



Nottingham City Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 15 January 2025

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 13 November 2024
- 4 Impact of the 2025/26 Budget Proposals on Children's Services and Education** 11 - 14
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
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To note the latest responses received to the Committee's recommendations
- 7 Work Programme** 47 - 56
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

If you need any advice on declaring an Interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer shown above, if possible before the day of the meeting.

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Nottingham City Council

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 13 November 2024 from 9.31 am to 12.03 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Fozia Mubashar
Councillor Michael Savage (Chair)
Councillor Adele Williams
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor David Mellen

Absent

Councillor Maria Watson
Councillor Naim Salim

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Cheryl Barnard - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
Elizabeth Browne - Executive Principal for Alternative Education, Raleigh Education Trust
Steve Edwards - Independent Scrutineer
Jennifer Hardy - Project Manager
Neil Langham - Inclusion Manager
Nick Lee - Director of Education Services
Adrian Mann - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
John Matravers - Head of Safeguarding and Partnerships
Ben Osifo - Business Manager, Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership
Damon Stanton - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer

- As the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Naim Salim, was absent, the Vice Chair, Councillor Michael Savage, chaired the meeting.

20 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Naim Salim - unwell
Councillor Maria Watson - personal reasons
Ailsa Barr - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Jill Colbert - Corporate Director for Children and Education Services
Robert Griffin - Assistant Chief Constable, Nottinghamshire Police
Rosa Waddingham - Chief Nurse, NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board

21 Declarations of Interest

None

22 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

23 Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education; John Matravers, Head of Safeguarding and Partnerships; Ben Osifo, Business Manager at the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP); and Steve Edwards, Independent Scrutineer, presented the NCSCP's Annual Report for 2023/24. The following points were raised:

- a) The NCSCP is a statutory partnership between the Council, Nottinghamshire Police and the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to provide the safeguarding arrangements under which partners and agencies work together to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; identify and respond to the needs of children in the City; commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews; and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of these arrangements. The Council and the ICB provide 42% of the SCP's overall funding each, with the remainder contributed by the Police. The SCP is supported by an Independent Scrutineer.
- b) A great deal of work has been done to ensure that the Annual Report is as accessible to children as possible, so they know about the structures that are in place to safeguard them. The NCSCP's priorities have been developed on the basis of direct engagement with and listening to children and their families, working with local communities to provide the services that they need. Although the Council, the Police and the ICB are the statutory partners, the NCSCP emphasises that child safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and works with a wide range of stakeholders and community groups to establish this message. The NCSCP's website has been updated to provide effective and easily accessible safeguarding resources for children, parents and carers.
- c) Overall, there are around 66,000 children in the City, with 34% living with some level of deprivation. The NCSCP's 'Working Together' policy has been updated to ensure that there is a strong layer of leadership across the Partnership to drive the safeguarding agenda, and there is also close engagement with the County Council. A quarterly newsletter is circulated on the development of the Partnership, which provides a helpful overview and enables effective messaging to take place on what the safeguarding outcomes for children have been.
- d) Currently, there is a high number of children who have been excluded from school (189, which represents an increase on previous years) or who are being home-schooled, and there are also increasing numbers within the Youth Justice system, which presents some significant safeguarding challenges. However, the number of children with Child Protection Plans in place has decreased. Ultimately, it is vital that support is delivered to the most vulnerable children as soon as possible, to prevent their reaching a point of crisis. As a result, a substantial level of activity

is carried out with a wide range of partners to identify potential safeguarding issues at an early stage.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- e) The Committee noted that it was extremely disappointed that all members of the Partnership's Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) could not attend and had been unable to send representatives to the meeting to participate in what should have been a full partnership discussion. The Committee also expressed concern regarding the apparent imbalance in the funding of the NCSCP amongst the three statutory partners.
- f) The Committee asked how the NCSCP operated so that it could be easily related to and contacted by a given vulnerable child. It was reported that the NCSCP is developing its service offer in direct consultation with Nottingham children, and that contacts and phone numbers will be made easily available – with close co-production taking place with school partners, as they play a significant role in the delivery of support. The Partnership is taking action to understand the exact needs of children and identify any barriers to access, so that children and their families can feel confident in engaging with formal services.
- g) The Committee noted that, to be most accessible, the NCSCP must have a presence on the social media platforms that the majority of children now use – and that it should also consider the different communications methodologies that may be required to reach both older and younger groups of children.
- h) The Committee was concerned that a substantial number of children in Nottingham appeared to have had some degree of contact with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Hub (MASH). It was explained that the statistics provided represented the overall number of contacts with the MASH – rather than the number of individual children. A needs-led, 'children at the heart' approach is being taken to the establishment of Child Protection Plans, working directly with families to ensure that Social Services provision can focus on the children most in need.
- i) The Committee considered that as much work as possible should be carried out with families to ensure that they are prepared and able to engage with services before a point of crisis is reached.
- j) The Committee asked what the current levels of risk were in terms of child exploitation. It was set out that the Police have a specialist unit in place to tackle this issue, and a concerted level of engagement is underway with individual communities. Activity is being carried out to increase the front-line targeting of perpetrators. Currently, around 65 children are in an exploitation risk management process. An online tool is in place to monitor the potential exploitation risks and the action to be taken. Work is underway to support the recognition of the full range of exploitation and a significant campaign on recognising the signs of exploitation will be launched in March next year. Activity is also being carried out with schools to seek to mitigate against exploitation impacting on children in the process of seeking a school place.

- k) The Committee asked how the Partnership ensured effective safeguarding links and oversight with all partners, particularly schools, religious organisations, community centres and voluntary groups. It was explained that the NCSCP had been carrying out specific outreach with faith groups and their safeguarding leads. The Partnership also engages closely with the Early Years sector, the Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service and other Local Authorities, including the County Council. However, many partner organisations have their own governance structures for safeguarding – though the NCSCP aims to be as open and approachable as possible to support the wider application of best practice.
- l) The Committee asked how many children required close support from services, and what measures the Partnership used to assess the effectiveness of the safeguarding outcomes for children. It was reported that the NCSCP has identified the current primary safeguarding challenges and appropriate datasets are being delivered on measurable outcomes. Around 414 children in Nottingham have a Child Protection Plan, which represents a reduced number on previous years – and this has not led to an increase in the number of Child in Need Plans. It has been possible to reduce the overall level of cases for social workers, so that they are able to focus more closely on the children who are most vulnerable.
- m) The Committee noted that it was vital for the NCSCP to work closely with the Nottingham City Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that there is an effective safeguarding process around vulnerable young people transitioning into adult's services.

The Chair thanked the representatives from the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership and Nottingham City Council for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To request that further information, including statistics, is provided on the current position in relation to child exploitation within the city.**
- 2) To request copies of the audits on Exploitation and Mental Health carried out through joint authority, multi-agency working during 2023/24.**
- 3) To request that the Committee receives a copy of the newsletter informing agencies of the work that the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) does.**
- 4) To write to the NCSCP's Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) to express the Committee's dissatisfaction that they were not able to send representatives to attend the meeting.**
- 5) To write to the Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire Police to urge their organisation to make more of an equitable contribution towards the funding of the vital work of the NCSCP.**

24 Alternative Education Provisions for Permanently Excluded Children

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education; Nick Lee, Director of Education Services; Neil Langham, Inclusion Manager; Jennifer Hardy, Project Manager; and Elizabeth Browne, Executive Principal for Alternative Education at the Raleigh Education Trust, presented a report on the alternative education provision available for children who have been permanently excluded from their school. The following points were raised:

- a) There is a historically high level of permanent exclusion in Nottingham, with averages often 50% higher than the national figure – and the current local levels of exclusion are higher than in recent years. There are 19 Alternative Education Provision settings in the city, with five specialist schools and three Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) – though there is no Key Stage 1 provision for permanently excluded children and the PRUs are experiencing capacity issues. As capacity within the available Alternative Provision is so limited, the Department for Education has approved plans for a new Free School – but this will take time to build and staff. A great deal of work is also being done to identify children at risk of exclusion to provide support at as early a stage as possible.
- b) The Council commissions the Raleigh Education Trust to manage the Alternative Provision and PRU process. An Alternative Provision providers network is in place and it works both to try and slow the rate of exclusions and to provide the best support possible to children in PRUs. Alternative Provision seeks to deliver the full National Curriculum with children on site wherever possible (though there is also Virtual School provision), while working to find appropriate permanent school places. A great deal of work is done to assess individual need and to seek to reduce barriers to learning.
- c) When a child is excluded, Alternative Provision works with the child and their family on a pathway to bring them back into permanent education. Engagement is carried out with the school to learn what needs the child has and the barriers they experienced, to both help identify an appropriate new permanent place and ensure that the right support is provided in the meantime. Oversight structures are in place and reviews are carried out regularly to ensure the quality of provision and that vulnerable children are safe. Teams have been established to support the families of excluded children with the admissions process and work to try and prevent new placement breakdown. Given that many children who are excluded have a high level of need, Safety and Welfare officers are available, alongside Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- d) The Committee asked what strategies were in place to seek to reduce the current rates of school exclusion and ensure that SEND needs were addressed properly. It was reported that work is carried out with schools to ensure that the needs of as many children as possible can be met within mainstream education, and that investment is being made into identifying those needs as early as possible and removing barriers. It is vital that children are found the right placement in the right setting and that the success rate for children returning to mainstream schools is improved. It is important that appropriate additional support for children is maintained with mainstream schooling and that work is done to remove the potential stigma attached to having been within Alternative Provision.

