



NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Date: Monday, 31 March 2014

Time: 3.00 pm

Place: LB31-32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG

Councillors are requested to attend the above meeting to transact the following business

Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director for Resources

Constitutional Services Officer: Catherine Ziane-Pryor **Direct Dial:** 0115 8764298

AGENDA

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9 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE

Verbal presentation by members of the Children in Care Council

10 PROPOSED FORWARD PLAN

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11 PROPOSED MEETING DATES IN THE NEXT MUNICIPAL YEAR

To note the following proposed meeting dates for the next municipal year: 19 May 2014, 21 July, 15 September, 17 November, 19 January 2015, 16 March.

IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE ON DECLARING AN INTEREST IN ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA, PLEASE CONTACT THE CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES OFFICER SHOWN ABOVE, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEETING

CITIZENS ATTENDING MEETINGS ARE ASKED TO ARRIVE AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF THE MEETING TO BE ISSUED WITH VISITOR BADGES

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at LB31-32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 20 January 2014 from 14.30 - 16.17

- ✓ Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Georgina Culley
- ✓ Councillor Emma Dewinton
- ✓ Councillor Jackie Morris
- Councillor Eileen Morley
- ✓ Councillor Wendy Smith

✓ indicates present at meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

- Helen Blackman - Acting Director Children's Safeguarding
- Heidi Watson - Business in the Community (BITC) Regional Director,
- Evonne Rogers - Business Strategy and Support
- Lewis Fearon - Children in Care Council Member
- Ben Attfield - Children in Care Council Support Officer
- Simon Down - Commissioning and Insight
- Tanya Mackley - Foster Carer Representative
- Elise Darragh - Insight Manager
- Robert Fagan - Marketing and Communications
- Kirstie Gee - Marketing and Communications
- Esme MacAuley - Marketing and Communications
- Gill Moy - Nottingham City Homes
- Kwesi Williams - Project Officer, Children in Care
- Laura Haxton - Quality and Commissioning
- Sharon Clarke - Service Manager, Children in Care
- Malcolm Wilson - Virtual School, Education
- Cath Pryor - Constitutional Services

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Eileen Morley (other Council Business)
Bev Beatie - Foster Carer Representative
Paulette Omennka-Thompson

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

35 MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of Tanya Mackley, Foster Carer Representative, in the list of apologies, the Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2013, as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

Councillors requested that, as referred to in minute 29, paragraph (h), Anne Partington, as Acting Head of Safeguarding, arrange for the leaflet providing contact telephone numbers signposting citizens with concerns over child sexual exploitation to the appropriate service, to be circulated to all City Council Councillors.

36 FOSTERING AND ADOPTION MARKETING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Esme MacAuley, Children and Families Business Partner, and Kirstie Gee, Fostering and Adoption Marketing and Communications Officer, presented the report which was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the presentation was submitted to the online agenda following the meeting.

A new directive from the Department for Education, requiring the adoption process to be speeded up, has, for Nottingham, been accompanied by an Adoption Reform Grant of £1.186 million from April 2013 to support the reform.

The current situation and processes were examined and consideration given to how to:

- (a) increase the number of suitable enquiries and applications (currently with a conversion rate of 39 enquiries for one successful application);
- (b) increase the number of Polish, Dual Heritage, Black Caribbean and respite carers and foster families who are able to place sibling groups and disabled children;
- (c) redress the balance of the City's young people in care to 80% with City Council Foster Carer's and 20% with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), from the current situation of 53:47.

The Fostering and Adoption marketing, recruitment and retention strategy takes an evidence based approach with mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation and reflects feedback from existing foster carers and adopters with the following:

- (d) a new branded profile with a fresh promotional approach including a new information pack with revised content and presentation;
- (e) demographic targeting of the communities;
- (f) skills based targeting of professionals and parents with strong transferable skills, especially with regard to supporting harder to place children.

Further promotional work is to be done:

- (g) during key national campaigns but with a localised focus;
- (h) increased advertising within the City on bus shelters, trams etc;
- (i) with press releases and radio interviews;
- (j) using the testimonials of current foster carers and adopters within promotional material;

- (k) with information stands at community events including the Nottingham Carnival, Splendour and Nottingham Pride;
- (l) holding recruitment road shows 'meet the carer' at smaller community events.

To help retain carers once they have been successfully recruited:

- (m) customer service provision was to be increased to prevent/resolve issues as quickly as possible and provide advice;
- (n) a foster carer newsletter is to be re-instated;
- (o) Support Groups are to be established;
- (p) foster carer business meetings are to be held to help gather information on how to improve the service and meet the needs of carers and young people.

It is anticipated that once the above are established, there will be fewer complaints, fewer carers leaving the City Council service, and an increase in word of mouth referrals.

Monitoring and evaluation will take place at every stage and for every campaign, with the focus on getting the appropriate people to apply and therefore raising the proportion of enquires/applicants to successful carers and adopters.

The revised approach had proved very successful during the National Adoption Week campaign when there had been a 1000% increase in visits to the website, requests for information packs had risen by 1800%, and three times as many people as usual had booked to attend an information evening.

Currently there is a campaign on recruiting more holiday and emergency foster carers while future campaigns will include, during March, a focus on recruiting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual foster carers and adopters and in May there is to be large national campaign 'fostering fortnight'.

Esme and Kirstie responded to the Board's questions as follows:

- (q) the pay levels of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) have historically been significantly higher than the levels which are paid by the City Council, however, this is under investigation by the Quality and Commissioning Team. Ideally the pay rates would be very similar;
- (r) feedback from carers had included comments that the photographs in the information pack should represent images of more real life children and families in real life settings and not use models. This had been applied and included an image disabled children in care. In addition to improving the links with the Disabled Children in Care team, links were also being established with the Caring for Adults and Disabled Adults Team;
- (s) The conversion rate of 39 enquiries to achieve 1 successful foster carer is a concern but with specifically targeted advertising, it is predicted that this ratio will improve. Independent Fostering Agencies don't release conversion rate information so it is not known what levels they achieve to be able to compare;
- (t) there is a relatively high 'churn' rate regarding retention of foster carers and although the improved customer support is expected to ease this to some extent, as existing carers will be subject to skills evaluation, the level of turnover may remain at a similar level or even rise until all had been assessed. All carers leaving the service of their

own accord will be asked for their reasons for leaving as part of the monitoring process.

The following comments were made by Councillors and Carer Representatives:

- (u) not all foster carers are driven by the pay or are looking to 'make a profit' but the pay that is available needs to be enough to cover the cost of carering. Higher pay is not the only benefit that some IFAs offer, there are often other incentives and a higher level of support with consideration given to ensuring that the services available to foster carers and adopters are flexible enough to fit around their care needs;
- (v) it is good that recruitment is reaching into a variety of communities but credit should be given to teenagers who often have views beyond being ethnically matched;
- (w) Nottingham City Homes has run advertisements for respite and emergency foster carers which generated a lot of enquiries. This short term care is an ideal test opportunity to help new carers experience short term fostering and decide if fostering is right for them;
- (x) it should be promoted that families can benefit from the diversity of the fostering experience, as can retired people who have experience of parenting;
- (y) targeted advertising through professional organisations such as the Police and other City Council partners would be beneficial, especially as IFAs already did this;
- (z) encouraging existing foster carers to talk with potential foster carers is a valuable promotional tool but there also needs to be a facility for carers to talk to carers outside of a formal environment. Voids of support, especially if Social Worker support is lacking, can be very damaging.

RESOLVED

- (1) to approve the direction of travel which will ensure that Nottingham City Council is able to deliver a new way forward for the service to ensure that children are matched to suitable carers in a more timely manner.**
- (2) to acknowledge:**
 - (i) the importance of the role of marketing and Customer Services Officers in the drive to recruit more foster carers and adopters and improve outcomes for children in care;**
 - (ii) the work being carried out to put systems in place to reduce dependence on Independent Fostering Agencies in order to achieve significant cost savings for the council.**

37 CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2013-2015

Kwesi Williams, Children in Care Project Officer, presented the report which informed the Board of the proposed Strategic Priorities and corresponding Strategic Priority Statements, identified through:

- Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- Children in Care and Care Leavers 'Have your say' survey;
- consultation with relevant professional partners; and

- Children in Care Outcomes Group.

The comment of the Board is sought prior to the strategy being considered for approval by the City Council's Children and Families Leadership Team.

