



**Nottingham City Council
Corporate Parenting Board**

Date: Monday, 18 January 2021

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: To be held remotely via Zoom – <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: Mark Leavesley

Direct Dial: 0115 876 4302

- 1 Apologies for absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interests**
- 3 Minutes** 3 - 6
Last meeting held on 16 November 2020 (for confirmation)
- 4 Reducing Offending Behaviour (Children in Care)** 7 - 12
Report of Director of Children's Integrated Services
- 5 Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report 2019/20** 13 - 32
Report of Head of Service
- 6 Fostering and Adoption update**
Reports of Director of Children's Integrated Services
 - (a) Foster Carer recruitment and retention** 33 - 40
 - (b) Fostering and Adoption Panel: Chair's report** 41 - 46
- 7 Children in Care Council update (including Health & Wellbeing themed discussion feedback)**
Engagement and Participation Lead Officer to report
- 8 Work plan** 47 - 48
For discussion / noting
- 9 Next meeting**
To note that the next meeting will be held on Monday 15 March 2021 at a time to be agreed

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

Nottingham City Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the meeting held remotely and livestreamed on YouTube on 16 November 2020 from 2.30 pm - 3.32 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Cheryl Barnard (Chair)
Councillor Jay Hayes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Councillor Maria Watson
Councillor Cate Woodward

Absent

Councillor Georgia Power

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Gillian Black	- Project Manager, Change Grow Live
Helen Blackman	- Director of Children's Integrated Services
Clive Chambers	- Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Mark Leavesley	- Governance Officer
Jon Rea	- Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
Patrick Skeete	- Social Care Complaints Manager
Gabriel Hall	- Area Manager) The Children's Society
Alison Smith	- Service Manager)

16 Apologies for absence

Sophie Russell

Helen Blackman - attended for minutes 19 and 20 (items 4 and 5) only

17 Declarations of Interests

None.

18 Minutes

Subject to changing on page 6 'additional *pointed*' to 'additional *points*', the Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

19 Children in Care - social care complaints

Patrick Skeete, Social Care Complaints Manager, presented the report, summarising the statutory Social Care Complaints procedure (SCC), which ensured young people had a robust process to share worries or concerns about the service and/or support they received, and highlighting complaints made specifically by children in care, in

accordance with the SCC. The report also focused on the nature of the complaints made and whether they were addressed within the statutory timescales.

In response to questions, Mr Skeete gave the following information:

- i. the Stage 2 complaint in the report (table in section 2.12, complaint 12) was not upheld as it was due to circumstances out of the authorities control;
- ii. the response time to complaints is now back on track as delays were due to the previous pandemic lockdown, although the average delay was still only 3 days late during those months;
- iii. while the complaints process is a formal one, determined by statute, children can complain informally by text etc if they are not aware of the formal process;
- iv. there is no particular theme arising from the complaints as they tend to cover a range of issues.

Resolved that the Board continues to support effective complaints handling, and acts as corporate parents, in relation to addressing the concerns of young people in care.

20 Independent Visitor Service - Annual Report 2019/20

Gillian Black, Project Manager at Change Grow Live, presented the report, detailing the Change Grow Live Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council Independent Visitor Project Annual Report 2019-20.

Ms Black stated that the project is jointly funded by the Councils and is designed to meet the needs of children irrespective of where their placement is.

In response to a question, Ms Black stated that visitors are matched with a child or young person until they are 18 years old, but this can be extended, currently up to 25, if the young person has additional needs.

It was stated that the independent visitor service was a further important safeguard for children in care and provides them with valuable social experiences.

Resolved to note the Independent Visitor Project Annual Report 2019-20.

21 Independent Advocacy Annual Report 2019-20

Gabriel Hall (Area Manager) and Alison Smith (Service Manager), The Children's Society, presented the Independent Advocacy Service Annual Report 2019-20.

They stated that the Children's Society is jointly commissioned by Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils to deliver an independent Advocacy Service for all children in their care, promoting children's rights and providing advocacy in line with each local authority's statutory duty, and underpinned by the 'National Standards for the provision of Children's Advocacy Services (2002)'.

It was also stated that across the UK, there had been a reduction in the number of children leaving care in every age band, apart from in the 16-18 year old group, which had increased.

Resolved to note the Independent Advocacy Service Annual Report 2019-20.

22 Children in Care Council update

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, updated the Board as follows:

- i. the Children in Care Council (CiC) is currently working on ways to work more closely with Board members and make it more empowering for young people;
- ii. at a recent meeting with Councillor Barnard, a discussion around the number of different issues affecting young people was held, and this will be used as the starting point for future small, informal discussions between members of the Board and young people. The first being a meeting before Christmas to discuss the pressures facing young people, with the outcome being reported to the January meeting of the Board;
- iii. there is an open invitation to members of this Board to attend the CiC monthly meetings;
- iv. the 'Have Your Say' survey is currently live and a link has been sent to young people to complete (via 'Snap Survey'), with a deadline for completion of 11 December;
- v. the 'Mind My Own' app is currently being used to encourage workers to access training. It has also seen a rise in numbers of young people using it to provide feedback and to report concerns;
- vi. a new Principle Social Worker has been recruited and the Young Person's Panel included a current and a past member of the CiC. The Panel were commended for their excellent contribution to the recruitment process;
- vii. the last CiC of the year will be a 'Christmas special' and will be held on 14 December, to which all Board members are invited.

Resolved to note the update.

23 Future meeting arrangements - proposal

The Chair proposed new arrangements for the Committee to support effective Board discussions, prioritising the views of children and young people, and demonstrating the impact of partnerships to support children in care and care leavers in Nottingham City.

Resolved that the new arrangements as per the report be agreed, including:

- (1) having a single, themed discussion at each meeting, commencing with 'Health and Wellbeing' at the next meeting in January 2021;**

- (2) for each 'theme', an identified member of the Board will work with representatives of the Children in Care Council to gather the views of a wider group of children and young people, identify key areas for exploration by the Board, and present their findings to the Board for discussion;**
- (3) changing the start time of meetings from 2.30pm to 5.30pm to support the involvement and attendance of young people by ensuring it takes place outside of standard school/college/work hours;**
- (4) extending the standing membership of the Board by seeking representatives from:**
 - The Independent Reviewing Service;**
 - The Virtual School;**
 - Nottingham City Homes;**
 - Housing Aid;**
 - The Local Clinical Commissioning Group;**
 - Nottingham City Public Health;**
 - The Department for Work and Pensions.**

24 Date of next meeting

Following the decision in minute 23 above, the Committee agreed to meet at 5.30pm, instead of 2.30pm, on Monday 18 January 2021 (either at Loxley House or remotely via Zoom, depending on the pandemic situation at the time).

Corporate Parenting Board - 18 January 2021

Title of paper:	Reducing Offending Behaviour (Children in Care)	
Director:	Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services	Wards affected: All
Report authors and contact details:	Natalie Pink – Leaving Care Service 0115 8761333 PC Sam Flint - Children in Care Police Officer (CiCPO), Nottinghamshire Police 0115 8763735	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	PC Rebecca Dalby – CiCPO Boyd Livingstone – Youth Justice Service Principal Analyst	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:		
Nottingham People		X
Living in Nottingham		<input type="checkbox"/>
Growing Nottingham		<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect for Nottingham		<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving Nottingham Better		<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
To update the Board on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the published data for 2019/20 regarding reducing offending behaviour within the Children in Care population, published 21.12.2020; ii. the activity of the Children in Care Police Officers (CiCPO) and Leaving Care Service (LCS) Senior Personal Advisor 2020, in working together to reduce offending and safeguard Children in Care, (including how this has been impacted by COVID-19); iii. the review of the Multi-agency Protocol for Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, to reduce the criminalisation of Children in Care. 		
Recommendations:		
1	To note the data regarding reducing offending behaviour within the Children in Care population.	
2	To note the importance of sustaining the work of the CiCPO’s to continue to improve outcomes for Children in Care, supported by the LCS Senior Personal Advisor.	

