



# Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2018 – 2020

## Valuing the Future of Our Children in Care and Care Leavers



Safer, cleaner, ambitious  
**Nottingham**  
A city we're all proud of



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

# Table of Contents

<b>Our Leadership Team</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Welcome to Our Plan</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Promises</b>	<b>5-13</b>
<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Our Internal Services</b>	<b>15-18</b>
<b>Our Support Services / Partner Agencies</b>	<b>18-19</b>
<b>Governance and Monitoring Framework</b>	<b>19</b>

# Our Leadership Team



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## Welcome to Our Plan

Sometimes children cannot be cared for in their birth families or wider network, and come into the care of the local authority. For this group of children and young people we have a responsibility, as corporate parents, to provide care and to work with partner agencies to best meet their needs and prepare them for their future.

As corporate parents, we are responsible for ensuring children who come into our care experience safe and positive parenting, are helped to achieve their full potential and pursue their aspirations.

It is essential that in order for our children to achieve the best possible outcomes, all agencies involved in caring and supporting them must work together effectively. This in-turn requires a multi-agency strategy that clearly states areas that require improvement or attention (i.e. our strategic priorities) and what actions will be taken to address these. Ensuring that children in care and care leavers are happy, cared for and properly supported is one of the most important things that we do at Nottingham City Council.

This strategy is based on promises we have made to children in care (CIC) and care leavers (CL), and have been developed in partnership with our young people. The strategic priorities identified within this strategy have also been aligned with the Directorate's priorities.

Our vision is for a city where every child and young person can enjoy their childhood in a warm and supporting environment, free from poverty and safe from harm; a city where every child grows up to achieve their full potential.

We want to ensure that all of our children in care and care leavers have the right home and support to keep them safe and well, and to help them grow into happy, healthy, successful and fulfilled young adults who are optimistic about their future.

When children first come into care, their social worker is likely to be from one of our twelve fieldwork children in care teams. These teams work with children, young people and their families to make sure that children only come into care when this is the best thing for them. We have a range of services to help with this aim. Working together in this way should help us ensure our children and young people, and those who care for them, get the right help at the right time. In order to do this, we have condensed our strategic priorities set out below into seven areas of promise for our children and care leavers.

CIC and CL Strategic Priority		CIS Priority	
1. To actively seek the wishes and feelings of our young people and use the information to shape the care and support they receive. We will ensure our young people are able to access advocacy, independent visitor and complaints services. We will ensure our young people are treated with respect and will be given enough time and help to understand why they are in care.	A LEARNING CITY	<p>We will play an active role in supporting families to address the issues that can become barriers to learning and aspiration for children, young people and their parents/carers. We will work with education colleagues to support children in care. This will contribute to the successful delivery of Nottingham City's Education Improvement Strategy.</p> <p>We will promote a learning culture within our services that ensures our practice is informed by a strong evidence-base, emerging best practice and learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and other serious incidents. We will act on the findings of inspections, peer reviews, audit activity and our regular performance monitoring.</p>	
2. To help our young people achieve educational success and to ensure those leaving care are engaged in employment, education or training.		RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	<p>We will provide early help, parenting and family support, targeted interventions and specialist services to build resilience, not dependence, in the children and families we serve. We will work with our communities to build their capacity to support one another. We will work to safeguard children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation and we will support children who are in our care and their carers. We will use restorative approaches with young people to enable them to make a positive contribution to their communities.</p>
3. To ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support in order to facilitate the best possible transition into independence.	4. To keep young people safe and avoid the criminalisation of young people through strong collaborative partnership work.		5. To ensure young people are healthy and have access to relevant health services. This will be facilitated through the timely undertaking of health assessments, dental checks, immunisations, and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs).
6. To continue our ongoing commitment to achieving permanent living arrangements for our young people. To further strengthen this we will ensure unnecessary changes in home, carer, social worker or school are avoided.	HEALTHY MINDS, BODIES AND RELATIONSHIPS		<p>We will work with our partners to ensure children and young people have the self-esteem, confidence and knowledge to keep themselves safe in their relationships, seeking help when needed. We will, at the earliest opportunity, directly support children, young people and their families that are struggling with significant mental health issues that may result in harm to themselves or others.</p>
7. To increase use of internal foster and residential placements through the recruitment and retention of foster carers, and to explore if the types and numbers of internal residential placement can be increased, in order to offer more local homes.			