- e) The Committee asked whether there was any significant variation in the number of children being excluded from individual schools across the City. It was explained that the majority of the total exclusions were made by a small number of schools – where the children excluded often had complex needs. A great deal of work is being done to work with schools to try and reduce the number of exclusions. There is a particular focus on the Academy Trusts with the highest exclusion rates, but some choose to not engage with the Council. The overall number of exclusions from secondary schools has decreased slightly, but the number of exclusions from primary schools is now increasing.
- f) The Committee asked how many staff working within Alternative Provision were qualified teachers and how much educational time was provided to children in these settings. It was set out that there are no statutory requirements on the number of qualified teachers in an Alternative Provision setting – but qualified teaching staff are in place to support the children at GCSE level. However, there is a rising trend of exclusions at Year 11 and these children can be very difficult to then place – with limited Alternative Provision for Key Stage 4. Alternative Provision does aim to provide the whole National Curriculum, in addition to delivering additional enrichment activities – with the guidance being for children to have at least 25 hours of teaching per week. A number of children come into Alternative Provision as a result of very limited attendance at school, so close work is carried out with them to bring them up to full-time attendance as quickly as possible.
- g) The Committee asked whether there were Alternative Provision units within mainstream schools and how early intervention was delivered effectively. It was explained that some Alternative Provision was delivered within mainstream schools. The needs of children at risk of exclusion are considered on an individual basis and support can be provided through one-to-one tutoring – though this can be difficult to source. A joint commissioning process is being carried out with the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board to deliver additional support to neurodiverse children and children with mental health conditions, and a great deal of activity is being done to better understand these issues to inform an effective Joint Commissioning Strategy.
- h) The Committee asked how teachers in mainstream schools were trained to deliver an inclusive environment for children with additional needs. It was reported that an Inclusion Manager has been appointed to develop a full Inclusion Strategy, which will have a strong training and continuous professional development element. There is a current focus on seeking to grow training in therapeutic activity in schools, and work is being carried out to assess the future workplace requirements across the city on the basis of a better understanding of children's needs.
- i) The Committee asked how the most vulnerable children (such as those in mental health crisis, those on the edge of a social care intervention and those in care but placed outside Nottingham) were supported. It was set out that there is Virtual School provision for children in care placed outside the city. The Early Help offer for children is under review and a great deal work has been undertaken to ensure

a wide range of representation at the multi-agency panels to ensure that vulnerable children are known to services as quickly as possible.

The Chair thanked the representatives from the Raleigh Education Trust and Nottingham City Council for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To request that a report is provided on what the Council is doing to prevent permanent exclusions from school, and for the comparative figures (including trends between the schools within the city and nationally) to be provided.**
- 2) To request that a report is provided on what work is being done to ensure that Alternative Education Provisions within the city are of a good standard.**
- 3) To invite the Chief Executives of the major Multi-Academy Trusts within the city to a future meeting to discuss the Committee's concerns in relation to permanent exclusions.**

25 Provisions for Children Without a School Place / Fair Access

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education; Nick Lee, Director of Education Services; Neil Langham, Inclusion Manager; and Jennifer Hardy, Project Manager, presented a report on the education access arrangements for children without a school place. The following points were raised:

- a) There is a significant need for in-year school places due to families frequently moving into the Nottingham area, or because of a child needing to move from one school to another. However, most schools are now oversubscribed, so the Council works closely with broad panels of schools to ensure that children admitted in-year are placed in a range of schools across the city. Ultimately, all Local Authorities must then have a Fair Access Protocol in place for children who have been unable to secure a school through the normal admissions process, or who are deemed as 'hard to place'.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- b) The Committee asked what the main drivers were behind the growing number of Fair Access cases, and whether the current upward trend was likely to continue. It was reported that the upward trend in Fair Access cases seems likely to continue, across all school years. Work is underway to expand secondary provision and a strategic approach is being taken to meet the increasing demand for future school places. Predicting the likely level of in-year changes is extremely difficult, but the Council works as closely as possible with schools and the Department for Education (DfE) to seek to ensure that school places are available.
- c) The Committee asked why a large number of children were moving from one city school to another, and queried to what degree changing a school place resulted in

better outcomes for the child. It was explained that around 40% of supported transfers to a new school were considered as being successful – while the outcome of an unsuccessful transfer is often permanent exclusion.

- d) The Committee asked to what degree health and wellbeing needs were being taken into account within the Fair Access Protocol. It was set out there are triggers in place within the Protocol in relation to a child's eligibility to transfer school, and the assessment panels must consider the overall best interests of a child when making supported transfers. The Protocol is being developed to make specific reference to complex and mental health needs, so there is potential for health and wellbeing to also be included. Some children have been excluded from school because of non-attendance arising from a mental health condition, so work is being done to invest in further mental health support and prevention, and reducing the barriers to attendance for children suffering from poor mental health.
- e) The Committee asked how school needs were forecast for individual communities in the City. It was reported that there is a national set formula that must be used to calculate the overall school places requirement for the city area. However, local knowledge is collected and taken into account for assessing school place need at the community level, and is factored into informing decision-making.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, the Director of Education Services, the Inclusion Manager and the Project Manager for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To request that further information is provided on the formula used to determine the provision for school places within the city.**
- 2) To recommend that provision for wellbeing is included in the revised Fair Access Protocol.**

26 Work Programme

The Chair presented the Committee's current Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

15 January 2025

Impacts of the 2025/26 Budget on Children's Services and Education

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise the potential service impacts of the budget proposals that fall within Children's Services and Education.
- 1.2 To note that the overall financial impact of the budget, and the service impact of proposals that fall outside of the remit of this Committee will be scrutinised by the other Scrutiny Committees at their meetings in December / January as these matters fall outside the terms of reference for this Committee.

2 Action required

- 2.1 To discuss the service impact of proposals put forward from the Peoples Directorate concerning Children and Young People Services with the officers and Executive Councillors present, to gather information and draw conclusions.
- 2.2 To provide feedback to the relevant Executive Members.

3 Background information

3.1 The Role of Overview and Scrutiny

All Council's operating Executive Governance arrangements are required to establish Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These Committees act as a check and balance to the power of the Executive, holding decision makers to account for their decisions, reviewing proposals and supporting the development of policy. When operating effectively Overview and Scrutiny supports effective decision making and good governance through processes of supportive but robust challenge and transparent public accountability.

3.2 Scrutiny of the Budget – 2025/26

All Councils are legally required to agree a balanced budget, outlining how resources will be allocated to enable them to deliver their statutory responsibilities within their financial means. The Council continues to face significant budget pressures in future years and uncertainty, including the continuing level of support from Central Government, over the medium term. Due to an increased demand for services councils continue to operate in a challenging resource environment where changes to demands on services can lead to material budget variances.

3.3 In Nottingham, proposals have been drawn up by the Council's Executive Councillors and Senior Officers. At its meeting on 17 December 2024, Executive Board agreed to put these proposals to the public with a formal consultation process for those proposals requiring it.

3.4 Scrutiny of the Impact of Individual Proposals

This Committee is responsible for scrutinising the service impact of individual proposals put forward from the Peoples Directorate concerning Children and Young People Services. Matters to consider could include:

- a) What impacts the proposals will have on service users / citizens and how these impacts might be mitigated.
- b) How effectively equalities have been considered as part of the proposals.
- c) The robustness of the proposals.
- d) The impact proposals may have on each other.

Any comments or feedback should be fed back to the Executive Member.

3.5 As part of building on the existing Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) approved at Full Council on 04 March 2024, at its meeting on 25 January 2024, the Committee considered the 2024/2025 savings proposals which affected Children and Young People services and provided feedback to the Executive Member. The Committee further requested an item as part of its Work Programme for this municipal year that covered the impacts of the 2025/26 proposals. £2 million in savings are proposed to Children's Integrated services over the 2025-2029 period.

3.6 The service impact of the individual proposals put forward from the Council's other directorates will be scrutinised by the four other Overview and Scrutiny Committees at their meetings in December/January with comments fed back to the relevant Executive Members. In addition, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, as the Scrutiny Committee responsible for finance, will provide feedback to the Executive on the overall budget once proposals have been finalised at its meeting in February. These matters fall outside of the Terms of Reference for this Committee and should not form part of the considerations at this meeting.

