

17th January 2022**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND
SKILLS****UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present an update on the impact of Nottinghamshire's Improving Educational Opportunities for All Strategy, since the last report on 2nd November 2020.

Information

2. At the Children and Young People's Committee meeting on 11th February 2019, the development of, and consultation on, a new strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All (IEOfA) was approved. The IEOfA Strategy was finalised and approved by Policy Committee on 15th January 2020.
3. The Strategy reflects national priorities surrounding social mobility, recognising that disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people are less likely to fulfil their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future emotional and financial security. The IEOfA Strategy recognises the central role that education plays in breaking down the barriers to social mobility that too many young people face. It sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's long-term commitment to ensuring that the full range of services and partners work coherently with schools and other educational settings to maximise the impact of available resources in further improving the attainment and progress of vulnerable groups of learners.
4. In addition, the Social Mobility Commission's "State of the Nation Report" (November 2017) ranked all English local authorities into hotspots and coldspots based on social mobility outcomes from early years through to working lives. The East Midlands was the country's lowest performing area and, in Nottinghamshire, six of the seven districts were ranked as coldspots with poor social mobility outcomes.
5. The Strategy contributed to the delivery of the key ambitions in the Nottinghamshire County Council Plan 2017-2021, 'Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future'. It will continue to align with

the vision of levelling up life chances outlined in The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021- 2031, which pledges to reduce inequality and support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

6. The report on progress towards the IEOfA Strategy's ambitious success criteria will strengthen existing accountability arrangements, principally the IEOfA Performance Board. The Performance Board, which meets termly, includes representatives from an FE college, a specialist College, secondary schools, special schools, primary schools and both universities.
7. The cancellation of statutory assessments in 2020 and 2021 has meant that some of the success criteria identified in the IEOfA Strategy cannot be commented on as national comparative data is needed. This report does not duplicate the quarterly performance reports on outcomes, but instead will concentrate on partnership working focusing on key groups: children and young people in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and children and young people who are eligible for free school meals.

Improving outcomes and opportunities for children and young people in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council

8. There were 994 children and young people in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council in October 2021. This number has kept relatively stable for much of the year, following a steep increase after the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. The number of children in care in Nottinghamshire continues to be below statistical neighbours and national available comparator figures. Two of the IEOfA Strategy's success criteria relate to supporting schools to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of all children, but particularly those looked after by the local authority.
9. There has been an increase in the number of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants trained and working in Nottinghamshire schools, so children and young people receive timely emotional literacy support within their own school setting. In October 2019, there were 194 trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants which increased in March 2020 to 249. Currently there are 416 trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, with 348 active in Nottinghamshire primary, secondary and special schools.
10. There has also been an increase in the number of schools involved with the Attachment Aware Schools Project, now renamed as Building Relational Schools: attachment aware and trauma informed. Nottinghamshire's approach is closely linked to the national approach, in that it encourages schools to use the Behaviour Toolkit available across the County and beyond. This has been produced by the Educational Psychology Service in collaboration with schools and professionals across multiple sectors. Building Relational Schools include supervision networks, which support school staff to use an evidence-based relationship-based approach. In September 2019, there were 16 schools who had received this training. By March 2020, this had increased to 35 schools and currently there are 48 schools across the County who are trained.
11. Personal Education Plans are an evolving record of what needs to happen for our looked after children to enable them to make at least expected progress and to fulfil their educational potential. Nottinghamshire Personal Education Plans reflect a strength-based approach which is being promoted across the local authority's children's services. The

strength-based approach ensures successes and achievements of our children are at the centre of the Personal Education Plan, alongside the child's 'voice', meaning their views, aspirations, and what they think is needed to support them is recorded.