## Promise 1:

### Participation in Society

#### Have Your Say Survey 2017

Each year, we circulate the Have Your Say Survey to all of our children in care and care leavers. Launched in 2011, responses to the survey help us gauge how well we are performing against the commitments made in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Charter. The survey can be returned by post, or completed online. There is also an 'easy read' version available to all of our children, to allow all of them to complete the survey. Nottingham City is now also using MOMO, an app designed to help further capture the child's voice in a digital forum. We achieved a 19% response rate in our 2017 survey. This is a slight increase when compared to our response rate in 2016 of 18.5%.

#### Survey Feedback

The recurrent themes arising from survey returns in recent years are:

- Ensuring young people know about advocacy and complaints services in case they want help to have their views heard or are unhappy with us.
- Ensuring that young people have the right place to live as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring that we do all we can to prevent changes in a young person's life unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well. We know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person.
- Ensuring we provide all the help our children and young people need, to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood.

Based on this year's results, three specific areas have been identified for further focus through the termly Corporate Children in Care Council meetings. These are regarding the following Children in Care and Care Leavers Charter commitments:

- "We know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person so we promise to do all we can to prevent such changes unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well."
- "We will help them to achieve at school and elsewhere to the very best of their ability."
- "We will help our children and young people to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood."

The CIC Council also recognises that good progress has been made to ensure Children in Care (CIC) and Care Leavers (CLs) are generally happy that they are treated with respect, have time and help to understand their circumstances, have the right place to live, have a home life that is stable and safe and get the right support to be as healthy as possible. Additionally CIC and CLs are generally, with some exceptions, aware of and know how to access advocacy and complaints processes, and are listened to in the planning for their care. Two areas for further focus circulate around avoiding unnecessary change in the lives of CIC and CLs, and to ensure they receive the support they need with their pathway plans to facilitate transition into adulthood, and to ensure CIC and CLs receive the support they need to achieve in school and elsewhere.

## Promise 2:

### School and Higher Education

#### School

The educational attainment of our children in care has remained relatively stable, year on year. In line with changes to the Teacher Assessment framework, data for 2018 is still being collated. In 2017, our cohort of children in Key Stage 1 saw a 4% drop in reading, a 23% increase in writing and a 21% increase in maths in 2016 / 2017 compared to 2015 / 2016. At Key Stage 2, our cohort size has more than doubled from 15 pupils in 2014 / 2015 to 37 pupils in 2016 / 2017. Attainment at Key Stage 2 has dipped below the national average in reading and maths, but incurred large increases in results for writing and SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar). Our Key Stage 4 cohort has remained approximately the same in number over the last two years; GCSE / qualification results for 2018 are detailed below:

Result	2017	2018
5 GCSEs L4+ (A* - C)	15%	23%
5 GCSEs L4+ (A* - C) including English and Maths L4+)	10%	18%
English and Maths GCSEs L4+ (A* - C)	17%	21%
Any Qualification	83%	82%

2018 Key Stage 4 results are an improvement on the results in 2017. As indicated in the table, the percentage of pupils attaining 5 GCSEs at L4 and above (A\* - C) has increased by 8 and the percentage of pupils with English and Maths GCSEs at L4 and above has increased by 4%.



As of October 2018, 41.7% of care leavers (aged 17 to 21 years) are in employment, education or training; this is currently below our local target of 55% set for 2017/18.

Additionally, an annual celebration event also takes place within the Children in Care Service, called the Big It Up Awards. Split into two events based on age groupings, the Awards are an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our children in care over the past year.

#### Children in Care and Care Leaver Feedback

71% felt that they are doing very well or well at school in the 2017 Have Your Say Survey, the highest proportion since the survey began. There is also a positive picture across the board in relation to personal education plans (PEP's). More CiC know about their PEP (70% of CiC), more are happy with their PEP (82%) and more are involved in drawing up their PEP than in 2016 (63%). Also, there has been a decrease in the number who feel they would do better with more help 'all/most of the time' (50% down 11ppts). This is in line with an increase in those who

feel they would 'never' do better with more help (25% up 3ppts), suggesting overall more CiC feel they have enough help than previous years.