4 List of attached information

4.1 None.

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 [Budget Savings 2025/26 -2028/29 Report considered by Executive Board on 17 December 2024.](#)
- 6.2 [2024/25 Budget and Council Tax Resolution Report considered by City Council on 04 March 2024.](#)
- 6.3 [Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, 25 January 2024.](#)

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

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

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**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
15 January 2025**

Children's Services Improvement

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise progress in improving outcomes for children and young people through delivery of the Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan and subsequent Ofsted Monitoring Visits.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked if it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the approach to, or progress in improvement of Children's Services.

3 Background information

- 3.1 In November 2022, the Committee considered the findings of the inspection of children's services carried out by Ofsted in July 2022, and the action being taken and proposed to be taken to address the arising issues. The Council has been judged to be 'Requires improvement to be good' in the domains of the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families and the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers; and 'Inadequate' in the domain of experiences and progress of children who need help and protection. As a result, the overall outcome of the inspection judgement was 'Inadequate' and Ofsted identified eight specific areas for improvement. At that time the Committee was assured that work had already started on addressing the issues raised by Ofsted, alongside reviewing its pre-existing Improvement Plan to ensure that it reflects the specific areas identified for improvement by Ofsted as well as wider development of the Service.
- 3.2 In January 2023, the Committee reviewed the development and delivery of the Improvement Plan, including speaking to the Independent Advisor appointed by the Department for Education to provide support and challenge who is the Chair of the Improvement Board. He expressed the view that the Corporate Director, Director and Portfolio Holder have a real grip of the issues that need addressing and that a lot had already been achieved in relation to the 'front door' to services, but that there was more to do, for example in relation issues of consent and ensuring consistent thresholds across the service. The Committee was informed that the most significant risk to delivery of the Improvement Plan was workforce.
- 3.3 The Committee also received a detailed update on progress in addressing the issues relating to the 'front door' to services (the

multiagency safeguarding hub [MASH] and duty and assessment services). At that time the Committee commented that this update was well evidenced and reassuring.

- 3.4 In March 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools updated the Committee on progress and the first Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 28 February and 1 March. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.5 In September 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the second Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 25 and 26 July 2023. The visit focussed on children in need and children with a Child Protection Plan in place. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.6 In January 2024, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the third Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 22 and 23 November 2023. The visit focussed on care leavers aged 18 to 25. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.7 In May 2024, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the fourth Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 3 and 4 April 2024. The visit focussed on support to children in care (planning and achieving permanence). The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.8 In September 2024, the Executive Member for Children, Young People, and Education updated the Committee on progress and the fifth monitoring visit that took place between 31 July and 01 August 2024. The visit focused on the Front Door (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Duty and Emergency Duty Team (EDT)). The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee Members.
- 3.9 The sixth Ofsted Monitoring Visit took place between 12 and 13 November 2024, focusing on the support to children in care, with a focus on care planning and achieving permanence. The report from the directorate and Ofsted letter summarising the outcomes of the visit follow this report.
- 3.10 Typically, Ofsted only undertake six monitoring visits (although the inspection framework allows for seven visits) and so the Council anticipates that this will be the final visit prior to a full inspection during the second half of 2025.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Children's Services Improvement Report from the Directorate.
- 4.2 Monitoring Visit to Nottingham City Children's Services November 2024.
- 4.3 Inspection of Nottingham City Local Authority Children's Services 2022.

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 Ofsted inspection of Nottingham City Local Authority children's services July 2022.
- 6.2 Ofsted Monitoring Visits February/March 2023, July 2023, November 2023, April 2024, July/August 2024, and November 2024.
- 6.3 Reports to, and minutes of, meetings of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 03 November 2022, 26 January 2023, 30 March 2023, 28 September 2023, 25 January 2024, 15 May 2024, and 11 September 2024.

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
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Meeting Title	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Ofsted monitoring visit
Meeting Date	15 th January 2024

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Sarah Nardone, Interim Corporate Director for Children and Education Services Ailsa Barr, Director for Children’s Integrated Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Ailsa Barr, Director for Children’s Integrated Services

Summary of issues:
This report provides an update of the progress of the Children’s Integrated Services improvement and transformation journey since the inadequate judgement following the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) in July 2022.
Recommendation(s):
1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee consider the findings of the final Ofsted Monitoring Visit in November 2024.
2. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the progress made and the next steps
3. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee confirm its commitment to improving Children’s Services and its ambition for Nottingham Children’s Services to be delivering consistently good social care services to children and young people

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Committee will be aware that Nottingham City Children’s Services last full inspection was in July 2022 where the overall assessment was that the service was delivering inadequate services, this resulted in a formal notice of improvement being issued to the council by the Department for Education and an independent improvement advisor being appointed to chair the improvement board which was established to oversee the delivery of the improvement plan.
- 1.2 In addition to the improvement board and work being delivered by the service to support improvement work Ofsted have carried out regular monitoring visits. These are 2 day ‘inspection’ visits focused on different areas of service delivery, these visits are not graded but instead the inspectors prepare a letter which is sent to the Statutory Director of Children’s Services and published on the Ofsted website.
- 1.3 As part of the ongoing monitoring of improvement of Nottingham Children’s Services Ofsted undertook their sixth monitoring visit on 12th and 13th November. Typically, Ofsted only undertake six monitoring visits (although the inspection framework allows for seven visits) and so we anticipate that this will be the final visit prior to a full inspection during the second half of 2025. The monitoring visit was undertaken by 2

inspectors, Margaret Burke, who has been the lead inspector for most of the monitoring visits, and Rachel Griffiths who was part of the full inspection team in 2022. A copy of the letter outlining the details of the visit and findings is attached at appendix 1.

2. Focus and headline findings

2.1 This monitoring visit reviewed the support to children in care, with a focus on care planning and achieving permanence.

2.2 Areas Covered:

- Quality of children's assessments, plans, and reviews.
- Quality of visits and work with children.
- Support for children in care and their carers.
- Management oversight and supervision.
- Stability and sustainability of the workforce.
- Performance and quality assurance oversight.

2.3 Headline Findings:

- **Progress:** Nottingham City Council has made sustained progress despite financial pressures and leadership changes.
- **Leadership:** A new permanent director of children's services has been appointed, and senior management positions are now permanently filled. There was some specific positive feedback about the newly appointed Head of Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers from both the workforce and the inspectors.
- **Children in Care:** Children enter care when necessary, but there are issues with the quality and timeliness of assessments and care plans.
- **Permanence Planning:** Effective for adoption but less so for other forms of permanence. Delays in progressing permanence decisions for children in foster care.
- **Workforce Stability:** Improved stability and reduced caseloads for social workers, leading to better support for children.
- **Quality Assurance:** Comprehensive and well-developed systems in place, the inspectors were complementary about the quality of our audit tools, but we need to do more work to ensure the impact of audit work leads to improvements in children's experiences.

2.4 Challenges:

- **Variable Quality:** Assessments and plans for children in care are inconsistent.
- **Delays:** In progressing permanence plans and discharging care orders.
- **Sufficiency Issues:** Some children are placed in residential homes as opposed to foster homes due to sufficiency of placement options.

2.5 Positive Developments:

- **Adoption:** Effective planning and support for children with adoption plans.
- **Support for Children:** Regular visits by social workers, support for hobbies and activities, and good support from schools.

3. Next steps

- 3.1 Ofsted have indicated that although the inspection framework allows for a seventh monitoring visit, they do not intend to undertake a seventh monitoring visit, instead they plan to progress to full inspection during 2025. We would anticipate this visit from July 2025 onwards.
- 3.2 Since the monitoring visit our Corporate Director, Jill Colbert, has resigned. Sarah Nardone has been seconded into the role of Interim Corporate Director. There is continuity of a permanent Director of Children's Integrated Services with additional leadership capacity from an Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services alongside, to continue to support the improvement work. There is a permanent group of Heads of Service which means that the service can continue to progress essential improvement work whilst permanent recruitment decisions are made regarding the Corporate Director role.
- 3.3 In support of our overall improvement work we continue to work closely with Lincolnshire who are providing sector led improvement work with the service. This work is progressing and enabling effective diagnostic work which is supporting the development and progression of actions to address areas of improvement as well as building on areas of emerging strength.

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12 December 2024

Jill Colbert
Corporate Director for Children and Education Services
Nottingham City Council
Loxley House
Station Street
Nottingham
NG2 3NG

Dear Jill

Monitoring visit to Nottingham City children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Nottingham City children's services on 12 and 13 November 2024. This was the sixth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in July 2022. His Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Margaret Burke and Rachel Griffiths.

Areas covered by the visit

Inspectors revisited the areas covered in the monitoring visit carried out in April 2024 and reviewed the progress made in support to children in care planning and achieving permanence since the last inspection. Inspectors focused on:

- The quality of children's assessments, plans and reviews.
- The quality of visits and work with children.
- Where children in care live and the support they and their carers receive.
- The quality of management oversight and supervision.
- Stability and sustainability of the children in care service workforce, including the impact of current caseloads on practice.
- Performance and quality assurance oversight of senior leaders.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework.

