



Nottingham City Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 25 March 2021

Time: 10.00 am

Place: To be held remotely via Zoom - meeting participants will be given access details. The meeting will be livestreamed on the Council's YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil>

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

Director for Legal and Governance

Governance Officer: Kim Pocock **Direct Dial:** 0115 8764321

- 1 Helen Blackman - A Minute's Silence**
To remember our Council colleague, Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services, who died from Covid 19 complications on 3 March 2021.
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Minutes** 3 - 12
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021
- 4 Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan** 13 - 22
- 5 The Impact of Speech and Language Needs on Outcomes for Children and Young People** 23 - 28
- 6 Work Programme 2021/22**
To follow

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

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NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held remotely via Zoom on 28 January 2021 from 10am – 11.52am

Membership

Present

Councillor Carole McCulloch (Chair)
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Jane Lakey
Councillor Chantal Lee
Councillor Salma Mumtaz (Vice Chair)
Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos

Absent

Councillor AJ Matsiko
Councillor Maria Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Cheryl Barnard - Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Wilf Fearon - Head of Early Help Services
Nicholas Lee - Director of Education Service
Catherine Underwood - Corporate Director for People
Councillor David Mellen - Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Schools and Communications

Jane Garrard – Senior Governance Officer
Kim Pocock – Scrutiny Officer

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor AJ Matsiko (bereavement) and Councillor Maria Watson (medical appointment).

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

25 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair agreed to take this item first due to the need to resolve technical issues to enable participation of officers in the Play and Youth Services item.

The Committee noted its work programme for the remainder of 2020/21.

Items were agreed for the March meeting as follows:

- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - to review progress in implementing outstanding actions from the action plan
- Children's Integrated Services Improvement Programme - to scrutinise progress in implementation of the Improvement Plan
- Speech, Language and Communication Services - to review support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

The Committee will also discuss the work programme for 2021/22 at its March meeting. There is a list of suggestions for consideration on the 2020/21 work programme

26 PLAY AND YOUTH SERVICES

Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People, and Wilf Fearon, Head of Early Help Services spoke to the Committee about the work of Play and Youth Services and how provision is targeted to support those children and young people most in need of support. They highlighted the following information:

- a) The service delivers a whole range of social and recreational activities to children and young people aged 5-16 years. There has been a recent reshaping of the service to look at a more targeted approach to delivery in the light of the available budget and concerns about serious youth violence.
- b) County Lines has been a concern for a while. Those who have had contact with the Police are from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds, but there is limited knowledge about young Asian boys.
- c) The Exploitation and Violence Reduction Hub works with partners to map and understand young people and how to share intelligence and engage with them.
- d) Play and Youth Services delivers activity from a number of venues in three localities, covering the north, south and central city.
- e) Covid has impacted on the Service, for example in quarter 4 last year (January – March 2020) the service had approximately 8,000 attendees. In quarter 3 this year (October – December 2020) this was down to 2,000.
- f) Two members of staff are seconded to the Exploitation and Violence Reduction Hub to ensure closer working and sharing of training and experience.
- g) Other partnership working includes working closely with voluntary groups and Area Based Grant partners, the Youth Justice Services, which has just received a grant for youth work, some of which is being used to develop a detached youth team, which will work closely with Play and Youth Services staff to support the work they are doing with children most at risk across city. The fund will also be used to support other partners to increase their capacity to work with children and young people.
- h) The Youth and Play Service works with children and young people in schools and alternative provision, particularly in the area of knife crime and serious youth

violence, to let them know how they can engage with support and get to know staff.

- i) The Service is also involved in family support work, offering constructive activities and interventions to those referred via targeted youth support.
- j) To ensure that work is aligned with partners, Play and Youth Services staff attend a range of meetings to share and receive information, for example the Child Criminal Exploitation Panel and the Out of Court Disposal Panel.
- k) Joint training is undertaken with partners, including training on young women and gangs, targeted youth work and sexual exploitation.
- l) In full lockdown staff are liaising with children and young people through online activities. Those regarded as vulnerable are seen more often and staff have dropped off resource packs to support them to stay engaged.
- m) The Service doesn't record if a child or young person has been excluded from school unless there is a safeguarding issue.
- n) Staff are trained on signs of safety and how to identify risk and needs. This includes how to build trust and relationships with young people to encourage them to talk should there be a safeguarding concern.
- o) The Service focuses on the child or young person. It does not have a specific whole family approach. If family issues are identified, then staff signpost and/ or refer families to appropriate targeted services.

