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**Nottingham
City Council**

Nottingham City Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 28 March 2024

Time: 9.30 am

Place: Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham,
NG2 3NG

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

Director for Legal and Governance

Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer: Damon Stanton

Direct Dial: 0115 87 64345

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Minutes** 3 - 10
To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024
- 4 Children in Care Placement Sufficiency** 11 - 38
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 5 Review of the Early Help Strategy** 39 - 66
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 6 Children's Services Improvement**
Verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, and Education on the Council's Improvement Journey
- 7 Recommendation Tracker** 67 - 68
For noting
- 8 Work Programme** 69 - 74
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

For the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
2023/24 to be signed off as complete

If you need any advice on declaring an interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Governance 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

Citizens are advised that this meeting may be recorded by members of the public. Any recording or reporting on this meeting should take place in accordance with the Council's policy on recording and reporting on public meetings, which is available at www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk. Individuals intending to record the meeting are asked to notify the Governance Officer shown above in advance.

Nottingham City Council

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 25 January 2024 from 9.31 am - 11.55 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Naim Salim (Chair)
Councillor Samuel Gardiner
Councillor Fozia Mubashar
Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Ethan Radford
Councillor Michael Savage
Councillor Maria Watson

Absent

Councillor Adele Williams

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Cheryl Barnard	- Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education
Ailsa Barr	- Director of Children's Integrated Services
Nick Lee	- Director of Education Services
Kate Morris	- Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
Sam Morris	- Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement
Damon Stanton	- Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
Catherine Underwood	- Corporate Director for People
Lou Williams	- Chair of the Independent Improvement Board

24 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Adele Williams – Personal Reasons

25 Declarations of Interest

None.

26 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November were confirmed as a true record, with the addition of apologies received from Councillor Maria Watson. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

27 Children's Services Improvement

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education attended the meeting to update the Committee on the programme of work to improve outcomes for children and young people through delivery of the Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan. Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Services, and Ailsa Barr, Director for Children's Integrated Services, and Sam Morris, Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement gave a presentation detailing

the work done to date. Lou Williams, Chair of the Independent Improvement Board was also in attendance. The following points were highlighted:

- a) In July 2022 Ofsted visited Nottingham City Council and inspected Children's services. In the subsequent report issued they gave a rating of Requires Improvement to be Good. Since this rating was received the Council has been on an improvement journey focusing on improving services.
- b) Since the initial inspection in July 2022 there have been three subsequent visits by Ofsted, looking at three different themes, the Front Door, Children in Need and Children with a Child Protection Plan, and Care Leavers. The Council expects another 3 monitoring visits by Ofsted indicating that the programme is approximately at its mid-point.
- c) The narrative reports published following the second and third monitoring visit highlighted a number of improvements. They recognised the clear link between improvement and transformation and how that linked to staff morale. The reports highlighted that investment in frontline and management capacity has helped manage workloads and increased management oversight all leading to improved moral. They also note that this has allowed children to make meaningful connections with workers allowing staff to offer good support and care. The workforce report feeling supported by managers and the reduced caseload allows them to focus on delivering best practice.
- d) Additionally, the narrative reports highlight that the senior leadership team within the service have good knowledge and a good level of oversight of performance, supported by a quality assurance framework that has been strengthened and is embedded. This has allowed senior leaders to predict trends and implement additional support and training to strengthen practice.
- e) The narrative reports also highlight areas in need of ongoing development. Although there had been improvement there is still some inconsistency in plans. Some children still experience too many changes of social worker, particularly those in long term care or care leavers. The reports highlight an inconsistency in some areas of supervision, as front-line staff numbers increased but manager numbers were still low. This has now been addressed and improvements will be seen. The reports have also highlighted that there is additional work to be done with partners to reduce delays and ensure that children get the specialist support they need in a timely way.
- f) As a result of the Improvement plan and transformation work there has been a significant decrease in the number of Child Protection Plans and the duration which they are active for. This focus on progressing plans, collaborative working and reducing harm has led to more positive outcomes for children with many staying within their family setting. A whole range of tools and resources have been made available to social workers to support children in need and Child Protection Plans, including tools to understand trends in children coming into care, Family Network Meetings, greater collaboration of forward thinking and additional assessment programmes to establish where the extended family could care for a child

- g) There has been significant work done around improving fostering and the fostering service. Currently there is a mostly even balance between Council foster carers and agency foster carers, with an ambition to have more Council recruited carers within the service. Work has been done to diversify the type of recruitment events, and their frequency, different marketing strategies and methods of tracking their impact.
- h) Alongside social media marketing and advertising foster care opportunities similar methods have been used for recruitment of social work staff. Nottingham City Council has always been popular for newly qualified staff and education placements but in recent years has struggled to retain or attract more experienced staff. There has been a conversion of existing experienced agency staff to permanent contracts, and more recently there has been the opportunity to employ more experienced staff through recruitment events.
- i) Work continues around supporting staff with development of a direct work kit, the continued celebration of practitioners, monthly shoutouts and regular acknowledgement that despite a difficult work environment some life changing work takes place in the service. Staff are reporting that they feel supported, and the cultural change is leading to a better work environment with reduced caseloads. Although they remain very busy, they feel more supported.
- j) Moving forward consistency in practice will be a focus of the improvement work, through learning and team development. Work will continue with partners to embed the Early Help Strategy and Thresholds of Need to ensure timely support to families and there will be a continued review of recruitment and retention. Work will be done to assess data in order to plan and realign staffing and resources for areas with higher or increasing demand, such as support for Care Leavers and children in care over the age of 12.
- k) The next monitoring visit is likely to focus on Children in Care services. These services support some of the more complex cases, challenging work environments, and higher caseloads. There has been a high turnover of staff in recent years, although this has somewhat stabilised recently, but has also taken time to turn around in terms of practice. Senior management has been bolstered through the transformation work, but this is only until the end of March 2024.

During the discussion the following questions were asked, and additional information was provided:

- l) Members wanted to know what reasons were given when foster carers left the Council. The most common reason for carers leaving the council was that the carers decided to adopt, or they got a Special Guardianship Order, which is an excellent outcome for the children. These reasons are reviewed and tracked in order to try and get ahead in terms of overall numbers. It is rare that carers leave for negative reasons, and they mostly leave due to positive outcomes for children or life choices for carers, such as increasing age.

- m) Committee members asked whether the reasons children were coming into care were being tracked, and what the main reasons were. Services track the reasons young people come into the care of the Council. The main reasons for entering care were risk of significant harm, breakdown in relationships with older children and unaccompanied asylum seekers.
- n) Committee members asked about the delays some children and families faced being able to access support services, and whether the children who experienced these delays were more likely to come into care. Some children and families do face delays in accessing some types of specialist support, but this is a national issue and distinct from the Council budget, and there is no recognised correlation between these delays and care. Reports from the monitoring visits have highlighted that plans need to include support from all services that are needed, and there is work taking place to ensure better consistency in plans and creating a network of support and interventions around families.
- o) Committee members queried whether there had been analysis on the data around the decrease in number of Child in Need status and Child Protection Plans as to whether the children re-entered care services. This analysis was taking place and where children did re-enter services the reasons why were carefully looked at. This data is fed into audits and assessments to consider if anything is missed, or any further work could have been done to prevent the young person returning. Re-referral rates will show confirmation bias, as closer monitoring of children who have received support is in place and re-referral rates sit within the national average of between 20-25%. More understanding is needed around reasons of re-referral and a piece of work is starting to understand what is the most effective interventions for subsequent plans.
- p) Committee members asked if there was a significant link between children and young people who go missing then present as homeless. Although theoretically there could be a link between missing children and homelessness, a link is not really seen in Nottingham.
- q) Committee members asked for more detail around work being done on recruitment. Alongside the social media exposure and marketing, and community events, traditional recruitment and targeted advertising work with faith groups, work is also taking place with D2N2 partners and the Department of Education to support an increase in regional recruitment. The target for foster recruitment is a year on year increase in numbers of foster carers which has been exceeded this year already.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education, the Corporate Director for People Services, the Director for Children's Integrated Services, the Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement and the Chair of Independent Improvement Board for attending the meeting.

28 Children's Integrated Services and Education Budget Proposals

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education, Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Services, Ailsa Barr, Director for Children's Integrated Services and Nick Lee, Director of Education presented a report on the development context of the Council's 2024/25 budget proposals and their anticipated impacts on the services delivered by the Children's Integrated Services and Education. The following points were highlighted:

- a) The 2024/25 budget proposals have been developed in the context of very challenging circumstances both locally and nationally. There are significant pressures in a number of service areas, by December 2023, growing inflationary and demand pressures indicated a requirement to make savings of £53.7 million to achieve a balanced budget for 2024/25. As a result, a strict 'Duties and Powers' approach has had to be taken to the development of the new budget, identifying potential savings of £20.5 million.
- b) The 'Duties and Powers' methodology assesses where the Council has a legal obligation to deliver a function and where it can exercise functions on a discretionary basis. It is a recognised approach in the Local Authority sector and is used to create a focus on the Council's core statutory activity and identify work areas where savings can be made. As a result, the current budget proposals have been developed on the basis of establishing all service options in the context of delivering the legal minimum as the base position. Although the current proposals have been discussed between senior officers and Executive Councillors, and been subject to a formal public consultation process where required, a number have not been agreed by the Council's Executive.
- c) It is proposed that around £5.4 million in savings will be made from within the Children's Integrated Services and Education Budget over the next two years, with the majority to be delivered within 2024/25. The identification of these savings has been an extremely challenging piece of work. In making the proposals, full regard has been given to the written guidance on the required standards of statutory services. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) have been produced for all relevant proposals and work is taking place to mitigate service impacts wherever possible.

During the discussion the Committee asked a series of questions. The following points were highlighted:

- d) Members were concerned that information around risk was not included within the report, and that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were also not included. Papers were produced in liaison with the Chair and papers have contained slightly different information for all the Scrutiny committees. The EIAs are available on the Council's website.
- e) Members of the Committee raised a number of concerns about the proposed closure of the Ridge Adventure Centre. Members were concerned about the impact that this would have on antisocial behaviour in the area, and the lack of consultation with Ward Councillors around the proposals. Discussions are still ongoing about this proposal with additional work being done to establish the best

proposal. Liaison with Ward Members would take place as part of these additional discussions.

- f) Members raised concerns around the potential for the Schools Board not accepting the proposed budget cuts. This is a risk, the Schools Forum had agreed one paper in principal and another two are due before the next meeting. One of those papers is around changes to Transport and requires approval from the Secretary of State as well as from the Schools Forum. The proposal increases the number of placements in local special and support for SEND pupils in mainstream schools, reducing costs of transport, and higher cost out of areas placements in the longer term. Much of the Education budget is ringfenced, surplus within these budgets can be used to support the additional support proposed. There are risks with this strategy, but those are being thoroughly considered.
- g) Committee members raised concerns about the impact that a reduction in the Household Support Fund may have on young people's access to school uniforms and the implications this may have for them in a wider setting. This fund is for those families where children attend a maintained school, and the continuation of the fund has not yet been announced in the Spring Statement. The impact that this fund has had must be recognised, and work with the Nottingham Schools Trust is underway to see how support for the cost of living can continue so as to reduce the impact of this proposal.
- h) Committee members were particularly concerned about the proposals stopping the Area Based Grant, highlighting that this is likely to impact a high number of services across different directorates. Work is taking place to better understand the cumulative impact of this proposal and what mitigations can be found to limit the impact.
- i) Committee members expressed concerns about the reduction in preventative and early intervention services highlighting that this work reduced pressure on statutory services in the long term. As many of the preventative and early intervention services are not statutory services, the Duties and Powers methodology requires officers to consider those services for reduction to produce a balanced budget. Work continues to take place to assess risk and potential mitigation measures.
- j) Committee members asked for more detail around the proposed changes to the Youth Service structure and what work was being done to ensure that the proposed changes would not disadvantage one group over another. The restructuring work had been identified as part of the transformation work and has been developed to achieve the same aims and goals, but at a reduced cost. Work continues to take place on fully developing the EIA for the proposal. Work is also underway with partners looking at how the wider system works together and identify additional cost saving measures. Fragmented services will be consolidated and there will be more specific targeting of work and interventions. The management structure of the service has been considered as part of the transformation work.

- k) Committee members raised concerns about the possible closure of the Bulwell Riverside Centre and the impact that that would have on services provided from the building, in particular that NHS sexual health services would cease to exist. Although services will cease to be delivered from the Riverside Centre work is taking place with partners to find alternative venues for the existing services to be delivered from so that the services can continue to be offered going forward. The building itself will be considered for alternative uses.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education, the Corporate Director for People Services, the Director for Children's Integrated Services, and the Director of Education for attending the meeting.

Resolved to:

- 1) Request that ward Councillors are consulted on budget proposals that impact directly on their ward**
- 2) Request that the Director of Education shares the outcomes of discussions that will take place with schools in the City on the budget proposals.**
- 3) Request that Officers provide the Committee with a breakdown of the risks associated with the budget proposals and relevant Equality Impact Assessment.**

29 Work Programme

The Chair introduced the Work Programme, highlighting that the meeting in April was cancelled due to its proximity with the Mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

28 March 2024

Children in Care Placement Sufficiency

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The report provides the Committee with information on the Children in Care Placement Sufficiency Strategy, Action Plan, and Market Development.
- 1.2 The Committee will also receive presentations from LA officers on the day.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the work currently planned and make any comments or recommendations regarding the information presented.
- 2.2 The Committee is also asked to consider future scrutiny of the topic with officers suggesting that this becomes a standing item on the Committee's Work Programme every March.

3 Background information

- 3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for their looked-after children and young people under section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty requires "local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority is looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area" (['the sufficiency duty'](#)).
- 3.2 This duty should be undertaken within the context of the planning and cooperation duties which the 2004 Children Act places on key partners and local agencies to improve the wellbeing of children in the local area.
- 3.3 The Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy responds to the duty by setting out the vision for achieving our commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances of the children and young people who are in our care, and providing sufficient, safe, secure, and

appropriate placements for looked after children and care leavers over the next 5 years.

- 3.4 Sufficiency of placements remains a major local challenge within an increasingly difficult national context.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy.

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None.

