and nationally.

12. During Covid-19 lockdown beginning March 2020 the Virtual School worked with Children’s Social Care (CSC) colleagues to ensure those pupils needing to be in school or provision, for various reasons, secured placements. The table below indicates how many pupils were accessing their setting and those that remain supported by their settings to learn from home.

Remain at home	Stayed at school	Attending school P/T	Receiving bespoke provision
75%	15%	3%	7%

13. As work began to support schools with the planning for pupils returning to their settings, the Virtual School was involved in the work by the Educational Psychology Service to produce the comprehensive resource now available for schools to access supporting the return of all pupils. This resource has been received very positively both within the Local Authority and beyond and specifically supports the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of children/young people and also providing tools and resources to support planning for any children/young people who are requiring extra support to return.
14. The current Year 12/13 cohort of LAC is 256. This is a significant increase from 196 at this time last academic year. The Council’s ambition is to make sure all post-16 LAC are placed on appropriate education, employment or training (EET) pathways, and to provide effective support and challenge for post-16 settings.
15. The Virtual School works in collaboration with a dedicated Leaving Care Achievement Officer to support the post-16 cohort of LAC. This includes providing information of those Year 11 young people who the Virtual School considers may be at risk of not securing an appropriate EET pathway. The wider Leaving Care team of achievement officers support Year 13 young people with making choices from a range of EET opportunities.
16. The Virtual School is working with Futures, who have secured D2N2 funding, on a project called Unlocking Potential. This project is aimed at Year 10 pupils and upwards to ensure quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) is available, particularly to those pupils with risk factors to post-16 planning, to avoid pupils becoming NEET. In the next phase of the project young people in Years 12 and 13 will also receive IAG to maintain their chosen courses or make decisions on whether the course currently being undertaken is the most relevant and sustainable. This project will be bringing together all relevant services: Children’s Social Care, Virtual School, Leaving Care Achievement Advisors and post 16 settings to ensure quality planning is in place to maintain EET.
17. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) have been updated for the academic year 2020-2021. This was necessary in order that they are reflecting the strength-based approach that is now a key theme through the Local Authority children’s services. There will be a joint quality assurance process that will be undertaken through multi-agency forums including Children’s Social Care colleagues to maintain a focus on meaningful PEP processes. Training has been delivered to schools, alternative provisions and social care teams to support the quality of personal education planning for our children. The Virtual School senior leadership team continues to work with senior leaders within Children’s Social Care to develop strength-based working practices within the wider social care workforce.

18. The Virtual School team works in close partnership with other Council teams, including the Fair Access Team, to ensure that there is a robust joined-up approach to identifying and monitoring those LAC who are at risk of missing education. This process is delivered through the work of the Vulnerable Children's Education Committee (VCEC), Children Out of School Group (COOS) and the Children Missing Education Panel (CME). These processes enable a clear escalation process for those LAC who are at risk of not receiving appropriate full-time education. These forums have also provided the Virtual School with a mechanism for the early identification of children who may be at risk of coming into care.
19. The Virtual School works closely with colleagues in the Education, Learning and Skills division in areas where there are shared responsibilities, for example with Achievement and Equality consultants in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs), and with Early Years Teachers to ensure effective partnership working with early years, schools and settings to implement the Early Years Pupil Premium.
20. The Virtual School team works closely with colleagues across Children's Social Care and especially with the Children's Placement team to minimise disruption in education should placement moves be required. There is also a robust decision making process through senior colleagues in Commissioning and Placements to support the decision making when any education placements are required as part of residential placements for our children.

### **Supporting work of Designated Teachers**

21. Each publicly funded school is statutorily required to have a qualified teacher undertaking the role of Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked After Children, and previously Looked After Children. This DT's statutory role is detailed in the legislation The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, February 2018. The Virtual School has a responsibility, as detailed in the local authorities guidance Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, February 2018, to:
  - ensure all governors and school leaders are aware of their requirement to appoint and train a DT for LAC
  - work closely with, and provide training and support for all DTs to ensure that they understand and fulfil their statutory role for LAC
  - provide regular updates for governors, school leaders and DTs in terms of current outcomes for LAC and good practice examples.
22. Good links are in place with Designated Teachers in Nottinghamshire schools through a regular email service, which provides DTs with update information and guidance on all topics related to LAC provision. In addition, free 'new to role' or 'refresher' training is offered to all DTs on a termly basis. During the academic year 2019/2020 over 69 DTs have received this training. In addition to this the Virtual School has developed the DT Curriculum offer. This is a full range of training that DTs from all settings can undertake. This training includes understanding trauma, executive functioning and the emotion coaching approach. These courses are offered at no cost to schools/settings and commissioned through the Educational Psychology Services using retained Pupil Premium funding or delivered by Virtual School staff. Despite the required changes due to the current Covid-19 restrictions all training was moved to online delivery and well attended.

23. The Virtual School, alongside Educational Psychology colleagues during 2019, established a pilot network which brings together DTs from within a Family of Schools in Mansfield to provide a termly opportunity for peer support, training and good practice sharing. Following the positive feedback from this pilot there are now networks set up across Mansfield and Ashfield with Newark, Rushcliffe and Broxtowe and Gedling expressing an interest in setting up their networks during 2020-21 academic year.

### **Monitoring and maximising the use of the Looked After Pupil Premium**

24. The Pupil Premium is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities, and to ensure educational opportunities for all regardless of need. Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium are children eligible for free school meals, looked after and previously looked after children, and forces children.
25. The size of the Pupil Premium budget which is overseen by the Virtual School is £1.6m. The value of the Pupil Premium Plus allocation per Looked After Child for each school is £2,300. The number of LAC for whom schools accessed Pupil Premium Plus last year was 690.
26. In order for the Virtual School to release the LAC Pupil Premium, all schools must return a detailed Pupil Premium Plan which is quality assured by the Assistant Head of the Virtual School to ensure chosen 'spends' are appropriately focused on the particular educational needs for each eligible child. The Virtual School monitors the impact of this funding and has identified a number of evidence-based interventions which have a positive impact on progress, for example, Switch-on and Reading Recovery, Numicon (maths) and 1:1 tuition and relational based support such as ELSA's (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) to overcome barriers to learning. This information is shared with schools and settings to support intervention planning for those pupils not making good progress.
27. Due to the Covid-19 situation this financial year a number of year groups will be targeted to receive funds at the beginning of the new academic year. These year groups are Years 10 and 11 (academic year 2020-21). The decision on this early release before approved plans are received has been made to ensure schools have maximum time with the allocation of funding to identify and support any gaps that may have occurred during the past months of limited teaching time. This temporary change is for this financial year only and has been detailed in the Statement which the Virtual School releases each year.
28. In line with the 'Conditions of Grant' guidance, Nottinghamshire's Virtual School retains some Pupil Premium funding in order to commission and provide a number of additional, far-reaching development projects which aim to either involve and inspire groups of LAC or to pilot and develop collaborative good practice across Nottinghamshire's schools. Letterbox club, the Multi-modal Literacy Project and the Attachment Aware Schools, now known as the Relational Schools: Becoming Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed, are successful examples of the use of Pupil Premium funding which are worthy of celebration.

### **Celebrating success**

29. The Letterbox Club, which is an initiative run by the Book Trust to promote reading for pleasure, has been evaluated as being extremely positive, with many carers reporting that their young people are now enjoying reading. The current cohort consists of:

(Early Years) Year group 1	24
Year group 1	22
Year group 3	23
Year group 5	38
Year group 7	46

30. The Multi-modal Literacy (MML) Project, which is a literacy initiative to engage vulnerable looked after learners to improve confidence and progress, was impacted by the Covid-19 situation which prevented the delivery of face to face training and support to schools. However, the Virtual School supported the practitioners commissioned to deliver the MML project, to move the work to an online delivery aptly named as the Multi Modal Hub. This Hub enabled students on the project to access live one hour teaching sessions three times a week which continued to build on the resources the pupils had from the project. This was a huge success and engaged some very hard to reach learners who had not been on the project previously. The intention is to maintain the Hub as a blended approach for the MML project and also as an offer to those learners that might find face to face teaching a challenge. Feedback from adults supporting the Hub included comments such as: a way for children to expand their literacy and technology skills, able to achieve, empowering – great for self-esteem and positive learning environment.

31. The MML project will be delivered again during the 2020-21 academic year. The Virtual School and MML practitioners have developed a plan to deliver either face to face training or online training for foster carers and teachers both new to the project or continuing. The Virtual School is also working with the practitioners to develop the virtual reality aspect for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, the MML app and once again work with the Southwell Minster and Harley Gallery.

The current cohort has 41 pupils taking part, four are Key Stage 3 pupils who have been with the project sometime. An impact report will be produced at the end of this academic year.

32. The Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) project has now been renamed to Relational Schools: Becoming Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed and this is to reflect the approach that we know is a positive intervention when meeting the needs of vulnerable children. Currently 45 schools have undertaken or about to start the programme. A key aspect of the project is sharing good practice that schools develop and this remains an expectation of the participants; this is shared widely through either designated teacher networks or through other training forums that the Virtual School will facilitate to continue to develop the designated teachers' knowledge and confidence throughout Nottinghamshire.

33. The Virtual School hosts an annual achievement event to celebrate the success of Nottinghamshire's children and young people. This is usually attended by our children and young people, their carers, their teachers, their social workers, and various senior officers of the Council as well as the Virtual School team. Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 situation the event was not able to be held under normal circumstances at the Albert Hall in Nottingham City Centre. However, over 232 Looked After Children received their certificate, book token and letter to acknowledge their achievements. Colin Pettigrew, Corporate Director, also recorded a congratulatory message that was accessible through the Virtual School website. The achievements range from graduation from university to overcoming

huge barriers in personal and social lives. The LAC and Care Leavers Partnership Board now routinely shares and celebrates the particular achievements of Nottinghamshire LAC and Care Leavers.

34. In partnership with Nottingham Trent University the Virtual School was due to host another conference for Designated Teachers (DTs) and other professionals with a focus on supporting and developing the role of the DT. Key note speakers who were booked to deliver at the April 2020 conference included Richard McCann and Stuart Guest, all of whom have direct experience of the needs of vulnerable children and the support required whether pupils were looked after, previously looked after or identified as vulnerable. A range of workshops were also identified to be provided by keynotes, school colleagues and educational psychologists. The conference is hoped to be delivered through webinar forums during April 2021 with the colleagues involved booked for the 2020 conference.
35. The Virtual School, together with other strategic partners, has continued to develop the Work Readiness and Career Ambition Programme. This Programme has the ultimate aim that all Nottinghamshire's LAC embark on a systematic programme of experiences from Year 8 onwards which better prepares them for the world of work. The activities during 2019-20 academic year were curtailed by Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020. As it is very uncertain as to how the project in its current form will be delivered due to continued restrictions, the Virtual School has worked with all partners both outside and inside the Council to transform the programme to an online delivery via the Virtual School website. Colleges, Futures and other providers have all delivered their workshops through this method and there are activities available to support these deliveries. This will be kept up to date regardless of whether the programme is delivered on a face to face model again as it gives all children and young people the ability to draw on the resources, advice and guidance provided by the project.
36. The Virtual School encouraged Nottinghamshire schools with looked after children on roll to take part in a research project, conducted by What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC), which will be evaluating the impact of a mathematics intervention delivered by Third Space Learning, an online intervention programme. A number of schools registered their interest with this, 15 in total. The Virtual School will receive updates on a termly basis by WWCSC and the findings will be shared with all schools after the year's research is complete. These findings will help to inform any Pupil Premium expenditure where mathematics may be a need.

### **Future priorities**

37. 2020-2021 planning for the Virtual School includes:
  - to continue to work on a framework of partnership working to build capacity through a school-led system
  - in collaboration with Children's Social Care support quality strength-based PEP for ages 3 to 18 and develop an effective quality assurance process
  - further develop post-16 educational support in collaboration with the Leaving Care Service
  - build positive working relationships with locality teams to the benefit of our children's educational outcomes

- to continue to effectively support our children to achieve their education potential through supporting designated teachers and professionals to meet any identified additional needs to promote engagement in learning.

### **Other Options Considered**

38. No other options have been considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

39. 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**

40. 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**

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

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Committee:

- 1) considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information in the report on the impact of the work of the Virtual School and its partners for academic year 2019/20.
- 2) agrees that further annual reports on the work of the Virtual School be presented to the Children's and Young People's Committee.

**Marion Clay**  
**Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 03/11/20)**

42. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

### **Financial Comments (SAS 09/11/20)**

43. 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.

Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (February 2018)

Nottinghamshire's Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2018-21

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

All.

C1402



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 6**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) SERVICE: APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020**

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

1. The report provides an update on the activities and performance of the Independent Reviewing Officer service from April 2019 to March 2020.

#### **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 dispute resolution process and how the service is developing with key findings for the past year and priority areas for 2020/21. Additional to this report, attached as **Appendix 2**, is the child friendly report for April 2019 - March 2020 which outlines some information from the annual report to share with children and young people. This report has been shared with the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and they are agreeable to the format and information included.

#### **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**

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## **Constitutional Comments (KK 12/11/20)**

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

## **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

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.

C1411





From Strength to Strength

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
Annual Report of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service  
April 2019 – March 2020

**Independent Chair Service vision statement:**

*“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”.*

## 1. Introduction

The Independent Chair Service (ICS) in Nottinghamshire is part of the Safeguarding and Independent Review Service, it is positioned in the Commissioning and Resources service thus improving greater independence. The ICS is responsible for quality assuring practice in relation to children in public care and children subject to child protection plans, ensuring that appropriate care/safeguarding plans are in place for these children, and promoting effective interagency working. There are two groups of staff within the ICS 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 (CPC) part of the service.

## 2. Purpose and legal context

Since 2004 all local authorities have been required to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) 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 monitors and reviews each child’s case and ensures their current wishes and feelings are given full consideration and where necessary challenge 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 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 2019/20 is 14 (full time equivalent) and the team is currently up to full capacity. There has also been an increase in service manager cover to 2.5 FTE posts. 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 steady growth of the looked after population over the past two years IROs in Nottinghamshire have had responsibility for the care plans of over 70 children and young people and sometimes as high as 75-80. 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 on 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.

IROs participate in the regional seminars that have been in existence for the past 5 years, these involve facilitators from each local authority presenting specific topics around looked after children and occur four times a year. This enables IROs to reflect upon their own practice, meet up with other colleagues within the region and share good practice. As one of the managers of the Independent Chair Service I chair the regional managers network and also participate in the national group which meets quarterly in London. The regional group meets quarterly and considers any work being undertaken within the region and nationally in respect of the IRO role and its impact on looked after children. The main emphasis is on trying to create consistency nationally and regionally whilst maintaining an individual identity and purpose as a local authority.

IROs are committed to developing themselves and have specialisms/lead roles which enables them to develop specialist knowledge which is shared with colleagues and social workers and creates good working networks with other agencies when striving to achieve good outcomes for looked after children. Over the past two years the service has experienced a high level of absence within the team and this has impacted on the IROs ability to consistently deliver training/mentoring/attend meetings/forums around their specialisms and adhere to the roles and responsibilities as illustrated within the IRO Handbook. The IROs have regular individual and group supervisions with colleagues and use this as reflection time on practice and to discuss cases where children and young people are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, who go missing, with disabilities and UASC (unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) and other vulnerable children within the looked after population.

The IROs have a direct relationship with CAF/CASS, and can if required refer matters of concern to them; however, this year there has been no cause to refer anything. Once care proceedings are initiated the Guardian and IRO communicate regularly as part of the looked after process to share views on the care plan and to ensure assessments are being progressed in time. Also, twice a year we hold IRO/CAF/CASS workshops which provide an opportunity to share good practice examples.

#### **4.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. 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.

Local authorities have a legal duty to make advocacy arrangements for children who wish to make a complaint about health and social care services for children who are detained under the Mental health Act or 16- and 17-year olds who lack mental capacity. The current advocacy service for looked after children in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City has been provided as a joint contract by an external provider since April 2014. The service provides issue-based advocacy available on referral, regular planned visits to looked after children placed in residential accommodation, weekly visits to Clayfields secure children's home, an Independent visitor service who provides volunteers to befriend and spend time with children and young people and an independent person to sit on review secure panels.

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

Total number of reviews held	2018-19 21821	2019-20 2280
Definition of participation	% of total reviews	% of total reviews
Child under 4 at time of review	NA	NA
Child attends and speaks for themselves	40.1	42.0
Child attends and an advocate speaks for them	1.0	0.5
Child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	0.2	0.1
Child attends; does not speak for themselves/convey their views	0.4	0.6
Child does not attend but asks advocates to speak for them	5.3	4.2
Child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the review	44.1	45.2
Child does not attend nor convey their views to the review	6.0	5.4

The picture around participation continues to be consistent and stable with 41.3 (at end of 2019) and 42.6 (at end of 2020) 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 2019) and 49.4 (at end of 2020) ask an advocate to speak on their behalf or convey their feelings to the review. Of those who did not participate through their own choice, 6.0 (at end of 2019) and 5.4 (at end of 2020) 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.

With the introduction of the MOMO app IROs continue to encourage children and young people to use as a means of conveying their views. The MOMO app was launched in 2019, it creates tools that 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.



102 one app statements have been sent by different children in care (some of which have sent in multiple statements). These children and young people

were aged between 7-18 with the most common being sent by 11-14-year olds. The statements included: worker visits, preparation, to share good news and to sort a problem.

IROs continue to encourage young people to chair/co-chair their own review with their own agendas where appropriate. Although there is a limited number of young people who feel confident enough to chair their own review, we hope that this will increase once we have remodelled the way reviews will be conducted and how the record is produced in the future.

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 (CICC) 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. Over the last year IROs have consulted with the CICC about the way looked after reviews are recorded and their views on producing a shorter record of what was discussed. Young people at the time were not keen, however we would like to revisit this proposal and explore further with young people around looking at alternative ways of producing a record that is acceptable and accessible to children and young people. This would enable IROs to visit children in between reviews more and undertake more quality assurance work on recommendations and care plans between each review.

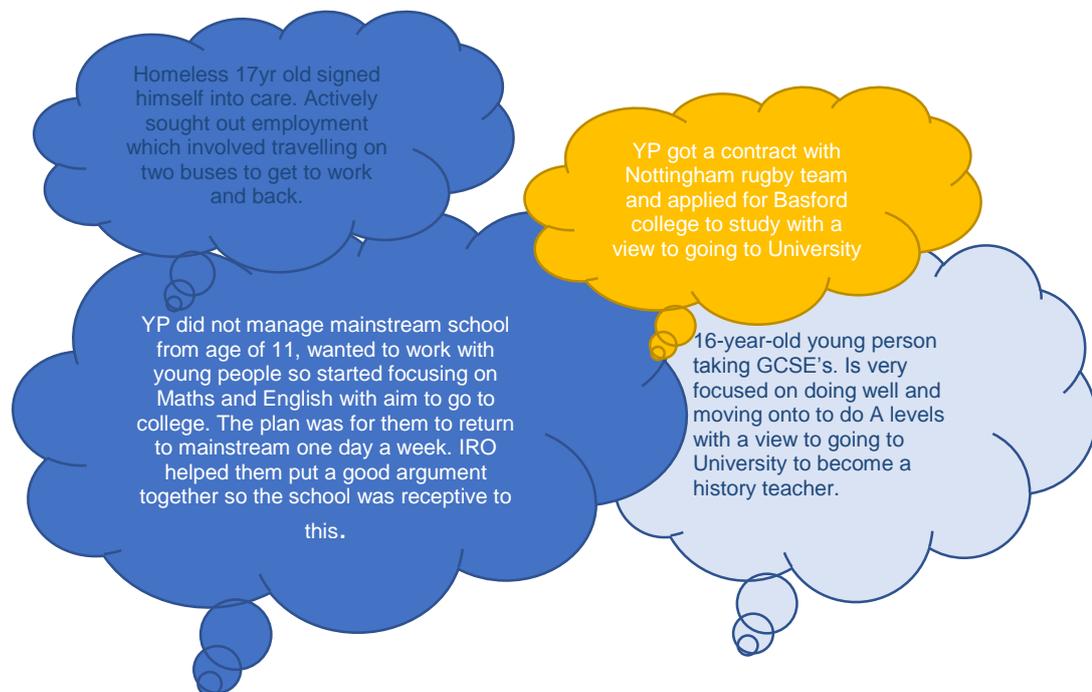
Our service took a proposal to CICC about completing two films, one for younger children and one for young people. These films would provide children and young people with an easy to understand and authentic insight into who is involved in their care and how they will be supported when they become looked after. 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. This project has not been progressed due to Covid19, however it is intended that some work will progress to complete one clip at a time in order to develop the film over the next 6 months.

## 5. Achievements in 2019/20

- IROs use of technology has increased somewhat since Covid 19, they have adapted well to using skype as a means of holding reviews remotely and have reported a good attendance from agencies and young people.
- The provision of reviews for young people who have left care has shown some success and is going to be offered to all care leavers.
- Fostering IROs are now placed in the Independent Chair Service, they are managed by one manager and continue to work independently focusing on Foster Care Reviews.
- IRO case note types have been developed on Mosaic allowing for reporting on informal alerts
- Service Manager ICS attendance at the LAC and Care Leavers Strategic Partnership Board allows progress on action plan to be shared with the IROs
- IROs continue to monitor the Local Offer for care leavers and this has been received well by young people.
- The child friendly annual report was shared with the CICC and they were pleased with the draft version and were happy for this to be produced for 2019/20

- IROs lead roles have been identified but not in full force due to additional pressures of covering absence within the service.
- Nottinghamshire has taken the lead on behalf of the national IRO managers group focusing on the 'Voice of Children', work is underway but has stalled due to Covid 19
- The quality assurance activity and how this is captured by IROs has not progressed and it is hoped this will take priority in the next year.
- During this year there have been many challenges within the team due to staff absences, vacant posts, high caseloads and an increase in admin tasks. However the service has continued to provide a high quality service and to provide scrutiny, challenge and support to social work teams.
- IRO's used for consultation by Team Managers, SW's, other agencies, Guardians on multi-agency discussions for young people.
- IROs build a bridge between all agencies and explore resolutions in situations where conflict may arise with families.
- IROs provide regular constructive feedback on social work practice, contribute to AYSE progression reports and annual reviews of foster carers.

## 6. Achievements of children and young people



## 7. Nottinghamshire Children and Young People Data 2019/2020

At the end of March 2019, Nottinghamshire had responsibility for 923 looked after children and young people (a rate of 56.8 per 10.000 children) in comparison to last year there were 875 looked after children at a rate of 53.9 per 10.000 children. When considering the age groups of admissions as in previous years there are more boys 198 (54.7) than girls 164 (45.3) who become looked after, this closely resembles figures nationally.

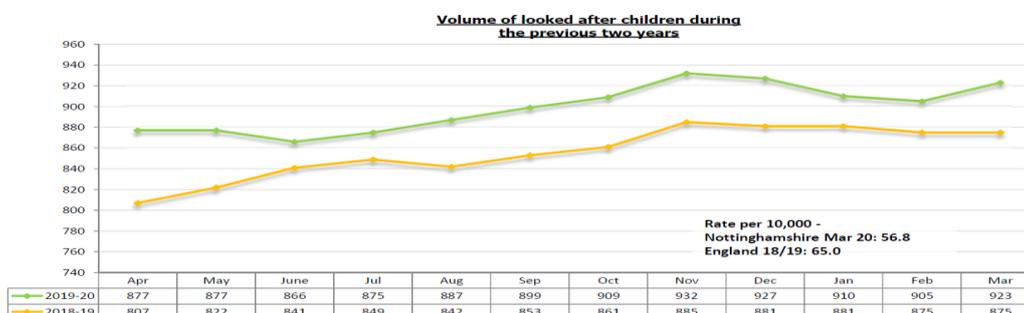
## Age groups of admissions during 2019/20



There has been a notable rise in the number of 16-17 yr olds (21.5%) of those accommodated by IROs this past year. Breakdown in family relations is the most common reason and a small number have presented as homeless and in need of accommodation. This also represents a change in government legislation placing a statutory responsibility to offer all homeless 16 and 17 year olds the option of becoming looked after. If a return home is not possible IROs ensure these young people are well supported in identifying whether they require semi-independent accommodation or live independently.

In the past year of the 362 accommodated with regard to ethnicity 320 (88.3%) were white, 4 (1.1%) were of Asian/Asian British, 3 (0.82%) black or black British, 21 (5.8%) mixed and 13 (3.6%) 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 923 looked after children as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 22 (2.38%) were placed with parents, 20 (2.2%) were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and 5 (0.54%) were placed in secure unit.

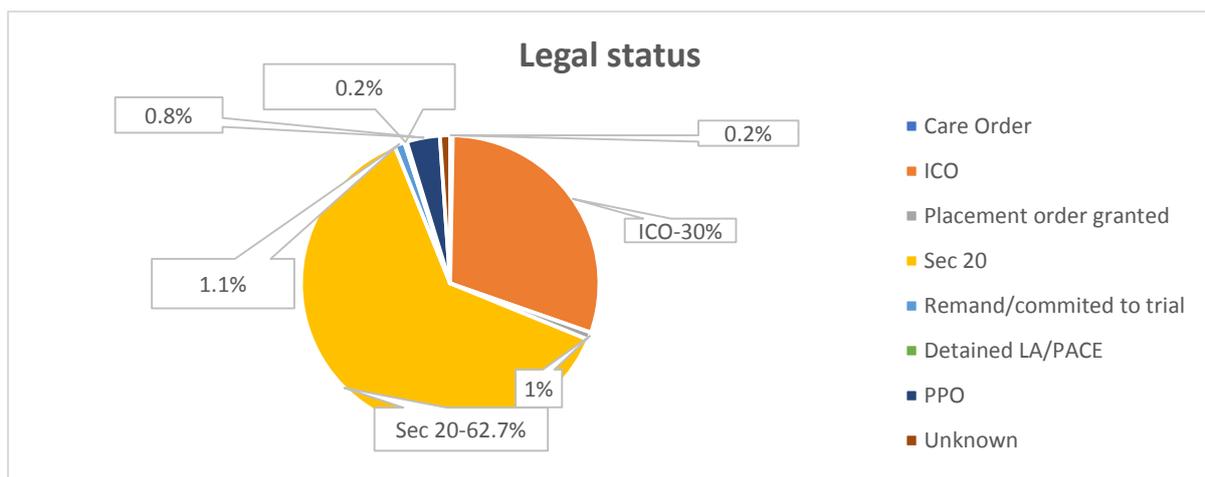
Of the 318 children and young people whom were discharged during in the year, 4 (1.25%) were sentenced to custody.

Child protection coordinators within the service have an overview of cases where children 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 CPCs 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 in order 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. Of the 362 children becoming looked after during the year 109 (30.1%), were subject to care proceedings 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.

### Legal Status of 362 children admitted into care during 2019/20



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.

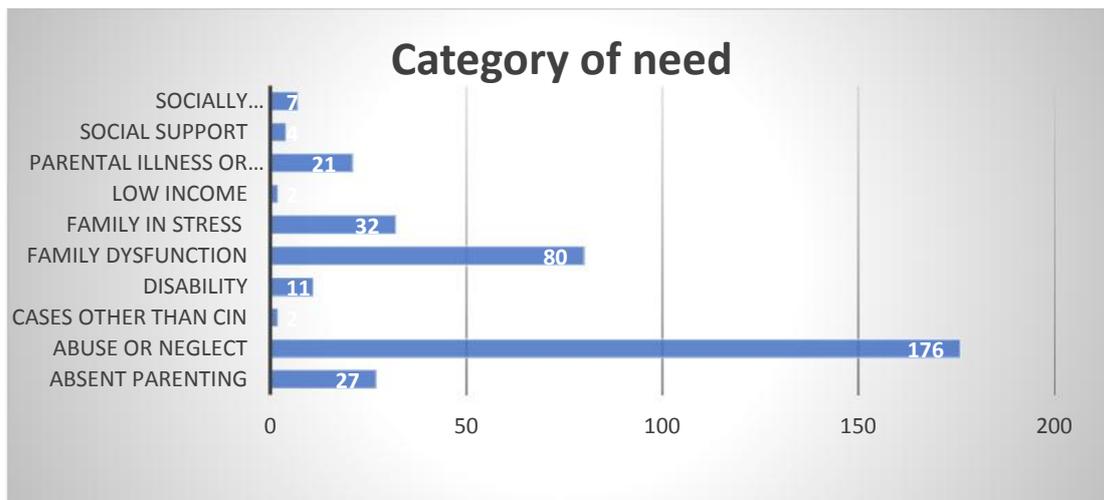
## 8. Our children and young people’s statutory reviews-timeliness and participation

### Looked After Reviews

A total of 2159 reviews were chaired by IROs in the year ending of March 2010, (this is a significant increase from the year before where 1850 reviews were held) of these 96% of these 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 362 in total for the year of 2019/20 51% were due to neglect and abuse which is a slight increase from last year of 47%. Other factors involved family dysfunction, absent parenting and family in acute stress featured highly 31%.

## Nottinghamshire children category of need at time of admission to care



### 9. Identifying good practice and Dispute 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 an alert. In the first instance, the IRO will initiate an alert and seek to resolve the concerns with the social work team manager. A record of this alert 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 taking action by progressing to stage 1; this involves the operational service manager.

When the IRO identifies any issues around care planning they will seek to resolve the issue informally with the social worker, their manager or with the agency involved. The informal stage of the process is recorded on the child's file under 'Informal discussion with IRO', which is used regularly where issues of concern are raised with the team manager of agency and is resolved immediately. During the year 113 formal alerts were initiated by IROs with Social Care practitioners, data suggests there has been an increase in the number of alerts initiated last year. (as noted in the table below)

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

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 (11.36%), care plan not being implemented fully (11.36%), drift and delay (20.45%), usually due to change over of social workers and any poor practice identified (35.8%). 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 all were responded to within timescale by the team manager without the need to escalate to service manager level.

### 10. Good Social Work Practice Stories

- It was apparent the SW has a good relationship with the mother, there was a clear sense of trust from the mother to the social worker. The social worker had also

clearly advocated for mother and had fought for services to be put in place for her when the SW met resistance, she made a complaint to this service on behalf of the mother.

- Report for the review was on time and to a good standard. SW participated well throughout the review and showed a good understanding of the young person's needs. Worked well with the Social Worker who was due to take over the case and demonstrated their willingness to complete joint working sessions with them, to ensure the young person had a smooth transition to another team.
- IRO acknowledges case audit received praise from Chief Executive. Lots of good work had secured a child a very positive move to a residential home, residential provider praised the preparation undertaken by SW.
- Permanence SW & TM moved baby swiftly to prospective adopters during Covid 19
- IRO complimented Practice Consultant on their ability to manage a strong team of professionals to ensure there was a safety plan in place for a very young couple where the baby was placed back at home with them. They showed compassion and were really positive about professionals working together.
- LAC SW; always provides updates regarding risk assessments in respect of children's care plans. In one instance this allowed the IRO to talk to the Guardian to gain their views about a young person placed in secure.
- LAC SW doing some great work with a number of teenagers where joint work is undertaken with concerns around CSE, healthy relationships and keep safe work. SW working with placements to ensure strong safety plans are in place for these teenagers.
- After many years apart young person is reunited with family. SW has supported this young person through direct & life story work to understand their entry into care & subsequent separation from her family. SW has facilitated contact and more recently has made the journey with the young person to meet their birth relatives for the first time in many years. SW was able to capture some beautiful photographs which both the young person & their relatives now treasure

## 11. Summary

- There has been a growth in the looked after children population in Nottinghamshire over the past year
- IROs continue to scrutinise plans and challenge where necessary.
- Participation of children and young people at their LAC reviews continues to be stable with the majority sharing their wishes and views as part of the LAC process.
- Initial feedback indicates that professionals and children are responding well to reviews being undertaken by skype since mid-March when Covid 19 necessitated these different arrangements.
- It is noted there are excellent examples of work being undertaken with children and young people by their social workers which has produced some good outcomes for them
- IROs continue to develop and maintain good working relationships with partner agencies and their peers within the region
- Proposals to enrich the looked after population, (Child Friendly Report and film) introduced by ICS is being welcomed by CICC

## 12. Key priority areas for 2020/21

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 CICC 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.

18.05.20  
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 2019 to March 2020**

**October 2020**





## **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.

IRO's 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.

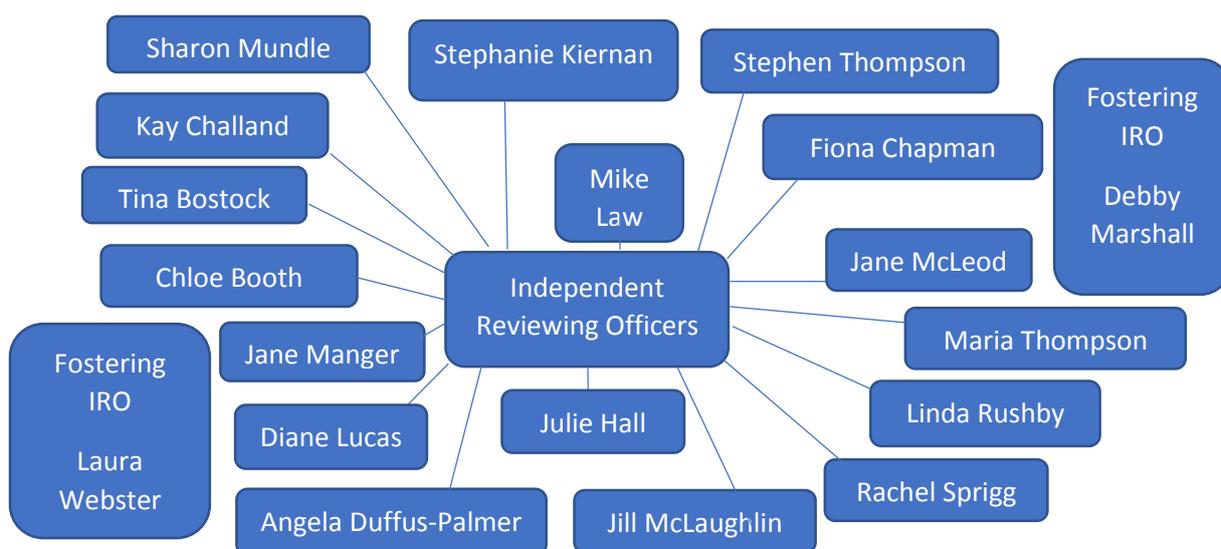
A report has to be written every year on how we are doing.

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 2020, there were 923 Children and Young People being looked after by the Local Authority.
- 40% of Children and Young People attended their reviews
- 45% of Children and Young People did not attend their reviews, but asked for their wishes and feelings to be shared at their review
- 4.2% of Children and Young People did not attend their reviews but asked for an advocate to speak for them
- IRO's continue to work to ensure all Children and Young Peoples' Care Plans are meeting their needs and changes to their Care Plans are made when needed.
- IROs make sure they ask Children and Young Peoples' 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 IRO's, or by their carers or their social workers afterwards.



## Achievements of some Children and Young People

YP got a contract with Nottingham rugby team and applied for Basford college to study with

Homeless 17yr old signed himself into care. Actively sought out employment which involved travelling on two buses to get to work and back

YP did not manage mainstream school from age of 11, wanted to work with young people so started focusing on Maths and English with aim to go to college. The plan was for them to return to mainstream one day a week. IRO helped them put a good argument together so the school was receptive to this

16-year-old young person taking GCSE's. Is very focused on doing well and moving onto to do A levels with a view to going to University to become a history teacher



## What's happened during this year?

The IRO's Chaired 2159 Children and Young Peoples' Looked After Child reviews by the end of March 2020.

This is many more than the year before when there were 1850 reviews held.

IRO's use of technology has been used more with Looked After Child reviews because of Covid- 19, this has worked well for some Children and Young People who have told their IRO's that they felt more able to join their review, while others prefer to meet face to face in their reviews.

IRO's 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.



There has been the introduction of the Mind Of My Own app IROs continue to encourage children and young people to use as a means of conveying their views. The Mind Of My Own app was launched in September 2019, which is an app that makes it easier for Children and Young People to be able to express their views, thoughts and feelings to social workers/IROs and any other significant professionals who

are working with them. A real positive to using this app is that Children and Young People can send their views, wishes and feelings to their workers at any time they want.

At the beginning of this year we took a proposal to the Children In Children 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 films has been slowed down by Covid-19, but we are working to finish these over the next 6 months.

There are 2 IRO's who review Foster Carers only who are now placed in the Independent Chair Service, 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 carer's 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:

- Social Worker has a good relationship with the mother, who trusted the Social Worker who had spoken for her to make sure she had the services she needed.
- The Social Worker made sure their report for the review was on time and to a good standard and showed a good understanding of the young person's needs.
- Lots of good work by the Social Worker which meant a child had a very positive move to a residential home, staff from the residential home praised the preparation undertaken by Social Worker.
- Looked After Child Social Worker is doing some great work with a number of teenagers by working together to keep them safe and working with their carers to make sure strong safety plans are in place for these teenagers.
- After many years apart a young person is reunited with family. Social Worker has supported this young person through life story work to understand why they came into care. The Social Worker supported the young person to see their family and more recently has made the journey with the young person to meet their family

who they have not seen for many years. The Social Worker was able to take some beautiful photographs which both the young person and their relatives now treasure.



## Working together for Children and Young People



IRO's have regular meetings with Team Managers and the service to ensure there is consistent practice with:

Children in Care Council / Participation Group

Children Disability Service/Local Family Justice Board

Adoption Service/Foster carers meetings/CAMHS.





## Our Key Plans for Children and Young People for 2020-2021 are:

We will work with Childrens' Social Care staff to ensure professionals who work with you focus on your achievements and make sure you get the support you need

IROs will encourage everyone involved with yourselves to use strength-based language which will focus on your views, strengths, aspirations, hopes, talents and achievements. They will also look at ways with yourselves to be supported to understand and work with professionals and social workers about your Care Plans

We will continue to work with you directly to encourage you to attend your reviews and chair them if you wish

We will work with all professionals to share and make sure the reports provided for your reviews are written in language you understand and focus on your needs as a looked after child

We will be looking at ways to make more time for IRO's to visit Children and Young People and to review your Care Plans in between reviews to make sure your needs are being met

We will be looking at how IRO's raise any concerns about the care provided to you, making sure they offer high support and high challenge to improve practice and outcomes for you as looked after children and young people

We will work with Childrens' Social Care staff to ensure professionals work with yourselves focusing on your achievements along with the challenges you may encounter

We will be looking at ways to make sure all those key people and organisations understand the importance of the IRO role within the Authority when working with yourselves as looked after children and young people

We will ask all Care Leavers if they wish for their IRO to provide a Post 18 service and make sure we are working in a way you find helpful and supportive

**Independent Chair Service**





**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 7**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**

### **COVID WINTER GRANT SCHEME**

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

1. The purpose of this report is to ask Committee to approve spending plans for the Nottinghamshire allocation of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme.

