



NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Date: Monday, 16 November 2015

Time: 2.30 pm

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

Corporate Director for Resilience

Governance Officer: Catherine Ziane-Pryor **Direct Dial:** 0115 8764298

AGENDA

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Schedule of issues for consideration.

IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE ON DECLARING AN INTEREST IN ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA, PLEASE CONTACT THE GOVERNANCE OFFICER SHOWN ABOVE, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEETING

CITIZENS ATTENDING MEETINGS ARE ASKED TO ARRIVE AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF THE MEETING TO BE ISSUED WITH VISITOR BADGES

CITIZENS ARE ADVISED THAT THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. ANY RECORDING OR REPORTING ON THIS MEETING SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S POLICY ON RECORDING AND REPORTING ON PUBLIC MEETINGS, WHICH IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.NOTTINGHAMCITY.GOV.UK. INDIVIDUALS INTENDING TO RECORD THE MEETING ARE ASKED TO NOTIFY THE GOVERNANCE OFFICER SHOWN ABOVE IN ADVANCE.

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at LH 2.11 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 19 October 2015 from 2.30 pm - 3.31 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Sally Longford
Councillor Wendy Smith
Councillor Sam Webster

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Marcia Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Jennifer Hanby - Nottingham Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)
Jeren Artykova) Children in Care Council Representatives
Mary-Kate Gavin)
Gill Moy - Director of Housing (Nottingham City Homes)
Evonne Rogers - Head of Business Support
Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Social Care
Steve Comb - Head of Children in Care
Clive Chambers - Head of Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Sharon Clarke - Service Manager of Children in Care and Leaving Care Services
Lynne Pearce - Senior Personal Advisor to Children in Care
John Rea - Engagement and Participation Officer
Kwesi Williams - Children in Care Project Officer
Elise Ashworth - Insight Manager
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Marcia Watson (ill health)
Councillor Sue Johnson (personal)
Malcolm Wilson
TM
Natalia Stachowiak

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

21 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2015 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

22 SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS SERVICE REPORT

Clive Chambers, Head of Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, presented the report which informed the Board of the statutory complaints procedure, the complaints received during 2014/15 and the outcome of those complaints.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) where issues arise solutions are usually sought at a local level before the issue is progressed to a formal complaint;
- (b) the complaints procedure has three stages:
 - (i) a formal complaint is submitted and a written response is provided by the department within 10 working days;
 - (ii) if not resolved, the complainant can progress the complaint to be investigated by an Independent Investigator with a report, including recommendations, usually provided within 25 working days;
 - (iii) if still unresolved the complaint can be considered by an independent panel of three members;
- (c) during 2014/15 seven formal complaints were received although it should be noted that young people also have access to NYAS advocacy support if they have any issues they wish to discuss;
- (d) when young people first enter care they are informed of the complaint service and how it can be used, but also, especially for younger people, it is open for other people to lodge a complaint on their behalf. The age at which a child or young person is considered able to lodge their own complaint is in line with the health guidelines;
- (e) a breakdown of information regarding the nature of complaints and where young people are placed is not immediately available but can be provided, although the NYAS figures show there is no difference with the nature of complaints if a young person lives away from the city in another authority area;
- (f) when complaints lodged against other young children in care are upheld, it is generally the perpetrators who would be moved and not the victims, but the safety of the children is paramount at all times;
- (g) with regard to the complaints chart, 'undecided' indicates that the complaint has been resolved but the outcome is not necessarily in favour of the complainant. This terminology will be reviewed prior to the next Complaints Service report;
- (h) where complaints are formalised they are reported to the Heads of Service Meetings and where themes appear to emerge, these are reported to the Directors on a quarterly basis to enable a broader review of circumstances.

RESOLVED

- (1) to continue to support the effective complaints handling of young people in care;**

- (2) to acknowledge the required duties of corporate parents in relation to addressing the concerns of young people in care;**
- (3) for Clive Chambers to provide Councillor Sally Longford with detailed information regarding the nature of complaints by the area in which complainant's are located;**
- (4) for an update on children in care social care complaints to be submitted to the board in one year's time.**

23 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT

Sharon Clarke, Service Manager of the Children in Care Team, presented the report which outlines the work done and improvements achieved regarding the transitional support services provided for young people leaving care.

A summary of the statutory guidance for care leaver's services is provided within the report.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) 88.4% of care leavers, aged 17 to 21 years old, were considered to be living in suitable accommodation. Realistically this equates to 100% of care leavers who are still engaged with the service and not in custody as it is not possible to include young people who are in custody or no longer wish to engage with the service;
- (b) there has been a national focus on young people 'staying put' once they leave care. Approximately 10 care leavers are currently staying put. Foster carers and care leavers need to be fully aware of all the implications of 'staying put' and supported if this option is chosen. Providing 'staying put' is not an option for all foster carers and care providers as it may impact on future fostering arrangements, however where it is mutually agreed, the Care Leaver Team liaise between the carer and young person with regard to expectations and financial contributions;
- (c) Nottingham City Homes works closely with the care leaver's service to ensure where possible care leavers have suitable accommodation;
- (d) Semi-independent placements for young people are commissioned but the Service is considering a 'matching panel' to investigate the opportunities currently available and to ensure all options are explored to best meet young peoples' needs;
- (e) a dedicated Personal Advisor (PA) post has now been established to work on a one-to-one basis to assist to support young people into education or training as they leave care. To date this has proved great success, including securing a grant of £2,000 to enable young people to have bespoke access to leisure as an incentive to maintaining engagement. The PA has successfully re-engaged some hard to reach care leavers who previously had stopped accessing the services offered;
- (f) a new care leavers group named 'Your Voice' has been established and will consider issues which affect care leavers and how services and support can be improved including individual health and well-being information and support;

- (g) the care leaver's 'Big It Up' event was considered a success with some care leavers delivering powerful speeches;
- (h) currently there are 193 care leavers aged 17 to 21 years old within the City in contact with the Leaving Care Service. This does not include those care leavers who receive services directly from adult social care;

Children in Care Council members and care leaver representatives in attendance welcomed the 'staying put' option and commented that with regard to the 'health passport' which contains important health information about the care leaver, the information needs to be clearer and simpler to understand.

RESOLVED to support and understand the duties required by the Care Leaving Service.

24 NOTTINGHAM YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE

Jennifer Hanby, Project Manager for the Nottingham Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS), presented the report which summarised the activity of the service during 2014/15.

NYAS is currently commissioned to provide a residential advocacy service for all of Nottingham City's Children in Care.

The following points were highlighted;

- (a) there were 334 advocacy cases during 2014/15 with contact usually made with the young person within 72 hours of the request for advocacy;
- (b) the independent visitor service experienced some difficulties during the first two quarters of the year with several volunteers withdrawing but work is ongoing to recruit further volunteers;
- (c) an outcomes framework is being put in place which will show specific trends in complaints and positive feedback. Currently the general trend is that young people have issues communicating what they want, this is where advocacy works very well;
- (d) 42 residential visits were made during 2014/15 although there were several instances where visitors arrived to find the young people were not available. In addition, 48 visits were made to children and young people who are placed outside of the County;
- (e) 29 young people were supported through the 'spot purchase' of services.

RESOLVED

- (1) to acknowledge the advocacy and independent visitor activities undertaken by NYAS;**
- (2) to recognise the importance of the advocacy and independent visitor services in safeguarding and helping children in care to get their views heard.**

25 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL ACTIVITY AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, and Jeren Artykova, Children in Care Council member, verbally updated the Board on the activity of the Children in Care Council as follows:

- (a) the Corporate Children in Care Council met during July and considered social workers, including the difficulties and positives which young people in care experienced. This was then followed by a play and group discussion. The play, which was written and performed by young people, was considered extremely powerful and has been suggested for use within social worker training. The next Corporate Children in Care Council will be held on 30 November 2015 and include consideration of 'being at the right placement at the right time';
- (b) a London away-day was held in August which was attended by 12 young people and for staff. It included a workshop on the train journey to London considering the protocol of keeping children in care safe and an information pack on rights and responsibilities which will be passed to all new children in care. The group visited the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, Covent Garden, Westminster and enjoyed a boat ride on the Thames;
- (c) the 'Have Your Say' survey has now been sent out with a focus on young people's experience of care, what works well and what doesn't. All questions are linked to the Children in Care Charter. Responses to the survey help monitor how the charter's aims are being met with results reviewed by members of the Children in Care Council who then rate performance as Red, Amber, Green, the results will then be reported to the Board in the New Year. Officers and councillors are requested to encourage the completion of the survey by children in care. For every completed survey the young person will receive a leisure pass and be entered into a draw for gift vouchers and the latest iPad;
- (d) whilst young people can attend the All-Party Parliamentary Group focusing on children in care, space is limited and cannot be guaranteed. However further visits will be considered in future.

RESOLVED to note the activity of the Children in Care Council, including forthcoming events.

26 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the Forward Plan;**
- (2) for a report on 'Care Leavers and Welfare Benefits' to be submitted to a future meeting, to include:**
 - (i) information on Housing Benefit available to care leavers, including those aged 22 years and over;**
 - (ii) data to enable consideration of the comparative rates and payment available against young people who have not been in care.**

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - 16th November 2015

Title of paper:	Statement of Purpose: Fostering Service and Adoption Agency	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman – Director of Children’s Social Care and Vulnerable Children and Families helen.blackman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Wards affected: ALL
Report author(s) and contact details:	Sonia Cain, Service Manager Fostering & Adoption, 0115 8764526 Sonia.cain@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Claire Shepherd (Acting Adoption Team Manager) Claire.shepherd@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Gareth Dakin (Fostering Team Manager) Gareth.dakin@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	30 th October 2015	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
Adoption		
It is a statutory requirement that the Adoption Agency has an Adoption Statement of Purpose that is clear about the aims and objectives of the Adoption Agency and what services and facilities it provides. (See standard 18 of the ‘Adoption: National Minimum Standards, 2014’).		
The aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose should be outcome focussed and clearly show how the service will meet outcomes for children.		
The Adoption Agency is required to formally approve the Statement of Purpose and review them at least annually.		
Fostering		
It is a statutory requirement that this Fostering Agency has a Statement of Purpose. (See standard 16 of the ‘Fostering Service: National Minimum Standards, 2011’).		

The aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.

The Agencies policies, procedures and any written guidance to staff and volunteers need to accurately reflect the Statement of Purpose.

Recommendation(s):

1 It is recommended that members of the Corporate Parenting Board note the contents of the Statements of Purpose for the Local Authority's Adoption Agency.

2 It is recommended that members of the Corporate Parenting Board note the contents of the Statements of Purpose for the Local Authority's Fostering Service.

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is a statutory requirement that this department in its capacity as both Adoption and Fostering Agencies have Statements of Purpose for both Adoption and Fostering (see appendix one and two, respectively for draft Statements of Purpose).

1.2 The Statements of Purpose should be available to and understood by staff, volunteers, children, birth parents and guardians.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 The Statements of Purpose should be reviewed annually and the contents noted by the elected members. It is for the latter that both Statements of Purposes have been submitted to the Corporate Parenting Board.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 None

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 None

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 Appendix 1 Adoption Statement of Purpose

7.2 Appendix 2 Fostering Statement of Purpose

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Adoption: National Minimum Standards (2014)
(http://www.minimumstandards.org/adoption_nms.pdf)

8.2 Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
(<http://www.minimumstandards.org/national%20minimum%20standards%20-%20fostering.pdf>)

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Nottingham City Council

Fostering and Adoption Service

Adoption Statement of Purpose 2015-2016

Updated September 2015



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1. INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Purpose meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption and current legislation and regulations. It is intended to provide a clear written statement of the aims and objectives of Nottingham City Children and Families Adoption Agency. It explains our values and principles, the services we provide and how we provide them.

The Statement of Purpose is available online at www.Nottingham.gov.uk and is approved by elected members, reviewed and revised as appropriate and is intended to provide information to:

- Children and young people looked after (a separate Children's Guide is also available).
- Birth Family Members.
- Prospective/Approved Adoptive Parents.
- Agency staff.
- Adoption Panel Members.
- Councillors.
- Other Adoption Agencies.
- Members of the public.
- Inspectors.

Nottingham City Council offers a Translation and Interpretation Service in many languages, including Audiotape Production and a Braille Service. For information please contact telephone 0115 9160368.

2. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Nottingham City's Adoption Service consists of an Adoption and a Post Order Team and believes in achieving lasting successful adoption placements for children. Working with our commissioned partners Core Assets it recognises the long-term needs of all those involved in adoption, by offering high quality support, consistent with National Minimum Standards for Adoption and compliance with, but not limited to, the standards, regulations requirements below;

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention on the right of the Child 1989
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Standards Act 2002
- Inter- Country Adoption Standards and Associated Regulations 2003
- Adoption Support Services Regulations and Standards 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 2014
- National Minimum Adoption Standards and Associated Regulations July 2014
- The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) regulations 2012
- The Adoption Agencies (miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Statutory Guidance on Adoption – July 2013

We endorse the key principles which underpin the National Minimum Standards for Adoption:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and where ever possible this should be within their own family.
- The child's welfare, safety, and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages.
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.
- Children's ethnic origin, sexuality, cultural background, religion, and language will be fully recognised, positively valued, and promoted when decisions are made.
- We fully recognise and take into account the particular needs of disabled children or those with medical needs when making decisions about them.
- We will value and respect the role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth parents.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions, and individuals who have to work together to meet the needs for services for those affected by adoption.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of Nottingham City's Adoption Service is to ensure that children, who are referred for an adoption placement, are placed as a matter of priority, within a loving and supportive family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

This will be achieved by:

- Recruiting suitable adopters to meet the needs of children to be placed for adoption.
- Ensuring adopters are well prepared and understand the needs and experiences of children in care.
- Promoting equality without discriminating on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion, or culture.
- Working within the timescales outlined in statutory adoption guidance (or evidencing clearly why this has not been achieved).
- Assessing the needs of children with an Adoption Plan and achieving the best possible match to adoptive parent(s) who have the capacity to meet those needs.
- Ensuring children are well prepared and understand the adoption process by being sensitive and responsive to their individual developmental needs.

