

Title of paper:	Aspiring Nottingham: A Framework for Delivery	
Report to:	Children's Partnership Board	
Date:	13 October 2010	
Director(s)/Corporate Director(s):	Associate Director of Aspiration and Life Skills, NHS Nottingham City and Nottingham City Council	Wards affected: All
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	Jane Brown, Associate Director of Aspiration and Life Skills 0115 915 7864 jane.brown@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other officers who have provided input:		
Relevant Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) objectives(s):		
Safeguarding and Early Intervention - Children, young people and families will benefit from early and effective support and protection to empower them to overcome difficulties		✓
Strong families - More families will be strong and healthy, providing an enjoyable and safe place for children to grow up		✓
Healthy and positive children and young people - Children and young people will be healthier, fitter, more emotionally resilient and better able to make mature decisions		✓
Achievement - All children and young people will leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and will be ready for work or further learning		✓
Economic well-being - Child poverty will be significantly reduced		✓
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspiring Nottingham is a cross-cutting theme with The Nottingham Plan to 2020 for which the Children's Partnership has the lead, although the agenda is all-age and city-wide. Aspiration underpins achievement of all of the objectives in the Children and Young People's Plan and those in The Nottingham Plan to 2020. A discussion paper was sent out to partners from across the Partnership during February and discussions have been held with a wide range of senior representatives and groups from these partners. A model has been developed to be used to guide services to maximise their positive impact on the aspirations of their customers. It is planned to use this with services as part of their workforce development, planning and service redesign activities. The model is attached within the Aspiring Nottingham Framework for Delivery, which is presented for endorsement. 		
Recommendations:		
1	The Board is asked to endorse the draft Aspiring Nottingham Framework for Delivery.	
2	Partners represented on the Board are asked to ensure the use of the model within their own organisations.	

1. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

Context

The Nottingham Plan to 2020 sets out the visions for the city. Aspiring Nottingham is a cross-cutting aim within the Plan, with the objective being that:

By 2020, Nottingham will be:

A city of aspiration where children and adults alike have high expectations of themselves and for their future, and have the motivation and abilities to follow through their ambitions.

There has been a long-standing debate in Nottingham about a perceived 'lack of aspiration' among children, young people, families and communities. This notion of aspiration is raised in the context of discussion on virtually every area of policy. Increasingly it is seen as the key driver for transformational change. For this reason this agenda is a prominent theme in the city's overall policy framework.

Aspiring Nottingham: A Framework for Delivery

Work has been taking place over the last year to raise the strategic awareness of this agenda amongst key partners, across the public, private, and voluntary and community sectors. A discussion paper was sent to all members of the Nottingham Children's Partnership and One Nottingham Board in February. Meetings have since been held with a wide range of partners, either individually or management teams, including visits to a selection of primary and secondary schools. The strategic framework developed as an iterative process in response to these visits and other discussions with key officers and young people.

Nottingham's approach recognises that there is no simple solution to raising aspiration. We need to consider the levers we have to address the barriers to the development and achievement of aspirations through our mainstream service delivery and the way we, as a set of partners, interact with individuals and communities. We will undertake some targeted or specific work but the basis of our approach is to integrate this agenda into our overall approach in the city.

With this in mind the framework provides a model, which can be used to define action, assess current services and devise new or different interventions to maximise the impact of any policy or service on aspiration.

Based on national research, we have adopted a model of aspiration that requires four things to be in place: inspiration; information; self-esteem and self-belief. These four things apply equally to individuals, of all ages, and to communities.

The key beneficiaries will be:

- *Children and young people*: a key focus of our work will be on children and young people, as the scope to influence and support this group to develop their aspirations is greatest.
- *Parents*: work with parents will be our second priority as they have the biggest influence on their children, but also because the act of parenthood provides many opportunities to engage them in considering their own future.
- *Other adults*: work with other adults is likely to be targeted at specific groups, where aspiration is commonly low, such as those who are unemployed or workless.

- *Communities*: our transformational work with communities will seek to address the factors within communities which impact on the sense of community confidence and well-being, as well as the aspirations of individuals.

Nottingham's approach to raising aspirations has three main objectives, each of which has rationale as set out in the attached Framework:

1. An inspiring, motivated workforce
2. Inspired communities connected to Nottingham's future
3. People with positive goals and the personal skills to achieve them

Each will also be dependant upon effective communication of the issues, internally within partners and externally across our communities.

