



**NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**Date:** Monday, 20 November 2017

**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 Strategy and Resources**

**Governance Officer:** Phil Wye **Direct Dial:** 0115 8764637

- |          |   |         |
|----------|---|---------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  |         |
| <b>2</b> | <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b>  |         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>MINUTES</b><br>Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 September 2017, for confirmation.  | 3 - 8   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q1/Q2 2017-2018)</b><br>Report of the Director of Children's Integrated Services  | 9 - 12  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN CARE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY 2016 / 17 – NOTTINGHAM CITY</b><br>Report of the NHS Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group and the Director of Children's Integrated Services | 13 - 28 |
| <b>6</b> | <b>CHILDREN IN CARE PLACEMENTS</b><br>Report of the Director of Children's Integrated Services  | 29 - 34 |
| <b>7</b> | <b>CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL</b>   | Verbal  |
| <b>8</b> | <b>STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: FOSTERING AND ADOPTION</b><br>Report of the Director of Children's Integrated Services   | 35 - 86 |
| <b>9</b> | <b>FORWARD PLAN</b>   | 87 - 90 |

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](http://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 Loxley House, Nottingham on 25 September 2017 from 2.31 pm - 3.56 pm**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)  
Councillor Ginny Klein (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Liaqat Ali  
Councillor Jim Armstrong  
Councillor Nicola Heaton  
Councillor Sue Johnson  
Councillor Wendy Smith

Absent

Councillor Jackie Morris  
Councillor Marcia Watson  
Councillor Sam Webster

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services  
Clive Chambers - Head Safeguarding and Quality Assurance  
Steve Comb - Head of Children in Care  
Larelle Flowers - Children in Care Council  
Matthew Jenkins - CAMHS Children Looked After Team Manager  
Gill Moy - Nottingham City Homes  
Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation Lead Officer  
Jordan Whatman - Project Officer, Children in Care  
Aileen Wilson - Head of Early Help Services  
Phil Wye - Governance Officer

**24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Jackie Morris – personal reasons  
Councillor Marcia Watson – work commitments  
Councillor Sam Webster – leave

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**25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**26 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

## **27 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT**

Steve Comb, Head of Children in care, introduced the report updating the Board on services provided to young people transitioning from care into adulthood, highlighting the following:

- (a) it is anticipated that there will be a government requirement to offer services to Care Leavers for longer, and this is outlined in a recently approved strategy document entitled 'Keep on Caring'. This will require Local Authorities to offer guidance and support to all care leavers up to the age of 25. It is not clear when this will be implemented;
- (b) Nottingham City Council has a good record of finding appropriate accommodation for Care Leavers, and has a strong relationship with Nottingham City Homes. There has been a slight decline recently in the proportion of those children deemed to be in suitable accommodation. This is partially because of the way suitable accommodation is defined by government;
- (c) the council also has a good record with employment and training for Care Leavers, and attains a much higher level of employment or training than statistical neighbour authorities. This is in part due to apprenticeships within the council, and a strong relationship with Futures. Financial assistance and personal advisors are available to help with education;
- (d) 'Staying Put' arrangements allow Care Leavers to remain with foster carers beyond the age of 18, which can be positive for the young person but potentially leads to the loss of a foster carer for the authority;
- (e) the Leaving Care Service works closely with the Children in Care Police Officer and other relevant agencies to ensure that if there are concerns, then the relevant support is implemented.

### **RESOLVED to**

- (1) continue to support and understand the duties required of the Leaving Care Service, and forthcoming changes in legislation;**
- (2) be aware that the government recently approved a new strategy document entitled 'Keep on Caring - Supporting Young People from Care to Independence (July 2016), which will require Local Authorities to offer guidance and support for all care leavers up to the age of 25.**

## **28 IMPROVING AND ACHIEVING GOOD OUTCOMES FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY'S CHILDREN IN CARE – MENTAL HEALTH**

Aileen Wilson, Head of Early Help Services, introduced the report highlighting the following:

- (a) the CAMHS Team specifically to work with children in care is jointly funded and governed by Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

and consists of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a community health nurse and six specialist social workers;

- (b) the current priority for the team is a refresh to ensure resources are being used effectively and compliance with the national transformation plan based on the Future in Mind report;
- (c) upcoming and ongoing tasks for the team are the implementation of the Choice and Partnership Approach, use of performance measures as evidence of the effectiveness of support, and developing/sharing knowledge and skills around the impact of developmental trauma.

Board members recognised the importance of consultation work that the team carries out to guide practitioners and foster carers in their support of children in care. It was suggested that service users could be referred to the Children in Care Council or a similar group to build their confidence.

**RESOLVED to continue to implement the CAMHS transformation plan in line with the Future in Mind Report to ensure appropriate and timely access to support.**

**29 CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT: QUARTER THREE AND QUARTER FOUR 2016 - 2017**

Steve Comb, Head of Children in Care, introduced the report providing the Board with the most up to date Children in Care performance data, highlighting the following:

- (a) the number of children in care is above the council's target of 90 per 10,000, but better than that of similar councils;
- (b) there is a lot of ongoing activity around recruiting foster carers, with a council plan priority being to increase the number of foster carers. Additional recruitment events are being held in schools and faith groups across the city;
- (c) the Department for Education has ceased support for inter-agency adoption payments which is a financial challenge, but adoption activity continues to be strong with 48 adoptions in the last year;
- (d) all of the city's children's homes have been judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. Semi-independent homes now have their own monitoring framework in place;
- (e) the percentage of children in care with an up to date health assessment stands at 89%, with 83% having an up to date dental check and 92% having the relevant immunisations;
- (f) 4.6% of children in care have had a conviction or been subject to a youth caution during the year, which is good performance for the city. Continued part funding of the Children in Care Police Officer has had a significant contribution in this area;

- (g) the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation and in employment, education or training are both better than statistical neighbours.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (h) raising the percentage of children in care who have an up to date dental check has historically been a challenge, and it can be difficult to ensure older children attend their appointments. This is regularly tracked and children are incentivised to attend;
- (i) there is likely to be an impact on children in care and children on the edge of care from the introduction of Universal Credit and changes to benefits.

**RESOLVED to acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care Service, against identified key performance indicators.**

### **30 ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

Valerie Marshall, NYAS Service Manager, introduced the report summarising activities undertaken to date of the Advocacy and Independent Visitor (IV) services provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) during the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Valerie highlighted the following:

- (a) NYAS's contract to provide advocacy services and independent visiting services will be finishing at the end of September 2017;
- (b) NYAS have been working to maintain the Independent Visiting service by supporting current volunteers, recruiting new volunteers, and delivering training;
- (c) there has been a significant increase in the number of residential visits over the last year. There is a barrier to visiting young people in semi-independent accommodation as they often move or do not wish to engage;
- (d) NYAS has met with the new Independent Visitor provider to ensure a smooth transition. It is hoped that a large number of volunteers will be going over to the new provider.

**RESOLVED to**

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

### **31 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL**

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer and Larelle Flowers, Children in Care (CiCC) representative, gave a verbal update highlighting the following:

- (a) This year's Have Your Say survey will be conducted between 9<sup>th</sup> October and 17<sup>th</sup> November for children in care. Responses will be assessed by the CiCC in January 2018 and come back to the Board in March 2018;
- (b) there was no CiCC meeting in July but members did go to Trent Bridge to see cricket and meet with young people from Woodview residential home;
- (c) the first meeting of the Autumn term was a Corporate CiCC on the theme of placements and how the best placements can be achieved. Many senior officers attended the meeting, where CiCC members performed sock puppet dramas looking at the issues of splitting up siblings in care, and how foster carers can help children have a more natural relationship with their friends and birth family through better decision making;
- (d) following the session, managers made a commitment to share more real life children's stories in management meetings to inspire colleagues (making sure these are anonymised), and to make sure more young people are involved in training and developing foster carers;
- (e) the next few meetings will have the theme of preparation for adulthood. On the 18th December the annual award ceremony will take place with the Lord Mayor and Sherriff.

**RESOLVED to thank Jon and Larelle for the update.**

**32    CHAIR'S UPDATE**

None.

**33    FORWARD PLANNER**

The forward planner was noted.