Strategic Priority		Strategic Priority Statement (SPS)	
1	Reduce substance misuse.	1	To reduce young pregnancy and substance misuse. In addition to ensuring the timely completion of health checks, dental checks, immunisations, and SDQs.
2	Reduce young pregnancy.		
3	To ensure the timely completion of health checks, dental checks, immunisations, and SDQs (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires).		
4	To reduce delays in securing permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence orders and long term fostering.	2	NCC believes that all children should grow up with their birth families. Where this is not able to happen we will secure permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence orders or long term fostering.
5	Provide safe environments and stability in placement.		
6	Ensure children in care and care leavers are better able to deal successfully with significant changes in their lives.	3	To ensure children in care and care leavers are better able to deal successfully with significant changes in their lives. This includes improving transition into independence, and ensuring there are consultation and participation opportunities.
7	Improve transition into independence.		
8	Continue to seek the wishes and feelings of children in care and care leavers, and use this information to influence the care and support they experience.		
9	Ensure children in care know about the Advocacy, Independent Visitor, and Complaints service.		
10	Improve educational attainment.	4	To improve the educational attainment of children in care and to ensure care leavers engage in employment, education or training.
11	Support children in care and care leavers into employment, and training		
12	Ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support.	5	To ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support.
13	Reduce offending behaviour.	6	To reduce offending behaviour through strong collaborative partnership work.

The Board noted that the Children in Care Council have seen and commented on the Strategic Priorities and Strategic Priority Statements.

RESOLVED

- (1) with reference to the proposed Strategic Priorities and Strategic Priority Statements, the following comments and requests of the Board, are reflected in a revised document:
 - (a) regarding strategy priority 11, 'Support children in care and care leavers into employment and training', this be extended to include volunteering and work experience;

- (b) regarding Strategic Priority Statement (SPS) 6, 'To reduce offending behaviour through strong collaborative partnership working' the safety of vulnerable young people is guaranteed as much as possible and that it is ensured that young people do not return to environments of domestic violence, abuse and neglect which could influence future behaviour, be included in the revised draft document;**
- (c) the wording of SPS 4, Educational Attainment, be reconsidered to provide a stronger statement;**
- (2) to help support SPS 2, 'Permanency' , and SPS 3, 'Leaving Care', the feasibility of 'foster grandparents' be considered as additional support which is available for most families;**
- (3) once amended, the final draft of the Strategic Priorities and corresponding Strategic Priority Statements, are submitted to the next meeting of this Board, prior to consideration for approval by the Children and Families Leadership Team.**

38 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL - UPDATE

Ben Attfield, Children In Care Council Support Officer, and Lewis Fearon, Children In Care Council member, delivered a verbal update on the latest activity of the Children In Care Council (CiCC), which included:

- participation in 'have your say' sessions;
- the complaints procedure has been discussed, including how issues could be resolved at an early stage. The complaints procedure was chosen for more detailed future work;
- there is to be a residential session later in the year which will help develop skills such as team building, interpersonal and leadership roles;
- children from the City and County came together to tender for youth advocacy work;
- an ofsted inspection is due so there will be issues to address from the report;
- there is to be a refreshed membership drive, possibly expanding the CiCC to facilitate all areas of Children in Care beyond the current arrangements of 14 years of age and above.

39 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**40 VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE
ASSESSMENTS OF FOSTERING APPLICANTS AND ADOPTERS**

Laura Haxton and Simon Down, Children and Families Quality and Commissioning Team, and Robert Fagan, Innovation and Change Manager, presented the report which summarised the outcome of the Value for Money Review of Commissioned Service Assessments of Fostering Applicants and Adopters.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the review of the commissioned work;**
- (2) to request that the Board receive a more detailed report to a future meeting including more specific information on the cost and efficiency implications of the available and proposed options.**

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT – 31st MARCH 2014

Title of paper:	Personal Education Plans	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman Acting Director Safeguarding	Wards affected: ALL
Report author(s) and contact details:	Malcolm Wilson – Virtual School Head Teacher malcolm.wilson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 0115 8764619	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	None	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)		
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report sets out details of Personal Education Plan results for the period January to December 2013.		
The quality of Personal Education Plans still remains a significant focus for improvement. This report indicates actions taken and those planned to address this issue in the future		
Recommendation(s):		
1	The Board is asked to note the maintenance of PEP completion figures at over 90% and the actions undertaken to address the quality of PEPs.	
2	The Board to note developments planned to enhance the quality of the written records of PEP meetings.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To ensure we see an increase in the number of PEPs being completed. In addition to ensure we see an improvement in the educational focus of all PEPs.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 Every Child in Care (CiC) is entitled to a Personal Education Plan (PEP) when s/he is placed into care. The first is to be started within ten days of being placed in care and completed within 4 months. Following PEPs are undertaken every six months unless a child moves placement or school when a new PEP is expected.
- 2.2 The PEP contains a history of placement, school and social worker. It records the child's own view of their educational progress, ambition and targets as well as an educational plan for the next PEP period.
- 2.3 It is the social worker's responsibility to ensure that the PEP review takes place. Where possible the social worker should attend the meeting although it is not a requirement except for the first PEP. The school may take the lead in a PEP meeting except for the first.

2.4 PEP Completion Rates

Month	% PEPs In Date
January 2013	92
February 2013	90
March 2013	92
April 2013	93
May 2013	95
June 2013	95
July 2013	95
September 2013	95
October 2013	89
November 2013	92
December 2013	89

These results display a continued stability that has been present in recent years' figures.

- 2.5 The past year has seen the monthly completion rates at an average of 92.5%. This has been achieved through:
- Virtual School robust admin.
 - A monthly reminder being sent to all social workers
 - Earlier notification to social care team leaders of completion percentages for each month
 - Reminders at designated teacher network meetings of PEP completion expectations and social worker and designated teacher responsibilities;
 - Combining PEP and statement review meetings to avoid the repetition of meetings. An achievement consultant has worked with NCC special schools to make these adaptations;
 - PEA/EPG applications only being accepted if a PEP is in date and the PEA/EPG request matches priorities identified in the PEP;
 - The training of the CiC Social Work team regarding PEP essentials and their submission to the Virtual School;
 - Where possible the attendance of achievement consultants at PEP meetings for

pupils with changes to provision or placement.

2.6 The Virtual School has also produced a Key Stage 5 PEP to support those young people transferring to college. The aim is to complete it in the second half of Year 11 and invite the prospective college to the meeting so that it can ensure support mechanisms are in place. A network of colleges has been established by the Virtual School to ensure best practice is modelled by, and shared between, the colleges.

2.7 **Quality of PEPs**

The quality of PEPs still remains variable. The pupil view is generally well recorded; carers' views are also now recorded as is the historical information. But the education plan is often limited and does not always focus on English, Mathematics or other subjects where the young person is underachieving but rather behavioural and social targets. This has to be a priority focus over the next 12 months.

2.8 The Virtual School has changed its audit process to ensure all PEP records are audited as soon as they are received and, therefore, designated teachers in schools and social workers receive more timely feedback on their quality. The Virtual School will be working closely on this audit process over the next 6 months to improve on its effectiveness.

2.9 Actions taken so far are:

- An audit of a PEP record is completed as soon as it is received by the named consultant for that child
- Feedback on audited PEPs is given to the designated teacher and the social worker
- PEPs and audit records are held electronically on the Virtual School IT system
- Copies of PEPs are kept in pupil record folders
- IROs to ask for PEPs at reviews
- The CiC Team has received training on the required areas for improvement in PEPs
- Designated Teacher network meetings have highlighted PEP requirements and will continue to identify best practice
- The establishment of the Virtual School Steering Group to monitor the impact of the Virtual School on the provision made for CiC and to make recommendations and influence the practice of social care and schools
- A section has been added to the PEP to record the use of Pupil Premium funding

2.10 Further actions to be taken:

- Consideration of the commissioning of an e-PEP which would transfer information from one PEP to the next and would have a built in reminder to social workers and designated teachers of the requirement to complete their sections
- Extension of attendance and attainment data collection to include all city schools. Presently this is commissioned for City academies and those schools external to the LA whilst LA schools attendance data is collected through the electronic B2B system
- Training sessions for new Designated Teachers and social workers on how to complete a good quality PEP to be planned into the 2014-15 support programme
- For Out of City children Designated Teachers to be informed of PEP's out of date status alongside the social worker to ensure a meeting is co-ordinated and a PEP report completed

- The re-establishment of a active Virtual School Steering Group, meeting termly to refocus the priority on improving educational outcomes for all Children in Care
- Holding a CiC Conference in the summer 2014 targeted at Designated Teachers, Social Care teams. One of the key areas will be improving the quality of Personal Education Plans and their impact in ensuring accelerated progress in learning.
- Making further contact with all our schools both inside and out of the City to share best practice on the writing of good quality educational progress targets involving the CIC in the process.
- Given the present staff vacancy within the Virtual School it is recommended that 2 posts are created to return the team to full strength while also increasing the capacity of the team to work more effectively with schools at both a strategic and operational level.