- Referring children who cannot be placed for adoption within our own resources, to our East Midlands Adoption Consortium, the Adoption Register within 3 months, or advertising further.
- The appointment of suitability qualified Adoption Panel Chairs who are capable of providing a robust framework for the functioning of Adoption panel is vital to good decision making.
- Maintaining an efficient and informed Adoption Panel whose members reflect the local community and who are capable of making timely recommendations directed towards promoting the children's lifelong needs.
- Managing and providing skilled and experienced staff capable of undertaking their adoption responsibilities, ensuring access to good quality training and up-to-date information on professional and legal developments.
- Providing a comprehensive Post Order Service which supports adopters and the children throughout their lives, making use of all available consortium and Adoption Leadership Board resources.

4. THE MANAGER

The Responsible Individual for the Fostering & Adoption Service is:

Name: Steve Comb (Head of Service)

Address: 2 - 6 Isabella Street, 3rd Floor, Nottingham NG1 6AT

Responsible Individual

Steve Comb Head of Children in Care

Steve joined Nottingham City Council in January 2015, a HCPC Registered Social Worker, with over twenty years' experience in looked after children's services in four different local authorities. He has held the posts of Registered Manager, Team Manager, Service Manager, and Head of Service. Steve covers the operational areas of residential care, leaving care, fostering, adoption, family contact, and edge of care services. In previous roles Steve has also had responsibility as lead council officer for children missing from home or care, and as chair of placement panels for single and multiple agencies funded commissioned placements.

Qualifications

Master Business Administration Nottingham Business School
Diploma in Social Work Leeds Metropolitan University
Diploma in Combined Social Policy, University of Leeds
Certificate in Criminology, University of Leeds
Local Government Association peer challenge trained
British Association of Social Workers 077856
HCPC number SW 22475

THE SERVICE MANAGER

Sonia has held posts as a Social Worker, Team Manager and Service Manager in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire with over 30 year's experience.

She was first appointed as Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption in the City in 1992 as the Registered Manager. In 2010 she was appointed as Fieldwork Service Manager for the North of the City and spent four years in that post

Sonia returned to Fostering and Adoption in 2014

In previous roles Sonia has chaired the Fostering Panel and been the lead for in the Independent Visiting and Advocacy Service

Qualifications

Diploma in Management Studies, Nottingham Trent University
M.A in Social Work and Certificate of Qualification in Social Work
Nottingham University
B.A Social Studies Hull University
HCPC SW74360

5. INTEGRATED STAFFING AND SERVICE STRUCTURE

- Agency Decision Maker –
- Fostering and Adoption Service Manager – 1 FTE

Principal Managers – (2 FTE) managing:

- 2 Panel Advisors
- 6 FTE Adoption Social Workers
- 6 FTE Post Order Social Workers
- 2 FTE Record Management Officers
- 2 FTE Customer Service Officers

Business Support Manager – 1 FTE

- 12 FTE Business Support

In addition, the Adoption Service is supported by:

- 2 Adoption Placement Advisors FTE

All Adoption Social Workers hold professional qualifications in social work, are HCPC registered and Disclosure and Barring Service checked.

In addition, the Adoption Service works in partnership with;

- Fieldwork Social Work teams
- The Children in Care Team
- Our commissioned specialist assessment service Core Assets
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Health
- Education
- Housing

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Adoption service also contributes to [Nottingham City Council Plan](#) which sets out the Council's purpose, priorities and values for 2012-15. In conjunction with [Children and Young People's Plan 2010- 2014 \(CYPP\)](#) which sets out the priorities to be addressed by The Children's Partnership Board, as agreed by the partners.

We have a range of systems in place to ensure that services provided are effective and that the quality is of a high standard.

The following processes are in place:

- Our adoption application process database is used to monitor all children's adoptions from the 'best interest' review decision to the date the Adoption Order is granted, giving a clear overview of our performance against National Adoption Standard timescales and National Indicators.
- Our two stage tracker database is used to monitor timescales for recruiting and assessing prospective adopters. This similarly informs practice and is fed back to staff.
- All social workers/ managers receive regular supervision. The frequency depends on the needs of the supervisee, but is not less than 4 weekly. Supervision also includes performance appraisals in line with Nottingham City Council supervision policy.

- Regular safeguarding file audits are undertaken and this information is analysed and used to inform policy and practice.
- User feedback from prospective adopters about the quality of service provided from their first contact with the agency through to the adoption panel is sought. Evaluation forms are completed following information meetings, preparation training, and profile evenings and at panel. Feedback is also sought Post order from other events and training and is used to inform and improve practice.
- Adoption social workers attend regular training courses for personal development and are also required to attend our annual staff development day.
- In March 2012, Scorecards were introduced to address delays in the adoption system and are used to raise the performance thresholds to levels as set out in statutory guidance. Within our service, we use Scorecards to monitor and track our service targets in line with this Government Policy. We also complete the annual and quarterly monitoring for the Adoption Service.

Adoption and Fostering Joint Panels

- Panel membership consists of 20 members including 4 Chairs and 3 Vice Chairs. In addition we have 4 Medical

Advisors, 4 legal advisors, 2 Panel Advisors and 3 Business Support staff.

- The Joint Panels are run 3 times a month on a weekly basis.
- Panel Chairs meet on a six monthly basis to provide performance information and feedback for the Head of Service and the Departmental Management Team. These meetings are held in the Autumn and the Spring.
- Panel members attend a panel development day every year, jointly with social work staff. In addition training events are held to support Panel members and they are encouraged and supported to attend BAAF training.
- Regular panel briefings to include practice issues are held each week prior/ post panel.
- An Adoption and Fostering Agency annual report is submitted to the Agency Decision Maker and Councillors, which includes statistical information on the work of the Adoption and Fostering Panel
- The Medical Liaison Meeting – this meeting is held every three months between the Fostering and Adoption Service Manager, Panel advisors, and medical advisors to the panel.

- Legal meetings are held monthly with the Senior Solicitor, Panel Advisors and Principal Managers for Fostering and Adoption.
- All Panel Chairs and members receive annual appraisals and these are carried out by both the ADM / Head of Service. The Chairs are appraised by the ADM / Head of Service and the members are appraised by the Panel Chair and Panel Advisor.

7. RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT

[Our Adoption Passport](#) explains the different support services available for those wishing to adopt with Nottingham City Council and is available on the Nottingham City Councils website.

Initial interest stage

All initial enquires are dealt with promptly by the customer service officers. Information pack and dates of information evenings are sent within 5 days of enquiry.

Customer service officers will also phone applicants – this is an opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the process and confirm dates of attendance for the information evening.

Applicants are invited to attend an information evening chaired by the Social Workers from the service – at the information evening applicants will be given their registration of interest forms and reading lists.

Once their registration of interest form is received from applicants – a decision to accept will be made within 5 working days by the Principal Manager for Adoption. Prospective adopters will then be sent out all the necessary information required for stage one process.

Stage 1

Prospective adopters are given the opportunity to find out more information about adoption through a stage one preparation training session – These are held monthly and run by Nottingham City adoption social workers.

Our partner agency Core Assets is responsible for allocating a social worker and undertaking initial visits. Core Assets and our customer service officers provide prospective adopters with the opportunity to ask any questions they may have regarding the social work process.

During this 2 month period Nottingham City Council and Core Assets, will undertake statutory checks including medicals and take up references. Stage one will usually take 2 months. If a decision is made during the Stage one process that the prospective adopters is not suitable, a written explanation of this decision will be provided and the adopters made aware of the complaints process.

Stage 2

Once a decision has been made to progress to stage 2 , our partner agency Core Assets will allocate a social worker to complete a full assessment report based on training, observations and information gathered from stage 1.

Prospective adopters are also required to attend a further 3 day stage two preparation course. Second time applicants may be eligible for a fast track process depending on when they last adopted as their assessment will build on their experience.

Reports will be submitted to Nottingham City Council for review by our Principal Manager for Adoption and any changes that need to be made will be rectified. Once all reports are checked and completed, applicants will be booked onto a panel, you will be asked to attend in order for the panel members to make a recommendation on your application.

Supporting Placements

Once approved, adopters will be allocated an adoption support worker who will liaise with our adoption placement advisors to help identify possible links. Once matched as a minimum, all adoptive families should be visited within a week of the child being placed, weekly till the first review, two/three weekly to the second review. Support visits may be shared with the children's social worker's.

Other supporting services include:

- Family and Friends training
- Annual fun days/ social events
- Regular newsletter
- Training courses
- Letterbox
- Post Order Support

8. SERVICES PROVIDED

Adoption Customer Service Officers

Our Adoption Customers Service Officers are the initial point of contact and are able to signpost the requests to other appropriate parts of the Adoption service.

Adoption Placement Advisors

We have a team of two dedicated Adoption Placement Advisors who work in conjunction with our Children in Care Team and children's social workers and who offer an essential home finding service to Nottingham City Council children, adopters and key professionals. They are actively involved in attending Adoption Activity Days and supporting our adoptive children.

Adoption Activity Days

Adoption activity days are events where approved adopters, or adopters in the assessment process who have a panel date within the next 3 months, have the opportunity to directly meet a range of children waiting to be adopted in a prepared, supported, safe and fun environment.

These themed days are full of lots of fun activities such as face painting, climbing, craft and soft play. The children's foster carers and social workers attend the event with the children to support them.

Regular Profile Evenings

These evenings take place every six weeks and give the adopters the opportunity to see the profiles of the children waiting to be matched with an adoptive family, speak to the social workers who know the children and engage with the Adoption Team and Adoption Placement Advisors.

Training for Family and Friends of Adopters

Our friends and family sessions, provide a chance for family and friends of adopters to develop an understanding of adoption and the needs of adopted children. It also enables them to identify how they can help, and provides them with an opportunity to ask any questions.

Dual Approval

For some of our children in care there is very little chance of them returning to their birth family. In such cases in order to avoid any unnecessary moves for these children, Nottingham City may make a placement with approved adopters who are also approved under the Fostering regulations as foster carers.

Non Agency Adoption

All applications for Non Agency Adoptions and Special Guardianship (where children are not looked after by Nottingham City) are completed in house by experienced social workers within the Adoption service.

Special Guardianship Support

The Adoption Service offers support to children living in the City with Special Guardianship Orders or up to 3 years post order for those living further away. A social worker assesses the needs and may offer support such as:

- Financial
- Ongoing social worker support, assistance and advice
- A referral to CAHMS
- Support with contact if there are difficulties

Post Order Support

The Adoption Service also provides a range of support services for all parties affected by adoption as required by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005) in line with the drive to improve Adoption Support Services.

Adopters, their birth children, and Adopted children

We provide a range of support services for adopters, their birth children and adopted children. This service is available for all Nottingham City children for up to 3 years post order or for families with adopted children living in the City. Requests for support and advice are taken via a Duty referral line. A social worker will then assess the need for services and offer advice and guidance.

Adoption support services may include:

- Financial advice / issues
- Liaison with, and referral to other linking support services e.g. CAMHS, Education Service
- Ongoing social work counselling, advice and information
- Membership of Adoption UK and New Family Social
- Help with life story work, often undertaken directly with the adopted children
- Arrangements for link workers for the children
- A training programme for adoptive parents
- Adoption Support Fund applications including for individual therapeutic support, and therapeutic support groups.

Post Order Contact

The Service operates a letterbox exchange service, and supervises any agreed direct contact agreement. If any adopter experiences difficulties in respect to contact, these arrangements can be reviewed on request.

To support the exchange of letters, birth parents can be offered help in writing if requested. The Letterbox Scheme is now extended, on request, for young adopted adults up to 21 years or 25 years if continuation is appropriate.

Adopted Adults

A range of services are provided to adopted adults these include:

- Birth Records Counselling (Adoption and Children Act (2002), Schedule 2) for adopted adults
- Access to records
- Help and advice with tracing birth parents
- A register for vetoes for no contact

Independent Counselling Service

Social workers within the Adoption Service also offer an independent counselling service for birth families at the time the decision is made for their children to be adopted.

Inter County Adoption

Nottingham City has a service agreement with Yorkshire Adoption Agency who accept all referrals from people considering adopting a child from overseas who live in the city. All such enquiries are redirected to:

Jubilee House
Jubilee Road
Wheatley
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN1 2UE
Tel: 01302 349909

9. STORAGE, ACCESS, MAINTENANCE, AND SECURITY OF ADOPTION RECORDS

The Adoption Service adheres to the requirements of relevant Regulations and the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) in the way it manages all adoption case files.

Closed paper files are archived by a specialist document storage service. Access is carefully controlled by the dedicated records manager.

Adoption case records, where there has been an order, are kept for 100 years.

In addition to this Nottingham City Council operates restricted access to electronic records at the point of adoption placement to protect their confidentiality.

10. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Full details of our complaints procedure can be found on the Nottingham City Council website.