#### **Information**

2. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the government announced a package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, available from December 2020, will see new funding issued to County Councils and Unitary Authorities to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs. Nottinghamshire County Council's allocation is £2,316,008.
3. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will provide funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, who will administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This will include some families who normally have access to Free School Meals during term time. County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England will have the ability to deliver the scheme through vouchers or grants. The Scheme will operate from early December 2020 and covers the period until the end of March 2021.
4. The Local Authority is able to determine eligibility in their area and target their support within the scope of the conditions set out below:
  - at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other types of households, including individuals.
  - at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items.
5. In Nottinghamshire it is proposed that:
  - approximately £1.15m (50% of the available grant) would be spent on the provision of food to those families where children are in receipt of free school meals or free meals in

Further Education settings due to the low income of the household across the Christmas and February half-term breaks. In October, the Chief Executive took a decision under his Emergency Decision Making powers (see **Appendix A and B**) to provide FSM for eligible families in the two week October half-term period. The cost to the Council to fund FSM for 21,932 eligible children was approximately £634,680 for the two-week holiday. As in October, the provision at Christmas and February 2021 will be delivered locally by schools providing vouchers for local supermarkets. Schools have successfully demonstrated that they can effectively identify eligible children, communicate sensitively with families and manage a voucher scheme including their purchase and subsequent dissemination.

- approximately £0.6m (30% of the available grant) would be targeted at vulnerable families with children with an allocated lead professional such as a Social Worker, Family Service or Children’s Centre Service key worker or a professional in an allied service such as domestic violence charities. Of that figure £0.43m would be targeted at households struggling with the provision of food, paying winter energy costs and water bills during the period up until March and based on an assessment of need by the relevant professional.
  - circa. £0.45m (20% of the grant) would be focused on individual households not meeting the above eligibility but who have been identified by professionals as being in urgent need. This could include care leavers, families with children but without a key worker, those at risk of homelessness, those at risk from domestic violence but without children and those with no recourse to public funds. This would include at least £0.3m targeted on food, energy and water bills. It is proposed that through the Local Resilience Forum’s Humanitarian Assistance Group, officers work with District and Borough Council partners to identify priority individuals for this portion of the grant and to issue vouchers and make appropriate payments.
6. Upon receipt of more detail from the DWP, further local advice and best practice guidance would be produced to ensure that the money is fairly and consistently targeted, to reduce the risks of any fraud and to account for the expenditure in line with the set criteria. It is likely that detailed records will need to be held on individual household allocations. It is proposed that £100,000 will initially be set aside for administration, although this can be reviewed once further details are received.

### **Other Options Considered**

7. Due to the short timescales involved no other options have been considered.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

8. The recommendations support the conditions and purpose of the grant as set by government whilst meeting local priorities.

### **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 Children & Families revenue budget will be adjusted to reflect this new ring fenced grant and it will be monitored through the usual monthly financial monitoring process and in line with the grant conditions. A summary of the grant allocation is in the table below:

	<b>Food &amp; Utilities</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>	
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>
FSM & vulnerable families with children	1.58	0.17	1.75	80
Individual households	0.30	0.15	0.45	20
	<b>1.88</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>100</b>
Administration			0.10	
<b>Total</b>			<b>2.30</b>	
	85%	15%		

## RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee notes the decision taken by the Chief Executive under his Emergency Decision Making powers to provide Free School Meals for eligible families during the two week October half-term period.
- 2) That the Committee approves the overarching expenditure plan for the Nottinghamshire allocation of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme as detailed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report.

**Laurence Jones**  
**Service Director, Commissioning and Resources**

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

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 Service Director, Commissioning and Resources  
 Children and Families Department  
 T: 0115 9773696  
 E: [laurence.jones@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:laurence.jones@nottscc.gov.uk)

## Constitutional Comments (AK 18/11/20)

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

## **Financial Comments (SAS 19/11/20)**

12. The Children & Families revenue budget will be adjusted to reflect this new ring fenced grant and it will be monitored through the usual monthly financial monitoring process and in line with the grant conditions.

## **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.

C1417



# **USE OF EMERGENCY DECISION MAKING POWERS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

This form **MUST** have an accompanying report attached.

<b>Reference Number:</b>	CEX / EMERGENCY/ 2020/001
<b>Title of Report</b>	Emergency Payments for Free School Meals to Eligible Families
<b>Department</b>	Children & Families
<b>Relevant Committee</b>	Children and Young People's Committee
<b>Date of next Committee Meeting</b>	2 November 2020

<b>Summary of Decision Sought (including reason/s)</b>	To fund the provision of free school meals to eligible families during the two week October half-term period.
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<b>Reason/s for use of Emergency Decision Making Powers</b>	To provide this funding at the earliest opportunity during the half-term period.
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<b>Date request / report received</b>	26/10/20	<b>Date form originated</b>	26/10/20
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**DETAILS OF CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN (IF APPROPRIATE):**

<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Date</b>
The Leader and the Chairman of Children & Young People's Committee confirmed their support for this decision during discussions on 26 October.	26/10/20
Briefings were offered to the Leaders of the Opposition Groups on 27 October.	
The Leader of the Ashfield Independents Group was briefed on 27 October and confirmed his support for the proposals.	27/10/20
The Leader of the Labour Group was briefed on the 28 October and confirmed his support for the proposals.	28/10/20

**Approval from Chief Executive (or delegated Corporate Director in Chief Executive's absence)**

Signed 

Date: 28 October 2020

*Please return completed form to Keith Ford, Democratic Services, x72590*



## **REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS**

### **EMERGENCY PAYMENTS FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES**

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

1. To use the Chief Executive's emergency decision-making powers, in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, to enable the provision of Free School Meals (FSM) vouchers to eligible families during the half-term period.

#### **Information**

2. FSM are provided for vulnerable families during term time. It is essentially a statutory benefit to school aged children who receive other qualifying benefits and whose eligibility, following a formal application, has been checked. All publicly funded schools in Nottinghamshire currently use the Council's eligibility assessment checking facility. Applications made for FSM are processed by the school admissions and free school meals business support team using the DfE's ECS. Applications are assessed within 24 hours. This means that families are able to access this benefit as soon as they meet the criteria.
3. Section 512 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on maintained schools and academies and free schools to provide free school meals to pupils of all ages that meet the qualifying criteria:
  - income Support
  - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
  - income-related Employment and Support Allowance
  - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
  - Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
  - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
  - Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who are paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also access free school meals. It is also possible for a child to get free school meals if the parent or guardian is entitled to any of the above benefits and the child is both:

- younger than the compulsory age for starting school
- in full-time education.

4. There are currently 22,315 children in Nottinghamshire eligible for FSM. This includes 21 children who do not have a school place and whose education is provided directly by the Council. As of Monday 26 October, the breakdown of eligible children and young people across the County is as follows:

Ashfield	4825
Bassetlaw	3332
Broxtowe	2550
Gedling	2769
Mansfield	4182
Newark	2878
Rushcliffe	1758
Without a school place	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>22315</b>

5. There has been a national debate over many years regarding the provision of school meals during school holiday periods. Such was the concern around child hunger during the summer term and throughout the summer holiday period, the government agreed to centrally fund schools to ensure supermarket vouchers were provided to eligible families.
6. The Children's Commissioner of England, Anne Longfield, played a significant role in ensuring this provision was extended during the summer holiday period, arguing that the FSM was a significant defence against poverty and hunger for many vulnerable families. As a result, the Government funded school meals throughout the summer holiday period.
7. Since September, the Government has stated that this provision will no longer be centrally funded arguing that provision could be made at a local level with Council's funding from their COVID-19 Government grants.
8. In Nottinghamshire, some school-based provision has continued but this appears to be to a relatively small number of families with access to any provision inconsistent across the County. There has been some on-going delivery of food parcels in some areas whilst in others, supermarkets have, on an individual school basis, contacted schools to arrange the delivery of a sandwich to eligible children.

### **Other Options Considered**

9. To continue the previous term-time only provision but this would not recognise the additional financial pressures facing vulnerable families as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

10. Throughout the summer term 2020, the summer holidays and to date, families entitled to the benefit have accessed supermarket vouchers which have been facilitated at school level. These vouchers have been given directly to the family at a rate of £15 per child per week and have allowed parents to shop for food at their local supermarket.

11. The number of families experiencing financial hardship has continued and the number of families eligible for FSM has increased significantly during the Pandemic; in March 2020 19,061 children were eligible for FSM and by October 2020 this had increased to 22,315 (and may increase further as new applications are received). It is not clear that all vulnerable families are currently accessing support to buy or access food for children and young people.
12. The benefits of the school facilitated supermarket voucher scheme is that it uses the knowledge of the relevant headteacher to verify entitlement and is also able to deliver vouchers directly to the parent or carer. The current system allows headteachers to order and buy vouchers from the local supermarket in each community thus ensuring that families do not have to travel significant distances to exchange the vouchers for food.
13. Local supermarkets in communities are now used to implementing the scheme with robust systems in supermarkets to allow parents and carers to use the vouchers in exchange for food. The voucher scheme also allows families with multiple children to combine vouchers for a weekly shop thus providing better value for larger families
14. Anecdotal feedback from schools and eligible parents has been positive. Whilst there has not been either nationally or locally a review of the use of these vouchers, headteachers have not reported any widespread misuse of the vouchers. Rather, they have cited appreciation from vulnerable families.
15. In light of the time sensitiveness of this issue, a decision cannot wait until the next meeting of Children and Young People's Committee. It is therefore proposed that the Chief Executive uses his Emergency Decision Making powers and the Committee receives a subsequent report on this issue to its meeting on 30 November 2020.

### **Communication with schools**

16. All schools will be notified about provision of food vouchers through the regular Bulletins that have been sent to headteachers throughout the pandemic. Headteacher telekits arranged for the week commencing 2 November will also confirm details with all publicly funded school leaders.

### **Communication with parents and carers**

17. Parents and carers will be informed through the Council's public website, facebook and twitter. In addition, parents and carers will be informed of the details of the arrangements for provision of FSM vouchers through their child's school and by headteachers.

### **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. Given that there are 22,315 children and young people currently eligible, the maximum cost to the Council to provide free school meals vouchers for the current October two week half-term period will be £669,450.
20. In light of the timing of this decision, the payments will be backdated to cover the full two weeks period for each eligible child and young person.
21. All schools will be funded based on eligibility over the holiday period. The relevant amounts will be paid to schools (including academies). The costs of any individual arrangements funded by schools in the initial period of half-term up to the cost of £15 per pupil per week can also be met from this allocation.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Chief Executive use his Emergency Decision Making powers to approve the provision of funding of £15 per week for free school meals for each eligible child and young person for the current October two week half-term period.

**Marion Clay**  
**Service Director, Education, Learning & Skills**

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

### **Constitutional Comments (HD – 27/10/20)**

22. Under the Scheme of Delegation to officers, the Chief Executive has authority to exercise the powers of the County Council in the event of an emergency or a disaster and will report back to the relevant committee meeting when this authority is exercised. In this case, the powers would ordinarily be exercised by the Children and Young People’s Committee regarding the proposal for the Council to provide emergency funding for children eligible for Free School Meals and the Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee regarding the budgetary spend to underpin that funding. Reporting to each of those Committees or to Policy Committee would therefore be appropriate.

### **Financial Comments (KRP - 27/10/20)**

23. The cost of the proposed vouchers is a maximum of £669,450 as set out in paragraph 19. The government has previously announced emergency assistance of £63 million to be distributed to upper tier local authorities in England to use to support groups who are helping people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. Nottinghamshire County Council has been allocated £858,285 from this fund and has received bids for funding. The proposed vouchers will also be funded from this grant, with any excess over the total amount allocated being funded from the Nottinghamshire Covid - 19 Community Fund of £1m.

## **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 Divisions and Members Affected**

- All





30<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Agenda Item: 8

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CORE DATA SET - PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE FOR QUARTER 2**

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

1. This report provides the Committee with a summary of the performance and finance of the Council's services for children and young people for quarter 2 of 2020/21 (1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020).

#### **Information**

2. The Council's Planning and Performance Framework establishes the approach that the Council takes to planning and managing its performance to deliver effective and responsive services.
3. The Council has agreed that the key measures of its performance will be defined through a number of core data sets which are detailed in its Council Plan and each of its Departmental Strategies.
4. Performance against these core data sets is reported to Committee every three months (quarterly) to support the performance management of the delivery of services.

#### **Performance Reporting for 2020/21**

5. This report provides a summary of the quarter 2 position for the Children's Social Care and Education Core Data Set performance measures that fall within the responsibility of the Children and Young People's Committee. The full Core Data Set is included in **Appendices 1 and 2**. **Appendix 1** shows those measures which have received updates since the previous quarter. **Appendix 2** shows those measures which have not changed.
6. For each measure, the following information is provided:
  - Current performance and whether a high or low value is regarded as 'good'.
  - The period this current value relates to.

- An indication of whether performance has improved (+), declined (-), or remained the same (=) over the current reporting period. The most recently available annual performance and which year this relates to.
- The underlying numbers used to calculate the % for some measures is provided within the measure description.
- If a measure is cumulative, this is stated in the measure description.
- Comparator data of the national average for England, and that of the Council's children's services statistical neighbours, where this data is available.

## **Child and Family Assessments**

7. Data confirms that there has been continued positive performance in this quarter with the target being met and indeed exceeded. Given the additional challenges the service has faced, this is testimony to their hard work and commitment.

## **Child Protection**

8. The numbers of children on child protection plans in Nottinghamshire has increased slightly this quarter. This was expected due to lock down restrictions easing in quarter 2 and children returning to schools at the beginning of September. The quarter 2 figure remains above that of statistical neighbours and the national average. Further attention is being given at a senior level to provide additional insight into this.
9. The current figure of 3.7% of child protection plans lasting two or more years, although an increase on quarter 1, remains within target, and in-line with both statistical neighbour and England figures.
10. The proportion of children becoming subject of a repeat plan within two years has increased again this quarter, continuing the trend. According to the quality assurance data collected by conference chairs, the concerns identified for these families included drug and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, mental health and neglect. Any case going to conference where there has been a previous plan must receive service manager approval. Work to date has indicated these decisions have been correct. The figure reduces significantly if judged against previous plans in the last two years. This information has been shared with the relevant children's service managers in order to inform continued oversight of this issue and is currently subject to targeted attention by senior managers.
11. The percentage of Child Protection cases reviewed in timescale increased slightly from quarter 1, from 95.4% to 96.1%. This is slightly below the target of 98% but above both statistical neighbour and England figures.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing**

12. There has been a rise in the number of children reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as being at risk of CSE although this is still below the value of quarter 3 (2019/20). This was expected following the easing of lock down measures (which had resulted in a reduction of referrals to the MASH last quarter). Seventeen children are currently being discussed at CSE multi-agency strategy meetings and none of these are looked after children. This figure is in line with pre-lockdown quarters and again is an expected increase to previous levels. The overall approach to child exploitation is currently

under review and receiving close management attention. More detailed analysis should be available in the next reporting cycle.

13. There has been a rise in number of children reported missing overall. There has been a rise in the percentage of missing children who are missing from care (and reduction in those missing from home) and also a rise in the number of missing occurrences. The figures are however consistent with the pre-lockdown figures of quarter 3 and quarter 4. The percentage of all looked after children who have had a missing episode in the quarter has risen, but still remains below the figure for statistical neighbours and the national figure (being 84 out of the total 962 children who were looked after by the LA at the end of quarter 2.) There has been a small but welcome improvement in the number of return interviews completed within timescale, and a small but welcome reduction in the percentage of children reported missing this quarter who have gone missing five or more times in the last 12 months. These remain the subject of close management attention however.

### **Looked After Children**

14. The stability of placements (3+ in a year) considers children in care (CiC) who have had more than three placements during the previous 12 months as a proportion of all CiC. The current performance is consistent with the sustained improvement throughout 2019/20. This was impacted during the first quarter of the current financial year, which coincided with the initial period of national lockdown during which time placements became less stable as a direct result of measures taken by providers to maintain social distancing and, in some cases, to allow appropriate shielding of children in care with complex health needs. The latest data indicate that placements once again became more stable once lockdown restrictions were eased (albeit the actual number of children in care - and thus the volume of placements - has increased during this period). Please note: some level of caution should be exercised when benchmarking against national data because there is a difference between how the current Nottinghamshire figure is calculated and the way in which the national average data was computed in 2018/19. It effectively over-inflates the Nottinghamshire figure, hence the target of 12% has been derived to account for this.
15. The continuing trend of improvement in the percentage of children remaining in long term placements underlines the fact that a majority of children in care experience vary stable placements over the longer term, and that thankfully the impact of the coronavirus on placement stability to date has affected only a relatively small number of children in care. Additionally, the computation of this performance indicator belies the fact that planned placement moves are part of the normal care plan for older young people in care as they transition into semi-independent accommodation to equip them with independence skills as part of their wider transition into adulthood. Please note: the same issue around differences in data computation described above regarding stability of placements applies equally to this indicator, hence this target has likewise been modified to account for this.

### **Adoption**

16. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family has fallen significantly in quarter 2. This measure has changed slightly and is now adjusted for foster carer adoptions so that if a child(ren) is/are adopted by their foster carer, the clock stops when they moved in with that foster carer. The low value this quarter (252) is due to there having been seven Adoption Orders made, of which three were children adopted by

their foster carers. For these children the time between being fostered by their carer and that placement becoming an adoptive placement is not counted.

17. The average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match has also decreased significantly this quarter. The low value in this quarter's figures seems to be due to there having been seven Adoption Orders made with three of these being foster carers who adopted. The value is low as the children placed with foster carers who are approved to adopt have had their matches approved without delay. The other children not adopted by their foster carers were young children who were matched speedily with adopters post placement order.

## Care leavers

18. Despite the impact of Covid-19 on the care leaver population in respect of attending education provision and the impact on employment opportunities/income, the Council has managed to support our young people to a level which remains above the target of 49%. This has been through negotiations by Personal Advisors and Achievement Advisers with educational establishments to ensure that courses and classes could still be accessed online, and provision of resources to do this identified where required. This has also included the participation and distribution of the Government laptops to the 18-25 year old leaving care cohort. The Council has assisted young people to find or continue in their employment where possible (including identifying suitable accommodation provision for a young person who was a front line key worker who could not remain working whilst in the staying put placement as his ex-foster carers were needing to shield). The Council continues with the links with the Department for Work and Pensions and fast-tracking claims and employment support. In September 2020 the new Personal Education Plans were launched across Nottinghamshire which includes the Employability Assessment PEP for 16-17 year old looked after children and this feeds into the Employability Assessment Tool (EAT) post 18 years. Additional capacity has been recruited within Leaving Care in respect of Achievement Advisers and the Council is currently expanding and re-launching the Achievement Service offer to 16-17 year old looked after children and care leavers in conjunction with partners and our Local Offer. This is aimed for a full launch in the New Year.
19. Covid has also had an impact on the accommodation availability and move-on within Nottinghamshire and especially the demands on Supported Accommodation Providers. The Homelessness Prevention Personal Adviser has worked hard with district councils and supported accommodation providers in cases where young people have faced homelessness, as part of the "everybody in" campaign. A number of young people have moves to their own council accommodation with additional support from the Transitional Personal Adviser and Personal Adviser service in order to sustain this, as well as exploring other accommodation options including a linked apprenticeship/accommodation offer, additional supported accommodation provision, move-on accommodation for former unaccompanied asylum seeking children and an emergency bed space solely allocated for Nottinghamshire care leavers. A number of young people returning from education (university) have moved back to the Nottinghamshire area, and they have taken up private rented accommodation or council accommodation. There are very few young people in HMOs and those that are in them are there due to their own choice (sharing university accommodation) or in order to meet their needs at this present time.

## Youth Offending

20. The level of first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17 years (per 100,000) is well under the level seen in same quarter last year, and can be attributed in part to the compliance of young people with the Covid 19 lockdown. Performance of the partnership in reducing first time entrant rate will be better understood as the data is seen now lockdown has lifted.

## Summary Financial Position

21. The Children and Families Department Revenue Budget is forecast to underspend by £0.013m (0.01%) as summarised in the Table below.
22. The Authority has received four tranches of main Covid 19 grant allocations totalling £47.1m. This amount was not factored into projections when setting the 2020/21 budget in February 2020. A revised budget estimate has therefore been set whereby Covid 19 grant has been allocated across Committee budgets based on the current known financial impact of the Covid 19 crisis and Table 1 reflects the position after the allocation of this funding.

**Table 1 – Summary Revenue Position**

Forecast Variance as at Period 5	Division	Annual Budget	Actual to Period 6	Year-End Forecast	Under(-) / Overspend Variance	Variance as % of Budget
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	%
	<b>Children &amp; Young People's Committee</b>					
1,712	Youth, Families & Social Work	62,217	29,413	62,351	134	0.22
421	Education Learning & Skills	6,801	2,830	6,855	54	0.79
7,522	Commissioning & Resources	68,810	26,059	68,559	(251)	0.36
0	Capital & Central Charges	13,940	(28)	13,990	50	0.36
<b>9,655</b>	<b>Net Committee Overspend</b>	<b>151,768</b>	<b>58,274</b>	<b>151,755</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>0.01</b>

23. The Youth, Families & Social Work Division is forecasting an overspend of £0.1m. The major contributing factor is a £1.3m overspend on social work staffing which has arisen due to a combination of additional capacity staff to respond to anticipated increased workloads, maintain manageable caseloads, new posts to be established and agency workers.
24. The forecast agency spend for the Hard to Retain teams is £5.6m (2019-20 £5.4m). There were 79.3 fte agency Team Managers and Social Workers at the end of September and it is estimated that there will be 68.3 fte agency workers by the end of March 2021. This equates to an average of 76 fte agency workers for the year. The forecast also includes 27.11 fte agency Social Work Assistants and a reduction to reflect the annual leave, sickness and Bank Holidays to be taken by agency workers. All agency posts continue to

require the explicit approval of the Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work, and are subject to scrutiny by the quarterly Agency Challenge Panel.

25. The overspend was offset by a net underspend of £1.2m across all other budgets which includes vacancies, staff related running expenses, non-looked after children placements, additional grant income and income from selling beds in Children with Disability homes.
26. The Education, Learning & Skills Division is reporting a £0.1m overspend. The major contributing factor is a £0.6m overspend on the school improvement sold service offer offset by a £0.5m underspend on all other budgets. A review of the sold service offer for 2020/21 and beyond has been undertaken.
27. The Commissioning & Resources division is reporting a £0.2m underspend. The major contributing factor is a £0.7m underspend on Children's Centres of which approximately £0.4m is staffing related due to vacancies and a temporary subsidy on the NHS Employers pension rate for 2020-21. There is also £0.1m of additional gainshare income, related to the former Children's Centre contract, which exceeded expectations.
28. The overspend on external residential placements for Children Looked After is £0.3m which is mainly due to general cost increases observed towards the end of 2019-20 and the cost of additional support for complex cases.
29. External LAC numbers increased by a net of 14 in September, which was six more than predicted. The composition/ placement mix however was relatively favourable (Independent Fostering Agencies increased by five, Supported Accommodation by three more costly semi-independent spot purchases by two and residential by four, of which two were time limited Parent & Baby placements). Additional Health contributions of £0.147m, offset increased costs in the month resulting in a net marginal change overall.
30. The remaining £0.2m overspend is attributable to Short Breaks, ICDS Direct Provider Services attributable to commissioned Personal Care costs and various other budgets across the division.
31. Clayfields is currently forecasting a surplus against its income target of £0.411m. From early September 2020 it has been invoicing for all beds, including extra costs for 1:1 and 2:1 support. Additionally, the Youth Custody Service have approved an inflationary increase to bed prices backdated to April 2020. Any surplus at the end of the financial year will be added to the trading reserve balance which is £0.180m.
32. As well as the implications arising from the Covid-19 emergency the main areas of risk associated with the forecast are in relation to external residential placements and social work staffing due to the volatile nature of the demand on these budgets. In view of the high cost of external residential placements the forecast is highly sensitive to changes in e.g. numbers, weekly costs (due to complexity of need, market conditions, inflation, capacity of internal provision) and placement mix. There is a robust monthly monitoring process to track trend data, average costs and actual numbers of children in placement to highlight potential issues as soon as possible.

## **Other Options Considered**

33. This report is provided as part of the Committee's constitutional requirement to consider performance of all areas within its terms of reference on a quarterly basis. The departmental strategy was agreed on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and the format and frequency of performance reporting were agreed by the Improvement and Change Sub-Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Due to the nature of the report no other options were considered appropriate.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

34. This report is provided as part of the Committee's constitutional requirement to consider performance of areas within its terms of reference on a quarterly basis.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

35. 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**

36. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

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

37. Reporting on the performance of services for looked after children and care leavers will better enable the Council to ensure that children are effectively safeguarded.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That Committee considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the performance information on the Council's services for children and young people for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**Nigel Stevenson**

**Service Director for Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement**

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

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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 12/11/20)**

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

### **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

39. 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.

[Performance reporting \(Quarter 1 2020/21\) – services for children and young people: report to Children and Young People's Committee on 21st September 2020.](#)

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

All.

C1406

Key Performance Indicator	Nottinghamshire					Comparator Data		
	Current Value	Best to be	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Annual Performance	National Average	Statistical Neighbours	
Child and Family assessments for Children's Social Care carried out within statutory timescales	<b>97.9%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	96.2%	96.0% (2018/19)	83.1% (2018/19)	81.4% (2018/19)
Percentage of child protection cases reviewed within timescale	<b>96.1%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	95.4%	91.4% (2018/19)	91.8% (2018/19)	91.1% (2018/19)
Children subject to a Child Protection Plan – Rate per 10,000	<b>46.7</b>	N/A	N/A	2020/21 Q2	44.1	50.1 (2018/19)	43.7 (2018/19)	41.7 (2018/19)
Children who are subject to a child protection plan for 2 years or more	<b>3.7%</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	2.5%	4.1% (2018/19)	3.3% (2018/19)	3.8% (2018/19)
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan on more than one occasion	<b>27.9%</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	24.2%	23.8% (2018/19)	20.8% (2018/19)	21.3% (2018/19)
Total number of individual children reported missing this quarter	<b>291</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	213	967 (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Of the children reported missing, % missing from home (176/291)	<b>60.5%</b>			2020/21 Q2	52.1%	71% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Of the children reported missing, % missing from care placement (123/291)	<b>42.3%</b>			2020/21 Q2	49.8%	33% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Of the children reported missing, % missing from NCC LAC care placement (84/291)	<b>28.9%</b>			2020/21 Q2	32.9%	18% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Total number of missing occurrences* this quarter generated by these children	<b>599</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	447	2785 (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Percentage of Nottinghamshire LAC missing from placement by individual child (L) (84/962)	<b>8.7%</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	7.6%	18% (2017/18)	11% (2017/18)	10.1% (2017/18)
Percentage of Return Interviews completed within timescale (L) (293/358)	<b>81.8%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	79.0%	73% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Percentage of children reported missing this qtr who have gone missing 5+ times in last 12 mths (71/291)	<b>24.4%</b>	+	Low	2020/21 Q2	27.7%	14% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Number of children reported to MASH as at risk of CSE	<b>88</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	55	381 (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Number of LAC children subject to CSE strategy meeting	<b>0</b>	=	Low	2020/21 Q2	0	5 (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Number of non LAC children subject to CSE strategy meeting	<b>17</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	3	59 (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Percentage of looked after children placed 20 miles or more from home (L) (163/915)	<b>17.8%</b>	-	Low	2020/21 Q2	16.5%	17.0% (2018/19)	15.0% (2018/19)	15.7% (2018/19)
Looked after children with 3 or more placements in any one year (L)	<b>10.2%</b>	+	Low	2020/21 Q2	12.1%	4.0% (2018/19)	10.0% (2018/19)	10.1% (2018/19)
Percentage of looked after children remaining in long-term placements (L)	<b>71.0%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	67.0%	89% (2018/19)	69% (2018/19)	67.7% (2018/19)

For Nottinghamshire, the performance data available at the end of quarter 2 2020/21 is reported. The most recent data for national average and children's services statistical neighbours is reported, where available. Please note, comparisons may be indicative only, as the reporting periods are not necessarily aligned. Where Nottinghamshire performance meets or exceeds the latest national performance information, this is highlighted by the emboldened boxes. Key: (p) = provisional data; (L) = reported against the outcomes in the LAC & Care Leavers Strategy (+) = better than previous value; (-) = worse than previous value; (=) = same as previous value; (n/a) = not comparable to previous value

NB Missing definition = reported as missing to Police, includes missing no risk (absent) as well as missing

\* missing occurrences - Current value is total over 3 months, annual performance is total over 12 months

Key Performance Indicator	Nottinghamshire					Comparator Data		
	Current Value	Best to be	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Annual Performance	National Average	Statistical Neighbours	
Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training aged 19-21 (L) (115/221)	<b>52.0%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	50.9%	47.0% (2018/19)	52% (2018/19)	49.4% (2018/19)
Percentage of care leavers in higher education aged 19-21 (L) (17/221)	<b>7.7%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	6.9%	5.0% (2018/19)	6.0% (2018/19)	5.3% (2018/19)
Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation (L) (195/221)	<b>88.2%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q2	85.8%	90.0% (2018/19)	85% (2018/19)	84.6% (2018/19)
Percentage of school-age LAC with an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (L) (277/633)	<b>43.8%</b>	-	High	2020/21 Q2	51.4%	68.7% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for those adopted children, adjusted for foster carer adoptions (days)	<b>252</b>	+	Low	2020/21 Q2	531	285 days (2016-19)	285 days (2016-19)	360 days (2016-19)
Average time between a LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	<b>84</b>	+	Low	2020/21 Q2	231	134 days (2016-19)	134 days (2016-19)	162 days (2016-19)
First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (per 100,000) (cumulative)	<b>24</b>	+	Low	2020/21 Q1	171	251 (2018/19)	276 (2017/18)	-

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Appendix 2 - Indicators that remain unchanged from previous report

Key Performance Indicator	Nottinghamshire					Comparator Data		
	Current Value	Best to be	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Annual Performance	National Average	Statistical Neighbours	
Percentage of LAC who took up the opportunity to be consulted by their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) prior to the LAC Review Meeting (L) (228/646)	<b>35.3%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q1	34.5%	30.8% (P) (2018/19)	-	-
Participation in education, employment and training (EET) aged 16-17	<b>94.3%</b>	+	High	2020/21 Q1	92.8%	94.9% (2018/19 Q4)	-	-
Percentage not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16-17	<b>1.7%</b>	=	Low	2020/21 Q1	1.7%	1.7% (2018/19 Q4)	-	-
Percentage whose destination is not known aged 16-17	<b>4.0%</b>	+	Low	2020/21 Q1	5.5%	3.4% (2018/19 Q4)	-	-
Numbers exiting substance misuse treatment in a planned manner	<b>94%</b>	-	High	2019/20 Q4	95%	97% (2018/19)	80% (2018/19)	-
Numbers of individual children and young people engaged in positive activities delivered by the Young People's Service (cumulative)	<b>743</b>	-	High	2020/21 Q1	16,314	16,338 (2018/19)	-	-
Numbers of children and young people accessing Outdoor and Environmental Education (cumulative)	<b>617</b>	-	High	2020/21 Q1	28,190	29,056 (2018/19)	-	-
Average Strengths and Difficulties Question (SDQ) Score per LAC (for at least 12 months) (L) (Maximum possible score 40)	<b>15.2</b>	+	Low	2018/19	15.9	15.9 (2017/18)	14.2 (2018/19)	14.2 (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC (for at least 12 months) with up to date immunisations (L) (589/592)	<b>99.0%</b>	+	High	2018/19	99%	98.9% (2017/18)	87% (2018/19)	85.2% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC (for at least 12 months) who have had their teeth checked by a dentist (L) (460/592)	<b>78.0%</b>	-	High	2018/19	82%	82% (2017/18)	85% (2018/19)	80.1% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC (for at least 12 months) who have had their annual health assessment (L) (581/592)	<b>98.0%</b>	+	High	2018/19	94%	93.9% (2017/18)	90% (2018/19)	88.7% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC (for at least 12 months & under 5) whose development assessments are up to date (46/46)	<b>100.0%</b>	=	High	2018/19	100%	100% (2017/18)	88% (2018/19)	95.3% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC (for at least 12 months) identified as having a substance misuse problem (L) (27/592)	<b>5.0%</b>	=	Low	2018/19	5%	5.0% (2017/18)	4% (2018/19)	3.0% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC (for at least 12 months) convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand (L) (0/592)	<b>0.0%</b>	=	Low	2018/19	0.0%	0.0% (2017/18)	3% (2018/19)	3.4% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC achieving expected standard at KS1 in Reading (L) (9/15)	<b>60.0%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	31.3%	31.3% (2017/18)	52.0% (2018/19)	-
Percentage of LAC achieving expected standard at KS1 in Writing (L) (7/15)	<b>46.7%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	25.0%	25.0% (2017/18)	43.0% (2018/19)	-
Percentage of LAC achieving expected standard at KS1 in Maths (L) (9/15)	<b>60.0%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	37.5%	37.5% (2017/18)	49.0% (2018/19)	-
Percentage of LAC achieving expected standard at KS2 in Reading (L) (17/33)	<b>51.5%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	46.9%	46.9% (2017/18)	49.0% (2018/19)	50.0% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC achieving expected standard at KS2 in Writing (L) (19/33)	<b>57.6%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	37.5%	37.5% (2017/18)	50.0% (2018/19)	46.0% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC achieving expected standard at KS2 in Maths (L) (13/33)	<b>39.4%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	37.5%	37.5% (2017/18)	51.0% (2018/19)	48.0% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC achieving 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths at KS4 (L) (8/71)	<b>11.3%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	6.8%	6.8% (2017/18)	7.3% (2018/19)	10.0% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC achieving 9-4 grades in GCSE English & maths at KS4 (L) (17/71)	<b>23.9%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	22.7%	22.7% (2017/18)	18.0% (2018/19)	21.3% (2018/19)

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Appendix 2 - Indicators that remain unchanged from previous report

Key Performance Indicator	Nottinghamshire					Comparator Data		
	Current Value	Best to be	Current Reporting Period	Previous Value	Previous Annual Performance	National Average	Statistical Neighbours	
Percentage of LAC classed as persistent absentees (L) (29/385)	<b>7.5%</b>	+	Low	2018/19 academic	8.9%	8.9% (2017/18)	10.9% (2018/19)	10.9% (2018/19)
Percentage of LAC permanently excluded (L) (0/365)	<b>0.0%</b>	=	Low	2017/18 academic	0.0%	0% (2016/17)	0.05% (2017/18)	-
Percentage of LAC with at least one fixed term exclusion (L) (38/365)	<b>10.4%</b>	+	Low	2017/18 academic	10.6%	10.6% (2016/17)	11.7% (2017/18)	11.0% (2017/18)
Number of primary schools in an Ofsted category (Inadequate)	<b>1</b>	+	Low	2019/20 Q4	2	n/a	-	-
Number of secondary schools in an Ofsted category (Inadequate)	<b>3</b>	-	Low	2019/20 Q4	2	n/a	-	-
Early years foundation stage attainment (Reaching a 'Good Level of Development' - at least expected in all early learning goals in all prime areas and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics)	<b>70.6%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	69.7%	69.7%	71.8% (2018/19)	72.0% (2018/19)
Attainment gap for a good level of development in EYFSP between pupils taking free school meals and the rest	<b>23.0%</b>	-	Low	2018/19 academic	22.7%	22.7%	18.5% (2018/19)	-
Pupils achieving at least the expected standard in reading, writing & mathematics at age 11	<b>64.7%</b>	=	High	2018/19 academic	64.7%	64.7%	65% (2018/19)	64.7% (2018/19)
Attainment gap at age 11 between pupils taking free school meals and the rest (FSM during past six years)	<b>22.6%</b>	=	Low	2018/19 academic	22.6%	22.6%	19.0% (2018/19)	-
Achievement of 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths	<b>45.4%</b>	-	High	2018/19 academic	45.6%	45.6%	43.4% (2018/19)	42.9% (2018/19)
Achievement of 9-4 grades in GCSE English & maths	<b>67.6%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	66.6%	66.6%	64.9% (2018/19)	65.1% (2018/19)
Attainment gap at age 16 between pupils taking free school meals and the rest (FSM during past six years) 9-5 grades in GCSE English & maths	<b>26.4%</b>	+	Low	2018/19 academic	28.2%	28.2%	24.5% (2018/19p)	-
Attainment gap at age 16 between pupils taking free school meals and the rest (FSM during past six years) 9-4 grades in GCSE English & maths	<b>26.7%</b>	+	Low	2018/19 academic	28.0%	28.0%	26.3% (2018/19p)	-
Percentage of A level entries at A*-B grades	<b>49.5%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	49.3%	49.3%	48.4% (2018/19)	-
Percentage of A level entries at A*-E grades	<b>98.2%</b>	-	High	2018/19 academic	98.5%	98.5%	97.2% (2018/19)	-
Percentage of young people qualified to Level 3 (2 passes at A-Level or equivalent) by age 19	<b>52.0%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	51.9%	51.9% (2017/18)	56.9% (2018/19)	55.4% (2018/19)
Percentage of young people who have not attained a Level 2 qualification in English & maths at age 16 who go on to attain Level 2 or higher in both by the end of the academic year in which they turn 19	<b>24.7%</b>	+	High	2018/19 academic	23.8%	23.8% (2017/18)	28.7% (2018/19)	27.4% (2018/19)
Percentage of overall absence in primary, secondary and special schools	<b>4.4%</b>	+	Low	2018/19 academic	4.5%	4.5% (2017/18)	4.7% (2018/19)	4.7% (2018/19)
Rate of permanent exclusions from school (primary, secondary and special schools)	<b>0.04%</b>	=	Low	2018/19 academic	0.04%	0.04% (2017/18)	0.10% (2018/19)	0.10% (2018/19)
Percentage of two year olds taking up their free entitlement	<b>68.4%</b>	-	High	Summer Term 2020	74.3%	74.3% (Summer 2019)	-	-
Percentage of children aged 0-4 living in low income areas registered with children's centres (snapshot)	<b>100.0%</b>	=	High	2018/19 Q1	100.0%	100% (2017/18 Q4)	-	-
Percentage of children aged 0-4 living in low income areas seen at children's centres (cumulative)	<b>75.5%</b>	+	High	2018/19 Q1	72.4%	75.5% (2017/18 Q4)	-	-
Primary schools judged by Ofsted as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour	<b>93.4%</b>	+	High	As at Sept 2015	92.7%	n/a	94.3% (Sept 2015)	94.1% (Sept 2015)
Secondary schools judged by Ofsted as having good/outstanding standards of behaviour	<b>79.1%</b>	-	High	As at Sept 2015	83.3%	n/a	85.1% (Sept 2015)	84.2% (Sept 2015)
Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks, incl. mixed feeding methods (Nottinghamshire NHS)	<b>43.4%</b>	=	High	2019/20 Q3	43.4%	41.9% (2018/19)	46.2% (2018/19)	45.7% (2018/19)

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**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 9**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS**

### **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION - UPDATE**

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

1. The report provides the fifth six-monthly report on electively home educated (EHE) pupils to enable Committee to monitor trends in numbers and reasons for elective home education.
2. The report seeks approval to continue to report to the Committee on a six-monthly basis.