In response to questions from the Committee and in the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- p) In response to a question about what the Service is doing to reach out to young Asian boys following a stabbing incident in Berridge Ward, it was noted that this is an area where more work is needed. Staff know that they need to work on liaising with Asian communities to attract Asian boys and they are looking at how to do more targeted work.
- q) To try to prevent such incidents as this stabbing, partners are working together. The Youth and Play Service does not have the capacity to do it alone. Area Based Grants (ABG) are used to secure the most appropriate service and this includes activity geared towards this sort of need. There is ongoing consideration to introduce a quality mark as an assurance that the work of ABG partners meets the standards and requirements to achieve agreed outcomes.
- r) It was suggested that youth networks within each area, including partners and residents would be helpful to share intelligence and tackle the challenging issues. This could then be shared across the three areas. This was acknowledged as a good idea by Wilf Fearon, although he expressed concern about the capacity of the service given current proposed budget reductions.

- s) The Play and Youth Services workforce is representative of the community it seeks to work with, but this does not mean that the service can provide all that it would like to. Every member of the workforce is not necessarily skilled to work with specific groups. As well as Asian communities, there are other pockets of the community where the Service needs more knowledge and insight, eg the Somali community. The Service is always mindful of what skills it needs when recruiting, but is also difficult to get into those communities and build relationships.
- t) Play and Youth Services staff are not trained to work with adults and wider families but rather the service is designed to be delivered to 5-16 year olds from specific buildings (when not in lockdown). Wider family events are held so that children and young people and their families can work together. However, targeted family work is carried out by other agencies. Youth and Play Services works closely with other agencies to ensure a joint and holistic approach, for example, the MST (the Multi Systemic Therapy) team will do the therapeutic work but will refer the child or young person to Youth and Play Services to provide additional support. Youth and Play Services is not designed to work with a caseload as other services such as the Youth Justice and Social Care, but is engaged with all services which surround children, young people and their families.
- u) While the Service does collect data, it is difficult to quantify this and there is currently no hard data to measure impact. The Service is also likely to be very different in the near future if the budget reductions are agreed. Evaluating how good the service is and whether it is making sufficient difference will be essential to assess whether activity delivered is working well.
- v) The size of the Play and Youth Service means that it cannot do all of the work it wishes to do. It cannot record exclusions or the assessments which may or may not have taken place in relation to these. There is not the capacity to work more with County Lines on youth violence, so the Service focuses on working the children and young people who attend the Service's centres for both fun as well as targeted work. The service will need to continue to work closely with the Area Based Grant funded voluntary sector to deliver.
- w) The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Schools and Communications, who was in attendance, noted that, having been a portfolio holder for youth services for over a decade, he has seen the challenge the Play and Youth Service has faced. From when he first started working with youth services the workforce has been reduced from approximately 100 to 30 following several reorganisations; and services are now facing further reductions. This does not mean that the workforce is not doing a good job with children and young people, but roles have been changed so much over time that it has become difficult to define the approach to take.
- x) It was noted that in the light of budget reductions it is even more important to work closely with other organisations to bridge gaps created by reduced capacity.
- y) It was also noted that services need to be designed to avoid duplication in some areas and lack of support in others. When allocating Area Based Grants, the Council should be satisfied that organisations are delivering what is wanted to the standard required.

The Chair thanked Wilf Fearon for his work and recognised the pressures he and colleagues are working under.

27 SCRUTINY OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOLS

Councillor David Mellen - Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Schools and Communications, supported by Katherine Underwood and Nicholas Lee, Director of Education Service, gave a presentation about progress against objectives within the Council Plan 2019 to 2023 that relate to children and young people. He highlighted the following information:

- a) Covid has had a significant impact on schools, especially as arrangements have changed several times. Ofsted has stopped inspecting and there are no exams. The Portfolio Holder's report was provided to the Committee in the context that schools are not able to do what they would like to be doing, but are doing amazingly in the light of a lack of internet access and IT equipment. In spite of this, all actions are expected to be rated amber or green, indicating that progress is in the right direction
- b) Highlights include the following:
 - I. breakfast clubs, which were few and far between 10-15 years ago, are now a common feature;
 - II. every child will get a school place, even if not in the location they would prefer, and a new free school, to be run by the Archway Trust, is being built on the former Clarendon site;
 - III. 240 school staff from 80 schools have accessed mental health first aid training.
- c) It is known that the mental health of children and young people has suffered during Covid and the extent of that (including the impact on behaviour) has yet to be established. CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) podcasts and video training is being provided to equip school staff with the basics.
- d) There has been a decrease in referrals to CAMHS in the current circumstances, but they are beginning to increase again. It is difficult to work in schools on a face to face basis, given the current safety arrangements, so CAMHS staff are having to rely on other methods, which are not always the easiest for children and young people with mental health difficulties.
- e) The aim is to ensure that all children go to a school rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding but inspections have now been paused for a year. The city now has a higher level of such ratings than in the past, but is still not at 100%.
- f) There has been a reduction in exclusions, influenced to some extent by Covid. Close working is ongoing with the small number of schools which have the highest proportion of permanent exclusions. Engagement is taking place on a number of different levels, including portfolio holder conversations with the school Head/ Trust Director. If some schools with a mixed catchment are able to achieve low levels of exclusions, it means that all schools should be able to manage this.