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**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – NOVEMBER 2017**

|  |  |                                     |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of paper:</b>   | Children in Care Performance Report (Q1/Q2 2017-2018)  |                                     |
| <b>Director(s)/<br/>Corporate Director(s):</b>   | Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services  | <b>Wards affected:</b><br>All       |
| <b>Report author(s) and contact details:</b>   | Steve Comb – Head of Service, Children in Care<br><a href="mailto:steve.comb@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">steve.comb@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a>   |                                     |
| <b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>   |  |                                     |
| <b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>   |  |                                     |
| <b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>  |  |                                     |
| Strategic Regeneration and Development   |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Schools  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Planning and Housing   |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Community Services   |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Energy, Sustainability and Customer  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Jobs, Growth and Transport   |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Adults, Health and Community Sector  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Children, Early Intervention and Early Years   |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure and Culture  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration   |  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>   |  |                                     |
| <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 2017 Corporate Parenting Board meeting.</p> <p>The report highlights results covering the first and second quarters of the 2017-18 financial year.</p> |  |                                     |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b>  |  |                                     |
| <b>1</b>   | To acknowledge the current performance position of the Children in Care service, against identified key performance indicators, as detailed in the appendix. 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.

**2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

2.1 None.

**3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 None.

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

4.1 None.

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

5.1 None.

**6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

6.1 None.

**7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An EIA is not required as the report does contain proposals or financial decisions.

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

8.1 Appendix 1: CiC Performance Report Q1-Q2 17-18

**9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

9.1 None.

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – PERFORMANCE REPORT**  
**November 2017**
**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the most up to date performance overview in relation to Children in Care and to highlight results from April 2017 to September 2017.

| Area / Indicator  | Statistical Neighbour Average   | Out-turn 16/17 | Outturn Q1/Q2   | Service commentary  |
|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| Number of children in care as at September 2016. (rate per 10,000)  | 651<br>(92.2)   | 616<br>(93.4)  | 628<br>(95.2)   | We are currently above our target of 90 per 10,000 children in care. Demand for Social Care services remains high, with a significant number of requests for children to become Looked After in Q1/Q2. CAFCAS have stated that last year's national 30 year high in terms of children coming into care / court activity has continued in 2017. High quality support interventions with identified families are supporting some of our children on the edge of care to remain at home with their families. Exit planning continues to be a key focus. At 95 children per 10,000 in care our data is better than that of similar Councils. The monthly children in care analysis meeting provides further focus on our looked after children cohort, in terms of exit planning and monitoring. Our weekly Placement Panel also continues to examine all purchased placements; we continue to focus on reducing the number of high cost external residential placements with an aim of having more of our children cared for in family settings such as fostering. From October 2017 we have a weekly exit planning meeting to ensure that children and young people are supported to exit care in a timely manner when safe to do so. |
| Fostering & Adoption  | <p>The current Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption retires in November, the new Service Manager will commence in post in December 2017. There is significant activity in relation to carer recruitment, which we hope will yield additional fostering households in Q3 and Q4 of the 17/18 financial year, and beyond. Extra funding of over £100,000 has been put in place to assist with the recruitment of City Council Foster Carers for our children. There were 188 children in internal foster care in March 17, and 203 in internal foster care at the end of September Q2. There were 183 active Fostering Households at the end of Q2. Regional adoption discussions continue; the D2N2 permanence hubs have been discussed and are being implemented. The Department for Education have now ceased support for inter-agency adoption payments. We claimed over £250,000 from that fund in 16/17. The DfE have also tightened the criteria for adoption support fund financial support, relating to therapy post adoption.</p> <p>In Q1/Q2 19 children were adopted, 5 were given Special Guardianship Orders and 1 on a Child Arrangement Order. This resulted in 25 children leaving our care under permanence arrangements between April and September.</p> |                |   |   |
| Children's Homes  | <p>Five of our seven regulated children's homes have had their Ofsted main 17/18 inspection; they have all been graded as 'Good with Outstanding Features'. Two homes are awaiting their main annual inspection; this will take place prior to the end of the year. All homes are showing improved or sustained effectiveness by way of Ofsted judgements. This is a strong performance under a new, tougher inspection framework. Our five semi-independent (unregistered) homes for our older young people now have their own monitoring framework in place.</p>  |                |   |   |
| Regulation 44   | <p>In their inspection of five of our seven registered children's homes in this financial year so far, Ofsted have said we are compliant with statutory regulations and DfE requirements in relation to Regulation 44s to the Councils own oversight and management of Children's Homes.</p> <p>Our Regulation 44 inspectors constitute a wide range of professionals, who offer independence in their inspections of our homes. These include professionals from a number of settings within the Council, including the Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years.</p> <p>Written reports are forwarded to Ofsted in line with statutory requirements. We have recently received positive feedback from Ofsted in relation to our compliance with the notification framework. We have now introduced similar quality assurance visits to our semi-independent homes that are not registered with Ofsted.</p>   |                |   |   |
| Health  | <p>The percentage of Children in Care with an up to date Health Assessment stands at 88% at the end of Q1, and 80% at the end of Q2. Additionally, 78% of our children had an up to date dental check in Q1 and 66% in Q2. 92% had received relevant immunisations at the start of this financial year, because the holiday season falls in Q2 we do get data input and appointment delay in July and August. At the end of Q2, 56% of children in care who had been in care for 12 months or more had an up to date SDQ on file at the end of Q2, a further 38 SDQs received are currently being input by admin taking figure to 65%.</p> <p>Administration systems have been changed to provide a focus on these requests and appointments, as we are still below our target. A reminder has been sent to all staff re data inputting, to ensure we lift % in Q3. Monthly updates on health data will be provided again via Data Analysis colleagues from November as part of the Liquid Logic IT work stream.</p>  |                |   |   |
| Youth Offending   | <p>Offending in the CiC population in Nottingham has reduced from nearly 20% in 2006, to 5.4% in 2016. This is based on the percentage of the CiC population aged 10-17, who have been in care for a year or more, who have received a Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or conviction in that year. The 2016/17 data will be published in December 2017 and will be discussed at the Corporate Parenting Board in March 2018. This is historically good performance for the City and better than similar cities or national averages. The continued support of the Council in part funding the Children in Care Police Officer post has been a significant contribution in this area.</p>   |                |   |   |
| Self-Assessment on Inspection Readiness   | <p>Work is taking place in relation to exit planning and reducing delays in the effective care planning for Children in Care. We are working with Business Support, Data Analysis and Social Work Teams to improve the administration of health and dental checks, including SDQs, to improve data related to these key indicators.</p> <p>Resources in the Leaving Care Service are being reviewed post-inspection, with a focus on safeguarding for our older young people. Great Workforce leads from HR are actively involved in all Children in Care Teams.</p> <p>The Adoption scorecard is a significant measure of our ability to manage Adoption Services. We have improved our timelines. Performance in this area is improving in terms of timeliness, and we are on track to meet our target for the number of children progressing to adoption. Residential inspection outcomes are positive in terms of our profile as a Local Authority. Regular performance meetings are taking place in relation to Children in Care data.</p>   |                |   |   |
| The percentage of applicable (Eligible, Relevant and Former relevant) young people with a Pathway Plan completed/authorised in the preceding 6 months | Not collected nationally.   | 80.8%          | Below our tougher annual target awaiting development of data capture on liquid logic.   |   |
| The percentage of Children in Care with a completed Personal Education Plan (PEP)   | Not collected nationally.   | 90%            | 90% of children in care had a PEP completed in the last year. The Virtual School Head is currently gathering information and conducting an audit of data regarding PEPs, the governing body and the Virtual School PEP co-ordinator continue to hold regular meetings with the Children in Care management team to discuss the PEP completion rate and identify where they are incomplete. Under the latest Department for Education conditions of offer, the Virtual School Head will expect all schools to demonstrate how they will use the new Pupil Premium funding to close the gap for all LAC pupils. One-to-one tuition for pupils in Year 6 and Year 11 will continue, with an increased focus on analysis of impact. The Virtual School Head continues to drive PEPs and we are confident that we will continue to make progress towards all children having their PEP. The Virtual School Governing body chaired by the Lead Member also robustly monitors shortfalls in this data. |   |
| The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation (17-21 years old)  | 81.1%   | 89.6%          | 83.3%   | The focus on preparing our young people for independence continues, this cohort measured of 65 is impacted upon by small movements, because some of our young people have returned to parents, impacting on this indicator, alongside some entries to custody. Challenges in the wider housing market do impact on availability of suitable homes for our young people but our strong links with Nottingham City Homes help in reducing the challenges.   |
| The percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training (17-21 years old)   | 48.8%   | 65.9%          | 70.7%   | This is good performance that exceeds both statistical neighbours significantly and our own target by 5%. The focus is to continue to support more of our young people into education and employment.   |