#### **Information**

3. This report was due to be presented to Committee in June but was delayed due to Covid-19. The reporting period since the previous update, presented on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019, is therefore 10 months.
4. Parents' legal rights and duties are set out in the Education Act 1996. The parent of every child of compulsory school age must ensure that he/she receives an efficient, full-time education, suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs that he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A parent/carer has the legal right to withdraw a child from school by delivering notification of that fact to the school. The school then has a duty to notify the local authority (LA) and to remove the child's name from the school register. The local authority registers the child as EHE, and parents/carers can choose whether to engage with support offered by the LA. From that point, a child acquires elective home educated status and the parents/carers are elective home educators. The parent/carer then becomes completely responsible for the costs, provision and management and delivery of the education of that child, while the LA ceases involvement. There are no curricular or other requirements incumbent on elective home educators, who are free from any educational regulation.
5. All parents registered as elective home educators in Nottinghamshire are offered at a minimum yearly EHE adviser visits with the intention of offering support to home educators in continuing to fulfil their responsibilities as specified by the Education Act 1996. During the current pandemic visits are being conducted virtually unless a specific need for a face to face visit is identified. If no engagement is chosen, parents/carers are under no legal obligation to see an EHE adviser to allow their educational provision to be monitored or to provide written reports of their provision. The LA fulfils its duty to ensure that all children of

compulsory school age in its area are being suitably educated and to act if it appears that any child is not receiving such an education through well-established working practices, as described in the Council's Elective Home Education Policy endorsed by the Children and Young People's Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and approved at Policy Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020. These are generally very well received because they have been influenced by the views of electively home educating families in Nottinghamshire. Parents/carers retain the right to apply for their child to return to a mainstream school whilst they are of statutory school age and can be reconnected to the LA and other services should they wish to cease elective home education, where there is evidence of a safeguarding concern or education is deemed to be unsuitable.

6. The EHE team of associate advisers now stands at 15 advisers. The Council's procurement process enables new applicants to be approved, ensuring that the team's capacity is sustainable. The Council's EHE associate adviser team meets termly with the EHE Senior Practitioner and Fair Access Team Manager. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that all EHE advisers access relevant training to fulfil their role effectively, in line with the Council's policies and procedures, and current legislation and guidance; this training includes and prioritises safeguarding. Support and supervision is also available to all advisers.
7. In Nottinghamshire, 898 children were registered as EHE on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, an increase of 81 since 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019. Of these 898 children, 633 were receiving EHE adviser visits, while parents/carers of 265 children refused Local Authority involvement. It should be noted that there is an unknown number of parents who have always electively home educated and never enrolled their child/ren on a school roll. These children are not registered with the LA.
8. The dashboard for EHE (attached to this report as **Appendix 1**) identifies groups of electively home educated children and the reasons behind the parental decision to become EHE as at 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020. Information from the dashboard is used to inform decisions regarding the operation of the EHE team and identify areas of possible concern in relation to EHE registrations in order that they can be explored appropriately by LA officers.
9. In stark contrast to previous EHE update reports to this Committee, it can be seen from the data below that the increase in EHE registrations is impacted more significantly by an increase in primary registrations of 52, representing an increase of 21%, as opposed to secondary registrations totalling 29, representing a 5.3% increase.

<b>Registered EHE pupils: October 2019 – October 2020</b>				
<b>Secondary school</b>		<b>Oct 2019</b>	<b>Oct 2020</b>	<b>difference</b>
Key Stage 4	<b>Y11</b>	181	162	<b>-19</b>
KS4	<b>Y10</b>	120	154	<b>+34</b>
<i>Total KS4</i>		<i>301</i>	<i>316</i>	<b>+15</b>
KS3	<b>Y9</b>	121	118	<b>-3</b>
KS3	<b>Y8</b>	81	92	<b>+11</b>
KS3	<b>Y7</b>	64	70	<b>+6</b>
<i>Total KS3</i>		<i>266</i>	<i>280</i>	<b>+14</b>
<i>Total secondary</i>		<i>567</i>	<i>596</i>	<b>+29</b>
<b>Primary school</b>				
KS2	<b>Y6</b>	50	59	<b>+9</b>

<b>Registered EHE pupils: October 2019 – October 2020</b>				
KS2	<b>Y5</b>	45	63	<b>+18</b>
KS2	<b>Y4</b>	52	54	<b>+2</b>
KS2	<b>Y3</b>	45	55	<b>+10</b>
<i>Total KS2</i>		192	231	<b>+39</b>
KS1	<b>Y2</b>	38	36	<b>-2</b>
KS1	<b>Y1</b>	17	32	<b>+15</b>
FS2	<b>YR</b>	3	3	<b>0</b>
<i>Total KS1/FS2</i>		58	71	<b>+13</b>
<i>Total primary</i>		250	302	<b>+52</b>
<i>Total primary + secondary</i>		817	898	<b>81</b>

10. There has been a noticeable increase in formal requests for EHE during the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 compared with the same time period for 2019, as summarised below:

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Formal EHE requests made</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% increase</b>
1 August - 31 August	8	14	75
1 September - 30 September	94	223	137
Total between 1 August - 30 September	102	237	132

11. The sharp rise in EHE requests recorded at the start of the Autumn term and the shift in pattern to a higher rise in registrations in the primary phase can be linked directly to the timing of the current Covid-19 pandemic. A similar increase in requests and registrations is being reported by several LAs. Many families are reporting the reason for choosing EHE as anxiety regarding the pandemic and, more worryingly, a number report it as a temporary measure pending a future return to school. In these situations, children are facing a disrupted learning journey as parents/ carers who see home education as a short-term solution may, following a period of learning away from a school environment, face difficulties re-enrolling their child at a school of choice in the future if that school is over subscribed. Work is being undertaken to more accurately capture data to assess the true impact of the pandemic on EHE registrations and this will be available at the next update provided to the Committee. In response to the rise in referrals the EHE process has been streamlined to increase capacity and ensure services can be delivered within the agreed budget and the adviser team has been briefed on appropriate responses to parents/ carers considering EHE at this time.
12. If the current pattern of registrations continues then it is anticipated that the figure for children home educated in Nottinghamshire could reach 1,000 by the end of the Autumn term. Short term this creates pressure on the efficient operation of the EHE team in responding to an unusual volume of deregistrations from school and informal parental enquiries. It follows that children being registered in the primary phase will either remain EHE throughout their school career or require a return to school at a point whilst they are of statutory school age. Long term it is possible that this will lead to additional pressure on the EHE team, as the number of registrations carried forward from year to year remains

high, or pressure on the School Admission and Fair Access Teams as an increased number of children require a school place through the In-Year process.

13. The patterns of age at which children become EHE display sustained features. There is a spike at age 5/6 years, and numbers then dip and there is a steady increase through the primary phase. Registrations by age spike again at age 11 years, as children enter secondary phase, with a continued rise in registrations to age 15 years (Year 11). It remains a concern that over a third of Nottinghamshire's EHE registrations (316) are for children in Key Stage 4 as many of these children do not access nationally recognised qualifications in the same way as children registered at a school, increasing the risk of them becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) post 16. EHE advisers were briefed in October 2020 on the importance of supporting parents/carers to understand timelines involved in the examination process and where and how children registered as EHE can sit exams.
14. In response to the concerning rise in EHE withdrawals headteachers are now required to provide more detailed information on children leaving a school roll, with the expectation that a meeting with parents and the student will have taken place, at which the reasons for electing to home educate are thoroughly discussed. All information provided to schools and parents has been updated in light of the current pandemic to provide additional key information.
15. Of the 898 children registered EHE in Nottinghamshire on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, slightly more were female than male. 665 EHE children were White British and 63 were of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller ethnicity, with the remainder being either from other ethnic groups or unknown. 5 children were on a Child Protection Plan and 22 had Child in Need status. There is one Looked After Child reflected on the EHE dashboard and this is a child who was adopted following a period of LAC. For these children the Senior Practitioner for EHE is responsible for closer monitoring and review of the suitability of their EHE provision. 11 children had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) indicating a significant level of identified Special Educational Need (SEN).
16. Reasons for withdrawal from school to home educate as stated by the parent or the school at the time of withdrawal were:
  - 15 - school phobic or refuser
  - 12 - response to legal attendance proceedings or prosecution
  - 35 - bullying at or around school
  - 51 - dissatisfaction or conflict with school
  - 342 - unknown reasons
  - 57 - emotional reasons, e.g. anxiety and mental health issues
  - 386 - preferred method – i.e. parental choice.
17. In light of reported EHE registrations as a result of the current pandemic, work is being undertaken to capture data for withdrawals directly related to Covid-19 and this will be available to the Committee in the next update report.
18. The number of registrations for secondary age students rises by age, reaching a peak of 162 students registered in Year 11 during the period 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020. Parents or carers of children withdrawn particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9 often report

'lack of understanding' of a school in meeting their child's Special Educational Needs as the reason for EHE. Many of these children are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Anxiety and mental health issues are increasingly described as factors in the decision to EHE, with 'bullying' and associated low attendance and behavioural issues less often cited. Safeguarding concerns, often within a family or social context of domestic violence, addiction, adult mental health needs and sexualised behaviour, are more prominent as children advance through their early and mid-teens. Young people displaying signs of disengagement from an academic, as opposed to a vocational, education sometimes refuse to attend school. A large proportion of secondary aged EHE children will not return to school if they are withdrawn after the age of 12 years. Where there is evidence that schools encourage or persuade parents/carers, unlawfully, to remove a child to home educate this is challenged by the EHE team, whenever the team becomes aware. In such circumstances, senior officers intervene directly with schools to ensure that such children are not unlawfully removed from roll.

19. In response to the patterns of registration described above, specific training is provided to the EHE adviser team from the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children team, in addition to the statutory safeguarding training and specialist knowledge already available within the team.
20. A final impetus towards EHE appears in the final years of secondary education. Here, as well as the causal factors above, an academic, GCSE-based curriculum is often described by parents/carers and young people themselves as too 'hard', 'rigorous' and 'demanding' as the final intensity of the exam year is reached. Anxiety and other mental health issues also appear to be key factors here. Elective home education is sometimes chosen as a solution and some parents then take up the offer from FE colleges in Nottingham, Mansfield and Worksop of part-time, pre-16 courses for home educated students. Progress and attendance on these courses is monitored by the Senior Practitioner for EHE in conjunction with the relevant staff from each college. It is usually the case that when these courses are not successful for students the EHE is then felt to be unsuitable and many return to education with a package of alternative provision provided through the LA's Educated Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) arrangements.
21. Most EHE students go on to further education, training and/or employment and those students who are known to have no post-16 destination are referred to the NEET Team.
22. Nationally, EHE is a high-profile issue and there is widespread concern about the rapid rise in the numbers of children being home educated, schools off-rolling children unlawfully, the potential and actual safeguarding risks to these children and young people and the quality of the education being provided. The DfE published updated non-statutory guidance for local authorities and for parents (April 2019) as detailed in a previous report to Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019. As a result of this, the EHE Team has revised some of its processes to ensure a more rapid follow-up where concerns exist about the suitability of EHE, and to require a more detailed response from parents who refuse adviser visits regarding the programmes of education they are providing. A revised EHE Policy was endorsed by the Children and Young People's Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and approved by Policy Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020, and this reflects the April 2019 guidance and makes clear Nottinghamshire's approach to working with parents/ carers who choose to home educate.

23. The Council's EHE process is regularly reviewed, considering updates to national guidance and practice learning. Changes to process have been implemented in light of the recommendations of two child safeguarding practice reviews published in May 2020 and September 2020, where the children at the centre of the review had been known either historically or currently to Nottinghamshire's EHE team. Specifically, information is gathered about children where parents/ carers see EHE as a temporary solution pending gaining a place at a specific school. Training has been provided to advisers to be alert in these situations and to give realistic advice and guidance in order to support decisions being made in order to further safeguard the wellbeing of the children impacted. Schools are crucially now required to provide on the initial information more specific detail about safeguarding concerns they may hold that have not met threshold for intervention from Children's Social Care. In cases where it becomes apparent that information has been omitted this is followed up and challenged by LA officers. Advice is given to parents who register as home educators to notify their GP and any other Health Professionals involved with their child and the EHE initial visit and recording form has been further amended to reflect strengths and needs relating to children's' wellbeing as well as educational progress. Although there is no legal basis on which the EHE team can insist on seeing a child, children's views are always sought as a central part of the EHE process and where contact is refused by parents/ carers this is recorded and raised as a concern.
24. Through a period that has seen increased restrictions and altered ways of working the EHE team has continued to offer a service to families in Nottinghamshire. EHE Adviser reports in the financial year 2020/2021 to date (1<sup>st</sup> April to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020) show that there have been 312 adviser visits to children registered as EHE. 193 of these visits had a satisfactory outcome with EHE being deemed suitable. In 22 cases, the education was deemed to be unsuitable, requiring LA action and a return to school through the Fair Access Protocol. Due to the closure of schools as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic intervention visits and meetings with school have not taken place as they would usually have done, however, these have been requested since September where it has become apparent that deregistration from school may not be in the best interests of the child. In addition, associate advisers attended a total of 62 meetings. These include Child Protection and Children in Need meetings, meetings with the Integrated Children's Disability Service for young people being assessed for an Education, Health and Care Plan, and meetings to facilitate a return to school for vulnerable children.
25. In line with DfE guidance 'Elective home education; Departmental guidance for local authorities', April 2019, 246 informal enquiries about the provision of home education were made in July 2020 to parents/carers who were not in receipt of adviser visits at that time. The initial request was followed up where information was not provided. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 43 reports remained outstanding and work has started with the Council's Family Service to review the individual circumstances of these children and consider enforcement proceedings in cases where it is judged that a return to school is needed as no evidence has been provided of a suitable education.
26. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, there were 445 Nottinghamshire students, aged between 5 and 16 years, on roll at a school who had at some point previously been registered as electively home educated. On the same date, 26 Nottinghamshire students who had previously been registered as electively home educated were having provision made through the Council's Educated Otherwise Than At School arrangements.

27. Members have consistently raised concerns about the lack of legislation around EHE and have repeatedly raised these concerns with the relevant Secretary of State for Education over the recent past. At this time, the Government has requested a 'Call for Evidence' which was submitted on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020. A specific line of enquiry was around whether a statutory register of EHE pupils should be created and maintained by local authorities. In addition, the call for evidence requested views around inspection of EHE provision and the subsequent inspection of local authority oversight. The Council's submission strongly supported these proposals also stating that local authorities would require to be funded appropriately for these additional statutory duties.
28. On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018, the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee wrote to the then Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds raising concerns about the lack of regulation and legislation around EHE which was replied to by Lord Agnew (17<sup>th</sup> June 2018) who suggested that the Government needed to better understand why parents were opting for EHE. On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the Chairman of Nottinghamshire's Children and Young People's Committee wrote to Nottinghamshire's MPs raising concerns about the lack of regulation within EHE, formally requesting support for the mandatory registration of all EHE families.
29. Following a Practice Review the chair of the Strategic Leadership Group for the NSCP, Corporate Director, Colin Pettigrew, formally wrote to the Department for Education (DfE) on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to raise concerns around the lack of regulation within Elective Home Education and requested a review of the national guidance to ensure a sharper focus on the safeguarding of children. A response was received from the DfE on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020 stating that the DfE was continuing to review EHE through discussions across government with a view of identifying areas for improvement.
30. In addition, the Council has contributed to a further call for evidence by the Association of Directors of Children's Services. This focussed mainly on the impact of the Pandemic but also confirmed a need for national legislation, registration and inspection of EHE provision. This was submitted on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.

### **Other Options Considered**

31. The Council remains statutorily responsible for ensuring that all children and young people of statutory school age access full-time education. Therefore, the Children Missing Education Strategy approved by the Policy Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 continues to be implemented to ensure that every school aged child should be on a school roll, with the exception of those who are electively home educated. No other options have been considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

32. Members will wish to be assured that the Council's statutory duty to ensure that all children and young people of statutory school age are in receipt of full-time education is being fulfilled.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

33. 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**

34. The 2020/21 LA budget for EHE is £251,810 and will be sufficient to cover the cost of the service with the service delivery revision that has been implemented as a result of the unexpected increase in registrations.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the Committee requests a further six-monthly report on Elective Home Education and that future updates are made in April and October in order that the updates cover the period of the first half and entire academic year.

**Marion Clay**

**Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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

Sarah Whitby

Fair Access Team Manager

T: 0115 9773946

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## **Constitutional Comments (ELP 13/11/20)**

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

## **Financial Comments (SAS 16/11/20)**

36. The 2020/21 LA budget for EHE is £251,810 and will be sufficient to cover the cost of the service with the service delivery revision that has been implemented as a result of the unexpected increase in registrations.

37. 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.

Serious case review: Child C: a 14 year old boy, Published  
<https://library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchTerm0=C8291>

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, Child RN19, Published  
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/2896597/ncsprn19.pdf>

Education Act 1996, Published  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

Nottinghamshire County Council's Elective Home Education Policy, February 2020

Nottinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Strategy, February 2020

Elective home education; Departmental guidance for local authorities, April 2019, Published  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/791527/Elective\\_home\\_education\\_guidance\\_for\\_LAv2.0.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791527/Elective_home_education_guidance_for_LAv2.0.pdf)

[Elective Home Education update – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 16th December 2019](#)

[Elective Home Education update – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17th June 2019](#)

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

All.

C1412

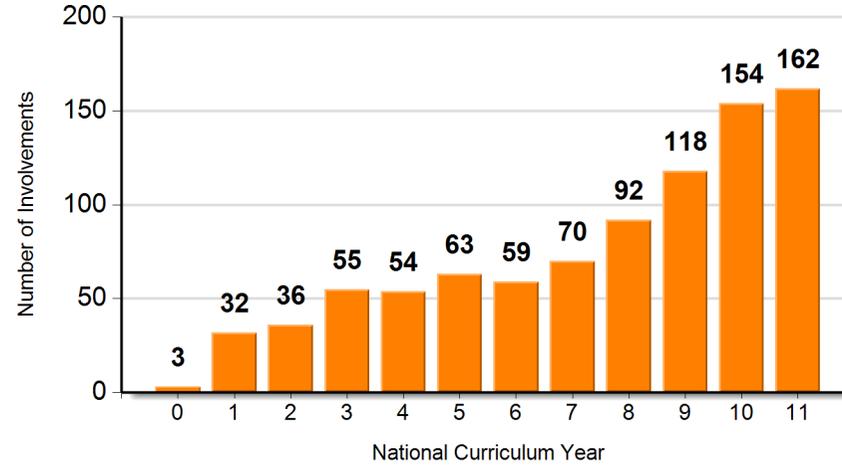


**Children with Current Active Elective Home Education Involvements**

**Data Quality Checks:**

<b><u>Current Number of Active EHE Involvements</u></b>	<b><u>898</u></b>
Number of EHE Children who are Looked After	1
Number of EHE Children who are on a Child Protection Plan	5
Number of EHE Children who are on a Child in Need Plan	22

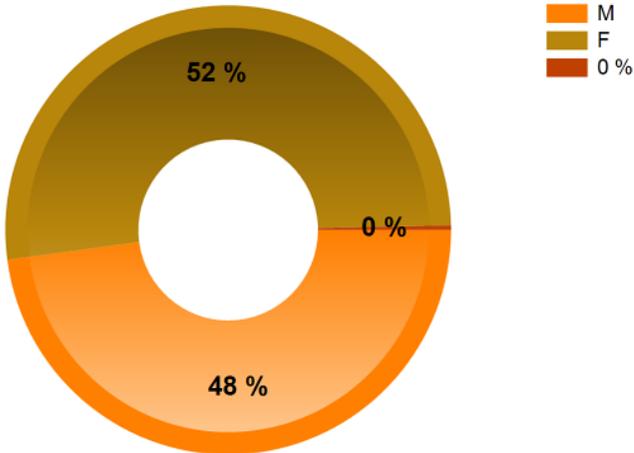
**Number of EHE Children by National Curriculum Year (NCY)**



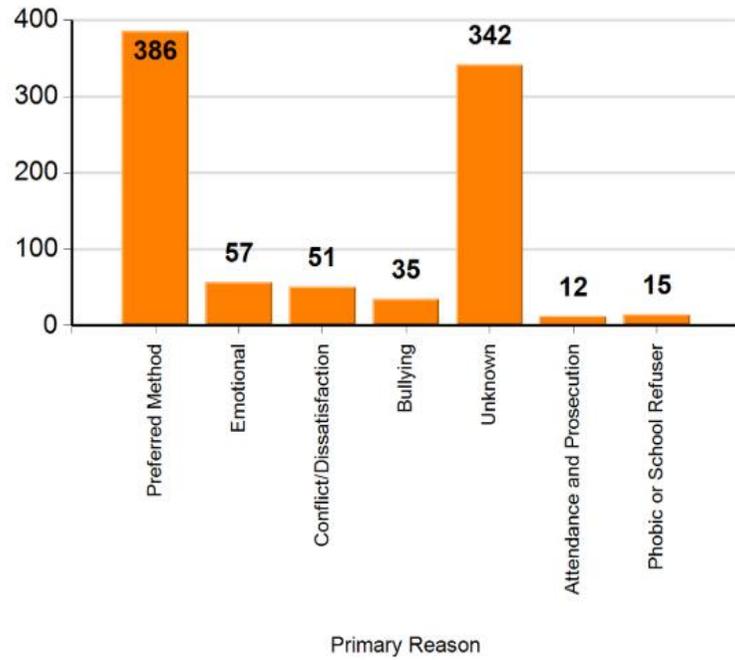
# ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION DASHBOARD



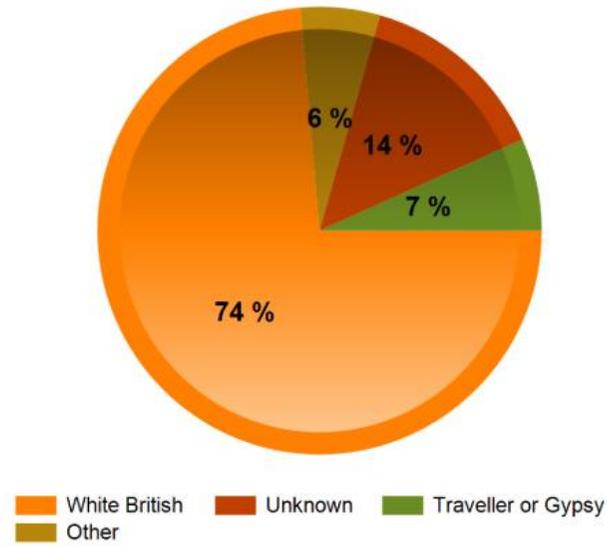
Percentage of EHE Children by Gender



Number of EHE Children by Reason for Involvement

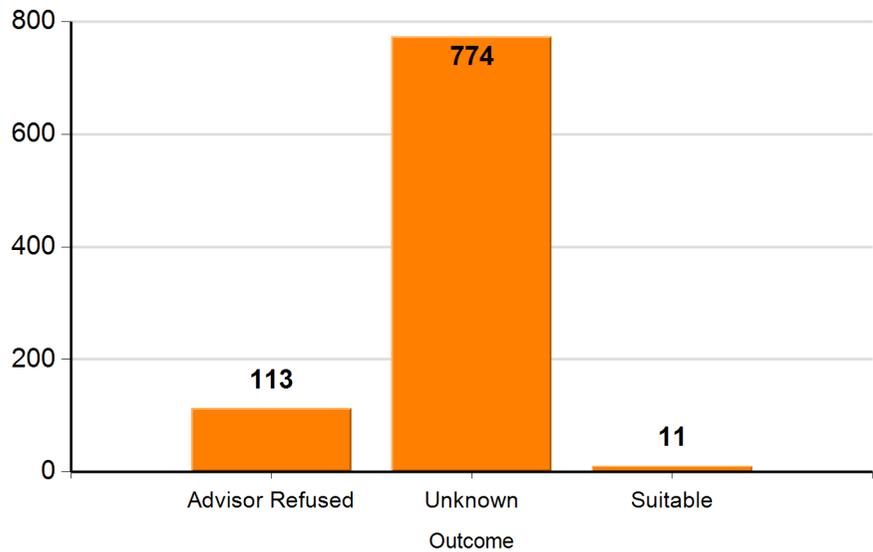


Percentage of EHE Children by Ethnicity

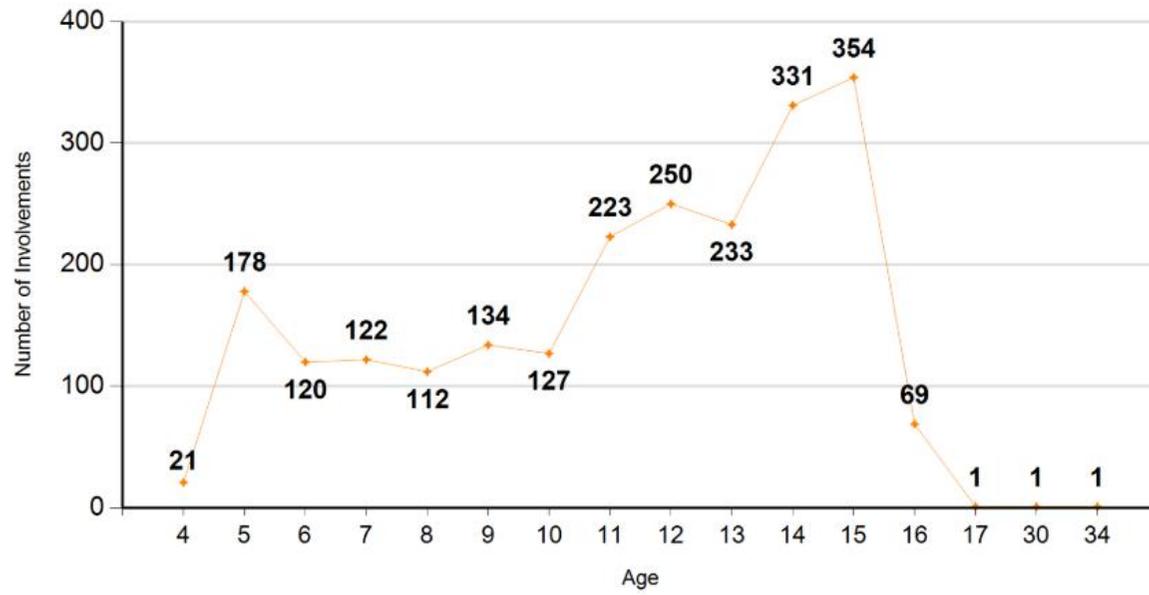


Number of Elective Home Education Involvements Over the Last Five Academic Years

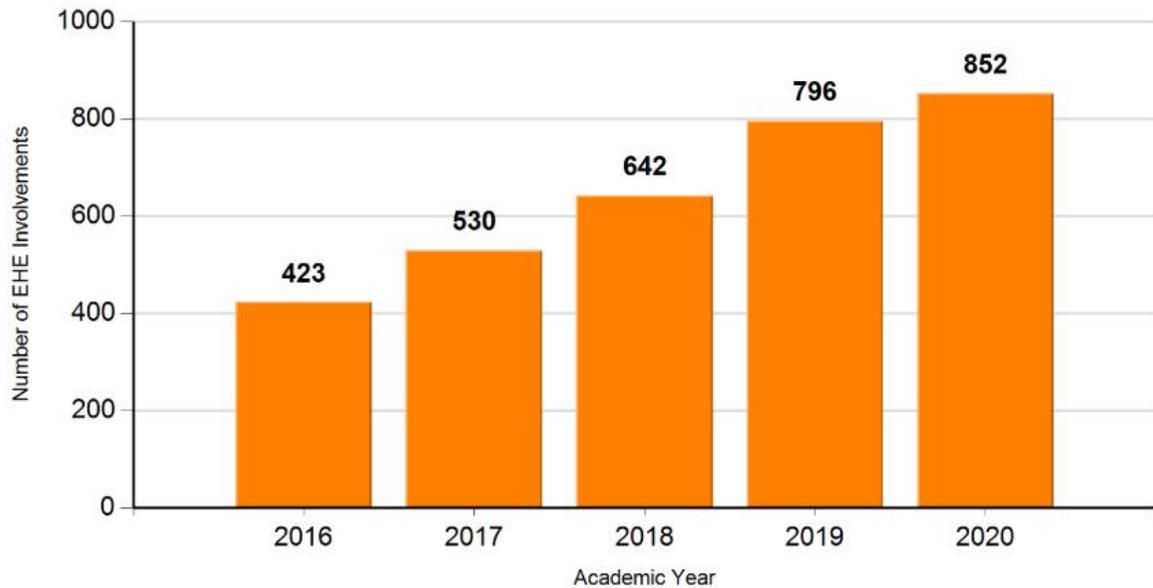
**Number of EHE Children by Outcome of Involvement**



Child's Age at which EHE Involvement Commenced



**Number of EHE Involvements in the last 5 years on the 1st September**



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 10**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND  
SKILLS**

**MANNERS SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, AVERHAM, NEWARK – OUTCOME  
OF INITIAL CONSULTATION**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Committee of the responses received to the stage one consultation seeking views on the future of Manners Sutton Primary School.
2. To agree the proposal and timeline for the formal consultation regarding the future of Manners Sutton Primary School.

**Information**

3. Manners Sutton Primary School is a small school with a published admission number of eight serving the village of Averham in the Newark District. The school is maintained by Nottinghamshire County Council. The last Ofsted inspection of the school (January 2018) rated the school as 'good'.
4. In recent years there have been significant concerns about declining pupil numbers at Manners Sutton Primary School. Over the recent past, this small rural school has experienced a decline in pupil numbers. At the time of the most recent Ofsted inspection in January 2018, 34 pupils were on the school's roll. By the time of the last statutory school census, undertaken by the school in January 2020, there were 23 pupils on roll.
5. In September 2020 Nottinghamshire County Council was informed by the Headteacher of Manners Sutton Primary School that the school had opened for the 2020/21 academic year with zero pupils on roll.
6. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020, the Children and Young People's Committee approved the undertaking of an initial statutory consultation to explore options for Manners Sutton Primary School including possible closure.
7. The consultation period opened on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
8. During the consultation period four responses were received. Three recommended the closure of the Manners Sutton Primary School and one recommended that the school

amalgamate with another school. Further details of the consultation responses can be seen at **Appendix 1**.

### **Other Options Considered**

9. The stage one consultation asks interested parties to state their preference on which of the following options should be adopted for the future of Manners Sutton Primary School:
- Continue with no change
  - Academisation
  - Federation
  - Amalgamation
  - Closure.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

10. Following analysis of the responses received to the stage one consultation and due to serious concerns of officers regarding the viability of Manners Sutton Primary School in the future, it is recommended that the Council consults on closing Manners Sutton Primary School from September 2021. The published timeline is attached as **Appendix 2**.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

11. 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**

12. 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**

13. The following posts will potentially be impacted by the proposed closure:
- 1 Assistant Head Teacher
  - 1 Administrator
  - 2 Teaching Assistant
  - 1 Mid-day Supervisor
  - 1 Supply Support Assistant.
14. Work is being undertaken with the Governing Body to address the various contractual issues which will arise if the school closes using the existing agreed policies and procedures

around redundancy and redeployment with appropriate consultation and involving the recognised trade unions.

### **Implications for Service Users**

15. There are currently no pupils on roll at Manners Sutton Primary School.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That Committee gives approval for a formal consultation on the closure of Manners Sutton Primary School to begin in January 2021, as detailed in **Appendix 2**.

**Marion Clay**  
**Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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

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### **Constitutional Comments (AK 13/11/20)**

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

### **Financial Comments (SAS 17/11/20)**

17. 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.

### **HR Comments (AW 16/11/20)**

18. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report and discussions have already been held with the staff affected as part of the current consultation process. Appropriate consultation will continue with the staff and recognised trade unions in line with the agreed redundancy and redeployment 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.

[Manners Sutton Primary School, Averham, Newark – proposed consultation regarding closure – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 21st September 2020](#)

Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Opening and closing maintained schools; Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers', November 2019

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

Farndon and Trent Division

Councillor Sue Saddington

C1409

**Analysis of responses to stage one consultation**

<b>Response Received From</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Nottinghamshire School Headteacher	Closure
Nottinghamshire School Headteacher	Closure
Anonymous	Closure
Averham Resident	Amalgamation



**Prescribed Stages and proposed timeline for the consultation process to consider the future of Manners Sutton Primary School**

Stage one: Pre-publication consultation	5th October 2020 - 15 November 2020	This is the start of the process when the Local Authority provides information about what is being proposed and gathers the views of interested parties to help them develop the proposals.
Stage two: Publication	4th January 2021	A legal notice is published in the local paper (usually the Newark Advertiser) and on the Council website which sets out brief details of the proposal and where more information can be found. It also gives details of where objections and comments can be sent and the closing date for these. It marks the start of the representation period or formal consultation.
Stage three: Representation	4th January 2021 - 31 January 2021	This is the formal consultation stage. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the LA, to be taken into account by the decision-maker.
Stage four: Decision	Spring 2021	All the objections and comments gathered during the representation period are provided to the decision maker (Local Authority Elected Members) to enable them to make the final decision. A statutory notice outlining the decision will be published.
Stage five: Implementation	Summer 2021	The decision made in stage four is implemented.



30<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Agenda Item: 11

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS**

### **OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON CLOSURE OF THE RESIDENTIAL UNIT AT FOUNTAINDALE SPECIAL SCHOOL**

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

1. This report seeks the Committee's approval to close the residential unit at Fountainsdale Special School.

#### **Information**

2. Members of the Children and Young People's Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> September approved a statutory consultation on the proposed closure of the residential unit at Fountainsdale Special School.
3. The consultation process 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. **Appendix 1** provides an outline of the consultation process.
4. Fountainsdale Special School is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council and has provision for physically disabled and sensory-impaired children and young people aged from 3 to 18 years. There are 81 pupils on roll at the school.
5. The school has a small residential unit which is adapted to meet the physical needs of children and young people. Residential care is provided during term time for pupils aged 14 to 18 years on a rota. The primary focus of this curriculum offer is to promote independence and improve social skills of the young people accessing the residential unit.
6. The residential unit is used two nights (Monday and Tuesday) for up to four young people per night for a period of 10 weeks. Over the school year the potential is for 24 students to access the unit for one night over 10 weeks.
7. Only children and young people attending Fountainsdale Special School can access the residential unit. This is the only Special School in Nottinghamshire which has any residential provision.
8. The school receives an annual budget from the High Needs Block of £116,000 to support the provision. The cost for each place per young person for a 10-night stay is £4,833.

9. A recent Ofsted inspection (February 2020) of the residential unit 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.
10. Following the Ofsted Inspection, the interim Executive Headteacher who was put into place to lead the urgent response to the school's short comings recommended that the unit should be temporarily closed pending wider discussions with the County Council. The unit therefore effectively closed to Fountaindale pupils on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
11. The residential unit's provision is not recorded in the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) of the current cohort of pupils. This is because all Fountaindale Special School pupils living in Nottinghamshire can access statutory short breaks through the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Local Offer, if they meet the minimum criteria.
12. The recommendation therefore is that the residential unit at Fountaindale School should be permanently closed with the option of expanding day place provision for pupils with SEND and whose EHCP recommends a specialist placement. In Nottinghamshire there is currently pressure on specialist places, and once the school is judged by Ofsted to be good, it will be possible to apply to the DfE to increase the school's Published Admissions Number (PAN).

### **Consultation Process and Outcomes**

13. The consultation on the proposed closure of the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School ran between 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.
14. A Public Notice setting out the Statutory Proposal and the details of how to respond was published in the Nottingham Evening Post on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020. Other local authorities with children and young people attending Fountaindale Special School were notified of the proposal and consultation.
15. All parents and carers of children and young people attending Fountaindale Special School, school staff and governors were sent a copy of the Statutory Proposal and details of how to respond to the consultation.
16. A public meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October. The meeting was attended by 10 people. comprised of three parents, one governor and six school staff.
17. Meetings were also held with affected staff and their trade union representatives, and the school's Governing Body.

18. A summary of the feedback from the consultation can be found in **Appendix 2**. A total of 81 responses were received to the consultation, and in addition further comments and questions were raised at the public meeting.
19. The feedback from respondents included the following key areas:
  - promoting self-help and independence
  - respite care for families
  - opportunity to spend time with school peers
  - lack of opportunities for young people with disabilities
  - value for money of the residential unit.

### **Other Options Considered**

20. Several other options were considered prior to the consultation. All of the options would have required additional funding from the High Needs Block budget which is currently under considerable pressure, due to increasing demand for specialist educational placements. The main two options would be:
  - to address the concerns of Ofsted and reopen the unit to young people from Fountaindale Special School
  - to address the concerns of Ofsted and reopen the unit to young people from all Nottinghamshire's Special Schools to ensure an equitable offer for all young people.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

21. It is acknowledged from the responses submitted to the consultation that the residential unit is valued by parents, carers and young people. The residential unit is primarily part of the School's curriculum offer, which is not available to young people in any other Nottinghamshire Special School. It should 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.
22. 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 SEND and providing respite care for their families. Short breaks also provide an opportunity for children and young people with SEND to meet peers and to form friendship groups.
23. The residential unit currently costs £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 SEND in Nottinghamshire. This budget was overspent by £1.002million last financial year and remains under considerable pressure as demand continues to increase.
24. The recommendation to permanently close the unit is because there is a greater need to increase day places for children and young people requiring specialist provision in Nottinghamshire.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

25. 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**

26. If following the consultation the County Council decides to close the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School there will be an annual saving to the High Needs Block (Dedicated Schools Grant) budget of £116,000. It is anticipated there will be a saving of at least £19,000 during 2020-2021.