Evaluation

- 2.11 2013 saw a completion rate of at least 90% in terms of PEP meetings.
- 2.12 Some improvement has been seen in the quality of PEPs. But additional work is required regarding the Education Action Plan. The Independent Reviewing Officers will request sight of the PEP in advance of the child's Looked After Reviews.
- 2.13 It has been a challenge to correlate PEP completion rates with pupil outcomes. The PEP meeting is a discussion regarding progress and attainment and a place where future actions are identified. The child's or young person's outcomes are impacted upon by the actions taken by the school and resources provided; e.g. Pupil Premium, PEA/EPG funding, 1:1 tuition, learning support which may need to change from those recorded at the PEP meeting as circumstances change.
- 2.14 Discussions with Virtual School Head Teachers in the East Midlands region and nationally indicate that all LA's have issues over the quality of PEP meeting records. But this can not be allowed to impact of the quality for our CiC going forward.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Virtual School, on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Board, takes on the responsibility for monitoring and recording PEP completion and their quality. This has resulted in a more consistent completion rate, at least similar and in some cases much higher than regional and statistical LA's.
- 3.2 There are challenges for social workers and staff within the Virtual School in terms of the distances travelled to attend some PEP meetings as sometimes children reside outside of Nottinghamshire. Slightly more than half of the school aged CiC are placed in schools external to the City.
- 3.3 The size of the Virtual School Team means that they are not able to attend all PEP and LAC review meetings. Where they cannot attend a PEP meeting they offer advice to social workers and designated teachers. They also offer training at team meetings and designated teacher networks as well as to individuals.
- 3.4 The Virtual School requires up to date information on its children to determine where

support is required to improve progress and raise the attainment of individuals and year groups, because of the large number of schools involved and the lack of access to a significant number of schools' data storage systems the Virtual School has commissioned the collection of attendance and attainment data on its behalf for the past 2 years. Now in 2014 a tendering process is underway for a new 3 year contract to include these two elements and an e-PEP. This service has proved invaluable to the Virtual School especially with the increasing numbers of academies in the City and the lack of access to information from schools external to the City boundary. It is the intention of this invitation to tender to include all Nottingham City CiC both inside and out of the City.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 The costs of PEP meetings are contained within salary costing of staff and very rarely are room hire/refreshment costs incurred as most meetings take place within the school. Social care has costs for social worker travel to meetings, especially those held external to the City boundary.

5.2 Schools incur costs when making provision to meet the action plans but pupil premium funding contributes to this as does any additional SEN funding approved as part of the usual statement or MSG bid process. Educational provision is the school's responsibility. This is why a section has been added to the PEP to record of the school are making use of Pupil Premium funding to improve learning outcomes. In a few exceptional circumstances, additional funding has been provided by the SEN or Virtual School budgets or the social care team to meet changes or adaptation to school provision.

5.3 To appoint 2 new staff members to the Virtual School should not require any additional cost, as there is a salary included within the current budget for the existing vacant post. If we appoint 2 Higher Level TA posts to fill the current vacancy this will provide better value for money in the long term. This restructuring of the service will enable the Virtual School to work more effectively at both a strategic and operational level. By doing this we should see an increase in PEP completion rates and more focused progress towards Education Action Plans

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Children in Care have an entitlement to a Personal Education Plan regardless of age, gender, race and disability and it forms part of the child's care plan.

7. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None

8. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

None

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 31 MARCH 2014

Title of paper:	Regulation 33 Visits – Internal Residential	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman Acting Director Safeguarding	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Paulette Thompson-Omenka – Head of Service, Children in Care paulette.thompson-omenka@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 0115 8765023	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Kay Sutt, Service Manager, Residential and Targeted Support kay.sutt@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 01158765667	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	N/A	

Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):

Internal Residential Homes are required to be inspected on a monthly basis by suitable persons independent to Residential Services as part of legislative requirements under National Minimum Standards (2000).

In January 2014 the Department for Education made some amendments to the Children’s Homes Regulations with specific changes relating to Regulation (Reg) 33 visits which come into force in April of this year.

These changes include ensuring that Reg 33 visitors are not involved in the operational running of a children’s home or in the preparing of a care plan of a child who lives in the home they are inspecting. Neither can they be involved in managing nor supervising the person who prepares the care plan of a child placed in the children’s home to be visited. The registered provider will have an increased role in being aware of and acting on any conflicts of interest in relation to the Independent visitor. A Reg 33 visitor shall also inspect the premises and any records they require. Where these include children’s case records the child should confirm their consent. From April 2014 reports will also have to be sent to a child’s social worker or relevant team manager.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other relevant professionals are included on the Rota managed by the Residential Service Manager. Reports are sent monthly as statutorily

required to Ofsted. The person carrying out the visit shall –

- (a) interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes the wellbeing of the children
- (b) inspect the premises of the children's home, its daily log of events and records of any complaints; and
- (c) prepare a written report on the conduct of the home.

Recommendation(s):

1	Continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals undertaking Regulation 33 visits including making reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring local authority.
2	Outcomes of Reports analysed and monitored by the Residential Service Manager to identify trends and patterns to improve performance as well as to share good practice.
3	In order to increase the understanding of Corporate Parenting Board members into running of internal Residential Homes, arrangements will be made for members to visit the homes with an Officer in the near future.
4	Corporate Parenting Board updated regularly in respect of outcomes of visits.

1.1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the nature of the provision it is imperative that the service is scrutinised independently to ensure it is delivering cost-effective services and improving outcomes for Children in Care. People carrying out Reg 33 visits can make recommendations to improve practice as well as ensuring that minimum standards are being adhered to and that children are effectively safeguarded and that the home is conducted in a way that promotes their well being.

Since April 2011 Reg 33 visits have been undertaken in all Children’s Homes within Nottingham city’s internal Residential provision.

In the last six months Reg 33 visitors have identified recent performance issues such as:

- Statement of Purpose in need of updating with change of manager and staff.
- Updating of paperwork
- Missing signatures on staff supervision
- Staff not having access to Carefirst. This is primarily due to there being limited availability of corporate Carefirst training
- Young people not writing their views on their care plan

Each visitor formulates an Action Plan which is completed by the Registered Manager and checked by the visitor on the next visit. Recommendations/Action plans have continued to be varied due to having a good mix of visitors who are from different professional backgrounds which has served to improve how each of the homes operate.

Ofsted look closely at Reg 33 reports and use the content during their inspections to check that action plans have been addressed by the Registered Manager and staff team. In the last year Ofsted have become more rigorous with their Ofsted ratings. However, one of our homes has maintained an Outstanding judgment, two homes are rated Good with Outstanding features, one maintains Good and three are judged as Adequate.

The Reports continue to be very positive with Inspectors describing the Homes as well kept, warm, welcoming and homely environments; an environment that a young person would take pride in being their home. Staff in the homes are described by the visitors as having good working relationships, having a good mix of personalities, dedicated and passionate to making a difference to the lives of the children they care for. Visitors comment that children in the homes are encouraged to develop emotionally, intellectually, socially and creatively. Young people on the whole are very complimentary about the care they receive in the homes with few complaints. Young people when asked by the inspectors say they feel well supported by the staff and generally feel happy in the home and get on well with the staff. They are also aware of how to make a complaint if they are unhappy. They also have access to an independent advocate.

Managers receive regular supervision and Operational Management meetings take place on a monthly basis with Development days taking place quarterly where any current issues or relevant themes/ongoing issues are raised and discussed. The management team within residential have a vision for the next 12 months and beyond for both their individual homes and the Residential Service as a whole. As a team they are united in their strong and passionate vision to have more internal residential homes within the city in order to reduce children and young people being placed in out of County private children's homes.

The young people have reported to visitors the positives about living in the houses. Some of the recent comments from children and young people are as follows:

"I feel happy, safe and cared for. Staff are approachable and helpful and I have no concerns or issues to raise"

"I am very happy in my current placement and I get on well with the staff. I am happy with the support staff are giving me with my independence skills and I have no concerns"

"This is a very positive place to live. I wouldn't change anything"

"I have some concerns about my education, but staff are supporting me with the issue"

"Having lived in foster care I much prefer living at this home because I feel more supported and more cared for, I have been able to get very good advice towards my independent skills"

"Staff at the home have helped me to get a job and I have an apprenticeship for two years which I am very excited about"

"The food is amazing and the staff cook for you"

"I was glad when I came into care when I did so it did not get worse with my mum"

"I prefer to live in residential than in someone else's home".

"The home feels like my home and I am really proud to call it my home".

The levels of missing young people fluctuates in each of the homes depending on the young people placed. Each home has an individual policy on steps to take to prevent young people from going missing in the first place in line with the children's homes amended Regulations which came into force in January 2014.