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Children Act 1989
6.2 2004 Children Act

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Roz Howie, Director of Commissioning and Partnerships,
roz.howie@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer,
damon.stanton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

November 2023

Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

For Looked After Children and Care Leavers

2023 - 2028



1. Introduction

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its looked after children and young people under section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty requires “local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority’s area which meets the needs of children that the local authority is looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority’s area” (‘the sufficiency duty’).

This duty should be undertaken within the context of the planning and co-operation duties which the 2004 Children Act places on key partners and local agencies to improve the well-being of children in the local area.

This Strategy responds to the duty by setting out the vision for achieving our commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances of the children and young people who are in our care and providing sufficient, safe, secure, and appropriate placements for looked after children and Care Leavers over the next 5 years.

This Strategy considers information we know about our children and what they have told us, what we know about local homes for children and the how well the current arrangements are working, informing the activity we need to undertake to deliver our priorities for our children in care and care leavers.

Note: 2023 figures are subject to DfE (Department for Education) validation throughout.

Vision

Our vision is a city where every child can enjoy their childhood in a warm and supportive 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 our children in care and care leavers have the right home and support to keep them safe and well. We strive to help them grow into happy, healthy, successful and fulfilled young adults who are optimistic about their future.

[\(Children and Young People’s Plan, 2021-24; Children In Care and Care Leavers Strategy \(2021-23\)](#)

This links to Nottingham City Council’s strategic aim of being a child-friendly city ([Council’s Strategic Plan \(2023-27\)](#)) with delivery supported by the [Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy 2023-2025](#).

Corporate Parenting priorities

Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe our collective responsibility to care for our children. We believe that children in care have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe as other children. We also recognise that there are unique challenges that children in care and care leavers face. We are committed to ensuring that corporate

parenting principles are embedded in the wider work of the City Council and work collectively to address these challenges.

Our work is guided by the promises outlined in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy. New pledges are currently being developed by the Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Board and will be our commitment to children and young people in care going forward.

Ofsted inspection feedback has also shaped our thinking.

Placement commitment

For placements, our vision is for placements to be right first time, on time, every time. We are committed to providing every child and young person with the best possible placement, which meets their needs, considers their wishes, and provides them with the opportunity to thrive and achieve.

We pledge to drive a dynamic, outcomes-focused, and child-centered placement market, which offers best value, quality and choice, to ensure that the right placement is found the first time, on time, every time.

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

- **Ensuring the best possible placement and matching for every child and young person in a timely way, including meeting of cultural needs.**
- **Improving outcomes through improved placement stability and permanence.**
- **Keeping our Children in Care close to home. We are currently achieving our ambition to place a minimum of 80% of our children and young people locally i.e. within 20 miles of the centre of Nottingham. For those placements made outside of the local area, we will ensure that the same levels of monitoring and quality standards are applied.**
- **Regularly reviewing the appropriateness of placements and placements plans, supporting children to be reunified with their family, wherever safe and in their best interests to do so.**
- **Listening to children and young people and maximise opportunities for their feedback to inform and influence service delivery.**
- **Measuring children and young people's outcomes across all placements, ensuring an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.**
- **Achieving consistency in the quality, support and provision offered within all placement provision, through using regulated provision, standardised specifications, and contracts.**
- **Achieving best value, through using a range of commissioning mechanisms as appropriate and undertaking regular benchmarking.**
 - **Articulating to providers what excellent outcomes look like for each child and young person and be open to exploring incentives for over-achievement.**
 - **Implementing effective early intervention, for example;**

Making a financial commitment where a specialist/therapeutic placement is required, for a period of time, determined by a qualified professional or

Escalating and recommending change when a young person has experienced multiple placement breakdowns.

Progress since the last Sufficiency Strategy

Our previous Sufficiency Strategy ran from 2021-2023 and outlined work across five key areas. Since then, progress has been made in the following areas:

- **Collaborative Redesign and Market Development:**
 - Developed our collaborative commissioning across D2N2¹, including sharing intelligence, best practice, and joint commissioning, including collaboratively commissioning a Supported Accommodation framework and an outcomes-based support programme for children in care and on the edge of care (through the STARS social impact bond).
 - Collaborated on wider local and national initiatives.
- **Fostering:**
 - Invested in our in-house fostering service by establishing a fostering support team and out of hours foster carer support service.
 - Collaborated with D2N2 partners to ensure best practice and quick wins across all areas with an immediate focus on pre- and post- approval training.
 - Implemented local initiatives aimed at developing a better understanding of our carers and their needs and wishes.
- **Residential:**
 - Significantly increased the number of placements available in the residential block contract and reconfigured this to ensure more young people are placed locally.
 - Reconfigured in-house residential homes to accommodate more complex young people, resulting in smaller homes.
- **Supported accommodation:**
 - Implemented both a new Nottingham City-only block contract increasing local provision and a new collaborative D2N2 Supported Accommodation framework.
 - Piloted a supported lodgings service for specific cohorts 16 years plus as an alternative to Supported Accommodation placements.
- **Joint work with health to support children with complex health needs:**
 - Collaborated on the development of a residential children's home provision for looked after children with specialist mental health needs, together with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and D2N2 local authorities.

National developments

Since 2021 there have been a number of national policy and legislative changes which have influenced this strategy development including: findings from the Competition and Markets Authority [Children's social care market study](#), the [Independent review of children's social care](#); and subsequent government response [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#), and [The Supported Accommodation \(England\) Regulations 2023](#)

COVID-19 and financial pressures have impacted upon local sufficiency requirements and our ability to meet the needs of our children and young people.

¹ D2N2 includes Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council

This strategy has also been updated with learning from the effectiveness of sufficiency strategies on market stewardship and best practise and guidance for consistent minimum market information (LGA- commissioned national Sufficiency template).

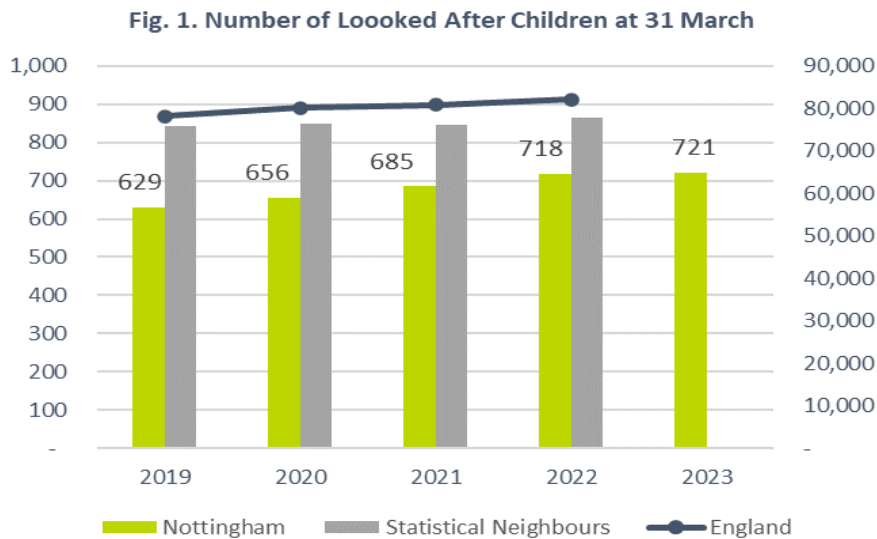
2. Demand for placements

Nottingham has 66,000 children aged under 18 representing 20% of the local population (ONS (Office for National Statistics) 2021). It is the 11th most deprived area in the country with 30% of our neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived in England overall. There are high levels of child poverty in the city with around a third of children and young people living in households with no working adults.

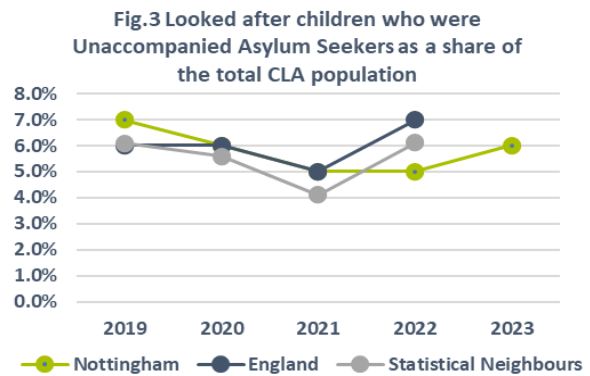
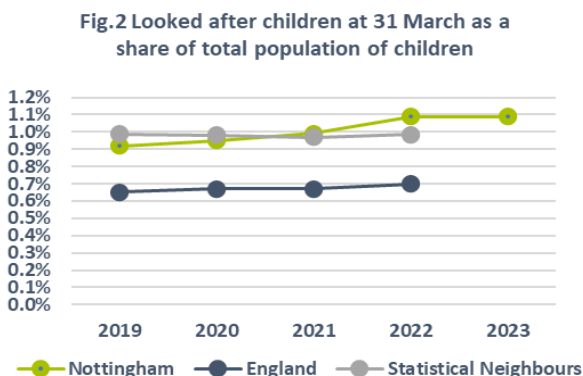
Population of looked after children

On 31 March 2023 there were 721 looked after children.

The number of children in care in Nottingham has increased over the last 4 years by 14% compared to a 5% increase across England and 3% increase experienced by its statistical neighbours. However, the rate of increase slowed between March 2022 and March 2023 to 0.4%. (Comparative figures not yet available for statistical neighbours 2023).(fig 1)



In the year to March 2022 the number of children looked after by Nottingham City as a proportion of the total child population exceeded those of both England and its statistical neighbours (fig 2).



In the same period, the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as a proportion of all children in care was lower than both England and its statistical neighbours (fig 3); this proportion is expected to further rise in line, in the short to mid-term.

Characteristics of looked after children

Of those children looked after at 31 March 2023, 64% are 11 years or older and 38% of all children looked after are male and over 11 years. The majority are white British ethnicity (53%).

The age and gender of our children in care population is influenced by UASC, of which there is a high proportion who are older and male.

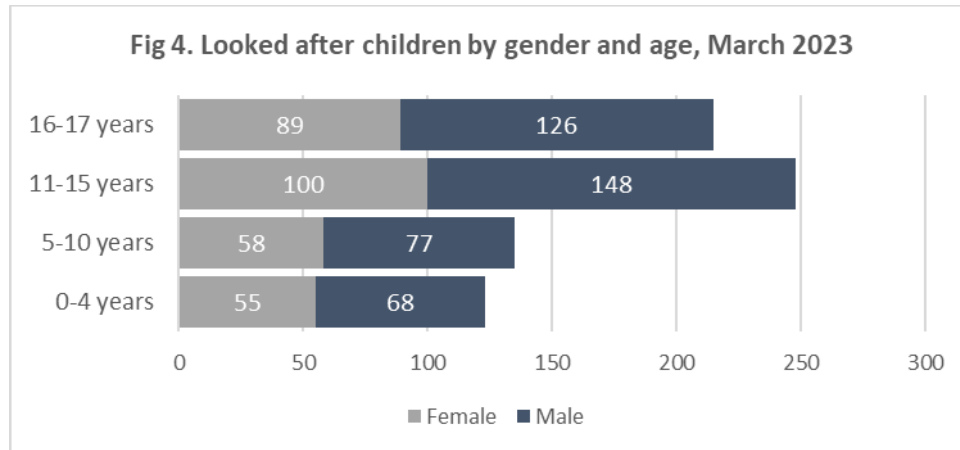
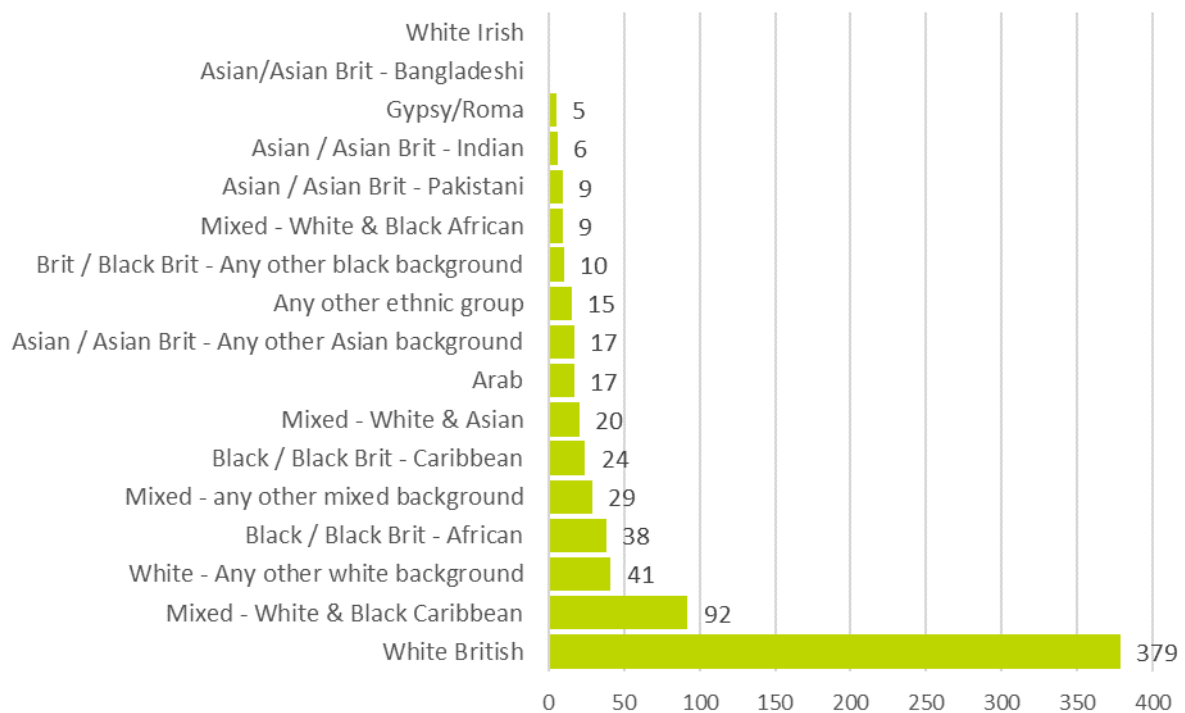


Fig 5. Looked after children by ethnicity, March 2023



Needs of looked after children

Of our looked after children as at 31 March 2023:

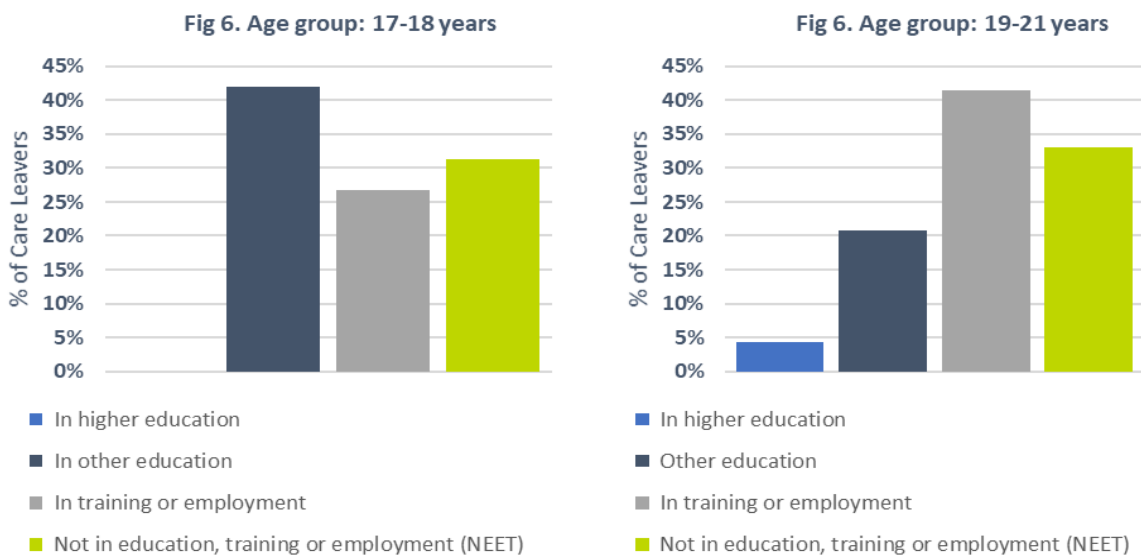
- 21% have a statement or Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and 39% have Special Education Needs (SEN) support²,
- 16% have a disability and
- Over half (56%) have a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score at a level of concern³ (2023) compared to a national average of 37% (2022).