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Social Care Complaints Service
The Clocktower Eastcroft Depot
London Road
Nottingham
NG2 3AH
Tel: 0115 915 0310

Fax: 0115 876 1374

Email: socialcarecomplaints@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

There is an independent children's right service who can be contacted:

www.NYAS.org.uk

NYAS

Tanners Lane

Barkingside

Ilford

Essex

IG6 1QG

Tel: 0208 550 8822

11. THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

The Adoption Service is subject to inspection by Ofsted whose contact details are:

Ofsted, Office for Standards in Education,
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231 (8.00am – 6.45pm Mon-Fri)

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Signed
Principal Manager Adoption

Signed
Sonia Cain, Service Manager

Signed
Steve Comb, Head of Service

Signed

Helen Blackman, Director of Childrens Safeguarding

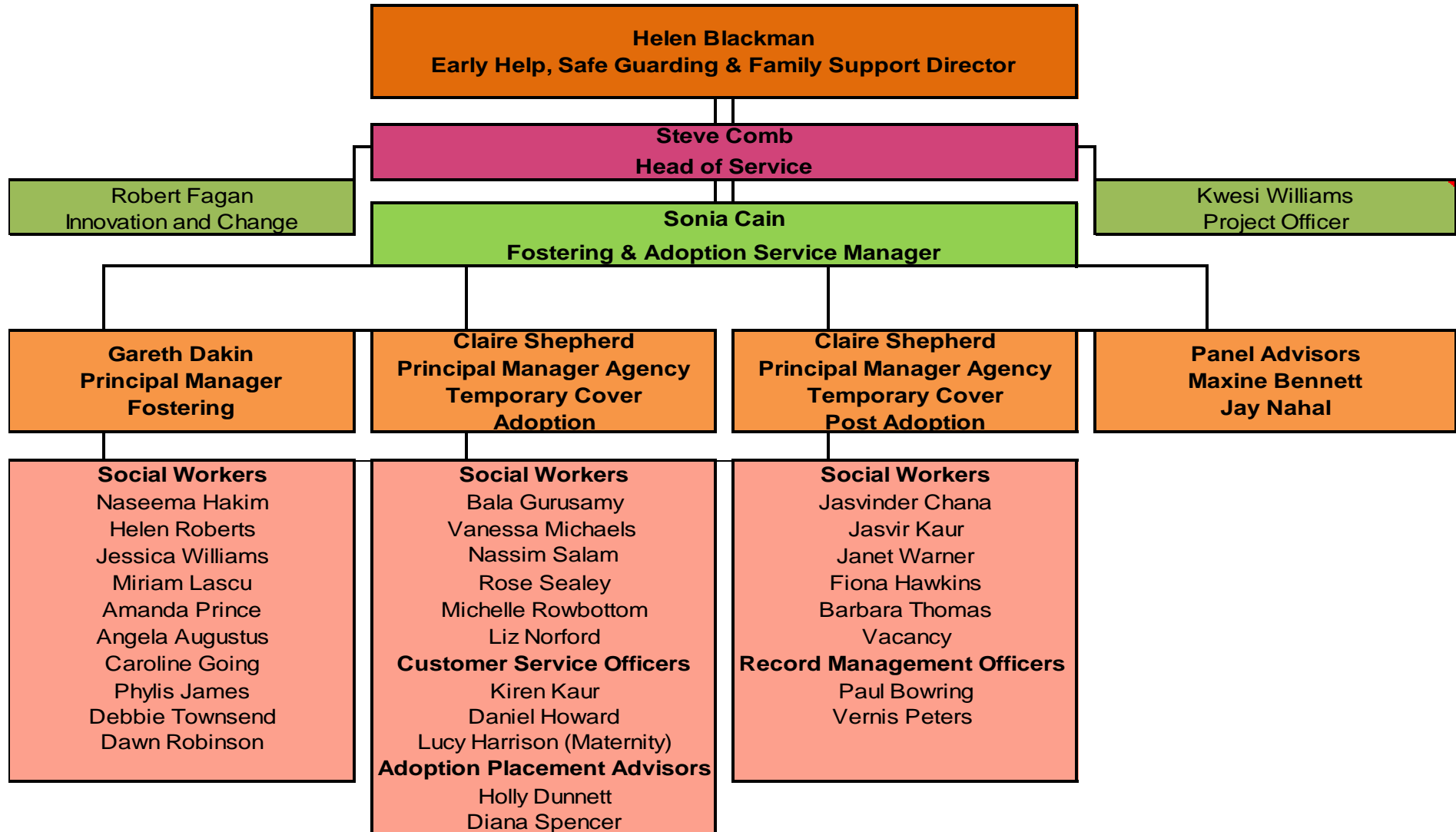
Signed.....

Alison Michalska, Corporate Director of Childrens & Families

Signed.....

Councillor Mellen, Chair of Corporate Parenting

Fostering, Adoption and Post Order Team Structure



Nottingham City Council

Fostering and Adoption Service

Fostering Service

Statement of Purpose 2015- 2016
(Updated November 2015)



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1. INTRODUCTION

Service Contact Details

Fostering Service Address:

Fostering and Adoption Team, 3rd Floor, 3 Isabella Street, Nottingham NG1 6AT.
The main telephone number is 0115 8762696.

Registered Providers Address:

Fostering and Adoption Service, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG.

Electronically and on Nottingham City Council Website: www.Nottingham.gov.uk

The Fostering and Adoption Service is subject to inspection by Ofsted whose contact details are:

Ofsted, Office for Standards in education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231 (8.00am – 6.45pm Mon-Fri)
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The day to day management of the fostering service is undertaken by Sonia Cain, Service Manager. The overall responsibility for the management of the Fostering and Adoption Service lies with Helen Blackman, Director of Safeguarding.

The Registered Manager for Nottingham City's Fostering and Adoption Service is:

Name: Sonia Cain (Service Manager)

Address: 2 - 6 Isabella Street, 3rd Floor, Nottingham NG1 6AT

Relevant Qualifications: Diploma in Management Studies, Nottingham Trent University
M.A in Social Work and Certificate of Qualification in Social Work
Nottingham University
B.A Social Studies Hull University
HCPC SW74360

Relevant Experience: Sonia has held posts as a Social Worker, Team Manager and Service Manager in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire with over 30 year's experience.
She was first appointed as Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption in the City in 1992 as the Registered Manager. In 2010 she was appointed as Fieldwork Service Manager for the North of the City and spent four years in that post
Sonia returned to Fostering and Adoption in 2014
In previous roles Sonia has chaired the Fostering Panel and been the lead for the Independent Visiting and Advocacy Service

The Statement of Purpose is available online at www.Nottingham.gov.uk and distributed to all foster carers.

Nottingham City Council offers a Translation and Interpretation Service in many languages, including Audiotape Production and a Braille Service. For information please contact telephone 0115 9160368.

Nottingham City Children's Services Fostering provision is governed by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the Fostering Regulations 2011, updated 2013, issued by the Secretary of State under Sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

A Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service has been developed to meet the requirements of Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3 (1) of the Fostering Services Regulations 2013. The Statement of Purpose is available in alternative formats, by request to the Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption.

The Statement of Purpose includes:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by the Fostering Service.

Nottingham's Fostering Service Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually. It will help to inform:-

- Children and young people who are in foster care
- Birth families of children and young people who are in foster care
- Councillors
- Children's Services Departmental Management Team
- Foster Carers and prospective carers
- Foster Care Social Workers
- Child Care workers
- Fostering workers
- Partner agencies
- Ofsted

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

In determining its aims and objectives, Nottingham City Fostering Service had adhered to the following:-

KEY LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE WORK OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards and Regulation 3 and 4 of the regulations 2011, requires all Fostering Services to produce a statement of purpose detailing its aims and objectives, the services and facilities provided and to keep this under review.

- The Children Act 1989
- Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services: National minimum standards 2011
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Reviews 2010
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4 – Fostering Services 2011
- Family and Friends Care – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

Nottingham's Statement of Purpose has been written to meet the requirements of the regulations and standards and will be regularly reviewed.

Nottingham City Council firmly believes that a family placement is appropriate for the majority of children in care. The Fostering Service endeavours to place the child/young person at the centre of its activity. Its primary aim is to provide the highest quality of substitute family care. It works in partnership with other agencies, parents, local authorities and the independent sector.

Nottingham Fostering Service aims to recruit, assess and support a range of high quality foster carers to improve outcomes for looked after children and to make children and young people's stay in foster care a positive experience.

We aim to maintain a sufficient range of foster carer placements and short break carers to meet the needs, age and diversity of looked after children requiring family placement in Nottingham by regularly reviewing requirements in conjunction with agreed targets for recruitment and retention of foster carers.

We aim to continue to increase the number of foster carers approved and trained by Nottingham City, whilst decreasing the number of external placements so that the majority of the council's looked after children are placed locally with Nottingham approved foster carers, including family and friend carers. Supporting a strong, committed local service is a priority, maintaining children's family friendship and education relationships wherever possible. The city has a range of excellent support service including CAMHS, health housing and vital school services available to support our children in care and foster carers.

Nottingham is committed to children in care living with loving foster homes, rather than residential care wherever possible.

The objectives of the Fostering Service are as follows:

- To recruit carers from a wide variety of backgrounds, the majority from the local community or within reasonable travelling distance of the City of Nottingham boundaries, who have the potential to meet the needs of children in care.

- To offer a range of training and support services before and after approval to carers that will maintain the stability of placements.
- To provide appropriate and timely placements for all children who are in need of fostering provision and to offer placement choice.
- To support permanency planning for all children.
- To consider the specific needs of the child/young person to be placed, by age, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation, and as far as possible match these needs with the skills of approved carers.
- To promote the physical and emotional health of children in foster care by encouraging a healthy lifestyle and working in partnership with health professionals.
- To provide a safe and caring environment in which children and young people will thrive and learn to make positive choices.
- To enable the children it cares for to reach their full potential, socially and educationally and enable them to make a positive contribution to the community, and to recognise their achievements and progress.
- To actively seek and to listen to the views of children in foster care, using this to inform change and service development.
- To teach children and young people to manage their finances and prepare them for independence.
- Where returning home or adoption is not an option to encourage carers to look after children on a long term or permanent basis, thus giving children and young people security, consistency and a sense of belonging, enabling them to establish themselves in the community and succeed in education and with future endeavours.
- To promote contact with the child or young person's birth family and significant others during a placement and encourage and facilitate this as appropriate to the child or young person's needs.
- All carers will be provided with contact numbers and email addresses for their supervising social workers and the service operates a daily duty line for urgent queries. Nottingham City Children's Social Care operates a duty line from 5 to 8pm, after which the Emergency Duty Team will provide advice and support.
- To reward foster carers financially for their skills, competency and experience. (Nottingham City's fostering allowances are in excess of the government's national minimum rates, and the council gives enhanced payments to carers who demonstrate skill and ability and offer long term or permanent placements to older children.)
- Through our partners, we provide access to specialist support on health, education and other issues.
- To focus on maintaining continuous improvement and high quality service provision.
- To carry out annual independent reviews of all foster carers.

3. CONTEXT OF THE FOSTERING AND ADOPTION SERVICE

The Fostering and Adoption Service is located within the Safeguarding Directorate, closely aligned to social work services for children in need and in care.

There are three Heads of Service managed by the Director, Safeguarding. One Head of Service is responsible for the Safeguarding and quality assurance for Children in Care and the third for Children's Social Care Field Work Teams. The Fostering and Adoption Service comes within the responsibilities of the Head of Service for Children in Care.

Children in need of Safeguarding and potential care are referred to a Central Duty point and then into locality social worker teams. Dedicated support services focus on helping families to care for their children at home wherever possible, but for those who need greater care or protection, the placement service will match them to a good foster home or small group home. For some children they may be in care for a longer period focusing on finding permanent homes. Many of our foster carers also adopt children.

There is a dedicated Children in Care Social Work Service for Children in the Care of the Local Authority also managed by the Head of Service, Children in Care. There is also a Leaving Care Service to work with older children, care leavers, and asylum seekers.

4. STAFF

Nottingham City Fostering Service has full time equivalent staff subdivided as follows:

Service Manager	1 Full Time
Innovation and Change Manager	0.2 Full Time Equivalent
AQA Principal Managers	1 Full Time
Practice Manager	1.5 (split across Fostering and Adoption)
Social work staff	8 Full Time Equivalent
Customer Service Officers	2 (split across Fostering and Adoption) Full Time
Record Management Officers	2 (split across Fostering and Adoption) Full Time
Business Support	6.0
Business Manager	1 Full Time with responsibility also for Children in Care and Residential

All Supervising Social Workers are qualified and have many years experience in fostering and child protection work. In addition to permanent staff, Nottingham City Fostering Service has commissioned a specialist agency to carry out assessments of prospective foster carers on its behalf; all assessors employed by the contractor have the necessary qualifications and experience for the work they are undertaking. This contracted work is overseen by a Principal Manager. All social work staff and administrative staff are subject to enhanced disclosure and barring service checks which are reviewed every 3 years.

INTEGRATED STAFFING STRUCTURE

The Corporate Director, Children and Families has overall responsibility for all Children's services which includes social care, education, family & community teams and audits social care.

The Director, Safeguarding Is the Agency Decision Maker who makes the decision to formally approve foster carers following panel recommendation.

The Head of Service, Children in Care is responsible for all of the Children in Care service including residential services, fostering, adoption, 15+ and leaving care provision.

The Service Manager Fostering and Adoption has day to day responsibility for the Fostering and Adoption Service and for providing line management supervision to Principal Managers. The Service Manager must be appropriately qualified experienced in the field of children's social care. The Service Manager is also the Registered Manager for Nottingham City's Fostering and Adoption Service.

The Innovation and Change Manager is responsible for leading on the Authority's response to the government's tackling delays in adoption action plan.

Assessment and Quality Assurance Principal Manager for Fostering provide supervision and support to the social workers. All hold an appropriate social work qualification (DIPSW/CQSW/CSS) and are registered with the HCPC.

Practice Managers are responsible for managing fostering and adoption panels. They hold an appropriate social work qualification (DIPSW/CQSW) and registered with the HCPC. The Practice Managers act as the Panel Advisor.

The Supervising Social Workers are responsible for providing supervision and support to foster carers. They are also required to undertake recruitment activities and deliver training. All supervising social workers have an appropriate social work qualification e.g. DIPSW/CQSW/CSS and are registered with the HCPC.

Records Management Officers are responsible for the oversight and control of the management of records, retrieval, archiving, and storage.

Customer Service Officers are responsible for responding to all enquiries that come through various channels, they monitor and quality assure the process throughout the customer journey from enquiry to panel approval.

The Business Support Manager is responsible for the allocation of administrative work and supervision of admin staff.

The Business Manager has responsibility for the financial management and planning of the service areas budgets, and oversees the administrative function of the service area across the Children in Care service.

The Foster Carers are responsible for providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment for the children in placement and promoting the five outcomes as described in the 'aims and objectives'. They are actively encouraged to complete mandatory training within their first year of fostering and thereafter to attend ongoing internal training. Foster carers are supervised and supported by supervising social workers.