Headline findings

Since the last inspection visit, Nottingham City Council has continued to make strides in its children's services improvement journey. Progress has been sustained against the backdrop of severe financial pressures, changes in leadership and continuous external scrutiny of the council. Children's services now have a new permanent

director of children's services (DCS), with leadership no longer spread across children's and adult services. The capacity of the senior management team has been increased and all the senior leadership and team management posts within the children in care service are now permanently filled. The process of appointing new leaders has inevitably impacted the pace of change. While the progress made to support children in care planning and achieving permanence in some areas has been slow, it is evident that plans which have previously stalled are now accelerating.

Findings and evaluation of progress

Children enter care when it is in their best interest and all other options to ensure their safety and care have been considered. Many children remain with their parents or family members on interim care orders while assessments are completed. For some children, the court's decisions have been impacted by the lack of suitable foster placements available to meet children's needs.

A significant proportion of children who have entered care in the last six months have previously been in care. A consistent theme for these children is that the earlier assessments have concentrated on the parents' needs and ability to provide safe care without sufficient attention paid to understanding children's experiences and the impact on them of living within such households. Most of these children have re-entered care following a crisis incident. The emotional distress and anxieties are compounded for many of these children as they are further traumatised by a move to carers who are very often different from their first set of carers.

The quality and impact of assessments for children in care remains too variable. Some provide a fair overview of children's needs, but others are based on too limited interactions with the child to understand their individual needs or the impact of their earlier life experiences. For many assessments, large sections of information are cut and pasted from previous documents. Assessments for children in care are not routinely updated. Leaders have focused the workforce on improving the quality of assessments and plans and management oversight of casework to ensure the quality of information in these documents makes them purposeful for children and they support the plans for them.

Child in care reviews take place within statutory timescales and they are attended by the relevant people involved in the child's life. Minutes and recommendations of the reviews are not routinely uploaded onto the child's case file in a timely way to help the social worker in the updating of care plans. Reviews are not routinely held following a change in the care plan or placement change. As a result, children in these situations are not always best supported with an up-to-date and relevant care plan with actions which make it clear who will support the child moving forward.

There is increasing evidence of independent reviewing officers (IROs) tracking actions to ensure that children's plans are progressed. Some IROs regularly review children's plans, seeking updates from social workers, conducting visits to children

and providing additional management oversight of case records. However, not all IROs are diligent in providing this scrutiny on case records or in visiting children.

Permanence planning for children with a plan for adoption is effective. Younger children are usually matched with adopters promptly and at the right time for them. Persistent efforts are made to successfully identify adopters for older children and those with additional/complex needs. Skilful direct work with children with adoption plans has helped to ease their transition into their adoptive placement. Children with a plan for adoption also benefit from impressive life-story work to help them to understand their early life experiences and journey to permanence.

When children have permanency plans that are other than adoption, these are not as effectively progressed. Too many young children live in children's homes, and while this may be appropriate for some, for others, this is due to the lack of suitable foster homes. The management rationale for placing children in such placements is not evident in records. For some of these young children their plan for permanence is ambiguous; they often have dual permanence plans of long-term residential care and long-term foster care. These plans are not always based on an up-to-date assessment or thorough consideration of all possible options.

Most children in long-term foster care are thriving, having been living in the same, stable placement for many years. For these children, they have the certainty of being matched to their carers who are providing them with high standards of care and support. However, too many children in foster care still experience delay in professionals progressing permanence decisions. For some children, this is simply a delay in formally ratifying and notifying them of the decision to remain with their carers, leaving children without the assurance that they can remain with their foster carers.

Children in care assessments and plans do not focus enough on progressing permanency in a timely way. IROs are not consistently prompting timely permanency planning for all children in care. Case supervision discussions do not drive children's permanence plans effectively. Leaders have recently strengthened management oversight and the tracking of permanency planning where the plan is not one of adoption, but it is too soon to see the impact of this.

Most social workers visit children regularly and in line with their needs, and for those children who have had a consistent social worker, they build positive relationships with them. However, despite the increasing stability in the workforce, some children are still experiencing too many changes of worker. During visits, social workers see children alone and check that their carers provide suitable care, and that the home provides safe and appropriate space for them. Direct work is evident in the work with some children, conducted by both social workers and family support workers, but this is not consistently undertaken for all children. Some children benefit from support provided by the children in care child and adolescent mental health service in-house specialist support team. This team provides effective interventions which help children to understand their life experiences. Leaders have raised expectations

for the completion of direct work and life-story work for those children who are not placed for adoption. They recognise that there is more to do to ensure that all children receive support in a timely way to help them make sense of their early and ongoing life experiences.

Children's family time is encouraged and supported. Efforts are made to ensure that children maintain contact with family members and that these visits take place in a safe way. Children are also supported to understand pressures in family relationships and family time sessions are supervised where required.

Children in care have the opportunity to participate in a range of sporting and other activities that enrich their experiences. Hobbies are promoted, and children are encouraged by their carers and professionals to achieve and develop emotionally, socially and educationally. The social workers and the children who spoke to inspectors report that children are well supported by their schools, with additional support brokered by the virtual school.

A small number of children remain in care for longer than necessary. Some foster carers with children placed with them long-term are often unwilling to consider a special guardianship order (SGO) due to concerns about the level of support they will receive. Leaders are aware that there is a need to communicate a consistent offer of support more clearly to carers in these situations. They are actively working on producing guidance that will make it clear what support is available to both SGO and kinship carers.

For children in care who are on full care orders but are now living safely with their parents, the progress in securing the discharge of the care order is often slow and delayed. Placement with parent reports are not routinely completed or updated within required timescales. Oversight at team manager and IRO level has not secured the progression of this work. Very recent senior management oversight of this group of children has resulted in more concrete plans to secure legal agreement to end some of these care arrangements, but for some children even with these new timescales they still remain in care much longer than necessary.

Sufficiency challenges have resulted in Nottingham City's continued use of unregistered children's homes. Leaders have strengthened systems to oversee the safety and welfare of these children, and children are visited regularly by social workers and their IROs. A weekly panel, chaired by the service director, reviews the safety and planning for these children.

Comprehensive quality assurance systems and a well-developed auditing framework provide leaders and practitioners with a clear picture of the quality of practice. Learning from quality assurance activity is embedded, closing the loop to make effective improvements. The amount of good work seen is increasing but leaders know that they are still appropriately judging the majority of practice as requiring improvement. Leaders also recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that audits are achieving the balance between compliance and quality, and to ensure that

the auditing process consistently results in improving children's individual experiences.

The workforce in the children in care and fieldwork services continues to stabilise, and children are now experiencing fewer changes in social workers. Social workers' caseloads continue to reduce, allowing workers time to embed improved practice standards and expectations. Workers are positive about working in Nottingham. They report the benefits of having more stable teams and say that they are feeling well supported by managers at every level. The new children in care head of service is having a positive impact on the changing culture and in the optimism in the trajectory in the journey of change. Some workers have returned to work for Nottingham City after hearing about the changes in the service.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Burke
His Majesty's Inspector

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Inspection of Nottingham City local authority children's services

Inspection date: 11 – 22 July 2022

Lead inspector: Andy Waugh, Her Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

Services for children who need help and protection are inadequate because there are serious failures, leaving children at continued risk of harm when they are first presented as in need of support.

In February 2020, a focused visit found there were areas for priority action in Nottingham around support for children with child protection or child-in-need plans. Since that visit, progress has been slow and uneven, hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the tragic death of a senior manager. There has been some improvement in the areas identified for priority action, although practice remains too inconsistent. Other services have deteriorated, particularly responses when children are first presented as potentially in need of help and protection. These services are too slow to identify and respond to risks of harm to children. Management oversight and supervision remains inconsistent and is not supporting social workers effectively. There has been a high level of staff turnover for children in care. Children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless do not always have their needs met by the local authority.

In the last six months, a new senior management team has been established for children's social care. This team has a sound understanding of the challenges it faces and has already delivered some improvements and positive culture shifts. Senior management oversight of vulnerable children has been strengthened through a

range of panels and monitoring systems. A quality assurance framework is embedded across the service, with an understanding of what constitutes good practice. Early permanence for children through adoption is a significant area of improvement. The recruitment and retention of workers is being appropriately prioritised.

What needs to improve?