The majority of our children present with needs that are deemed typical of Children in Care and can be well met within a nurturing family environment. However, for some of our children, due to adverse childhood experiences of neglect, abuse and trauma, their needs are more complex, and they may require more coordinated, intense support. Complex needs include mental health issues, self-harming and sexually inappropriate or challenging behaviours. Some of these children and young people are at risk of, or engaged in, child sexual and criminal exploitation (CSE/CCE). Placements that can meet the needs of these children, particularly when a family environment is deemed most suitable, are difficult to source.

Care leavers

Specific work undertaken to support care leavers includes the progression of our staying close offer, support to sustain tenancies, minimise moves at transition, and working with housing services to extend the Care Leavers accommodation pathway.

Fig 6. Care leavers by type of activity (as a share of the total population of care leavers), 2023



Note: The figure includes care leavers in the year ending March 31, 2023, aged 17 and 18 and 19 to 21 who were looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday. The figure does not include care leavers for whom the activity is not known

² As a proportion of the number of children looked after at 31 March who had been continuously looked after for at least twelve months and matched to census data

³ Children looked after continuously for 12 months at 31 March for whom a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was completed

- As at 31 March 2023, there were 112 Care leavers (now aged 17 and 18), and 284 Care Leavers (now aged 19, 20 and 21).
- 22 care leavers aged 18 during the year were accommodated with former foster carers.
- The majority of care leavers aged 17-18 years are in 'Other' education, with the majority of those aged 19-21 years in training or employment.

3. Supply of placements

We place children and young people across a range of internal (local authority) and external (private) placement provision.



Fostering

In line with other local authorities, in March 2023 the majority (60%) of children were placed in foster care, with 30% placed with inhouse carers and 30% placed with external providers (fig 7).

- However, when comparing to March 2022 national and statistical neighbours' statistics, Nottingham City had a lower proportion of children placed in foster care (at 64%) and higher proportion placed in Secure, Childrens homes and semi-independent.
- Our proportion of foster placements as a percentage of all care placements fell further to March 2023, to 60% (fig 7).
- The overall number of fostering placements between March 2022 and 2023 fell by 30, from 463 to 433. This change is consistent with the decrease seen by inhouse fostering (28), whilst the number of placements provided by the external market remained largely constant (fig 9).



Residential and Supported Accommodation

There has been a significant increase in both residential and supported accommodation placements between March 20.

- Residential placements increased by 24 (22%) on top of a 22% increase seen the previous year, and supported accommodation increased by 25 (40%) (fig 9).
- 88% of residential and 90% of supported accommodation placements are commissioned externally (fig 8).
- Whilst inhouse supported accommodation appears to show fewer placements, this is because almost half of this accommodation is used by UASC who remain after their 18th birthday and are not included in the data as a looked after child.

The steep increase in external residential placements over the last 24 months has been the result of a lack of fostering placements to meet demand. This means more children where fostering would have been a suitable option, are being placed in residential homes, impacting further on the availability of residential placements for young people with complex/challenging behaviours. Anecdotally, local providers have suggested that the strict application of Ofsted standards have influenced their decisions to accept challenging placements and also cited workforce challenges.

Fig. 7. All children looked after by type of placement (as a share of the total CLA population), 2023

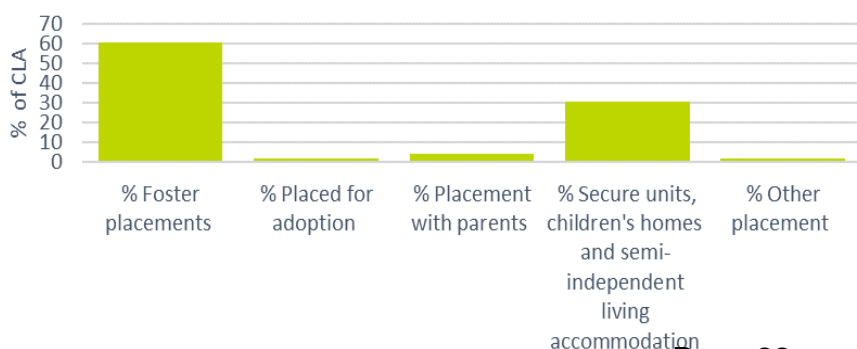


Fig. 8. Looked after children by placement provider (as a share of the total CLA population), 2023

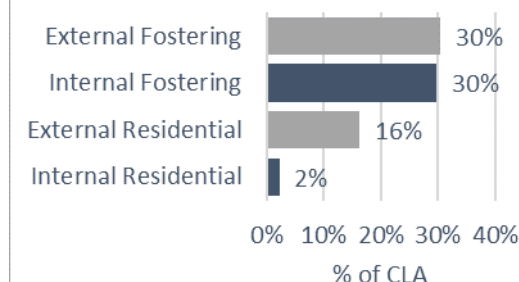
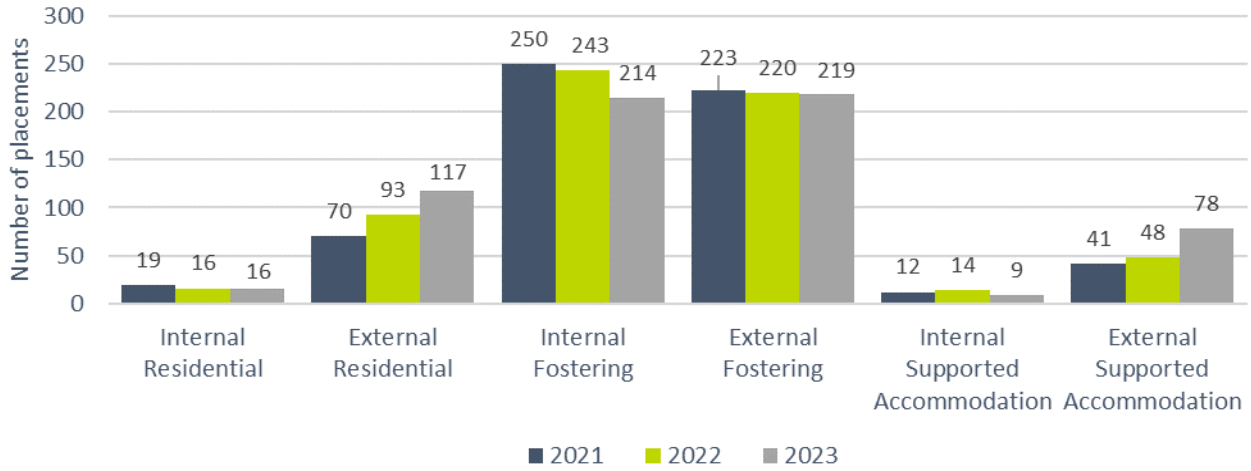


Fig 9. Placement type, as at 31 March



Placement stability

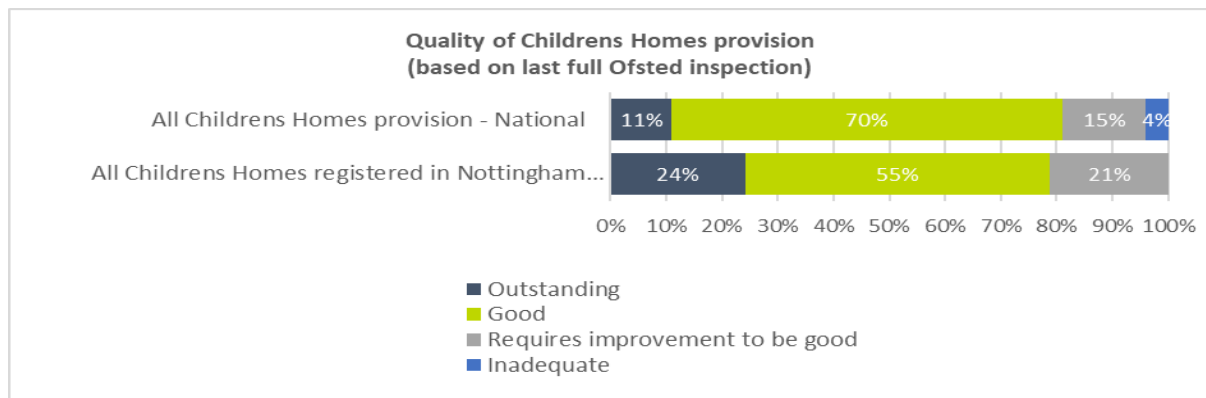
Placements moves during the year (table 1) indicates a worsening position relating to short term placement stability whilst long term stability remains constant.

Table 1. Stability of placements for children looked after	2022	2023
% of children looked after with three or more placements during the year	8%	12%
% of children looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	71%	71%

Placement stability is part of our transformation programme, which includes robust exit interviews to better understand placement breakdowns and the development of a Stable Homes policy which aims to identify early when placements may become unstable and implement support in a timely way.

Quality of local provision

79% of Childrens homes registered in the city are rated good or better, which is slightly below the national average of 81%.



Location of placements

Due to the compact nature of Nottingham City, placements may be deemed outside of the local authority area but still close to the city – we therefore define a ‘local’ placement as anywhere within a 20-mile radius of Nottingham City Centre. Where appropriate, the aim is for children and young people to remain living locally, taking into consideration the maintenance of a young person’s educational, health, social and cultural connections, and access to resources.

In March 2023 79% of children and young people were placed within 20 miles of their home and 40% placed within the local authority boundary.

All inhouse residential homes and inhouse supported accommodation provision/placements are within the City boundary, together with 40% of inhouse foster placements.

For placements with external providers:

- the majority (74%) of supported accommodation placements are within the city boundary, with 87% within 20 miles
- 21% of external fostering placements are within the city, rising to 72% within 20 miles.
- 49% of all external residential placements are over 20 miles from the city.

Fig 10. Looked after children where distance between placement and home is less than 20 miles (as a share of total population of CLA)

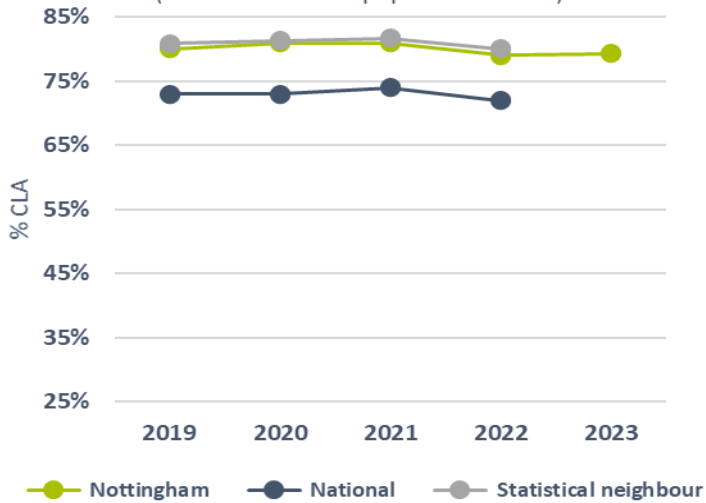


Fig 11. Looked after children placed within LA boundary (as a share of total population of CLA)

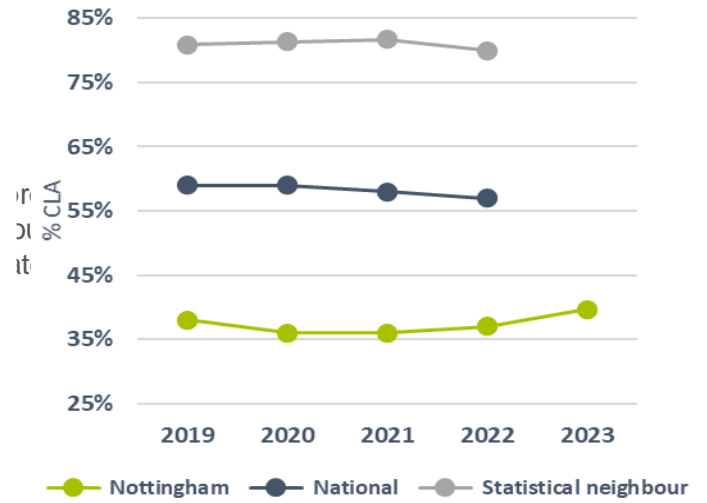
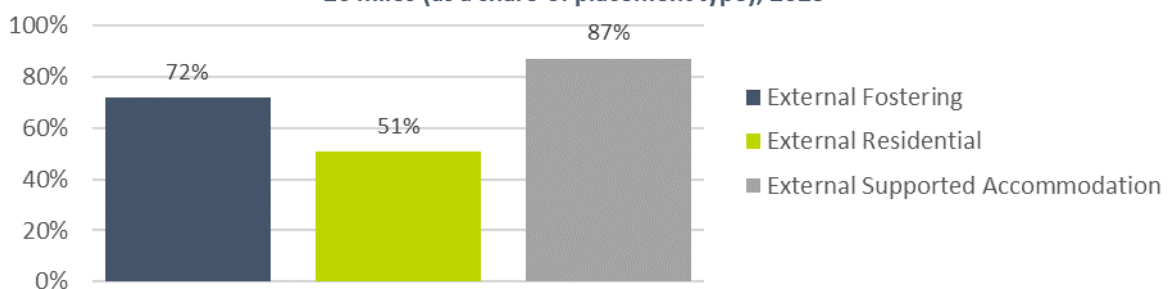