## **College**

If you are young person who wants to go to college:

We understand that sometimes it is hard to go on your own to enrol at college so Nottingham College is offering you the chance to enrol at a different time if you want to. Nottingham College will also provide you with the following:

- Access to an Achievement Coach, wellbeing support and health advice.
- Support through the college and your personal advisor to support your attendance.
- A named person to support in you to get an appropriate work placement or work experience.
- Support to visit the colleges if you just want to find out more.

## **University**

If you are a young person who wants to go to university:

- We will encourage you in any way we can to go to university and help you choose which one and where.
- We will provide you with a Higher Education (HE) bursary of at least £2,000 if you go to University and we will help you to consider how this is best spent.
- We will provide somewhere for you to stay during University holidays (or funding for this if you would prefer to make your own arrangements in the holidays) if you are in full time HE and your term time accommodation is not available. This is for 21 weeks of non-term time rent.
- We will provide a living allowance equivalent to benefit rate.
- We will help you sort out tuition fees and student loans; and we give you travelling costs to get to and from University at the start and end of term.
- Locally, Nottingham University and Nottingham Trent University will give you lots of information about how they can help you before you apply to them.
- Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham University may offer the following through their Growing Lives Programme:
  - Campus visits for you before you arrive and/or additional welcome activities if you want to go to them.
  - Bursary for financial support of £500.
  - Dedicated support officer to help you while you are at University.
  - Money advisers to help you apply for all you are entitled to and work out a budget to suit your needs and interests. Nottingham University offer this before you get to university.
  - Guaranteed offer of University-allocated accommodation if you have accepted a place at Nottingham Trent University as your first choice - accommodation in halls is available throughout the summer vacation too .
  - a personal health and wellbeing welcome pack.
  - help accessing all support services.
- Nottingham Trent University are also offering opportunities to find out more about the UK higher education system and accessing finance, tours and academic taster sessions, as well as English-language support at evening classes and an annual summer school.
- Nottingham University give you accommodation throughout the year and will help you move in if you are travelling on your own.



## Promise 3:

### Employment and Training

#### Jobs

If you are a young person who feels ready to find a job we will support you by:

- Making sure you have access to the Leaving Care Service employability programme to make positive steps towards training and employment. The programme is recognised by the DWP as a genuine job seeking provision for care leavers. The programme provides opportunities that aim to build your confidence so that you feel able to move onto training or employment. You will be involved in all aspects of planning your programme which could involve a mentor.
- Offering delivery of ASDAN courses where you will have the opportunity to achieve employability qualifications (from entry level to level 2).

#### Work Experience

Sometimes if you are not quite sure what you want to do work experience can help you make a decision. Our care leavers thought this would be a good idea so we have worked with education providers in the city to help give you a range of work experience opportunities. For example, the Work Inspiration scheme at Nottingham Trent University runs throughout the year and provides opportunities across a wide range of work experiences. In addition, Nottingham College will, where possible, seek work placement or experience opportunities for care leavers not enrolled at the college. The DWP will also offer work experience if you are getting benefits and health organisations can offer work experience to care leavers who wish to pursue a career in health. Nottingham City Council will also offer work experience and taster opportunities within the Council. Please talk to your Personal Advisor if you want to find out more about work experience.

#### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a really good way of getting into work. In Nottingham there are lots of opportunities for apprenticeships with Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes as well as other businesses. Nottingham City Council know that these are hard to get so will make sure that you and your Personal Advisors are told about any apprenticeship opportunities within the City Council at the same time as going to our recruitment agency. You will also be offered support. This would include regular review meetings with apprentice managers and PA's; and where needed, access to the additional support e.g. Maths / English support, resilience coaching and mentoring sessions.

We will also provide additional support by:

- Making sure that any apprenticeship assessments or interviews are at a place that is right for you.
- Helping with transport costs to attend interviews for training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews.
- Preparation for interviews and where appropriate financial support to purchase suitable interview clothing.

## Promise 4:

### Relationships

#### Local Data

87% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation as at the end of the 2017 / 2018 financial year; this represents an increase in performance of 3% compared to our statistical neighbours. 80.8% of applicable care leavers have a Pathway Plan that has been completed in the 6 months preceding the 2016 / 2017 financial year-end.