## **Human Resources Implications**

27. All the residential staff are employed by Fountaindale Special School. There may be opportunities for redeployment within the school. Discussions have taken place with the recognised trade unions as part of the consultation process. The Human Resource Service will support the process of formal consultation with staff and the recognised trade unions, if the outcome of the consultation is to close the residential unit.

## **Implications for Service Users**

28. All Fountaindale pupils living in Nottinghamshire can access statutory short breaks through the SEND 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 SEND and providing respite care for their families.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That Committee approves the closure of the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School.

**Marion Clay**  
**Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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

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### **Constitutional Comments (CEH 16/11/20)**

29. The recommendation falls within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

30. If following the consultation the County Council decides to close the residential unit at Fountainsdale Special School there will be an annual saving to the High Needs Block (Dedicated Schools Grant) of £116,000. It is anticipated there will be a saving of at least £19,000 during 2020-2021.

### **HR Comments (AW 16/11/20)**

31. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. If the residential unit closes appropriate consultation will occur with the staff and recognised trade unions in line with the agreed redundancy and redeployment 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.

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.](#)

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

All.

C1403



**Proposed timescale for the statutory consultation on the closure of Fountaindale Special School's residential unit**

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Stage 4</b>
<b>Publication (Statutory proposal)</b>	<b>Formal consultation (four weeks minimum)</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
<b>21 September 2020</b>	<b>22 September to 3 November 2020</b>	<b>30 November 2020</b>	<b>1 January 2021</b>
<b>Children and Young People's Committee</b>	<b>Public meeting(s) / online questionnaire</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Committee</b>	<b>Communication of the decision of Members</b>

Prior to Stage 1 initial meetings with key stakeholders i.e. the school, the Governing Body and affected staff, will take place before the publication of the Children and Young People's Committee's report on 11 September 2020.

[Department for Education - Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers \(October 2018\) - Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#)





## Appendix 2 – 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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.



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 12**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES**

### **SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT AND 2021/22 SCHOOLS BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (SBIP)**

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

1. To provide a progress report to Committee on the successes of delivering the various programmes of investment that comprise the Schools Capital Programme.
2. To present the projects identified as priorities for the 2021/22 Schools Building Improvement Programme (SBIP) and to seek approval to progress the projects to the feasibility stage.

#### **Information**

3. The Council receives annual School Capital Grant from Government comprising a number of funding streams including the Basic Need Grant and the Schools Condition Allocation. The Council discharges its duties pertaining to these allocations and provides capital improvements through its Schools Capital Programme, consisting of discrete programmes of investment, predominantly:
  - School Places Programme
  - Schools Building Improvement Programme
  - Schools Access Initiative.

#### **School Places Programme**

4. The School Places Programme contributes to discharging the statutory duty of the Local Authority to provide sufficient school places. It is an on-going annual programme that delivers new schools and/or expansions to existing schools to coincide with the arrival of new cohorts of pupils from September.
5. The programme is funded via government grant (Basic Need Grant) which allocates funding to local authorities on an annual basis as a result of data provided to it about school capacities, the Published Admission Numbers (PAN) and the projected future demand for

places. The programme is supplemented by additional funding from s106 contributions in respect of those places arising from new housing developments.

6. Examples of recent completions of the School Places Programme are as follows:

- **Newark Orchard School Replacement.** The purpose of this project was to construct a 140 place special school on one site and taking account of the specific needs of the pupils attending. The building boasts a full range of spacious classrooms and specialist learning environments, including a Hub specifically for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and a hydrotherapy pool.
- **Rosecliffe Spencer Academy** new school. The purpose of this project was to construct a 135 place primary school with a 26 place nursery. As the data shows that this is an area of potential growth in the population, the school is capable of a future expansion to 420 places.
- **The Basic Need Expansion Programme** for 2019/20 has also had a number of successes, notably King Edwin Primary, Edwinstowe, where a classroom extension has been added in order to provide much needed additional learning space due to an old mobile classroom needing replacement. Lady Bay Primary now has a refurbished mobile classroom for their Foundation pupils, together with an improved outdoor learning environment. At Lambley Primary School the Council has delivered an extra modular classroom, due to an increase in pupil numbers in the area and this will provide an extra 56 places over the next seven years. This includes a hygiene suite with hoist for a pupil with particular needs who has recently started at the school.
- **Commissioning Monitoring Projects.** There have been a number of academies who require expansions in order to increase the number of pupil places they need to provide. Through Grant Funding Agreements some have successfully applied for grants from the County Council and the academies engage their own architects and building contractors to deliver the projects. Through Arc Partnership the Council then provides a monitoring role to ensure that what is provided is compliant and meets the necessary building regulations. Recently Carlton Academy has completed the building of 10 additional teaching spaces, toilet and changing facilities, along with specialist Technology areas. This was done to increase the PAN (Published Admission Number) of 230 Year 7 pupils. Carlton le Willows has recently completed the building of an Enhanced Provision Unit in the form of a single storey pavilion which takes advantage of the tranquil setting of its surroundings. Magnus C of E Academy's project has provided a full refurbishment spanning two floors of the Warburton building. This includes the creation of food technology teaching spaces.

### **Schools Access Initiative and CYPS Academy Access Initiative**

7. The Council's Schools Access Initiative (SAI) provides for adaptations to County Council maintained schools to ensure that pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) can access education alongside and equal to their non-disabled peers. It enables them to obtain skills and qualifications necessary to enter further education and the job market on an equal basis to their peers. It also ensures that the Council and schools

meet their legal duties under the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty. The funding for the SAI is top sliced from the Schools Condition Allocation.

8. The Council is required by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide adaptations to Academies where the pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); this is provided by the Council's Academies Access Initiative (AAI). For recent adaptations funding has been provided from the special schools grant allocation.
9. Over the last 12 months there have been 18 completed projects meeting the access needs of 70 children with SEND. These projects include:
  - **Southwell Minster:** This school has been adapted for two visually impaired pupils, one of whom has no vision. The scheme consists of tactile guidance routes, tactile warnings at the top and bottom of stairs and a blue tooth beacon guidance system that links to a mobile phone app.
  - **Lantern Lane Primary School.** This scheme was carried out for 34 pupils with conditions ranging from Autism, ADHD, SEMH to hearing impairments. The school was open plan and as such the teaching environment was very challenging for pupils with hearing impairments and sensory conditions as well as other pupils and staff. The scheme created separate acoustically treated classrooms and teaching spaces.
  - **Garibaldi School.** This project was to make the secondary school UV safe for a pupil with an extremely rare skin condition who gets skin cancer if their skin is exposed to UV light. The pupil is one of only a handful of people in the UK with this condition and has a rare version of the condition.
  - **Priestsic Primary School.** This project was to provide a hygiene suite for eight children with SEND. The only way this could be built was to demolish an old and inadequate portacabin staff room, which partially blocked a fire escape from the Hall. The new extension provided a hygiene suite, new staff room and removed the issue with the fire escape.

### **Schools Building Improvement Programme**

10. The County Council receives an annual Schools Condition Allocation from the DfE, provided for capital improvements for the maintained school estate.
11. The SBIP delivers improvements across several workstreams, focusing on Health & Safety and maintenance issues which are most likely to result in a school closure if not addressed. The workstreams are as follows:
  - **Boiler & Heating Pipework Replacement:** Replacement of boiler and or associated heating pipework. Pipework replacement predominantly affects Victorian and turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century sites where the ageing heating pipework would not withstand the operating pressure of modern boiler installations.
  - **Drainage Works:** to address issues causing flooding, standing water or blockage to the foul drains.

- **Roof Replacement:** where a roof is beyond economic repair or the state of repair can become a risk through the possibility of falling slates or could result in major infrastructure damage particularly from water ingress and leaks.
  - **Kitchen Ventilation improvements:** Building Regulations require increased levels of ventilation where kitchens are improved or replaced and gas appliances are changed. This programme will provide new mechanical ventilation installations where appropriate, although a move to replacement with electrical appliances is first considered, as where possible this removes the ventilation issues arising from the gas appliances.
  - **Compliance Matters:** Particularly in relation to fire safety and water quality. The work stream focuses predominantly on the upgrade and replacement of fire alarms systems, and plumbing works to engineer out risk and provide safer water systems.
  - **Safeguarding:** Some historic school sites lack modern security and access control systems which ensure the safety of pupils and staff. This programme aims to rectify any identified safeguarding concerns.
  - **Structural and building fabric Issues:** structural works required to maintain the integrity of the building envelope including windows and doors.
12. All construction projects for the 2020/21 programme, agreed at Policy Committee in July 2020, have now been raised and are programmed to be completed over the next 18 months, dependent on the complexity of the projects.
13. Over the last 12 months 26 projects have been successfully completed on site. Examples of recently completed projects are:
- **Lady Bay Primary Boiler Replacement** - the existing boiler was estimated to be at least 17 years old and nearing the end of the boiler's expected economic life and it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain appropriate parts for repairs. The project approach was to replace the existing boilers with a new more energy efficient boiler plant, incorporating condensing gas boiler and a new pressurisation unit, and thus providing a long-term benefit to the school in terms of reliability and cost saving.
  - **The Lanes Primary Structural works to Canopy** - it was discovered that the concrete and asbestos canopy at this school was degrading and if left unattended would become structurally unsafe. The project included removing the canopy, forming new gutters and renewing parts of the roof covering. This also gave the opportunity to inspect the concealed construction steels and repair or treat any metal that was corroded. The project was carried out over phases as to minimise disruption to the school and was completed in time for the new academic year.
  - **Derrymount School Heating Cabinets** - a heating replacement project has been completed at both the Lower and Upper buildings at Derrymount School. Due to the nature of the school, further thought was given to find a solution that not only improved the heating in school but also reduced to potential for injury to pupils or damage to the heating system. The following approach was adopted: new protected low surface

temperature radiators (LST) with internal thermostats designed specifically for application in SEN Schools have replaced the existing LST radiators which were accessible to the students. New ceiling grid fan convectors mounted in the ceiling in the halls have replaced floor mounted fan convectors reducing the potential for tamper opportunities and increasing the air distribution.

- **Bispham Drive Junior School Drainage** - a drainage project has been completed to alleviate flooding from the school. Water was backing up through the grates in the play areas which made the areas not suitable for use. A completely new drain was put in around the edge of the school to replace the old drain which ran underneath the school, providing a much improved drainage solution which is also far easier to maintain in future.

## **2021/22 Additions to the SBIP Programme**

14. With a significant back-log of maintenance and improvement works required across the school estate it is necessary to prioritise the works that can be undertaken.
15. Stock condition surveys have been conducted across the school estate over the last five years. These condition reports form the basis of the prioritisation. Recommendations from other property records are also assessed and scrutinised, particularly site risk assessments (including water quality, fire safety and asbestos management). On-site issues and requests from schools are also taken into account.
16. The 2021/22 Schools Condition Allocation grant has yet to be announced. Confirmation is expected in April 2021. For the purposes of project planning the programme is working to the reasonable estimate of £5m in line with allocations for previous years. Should the allocation be significantly different to the expected a revised programme report will be brought to Committee.
17. Projects with a total value of circa £5M have been identified for the 2021/22 additions to the SPIB Programme. This is merely an initial estimate of cost and more robust estimates of the costs will be achieved through the feasibility stage if the final estimates of the cost exceed the available funding then it will be necessary to defer projects to the 2022/23 Programme. As well as available funding, decisions on the projects to be included have been made based on the urgency of the works required and assessment of the risk.
18. A Latest Estimated Cost (LEC) report will be brought to Committee in Spring 2021 once the feasibility projects have been concluded, establishing the full costs for the 2021/22 programme before proceeding to the construction phase of the projects
19. Due to the urgent nature of some of the works certain projects have already been raised to ensure the required works can be undertaken as soon as possible.
20. A full list of the projects to be included in the 2021/22 programme is provided in **Appendix 1**.

## **Other Options Considered**

21. The County Council has an obligation to provide adequate spaces for pupils requiring education to maintain its property portfolio, ensuring they are safe, compliant and fit for purpose. Therefore, no other options have been considered.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

22. The Council is committed to providing good schools with sufficient places for all Nottinghamshire children. The Schools Capital Programme is a key element of delivering this commitment.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

23. 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**

24. Financial provision for the elements that comprise the Schools Capital Programme are reconciled annually as part of the Council's overall budget setting process. The reconciliation takes account of the most recent government grant and other forms of income that contribute to the overall funding of the Programme, against the anticipated actual spend across the range of projects. Realistic assumptions about future sources of external income/grants have been built into the overall financial planning for the Programme, and robust arrangements are in place to monitor these over the course of the Programme.

## **Human Resources Implications**

25. Where schools expand, appropriate levels of teaching staff are appointed and funded from increases in the delegated school budget triggered by the increased number of pupils.

## **Human Rights Implications**

26. The provision of additional school places in new and refurbished schools will facilitate parental preference via the schools admissions process.

## **Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

27. Children within the Local Authority area will be able to access school places locally. All new build schemes will meet requirements for disabled access and special needs, for pupils, teachers and members of the public/visitors. Adaptations will be carried out to existing Council schools and academies to meet the access needs of children with SEND.

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

28. All new build schemes will take account of safeguarding needs and requirements.

## **Implications for Service Users**

29. The Schools Capital Programme seeks to ensure that there will be sufficient school places in school buildings which do not suffer from the need of essential maintenance to their fabric.

## **Implications for Sustainability and the Environment**

30. Increasing the number of school places is demonstrated by sustainable demand. All capital projects are subject to the requisite planning and Building Regulations which reflect environmental and sustainability targets. By providing local school places the need for travelling by car can be reduced.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That Committee:

- 1) considers the successes and progress that has been made in delivering the Schools Capital Programme.
- 2) approves the projects for addition to the Schools Building Improvement Programme for 2021/22 and approves the commencement of the project feasibility stage.

**Derek Higton**  
**Service Director, Place & Communities**

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## **Constitutional Comments (AK 16/11/20)**

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

## **Financial Comments (GB 19/11/20)**

32. The programmes set out in this report are all within the approved capital programme as follows – School Place Programme £12.1m in 2020/21 (£12.8m in 2021/22), School Building Improvement Programme £7.9m in 2020/21 (£5.2m in 2021/22) and the School Access Initiative £0.5m in 2020/21 (£0.1m in 2021/22).'

## **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.

[Schools Building Improvement Programme – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 11 February 2019](#)

[Schools Capital Programme progress report – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 18 November 2019](#)

[2021/22 Schools Building Improvement Programme \(SBIP\) Latest Estimated Cost \(LEC\) - report to Policy Committee on 15 July 2020](#)

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

All.

C1414

UPRN	Site	Type of works	District
01333	Albany Junior	Roof replacement	Broxtowe
01235	Annesley Primary	Replacement of ceiling, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Ashfield
01061	Berry Hill Primary	Roof replacement	Mansfield
01340	Bispham Drive Junior	Replacement of boiler and associated systems	Broxtowe
01308	Bramcote Hills Primary	Replacement of ceiling, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Broxtowe
01268	Brierley Forest Primary	Drainage works	Ashfield
01158	Coddington C of E Primary	Structural repairs to building Floor slab and External retaining wall	Newark and Sherwood
01077	Crescent Primary	Window replacements	Mansfield
01898	Derrymount Special School	Roof replacement	Gedling
01094	Eastlands Junior	Replacement of heating cabinets and associated pipework	Mansfield
01312	Eskdale Junior	Drainage works	Broxtowe
01022	Everton Primary	Roof replacement	Bassetlaw
01260	Holly Hill Primary	Replacement of ceiling, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Ashfield
01537	Jesse Gray Primary	Replacement of boiler and associated systems and Window replacements	Rushcliffe
01103	John T Rice Infant	Replacement of boiler and associated systems	Mansfield
01162	King Edwin Primary	Flat Roof replacement	Newark and Sherwood
01522	Kinoulton Primary	Roof replacement, drainage works & electrical upgrades	Rushcliffe
01208	Lowes Wong Anglican Methodist Junior	Replacement of ceiling, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Newark and Sherwood
02714	Misterton Primary	Improvements to access and layouts to enhance site safeguarding measures	Bassetlaw
01253	Morven Park Primary	Works repair or replace boundary wall	Ashfield
01111	Newlands Junior	Replacement of ceiling, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Newark and Sherwood
02759	North Wheatley C of E Primary	Drainage works	Bassetlaw
01042	Northfield Primary	Windows and ceiling replacement, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Mansfield
01255	Orchard Primary	Replacement of ceiling, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Ashfield
01464	Phoenix Infant	Roof replacement and repairs to the external elevations	Gedling
01436	Pinewood Infant	Drainage works	Gedling
01062	Redlands Primary	Replacement of boiler and associated systems	Bassetlaw
01117	Sherwood Junior	Replacement of heating radiators and associated pipework	Mansfield
01069	St Lukes C of E Primary	Conversion of kitchen from gas to electric.	Bassetlaw
01448	St Wilfrids C of E Primary	Roof replacement	Gedling
01466	Stanhope Primary	Roof and ceiling replacement, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Gedling
01050	Sutton cum Lound C of E Primary	Replacement of boiler and associated systems	Bassetlaw
01306	Trent Vale Infant	Works to repair structural canopy	Broxtowe
01541	West Bridgford Junior	Roof replacement	Rushcliffe
01147	Wynndale Primary	Roof and ceiling replacement, including works to ceiling tiles, Lighting, fire alarm systems and incorporating works identified through the site risk assessments.	Mansfield



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 13**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**

### **GIVING CHILDREN THE BEST START: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BEST START STRATEGY 2021 - 2025**

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

1. The report invites the Committee to consider the draft Best Start Strategy 2021 - 2025, attached as **Appendix 1**, and refers it to the Health and Wellbeing Board for further consideration prior to recommendation to Policy Committee for final approval.
2. To agree the frequency of Best Start Strategy updates for the Children and Young People's Committee.

#### **Information**

3. The Health and Wellbeing Board endorsed the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy in December 2017. The strategy contains four strategic ambitions including giving children a good start in life. This ambition is also reflected in the Council Plan 'Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future' which includes the priority to make Nottinghamshire a great place to bring up a family so that children get the best possible start in life.
4. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims to improve the life chances of all children in Nottinghamshire as there is overwhelming evidence that making healthier decisions early, from pregnancy, can influence someone's physical and emotional health and economic outcomes throughout their life.
5. In February 2020, a Health and Wellbeing Board workshop was held focusing on giving children the best start in life. The workshop was attended by a range of stakeholders including Elected Members, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Community and Acute Health Services as well as representatives from organisations working with children and families. The workshop has helped to inform the draft Best Start Strategy.

#### **Best Start Strategy**

6. Giving a child the 'best start' begins before birth, with good pre-conception and maternity care. Pregnancy and the early years offer a unique opportunity to shape the lives of children: if a child receives appropriate support during their early years, they have a real chance of

maximising their potential. The Strategy therefore focuses on pre-conception, antenatal, postnatal stages and support for families until a child reaches statutory school age.

7. The Strategy has been developed mainly using two Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) focusing on the first 1,001 Days, and Early Years and School Readiness. Both JSNA chapters include a review of research, evidence-based practice, local data and needs as well as mapping service provision. Both JSNA chapters were reviewed by Children and Young People's Committee in December 2019.
8. The Best Start Board workshop confirmed the following priorities for inclusion in the Best Start Strategy:
  - a) prospective parents are well prepared for parenthood
  - b) mothers and babies have positive pregnancy outcomes
  - c) babies and parents/carers have good early relationships
  - d) parents are engaged and participate in home learning from birth
  - e) parents experiencing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges are identified early and supported
  - f) children and parents have good health outcomes
  - g) children and parents are supported with early language, speech and communication
  - h) children are ready for nursery and school and demonstrate a good level of overall development
  - i) children have access to high quality early years provision
  - j) parents are in secure employment.
9. The draft Best Start Strategy is attached as **Appendix 1**.
10. The Strategy will also focus on the impact of Covid-19 on maternal health, babies born during lock down, emotional health and wellbeing and access to services and childcare.

### **Nottinghamshire Best Start Board**

11. The Strategy will be overseen by the new Best Start Board which will report to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Best Start Board will also work closely with the Children and Young People's Committee. The governance structure is included within the Terms of Reference in **Appendix 2**.
12. Membership will comprise senior management representatives from organisations working with expectant parents, and families with pre-school children as listed in the Terms of Reference.
13. Members will be expected to champion and deliver effective and meaningful multi-agency planning and service delivery to give every child in Nottinghamshire the best start in life.
14. A number of pre-existing and new partnership groups will report to the Best Start Board so that service commissioning, planning and delivery can be co-ordinated across Nottinghamshire.
15. The Board will oversee the Strategy and be responsible for regular reports and updates to both the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children and Young People's Committee.

16. The Health and Wellbeing Board will require annual updates from the Best Start Board. Reports will also be added to the Children and Young People's Committee work plan, and it is suggested that reports are submitted annually, unless Members require otherwise.

### **Other Options Considered**

17. No other options have been considered.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

18. Work to enable children to have the best start in life spans a wide range of services and social issues. There has been no co-ordinated partnership strategy which brings together all key partners and activities which focus on antenatal and postnatal care, children's development and support for families with pre-school children.
19. The Best Start Board will provide a cross-cutting solution to a complex set of problems and risks which face children and families. For this reason, the Strategy and Board will build links between many different parts of the system to provide joined-up and holistic services.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

20. 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**

21. By using evidence-based practice to target and engage children at risk of poor outcomes, it is anticipated that longer term outcomes for children involved in offending behaviour will reduce.

### **Financial Implications**

22. Partners in the delivery of the Best Start Strategy will use their own resources to help shape and improve services and interventions for pre-school children and their families.

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

23. Safeguarding children and families will continue to be a key priority within the Best Start Strategy and for all partners represented at the Best Start Board.

## Implications for Service Users

24. Successful delivery of the Best Start Strategy will improve a range of outcomes for children and families including emotional health and wellbeing, healthy pregnancy, school readiness, speech and language to name but a few.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Committee:

- 1) considers the draft Best Start Strategy, attached as **Appendix 1**, and refers it to the Health and Wellbeing Board for further consideration prior to recommendation to Policy Committee for final approval.
- 2) confirms the frequency of Best Start Strategy updates required for the Children and Young People's Committee work programme.

**Laurence Jones**  
**Service Director, Commissioning and Resources**

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## Constitutional Comments (AK 17/11/20)

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

## Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)

26. Partners in the delivery of the Best Start Strategy will use their own resources to help shape and improve services and interventions for pre-school children and their families.
27. 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.

[Second Nottinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy – report to Health and Wellbeing Board on 6th December 2017](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Chapter – 1,001 Days, Conception to Age 2 – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 16th December 2019](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Chapter – Early Years and School Readiness – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 16th December 2019](#)

**Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

All.

C1413





# **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BEST START STRATEGY 2021-2025**

**A partnership strategy**

**...giving children  
the best start**

# Foreword

## **Foreword by Councillor Philip Owen, Chair of the Children and Young People's Committee and Cllr Kevin Rostance, Chair of the Nottinghamshire Health and Well-Being Board**

Giving children in Nottinghamshire the best start in life is a priority that we can all sign up to. All children have the right to grow up with the best health possible, to be protected from harm and to have access to an education that enables them to fulfil their potential. We know, from research, that a great start in life for all is one of the key ways to success.

We want every child in Nottinghamshire to have the best possible start in life, because we know that a good start shapes lifelong health, wellbeing and prosperity.

We're proud to support Nottinghamshire's new Best Start Strategy which has been developed in partnership and builds on the existing relationship with key partners from Nottinghamshire County Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Acute and Community Health Service Providers, Early Years Providers including schools, the private, voluntary and independent sector, as well as parents and carers.

We recognise that by working together we will be more effective in enabling all children to get the best start in life. There is much to be gained by creating a more integrated approach which maximises the benefits of services working together better and involving the public and communities at every stage.

By working together, we have a better chance of achieving the 10 key ambitions of this strategy:

1. Prospective parents are well prepared for parenthood
2. Mothers and babies have positive pregnancy outcomes
3. Babies and parents/carers have good early relationships
4. Parents are engaged and participate in home learning from birth
5. Parents experiencing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges are identified early and supported.
6. Children and parents have good health outcomes
7. Children and parents are supported with early language, speech and communication
8. Children are ready for nursery and school and demonstrate a good level of overall development
9. Children have access to high quality early years provision
10. Parents are in secure employment

We look forward to seeing the positive outcomes of this strategy and to see our children and families aspire to achieve their potential.

# Introduction

## What do we mean by Best Start?

Giving children the best start in life is a fundamental part of improving health and reducing inequalities. The earliest years of a child's life have a significant impact on their long-term development and their life chances.

Giving a child the 'best start' begins before birth, with good pre-conception and maternity care. Pregnancy and the early years offer a unique opportunity to shape the lives of our children: if a child receives appropriate support during their early years, they have a real chance of maximising their potential.

# Background

## Why focus on giving children the Best Start?

“The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and wellbeing - from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status”

*Michael Marmot, 2010, Fair society, Healthy Lives*

How we treat young children shapes their lives – and ultimately our society. If we get the early years right, we pave the way for a lifetime of achievement. If we get them wrong, we miss a unique opportunity to shape a child’s future.

The first 1001 days - from conception to the age of 2 - are a critical period of development. This is because the earliest experiences, starting in pregnancy, shape a baby’s brain development and have a lifelong impact: during the first two years of life the brain develops a remarkable capacity to absorb information and adapt to its surroundings. From birth to 18 months, connections in the brain are created at a rate of one million per second.

From a baby’s perspective, their environment is made up almost entirely of the relationships with their parents or carers. The quality of this environment influences the development of their brain and social behaviours in a way that forms a foundation for their future experiences, and the way they will be equipped to respond to them.

Loving, secure and reliable relationships with parents, together with the quality of the home learning environment, support a baby’s emotional wellbeing, brain development, language development, ability to learn, and capacity to develop and maintain good relationships with others.

Babies are born ready to learn; however, their development is dependent on their parents and caregivers as their first teacher. Play helps to develop social, intellectual, language and problem-solving skills and is one of the main ways that babies learn about the world. From birth, a natural flow of affectionate and stimulating talk supports a baby’s brain and language development.

When a baby’s development falls behind the norm in the first year of life, it is more likely to fall further behind in subsequent years than to catch up with those who have had a better start.

Research shows that access to high quality early learning experiences, together with a positive learning environment at home, are vital to ensure children reach a good level of development.

Securing a successful start for our youngest children, and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is crucial. Attending any pre-school, compared to none, predicted higher total GCSE scores and the more months spent in pre-school, the greater the impact (DfE, 2016).

Ensuring children are able to get the best from education is vital. School readiness is a strong indicator of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially and emotionally. Not enough of our children are starting school with the range of skills they need to succeed. Educational attainment is one of the main markers for wellbeing through the life course, it is therefore essential that no child is left behind at the beginning of their school life.

There is a clear economic case for investing in the early years of children's lives. Investing in quality early care and education has a greater return on investment than many other options. For every £1 invested in quality early care and education, taxpayers save up to £13 in future costs; and for every £1 spent on early years education, £7 would need to be spent to have the same impact in adolescence.

Supporting healthy pregnancies and protecting and promoting the health of infants are also key to providing the best start in life: stopping smoking in pregnancy has a hugely positive impact on the health of mother and baby, as does good nutrition, vaccination and immunisation, and breastfeeding.

A parent's ability to support their child's health and development can be adversely affected by a number of issues including domestic abuse, being a teenage parent, experiencing stress, or by having many vulnerabilities or complex social needs. Parents can be affected by experiences from their childhood too; events in their childhood can have a profound effect on their lives as adults, affecting their physical or mental health and influencing their parenting behaviour.

Having a low income also has an impact: at age 3, children from poorer backgrounds have fallen behind in terms of cognitive outcomes, social skills and whether they experience behavioural issues. This doesn't mean that every young child growing up in relatively advantaged circumstances will necessarily experience good development, nor that children facing disadvantages won't achieve positive outcomes; however, young children facing various disadvantages are less likely than others to experience good development.

In summary, this time in a child's life represents a phase of increased vulnerability, yet also provides a short window of significant opportunity to improve outcomes. We recognise the need to engage families and children much earlier, taking a wider partnership approach, starting in pregnancy and before children access early education and childcare. This strategy will help us to achieve that.

Further information, evidence and local data can be found in the [1001 Days](#) and [Early Years and School Readiness](#) joint strategic needs assessment chapters.

## Passionate about giving every child the best start in life

The Best Start approach is underpinned by a range of national policy guidance including:

- Marmot: Fair Society, Healthy Lives, and the Marmot Review 10 years on: Health Equity
- First 1000 days of life, Health Select Committee
- 1001 Critical Days: the importance of the conception to age 2 period, All Party Parliamentary Group Cross Party Manifesto
- Frank Field independent review of poverty and life chances
- WAVE Trust report Conception to 2 years: The Age of Opportunity
- Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation
- Public Health England's Health Matters

Ensuring families prosper and achieve their potential is a priority within Nottinghamshire County Council's Strategic Plan 2017-2021, and the aim to give every child a good start in life is a key priority in the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022.



The Health and Wellbeing Board facilitated a workshop to shape this new *Best Start Strategy*, and the accompanying *Best Start Board*, which will lead and oversee the work.

The workshop:

- Shared findings of the recent joint strategic needs assessment chapters: '1,001 Days – Conception to Birth' and 'Early Years and School Readiness',
- Celebrated the unique opportunity that pregnancy and the early years offer to shape a child's life,

- Explored local successes and challenges, and generated ideas for improvement,
- Developed a shared understanding and commitment to drive accelerated improvement,
- Sought multi-agency engagement and ownership of evidence-based interventions to support children's best start in life.

## **Recognising the impact of Covid-19**

The Covid-19 pandemic has widened existing inequalities across society. It is important that we reflect and acknowledge the changing needs of babies, young children and their parents/carers as a result of Covid-19 and the associated restrictions.

Several national reports have examined the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across the early years. Many parents found their ability to cope with their pregnancy or baby had been impacted and reported that the changes brought about by Covid-19 had affected their baby or young child. Many more families are experiencing food insecurity and the number of children living in poverty is rising. There is a risk to child development, including to social and emotional development, as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. Domestic abuse is likely to have increased. There is also a higher prevalence of emotional and mental health needs in parents and children, and fewer opportunities to identify and support them.

Families with lower incomes, those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and young parents, have been hit hardest by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is more important than ever that we target our joint efforts to support these families. The needs of Nottinghamshire's babies and young children must be centre-stage.

## **Building on previous successes- key achievements**

We are committed to building on our previous successes and have worked with our partners to identify our key achievements and good practice. These are summarised in Appendix One.

# Our Vision

**For every child in Nottinghamshire to have the best possible start in life, because we know that a good start shapes lifelong health, wellbeing and prosperity.**

For partner agencies to work together to improve the life chances of all children in Nottinghamshire; working as a multi-agency Best Start Board to engage and support families prior to conception, in pregnancy, and across the early years.

For partners, families and communities to work collaboratively to ensure every child has a healthy and fulfilling start to life and starts schools with the range of skills they need to succeed.

# Our Ambitions

The Best Start Board recognises the importance of, and are committed to supporting:

- Healthy pregnancies
- Preparation for parenthood
- Parental mental health and good attachment
- Parent-infant interaction
- Opportunities to support a child's cognitive, language and social and emotional development
- High quality and accessible early years education
- Identifying and supporting our more vulnerable parents as early as possible

To achieve Our Vision, we have developed **ten ambitions** for Nottinghamshire informed by the evidence base and our engagement with partners.

The **ten ambitions** for Nottinghamshire are as follows:

1. Prospective parents are well prepared for parenthood
2. Mothers and babies have positive pregnancy outcomes
3. Babies and parents/carers have good early relationships
4. Parents are engaged and participate in home learning from birth
5. Parents experiencing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges are identified early and supported
6. Children and parents have good health outcomes
7. Children and parents are supported with early language, speech and communication
8. Children are ready for nursery and school and demonstrate a good level of overall development
9. Children have access to high quality early years provision
10. Parents are in secure employment

The work of the Partnership will be underpinned by a number of key principles:

- Clear leadership and accountability
- Partnership working, engaging a broader and more diverse range of partners
- Co-production and engagement with families
- Using evidence-base practice
- Using whole family and strength-based approaches
- Effective information sharing to better identify emerging need
- Resources and collective action targeted in areas of greater deprivation and with groups most at risk of poor outcomes
- Digital innovation and making better use of social media communication channels
- Trauma-informed care

## Our Actions

### 1. Prospective parents are well prepared for parenthood

Transition to parenthood starts before and during pregnancy. Pregnancy, birth and the weeks and months beyond are a key time of change and development for parents, as well as for their baby. This is an extraordinary and life-defining time however it is also a demanding time, and while most parents do well, some may struggle to cope with the changes or to adjust to their new roles.

Planning pregnancy, promoting healthy behaviours and reducing or managing risk factors are important for improving pregnancy outcomes. It is important that prospective parents are supported with their mental health, smoking and alcohol use, weight management and activity levels, and with anything else that may have detrimental impact on their wellbeing.

#### **We will:**

- Support health and wellbeing prior to conception with a key focus on mental health, healthy relationships, smoking cessation, healthy weight and good nutrition
- Ensure parents-to-be have access to information and support that will equip them with the knowledge and skills they need. There should be a focus on the emotional preparation for parenthood as much as on practical skills
- Deliver targeted support to our more vulnerable parents-to-be including pregnant teenagers

- Have a greater focus on young men and fathers-to-be
- Empower a wide range of partner organisations to prepare prospective parents for parenthood
- Reflect the voice of young people, prospective parents and new parents
- Maximise opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and preparation for parenthood between pregnancies
- Champion high-quality relationship and sex education in schools (primary, secondary, special schools and alternative education providers) and organisations working with young people

## **2. Mothers and babies have positive pregnancy outcomes**

Pregnancy is a critical period during which the physical and mental wellbeing of a mother can have lifelong impacts on her child. Supporting women's health in pregnancy is important for many reasons: for the safe delivery of babies, to prevent adverse health outcomes, and to promote a good birth weight, important because premature and small babies are more likely to have poor outcomes.

Addressing these key factors will help to support good antenatal outcomes:

- Smoking in pregnancy
- Substance and alcohol use
- Healthy weight and good nutrition
- Screening and immunisation
- Low birth weight
- Healthy relationships

### **We will:**

- Work in partnership to reduce the proportion of women smoking in pregnancy
- Promote and support early access to maternity care
- Increase opportunities for women to receive continuity of carer across maternity services through the Local Maternity Neonatal System (LMNS)
- Improve the uptake of screening and immunisation

- Review and strengthen pathways of care and partnership working for women with complex social needs or multiple vulnerabilities. One aim of this is to reduce parental stress
- Ensure swift referral pathways are in place for expectant parents who are deemed as vulnerable
- Engage a more diverse group of partners in supporting healthy pregnancies
- Support expectant teenagers to access antenatal services which are non-judgemental, young people friendly and accessible; with tailored antenatal care provided for those most vulnerable
- Promote national and local digital resources such as the Baby Buddy app
- Improve communication and handover of care between maternity services and Healthy Family teams, and information sharing across other key services
- Engage more families-to-be in pregnancy in services that support their health and wellbeing

### **3. Babies and parents/carers have good early relationships**

Early relationships are important for building healthy brains and have an immeasurable impact on social and emotional development. The way babies' brains develop is shaped by their interactions with the world around them: parent-infant relationships and the quality of parent-infant interaction are very important.

Secure, responsive relationships between a baby and their parent is essential for healthy brain development. This relationship reassures a child that their needs will be met, which helps them regulate their emotions and supports resilience into adulthood. Good early relationships help a growing brain to become socially efficient and support emotional, behavioural and intellectual development.

#### **We will:**

- Equip a wider range of practitioners with the knowledge and skills to support bonding, attachment and the early parent-infant relationship and understand the role of this in baby brain development
- Develop clear and consistent universal messages about the importance of sensitive, attuned and face-to-face interactions from birth onwards

- Routinely assess parent-infant interaction in the first few weeks of baby's life
- Implement evidence-based interventions that support the development of good early relationships across the 1001 days
- Deliver targeted support to parents experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, challenges with the early parent-infant relationship
- Champion early childhood mental health – the healthy social, emotional and behavioural development of young children – and act early to support emerging needs

## **4. Parents are engaged and participate in home learning from birth**

Babies are born ready to learn, and their development is dependent on their parents and caregivers as their first teacher. From birth, learning comes from interaction with people and the environment around us. Play helps to develop social, intellectual, language and problem-solving skills and is one of the main ways babies and young children learn about the world. Home learning is one of the biggest influences on early year's outcomes. Every day conversations, make-believe play, and reading activities have a particular influence.

### **We will:**

- Ensure parents understand the importance of their role as 'first educator' and are aspirational for their children
- Support parents to develop good home learning environments and prepare their children for learning from birth. We will target these actions at families with low incomes and those living in areas of multiple deprivation
- Work with voluntary and community organisations to foster and promote opportunities for babies and young children to play, learn and have new experiences close to home. Ensure these opportunities are clearly communicated to parents
- Support parents to improve their wellbeing and parenting skills as well as to understand their child's development needs
- Develop clear and consistent universal messages about the importance of home learning (interaction, play and supporting development) from birth

## **5. Parents experiencing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges are identified early and supported**

Mental health issues can impact on a mother and her partner's ability to bond with their baby, and to be sensitive and responsive to the baby's emotions and needs. Around one in five women will experience mental health difficulties before or after birth, yet this may remain unrecognised or untreated. A women's mental health before and after the birth is closely linked to the development of good early relationships. Fathers can also find the transition to parenthood challenging and may need support for their mental health.

Parents who are experiencing stress may be less able to provide a secure, healthy, nurturing environment for their child. In pregnancy, maternal stress can impact on baby's developing brain, though the effects of this are helped by sensitive and responsive parenting in the first year.