Exclusion often solves issues for the school, but not for the child/ young person and their family. Unofficial exclusions should never happen, eg asking the child/ young person not to attend at certain times. Schools are being asked to sign up to a pledge not to use permanent exclusions. The local authority can only try to influence schools they are not responsible for, but the portfolio holder was pleased to report that nine schools have signed up to the pledge so far.

- g) Work is ongoing to close the gap in achievement, but without any GCSE exams there is no current progress to report.
- h) Areas where performance requires more work include:
 - i. attendance, which is another area difficult to assess during Covid. The ideal would be to get both primary and secondary school children back as soon as possible;
 - ii. potential budget reductions to the Education Welfare Service and the Education Improvement Board;
 - iii. support to children and young people with additional needs in mainstream schools; and
 - iv. tackling holiday hunger.
- i) The majority of schools are very inclusive. The School's Forum has recently considered the budget to fund higher support needs. The majority of children with special needs are supported in mainstream schools, with a small number in special schools. The authority is committed to keeping children with additional needs on main sites, going to school with their friends, wearing the same uniform, etc, and will increase funding as it becomes available. Some work has been delayed by Covid, eg where a physical extension or other building work is required.
- j) The national holiday hunger campaign has added value to local work and the hope is that there will be a commitment from the Government to continue the voucher scheme. Work is still ongoing to extend free school meals to all primary school children; a green rated expected outcome may be a bit ambitious.
- k) Attendance data shows that since the key worker definition has been extended in this lockdown 67% of children in school in January are those of key workers. There are 5,760 children in schools, which remain busy places during lockdown. Compared with lockdown 1, the number of all children attending schools has increased by 5,080. Of the total number of children in schools in January, 3,777 are children of critical workers and 744 are vulnerable children.
- l) 317 vulnerable children (7%) are unable to be placed due to the limits imposed by Covid safety requirements. In line with national decisions, the children of key workers are accommodated first, but the authority is discussing this with schools.
- m) The authority distributed 1200 laptops, tablets and data dongles to vulnerable children in March – July 2020. This was not sufficient to meet all need so distribution was prioritised. However, a deal was brokered with Vodafone for a free, unlimited offer for all pupils identified by schools. During the second phase

(September to date) there has been a national roll out from all of the main operators (BT EE O2, Three etc.). Schools can now order devices directly following an audit of families. Most households now have a device, but the concern is that where there are multiple children in a household, access to a single device may remain limited. Work on developing the best use of online learning continues.

- n) At 26 January 2021 a total of 457 children of statutory school age and 101 pre-school children were self-isolating due to Covid (either because they had Covid or had been in contact with someone with Covid). There has been a decrease in numbers in self-isolation compared with previous weeks.

In response to questions from the Committee and in the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- o) Children and young people with no recourse to public funds (eg due to immigration delays) can still attend school and will be provided with necessary internet access and equipment as for other children, if needed. NEST (Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team) provides for children of asylum seeker and refugee families. Young people in their mid-teens can attend College Street where there is a welcome programme to support them with language, dealing with the trauma of settling in a new country etc.
- p) In response to a question about his view on the return to schools and vaccination, the Portfolio Holder agreed that vaccination of the school workforce is vital to bring schools back, but the difficulty is that there are lots of vulnerable staff who work with the public, all of whom are making a case for early vaccination. In his opinion, there is a case for vaccinating staff of special schools where medical care is part of their role. In terms of returning to school, the Government has to balance the 100,000+ deaths in the country against the prospect of schools being places where the virus can be passed on, not just in school, but also on the journey to and from school. In addition, the number of a-symptomatic cases has to be balanced against the need to get children back to school as soon as we possibly can. This is a difficult decision to make.
- q) Closing the gap for those who have not been able to engage with online learning (whatever the reason), is very important. These children will need to be identified as quickly as possible. They cannot be expected to just pick up from where they left off and will need to feel safe when back at school. Children did settle back quickly in September, but there were some fears from children and from staff too.
- r) Conversations are ongoing with headteachers. There is a lot of anxiety around the impact on younger children. If a child's experience of the first stages of early education are impacted severely, there is a lot of catching up to do. In terms of the authority's responsibilities, work is primarily with primary and special schools but there are discussions taking place with secondary schools. The approach needs to be holistic to meet all needs and this will involve more than a rigorous regime of learning, ie there will need to be attention paid to mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as supporting the narrowing of the attainment gap. There will be a range of additional support available but the detail of this has not

yet been provided to local authorities or schools. The disruption and stop-start nature of changes has resulted in a challenging weight of pressure and expectation on school staff, who will need to be supported in the overall recovery programme.