5. Recruitment of Carers

The Fostering and Adoption Service promotes awareness of the need for foster carers and adopters, provides information to prospective carers during information evenings, foster carers business meetings, newsletters, training and on line, and supports the advancement of suitable enquiries of suitable enquirers whom the service supports during the assessment process.

Enquirer's questions are answered by telephone, e-mail, letter, and in person at public events and information meetings. The main points of contact for enquiries are the Customer Services Officers. They are responsible for supporting applicants through the application process and also for providing management information about the types of applications, progress through the system and final approvals.

Enquiries are received by the Customer Services Officers via phone on 0115 915 1234, email at fa.info@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, through the City Council website www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/love, and by post. The contact details are widely publicised by leaflet and poster distribution, banner campaigns, local press and radio adverts and other means. Publicity materials make clear that enquiries are welcomed from all sectors of the community. Enquirers are sent an information pack and entered on to the IT system.

The Fostering and Adoption Service work closely with the Placement Service on an ongoing basis. This allows us to keep abreast of any changes or developments so that recruitment activity is adapted to focus on the areas of greatest need.

Enquirers are invited to attend an Information Meeting from which they can register an interest. These meetings are held monthly and include a PowerPoint presentation by a social worker and a question and answer session including at least one current carer. Content includes an introduction to the needs of children in care, the range of fostering tasks, contact issues, meeting minimum standards, the application and assessment process and the training & support provided.

Enquirers are given an information handbook to keep for reference and a Registration of Interest form to send back to the Customer Services Officers to progress to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Nottingham City Council has adopted a 2 stage process of assessment and approval of foster carers following statutory guidance within the Fostering Service Regulations 2013. The stages are applicant led to allow for thorough assessment, reflection by applicants and to ensure that statutory checks are completed within timescales. We aim to offer a timely responsive service at stage 1 and 2 of the fostering application.

Stage 1 takes up to 8 weeks and begins on receipt of a completed Registration of Interest form by the Customer Services Officers. Statutory check forms, comprising of Declaration of Health and Suitability forms, and forms to enable DBS checks (Disclosure and Barring Service) are sent out. There is a half day training day provided in Stage 1 which includes the types of children in care, a reading list and the role of a foster carer. The training is facilitated by Fostering Supervising Social Workers..

Initial visits to applicants wishing to proceed with Stage 1 are carried out by a specialist agency working in partnership with Nottingham City Council. They will provide a qualified social worker experienced and knowledgeable in fostering and adoption, to support and guide new applicants throughout the stage 1 process. The specialist agency returns the relevant report to the Principal Manager. If assessed as initially suitable the applicants will progress to Stage 2 and the specialist agency is asked to proceed with a full Home Study assessment. The Stage 2 process takes up to

16 weeks and concludes with the Form F assessment being presented at Panel and the applicant's approval being considered.

Existing foster carers support the recruitment of applicants by helping to run recruitment stands at public events, being featured in press and radio broadcast interviews, addressing information meetings, and arranging distribution and display of promotional materials in their neighbourhood. They are also encouraged to use 'word of mouth' promotion.

Nottingham's approach to recruiting new carers is one that has localism at its heart and the needs of children in care at the centre.

The assessment process to Panel falls within the Stage 2 part of the application process and is completed within 16 weeks.

The Homestudy Assessment

When the application has been accepted, a longer period of preparation, assessment, training, and working in partnership with the social worker will begin.

The assessing social worker will begin to analyse the applicant's suitability to foster children by building up a thorough profile of each applicant through a Homestudy. Fostering is a very demanding task and the social worker must be absolutely sure that applicants are right for the role. Equally potential carers need to feel that fostering is the right choice for them and this will be discussed at length throughout the assessment process.

Nottingham City Council Fostering and Adoption Service works in partnership with a specialist agency who undertakes fostering assessments. Assessors are qualified social workers, and are approved to carry out fostering assessments.

Part of the Homestudy process will include an introduction to the new Childrens Workforce Development Council (CWDC) 'Fostering Standards', which have been introduced by the Government to improve foster carer's understanding of their tasks and roles. The carer's CWDC Portfolio evidences the competence of foster carers, and must be completed within 12 months of panel approval (this is extended to 18 months for connected persons carers.) The assessing social worker will begin the process of looking at what evidence can be gathered for the portfolio from the Homestudy. However preparation for the portfolio will only officially start from when the panel approve an application.

Alongside the Home Study, applicants attend a three-day pre-approval training course. Course content is reviewed and updated as necessary. This course is delivered by social workers and at least one experienced carer.

References and Evidencing

During the process of assessment, a number of different ways of checking a person's suitability are used. These checks are called statutory checks, and will involve a Disclosure and Barring Service check, employee check, and school check. Personal references, including those from family members and ex-partners are also obtained. Statutory and other checks apply to all adult members of the applicants' household.

DBS checks are used to get a history of any serious criminal activity. This is used to determine if anyone is barred from working with children, or has convictions which could be incompatible with looking after a child in care.

Employer references are used to help check the reliability of a candidate. Personal references, two from friends and one from a relative, are used to verify the information applicants have shared with the assessor. If the applicants have children living within their home, further references are obtained from their respective schools. If children are under 5, a reference from the Health Visitor will be sought. If the children are now adults, separate comments are sought from them.

Enquiries are also undertaken with significant previous partners, particularly if applicants have had children or parented together. This is always discussed with applicant's first, due to the sensitivities involved in carrying out these checks. If applicants work with children or vulnerable adults, a specific reference is sought from their line manager. Applicants are also requested to complete a full medical with their General Practitioner to provide evidence of their physical and mental health.

All of these checks form part of a final written report, to offer a full and rounded appraisal of each candidate.

What does the service look for in foster carers?

Many of the qualities looked for in prospective foster carers are the same as those asked of any good parent. This could be defined as an ability to offer good quality parenting and the capacity to 're-parent' children who have been abused or neglected, and would be central to the application. Foster children will have experienced trauma and separation from their birth family and will display many different types of behaviour to express their upset or distress. Some will also have had many different carers and will be looking for confident people who can offer stability, safety, consistency, and reliability.

The assessment process itself covers the following areas:

- Experiences, skills, and abilities essential in a foster carer to safeguard a child.
- Provision of a safe, healthy, and nurturing home for children.
- Personal warmth to adults and children.
- Ability to work with the Department to implement the plan for the child. This is likely to involve contact with birth parent(s) and others important to the child(ren).
- The capacity to positively encourage child(ren)'s understanding of their origins, religion and culture.
- Understanding of others' points of views and feelings.
- Ability to 'stand back' from problems. Flexibility in resolving problems.
- Ability to enable children who are moving on to do so in a positive manner.
- Knowledge of normal child development, ability to listen to and communicate with children.
- Ability to manage children's behaviours using boundaries but without physical or other inappropriate forms of punishment.
- Appreciation of how experiences affect families and the impact fostering may have on carer's own family.
- Evidence of ability to sustain supportive relationships with family, friends, and the community.
- Ability to use training and supervision opportunities to improve skills.
- Ability to understand own limitations, and to ask for help and support.
- Appreciation of how a child's past may affect their current and future behaviour/needs.
- Appreciation of the importance of education and health for young people and the ability to promote these.

An assessment of the applicants' individual qualities and skills make up the basis of the Homestudy Report, which is written in accordance with the BAAF (British Association of Adoption & Fostering) form 'F' format and shared with applicants.

6. FOSTERING & ADOPTION PANEL

Nottingham City Council have a joint Fostering and Adoption Panel that is made up of an independent chair, independent panel members, social worker representative, Panel Advisor and a minute taker. Panel recommendations are considered/ratified by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM), in Nottingham this role has been taken on by the Director of Children and Social Care. In line with the regulations and guidance the ADM is “a social worker with at least three years’ post qualifying experience in child care social work and has knowledge and experience of permanency planning for children, adoption and child care law and practice”.

The main purpose of the Fostering and Adoption panel is to make recommendations about the proposed approval of prospective foster carers, adoptive parents, and connected person assessments. Other panel duties include making recommendations about adoption matches, adoption plans for relinquished babies, deregistration of carers and foster carer reviews. All prospective carers are invited to the panel and in doing so are included in the approval process.

The Agency Decision Maker will have 7 working days from the receipt of the panel minutes to make a decision with regard the Fostering and Adoption panel recommendations. The ADM will clearly state in writing why they are agreeing to ratify or not, the panel recommendation. If a negative recommendation is made the applicants are given 28 days to express dissatisfaction with the decision and can refer themselves to an IRM (Independent Review Mechanism) which would examine the decision making process.

Panel Members

Role on the Panel	Position
Panel Chair	Independent Agency
Social Worker with experience of Children's Services/ Vice Chair	Social Worker from Fieldwork
Social Worker with fostering experience	Social Worker from the Fostering Service
Social Care Manager with experience of older children in care	Social Care Service Manager – Residential & Children in Care Social Service Work
Independent Member	Education representative from Vulnerable Childrens Team
Independent Member	A Nottinghamshire County Council Foster Carer
Independent Member	Children's Representative
Legal Adviser	Senior Solicitor – Nottingham City Council
Minute Taker	Administrative Assistant, Fostering Service
Professional Advisor	Manager from Fostering Service
Agency Decision Maker	Director of Children's Services

Panel Activity

There are 3 panels per month, with an additional panel run every quarter.

Panel members are recruited to reflect a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds. All panel members receive an annual appraisal and regular training on pertinent issues and any changes to practice and legislation.

Between November 2014 and October 2015 the Fostering Panel had the following recommendations agreed by the Agency Decision Maker;

Approvals:

- 30 Adoptive Carers
15 Foster Care Households
- 5 Connected Person Carers
- 1 Short Break Carers (Home from Home)
- Deregistration: 10 Foster Care Households

8. FOSTERING RESOURCES

Services Provided

The service provides a wide range of family placements:

- **Emergency and short-term placements** - This can range from a day to several months.
- **Bridging Placements** - The placement can be for up to two years while the permanence plan is brought into effect and includes preparing and helping the child move to their permanent placement.
- **Long term/permanent placements** - The child/young person is a permanent member of the foster family
- **Parent & infant placements** – Foster carer's support and assess a young parents' ability to parent their infant while both live with the foster carer.
- **Short Break Placements** - These are short break placements to support disabled children who live with their birth family.
- **'Staying Put' Placements** - This is the continuing support we give a young person over eighteen who is still living with former Foster Carers as part of their Pathway Plan. This is supported by a Personal Advisor allocated to the young person.
- **Respite/Holiday Placements** - Provision of brief time limited support to an ongoing fostering placement.
- **Connected Person Placements** - This is the placement of a child with a family member or long-term family friend.

9. SUPPORT

The service is proud of the full range of support activities offered to all its carers. The Council works in partnership with carers and many of the initiatives have been developed in consultation with them.

- All foster carers have a named, fully qualified Supervising Social Worker allocated to them. It is this social worker's responsibility to supervise, support and develop the carer in the fostering task.
- The **Supervising Social Worker** will visit the carer regularly including at least 1 unannounced visit per annum. There would not normally be a regular programme of unannounced visits unless there were particular reasons for this. If a carer is being closely monitored for some reason, this will be made explicit to the carer.
- Supervising Social Workers are responsible for ensuring that the care offered to children in foster care is of a high standard and incorporates safe caring policies and risk assessments for each fostering family. Supervision meetings are an opportunity for all parties to raise issues of interest or concern. The supervising social workers also have a primary responsibility for assisting in the career development of carers, establishing training needs with them and completion of the Childrens Workforce Development Council portfolios.
- As set out in the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Service regulations 2011, all carers must undergo an **annual review**. This is an opportunity to look at progress in meeting targets set for the improvement of skills, to set new goals and an action plan for the next year. Training needs are assessed and commitment to further training agreed. Most carers enjoy training and attend courses which are offered. If, however, a carer is unwilling or unable to attend ongoing training then approval as a foster carer will eventually be withdrawn as the skills of the carer will not be able to reflect current practice. Foster Carer Reviews are chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.
- Foster carers are expected to keep a record of events relating to the child/ren in placement. Maintaining diaries/recordings/ medical information is considered an important part of the Foster Carer's role, and accurate factual and unbiased recording is important. These diary/recordings could, should the need arise, be used as evidence in legal proceedings.
- The physical and emotional health of children and young people is an important aspect of the Fostering Service role. The **Children in Care Health Team** regularly monitors the health of children in care and can be consulted by foster carers on any health issues. The Children in Care Health Team provides a service by visiting foster carer support groups and advising carers in any matters relating to health. The service also has links to the Children and Adults Mental Health Service (CAMHS) which provides consultation to foster carers and individual children by child psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers.
- There are regular **Foster Carer Business Meetings** open to all carers to discuss issues, , share information, access training and meet with social workers and Senior Managers from children's service.
- Nottingham City Council facilitates a number of Carer and Children's Support Groups across the city - these are run by carers with assistance from social workers and are locality based. They meet regularly in different venues of the city to provide informal support and an opportunity to share experiences.

The service recognises that fostering is an activity that involves all members of the family, including the children of the Foster Carers. It runs an annual 'Children who Foster' event for the birth and adopted children of carers. The group meet for activities during school holidays and provide an opportunity to discuss their member's special position and share any concerns they may have.

The service pays for all our carers to be members of **Fostering Network**. As members of the Fostering Network, carers have access to information and advice services by phone, mail and online facilities and the services of an Advice & Mediation worker whom carers can approach at any time for advice and support which is independent of that offered by the Department. Fostering Network contact details 0115 9231209 or via e-mail sarah.furby@fostering.net.

The Fostering Network Support Officer is invited to the Foster Carers Business meetings.

Nottingham City Fostering Service has close links with the specialist **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team**. Carers can approach the service for speedy and timely support for themselves and the children in placement through their supervising social worker or the social worker of the child they are fostering. The CAMHS Looked After Team provide regular training for Foster Carers on issues such as SDQ's and emotional well-being.

The voluntary organisation, NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) provides an independent **advocacy service** for all children and young people cared for by the service.