### **We will:**

- Work with partners to strengthen the pathway of care for women with mental health needs in the perinatal period, with a particular focus on mild to moderate and emerging mental health need
- Map and clearly communicate information about mental health support and services to all who might signpost, refer or wish to access
- Identify and engage people and communities that are not represented in services
- Share information about referrals and access to services with relevant partners so that opportunities to engage and support parents are not lost
- Develop a culture that recognises the importance of parental mental health and emotional wellbeing and the part this plays in healthy child development
- Share information about the changes in emotional and mental health that new parents may experience and support parents and carers to recognise and respond to these
- Promote a range of interventions that support the emotional and mental health of parents and carers of preschool children

## 6. Children and parents have good health outcomes

What happens during the early years influences health and wellbeing in later life: good nutrition is essential to a child's development, breastfeeding has particular benefit. Vaccination, immunisation and home safety are important for health promotion.

Addressing these key factors will help to promote good health:

- Breastfeeding
- Screening and vaccination
- Good nutrition
- Weight management and healthy weight
- Safer sleep

### We will:

- Target existing resource, services and support at those most in need, including those in areas of deprivation
- Have a greater focus on promoting the health of whole families, including fathers, partners and households
- Increase uptake and promotion of the Healthy Start Scheme including a radical increase in the uptake of vitamins in pregnant women, babies and children to age 4
- Promote safer sleep messages across a wide variety of partners and equip these partners with the knowledge and skill to recognise and support families most at risk of sudden and unexpected death in infancy
- Continue efforts to improve the prevalence of breastfeeding, focused on areas of the county with the lowest rates
- Work to improve the food environment for families with young children through delivery of the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer by:
  - Making access to affordable, healthy food easier
  - Improving the quality of food provision through early years settings
  - Enabling parents to develop good eating habits with their children
  - Promoting consistent messages
- Develop key messages about health and wellbeing in the early years that are shared widely by a wider range of professionals and partner organisations
- Continue to educate and support parents to reduce the risks of avoidable injuries in babies and children

## 7. Children and parents are supported with early language, speech and communication

Language difficulties predict problems in literacy and reading comprehension, but they may also be indicative of problems in children's behaviour and mental health. Once children enter school, language skills remain a strong predictor of their academic success. Evidence shows that difficulties in early language development can lead to:

- educational disadvantage
- emotional and behavioural difficulties
- risky behaviours
- involvement in offending
- economic disadvantage
- emotional disadvantage

Children's vocabulary skills are linked to their economic backgrounds. Children living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage are at much higher risk, with around 50% of children starting school with delayed language or other speech, language and communication needs. By 3 years of age, there is a 30 million word gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest families. Addressing speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) for children under the age of 5 cannot be ignored and is a local priority for Nottinghamshire.

### **We will:**

- Improve speech, language and communication skills amongst preschool children through the commissioning and delivery of the Home Talk programme for 2 year olds, Little Talkers Groups and specialist Speech and Language Therapy
- Jointly commission SLCN services to provide one service which includes early help approaches and specialist speech and language therapy
- Develop an integrated SLCN pathway for children under the age of 5 focusing on universal to specialist services
- Intervene early, reducing the need for specialist speech and language interventions
- Improve the knowledge of skills of local practitioners to help identify and address SLCN
- Narrow the attainment gap between children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and their peers by targeting SLCN early help programmes in areas of greatest need

- Refresh the Language for Life Strategy through the development of a Best Start SLCN Action Plan
- Work with a wide range of partners to promote the nationally developed resources, Tiny Little People and Hungry Little Minds, as part of universal and targeted support from pregnancy to 5
- Ensure children have access to communication friendly spaces

## **8. Children are ready for nursery and school and demonstrate a good level of overall development**

School readiness is a strong indicator of how prepared a child is to succeed in school and in later life. Levels of school readiness links to educational attainment, which impacts on life chances. School readiness has been shown to impact on health, mental health, future earnings, involvement in crime, and even death.

Ensuring children get the best from education is vital; education is central to improving life chances for children and young people and yet not enough children are starting school with the range of skills they need to succeed. Educational attainment is one of the main markers for wellbeing through the life course and so it is important that no child is left behind at the beginning of their school life.

### **We will:**

- Identify children with developmental delay and/or additional needs as early as possible and provide them with early support
- Work in partnership to ensure all children, particularly Looked After Children, children eligible for free school meals, children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), and children for whom English is an additional language achieve a good level of development
- Support the most vulnerable children and families to access the right support at the right time whether it be access to childcare or 1-2-1 family support
- Improve children's development at the Early Years Foundation Stage to be at least on par with statistical neighbours, as well as narrowing the attainment gap
- Ensure 2 year olds from low income families access their early education entitlements

- Ensure practitioners across Nottinghamshire are knowledgeable and effective in identifying and assessing the needs of 0-5's through a comprehensive workforce development offer and regular support and interventions
- Ensure children and families experience seamless interventions and services
- Review and strengthen the transition arrangements for children particularly with SEND
- Put in place robust pathways to comprehensive support where there are any issues identified at the Healthy Family Team 2-2 ½ year health and development review
- Continue to promote and champion the value of early education
- Have a greater focus on social and emotional development across the early years

## **9. Children have access to high quality early years provision**

High quality, accessible early learning experiences together with a positive learning environment at home is a vital combination to ensure that children reach a good level of development at school age. High quality early years practitioners and leaders are essential for delivering a high standard of care and education to create an effective early learning environment.

Early years education for children below the age of four has a positive impact on the life chances of disadvantaged children, yet disadvantaged children spend significantly less time in pre-school than children from more affluent backgrounds. It is therefore essential to increase the take up of childcare funding entitlements for low income families.

### **We will:**

- Ensure children and families, particularly those living in areas of disadvantage, have access to high quality, sufficient, sustainable early years education and childcare provision
- Offer support for providers of childcare and early education including providing training and support packages e.g. Ofsted readiness, working with children with SEND etc

- Work in partnership to ensure all children, particularly Looked After Children, children eligible for free school meals, children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), and children for whom English is an additional language achieve a good level of development
- Ensure vulnerable children have access to good or outstanding early years settings
- Continue to recognise the skill and expertise of the early year's workforce: further invest in training around the importance of the 1001 days, and skills to engage and support families collaboratively, building relationships based on trust
- Provide proactive support and assess the sustainability of the Early Years and Childcare Sector during and after the Covid-19 pandemic
- Carry out further analysis of the sufficiency of Early Years provision across all areas of the county considering the numbers of vacant spaces already available
- Deliver target support for Early Years providers working in areas of high levels of disadvantage and where vulnerable children would be adversely affected if there were no provision available
- Support the Early Years Sector to encourage families "Back in to Childcare" and promote the take up of childcare as a choice that benefits the child's development
- Explore how Nottinghamshire County Council can continue to fulfil the duty to provide sufficient childcare places for the most disadvantaged communities
- Carry out detailed consultation with parents on using Childcare and Early Education provision

## **10. Parents are work ready and in secure employment**

Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. We know 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. Growing up in poverty can mean being cold, going hungry, not being able to join in activities with friends, and not being able to afford even one week's holiday.

Worklessness is still a key reason why many children in Nottinghamshire are living in poverty; however, understanding and tackling in-work poverty remains a priority.

## **We will:**

- Provide opportunities for parents to be work ready, by working in partnership to improve skills, confidence and aspirations for their families e.g. Job Clubs, Work Coaches
- Increase families' money management skills and build financial resilience for children and families in poverty
- Provide parents with access to volunteering opportunities that support them to move closer to the labour market
- Gain a greater understanding and reduce the negative impact of Covid19 on child and family income
- Target families from low income households to deliver a range of interventions to give children the best start
- Successfully deliver the Troubled Families programme which supports parents into sustained employment and increases the number of young people in training, education or employment
- Support families' income and improve outcomes through tackling food insecurity
- Increase uptake of funded childcare provision and Tax Credits to remove barriers to employment for many parents
- Support teenage parents into employment by promoting and increasing take up of the Care to Learn grant for young parents in education or training
- Actively promote schemes to support parents with mental health problems into work
- Support families reliant on welfare to navigate the system
- Narrow the health inequalities gap for low income groups and their peers by commissioning and delivering services and interventions which target localities and groups with poorer health and wellbeing outcomes

# BEST START BOARD

The purpose of the Best Start Board is to assess local needs and subsequently develop and co-ordinate the effective delivery of the Best Start Strategy which will focus on pre-conception to statutory school age concentrating on the first 1,001 days.

## Responsibilities

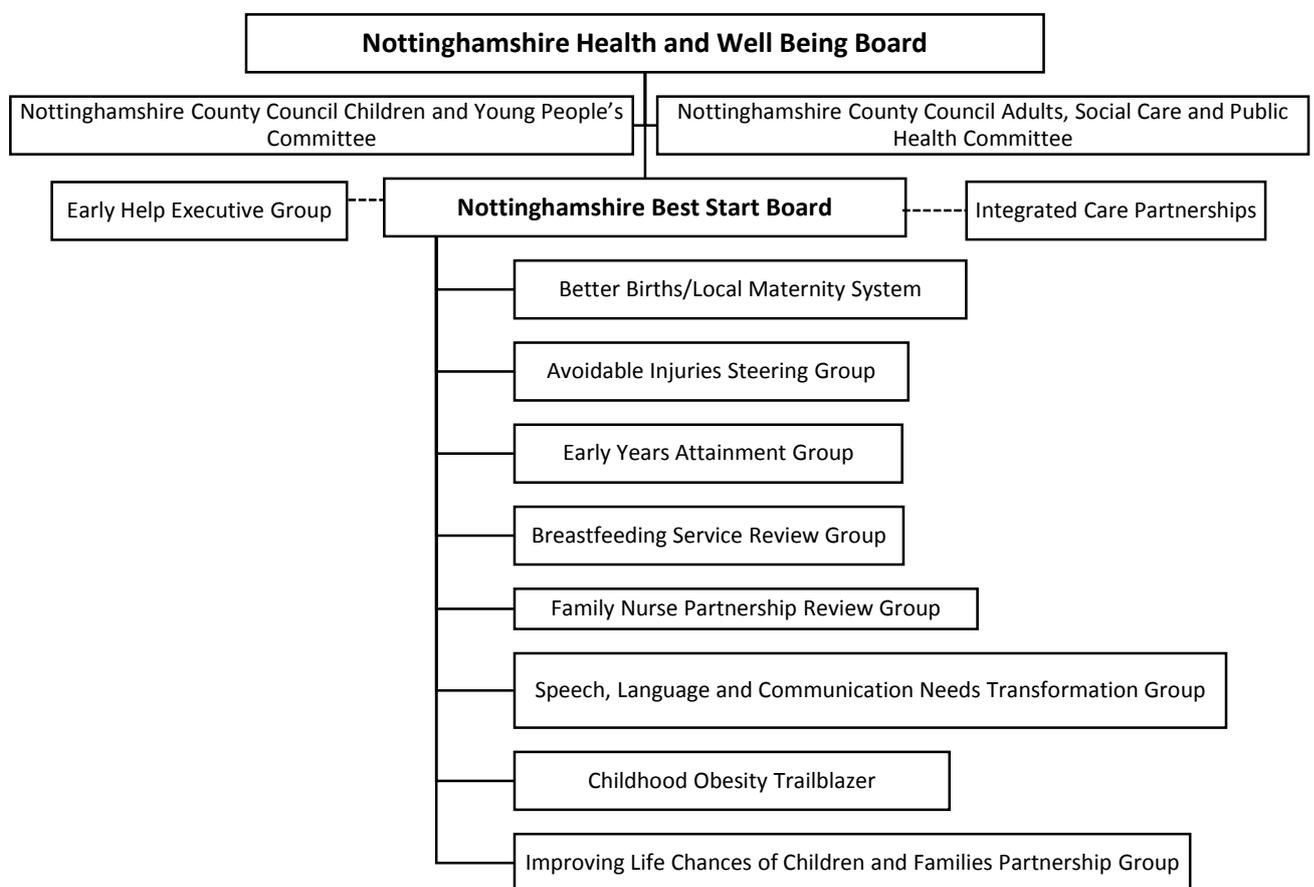
- Facilitate a partnership approach to ensuring children have the best start in life.
- To consider and implement the recommendations of the relevant Nottinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapters relating to pre conception, antenatal and postnatal support, school readiness and public health outcomes for children under the age of 5.
- Development, implementation and monitoring of the Best Start Strategy and Action Plan.
- To identify and progress new joint strategic needs assessment chapters, mapping exercises and reviews that may be required to better inform planning and delivery.
- To identify and refer to the evidence base for ensuring children get the best start in life.
- To actively target interventions to communities where outcomes are worse for children and families.
- To consider and respond to the effects of Covid-19 on outcomes for families with children under the age of 5.
- To agree reports on progress of the Action Plan for Local Authorities and key stakeholders
- To ensure any resources available are appropriately deployed in order to support activities in the Action Plan.

## Role of group members

- To act as a champion for work to improve the health and well-being of expectant families and those with young children within their own organisation and networks they represent.
- To contribute to the Best Start Action Plan and wider Best Start Strategy.
- To commit resources where possible to support the delivery of the Best Start Strategy.
- To identify ways in which their organisation can contribute to emerging issues and challenges including the Covid-19 pandemic.
- To provide a communication channel between the Board and their own organisation and through involvement at other strategic partnership groups and networks.
- To be aware of and respond in a timely manner to communications outside of Best Start Board meetings.
- To share relevant reports, information and resources with other members of the group as well as their own organisation and networks which they represent.
- To contribute relevant items for discussion at meetings.

# GOVERNANCE

The Best Start Board will report to the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board as well as member’s own organisational governance routes. The Board will ultimately report to the Health and Wellbeing Board and will work closely with the Children and Young People’s Committee in Nottinghamshire County Council who will contribute to the Strategy development and champion effective service delivery.



## Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Each workstream will be responsible for developing and monitoring a multi-agency action plan to deliver our ten ambitions, reporting to the Best Start Board.

There are a range of overarching public health indicators which will be used to assess progress, including:

- Reducing infant mortality
- Increasing vaccination, immunisation and screening uptake
- More children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception
- More children achieving a good level of development at the 2-2.5 year health and development review
- Fewer low-income families (children under 16 years)
- Reducing family homelessness
- Reducing the numbers of children who need to be Looked After
- Reducing the number of babies born low birth weight
- Reducing childhood obesity (4-5 years)
- Improving oral health
- Reducing teenage pregnancy
- Reducing smoking in pregnancy
- Increasing the rates of breastfeeding
- Reducing avoidable injuries (0-4 years).

The Best Start Board will review progress against these indicators, as well as comparing performance with Nottinghamshire's closest statistical neighbours.

Workstreams will also identify local indicators to monitor progress towards our ten ambitions.

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## Key contacts:

### **Nottinghamshire County Council Early Childhood Service**

Email: [earlychildhoodservices@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:earlychildhoodservices@nottscc.gov.uk)

Tel: 0115 977 2510

### **Nottinghamshire County Council Public Health**

Email: [Childrens.Commissioning@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:Childrens.Commissioning@nottscc.gov.uk)

## Appendix One - Building on previous successes- key achievements

### Prospective parents are well prepared for parenthood

- There are examples of excellent working relationships across the education, early years and health sector.
- A wide range of activities and support are available
- Integrated wellbeing service works to improve health and wellbeing of local population
- Knowledge of the impact of adverse childhood experiences is increasing across all sectors
- Relationships and Sex Education in schools is good and expanding across Nottinghamshire
- Work of the Schools Health Hub is now embedded, supporting schools to plan and deliver effective age appropriate Personal Social Health Education programmes
- Services working with young people such as the Youth Service regularly deliver support and information about healthy relationships

### Mothers and babies have positive pregnancy outcomes

- High quality support and valued services are in place e.g. maternity services, children's centre services, Healthy Family teams, Family Nurse Partnership for young parents.
- Improving antenatal outcomes is a local priority via the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS).
- Maternity clinics are available in many Children's Centre buildings across Nottinghamshire
- There is a local commitment to tackling smoking in pregnancy
- Maternity care is delivered in line with evidence base
- There are specialist midwives providing additional support for expectant parents affected by drug use and teenagers
- Development of 'Pregnancy Birth and Beyond' programme

### Babies and parents/carers have good early relationships

- We have a well-established Family Nurse Partnership who are experts in attachment, bonding and the early parent-infant relationship
- Maternity and community health providers are accredited in the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative
- Specialist perinatal mental health services support mothers with serious mental illness
- Ages and stages questionnaires help to assess children's social and emotional development
- The Children's Centre Service delivers a range of 1-2-1 and group support during the post-natal stages e.g. targeted baby massage which improves attachment

### Parents are engaged and participate in home learning from birth

- Great expectations programme delivered
- Home learning booklet developed by the Children's Centre Service and Healthy Family teams is routinely distributed

- Parents Home Learning tile is developed on Notts Help Yourself Let's Play and other programmes delivered by the Children's Centre Service

**Parents experiencing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges are identified early and supported.**

- Assessment of mental health and wellbeing takes places throughout pregnancy and after birth
- A range of evidence based mental health support is available for parents
- There are some excellent examples of collaborative working (including a hub model in Ashfield)
- The Children's Centre Service delivers successful PHEW peer support groups for parents with low emotional wellbeing
- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services are well established in Nottinghamshire
- Perinatal mental health is a local priority for commissioners and providers

**Children and parents have good health outcomes.**

- Good breastfeeding support offer including peer support through Children's Centre Service volunteer led 'Babes' groups
- There is a Breastfeeding friendly places scheme
- Social prescribing, where available
- Healthy Family Teams and the Children's Centre Service promote health and have achieved UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative status
- Healthy Family Team services are available in many Children's Centre buildings across Nottinghamshire
- The Children's Centre Service provides extensive health promotion interventions and campaigns

**Children and parents are supported with early language, speech and communication.**

- Little Talkers and Home-Talk programmes support children with emerging or targeted needs and are evidence-based and well-received
- There is now a single point of access for speech, language and communication needs services for all areas except for Bassetlaw
- There is an established Language Leads network for Early Years practitioners, with Language Lead accreditation previously provided
- There is a graduated response to emerging need and an aligned pathway of care
- There are high quality specialist speech and language therapy services in place
- There is a strong partnership approach to address speech, language and communication needs through the Language for Life strategy
- There has been a wealth of training available in Nottinghamshire for those working with families with preschool children
- There is a wealth of information for families to assist them to improve their child's speech and language. These are available on Notts Help Yourself, various Facebook pages, with regular campaigns shared e.g. 'Hungry Little Minds'

### Children are ready for nursery and school and demonstrate a good level of overall development

- There is a wealth of voluntary sector support to promote child development and school readiness
- There is a comprehensive Children's Centre Service offer and programmes to support child development and school readiness
- Healthy Family teams support development from pregnancy and beyond and deliver universal ages and stages assessment at key points
- The 2 year childcare entitlement and extended childcare offer is increasing access to high quality local childcare
- There are some examples are good links and partnership working between early years settings, the Children's Centre Service and Healthy Family teams
- Systems and processes are in place to monitor the take up and progress of the most vulnerable children (including the Early Years Better Start tracking tool)
- Transition arrangements are in place to support the most vulnerable children between early years provision and school
- The Schools Families Specialist Service works to support preschool children with SEND

### Children have access high quality early years provision.

- 78% of 2 year olds took up a funded childcare place (15 hours per week) in Spring 2020 and 93% of parents who applied took up an extended entitlement place (30 hours per week). These figures were adversely affected by Covid Summer 2020)
- The Book Start programme is offered universally
- 93% of Early Years Providers were rated as Good or Outstanding in the academic year 2019-20
- 44 Practitioners across Nottinghamshire have been supported to achieve a Nationally recognised Level 3 qualification in supporting Children with SEND
- 1,186 practitioners engaged in NCC led early years training in 2019/20
- Nottinghamshire settings have participated in the National Early Years Professional Development Programme which will reach over 45 settings to support Early Language and Numeracy.
- There is a well-established Early Years Quality and Attainment team which provides training, support and advice to all Early Years settings to help raise the quality of provision

### Parents are in secure employment.

- The number of children living in low income households has remained stable however the impact of Covid19 on employment and income have not been reflected in data
- The Children's Centre Service has over 200 active parent volunteers who are also being supported to be work ready
- The Department of Work and Pensions through Jobcentre Plus works closely with the Children's Centre Service to provide assistance to families
- The Chamber of Commerce and NCC Economic Regeneration are providing a range of services such as work coaches for parents with preschool children funded through D2N2

- Tackling Child Poverty remains a priority in Nottinghamshire through the 'Improving Life Chances for Children and Families Strategic Partnership Group'



## **Nottinghamshire Best Start Board Terms of Reference**

The Nottinghamshire Best Start Board is a sub group of the Health and Well Being Board.

The Health and Wellbeing Board aims to find out what Nottinghamshire needs to improve in health and wellbeing and to develop a strategy and delivery plan to achieve this. One of the key priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to give children the best start in life.

### **Vision of the Best Start Board**

The Nottinghamshire Best Start Board will champion and deliver effective and meaningful multi-agency planning and service delivery to give every child in Nottinghamshire the best start in life.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Best Start Board is to assess local needs and subsequently develop and co-ordinate the effective delivery of the Best Start Strategy which will focus on pre-conception to statutory school age concentrating on the first 1,001 days.

### **Responsibilities**

- Facilitate a partnership approach to ensuring children have the best start in life.
- To consider and implement the recommendations of the relevant Nottinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapters relating to pre conception, antenatal and postnatal support, school readiness and public health outcomes for children under the age of 5.
- Development, implementation and monitoring of the Best Start Strategy and Action Plan.
- To identify and progress new joint strategic needs assessment chapters, mapping exercises and reviews that may be required to better inform planning and delivery.
- To identify and refer to the evidence base for ensuring children get the best start in life.
- To actively target interventions to communities where outcomes are worse for children and families.
- To consider and respond to the effects of Covid-19 on outcomes for families with children under the age of 5.
- To agree reports on progress of the Action Plan for Local Authorities and key stakeholders
- To ensure any resources available are appropriately deployed in order to support activities in the Action Plan.

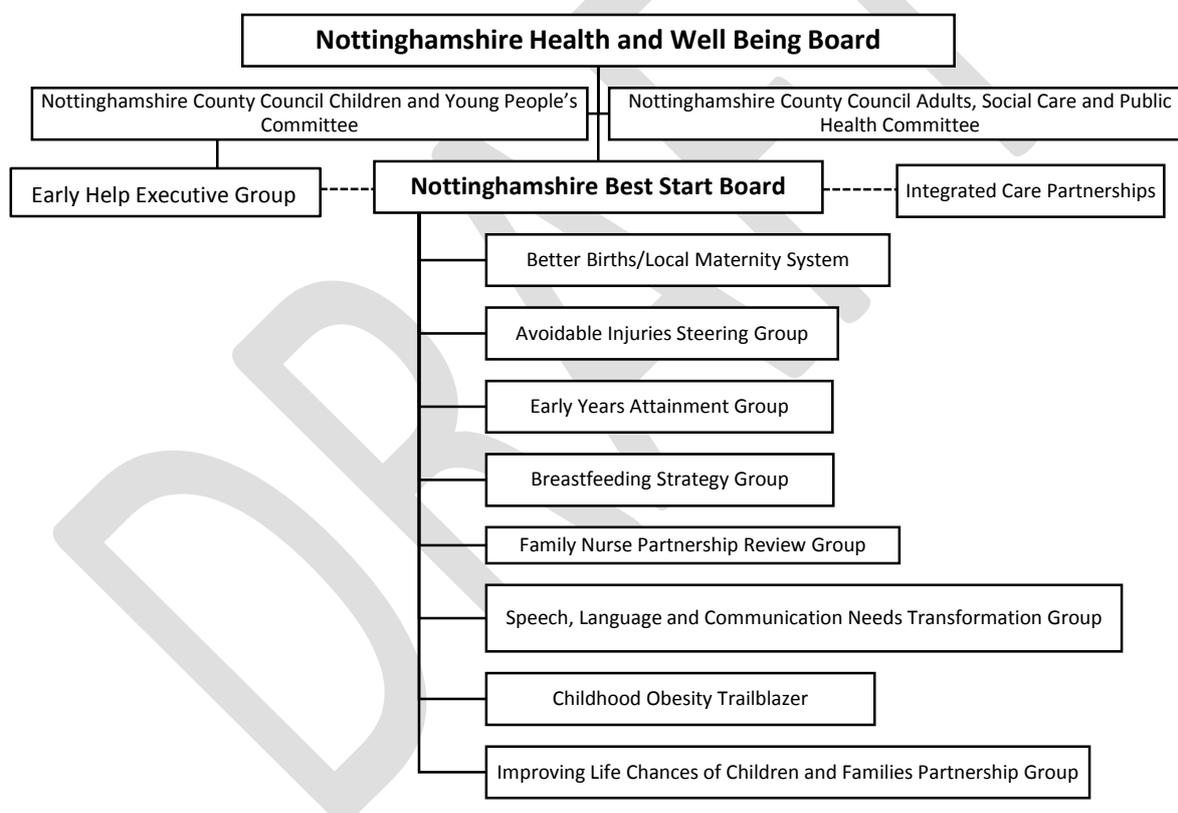
### **Role of group members**

- To act as a champion for work to improve the health and well-being of expectant families and those with young children within their own organisation and networks they represent.
- To contribute to the Best Start Action Plan and wider Best Start Strategy.
- To commit resources where possible to support the delivery of the Best Start Strategy.

- To identify ways in which their organisation can contribute to emerging issues and challenges including the Covid-19 pandemic.
- To provide a communication channel between the Board and their own organisation and through involvement at other strategic partnership groups and networks.
- To be aware of and respond in a timely manner to communications outside of Best Start Board meetings.
- To share relevant reports, information and resources with other members of the group as well as their own organisation and networks which they represent.
- To contribute relevant items for discussion at meetings.

## Governance

The group will report to the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board as well as member's own organisational governance routes. The Board will ultimately report to the Health and Wellbeing Board and will work closely with the Children and Young People's Committee in Nottinghamshire County Council who will contribute to the Strategy development and champion effective service delivery.



## Best Start Board Meetings

- The Best Start Board will meet 6 times per year, with more frequent task and finish groups as necessary.
- Papers will be sent out 5 working days before each meeting.
- Minutes will be sent out within 10 working days of each meeting.
- Business support will be provided by Early Childhood Services/Public Health within Nottinghamshire County Council.
- Terms of reference will be reviewed annually.

## Membership

Membership will comprise the following organisations:

- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Sherwood Forest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary and Community Sector representative
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- District/Borough Councils
- Integrated Care Partnerships
- Early Years Provider representative

Where the nominated representatives from the above organisations are unable to attend meetings, members will be required to have a named deputy to attend in their place. Where this is not possible, members may submit a brief written update prior to the meeting.

The group will invite/co-opt other relevant people to assist with activities and discussions as appropriate.

November 2020



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020****Agenda Item: 14****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND  
RESOURCES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2020 AND  
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE  
SECTOR IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To share the findings of the 2020 update to the 2019 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and seek approval of the proposed recommendations which enable the Council to fulfil the statutory duty to provide sufficient high-quality childcare.
2. To share the findings of the assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire.

**Information**

3. The Childcare Act (2006) states that the local authority must make arrangements to secure sufficient early childhood services in their area that are provided in such a way that facilitates access to those services, and maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.
4. The Act states that local authorities must secure free places offering 570 hours of Early Education and Childcare a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year for every eligible 2 year-old child in their area, and for all 3 and 4 year olds until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.
5. The Childcare Act 2016 amendment states that the local authority must also secure an additional 570 free hours of Early Education and Childcare a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year, for qualifying children of working parents.
6. Under section 6 of the Act there is a requirement on local authorities to produce an annual sufficiency report on the availability and sufficiency of childcare in their area. This information should be made available to parents and Elected Members.
7. This year, the Assessment takes a different form, and details the impact of the Covid-19 Lock Down and Recovery periods on the sector and is an update to the 2019 full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

8. The report is available in **Appendix 1** and will be published on the Council's website subject to Committee approval.

## **Methodology**

9. Information was collected from:
- Spring Term Self Update from Providers
  - Covid 19 enquiries log from dedicated email address
  - Early Years Consultation group online meetings
  - contact with provision through the Early Childhood Services team
  - information on Tracking Vulnerable Children
  - weekly online submission from providers (for reporting to Department for Education Statistics weekly)
  - online survey of providers
  - telephone survey of parents
  - one to one discussions with providers about their experiences.

## **Key Findings**

### Provision and supply during Lockdown and Recovery

10. There are 1,138 providers (September 2020) delivering Childcare and Early Education across Nottinghamshire. Included in the description of Childcare and Early Years Providers / Settings are Day Nurseries, Pre-schools, Childminders and Schools offering Early Years provision for children under statutory school age.
11. In general, Nottinghamshire continues to have sufficient childcare places for eligible 2 year olds, and all 3 and 4 year olds. (It remains the case that there are exceptions and not all available places are accessible for families). According to the assessment this Spring, there were around 2,800 x 15 hour places for 2,3 and 4 year olds vacant across the County.
12. Between 56% and 58% of all Early Years settings remained open to children of critical workers and vulnerable children during the initial Lockdown months of April and May. Nationally 32% to 35% remained open.
13. Following the Government's advice that settings could open for more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June there was a steady increase in the number of settings re-opening during Recovery, from 56% to 73% by the end of the Summer term. Nationally this was between 48% and 50%.

### Early Years Entitlements take-up during Lockdown and Recovery

14. There was an average 10% decrease in eligible 2 year olds registered to take up their place in the Summer term compared with the Spring term (77.7% take-up Spring 2020, dropping to 68% in the Summer term).
15. There was a significant decrease of 15.3% in numbers of parents applying for a new place in the Summer term for their 3 year old – i.e. a new Nursery starter after Easter. This compares with an average drop of 1.2% in the same period last year.

16. There has been little significant impact on take-up of the extended childcare offer for children with an eligible 30 hours code accessing their extended hours. The take-up rate reduced only slightly for the Summer term 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, reducing from 93% to 92.80% of children accessing their extended hours.
17. During Lockdown and Recovery, supplementary funding for the most vulnerable children continued to be paid alongside Early Years Entitlements in order to support settings to remain open for those children.
18. In order to support Critical Workers, Nottinghamshire County Council made the decision to extend the Early Years Entitlement Funding to cover the Easter and May half term breaks, when the funding does not usually apply. £132,000 was distributed to providers to enable them to remain open during the holidays.
19. Over the Summer Holidays, funding was made available to support the most vulnerable children who were about to make the transition to school. £9,500 was allocated to allow children to continue their attendance at the setting or to return to the setting to have support with social and emotional preparation for school.

#### National Funding Streams

20. The Government introduced a number of schemes to support businesses and the self-employed over the course of the Lockdown and Recovery periods.
21. Out of the 258 responses to the survey, only 17 Schools and 6 Childminders had not accessed one of the additional funding streams with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employment Grant being the most frequently accessed.

#### Parental demand during Lockdown and recovery

22. On 18<sup>th</sup> March, the Government announced that from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, all schools and childcare providers would remain closed until further notice except for children of key / critical workers and vulnerable children. In the initial weeks, it is estimated that approximately 1,500 children were using an Early Years place – approximately 8% of usual attendance.
23. Of the settings that responded to the survey, most of them reported less than a quarter of their usual attenders were coming to the setting during the initial Lockdown period, many reporting single figures.
24. Early Years Settings and schools were advised that they could open to more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June, within certain guidelines. As of 20<sup>th</sup> July, Early Years Provision was able to welcome back more children as the restriction on bubbles was relaxed and new Protective Measures were introduced. By the end of the Summer term, it is estimated that over 10,000 children were back at their usual setting – approximately 50%.
25. Parents were able to contact Early Childhood Services through the Council's dedicated Covid 19 email when they were struggling to find childcare when their usual setting was closed. Around 80 parents contacted the Council, and Early Years Project Officers were

able to signpost them to provision in their area that was open, either through the Families Information Service or by acting in a brokerage role to identify suitable provision.

26. Parents' confidence about sending their child to childcare was explored by the Children's Centre team through a structured conversation. 25% of the parents spoke with were critical workers, 22% had children who were classed as a Vulnerable Child. Only 7% of the group used childcare during the Lockdown period between April and May. This rose to 22% in the Recovery period June and July. Half of the group said they were confident or very confident about the measures their provider had put in place for the Autumn term.

### Sustainability of the Early Years sector in Nottinghamshire

27. The pandemic has left the Early Years Sector nationally in a precarious position. A national survey conducted by the Early Years Alliance in July 2020 found that 69% of providers were expecting to operate at a loss over the next six months, while 25% of respondents felt that it was 'somewhat unlikely' or 'very unlikely' that they would be operating in 12 months' time.
28. Providers were asked to tell us about their confidence about sustainability in the months ahead. 36% said they were unsure and commented this depended on take-up in forthcoming months. 37% said they were confident with 18% saying they were very confident.
29. The factors affecting the sustainability of the sector are numerous, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic:
- most providers rely on their Summer term income to see them through the other two quieter terms, significantly depleted this year
  - traditionally, the Summer term is when provision holds fundraising activity to boost reserves, and this could not happen
  - parents are not all confident about using childcare – it is anticipated on early findings that there are 10% less children in Early Years provision in the Autumn term compared with Autumn 2019
  - the number of Schools registering to provide Early Years provision continues to rise
  - there are already over 2,800 x 15 hour places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds vacant across the County
  - according to the Office for National Statistics, nationally and reflected across Nottinghamshire, the birth rate continues to drop.
30. In Nottinghamshire 11 Early Years providers (5 Pre-schools, 1 Day Nursery, 1 Out of School club and 4 childminders) have ceased delivering childcare since March 2020. Not all the closures are attributed entirely to the pandemic, but it has had an impact on settings who were already financially vulnerable.
31. Of the 11 providers who have closed, 6 are in communities where there are high levels of disadvantage and higher than average numbers of children identified as vulnerable, for example, eligible 2 year olds. In addition to those who have closed, there are concerns around 8 further providers who are struggling to sustain their business, and the impact this will have on the most vulnerable children and families.

## **Actions and Recommendations (Summary)**

32. The following actions and recommendations are summarised below:
- carry out further analysis of the sufficiency of Early Years provision across all areas of the County considering the numbers of vacant spaces already available
  - target support for providers working in areas of high levels of disadvantage and where vulnerable children would be adversely affected if there was no provision available
  - support the Early Years Sector to encourage families “Back in to Childcare” and promote the take-up of childcare as a choice that benefits the child’s development
  - provide additional and targeted support for providers who need to change their operating models to accommodate changing parents’ needs, such as more parents working from home, in order to remain viable
  - explore how Nottinghamshire County Council can continue to fulfil the duty to provide sufficient childcare places for the most disadvantaged communities
  - monitor the expected reduction in Early Years Entitlement funding paid to providers in the Spring term, when Government Guidance states that funding reverts back to being paid on actual numbers in attendance (and it is anticipated this will be around 10% less)
  - continue to link with the Life Chances Partnership to explore and promote what further external, local or national business grants may be available
  - carry out a full and comprehensive Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2021 in line with usual actions
  - carry out detailed consultation with parents on using Childcare and Early Education provision.

## **Other Options Considered**

33. No other options have been considered.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

34. Under section 6 of The Childcare Act (2006) there is a requirement on local authorities to produce an annual sufficiency report on the availability and sufficiency of childcare in their area. The Act requires local authorities in England to ensure a sufficiency of childcare and this information should be made available to parents and Elected Members.
35. The duties in the Act require local authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in their area in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. Following the Covid-19 pandemic there are concerns about balancing the supply of provision to ensure access for the most vulnerable children.
36. This year there are particular matters arising around the sustainability of the Early Years sector nationally and across Nottinghamshire following the periods of Lockdown and Recovery, and there will continue to be so.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

37. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, 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, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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**

38. Council employees with responsibility for childcare sufficiency are funded by the centrally retained early years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is reviewed each year, totalling approximately £335,000 and a further £60,000 for related activities. Online tools to support the development of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment used by the Council are also funded by the DSG, totalling £18,000.
39. The provision of the Families Information Service is a statutory duty for top tier local authorities and supports the promotion of childcare entitlements, guides parents to find childcare and helps the Council to secure data for the sufficiency assessment using social media and the Notts Help Yourself website. This service is also funded by the DSG totalling £94,000, with additional Council funding allocated to maintain the Notts Help Yourself website (£9,000 per annum).

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

40. Safeguarding is a central focus for childcare providers. The increase in numbers of children accessing childcare will inevitably identify safeguarding concerns in greater numbers of children. Nottinghamshire County Council has facilitated a number of 'safer settings' and training events to ensure all Early Years providers have the skills and knowledge to tackle safeguarding.

### **Implications for Service Users**

41. The supply of sufficient, high quality, affordable, sustainable, and accessible childcare and early education has huge benefits for both parent and child, including:
  - childcare that is flexible and accessible ensures parents can take up their entitlement at times that best support their child's learning and development, and at times which fit with the needs of parents to enable them to work or increase their hours of work if they wish to do so
  - a good quality pre-school experience supports children's cognitive and emotional development, aiding transition between home and school and improving school readiness
  - The Government's plan to improve social mobility through education [Unlocking Talent, Releasing Potential](#) states that good early years education is the cornerstone of social mobility and children with strong foundations will start school in a position to progress.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) That Committee approves the actions and recommendations of the Nottinghamshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020 (The impact of Coronavirus on the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Nottinghamshire), as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

**Laurence Jones**  
**Service Director, Commissioning and Resources**

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### **Constitutional Comments (CEH 13/11/20)**

42. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (SAS 19/11/20)**

43. Council employees with responsibility for childcare sufficiency are funded by the centrally retained element of the early years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is reviewed each year, totalling approximately £335,000 and a further £60,000 for related activities. Online tools to support the development of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment used by the Council are also funded by the DSG, totalling £18,000.
44. The provision of the Families Information Service is a statutory duty for top tier local authorities and supports the promotion of childcare entitlements, guides parents to find childcare and helps the Council to secure data for the sufficiency assessment using social media and the Notts Help Yourself website. This service is also funded by the DSG totalling £94,000, with additional Council funding allocated to maintain the Notts Help Yourself website (£9,000 per annum).
45. 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 Divisions and Members Affected**

All.