- s) In terms of longer term attainment objectives, Ofsted ratings are not the same as educational outcomes and attainment figures remain concerning, particularly for specific groups, including white working class boys and Gypsy/ Roma traveller children. The authority's powers to intervene in secondary schools has been much reduced, but work is ongoing with the Regional School Commissioner and to build relationships with academy headteachers, a number of whom have worked in the city for a long time and who remain committed to city children doing as well as they possibly can. The city's primary schools are moving up the attainment table. They were at the bottom of all schools when the City Council inherited responsibility for Education in 1998 and are now in the mid-range, comparing well with areas that have lower levels of deprivation.
- t) Achieving stability in the workforce, understanding what children in schools face and changing the low expectations of Nottingham children is a long term task, but one which must be tackled as education is the key to lifetime chances. The measure of 5 GCSEs is narrow but is key – without it success may be more difficult.
- u) In terms of outcomes, while still low, the direction of travel is in the right direction and what can be seen currently in primary schools is beginning to translate into their transfer into secondary schools. Some primary school children are making progress in the top 10-15 % in the country. Secondary schools are also raising attainment levels.
- v) The Archway Trust free school bid has been supported by the local authority on the basis of their commitment to Nottingham children and the growth of their leadership, who are based in and have experience of Nottingham. There are real signs of improvement and progress, but there is still a need to challenge the Regional Schools Commissioner who has responsibility for performance management for the secondary schools in the city. The local authority has an academies cause and concern process, whereby concerns (eg academic performance, inclusion, exclusion) can be escalated by notifying the Portfolio Holder and on to the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- w) The authority is aware of the issues of under attainment by white working class boys and other groups. This is a frustration for the authority as it does not have a direct role in what academies deliver. It has been easier to influence academies in relation to exclusions as the authority has a statutory responsibility for managing exclusions and, therefore, has the staff capacity for this specific work. Data on under attainment is presented to the Education Improvement Board but several academies are not based in Nottingham and have their own ethos and ethics.

- x) The Committee agreed to invite the Regional Schools Commissioner to a future meeting to discuss a range of issues of concern in relation to schools within the Commissioner's remit.

The Chair of the Committee recorded her thanks for the amazing job currently being carried out by teachers in Nottingham schools.

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**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
25 March 2021**

Children's Integrated Services Improvement Programme

Report of the Head of Legal and Governance

1 Purpose

1.1 To scrutinise progress on the actions being taken in response to the issues identified by Ofsted in its focused visit to Children's Services in February 2020.

2 Action required

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) review the action being taken, and progress being made in responding to the issues identified by Ofsted in its February 2020 focused visit;
- b) seek assurance regarding ongoing and future work to address these issues; and
- c) consider next steps in the scrutiny process.

3 Background information

3.1 Ofsted carried out an inspection of children's social care services in November 2018 and the report was published in January 2019. The report noted that there were areas of good practice across the services and a range of services had improved since the previous full inspection in 2014. However, there were also areas where improvements were required to ensure that all children get the right support at the right time. Overall, the service was rated as 'requires improvement to be good'. The Committee has explored work relating to some of the areas identified in that inspection report.

3.2 In February 2020, Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit to look specifically at Nottingham City Council's arrangements for children in need and those subject to a child protection plan, with a focus on children at risk of neglect.

3.3 Ofsted issued two priority actions as a result of their findings:

- (a) Address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improve their experiences, and that new and emerging risks are identified and responded to.
- (b) Stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social workers and first line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection.

3.4 An action plan was developed to address these priorities and an update report has been provided by colleagues to set out progress made against these actions over the last 12 months.

4 List of attached information

4.1 Report from Children's Integrated Services.

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

5.1 None.

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

6.1 Reports to, and minutes of the meetings of the Health Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 19 November 2020, 17 December 2020, 11 February 2021 and 30 July 2021.

7 Wards affected

7.1 All.

8 Contact information

8.1 Kim Pocock, Scrutiny Officer
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Meeting Title	Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Children's Integrated Services Improvement Journey
Meeting Date	25 March 2021

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Helen Watson, Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Michelle Roe, Executive Officer Sophie Russell, Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement

Summary of issues:

In February 2020, Ofsted undertook a Focussed Visit to look specifically at Nottingham City Council's arrangements for children in need and those subject to a child protection plan, with a focus on children at risk of neglect.

There is no inspection rating given during a Focussed Visit, but given the issues inspectors found in the service areas they looked at, Ofsted issued two Priority Actions:

1. Address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improve their experiences, and that new and emerging risks are identified and responded to.
2. Stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social workers and first line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection.

In response to the findings of the Focussed Visit, an action plan was developed and shared with Ofsted. This report sets out progress undertaken over the last 12 months to address the Priority Actions and to improve our services for children and families.

Recommendation(s):

- 1 Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee consider progress undertaken by Children's Integrated Services over the last 12 months against the requirements to improve services.

