

Nottingham City Council

Children's Partnership Board

Minutes of the meeting held remotely over Zoom on 12 December 2023 from 4.05pm – 5.10pm

Membership

✓	Cllr Cheryl Barnard (Chair)	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education, NCC
✓	Cllr Samina Riaz (Vice-Chair)	Executive Assistant - Children, Young People and Education NCC
	Catherine Underwood	Corporate Director for People, NCC
✓	Sam Morris	Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement, NCC
	Ailsa Barr	Director of Children's Integrated Services, NCC
	Nick Lee	Director of Education, NCC
	Jon Rea	Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, NCC
	Karon Foulkes	Head of Children's Commissioning and Transformation, NHS ICB
	Amanda Payne	Regional Manager, East Midlands, Futures Group
	Rachel Wadsworth	Further Education representative (Nottingham College)
✓	Ekua Ghansah	Child Friendly City Programme Lead
✓	Maria Ward	Maintained Primary School Governor
	Sonia Burton	Youth Justice Service, NCC
	Becky O'Brien	Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals, Nottingham CityCare Partnership
	Sarah Fielding	Nottingham Schools Trust and Virtual School
✓	Supt. Kathryn Craner	Nottinghamshire Police
✓	Nicky Bridges	Primary Schools' representative (Robin Hood Primary)
	Chad Thompson	Head of Children's Transformation
✓	Sandra Stapleton	Secondary Schools' representative (Nottingham Emmanuel School)
	Karla Capstick	Small Steps Big Changes representative (Director)
✓	Karla Banfield	Strategic Commissioning Manager, NCC
	Cheryl Steele	Special Schools' representative (Rosehill School)
✓	Nichola Rose	Children's Society
	Celina Adams	Voluntary Sector
	Claire Perry	Voluntary Sector (Children & Young People's Provider Network)
✓	David Johns	Consultant in Public Health, NCC

✓ Indicates present at meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

- Julia Bramble - Service Manager for Early Help and Lead for Family Hubs, Children's Integrated Services, Nottingham City Council
- Mike Carey - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

- Ronnie Fairley - Supporting Families Coordinator, Children's Integrated Services, Nottingham City Council
- Alison Smith - Service Manager for the Advocacy Service, Change, Grow, Live
- Elizabeth Richardson - Head of Safeguarding for Nottingham CityCare

19 Apologies for Absence

Ailsa Barr (Director of Children's Integrated Services)
Erica Doran (Interim Head of the Violence Reduction Partnership, Nottinghamshire Police)
Sarah Fielding (Nottingham Schools Trust and Virtual School)
Amanda Payne (Regional Manager, East Midlands, Futures Group)
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)

20 Declarations of Interest

None.

21 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 were confirmed as a true record.

22 Change, Grow, Live - Advocacy Service

Alison Smith, Service Manager for the Advocacy Service at Change, Grow, Live, delivered the presentation, highlighting the following points:

- a) Change, Grow, Live (CGL) took over the contract for the Advocacy Service for children in care, including residential homes and foster placements, in October 2022. CGL provides two levels of service: residential-visiting advocacy, involving face-to-face or virtual visits to children in residential care by advocates, and issue-based advocacy, through which children raise issues with their advocate and agree a strategy to resolve those issues;
- b) From October 2022 to September 2023, there were 94 direct issue-based referrals, the vast majority being raised by young people themselves. Social workers made the second most amount of referrals, though lower than expected due to changes in social work teams. After a spike in November 2022 (due to the transition with CGL taking over the service), issue-based referrals have ranged between three and eleven per month;
- c) The largest number of referrals came from the 15-17 age cohort, following the trend of looked after children. There has been an increase in younger children going into residential care, which is reflected in increases among 5-10 year olds. The number of referrals for care leavers is relatively low, and most are around transition;
- d) Referrals have been received for a range of issues. The largest number are for children seeking representation at Looked After Child (LAC) reviews, and then Wishes and Feelings assessments, and support with education issues;

- e) Requests for support with placement changes are fairly frequent, and a lot of those are due to young people being placed outside of Nottinghamshire. Around 40% of the young people placed in residential care at the moment are outside of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire;
- f) The service has also been commissioned to advocate for young people presenting as homeless. This was initially a six-month pilot, but has been extended for the year, and advocates have represented 17 young people in Joint Housing Assessments to date.