C1407





**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

**Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020  
The Impact of Covid-19 on the Early  
Years and Childcare Sector in  
Nottinghamshire**

**Early Childhood Services  
Children and Families Department  
September 2020**

# Contents

An update to the CSA published in September 2019, including a report on the impact of the Covid-19 between March and July 2020

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11. Recommendations and Next Steps

# 1. Introduction

The Childcare Act (2006) states that the Local Authority must make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in such a way that facilitates access to those services, and maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.

Between March 2020 and July 2020, when the United Kingdom was Locked Down due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, this duty on the Local Authority changed focus as Schools and Childcare Providers were ordered to close to all children with the exception of those from Key Worker families and those children who were deemed to be the Most Vulnerable.

This year, the Sufficiency Assessment will take a different form, as we explore the impact of the Lockdown and Recovery periods on the sector.

Covering

- Numbers of settings who remained open during the Lockdown and Recovery periods.
- How many children were in attendance during the Lockdown and Recovery periods.
- Additional childcare provided.
- How Local Authority funding for Early Years Places was used.
- Main effects on business sustainability of Covid-19 during the rest of 2020 and beyond.
- How parents/families appear to be feeling in terms of their child(ren) coming back to their settings.
- What types of support was and will be most welcome/needed from the Local Authority.
- Experiences of the Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and support measures for the self-employed childcare professionals.

## Methodology

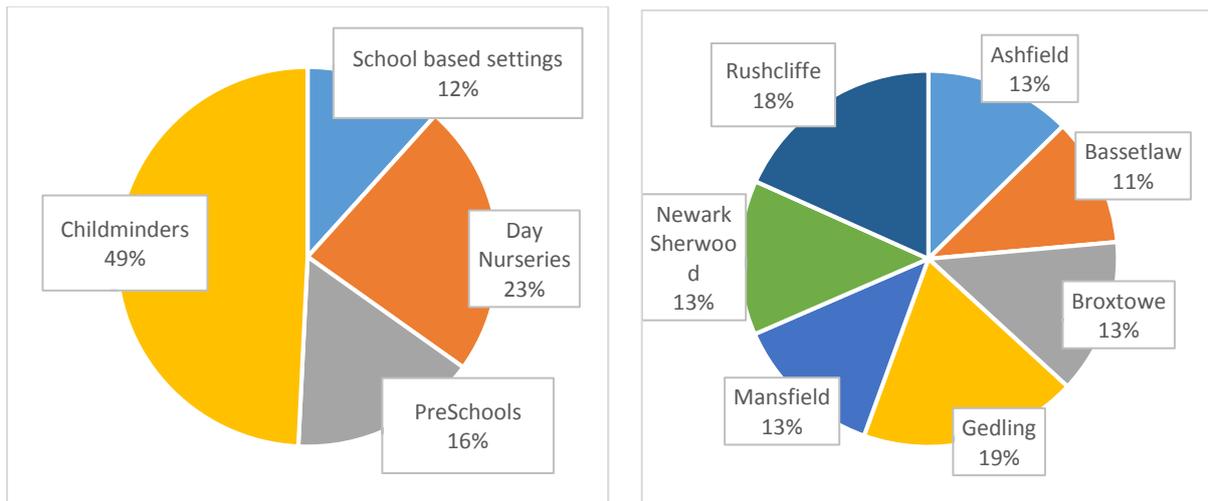
**Definition:** Included in the description of Childcare and Early Years Providers / Settings are Day Nurseries, Pre-schools, Childminders and Schools offering Early Years provision for children under Statutory School age.

## Information was collected from

- Spring Term Self Update from Providers (Baseline as the Summer Self Update did not take place as the numbers would have been skewed by the Covid-19 Pandemic).
- Covid 19 enquiries log from dedicated email address.
- Early Years Consultation group online meetings.
- Contact with provision through the Early Childhood Services team.
- Information on Tracking Vulnerable Children.

- Weekly online submission from providers (for reporting to Department for Education Statistics weekly).
- Online survey of providers.
- Telephone survey of parents.
- One to one discussions with providers about their experiences.

During the report we will make reference to the feedback from our Providers. We received 258 (24%) responses to our request for information broken down by district and Sector below.



## 2. National Context

### Full Lockdown period : 20<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 (hereafter referred to as “Lockdown”)

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, the Government announced that from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, all schools and childcare providers would remain closed until further notice except for children of key / critical workers and vulnerable children, as part of the country’s ongoing response to Covid-19.

Vulnerable children were initially described as:

- Children with and Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Children known to social care

On 15<sup>th</sup> May, guidance was updated to include “otherwise vulnerable children” – described as those who had been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities, and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance.

Parents who were Key / Critical Workers were initially broadly described as

- NHS Staff
- Police
- Those providing support for the vulnerable
- Social workers
- Probation Officers
- Teachers and Schools Staff
- Delivery Drivers

### **Recovery and Re-opening period 1<sup>st</sup> June onwards (hereafter referred to as “Recovery”)**

On 12<sup>th</sup> May, Government announced that Early Years Settings and schools could open to more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June, within certain guidelines.

Settings were encouraged to welcome back as many children as possible, following guidance on Implementing Protective Measures. This included taking children in to smaller, consistent bubbles and “prioritising vulnerable children and children of critical workers, then 3 and 4-year olds, in particular those who will be transitioning to reception in September.” The guidance recognised that not all children would be able to safely return and suggested settings undertake a risk assessment and where necessary “cap” the numbers of children in attendance.

From 20<sup>th</sup> July, early years settings were no longer required to keep children in small, consistent groups within settings, but should still consider how they can minimise mixing within the setting. For example, where they use different rooms for different age groups, keeping those groups apart as much as possible. In addition, parents and carers were encouraged to minimise the number of settings their child attended during the week.

## **3. Local Context**

Early Childhood Services communicated with Early Years providers throughout the Pandemic on a regular basis. Very early on in the Lockdown period, Early Childhood Services made a decision to base all advice and guidance to the sector in accordance with Government Directives.

- Covid 19 bulletins began on 17<sup>th</sup> March and communicated latest Government guidelines to the sector, and supported providers to implement them locally. Guidelines were from Central government, Public Health, Nottinghamshire County Council and Partner Professional organisations. Between 17<sup>th</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> July 49 bulletins were issued by email and using the Early years Portal. 95% of our survey respondents said they agreed / strongly agreed that they were useful.
- Early Childhood Services launched a new, dedicated Covid 19 email address on 26<sup>th</sup> March to deal with specific enquiries related to the Pandemic. Over 2,200 enquiries have been responded to, from providers, parents and professionals. 129 respondents to our survey had used this email address and 72% of them said they received a response in a timely manner.
- The Early Years Quality and Attainment team had regular, weekly contact with all our providers, including Childminders and paid particular attention to the whereabouts of the most vulnerable children – some of whom were still attending and some of whom were not. 83% of our survey respondents said they agreed / strongly agreed that the support they received from our team met their expectations.
- Early Childhood Services produced newsletters for Parents (based on Government Guidelines) as well as specific Bulletins for providers about the Furlough Scheme, Safeguarding, Transition, Outdoor Play, Childminder Specific and Business Support.

87% of our survey respondents said they agreed / strongly agreed that they were useful.

## 4. Childcare Supply

There are 1,138 Ofsted Registered Early Years Providers, including Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Settings and schools (June 20) delivering Childcare and Early Education across Nottinghamshire. Of those, 995 are registered to deliver funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

In the Spring term Self Update from all the above providers, they were reporting a total of 2,867 x 15 hour vacancies across the County. The Self Update was not conducted in the Summer term.

- 276 schools or academies are registered to provide Childcare and Early Education for 3 and 4 year olds in a nursery or reception class.
- Providing care in their own home, there are 586 registered Childminders in Nottinghamshire, of whom 462 are registered to deliver funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- Day Nursery settings provide care for children from six weeks to school age. There are 182 Day Nurseries operating in Nottinghamshire, all of whom deliver funded places for 2,3 and 4 year olds
- Generally, Preschools are used on a half-day or full-day basis and tend to operate only during term time. There are 82 preschools who all provide funded childcare places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- Out of school provision is defined as Breakfast club, after school, holiday care and out of school care, some of which offer Early years provision. There are 67 Ofsted registered holiday clubs and a further 30+ breakfast clubs in addition to the numbers of Early Years providers who deliver wrap around / out of school care as part of their Early Years provision.

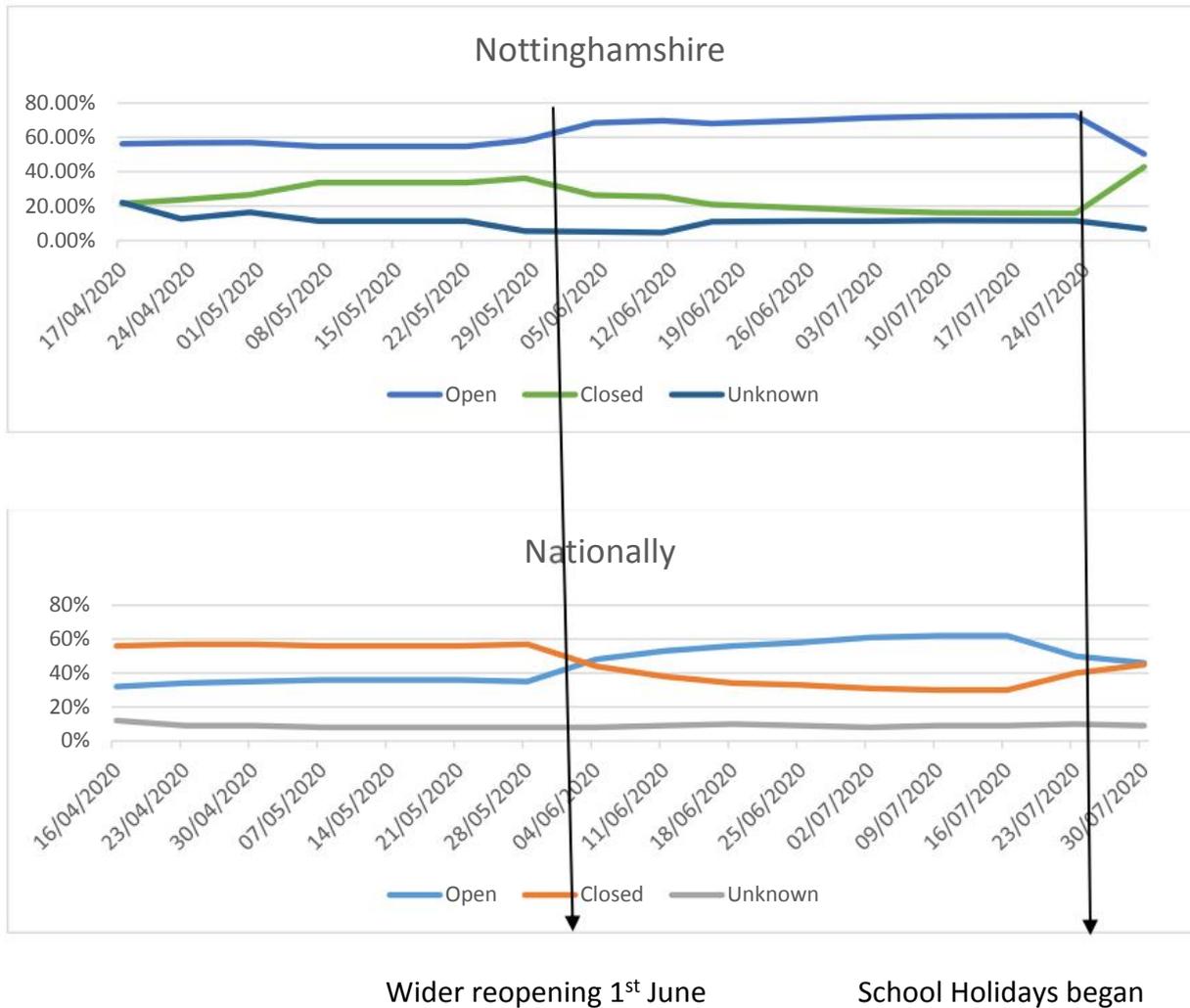
During the Lockdown, and in to the Recovery periods, Nottinghamshire maintained a healthy percentage of settings open and able to care for children.

### **Supply during Lockdown:**

Between 56% and 58% of all Early Years settings remained open to children of critical workers and vulnerable children during the initial Lock Down months of April and May. Nationally 32 % to 35% remained open.

### **Supply during Recovery:**

Following the Government's advice that settings could open for more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June there was a steady increase in the number of settings re-opening, from 56% to 73% by the end of the Summer term. Nationally this was between 48% and 50%.

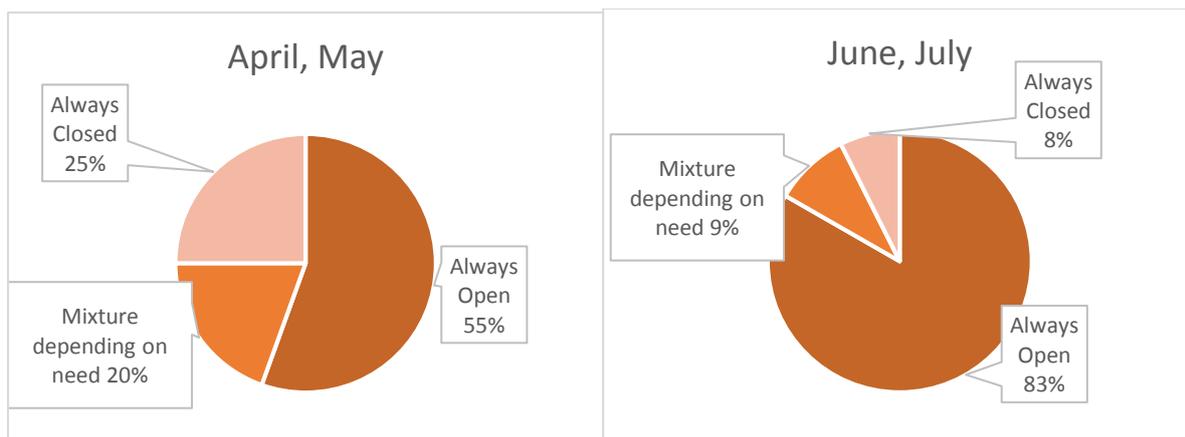


**Reasons for temporary closure**

Some settings remained temporarily closed throughout the Lock Down and Recovery periods because

- There was no demand from parents for them to open
- They were themselves shielding or had vulnerable family members
- They operated out of a community building which was closed
- A number of multiple site settings amalgamated – closing one setting and caring for all their children at another

The 258 settings who took part in our survey were asked about their open / closed status during the Lockdown and Recovery periods.

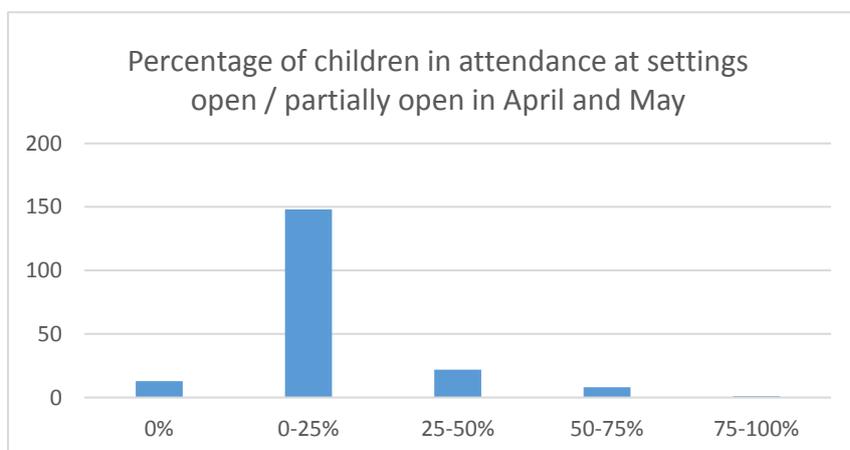


## 5. Demand

### Demand during Lockdown and Recovery:

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, the Government announced that from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, all schools and childcare providers would remain closed until further notice except for children of key / critical workers and vulnerable children, as part of the country's ongoing response to Covid-19.

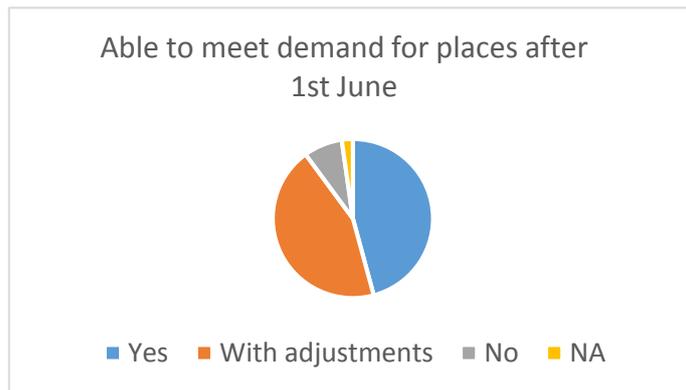
In the initial weeks, we estimate approximately 1,500 (8%) children were using an Early Years place. (NB Online submission and reporting did not start until week 3 of Lockdown). This compares to a usual take up of about 20,000 children.



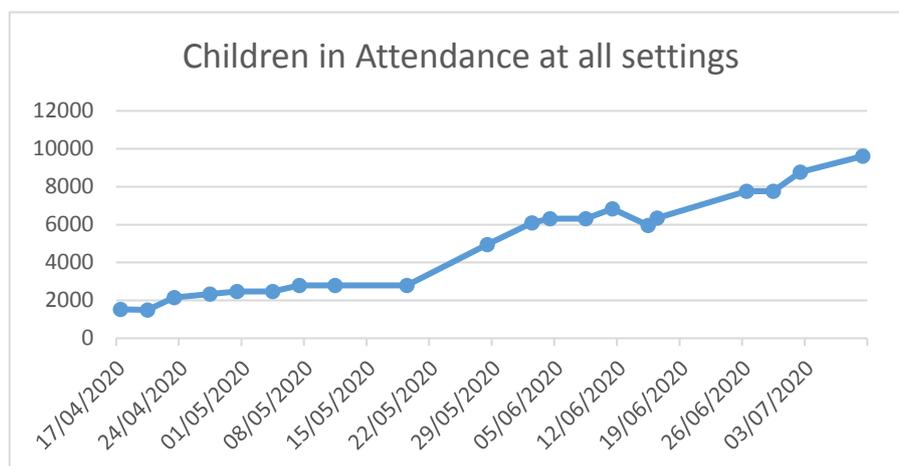
Of the settings that responded to our survey, most of them reported less than a quarter of their usual attendees were coming to the setting during the initial Lockdown period, with many reporting single figures.

Early Years Settings and schools were advised that they could open to more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June, within certain guidelines. The guidelines meant that children had to be kept in bubbles of 8 or 16 with consistent members of staff and minimising the mixing of the groups. This inevitably meant that settings had to "cap" the numbers of children in attendance and remodel their delivery to welcome back as many children as possible.

Of the responses to the survey, the majority (90%) of providers said they could meet demand for the number of children returning, most of them having to make adjustments to their operating model to do so.

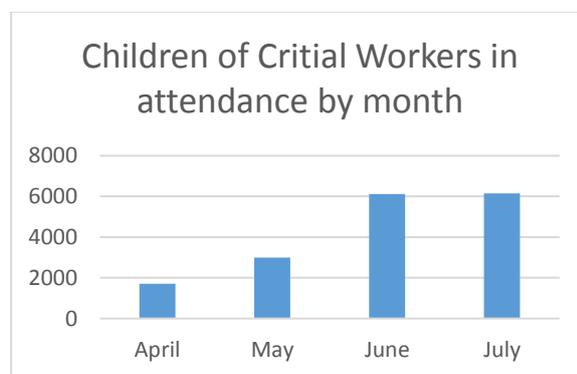
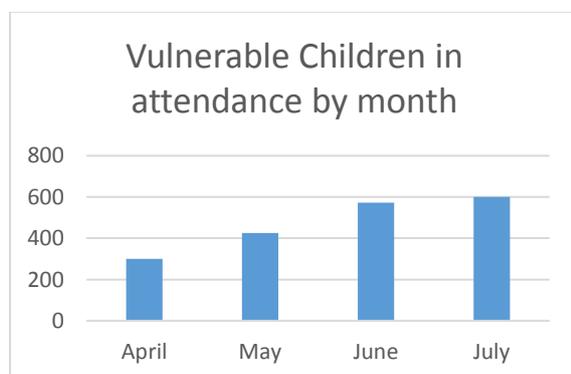


As of 20<sup>th</sup> July, Early Years Provision was able to welcome back more children as the restriction on bubbles was relaxed and new Protective Measures were introduced. As the table above describes, by the end of the Summer term, we estimate that over 10,000 children were back at their usual setting. Not all settings were able to re-open for the reasons stated above, and in some areas, demand for places was higher than others.



As described above the numbers of children in attendance continued to rise between initial Lockdown and the end of the Summer term.

Below shows the number of children estimated to be in attendance in each of the categories collected using our online submission for the Department for Education weekly returns.



## 6. Impact on Attendance for Funded Children and Vulnerable Children

Many pre-school aged children are eligible for 570 hours of funded Childcare and Early Education per year, (equivalent to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year). This includes:

- The most disadvantaged 2 year-olds,
- All 3 and 4 year-olds.

In addition, children of working parents meeting certain criteria<sup>1</sup> are eligible for 30 hours childcare per week equating to 1,140 hours per year.(Extended Entitlement)

The detail below shows how parents are using Childcare entitlements and how well they have been accessed across the districts during lockdown and recovery, with comparisons to the take up in 2019-20 terms

### 2 year olds

The table below shows take up rates for the most disadvantaged 2 year olds by district.

We are comparing the take up of places in the Spring Term (January to March) with the Summer term (April to July). NB These figures are for Children registered to take up a place and NOT those actually in attendance.

District (nos. of children attending at providers in these districts)	November 2019 DWP list population	Spring Take up 2020	% take up by district	March 2020 DWP list population	Summer Take up 2020	% take up by district	% down: Spring to Summer 2020
Ashfield	500	366	73%	536	336	63%	-11%
Bassetlaw	384	258	67%	419	233	56%	-12%
Broxtowe	263	227	86%	272	213	78%	-8%
Gedling	339	284	84%	341	249	73%	-11%
Mansfield	470	351	75%	440	299	68%	-7%
Newark and Sherwood	376	285	76%	370	257	69%	-6%
Rushcliffe	169	172	102%	170	155	91%	-11%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2501</b>	<b>1943</b>		<b>2548</b>	<b>1742</b>		
<b>% take up</b>		<b>77.7%</b>			<b>68%</b>		<b>-9.7%</b>

as at 14/04/2020

as at 28/07/2020

<sup>1</sup> Parent, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) at least £120 a week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage) but not more than £100,000 per year.

There was an average 10% decrease in children registered to take up their place in the Summer term compared to the Spring Term. A significant proportion of the 2 year old take up usually occurs later in the Summer term and that hasn't happened this year as most children did not actually attend any provision between April and July.

During the initial Lockdown period, children eligible for 2 year old funding were not specifically included in the list of vulnerable children provided by Government: "Eligible 2-year olds are low income families who may be struggling during this pandemic. However, these 2-year olds not been identified as a 'vulnerable' group unless they also fall into the categories listed above [Known to Social Care or Children with an EHCP]."

However, Nottinghamshire County Council recommended that settings use their discretion about providing places for these children and should consider supporting 2-year olds, not only in the categories above, but also where a setting had safeguarding concerns.

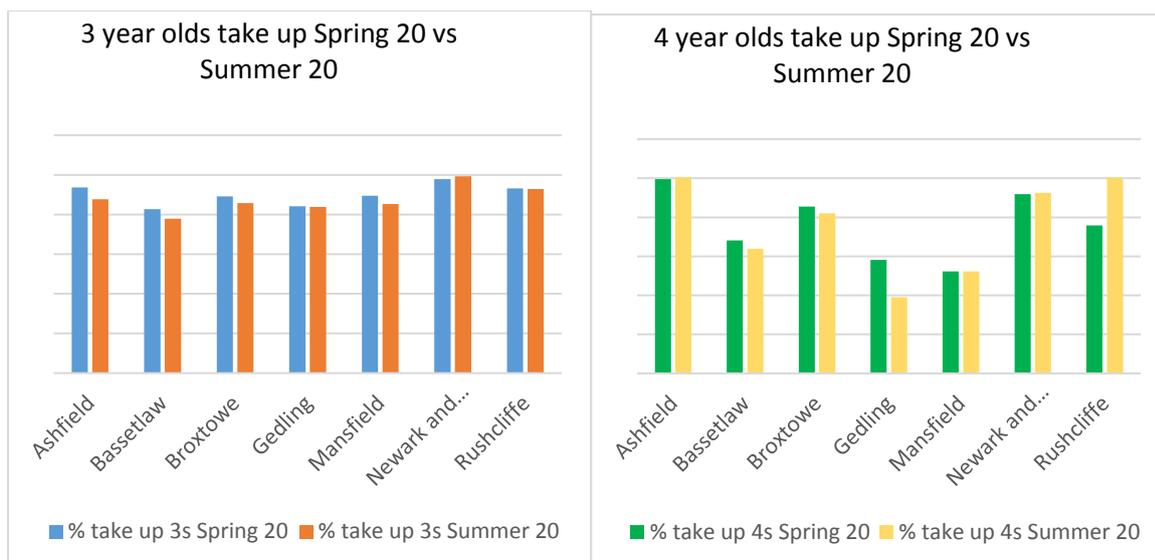
On 19<sup>th</sup> April, the Government introduced an update to this guidance which now included "children and young people who are otherwise vulnerable". This allowed providers to provide care for more eligible 2-year olds. There is more information below about the take up of places by other vulnerable children further on in this report.

### 3 and 4 year olds

The tables below show take up rates for 3 and 4 year olds by district.

We are comparing the take up of places in the Spring Term (January to March) with the Summer term (April to July). NB These figures are for Children registered to take up a place and NOT those actually in attendance.

District Name	% take up 3s Spring 20	% take up 4s Spring 20	% take up 3s Summer 20	% take up 4s Summer 20
Ashfield	93.66%	99.88%	87.67%	100.13%
Bassetlaw	82.71%	92.04%	77.92%	90.96%
Broxtowe	89.11%	96.37%	85.77%	95.51%
Gedling	84.16%	89.52%	83.86%	84.75%
Mansfield	89.45%	88.06%	85.38%	88.06%
Newark and Sherwood	97.92%	97.98%	99.31%	98.14%
Rushcliffe	93.22%	93.95%	92.91%	100.08%
<b>County average</b>	<b>90.03%</b>	<b>93.97%</b>	<b>87.55%</b>	<b>93.95%</b>



There was an average 2.5% decrease in 3 year old children, and 1% decrease in 4 year old children registered to take up their place in the Summer term compared to the Spring term.

However, more significantly there was a decrease of 15.3% in numbers of parents applying for a new place in the Summer term for their three year old – i.e. a new Nursery starter after Easter. This compares to an average drop of 1.2% in the same period last year. Some of this can be partially attributed to the falling birth rate (see later chapters). But we can also surmise from this that parents did not take up a place this Summer because their child was not vulnerable, they were not a Key Worker, or they decided to keep the child at home for one more term due to the Public Health messages issued during the Pandemic.

	SUMMER 18	SUMMER 19	SUMMER 20	SUMMER 18 to SUMMER 19	SUMMER 19 to SUMMER 20
Newly Funded 3YO's	2,250	2,223	1,882	-1.20%	-15.34%

## Extended entitlement

Take up of the extended childcare offer has remained successful with a consistent take-up rate of 93% of children with an eligible 30 hours code accessing their extended hours in Nottinghamshire. The take-up rate has reduced slightly for the summer term 2020, during the covid-19 pandemic, reducing to 92.80% of children accessing their extended hours. There is little significant variance in this take up as it is anticipated that most of the parents classed as Critical / key workers would be eligible for the extended entitlement.

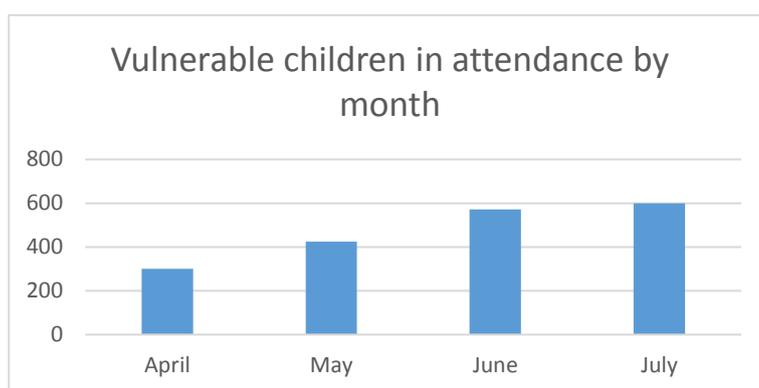
Proportions of Children Funded Extended Entitlement at Each Provider Type					
Provider Type	AUT17 to SPR19	SUM19	AUT19	SPR20	SUM20
Childminder	8%	8%	9%	6%	7%
PVI	64%	63%	61%	64%	65%
School	28%	29%	31%	30%	29%

## Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children and young people for the purposes of continued attendance during the Covid-19 outbreak were defined as those across all year groups who:

- were assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- had an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- were assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers

Numbers of vulnerable children in attendance were low at the beginning of Lockdown, but as settings were able to identify those who were classed as “otherwise vulnerable” numbers began to rise and continued to do so until the end of the Summer term. Providers worked hard to encourage these children back to their provision as soon as they could.



## Keeping in touch with the most vulnerable children.

Providers across Nottinghamshire continued to provide activities for children at home, including home play packs and using Social media to keep in touch with families.

The Early Childhood Services Quality and Attainment team made weekly contacts with all providers with a particular focus on tracking the most vulnerable children. Alongside the providers, they monitored the attendance of those children and had regular contact with Social Care, Schools and families Specialist Support, Speech and Language teams and other professionals. This was tracked and monitored centrally, and risk assessments were carried out by providers when children weren't attending.

In the Summer break, Nottinghamshire County Council provided funding for the most vulnerable children who were due to make the transition to School to attend Summer activities.

## Supplementary Funding – impact on take up and access for Vulnerable Children

As mentioned previously in this report, many children were not able to take up a new funded place in the Summer term of 2020 and this is reflected in the figures below.

### Early Years Inclusion Funding

This fund is available for children identified as having emerging, targeted and higher level needs.

Age	Number of Children		AUTUMN 19	SPRING 20	SUMMER 20	Total
2yrs	12	<b>Nottinghamshire Total 2019 -2020</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>365</b>
3yrs	64					
4yrs	81	Nottinghamshire total 2018-19 (for comparison)	82	96	119	297
5yrs	9					

During Lockdown and Recovery, Inclusion supplement continued to be paid alongside Early Years Entitlements in order to support settings to remain open for the most vulnerable children.

Each term shows a slight increase on the payments for last academic year. This is attributed to a change in the criteria to include funding to support transition, and increased practitioner confidence in early identification of need.

### Deprivation Fund

Numbers of children identified as Child in Need or on a Child Protection Plan in receipt of a termly Deprivation Fund payment in Academic Year 2019-2020.

Academic Year	Child in Need			Child Protection Plan			Eligible 2YOs and 2,3,4 year olds Looked After
	AUT19	SPR20	SUM20	AUT19	SPR120	SUM20	
<b>Notts County Total 2019 - 2020*</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>27**</b>
Notts County Total 2018 - 2019* (For comparison)	<b>AUT18</b> 89	<b>SPR19</b> 145	<b>SUM19</b> 206	<b>AUT18</b> 54	<b>SPR19</b> 79	<b>SUM19</b> 109	N/A

During Lockdown and Recovery, the Deprivation Fund Payment was not withdrawn. This is a yearly payment to enable Providers to participate in meetings and additional work associated with caring for the children known to Social Care. In summer 2020, eligibility criteria for payment from the Deprivation Fund was extended to eligible funded 2 year olds with CIN, CPP or LAC status. This has meant the number of children receiving the Deprivation Fund has increased by 5% for the academic year 2019/2020, compared with 2018/2019.

\* NB Figures increase across the terms as children once in receipt of this payment remain eligible for payments until they reach school age.

\*\* Newly eligible children in SUM20 include 17 x 3&4 YO's and 10 x funded 2YO's

### Early Years Pupil Premium

Numbers of Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (**Economic Factor**, ) in Academic Year 2019 - 2020

	<b>Autumn 19</b>	<b>Spring 20</b>	<b>Summer 20</b>
<b>Notts total 2019-20</b>	<b>1,244</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>2,237</b>
Notts total 2018-19 (for comparison)	Autumn 18	Spring 19	Summer 19
	1,221	1,708	2,150

\* NB Figures vary across the terms as children may be funded for one, two or three terms.

Numbers of Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (**Children Looked After**) in Academic Year 2019-2020

	<b>Autumn 19</b>	<b>Spring 20</b>	<b>Summer 20</b>
<b>Notts Total 2019-2020</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>
Notts Total 2018-2019 (for comparison)	Autumn 18	Spring 19	Summer 19
	15	22	26

\* NB Figures vary across the terms as children may be funded for one, two or three terms.

The average across 3 terms for all EYPP groups is 1,739 up from average of 1,714 last year. During Lockdown and Recovery, EYPP continued to be paid alongside Early Years Entitlements in order to support settings to remain open for the most vulnerable children.

### Disability Access Fund

Numbers of children accessing Disability Access Fund (for children on Disability Living Allowance) in Academic Year 2019-2020 by district.

	<b>Autumn 19</b>	<b>Spring 20</b>	<b>Summer 20</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Notts Total 2019-2020</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>87</b>
Notts Total 2018-2019 (For comparison)	Autumn 18	Spring 19	Summer 19	Total
	40	33	26	99

Notably the numbers taking up a new entitlement in the summer term 2020 dropped by 50% compared to Summer 2019. This was because children were not attending any provision, and there were no new eligible children starting nursery. In addition, Parents are required to submit evidence of their DLA entitlement which they may not have had access to during Lockdown.

## 7. Funding

### Agreed Early Years Entitlement Funding rates for 2020 - 2021

Central government increased base rates by 8p per hour for all age groups, and following local consultation this year's funding rates reflect an additional 10p per hour increase in the hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds for financial year 2020-21

- Eligible 2 years olds in all settings                    £5.31 per hour
- Eligible 3 and 4 year olds in all settings            £4.35 per hour

In addition

- Providers who had funded children in 2019-2020 received a one-off uplift in the hourly rate of 10p. This payment was made on Monday 23rd March.
- We paid the full summer term payment in April rather than in two parts. 81% of our survey respondents said they agreed / strongly agreed that this was helpful.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March, we confirmed to the sector that all Early Years Funding would remain in place should a setting have to close due to Covid-19 as announced by DfE the same day. Included in this was the supplementary funding described above to allow the most vulnerable children to continue attending.



A provider said "The free entitlement funding has been a life saver and if that had not been paid it would have been a very different picture for the business"

### Funding during Lockdown period

As expected, a number of settings were forced to close entirely during the Lockdown period. We anticipated therefore that there would be some children who need to move from one setting to another during this time, in order to maintain provision for the most vulnerable children, or children of key / critical workers. We also knew that there were *vacant* spaces where a child was not attending. In line with Government guidance we asked if settings had spare capacity to take additional children, then unoccupied funded places were re-allocated to children from other closed settings. This ensured that funding which had already been issued to the sector was allowing all children who needed a place, to find one. According to our on-line submission from providers, there were approximately 130 children accommodated in this way.

### Funding during Recovery Period

On 1<sup>st</sup> June the Government announced that Early Years settings could welcome back all children, within certain restrictions. Because of those restrictions, some settings had to "cap" the numbers of children attending, and some parents were left without childcare when they were expected to return to work. New guidance gave us the opportunity to "redistribute" funding in exceptional circumstances, where there were no vacant funded spaces available.

## Funding for Holiday cover

School / Setting holidays are a time when working parents often have to take leave or rely on Grandparents and Family members to cover their childcare needs. During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, many Critical Workers were faced with complications over the holidays, as they could no longer rely on their usual back-up arrangements.

In order to support Critical Workers, Nottinghamshire County Council made the decision to extend the Early Years Entitlement Funding to cover the Easter and May Half term breaks, when Early Years Entitlement funding does not usually apply. This was to support those Critical workers who remained at work during Lockdown, and the most vulnerable children.

Over the Summer Holidays, we made funding available to support the most vulnerable children who were about to make the transition to school. Funding was available for children to continue their attendance at the setting or to return to the setting to have support with social and emotional preparation for school.

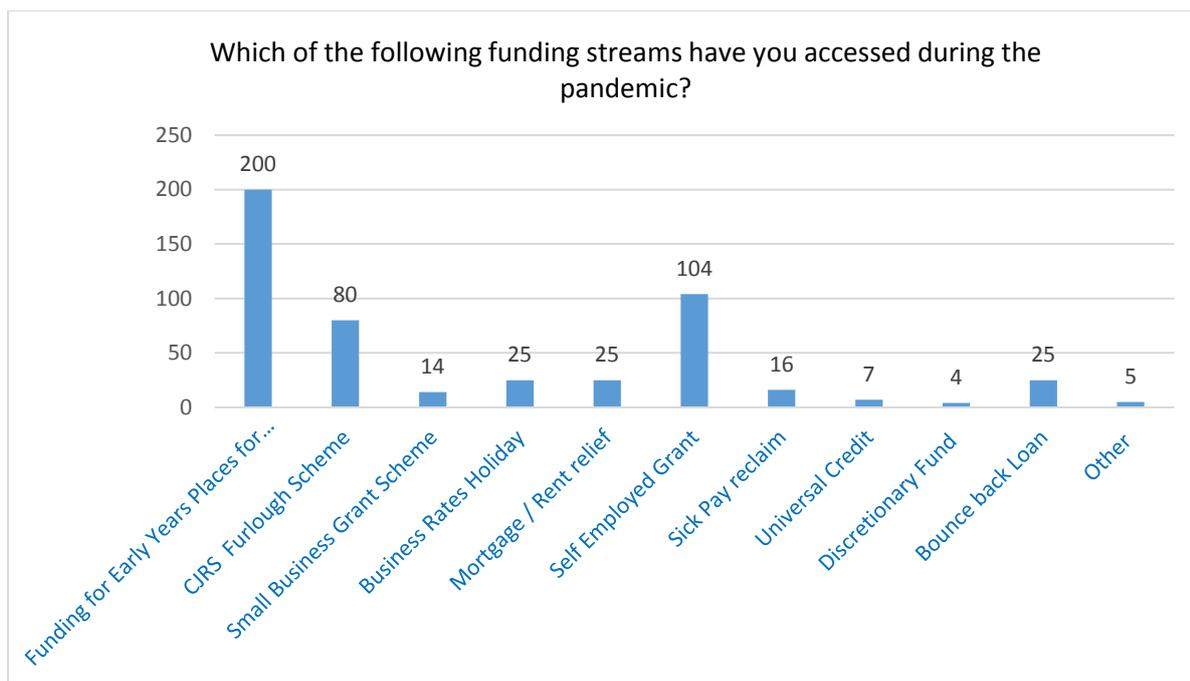
The table below shows how many children and families were supported to remain in their setting over the periods not usually covered by Early Years entitlements.