- Effectiveness and timeliness of responses to children’s needs when first presented to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).
- Management oversight and direction of front-line work and the local authority designated officer (LADO).
- Social work capacity, so that social workers and first-line managers can respond effectively to children in need of help and protection, and that children in care have greater consistency of social worker.
- Placement sufficiency for children in care and those with complex needs.
- The service response to care leavers aged 21 and over.
- The service response to young people who are aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless.
- The quality and timeliness of return home interviews.
- Oversight of children missing from education and those who are electively home educated.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: inadequate

1. Weaknesses in the MASH are significant, widespread and systemic. Risk of harm is not always recognised, leaving too many children with insufficient protection. Some children who have met the threshold for social care intervention wait up to six weeks to be seen by a social worker. The majority of contacts in the MASH are delayed and not processed within timescales appropriate to the risks and needs of children.
2. Management oversight is not effective when applying thresholds to safeguard children, and it is not providing social workers with direction or overseeing how quickly contacts are progressed. However, once children are allocated, most social workers understand thresholds well and apply them appropriately for the majority of children.
3. Parental consent is not consistently obtained by partners in order to allow safeguarding information about children to be shared. Complicated systems in the MASH contribute to delays because partners do not respond to social workers’ requests for information in a timely way. For some children, this takes up to 16 days. A significant number of children experience repeated contacts and referrals before they get the help they need.

4. Where allegations of significant harm are first presented, decision-making within the MASH is not as timely as it needs to be, leaving some children in situations where they are at continued risk of harm and without safety plans.
5. The emergency duty service social workers do not have consistent management oversight and supervision. Social workers mostly respond effectively to the needs of children out of hours, but on occasions lack professional curiosity in order to ensure children are protected.
6. Most children and their families benefit from a comprehensive offer of early help services. However, not all children receive early help support at the right time, with many waiting too long for targeted support. Managers are not consistent in applying thresholds for children to step up and down between early help and children's social care.
7. Despite the delays in transferring from the MASH to duty teams, when children are allocated a social worker, strategy discussions take place when required and assessments are completed in a timely way. Strategy discussions are well recorded, with the right thresholds applied. Multi-agency discussion leads to effective information-sharing and analysis of risk. This includes consideration of family history and the next steps for intervention.
8. Most children are visited at levels relating to need. Outcomes following Section 47 enquiries are appropriate, leading to decisions and actions that reduce risks and ensure children are protected. Safety planning takes place for most children.
9. The majority of assessments have a clear purpose and rationale for intervention. Assessments address the risks and concerns and explore the impact for children. Direct work provides valuable insights into children's experiences. Where children are part of a large family, they are considered individually. Parents' views and family history are understood. Analysis of all the information addresses the concerns and risks and informs what needs to change. For some children, the neglect toolkit informs assessments. However, it does not always result in an overall analysis or contribute to actions.
10. The threshold decisions to proceed to the initial child protection conference are appropriate. Partner agencies contribute to analysis of risk, resulting in a clear rationale for decisions. Most plans are comprehensive, with immediate actions to improve children's circumstances, and are consistently reviewed and updated at core groups.
11. For children who are supported through child-in-need planning, where concerns are escalating, child protection enquiries are appropriately initiated. Children's needs are well considered in child-in-need and child protection plans. These plans include wishes and feelings, and they are written so that the child can understand them. Families have a clear understanding of the support they will receive and how it needs to be sustained. Most plans are reviewed within timescales. However, for some children, delays in circulating initial plans and meeting minutes impact on the new plans being progressed in a timely way.

12. Arrangements to manage allegations against professionals by the designated officer are overcomplicated. The service has an area of vulnerability because non-social work qualified staff are involved in gathering information in respect of child protection referrals in a complex and specialist area of safeguarding. This is further compounded by an absence of management oversight and effective tracking of referrals.
13. The overall quality and frequency of supervision is variable in duty and fieldwork teams. Team managers provide oversight and guidance at the point of allocation. However, for some children, written records are copied from previous supervision sessions, with no reflection on children's circumstances. Actions lack timescales to monitor progress and effectiveness of assessment. Where supervision is better, it is more reflective, detailed and focused on the needs and experiences of children.
14. When children's lives are not improving, children benefit from early authoritative decisions to escalate into pre-proceeding and care proceedings. Senior managers ensure effective review of the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline (PLO) through panels, which provides tight tracking to minimise drift and delay for children. Letters before proceedings are mostly clear and identify effectively the individual risks to children, as well as their needs.
15. Social workers establish positive working relationships with children and their families and have a good understanding of their needs. They are persistent when engaging parents to build relationships, which enables better participation with plans and improved outcomes for children. Social workers are skilled at gathering the views of children, using a range of age-appropriate tools.
16. The daily domestic abuse triage meeting is well attended by most partners, enabling effective information-sharing and prompt decision-making in respect of next steps. This ensures clear direction as to what needs to happen immediately in order to safeguard children. However, the absence of information from midwifery and schools prevents a full assessment in respect of some children.
17. Workers in the whole life disability team are committed to the children they work with. Child protection work is effective in making disabled children safer and improving their circumstances through multi-agency working, including regular core groups which monitor the progress of the child.
18. Arrangements for children who are privately fostered are managed effectively. Once in placement, children are visited regularly. A dedicated panel provides effective oversight of privately fostered children. This ensures that children continue to live with carers who can meet their needs.
19. Children who are aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless are not consistently provided with appropriate advice or options. Once children have been assessed, there is a lack of urgency from both the social housing provider and the local

authority in providing suitable accommodation that meets their needs. This lack of accommodation increases some children’s existing vulnerabilities.

20. Children who are at risk from criminal and sexual exploitation receive detailed assessments in which risk factors are identified and effective analysis of the impact of criminal and sexual exploitation on young people and their families is provided. Multi-agency meetings and subsequent planning lead to plans that effectively reduce risks to children. Plans are reviewed regularly, with actions being updated in recognition of changes in children’s circumstances. For some older children who are at risk of exploitation, there are issues of placement sufficiency, which has an impact on the ability of workers to keep them safe. This means that some children are left too long in situations when they have been assessed as needing to enter care.
21. For children who have been missing, return home interviews are not held consistently, or in good time. Return home interviews have often been recorded without sufficient analysis of the circumstances and with outcomes that are not specific to the child. Hence, return home interviews do not contribute effectively to children’s safety plans. Children currently do not have access to a wide range of adults who they can relate to and share their experiences.
22. The local authority does not have suitable oversight for all children who are missing from education. Staff are unclear about the whereabouts of young people when attending part-time timetables. There has been a significant rise in the numbers of children being electively home educated, and the local authority has oversight of all these children. However, for some children, risks are not fully understood because safeguarding is not routinely considered when completing assessments.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: requires improvement to be good

23. Most children only come into care when it is necessary and in a timely way. For others, however, there has been some delay, meaning that some children had been living in neglectful circumstances for too long.
24. When children are unable to live with their parents or wider family or friends, alternative permanence options are considered concurrently. As a result, children who require permanence through adoption are being matched more quickly than they previously were. Brothers and sisters have been successfully adopted together, and the use of fostering for adoption placements has given some babies stability and security from the earliest opportunity. Sensitive direct work with children and their prospective adopters is helping to ensure positive and smooth transitions to permanence. Some children also achieve permanence through long-term fostering. These children are receiving consistent care from committed carers, and they are experiencing the quality of support as they would from a good parent.

25. Some children are living with their parents under care orders, where there has been drift in planning for the discharging of care orders. Consequently, children have been living with statutory intervention and with a level of uncertainty about their future for too long.
26. Too many children in care have experienced too many changes of social workers, including times when they are visited by duty workers. This has affected children's opportunities to form trusting relationships with their social worker and complete meaningful direct work. Some children have been able to develop positive and trusting relationships when their social worker has remained consistent.
27. Too many children who are in long-term foster homes do not have an up-to-date assessment of their needs, thus hindering effective planning to ensure that children are receiving the right support at the right time. There is not sufficient life-story work being undertaken with children who do not have an adoption plan to help them to understand their journey into care, develop their sense of identity or help them to feel proud of who they are.
28. The review of children's plans mostly takes place within statutory timescales, and minutes are sensitively written to children to help them understand the outcomes and plans. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) do not consistently monitor children's circumstances in between reviews. Escalation processes are currently not effective in demonstrating impact or positive change for children because of concerns raised by the IROs.
29. Family time is carefully considered, and takes place based on children's views and an analysis of risk. Children are supported to take part in a range of leisure and social activities. Children told inspectors about the range of fun activities and social experiences they enjoy while living in their foster placements, which have enhanced their confidence and self-esteem.
30. The virtual school is ambitious in ensuring that most children in care make good educational progress at school or other provision. Most children achieve well relative to their starting points. The virtual school works in close partnership with schools to ensure that vulnerable children receive the right provision. For a small number of children, learning takes place full-time in unregistered provision. Sometimes, low levels of attendance are not prioritised as concerns and the voice of the child is not captured fully enough.
31. The emotional and mental health needs of children in care are appropriately met in Nottingham. Many children in care and their carers are benefiting from both direct support and consultation to help improve their emotional and mental well-being.
32. The help and support provided to children in care who go missing and who are at risk of exploitation is variable and is impacted by the quality and consistency of social workers relationships with children. In stronger work, multi-agency

packages of support are safeguarding children effectively. For some children, when practice is weaker, there is a lack of clarity in respect of safety planning and a lack of opportunity to learn and plan from return home interviews.