The service provides all carers with a '**Foster Carers' Handbook**' and a training manual, which gives detailed information about all areas of the fostering task.

All carers will be provided with contact numbers and email addresses for their supervising social workers and the service operates a daily duty line for urgent queries which operates from 8.30 am to 5pm. The daily duty social worker and manager are available on **0115 8762696** or via the extension for your supervising social worker. Out of hours, Nottingham City Council operates a 5-8 service **01158765600**, after this time the **Emergency Duty Team** are available on **0115 8761000**.

The service provides **social events**, educational outings, sports and leisure events for foster carers, their own children, and children in care at no cost to the carer.

A bi-monthly newsletter to all carers provides information, updates, letters, and memos about forthcoming events and developments in the service.

10. SHORT BREAKS TEAM

The Short Breaks Team consists of 2 full time equivalent social workers and is managed by the Resource Manager of 'Short Break Services'.

The scheme offers family-based short breaks to disabled children. Its aims are:

- To provide a flexible family-based short break care service to children and young people with a physical and / or learning disability in the City of Nottingham.
- To recruit, train and support carers to provide this service.
- To offer ongoing support to new and existing carers
- To raise the profile of foster carers within the Short Breaks Scheme
- To co-ordinate existing information about the area resources to ensure that a consistent and appropriate service is offered to children/young people and their families in the City of Nottingham.
- To address Equal Opportunities issues and meet the specific needs of individual children/young people taking into account: - disability issues, gender, sexual orientation, race, and cultural needs.

The team is based at the Mary Potter Health Centre and is an integral part of the Children's Health and Disability Service. This service offers specialist social work support and provision to disabled children in the City of Nottingham. The Short Breaks Team has a wide range of expertise, and knowledge of fostering and placement needs of disabled children, as well as disability issues. There

are effective working links with the Fostering and Adoption Service in the recruitment and pre approval training of new carers. The Short Breaks Carers and Team have an additional programme of activities throughout the year as well as their own support group, but are also invited to join in with mainstream events.

The Scheme works closely with the Department's Training Team to ensure a range of specialist training workshops are provided on disability issues.

11. TRAINING

While the homestudy is being conducted, applicants are required to attend a 3 day pre-approval training course. The objectives of the training are to enable applicants to understand the nature of fostering and the role of the foster carer and to equip themselves as far as possible for the task ahead. The content of pre-approval training is as follows:

Day 1

1. Who are the Children in Care?
2. Implications for foster carers of Every Child Matters/ Five Outcomes.
3. Valuing Diversity Identity & Culture.
4. Working Together with Birth Families.
5. Statutory Reviews – Role and responsibilities involved.
6. Working in Partnership with the Department.
7. CWDC Standards / Introduction to completing a Portfolio.

Day 2

1. Brain Development in Early Years, attachment issues.
2. Child Development.
3. What is Abuse and Neglect?
4. Handling 'disclosures' from Young People
5. Issues for "Children Who Foster" i.e. the foster carers own birth children or adopted children

Day 3

1. Safer Caring.
2. Introduction to childcare law.
3. Life story work.
4. Endings – moving children on positively.
5. Managing behaviour - what works

The service has a comprehensive post-approval training programme for carers. Its aim is to improve the quality of the care provided to children in the public care system. There is a long history of involving carers and users in the design and delivery of appropriate and effective training. Some joint training between social worker and carers also takes place, helping to improve mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities, and to enhance and develop more effective communication and working practices.

The training programme takes into account the availability of carers and their other commitments. Some of the training takes place at the weekends some in the evenings and some during weekdays.

The training is modular so that carers can:

- a) Access courses/modules flexibly
- b) Develop a portfolio of skills and knowledge
- c) Link modules to appropriate qualifications

- d) Access ongoing opportunities for personal/professional development.

On April 1 2004 the Government introduced the 'Childrens Workforce Development Standards' through which they hope to strengthen foster carers understanding of their role in working with children in care.

Currently all Nottingham City carers have completed or are working towards completion of the standards. New carers will be expected to attend workshops the service has developed.

12. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Nottingham City Council is committed to continuous improvement. For the Fostering and Adoption Service this means a number of the things. It is our responsibility to ensure that we keep pace with changes in legislation and best practice guidelines. In order to achieve this, work practices are regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect such changes. An example of this is the implementation of a Signs of Safety into our documentation and practice.

The service values the views of all members of the foster family. We recognise our responsibility to actively seek their opinion in order to verify that they are receiving the highest level of support and care, and to ensure that the service is developing in a manner that makes this possible. We are able to capture their views through regular consultation using a variety of tools and methods. These include feedback forms, annual surveys, and regular business meetings. Comments and suggestions obtained are reviewed and help guide service development.

Our service continues to develop through sustained cross-sector partnership working. Links have been developed and maintained with partners internal and external to the local authority. Work with partners has helped expand our service in terms of the help and support we are able to offer to our foster families. Partners recently worked with include the following;

- Nottingham City Council's Sports and Leisure Team
- The Lenton Centre
- Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team
- Compass
- Children in Care Council
- Business in the Community
- The Trent Vineyard

13. COMPLAINTS

The service regards a formal complaints process as an essential part of its pro-active approach to user feedback and constant improvement in service delivery to both foster carers and children in care. All carers are made aware of the complaints process which is in line with published statutory guidance called 'Getting the Best from Complaints' issued by the Department of Health.

Many of the reforms stated in the guidance were already in place in Nottingham. These included:

- a dedicated Complaints Manager in post,
- a 12-month cut off period for accepting complaints (based on the Local Government Ombudsman model)
- advocacy arrangements in place for children making complaints

20 complaints have been received between April 1st 2014 and March 31st 2015

14. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE REVIEW AND UPDATE

This document will be reviewed and updated on or by 1st November 2016.

Signed

Gareth Dakin - Assessment and Quality Assurance Principal Manager – Fostering

Signed

Sonia Cain – Service Manager Fostering and Adoption (Registered Manager)

Signed.....

Steve Comb – Head of Service Children in Care

Signed.....

Helen Blackman - Director Children’s Services

Signed.....

Alison Michalska -Corporate Director Children & Families

Signed.....

Councillor Mellen - Chair of Corporate Parenting

Fostering Team Structure



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Corporate Parenting Board 16th November 2015

Title of paper:	Children in Care Placements – Update	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Katy Ball Director of Childrens Commissioning & Procurement Candida Brudenell Assistant Chief Executive	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Anne Partington, Service Manager, Placements Service. 0115 8764722 / anne.partington@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Holly Macer, Lead Contract Officer, Placement Service, 0115 8764816, holly.macer@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	n/a	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report provides an update from Nottingham City Council Placement Service, including children in care data, performance, commissioning priorities and developments with external providers.		
Recommendation(s):		
1	For the Corporate Parenting Board to note the contents of the report.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The report provides an update from Nottingham City Council Placement Service.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

Update On Placements

2.1 As of the 13th October 2015, there were 595 children in care, with 59% (382) of these being in external provision. The majority of these children (451) are placed with foster

carers, 256 with Independent Fostering Agencies and 195 with internal foster carers. The number of children in external residential and semi-independent provision has been reducing recently but currently stands at 62 and 64 respectively.

- 2.2 At this point, 83.6% of children were placed within 20 miles of Nottingham City. Analysis of this undertaken during September suggests that 60% of these are in foster placements and 32% in residential placements. A number of these will be specifically placed outside of the area due to safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3 The Placement Service has had extensive staffing changes in the last year, with 3 new Placements Officers starting in the team. We are developing their areas of expertise, with one taking a lead for Fostering and one for residential, both linking with Nottingham City Council internal teams to develop and maintain positive working relationships and effective business processes.
- 2.4 The Lead Contract Officer role now includes responsibility for Market Development and work is planned to understand and shape developments in the market to meet current challenges. We are aiming to place children in foster care where possible, reducing the need for residential placements. We are also working closely with the Nottingham City Council Fostering Service to develop our use of internal fostering provision.

Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

- 2.5 In April 2014, Nottingham City Council published its first Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy to determine the way in which Children in Care (CiC) placements are commissioned, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market.
- 2.6 An update paper has been published one year into the Strategy to revisit the vision and commitments made and to provide an overview of the progress to date upon each of the agreed commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market. The paper also provides an update on the City's sufficiency requirements, providing detail on any change within the market strengths and weaknesses.
- 2.7 The strategy is included within Appendix 1.

Commissioning Priorities

- 2.8 The current priorities for development of placement services for children in care as follows:
 - Complex Fostering for children and young people who require intensive / specialist support within a fostering placement and could be suitable for children and young people transitioning from a residential care environment, foster care or new entries to the care system
 - Bridging Fostering to stabilise, assess, prepare and transition a young person to an appropriate long term placement which could be suitable for young people who

are new to the care system and professionals require further information before determining what placement would be of most benefit to the young person.

- Semi Independence Framework is being reviewed and recommissioned as the current framework is due to end on 31.10.15. It is acknowledged that the market has evolved significantly since its implementation and in addition to our own internal semi-independent estate, we intend to continue to commission these services from external providers as required.

2.9 We are currently exploring both the development of internal services and the commissioning opportunities in relation to these priorities.

East Midlands Regional Children's Framework

2.10 The East Midlands Regional Provider Framework for Looked After Children placed in Independent Foster Care and Residential Care was implemented in March 2011 for 4 years, with an extension agreed until December 2015. A full review has been undertaken during 2015, with 9 local authorities involved and committed to the development of a new framework from February 2016. The return deadline for tenders for the new East Midlands Regional Children's Framework was on 2.10.15, the evaluation period runs from 02.10.15 to 11.12.15, with the awards being issued on 30.12.15.

2.11 Over the last 4 years the number of residential and fostering placements made by Nottingham City on the framework has increased from 213 in 2011 / 12 to 482 in 2014 / 15, with only 46 placements being made off framework in 2014 / 15.

2.12 Northamptonshire County Council manage the regional framework on behalf of the other local authorities, currently providing both contract management and quality assurance support. The cost of this is shared between the local authorities who are part of the consortium and is based on the amount of placements made.

Residential Care Contract

2.13 As the result of a robust procurement process, an external provider of children's residential care was awarded a block contract for ten placements over a maximum length of ten years. The contract was implemented in April 2015 with an initial five placements, with a phased implementation up to full capacity of ten placements by November 2015.

2.14 At September 2015, eight young people had placements through the contract, all in children's homes that were judged by Ofsted to be either Good or Outstanding. Quality of provision is central to the contract and is monitored through an Outcomes Framework, regular performance management and contract monitoring meetings and positive partnership working.

2.15 The contract is also anticipated to achieve a significant reduction in local authority spend on residential care, as well as increase placement stability and the ability to place children within Nottinghamshire.

3. **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

N/A

4. **FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

Savings identified from the Residential Care Contract and will be considered within the commissioning priorities. These are managed through the Big Ticket process.

5. **LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)**

Risk management processes will be undertaken prior to commencing any procurement or commissioning activity. There are no legal or Crime and Disorder Act implications at this stage. Any future procurement and commissioning activity will comply with EU Procurement Legislation and guidance will be sought through the relevant Legal and HR channels.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Children in Care Commissioning & Sufficiency Strategy: One Year On. 2015/16.

8. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

Nottingham City Council's Children and Young People's Plan

Nottingham City Council Plan



Nottingham
City Council

Children in Care Placements - Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

**A Strategic Approach to the Commissioning
of Children in Care Placements**

2014 – 2016

2015 Update: One Year On

“Getting it right first time, on time, every time”

**Early Intervention and Market Development, Quality and Commissioning,
Children and Families, Nottingham City Council**

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Background and Purpose

All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked After Children and Young People. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989.

In response to this duty, April 2014, Nottingham City Council published its first Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy to determine the way in which Children in Care (CiC) placements are commissioned, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market.

The purpose of this update is to revisit the vision and commitments made in the Strategy and to provide an overview of the progress to date upon each of the agreed commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market.

The paper will also provide an update on the City's sufficiency requirements, providing detail on any change within the market strengths and weaknesses.

Vision and Commitment

In line with the Nottingham City Council Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, the overarching ambition of the Strategy is to ensure that all children and young people are given the best start in life and have the opportunity to thrive and achieve.

The Vision - Getting it right first time, on time, every time

Nottingham City Council will provide every child and young person with the best possible placement, which meets their needs, wishes and feelings and provides them with the opportunity to thrive and achieve.

Nottingham City Council will drive a dynamic, outcomes-focused, child-centred placement market, which offers good value, quality and choice, to ensure that the right placement is found the first time, on time, every time.