The number of 18 year old care leavers, staying put with a former foster carer, has increased. In 2016/17 4.8% of this cohort stayed put, compared to 18.2% in 2017/18. This is an increase on the national average of 17.6%, indicating that more of our care leavers feel safe, included and able to thrive within their former foster families.

#### Other Internal Services

The Social Care Complaints Service facilitates the resolution of service user dissatisfaction and learns from complaints in order to improve service delivery. There is a concerted effort to ensure that our young people know how to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the support they receive. Regular monitoring of complaints mean trends can be identified and service improvements can be made.

The Research, Engagement and Consultation team provides strategic and operational support for children's social care to ensure that children and young people's views, experiences and ideas for change are listened to and used to shape both their lives and improve services for CIC in general. The Engagement and Participation Lead from the REC team is responsible for convening CIC Council meetings and associated youth voice activities linked to the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) and Charter for Children in Care and Care Leavers. The Engagement Lead also co-ordinates the annual Have Your Say survey of all CIC and care leavers, the results of which are used by the CPB to drive up standards across all service areas.

#### Care Leavers Local Offer

In 2017, the government announced the implementation of the 'Keep on Caring' policy document. This policy stipulates that Local Authorities must offer Leaving Care Services to care leavers up to age 25, rather than age 21. Nottingham City Council is therefore formulating a local offer for Care Leavers. To develop our offer, we had six focus groups looking at different things that are important to all young people like health, education, training and employment as well as where CLs live. These groups included lots of different people from within Nottingham City Council like our Early Help, leisure and employment teams. We also included people from health, housing, education, training and the Department of Work and Pensions as well as some of the other organisations that we work with to support CLs. Nearly all of these groups had two or more Care Leavers, who shared their story about what was good about when they left care (so that we

can carry on doing it) but more importantly what they would have liked us to do. We listened to all of this and shared our ideas about what we could do before developing this Local Offer.

## Promise 5:

### Keeping Safe

The Youth Justice Service work closely with young people who get into, or are at risk of getting into trouble with the law. The YJS (and its partners) work hard to prevent offending and re-offending behaviour. It has been effective in its efforts to do this through its use of Restorative Justice (RJ).

Restorative Justice is used to help young people who commit crime to make amends in an effort to repair the damage done and find a positive way forward. Research shows that restorative practice delivers better outcomes for young people across schools, care, community and the Criminal Justice System. The YJS has now been awarded the Restorative Justice Council's Restorative Service Quality Mark (RSQM), which recognises professionalism and high standards in RJ practice.

#### Local Data

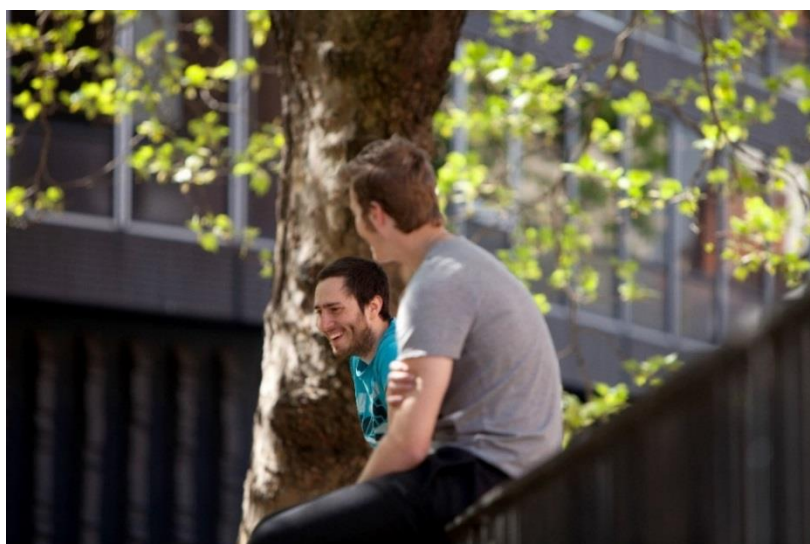
06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
13.00%	9.00%	9.00%	9.80%	9.00%	9.80%	8.70%	8.2%	6.0%	5.8%

Table: Source. 903 Statutory Return (data for Nottingham)

The percentage of CiC placed in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, aged 10 years old or older, having received a Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or conviction, is at its lowest when compared to previous years at 5.4% for 2016/17. Nottingham City moved to the second best performing 'quartile' in this area in 2014/15 and have maintained this place each subsequent year.