1 Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 The role of CiCPO and LCS Senior Personal Advisor, (previously known as Youth Justice Service Lead for CiC), working in partnership, has previously been suggested as a model of best practice. This has been recognised in repeat Ofsted inspections: “The dedicated CiCPO successfully supports restorative justice interventions, and there have been impressive reductions in offending rates.” “Joint work with the police, youth justice service

and community-based services results in shared strategic approaches to providing swift and flexibly deployed resources, reducing the risk of young people re-offending.” (Ofsted 2018)

- 1.2 To our knowledge, Nottingham City is the only authority where CiCPO and LCS Senior Personal Advisor work in collaboration and to this model. One CiCPO is now in place for the County, and they are working with the City to develop the role. We believe that measures have contributed to the marked reduction in offending within the Children in Care population over time.

2 Background (including outcomes of consultation)

- 2.1 **National reporting data** is submitted annually, based on the Children in Care population whose home Authority is Nottingham City, who have been in care for a year or more, are aged 10-17, and have received a Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or conviction within the year.

- 2.2 Up until (and including) the year 2016/17 we were able to report a 5 year trend in reducing offending behaviour within the Children in Care population. In 2017/18 we maintained our performance in terms of the numbers of Children in Care who offended. The figure for 2018/19 reduced to 3%. We can now report a figure of 4% for 2019/20. This is felt to represent a maintenance of performance. It may be noted that data is rounded to the nearest whole number, and figures are now so low that some fluctuation is likely.

2.3 Table 1

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
9.80%	9%	9.80%	8.70%	8.20%	6%	6%	5%	6%	3%	4%

(Source <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>)

- 2.4 We are encouraged that other Authorities continue to seek out advice and guidance around reducing criminalisation from Nottingham City, with a view to improving outcomes for Children in Care.
- 2.5 **Specialist roles:** Both CiCPO posts continue to be jointly funded by Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham City Council. PC Rebecca Dalby joined PC Sam Flint in the role of CiCPO in January 2018. We are pleased to report that capacity for the role in the City has now been permanently expanded to 2 Police Officers. It may be noted that in March 2020 Nottinghamshire Police also successfully recruited a CiCPO for the County, jointly funded by Nottinghamshire County Council. This was with a view to provide parity of service and improve outcomes for children across Nottinghamshire.
- 2.6 The LCS Senior Personal Advisor holds a caseload of young adults, supports management and performance. Elements of the previous Youth Justice Service Lead role are now embedded within the Youth Justice Service.
- 2.7 **Multi Agency Protocol:** The LCS Senior Personal Advisor, CiCPO and Nottinghamshire Police worked alongside the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Service Managers for Children in Care and Placements to develop and implement a protocol for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, with a view to further reducing the criminalisation of Children in Care. This Protocol embedded restorative justice and early intervention, including tools for carers. A renewed focus was placed upon the completion of a CPS 10-point checklist,

to provide information to the Prosecutor/Out of Court Disposal Panel, to ensure the most appropriate action is taken (if any), following offending behaviour by a Child in Care. The then Youth Offending Team Board ratified this document in 2017.

- 2.8 The existing Protocol was agreed prior to the publication of the National Protocol on Reducing Unnecessary Criminalisation of Looked-After Children and Care Leavers, November 2018. Though this protocol is already reflective of the spirit and many of the practices put forward in this national document, it was felt its publication should prompt a multi-agency review, including a consideration for Care Leavers.
- 2.9 The CiCPO for the City and County, LCS and the Youth Justice Service have been working together with the CPS to implement and review the current Reducing Offending Behaviour Protocol. Amendments have been made, following consultation with all agencies, to include risks such as Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). Together the agencies have consulted on changes to the 10 point list to consolidate and make this a more user friendly document. This is being consulted upon nationally for consistency. Once this has been approved the amended Protocol can proceed to sign off by respective Leads. CPS, Youth Justice, Nottinghamshire Police and the LCS now all meet regularly using Teams to discuss good practice and address any issues.
- 2.10 **Children in Care Arrest Screening:** The difficulty of early and effective identification of Children in Care on arrest was identified as a concern in 2015, and an Arrest Screening Programme devised to pro-actively divert Children in Care from prosecution where appropriate. The arrest Screening standard email has been improved and gives concise guidance. The Arrest Screening Programme is now embedded within the Youth Justice Service, with the LCS Senior Personal Advisor providing consultation only.
- 2.11 With the help of an analyst the CiCPO now receive a daily incident list of all reports from children's homes and semi-independent providers. This allows the CiCPO to intervene immediately, offering advice and guidance to officers to prevent unnecessary criminalisation of Children in Care.
- 2.12 **Practitioner Forums:** These Fora are chaired by the CiCPO and LCS Senior Personal Advisor, for the benefit of Local Authority, Private providers, foster carers and representatives of Children's Services and the voluntary sector. Resources are promoted, guest speakers present and best practice is shared. We aim to offer participants 2 Fora per year. Evaluation has been wholly positive, with key themes being the opportunity to network and share learning from each other and guest speakers. The last meeting was held in person on 28.02.2020 and focussed on CCE, LCS and the review of our Protocol. Due to COVID Practitioner Forums have been frozen and the CiCPO have focussed on doing work with homes on Teams. We have discussed holding these virtually and will progress this in 2021.
- 2.13 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):** The CiCPO sits on the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel. They continue to liaise daily with Children's homes, supporting workers to implement our protocols, identify indicators and promote the use of tools to safeguard young people. Although Concerns Network Meetings are on hold due to the impact of COVID-19, a bulletin is sent to members to maintain partnership working, and those partners continue to share information.
- 2.14 Creative practices have been implemented and CiCPO meet staff teams on Teams to discuss any issues and offer advice. CCE and CSE packages have been created which are shared with staff at the homes and CiCPO facilitate a training input, also through

Teams. These packages educate staff and show the correct pathways to use when there are CCE/CSE concerns. Packages around internet safety and healthy relationships have also been created for staff teams to use in key-work sessions with young people. Nottinghamshire Police are recruiting dedicated CCE Co-ordinators who will work directly with young people identifying risks and attend the multi-agency CCE meeting to provide a coordinated approach. These officers will sit within the same team as the CiCPO.

2.15 **Diversions work with young women:** The CiCPO lead a girls-only boxing provision in collaboration with Jawaid Khaliq, World Champion boxer, to empower young women. Nottinghamshire Police continue to fund this project. The class has thrived and even through Lockdown the girls have maintained participation through Teams. The CiCPO facilitated a trip to the Galleries of Justice Choices and Consequences exhibition for the girls boxing group. Organisers of the exhibition commented on how engaged, informed and confident the group were, representing our children in care brilliantly.

2.16 “I’ve never had any real friends. The boxing girls are now like a supportive family to me. I don’t want to let them down!” NW 2020.

2.17 We are delighted to share that we now have 3 police cadets and a trainee coach!

3 Other options considered in making recommendations

3.1 None

4 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)

4.1 The post of CiCPO is jointly funded by Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham City Council. Reduction of offending and missing reports have both a short and long term financial benefit across the authority and partners, as well as safeguarding Children in Care and improving outcomes.