12. In 2020-21, the average attendance for all of Nottinghamshire's looked after children of statutory school age was 91.7%, which is in line with the national figure. However, this will not be an accurate figure due to lockdown attendance codes. In 2020-21, 46 looked after children had fixed term exclusions and there were 155 fixed term exclusions in total. Nottinghamshire's fixed term exclusions are slightly above the national rate for looked after children which the Virtual School is aware of and addressing. There are 12 looked after children on part-time timetables and they are reviewed regularly. None of our children of statutory school age are not in education. There are currently 23 statutory school age young people waiting for a school place who have tuition in the interim. 19 of the 23 children waiting for a school place are living in other local authorities.
13. One of our looked after young people, who is now in year 7, missed almost two years of primary school due to attachment, trauma and anxiety, and he was unable to return to his school. A tutor began forming a relationship with our young person in his home by playing games with a relational and trauma informed approach. Initially, our young person was reluctant to engage but over an 18-month period the hours with his tutor and his engagement in learning increased, along with his confidence and emotional resilience. Due to his progress, the Virtual School was able to organise for him to access his tuition in a local primary school for most of year 6 to start the transition back to school and to identify what type of education setting would meet his needs best. As our young person became more confident and began to form some friendships for the first time in years, he became determined to return to mainstream school and make friends. A strong team around the child, centred by the young person's voice, enabled the Virtual School to work with his chosen secondary school to trial a transition period with the support of his tutor. He is now on the school's roll, attending full-time and thriving, without his tutor, but with school support in place for him to continue to make progress academically, socially and emotionally.
14. Nottinghamshire's Virtual School has secured a bid for a post-16 pupil premium pilot for two terms. The project includes developing previously successful mentoring to facilitate workplace experiences outside of the classroom, developing relational approaches in FE settings and improving/securing English and mathematics outcomes through one-to-one tuition opportunities. The impact of this pilot will be commented on in the next report.
15. In 2020-2021, 10 of Nottinghamshire's care leavers became graduates and a total of 36 care leavers aged 18 to 25 are presently in Higher Education. Degree subjects include teaching, midwifery and accountancy.
16. Between March and May 2021, Nottingham Trent University delivered online academic mentoring sessions for our looked after children and care leavers – "Interested in applying for University?" and "Have university plans?". They covered various topics linked to university and Higher Education options, the support available at university and financial advice. 5 young people chose to access these sessions and 2 have now enrolled at university, 2 wish to apply for university for September 2022 entry and 1 has deferred from September 2021 entry to September 2022.

Improving outcomes and opportunities for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

17. Three Locality Working Boards chaired by Group Managers from Education, Learning and Skills and Commissioning and Resources have been established. The infrastructure and lines of accountability have been developed and the Boards are now beginning to focus on the priorities for their particular locality. Locality Working will be part of the All Age Approaches programme supporting the ambition of inclusive practice and preparation for adulthood.
18. To support the work of the Boards, a data dashboard has been produced which provides information in relation to Key Performance Indicators. A further dashboard on financial data is in development and should be available by the end of the year. These are intended to support analysis of performance in the locality including issues, good practice and potential lines of enquiry. Representatives from the Locality Working Boards have been involved in the development of the dashboards and it is reported by the Boards that these are providing a useful tool for discussion.
19. During the pandemic the membership of the Locality Working Boards has comprised exclusively of Nottinghamshire County Council staff, who have met virtually through Microsoft Teams. This has allowed education and disability services to develop their understanding of the roles of others, identifying opportunities for joined up working and reducing unnecessary duplication.
20. Towards the end of the Summer term 2021, engagement with external stakeholders commenced with a briefing for head teachers as the first step. Representatives from mainstream primary, secondary and special schools have been sought and head teachers have joined the Locality Working Board meetings from the Autumn term 2021. COVID-19 continues to exert pressures on schools and head teacher engagement has been mixed, as a consequence. The project team is continuing to seek head teacher representatives, where some parts of the County are insufficiently represented. This is the first step in wider stakeholder engagement which will also need to include the Early Years and Further Education sectors, as well as health colleagues.
21. A pilot project, Autism in Schools, brings together NHS, schools and parents/carers. The pilot aims to raise awareness of the impact of Autism on education, social and life outcomes in general. A successful bid has secured £200,000 to develop the pilot programme for 2 nominated schools within Nottinghamshire and 2 within Nottingham City. The focus is on transition and the re-engagement of highly anxious autistic learners into the school setting. To date, baseline questionnaires have been sent to participating schools. Parent/carer questionnaires are in preparation and consideration is being given to pupils' voice. The County and City Autism teams are working together to revise and modify existing materials from recent pilots in our local authorities. The impact of this pilot will be included in the next report.
22. The Council organised webinars for school leaders and Special Educational Needs Coordinators to promote the Preparation for Adulthood agenda. Both of these included presentations from Nick Whittaker, the then Her Majesty's Inspector for Special Educational Needs & Disability around Ofsted's position on this agenda and their intent to focus on schools ensuring the curriculum and school environment provides students with the skills

to make a successful transition to adulthood. Presentations were also delivered from D2N2, Nottinghamshire's biggest General Further Education college and the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) Preparation for Adulthood.