Young people's access to education and employment is improving, all of which is recorded in the Regulation 33 Reports. Currently the majority of our young people in our semi-independence home and long term homes are in some form of work or education. Staff continue to work very closely with the Virtual Head in supporting our children and young people in school and ensuring that educational packages are put in place for those children who don't currently have a school placement. The staff have high aspirations for the children and young people and achievements are celebrated as a matter of high priority. In September of last year the City Council held an awards ceremony in which most of our young people attended and received a certificate of achievement for which they were extremely proud.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

Residential services since April 2011 have been re-configured into a Small Group Homes Model which is an umbrella term. The specifics are set out below:

There are now ten settled beds in four Children's Homes, seven Emergency beds which accommodate three young people in the Bestwood area each on a short-term basis and twelve Semi-Independence beds (six in Sherwood Rise, four in Hyson Green, two in Lenton and two transition houses in the NG7 area).

Last year Crocus Fields Unit came over to the Residential Service offering eleven beds for short breaks for children and young people with disabilities.

In December 2013 we opened our first four bedded home within the city offering long-term care for children/young people with complex disabilities.

The number of internal beds in Nottingham City has increased from twenty-five to twenty-nine which require further Reg 33 visitors.

Reg 33 visits are an important quality assurance process and also serve as a safeguarding measure for Children in Care. They are able to inform practice and performance and ensure young people have access to someone independent, should they need to complain or disclose information about the care they are receiving.

Reg 33 visits are also a legislative requirement and completed reports are sent to Ofsted on a monthly basis. From April 2014, in line with the amended regulations, reports will also be sent to the social worker or to the team manager of a child who lives in the home.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

None Required.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

The re-configuration of Children's Residential continues to be cost effective for the City Council. Internal beds remain cost effective and are currently in line with or lower than external provision. Also the increase in internal beds prevents some young people from being placed outside of the city as it is good practice, wherever possible, to keep children and young people near their family, friends, school or college.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

Regulation 33 reports include legislative requirements (amended to meet new Minimum Standards, April 2011)

Record and capture information in relation to young peoples offending and anti-social behaviours.

They also report as to whether young peoples cultural and diversity needs are being met within their identified Care Plan.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

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

None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

None

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Corporate Parenting Board – March 31st 2014

Title of paper:	Children in Care Placements – Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014 - 2016	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Candida Brudenell Director of Quality and Commissioning	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Holly Macer, Lead Contract Officer, Placement Service, Quality and Commissioning, 0115 8764816, holly.macer@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Katy Ball, Head of Early Intervention and Market Development, Quality and Commissioning, 0115 8764814, katy.ball@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Joy Chambers, Placement Service, Quality and Commissioning, 0115 8765025, joy.chambers@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	06/01/2014	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority: (you must mark X in the relevant boxes below)		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>Nottingham City Council (NCC) acknowledges that there has been a growing demand for Children in Care (CiC) placements, and changing needs. This, along with local authority financial pressures, legislative changes, learning from Serious Case Reviews nationally and the final year of the Regional Provider Framework, has prompted a Strategic Review into Nottingham City's CiC Placements Market.</p> <p>A draft Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy has been produced to determine the way in which Nottingham City Council commissions CiC placements, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitments to all children and young people requiring a care placement and explores the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands to signal to the placement market.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	For the Corporate Parenting Board to endorse and provide comment on the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014 – 2016.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 In line with the Nottingham City Council Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, the overarching ambition of the Strategy is to ensure that all children and young people are given the best start in life and have the opportunity to thrive and achieve.
- 1.2 A Strategy is required to strengthen messages to the provider market about quality standards and gaps in support for Nottingham's CiC. The Strategy will signal a clear direction to stimulate the placement market and shape it to best meet the needs of Nottingham's children and young people.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 In September 2013, there were 584 children and young people in the care of Nottingham City Council. The cohort has been increasing at an average rate of 3.9% each year, against a national average rate of 2%. Although the rates are higher than both national and regional rates, they are slightly lower than comparator authorities.
- 2.2 The socio-economic factors of the City; deprivation, unemployment, domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse, all impact on the volume and complexity of needs presented by children and young people. Legislative changes, including the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) and the Southwark Judgement have also impacted upon demand. Much of the changes in demographics, such as increasing population, rising birth rate, increasing BME population and international migration, show little signs of reversing in the short term.
- 2.3 Nottingham City Council has actively responded to the increasing demand and financial pressures. In 2011, the Placement Service was restructured to increase dedicated capacity to implement more robust processes and arrangements, review all placement packages and build more effective provider relations. This has led to greater value for money, increased transparency of services and quality delivered, and improved market management.
- 2.4 The East Midlands Regional Provider Framework was implemented in April 2011. The Framework established a formalised agreement between participating local authorities and independent providers and has brought about multiple benefits, including; sharing information about quality, efficiencies, buying power, market influence and resource sharing. The current Framework expires in March 2015. A regional working group is exploring what new arrangements might look like.
- 2.5 The combination of all of these factors; growing and changing demand, CiC outcomes, financial pressures, legislative changes, learning from Serious Case Reviews nationally and the expiring Framework, means that the need for a Strategic Review into Nottingham City's placements market is timely and critical.
- 2.6 Through analysis into Nottingham's City's current and anticipated sufficiency requirements, a draft Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy has been produced to determine the way in which CiC placements are commissioned. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitments to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market. *Please refer to Appendix One for the draft Strategy.*

2.7 Consultation

The draft Strategy has been presented to Nottingham City's Council's Children and Families Leadership Team and the Children and Families Big Ticket Programme Board. It is proposed that the governance route continues through to the Corporate Parenting Board and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

2.8 Consultation with the internal and external provider market has been undertaken. The consultation process has invited participation, asking colleagues, partners and providers for feedback and comments to help shape the final Strategy and plan for implementation.

2.9 *NB:* The Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy forms only one stage of the Strategic Review into the CiC Placements Market. Further work includes market development to create greater capacity locally to ensure more of Nottingham's children and young people are placed close to home. *Please refer to Appendix Two which provides a timeline and overview of the Review process.*

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To not produce a Strategy would result in a reactive market, less well equipped to meet the placement needs of Nottingham City's CiC.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

4.1 There are no direct financial implications or value for money issues arising from this report. Future commissioning decisions made as a result of the Strategic Review will have financial and value for money implications. A further report, detailing these implications, will be brought to the Corporate Parenting Board at the appropriate time.

4.2 The Regional Provider Framework is due to end in March 2015. Provider fees have been fixed up until this point and therefore inflation is a risk. This has been acknowledged through the regional working group which is considering the potential implications of this and exploring how new arrangements may look.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 Risk management processes will be undertaken prior to commencing any procurement or commissioning activity. There are no legal or Crime and Disorder Act implications at this stage. Any future procurement and commissioning activity will comply with EU Procurement Legislation and guidance will be sought through the relevant Legal and HR channels.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 An EIA is not required at this time as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions. An EIA will be carried out before any formal decisions are made.

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

- 7.1 Appendix One: Children in Care Placements - Draft Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014 – 2016.
- 7.2 Appendix Two: Strategic Review of the Children in Care Placements Market – Timeline

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 8.1 Nottingham City Council's Children and Young People's Plan
- 8.2 Nottingham City Council Plan

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Children in Care Placements - Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

**A Strategic Approach to the Commissioning
of Children in Care Placements**

DRAFT
2014 - 2016

“Getting it right first time, on time, every time”

Early Intervention and Market Development, Quality and Commissioning,
Children and Families, Nottingham City Council

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DRAFT

Vision and Commitment

In line with the Nottingham City Council Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, the overarching ambition of this Strategy is to ensure that all children and young people are given the best start in life and have the opportunity to thrive and achieve.

The Vision - Getting it right first time, on time, every time

Nottingham City Council will provide every child and young person with the best possible placement, which meets their needs, wishes and feelings and provides them with the opportunity to thrive and achieve.

Nottingham City Council will drive a dynamic, outcomes-focused, child-centred placement market, which offers good value, quality and choice, to ensure that the right placement is found the first time, on time, every time.

The Commitment

For all of our children and young people, Nottingham City Council commits to:

- ✓ Secure the best possible placement for every child and young person, in an open market, with consistent application of processes and standards across internal and external provision.
- ✓ Place a minimum of 90% (fostering) and 80% (residential) of children and young people 'locally'. For those placements made outside of the local area, Nottingham City Council will ensure that the same levels of monitoring and quality standards are applied.
- ✓ Articulate to providers what excellent outcomes look like for each child and young person and explore incentives for over-achievement.
- ✓ Measure children and young people's outcomes using a standardised approach across all placements, ensuring an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.
- ✓ Listen to children and young people and maximise opportunities for their feedback to inform and influence service delivery.
- ✓ Provide quality, standardised 'life skills' development support and entitlements for young people transitioning into independence.
- ✓ Implement effective early intervention, for example;
 - Financial commitment where a specialist/therapeutic placement is required, for a period of time determined by a qualified professional
 - Ensure that all eligible young people are engaged in the Family Nurse Partnership
 - Escalate and recommend change when a young person has experienced multiple placement breakdowns
- ✓ Implement robust commissioning, contract and quality assurance processes.