In the discussion which followed, and in response to questions from the Committee, the following points were made:

- g) There are discussions ongoing with Heads of Service for how to promote the advocacy service further, especially among social work teams due to recent changes. All the children's residential homes have information displayed about the service, including photographs of the advocates allocated to those homes;
- h) There are concerns that children in foster placements may not be as aware of the service, though informational leaflets should be included in the packs social workers give to children when they go into care;
- i) Advocates have moved over to CGL when the contract was taken over, so young people may have had the same advocate for the last five years. When young people have been in care for a long period of time, their advocate can move with them when they move home, especially if they have a good relationship. This allows a positive and lasting relationship to be built;
- j) Advocates will attend any meeting that the young person requests, which can include legal meetings, Education, Health and Care Plan meetings, LAC reviews, Secure Accommodation reviews, and a range of others depending on the young person's needs.

23 Nottingham Early Help Partnership

Julia Bramble, Service Manager for Early Help and Lead for Family Hubs, and Ronnie Fairley, Supporting Families Coordinator, delivered the presentation, highlighting the following points:

- a) The Supporting Families programme, previously known as Troubled Families nationally and Priority Families locally, underwent significant changes in 2021 in response to the challenges posed by the post-Covid period for Nottingham communities. Seeking a Whole Family Working approach, the programme expanded from six to ten key areas of focus;
- b) Supporting Families works with accredited practitioners from a variety of partner organisations, including schools, the DWP, the police, CAMHS, health services, education welfare, and housing, to ensure a coordinated and collaborative approach. Practitioners contribute to the transformation of services, and provide support to key partners through the assessment and plan, and their role as the lead professional coordinating support for families;

- c) Improving data maturity is a key role for Supporting Families, involving the development of a partner portal to record assessments and plans, and a focus on appropriate data sharing;
- d) In March 2023, Supporting Families held a Whole Family and Early Help Partnership workshop involving around 50 different partner organisations as well as representation from families. This led to the formation of an Early Help Partnership Steering Group in June 2023, which brought services together to work on the Early Help Partnership Strategy 2023-25, which is available on the website. The Steering Group adopted the practice principles of the Children's Integrated Services department at Nottingham City Council, and the Strategy was developed through coproduction and consultation with families;
- e) The Steering Group agreed five key priorities as a focus of work for the next three years:
 - i. Embedding a whole system approach to facilitate Early Help being an integral part of a city-wide service;
 - ii. Partnership working;
 - iii. Partnership workforce development and structure;
 - iv. Measure the impact of Early Help;
 - v. Pool funding and identify sustainability opportunities with the Family Hub and from external funding sources;
- f) Under the first priority, the Steering Group have developed a partner portal which should be launched within a few weeks, which will be aligned with the Threshold of Needs guidance, and will help to develop a shared language and Whole Family approach;
- g) Under the second priority, the Early Help Partnership website has been launched, to help improve co-production and share good practice. The website has been funded through Family Hubs and launched on the 30 October 2023, and contains information for families and professionals on the range of Early Help services in one place. The website is available in a range of community languages, and additional work on accessibility will be completed by the beginning of next year;
- h) Under the third priority, the Partnership is looking at the language used across different service areas, identifying gaps in services, and looking at access to services. It is developing and delivering a partnership-wide induction, training, and refresher package. It will include a programme of shadowing opportunities and multi-agency events every six months. The intention is to make all partners aware of each other's service areas, the support available, and how it can be accessed;
- i) Under the fourth priority, the Partnership is looking to establish joint key performance indicators and develop a system to evaluate achievements and identify areas of further development across the wider partnership;
- j) Under the fifth priority, as both the Family Hub and Supporting Families are reliant on short-term, external grant funding, the Partnership is seeking joint commissioning opportunities, so partners can actively support each other to apply for funding to

increase the early help support available for families, and to secure long-term funding and investment in early help services;