23. As a result of these webinars, a working party has been established with members from secondary schools, special schools, West Notts College and Nottingham Trent University to identify how secondary schools can best support young people with special educational needs and disabilities to have the skills required for the world of work and how these can be developed and embedded in the curriculum offer. Alternative pathways for students with more complex needs are also being identified. The impact of this work will be reported on in the next report.
24. A success criterion identified in the IEOfA Strategy was that the number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities who secure sustained employment, following a supported internship, would increase. Nottinghamshire's flagship supported internship programme has been impacted by Covid, with placement opportunities significantly curtailed during the various periods of lockdown. However, during 2020/21 there were 52 interns, 14 of whom (27%) gained paid employment, with 7 of the positions being for 16 hours per week or more. In 2021/22 there are currently 55 interns, which include 8 supported internship's that were extended from 2020-2021.
25. Work experience and supported internship placements have been offered by a range of local employers, one of whom is County Battery Services. One young person completed a supported internship programme with them in 2020-2021 and during this time he helped to identify and develop some time saving processes within the company. He has now secured paid employment with the company.
26. Another young person started a Supported Internship in September 2020 with Landmarks Specialist College. He wanted to work in the hospitality industry and was based at the college's own pub, The Archer, which they use for education and training purposes. He worked really hard and was a natural behind the bar. He secured paid employment with The Archer in April 2021 and is now a role model for the current interns.
27. The biggest opportunity of scale comes with the successful re-launch of DFN Project Search with the University of Nottingham, NHS and delivery partner Nottingham College. Underwritten by the Local Authority, this programme provides placement opportunities for ten young people with special educational needs and disabilities at the City Hospital site and possible extension to the Queen's Medical Centre is under consideration. Very positive discussions have recently taken place with the Newark and Sherwood NHS Trust, with their governing body hopefully granting approval for a programme to start in September 2022. Nottinghamshire County Council, as an employer, remains committed to hosting a three place programme and discussions are currently taking place regarding the location of this.

Improving outcomes and opportunities for children and young people eligible for free school meals

28. National research, mirrored in Nottinghamshire schools, suggests that disadvantaged pupils have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and predicts a widening of the attainment gap. In recognition of this, the government made a significant amount of funding available to schools aimed at supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. The

Education Improvement Service continues to support schools to make the most of this additional funding to ensure educational outcomes for these pupils improve. Since April 2020, the Education Improvement Service has delivered 218 courses and webinars to schools in the County. Schools in areas of high deprivation with low outcomes were allocated funded places to encourage take up and participation. If statutory assessments take place, as expected in 2022, the outcomes for children and young people eligible for free school meals will be shared in the next report.