4.2 “The rate at which a minority of children move from care into the criminal justice system is not inevitable.....“Good practice can dramatically reduce the long term costs that arise when young people get sucked into the criminal justice system unnecessarily – one study calculated a return of £3.41 for every £1 invested.” (In Care, Out of Trouble 2016)

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 (EIA)

7.1 An EIA is not required because *(Please explain why an EIA is not necessary)*

8 List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information

8.1 Joint Protocol Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire

9 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

9.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-protocol-on-reducing-criminalisation-of-looked-after-children>

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Nottingham City Council

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service

IRO Service

Children in Care & Child Protection

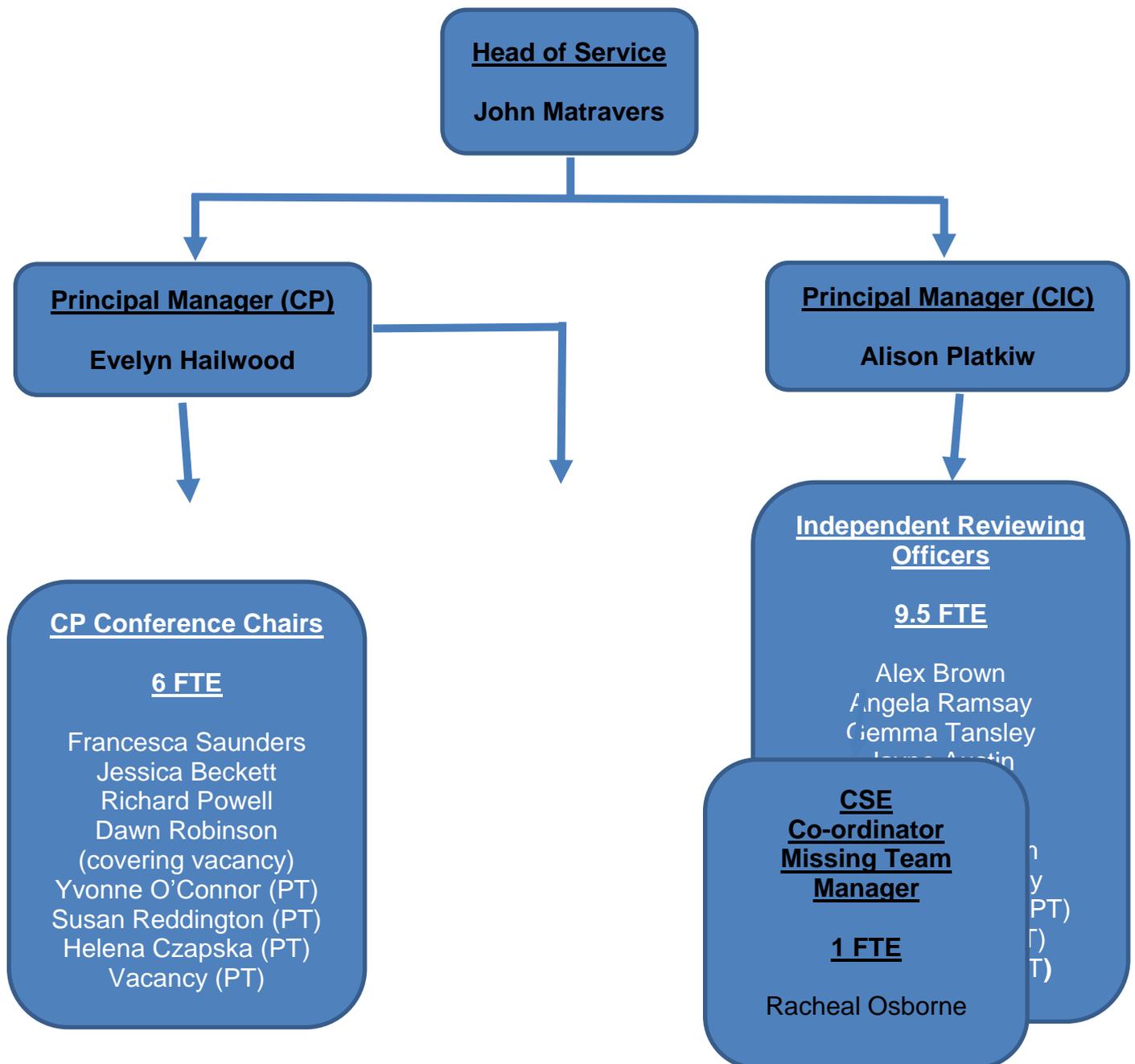
Annual Report
2019 – 2020



Safe, clean, ambitious
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IRO and Child Protection Coordinators Service structure chart:



Children in Care Service

This report sets out the contribution of the Independent Reviewing Officers to quality assuring and improving services for children whom Nottingham City Council are responsible for.

This Annual Report provides evidence relating to the services in Nottingham City as required by statutory guidance.

The core business of the team includes the chairing of Children in Care reviews and monitoring the activity of the Local Authority as outlined in the IRO Handbook 2010.

The IRO Annual Report will be presented to The Corporate Parenting Board and the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership(NCCSP).

Purpose of Service and Legal Context

The service sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service of Nottingham City Councils Children's Integrated Services Directorate. The Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO) Service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance, which were introduced in 2015.

The Responsibility of the IRO (Children in Care)

The responsibility of the IRO changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the case. This includes regular monitoring and follow-up between reviews.

The IRO

- Plays a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for children in care.
- Ensures a process for challenging drift and delay.
- Ensures that the views of the children, parents and carers are given sufficient weight in Care planning.

Professional Profile of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service (IRO)

The IRO Service sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service offering independence to the role. There are two Principal Managers responsible for Children

in Care and Child Protection. Both sides of the service sit together to maintain some team cohesiveness.

To offer clarity of the roles and enable the development of specialisms each side of the Service is responsible for different elements of the service. To further promote clarity Independent Reviewing Officers undertaking Children in Care Reviews are known as IRO's.

All IRO's are qualified Social Workers, sufficiently experienced with a wide range of Social Care experiences which brings a positive level of depth and knowledge to the service.

Independent Reviewing Officers

Every child who is '*looked after*' (Nottingham City use the term children in care) by Nottingham City Council must have a care plan. This document details the long-term plan for the child's upbringing, and the arrangements made by Nottingham City Children's Integrated Services to meet the child's day-to-day needs. All Local Authorities have a statutory duty to review the Care Plan regularly, within legislative timescales, as stipulated in the Care Planning and Case Review Regulations.

It is a legal requirement for every child who is in care to have an Independent Reviewing Officer appointed to them under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Independent Reviewing Officers Handbook (2010) outlines the statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for children in care. The handbook specifies that the Independent Reviewing Officer should provide continuity in the oversight of matters relating to a child being in care and that they should strive to establish a consistent relationship with the child. The statutory duties of the Independent Reviewing Officer include the following:

- Monitor the performance of the Local Authority and their function in relation to the child's case.
- Participate in any review of the child's case.
- Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration by the appropriate authority.
- Perform any other function, which is prescribed by the regulations.

From December 2012, the children in care population was extended to include those children placed on remand in a secure unit or youth offending institution under the terms of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. This legislation placed a responsibility on all Local Authorities to treat the child as a child in care, up to the age of 18 years, who is remanded into custody. Each of these children is required to have a Remand Plan, which is equivalent to the Care Plan.

Independent Reviewing Officers role in Short Breaks

The Statutory Guidance on how to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children using short breaks 2010 focuses in particular on the decision as to whether overnight short breaks should be provided under section 17 or section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and the consequences in relation to '*looked after*' status if section 20 provision is made.

The guidance states (para 3.19) that reviews for children who are receiving short breaks under S20 arrangements but who are not looked after should take place at least every six months. Reviews for looked after children must take place in accordance with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and be undertaken by an IRO.

Within Nottingham City Council Short Breaks Services Policy is that IRO's are responsible for chairing all reviews where children are accessing Short Breaks for 36 nights or above.

Management Team and Staffing

The Head of Service remains as John Matravers, who has now taken this role on permanently.

We continue to have a permanent staff team of both full and part time workers. We have had no changes to the current IRO's in post.

As a service, we have attempted to provide a balance between male and female workers. We have a culturally diverse team, which reflects the diverse population of Nottingham City.

IRO's work flexibly from home and can access other offices across the city to meet the needs of the service. There are fortnightly team meetings, but IRO's communicate with each other for support and advice and their Principal Manager between these meetings.

These steps contribute to ensuring a highly motivated integrated and well-supported team.

Supervision and Training

IRO's have monthly supervision and informal supervision when required. All IRO's have a yearly performance appraisal and are encouraged to attend training in line with the requirements of Social Work England. All IRO's are required to evidence their training and development each year as part of the Social Work England Practice Standards for continued practice on the new online site. The team has the opportunity to attend regional workshops for IRO's, which are held four times a year and include the East Midlands regional partners IRO Services.

Team members are able to access the training provided by the NCC learning and development team as well as the LSCB training opportunities. Partner agencies also offer a variety of training courses, which can be accessed.

Additionally, the Children in Care IRO's have two sessions per year with Cafcass. Within these seminars, we look at themes agreed by the Managers from Cafcass and the IRO Service. This has increased communication and understanding of respective roles and continues to be fully attended by all parties.