The Framework suggests four priority areas for action in 2010-2012 as follows:

1. Workforce development and service redesign
2. Interventions in schools
3. Community transformation, leisure and sport
4. Entry into employment schemes

Measuring progress is a challenge, as few mechanisms are in place. The Framework identifies a number of ways in which progress may be assessed: measurement of the aspirations of young people, by online survey; individual measurement of service impact on aspiration and a tool for individual assessment of risk. We have, also, identified which priorities within The Nottingham Plan to 2020 and the Children and Young People's Plan we would expect to be most affected by raising aspirations. Progress against this basket of indicators may also provide an indication of the direction of travel in respect of aspiration.

Ownership and Next Steps

It is very clear from discussions that this is not an agenda that can be addressed by quick fixes or bolt-on activities. It is primarily about identifying the key elements that will impact on aspiration and can be integrated into our overall approach. There is also very little dedicated capacity or resource for this agenda. For these reasons strong, shared ownership across partners is critical. The real enthusiasm in the city for this agenda, must translate into commitment to taking practical steps in incorporating change into existing activity.

There are a number of examples of this already being the case, but we need to ensure that our action is at an appropriate scale to bring about the level of change to which we aspire.

2. RISKS

Relatively low levels of aspiration are both a symptom and a cause of local inequalities and poorer outcomes for children, young people and families. Raising aspiration is a long-term agenda, but one that is necessary to ensure the city can achieve the goals it has set out in The Nottingham Plan to 2020.

In terms of delivery, the risks are significant due to the tightening public sector finances and limited dedicated capacity for this agenda. These risks are mitigated by the approach being taken which emphasises the need to integrate raising aspirations into the way services work.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no dedicated financial resource allocated to this programme of work, hence the majority of work will need to be funded through mainstream activity of the partners. This mainstream approach is an integral part of the plan and it is imperative to delivery that partners do seriously consider ways in which there existing services and activities could be adapted to take account of the model and better enable and support the development of our communities' aspirations.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

5. CLIENT GROUP

Aspiring Nottingham has implications for all children, young people and families, and particularly for those who have a greater likelihood of not achieving their full potential.

6. IMPACT ON EQUALITIES ISSUES

Low aspiration is linked with deprivation and inequality, but most strongly with communities which are insular and lack diversity of influence and experience. The approach to raising aspirations will both respond to and address a range of inequalities, both in terms of geographical groups and communities of interest that experience lower levels of aspiration. We aim, however, to ensure the aspirations of all citizens are as high as they possibly could be.

7. OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES AFFECTED

This Plan will contribute to all the Children and Young People's Plan objectives and priorities. Raising aspiration will impact on improving a wide range of outcomes for children, young people and families, as well as adults and communities.

8. CONTACT DETAILS

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Aspiring Nottingham – A Framework for Delivery

September 2010

Nottingham is a city full of opportunity, yet many of our children, young people and families seem unable to make the most of the chances available to them. There has been a long-standing debate in the city about this perceived 'lack of aspiration' among children, young people, families and communities. In truth, few people are without aspiration – but for many their aspirations are lower than their potential or are clouded by barriers they feel helpless to address. This notion of aspiration is raised in the context of discussion on virtually every area of policy. Increasingly it is seen as the key driver for transformational change. For this reason this agenda is a prominent theme in the city's policy framework.

The Nottingham Plan to 2020, our Sustainable Community Strategy, includes Aspiring Nottingham as a cross-cutting aim.

By 2020, Nottingham will be:

A city of aspiration where children and adults alike have high expectations of themselves and for their future, and have the motivation and abilities to follow through their ambitions.

Defining Aspiration

Aspiration – what is it?

Aspiration underpins how we think, feel and behave.

It is a positive sense of purpose, a desire to grow, achieve and improve. It incorporates a belief that we have options in life and a sense of personal responsibility for the choices we make.

How do we see it?

We express our aspiration in the things we value, the things we want for our life, our family and our community. Our level of aspiration defines our expectations of ourselves and others, as well as of the services we access.

What effect does it have?

Our aspiration affects our educational attainment, our employment, our health and the contributions we make to our family and community. Higher aspiration is likely to lead to better outcomes in these areas and to a greater sense of well-being.