Background and Purpose

Nottingham is a vibrant City with a diverse population of approximately 305,700. It is a city of business and enterprise, learning and science, and sport and culture. Nottingham, like other cities, still faces challenges. The population has increased by 14% over the last 10 years, driven largely by increasing student numbers, a higher birth rate, and international migration. The proportion of the population from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities is now at 35%, almost double what it was a decade ago, with the population of under 18's being even more diverse.

High levels of deprivation and disadvantage in some parts of the City, has led to Nottingham being ranked as the 20th most deprived out of 326 local authority districts. The percentage of children living in poverty has fallen slightly over recent years but still stands at over 35% (equating to over 19,500 children under 16 years). The socio-economic factors of the City; deprivation, unemployment, domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse, all impact on the volume and complexity of needs presented by children and young people.

In September 2013, there were 584 children and young people in the care of Nottingham City Council. The cohort has been increasing at an average rate of 3.9% each year, against a national average rate of 2%. Although the rates are higher than both national and regional rates, they are slightly lower than comparator authorities. Legislative changes, including the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) and the Southwark Judgement have also impacted upon demand.

Much of the changes in demographics, such as increasing population, rising birth rate, and international migration, show little signs of reversing in the short term. Nottingham City Council has actively responded to the increasing demand and financial pressures. In 2011, the Placement Service was restructured to increase dedicated capacity to implement more robust processes and arrangements, review all placement packages and build more effective provider relations. This has led to greater value for money, increased transparency of services and quality delivered, and improved market management.

The East Midlands Regional Provider Framework was implemented in April 2011. The Framework established a formalised agreement between participating local authorities and independent providers and has brought about multiple benefits, including; efficiencies, shared risk, buying power, market influence and information and resource sharing. The current Framework expires in March 2015.

The combination of all of these factors; growing and changing demand, financial pressures, legislative changes, learning from Serious Case Reviews nationally and the expiring Framework, means that the need for a formalised Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy is timely and critical.

Led by the Quality and Commissioning Directorate, and owned by City partners as a whole, this Strategy determines the way the City commissions CiC placements, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. It lays out the City's vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market.

*** Comment from Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to be inserted here ***

Market Position and Sufficiency

Analysis undertaken into the CiC cohort provides detailed insight into the City's sufficiency requirements, revealing the market strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities, and enabling commissioners to determine how much of what type of provision the City requires. *Appendix One provides an overview.*

Key Market Messages

- Each year there are over 600 new CiC placements made. Typically 250-300 of these are children and young people entering care, with the remainder being moves between existing placements.
- The number of CiC continues to increase at an average annual rate of 3.9%.
- Limited availability across all placement provision is restricting choice and matching prioritisation, particularly with local provision.
- Meeting and effectively de-escalating the needs of the most complex children and young people is becoming increasingly challenging.
- Continued local authority financial pressures require innovative solutions to ensure the City sufficiently meets demand.
- The Regional Provider Framework comes to a close in March 2015 (fees are fixed until then). Clear direction is required to inform the refresh and development of the Framework.

✘ Weaknesses and Gaps

- Insufficient availability of local provision - specialist residential, solo and dual residential, complex fostering, semi independent accommodation and support, emergency provision
- Some inconsistencies in the application of processes and monitoring standards across internal and external provision
- Inconsistent transition support to independence, between placements and rehabilitation home
- Insufficient use of Staying Put arrangements
- Provision for vulnerable Care Leavers who do not meet the threshold for adult services, but are not ready to secure their own tenancy at 18
- Insufficient expert knowledge of what does and does not work (e.g. most appropriate placement model for victims/perpetrators of sexual abuse)
- Limited financial resources
- Lack of incentives for providers to ensure excellent outcomes for children and young people in their care

✔ Strengths and Opportunities

- East Midlands Regional Provider Framework – opportunity to build upon success of the current Framework and inform the developments of the new Framework
- Placement Service capacity: quality assurance, contract compliance, strategic oversight, opportunity for innovation
- Effective provider relations and opportunity for improved market management
- Stakeholder engagement/senior management buy-in

- Improved Quality Assurance Framework
- Improved transition planning and support to independence, between placements and rehabilitation to family
- Further integration of Health, Education and Social Care
- Maximised local placement availability, enabling an increased number of CiC to be placed locally

Commissioning Direction

To ensure choice and diversity and to avoid monopolies, Nottingham City Council (NCC) will operate within a mixed economy of internal and external provision, commissioned through framework, spot and block purchasing arrangements, some of which will be regional and issues based. Placements will be made according to what placement can best meet the needs of the child or young person. To ensure this, there will be a consistent application of processes across internal and external provision.

All commissioning will be strategic and needs-led, with robust procurement and contracting functions embedded. Collaboration between partners, commissioners, the market and children and young people, will ensure a market which is truly fit for purpose. NCC will continue to build upon strategic relationships with neighbouring local authorities to achieve greater regional and sub-regional collaboration and identify future areas for issues/tactical based commissioning. Work to further integrate Health, Education and Social Care through joint planning and funding will sustain shared accountability and inter-agency cooperation, drive efficiencies and prevent duplication.

Significant work has been undertaken to reduce costs and ensure value for money. Whilst this will continue to be a focus, the priority remains to drive up quality and ensure early intervention leading to de-escalation of need and greater placement stability for better outcomes for our children and young people.

Market Development

To effectively shape the market, Nottingham City Council will maintain a strong visible presence and consult directly with the market, articulating a clear direction for what is required internally and externally to best meet the needs of our children and young people. The market must be;

- Composed of the optimum number, sector and size of providers. A mix of small, medium and large organisations from the public, private, voluntary and not for profit sectors, to achieve variety, sustainability and avoid monopolies
- Dynamic, flexible and responsive - proactively adapting to changing demand and need
- Person-centred and outcomes-focused
- Efficient, effective and value for money

Placing Our Children Locally

Nottingham City Council defines a 'local' placement as anywhere within the boundaries of a 20 mile radius from Nottingham City Centre. Securing a local placement will take into consideration maintaining a young person's educational, health, social and cultural connections and access to resources.

Nottingham City Council will strive to secure the most appropriate placement available for each child and young person. Where appropriate, the priority will be for all children and young people to remain living locally. This will be achieved through short, medium and long term strategies to maximise local provision availability. Where it is not possible to secure a local placement, the remaining matching criteria for a young person will be prioritised and the Local Authority will evidence that it has done all that is reasonably practicable to secure a suitable placement.

A mapping exercise, detailing all local care placement provision against availability and use, revealed that a significant proportion of local placements are being commissioned by other local authorities. NCC will collaborate with the provider market and with regional local authorities to ensure that the use of local placements for local children and young people is maximised. In the short term, this will include improved co-ordination and advanced placement planning, alongside some retained arrangements, where appropriate. In the medium to long term this will include block contract arrangements and plans for increased local placement capacity.

East Midlands Regional Provider Framework

Implemented in April 2011, the Framework has brought about a number of benefits including; efficiencies, shared risk, buying power, market influence and information and resource sharing. It is Nottingham City Council's intention to remain in the Framework following its expiration in March 2015. NCC will inform the refresh and development of the Framework, promoting more dynamic arrangements which;

- Enable new providers to join throughout the life of the contract
- Support smaller, local providers to increase choice and avoid monopolies by larger providers
- Allow flexibility to encourage innovation and improvement over the life of the contract
- Ensures a true multi-agency approach, through greater integration of Health and Education

Block Contracting

Nottingham City Council will embark upon block contracts which guarantee business to a number of providers across a portfolio of provision, securing reduced fees, assured availability and forward planning for the local authority and provider. The following will be considered for block contracts;

Fostering: local fostering for 'complex' children and young people, remand foster carers (sub regional collaboration).

Residential: local solo and dual homes for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, semi independent accommodation and support

Spot Purchasing

Spot purchased provision will be commissioned for services that are not consistently required or where there has been no previous or predicted demand e.g. parent and child assessments, rare/specific disability/health need.

