

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT

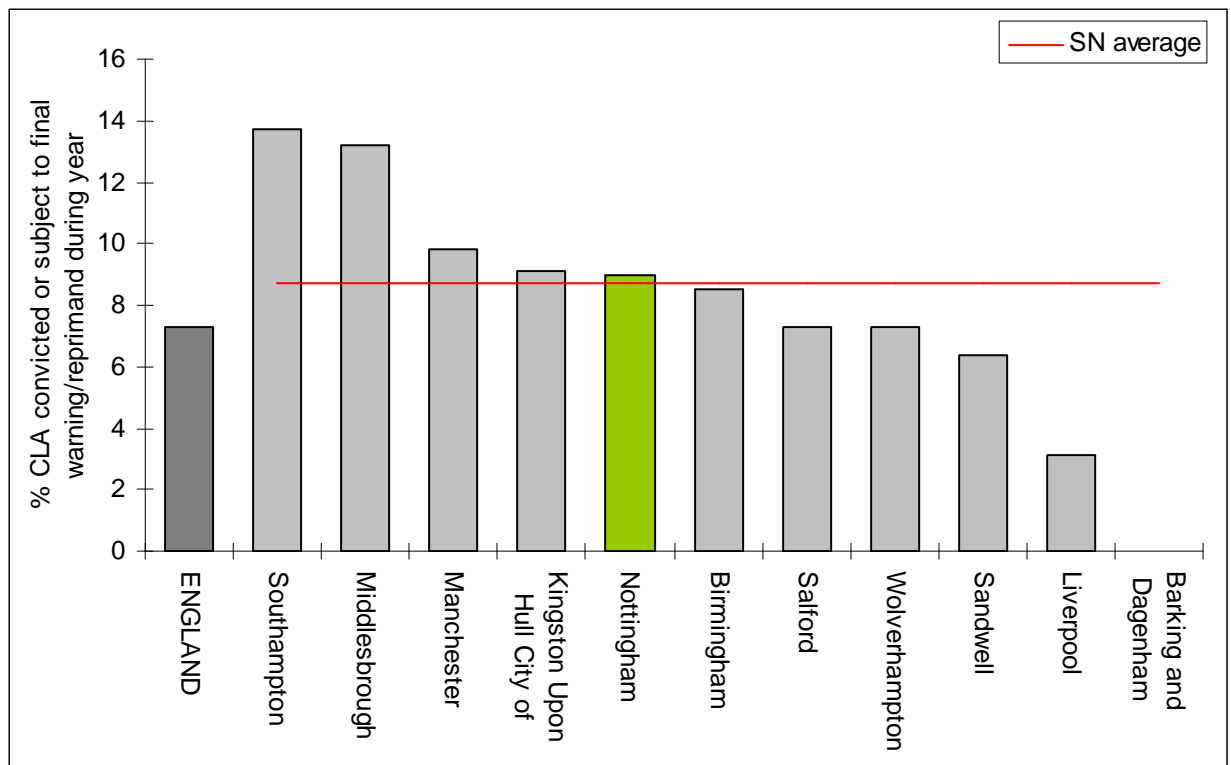
17th January 2011

Title of paper:	Reducing Offending Behaviour	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Ian Curryer, Corporate Director Dave Walker, Nottinghamshire Police	Wards affected: ALL
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC Sam Flint, Children in Care Police Officer, Nottinghamshire Police • Natalie Pink, Case Manager and Youth Offending Team Lead, Children in Care 	
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Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		✓
Neighbourhood Nottingham		✓
Family Nottingham		✓
Healthy Nottingham		
Serving Nottingham Better		✓
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<p>This report explains the improvements made in the reduction of the criminalisation activity of children in care. It focuses on the role of the CiC Police Officer and Youth Offending Team Lead for Children in Care. It discusses developments in the quality assurance process, to improve outcomes for young people, and informs the Board of forthcoming multi-agency meetings/forums to drive improvement. Performance information is summarised and shows positive progress and enhanced outcomes.</p>		
Recommendation(s): Recommendations for 2012 below build on those proposed in 2011.		
1	The Board to continue to acknowledge the importance of the role of the CiC Police Officer and YOT Lead for Children in Care in the drive to reduce the criminalisation of CiC and improve their outcomes	
2	The Board to offer commitment for the need to continue annual multi agency events, and quarterly Reducing Offending meetings, with a view to safeguarding and reducing the criminalisation of young people in care. To ensure that attendance at these forums is more inclusive	
3	Continued development of quality assurance checks to allow field staff to feedback positive and negative experiences and enhance commissioning arrangements	
4	Local performance measures to be developed to ensure improved monitoring of the CiC cohort, to further reduce criminalisation and to provide more local analysis	
5	The Board to offer commitment to using the restorative justice principles within residential units in the city	

1 BACKGROUND

Reduction in criminalisation of Children In Care - performance

- 1.1 **Rate of offending by Nottingham CiC at same level as our statistical neighbours;**
The data shows a similar rate of offending – as represented by the % of CiC over 10 years old convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the previous year – to that seen across the statistical neighbour group, but above the national average.



- 1.2 Taken from the annual statutory return (903) for CiC, Nottingham reported that 9% of CiC who were over 10 years old, and who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, were convicted or subject to a final warning in the year up to 31st March 2011. Compared to the previous year, performance has remained static.