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**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – NOVEMBER 2017**

|   |   |                                     |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of paper:</b>  | The Health of Children in Care of the Local Authority 2016 / 17 – Nottingham City   |                                     |
| <b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>  | Sally Seeley - NHS Nottingham City CCG<br><br>Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services   | <b>Wards affected:</b><br>All       |
| <b>Report author(s) and contact details:</b>  | Kathryn Higgins - Designated Nurse for Children in Care<br><a href="mailto:Kathryn.higgins2@nhs.net">Kathryn.higgins2@nhs.net</a><br><br>Melanie Bracewell - Designated Doctor for Children in Care/Medical Advisor for Adoption / Consultant Community Paediatrician<br><a href="mailto:melanie.bracewell@nuh.nhs.uk">melanie.bracewell@nuh.nhs.uk</a> |                                     |
| <b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>  |   |                                     |
| <b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>  |   |                                     |
| <b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>   |   |                                     |
| Strategic Regeneration and Development  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Schools   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Planning and Housing  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Community Services  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Energy, Sustainability and Customer   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Jobs, Growth and Transport  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Adults, Health and Community Sector   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Children, Early Intervention and Early Years  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure and Culture   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>  |   |                                     |
| <p>Most children become looked after as a result of abuse and neglect. Although they have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences.</p> <p>The NHS has a major role in ensuring the timely and effective delivery of health services to looked after children (and, by extension, to care leavers) by commissioning effective services, delivering through provider organisations, and through individual practitioners providing coordinated care for each child.</p> <p>The attached document is the first CCG looked after children annual report and provides assurances that Nottingham City CCG is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities to children as outlined in the Children Act 1989 and Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children (2015).</p> |   |                                     |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b>   |   |                                     |
| <b>1</b>  | To note – health providers supported by the Designated Professionals will continue to work with the Service Improvement Forum and associated working groups with the aim to improve the health outcomes for Children in Care.   |                                     |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>2</b> | To note – Revised CCG pathways for out of area placements and other local authority placements in the City to be implemented in 2018.  |
| <b>3</b> | To note – health providers supported by the Designated Professionals will continue to work with the Local Authority, other partner agencies and Commissioners in planning for and ensuring adequate health provision for Care Leavers. |

## **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Following the County Pathway review in 2016 and recommendations made, the Nottinghamshire Service Improvement Forum is now an established group which includes representation from CCGs, health providers and the local authorities with the aim to improve health outcomes for children and young people in care across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire.
- 1.2 NHS Nottingham City CCG is responsible for all Looked after children originating from Nottingham City placed out of area and for ensuring the health provision is in place for placements by other local authorities in the City.
- 1.3 It is acknowledged that care leavers are a vulnerable group of young people needing good transition from children's to adult's services and who may be in contact with both.

## **2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

- 2.1 See Appendix 1: Looked After Children/Children in Care Annual Report 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

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

- 3.1 None

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

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications or value for money issues arising from this report.

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

- 5.1 None

## **6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

- 6.1 None

## **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An EIA is not required because the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions

## **8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 8.1 None

## **9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

- 9.1 Children Act 1989 HMSO.
- 9.2 Local Authority Interactive tool accessed 09.05.17.
- 9.3 Looked after Children: Knowledge, skills and competencies of healthcare staff. Intercollegiate Role Framework (RCGP, RCN & RCPCH) March 2015.
- 9.4 Children's Care Monitor: children on the state of Social Care in England: reported by the Children's Rights Director for England (2013/14).  
<http://deva.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/19818>
- 9.5 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and Social Care Institute for Excellence (2013) "Promoting the Quality of Life of Looked After Children and Young People" NICE Quality Standard 31.
- 9.6 The Statutory Guidance on "Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children" (2015) DH/DCSF.

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# **Looked After Children/Children in Care**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 APRIL 2016 – 31 MARCH 2017**

*A summary of key achievements and future plans for Nottingham City CCG to fulfil its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children*

|

**Looked After Children/Children in Care  
ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17**

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## **Looked After Children/Children in Care Annual Report 2016/2017**

Most children become looked after as a result of abuse and neglect. Although they have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences.

The number of LAC has continued to rise and as of 31 March 2016 there were 70,440 nationally a 5% increase since 2012. In Nottingham City this number was 595 a slight increase on 580 in 2015 (Local authority interactive tool) and a recent verbal update from the local authority stated a current number of over 600 highlighting the ongoing increase.

The NHS has a major role in ensuring the timely and effective delivery of health services to looked after children (and, by extension, to care leavers) by commissioning effective services, delivering through provider organisations, and through individual practitioners providing coordinated care for each child (Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children 2015).

(Throughout this report Looked after Children will be referred to as children in care - CIC).

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report relates to Nottingham City CCG.
- 1.2. The CCG commissions health services for the population of Nottingham City. The purpose of this report is to provide assurance that Nottingham City CCG is fulfilling its responsibilities as a commissioner to work in partnership with the Local Authority and other agencies to promote the safety and welfare of children and adults in need of care and protection.
- 1.3. Key areas of priority for the CCG are identified in the Nottinghamshire County LAC Pathway review (2016), the recommendation for the CCG specifically are highlighted below.
- 1.4. This report will summarise achievements and activity undertaken in 2016-17 and highlights recommendations for 2017-18.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. This is the first separate CIC annual report and provides assurance that Nottingham City CCG is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities to children as outlined in the Children Act 1989 and Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children (2015).
- 2.2. The CCG works in partnership with health provider organisations, the Local Authority and other agencies including the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children and Adult Boards. The Designated Nurse role was removed from Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust in September 2016 and is now situated within the CCG in line with statutory guidance. The role is now fully strategic with no clinical responsibilities. This role is also responsible for the South and Mid County CCGs.
- 2.3. There has also been a change in the Designated Doctor who also covers the County South CCGs. This post has a combined clinical and strategic role and sits within Provider.

## 3. LAC/CIC Governance and Accountability arrangements

The CCG governance arrangements for CIC are monitored through the City Safeguarding Steering group. The Steering group meets bi-monthly and monitors progress on national and local guidance and strategic priorities. The CCG LAC/CIC executive leadership is through the Chief Nurses who represent the CCG on Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children and Adult Boards and are members of the CCG Governing Bodies.

The Designated Professionals also contribute to the local authority Corporate Parenting Board and are members of the regional NHS England Safeguarding network.

## 4. Commissioning arrangements

The CCG commissions the following providers to undertake statutory health assessments;

- **Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust** – provides medical input from Community Paediatricians for children who live in the City or are placed from out of the City. This includes initial health assessments and referrals to specialist services. This service is commissioned by the 3 southern County CCGs and Nottingham City CCG. This service also provides Medical Advisers for Adoption who fulfil the statutory duties for the local authority around Adoption Panels, reports on the health of prospective

adopters as well as contributing to the health assessments and statutory reports for children and young people with an adoption plan.

- **Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Local Services Division)** – provides the CIC Nursing team. This team coordinates the pathway once a looked after child enters the health system, both from in and out of the county, and undertakes most review health assessments. It is jointly commissioned with the Nottingham County CCGs. It also provides the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) LAC team which is co commissioned with the local authority.
- **Public Health & Nottingham City Local authority** - commission the 0 – 19 Programme which includes the delivery of the Department of Health “healthy child programme”. The service will work with the CIC health teams to ensure that the Universal and Public Health needs of CIC are met by the appropriately skilled and knowledgeable practitioners.
- **CAMHS LAC** - 2016/17 As part of the local transformation plan for children’s mental health, the CAMHS team for looked after children has been embedding the use of routine outcome measures as part of the implementation of CYP IAPT. In 2017/18, the service model will be reviewed in light of the recommendations from the SCIE working group into looked after children’s emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Consideration will also be given to the consistency of the support provided to looked after children placed out of area, as well as other area looked after children placed in Nottingham.