Updates on priorities set 2019-2020

1. Develop a new child contribution paper

This has been further refined following consultation with the Children in Care Council and Essex County Council as part of the Ofsted Improvement Plan. They are more child focused in line with Signs of Safety and will be relaunched in January 2021.

2. Develop a Parent/Carer and Foster Carer contribution paper

This is complete and will be launched with the contribution paper in January 2021.

3. To relaunch the Dispute Resolution Policy due to changes in staff teams

Due to Covid-19 pandemic this has been delayed. However, the dispute form is being further developed. Future disputes raised will be on the child's file on Liquid Logic to clearly evidence the concerns raised and Social Care's responses in dealing with the disputes.

4. Launch the Coming into Care Packs in September 2019

This has been further refined following consultation with the Children in Care Council and Essex County Council as part of the Ofsted Improvement Plan. They are more child focused in line with Signs of Safety and will be relaunched in January 2021.

5. Launch a new child friendly minutes' template on Liquid Logic

This has now been completed and is available on Liquid. These minutes are now written to the child as it is the child's review and information.

Children in Care Data 2019-20

Children in Care Population and the IRO Service Data

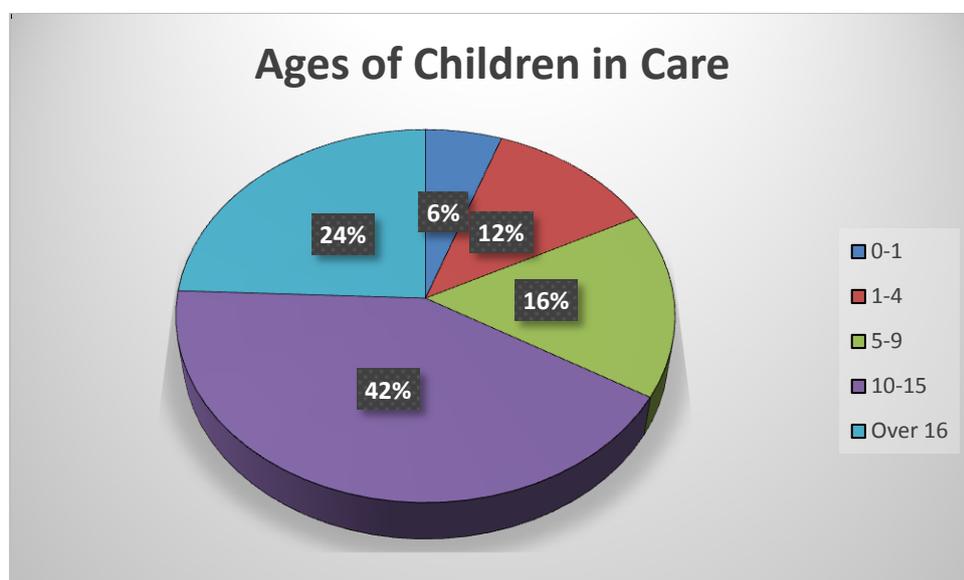
The Children in Care population for 2019-20 within Nottingham City Council was 656 excluding 57 short breaks. Caseloads are marginally more than as specified in the IRO handbook, which denotes a caseload of 50-70 per IRO as being manageable. At present 8 full time IRO's hold caseloads of around 75-80, with 3 of the posts being part time holding caseloads of around 30-34 cases.

In terms of outcomes during 2019-20, there were 26 Adoption Orders granted, 23 Special Guardianship Orders granted (SGO) and 7 Child Arrangement Orders issued.

Furthermore 68% of the population have remained in the same placement for at least 2 years or more.

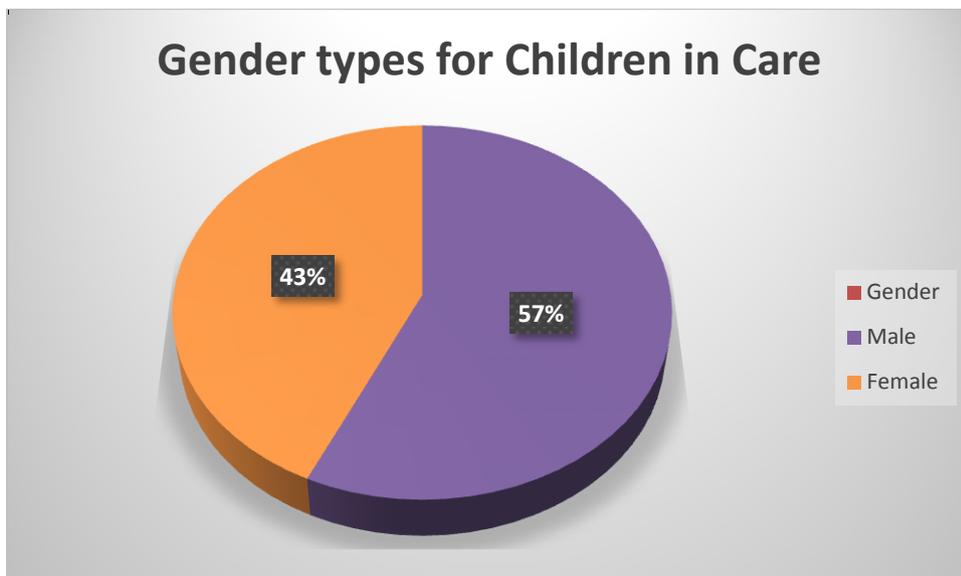
We can look at the data for children in care in age groups, ethnicity and gender as highlighted below:

Age	2017	2018	2019	2020
Under 1	6.7%	5.3%	6.4%	6%
1 - 4	9.7%	12.3%	10.2%	12%
5 - 9	18.5%	16.7%	14.9%	16%
10 - 15	41.2%	41.6%	42.1%	42%
Over 16	23.9%	24.1%	26.4%	24%



Ethnicity of Children in Care	2017	2018	2019	2020
Arab	3	24	0	4
Asian / Asian British / Bangladeshi	1	1	3	3
Asian / Asian British / Pakistani	13	13	11	11
Asian / Asian British / Indian	3	3	3	0

Asian / Asian British / Any other Asian background	17	18	26	19
Black / Black British / African	29	23	35	31
Black / Black British / Caribbean	20	23	20	25
Black / Black British / Any other Black background	6	5	8	6
Gypsy / Roma	3	3	8	7
Mixed White & Black African	8	8	9	7
Mixed White & Asian	6	5	5	14
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	71	78	68	88
Mixed any other mixed background	26	31	27	26
Other ethnic group	16	0	20	19
Unknown	5	1	2	3
White British	362	356	348	361
White Irish	7	7	4	3
White any other White background	24	19	32	35
Total	620	618	629	662



Advocacy

The commissioning of advocacy services remains with the Children's Society. They have been to a team meeting to introduce their service. Additionally, the Children's Society leaflet is included in the coming into care pack. IRO's this year have actively accessed this service on behalf of children or have encouraged them to access this service.

Timeliness of Children in Care Reviews

90% of Children in Care Reviews took place within the statutory timescales.

Children's and Young People's Involvement in Reviews

94% of children in care participated in their review process through a number of forums either by attending the meeting, completing the contribution paper or for some having contact either by phone, email or a home visit with the IRO before their review is held.

IRO's continue to support and encourage young people to chair their own meetings or set their own agenda's where appropriate.

Contact with young people between reviews continues to improve as caseloads allow. Due to this IRO's have been able to develop relationships that are more meaningful and are being creative about this. Through a variety of mediums furthermore an IRO can now record a home visit within a child's file on case notes allowing them to have a clear voice on the child's file and their contact can also be monitored in terms of performance development.

IRO's make a conscious effort to further increase the participation of children by undertaking child friendly reviews, which are individualised to each child's needs and abilities. Furthermore, children are reassured in between reviews or before the review starts to give them, the confidence needed to participate fully in their own review.

Progress and Activity between Children in Care Reviews

During this reporting period, the IRO's have been able to monitor the progress of their allocated children. This brings them into line with their duties outlined in the IRO Handbook (2010). Therefore, they have been able to monitor the progress of the Care Plan and intervene to escalate issues should there be a need. This has also improved communication with the Social Work teams.