1. Background

In response to the two priority actions, and wider recommendations made around practice improvement, an action plan was developed and provided to Ofsted in March. The key headline actions are:

Priority Area for Action 1 – Social Work Practice

Address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improve their experiences, and that new and emerging risk are identified and responded to.

Priority Area for Action 2 – Workforce Capacity

Stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social worker and fine line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection.

Attached as Appendix A is progress is against the action plan.

To drive delivery of this action plan and to secure sustainable improvement which will make a real difference for children, young people and families, the Children at the Heart Improvement Board was established in April 2020 and has met monthly. The Improvement Board is chaired by the Chief Executive and membership includes both the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, along with senior officers of the Council. Key health, education and police partners are members.

Throughout our improvement journey we have continued to work closely with Ofsted and the Department for Education. To support our improvement, the Department for Education have enabled to us access support from the Partners in Practice (PiP) programme, which provides peer support from a partner local authority to support improvement. Our Partner in Practice is Essex County Council. The scope of the programme was co-produced between Nottingham City Council and PiP colleagues. In spite of an initial delay due to covid-19 and the continuing restrictions, the PiP team began work with us during May 2020 to understand practice issues, undertaking sampling of case files as well as discussions, diagnostics and training sessions with senior managers, team managers and a range of practitioners, including those with specific case involvement.

In December 2020 Essex undertook a review of improvement progress using their Partners in Practice review framework. The review found:

- Strong feedback that improvements are happening at pace, based on deep and genuine changes to culture.
- A motivated workforce who are aligned to the organisation, understand the vision and the approach to practice, and feel supported and valued
- Good partner relationships and buy-in
- Positive impact felt by families (small sample)
- Areas for development: staff stability, caseloads & allocations, interventions during assessment, working cases at lowest level
- Strong recognition that it is early days. Continued focus and investment is required if progress is to be sustained and produce better outcomes

We are currently exploring opportunities to continue our work with Essex and agree a further programme of support.

2. Next Steps

Phase Two of the Children at the Heart Development Plan was agreed by Children at the Heart Improvement Board (October 2020). There are four workstreams and each workstream has a sponsor.

Children at the Heart Improvement – Plan on a Page

01.03.21 – Sophie Russell



<p>Children will benefit from consistently good social work practice</p>	<p>Services will be enabled and supported to make a difference for children</p>	<p>Children will benefit from a partnership that works together to improve outcomes for children</p>	<p>Children's Integrated Services Financial Sustainability</p>
<p>Sponsor: Helen Watson</p>	<p>Sponsor: Helen Watson</p>	<p>Sponsor: Catherine Underwood</p>	<p>Sponsor: Catherine Underwood</p>
<p>Workstream Support: Jessica Janes, Claire Hallam, Lisa Elikier</p>	<p>Workstream Support: Andy Shone, Carole Rooth</p>	<p>Workstream Support: Elaine Mitchell, Kate Thurman</p>	<p>Workstream Support: Sara-Jane Brighthouse</p>
<p>Creating the conditions for good social work to flourish -including Neglect (Lead Officer: Tracey Nurse)</p> <p>Outcomes for CiC / Care Leavers – including Permanence/Fostering (Lead Officer: Tajinder Madahar / Tracey Nurse)</p> <p>Family Interventions and Delivery Models (Lead Officer: TBC)</p>	<p>Quality Assurance – including Reviewing Service (Lead Officer: Sophie Russell / Uzma Moody)</p> <p>Participation & Engagement – Workforce and Children/Families (Lead Officer: John Matraveros)</p> <p>Workforce Development (Lead Officer: Sophie Russell)</p> <p>Ways of Working (Lead Officer: TBC)</p>	<p>Strategic Alignment of Plans & Strategies (Lead Officer: Sophie Russell)</p> <p>Youth Violence and Exploitation (Lead Officer: Wif Fearon)</p> <p>Early Intervention & Help (Lead Officer: Aileen Wilson)</p> <p>Vulnerable Learners (Lead Officer: Peter McConnochie / Janne Walker)</p> <p>Commissioning for Good Outcomes (Lead Officer: tbc)</p>	<p>Delivering Staffing Savings</p> <p>CiC Placement Costs</p> <p>CiC Demand and Flow</p> <p>Workforce Costs</p>
<p>Culture Change (Social Work Practice, Organisational and Leadership, Partnership)</p>			
<p>Strategic Planning (Team Plans, Children's Integrated Services Plan, Children and Young People's Plan/Family Support Pathway)</p>			

Actions have been developed against each workstream and progress is monitored by the Children at the Heart Improvement Board and, for financial sustainability, by the Children's Integrated Services Sustainability Board.

3. Finance Implications

An Improvement Fund of £1.5m one-off funding was identified by the Council to support short-term work force capacity and delivery of the improvement plan. As we are now one year into our improvement journey we have been working to ensure that any improvement work undertaken is sustainable.