#### **4.1 CIC placed out of area (OOA)**

The Nottinghamshire County CIC Health Pathway Review identified that CCGs were only partially compliant with the Statutory Guidance in ensuring a continuity of high quality, timely healthcare for CIC that move OOA.

A task and finish group has been formed and includes the local authority CIC managers, local authority placement officers and health providers.

This group will review the pathways for children and young people placed out of area in relation to:

- The CIC medical teams
- The CIC nursing team
- LAC CAMHS

The outcomes of this task and finish group will feed into the CIC service improvement forum and the City Safeguarding Steering group.

The Designated Nurse CIC and Doctors CIC have reviewed processes and are devising a CCG OOA pathway that is in accordance with Statutory Guidance. This pathway will include

quality assurance processes, a robust escalation process and clear financial pathways. Health provider's own internal processes will align to this.

#### **4.2 Other Local Authority Children (OLAC)**

In line with the task & finish group for OOA placements the CCG is also reviewing the process for OLAC placed in Nottingham City, ensuring that all OLAC are offered primary and secondary care as any other child or young person would receive. For any statutory health assessment undertaken the CCG will invoice the originating authority as per the Responsible Commissioner guidance (2007).

#### **5. Nottinghamshire CIC Service Improvement Forum**

The Nottinghamshire CIC Service Improvement Forum was established in December 2016 to implement/continue the health pathway review work/suggestions. The recommendations made within the Nottinghamshire County CIC Health Pathway review have been converted into an action plan that is being overseen within this forum led by Commissioners. This is a County wide forum with agreement to commitment from both the City and County Local Authorities, CCGs and health providers.

#### **6. Nottinghamshire CIC data collection and reporting project**

Accurate and reliable data in relation to the health needs of Looked after children has been historically very difficult to obtain. It is complicated and involves collecting data that tries to capture timescales of interventions but with many variables. A lot of time and effort has been given previously to try to gather this information together but it has not been successful. It is difficult to ascertain whether the electronic systems being used to collect the data are appropriate or whether another method is needed or whether with adjustments these can be used successfully. In addition to this, going forward we need to collect data that supports caseload profiling and that evidences the outcomes of the health interventions.

Following a successful bid to NHS England for non-recurrent project funding (likely to run for over 1 year from March 2017), a working group has been established, led by a project lead with the support of the Designated Nurse. The aims of the project being:

- To ensure accurate data is collected in line with national statutory Key Performance Indicators requested by Commissioners and held within service specifications and contracts.
- To obtain additional health data that evidences outcomes of health interventions.
- To obtain additional health data within caseload profiling to support with health needs assessments and future service planning.

## **7. Care leavers**

Within the CIC health Pathway Review one of the key findings identified was that care leavers were not always given sufficient information in regard to their own health; there was limited information about their family history (however this may be due to issues around consent and confidentiality should birth parents not agree to their health information being shared) and that one in three felt they needed more support accessing adult health services. Within the review a recommendation was made to commissioners to work with providers and the local authority to explore resource options to establish a joint leaving care health worker post to support transition to adult health services.

A workshop is planned for July 2017 to scope services currently commissioned, identify any gaps and/or consider alternative ways of improving support around health for this group of vulnerable young people.

## **8. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)**

Since the implementation of the National Transfer scheme in July 2016 the following work has been completed;

- Links are now in place between the Designated Professionals and Nottingham City Local Authority in relation to planning for future placements.
- The Designated Professionals are now represented on a regional UASC group.
- Links are in place with the Nottingham City Local Authority in relation to wider issues including possible multi-agency training for agencies working with UASC.
- A health impact assessment was completed in July 2016 – the results of this being the majority of health services felt able to absorb any additional workload. However the CIC/LAC Medical and Nursing teams felt that although short term small numbers could be managed a rising number that will be sustained by 2020 may have an impact on the capacity of the teams. Further work is required by commissioners about the impact on LAC CAMHS and adult mental health services.
- Practice guidance to support completing Initial health assessments (IHA) has been written and shared to support Review Health Assessments (RHA).
- Documentation to support the local authority in arranging the IHAs has been produced and shared.
- Documentation explaining what an IHA is has been produced to be shared with the young person via an interpreter.
- Information about the National UASC website has been cascaded to health providers including all GPs via the CCG newsletter.
- Improvements to data collection and reporting on health assessments for UASC are now being made in order to plan service delivery.

- A Commissioning health pathway has been completed and has been agreed by the CCG.

## **9. Voice of the child**

Work continues to ensure the CCG ensures that the voice of children and young people in care contribute to service planning and delivery. This will include working with provider organisations to ensure the voice of the child is included in audits and reports.

## **10. Work undertaken for LAC/CIC in 2016/17:**

- Transfer of Designated Nurse CIC post from Provider to the CCG.
- Implementation of contract review meetings with the Provider organisations.
- UASC processes and review of health needs.
- OOA pathway review.
- OLAC pathway review.
- Data collection and reporting project commenced.
- Service Improvement Forum established.
- Safeguarding Concerns pathway for looked after children completed.
- Improved links with NHS England and the Midlands LAC sub group.

## **11. Priorities Identified 2017/18**

1. Data collection and reporting project.
2. OOA pathway to be agreed and embedded.
3. OLAC pathway to be agreed and embedded.
4. Care leavers support to be reviewed.
5. Quality Assurance processes to be reviewed and strengthened.
6. Review the CCGs responsibilities in the commissioning of the medical adoption service.
7. Further priorities to be identified from the NHS England Safeguarding Assurance Tool.
8. Consideration and planning to be given on the implementation of any additional priorities that emerge from the NHS England Looked after Children Working group.



## **12. Summary**

The CCG has made important changes to children in care commissioning in 2016/17, in particular through the transfer of the Designated Nurse post from health provider to the CCG to enable the Designated Nurse to undertake its role and functions.

This report demonstrates how this has strengthened leadership across the health economy for CIC alongside grasping the priorities for improving the quality of the services, both CCG commissioned and commissioned with partners.

Health Provider Annual Reports were not available this year, the plan going forward for these to support the CCG report as the information they provide may influence CCG priorities.

## **13. References**

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**Author of report:**

Kathryn Higgins (Designated Nurse Looked after children Nottinghamshire County 5 CCGs)  
Kathryn.higgins2@nhs.net

**Contributors:**

Dr Melanie Bracewell (Consultant Community Paediatrician, Designated Doctor for Children in Care/Medical Adviser for Adoption) Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Helene Denness, Consultant in Public Health, Nottingham City Council.

Lucy Peel, Programme Lead, Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing (Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City).

## 1. Appendix 1

### **List of Strategic Partnership Meetings and Sub Groups attended by the CCG Designated Professionals for looked after children.**

- CCG Safeguarding Steering group – representation by the Designated Dr and Nurse for looked after children.
- City CIC Outcomes group – representation by the Designated Dr and Nurse for looked after children.
- City Corporate Parenting Board – representation by the Designated Dr and Nurse for looked after children.
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire NHS England Safeguarding Forum – representation by the Designated Dr and Nurse for looked after children.
- Links to the NHS England National network (LAC subgroup) – both Designated Dr and nurse for looked after children.

### **Additional relevant strategic meetings.**

- Domestic Violence Strategic Steering Group - representation by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding.
- Joint NSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Steering Group – represented by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding.
- MARAC Strategic Steering Group – represented by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding.
- Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board (NCSCB) – representation by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding.
- NCSCB Audit Sub-Committee – representation by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding.
- NCSCB Executive – representation by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding.
- NSCB Policy and Procedure Sub-Committee – representation by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding
- NSCB Quality Assurance/Audit Sub-Committee – representation by the Designated Nurse Safeguarding

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**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – NOVEMBER 2017**