Accelerated Strands

- ➔ Defined 'local' provider, ensuring appropriate geographical boundaries which maintain appropriate attachments and enable easy access to local services and resources
- ➔ Maximised local placement availability (internal and external), enabling an increased number of CiC to be placed locally
- ➔ Improved Quality Assurance Framework
- ➔ Remand fostering pilot (sub-regional collaboration)
- ➔ Define what early intervention looks like for our most complex young people
- ➔ Explore dynamic block contracts for external residential and semi independent placements
- ➔ Explore dynamic block contracting of local foster carers in the external market
- ➔ Secure emergency placement provision
- ➔ Standardised 'life skills' development support and entitlements for young people transitioning into independence
- ➔ Complex cohort provision (e.g. defining the most appropriate placement model for victims/perpetrators of sexual abuse)
- ➔ Capture themes emerging from ongoing quality assurance activity (e.g. how to incentivise excellent outcomes for the child/young person)

Quality Assurance

Through a robust Quality Assurance Framework, Nottingham City Council will ensure that all children and young people are accessing high quality, value for money care placements. Consistent application of processes will be applied to internal and external provision impartially.

Minimum standards detailing what constitutes a good quality placement will feed into service specifications and lay a benchmark for providers applying to care for Nottingham's children and young people. Elements of the criteria will be specific to the type of placement being required (e.g. therapeutic) and will recognise particularly vulnerable cohort (e.g young people experiencing teenage pregnancy and child sexual exploitation).

A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rated system for monitoring providers will determine the level and frequency of quality assurance visits undertaken by the Placement Service. A set of criteria, factoring in performance, business viability, Ofsted judgements, history and complexity of current placements, will determine whether a provider is rated as Red, Amber or Green.

It is Nottingham City Council's ambition to only place with Ofsted judged 'Good' and 'Outstanding' providers. A formalised protocol to address what action should be undertaken when a provider receives an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement will be established. This will build upon current practice which sees an assessment of the appropriateness for a young person to remain in placement, increased monitoring visits and close liaison with the provider and Social Care. This protocol will form part of a suite of Placement Service Protocols to address;

- a provider receiving an 'Inadequate' or 'Adequate' Ofsted judgement
- concerns around a providers' financial viability
- decline in provider quality
- spot purchasing of a non-vetted provider
- authorisation of Out of Area placements
- managing a placement contract

The voice of children and young people will tangibly inform service planning and delivery, through actively capturing their views and feedback. The Placement Service intends to recruit a young apprentice with experience of the care system to support with quality monitoring responsibilities.

Improved Outcomes

Improving outcomes for our children and young people is the ultimate objective of this Strategy. Nottingham City Council intends to build upon current practice for measuring and monitoring outcomes by moving to a standardised model, allowing a young person's progress to be accurately monitored throughout their time in care. This will be developed by experts from a provider, commissioner and young person perspective and will support regional discussion.

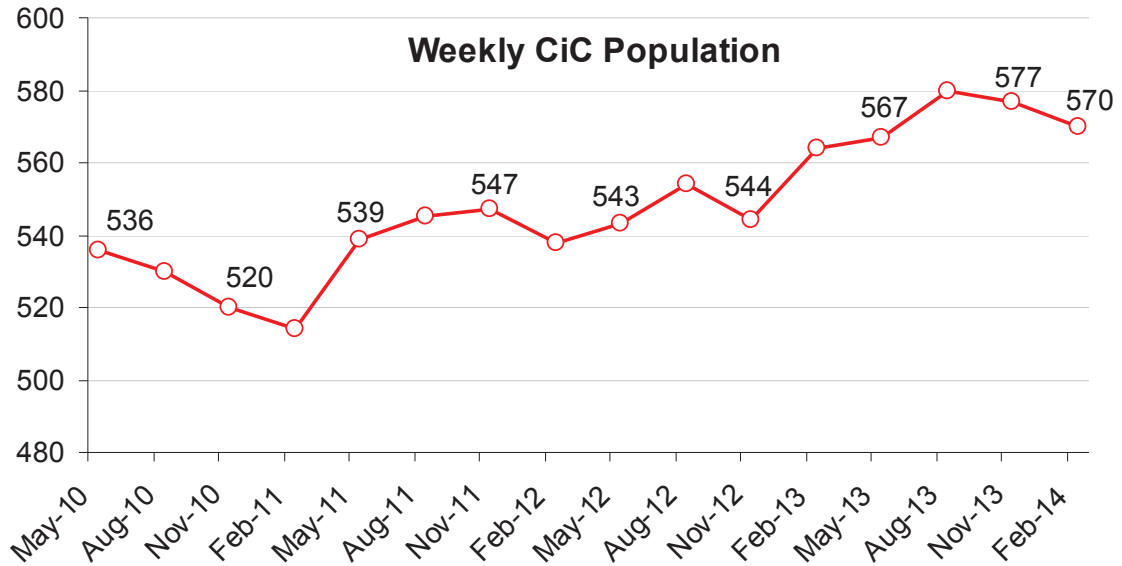
→→→ Placement Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy - Implementation Plan →→→

August - September 2013	
Cohort and Market Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify the profile of the current cohort, articulating volume and need in order to predict demand and shape the market. <i>(Overview of findings included in Appendix One)</i> ➤ Clarify market strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities
October 2013	
Local Market Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Map all local care placement provision, alongside availability and use. Use to explore options for Nottingham City Council to maximise the use of local resources <i>(A map maintained by the Placement Service will be used to measure progress)</i>
November 2013	
Quality Assurance Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Initiate the refresh of the Quality Assurance Framework <i>(RAG rated providers, monitoring visit rota, quality standards and criteria)</i>
December 2013	
Draft Placement Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Draft Strategy to determine a strategic approach to the commissioning of CiC placements, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements ➤ Draft Placement Service Protocols developed ➤ Agree a vision for the Placement Service and a set of commitments to children and young people ➤ Ensuring appropriate geographical boundaries which maintain appropriate attachments and enable easy access to local services and resources
Placement Service Protocols	
Placement Service Vision and Commitments	
Defined 'Local' Boundaries	
January 2014	
Placement Commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Draft Strategy out for consultation.

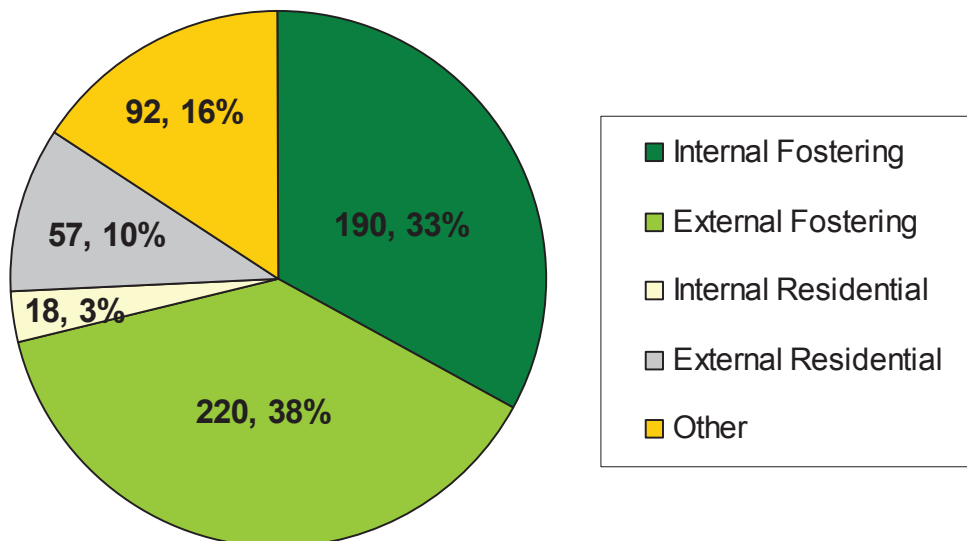
and Sufficiency Strategy Regional Provider Framework Review Quality Assurance Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commence working group to refresh and develop the East Midlands Regional Provider Framework, ahead of its expiration in March 2015 ➤ Quality assurance standards agreed
February 2014	
Remand Foster Care Pilot Quality Assurance Framework Young Person Input Market Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implementation of a six month sub-regional pilot for the foster care of remanded young people ➤ Quality Assurance Framework agreed ➤ Establish methods for collating and utilising children and young people's feedback to inform service delivery. Pursue recruitment of a young apprentice with experience of the care system ➤ Market Development Plan and timeline established
March 2014	
Implementation of Placement Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 'Life skills' Support and Entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implementation of market development and procurement activity, and Placement Service Protocols ➤ Agreed standardised 'life skills' development support and entitlements for young people transitioning into independence
April 2014 – March 2015	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Market development and procurement activity ➔ Continued implementation of the Placement Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy ➔ Develop regional local authority collaboration ➔ Develop sub-regional tactical/issue based commissioning ➔ Develop Health and Education collaboration 	
April 2015 - Commence new Regional Framework arrangements	