All children at their initial meeting are given the contact details of their allocated IRO and every effort is made to ensure the IRO chairs any subsequent meeting, offering a level of consistency moving forward. Given the stable staff team this is working well for children as they now have strong relationships built with their IRO. Additionally, we are also now able to monitor through case notes when an IRO has undertaken case oversight actions in terms of performance management.

Audits

IRO's contribute to the learning and improvement framework, which covers the auditing of selected case. Analysis is drawn from this information and action identified and addressed where applicable. This reporting year IRO's have audited cases on the following themes.

- 4 - Children Living with Alternative Carers.
- 2 - CCE & Youth Violence.
- 1 - Neglect.
- 1- Meeting the Educational Needs of Children in Care.

Management Oversight

Statutory Guidance states that operational Social Work Managers must consider the decisions from the Review before they are finalised. This is due in part to the need to ensure any resource implications have been addressed. Once the decisions are completed, the Manager has 5 days to raise any queries or objections. Managers rarely ask for any amendments to be made so at present this process appears to work well.

IROs have continued to monitor the quality of care plans, adoption plans and pathway plans and social worker reports. Where any issues were identified, the IRO's have attempted initially to deal with the matter informally to address these and on a few occasions have formally escalated concerns.

Dispute Resolution Data 2019-20

Dispute Resolution Policy

Throughout the majority of the year formal escalations have been responded to but the timeliness of these responses can vary. However, performance is improving in this area. Plans for closer links between IRO's and social work teams will help to improve this further. The IRO's follow through all dispute resolution's raised through the formal policy that has now been in place for two years. This helps to ensure that young people are safeguarded appropriately in line with their care plan and the recommendations made at reviews are swiftly completed.

Over the last reporting year, the service as a whole has raised 78 concerns. This is a significant increase compared to 2018-19 in which 25 concerns were raised. This is due to an increased focus on delay and we anticipate that with the new measures in place performance improvements will show to be effective and that formal numbers should decrease as improvement work embeds. All concerns have been resolved by Service Manager or Head of Service involvement. From the data currently analysed there are themes developing around disputes the IRO's are raising.

The main contributing factors to the disputes are:

- Issues around placement suitability.
- Delays in legal planning meetings.
- Change of Social Workers.
- Reports not completed in a timely manner for the CIC review.
- Lack of communication between professionals around the child.

Delving into a few of these disputes with different issues, we can see the impact this has made to the outcomes for the children in question.

Compliments from the IRO Service

The policy also incorporates a system for IRO's to raise good practice in the course of their work. The IRO completes a compliments form and sends to all Senior Managers in order to share the positives that are seen out in practice. This reporting year 14 compliments have been sent to Senior Managers about Social Workers whom IRO's have felt their work has been exceptional they wanted it to be formally acknowledged.

Some examples below:

1. *'If I were a child in care, I would want Cheryl to be my social worker. She cares by the bucketful. It shows in the things that she does, in the things that she says and in her professionalism.'*
2. *'The foster carer, Liz said that she wanted to thank Natalie for her support and with any challenges. Natalie has been quick to action anything raised by the carer. Liz can also see how Aaron has confidence in his social worker. It is very evident that Natalie cares about Aaron and is ensuring that all of his needs are being met.'*
3. *'Anthony came with me to do a joint visit yesterday as the duty social worker. Yet again he has demonstrated what a caring, supportive colleague and professional person he is. Well done Anthony again; you are credit to the children and young people of Nottingham.'*
4. *'On 08 October 2019, I chaired a child in care review in respect of CC. I have been CC's IRO since 04 April 2018. CC's step-dad father has never held a particularly high opinion of children's social care or CC's previous social worker. It was significant, therefore, when step-dad commented upon the working arrangement with Leanne- CC's social worker since 16 July 2019.*

Step-dad said Leanne "listens and understands.... work together with Leanne... get on well with her". It was clear that in a very short space of time, Leanne had established a positive working relationship with step-dad and had earned his respect. This is testament, in my view, to Leanne's open and honest communication style. She also follows through on actions and gets things done.'

Annual Work Programme and Key Themes for April 2020- March 2021

1. Ofsted improvement plan to be implemented by re-designing how we conduct CIC Reviews and minute these focusing on a more child focused delivery.
2. Child Contribution paper to be revised and used at every review.
3. Case review form to be embedded into practice around IRO's addressing statutory requirements for care planning are quality assured and notifications given to Team Managers for response to bring up standards.

Child Protection

This report sets out the contribution of the Child Protection Coordinators to Quality Assuring and improving services for children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Nottingham City.

This Annual Report provides evidence relating to the services in Nottingham City as required by statutory guidance.

The core business of the team includes the chairing of, Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation Strategy Meetings. Where appropriate this report contains information for all these areas.

Purpose of Service and Legal Context

The service sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service of Nottingham City Councils Children's Integrated Services Directorate.

The Responsibility of the Safeguarding area of the Service

- Chair Initial and Review Child Protection conferences.
- Chair Child Sexual Exploitation strategy meetings.
- Chair Criminal Exploitation strategy meetings.
- Chair Complex strategy meetings.
- Chair Child Death strategy meetings (where abuse or neglect is suspected).
- Chair Secure Panel meetings.
- Take part in Service Audits

- Write reports for Legal planning meetings where this has been a recommendation and requested by Service Managers.

Professional Profile of the Child Protection Coordinator(CPC) Service

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is also positioned within this service and is line managed by the Child Protection (CP) Principal Manager.

All CPC's are qualified social workers, sufficiently experienced with a wide range of Social Care experiences which brings a positive level of depth and knowledge to the service.

The Chair

- Should be a professional who is independent of operational and/or line management responsibilities for the case; and
- Should meet the child and parents in advance to ensure they understand the Purpose and the process.
- Where possible the same person should chair subsequent Child Protection Conference Reviews.

Management Team and Staffing

We continue to have a permanent staff team of both full and part time workers. We have had one change to the current CPC in post as one resigned due to ill health. As a service, we have attempted to provide a balance between male and female workers. We have a culturally diverse team, which reflects the diverse population of Nottingham City.

CPC's work flexibly from home and can access other offices across the city to meet the needs of the service. There are fortnightly team meetings, but CPC's communicate with each other for support and advice and their Principal Managers between these meetings.

These steps contribute to ensuring a highly motivated integrated and well-supported team.

Supervision and Training

CPC's have monthly supervision and informal supervision when required. All CPC's have a yearly performance appraisal and are encouraged to attend training in line with the requirements of Social Work England. All CPC's are required to undertake

five days training /development each year as part of the Social work England requirements for continued practice.

Team members are able to access the training provided by the NCC learning and development team as well as the LSCP training opportunities. Partner agencies also offer a variety of training courses, which can be accessed.

Nottingham City offer over and above the standard training required.