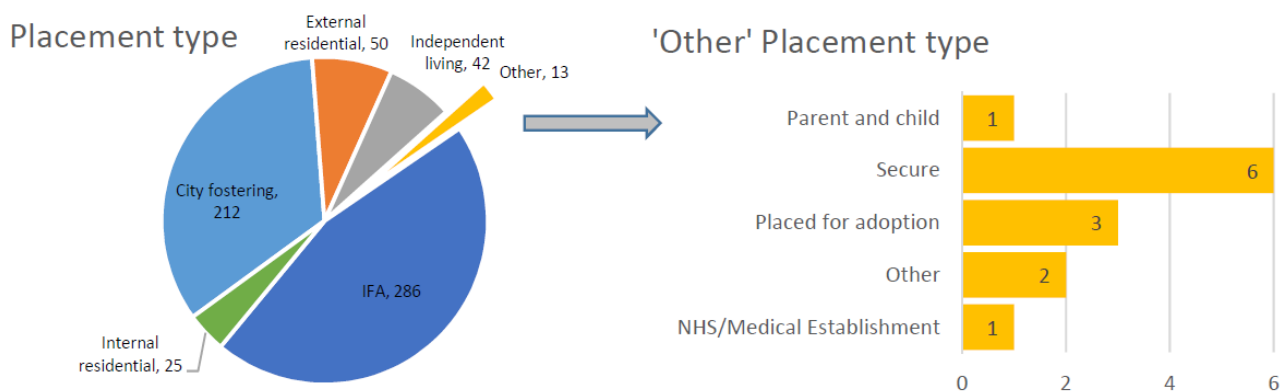
|   |   |                                     |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of paper:</b>  | Children in Care Placements   |                                     |
| <b>Director(s)/<br/>Corporate Director(s):</b>  | Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services   | <b>Wards affected:</b><br>All       |
| <b>Report author(s) and<br/>contact details:</b>  | Holly Macer - Placements Manager<br><a href="mailto:holly.macer@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">holly.macer@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a> 0115 8764816                     |                                     |
| <b>Other colleagues who<br/>have provided input:</b>  | Clive Chambers - Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance<br><a href="mailto:clive.chambers@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">clive.chambers@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a> |                                     |
| <b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s)<br/>(if relevant)</b>  |   |                                     |
| <b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>   |   |                                     |
| Strategic Regeneration and Development  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Schools   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Planning and Housing  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Community Services  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Energy, Sustainability and Customer   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Jobs, Growth and Transport  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Adults, Health and Community Sector   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Children, Early Intervention and Early Years  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure and Culture   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>  |   |                                     |
| This report provides an annual update on Nottingham City Council’s Children in Care placements and shares progress against the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy. |   |                                     |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b>   |   |                                     |
| <b>1</b>  | To note the contents of the report.   |                                     |

**1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The report provides an annual update to the Board with regards to Nottingham City Council Children in Care placements and progress against the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy.

**2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)****Placement Overview**

- 2.1 As at 31.08.2017, Nottingham City Council (NCC) had 628 Children in Care (CiC). In line with NCC’s ambition to keep young people within family settings wherever appropriate, and despite the increase in the overall cohort, the proportion of CiC placed in residential settings has decreased by 1%, with foster placements having increased by 2% (to 79% of the overall cohort). Refer to complete placement type breakdown below.



- 2.2 A priority is to support children and young people to remain living locally, taking into consideration maintaining their education, health, social connections and access to resources. In September 2017, 85% of CiC were placed within 20 miles of Nottingham City. This is an increase of 2% on the previous year and means that the 85% target has been reached.
- 2.3 There is concerted effort to maximise the use of internal placements and there is now dedicated capacity within the Placement Service to achieve this. There has been an increase of 3% from the previous year of all CiC placed within internal provision (from 35% to 38%). Further efforts to increase this include; recruitment of new carers, retention of existing carers, maximising the capacity of the existing carer cohort and expansion of the internal residential estate.
- 2.4 Challenges faced by NCC reflect the national picture where placement capacity is limited. There is insufficient supply of local fostering and residential placements for those children and young people presenting with more complex needs. In response to this, NCC are investing in the expansion of their internal provision. This includes increasing capacity within the internal residential estate, alongside significant investment into the recruitment and retention of internal foster carers.

#### Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

- 2.5 The CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy (2016-2018) responds to the Local Authority's statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked after Children and Young People. The Strategy determines the way in which CiC placements are commissioned, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. It 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 Strategy was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2016.

#### East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF)

- 2.6 The EMRCF is a consortium of seven local authorities in the East Midlands working in partnership with providers of care placements to achieve consistent, high quality and value for money placements.
- 2.7 After an initial four year contract, the EMRCF was recommissioned in February 2016 for a further four year period. The Framework opens annually to allow new providers

the opportunity to tender for the Framework. The evaluation process is currently open, with NCC working alongside the regional authorities to undertake the scoring of providers who have submitted tenders. The results will be published in January 2018.

- 2.8 The Framework brings about a number of benefits, including;
- maintaining a diverse, healthy and competitive market by enabling new providers to join the Framework annually throughout the life of the contract;
  - achieving efficiencies through streamlined processes and coordinated contract management and performance monitoring;
  - shared risk, buying power, market influence and information and resource sharing.

### Residential Care Contract

- 2.9 In line with the Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy, a block contract for ten residential children's homes placements over a maximum length of ten years, was awarded to Homes2Inspire in April 2015. The ten block contract placements have been full since October 2016. A further two placements have been negotiated at the block contract rate (with only financial commitment for the ten). At September 2017, the full 12 placements were full.
- 2.10 Three of the Homes are currently rated by Ofsted as 'Good'. Two of the Homes are rated by Ofsted as 'Requires Improvement'. These homes are subject to increased quality assurance visits and progress against their Ofsted action plan is closely monitored. The team around the children have reviewed the appropriateness of the continued placements to ensure outcomes are not adversely affected. Due to the complexities of matching multiple children's needs and behaviours in one of the homes, it has been agreed in the best interests for all, that new placements are found for three of the children in placement.
- 2.11 The contract has achieved;
- a reduction in local authority spend on residential care;
  - further efficiencies via reduced staff time, travel expenses and local commissioned resources;
  - greater forward planning for the local authority and provider;
  - supporting more young people to remain living locally.
- Long term, it is anticipated that these will lead to improved outcomes and placement stability for the cohort.

### Semi-Independent Accommodation

- 2.12 NCC has an internal semi-independent estate which provides consistent, quality accommodation and support for 16-18 year olds. In addition to this, local external providers are commissioned on a spot purchase basis, to support the demand for semi-independent placements.
- 2.13 A more robust commissioning and contracting approach is required. In November 2017, it is the intention to procure semi-independent services via an open accreditation process which offers an opportunity to improve outcomes, local sufficiency, consistent quality and greater value for money. This will be available to access placements from in January 2018

## Quality Assurance

2.14 Quality assurance of external placement provision remains a priority for the Placement Service. All external placements are subject to an annual unannounced quality assurance visit. In addition to this, wherever concerns are raised regarding a provision, a visit is undertaken within seven days to ascertain facts surrounding the concerns. Action plans are issued to the provider and monitored by the Placement Service to ensure that appropriate remedial action is undertaken in a timely manner. This approach was cited as a strength in the latest Ofsted inspection.

2.15 In addition to the quality assurance visits, through the role, the Placement Service also;

- works with the CiC Council to ensure that children and young people's feedback meaningfully informs service development and quality improvements
- provides quality assurance reports on individual placements for the weekly Children's Placements Panel to ensure that the multi-agency panel can make informed reviews of young people's cases
- works in partnership with the Youth Offending Team and Nottinghamshire Police to ensure a joined up approach to the management of concerns surrounding NCC CiC placements. This includes attendance at the Concerns Network – a forum lead by Nottinghamshire Police and Youth Offending Service to share intelligence and management strategies between professionals, partner agencies and private providers regarding local concerns and significant events (e.g. child sexual exploitation, individuals or areas of potential risk, recent criminal activities).
- maintains oversight and undertakes analysis of missing/absent episodes to identify trends with regards to providers/areas of concern
- undertaken quality assurance visits for Derby City Council (generating circa £4,000)
- working with Nottinghamshire County Council to monitor the performance of the new Advocacy and Independent Visitor contract

## Continuing Care Funding

2.16 The National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care sets out the process for assessing and agreeing continuing care funding for children with complex health needs.

2.17 An Officer based within the Placement Service leads upon the multi-agency liaison and coordinates the referrals for funding eligibility assessments. Where successful, the funding is used by NCC to contribute to specialist placements which are able to meet the complex needs of the children and young people placed and therefore achieve improved outcomes for the cohort. The Continuing Care funding contribution for 15/16 increased by 47% in 16/17. It is forecast to increase again by 15% by year end of 17/18. This is not taking into account any pending referrals which may be successful, and if so, these will be backdated to the date in which the referral was first submitted.