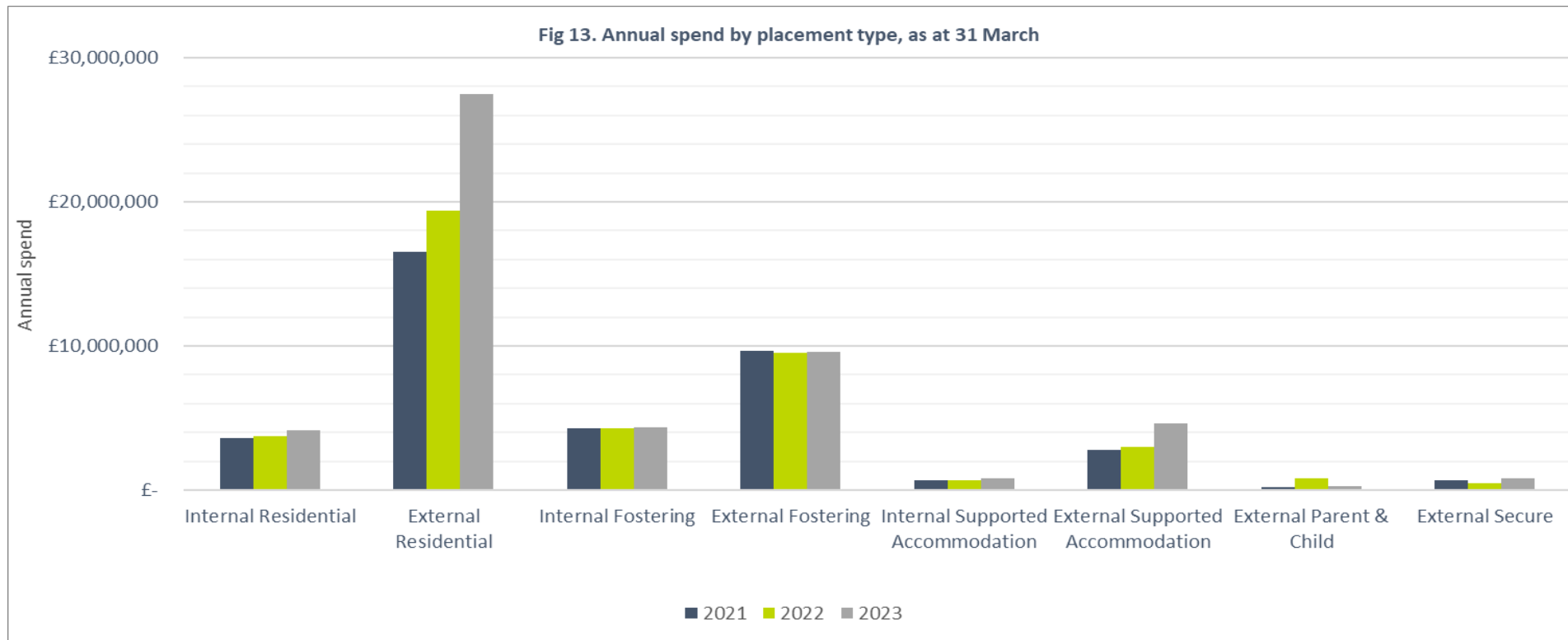
Fig 12. Looked after children where distance between placement and City is less than 20 miles (as a share of placement type), 2023



Cost of placements

The overall spend on placements during 22/23 was c£57m, an increase of 27% over the previous year. This was due to an increase on spend for all external residential-type placements, such as Secure provision (increased 84%) and residential homes (increased 42%).

The increase in residential homes spend is reflective of the increase in number of placements. The impact of the wider inflationary factors within the current economic environment is expected to impact more significantly during 2023/24.



4. Approach and Provision

Early Help and Strengthening Families

In Nottingham City we remain committed to supporting children and families facing difficulties. In the first instance this includes providing intensive support to those families where there is risk of relationship breakdown and where there is risk of children needing the Local Authority to provide care for them. We recognise that for many children remaining in the care of their parents or wider family network is in their best interests and should be supported as a priority. We work to identify and support families as an alternative to care and we have a range of Strengthening Families at Home services which are provided to those families with increased risk of breakdown either due to relationship difficulties or concerns about the care of the child.

Our Transformation work strand 'Preventing Long term entry to care' is aimed at reducing both the numbers of children and length of time children are on child protection and children in need plans and have successfully reduced the number of children on child protection plans by 25%, which, over time will result in fewer children in care.

We are changing practice so more children can be placed with families through special guardianship orders, child arrangement orders and as connected carers and achieve permanence out of care. Support for these carers is being strengthened together with regional collaboration on kinship care improving advice and support. Reunification policies and procedures are being redesigned as part of our transformation programme, all aimed at keeping more children with their families.

As part of achieving permanence, Nottingham City's adoption services are now part of [Adoption East Midlands](#) supporting D2N2 authorities.

Nottingham City is an active contributor to both regional and sub-regional commissioning partnerships. The East Midlands Commissioning leads undertake regional development work, including on fees, the wider market, best practice and quality. The D2N2 partnership has a number of framework agreements and collaborative workstreams, outlined within.

Voice of the child

Aligned to the Nottingham City Council strategic aim to achieve UNICEF accreditation as a Child Friendly City, and adopting a child rights-based approach, the voice of the child has been recognised whilst writing this strategy.

Children in care and care leavers have told us what they want to see from their accommodation and where they live, and the Children in Care Council is working with the Corporate Parenting Board to refresh the Children in Care and Care Leaver pledge.

This approach will feature within the future Action Plan, exploiting the opportunities the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy provides and the Child Friendly Nottingham badge for Communication and Leadership, whereby children and young people are actively involved and empowered to contribute to local decision making. Currently children can use advocacy services with feedback shaping the recommissioning of services which affect them however, specific feedback will be sought where existing services are being recommissioned or new services developed.

Inhouse Provision

Where children and young people are looked after, Nottingham City Council has a range of internal provision which complements externally commissioned arrangements:



Inhouse Residential

The Local Authority has seven registered children's homes located in the city, caring for up to 17 children and one short breaks home, caring for up to 11 children. The homes are rated by Ofsted as either Good or Outstanding apart from one home requiring improvement.

Regional development initiatives include working together to overcome sector-specific challenges such as recruitment and retention and training and pay.

In-house Fostering

Over recent years the proportion of fostering placements with inhouse foster carers has continued to fall; at March 2023, half of fostering placements are now with internal foster carers. There was a total reduction in inhouse foster placement of 12% from the previous year, whilst the total number of external placements remain roughly constant. The number of fostering households has also reduced.

We are strongly committed to increasing the capacity of the fostering service. The immediate priority is to recruit and retain more carers, and better utilise carers we do have. A significant programme of investment activity is supporting this, including:

- Our 'Modernising Fostering' transformation work, which has resulted in an increase in enquiries, applications and carers, and a reduction in negative resignations.
- Establishing a fostering support team and out of hours foster carer support service, who are therapeutically trained and there to support carers when challenges arise,
- Collaborating with D2N2 partner local authorities to ensure best practice and quick wins. Work to date has included pre and post approval training. Going forward, we are

participating in the national pilot for pan-LA collaborative foster carer activity, covering recruitment and the Mockingbird foster-carer support model. Other potential future collaboration areas include wider foster carer support and specialist carers (i.e., Parent and child).

- Implementing local initiatives aimed at developing a better understanding of our carers and their needs and wishes.

Our Fostering Service Statement of Purpose will shortly be updated to reflect these changes.

It is anticipated that this will enable more children to be placed locally, reduce external spend and achieve improved placement management throughout a child’s journey through care, ultimately leading to overall improved outcomes.

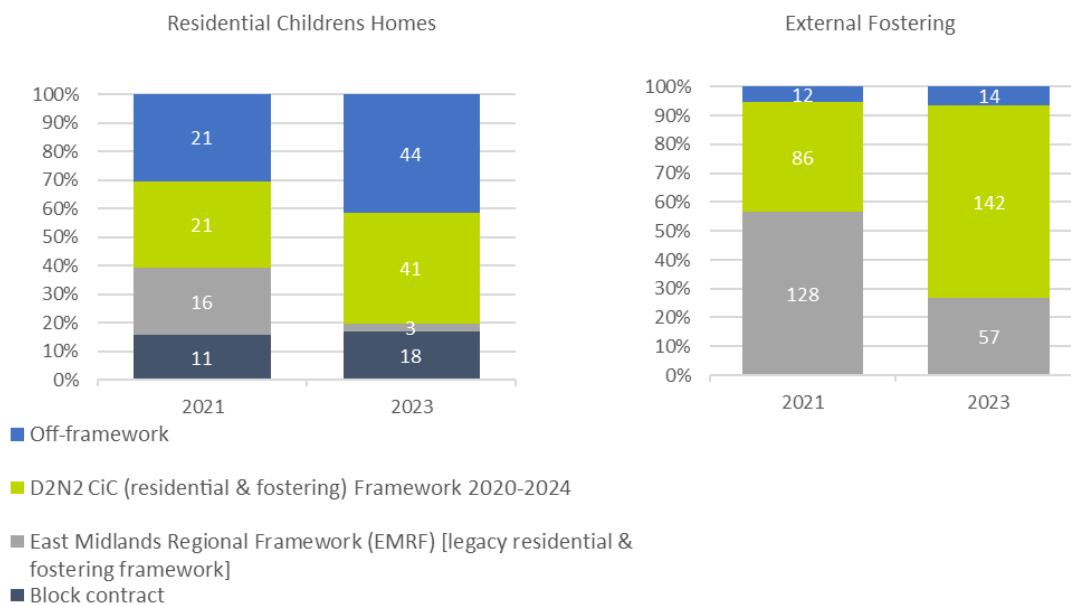
Inhouse Supported Accommodation

Nottingham City Council has five supported accommodation homes able to care for up to 20 young people, including children in care and care leavers. These provisions are well-established and support young people reaching independence and are currently being prepared to meet the new Ofsted Supported Accommodation standards. Key challenges include recruitment and retention of staff.

External Provision

The external market meets over 75% of our residential, fostering, and supported accommodation placement needs through a range of framework, block contracting and spot purchasing arrangements. For all placements we would initially seek to source through either inhouse of block contracted provision before using frameworks then spot purchasing arrangements. Most fostering placements are consistently sourced through frameworks.

Externally commissioned placements from 2021 and as at March 2023 (fig 14):





External residential

The D2N2 Children in Care (Residential and fostering) Framework is used to source residential placements. This framework went live in January 2020, with an initial period of 4 years, and is currently being extended until 2026. The four local authorities jointly fund a D2N2 Contracts officer post that is currently hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council.

The framework has specifications for both residential and fostering, standard and specialist provision and supports a locally competitive market by enabling new providers to regularly join.

The framework superseded the wider East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (residential and fostering) which ended in 2020. Working as a smaller collaborative, benefits providers through fewer and more consistent and coordinated processes, contract management and performance monitoring, than would be required when dealing with multiple local authorities, with local authorities benefitting through local efficiencies, shared risk, enhanced buying power and market influence, and information and resource sharing.

Residential Block Contract

The local authority has one block contract (in place since 2015) for residential Children's home provision, which was expanded over 2022/23 and the initial part of 2023/24, now including 23 beds across 8 homes. The contract has increased the number of young people living locally (aided by recent reconfiguration) and brought benefits of increased accessibility to local support services, with the relationship approach enabling more efficient placement provision and easier planning.



External Fostering

Most new external fostering placements are made through the D2N2 CiC (Children In Care) framework. Whilst the number of external fostering placements within the city boundary is not high, this rises to 72% within 20 miles of the city. The number of external fostering placements sourced has remained constant. The DN2 STARS programme also includes a step down to foster opportunity and provides fostering stability support.

External Supported Accommodation

Supported accommodation is externally sourced through a small block contract (established in 2022), the D2N2 framework for Supported Accommodation (also established in 2022 and managed by Derby City Council) with the remainder sourced through spot purchasing. Overall, use of supported accommodation has increased with 90% of all supported accommodation for under 18s sourced from external providers.

The new Supported Accommodation regulations will come into effect from October 2023 and bring Ofsted regulation to this market which is likely to have a significant impact on the market.

Supported Lodgings

Supported lodgings is currently being piloted, which provides additional accommodation options for young people up to 21 years.

Care Leavers

Our Care Leavers offer is available on [AskLion](#) and currently being refreshed, with our Staying Close model in development. Going forward we are also working on a housing pathway and solutions to support young people to retain tenancies.

5. Gaps and Issues

We know there are gaps in provision to meet some specific needs areas:



Foster Care

Challenges meeting the needs of children requiring fostering provision

- We are unable to source a fostering placement for all our children and young people who have a fostering care plan, particularly those with more complex needs. This means more children and young people are placed in residential provision than we would like.
- We need more foster carers, specifically for young children (under 3 years), teenagers, parent and child fostering, large sibling groups (3-4 siblings) or for children with disabilities. . We also need more foster carers for young people with specialist needs, specifically mental health, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) and challenging behaviours which may suit therapeutically trained carers.