'Our aspirations are our possibilities'

Our Purpose in Raising Aspiration

Our approach to raising aspirations aims both to drive greater achievement and greater well-being; the relationship between the two being complex and dynamic.

Increasingly raising aspirations is seen as, perhaps the, key to achieving change for individuals, communities and the city. Raising aspirations will drive:

- Improved outcomes for children, young people and families
- Greater sense of personal and community well-being
- Increased attainment and skills for the workforce
- Economic growth and increased prosperity

Higher aspirations will assist us in reaching the shared objectives for the city set out in The Nottingham Plan to 2020 and the Children and Young People's Plan.

Our aim is to enable the city's children, young people, families, adults and communities to have aspirations that are as high as possible for themselves, their families and communities.

Aspirations are linked to value and opportunity. People most often aspire to those things that they, their culture or society, value. They then consider whether they have the opportunity to attain these things. Their perception of this likelihood will influence whether they invest time and effort in realising their goals.

Influencing Aspiration

Whilst raising aspirations has been an implicit aim of many programmes within the city, and beyond, there is a dearth of evidence about what is effective in raising aspirations.

National evidence does, however, demonstrate clearly what influences aspiration and thus gives us some pointers to the types of interventions that might be successful.

The key factors of influence are:

- *Personal factors* – some people will always have high aspirations and will succeed beyond their peers.
- *Parents* – parents and carers are, unsurprisingly, the most important influence on children and they in turn are influenced by their upbringing and their frame of reference.
- *Family and friends* – beyond parents and carers other family members, friends and peer groups are the next main influence. Young people rate family (including parents) and friends as the preferred and most trusted sources of advice.
- *Teachers and other workers* – workers can be important influences, particularly for those who may be seen as achieving higher than the perceived norm for their family and community.
- *Community and background* - certain types of neighbourhoods have lower aspirations, and these tend to be more deprived, however not all areas of high deprivation have low aspirations. Close-knit, isolated and insular communities, with a history of economic decline, are likely to have lower aspirations. Aspiration also varies by gender and ethnicity.
- *Media and society* – if we consider the notion of 'value', what people value is increasingly influenced by media and wider society.

Whilst this is a whole city, all age agenda, the research very clearly states that the key age for young people, in terms of the development of their future aspirations, is 11 – 14

years. This does not mean waiting until this age to intervene to strengthen aspirations, rather it means investing time and effort ahead of this age and ensuring support during these years. This approach would link strongly to the city's commitment to early intervention.

National research suggests that *“young people are more likely to achieve positive outcomes when they develop ambitious achievable aspirations, combined with the self-esteem, self-efficacy, information and inspiration they need to persevere towards their goals”*¹.

We can widen the circle of influence by providing information and inspiration for people to see the range of options for their lives, and enabling them to develop the self-esteem and self-belief to pursue their goals.

Nottingham's Approach

Our approach recognises that there is no simple solution to raising aspiration. We need to consider the levers we have to address the barriers to the development and achievement of aspirations through our mainstream service delivery and the way we, as a set of partners, interact with individuals and communities. We may undertake some targeted or specific work but the basis of our approach is to integrate this agenda into our overall approach in the city.

Aspiring Nottingham is a cross-cutting aim within The Nottingham Plan to 2020 and as such it is recognised that each part of the partnership and each partner agency has a role to play in raising the aspirations of our communities. This strategy, therefore seeks to give them the framework with which to incorporate aspiration into their activity.

With this in mind the strategy provides a model, which can be used to define action, assess current services and devise new or different interventions to maximise the impact of any policy or service on aspiration.

***Raising aspiration is not something we do to people,
yet it should be at the heart of everything we do.***

Early Intervention

Nottingham is committed to developing an approach that will break the intergenerational nature of underachievement and deprivation in Nottingham.

The mission of Early Intervention is:

“To break the intergenerational nature of underachievement and deprivation in Nottingham by identifying at the earliest possible opportunity those children, young people and families who are likely to experience difficulties and to intervene and empower people to transform their lives and their future children's lives”.

Children, young people and families will be offered the help and support they need, when they need it, throughout their childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. Services will be accessible, tailored to meet individual and community needs and designed to support social inclusion and cohesion.

¹ Social Exclusion Taskforce 2008, *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities*, page 2.

Enabling children, young people, families and communities to develop the highest possible aspirations is one aspect of our approach to Early Intervention. We believe this is one of the best ways to improve outcomes for local people and reduce the chances of problems arising in the future.