Of those children in care in England aged between 10 and 17 years, 4% were convicted or received an Out of Court disposal in 2016/17, compared with 7.3% in 2010/11 (Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)).

This data shows us that that fewer young people are now being criminalised in Nottingham. We believe that the work of the Authority's Children in Care Police Officer and our Youth Justice Service Lead for Children in Care has contributed to this reduction, by working closely and pro-actively to safeguard children in care. This includes identifying children in care at arrest stage, promoting the use of diversion and restorative approaches where appropriate, and providing care-givers with opportunities for multi-agency working.



Our CIC Police Officer (CIC PO) received a British Empire Medal from HM Queen Elizabeth II in 2017, for her contribution in this role.

## Promise 6:

## Health and Wellbeing

### Performance Data

As at the end of September 2018, our performance headlines in relation to health are as follows:

- 76% of CIC have had a health assessment recorded in the last 12 months.
- 74% of CIC have had a dental check recorded in the last 12 months.
- 76% of CIC have had a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) recorded in the last 12 months.



Dedicated business support has been re-established which has led to a rise in performance in regards to the recording of SDQ completion, and the recording of health and dental check-ups. Meetings have been established to look at children's emotional well-being, and data is available to ensure we appropriately follow up with those young people with high scores to ensure appropriate intervention is in place. Colleagues from CAMHS and the Nottinghamshire CCG attend our CIC Outcomes Group on a bimonthly basis, to further communicate and establish new and effective working methods to better capture performance data in a multi-agency capacity.

Within the CAMHS Service, the current wait time for an appointment is less than 3 weeks. If all referrals were booked into the next available slot irrespective of choice, this would reflect a wait time of less than 2 weeks. This illuminates a high degree of efficiency within our CAMHS Service and other relevant agencies, to ensure children and young people who need their support are referred and met with in a timely way.



## Promise 7:

### Accommodation

#### Local Fostering Data

We use a mix of internal Local Authority recruited foster carers and Local Authority managed residential homes, as well as commissioned independent fostering agencies (IFAs) and external residential homes. At the end of March 2017, we had 144 internal fostering households, which represented a significant increase compared to March 2016. By March 2019, we will be working to secure 162 fostering households internally. We will also be working hard to ensure that 85% of our children are placed within 20 miles of Nottingham. Data shows that 81% of our young people live within 20 miles of the City, as at the end of September 2018.

#### Residential Provision

At Nottingham City Council we are increasing the number of internal residential homes we have, with two new mainstream homes set to open in 2018. This includes another two bedded home for long-term, settled care placements and another home for short-term placements. Further work is ongoing to expand an existing two bedded home, to four beds. Two semi-independent homes will also be increasing their provision by two beds. In addition to this, a two bedded home is being developed for younger children who display complex behaviours, with the aim of intensive work undertaken with them leading to a move into a foster placement. One of our current mainstream homes will be repurposed for this. As with internal fostering, this allows smoother collaboration between the network of colleagues working with the child, as they will all work for the Local Authority and share the same working methods required to help children thrive.





## What Is Corporate Parenting?

So far, throughout our strategy, the term 'corporate parenting' has come up. What does this actually mean?

Anyone who works with, or acts in the best interests of, children in care can be considered a Corporate Parent, including Councillors. All are equally responsible for advocating and supporting our young people to maximise their potential and outcomes. Corporate Parenting is everyone's responsibility within the Local Authority. Councillors, as Corporate Parents, are responsible for ensuring children who come into our care experience safe and positive parenting, are helped to achieve their full potential and obtain the best possible outcomes, the same outcomes that we would expect for our own children. It is the role of the Corporate Parent to advocate on behalf of children in care and care leavers, and to empower them to make their own decisions in preparation for adulthood.