Residential Care

Challenges meeting the needs of children requiring residential provision

- Current challenges with residential provision include only 49% of residential placements being within 20 miles (despite an expansion and reconfiguration of the block contract); an increasing number of off-framework placements (c40%) and lack of specialist placements being offered by D2N2 framework providers and the wider market.
- Going forward we need to secure more residential placements close to the city. This includes increasing the number of local providers on the framework, developing closer tied relationships with providers potentially through hard or soft block contracting arrangements, and specific contracting for residential provision for young people with challenging behaviour.
- We need more residential placements emergency/short term/assessment places enabling needs to be assessed prior to finding an appropriate long-term setting and small setting/solo provision for children who tend not to thrive in standard settings
- We also need residential placements for young people with specialist complex needs, specifically mental health, or specialist physical and learning disability presenting behaviours that challenge.

6. Commissioning approach 2023-2028

This strategy will be updated annually to reflect current data and provision and will inform commissioning plans and intentions going forwards.

We believe that the market should be:

- Composed of a mix of small, medium, and large organisations from the public, private, voluntary, and not for profit sectors, to achieve variety, sustainability and ensure competition and choice.
- Dynamic, flexible, and responsive, proactively adapting to changing demand and need.
- Person-centred and outcomes focused.
- Efficient, effective and provide best value.

Our commissioning intentions are to:

- Provide early help services and support to strengthen families, minimising the number of children needing to be cared for outside their families.
- Where children and young people do become looked after, ensure choice and diversity by continuing to operate a **mixed economy of internal and external provision**.
- Commission external provision through a **range of mechanisms**, aimed at incentivising specific outcomes wherever possible. This includes **frameworks and block contracts and minimising the use of spot purchasing**.
- Commission at both a **single local authority and partnership level** (either sub-regionally (D2N2) or regionally where beneficial), providing a balance of benefits and control.
- Build upon **strategic regional and sub-regional (D2N2) networks**, collaborating on areas with shared aims and objectives, problem solving and market management and to develop a better market for children's placements.
- Ensure **strategic, evidence-based, and needs-led** commissioning, making use of robust procurement and contracting functions.
- **Maximise use of internal provision**, with particular development of fostering.
- Place children according to what **best meets their needs**. To ensure this we will consistently apply processes across internal and external provision. Where we can meet the needs of a child through an internal placement, this would be our preferred option, as it allows us to offer fully joined up services for our children.
- Drive **up quality, ensure greater placement stability and de-escalation of need** through timely interventions, leading to better outcomes for children. We recognise that

the greater placement stability and improved outcomes for our children and young people, the greater our influence is on costs and ensuring value for money.

- Further integrate Health, Education and Social Care through joint planning, funding, and commissioning, sustaining shared accountability and inter-agency cooperation, driving efficiencies, and better meeting the needs of our children.

Short term Market Position statement

The following have been identified as gaps where more provision is needed.

Residential

- Residential placements closer to the city
 - This includes increasing the number of local providers on the framework, developing closer tied relationships with providers potentially through hard or soft block contracting arrangements, and specific contracting for residential provision for young people with challenging behaviour.
- Specific types of residential provision:
 - Emergency/Short-term/Assessment placements: Accommodating urgent need for children needing a short-term setting to allow time for their needs to be assessed to find an appropriate longer-term placement. This should reduce the number of placement break downs going forward.
 - Specialist Residential Provision: for children with complex behavioural needs that tend not to thrive in standard residential settings.
 - Smaller residential settings: Solo or Dual Occupancy: More intensive support in a smaller environment.
 - Residential homes close to Nottingham City that operate using a step-down model for children and young people with a medium to long term plan to live with a foster family.
 - Therapeutic Residential Homes offering a clinically validated therapeutic environment.
- Provision meeting the following needs: Specialist complex needs, specifically mental health, and specialist physical and learning disability presenting behaviours that challenge.

Fostering

- Foster carers specifically for young children (under 3 years); teenagers; parent and child fostering; large sibling groups (3-4 siblings); children from black and ethnic minority backgrounds; for children with disabilities.
- Foster carers for young people with specialist needs such as mental health, CSE and challenging behaviours, which may suit therapeutically-trained carers.
- Specialist / Therapeutic carers for children stepping down from residential placements.

We are looking to jointly develop services with providers and draw from their experience around what they believe works best and are open to a range of commissioning approaches.

7. Action Plan

Fostering

Internal

- Increase the number of bed nights the inhouse fostering service can care for, by increasing recruitment and retention and utilising current carers more effectively.
- Implement additional recruitment campaigns to target specialist carers for those groups where more foster carers are needed, such as for:
 - Young children (under 3 years), teenagers, large sibling groups, children with disabilities, children from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.
 - Children with specialist needs, and those stepping down from residential provision.
- Provide greater specialist training and support for inhouse foster carers, such as therapeutic training for experienced carers.
- Understand what works to enable carers to continue caring for children with complex needs and develop specialist training for carers in this specific area.
- Evaluate support requirements and provide support for male carers and birth children.
- Develop a parent & child fostering offer.
- Continue to work collaboratively across D2N2 developing training and sharing learning and best practice.
- Explore the benefits of a sub-regional fostering agency.

External

- Maximise the STARS programme to support complex and challenging children to live within a family setting, including step down from residential provision.
- Work with the fostering market to enable carers to take children with needs where they would be best accommodated in a family setting, to avoid the needs for residential placements.

Residential

External

- Improve the proportion of residential placements sourced through the D2N2 framework, including market engagement with local providers to explore barriers.
- Consider requirements and need for solo provision for young people with high needs, reducing the need for unregistered provision and ensuring regulated placements.
- Scope requirements for emergency provision, further reducing need for unregistered placements.
- Scope the requirements to meet specialist residential needs and implement small contracting arrangements (either D2N2 or Nottingham City only) to meet demand locally.
- Progress D2N2 Specialist therapeutic homes model with ICB, ensuring specialist provision for young people with emotional/psychological deregulation and/or challenging behaviour.
- Recommission residential block contract provision, scoping needs covered by the existing block contract (due to end March 2025) and additional requirements, improving local residential sufficiency.
- Explore wider (soft) block contracting arrangements, both through D2N2 (harnessing the benefits of pooling places) and as a sole commissioner (with the benefit of control), also improving local sufficiency.

Internal

- Improve recruitment and retention of residential home staff, working with the region/sub-region to share best practice.

Supported Accommodation and Supported Lodgings

External

- Manage the current block contract to ensure children and young people are placed in quality, local provision that represents best value. Consider additional developments within the contract to meet emerging needs as required.
- With D2N2 LAs, develop the D2N2 Supported Accommodation framework so more provision is sourced to these standards and ii) that the provision sourced offers best value.
- Review of supported accommodation sector and provision used by NCC including framework, off-framework, and block, to ensure best meeting needs and value for money.
- Provide ongoing support and monitoring of provider-specific and the sector-wide response to meeting the Supported accommodation regulations, with appropriate management of risk and impact.
- Review the impact and outcomes from supported lodgings pilot, further commissioning as appropriate.

Internal

- Ensure inhouse provision effectively meets the new Ofsted regulations.

Care Leavers

- Develop a targeted offer for Care Leavers, including a robust Staying Close model.
- With Housing partners, remodel the Care Leavers Pathway and Protocol for accommodation, clarifying responsibilities to ensure an integrated offer.
- Explore sub-tenancy arrangements for care leavers which minimises moves.

Kinship care

- Regionally, share learning and best practice to further develop our Kinship care offer.

Partnership working and Internal governance

- Continue to work regionally (East Midlands) and sub-regionally (D2N2) to harness learning and best practice where appropriate.
- Ensure robust contract management processes and monitoring to support good outcomes and best value across all contracts.
- Strengthen the visibility of the voice of the child and their wishes and feelings when part of the placement search process.
- Continue to work collaboratively with providers to:
 - Ensure their workforce is equipped to meet the outcomes of our young people,
 - Ensure standards within contractual agreements are upheld and
 - Gain feedback regarding the quality of referrals and communication/engagement.
 - Continue to link with Child Friendly City to ensure the voice of the child is heard.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

To be developed by March 2024 for providers and citizens

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

28 March 2024

Review of the Early Help Strategy

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To assess the impact of the Early Help Strategy and whether it is achieving its intended outcomes.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the progress made since the launch of the strategy and website and whether it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the information presented at the meeting.

3 Background information

- 3.1 The Early Help Partnership Strategy (appendix 1) and website was launched 30th Oct 2023 www.earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk.
- 3.2 The objectives of the strategy are:
 - To have a partnership offer with clear referral pathways for when babies, children, young people, and families need support
 - To build resilience in children, young people, and families living in Nottingham City
 - To ensure Early Help offers support and provide information to the whole family when they need it, that is easily accessible so that they can meet their own needs
 - To better join up and embed how all partners work to safeguard babies, children, and young people as part of a multi-disciplinary approach
 - To gather feedback from parents/carers, children, and young people to continuously improve our Early Help offer
- 3.3 The partners identified five priorities to drive initial activity:
 - Embedding a whole system approach to facilitate Early Help being an integral part of a city-wide service
 - Partnership working
 - Partnership workforce development and structure
 - Measure the impact of Early Help

- Pool funding and identify sustainability opportunities with the Family Hub and from external funding sources
- 3.4 The report provided by the People's directorate outlines early help within Nottingham City Council, service use, progress made against each priority, and the next steps.
- 4 List of attached information**
- 4.1 Report provided by the People's directorate on the review of the Early Help Strategy.
- 4.2 Early Help Partnership Strategy.
- 5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**
- 5.1 None.
- 6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**
- 6.1 Early Help Partnership Strategy.
- 7 Wards affected**
- 7.1 All.
- 8 Contact information**
- 8.1 Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
damon.stanton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Meeting Title	Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Review of the Early Help Strategy
Meeting Date	28 th March 2024

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Ailsa Barr, Director for Children’s Integrated Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Wilf Fearon, Head of Service for Early Help

Summary of issues:
Review of Early Help Strategy:
To assess the impact of the Early Help Strategy and whether it is achieving its intended outcomes
Recommendation(s):
1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee confirm its commitment to supporting the Early Help Partnership strategy and its ambition for Early Help to be delivered in partnership with other services.
2. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the progress made since the launch of the strategy and website

1. Early Help in Nottingham City Council

- 1.1 Early Help support through Nottingham City Council is primarily delivered through the City’s four Family Hubs in Bestwood, Broxtowe, Meadows and Hyson Green, the Supporting Families programme, the Best Start for Life Offer, and the Targeted Family Support Teams.
- 1.2 Family Hubs are a single point of access for whole family support and services from conception up to 19 and up to age 25 for children with special education needs or disabilities. Through the Family Hub network, there is a range of services available, some are delivered in the Family Hubs, some are arranged in community and partner venues.
 - Infant feeding support
 - Mental health and wellbeing services, including Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Peer support services.
 - Family Support Services
 - Play and learning activities including for the home learning environment
 - Special educational needs support, advice and services
 - Parenting support
 - Healthy Relationships support
 - Domestic Abuse support
 - Young Parents together groups

- Housing, benefit and welfare advice
- Substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) support
- Youth services and Youth Justice

1.3 The Start for Life offer provides information and links to support that is available when families need it, from conception to the baby's second birthday. There is a range of universal services, (open to everyone) and targeted services (available via referral). These include:

- **Universal Services** - Accessing a midwife, Antenatal services, Post Natal support
- **Targeted Services** - Family Nurse Partnership, Teenage midwife, Healthy Little Minds

1.4 The Supporting Families programme, funding and Whole Family Working underpins Nottingham City Council's Early Help services. This National Programme, (formerly called "Troubled Families 2012-2021"), was originally funded by Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities and is now funded by Department for Education.

1.5 It has 3 main goals:

- Ensure partners work together to help whole families so they get the same kind of help across all services.
- Change how Early Help services work so they are more connected and work together.
- Use data to understand what families need and get better at helping them.

Service users

1.6 Between 01/01/2023 and 28/02/2024, 6,031 individuals received Early Help Support (commencing either an Early Help Episode, or Early Help Brief Assessment). Of those 61% were children and 38% were adults at the start of the support (1% did not have age recorded).

1.7 Between 01/01/2023 and 28/02/2024 Nottingham City Council delivered 3,778 group work sessions, with 18,712 attendees across all sessions, supporting 3,242 registered individuals (in most of the cases an individual would attend multiple sessions and multiple activity types). Of those, 61% were Adult and 39% were children at the time of the session.

2. Background of the strategy

2.1 The Early Help Partnership Strategy (appendix 1) and website was launched 30th Oct 2023 www.earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk.

2.2 The objectives of the strategy are:

- To have a partnership offer with clear referral pathways for when babies, children, young people, and families need support
- To build resilience in children, young people, and families living in Nottingham City

- To ensure Early Help offers support and provide information to the whole family when they need it, that is easily accessible so that they can meet their own needs
- To better join up and embed how all partners work to safeguard babies, children, and young people as part of a multi-disciplinary approach
- To gather feedback from parents/carers, children, and young people to continuously improve our Early Help offer

3. Priorities of the strategy

The partners identified five priorities to drive initial activity:

1. Embedding a whole system approach to facilitate Early Help being an integral part of a city-wide service
2. Partnership working
3. Partnership workforce development and structure
4. Measure the impact of Early Help
5. Pool funding and identify sustainability opportunities with the Family Hub and from external funding sources

4. Current progress against each priority

4.1 The Early Help Partnership Strategic Steering Group is now chaired by Karla Capstik, Programme Director (Small Steps Big Changes). The steering group has set-up four subgroups to address the priorities in the strategy:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- Family Voice
- Workforce Development
- Impact Monitoring

4.2 The development of fifth subgroup to manage the actions around sustainability is progressing.

Partnership priorities

4.3 **Priority 1** - Embedding a whole system approach to facilitate Early Help being an integral part of a city-wide service

- The partnership has agreed on practice guidance. Some small changes are being made before the document is distributed to the partnership.
- Arrangements for partners to have access to LL are nearly complete, testing dates are arranged.
- Through a language audit and primary school entry data 5 key languages in addition to English and British Sign Language have been identified to support access to services for families, Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi India, Romanian and Polish.
- The EDI subgroup is leading on standardised documentation and a shared language across the partnership and tracking progress against the Early Help Partnership Equality Impact Assessment. Easy read versions of the Partnership Strategy have been created and published with audio in English, Urdu, Arabic and Romanian.