Our commitment to early intervention provides the context for our work on raising aspirations. All services will be commissioned and designed with clear expectations of how they impact on early intervention and the aspirations of our citizens and communities.

The Model

Based on national research, we have adopted a model of aspiration that requires four things to be in place: inspiration; information; self-esteem and self-belief. These four things apply equally to individuals, of all ages, and to communities.

INSPIRATION

Inspiration provides a sense of what is possible; it broadens our horizons and opens up new ideas and opportunities. We cannot aspire to that of which we have no idea.

INFORMATION

We need reliable, accessible advice and information upon which to base our life-choices. Information enables us to understand what steps we need to take to achieve our goals.

SELF-ESTEEM

We need to value and be confident about ourselves if we are to aspire to grow and achieve. Self-esteem strengthens our resilience when faced with life's set-backs.

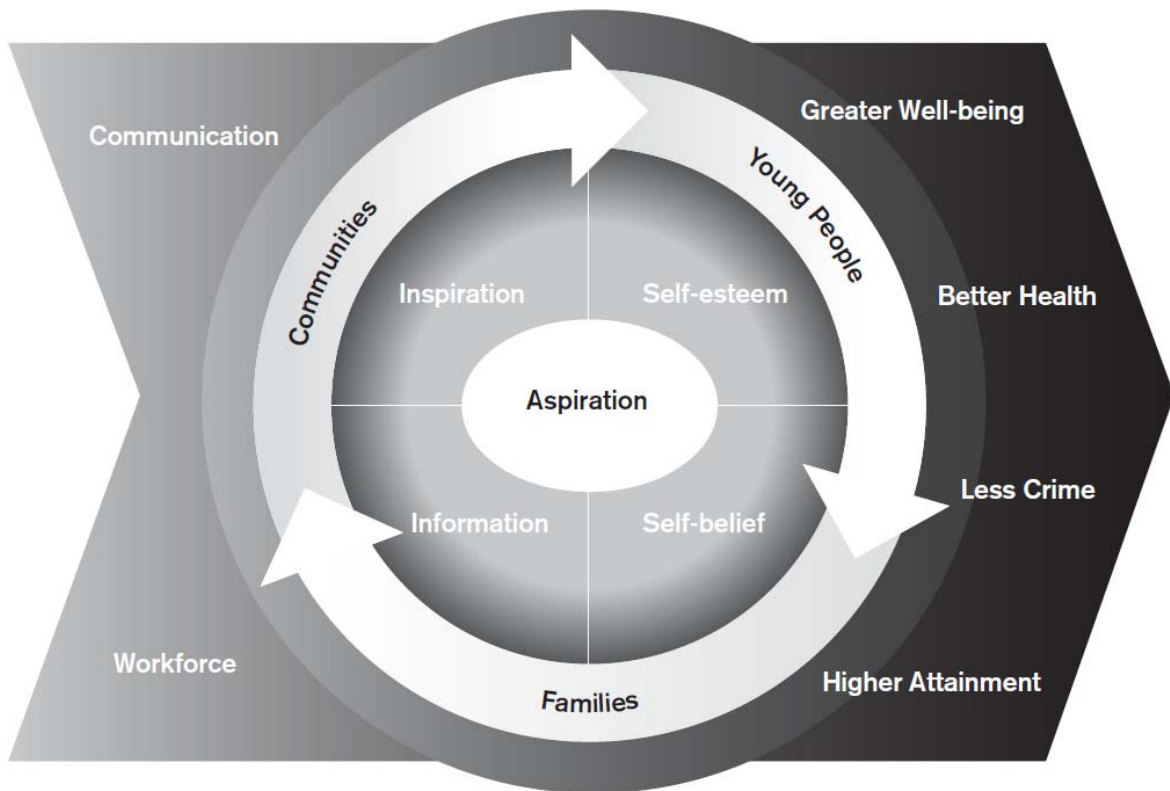
Community confidence is important in enabling communities and individuals to aspire to reach their full potential.

SELF-BELIEF

Our belief in our ability to achieve affects our aspirations; we need to believe we have the appropriate skills and a fair chance of success.

In communities, this means, collective belief that our community can change, grow and develop.

The model is depicted in the chart below, which shows how the different strands of our approach come together as a coherent whole.