Updates on priorities set 2019-2020

1. Develop a system to manage conflict resolution disputes more effectively and share these findings with the wider directorate – we have a system in place that works well as the resolved dispute now goes to the Principal Managers for oversight – **Complete.**
2. Develop a system for obtaining feedback form children/young people for case conferences – **Under revision following further consultation with Essex County Council. This will be launched in January 2021.**
3. Liaise with advocacy services to enable this area of responsibility to be improved and reported on – **Complete.**
4. Revise Liquid Logic to collect a variety of work streams/data for reporting purposes – **Complete.**

Child Protection Data 2019-20

Cumulative number of CP Conferences

Number of Children	ICPC	CPR
Apr 19 - June 19	196	330
July 19 - Sept 19	241	326
Oct 19 - Dec 19	225	380
Jan 20 - March 20	242	367

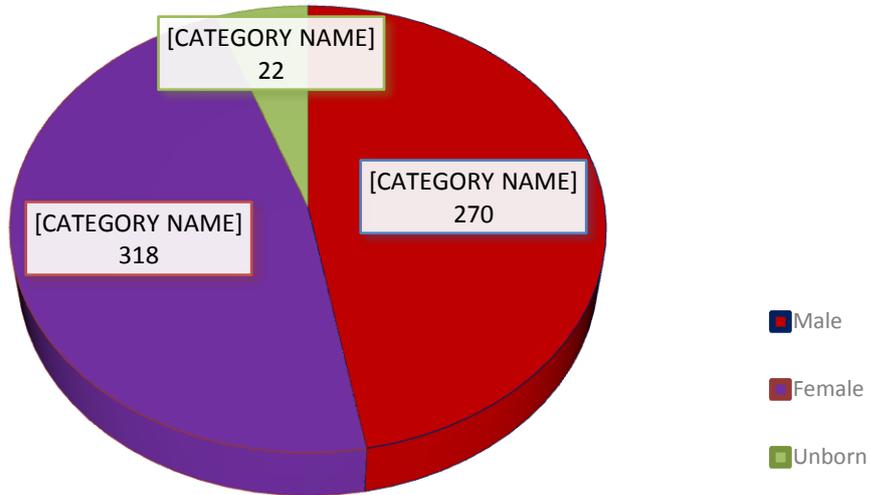
Category of Plan	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Physical abuse	6%	4% (24)	6% (33)	11% (65)
Sexual abuse	3%	1% (8)	1% (6)	4% (26)
Emotional abuse	27%	33% (189)	31% (161)	36% (219)
Neglect	36%	40% (230)	42% (222)	41% (248)
Multiple Categories	27%	22% (128)	20% (104)	9% (55)

Ethnicity	Number on Plan
Any other ethnic group	6

Arab	2
Asian / Asian Brit - Bangladeshi	1
Asian / Asian Brit - Indian	3
Asian / Asian Brit - Pakistani	33
Asian / Asian Brit -Any other Asian background	10
Black / Black Brit - African	27
Black / Black Brit - any other black background	5
Black / Black Brit - Caribbean	23
Mixed - any other mixed background	17
Mixed - White & Asian	26
Mixed - White & Black African	21
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	55
White - Any other White background	24
White British	360
White Irish	2
Unknown	4

Age	
Under 1	30
1	47
2	33
3	37
4	51
5	42
6	25
7	22
8	31
9	34
10	46
11	29
12	29
13	29
14	34
15	33
16	22
17	34

GENDER OF CHILDREN SUBJECT TO CHILD PROTECTION



Number previously on a plan = 35%

Length of Plan

Over 2 years' = 39
 18 months to 2 years = 26
 1 year to 18 months = 46
 6 months to 1 year = 171
 3 months to 6 months = 101
 Less than 3 months = 243
 Longest 45 months

Timeliness of Reviews

91% of child protection meetings were held within timescale.

Advocacy

We have consistently requested that social workers are involving advocacy services for child protection conferences however we have had very few advocates at the meetings and this is being progressed with the Community Social Work Service.

Children's, Young People Preparation, Involvement in Initial, and Review Conferences

Those children of an appropriate age are encouraged to attend their conferences and empowered to participate. Young people who do not attend are invited in most cases to meet with the chair outside of the meeting process. We will also write to young people introducing ourselves in the hope of encouraging them to attend further meetings. There are good examples of children writing to chairs outlining their wishes and feelings. Whilst this report only captures the start of the pandemic, initial feedback suggests that young people prefer meetings over teams as they feel it is less inhibiting.

Progress Monitoring Activities between Child Protection Reviews

Child Protection Chairs (CPC's) will monitor the outcomes in between reviews whenever possible. This gives them the opportunity to raise concerns, which are then recorded on the child's file.

Number of Different Meetings Chaired Per Quarter

Date range	ICPC	CPR	CSE	CCE	Complex Strat	Secure	Child death
Apr 19 – Jun 19	101	201	25	25	14	4	1
Jul 19 – Sep 19	114	197	47	21	12	1	1
Oct 19 – Dec 19	105	214	21	28	10	1	1
Jan 20 – Mar 20	145	223	39	36	15	1	1
Totals	465	835	132	110	51	7	4

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

As a service, we work collaboratively with the CSE Co-Ordinator. The CP Principal Manager is the Co-Chair of the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel Meetings. We have continued to have a filter meeting for referrals into the service and meet alongside the CSE Co-Ordinator with the Police to consider high-risk young people who are on CAROSE (Police Database).

When it is identified that more than two young people are linked we have a system of mapping to ensure all relevant links including adults of concern are highlighted and assessed for further action and safeguarded. All young people are encouraged to attend their strategy meeting and when this has not happened visits have been made to the young person to explain the worries their professionals have and to discuss the safety plan in place. (Wherever possible).

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

The numbers of children identified as at risk of criminal exploitation has continued to rise as identified in data above and the Local Authority continue to respond positively. Referrals have nearly doubled over this reporting year.

The CCE tool kit is a helpful tool for professionals to refer for a strategy meeting. We also have continued to have regular Child Criminal Exploitation Panel (CCEP) Meetings to address and quality assure the process.

Secure Panels

As already stated the procedures state that secure panel meetings are chaired by the Principal Manager. Both Principal Managers share this responsibility. Seven panel meetings have been held within this reporting period.

Complex Strategy Meetings

119 children have been subject to a complex strategy meeting. This is mainly because of mapping exercises that have identified further young people during CCE and CSE strategy meetings. We jointly meet with Nottinghamshire when young people overlap into both areas.

Audits

The Quality Assurance Service contributes to the learning and improvement framework, which covers the auditing of selected case files. Analysis is drawn from this information and action identified and addressed where applicable.

Dispute Resolution Data 2019-

Dispute Resolution Policy

Throughout the majority of the year formal escalations have been responded to in a timely manner. The process includes an informal dispute process within 5 days or the matter will be escalated. This has resulted in improved responses in timescales.

CPC's follow through all dispute resolution's raised through the formal policy that has now been in place for 2 years. This helps to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded appropriately in line with their child protection plan and the recommendations made at conferences are swiftly completed. The service has raised 13, none of these have had to be escalated beyond Service Manager Level.

The main contributing factors to the disputes are

- Lack of professionals in attendance – whether that is Social Worker or other professionals
- Lack of progress in a Child Protection Plan
- Change in Social Workers
- Practise issue

Compliments from the IRO Service

The policy also incorporates a system for CPC's to raise good practice in the course of their work. The CPC completes an email to all Senior Managers responsible for the matter in order to share the positives that are experienced in practice. Some examples raised have been in relation to support and professionalism of individual Social Workers, well-written and presented reports and the positive Social Worker, child relationships observed.

Ofsted

Ofsted visited NCC in February 2020 as a result of this visit NCC were given a "requires improvement" judgement. In respect of the safeguarding unit there were two areas that they wished for us to work on.

1. That there were too many recommendations on our plans that could make it confusing for parent/carers.

We recognised as a team that we were being too prescriptive and cautious. As a team we amended our plans to be more family friendly and not so onerous for parent's/carers young people and professionals.

When Ofsted next visit I believe they will see a marked improvement in the Outline Plan that are developed during the conference process.

2. That we used more than one category of abuse which did not act as a primary risk and again could be confusing.

We have addressed this and the data is positive in evidencing that we have completed this action.

Annual Work Programme and Key Themes for April 2020- March 2021

1. To continue to embed the use of one category in the child protection plan process
2. To continue to embed child centred outcome plans for children and families.
3. To develop a new framework for Minutes of child protection conferences.
4. To pursue all CPC to be recognised as Signs of Safety champions for NCC
5. Further develop a feedback system for young people to provide feedback on meetings.
6. To support the children's service integrated service plan to improve outcomes for children



Alison Platkiw
Principal Manager (CIC)



Eve Hailwood
Principal Manager (CP)



John Matravers
Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Partnerships

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 18 January 2021

Title of paper:	Foster Carer Recruitment and Retention	
Director:	Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services	Wards affected: All
Report author and contact details:	Audrey Taylor – Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption audrey.taylor@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Sarah Bartlett - Principle Fostering Recruitment Manager. Bala Gurusamy- Principle Fostering Manager Christina Godfrey - Principle Fostering Manager	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder	04 January 2021	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:		
Nottingham People		X
Living in Nottingham		
Growing Nottingham		
Respect for Nottingham		
Serving Nottingham Better		
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizen’s/service users):		
This report addresses the strategies for the recruitment and retention opportunities of foster carers.		
Recommendation:		
1	It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board notes the recruitment and retention performance of the Fostering Service and the activities undertaken by the service to recruit and support foster carers.	