The Current Market

Placement Volume and Type

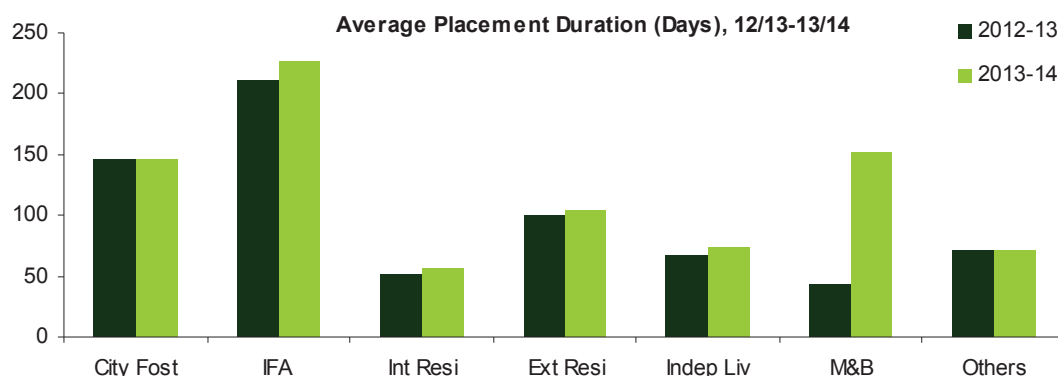


In March 2014, there were 577 children and young people in the care of Nottingham City Council, placed in following provisions;



Each year there are over 600 new CiC placements made. Typically 250-300 of these will be children and young people entering care, with the remainder being moves between care placements.

CiC Placement Average Duration



Placement Stability

At the end of March 2013, 14% of CiC placed externally had three or more placements in the previous year, compared to 10.5% of those placed internally. These figures provide an indication of the short term placement stability. Longitudinal research is required to look at long term placement stability.

In fostering, 5% of CiC placed internally had three or more placements in the previous year, compared to 4.5% of those placed externally. In residential, 54% of CiC placed internally had three or more placements in the previous year, compared to 46% of those placed externally. To provide context, it should be noted that the external market caters for a higher proportion of complex needs, which will impact upon the stability statistics.

Commissioning Methods

Nottingham City Council commissions a mixture of internal and independent placement provisions via formal framework arrangements, block contracts and spot purchasing.

	Internal	External Framework	External Spot Purchase
Fostering	51%	48%	1%
Residential	27%	46%	27%
Semi Independence	26%	28%	46%

The needs of the young person will drive the placement search. Once accommodation has been agreed by Social Care senior management, the Placement Service then trawl the internal market for a suitably matched vacancy. If there are no internal vacancies which can meet the needs of a young person, the search will then be extended to framework providers. Only if there are still no suitable vacancies, will the Placement Service consider spot purchasing from a non-framework provider.

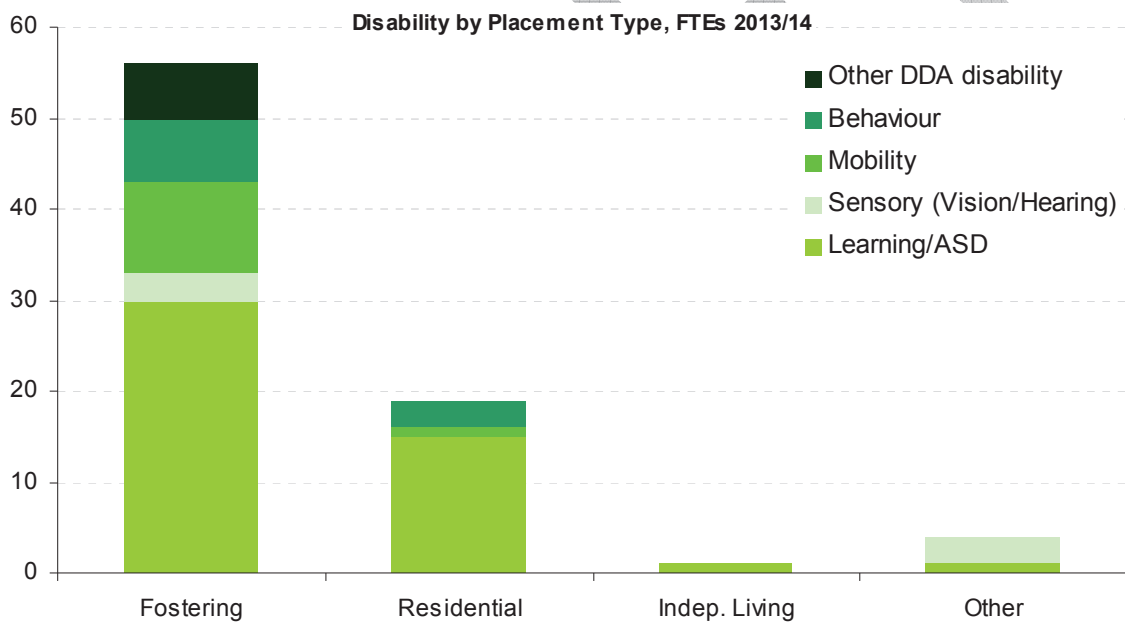
Placement Need

	Need Level	Fostering FTE	Fostering %	Residential FTE	Residential %
2012/13	Core	384	90%	0	0%
	Enhanced	29	7%	45	73%
	Complex	11	3%	16	27%
2013/14	Core	395	90%	0	0%
	Enhanced	32	7%	46	73%
	Complex	12	3%	17	27%

*Full Time Equivalent

Between 2012/13 and 2013/14, there was an increase in the volume of fostering placements across all need levels, with the proportion of need remaining the same.

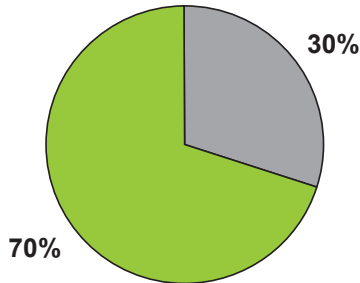
Placement Requirements due to Disability



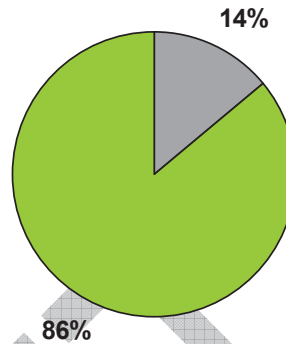
The percentage of CiC with a disability classification has reduced from 15% in 2012/13 to 14% in 2013/14. The cohort requiring specialist provision due to their disabilities is minimum, as the majority of these young people are able to be placed in 'mainstream' provision, with appropriate additional support being provided through universal services.

Placement Location:

Residential



Fostering



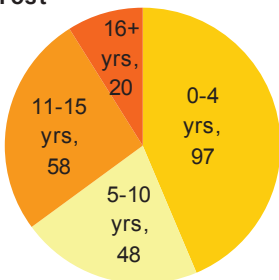
Within 20 miles of the City Centre
 Outside 20 miles of the City Centre

In comparison to other local authorities, Nottingham places more young people locally. Nottingham City Council defines 'local' as a placement within a 20 mile radius of the City Centre. NCC will strive to increase the percentage of young people placed in local foster placements to a minimum of 90% and increase the percentage of young people placed in local residential placements to a minimum of 80%.

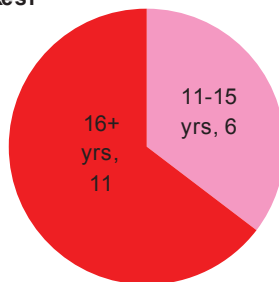
Age and Gender

Age:

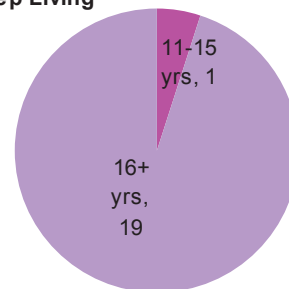
City Fost



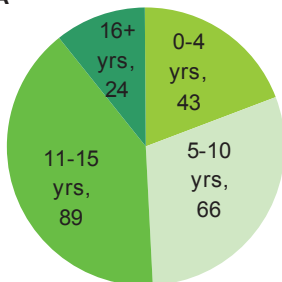
Int Resi



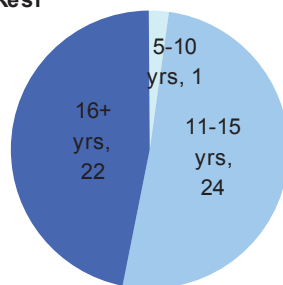
Indep Living



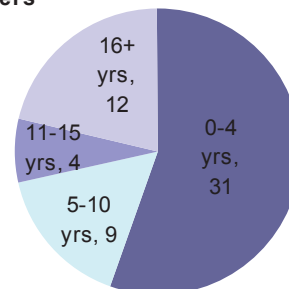
IFA



Ext Resi



Others

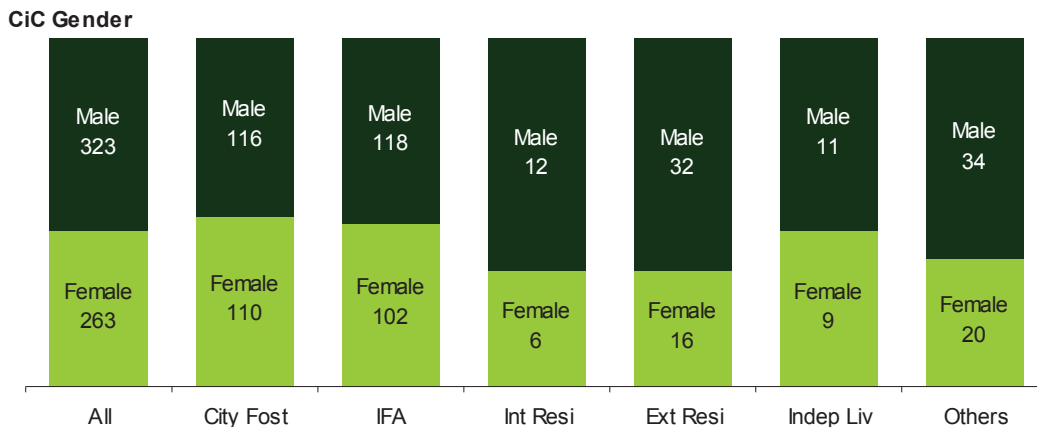


Count of Child ID	Gender (Snapshot at 01/04/2012)			
Age	Female	Male	Total	%
0-4	62	54	116	21%
5-10	63	61	124	23%
11-15	61	67	128	24%
16+	75	97	172	32%
Grand Total	261	279	540	100%

Count of Child ID	Gender (Snapshot at 30/08/2013)			
Age	Female	Male	Total	%
0-4	83	85	168	29%
5-10	59	67	126	22%
11-15 years	82	93	175	30%
16+	41	72	113	19%
Grand Total	265	317	582	100%

Snapshots taken from 2012 and 2013 demonstrate that the percentage of CiC aged 16+ years has reduced from 32% to 19%. The percentage of CiC aged 0-4 years has increased from 21% to 29%. The percentage of CiC aged 11-15 years has increased from 24% to 30%.

Gender:



Although the overall gender split has remained relatively even (46% female, 54% male), there has been an 8% decrease in female CiC aged 16+.

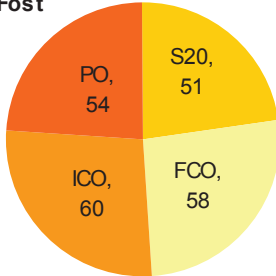
These statistics highlight that the market needs to be flexible year on year. It needs to be responsive, proactively adapting to the changing demand and need.

Legal Status

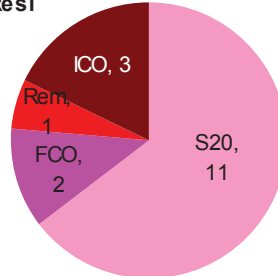
CiC Legal Status - All



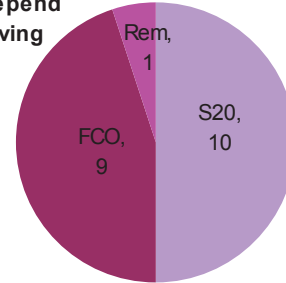
City Fost



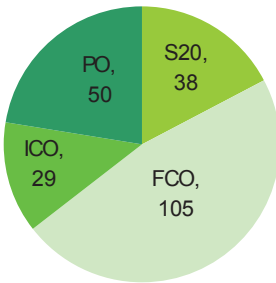
Int Resi



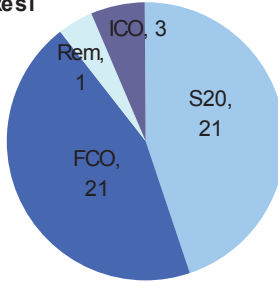
Independ Living



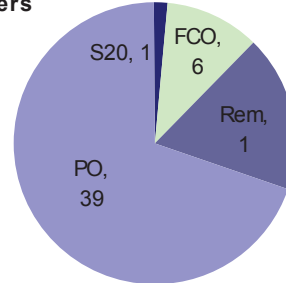
IFA



Ext Resi



Others

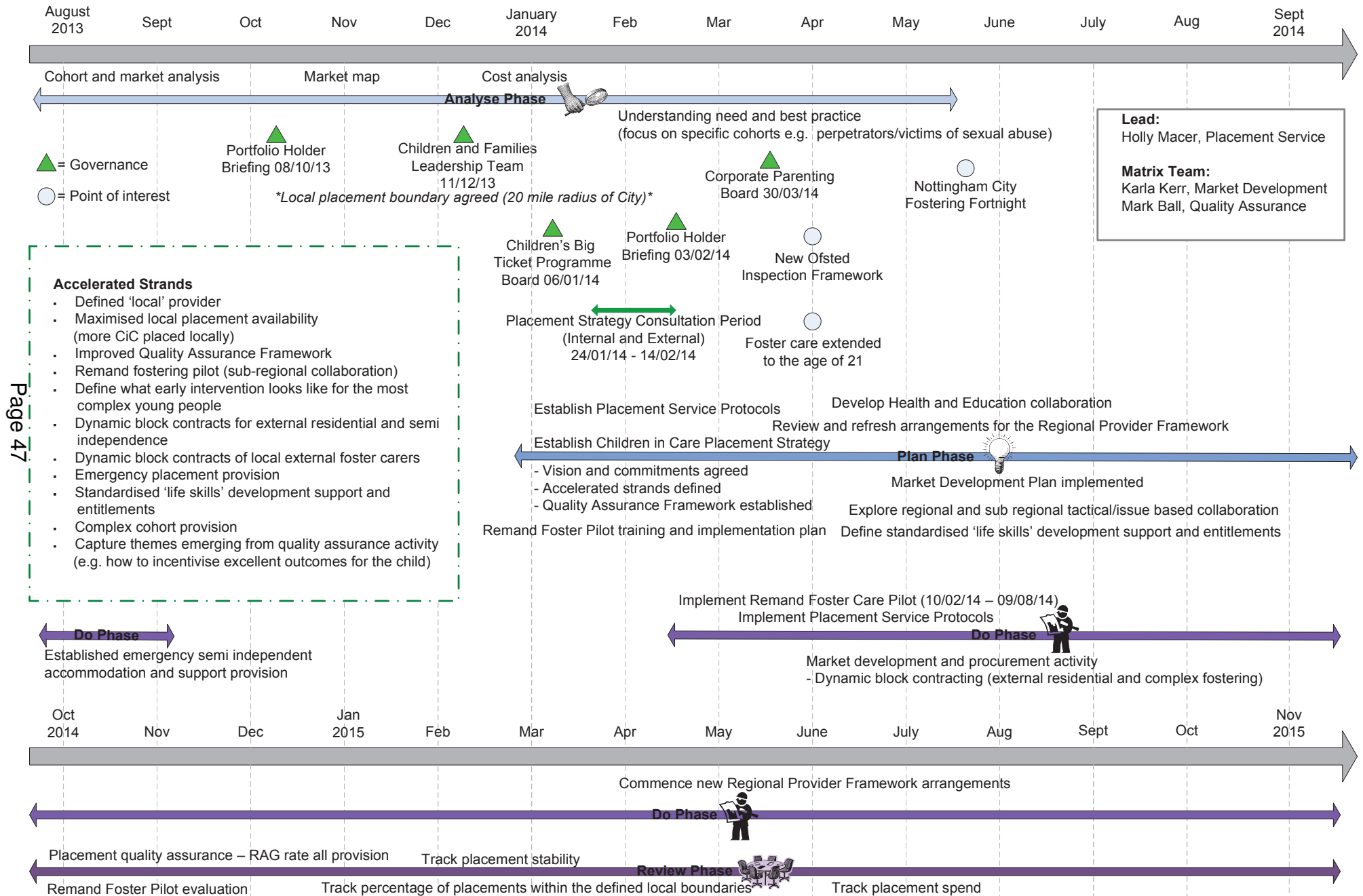


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DRAFT Strategic Review of the Children in Care Placements Market

Key Outcomes: - 87% of CiC placed within a 20 mile radius of the City Centre
 - Increased proportion of CiC placed with Ofsted judged Good and Outstanding providers



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