This model will be used as an interactive tool to assess how services can maximise their impact on the aspirations of children, young people, families and communities.

Beneficiaries

This is an all age, all communities agenda. Some individuals and communities will have lower aspirations than others. Yet even those individuals and communities with higher existing aspirations may have the potential to develop further. Aspirations will vary – there is no set pattern – positive aspirations for personal or community growth are all of equal value and should be encouraged and enabled. Many people will need to take small steps along a path to gradually see what is possible in their lives and to raise their aspiration.

Children and young people: a key focus of our work will be on children and young people, as the scope to influence and support this group to develop their aspirations is greatest.

Parents: work with parents will be our second priority as they have the biggest influence on their children, but also because the act of parenthood provides many opportunities to engage them in considering their own future.

Other adults: work with other adults is likely to be targeted at specific groups, where aspiration is commonly low, such as those who are unemployed or workless.

Communities: our transformational work with communities will seek to address the factors within communities which impact on the sense of community confidence and well-being, as well as the aspirations of individuals.

Outcomes

Nottingham's approach to raising aspirations has three main objectives:

1. An inspiring, motivated workforce

Why?

- The public service workforce, in its widest sense, is the key strategic lever.
- Encouraging and supporting individuals and communities to understand what is possible in their lives and enabling them to have the necessary information, confidence and belief to move forwards is a core function of our workforce.
- The quality of the interaction between public and community services and their customers impacts on self-esteem and aspirations.
- Much of our collective workforce is local and can be a driver for change in their own families and communities.

2. Inspired communities connected to Nottingham's future

Why?

- A relatively tight circle of influences, many of which are community-driven, shape our aspirations – to achieve change we must break into this circle.
- Individual and community level change are inherently connected.
- Some of our communities feel disconnected from Nottingham's future, increasing this sense of connection will enhance their view of what is possible.

3. People with positive goals and the personal skills to achieve them

Why?

- Aspiration both flows from and requires personal goals and the skills, motivation and resilience to see them through.
- Goals change and develop, but they form the basis of our aspiration.
- Parents are the biggest influence on young people, we need to engage them better in the education and services their children access.

Each will also be dependant upon effective communication of the issues, internally within partners and externally across our communities.

Applying the Model and Delivering Change

Our approach is not to develop new and specific actions to raise aspirations, rather to incorporate what we have learnt about how to raise aspirations into existing services, adapting ways of working as necessary.

Whilst a plethora of actions may contribute to our objectives, we will pursue the actions which will be most transformational and bring about most sustainable change, in the context of reducing public sector resources.

Our priorities for action in 2010-2012 are as follows:

1. Workforce development and service redesign

Our workforce and our services are our main levers to raise aspiration. In the context of tightening public resources, our services face many challenges, yet raising aspiration is more important than ever. Through interactive use of the model, we aim to increase the skills, knowledge and expertise of our workforce to develop the aspirations of local people and to have the highest possible aspirations themselves. The current environment provides an opportunity to refocus and redesign many of our services so that we maximise our impact on the aspirations of local people.

2. Interventions in schools

Beyond parents and carers, schools have the most opportunity to influence the aspirations of all children and young people. They are also a universal service which can engage all parents. Aspiration is fundamental to the core activity of schools, enabling young people to learn and achieve. We will enable schools to share and extend the excellent practice already present in some, particularly around parental engagement, family learning and linking the curriculum to the city's future and to the students' aspirations. We will encourage all schools to work with a wide range of partners to increase the new and diverse experiences and influences students gain during school.

3. Community transformation, leisure and sport

Individuals' aspirations are closely linked to those of their communities. Leisure and sporting activities have traditionally been seen as, in part, about aspiration, but we have not tapped into the potential for this connection to impact on aspiration across the board. As the city develops its major events programme further, we will enhance the community wrap-around to such events to maximise the broadest impact on local aspirations. Our approach to community transformation will have aspiration for individuals and communities at its heart.

4. Entry into employment schemes

Aspiration is perhaps the main driver of our attainment and employment prospects. Many of our young people and our adults participate in schemes designed to enable them to join or return to the workplace. Yet often we focus on skills and technical abilities within such schemes rather than promoting a wider development of our aspiration. Such schemes provide a specific opportunity to reach adults who are not parents, but are very vulnerable to lower aspirations. We will develop complimentary and integral activities within these programmes which focus on developing longer-term aspirations and personal goals, as well as the skills and plans to achieve them.