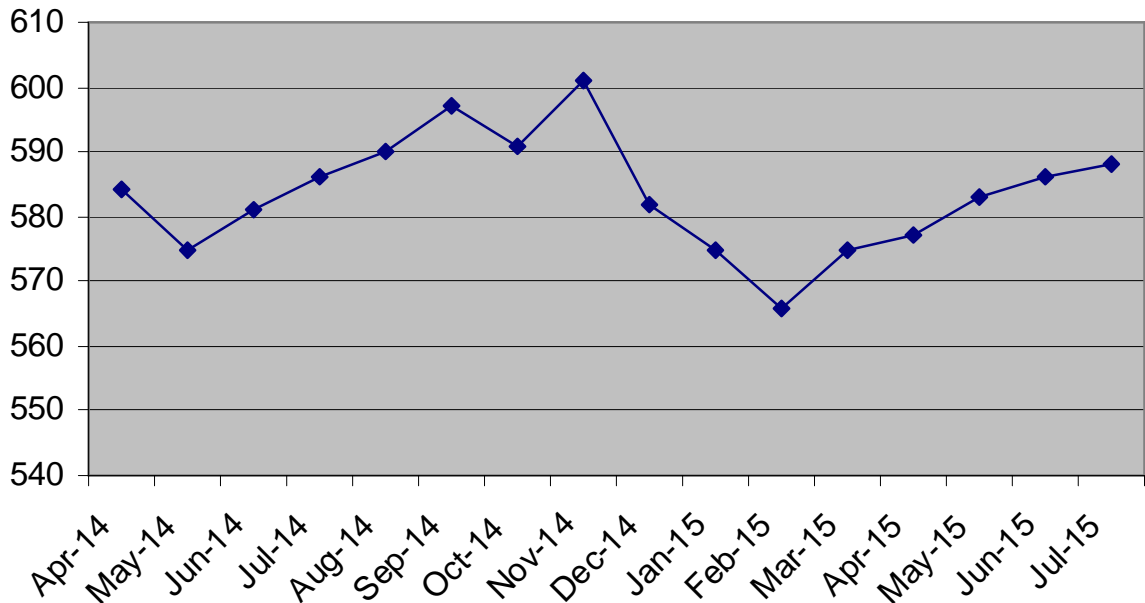
The Commitment

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

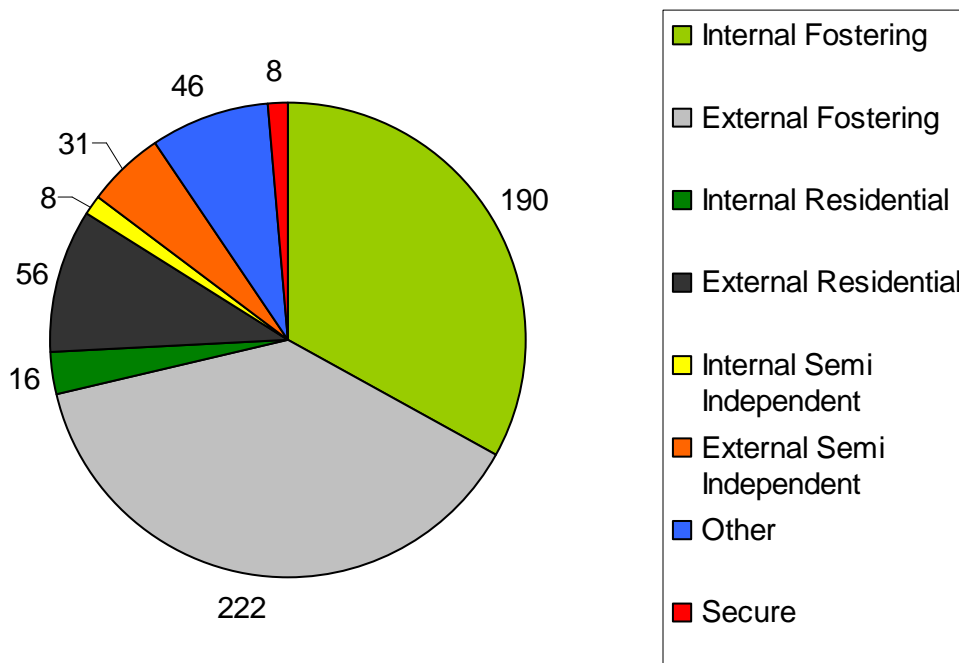
- ✓ Secure the best possible placement for every child and young person, in an open market, with consistent application of processes and standards across internal and external provision.
- ✓ Place a minimum of 90% (fostering) and 80% (residential) of children and young people 'locally'. For those placements made outside of the local area, Nottingham City Council will ensure that the same levels of monitoring and quality standards are applied.
- ✓ Articulate to providers what excellent outcomes look like for each child and young person and explore incentives for over-achievement.
- ✓ Measure children and young people's outcomes using a standardised approach across all placements, ensuring an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.
- ✓ Listen to children and young people and maximise opportunities for their feedback to inform and influence service delivery.
- ✓ Provide quality, standardised 'life skills' development support and entitlements for young people transitioning into independence.
- ✓ Implement effective early intervention, for example;
 - Financial commitment where a specialist/therapeutic placement is required, for a period of time determined by a qualified professional
 - Ensure that all eligible young people are engaged in the Family Nurse Partnership
 - Escalate and recommend change when a young person has experienced multiple placement breakdowns
- ✓ Implement robust commissioning, contract and quality assurance processes.

Analysis undertaken into the CiC cohort provides detailed insight into the City's sufficiency requirements, revealing the market strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities. This section provides an overview of the current market position.

Children in Care Population (April 2014 – July 2015)



Nottingham has the 19th highest rate of Children in Care per 10,000 children, yet despite its high ranking, the City has a lower rate than seven of its eleven statistical neighbours.



The above chart demonstrates the number of CiC placed in each placement type as of 31.03.2015. 'Other' includes CiC placed for adoption, with parents and in NHS settings.

Proportion of Internal Versus External Placements at 31.03.2015

Fostering (412)		
	Number	Percentage
Internal	190	46% (↓ 5%)
External	222	54%
Residential (72)		
	Number	Percentage
Internal	16	22% (↓ 5%)
External	56	78%
Semi Independence (39)		
	Number	Percentage
Internal	8	21% (↓ 4%)
External	31	79%

Gender of Children in Care

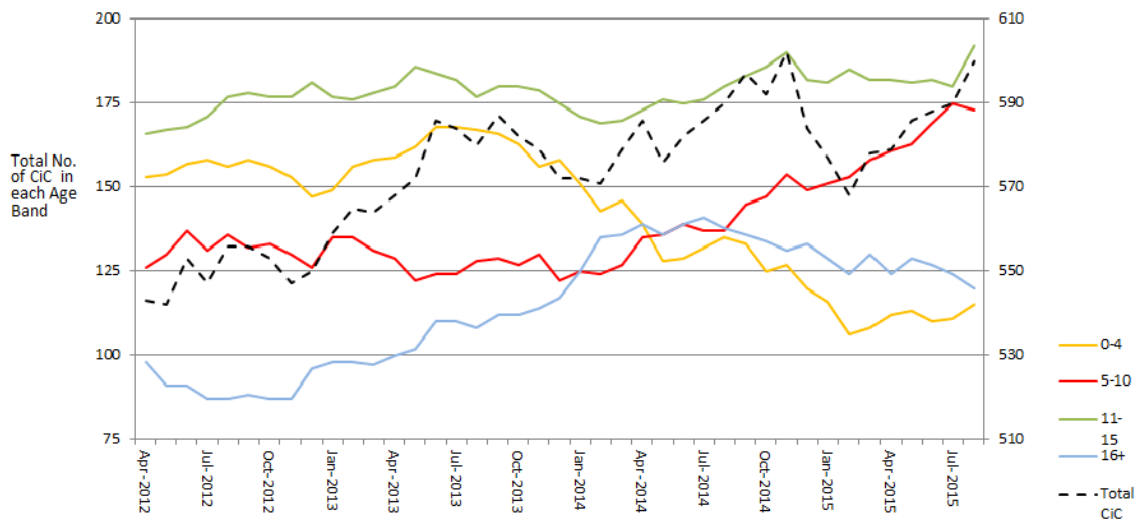
	Male (count)	Male (%)	Female (count)	Female (%)	Total
Internal Fostering	90	47%	100	53%	190
External Fostering	95	43%	127	57%	222
Internal Residential	9	56%	7	44%	16
External Residential	33	59%	23	41%	56
Internal Semi Independent	4	50%	4	50%	8
External Semi Independent	15	48%	16	52%	31

Legal Status of Children in Care

	Section 20 (Voluntary)	Full Care Order	Interim Care Order	Placement Order
Internal Fostering	41	59	45	45
External Fostering	36	130	24	32
Internal Residential	6	10	0	0
External Residential	31	24	1	0
Internal Semi Independent	6	2	0	0
External Semi Independent	19	10	2	0

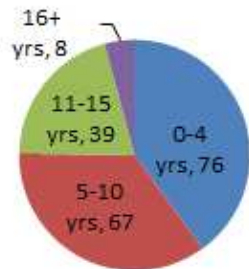
Age of Children in Care

Age band profile over time

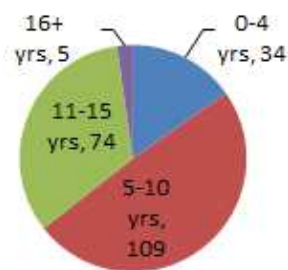


Age at time of placement

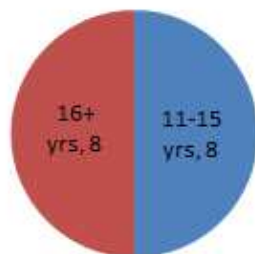
Internal Fostering



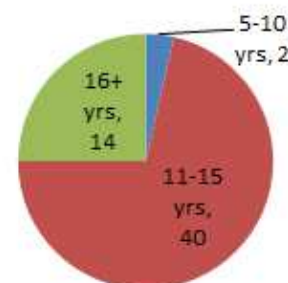
External Fostering



Internal Residential



External Residential



As expected, the internal fostering service cares for a higher proportion of the younger cohort (0-4 years), whilst external fostering cares for a higher proportion of the older, and often more complex, cohort.

Key Market Messages

✘ Areas for Development

Carried over from Strategy at April 2014

- Develop quality and consistency in the support provision for young people placed in external semi-independent accommodation
- Further develop consistent application of processes and monitoring standards across internal and external provision.
- Insufficient expert knowledge of what does and does not work (e.g. most appropriate placement model for victims/perpetrators of sexual abuse)
- Meeting and effectively de-escalating the needs of the most complex children and young people remains a challenge.
- Limited financial resources.
- Lack of incentives for providers to ensure excellent outcomes for children and young people in their care.

Added at March 2015

- Limited availability across placement provision is restricting choice and matching prioritisation, particularly for local complex fostering and residential provision and for all emergency provision.
- Risk of market instability, monopolies and over saturation, due to competing local authority and provider priorities.
- Development of fostering opportunities for children within Nottingham City Council internal provision and commissioning priorities

✔ Strengths and Opportunities

Carried over from Strategy at April 2014

- Effective provider, local authority and partner relations, enabling improved market influence and management.
- Opportunities to maximise the effectiveness and define the unique selling point of internal provider.
- Further integration of Health, Education and Social Care

Added at March 2015

- Improved East Midlands Regional Provider Framework, due to be implemented in February 2016, provides an opportunity for more creative and efficient commissioning arrangements.
- Residential block contract securing local placements and reducing spend.
- Comprehensive Quality Assurance process.
- Capacity to scrutinise value for money and budget management (including Health contributions)

Year One Achievements

Based upon the accelerated strands identified within the Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy and the first phase of the Implementation Plan, this section provides an overview of progress to date.

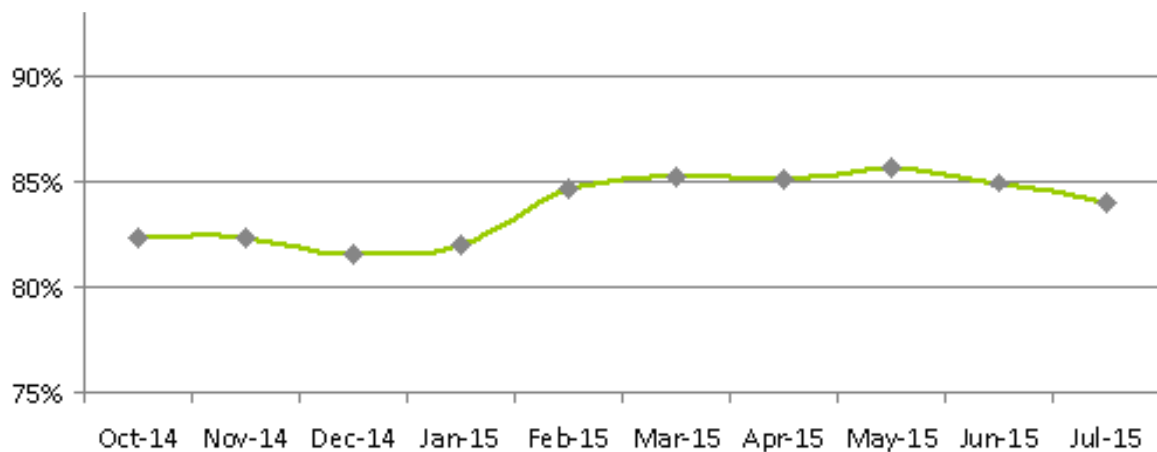
Market Development

In order to shape the market to meet demand, NCC have maintained a strong visible presence and consulted directly with the market, articulating a clear direction for what is required internally and externally to best meet the needs of CiC. Work continues to be undertaken at a local, regional and sub-regional level.

Local Placements

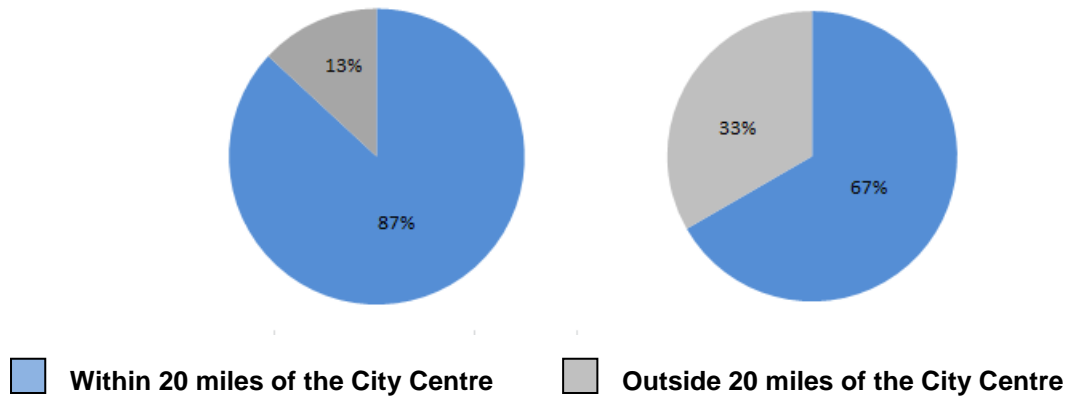
Where appropriate, the priority is for all children and young people to remain living locally, taking into consideration maintaining a young person's educational, health, social and cultural connections and access to resources. NCC has pledged to ensure that a minimum of 85% of CiC live within 20 miles of the City. The below graph demonstrates the change in this percentage. Despite the more recent decline since May 2015, the percentage of local placements has increased overall.