There are significant pressures on the Council's financial position and to achieve a balanced budget, savings have been required across the Council. At the time of writing this report, savings totalling £1.189m in 2021/22, rising to £1.848m in 2023/24 and workforce reductions totalling £590,000 for 2021/22 are proposed.

4. Risk

Following February's Focused Visit, Ofsted informed us that they would undertake a further Focused Visit and that this would result in either assurance of sufficient improvement or a full inspection. Since Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns, Ofsted adjusted their inspection activity and we still await this follow up visit. Under the new inspection regime there will be a fuller review of children's experiences under

Covid-19, which would look at a wider range of our children's services than those areas considered under the Focused Visit.

The implications of an inadequate inspection would bring major external scrutiny with ministerial oversight and potential intervention. In addition, very substantial additional cost would be incurred. Achieving fast and demonstrable improvement required significant additional resource.

5. Views of citizens/children and young people

The Children in Care Council and the Youth Cabinet have been invited to meet Improvement Board members and their feedback has been presented to the Board to inform future developments and strategic planning.

Ongoing opportunities to hear the views of young people through established forums, annual surveys and consultation exercises, will inform our continuous improvement.

Priority Area for Action 1 – Social Work Practice		
<i>Address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improve their experiences, and that new and emerging risk are identified and responded to.</i>		
1.	Ensure that there is sufficient capacity for strong leadership of immediate and ongoing practice improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex Partners in Practice have undertaken a programme of improvement. • A Director of Practice Improvement was employed for 9 months to provide additional leadership capacity • A Communications Plan was developed in consultation with the Practice Forum. • A Principal Social Worker was recruited in November 2020.
2.	Ensure that Nottingham City Council has an operating model which enables good practice and workforce capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Business Case for capacity and structural changes is in development in the context of wider budget planning. This will be carried forwards as an action into the Phase Two programme
3.	Ensure that all staff and managers are clear about Nottingham’s social work practice models and ‘what good looks like’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Model confirmed (strengths-based, using Signs of Safety approaches). 2 day training courses took place for all staff. • Practice tools were launched in the Neglect Practice Guidance in June 2020 with work is ongoing to strengthen the tools available. • A Workforce Strategy has been developed. • We have re-joined Research in Practice and developed a plan around how RiP resources and support will be utilised to support improvement
4.	Ensure that assessments and plans are of good quality and accurately evaluate risk and address the needs of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Standards have been developed and disseminated to all colleagues. • All Children’s Social Care teams have been engaged in the PiP Diagnostic and have had the opportunity to attend learning workshops to help reflection on practice. • Group supervisions have commenced to embed the practice model in frontline social work teams. • We have re-launched the escalation policy, which makes it clear what actions staff can take if they are concerned about practice and decision making.
5.	Assertive practice ensures that children’s needs are understood and appropriate action/intervention is put in place to improve outcomes for children, including those experiencing neglect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We undertook immediate scrutiny of current Children in Need cases to be undertaken to ensure there is robust management oversight, decision-making is appropriate and that timely action has been taken to address any drift or delay identities. • We have developed and launched a Neglect Practice Guidance and Toolkit, including consideration of the impact of parental drug and

		<p>alcohol misuse, mental health and evaluating parenting capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have drafted a Partnership Neglect Strategy. • Neglect Training has been rolled out to the Social Care Workforce. • A multi-agency thematic audit on neglect has been completed.
6.	<p>Ensure that all managers are clear about the expectations of their oversight on casework, to ensure children's needs are understood and effectively addressed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are redeveloping our Practice Management Standards for Team Managers. • We have re-launched guidance for Managers in relation to management of allocation and oversight and review of any unallocated work. • We have relaunched our Supervision Policy. • We are undertaking regular audits to consider the quality and effectiveness of supervision in driving improved outcomes for children
7.	<p>Develop an effective audit framework which provides an accurate appraisal of the experience of children and drives systematic improvements in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have reviewed and re-shaped the audit programme and governance to ensure that audits are focused on the impact of practice for children and to ensure that learning from audits is embedded across the Directorate. • Regular case file audit programme is now up and running with a moderation panel proves in place, involving the case holder, relevant Managers and the IRO to ensure reflection on the quality of practice and impact for the child. • Further work is ongoing with the Essex PiP to review the audit framework to identify further improvements, which will be included in the Phase 2 programme. • All auditors have had training in September 2020 and four colleagues attended regional 'train the trainer'. Further work is now identified in Phase Two Plan to improve guidance and develop an in-house training programme to improve the quality of audits. • We have implemented a clear communication strategy to ensure that the learning from audits is embedded in practice.
8.	<p>Ensure that senior managers and leaders have an accurate understanding of the experience of children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children at the Heart Improvement Board was established in April 2020. • The Children at the Heart Practice Forum has been established for frontline practitioners. • We have refreshed the quality and performance assurance framework to ensure leadership oversight and assurance of Children's Services. • Performance and Quality meetings have been streamlined to ensure timely consideration of performance information by senior leaders. Monthly Performance and Quality Lead Member briefing and monthly CEO briefing. • We have reviewed and refreshed the framework