- 1.3 Nationally 7.3% of CiC who fulfil the same criteria as above, were convicted or subject to a final warning in the year up to 31st March 2011 which was 1.4 percentage points lower compared to the previous year. Performance is in line with the mean of the statistical neighbour comparator group (8.7%).
- 1.4 The development of local performance measures to regularly monitor the criminalisation of CiC requires development to offer a more accurate view of performance and evidence outcome improvements. Unlike the OC2 statutory reporting framework, there is a need to focus on monitoring all children who are in care and their criminalisation activity regardless of their time in care. In 2011, work was undertaken on regular data sharing of CiC admissions and discharges so the CiC statuses on Careworks (YOT) could be updated and monitored.

Continued implementation of missing from care protocol recognised as excellent practice within 2011 Ofsted inspection of Fostering Service.)

1.5 Reduction in criminalisation of Children In Care – role of CiC police officer/YOT Lead

1.6 Nottingham City Council is the only Local Authority in England to benefit from having a dedicated CiC Police Officer. The Police Officer for CiC sits within the Targeted Support Team and has enabled close liaison with Children and Families, YOT, Social Care and placement providers.

1.7 Acting as a central point of contact, the Police Officer for CiC has an overview of young people placed within Nottingham city, enabling preventative work and a pro-active police response. The officer implements the missing from care protocol and collates information from return interviews. The officer has provided training for generic police officers, residential home staff, and foster carers in 2011, and there are plans to expand this to include partner agencies in 2012.

1.8 The role has assisted in the management of offending by children and young people in care by performing a preventative role in placement planning, promoting the use of alternative (non-criminal) disposals to divert, and enabling generic police time to be used more efficiently through the deployment of systems. The commitment and tenacity of this officer has been evident as the post has expanded to include private care providers throughout the city.

1.9 The role of 'YOT Lead' for Children in Care was formalised in 2011. The YOT Lead provides a point of liaison for YOT and residential staff, collates information, Chairs Quarterly Meetings with the CiC Police Officer, and is jointly co-ordinating and delivering the annual 'Safeguarding Children in Care' event.

1.10 Reduction in criminalisation of Children In Care - partnership

1.11 Annual events centred on reducing the criminalisation of CiC were held in 2007, 2008, and 2009 providing a multi agency group of professionals and stakeholders with a forum to identify action points, discuss and drive ways forward to improve outcomes for children in care. The importance of placement planning, and the appropriate matching of young people, has previously been highlighted by practitioners at these meetings, and has resulted in the development of multi agency good practice guidance, quarterly meetings, and the later establishment of the 'YOT Lead' role.