NCC continues to work collaboratively with the provider market and with regional local authorities to ensure that the use of local placements for local children and young people is maximised. Small scale block contracting is increasing local placement capacity, whilst broader market development will improve co-ordination and advanced placement planning.



Fostering

Residential



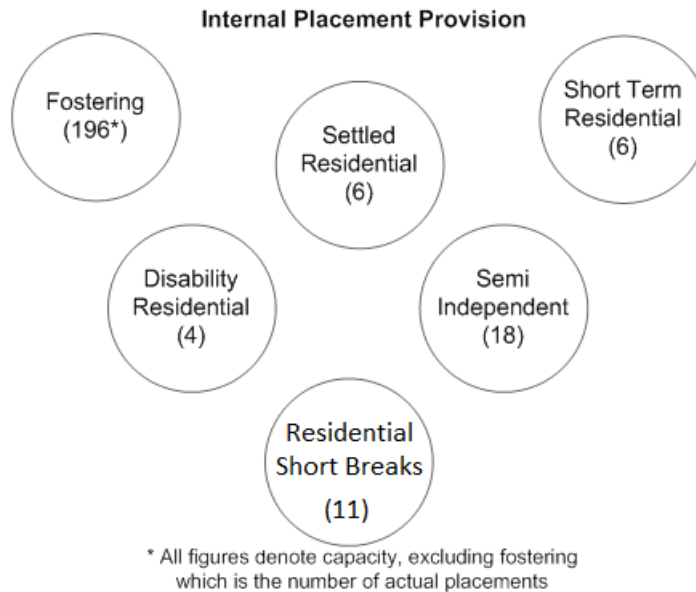
The Strategy makes a commitment to place a minimum of 90% (fostering) and 80% (residential) of children and young people within a 20 mile radius of the City Centre. The above charts demonstrate the percentage of all placements meeting these criteria at 31.03.2015. The percentage of fostering placements within the local boundary has increased by 1% from the previous year, however has decreased by 3% for residential placements.

It should be acknowledged that many of the residential placements will have been intentionally placed outside of the local authority area, to best respond to the needs of the young person. Reasons can include; young people at risk from individuals/affiliations in the local area; young people requiring highly specialist provision which is not available locally.

A recommendation from this update paper is to revise the Strategy's commitment to align with NCC's manifesto pledge for 85% of all children and young people to be placed within the 20 mile radius.

Internal Market Development

NCC are committed to maximising the effectiveness of internal provision and securing the best possible placement for every child and young person, in an open market, with consistent application of processes and standards across internal and external provision.



Fostering

At 31.03.2015, 46% of young people were placed with internal foster carers. NCC have pledged to increase this proportion to 50% by March 2016. It is anticipated that this will enable more children to be placed locally, reduce external spend and achieve improved placement management throughout a child's journey through care, ultimately leading to overall improved outcomes.

In order to achieve this, the internal provider will be competing with independent fostering agencies who are offering attractive carer packages, which due to financial and resource constraints, it would not be feasible for the local authority to match. Instead NCC will utilise recruitment expertise to develop and market the internal provider's own unique selling point. Once carers are recruited, it will aim to improve upon current retention rates through quality support and training opportunities.

It is acknowledged that achieving the target will be challenging and will take time. Interim external commissioning arrangements will therefore be progressed to secure local foster placements. This will require effective cross directorate working and careful market management to ensure that interdependent priorities are effectively managed and do not compromise the overall ambition.

Residential

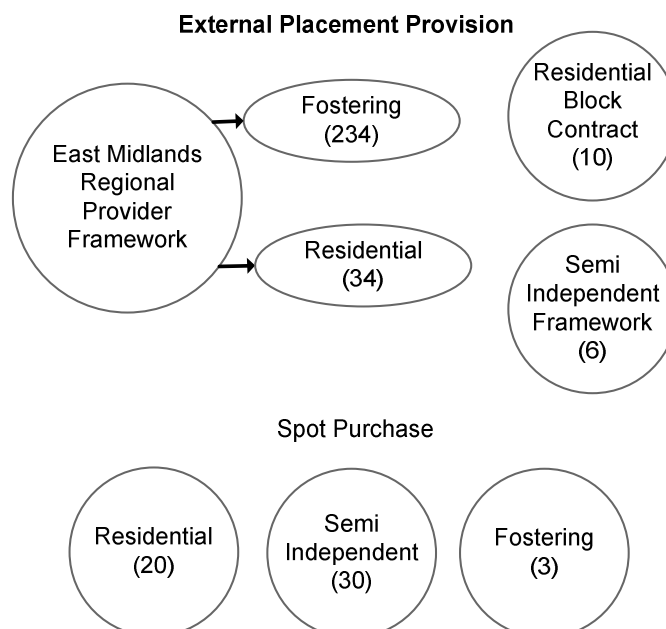
NCC has 16 residential care home placements across six small group homes. There are no plans to increase the current estate, however there is the intention to change the registration of one of the small group homes from short term to long term. This will achieve placement stability for the cohort and for the home, however it will impact upon the number of external residential placement referrals as there is no definitive indication that the current need will reduce in the near future.

Semi Independent

NCC has 18 semi independent placements across five homes. Two new semi independent homes have been commissioned since the Strategy's implementation, offering consistent quality, flexible accommodation and support.

External Market Development

The external market meets a significant proportion of the City's CIC placement needs, through framework, block contracting and spot purchasing arrangements. The Placement Service undertakes effective, consistent procurement, contract management and quality assurance of all external placements. Despite the intention to maximise internal provision, it is acknowledged that there is an ongoing need to commission from the external market.



East Midlands Regional Provider Framework

Implemented in 01.04.2011, and extended to 31.12.2015, the Framework has brought about a number of benefits including; efficiencies, shared risk, buying power, market influence and information and resource sharing. NCC has been working collaboratively with eight regional authorities to inform the development of the new Framework, which will be implemented in February 2016.

It is Nottingham City's intention to remain in the Framework, which provides the opportunity for more dynamic arrangements to;

- Maintain a diverse, healthy and competitive market by enabling new providers to join the Framework annually throughout the life of the contract.
- Achieve efficiencies through streamlined processes and coordinated contract management and performance monitoring.
- Enable further targeted commissioning through a mini competition process, omitting the need to undertake further lengthy and resource heavy procurement exercises.

Residential Block Contract

A block contract for ten residential placements with one external provider was implemented in April 2015. It is anticipated that the contract will achieve;

- An increased percentage of children and young people placed locally.
- A significant reduction in local authority spend on residential care (alongside improved budget management and forecasting).
- Efficiencies via reduced staff time and travel expenses (e.g. social care and quality assurance visits).

- Efficiencies via reduced need to commission out of area services (e.g. CAMHS, education).
- Greater forward planning for the local authority and provider, leading to improved outcomes and placement stability.
- Greater consistency of service delivered.

Remand Foster Care Pilot

NCC embarked upon a 12 month sub-regional pilot for the foster care of remanded young people, with Nottinghamshire County and Derby City. The pilot was commissioned through an Independent Foster Agency and involved retaining several foster carers who were specifically trained and supported to care for young people who had been remanded to local authority care. Evaluation of the pilot concluded that it would not be financially viable in the long term, due to the low usage across the life of the pilot.

Semi Independent Provision

A Framework contract for providers of semi independent support and accommodation was implemented on 01.11.2011 and is due to expire on 31.10.2015. In 2014/15, only 23% of external semi independent placements were made through the Framework. The remainder were spot purchased. These figures have been consistent throughout the lifetime of the Framework.

Since the Framework's implementation, the market has developed significantly. As the provision is unregulated, there are very few barriers to new providers establishing themselves. This proves beneficial in terms of ensuring a diverse market which provides choice and encourages healthy competition - however it also poses a risk in terms of quality and consistency of services provided. Future commissioning intentions are currently being explored and will be progressed towards the end of 2015.

In response to the imminent need for emergency semi independent provision, small scale retained arrangements were made to reduce the likelihood of need not being met.

A block contract for Supported Lodgings was decommissioned early to prevent unnecessary spend.

Quality Assurance

Through a robust quality assurance process, NCC ensures that all CiC are accessing well matched, high quality and value for money care placements. A system for monitoring providers determines the level and frequency of quality assurance visits, which are undertaken by the Lead Quality Assurance Officer and selected social care professionals. Dedicated semi independence experts have been trained to undertake visits to ensure consistency throughout semi independent provision.

A suite of protocols have been implemented to address;

- a provider receiving an 'Inadequate' or 'Adequate' / 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgement
- concerns around a providers' financial viability
- decline in provider quality
- spot purchasing of a non-vetted provider
- authorisation of Out of Area placements

Closer partnership working with regional colleagues is maximising shared intelligence.

→→→ Placement Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy - Implementation Plan (Phase Two)→→→

Phase Two Implementation Plan

Targeted Market Development (*October 2015 – January 2016*)

In response to the current local capacity issue, imminent market development work is required to mitigate the risk of not meeting demand. The service will consult directly with the market, specifically around complex fostering and residential provision, with the aim of creating greater local capacity and placement choice. This will require effective cross directorate working and careful market management to ensure that any arrangements with the external market do not compromise the ambition of internal provision.

The Placement Service will articulate to providers what excellent outcomes look like for each child and young person and explore incentives for over-achievement.

East Midlands Regional Provider Framework

- Evaluation / scoring of tenders (*19 October 2015 to 13 November 2015*)
- Moderation (*16 November 2015 – 05 December 2015*)
- Implementation (*01 February 2016*)

Residential Block Contract

- Phased implementation to full capacity of ten placements by *November 2015*
- Implementation of Placement Matching Panel (*January 2016*)
- Ongoing contract monitoring and performance management

Fostering

Targeted fostering models:

- Bridging Placements: short term placements to stabilise, assess, prepare and transition a young person to an appropriate long term placement
- Complex Needs Placements: skilled, trained, experienced and supported carers for young people requiring intensive/specialist support

Exploration to determine whether these models will be developed and delivered by the internal provider, or commissioned from the external market (*October 2015*). Estimated Implementation by *July 2016*.

Semi Independent Provision

- Current Framework expires **31 October 2015**
- Options appraisal for future commissioning intentions (**November 2015**)
- Estimated implementation of new arrangements by **March 2016**

Placement Service Capacity

- Capacity to increase Continuing Health Care Contributions (**June 2015 – June 2016**)
- Capacity to review financial contracting arrangements with providers (**October 2015 – March 2016**)

Outcomes (*timescales TBC*)

- Capture themes emerging from on-going quality assurance activity including: (1) how to incentivise excellent outcomes for the child/young person and (2) identifying what works when caring for victims/perpetrators of sexual abuse, in order to help define the most appropriate placement model
- Measure children and young people's outcomes using a standardised approach across all placements, ensuring an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.
- Implement effective early intervention, for example;
 - Financial commitment where a specialist/therapeutic placement is required, for a period of time determined by a qualified professional
 - Ensure that all eligible young people are engaged in the Family Nurse Partnership
 - Escalate and recommend change when a young person has experienced multiple placement breakdowns

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 16th November 2015

Title of paper:	Adoption & Permanency	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman – Director of Children’s Social Care and Vulnerable Children and Families helen.blackman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Wards affected: ALL
Report author(s) and contact details:	Sonia Cain, Service Manager Fostering & Adoption, 0115 8764526 Sonia.cain@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Claire Shepherd, Acting Adoption Manager, 0115 8765132 claire.shepherd@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:		
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	30th October 2015	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>The report provides an overview of the permanency performance of the Local Authority and the number of children placed for Adoption and Special Guardianship. This year has been a challenging one as the impact of the Re:B:S judgement and allied judicial scrutiny of adoption plans has been working through the Courts.</p> <p>There has been a significant reduction in the numbers of children nationally being placed for adoption and a corresponding increase in Special Guardianship Orders.</p> <p>There is a national review of Special Guardianship being undertaken at present in order to align the initial viabilities, assessments and support of Special Guardians, which is going to have a significant cost implication to the Council in the next year and also have staffing implications.</p> <p>The Government have undertaken a consultation and expression of interest in Regionalisation of Adoption Agencies, mainly concentrating on those authorities which do not place many children for adoption, the East Midlands Adoption Consortium (EMAC) are not part of this cohort but have submitted and been granted funding for a development worker to explore more</p>		

collaborative working in the fields of recruitment, training and adoption support. This will be a two year project and enable EMAC to explore more joint working and economies of scale in providing Adoption Services.

Recommendation(s):

1	It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board notes the performance to date in Adoption and Special Guardianship and the activities being undertaken to minimise delays.
2.	It is recommended that the Adoption and Permanency Report is presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in May in future as this will enable the Adoption Leadership Board data to be considered for the previous year and provide accurate data for the year end to be collated.

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is important that members of the Corporate Parenting Board are kept informed of the activities being undertaken to achieve permanency for those who the Board have corporate parental responsibility for. It is also imperative that the Board is given the opportunity to comment on current activity.
- 1.2 The report also makes reference to the actions relating to Strategic Priority Statement (SPS) two of the ‘Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2014 – 2016: Valuing the future of our Children in Care and Care Leavers’ and provides a brief update on progress made against these actions – see section 2.19.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 Nottingham City continues to make adoption plans for a significant number of children in its care. Many of these children have complex medical conditions, a number of the children are part of a sibling group and children with disabilities or have birth parents with complex histories. Adoption plans are made knowing that many of these children are considered ‘hard to place’ but with a strong belief that if children cannot live with their birth family, adoption will provide the permanency and the security they need to achieve positive outcomes.
- 2.2 The Adoption Scorecard (introduced in 2012) allows local authorities and other adoption agencies to monitor their own performance and compare it with that of others at critical points in the child’s journey towards adoption.
- 2.3 The government are incrementally reducing the timescale by which children should be adopted year on year.
- 2.4 Successfully placing more complex children can negatively affect our timeliness as the complexity of these cases brings more days to our scorecard pro-rata.