33. Support for children who arrived in the UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) is tailored, supportive and recognises their need for a range of practical and emotional support. This includes a specific looked after children's nurse to support UASC.
34. Most children in care live in stable placements that meet their needs. There are sufficiency challenges, particularly for children with the most complex needs. This has resulted in a small number of children under 16 living in unsuitable and unregistered children's homes while placement searches continue. These placements are unlawful. Senior leaders are aware of these children and maintain effective oversight.
35. High staff turnover in the fostering service has impacted on the quality of work, resulting in foster carers having limited training opportunities and inconsistent support from supervising social workers. There is a shortfall in the number of foster carers being recruited, which affects the local authority's ability to be able to provide care for children within the local area.
36. There is effective working together with the regional adoption agency (Adoption East Midlands), which enables effective matching of children to adopters. Adopters are provided with the required training throughout their adoption journey, and post-adoption support is organised and specific to individual need. Adopters are provided with life-story books, which will help them and their children to understand their adoption journey.
37. The Children in Care Council provides some children and care leavers with an opportunity to share their views on services they receive. However, the council is underdeveloped, with only nine children attending regularly. This limits the capacity for children and young people to influence service development and co-production in Nottingham city.
38. Care leavers are allocated a personal adviser (PA) six months before they reach the age of 18, enabling them to begin to build a relationship before they leave care. Care leavers, some of whom have complex needs, are reassured when they transition into adulthood that there is a trusted person who can help and to whom they can turn, if needed. Most care leavers benefit from long-standing relationships with dedicated PAs who establish enduring relationships with them.
39. The majority of care leavers are informed of their rights and entitlements. The offer of support and entitlements are outlined for care leavers, although it has not been updated since 2018. The local offer does not confirm the statutory requirement to provide a PA to support care leavers post-21 years of age. The

local authority is not consistently fulfilling its duty to care leavers post-21 years of age.

40. Risk assessments for care leavers are not consistently reviewed. Some PAs are managing high-risk situations without the benefit of regular supervision, or appropriate staff care, including lone worker health and safety risk assessments.
41. Pathway plans are regularly updated. A new pathway plan template enables the engagement of care leavers in planning next steps, but this is not consistently happening. Some pathway plans are, therefore, completed without the benefit of co-production, and sometimes language lacks sensitivity and empathy.
42. Care leavers are supported to access accommodation that meets their needs. A significant number are benefiting from living in staying-put arrangements. Managers work closely with the housing department, providing appropriate identity documents to create accounts for care leavers to bid for, and, where necessary, they are facilitating direct housing offers. Care leavers can move into their own tenancies; if they encounter challenges, they are supported to return to semi-independent provision, allowing them access to further support.
43. Some care leavers are successfully undertaking university courses. The care leavers team works closely with specialist employment officers to enable care leavers to meet with local employers to discuss their futures. The processes to support young care leavers in post-16 education are inconsistent. For many, the review of their personal education plans does not happen frequently enough, including for those most vulnerable to not being in education, employment or training.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: requires improvement to be good

44. In response to the areas for priority action identified in the focused visit in February 2020, leaders and senior managers developed a service-wide improvement plan as well as a plan to manage the subsequent pandemic. The service and its members then experienced the impact of the sad passing of their Director of Children's Integrated Services (DCIS). Corporately, the local authority also faced significant financial challenges with the council, being the subject of a section 114 notice (Local Government Finance Act 1988) in December 2021. Within this challenging context, slow progress was made against the areas for priority action and, while some services improved, others deteriorated.
45. A new, knowledgeable DCIS, along with a committed new leadership team, is beginning to have a greater impact on practice. There is clarity on the expectations of all staff, and leaders are developing a culture that promotes good practice through high support and high challenge. However, the scale of required improvements remains substantial, and the pace of change needs to

quicken for all areas of the service to provide safe and consistently good services for children.

46. In November 2021, significant shortfalls were identified in the MASH following a diagnostic report. Backlogs in the system meant that children's needs had not been responded to for significant periods of time, and some children were not appropriately safeguarded. Senior managers responded by altering some systems to improve the timely response to all children referred to the service. This, in effect, created a further backlog in the MASH, as more children were identified whose circumstances needed to be assessed. In May of this year, senior managers responded further by recruiting a team of qualified staff to manage the continuing demand at the front door. However, inspectors found the additional resources, alone, have not been effective in ensuring a timely and safe response to children who have met the threshold for a service. This includes some children who are at risk of significant harm.
47. During the inspection, leaders acknowledged that the level of delay and impact for children was unacceptable at the front door. In response, managers completed a significant amount of audit activity to ensure children's needs had been appropriately assessed. In addition, structural and systemic changes in the MASH, planned for August 2022, have been brought forward.
48. The quality of supervision and management oversight remains inconsistent across services and is not an effective process for the timely progression of children's assessments and plans. The poor application of threshold decisions by some managers leaves too many children in situations of unassessed risk, with their needs not fully understood.
49. Elected members and the chief executive remain committed to improving the quality of children's services, despite the local authority's financial challenges. Further investment has been agreed to increase capacity to manage the demand and improve outcomes for children.
50. There are positive working relationships with partners at a strategic and practice level that work together to achieve the best outcomes for children. The judiciary and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service reported effective working relationships with the local authority, which ensures timely court proceedings and enables children to achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity. The application of the PLO has improved significantly.
51. The corporate parenting board is attended by social care staff and elected members, with partners only attending to share specific information. It is difficult to measure the impact the board has on service delivery and development because children's views are not consistently recorded. Leaders have acknowledged that the board is underdeveloped, and they are currently reviewing its functions to ensure that there is a greater commitment from partners to children in care and care leavers.

52. Senior managers understand the ongoing challenges regarding sufficiency of placements for the most complex children and young people. An ambitious sufficiency plan is in place, with funding secured to recruit more foster carers, along with block commissioning residential and semi-independent placements to increase placement capacity. However, the plan is at an early stage of implementation and is yet to demonstrate the impact it might have for children.
53. Senior managers welcome scrutiny from partners and peers in order to provide opportunities to reflect on current service delivery and make improvements to frontline practice. The chosen model of a strength-based approach has been implemented but requires further embedding for it to be consistently effective in supporting families. A career pathway has been developed for social workers through mentoring with heads of service and encouraging peer support.
54. A performance and quality management framework is beginning to provide managers with an effective oversight of the service. Consequently, managers have an improved grip on the service and a better understanding of practice. Audit activity provides evidence that managers and staff have an understanding of what good practice looks like. However, audits are not consistently used to improve individual practice or learning for the whole service. The local authority's self-evaluation mostly demonstrates a sound understanding of the service's effectiveness and impact on children. However, there remained shortfalls at the front door that were not fully understood.
55. The improvement plan implemented in response to the areas identified as requiring priority action has resulted in incremental improvements in the services delivered to children and families. The pace of change is slow, and practice in some areas of the service remains variable.
56. Senior managers are appropriately focused on the need to drive forward recruitment and retention, motivating current staff with an enhanced financial package, and reducing the reliance on agency social workers in order to stabilise the workforce. Although recently reducing, workloads for some social workers remain too high. For less experienced social workers, they have manageable workloads.
57. Team managers do not provide consistent oversight of key decision-making. Supervision is too variable, and there are gaps in frequency. The level of reflection and ability to consider impact on children is inconsistently recorded.
58. The staff that inspectors have spoken to are positive about working in Nottingham City and show a commendable loyalty to the children of Nottingham. Some social workers told inspectors that they feel valued and expressed their pride in working for Nottingham City and their drive to improve children's experiences. Workers remain committed to doing their best to support children in Nottingham.