		<p>for hearing and acting on the voice and experience of the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have piloted a relaunch of Mind of My Own
9.	<p>Ensure effective Independent Reviewing Officer service which ensures effective plans and progress for children in care and children in need of protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have undertaken a short-term options appraisal for creating capacity in the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service and additional capacity has been added. This has had a very positive impact in relation to the timeliness of reviews and Initial Child Protection Conferences. • PiP Support is in place to look at practice improvements in relation to Reviewing Service. Further work will be incorporated into the Phase 2 Improvement Programme.
<p>Priority Area for Action 2 – Workforce Capacity <i>Stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social worker sand fine line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection.</i></p>		
10	<p>Stabilise the social work workforce increase capacity in the short-term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have refreshed our advert and offer for agency social workers. • We recruited an agency social work fieldwork team for 6 months to drive. • Contact Workers have been recruited. • We have recruited temporary additional business support in field work teams
11	<p>Develop a sustainable plan to ensure the sufficiency of social workers in the long-term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have introduced a new Social Work progression and pay structure. • We have launched a new microsite to support social work recruitment. • Rolling recruitment of Social Workers has continued. • We are undertaking a review of the wider factors which contribute to social work capacity and retention (including IT- enabled working and support, parking and office space).

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**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
25 March 2021**

The Impact on Speech and Language Needs on Outcomes for Children and Young People

Report of the Head of Legal and Governance

1 Purpose

1.1 To review support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.

2 Action required

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) consider the information provided on support made available to children and young people with speech, language and communication needs;
- b) consider and comment on the development plan for the Early Years Strategy; and
- c) consider whether any further scrutiny should be carried out in relation to this issue.

3 Background information

3.1 A key recommendation arising from a Local Government Association Peer Challenge carried out with Nottingham City Council in 2019 was to develop a collaboratively produced citywide Early Years Strategy, with a particular focus on speech, language and communication (SLC).

3.2 It was recommended that the Strategy focused on upskilling the workforce, early identification of SLC, offering a clear journey for parents and carers, and informing long-term planning to improve children's outcomes and reduce inequalities.

4 Colleagues from Early Years will attend the Committee meeting to outline the support available and progress in relation to the Strategy, to inform the Committee and enable members to identify any particular themes or areas for future scrutiny.

5 List of attached information

5.1 Report from Early Years.

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

6.1 None.

7 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

7.1 None.

8 Wards affected

8.1 All.

9 Contact information

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Meeting Title	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	The impact of Speech and Language Needs on Outcomes for Children and Young People
Meeting Date	25 th March 2021

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood Nicholas Lee
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
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Scope of this Report

The Local Government Association undertook a Peer Challenge with Nottingham City Council in 2019 and are due to revisit the Authority later this year. Following the Peer Challenge, the key recommendation was to develop a collaboratively produced, citywide Early Years Strategy with a particular focus on speech, language and communication (SLC). It was recommended that the strategy:

- Upskills the wider workforce in SLC and ensures the workforce understand how their work contributes to the strategy;
- Encourages measures to support with early identification of SLC needs;
- Offers a clear journey for parents and carers on the SLC offer in the City;
- Ensures SLC needs inform long term planning to improve children’s outcomes and reduce inequalities.

Shortly before the Peer Challenge, Nottingham City Council Children’s Services secured funding under the Department of Education’s Early Outcomes Fund (EOF) for work linked to SLC and the development of a SLC strategy for the City. This report provides an overview of the journey of the EOF work to date, when 18 months ago, there was no central SLC information hub in the City. The EOF has enabled us, in partnership with parents, practitioners and Better Communications CIC, to develop a digital SLC information hub, which will be launched on 16th March 2021. This is huge progress for the City.

Whilst evidence can be cited around the impact of how early SLC intervention and support can affect a child’s life chances in later years, we collectively recognise the developing strategy ideally needs to extend beyond the 0-5 years age range. This report does not cover the specifics of intervention for those at risk of exclusion and those on the edge of the Youth Justice System as this is outside the scope of the EOF Work, although it must be acknowledged the work that the Youth Justice Team are carrying out with young people strengthens the need for a citywide SLC strategy.

Context and Background / Reason for this Work

- Through Department for Education funding under the EOF, Nottingham City Council Children’s Services has been involved in ground-breaking work, in partnership with Leicester and Derby City Council’s and Better Communication CIC. This combined funding application, which is early

years focused, successfully secured £186k for the City in March 2019.