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the National Charity Fostering Network:

- 57,380 children were living with foster families on 31 March 2020.
- This is 72 per cent of the 80,080 children in care looked after away from home.
- There are around 42,125 foster families in England.
- Every year thousands of new foster families are needed in England.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 The City had 680 children in their care as recorded on 1st December 2020. These are the most vulnerable children in the City, some of them known to services for some time, and many with complex needs. The majority of these children (464) are placed with foster carers. The Department recognises that if children are unable to live safely with birth parents or their extended family, then a setting that offers the experience of family life is best. This is what a placement with a foster carer offers.

- 2.2 The Department places most children in our care with foster carers. We continue to strive to place many more of our children with our own in-house mainstream carers. In terms of costs of placements we have increased our approved foster carers numbers to the point where we are now providing City Council foster placements for 52.4% of the required placements (recorded at 1st December 2020).

We continue to maintain this increase, in spite of the challenges presented by Covid 19 in approving carers and placing them in house. Many of our carers are either older carers or in the vulnerable category and have health concerns. We continue to work hard to further reduce the reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies, with an increasing number of new fostering households in the younger age ranges.

- 2.3 Placing children within families and connected persons carers have increased at a fast pace. There is an increase of more than 300% compared to 2018 where 28 placements was made, in 2020 this has increased to 68 placements.
- 2.4 Many of our foster carers live in the City or the County, we prefer to recruit more carers living locally so that our children have more opportunities to continue relationships with friends and have the option to remain at the same school if appropriate. We prefer to place children and young people who need foster care with our own carers rather than with an Independent Fostering Agency, which may be further away and increases the risk of disrupting established relationships. Independent Fostering Agencies also incur a much higher cost to the city council as we have to pay the additional Independent Fostering Agency fee.
- 2.5 For those children who are unable to live with their birth families, it is important where possible for them to retain close links and many will continue to have regular contact with their families. It is more economically viable for support and contact to be maintained with local foster carers. A foster placement with our own local foster carers can help the child to have a better quality contact. With less travel time required the child is often less anxious.
- 2.6 Statutory visits by the child's Social Worker and the Supervising Social Workers are more efficient when the child is placed with local City Council foster carers. Communication is often easier for the child's Social Worker and the Fostering Supervising Social Worker, because they work for the City Council. Any successful placement is dependent on good communication between the staff concerned and to be able to get accurate information quickly is key to giving all those involved the best support possible.

This will definitely help the child feel that we care deeply about them and will work hard to ensure they get the best possible service. A successful placement needs to be supported well. The support to the placement is easier to put in place when all professionals work in the same department, as support from CAMHS, the Virtual School, and Targeted Support are all delivered from the same Council or linked Agencies.

- 2.7 Connected Persons foster placement, will be granted temporarily approval by the Head of Service following the completion of a positive viability assessment. The assessments are completed and presented to fostering panel within 16 weeks of placement date, where this is not possible, a further extension of 8 weeks is requested to keep the placement regulated. Supervising Social Workers support all Connected carers from the date we receive the referral from the child Social Work team.

Connected carers are given a specific handbook information pertaining to connected foster placement, Special Guardianship Order/Child Arrangement Order. Carers are supported with weekly fostering allowance and equipment's/furniture's for children to settle in. Connected carers are offered Skills to foster training which is condensed to one day. We also have a support group exclusively for connected carers. All our connected carers have access to independent support from the Fostering Network. Majority of our connected carers will opt for Special Guardianship Order (SGO) as part of the final outcome of care proceedings in the court leading to permanency for children and an exit from care. Carers are supported with independent legal advice to consider their options.

- 2.8 Carers choosing to remain long-term connected carer are provided with the same level of support as mainstream foster carer in accordance with National Minimum Standard of Fostering.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

- 2.9 The City Council's recruitment strategy is aimed at recruiting more local foster carers and retaining existing foster carers for a longer period. Currently the average number of years a household fosters is 8. We seek to increase this to enable children who are placed to have the opportunity to stay longer if that's the right plan for them. We currently have two 0.5 dedicated Customer Service Officer posts for Fostering. They are the point of contact for any prospective foster carer from the application stage through to approval.

Every month Information events are held on line, broadcast from Loxley House, for anyone thinking about Fostering. Prior to the Covid restrictions these events were face to face and were always attended by a foster carer and members of the Fostering Team who answered any queries from guests interested in fostering, and to share their own experiences of fostering. Covid restrictions required us to create a safe and effective new way to continue to recruit foster carers and we moved our events on line. These regular events are not the same as a face to face event, but we still share films on the fostering role, and have a Q and A session that helps potential applicants consider all the information that hopefully leads to them making a request for a visit from the Recruitment Team. Enquiries have continued to come via this method.

- 2.10 We continue to have video clips of carers and young people who have been in foster care presenting their views. This is the most powerful part of any event, bringing to life the realities of fostering, the positives and the challenges. Potential applicants hear directly from young people in foster care, as well as receiving advice about what makes a good foster carer.

We have increased our on line presence and promote Fostering Services on Facebook, Twitter and on the Nottingham City Council website. The web pages are regularly reviewed as we recognise that more and more citizens research Fostering on-line before making contact with the department. Covid has presented us with challenges in terms of recruitment, but we have responded creatively and we continue to receive enquiries, arrange virtual visits and process applications.

- 2.11 May 2018 saw the first Fostering Sunday, which was when many churches across the city highlighted the need for more foster carers in the city as part of their sermons and other activities. This was part of the 100 Homes campaign, a joint initiative between the City Council and Nottingham City Prayer, a group of Nottingham Church

Leaders. Nottingham City Prayer have pledged to recruit 100 fostering households for the City Council from local churches over a 3-year period. The second Fostering Sunday was held in May 2019, and the intention is that it becomes an ongoing annual fixture in the calendar of Nottingham.

Due to Covid 19 all church services were online, there was a mention in relation to the 100 homes campaign throughout Nottingham City Prayer churches in May 2020. Since the 2018 Fostering Sunday several Fostering information events have been held in churches around the city which have been well attended, and to date has seen 13 households being approved, with several more in the recruitment process. Two of the Fostering households recruited via the campaign to date are church leaders, one of whom is a vocal advocate for Fostering.

- 2.12 The City Council Fostering Recruitment Service are working in partnership with 100 homes / City Prayer. We have held several virtual events to promote fostering and held Q and A sessions for church members who have expressed an interest in fostering. We have part funding a post for a link worker; the role includes supporting church members in early stages of recruitment process, holding service reviews and unpicking barriers to recruitment when they arise. We are in the second year of part funding this post and thus far recruitment from the City Prayer collective has made a slow but steady start.
- 2.13 We have been working with the Indian Community Centre Association (ICCA) to highlight the need for more foster carers in the City that reflect our community. This involves the distribution of fostering literature through Gurdwaras, Temples and other institutions, plus the sharing of social media posts. The City Council is one of several LAs that are participating in a scheme to recruit more foster carers and supported lodgings providers for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). This is being operated by Leicestershire County Council, who will assess and train any households in our area and bring them to our panel.
- 2.14 Supported Lodgings is a particular type of placement aimed at older young people and is designed to support their transition into adulthood. Barnardo's are working with Nottingham City Council to develop a needs led pathway of accommodation for care experienced young people as they move on from care. As part of this pathway, Barnardo's are using funds from a legacy left by a supporter to develop a Supported Lodgings scheme for care experienced young people in Nottingham City.
- 2.15 We are also in partnership with is the Nottingham Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Network (LGBTQ). The Fostering Recruitment Consultant was made LGBTQ Network Champion for the year, which will allow for further opportunities to promote Fostering within this community. Our direct work in 2020 has been somewhat limited as live events and festivals we would usually attend and recruit from have not taken place due to Covid restrictions in March 2020 we held one event in a city bar over a weekend, before Lockdown. We are maintaining contact with our (LGBTQ) partners who are keen to welcome us back to continue with our recruitment events.
- 2.16 In addition to the activity set out above there is a range of on-going work as we respond to the need to work more and more on line. This has included further development of social media content, which resulted in several posts going viral. The most successful of these in terms of impact was a short video of a foster carer telling a very powerful story involving taking a foster child to the beach for the first time. This was shared over 200 times and was seen by over 30,000 people. Prior to the Covid

restrictions the Fostering Recruitment Team would regularly attend local events such as the Riverside Festival, and Pride to promote Fostering. We look forward to resuming our face to face activities at these wonderful events.