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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Recommendation/Action Tracker 2024/2025

Dates/Deadlines	Recommendation/Action	Progress/Response
<p>Date of Meeting: 10 July 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued: 12 July 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 12 September 2024</p>	<p><u>Priority Education Investment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That all possible partnership work is done to grow inclusion activity, and the development of schools as welcoming environments to all needs (including through the effective training of teachers and the resourcing of their professional development), to overcome barriers to school attendance in a proactive way that is directly informed by the voice of children and their families. (R) 2) That the Council maximises its engagement with all schools to seek to avoid the need for their issuing of a fine for non-attendance wherever possible. (R) 3) That there is close partnership engagement with the provider organisations that deliver mental healthcare services to ensure that early intervention activity connects children and young people to the support that they need to break down potential barriers to school attendance. (R) 4) That further information is provided on the delivery planning underway for the implementation of the Early Help Strategy (particularly on how there will be effective integration with other support services to reduce barriers to attendance, including for children attending schools outside the City Council area). (A) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An Inclusion Strategy is being developed, in partnership with schools. We have appointed an officer to lead on Inclusion (starting in January 2025), who will work with schools to improve their inclusion practice and offer. Schools will have a named lead to develop partnership work. 2) We do not encourage schools to issue non-attendance fines. We work closely with them to encourage preventative and proactive work. <p>As outlined within the Early Help Strategy – Family Hubs will increase opportunities for more intervention work around school attendance. Strategies will be developed with parents to help them to understand the importance/benefits of school attendance.</p> <p>We have also invested in a mental health intervention for schools to refer children to if they are not attending school due to their anxiety and this should reduce further the need for penalty notice requests.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) CIS are commissioned by the ICB to deliver the Targeted CAMHS Service, which currently sits under our Head of Service for EH. The contract is due to expire in March 2025, we are currently waiting to hear if this will be extended for a further 2 years. We are working closely with the ICB to progress this. Targeted CAMHS is a successful early intervention service, which support children and young people in Nottingham City from birth. <p>Within Early help we have our mental health support team (MHST), who have almost 100 percent coverage of city</p>

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		<p>schools (practitioners have a day per week in each school). We work 1:1 with children who experience low mood and anxiety, and also work school wide through the delivery of psychoeducation for children and staff. The offer is enhanced with cognitive behaviour therapists, systemic family practitioners and Low intensity practitioners who all work at an early intervention level.</p> <p>We have recently started a pilot project (funded through schools DSG budget as part of a collaborative project with the education directorate) a targeted mental health attendance team of 9 specialist practitioners to work city wide with children who experience mental health barriers to attending school. This is a new project that has just started, referrals are taken from schools as part of the new DfE section-19 guidance. Practitioners work with the child specifically on anxiety related barriers to attendance, and also work across the ‘system’ (family and school) to support reintegration into a school setting. The aim of this team is to a) improve attendance and b) remove mental health barriers to school attendance.</p> <p>There is also early intervention support from the Behavioural and Emotional Health Team, which is the earliest point of support for children and young people.</p> <p>4) The case for Change has been submitted for consideration, once this is agreed there is a plan to work with our workforce, partners and children, young people and their families; ensure the model is fully integrated and meets local needs, whilst being sustainable for the future. Information has been shared with all head teacher and partners at the Early Help Partnership event and with the workforce.</p>
<p>Date of Meeting: 10 July 2024</p>	<p><u>Early Years Entitlement and Wraparound Childcare Provision</u></p>	

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<p>Date recommendations were issued: 12 July 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 12 September 2024</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That a 'One Council' approach is used to establish a solid childcare and early education infrastructure that is accessible to everyone in the city, with proactive work carried out to engage with wider Council teams and foster collaborative working to ensure a comprehensive childcare offer. (R) 2) That work is done to ensure that the needs of individual communities within wards are fully understood, to ensure that everyone does have access to childcare and that there is a full equity of outcomes for families across the city. (R) 3) That further information is provided on the outcomes of the 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Audit. (A) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) This is being progressed by Nick Lee, Director of Education Services and Sarah Nardone, Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services. 2) In order for this to be achieved, an integrated policy of work, that includes DWP, Director of Education Services and Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services with the support of the 3rd sector, is being progressed. 3) The 2023 childcare sufficiency audit can be found at: https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/earlyyears/section-pages/welcome-to-nottingham-city-early-years/childcare-sufficiency-assessment
<p>Date of Meeting: 11 September 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued: 16 September 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 16 November 2024</p>	<p><u>Children's Services Improvement</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recommend that the Council considers how it can expediate its initial assessment of children. (R) 2) To request further information on the most common reasons identified for child in need and child protection plans and why children are coming into contact with children's services. (A) 3) To request that the Committee is kept updated on the ICB savings plans and the impact this might have on children's services. (A) 4) To request further information and assurance on the timeliness and consistency of time between the section 47 and child protection conference. (A) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The service continues to utilise performance data and quality assurance information from audit activity to monitor timeliness regarding assessments. 2) Further information was provided to the Committee via email. 3) There is no further information on this at present. 4) Our timeliness regarding initial child protection conferences is 81.5%. Our 23/24 outturn was 73%. The last data (22/23) regarding the performance of our statistical neighbours in relation to this measure was that the statistical neighbour average was 78.5%. 5) This can be shared and discussed, alongside the plans for the future of the Early Help System in Nottingham City.

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	5) That the Early Help Strategy be considered by the Committee as part of its work programme for 2025/26. (A)	
<p>Date of Meeting: 11 September 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued: 16 September 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 16 November 2024</p>	<p><u>2024/25 budget savings for Children’s Services and Education</u></p> <p>1) Recommends that work is done to understand the needs and type of children coming into the Council’s care and whether the Transformation Programme is still meeting that need. (R)</p> <p>2) To request further information on the young futures hub and how they will work. (A)</p> <p>3) To request further information from property and estates on how disposed of children’s services buildings will be used going forward. (A)</p> <p>4) To request further information on how the Council is preparing for funding streams such as the Family Hubs Programme. (A)</p>	<p>1) The transformation programme has been effective in supporting us in reducing the numbers of children in care. We continue to have less children in care than we did in April 2023. We know that the current placement market is a challenge and we are working to ensure that all children have up to date assessments of their needs, this will support us to understand in greater detail the needs and demographics of children and young people in our care more robustly.</p> <p>2) There is no further detailed information from central government on this proposal yet.</p> <p>3) property and estates have advised that if an asset is surplus to the Council’s operational/delivery requirements they will be sold on the open market with no restrictions. This is done for the Council to achieve best consideration. In relevant cases, the Council may apply an overage clause to capture the value of any future development, and this is applied on a case by case basis. Surplus assets are sold as per the Council’s adopted disposals policy.</p> <p>4) We are waiting for further government announcements on this. In the meantime we are working to consider this as part of the Early Help System changes.</p>
<p>Date of Meeting: 13 November 2024</p>	<p><u>Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24</u></p>	

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<p>Date recommendations were issued: 15 November 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 03 January 2025</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To request further information, including statistics, on child exploitation within the City, and to request copies of the audits on Exploitation and Mental Health carried out through joint authority multi-agency working during 2023/24. (A) 2. To request that the Committee receive a copy of the newsletter informing agencies of the work that the Partnership does. (A) 3. To write to the NCSCP's Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) to express the Committee's dissatisfaction that they did not send representatives to the meeting. (A) 4. To write to the Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire Police to urge their organisation to make more of an equitable contribution towards the funding of the vital work of the NCSCP. (A) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After discussion with the chair of the meeting, it has been agreed that detailed information will be provided regarding the plans to support children and young people in Nottingham City who are at risk of exploitation as part of the response to the social care reforms and the new Family Help offer, which is currently under consultation. This is scheduled to be discussed at CYP Scrutiny in May 2025. There is also a follow up on exploitation scheduled in the forward plan for November 2025. In relation to the request for copies of the multi-agency audits, these are tools which hold child level data and therefore would not be shared with the committee. The overview report should provide members with sufficient detail to provide assurance of the response to exploitation and the plans in place to develop this further, to ensure that all children and young people in Nottingham City are receiving the right help at the right time. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people in Nottingham City. We value your oversight and look forward to discussing these important matters further at the upcoming meetings. 2. The Committee is now part of the distribution list for the newsletter and so can be kept updated on the work of the Partnership. 3. Letter sent to Assistant Chief Constable Rob Griffin (as the Partnership's Chair) outlining the Committee's disappointment that no members of the Partnership's Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) were present at the meeting. The letter was raised at the SLG meeting on 13/12/24. 4. Letter sent to Chief Constable Kate Meynell and Assistant Chief Constable Rob Griffin outlining the Committee's concern with Nottinghamshire Police' contributions to the funding of the
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		Partnership. Response requested as to why their contribution was just 9.1% when funding should be fairly and equitably split between all three partners. The letter was raised at the SLG meeting on 13/12/24.
<p>Date of Meeting: 13 November 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued: 15 November 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 03 January 2025</p>	<p><u>Alternative Education Provisions for Permanently Excluded Children</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To request a report on what the Council is doing to prevent exclusions, and for comparative figures including trends between the schools within the City and national comparisons to be provided. (A) 2. To request a report on what work is being done to ensure Alternative Education Provisions within the City are of good standard. (A) 3. For the Chief Executives of the major Multi-Academy Trusts within the City to be invited to a future meeting to discuss the Committee's concerns in relation to permanent exclusions. (A) 	<p>This is ongoing work which the Committee will consider at its meeting in March 2025. There is a scoping meeting scheduled in January 2025 to discuss the next steps.</p>
<p>Date of Meeting: 13 November 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued: 15 November 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 03 January 2025</p>	<p><u>Provisions for Children without a School Place / Fair Access</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To request that further information is provided on the formula used to determine the provision for school places within the city. 2) To recommend that provision for wellbeing is included in the revised Fair Access Protocol. 	<p>1) Further information on the formula was emailed to Members on 20/12/24.</p>

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
15 January 2024**

Work Programme

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25 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 2024/25 and make amendments to this programme as appropriate.