Measuring Progress

Aspiration is not something which is easy to measure, as it is such an intangible concept. Models of measurement often focus on educational and employment aspirations, which do not reflect the complexity of the concept, nor the underlying factors. In a sense, of course, it is not aspiration itself which we wish ultimately to change, as aspiration is one key route through which local people will achieve better outcomes in their lives.

It is possible to establish robust mechanisms for measuring aspiration, with the necessary resources, but we would have to consider the value gained. For the time being, proxy mechanisms will be used to measure progress relating to aspiration and the outcomes we wish to improve.

We have identified which of the priorities within The Nottingham Plan to 2020 and the Children and Young People's Plan we would expect to be most affected by raising aspirations. Progress against this basket of indicators (see Appendix) may also provide an indication of the direction of travel in respect of aspiration.

The lack of robust evidence about how aspiration manifests itself in Nottingham's communities means we have no baseline from which to assess progress, but we do have a number of ways to ensure we develop the knowledge base in the future. We propose the following:

1. Measurement of the Aspirations of Young People

We are developing a tool to measure the aspirations of groups of young people within school settings. This tool is based upon one already successfully used to support the Healthy Schools Programme. This will provide the opportunity to measure the changing aspirations of groups of young people and will provide a valuable insight into the impact of our interventions.

2. Individual Measurement of Aspiration

As part of the programme, we will be encouraging services to consider how they measure the impact of their services on the lives of individuals. Where appropriate, we will support services to include direction of travel assessments which incorporate aspirations.

3. Individual Assessment of Risk

A tool for measuring those children, in years 5 and 6, at risk of low aspirations has been developed and piloted. This will be made available to any services working with these young people of this age, who wish to target interventions to those most at risk.

Contribution of Aspiring Nottingham to the city's other shared priorities

Plan	Priorities/strategic objectives	Indicators / Targets
The Nottingham Plan 2020	SP2 Neighbourhood Nottingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality to 40%
	SP3 Family Nottingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage pregnancy rate will be halved by (defined as the under 18 conception rate) • Raise the % of pupils achieving 5 or more A* - C GCSE including English and Maths so that Nottingham is in the top 20% of most improved local authorities. • Reduce the % of pupils leaving school with no qualifications to 0%
	SP4 Working Nottingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the proportion of adults with at least Level 2 qualifications to 90%
	SP5 Safer Nottingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce 'all crime' to the average for Nottingham's family of similar CDRP's
	SP6 Healthy Nottingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase levels of physical activity to 32% of adults participating in 3 x 30 mins moderate physical activity per week • To improve mental health and well-being across the city (Baseline and target under development)
	Aspiring Nottingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commitment to raise aspirations has been written into the core of this strategy with the targets for each of the Strategic Priorities set at ambitious levels requiring rising aspirations. Not separate targets have therefore been set for this cross cutting theme
Nottingham City Children and Young People's Plan 2010 - 2014	Strategic objective 2: Strong Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI 022: Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area • NI 118: Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families • NI 099: Children in Care reaching level 4 in English at KS2 • NI 099: Children in Care reaching level 4 in English at KS2

Nottingham City Children and Young People's Plan 2010 - 20114	Strategic objective 2: Strong Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI 100: Children in Care reaching level 4 in Maths at KS2 • NI 101: Children in Care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at KS4 (including English and Maths) • Percentage of LAC NEET (Connexions) • Percentage of Care Leavers NEET (Connexions) • NI 148: Care leavers in employment, education or training
	Strategic Objective 3: Healthy and Positive Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI 112: Under 18 conception rate (per 1,000) • NI 115: Substance misuse by young people • NI 019: Rate of proven reoffending by young offenders • NI 111 (PN C Data): First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17 (per 100,000)
	Strategic Objective 4 Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI 117: 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) (Connexions) • CS 025: Primary school persistent absence rate • CS 026: Primary school overall absence rate • NI 072: Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy • NI 073: Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2 • NI 075: Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths • NI 087: Secondary school persistent

		<p>absence rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CS 024: Secondary overall absence rate• NI 091: Participation of 17 year olds in education or training• NI 080: Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19• NI 163: Working age population qualified to Level 2 or higher• NI 164: Working age population qualified to Level 3 or higher• NI 165: Working age population qualified to Level 4 or higher
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