## Regional Developments

- 2.18 SEND Placements - The Placement Service are supporting the regional development of improved commissioning arrangements for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- 2.19 DN2 - NCC, in partnership with Derby City and Nottinghamshire County Councils (DN2), has been successful in obtaining an offer in principle of £3m towards outcomes payments from the Life Chances Fund, delivered by the Big Lottery Fund.
- 2.20 DN2 are now seeking a Social Investor and provider(s) to create an innovative service to support the most complex CiC to ensure improved outcomes and life chances, and to provide financial savings to the Authorities.
- 2.21 The focus for NCC will be on;
- Residential de-escalation - services working to transition young people from residential care to a family setting (foster placement).
  - Placement stabilisation - services working to support foster placements to be maintained where they are at risk of breaking down and therefore preventing the need for more intensive services such as residential care.
- The model means that NCC will only pay for outcomes achieved.

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

- 3.1 None.

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

- 4.1 None.

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

- 5.1 None.

## **6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

- 6.1 None.

## **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An EIA is not needed as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions.

## **8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 8.1 None.

**9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

9.1 Children in Care Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2016-2018

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – NOVEMBER 2017**

|  |   |                                     |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of paper:</b>   | Statement of Purpose: Fostering and Adoption  |                                     |
| <b>Director(s)/<br/>Corporate Director(s):</b>   | Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services   | <b>Wards affected:</b><br>All       |
| <b>Report author(s) and contact details:</b>   | Sonia Cain - Service Manager, Fostering & Adoption<br>0115 8764526 <a href="mailto:sonia.cain@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">sonia.cain@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a>   |                                     |
| <b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>   | Maxine Bennett - Adoption Manager, Fostering and Adoption<br>0115 8762679 <a href="mailto:maxine.bennett@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">maxine.bennett@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a><br><br>Luke Impey - Fostering Manager, Fostering and Adoption<br>0115 62569 <a href="mailto:luke.impey@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">luke.impey@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a> |                                     |
| <b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>   |   |                                     |
| <b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>  |   |                                     |
| Strategic Regeneration and Development   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Schools  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Planning and Housing   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Community Services   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Energy, Sustainability and Customer  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Jobs, Growth and Transport   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Adults, Health and Community Sector  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Children, Early Intervention and Early Years   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure and Culture  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>   |   |                                     |
| <p><b>Adoption</b><br/>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. (Adoption Minimum Standards 18).</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Fostering</b><br/>It is a statutory requirement that this Fostering Agency has a Statement of Purpose. (Fostering Minimum Standards 16).</p> <p>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.</p> |   |                                     |

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b> |   |
| <b>1</b>                  | To note the contents of the Statements of Purpose for (1) Adoption (2) Fostering. |

**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.
- 1.2 The Statements of Purpose should be reviewed annually and the contents noted by the elected members.
- 1.3 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 None.

**3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

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

- 4.1 None.

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

- 5.1 None.

**6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

- 6.1 None.

**7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An EIA is not needed as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions.

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

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Adoption Statement of Purpose
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Fostering Statement of Purpose

**9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

9.1 Adoption Minimum Standards

9.2 Fostering Minimum Standards

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# Nottingham City Council

## Fostering and Adoption Service

# Adoption Statement of Purpose 2017-2018

Updated October 2017



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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 Department as an 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](http://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.

## **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
- Children and Adoption Act 2007
- Education and Children Act 2016 (relates to RAA)
- The Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-Commencement Adoptions) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- 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
- Care Planning Regulations - 2010

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, and Adoption Link
- The appointment of suitability qualified Adoption Panel Chairs who are capable of providing a robust framework for the functioning of Adoption Panel.
- 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 agency 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  
Social Worker Registration HCPC number SW 22475

## **THE REGISTERED MANAGER**

### **THE SERVICE MANAGER**

Sonia Cain 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

Social Worker Registration HCPC SW74360

## **5. INTEGRATED STAFFING AND SERVICE STRUCTURE**

- Agency Decision Maker –
- Fostering and Adoption Service Manager – 1 FTE
- AQA 2 Full Time Principal Managers
- (1 Adoption and 1 Post Order)
- 1 Panel Manager
- 5 FTE Adoption Social Workers
- 6 FTE Post Order Social Workers
- 2 FTE Record Management Officers
- 1 FTE Customer Service Officer

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 which include the newly established Child Permanence Team
- Our commissioned specialist assessment service Core Assets
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Health
- Education
- Housing

Nottingham City was a founding member of the East Midlands Adoption Consortium more than 10 years ago. In 2015 the Department of Education invited all Adoption Agencies (Voluntary and Local Authorities) to establish Regional Adoption Agencies. With the appointment of 2 Project Officers work commenced, and this summer Derby City, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City (D2N2) established a pilot, commencing with the introduction of Permanency Teams in all areas, apart from Nottinghamshire which already had a Permanency Team.



## 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 2015-19. In conjunction with [Children and Young People's Plan 2016- 2020 \(CYPP\)](#) 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 Leadership Board returns.
- The Adoption Leadership return provides information quarterly to the Department of Education in relation to children with adoption plans and the timeliness of their adoption. Also prospective adopters being assessed and the timeliness of their assessment.

Data also tracks the post order service in terms of access to the post order support services

### 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, 1 Panel Manager and 3 Business Support staff.
- The Joint Panels are run 3 times a month and 4 times a month if work necessitates this.
- Panel Chairs meet on a quarterly basis to provide performance information and feedback for the Head of Service and the Departmental Management Team.
- 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 Coram/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 Corporate Parenting Board, which includes statistical information on the work of the Adoption and Fostering Panel

- The Medical Liaison Meeting is held every three months between the Fostering and Adoption Service Manager, Children in Care Service Manager, Panel advisors, and Medical Advisors to the panel.
- Legal meetings are held 6 – 8 weekly 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 Panel Manager / Head of Service. The Chairs are appraised by the Head of Service and the members are appraised by the Panel Chair and Panel Manager.

## **7. RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT**

### **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 organised by the adoption team and attended by both staff and adopters – at the information evening applicants are given a reading list and have the opportunity to arrange a meeting with a social worker for an initial visit and if this meeting is positive they are given a Registration of Interest (application) form.

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 at any time during the assessment.

Stage 1 usually takes 2 months. During this 2 month period Nottingham City Council and Core Assets, will undertake statutory checks including medicals and take up references. 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 days of preparation training during Stage 2. 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 signed 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 social 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. Beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> review visits will 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 requests to other appropriate parts of the Adoption service.

### **Adoption Placement Advisors**

We have a team of 3 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 adoption social workers.

### **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 Post Order 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
- We have recently established a support group for Special Guardianship

Special Guardianship is one of a range of permanency options, where a child lives with an adult who is not their birth parent. The Special Guardian has parental responsibility for the child above that of the child's birth parents.

## **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 Adopted Nottingham City children who live in the City until they are adults, and for 3 years Post Order if they live outside of 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 with writing if needed. 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 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](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Social Care Complaints Service

Loxley House,

Station Street

Nottingham

NG2 3NG

Tel: 0115 87 65974

Fax: 0115 87 63132

Email: [socialcarecomplaints@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:socialcarecomplaints@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

There is an independent children's right service which can be contacted by Children's Society for Advocacy and SOVA for Independent visiting.

## 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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **12.STATEMENT OF PURPOSE REVIEW AND UPDATE**

This document will be reviewed and updated on or by 1st November 2018.

Signed .....

**Maxine Bennett - Assessment and Quality Assurance Principal Manager – Adoption**

Signed .....