3 Background information

- 3.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has been established to carry out the statutory overview and scrutiny functions in relation to corporate matters. This includes the Council's finances and resources such as IT, customer services, commercial strategy, procurement and financial management; and corporate and cross-cutting matters that affect each directorate such as development of and delivery of the Strategic Council Plan, budget, transformation and improvement.
- 3.2 The Committee is responsible for setting and managing its own work programme.
- 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 2024/25 is attached.

4 The Strategic Council Plan 2024-27 and the Council Improvement Plan

- 4.1 The vision set out in the Strategic Council Plan (SCP) is that Nottingham is a city where people are proud of its history, vigorously pursue and celebrate our diversity, and be ambitious for the future of its people, neighbourhoods and city. That Nottingham will be known as a healthy, aspirational and thriving city, where people feel safe to live and work whatever their age, and an exciting, clean and welcoming place to play, study and visit. Nottingham will be a city that is green and environmentally sustainable, with a strong commitment to fairness, equality and inclusivity. That Nottingham is an ambitious city where people and businesses have a reputation for regeneration and building a growing economy with a skilled workforce. A city that is creative and culturally vibrant, where local people are proud of their city, their place, neighbourhood and their local community. The SCP sets out ten high-level outcomes for Nottingham, and each outcomes has a number of priority activities and interventions to help deliver it within the four-year span of the SCP.
- 4.2 In addition, the Council Improvement Plan (CIP) establishes how the Council will respond to the significant governance and financial challenges that have led to the statutory intervention by Government Commissioners. The CIP represents the overarching framework that holds the Council's improvement activity together and is intended to address the challenges the Council faces while working towards achieving longer-term change to become an organisation that has a clear purpose and direction, is financially sustainable and is well run. Delivering the CIP is intended to provide assurance to citizens, councillors, officers, partners and the Commissioners that the Council is improving the way it operates to deliver, enable and influence better outcomes for Nottingham in the most effective, efficient and economical way. The CIP sets out three overall aims, with eleven Priority Programmes of Action.
- 4.3 As a result, when planning its work programme, the Committee should consider how an item relates to achieving both the Priority Programmes of Action within the CIP and the wider objectives of the SCP. In scrutinising topics at a meeting, the Committee should seek to investigate what Priority Programmes of Action the issue affects and how improvement is being delivered against these, as well as the progress made to date against the associated performance metrics and that there is a full understanding and effective management of risk.

5 List of attached information

- 5.1 Scrutiny Prioritisation Process
- 5.2 Corporate Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

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

6.1 None

7 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

7.1 [Nottingham City Council's Constitution](#) (Article 9 and Article 11)

7.2 [The Strategic Council Plan 2024-27](#)

7.3 [The Council Improvement Plan](#)

8 Wards affected

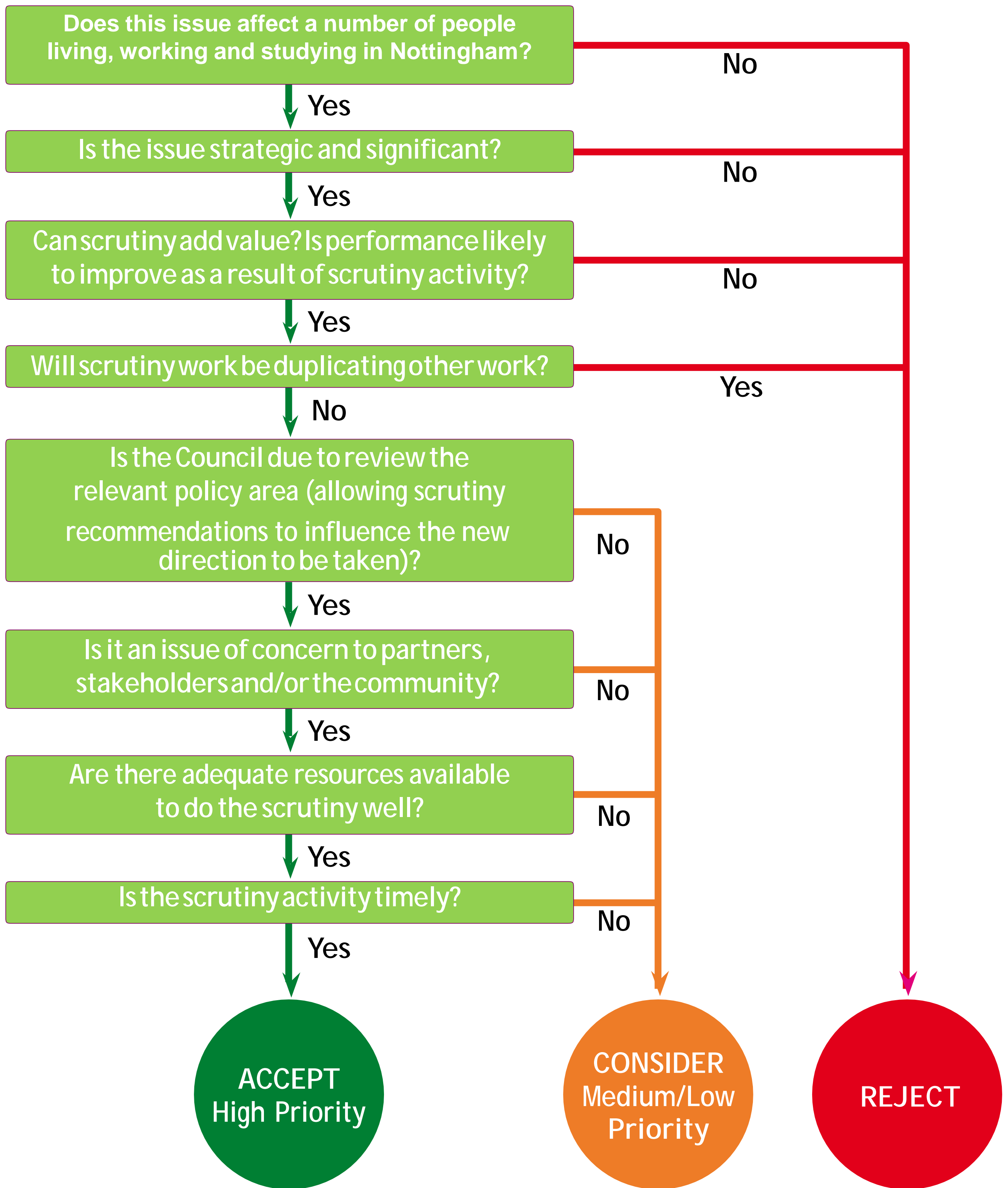
8.1 All

9 Contact information

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Nottingham City Council Scrutiny Prioritisation Process



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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2024/25 Work Programme

Chair: Councillor Naim Salim

Vice Chair: Councillor Michael Savage

Wednesday at 9.30am

Date	Items
15 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Exploitation To scrutinise current arrangements in preventing child exploitation including cross partnership working and strategy development.• Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the Council’s improvement journey following an OFSTED monitoring visit.
10 July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority Education Investment Area To hold partners to account.• Early years Extended Entitlement and Wrap Around Care• Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Executive Member on progress made in the Council’s improvement journey.
11 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transformation/savings delivery plans – progress update To receive a progress update on the Children’s Services 2024/25 budget savings and transformation programme, and the Education Services 2024/25 budget savings.• Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the Council’s improvement journey following an OFSTED monitoring visit.

Date	Items
13 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report To consider the safeguarding partnership annual report • Alternative education provisions for permanently excluded children To scrutinise alternative education provisions for permanently excluded children • Provisions for children without a school place / fair access To scrutinise the Council's fair access protocol, which places children who have been unable to secure education provision through the normal admission process, or who are deemed 'hard to place'
15 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the 2025/26 Budget proposals on Children's Services and Education To scrutinise 2025/26 budget proposals and the impact these will have on service provisions on Children's Services and Education • Children's Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the Council's improvement journey following an OFSTED monitoring visit
22 March 2025	<p style="text-align: center;">'Deeper Dive' – Alternative Education Provisions for Permanently Excluded Children - TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the Council is doing to prevent permanent exclusions • What the Council is doing to ensure alternative education provision is of good standard • Receive evidence from Multi-Academy Trusts

Standing items

- **Children's Services Improvement – every meeting**
- **Nottingham City Council Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report – September**
- **Placement Sufficiency - March**
- **Impact of attainment – March**
- **Child Exploitation Strategy – 12-18 months to assess the performance of the Strategy (May 2025-November 2025)**

Topics for work programme

- **Child Fostering – how can the Council champion and develop its own foster carers**
- **Youth Justice**
- **Police & Crime Commissioner – response to children living in households involving domestic violence / prevention of youth crime**
- **Child Poverty Strategy – how can the Council help prevent child poverty – mitigating the impacts of the removal of the household support fund**

WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

COMPLETED ON

SIGNED (CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE)

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