29. All schools were offered support during the COVID pandemic. These included regular briefings for senior leaders and governors, led by various departments in the Council including Public Health, to support with aspects of the pandemic, regular bulletins with updated information including answers to Frequently Asked Questions relating to issues raised in briefings, webinars for senior leaders/governors focused on wellbeing and access to educational psychology support for headteachers either individually or through group sessions, access to a wellbeing webpage on the Em-Ed website containing a wide range of resources to support leaders/staff and blended learning webinars and resources providing support for leaders and governors in developing a strategic approach to blended learning.
30. The Education Improvement Service provides a specific offer to Local Authority maintained mainstream schools for those requiring some or significant improvement. The majority of these schools serve communities in areas of high deprivation, where a significant percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The schools are allocated bespoke packages of support throughout the academic year which are aligned to their needs where existing field knowledge and/or the risk assessment indicates that the school may require support to provide a good or better standard of education. Support allocated is proportionate to the risk presented by the school.
31. Many schools in Mansfield and Ashfield serve areas of high deprivation, where children desperately need their life chances and opportunities improving and education is key in this. This has been recognised as the funding through the Department for Education's place-based approach is targeting these districts. In the last two years, the Education Improvement Service has completely overhauled the way that it works with the schools in these districts. A strong partnership with school leaders has been established and packages of support to the schools are provided that bring in core team members and associate advisers with a range of different skills and expertise to secure faster improvement by targeting a range of development areas at any one time. The success of this approach is already evident and whilst the place-based approach is still not underway in the districts, there is already a significant shift in the quality of provision.
32. Since Ofsted resumed its inspections in April 2021, 3 of Nottinghamshire's Requires Improvement (RI) schools in Mansfield and Ashfield have moved to Good at their inspection. This means that just over 800 more children in Mansfield and Ashfield now attend a Local Authority maintained school that is judged to be Good. Following the monitoring visits by HMI to local authority schools in Mansfield and Ashfield that have previously been judged Requires Improvement multiple times, all 4 of those Local Authority maintained schools were judged to be on a trajectory to Good and are expected to be judged as such at their next section 5 inspection. This would mean that a further 1,500 children will attend a Good school in these areas of deprivation.

33. The Council continues to work in partnership with both universities in Nottingham. Both have strong links with employers of all sizes and provide outreach to schools in targeted wards.
34. In 2019/20, the University of Nottingham's Widening Participation and Outreach team worked with 17 of the 43 targeted Nottinghamshire primary schools. All Nottinghamshire secondary schools were able to request outreach activity and 31 accessed the offer during the year. From March 2020 onwards, most of the outreach was cancelled due to the pandemic. In 2020/21, with the ongoing pandemic situation and related restrictions, the team worked with 5 of the 43 targeted Nottinghamshire primary schools and 14 Nottinghamshire secondary schools. Outreach was a mixture of in-person and virtual over the course of the year.
35. In 2019/20 Nottingham Trent University increased the number of schools it worked with to 19 primary schools, 33 secondaries and 1 FE college. In 2020/21 this reduced significantly due to the pandemic and Nottingham Trent University supported 1 primary school and 9 secondaries. Nottingham Trent University noted that schools had informed them that they were inundated with digital outreach and were overwhelmed. They requested some space to allow them to focus on the situation and Nottingham Trent University obliged. The outreach programme has resumed in 2021/22 and will be shared in the next report.
36. A Council officer sits on the Governance Board of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Collaborative Outreach Programme (DANCOP). This is part of the Uni Connect Programme, funded by the Office for Students to work with learners from specific target wards to support learners to make informed decisions about progression to Higher Education through providing impartial advice, guidance and support. The work of the programme focuses on learners in year 9 upwards from target wards as identified by the Office for Students as areas where progression to Higher Education is low, given GCSE attainment. DANCOP has 63 target wards, including 21 in Nottinghamshire. DANCOP has 25 target schools and colleges in Nottinghamshire. In 2019/20, DANCOP delivered 1,089 activities across 22 of these schools and colleges, and 1,096 activities across 24 schools and colleges in 2020/21.
37. The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, funded by the Department for Education, offered free activities to children and young people in Nottinghamshire, as well as free healthy meals during the school holidays. Children and young people eligible for Free School Meals were able to get a free place on the HAF programme. The programme has been delivered in schools and academies across the County and any child or young person who could not access face to face provision was offered HAF at home to access food and activity packs. The government has announced a further investment of over £200m per year over the next three financial years, and the Council will continue to support the HAF programme which will be available in the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays in 2022.

Other Options Considered

38. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

39. To provide the Committee with an update on the impact of Nottinghamshire's Improving Educational Opportunities for All Strategy.

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:

- 1) Members consider whether there are any actions they require in relation to the issues contained within the report.
- 2) Members agree to receive an update report in the next 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.

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Constitutional Comments (ELP 17/12/21)

42. The recommendations fall within the delegation to Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its frame of reference.

Financial Comments (MDN 20/12/21)

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.

[A Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State of the Nation 2017 - Social Mobility in Great Britain.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf)

[A Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All - report to Policy Committee on 15th January 2020](#)

[Nottinghamshire's Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 2nd November 2020](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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