**Audrey Taylor - Assessment and Quality Assurance Principal Manager – Post Order**

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 Integrated Services**

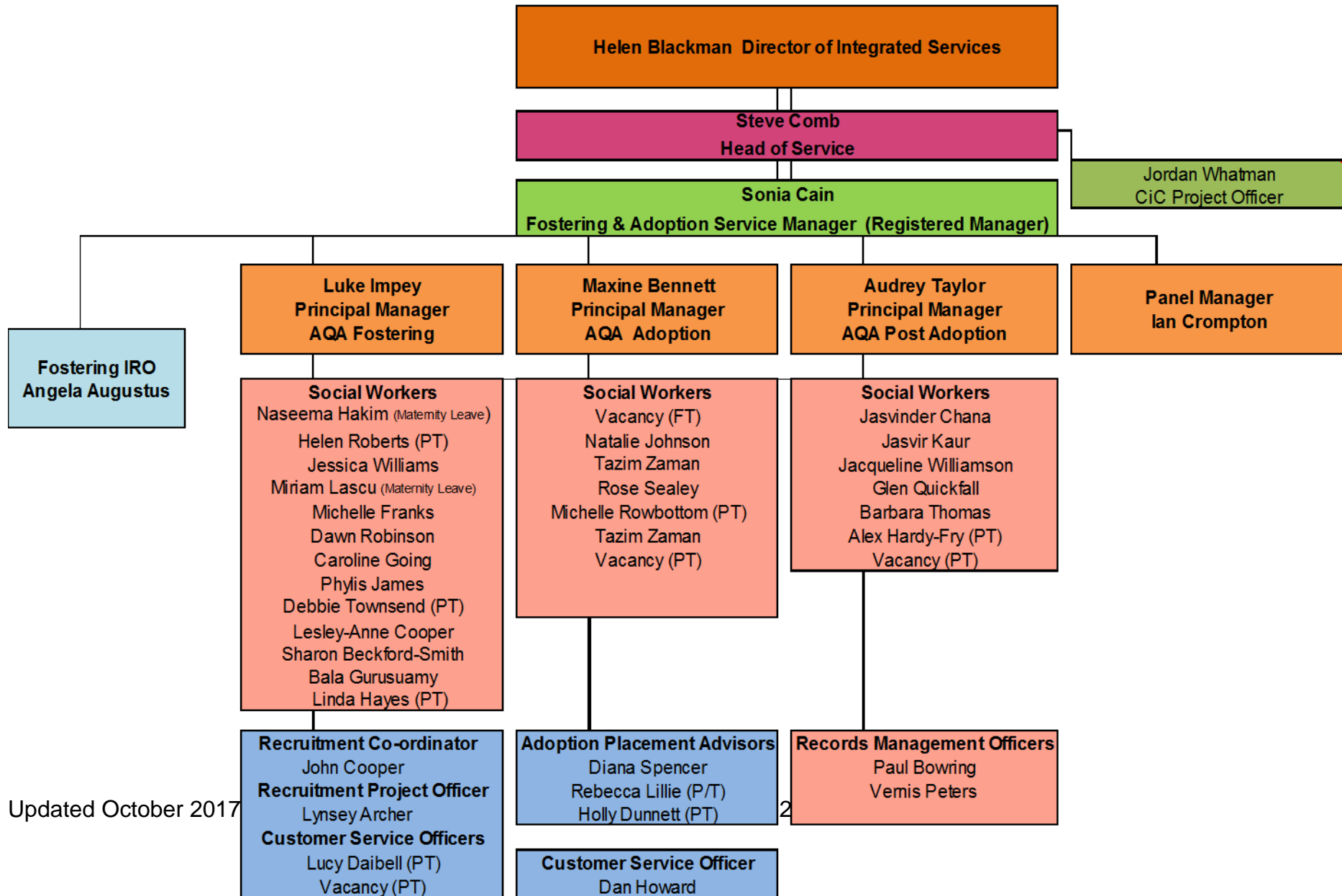
Signed.....

**Alison Michalska -Corporate Director Children & 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 2017- 2018  
(Updated October 2017)



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Service Contact Details

Fostering Service Address:

Fostering and Adoption Team, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

## 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 agency 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  
Social Worker Registration HCPC number SW 22475

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 Children's Integrated Services.

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  
Social Worker Registration 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](http://www.Nottingham.gov.uk) and distributed to all foster carers.

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 Fostering Service 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 virtual school services available to support our children in care and foster carers.

Nottingham is committed to children in care living with loving foster homes 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 we care 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. The City's Emergency Duty Team will provide advice and support outside of office hours during evenings, weekends and bank holidays.
- 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, disability, finance 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.

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 the children they have previously fostered.

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  |
| AQA Principal Manager (Fostering)     | 1 Full Time  |
| Practice Manager                      | 1 Full Time (split across Fostering and Adoption)            |
| Fostering Reviewing Officer           | 0.8 Full Time  |
| Social work staff                     | 8 Full Time Equivalent                                       |
| Customer Service Officer              | 1 Full Time  |
| Business Support                      | 6.0  |
| Fostering Recruitment Co-ordinator    | 1 Full Time  |
| Fostering Recruitment Project Officer | 1 Full Time  |
| Business Manager Residential          | 1 Full Time responsible 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 some 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.

There is currently an Independent staff member acting as 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 is 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.

**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.

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

**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 ensure the process throughout the customer journey from enquiry to panel approval goes smoothly.

**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.

**Foster Carers** are responsible for providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment for 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 876 3335, email at [fostering@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@nottinghamcity.gov.uk) through the City Council website [www.fosteringnottingham.com](http://www.fosteringnottingham.com) <https://www.facebook.com/fosteringnottingham/> 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 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 City staff. The specialist agency undertakes the Stage 1 and 2 assessment. 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.

## **6. 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.

Part of the Homestudy process will include an introduction to the Training, Support and Development Standards for foster carers, '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 Homestudy, 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. 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 Coram/BAAF (British Association of Adoption & Fostering) form 'F' format and shared with applicants.

## 7. FOSTERING & ADOPTION PANEL

Nottingham City Council have a joint Fostering and Adoption Panel that is made up of an independent chair, independent panel members, councillor representative, social worker representative, Panel Manager, and a minute taker. Panel recommendations are considered/ratified by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM), in Nottingham this role is undertaken by an Independent Consultant. 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  |
| 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  | Independent Consultant   |

### 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.

## 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 wide 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 seeing that they are met..

- 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 the children's service. These meetings are arranged every 6 – 8 weeks and alternate between a day time and an evening meeting to meet the needs of all carers.
- Nottingham City Council has a Therapeutic Intervention Support Team, which provides specialist therapeutic support to fostering placements and will contact with all foster carers within 8 weeks of any child placed with them. This includes connected persons placements.
- 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. The Fostering Network contact details are 0115 9231209 or via e-mail [sarah.furby@fostering.net](mailto: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 the strengths and difficulties questionnaire and emotional well-being.

The voluntary organisation, Childrens Society provides an independent **advocacy service** for all children and young people cared for by the Authority, and SOVA an independent **visiting service** for all children in care.

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, after this time the **Emergency Duty Team** are available on **0115 8761000**.

The service provides **social events**, Christmas parties, 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 is sent to all carers provides information, updates, letters, and memos about forth-coming 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 the '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 Loxley House 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 the 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. 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 4 day pre-approval training course (2 evenings and 2 Saturdays.) 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:

### Session 1

Includes: child development; the role of the foster carer and Fostering Regulations and Standards.

### Sessions 2 & 3 –

Includes: the links between childhood experience; development and behaviour; separation and loss and the importance of attachment; understanding and managing behaviour; the law; working together and how children come into foster care.

### Sessions 4 & 5 -

Includes: diversity, identity and disadvantage; understanding the experience of being fostered; the nature and consequences of abuse; responding to the needs of children who have been abused; risk and safer caring for families who foster. Light buffet lunch is provided.

### Session 6 –

Includes; specialist health services for fostered children; working with the birth family and why and how placements come to an end.

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 2010 the Government introduced 'Training, Support and 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;

- CAMHS
- NUH Sexual Health – Outreach and Health Promotion Team
- Early Help
- Children in Care Council
- The Youth Offending and Leaving Care Team
- Heart Church, The Trent Vineyard, A local Mosque
- Learning and Development

## **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,
- advocacy arrangements in place for children making complaints

**3 complaints have been received between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017**

#### **14. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE REVIEW AND UPDATE**

This document will be reviewed and updated on or by 1st November 2018.

Signed .....