- k) Granting funding supports some Family Hub services, including:
- i. A Start for Life Offer, collating all the essential information that families may need to help with children from conception to the child's second birthday. The electronic version is being reviewed early 2024, and midwives will be provided with paper copies to distribute to all new parents;
 - ii. Support around infant feeding, including public health campaigns promoting appropriate infant feeding, increased support through CityCare provision, and peer support;
 - iii. Support around perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships, including by coordinating existing perinatal mental health offers and increasing the capacity of the Healthy Little Minds team;
 - iv. Developing in-person and online parenting programmes, particularly filling a gap in programmes for the 0-2 age bracket;
 - v. Helping to develop the home learning environment, supporting parents as their child's first educator, by improving parents' confidence and access to education resources;
- l) As well as the funded services, Family Hubs hope to widen access to services more broadly, moving from the previous children's centre offer (focused on 0-5 year olds) to a whole family offer (aimed at 0-18, or 0-25 for children with disabilities). This includes:
- i. Weekly drop-in sessions with DWP colleagues at each of the four Family Hubs;
 - ii. Community perinatal mental health assessment sessions at the Meadows Family Hub, through which families can speak directly to a perinatal mental health nurse without having to seek a referral from their GP;
 - iii. Oral health packs, for any family that needs resources or information about positive oral health;
 - iv. Starting in January, the NSPCC will be running two sessions: Pregnancy in Mind, an antenatal support session, and Domestic Abuse Recovering Together, which will be a support session for parents and their children;
 - v. Starting in the new year there will be Housing Solutions drop-ins at the Family Hubs;
- m) Families can contact or turn up to any of the four Family Hub sites: Bestwood, Broxtowe, Hyson Green, and the Meadows. However, Family Hubs follow a 'hub and spoke' model, and also deliver services in communities and areas of the City that do not have a Family Hub based in them using community venues, alongside the virtual offer which is accessible anywhere.

In the discussion which followed, and in response to questions from the Committee, the following points were made:

- n) The team are due to have 50,000 postcards printed to promote the service, which will be delivered to every school, health centre, GP surgery, police station, Family Hub, and other venues. Information is also easily accessible online, and can be accessed through a QR code, which may be particularly useful for younger parents;
- o) The Family Hubs provide a strong opportunity to engage parts of the community who may not be involved with professionals, and as part of the promotional efforts it would be useful to work with voluntary groups and community partners, such as the Co-ops and Tesco, who have community boards where information about services could be advertised to those who may not access it elsewhere;
- p) Family Hubs have been establishing contacts with community groups, such as the Muslim Women's Network and the Ukrainian family support services, as part of work to be inclusive for Nottinghamshire families;
- q) It was noted that Nottinghamshire Police have been key contributors to the Supporting Families programme since it started, and all new PCSOs received training as part of the programme last week;
- r) Members asked if it would be considered for Family Hubs to aim at the 0-25 age range as a standard, in line with some other Family Hubs across the country, recognising the difficulties in the transition to adulthood. There is a network of different hubs being developed, such as Health Hubs and Youth Hubs, so at the moment the Family Hubs have been focused on making links across them to make sure the individual finds the most appropriate place to find the right support in order to avoid duplicating work that may be funded through a different hub;
- s) In some Family Hubs there is more youth access than in others. Young people out of education may meet their tutors on Family Hub sites, or attend CAMHS appointments. There are two young parents' groups, involving teenage parents up to the age of 25;
- t) Work is being done to look at increasing accessibility, including through consultations with young people, to see what services they require and how best to access them, whether that's at the Family Hub site or elsewhere. There will also be the potential for expanded opening hours according to demand, for those families who cannot access the hubs during standard working hours;
- u) The team is involved with the broader Family Hubs network through regional meetings for the East Midlands and the Midlands as a whole, which enable teams in different local authority areas to share ideas and best practice, such as in a recent meeting discussing how community fridges work in other local authority areas.

24 Key Messages and Items for Information

Councillor Cheryl Barnard noted that Children's Integrated Services at Nottingham City Council had received its third OFSTED monitoring visit, concentrating on care leavers, and that the outcome is due to be published on Friday 12 January 2024.

25 Forward Plan and Suggestions for future agenda items

The provisional agenda for the next meeting is proposed to include:

- OFSTED update (Ailsa Barr)
- School Attendance / Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) (Jennifer Hardy and Liz Anderson)