- Eligibility for funding was driven by all 3 cities in the partnership bid scoring below the national average in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) data. The table below reflects the EYFSP data over the last 5 years (*due to the impact of COVID19, there is no local or national dataset for 2020*).

	Good Level of Development				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Nottingham City	58% (+11)	63.5 (+5.5)	66.2 (+2.7)	67.6% (+1.4)	66.9% (-0.7)
National	66%	69.3 (+3.3)	70.7 (+1.4)	71.5 (+0.8)	71.8 (+0.3)
Statistical Neighbours	61.7	64.9	66.6	68	68.7
Difference	-8	-5.8	-4.5	-3.9	-4.9

Average of Communication and Language Early Learning Goals (Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking)

	Ward	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSBC Wards	Aspley	76.6%	72.9%	75.9%	74.9%	79.0%
	Bulwell	80.8%	80.2%	75.4%	82.4%	74.8%
	Hyson Green & Arboretum	69.2%	71.1%	71.4%	77.0%	77.7%
	St. Ann's	68.7%	76.0%	69.9%	76.6%	77.5%
Non-SSBC Wards						
	Basford	74.5%	83.5%	86.7%	86.4%	84.0%
	Berridge	71.0%	76.1%	75.8%	79.4%	73.8%
	Bestwood	77.6%	82.3%	84.2%	85.4%	83.3%
	Bilborough	77.6%	76.2%	78.9%	82.1%	84.2%
	Bulwell Forest	87.4%	87.4%	89.9%	89.1%	83.4%
	Castle	77.8%	84.4%	86.7%	90.6%	80.6%
	Clifton East	82.5%	83.5%	79.2%	83.0%	85.5%
	Clifton West	81.3%	86.2%	82.8%	89.0%	88.4%
	Dales	72.3%	74.8%	79.6%	76.4%	81.3%
	Leen Valley	72.6%	83.0%	79.0%	77.8%	83.7%
	Lenton & Wollaton East	74.2%	81.4%	68.8%	80.0%	81.6%
	Mapperley	68.8%	76.2%	78.4%	70.6%	81.7%
	Meadows	68.6%	76.0%	87.2%	84.1%	78.1%
	Outside Nottingham	83.5%	89.1%	86.4%	91.0%	85.0%
	Radford	68.6%	71.9%	78.5%	82.3%	77.9%
	Sherwood	81.8%	80.1%	84.1%	92.4%	81.0%
	Wollaton West	89.2%	89.6%	86.6%	84.8%	93.3%
Average		76.4%	79.5%	79.6%	81.8%	81.2%

- A local Needs Analysis has evidenced children and young people of Nottingham are not developing SLC to the best of their potential, which impacts on their attachment, attainment, leisure, mental health, well-being, later employment and life chances. The attached 'heat map' identifies predicted level of SLCN need for 0-4 years. We acknowledge the excellent targeted interventions taking place in the Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) wards and SSBC colleagues

have been involved throughout this EOF work, however it remains evident that SLC needs remain a citywide issue and as such a citywide strategy is needed. This work presents the opportunity for real strategic change, to make that significant difference to children and families and address inequalities.

- The Early Years Peer Challenge acknowledged there were lots of really positive interventions, however “the golden thread” was missing and did not address long term positive impact. The Peer Reviewers are due to return in Summer 2021 and the identified need for a SLC Strategy has been developed as part of this EOF work. The draft SLC Strategy will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board, who oversee and are accountable for this work, in May 2021.
- The attached *Identification and Intervention for Speech, Language and Communication in the Early Years: A Summary of the Early Outcomes Fund Project in Leicester, Derby and Nottingham cities* was published by Better Communication CIC in March 2020 and provides further context and an overview of work to date.

Vision for this SLC Work

- To develop a **city-wide, shared strategy**, based on outcomes across the whole system, which could inform future commissioning arrangements.
- For this strategy and change program to focus on **measurable impact**, not input, and to be jointly owned and delivered by all partners and for the leadership of delivering these integrated services to be based on the understanding of need rather than demand, with the tailoring of equity of outcome rather than equality of input.
- For there to be a **clear offer** which empowers families and professionals to navigate the best support to access the best offer to meet the needs of children and their families.
- To develop a **dashboard of impact measures** bringing together impact data across the whole system, informing ongoing joint commissioning of services and leading to improved outcomes for individuals, settings and cohorts. This is a long term plan.
- For SLC to be **embedded as a key issue** across all agendas, supported by a clear understanding of funding and commissioning arrangements, informed by subject experts who are ambitious for change for children and young people in Nottingham City and their life chances.

Next Steps

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ➤ March 2021 | Launch of SLCN pathway to support the delivery of the Strategy |
| ➤ March – June 2021 | Development of the SLC Strategy, overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board |
| ➤ April 2021 – March 2022 | Establish joint commissioning strategic group with a view to jointly commissioned SLT and other SLC support services |

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