Nottingham City Council has an average of 600 children in its care at any one time for whom we are the corporate parent. Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years children, chairs the Corporate Parenting Board that provides oversight and challenge in relation to all matters involving children in Nottingham City Council's care. The Corporate Parenting Board is held six times each civic year and is attended by elected members, relevant internal colleagues and contributors from external agencies. The Corporate Parenting Board is informed annually by the Have Your Say survey, which is distributed to all children in care and care leavers for feedback on how they think Children's Services are performing. Target areas for deeper analysis and action are identified here, which shapes the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Board over the year to follow.

## Children in Care Services

Care is a vital part of our child protection system. We are always trying to do more to ensure that all children in care are healthy and safe, have the same opportunities as their peers and can move successfully into adulthood. Children, young people and carers are likely to be supported by a number of different teams as they move through the care process. Whilst we know that this can cause some disruption we think it's important that the support on offer changes as the needs of the child or young person develop.

This section seeks to outline the roles and responsibilities of Local Authority teams that work with our children in care and care leavers.

### Social Work Support for Children in Care

The Local Authority's social work support for children in care is provided by one of three types of social care teams. These are:

- Children in Care (CIC) Teams
- Children's Social Care (CSC) Teams
- The Whole Life Disability Service (WLD)

Nottingham City has two Children in Care Teams at Nottingham City, representing the North / Central and South / Central areas of the city respectively. They work solely with children in care from 0 up to 18 years old. Having dedicated children in care teams promotes specialism and expertise. This, we believe, leads to better outcomes for our young people. A dedicated Permanency Team has been formed, linked to the government agenda to establish Regional Adoption Agencies. This Team deals specifically with children for whom the best outcome is adoption, or another form of permanence.

The WLD is an integrated service which includes social workers with specialist knowledge in the area of childhood disability. The WLD undertake a number of duties, including those associated with meeting the Authority's statutory requirements in relation to severely disabled children in care. The number of CIC cases held by the WLD is relatively small.

### Residential Services

Nottingham City Council has thirteen small residential homes offering care and accommodation for children and young people between the ages of 12 - 25 years. A wide range of care and support is available including short term emergency care, long term care and a long term home for children with complex disabilities.

Nottingham City currently has six mainstream residential homes, one home dedicated to children with complex needs and four semi-independent units for young people who are 16 years and over. Additionally, we have a dedicated short breaks home for children and young people with

learning disabilities, physical disabilities and a range of associated placements with challenging behaviours. Nottingham City is working towards increasing the number of internal residential placements in the near future.

All our homes are safe and welcoming and we are proud to provide high quality care, with two of our homes judged 'Outstanding' and a further three as 'Good' with outstanding management and leadership, as of October 2018.

Every effort is made to provide children and young people with the necessary support needed for them to achieve the best outcomes possible. All units are subject to regular quality assurance, both internally and externally, in order to ensure all young people receive the same high quality care.

Some of our children are placed away from Nottingham City in residential children's homes and where this is the case, we rigorously monitor the homes, the support and services they provide to our children.

## Fostering and Adoption

The Fostering and Adoption Service aims to provide high quality family based care that ensures that children in care receive a positive experience of home and family life.

To achieve this we recruit, assess, train and support foster carers and adopters to care for children so they achieve the best possible outcomes in regards to their physical, emotional and intellectual development. A variety of foster carers and adopters are recruited and trained to meet the diverse needs of children and reflect the ethnic and cultural background of the community we serve. We offer a full and comprehensive training programme to equip carers to be able to meet the complex needs of children in our care

All foster carer and adoption applicants are rigorously screened, thoroughly assessed and carefully trained so that they can provide safe and supportive homes for children in care, children placed for adoption.

Support is available to adopters after the adoption order is granted to enable them to respond and adapt to the changing needs of children. We recognise the lifetime commitment that is adoption. We offer a range of support including a designated Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA) who is there to help adopters' access adoption support, which includes making an application to the adoption support fund and other specialist services.

The Post Order team also offer a service to special guardians who can request an assessment and further support post the making of the order.

## Independent Reviewing Officer Service

The Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) Service operates within the framework of the updated version of the IRO handbook, the national guidance of Working Together 2018 and the national guidance for Fostering. We provide each child in care with an IRO, to ensure their Human Rights are respected.