4.4 **Priority 2** - Partnership working - Work on actions from priority 2 are well advanced.

- There is ongoing work with partners to ensure a collective 'Core Offer' of what Early Help Services are available to children, young people, and families.
- What is Early Help in English, Arabic, Urdu and Romanian have been created and distributed to Early Help contacts and Marketing and Communication leads at City Care, Police, Department of work and pensions, Small Steps Big Changes, Integrated Care Board and Change Grow Live. The promotion of services through AskLion, social media, partner organisations and the Early Help Partnership /Family Hubs website is ongoing. 27,800 Early Help Partnership Promotional postcards have been distributed to frontline workers and partners for onward distribution to children and families. A further 22,200 are committed and are due to be distributed by 13th March.
- An Early Help Partnership Marketing and Communications Strategy has been drafted and approved by Marketing and Communication leads from Partner organisations – it will next go to the Early Help Partnership Strategic Steering Group for approval.
- Since the launch of the Early Help Partnership website in October, 578 unique people have visited the website and spent on average 4minutes 30seconds on the site. We are currently in conversation with an external advertiser who can guarantee a minimum of 7500 interactions with the website in three months. This will be pending approval and agreeing a contract with them.

4.5 **Priority 3** - Partnership workforce development and structure

- The Early Help Partnership Strategic Steering Group and current subgroups (Workforce Development, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Family Voice and Impact Monitoring are now functional and enabling the work on further alignment of services to enable ease of access for families
- Currently there is ongoing partnership work to develop partnership-wide workforce induction/ training/refresher package to ensure staff and system leaders are providing a consistent high-quality service.
- Shadowing opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of partners' offer including peer support and mentoring
- Deliver six-monthly multi-agency partner and practitioner events to embed a collaborative approach. The first event maybe planned for end of June.

4.6 **Priority 4** – Measure the impact of Early Help

- A draft Quality Assurance Framework has been developed and approved by members of the Impact Monitoring Subgroup. This will go to the Early Help Partnership Steering Group for approval in April 2024.
- The Impact Monitoring subgroup members are in the process of agreeing Key Performance Indicators to propose to the Early Help Partnership Steering group and qualitative information that will be collected.
- Surveys have been developed to gather qualitative information which will be piloted with families before being used.
- Case studies are to support qualitative data

4.7 **Priority 5** - Pool funding and identify sustainability opportunities with the Family Hub and from external funding sources

- Currently a standing item on the Early Help Partnership Strategic Steering group. Volunteers are being sought from partners to join the Sustainability Subgroup who will lead on this priority. The work will include:
 - Identifying opportunities to pool resources for funding, training, and service delivery.
 - Work on a sustainability strategy for 2025, work on the Sustainability Strategy will start around October 2024
 - Actively apply for funding to increase Early Help services, and collaborate to maximise available funding streams and continue to collectively make the case for continued long-term investment in Early Help and prevention

5. Next Steps

- Recruitment to current grant funded vacancies (DfE/Small Steps Big Changes), which is required to support the ongoing work in Family Hubs and the wider Early Help area
- Further alignment of in-house Early Help services to support the wider Early Help system and CIS
- Agreement of key performance indicators and reporting framework with partners
- Confirmation of the sustainability subgroup

Appendix



APPENDIX 1
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Nottingham City

Early Help Partnership Strategy

2023-25



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We are delighted to introduce the new **Early Help Partnership Strategy for Nottingham City**, and would like to thank all our staff, young people, families, and partners who have contributed and worked together to develop this Early Help approach.

Whilst Nottingham has long been recognised as an Early Intervention City, this strategy represents a renewed commitment by partners system-wide to respond to emerging needs early and effectively and to galvanise multi-agency support to ensure that families and young people access and receive the right support at the right time.

The implementation of this strategy is a priority for all of us and will help us to improve how we coordinate and deliver services. The strategy is ambitious and recognises that Early Help is not the domain of one single agency and reflects our shared ambition for an integrated and better co-ordinated approach across all agencies.

The strategy is the beginning of the work that needs to be accomplished and is an important aspect of the opportunities that integrated partnership working will bring to staff, babies, children, young people, families, and partners. We will continue this important piece of work as a partnership, to ensure we embed whole family working and promote a joined-up approach to service delivery. We will develop an effective Early Help framework and support the entire workforce to develop the knowledge and skills to deliver an effective service offer. An offer, that provides the right support at the right time.

Successful implementation of this strategy is dependent on the effort and commitment of the whole Early Help system and workforce. Partners signed up to this strategy are demonstrating their commitment to developing an Early Help system that will enable partnership collaboration and whole family working for the benefit of Nottingham's babies, children, young people, and families.

We look forward to working with you all to achieve our joint aims.

Introduction

The partnership strategy for Early Help Services in Nottingham City is a multiagency approach. Over seventy people, representing forty-three different services and organisations attended the Early Help Partnership Strategy Workshop in Spring 2023. Comments and feedback from parents, partners including academies, Children's Social Care, Department of Work and Pensions, Early Years Services, Health, Housing, Police and Voluntary and Community organisations have helped to shape this strategy.

This strategy lays out five priority areas, which will form a focus for all partners working together to achieve good outcomes for all families over the next two years from 2023 to 2025.

The strategy will be owned by the Early Help Strategic Steering Group which will ensure a joined-up approach across Nottingham City to ensure babies, children, young people and families achieve the best outcomes using the resources available.

In Nottingham our partnership of Early Help services provides a whole family approach so that the right help is provided at the right time. We aim to provide advice, support, and effective evidence-based interventions to prevent or reduce the chance of escalation of need and therefore the involvement of statutory services.

We work with children, young people, and families using strengths-based approaches to empower them to achieve the best outcomes they can. We match services to needs and our range of interventions are informed by evidence-based research which drives the quality of our practice.

We actively engage and listen to parents, children and young people and use their lived experiences and voice to shape our service provision.

Partners thoughts, comments and feedback have helped greatly to shape this document for which we are very thankful.



Rob Griffin
Assistant Chief Constable
Nottinghamshire Police



Catherine Underwood
Corporate Director of People
Nottingham City Council



Rosa Waddingham
Chief Nurse
NHS Nottingham and
Nottinghamshire ICB



Objectives of this strategy

- ✓ To have a partnership offer with clear referral pathways for when babies, children, young people, and families need support
- ✓ To build resilience in children, young people, and families living in Nottingham City
- ✓ To ensure Early Help offers support and provide information to the whole family when they need it, that is easily accessible so that they can meet their own needs
- ✓ To better join up and embed how all partners work to safeguard babies, children and young people as part of a multi-disciplinary approach
- ✓ To gather feedback from parents/carers, children, and young people to continuously improve our Early Help offer

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What is Early Help?

'In Nottingham, 'Early Help is the right help at the right time', delivered through coordinated partnership working. It is informed by the lived experience and voice of children, young people, and families.

'It enables whole families to become resilient and to reach their full potential.

'It includes good early years development from pre-birth, through adolescence, getting a good education, improved mental and physical health, good family relationships, living safe from harm and free from crime and substance use.'



Our partnership principles

At the March 2023 partnership workshop, attendees proposed the principles of the Nottingham Early Help Partnership to be:

- ✓ Co-production with children, young people, and families
- ✓ Families are listened to, to understand their needs and to build their resilience
- ✓ The language and offer are accessible and flexible to suit everyone's individual needs.
- ✓ A whole family needs-driven approach is embedded
- ✓ Early Help becomes everyone's responsibility, everyone 'buys in' and works in partnership



Good education and good parenting because what we write on their mind is there for life

Help from the very beginning when you say you are pregnant

Support to improve my behaviour before I do something bad

Listening and learning from other people who have been through the same thing



We asked young people and parents, 'What does good early help look like to you?' This is what they told us...

Supportive, easy to access children's activities and information

Noticing me early and not when it's too late

Someone there to support you and give you advice

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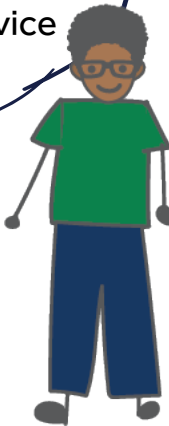
Knowing where you can go to make friends with other mums



Being able to detect health development issues early which is better for everyone

Listening without judging

Someone or some service that is approachable, especially for people who are suffering from poor mental health



Why is Early Help important?



Early Help has numerous benefits to babies, children, young people, and families and offers them the support needed to reach their full potential. Early Help enables families to build resilience as outlined in the diagram below.

Diagram: Building resilience within families



Where are we now?

In 2008, Nottingham City became the UK's first 'Early Intervention City', with the launch of a raft of programmes designed to improve the life chances of its children most in need of additional support. The programmes included a family nurse project to help teenage mums, a mentoring scheme for young people, greater support for victims of domestic violence and initiatives to tackle drug and alcohol abuse.

Nottingham's Early Help offer has been through various transformations over the years, including Sure Start local programmes and Children's Centres. Throughout these changes, there has remained a focus on giving families the tools to build their resilience.

In 2013 Nottingham was awarded funding from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities to deliver the Priority Families programme, (nationally known as Troubled Families) which became the Supporting Families programme in 2021.

The current programme is focused on embedding the framework and processes for an effective Early Help system, including:

- ✓ Multi-agency collaboration, early intervention and whole family working, to support vulnerable families to thrive and build their resilience.
- ✓ Transformation of services to enable system change locally and nationally, ensuring joined up efficient services.
- ✓ Combining and analysing data that support families and practice and enable a strong evidence base to help support families and commission appropriate services.

In 2015, Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC), hosted by Nottingham CityCare Partnership received significant funding from the National Lottery Community Fund's 'A Better Start' programme. The programme has a focus on prevention and early intervention in early years to test and learn

around early child development, workforce, coproduction and influencing commissioning locally. SSBC has worked across the early help system to empower parents, communities, and workforces to coproduce services and achieve together.

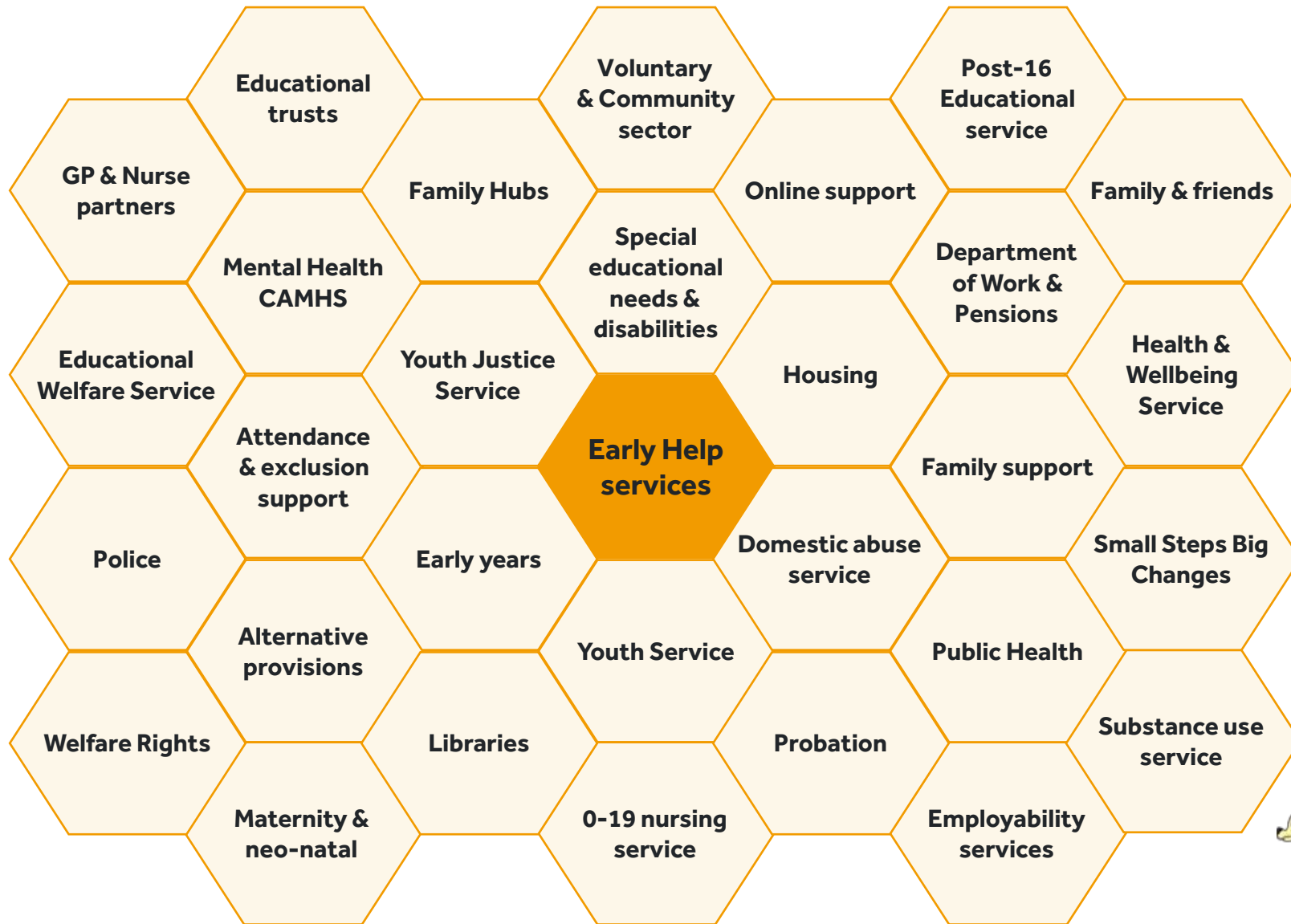
The city has also worked with partners to transform four of its former Children's Centres into Family Hubs, in North, South and Central localities of Nottingham. The Family Hubs provide a range of partnership services for families from pre-birth through to adulthood, ensuring:

1. **Access:** there is a clear and simple way for families with children of all ages to access help and support through a Family Hub building and a Family Hub approach.
2. **Connections:** Services work together for families, with a universal 'front door', shared outcomes and effective governance.
3. **Professionals work together** through co-location, data-sharing and a common approach to their work. Families should only have to tell their story once, the services are more efficient, and families receive more effective support. Statutory services and voluntary and community sector partners work together to get families the help they need.
4. **Relationships:**
 - ✓ The Family Hub prioritises strengthening relationships and builds on family strengths.
 - ✓ Relationships are at the heart of everything that is delivered in Family Hubs.
 - ✓ The Reducing Parental Conflict programme provides support for families experiencing relationship distress.