EASTER 2020 (Three weeks)						
Settings Funded	Children using places	Children of Critical workers	Vulnerable children	Children in alternative childcare	Number of hours provided	Cost to LA
143	416	370	46	35	22,000	£85,500
MAY HALF TERM (One week)						
Settings Funded	Children using places	Children of Critical workers	Vulnerable children	Children in alternative childcare	Number of hours provided	Cost to LA
139	600	525	75	40	11,900	£47,000
SUMMER HOLIDAYS (Five Weeks) Vulnerable Children only						
Settings Funded	Children using sessions	Children of Critical workers	Vulnerable children	Children in alternative childcare	Number of hours provided	Cost to LA
18	36		36			£9,500

## National Funding Streams

The Government introduced a number of schemes to support businesses and the self employed over the course of the Lockdown and Recovery periods.

Out of the 258 responses only 17 Schools and 6 Childminders had not accessed one of the additional funding streams with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self employment Grant being the most frequently accessed. 58 settings (Schools and Childminders) did not access any Early Years Funding.



## Providers' experiences of using the Grant Funding Streams

We asked some providers across the county to tell us about their experiences of using the assistance available to them Nationally.

A Childminder told us about the **Self Employment Grant**. "It was fairly easy to apply and only took 3 or 4 days until I received the money. The scheme has enabled me to maintain an income."

A Private Day Nursery told us that the Borough Council **Discretionary Grant Fund** "provided vital support in terms of cashflow and have helped to relieve some of the financial pressures of the last 6 months". "The Discretionary Grant payment was paid directly without the need to apply."

However, another Day Nursery, in a different district, said: "We were **not eligible** for any of the discretionary grant funding- In the first round we had to evidence 80% loss and 2nd round has to evidence 60% loss. Due to still being paid free entitlement funding could not evidence this amount of loss."

And in a third district, the provider said " it was long winded- I was refused the first round- I sent a begging letter and then I was successful. I needed accountant figures- it was a detailed application process- I didn't match the criteria -it wasn't easy"

**NB: The Discretionary Grants were distributed by District or Borough Councils. Each of them applied their own criteria and their own guidance and application process.**

A Day Nursery and Out of School Club told us: "We were able to keep staff being paid for 8 weeks but then would have had to make redundancies. The **CJRS (Furlough)** scheme along with the free entitlement funding enabled staff to continue to be employed and for the settings to continue to operate/ survive" About the Furlough Scheme, the provider told us that the "process was easier because he worked through it all with his accountant. It would have been difficult if accountant had not been so knowledgeable"

Another provider, a Preschool, told us that the **CJRS Furlough Scheme** “does not easily fit the EY sector and the initial guidance from DfE and HMRC gave different interpretations. It’s particularly complex if you have staff on a number of work patterns, and the accountant that does all the tax and payroll is a big help navigating the figures and the system”

A Preschool said they applied for **no support** in the end: “we initially tried for the CJRS-prepared staff, letters, accountants got everything in place. Then the guidance changed and were not entitled to very much as a high percentage of the children are funded” {public funds} “With the cost of paying the accountant, the wages top up and the complicated process made the pre-school take the decision that they would not apply”

A Day Nursery said they had applied for a **Bounce Back Loan** and told us “It’s a bit of a safety net but also places more financial pressure of loan to be repaid”

## 8. Information and support for parents

As well as Early Childhood Services own internal communications, we have worked closely with Notts Help Yourself, Families Information Service and Nottinghamshire County Council Corporate Communications teams to ensure parents and families are kept up to date with the situation in Nottinghamshire.

- The Families Information Service (FIS) exists to fulfil the statutory duty laid out in Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 to offer a service providing information, advice and assistance about childcare and other activities to benefit parents, children and young people up to the age of 20. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, Provider submissions were fed in to the data base to ensure that parents looking for Childcare had the most up to date information.
- Notts Help Yourself is a countywide website which provides a range of information for parents including childcare provision, wrap around care and holiday clubs. The information from the FIS data-base populates the website [www.nottshelpyourself.org](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org) enabling parents to search for childcare in their local area. In addition, during the Lockdown and Recovery periods, there was a focus on making sure the Home Learning tile was populated to enable parents and carers to access resources to help their child play and learn at home.
- We have produced five Fact Sheets for parents based on a summary of Government and Public Health guidance that have been distributed through our providers.
- As previously mentioned, parents were able to contact us through the Covid 19 email when they were struggling to find childcare when their usual setting was closed. Around 80 parents contacted us, and our Early Years Project Officers were able to signpost them to provision in their area that was open, either through the Families Information Service or by acting in a brokerage role to identify suitable provision. Some examples are below:

**Query:** I'm contacting you as I was informed by my son's nursery [which has closed] that I'm eligible to send him to nursery in the local area could you contact me so I can gain a placement.

**Response:** ECS spoke with another childcare provider regarding a childcare place for the child for 2 days per weeks starting as soon as possible, The setting confirmed that she will be able to accommodate a place for the child and we have confirmed that he meets the vulnerable child criteria.

**Query:** Both my wife and I are keyworkers - pharmacists working for NHS. Our daughter is normally cared for by my mother when we are both at work Thursday, and then on Friday my daughter goes to nursery. Nursery have advised they will no longer open on Friday. Is my mother still allowed to do look after her? We do not live at the same address. Otherwise one of us will be unable to work

**Response:** ECS made contact with parent re local provision and guidance on Grandparent caring for the child. ECS contacted the local school who agreed for Child to start for two days per week.

We also worked closely with colleagues from other services to support the most vulnerable children to find appropriate childcare.

#### **Case Study: Assisting a Vulnerable Child to find a Childcare Place**

A 3 year old child who was on a child protection plan was due to take up their place up at a school after the Easter Holidays, however due to Covid-19 and conducting the associated risk assessments the school were unable to offer the place to the child.

The Social worker contacted ECS for support. The child's family did not have any access to transport and the Government advice was not to use public transport unless essential. After discussions with the social worker, early years settings and a detailed postcode search the only childcare place that was available to the child was a 45 minute walk away from their home. The family would also need to drop off and collect the older sibling at school which was in the opposite direction to the setting. It was agreed that ECS would be able to support the family with the transport costs so that a taxi service could be provided to enable the family to access the childcare place.

The taxi service was funded through the Early Years Deprivation Fund, after the place and taxi had been finalised the social workers response was 'Thank you so much for this I appreciate it and I know the family do too'.

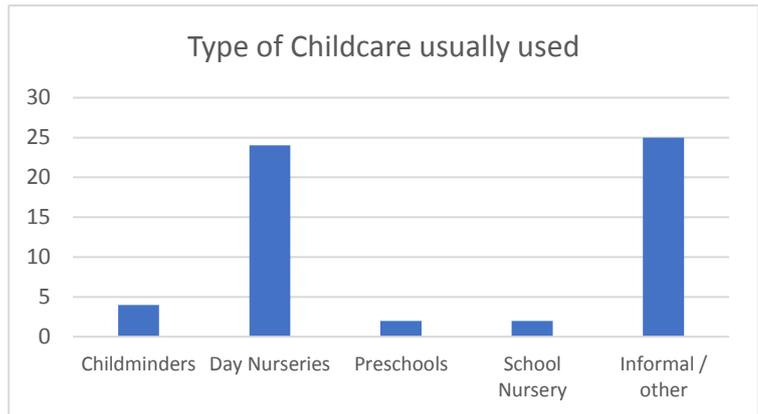
#### **Parental confidence**

Our Children's Centre team asked 57 parents to identify how they had used childcare during the Lockdown and Recovery periods and to find out how they felt about returning to Childcare in the Autumn terms. This was done by direct contact through a structured conversation.

Of the parents we spoke to, many of them usually used informal and family childcare.

25% of the parents we spoke to were critical workers

22% had children who were classed as a Vulnerable Child.



Only 7% of the group used childcare during the Lockdown period between April and May. This rose to 22% in the recovery period June and July.

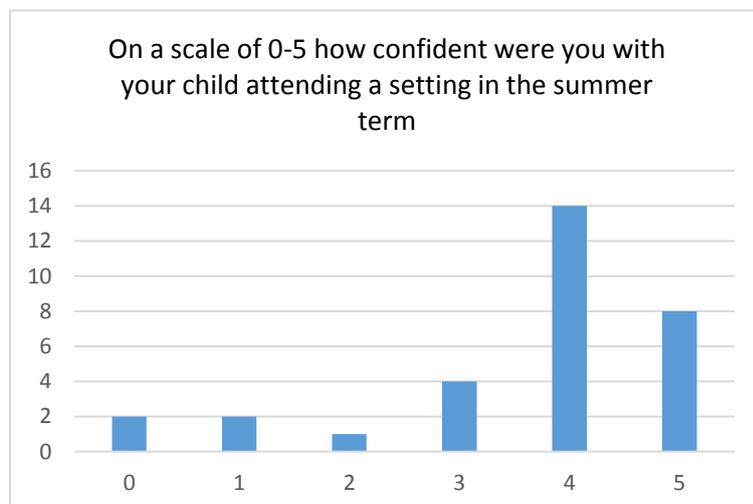
The reasons given for not attending broadly broke down in to

- Not confident to
- Not eligible to (not a critical worker or had a vulnerable child)
- Provider was closed
- Parent or family member was shielding

“It was recommended to stay at home if you could and Dad was not able to work so there was not a need to send him”

“My Husband was on furlough. And it didn't feel safe

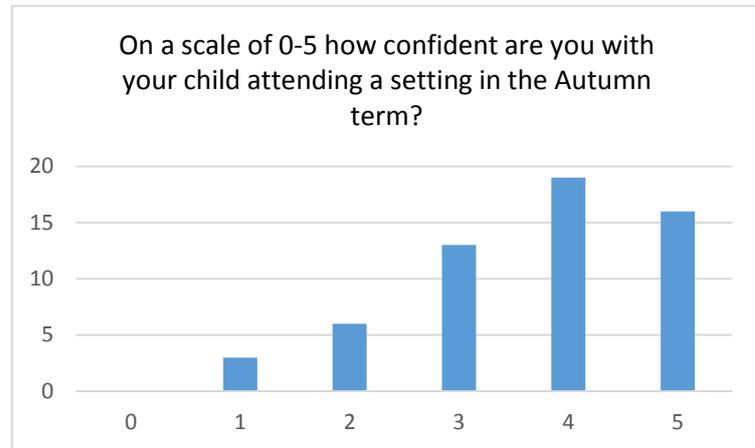
We asked parents about their confidence levels during the **Lockdown and Recovery** Periods.



Those who did not consider using childcare or did not attend childcare in the Summer terms did not score this category. Only 31 parents responded to this question.

We asked the same question about confidence levels about using childcare in the **Autumn term**.

All the participants scored their confidence rating about taking children back to Childcare in the Autumn term. Generally, confidence levels are much higher, and we asked parents to give us their reasons for their scores.



Those that were not confident gave a broad response but generally said that they were not confident in understanding the government guidance and also feared a “second spike” in some form.

- Fear of Covid 19 numbers rising
- Fear of another spike during autumn and winter
- Mixed messages about children getting Covid 19 (Media and Government)
- Confused with Government guidance
- Concerns about people not following guidance such as wearing masks

“Our family will be attending 5 different schools, plus the older children will be in a bubble of 300.”

However, a significant proportion said they were confident about returning to Childcare in the Autumn term.

- Confident in the way this has been managed
- Generally confident with government guidance now
- Trusts the nursery
- Implementing the guidance is good at the Day Nursery
- Not overly worried any more

“I am pleased with my child care and have no worries.”

Nottinghamshire County Council has been actively promoting the take up of childcare places through social media posts on Facebook and Twitter and have promoted positive messages from parents who have begun using childcare again.

“ An amazing welcome back for my daughter post COVID-19.

All the staff have adapted beautifully, they are happy, positive, encouraging and make everything feel as normal as possible for the little ones.

My daughter can't wait to get there each morning. Don't be afraid to send your children back, nursery have got it covered.

”

“ Seeing Rosie's face of pure delight when we went back to nursery for the first time, I knew we had made the right decision in starting back.

I didn't even get a backwards glance goodbye!

You run a fantastic nursery, thank you for all you have done to make this as easy as possible.

Amy (Rosie's mum)

”

## 9. Sustainability

All of our Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provision relies on income from Early Years funding as well as fees paid by parents.

### Early Years Funding during Lockdown and Recovery

As previously mentioned, providers who had funded children in 2019-2020 were due to receive an uplift in the hourly rate of 10p. This payment was made on Monday 23rd March. We paid the full summer term payment in April rather than in two parts in order to support providers' cash flow in the early days of the Lockdown period.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March, we confirmed to the sector that all Early Years Funding would remain in place should a setting have to close due to Covid-19 as announced by DfE the same day. On 1<sup>st</sup> June the revised guidance gave us the opportunity to “redistribute” funding in exceptional circumstances.

For Autumn 2020, Guidance that Government issued on 20<sup>th</sup> July suggested that Local Authorities could pay providers based on their Head Count from Autumn 2019, to take in to account any loss of anticipated take up this coming term.

*“The intention is to fund on the basis of ‘as if autumn term 2020 were happening normally’. In order to do this, local authorities might, for example, use the numbers of children in places in the previous autumn to inform funding levels this autumn.”*

Approximately two thirds of Nottinghamshire providers have been paid based on Autumn 2019 headcount hours because their numbers attending in Autumn 2020 are significantly lower. We have paid 80% upfront with the remaining balancing payment due in December, again, to support Cashflow.

## Fees and Parent Paid Income

The majority of PVI providers have a reliance on fee-paying parents, particularly Day Nurseries and Childminders who care for children not always in the Early Years Funding age brackets (i.e. babies under two and before and after school care). Nationally, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies<sup>2</sup> parent fees account for an average of 64% of income for each setting.

Each provision has its own fee structure and contract with parents so, when families stopped attending, the providers were faced with difficult decisions about whether to make a charge, if any to those parents. Because there are so many variables in providers' policies, this is impossible to measure.

However, we have anecdotal evidence that there were a number of approaches to charging:

- Some provision continued to charge parents in full for their place
- Some provision charged a "retainer"
- Some provision charged a percentage of the fee (usually based on percentage not claimed for Furloughed staff or through the Self Employment grant)
- Some provision did not charge at all
- Most providers worked on a case by case basis to ensure parents were treated fairly, whilst balancing the need to sustain the provision for the future

A provider's approach to this was dependent on a number of factors.

- Whether they remained open or closed
- Numbers of children in attendance, Critical workers and Fee-paying families.
- Running costs of the building / overheads for the business
- Staffing costs and contracts (some on zero hours / casual contracts)
- Percentage of claims made as above, through Furlough or Self-employment grant

One Pre-School told us "For the first 6 weeks of lockdown, we gave the parents a choice, some paid the full amount, others paid 50%, others paid nothing. For the last 7 weeks of lockdown we didn't charge parents any fees at all."

Another said, "No charges were made, but we still had to pay rent to the community hall."

A Childminder said, "One family paid voluntary half of their fees, but I didn't ask them to."

One Nursery said, "Payment of fees by families whose children were unable to attend was discretionary. Any fees (partial or otherwise) that were paid were then credited to future attendance at the nursery."

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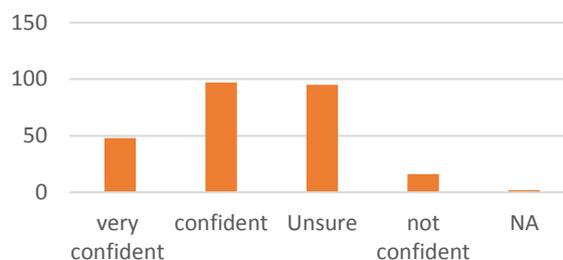
<sup>2</sup> IFS: Challenges for the childcare market: the implications of COVID-19 for childcare providers in England. September 2020

## Sustainability in the months ahead

We asked providers to tell us about their confidence about sustainability in the months ahead. 36% said they were unsure and commented this depended on take up in forthcoming months. 37% said they were confident with 18% saying they were very confident.

At the moment I can't see past December, I'm just trying to get to that point.

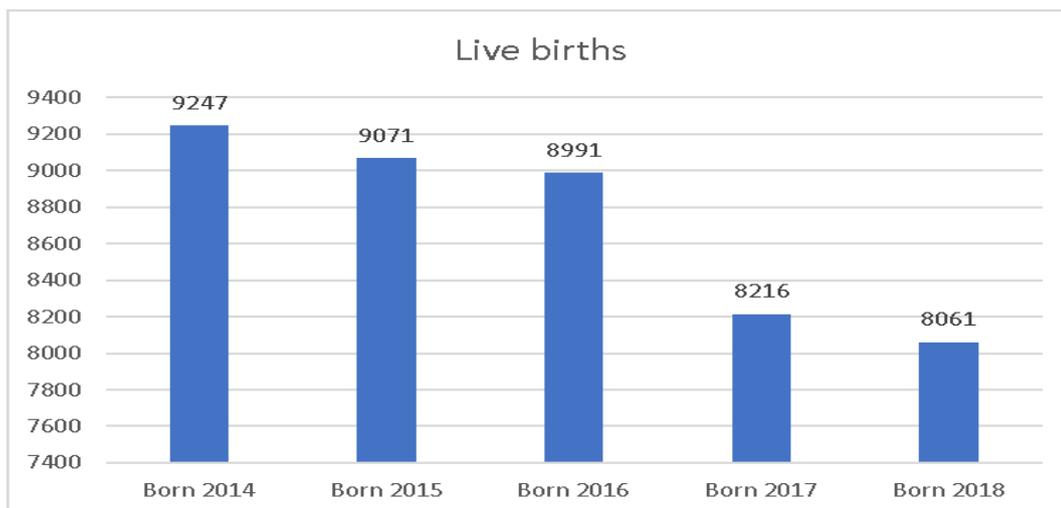
How would you describe your confidence about your sustainability going forward, for example by the end of the Autumn term?



As demonstrated in previous sections there are further challenges

- Autumn is always a term when there are less children – as large cohorts of children start school. Most providers rely on their Summer term income to see them through the quieter term, but as stated above, the summer term income for the majority of settings was drastically affected.
- Traditionally, the Summer term is when provision (particularly Preschools and Charity run organisations) hold fundraising activity to boost reserves and provide for additional activities across the year
- Parents are not all confident about using childcare and the numbers of children taking up their funded entitlements has dropped significantly. We anticipate on early findings that there are 10% less Children in Early Years provision in the Autumn term compared to Autumn 2019.
- The number of Schools registering to provide Early Years provision for children aged 3 and 4 continues to rise, impacting on the market share for PVI providers
- In Summer Term 2019 we reported that there were 2,500 x 15 hour places for 2,3 and 4 year olds vacant across the county. In Spring term 2020 there were already over 2,800 x 15 hour places for 2,3 and 4 year olds vacant across the county.
- According to the Office of national Statistics, nationally and reflected across Nottinghamshire, the birth rate continues to drop<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [13 February 2020]



### Permanent Closures:

The Pandemic has left the Early Years Sector nationally in a precarious position. A National survey conducted by the Early Years Alliance<sup>4</sup> in July 2020 found that 69% of providers were expecting to operate at a loss over the next six months, while 25% of respondents felt that it was 'somewhat unlikely' or 'very unlikely' that they would be operating in 12 months' time.

In Nottinghamshire 11 Early Years providers (5 Preschools, 1 Day Nursery, 1 Out of School club and 4 childminders) have ceased delivering childcare since March 2020. Not all the closures are attributed entirely to the Covid-19 Pandemic, but it has had an impact on settings who were already financially vulnerable. There are examples below:

Pre-School: The setting was already struggling in terms of sustainability. The situation around COVID 19 has now made it impossible to carry on. Numbers are extremely low with only 3 children on the waiting list for October half term.

Day Nursery: The provider's bills for pensions, insurance, wages have gone up considerably. In September they have just 6 children who need a place (15 hours funding only). They will have no funds to pay the staff after the end of September. The children usually leave to go to school nursery at the age of 3 and rarely take their 3 or 4 year entitlement at the setting. They reopened fully on the 1st June 2020 after having closed from 25th March 2020. They were unable to apply for the CJRS scheme or Furlough staff as the less than 5% of their funding came from parents paying for their child's place.

<sup>4</sup> THE FORGOTTEN SECTOR. The financial impact of coronavirus on early years providers in England. June 2020

Pre School: The setting was struggling financially and had recruitment issues. Numbers are low for September. They stayed partially open during lockdown. There's not enough money to employ staff even if projected child numbers increase.

Childminder: Her own daughters health reasons, so does not want to take additional risks with Covid19. Being closed during lockdown was very difficult with no income. She has lost business due to parents home working, and the additional cost of PPE and Insurance was too high compared to income.

Particularly concerning, and as Covid-19 has highlighted, is that those settings in the most disadvantaged areas usually have a high proportion of vulnerable children accessing provision and less fee paying parents.

Of the 11 providers who have closed, 6 are in communities where there are high levels of disadvantage and higher than average numbers of children identified as vulnerable, for example, eligible 2 year olds. In addition to those who have closed, there are concerns around 8 further providers who are struggling to sustain their business in disadvantaged communities.

## **10. Conclusions**

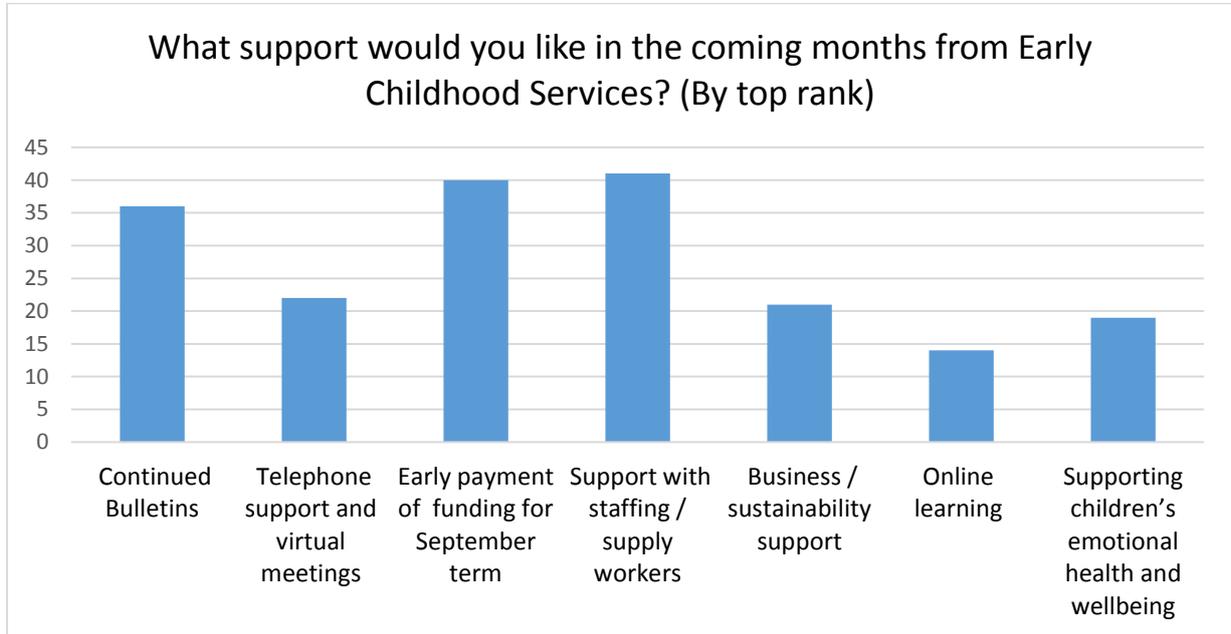
The main body of this report is based on findings from the Summer term 2020. All the evidence was collected during the summer months and relates to the period between the beginning of April and the end of July.

On the surface in Nottinghamshire, the picture has been positive with a sufficient supply of Childcare, higher than national average take up and fewer settings closing as compared to national estimates.

However, the rise in infection rates and further restrictions imposed on the County in the coming months are expected to have a significant impact. It is important for the Council to continue engagement with the Early Years Sector to best understand and monitor the impact on their sustainability and the attainment levels of young children.

## 11. Actions and recommendations

We asked our providers what they needed from early Childhood Services and the Local Authority in the coming months.



Early Childhood Services (ECS) continues to support the Early Years Sector in the ongoing and ever changing circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 Pandemic.

ECS continues to produce weekly Bulletins for the Early Years Sector and respond to request for information for Parents and Families. The ECS Early Years Quality and Attainment team continues to have regular conversations with settings until such time as face to face visits can recommence. In the Autumn term, we have increased the number of “virtual” meetings with the providers to focus our offer of support to those most in need. A series of online briefings and training courses are being offered in the absence of face to face training opportunities. <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/early-years-and-childcare/childcare-providers/early-years-education-and-childcare-training>

What else we need to do:

Supply

- Carry out further analysis of the sufficiency of Early Years provision across all areas of the county considering:
  - The continued drop in the birth rate
  - The over-supply in some areas demonstrating over 2,800 spare places for 2,3 and 4 years olds reported in the Spring Term.
- Target support for providers working in areas of high levels of disadvantage and where vulnerable children would be adversely affected if there were no provision available
- Continue to monitor the attendance of the most vulnerable children using tools developed and enhanced during the Lockdown and recovery periods

## Sustainability

- Support the Early Years Sector to encourage families “Back in to Childcare” and promote the take up of childcare as a choice that benefits the child’s development
  - Revisit the 2 year old campaign and resources
  - Continue to work with Corporate Communications to develop NHY and Social Media posts.
  - Engage fully with Children’s Centre teams to provide a brokerage role.
- Provide additional and targeted support for providers who need to change their operating models to accommodate changing parents’ needs, such as more parents working from home, in order to remain viable
- Continue to link with the Life Chances Partnership to explore how Business Support can be provided, and to highlight the challenges faced by the Early Years Sector with District and Borough Councils and partners.
- Explore how Nottinghamshire County Council can continue to fulfil the duty to provide sufficient childcare places for the most disadvantaged communities through negotiation with colleagues in Place to scope incentives for Early years Providers operating in our buildings . In many of these areas, Nottinghamshire County Council have commissioned Early Years providers to operate out of Council run properties to support us to fulfil that duty.

## Funding

- Early Years Funding for the Autumn term has been paid 80% up front and in line with Government guidance, was based on the head count from 2019 or 2020 whichever was the highest. Analyse and plan for the expected reduction in Early Years Entitlement funding paid to providers in the Spring term, when Government Guidance states that funding reverts back to being paid on actual numbers in attendance (and we anticipate this to be around 10% less)
- Continue to link with the Life Chances Partnership and Local Authority Economic Regeneration teams, to explore and promote what further external, local or national business grants may be available.

## Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021

- Carry out a full and comprehensive CSA in 2021 in line with usual actions
- Carry our detailed consultation with parents on using Childcare and Early Education provision



**30 November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 15**

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

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

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

1. The report informs Members of the content of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report 2019/20, which is available as a Background Paper, and asks the Committee to consider whether there are any further actions it requires in relation to the information contained in the report.

#### **Information**

2. Under statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*<sup>1</sup>, the safeguarding partners (local authority, police and clinical commissioning groups) have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
3. The safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
4. The NSCP Annual Report 2019/20 has therefore been prepared in accordance with the guidance and agreed by the NSCP Strategic Leadership Group (SLG). In line with local policy the annual report is being presented to the respective governance arrangements for each of the safeguarding partners. The report has also been published on the NSCP website and a copy provided to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care.
5. In January 2020 the Lead Representatives for the safeguarding partners appointed a new Independent Scrutineer following transitional measures whilst the new safeguarding arrangements were embedded. The Annual Report includes the Independent Scrutineer's assessment of the effectiveness of the leadership by the safeguarding partners.

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<sup>1</sup> Published in June 2018

6. A Joint Strategic Leadership Group has been established with the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership and this meets annually to identify and coordinate any cross cutting issues for the Partnerships. This group has received assurances regarding the action being taken in response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), which published its report in relation to the Nottinghamshire Councils strand of the Inquiry during the year, and will be reflecting on the learning from the Inquiry and effectiveness of the response by relevant agencies at their next meeting.
7. The funding of the NSCP, which includes contributions by partner agencies, has been reviewed by the SLG and a breakdown of income and expenditure is included within the report.
8. A Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG), with senior representation from across the partnership, has monitored safeguarding performance and coordinated a significant amount of improvement work which is detailed fully within the report.
9. During 2019/20 the NSCP has delivered a wide-ranging programme of multi-agency training courses and seminars. 57 training events have been delivered covering core safeguarding practice and specialist areas of practice with 2,346 practitioners attending from 38 different organisations across Nottinghamshire. A range of 21 different e-learning modules have been approved for use by members of the Partnership and over 8,060 e-learning modules were completed during the year. A new on-line booking system has also been introduced providing a better and easier way for delegates to book their training.
10. The NSCP continues to provide procedures and guidance on a wide range of safeguarding issues for practitioners to follow. During the year, three updates to the interagency safeguarding procedures were completed to ensure that the guidance remains current and up to date. Updated content included new chapters on child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse.
11. A key responsibility for the NSCP is to commission and undertake case reviews according to national criteria. An initial Rapid Review is undertaken in relation to all serious child safeguarding cases and where necessary a more in-depth Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) is commissioned to identify any improvements to practice that are needed. During the reporting period, seven Rapid Reviews have been completed and submitted to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (NCSPRP) for their consideration. One CSPR (RN19) was commissioned and this has now been completed and published. A further CSPR was recommended and this has been pending to allow the conclusion of other proceedings. The NCSPRP has agreed with the findings and decisions from all the Rapid Reviews undertaken and the learning identified, and action taken in response, is detailed within the report.
12. The safeguarding partnership improvement priorities for 2020/23 are set out within the final section of the safeguarding arrangements annual report and focus on issues identified through the learning and improvement framework. The new safeguarding arrangements will also be reviewed, in line with statutory guidance.

## **Other Options Considered**

13. No other options have been considered as the publication of an annual report is a statutory requirement.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

14. The report provides the opportunity for the Committee to consider any further actions arising from the information contained in the report.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. 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**

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

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That Committee considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

**Colin Pettigrew**  
**Corporate Director, Children and Families**

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

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## **Constitutional Comments (CEH 12/11/20)**

17. The report falls within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee under their terms of reference.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

18. 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.

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2019/20 is available at: - <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp/about-the-partnership>

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

All.

C1404

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020****Agenda Item: 16****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****LOCAL TRANSFORMATION PLAN FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH - UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the Committee with an update of progress on implementing the Local Transformation Plan for children and young people's emotional and mental health.

**Information**

2. Local areas, led by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), have been required to have a system-wide local transformation plan (LTP) for children and young people's emotional and mental health since 2015. The current LTP can be accessed here: <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-children-and-families-alliance/mental-health>. This plan is the fifth iteration for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. Nottinghamshire's Childrens Integrated Commissioning Hub based in Public Health co-ordinate the implementation of this plan. NHS England has requested the plan is refreshed by March 2021. The plan will update on the achievement of the NHS Five Year Forward View (2015) priorities (required to be completed by 2020/21) and the work in place to ensure the Long Term Plan (2019) priorities for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing are achieved by 2023/24 in addition to any areas identified by partners locally.
3. The Children and Young People's Mental Health Executive comprises representatives from CCGs, Local Authority Children's Services, Public Health, local providers, NHS England and Elected Members from Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council.
4. The plan is system-wide and covers services commissioned and provided by the Local Authorities (Public Health and Children's Service functions), local CCGs and NHS England. Progress in implementing the plan is reported to Children and Young People's Committee in the context of the Local Authority's role in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

**Covid-19**

5. Local mental health services have responded quickly to the Covid-19 crisis and adapted their offer to include telephone and on-line support, including group work. Direct face to face

support has still been delivered to those at high-risk during the crisis. All services remained open to referrals and followed guidance released by NHS England. Providers have shared that some children, young people and families did not want to access telephone or virtual support, and services are working towards re-introducing face to face services where safe, in line with national guidance.

6. Whilst Covid-19 has presented some challenges in terms of service delivery, it has also provided opportunities to develop improvements, which can be continued beyond the crisis period. Commissioners will continue to work with providers, to identify these opportunities and how they can be embedded into service delivery; it is likely this will focus on young people having more choice over how and where support is received. In recent months there has been a focus on sharing that services are still open and able to provide support to children and young people.

### **Five year forward view achievements**

7. As The Five Year Forward View (2015) programme concludes, a summary of Nottinghamshire's achievement against the targets within the programme are as follows:
  - **Ensure a Joint agency LTP is aligned to system plans and refreshed annually.** The plan is on track to be refreshed by March 2021. The plan will reflect the interdependencies between other strategic plans, such as those for Youth Justice, children and young people who are looked after, children and young people who have SEN (Special Educational Needs) and those who have autism and / or intellectual disability (the Transforming Care cohort).
  - **At least 70,000 additional children and young people each year will receive evidence-based treatment – representing an increase in access to NHS-funded community services to meet the needs of at least 35% of those with diagnosable mental health conditions by 2020/2021.** In 2019/20 the area achieved performance of 27.7% against a target of 34%. In response to this underperformance the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS) has undertaken a piece of work to increase its commissioned capacity and improve data quality, which will ensure all commissioned activity is contributing to the target. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are forecasting to achieve the access target for 2020/21. In order to increase performance this year capacity has been addressed, the Small Steps Service, currently provided by Family Action, has been commissioned by Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CCG to enhance the support available for children and young people with needs that may be indicative of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The service supports the local neurodevelopmental pathway by providing options of support such as 1:1 support, workshops, parenting programmes, peer support, online and telephone support. After the support package is complete the service identifies if there are ongoing needs and makes onward referrals if required. The service has continued to provide support to parents virtually during Covid-19. This has been particularly important as there has been an increase in need for services for this cohort since the onset of Covid-19.
  - In Bassetlaw, A Place to Call Our Own (APTCOO) have been consulting with parents and carers to develop the service and workshops for pre and post ASD/ADHD diagnosis and children and young people with behaviours indicative of these conditions. They

have also been providing a virtual offer of support and face to face where it has been safe and appropriate.

- **Ensure there is a children and young people's crisis response that meets the needs of under 18-year olds.** Nottinghamshire has a children and young people's crisis, home treatment and liaison service. The team provides crisis support within the community, intensive home treatment and liaison within the acute hospitals to ensure children and young people receive urgent treatment.
- **Achieve 2020/21 target of 95% of children and young people with an eating disorder accessing treatment within 1 week for urgent cases and 4 weeks for routine cases.** The child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) Eating Disorder service has been re-designed and is commissioned to provide treatment within the waiting time standard. Where the waiting time standard has not been met, exception reporting is obtained to inform further improvement. Analysis of these reports has shown that this is mainly due to patient choice.

### **Communications and engagement**

8. The communications sub-group of the Children and Young People's Executive co-ordinated communications around Mental Health Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day and World Suicide Prevention Day to ensure that the public are aware that services are open and accessible. An all-ages mental health and wellbeing page on the Nottinghamshire County Council website can be accessed here [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/mentalhealthwellbeing](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/mentalhealthwellbeing)
9. Nottinghamshire young people will be taking part in a workshop with Young Minds and NHS England to capture their views on the design and delivery of digital services. This will then be used to develop some local guiding principles for children and young people's Mental Health Service professionals, to inform future development and delivery of digital mental health support for children and young people in the region.
10. Embedding learning from consultation, engagement and communication has been a key focus in the last six months. As part of the local recovery response to Covid-19, further engagement with children and young people around their experiences of Covid-19 and its impact on their mental health has been undertaken. Local youth group MH2K were commissioned to lead this work. The focus was on access to CAMHS and social media, Key messages include the need to still provide face to face services, but to also offer choice, the need to have access to support in school and an increase in communication about services via social media. Young people also reported mixed experiences of lockdown, whilst some reported it had impacted negatively on their mental health, others reported it had no impact or they had felt better, as their social anxiety had reduced, and exam pressures had been lifted. This feedback has been shared with the Children and Young People's Mental Health Executive, the Children's Health Network and wider partners and will be used to inform the development of the LTP refresh, which will inform communications strategies wider service developments across the system.

## **Emotional mental health and wellbeing support for school aged children**

11. In Nottinghamshire, CCG, CAMHS, Education and Local Authority partners have worked together to secure funding for six Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), covering all localities in Nottinghamshire. The aim of the support teams is to ensure timely support is available to children and young people by providing them with early intervention and preventing the escalation of needs, where possible. Funding is fixed and protected for these teams until 2023/24. The service model was informed by local children and young people. A timetable for the rollout of the teams is outlined below in **Table 1**.

**Table 1 - MHST Mobilisation in Nottinghamshire**

Wave	Coverage	Training and mobilisation period	Fully operational
Wave One	Nottingham North and East (One MHST)  Rushcliffe (One MHST)	January 2019 - December 2019	December 2019
Wave Two	Nottingham City (Two MHSTs)  Mansfield and Ashfield (One MHST)	September 2019 - August 2020	November 2020
Wave Three	Newark and Sherwood (One MHST)  Nottingham West (One MHST)  Bassetlaw (One MHST)	January 2021 - December 2021	January 2022

12. In total, approximately 111 schools will receive support from a MHST, as well as some pupils in alternative provision. These NHS funded teams will provide early intervention and support for children and young people with mild to moderate mental health needs on or near school sites. MHST staff have worked with schools during Covid-19 and have developed self-referral mechanisms to the teams for children and young people, parents and carers, whilst schools were closed. Whilst the operationalisation of the teams has been relatively recent and delivery has been interrupted by school closures, referrals to the teams are increasing and they are expected to increase timely access for children and young people to mental health support.
13. Early evidence indicates the teams have had a positive impact on both schools and pupils. Feedback from children, young people and parents and carers indicates they value the service being offered locally, they found staff approachable and empathetic and that accessing the MHSTs helped them to feel less isolated and more able to deal with the challenges of school life, including academic pressures. Schools have also given positive feedback on work that has been completed during the pandemic, for example, workshops were delivered in the Summer term around staff mental health and wellbeing and transition. This has now resulted in schools developing their own staff mental health and wellbeing policies, which will then enable them to effectively support their pupils. Schools also report the transition workshops were delivered at a key point of time and increased their understanding of how to incorporate wellbeing into transition planning and how to manage

anxiety around transition. The workshop used a train the trainer model, which enables staff to cascade the learning in their schools.