1.12 A 'Safeguarding Children in Care' event is currently being planned and will be facilitated by the CiC Police Officer and YOT Lead for 27th March 2012, which will further emphasise the importance of seeing young people as neither risky or vulnerable in isolation. This is a multi agency event, giving practitioners the opportunity to hear guest speakers, reflect upon practice, and share developments. This is a practitioner-led event which plans to work creatively to reflect ambition for our young people in care, and to enable their participation.

1.13 Quarterly Reducing Offending meetings were initially held within local authority children's homes, and were extended in 2011 to include some private providers. The designated YOT Lead and CiC Police Officer attend meetings with providers looking to promote a consistent and quality approach to communication, behaviour management, substance misuse issues, and responses to children and young people missing from home. These meetings enable a 'tiered response', to allow for an effective response and prevent the unnecessary escalation of concerns. The re-tendering process for

service providers took place in 2011 hampered progress and meetings were halted whilst this was outstanding. These meetings will re-launch in 2012, and wider attendance at these meetings would be beneficial.

- 1.14 A 'concerns group' was created in 2010 to address concerns raised by any agency in a timely fashion, in relation to placement of young people in residential care. The group consisted of key individuals within Social Care, Police and Health whose remit was to take appropriate action and act with assertion. The expansion of the Placements Team in 2011, and implementation of two procurement frameworks (East Midlands Regional Framework for Looked After Children placed in Independent Foster Care and Residential Care, and the Semi independence accommodation and support framework for young people over sixteen years), has replaced the need for this group, as has the development of quality assurance measures below. The Placements Service now addresses any concerns raised around performance, outcomes, and accommodation jointly with partners and service providers.
- 1.15 Continued learning from Serious Case Reviews has led to the development of a part-time transitions worker to assist young people who fall through the "net" in respect of accessing adult services, sitting within the Transitions Team.
- 1.16 A Children in Care Team will be launched early 2012, which will enable Social Workers to develop specialist knowledge, and identify any issues of concern. This Team will be based on the same site as the CIC Police Officer and YOT Lead, and this will further enhance communication.
- 1.17 **Development of Quality Assurance measures**
- 1.18 Nottingham City is part of the East Midlands Regional provider framework, which became operational on the 01.04.11. This was borne of a frustration in seeking suitable quality placements with clear pricing structures in the prevailing market conditions. This is a formal procurement agreement between the participating local authorities, to work with each other, and with independent providers, through a framework agreement, to improve the quality and reduce the cost of CiC placements.
- 1.19 The tradition had been for Nottingham City to 'spot purchase' placements at the point of need, when there was not always sufficient time to negotiate or understand how placement packages can best match the presented care needs. The framework has therefore been created to formalise a working relationship with a limited number of selected independent providers, who agree to operate transparently with local authorities in terms of pricing and service specification. For our part, Nottingham city has agreed to make their placements with these approved framework providers as far as possible.
- 1.20 Using the framework has already served to reintroduce greater competitiveness into this market, and Nottingham City have seen significant cost savings on CiC placements. The framework has led to current purchases being made predominately from Tier 1, preferred providers who are offering the best price and quality in the region. Most importantly, the framework has led to an improved quality of service for children and young people as the providers work across the region with greater accountability. The Placements Team monitor performance by providers by a variety of means:
 - quarterly monitoring reports
 - periodic framework provider performance meetings
 - monitoring visits

- collating and analysing patterns from feedback forms/issue logs from a variety of sources including, the Child/IRO/Social Worker/ Providers and analysing the providers performance against their tender submission

1.21 The Placements Team shall be attending and contributing to the annual event in March 2012, in order introduce themselves, to discuss the above developments in quality assurance, and ways in which practitioners can contribute to this process. A member of the Placements Team will attend Quarterly Meetings on request.