The main focus of the IRO is to critically examine and quality assure the Care Planning and interventions of the Local Authority in respect of each child or young person looked after. Central

to this is ensuring that the child's wishes and feelings are given full consideration in planning and enabling by their role, improved outcomes. IROs therefore ensure:

- There is robust challenge regarding decisions, where there is underlying poor professional practice and when decisions are not being taken in the children's interests.
- To challenge the quality of analysis being undertaken, to ensure it meets the children's needs.
- That views of children, parents, carers and other professionals are given sufficient weight in care planning.
- That informed reflection occurs on the child's progress and planning for the future.

## Leaving Care Service

The Leaving Care Service work with young people aged between 18 - 25 years who are eligible to receive care leaver support. The service aims to ensure all young people get the best support possible, as they transition into adulthood.

Every young person will be given the opportunity to explore their independence with an individual support package that allows them to develop, learn, or re-learn the skills that will be needed for successful independent living.

We have supported a number of young people through further and higher education, with some going on study at a post-graduate level. We are very proud of all our young people who have gone on to achieve huge success.

The Leaving Care Service also incorporates a service for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

## The Placement Service

The Children's Placement Service is the single point of access for the formation and quality assurance of care placements. The Service is responsible for providing 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.

The Placement Service undertakes activities which ensure that all children and young people are accessing high quality care placements.



## Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

The CAMHS Children in Care team provides a specialist service and training to support and maintain the emotional and mental health needs of our young people. The team ensures the emotional health needs of young people are reflected in Health Plans and are part of the review process.



The team works to a consultation model working closely with Foster Carers, Social Workers and the wider professional network offering a reflective space to think about the child's history, what the current difficulties or concerns are and to develop a plan. They will also offer support to identify individual therapy for children, where this is needed.

## Virtual School

The role of the Virtual School is to monitor, support and provide interventions to ensure that children in care achieve the best possible educational outcomes. The school reports on the completion of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and audits the quality of these plans. It also supports schools, or other educational institutes, to fulfil their statutory duties to children in care.

The Virtual School works with a network of Designated Teachers who are dedicated to ensuring that our children achieve the best they can in line with all other children.

## Support Services and Partner Agencies

The Children in Care Service works closely with a number of support services and partner agencies external to the Authority, all of which share the same vision. Support services and partner agencies include the following:

### Health Provision

The Children in Care and Adoption Health team assist the local authority in addressing the needs of children in care through effective commissioning, delivery and co-ordination of health services and through individual practitioners providing co-ordinated care for each young person.

The team is led by a Designated Doctor and Nurse and includes Community Paediatricians and Clinical Nurse Specialists. A initial holistic health assessment must be carried out within 20 days of a child entering care, and must be carried out by an appropriately trained doctor with knowledge of the needs of looked after children. Following this, review health assessments are usually undertaken by a Specialist Nurse. In addition to reviewing the child or young person's physical health, their developmental and emotional health is also assessed. It is standard to give the child or young person time alone with the health professional, in an age appropriate manner, to ensure their voice is heard directly and sensitively. We also encourage and support children to go to appointments at the dentist and opticians at least once a year.

### Independent Visitor and Advocacy Service

The Children's Society and SOVA are the current advocacy and independent visitor providers for Nottingham City Council, and they provide the following to our young people:

- Advice and information for children and young people about their rights. Services include Independent Persons service is for all eligible children and young people subject to current Secure Accommodation Orders.



- Independent Visitor service provides suitable appointed volunteers to visit any child or young person who is in care where it is deemed to be in the child or young person's best interests. This includes children placed out of the local authority area.
- Residential Visiting Advocacy service provides visits to all residential children's homes and residential schools wherever one of our young people is placed. This includes secure accommodation.

## Futures

Futures are a not-for-profit provider of jobs and skills advice, training, apprenticeships and support to young people and adults who need help preparing for work or training.

## Governance and Monitoring Framework

This strategy is endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Board. Strategic Priorities (SPs) and their corresponding actions will be reviewed in response to updates of the Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the annual children in care and care leavers 'Have Your Say' (HYS) survey, and priorities set by central government. The next scheduled update of this strategy will take place in 2019.

The Children in Care Council (CICC) will assist in the evaluation of progress against identified priorities. The CICC are involved in analysing performance data generated by the annual HYS survey and comparing it review result from the previous year. Priorities for future action are then recommended.

The diagram below shows the relationship between corporate parenting forums within the Authority.