Our partnership

The Early Help System in Nottingham City includes a range of support and information services, outlined in the image below. These include community support, universal and acute services.



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Local context

Nottingham is a young, diverse and vibrant city. It has a resident population of 323,700 people. 48% of residents are aged 30 or under, 27% are under 19 years of age. There are 35,256 households with dependent children and young people aged 0-19 years (Census 2021).

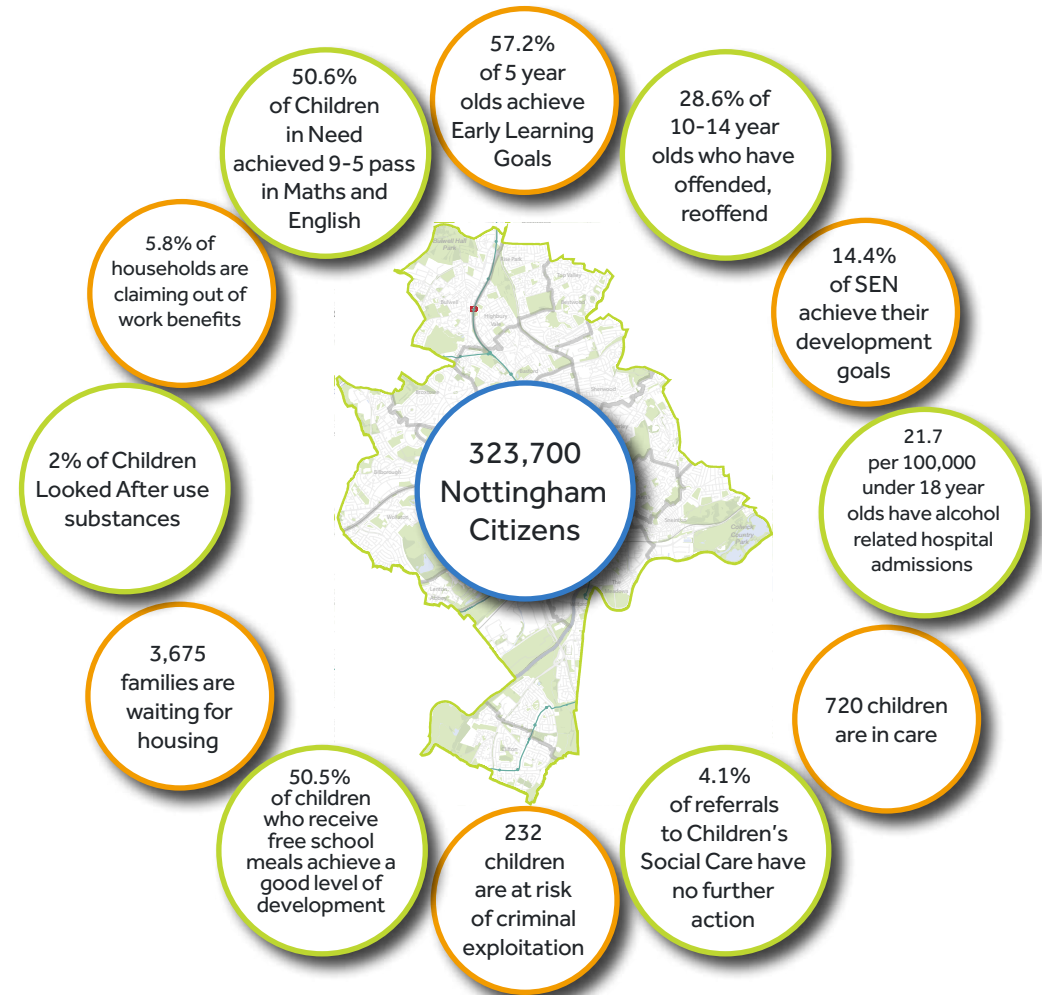
Over one third, 34.1% of its population, identify as non-white compared to 20% for England. Our largest ethnic population is Asian or Asian British, making up 14.9% of the population. This is followed by Black, Black British, Caribbean or African at 10% and Other ethnic groups at 3.3%. The white population of 65.9% includes high numbers of people from Eastern Europe, including Poland and Latvia. Nottingham has also welcomed children and young people seeking asylum, who make up 5% of this group. 33.7% of children and young people in Nottingham speak English as a second language.

In the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Nottingham ranked 11th most deprived district in England out of 317. One third of children and young people live in workless households. Over one-third, 37.8% of the city's pupils, are eligible for free school meals, higher than the England average of 23.5%. The children and young people who live in absolute low-income families is 33.9%, over double the England average of 15.3%.

Families in Nottingham are also battling with the cost-of-living crisis. The Trussell Trust report shows a 37% increase in use of food banks over the last year. In addition, one-fifth of adults reported borrowing more money than a year ago. This was more common amongst renters, people with dependent children and those living in deprived areas.

The data highlight the challenges faced by families and the Early Help workforce. The development of Early Help system wide will help to reduce those challenges and minimise the impact. It will also allow us to build on

areas that we are doing well. Other key statistics about Nottingham's population are illustrated in the diagram. In green is where Nottingham is achieving better outcomes than the national average.



Our vision

Our vision for Nottingham City, taken from Nottingham's Children and Young People's Plan is: *'A city where every child can enjoy their childhood in a warm and supportive environment, free from poverty and safe from harm; a city where every child grows up to achieve their full potential'.*

Our values & practice principles

As a partnership we have developed these values that underpin all our Early Help work and approaches:

1. Children and young people are at the heart of all that we do
2. We will ensure that children, young people, and families can access the right help at the right time
3. We will work with, not do to, children, young people, and families
4. We will listen to, and act on, the views of children, young people, families, and communities



'Support to improve my behaviour before I do something bad'

Practice principles

In Nottingham we have 5 practice principles across our Children's Integrated Service. They are the core values which underpin our practice.



Our priorities



Our five priority areas over the next two years are outlined below:



Priority 1

Embedding a whole system approach to facilitate Early Help being an integral part of a city-wide service

What we aim to do:

- a) Embed the Whole Family Early Help Partnership Assessment and plan into practice across the Early Help Partnership system
- b) Develop an effective case management system so that partners can access relevant information including referrals, intervention plans and case notes
- c) Review the Threshold of Need document and ensure awareness of this document across all partner agencies and ensure all colleagues and partners are clear on the process
- d) Ensure standardised documentation and a shared language is used across the partnership



Priority 2

Partnership working

What we aim to do:

- a) Ensure partners have access to the case management system (Liquid Logic hosted by Nottingham City Council with a clear GDPR policy and processes to ensure children, young people, and families only tell their story once)
- b) Support partner organisations to develop a collective 'Core Offer' of what Early Help Services are available to children, young people, and families across the City with some neighbourhood variations to reflect local needs, acknowledge and celebrate the City's diversity
- c) Develop 'Family Hubs' partnership offer and ensure they have a whole family working offer
- d) Promote information on all services to children, young people, and families, through AskLion, social media and partner organisations whilst developing the new Early Help Partnership/Family Hubs website
- e) Use the lived experience of local children, young people, and families to shape services based on need and developed and delivered through a co-production approach
- f) Develop toolkits using the expertise of the partners to support professionals working with children, young people, and families, and maintain a regularly updated directory of Early Help services



'Knowing where you can go to make friends with other mums'



Priority 3

Partnership workforce development and structure

What we aim to do:

- Ensure the Early Help partnership structure is aligned and effective ensuring ease of access for children, young people, and families.
 - Undertake a language audit to identify gaps and support access for all children, young people, and families (including sign language) through all devices
 - Develop and deliver a partnership-wide workforce induction/ training/refresher package to ensure staff and system leaders are providing a consistent high-quality service
 - Develop a programme of shadowing opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of partners' offer including peer support and mentoring
- Deliver six-monthly multi-agency partner and practitioner events to embed a collaborate approach

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Priority 4

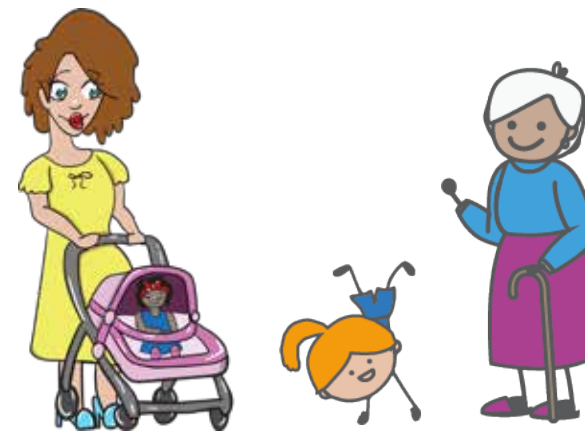
Measure the impact of Early Help

What we aim to do:

- Establish which Early Help Partnership services we want to measure our success against and how these will be measured
- Develop a Quality Assurance Framework with accessible performance dashboards for the workforce to measure success and learning
- Agree Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that deliver tangible benefits to children, young people, and families
- Establish a system to consistently evaluate performance against KPIs to include the voice of children, young people, and families
- Report progress to the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Partnership's (NCSCP), Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) and Business Management Group (BMG) as required



'Supportive, easy to access children's activities and information'





How we will work together

Safeguarding

Nottingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership vision is for effective partnership working to improve safeguarding outcomes for children, young people and families and that children and young people are safe from harm, inside their home, outside their home and on-line.

According to statutory guidance, under section 11, of the Children Act 2004, organisations and agencies have a duty to ensure they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people when carrying out their functions and must show independent scrutiny in doing so. The statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 identifies the core legal requirements, making it clear what individuals, organisations and agencies must and should do to keep children safe.

Nottingham Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed the Threshold of Need document, alongside multi-agency partners, for use by practitioners and their managers in agencies working with babies, children, young people, and families in Nottingham.

The aim of the Threshold of Need document is, *'to determine whether the child and family can be appropriately and safely helped by services providing early intervention and support, or whether the level of need and risk is such that statutory social care involvement is required'*.

The Threshold of Need document sets out four levels of need where support and intervention including Early Help may be needed. The intention is that interventions will be delivered by a range of partners and agencies.



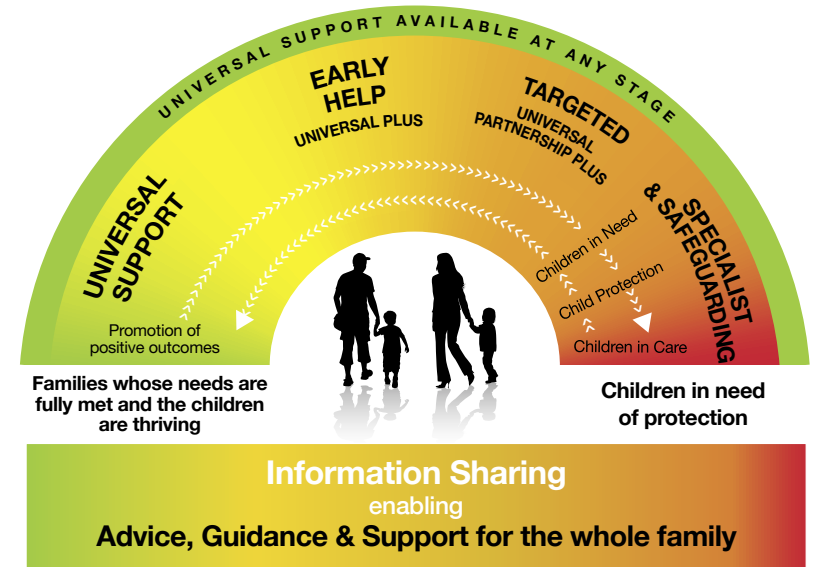
Priority 5

Pool funding and identify sustainability opportunities with the Family Hub and from external funding sources

What we aim to do:

- a) The partnership will seek out joint commissioning opportunities to enable the planning and delivering of services in a holistic, joined-up way
- b) Identify and agree opportunities to pool resources for funding, training, and service delivery
- c) Plan a sustainability strategy for the Early Help Partnership in Nottingham City by March 2025 including utilizing existing funding streams e.g., Family Hubs and Supporting Families
- d) Actively apply for funding to increase Early Help services and collaborate to maximise available funding streams for Early Help work across the partnership
- e) Continue to collectively make the case for continued long-term investment in Early Help and prevention as a valued support for babies, children, young people and families that is also effective and efficient

Universal support	Children, young people, and families are doing well and their needs are met within universal services including health development and achievement.
Early Help	Children, young people, and families are experiencing problems requiring universal services to offer additional support or work together with other support services to prevent problems increasing.
Targeted	Children, young people, and families are experiencing a range of increasing problems that require intensive multi-agency support to meet the needs of the whole family and crisis is likely to be prevented.
Specialist & Safeguarding	Children in Need - Children are 'in need' if they are disabled or unlikely to achieve a reasonable standard of health or development unless services are provided (Children Act 1989). Child Protection - Children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Children in Care & Care Leavers - The family's needs may change over time and their level of support will move between the levels.



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When the needs of children, young people, and families are considered to require Early Help, an Early Help Partnership Assessment is completed with the family to identify their specific needs. This is carried out by the Lead professional within the organisation involved with the family who will coordinate a multi-agency response of support. The Early Help Partnership Pathway is then followed.

Information sharing

As a partnership we will work together to enable effective information sharing solutions to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of individuals and families. We will collaborate to ensure that our collective data and resources are utilised to deliver the best possible outcomes, at the earliest

possible opportunity. Our decision-making will be evidence-led and informed by timely and accurate data. Our vision for information-sharing will be ambitious, forward-thinking, and compliant with relevant legislation.

Training

To ensure a consistent and skilled workforce, all professionals across the partnership will have an individual training plan which will include Whole Family Working, Signs of Safety and Trauma Aware practice. Training will be delivered using a partnership approach to assist in creating a sustainable wider integrated workforce. Additionally, resources to support families will be shared across the partnership.



Governance

The Early Help Partnership Strategic Steering Group is a new group, set up to facilitate the development and delivery of an Early Help partnership strategy for partner services across Nottingham City. The strategy is sponsored by Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership's (NCSCP) Strategic Leadership Group (SLG).