14. Another key function of the MHSTs is to support the establishment of schools to identify and implement a Senior Mental Health Lead role. Senior Mental Health Leads network groups for the MHST schools in Rushcliffe, Gedling and Mansfield and Ashfield have been established. These networks have been meeting fortnightly at the school's request during the Covid-19 crisis, in order to support staff wellbeing and to help provide staff with a forum to discuss cases and develop best practice around children and young people's mental health.
15. MHSTs and CAMHS teams have also supported the development of the Wellbeing in Education Return programme. Locally, this is led by the Educational Psychology Service and will offer training to all schools around supporting children and young people's mental health via two webinars. Partners will also develop a Local Offer for Children and Young People's Mental Health, which will be completed by March 2021. This work will complement the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families programmes, which provides training to schools. Workshops took place from January 2020 with 80 schools, including alternative provision and colleges. The programme aims to help partners (CCGs, other service providers and local authorities) work together with schools and colleges to provide timely mental health support to children and young people. It works to empower professionals and support staff by brokering contact, sharing expertise and developing a joint vision for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Face to face workshops were paused in March, due to Covid-19, but will be delivered virtually in November.
16. Building children and young people's resilience is a key to supporting children and young people manage their emotional health and wellbeing. The academic resilience programmes that have been commissioned by Public Health, aimed to equip schools with the skills to build resilience within their practice and ensure this approach is sustained; this programme is set conclude in March 2021. In Bassetlaw, Bassetlaw CCG has commissioned Each Amazing Breath virtual offer and a Take 5 Anywhere App to directly work with schools; this model works directly within children and young people within schools.

### **Ensuring inclusivity in support**

17. Partners within Nottinghamshire have been working to ensure support is tailored to meet the needs of all young people. Two pilots have been in place since January 2019, funded by NHS England, that bring together Clinical Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Youth Justice. From a Clinical Psychology perspective, the aim is to support the Youth Justice service to understand the impact of trauma, identify young people who have experienced trauma and support their additional needs with clinical psychology input. The aim of the Speech and Language Therapy is to support the Youth Justice service to understand the impact of speech and language needs, identify young people who may require additional support and develop tools to assess need. The pilots are currently in their evaluation phase.
18. As of October 2020, 368 Nottinghamshire Children in Care (CiC) and Care Leavers have been referred into the You Know Your Mind (YKYM) programme, with 333 now in receipt of a personal budget. Their progress continues to be evaluated locally. Nottingham Trent

University undertook an external evaluation of this approach and interviewed 403 children and young people. The evaluation found that the approach taken by You Know Your Mind provides an alternative method of support to improve children and young people's wellbeing and service planners and commissioners are using this learning to inform their plans for 2021/2022.

### **Future Priorities and next steps**

19. A number of areas require further transformation by 2023/24 in line with the NHS Long Term Plan (2019) and will be a priority of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Executive. Work has already begun to take place on the key areas, which are as follows;
  - **345,000 additional children and young people aged 0-25 years will have access to support via NHS-funded mental health services and school or college-based Mental Health Support Teams (MHST).** The section on Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing support for school aged children outlines the work that has been undertaken to begin to test this new service model.
  - **There will be 24/7 mental health crisis provision for children and young people that combines crisis assessment, brief response and intensive home treatment functions.** In preparation for Winter it is planned that 24/7 in reach will be provided to the acute hospitals. In April 2020 a 24/7 all ages crisis helpline was launched.
  - **There will be a comprehensive offer for 0-25 year olds that reaches across mental health services for children and young people and adults.** A system wide 0-25 event was held at the end of January, where partners came together to look at models of delivery of this agenda. Further work has since been undertaken, which has identified good practice around disorder specific presentation, where a keyworker is in place. This learning and work undertaken by members of the CYP Mental Health Executive will be used to further develop local pathways, ensuring that as young people move into young adulthood they have the appropriate and joined up support.
  - **The 95% waiting time standard for children and young people's eating disorder service referral to treatment achieved in 2020/21 will continue to be maintained** and service improvements will be undertaken to further develop the local offer, including those children and young people with avoidant restrictive intake disorder (ARFID).
  - **Children and young people's mental health plans will align with those for children and young people with learning disability, autism, special educational needs (SEN), children and young people's services, and Health and Justice.** The Children and Young People's Mental Health Executive will continue to strengthen alignments with other strategic partnership groups.
20. In order to ensure successful delivery of the Long Term Plan priority areas, the local system worked with NHS Improvement to participate in a service optimisation visit. A full report of recommendations will be shared in November, but it is expected that there will be recommendations around further improving data processes in relation to the mental health services data set (MHSDS), understanding local capacity and demand at a system level and working to resolve issues and the interface between adults and children's services.

## **Other Options Considered**

21. No other options have been considered. This plan is in line with NHS England planning requirements.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

22. Children and young people's emotional and mental health is an issue for all services working with children and young people across local government, health, schools, police and voluntary, community and independent sectors. This is reflected in the content of the local transformation plan. It also falls within the Council's statutory duties in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

23. 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**

24. Implementation of this plan will contribute to reducing health inequalities for vulnerable children and young people.

## **Financial Implications**

25. There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **Implications in relation to the NHS Constitution**

26. Implementation of this plan is in line with the NHS Constitutional Standards.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

27. Implementation of this plan will contribute to reducing health inequalities for vulnerable children and young people.

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

28. Implementation of this plan will contribute to reducing the risk of harm to children and young people with emotional or mental health needs.

## **Implications for Service Users**

29. Implementation of this plan will improve the response of services to children and young people with mental health needs and thus improve outcomes.

## RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Committee members consider whether there are any actions they require in relation to issues contained within the report
- 2) Committee agrees to receive a follow up report in the next six months and that this be included in the work programme.

**Jonathan Gribbin**  
**Director of Public Health**

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### **Constitutional Comments (LW 13/11/20)**

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

### **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

31. 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.

[Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Transformation Plan – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17th June 2019](#)

Future in Mind - Department of Health (March 2015)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-mental-health-services-for-young-people>

Five Year Forward View for Mental Health – Mental Health Taskforce Strategy - NHS England (February 2016)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf>

Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper - Department of Health/ Department for Education (December 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

Long Term Plan (2019)

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/>

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

All.

C1408





**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 17**

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

**REMODELLING PRACTICE WITHIN THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
DEPARTMENT THROUGH STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides a progress update of the Remodelling Practice programme within the Children and Families Department.

**Information**

2. On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the Committee approved funding to support improvements in the quality of social work practice.
3. On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018, an update was provided to the Committee on the establishment of a programme of work entitled 'Remodelling Practice'. The purpose of the Remodelling Practice programme is to create a sustainable delivery model for services for vulnerable children and families which is high quality and financially sustainable. The programme aims to develop a positive working environment and provide teams with the tools and support to do their jobs in the most effective and efficient way, enabling the improvement of outcomes for children and families.
4. On 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the Committee approved a proposal to embed strengths-based practice as a consistent practice model within Youth, Families and Social Work. Subsequently, this has been adopted as the practice model across the Children and Families Department.
5. On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the Committee approved external promotion of the Department's strengths-based practice model.

**Embedding strengths-based practice**

6. Strengths-based practice is centred on working 'with' colleagues, partners and children, rather than 'doing to', to assess, plan and manage work with children and families.
7. In 2020, work has focused on building on our existing strengths-based practice to create consistency and ensure that processes, workforce development and the way we work with each other reflects this approach. This has included the following achievements:

- group reflective supervision implementation across frontline social care teams, and planning to embed within other youth, families and social work teams. This allows teams to spend time together reflecting on their work through the eyes of a child, using an informed strengths-based approach. The sessions support the building of relationships and peer support within teams to find alternative solutions and progress plans for children.
  - beginning the delivery of a comprehensive training plan which incorporates learning for all staff around strengths-based approaches and how these will be embedded across the service, as well as ensuring that there are learning and development opportunities to gain practice knowledge and skills. This has included a virtual full department development session; further information is provided at **paragraph 8** of this report.
  - successful pilot and implementation of Schwartz Rounds, a multi-disciplinary forum which allows workers to come together to reflect upon and discuss the emotional impact of the work they do. This work has been undertaken in partnership with the Point of Care Foundation and Cardiff University.
  - engaged with children and workers about the language which we use and the impact of this, and development of a plan to embed preferred language into practice.
  - adopted a strengths-based approach to planning assessments across district child protection teams.
  - introduction of revised Personal Education Plans for children who are Looked After which align with a strengths-based approach.
  - consulted with teams about the information they require and included this within the launch of new intranet pages which are a hub for information and tools relating to strengths-based practice, latest policies and guidance.
  - celebrated success of our colleagues and the children we work with through Covid-19.
8. To mark the Department's commitment to embedding a strengths-based practice model, a full-service strengths-based practice development event was held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020; this is the second annual event with the first taking place in October 2019. The event featured a nationally and internationally known key note speaker, Professor David Shemmings, who is an expert in relationally-based social work theory, research and practice and allowed the workforce time to reflect on how they will further embed a strengths-based way of working. The event was attended virtually by over 600 colleagues, including Councillor Tracey Taylor, Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee, who introduced the event and pledged her continued support to this way of working. The event was the largest virtual session the Council has held to date. As of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 97% of attendees said that strengths-based practice has had a positive impact on their work over the last year.
9. Colleagues who attended the practice development day were asked to identify key learning from the event and how they will embed this in their practice. The feedback from staff will be incorporated into the next stages of the plan to further embed a strengths-based practice model, which also includes the following priority work areas:

- continued delivery of a comprehensive training plan, including an annual full department event
- introducing group reflective supervision for managers
- working with colleagues to further embed a strengths-based approach within child and family assessments
- embedding a strengths-based approach within Child Protection Conferences, working closely with a clinical psychologist from the Education Psychology Service, using learning from other local authorities and working with partner agencies
- building on our existing tools and resources available for working directly with children and families
- working with managers to embed learning into support and supervisions, chairing meetings and ensuring good practice

### **Other Options Considered**

10. No other options have been considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

11. 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**

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.

### **Financial Implications**

13. Costs associated with the implementation of strengths-based practice are met from the Youth, Families and Social Care budget.

### **Implications for Service Users**

14. Further implementation of strengths-based practice will improve the quality of service to children, young people and families who have contact with the Children and Families Department.

## RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee considers whether any further action is required in relation to the progress update of the Remodelling Practice Programme within the Children and Families Department.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work**

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

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**Constitutional Comments (LW 13/11/20)**

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

### **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

16. 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.

[Supporting improvement in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 June 2018](#)

[Update on supporting improvements in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17 December 2018](#)

[Youth, Families and Social Work Framework for Practice – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 March 2019.](#)

[Remodelling Practice within the Children and Families Department – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 16 December 2019](#)

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

All.

C1410

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 18**

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

### **CHANGES TO STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TO ESTABLISH A SOCIAL WORK APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME**

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

1. To seek approval to establish a Social Work Apprenticeship programme in Children's Social Care Services, with the initial establishment of five Social Work Apprenticeship posts.

#### **Information**

2. Nationally local authorities are facing increasing challenges to recruit and retain qualified Social Workers, which leads to an increase in agency worker expenditure.
3. Developments with apprenticeship standards have recently resulted in the Institute for Apprenticeships approving for delivery the Social Work (degree) Apprenticeship. The development of the apprenticeship offers a paid employment-based route into the profession as an alternative to the usual undergraduate study
4. An apprenticeship is a job with an accompanying skills development programme. Through their apprenticeship, apprentices will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills they need for their immediate job. The apprentice gains this through a wide mix of learning in the workplace, formal on-the-job training and the opportunity to practise these new skills in a real work environment.
5. In May 2017, the Government's apprenticeship reforms provided employers with the means to pay for training and assessment against apprenticeship standards by introducing the apprenticeship levy. The levy is deducted at a rate of 0.5% of the Council's payroll and is collected monthly by HMRC and placed in a digital account. This digital account can only be used to pay registered training providers to deliver apprenticeship training and assessment costs.
6. The use of the apprenticeship levy and the wider apprenticeship programme has been approved at Personnel Committee and is managed through the Council's Workforce and Organisational Development team as part of the corporate workforce planning response, to meet the Council's future skills needs.

7. The typical duration of this apprenticeship is 36 months and the training cost of £23,000 per apprentice can be met from the Apprenticeship Levy. Apprentices would be offered a substantive post, time limited for the duration of the apprenticeship. Expectation would be that they would work four days in a team, performing non-statutory duties and co-working with qualified social workers as part of their learning and have one day for study (how this one day per week is used could vary depending on the chosen provider, some may do blocks of off-site learning and others day release each week). Social work student placements still need to be undertaken in alternative settings in Year 2 (70 -80 days) and Year 3 (90 – 100 days).
8. The introduction of the Social Work Apprenticeship programme within Children's Social Work Services will support work to ensure there is sufficient workforce capacity to meet the increased demands, ensure manageable caseloads, and to address challenges around recruitment and succession planning. These posts will provide career progression opportunities for non-Social Work qualified staff and add additional non-Social Work qualified worker capacity to support children and families.
9. With the success of the Grow our Own and Step up to Social Work schemes, it is felt the introduction of the Social Work Apprenticeship will attract internal staff who previously have been unable to apply for the schemes, due to the requirement to have an undergraduate degree before entering the step up programme and the impact of the associated financial costs of the two schemes.
10. The apprenticeship salary model will pay a percentage of the starting salary of a newly qualified worker (Hay Band A) for each year of the apprenticeship, 75% in year 1, 80% in year 2 and 85% in year 3. This reflects the skills, knowledge and behaviour the apprentice will develop each year. It also reflects the training investment the service is offering and the impact of study time away from the office.
11. The existing Social Worker job description will be used for the posts to ensure competencies and expectations can be measured against the expected requirements of a newly qualified Social Worker taking into account the level of training received.
12. Initially, five posts will be established in January 2021, with the ambition of developing further Social Work Apprenticeship posts in the future in order to establish a rolling Apprenticeship programme. This would support an increase in the number of qualified Social Workers who will graduate each year, to support with succession planning and recruitment.
13. Funding for the Social Work Apprenticeship posts is subject to the agreement of a budget pressure which has been submitted as part of the Council's budget setting process.
14. The introduction of the Social Work Apprenticeship programme will replace the development of the Social Work Assistant role. This shift in approach is in recognition that individuals attracted to this role are often wishing to pursue a career in Social Work, and the remit and tasks of the Social Work Assistant role could suitably be undertaken/absorbed by a Social Work Apprenticeship role, whilst supporting their studies. The ambition is to eliminate the overspend on agency Social Work Assistants through the use of

Apprenticeships subject to the success of the programme and the Council's budget setting process.

15. The Social Work Apprentice posts will be placed in the Hard to Retain teams, providing additional resource to these teams, and placements in years 2 and 3 will be offered across the whole service to meet qualification requirements.
16. All options for protecting the investment of the Council in Social Work apprenticeships will be explored, including contractual arrangements to ensure the services of the staff are retained once qualified.
17. In terms of ability to recruit to the above posts, recruitment data shows that the Council has recruited 51 newly qualified social workers in 2019 and 36 so far in 2020. Between 2015 and 2019, 98 Social Work students have been offered employment, of which 81 completed their placement with Nottinghamshire County Council, suggesting that Nottinghamshire is an employer of choice for social work students.

### **Other Options Considered**

18. One option is to establish the Social Work Assistant posts in teams; whilst this would provide additional resource to support children and families, it would not support with succession planning, recruitment challenges and have an impact on agency expenditure.
19. Alternatively, an option could be to do nothing; this would reduce the career opportunities for staff and support available to children, their families and Social Workers to improve outcomes for children.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

20. The establishment of the Social Work Apprenticeship programme and the initial establishment of five Social Work Apprenticeship posts is being recommended to provide a career pathway for non-Social Work qualified staff wishing to progress into Social Work, to support with recruitment challenges and succession planning and for the duration of the Apprenticeship to provide non-Social Work qualified resource to Social Care teams to improve outcomes for children and their families.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

21. 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**

22. The total cost of the five posts at 75% of Band A in 2020-21 will be £42,000 including £7,250 for running and one-off equipment costs. This will be met from the release of five agency

Social Work Assistants and therefore contained within the overall Children & Families budget.

23. The total cost of these posts in 2021-22 is £150,000, including running costs, with an additional £10,000 in each of the following financial years as the apprentices progress through the apprenticeship salary model as outlined in **paragraph 10** i.e. 75% in year 1, 80% in year 2 and 85% in year 3. The funding will form part of the Council's budget setting process for 2021/22.
24. The training cost of £23,000 per apprentice (£115,000 in total) will be met from the Apprenticeship Levy, this budget is held by corporate HR Learning and Development.

### **Human Resources Implications**

25. Procurement of the training provider will be undertaken by the Council's Workforce and Organisational Development Team in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's procurement policy.
26. A recruitment exercise will be undertaken each year to identify suitable candidates for the role.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the Committee approves the establishment of a Social Work Apprenticeships programme in Children's Social Care, with the initial establishment of five Social Work Apprenticeship posts.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director for Youth, Families and Social Work**

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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 16/11/20)**

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

### **Financial Comments (SAS 19/11/20)**

28. The total cost of the five posts at 75% of Band A in 2020-21 will be £42,000 including £7,250 for running and one-off equipment costs. This will be met from the release of five agency Social Work Assistants and therefore contained within the overall Children & Families budget.

29. The total cost of these posts in 2021-22 is £150,000, including running costs, with an additional £10,000 in each of the following financial years as the apprentices progress through the apprenticeship salary model as outlined in **paragraph 10** i.e. 75% in year 1, 80% in year 2 and 85% in year 3. The funding will form part of the Council's budget setting process for 2021/22.
30. The training cost of £23,000 per apprentice (£115,000 in total) will be met from the Apprentices budget held by corporate HR Learning and Development.

#### **HR Comments (BC 19/11/20)**

31. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The establishment of a social work apprenticeship programme will provide a career pathway into social work for existing NCC staff. Posts will be appointed to in line with the agreed 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

C1416



**30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 19**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS**

### **SCHOOLS FORUM AND EDUCATION TRUST BOARD OFFICER GROUP REPORT**

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

1. To advise Committee on the legal status, composition and constitution of the Schools Forum and update Members on its work.
2. To advise Committee of the terms of reference, composition and recent work of the Education Trust Board.
3. The report also seeks approval for a further update report to be brought to the Committee on the work of the Schools Forum and Education Trust Board in 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.

#### **Information**

##### **Schools Forum**

4. The Government requires that each local authority (LA) maintains a Schools Forum to represent its schools' views on matters relating to the total Schools Budget. There are national regulations which govern the composition, constitution and procedures of Schools Forums. However, the responsibility for determining the local funding formula for schools and early years providers lies with the local authority.
5. Schools Forums are made up of representatives from schools and academies, but with some representation from other non-school organisations, such as Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector and the Dioceses. Schools and academies representatives should be roughly proportionate to the number of pupils in each sector. In Nottinghamshire, the membership is reviewed annually to ensure that this proportional representation is maintained.
6. In Nottinghamshire, the current Forum membership as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 is made up as follows and further details are attached as **Appendix 1**:

School and Academy membership (based on pupil population):

- 5 maintained primary Head Teachers

- 1 maintained secondary Head Teacher
- 8 academy representatives
- 1 maintained special school Head Teacher
- 1 academy special school representative
- 5 governor representatives (minimum 1 maintained primary school, 1 maintained secondary school, 1 academy and 1 special).

Non-school membership:

- 2 PVI early years representatives
- 2 Diocesan representatives – 1 Roman Catholic and 1 Church of England
- 1 FE representative from a Nottinghamshire College
- 2 Trade union representatives (1 teaching union & 1 non-teaching union).

Total membership: 28

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 there are 5 vacancies:

- 2 academy representatives
- 2 governor representatives
- 1 diocesan representative

7. Vacancies will be appointed to in line with the process determined by The Schools Forum Constitution.
8. The Forum is chaired by an annually elected member and is required to meet at least four times a year. Forum members are elected for a period of five years. Members can stand for a further period of five years at the end of their first term of office. Any member who has been a member for 10 years must stand down.
9. The Schools Forum has been chaired by Carlo Cuomo since September 2015 and he has served on the Schools Forum since June 2011 as the representative of the Roman Catholic Diocese. Having served as chair for the last five years he has resigned and on 17<sup>th</sup> September a new chair was appointed, James MacDonald, an academy representative.
10. The Forum acts as a consultative body on some issues and is a decision-making body on others. The Forum acts in a **consultative** role for:
  - changes to the local funding formula and operation of the minimum funding guarantee
  - changes to or new contracts affecting schools
  - arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in pupil referral units and in early years provision.
11. Members of the Forum have a responsibility to represent the interests of their peer group by whom they are elected and can reasonably expect to be canvassed by schools and academies. Members are also expected to provide feedback to their peers through existing headteacher meetings and networks.
12. The Local Authority's role is to ensure that there are suitable arrangements in place for the organisation and administration of the Schools Forum to ensure that it is effective in its

operation. Part of this is to ensure that Forum meetings are open to the public and papers are made available on a public website.

13. The Forum is **responsible** for decisions on:
  - movements of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other funding blocks
  - how much funding may be centrally retained within the Dedicated Schools Grant
  - any proposed carry forward of deficits on central spend from one year to the next
  - proposals to de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary schools
  - changes to the scheme of financial management.
14. The Schools Forum continues to face significant challenges due to the budget pressures in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant which funds specialist services for pupils with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND). During the financial year 2019-2020, the High Needs Block ended with an overspend of £1.002m which was addressed through the Non-Individual School Budgets reserve. Whilst the High Needs Block received an increase of £11.833m for 2020-2021, the pressures remain and the current projected overspend is £2.3m.
15. The element of the high needs budget continuing to face the most significant pressure is that used to fund education for children in independent and non-maintained settings both within and out of Nottinghamshire as a result of parental preferences as expressed through the Education Health and Care Plan processes. Despite actions taken to minimise these costs, expenditure continues to increase year on year. Since 2018, the average cost of an INM placement has increased from £41,400 to £46,500 per annum. In addition, and as a result of increased permanent and short term exclusions, there has been a need to provide statutory education funded through the High Needs Block.
16. The Government announced a temporary amendment to the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force for the period 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 to allow for School Forums to meet remotely while they are unable to meet physically in a room during the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19). This was the only amendment incorporated into the Nottinghamshire's School Forum Constitution. As of September 2020, one new academy, one new maintained special school, one new special academy and two new governor representatives have been appointed.

### **Education Trust Boards: Primary, Special and Governor Boards**

17. As Members will be aware, the Department regularly seeks the views of headteachers and governors through a range of consultation processes. These consultations vary from statutorily required consultation over such matters as a school's closure, amalgamation or expansion, through to more informal processes such as e-mailing schools to seek their comments on proposed strategy or policy changes which affect them. Since the report to Committee in April 2019, the Education Trust Board has supported consultation and stakeholder feedback a range of matters.
18. Therefore, the Education Trust Board continues to fulfil an important role in involving headteachers and governors actively as the Department continues to evolve due to the on-going, changing educational landscape, as a result of national education policy. The continued defined purpose of the Board is:

*‘To provide a forum that enables schools to be active participants in guiding innovation and strategy and in shaping service delivery to raise attainment and achievement of children and young people in Nottinghamshire’.*

19. The Education Trust Board comprises two headteacher phase boards, one for primary, and special schools, and a board to represent the views of school governors. Whilst the secondary board ceased in April 2015 as attendance at these meetings had declined, partnership working with secondary headteachers has continued through the secondary senior leader briefings although these have been interrupted by the pandemic. Formal partnership with the Teaching School Alliances continues to ensure the views of secondary partners are heard and continue to inform policy and partnership work with the secondary sector.
20. The Special School Trust Board continues to meet and is chaired on rotation by one of the 11 special school headteachers. In the case of the governors’ board, each district of the Council has a governor representative, as well as there being an equal number of representatives nominated by the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGS).
21. The boards are served by the Service Director for Education, Learning and Skills or by one of the Group Managers for the Education, Learning and Skills Service area. Other officers attend as required, according to the agreed agendas. Trust members and officers put forward items for the agenda, with the final version being approved by the chairs. Ed Seely, Headteacher of Edgewood Primary School and member of the primary trust board, represents the collective trust boards on the Children and Families Alliance and fulfils the role of vice chair of the Alliance. **Appendix 2** presents an overview of membership of the Education Trust phase boards.
22. Over the past year, members of the primary phase board have engaged with the following agendas since March 2019:
  - GDPR/Information Governance
  - Reduced timetable collection arrangements and last part-time timetable report
  - Children Missing Education county wide data and dashboard
  - Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education Policy Consultations
  - Statutory Consultation Processes for Education, Health and Care Assessments
  - Consultation around the draft SEND Policy
  - Support to Schools Service (StSS) Staffing Structure proposals
  - Update on enhanced provision and special schools’ hub pilots
  - LA updates including identifying a representative head teacher to sit on the Improving Educational Opportunities for All Performance Board
  - Understanding behaviour in schools
  - Childcare Sufficiency
  - Children’s Services Ofsted Report
  - Developing strengths-based practices; involvement of the wider schools’ workforce
  - Pupil Place Planning
  - Proposed holiday pattern for 2020-21 and 2021-22 feedback from schools
  - School Admissions challenges

23. Whilst the Primary Trust Board meeting for the Summer term 2020 was postponed due to Covid, the LA held two extraordinary Primary Trust Board meetings in partnership with the Primary School Behaviour and Attendance Partnership (SBAP) Leads to discuss the emerging challenges around ensuring continuity of care for pupils during the pandemic, supporting school staff, developing risk assessments, meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils, and defining how the LA could most appropriately target the support available.
24. During this period, members of the special school phase board, which is incorporated into three of the six special school headteacher meetings, have engaged with the following agenda items since March 2019:
- Statutory consultation processes for Education Health and Care Plans placement requests
  - Supporting positive mental health in Nottinghamshire Schools
  - Understanding behaviour in schools
  - Identification of SEND primary needs of the Special Schools' cohort
  - Additional places in Special Schools
  - The Education Improvement Adviser for SEND's role
  - Update on SEND Policy and consultation process
  - Administration of medicines
  - Partnership working with Health
  - Self-Evaluation Framework/school improvement
  - Developing home learning opportunities
  - Special School Hubs
  - NCC sensory services
25. Since the last report to Members in April 2019, the governors phase board has continued to meet termly and engaged with the following:
- School Safe Alert Notification Protocol
  - CYP Emotional Mental Health & Wellbeing Pathways
  - Closing the Gap strategy refresh/Economic Development
  - Reduced timetable collection arrangements and last part-time timetable report
  - Children Missing Education dashboard
  - Statutory Consultation Processes for Education Health and Care Assessments and Plans
  - Draft SEND Policy
  - Update on Support to Schools Service/Education, Learning and Skills Staffing Structure
  - Update on enhanced provision and special schools' hub pilots
  - Understanding behaviour in schools
  - Childcare Sufficiency
  - SEND Policy and Consultation
  - Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education Consultation
  - Update on Nottinghamshire County Council response to the Coronavirus and recovery
  - Update on SEND Policy
  - Pupil Place Planning update.

## **Other Options Considered**

26. No other options have been considered.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

27. The Council is legally required to maintain a Schools Forum for the purposes outlined in the report. The report advises Members of how the Forum is set up and the key features of its work.
28. The Education Trust Board provides the Department with a formal process to consult with publicly funded schools throughout the academic year. This ensures that any policy or strategy developed by the Department are informed by the views of key stakeholders.

## **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 operation of the Schools Forum is financed by a ring-fenced budget held within the centrally retained element of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That Committee agrees to receive a further update report on the work of the Schools Forum and Education Trust Board in 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.

**Marion Clay,  
Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

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

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## **Constitutional Comments (LW 13/11/20)**

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

## **Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)**

32. The operation of the Schools Forum is financed by a ring-fenced budget held within the centrally retained element of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
33. 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.

The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/schoolsrevenuefunding/schoolsforums/a00213728/schools-forums-england-regs-2012>

Nottinghamshire School Forum meetings page

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/information-for-schools/schools-forum/schools-forum-meetings>

[Schools and Early Years funding – agreement of the local funding formula for 2019/2020: report to Policy Committee on 13th February 2019.](#)

[Schools Forum and Education Trust Board officer group report – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 29th April 2019](#)

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

All.

C1405



**Schools Forum Members****Maintained Primary**

Andrew Rossington	Arno Vale School
Ben Waldram	Lowdham CofE Primary
Helen Atkins ( <b>Vice Chair</b> )	Leas Park Junior School
Ly Toom	Abbey Road Primary
Lynn Corner-Brown	Wadsworth Primary

**Maintained Secondary**

David Phillips	Chilwell School
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**Academy Representatives**

Andy Seymour	Newark Academy
Anne Hall	Carlton Junior Academy (Redhill Trust)
Dr Philip Smith	Outwood Grange Academies Trust
Halina Angus	The Southwolds Academy (EMET Trust)
James MacDonald ( <b>Chair</b> )	Whitehills Park Federation
Neil Holmes	Diverse Academy Learning Partnership (DALP)
Vacancy	
Vacancy	

**Maintained Special School**

Matt Rooney	St Giles School
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**Academy Special School**

Pauline Corfield	Redgate Primary (DALP)
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**Governors**

Amanda Williams	Albany Infant & Nursery
Fiona Jones	Winthorpe Primary
Colin Barnard	Abbey Gates Primary
Vacancy	
Vacancy	

**PVIs (Private, Voluntary & Independent Nursery Providers)**

Karen Richards	Early Years Consultation Group
Laura Gapski	Early Years Consultation Group

### **Diocesan Representatives**

Nigel Frith	Diocesan Director of Education, Church of England Diocese
Vacancy	

### **14-19 Partnership Representative**

Louise Knott	West Nottinghamshire College
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### **Trade Union Representatives**

Jo Myers	Support Staff Unions UNISON
Joe Jefferies	Teacher Trade Unions NASUWT

**Education Trust Board Members**

**Primary**

Edward Seeley	Edgewood Primary and Nursery School	Ashfield
John Birch	Misson Primary	Bassetlaw
Jackie Moss	Trent Vale Infant & Nursery	Broxtowe
Rachel Otter	Pinewood Infant School and Foundation Unit	Gedling
Helen Atkins (Chair)	Leas Park Junior School	Mansfield
Jenny Hodgkinson	Lovers Lane Primary and Nursery School	Newark
Richard Waldron	James Peacock Infant and Nursery School	Rushcliffe

**Governors**

Chris Levy (NAGS Executive) (Chair)	Bassetlaw
John Heald (NAGS Executive)	Ashfield
Gordon Taylor (NAGS Executive)	Mansfield
John Wilson (NAGS Executive)	Ashfield
Jane Mansell (NAGS Executive)	Ashfield
Jayne Littlewood (NAGS Executive)	Mansfield
Deborah White (Additional Governor)	Rushcliffe/Ashfield
Chris Bailey (Additional Governor)	Bassetlaw
Sarah Dennis (Additional Governor)	Newark
Sonya Hand (Additional Governor)	Gedling
Colin Barnard (Additional Governor)	Gedling/Ashfield
Paul Key (Additional Governor)	Gedling
Tina Launchbury (non -member invited as an observer)	Broxtowe

**Special**

Dawn Wigley	Ash Lea School
Neil Davies	Beech Academy
Catherine Askham	Bracken Hill School
Janet Spratt-Burch	Carlton Digby School
Cathy Clay	Derrymount School
Donna Chambers	Fountaindale School
Jamie Hutchinson	Foxwood Academy
Margot Tyers	Newark Orchard School
Courtney Hoop & Pauline Corfield	Redgate / Yeoman Park Academy
Matt Rooney	St Giles School
Meetings chaired on a rota basis	



**30 November 2020**

**Agenda Item: 20**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES**

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

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

1. To consider the Committee's work programme for 2020-21.

#### **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:**

Martin Gately  
Democratic Services Officer  
T: 0115 977 2826  
E: martin.gately@nottsc.gov.uk

## **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 2020-21

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR
<b>18 January 2021 Virtual meeting</b>			
Progress on Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Children's Services Plan	Quarterly update	Laurence Jones	Laurence Jones
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Action Plan and Integrated SEND Commissioning Strategy		Laurence Jones	Chris Jones
Children's Services Workforce Health Check Survey 2020	Annual report	Laurence Jones	Liz Maslen
Children Missing Education	Six-monthly update	Marion Clay	Karen Hughman/ Sarah Whitby
Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team		Marion Clay	Sarah Lee
School Holiday & Term Time Dates for Local Authority Maintained Schools in Nottinghamshire 2023/2024, 2024/2025, 2025/2026 and 2026/2027	Approval to carry out statutory consultation	Marion Clay	Claire Wilcoxson
Troubled Families Programme in Nottinghamshire update	Six-monthly update	Steve Edwards	Rachel Miller
Harmful Sexual Behaviour by children – annual report		Laurence Jones	Claire Sampson
Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services – improvement plan progress		Colin Pettigrew	Lucy Peel
Nottinghamshire Outstanding Achievement 4Uth Award 2020	Annual update report	Laurence Jones	Pom Bhogal
National Children and Adult Services Conference November 2020		Colin Pettigrew	
<b>Corporate Parenting items:</b>			
Adoption East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency update: April to September 2020		Steve Edwards	Tracey Coull
Promoting and improving the health of Looked After Children	Annual report and including CAMHS Looked After and Adoption team annual report	Steve Edwards	Lucy Peel/ Katharine Browne

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR
Destination of Year 12-13 Looked After young people cohort 2020-2021		Marion Clay	Sue Denholm
Fostering Service annual report		Steve Edwards	Ty Yousaf
Contact Service annual report	Annual report	Steve Edwards	Devon Allen
Improving the emotional health of looked after children	Six-monthly update	Steve Edwards	Lucy Peel/ Katharine Browne
Children's Homes Governance Board update	Six monthly report	Laurence Jones	Laurence Jones
<b>22 February 2021</b>			
Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future – Departmental Strategy: six month review of progress (April to September 2020)	Six-monthly review	Colin Pettigrew	Matt Garrard
Admissions applications in the normal admissions round to Nottinghamshire schools and academies – academic year 2020/21		Marion Clay	Mike Sharpe/Claire Wilcoxson
Nottinghamshire school admission arrangements 2022-23: determination		Marion Clay	Karen Hughman/ Mike Sharpe/ Claire Wilcoxson
Update on the Remodelling Practice programme	Quarterly report	Steve Edwards	Lucy Peel/ Holly Smitheman
Principal Child and Family Social Worker - annual report 2019/20	Annual report	Steve Edwards	Diana Bentley
Reorganisation of the Statutory Education Health and Care Assessment Team in the Integrated Children's Disability Service		Laurence Jones	Jill Norman
SEND performance: impact of Covid pandemic on children and families		Laurence Jones	Chris Jones
Local Authority governor appointments to school governing bodies	Quarterly report	Marion Clay	Sarah Sayer
<b>Corporate Parenting items:</b>			
Destination of Year 12-13 Looked After young people cohort 2020-2021		Marion Clay	Sue Denholm
Outcomes of review of governance arrangements of Looked After Children care		Laurence Jones	Laurence Jones

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR
settings			
<b>15 March 2021</b>			
Children and young people core data set - performance and finance for Quarter 3 2020/21	Quarterly performance report	Nigel Stevenson	Dave Gilbert
<b>Corporate Parenting items:</b>			
Fostering Service recruitment and marketing plan 2021/22		Steve Edwards	Sophie Eadsforth/ Tara Pasque
Foster carers items			
<b>19 April 2021</b>			
Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All – six monthly update		Marion Clay	Koni Rakhit
School Capital Programme progress report	Six-monthly update	Derek Higton	Phil Berrill/ Mick Allen
Local Transformation Plan for children and young people’s emotional and mental health - update	Annual refresh	Jonathan Gribbin	Rachel Clark
Schools Forum and Education Trust Board officer group report	Annual officer group report	Marion Clay	Marion Clay
<b>Corporate Parenting items:</b>			
Children’s Homes Governance Board update	Six monthly reports	Laurence Jones	Laurence Jones
Provision, achievements and progress of the Children in Care Council and participation of children and young people looked after 2020/21		Steve Edwards	Pom Bhogal
Contact Service annual report	Annual report	Steve Edwards	Devon Allen
<b>21 June 2021</b>			
Children and young people core data set - performance and finance for Quarter 4 2020/21	Quarterly performance report	Nigel Stevenson	Dave Gilbert
Children Missing Education	Six-monthly update	Marion Clay	Karen Hughman/ Sarah Whitby
Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care: six monthly update	Six monthly update	Laurence Jones	Joe Foley/ Hazel McKibbin
Progress on Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Children’s Services Plan	Quarterly update	Laurence Jones	Laurence Jones
Update on the Remodelling Practice	Quarterly report	Steve Edwards	Lucy Peel/ Holly

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR
programme			Smitheman
Elective Home Education update	Six-monthly update	Marion Clay	Sarah Whitby
Local Authority governor appointments to school governing bodies	Quarterly report	Marion Clay	Sarah Sayer
<b>Corporate Parenting items:</b>			
Improving the emotional health of looked after children	Six-monthly update	Steve Edwards	Lucy Peel/ Katharine Browne
Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care: annual report 2020/21	Annual update	Laurence Jones	Joe Foley/ Hannah Johnson
Fostering Service annual report		Steve Edwards	Ty Yousaf
Virtual School annual report	Annual report	Marion Clay	Sue Denholm
Independent Reviewing Officer Service annual report		Steve Edwards	Izzy Martin
National Minimum Fostering Allowances and Levels Payments to Foster Carers 2021/22	Annual determination	Steve Edwards	Ty Yousaf/ Tara Pasque
<b>19 July 2021</b>			
Outcomes of Ofsted inspections of schools		Marion Clay	Diane Ward
<b>Corporate Parenting items:</b>			
Foster carers items			