1.22 **Use of restorative justice principles within city residential units**

1.23 The CiC Police officer takes the lead in delivering restorative interventions within residential homes and foster placements with the city. Restorative Conferencing was approved for use as a detection by CiC Police Officer and trained 'Champions' within Nottinghamshire Police in 2011. However, it is recognised that this way of working is resource intensive, and this limits the availability of this service in practice.

1.24 The YOT already has two Victim Liaison Officers in post, and continually strives to increase the use of restorative justice within its work. Three YOT workers are to be trained in Restorative Conferencing in 2012, in order to cascade this approach to the wider organisation. The YOT is working within the Victim Charter to broaden access to victim data, in order that victim's views and wishes can be incorporated within assessment and planning processes, whilst being sensitive to the confidentiality of this information. The YOT Improvement Plan expects that victim safety is overtly incorporated within young people's assessments.

1.25 The Placements Team list their preferred providers, and training in restorative approaches is considered one indicator of good practice. Restorative interventions can be included within a young person's Individual Placement Agreement where appropriate.

1.26 All members of the Targeted Support Team were trained in the use of Restorative Justice approaches during 2011, and encourage the use of this when working with children and young people on the edge of care or accommodated by the Local Authority. Financial constraints have made it more difficult for residential Social Workers within the Local Authority to access restorative justice training.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 It is proposed that the role of CiC police officer and YOT Lead working in close partnership is a model of best practice. This has been recognised within Ofsted inspection processes in both 2010 and 2011. It is recognised that this has contributed to the reduction of offending behaviour, and instances of missing reports for children in care. Nottingham city is the only authority with a Children in Care Police Officer, and therefore could be considered a national lead in this area. The continuation and sustainability of these roles are considered instrumental in consolidating and building upon work in this area to date, to strive for better outcomes for children in care in Nottingham.

2.2 There has been positive feedback from participants at both previous annual events. There is a significant degree of interest from a range of agencies in attending the 2012 event. Participants have reported that quarterly Reducing Offending Behaviour meetings contribute to the risk and vulnerability management of young people in their

care, and facilitate information sharing amongst professionals. It is proposed that these events and meetings encourage good communication and multi agency working between agencies, assisting problem solving at an operational level. Attendance by a wider range of professionals would further enhance these benefits across the authority.

- 2.3 Quality assurance processes allow for greater workforce participation and empowerment, and the effective collation and analysis of information, in order to identify and address areas of best practice, or any issues of concern. By having a clearer picture of how placements are functioning, the authority is better placed to ensure placements are offering value for money, and better outcomes for our children in care.
- 2.4 The drive for local measures is motivated by the desire to present an accurate and valid picture of children in care who offend in Nottingham, in order that issues or patterns can be more clearly identified, and action taken to resolve these.
- 2.5 Restorative justice approaches are used where appropriate to prevent and divert young people from management within the Youth Justice System. There is a research base that documents positive outcomes for participants. A commitment to this approach would assist residential staff to provide a consistent approach across statutory and private providers.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

None

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

- 4.1 The post of Children in Care Police Officer is jointly funded by Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham City Council.
- 4.2 The 'Safeguarding Children in Care' event has no cost implications. The venue, lunch and facilities are all provided courtesy of placement and fostering and adoption provider Social Work Choices.
- 4.3 Roll out of restorative justice training across all children's homes to include external residential will necessitate an initial outlay. However, there are benefits both for young people and financially in appropriate diversion.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

- 5.1 The Children in Care Police Officer post minimises risks to both organisation and young people in care. To minimise risk detailed succession planning and business continuity needs to be considered and developed.
- 5.2 The CiC Police Officer has reduced the risk of children and young people committing crime and disorder within their communities (neighbourhood work) and has actively improved outcomes and life chances for this vulnerable group. As a corporate parent we would wish children in care in Nottingham city to have the same opportunities to enjoy and achieve as any other young person.

6 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

6.1 Annual statutory return (903) for CiC

PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

7

7.1 Ofsted Inspection of Nottingham city Councils Children in Need and Children Looked After Inspection 2010

7.2