2.5 Since the last report, the service has stabilised and is moving forward to establish standards and provide a robust service to both children and adopters. Three separate teams have been established within the Fostering and Adoption Services, these are;

- Fostering
- Adoption
- Post Order

Work is underway to employ permanent social workers to ensure that Fostering and Adoption are able to attract and retain staff,

Adoption Data to 31st October 2015

2.6 In Nottingham City currently there are 91 children with adoptions plans:-

- 91 Children's Best Interests Decision for adoption have been made
- 30 Children with Placement Orders where homefinding is active
- 4 Children Matched
- 35 Children placed with adopters
- 22 Special Guardianship Orders –Nottingham City is currently paying 260 Special Guardianship Allowance and this is going to increase over time.

2.7 There have been 26 children adopted and it is hoped that over 50 will be adopted by the 31st March 2016. This is a decrease on our performance in 2014/15 where we achieved 70 adoptions for the whole year, but a number of these adoptions were made in the first quarter, the children having been placed during the previous reporting year and the Orders being granted in 2014/15. The reduction in projected numbers of children being placed for adoption reflects a national trend whereby the increasing use of Special Guardianship Orders and Court decision making has had a negative impact on the plans for adoption.

2.8 There are 30 children with placement orders:-

- 4 matched waiting for ADM
- 10 booked into Panel for their match (a sibling group of 6 being placed together is included in this figure)
- 2 siblings placed with foster to adopt carers
- 9 Placement orders granted in the last 3 months.
- A sibling group of 2 children have been waiting over 11 months

- 2.9 There are a number of children (4) whose plans for adoption are to be rescinded which are currently underway through the Courts.
- 2.10 The Authority is currently homefinding for 52 children. Data relating to this activity are presented as followed;

Gender

28 of these children are male

24 of these children are female

Age

35 are under 5 years old

15 are between 5 – 10 years old

1 child is over 11 years old

Ethnicity

28 are white

2 are black

16 are dual-heritage

6 are other her

Sibling Groups

There are 12 sibling groups (these include 26 children)

For children who we are unable to place with our internal adopters, we make use of our Interagency Adoption budget, however recently the Government have announced that they are providing funding for hard to place children, sibling groups, children with disabilities and BME so that Nottingham can reclaim any inter-agency fees paid this year to place children with other agencies.

2.12 Recruitment

We currently have over 20 adopters who are in the process of being assessed, but the challenge which we share with a number of local authorities is to recruit enough adopters to match the complexity of the children with whom we would wish to place. We have close links with neighbouring authorities as a member of the East Midlands Adoption Consortium and regularly share profiles in relation to adopters who are waiting and children with adoption plans. We are currently exploring closer links with Derby City with a view to exchanging adopters where we have not been able to place because of location or specific needs. Along with other Adoption Agencies we are finding that adopters are waiting longer for placements as the number of

children with a plan for adoption dwindles. We are therefore going to have to refresh the Adoption Recruitment Strategy to target our recruitment activity to older and hard to place children.

2.13 Adoption Support Fund

We have been successful in developing a proactive service in applications to the Adoption Support Fund. We welcome this initiative as a means of continuing the support we offer to adopters who have adopted some of our most complex children. The Adoption Support Fund was established and went live in April 2015 for an initial one year period. There is uncertainty as to whether the ASF will continue beyond March 2016. However Nottingham City have successfully made 16 applications and to date have received over £100,000 to support therapeutic interventions for adopted children.

- 2.12** The Adoption Support Services Advisor is a pivotal and increasingly important role within the service as they make all the applications. This role needs to be recognised and funded within the service.

Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy (2014 – 2016)

- 2.18 As highlighted in 1.1, it is imperative that the Board is given the opportunity to comment on current activity. It is also important to show how service activity is linked to the Board's strategic priorities. Service activity has contributed to Strategic Priority Statement two of the CiC and Care Leavers strategy that states,

'Nottingham City Council believes that all children should grow up with their birth families. Where this is not able to happen we will secure permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence orders or long-term fostering.'

- 2.19 A number of activities are being undertaken by the Fostering and Adoption Service in order to meet this priority. The activities, as well as the progress made against them are described as followed.

Action:

We monitor the progress of children in the adoption process to help ensure children are adopted in a timely manner:

Activity:

The Adoption Analysis Journal (AAJ) The AAJ is a key document used in Adoption Tracker Meetings, which progress and track adoption plans for every child. The AAJ is produced at the end of each month to provide a detailed analysis of all children in the adoption process at the different stages. This also enables early detection of potential delays and promotes forward planning to prevent those delays.

The AAJ is used as part of the Exit Planning Meetings where adoption cases and how they are being progressed is discussed in detail.

Action:

Adoption Placement Advisors (APAs) work closely with social workers to actively seek appropriate placements for children in the adoption process.

Activity:

Regular meetings are held between the Fostering and Adoption Service Manager and the APAs. These meetings are used to ensure homefinding is initiated as early as possible in an attempt to secure permanency through adoption quickly.

Action:

The authority has commenced a rolling programme of Profiling Evenings, as well as participated in Adoption Activity Days. Both provide an opportunity to create matches for our children with adopters.

Activities:

Profile Evenings are run jointly with members of EMAC, on a six-weekly cycle. All remaining Profile Evenings have been booked for the remainder of the financial year.

Adoption Activity Days (AADs) are run by CoramBAAF. The Authority attends on average two ADDs per year.

The Profile Evenings/Activity Days Tracker records the impact of these activities.

The combined impact of the activities described has led to an increase in the number of children that the Authority has secured permanency for when compared to this time last year.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 With the Special Guardianship Review there is going to be an increase in the statutory responsibilities and assessments that are required in this field which will require funding. This will also have an impact on the fostering service in the connected person's arena.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 None

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 None

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy (2014 – 2016): Valuing the Future of our Children in Care and Care Leavers (2014)
<http://gossweb.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nccextranet/index.aspx?articleid=10687>

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 16th November 2015

Title of paper:	Children in Care Service (Concise) Performance Report: Quarter One and Two 2015	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman – Director of Children’s Social Care and Vulnerable Children and Families helen.blackman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Wards affected: ALL
Report author(s) and contact details:	Steve Comb, Head of Children in Care, 0115 8764024 Steve.Comb@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Kwesi Williams, Project Officer – Children in Care, 0115 8762684 Kwesi.Williams@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Elise Ashworth, Insight Manager (Analytical) 0115 8764844 Elise.Ashworth@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	30 th October 2015	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>In order to ensure continual service development and to provide the best support to our children in care and care leavers, it is essential that the performance of the Children in Care service is monitored and open to scrutiny by Corporate Parenting Board (‘Board’) members. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data relevant to the areas being discussed at the November 2015 Corporate Parenting Board meeting. The report highlights results covering the first and second quarter of the 2015-16 financial year.</p>		
Recommendations:		
1	It is recommended that Board members acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care service against identified key performance indicators (KPIs). Where necessary, members are invited to offer suggestion for remedial action in areas of poor performance and developmental suggestions in all other areas.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 As corporate parents, ensuring the best possible outcomes for our children is paramount. It is not possible to establish how well we are supporting our children to achieve their full potential without having a clear understanding of our performance in regards to key performance indicators. It is for this reason that is important performance data is reviewed at the Corporate Parenting Board.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 The concise children in care Performance Report accompanying this document, provides Board members with the performance data relevant to the areas being discussed at the November 2015 Corporate Parenting Board. (See Appendix One.)

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 None

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – PERFORMANCE REPORT: Concise (Appendix 1)

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 None

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – PERFORMANCE REPORT: Concise
NOVEMBER 2015
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data relevant to the areas being discussed at the November 2015 Corporate Parenting Board meeting. The report highlight results from April 2015 to September 2015. Performance commentaries have been provided by the service.

Reference	Indicator	Statistical Neighbour Average	Target 15/16	Out-turn 14/15	Apr 15	May 15	Jun 15	Q1	Jul 15	Aug 15	Sep 15	Q2	YTD	Raw numbers	Service commentary	
Page 9 CC-1 (E)	Number of children in care (as at) (rate per 10,000)	784 (93.8)	575 (90)	573 (89.7)	577 (90.4)	580 (90.8)	589 (92.2)		588 (92.1)	596 (93.3)	601 (94.1)		601 (94.1)		<p>Demand for Social Care services remains high with requests for support, referrals and re-referrals continuing to increase. Included in this are requests for children to become Looked After by Nottingham City. The increase in the number of children coming into care (or becoming Looked After) is a trend mirrored nationally. This trend is reflected through our current Statistical Neighbour Average (SNA) of 784 children in care (CiC). Our aspiration is to perform significantly better than SNA and as a result, we have set an ambitious out-turn target of 575 children in care for the year 2015/16. Despite this target being set significantly lower than the SNA, based on our 2014/15 performance, this target is achievable, providing wider socio economic factors and pressures remain stable.</p> <p>Year To Date (YTD) figures show that there are 601 children in care. Work is underway to reduce this figure by exiting children from care via permanent outcomes (e.g. adoptions orders, special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders), as well as preventing admissions into care when it safe to do so.</p>	
CC - 1a (E)	The number of children discharged as a result of a Permanent Outcome (SGO/Child Arrangement Order/Adoption Order)	88	75	116	4	5	7	16	6	14	8	28	44		There has been a 75% increase in performance during Q2 when compared to Q1 with 28 children being discharged from care as a result of a permanent outcome. At half through the year, we are over half way to achieving the target set for 2015/16 (with the YTD figure and target being 44 and 75, respectively).	
CC-8 (NI62)	The percentage of Children in Care that have had three or more placement moves in the previous 12 months	11.1%	11.1%	10.5%				11.2%				10.2%		61 of 597	This indicator focuses on short term placement stability of CiC. Figures over the last quarter have improved slightly with a greater proportion of the children experiencing placement stability. Current performance is marginally (0.9%) better than this year's target and the SNA.	
CC-9 (NI63)	The percentage of Children in Care who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years	66%	66%	66%	65.9%	65.7%	66.5%		69.3%	68.0%	68.6%		68.6%	116 of 169	Performance has remained stable for this indicator. YTD figures show performance is 2.6% above that of the SNA, our 2015/16 target and our 2014/15 out-turn.	
CC-29 (R)	The percentage of placements that are over 20 miles from Nottingham	10.3%	To monitor	16%				15.0%					16.3%	16.3%	89 of 601	Current performance is in line with our 2014/15 out-turn. Pressures on placement availability impact on this indicator.

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Corporate Parenting Board Reporting Schedule: Forward Planner 2015 - 2016

Report (Corresponding Strategic Priority Statement)	Report Lead	Draft Report from Report Lead	Chair's Briefing	Final Reports from Report Lead	Corporate Parenting Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality Assurance Visits of Regulated and Non-regulated Residential Provision ▪ Have Your Say Survey Result Summary ▪ Performance Report (Q3 and Q4 2014/15) ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kay Sutt ▪ Kwesi Williams ▪ Steve Comb ▪ Kwesi Williams 	5 th May 2015	13 th May 2015	18 th May 2015	1 st June 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report (3) ▪ Pathway Planning (3) ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Apprentice Scheme (Verbal Update) ▪ Report Forward Planner (Verbal Update) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clive Chambers ▪ Sharon Clarke ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Evonne Rogers ▪ Cllr Mellen 	17 th June 2015	1 st July 2015	6 th July 2015	20 th July 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Care Leavers Annual Report (4)(5) ▪ Advocacy and Independent Visitor Annual Report ▪ Complaints Service Report ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Report Forward Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharon Clarke ▪ Paul Clark ▪ Patrick Skeet ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Cllr Mellen 	18 th August 2015	2 nd September 2015	7 th September 2015	19 th October 2015

Report (Corresponding Strategic Priority Statement)	Report Lead	Draft Report from Report Lead	Chair's Briefing	Final Reports from Report Lead	Corporate Parenting Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statement of Purpose Fostering Service and Adoption Agency ▪ Children in Care Placements ▪ Adoption and Permanency (2) ▪ Performance Report (Q1 and Q2 2015/16) ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Report Forward Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sonia Cain ▪ Anne Partington ▪ Sonia Cain, Sharon Clarke ▪ Steve Comb ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Cllr Mellen 	14 th October 2015	30 th October 2015	2 nd November 2015	16 th November 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fostering and Adoption Panel Chairs Update ▪ Emotional Health (1) ▪ Child Sexual Exploitation and Grooming (1) ▪ Reducing Offending Behaviour (6) ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Report Forward Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sonia Cain ▪ Tania McDonald ▪ Caroline Riley ▪ Sam Flint, Natalie Pink ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Cllr Mellen 	18 th November 2015	2 nd December 2015	4 th January 2016	18 th January 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational Attainment of Children in Care (4) ▪ Physical Health (1) ▪ NCSCB Missings Update Report ▪ Edge of Care Provision ▪ Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Review ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Report Forward Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malcolm Wilson ▪ Amanda Edmonds ▪ To be identified ▪ Kay Sutt ▪ Steve Comb ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Cllr Mellen 	17 th February 2016	2 nd March 2016	7 th March 2016	21 st March 2016

- **SPS 1: Health**
- **SPS 2: Permanency**
- **SPS 3: Resilience and Independence**
- **SPS 4: Educational Attainment**
- **SPS 5: Suitable Accommodation**
- **SPS 6: Offending Behaviour**

ATTENTION: IMPORTANT CHANGES TO REPORT SUBMISSION

All* reports scheduled to be presented to the Board on or after the 1st September 2015 must be produced and submitted through the corporate report management system – see link to access the system and for guidance

<http://gossweb.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nccextranet/index.aspx?articleid=10263>. When prompted to input ‘approvers’, the following individuals must be included

- Helen Blackman
- Steve Comb
- Clive Chambers
- Kwesi Williams

(* This only applies to reports produced by local authority staff. External partner should continue to submit reports via email to kwesi.williams@nottinghamcity.gov.uk no later than 10.00am on the date stated.)

Please note that additional reports may be added to the schedule by request of the Chair or other Board Members. Reports are also subject to schedule changes.

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