The NCSCP provides the safeguarding arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their safeguarding services and identify and respond to the needs of babies, children and young people in Nottingham.

Accountability for the effectiveness of safeguarding rests with the safeguarding partners through an established SLG. The SLG comprises of those with lead responsibility from each of the safeguarding partners. The SLG set the strategic priorities for the partnership and is chaired on a rotating basis by the partners.

Delivering this strategy will take work together from across partners in the city. The Early Help Partnership Strategic Steering Group will lead this, with a clear plan for how we progress. It will report to the Business Management Group (BMG) on a quarterly basis. The BMG includes senior managers from the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies that have responsibilities for safeguarding. The BMG scrutinizes safeguarding effectiveness and coordinates improvement activity by developing action plans for themed areas of practice. The BMG also monitor performance information and intelligence provided by NCSCP members and maintain an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness and impact of safeguarding work.



**NCSCP
Strategic Leadership Group**

**Business
Management Group**

**Early Help Partnership
Strategic Steering Group**



**‘Someone there to support you
and give you advice’**

Thanks

Thank you to all the partners who attended the workshop and have contributed to the development of this strategy and committed to the ongoing development of Early Help in Nottingham City. These are:

Analysis and Insight, Archway Trust, Behaviour and Emotional Health Team, Blue Bell Hill School, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Change Grow Live, Child Friendly City Team, Children's Integrated Services, City Care, Children's Public Health 0-19 Service, Claremont Primary and Nursery School, Department of Work and Pensions, Early Years, Educational Psychology, Education Welfare Service, Equation, Family Hubs, Family Information Service, Family Intervention Project, Fernwood Academy Trust, Futures for You, Greenwood Trust, Healthy Little Minds, Housing Solutions, Integrated Care Board, Juno Women's Aid, Lead Academy Trust, Maford Academy, Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub, NHS, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Council Housing Services, Nottingham Schools Trust, Nottingham Works for you, Nottinghamshire Police, Nova Education Trust, Positive Business Communications, Public Health, Raleigh Trust, Redhill Trust, Small Steps Big Changes, Targeted Healthy Lifestyle Team, Transform Trust, Special Educational Needs Team, St Ann's Advice Centre, Strategy and Improvement, Targeted Family Support Team, Toy Library, Our Lady of Lourdes Multi-academy Trust, Way2Work, Violence Reduction Partnership, Welbeck Primary School, Youth Services, Youth Justice Service and Whole Life Disability Team

For more information about Early Help in Nottingham please visit our website www.earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk

or email us at info@earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk



About the Partnership

Below is a list of our current partners.

If you would like to join our Early Help Partnership then please email us at info@earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk



Appendix 1 Local statistics

Data shown in **red** is where outcomes for babies, children, young people and families are lower than the national average and where there is more work to be done. **Green** is where Nottingham City is achieving better outcomes than national averages.

Indicator	Year and source	Nottm City/ England
Children in absolute low-income families (under 16s)	2021-22 Office for Health Improvements and Disparities	33.9% /15.3%
Pupils receiving free school meals (FSM)	2022-23 DAISI	37.8% /18.3%
White	2021 Census	65.90%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	2021 Census	14.90%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	2021 Census	10.00%
Other ethnic group	2021 Census	3.30%
Pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL)	2021-22	33.7% /20.5%
Achieved 17 Early Learning Goals	2021-22 DAISI	57.2% /63.4%
Children achieving good level of development in Foundation Stage Profile (FSP)	2021-2022 LAIT data	50.60% / 49.10%
Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils who achieved 12 Good Learning Development Goals (305 pupils)	2021-22 DAISI	14.4% /22.9%

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	2022 DFE	5% /7%
Under 18 years alcohol related hospital admissions rate per 100,000	2018-19 to 2021-2022 LAIT	21.74% / 29.30%
Children Looked After identified as having a substance misuse problem in the year	2021-2022 LAIT data	2.0% /3.0%
Children at risk of Child Criminal (CCE) Exploitation out of 5383 who were assessed	2021-22	232/no data
Referrals to Children's Social Care with no further action	2021-22 LAIT data	4.10% /7.60%
Proportion of offenders that reoffend aged 10-14 years	2020-21 Ministry of Justice	28.6% /28.9%
Number of families (households with at least 1 under 18) currently on the Housing waiting list in Nottingham City	2023 NCC	3675/no data
Households claiming out of work benefits	2023 NOMIS	5.8% /3.8%



Appendix 2 Links to key documents

- ✓ **Nottingham City Council – Strategic Council Plan 2023**
(nottinghamcity.gov.uk)
- ✓ **Nottingham Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold of Needs** (nottinghamcity.gov.uk)
- ✓ **Statutory guidance for the Care Act 2014**
(www.gov.uk)
- ✓ **Children Act 2004** (legislation.gov.uk)
- ✓ **Working together to safeguard children** (www.gov.uk)
- ✓ **Supporting Families Programme guidance 2022 to 2025**
(www.gov.uk)
- ✓ **End of Year Stats - The Trussell Trust**
- ✓ **Start for Life offer Nottingham City Start for Life Offer | AskLion - Nottingham City Directory**
- ✓ **The Children & Young People's Plan**
(nottinghamcity.gov.uk)
- ✓ **Family Hubs and Start for Life programme: local authority guide - GOV.UK**
(www.gov.uk)





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For more information about Early Help in Nottingham please visit our website www.earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk or email us at info@earlyhelpnottingham.org.uk

Supporting Families: 0115 876 3606

Bestwood Family Hub: 0115 876 1890

Broxtowe Family Hub: 0115 876 3888

Meadows Family Hub: 0115 876 1320

Hyson Green Family Hub: 0115 876 3888



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker

Date of meeting		Recommendation/Action	Progress/response	Status
28 September 2023	R	Request that a review is done to assess how the Council can make what it offers to care leavers living outside of the City more equitable.		
28 September 2023	R	Review how the Council actively encourages agency staff to join us on a permanent basis. This could be done through a formal process.		
28 September 2023	R	Investigate how the Council can communicate its services better such as through the use of a newsletter.		
28 September 2023	R	Publish basic information in different languages		
26 October 2023	R	That the Partnership continues to focus on recognising the voice of the child, and ensure that the Council and Partners continue to improve on how they communicate with children with language barriers.	The Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership provide an annual report to the Committee. Members can assess progress made on recommendations at the next annual update.	Complete
26 October 2023	R	That the Partnership continues work to disseminate information and videos to a wider range of organisations outside the partnership.	The Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership provide an annual report to the Committee. Members can assess progress made on recommendations at the next annual update.	Complete
26 October 2023	A	Request an item at a future meeting on alternative education provision of permanently excluded children, as well as the outcomes of the Education Priority Investment Area funding once the funding has ended;	This will be requested as part of the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25.	Complete
26 October 2023	A	Investigate if comparison data is available with other local authorities on demand for the service and share this with Committee members. (Youth Justice).		

A = Action

R = Recommendation

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker

26 October 2023	A	To share the recruitment video shown at the meeting with Councillors so they can share it on their social media platform		
30 November 2023	A	Receive the public first report on school attendance absenteeism		
30 November 2023	A	receive further information on support available for parents travelling with children to school		
30 November 2023	A	receive the new Inclusion Strategy for at Committee for consideration.		
25 January 2024	A	Request that ward Councillors are consulted on budget proposals that impact directly on their ward.		
25 January 2024	A	Request that the Director of Education shares the outcomes of discussions that will take place with schools in the City on the budget proposals.		
25 January 2024	A	Request that Officers provide the Committee with a breakdown of the risks associated with the budget proposals and relevant Equality Impact Assessment.		

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

28 March 2024

Work Programme 2023/24

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's work programme for 2023/24 based on areas of work identified by the Committee at previous committee meetings, the informal meeting of the Committee to scope its work programme for the year ahead and any further suggestions raised at this meeting

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the work that is currently planned for the municipal year 2023/24 and make amendments to this programme as appropriate

3 Background information

- 3.1 The purpose of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is to carry out the statutory overview and scrutiny function in relation to matters affecting children and young people.
- 3.2 The Committee is responsible for setting and managing its own work programme to fulfil this role.
- 3.3 In setting a programme for scrutiny activity, the Committee should aim for an outcome-focused work programme that has clear priorities and a clear link to its roles and responsibilities. The work programme needs to be flexible so that issues which arise as the year progresses can be considered appropriately.
- 3.4 Where there are a number of potential items that could be scrutinised in a given year, consideration of what represents the highest priority or area of risk will assist with work programme planning. The Scrutiny Prioritisation Process has been attached to assist Members on those considerations with the Committee advised to focus on two items per meeting so that due consideration can be given.
- 3.5 The current work programme for the municipal year 2023/24 is attached.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Scrutiny Prioritisation Process
- 4.2 2023/24 Committee Work Programme

- 5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

- 5.1 None

- 6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

- 6.1 Nottingham City Council Constitution

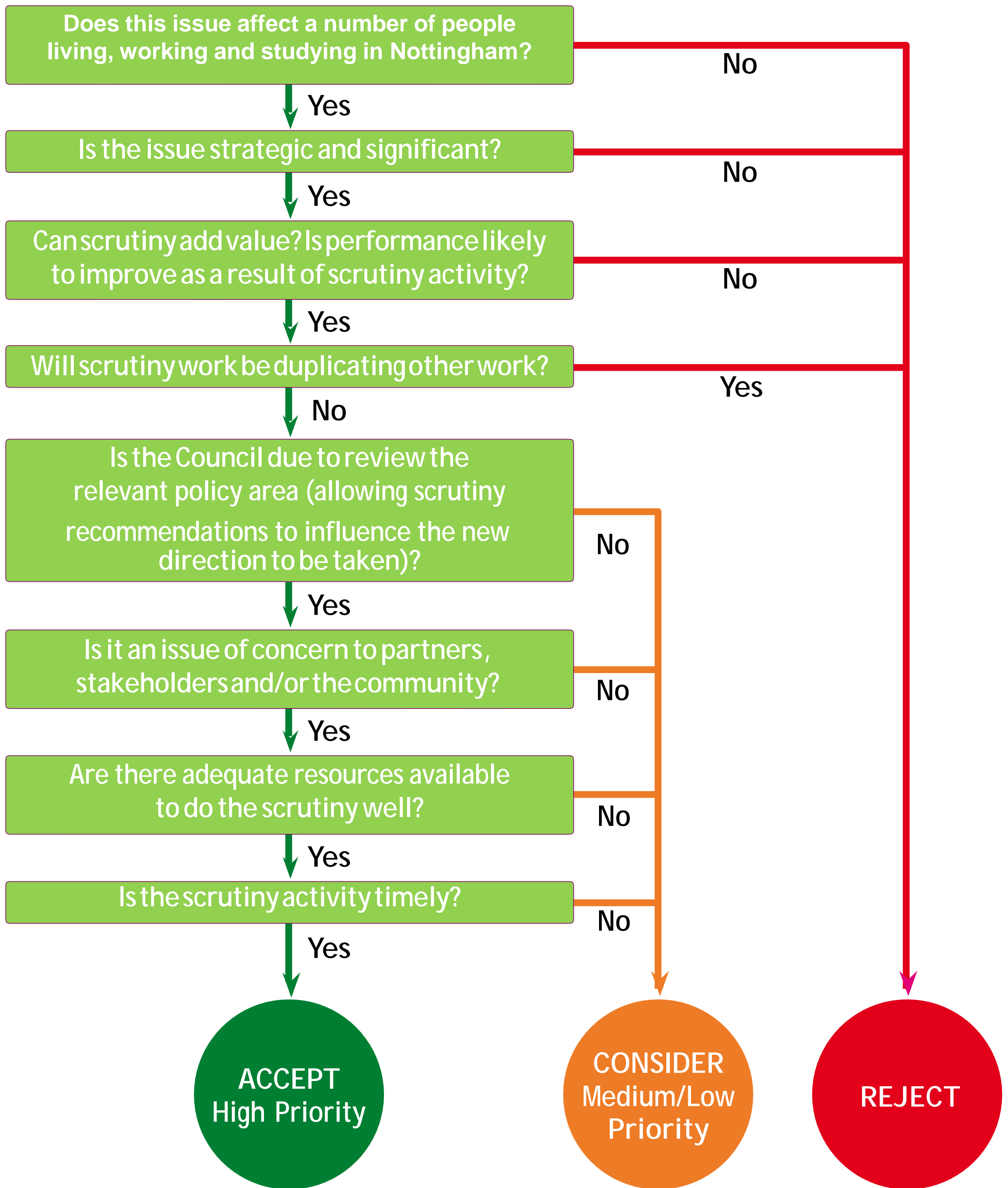
- 7 Wards affected**

- 7.1 NA

- 8 Contact information**

- 8.1 Damon Stanton – Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
damon.stanton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council Scrutiny Prioritisation Process



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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2023/24 Work Programme

Date	Items
<p>28 September</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the improvement journey, including the findings of and response to the second Ofsted monitoring visit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workforce challenges – recruitment and retention • SEND Improvement To scrutinise progress in addressing areas for improvement identified following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Local Area Inspection of SEND Provision in 2021, with a particular focus on communication with parents and families
<p>26 October</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 73</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report To consider the Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child exploitation - Children out of school kept safe • Youth Justice Service To scrutinise response and progress in improving areas identified for improvement following HMIP Inspection in 2020 and Peer Review in 2022. • Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder on progress made on the improvement journey.
<p>30 November</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder on progress made on the improvement journey. • Education Investment Area To hold partners to account for delivery of the action plan
<p>25 January</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the Budget proposals on Children’s Services and Education To scrutinise the proposed budget and its impact on service provisions

Date	Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the improvement journey
28 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Early Help Strategy To assess the impact of the Early Help Strategy and whether it was achieving its intended outcomes • Placement Sufficiency To scrutinise arrangements that ensure that there are sufficient care placements for children • Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder on progress made in the improvement journey
Page 4 5 April CANCELLED	

*Nottingham City Council Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report to be included on every committee work programme, scheduled for the October (or the nearest available) meeting

* Update on PEIA – EST AUG 2024

*Item on support offered to pupils during the cost of living crisis and the impact on mental health. To be added as soon as space permits in the work programme