Luke Impey - **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 Integrated Services**

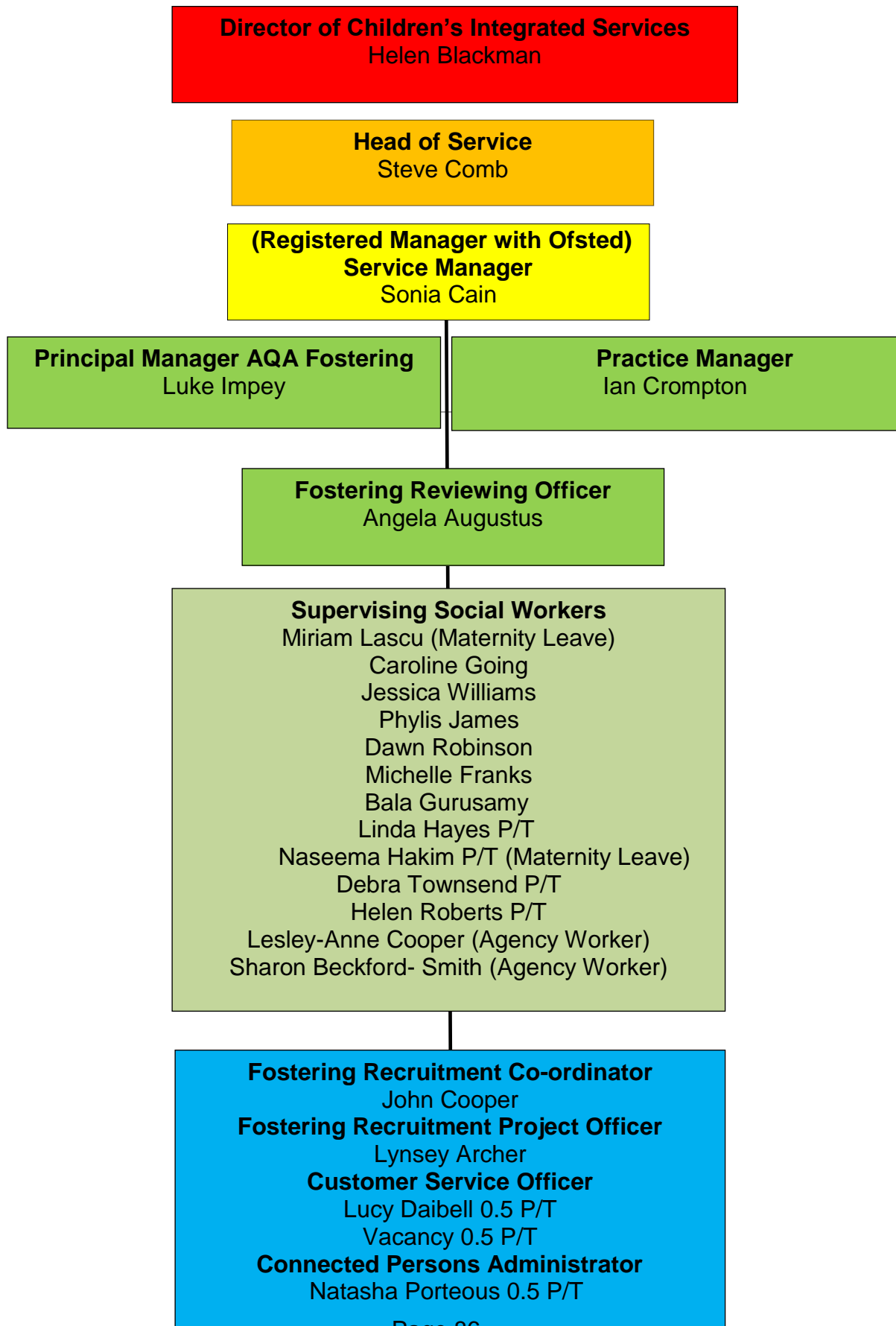
Signed.....

Alison Michalska -**Corporate Director Children & Families**

Signed.....

Councillor Mellen - **Chair of Corporate Parenting**

# Fostering Team Structure



## Corporate Parenting Board

### Reporting Schedule: Forward Planner

#### 2017 - 2018

| Report<br>(Corresponding Strategic Priority Statement)   | Report Lead   | Draft Report submitted for Advice | Draft Report Submitted for Departmental Sign-off | Draft Report Submitted to Constitutional Services | Chair's Briefing             | Final Report Submitted to Constitutional Services | Corporate Parenting Board       |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality Assurance Visits of Regulated and Non-regulated Residential Provision</li> <li>▪ Adoption and Permanency (2)</li> <li>▪ Pilot Ofsted Inspection</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update)</li> <li>▪ Keep on Caring (Verbal Update)</li> <li>▪ Report Forward Planner</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kay Sutt</li> <li>▪ Sonia Cain</li> <li>▪ Helen Blackman</li> <li>▪ Jon Rea</li> <li>▪ Lynn Pearce</li> <li>▪ Cllr Mellen</li> </ul>       | 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2017         | 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2017                       | 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2017                         | 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2017    | 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2017                         | 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2017      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report (3)</li> <li>▪ Pathway Planning (3)</li> <li>▪ Foster Carer Recruitment and Retention</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update)</li> <li>▪ Report Forward Planner (Verbal Update)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clive Chambers</li> <li>▪ Sharon Clarke</li> <li>▪ Sonia Cain</li> <li>▪ Grace Brough</li> <li>▪ Jon Rea</li> <li>▪ Cllr Mellen</li> </ul> | 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2017         | 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2017                        | 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2017                        | 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2017   | 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2017                         | 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2017      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Care Leavers Annual Report (4)(5)</li> <li>▪ Emotional Health (1)</li> <li>▪ CiC Performance Report (Q3/Q4 16/17)</li> <li>▪ Advocacy and Independent Visitor Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update)</li> <li>▪ Report Forward Planner</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sharon Clarke</li> <li>▪ Aileen Wilson</li> <li>▪ Steve Comb</li> <li>▪ Val Marshall</li> <li>▪ Jon Rea</li> <li>▪ Cllr Mellen</li> </ul>  | 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2017        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2017                      | 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2017                       | 16 <sup>th</sup> August 2017 | 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2017                    | 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2017 |

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Agenda Item 9

| Report<br>(Corresponding Strategic Priority Statement)  | Report Lead  | Draft Report submitted for Advice | Draft Report Submitted for Departmental Sign-off | Draft Report Submitted to Constitutional Services | Chair's Briefing               | Final Report Submitted to Constitutional Services | Corporate Parenting Board      |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statement of Purpose Fostering Service and Adoption Agency</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Placements</li> <li>▪ Physical Health</li> <li>▪ Performance Report (Q1 and Q2 2017/18)</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update)</li> <li>▪ Report Forward Planner</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sonia Cain</li> <li>▪ Holly Macer</li> <li>▪ Kathryn Higgins</li> <li>▪ Steve Comb</li> <li>▪ Jon Rea</li> <li>▪ Cllr Mellen</li> </ul>   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2017      | 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2017                     | 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2017                     | 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017  | 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2017                     | 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2017 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fostering and Adoption Panel Chairs Update</li> <li>▪ Child Sexual Exploitation and Grooming (1)</li> <li>▪ Adoption and Permanency (2)</li> <li>▪ Complaints Service Report</li> <li>▪ CiC and Care Leavers Strategy</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update)</li> <li>▪ Report Forward Planner</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audrey Taylor</li> <li>▪ Racheal Osborne / Clive Chambers</li> <li>▪ Audrey Taylor, Sharon Clarke</li> <li>▪ Patrick Skeet</li> <li>▪ Steve Comb</li> <li>▪ Jon Rea</li> <li>▪ Cllr Mellen</li> </ul> | 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2017    | 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2017                    | 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2017                    | 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2017 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2018                      | 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2018  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educational Attainment of Children in Care (4)</li> <li>▪ NCSCB Missings Update Report</li> <li>▪ Edge of Care Provision</li> <li>▪ Reducing Offending Behaviour</li> <li>▪ Children in Care Council: Have your Say 2016</li> <li>▪ Report Forward Planner</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jasmin Howell</li> <li>▪ Clive Chambers</li> <li>▪ Kay Sutt</li> <li>▪ Sam Flint</li> <li>▪ Jon Rea</li> <li>▪ Cllr Mellen</li> </ul>   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2018     | 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2018                    | 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2018                    | 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2018 | 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2018                        | 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2018    |

- **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 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 submitting the report for advice, you will be prompted to select reviewers. The following reviewers should be selected;

- Steve Comb
- Clive Chambers
- Jordan Whatman

When submitting the report for departmental sign-off, you will be prompted to select reviewers. The following reviewer should be selected;

- Helen Blackman

(\* This only applies to reports produced by local authority staff. External partners should continue to submit reports via email to [jordan.whatman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:jordan.whatman@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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