2.17 The capacity of the Fostering recruitment team has grown enabling us to create a stronger more effective process that has already improved the journey for applicants and has started to enhance our reputation. A target of a net gain of 15 fostering households was set for 2018-19. We have exceeded this, with a net gain of 20 households, with 37 approvals set against 17 resignations.

In 2018-19 the City Council recruited 37 fostering households, which is the highest figure of any local authority across the Midlands. In 2019-20 a further 23 households were approved, and in 2020-21 at least 30 households are projected to be approved, subject to panel capacity and a solution for fostering medicals. Compared to other similar local authorities, fostering recruitment is performing exceptionally well. The initial recruitment marketing budget of £10,000 was reduced to £5,000 half way through the financial year 2020-21, yet the number of households approved still exceeds many authorities who have significantly higher marketing budgets.

Training

2.18 As part of the recruitment process under Covid restrictions we have moved our Skills to Foster Training on line. We have condensed the 3 days to 2.5 days and held smaller groups to enable applicants to take part and be supported through group work, feedback and identifying specific learning needs for some applicants. This information is then shared with the assessor completing the form of assessment and they can then follow up and direct applicants to further reading and on line training. We have commissioned therapeutic parenting training that has contributed to the applicants developing new parenting strategies that some foster children will benefit from. Feedback in the past 9 months is positive and while the training groups are smaller and therefore not as cost effective, the evaluation is positive and the applicants report their skills have been increased significantly having had the training. Going forward we plan to continue to run Skills to Foster Training virtually every month until such time when we can safely return to our face to face training in Loxley House.

Recruitment performance

Month	Number of Enquiries	Assessment Starts		Placements In-House	Placements With IFAs	% In-House vs IFAS
Dec-20	21	2	3			
Nov-20	11	2	2	243	221	52.4% v 47.6%
Oct-20	31	4	2	243	212	53.4% v 46.6%
Sep-20	18	5	0	248	219	53.1% v 46.8%
Aug-20	18	2	1	253	218	53.7% v 46.3%
Jul-20	10	6	2	268	219	55% v 45%
Jun-20	16	4	5	274	222	55.2% v 44.7%
May-20	32	5	2	276	215	56.2% v 43.7%
Apr-20	12	2	4	270	215	55.6% v 44.3%
Mar-20	18	5	0	265	213	55.4% v 44.5%
Feb-20	22	1	3	260	206	57.8% v 44.2%
Jan-20	34	4	Page 37	249	201	55.3% v 44.6%

Risks

- 2.19 We have experienced considerable barriers in regard to arranging and completing medicals, these are a statutory requirement for any prospective foster carer. The Government did recognise this and for a period of time we were able to accept health self-assessment that were then sent on to our medical adviser to comment on in terms of the applicant's fitness to foster. These arrangements ended on 25/9/20.
- 2.20 The Fostering Recruitment Team are now facing the risk of losing potential foster carers, due primarily to the delay in completing medicals with GP's not having capacity due to Covid. We are in the process of compiling a list of contracted independent medical assessors, who must be a qualified GP, to perform our medicals in a timely and effective manner. We have secured a budget for this service, and are hoping that this will be successfully implemented in the coming weeks.

Retention Strategy

- 2.21 We have a well-established, dedicated and experienced team of Supervising Social Workers. Every foster carer has their own Supervising Social Worker who regularly visits them, and who they can contact at any time regarding their Fostering role. We are in the process of increasing the team of Supervising Social Workers to ensure foster carers are supported and reflect our success at recruiting more internal carers. Our foster carers are regularly and formally reviewed where any changes to their status can be discussed and agreed
- 2.22. We have introduced a Buddy scheme, offering peer mentoring by experienced foster carers, foster carers tell us that this is a much-valued service that is growing steadily. New carers tell us that they have been helped by the buddy and are growing in confidence because of it.
- 2.23 The Fostering team have developed a Therapeutic Support Team. The Therapeutic Support Team provides therapeutic based interventions, support, and advice, recognising that caring for children can feel overwhelming at times and sometimes patterns of behaviour and the way families get on together can become very stuck. They offer monthly consultation slots for foster carers and professional and also offer home visits.
- 2.24 There are six-weekly Fostering Business meetings that alternate between day and evening sessions. These meetings are now being run successfully virtually. The meetings offer all our foster carers the opportunity to meet with Senior Managers within the Department, and for the Department to share current issues and concerns, and consult in relation to new initiatives. The Virtual School regularly attend business meetings to address any issues in relation to education that carers may have. Other services that attend periodically are Independent Reviewing Officers and the Placement Service.
- 2.25 In addition to internal services partner agencies also attend business meetings. This year the NSPCC attend the Business meeting, in relation to work they are doing with life story work for children in foster care. Life story work is important for children who are in foster care for some time to help them maintain a clear understanding of their life history. We have also had presentations from the service that provides advocacy and Independent Visitor schemes.

2.26 We are currently reviewing and updated our training programme for 2021 which all training course will be run virtually. We are also moving towards supporting social workers to support training session in groups as well as on a 121 basis to develop a more bespoke training package. Where we have received positive comments from foster carers, we will run a course the following year, or more than once during the year.

2.27 We pay for all our carers to be members of the Fostering Network where they can receive the latest information relative to developments in Fostering, and they also access the services of the Fostering Network Advice and Mediation Worker.

2.28 Works Perks is an employee benefits scheme where staff can choose from over 6000 lifestyle discounts, we have recently extended this to include foster carers. This can include discounts at well-known shops, cinema, discounted holidays and travel, and local offers from businesses. We consulted with foster carers, and most foster carers have received their ID badges to access the scheme.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None.

4 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS

4.1 None.

5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS

5.1 None.

6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS

6.1 None.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Not required 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 None.

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 18 JANUARY 2021

Title of paper:	Fostering Panel Chair's Report	
Director:	Helen Blackman – Director, Children's Integrated Services	Wards affected: All
Report author and contact details:	Audrey Taylor – Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption Audrey.Taylor@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 01158764526	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Phil Rogers – Chair, Foster Panel Two Dagoberto Rojas – Chair, Foster Panel Three Tom Elvidge – Vice Chair Kady Stimson - Vice Chair Vivien Slyfield - Panel Advisor Ian Crompton - Panel Manager –Consultant	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:		
Nottingham People		X
Living in Nottingham		
Growing Nottingham		
Respect for Nottingham		
Serving Nottingham Better		
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
The Panel's primary responsibility is to safeguard children and young people, placed in foster care / families by Nottingham City and beyond. The Panel takes its responsibility to protect children very seriously and is vigorous in its scrutiny of reports and assessments.		
Recommendation		
1	To note the activity of the fostering Panels.	

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Good practice as suggested by the Coram - British Association for Adoption and Fostering Effective Fostering Panels (CoramBAAF 2019) states that an annual report should be prepared detailing the work of the Fostering Panel. The report should detail the following:
- the numbers and profiles of foster carers and children;
 - strengths and achievements of the service;
 - performance targets and measurements and further areas for development.
- 1.2 The report should be made available to elected members.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of members of the Board with information pertaining to the activity of the fostering Panel.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

Function of Fostering Panel

2.1 The primary functions of the fostering Panel are to:

- Recommend the approval of prospective foster carers including the terms of their approval, i.e. the type of foster care they can provide.
- Recommend the approval of foster carers after the foster carer's first annual review or after a review following concerns having been expressed, or allegations made, about the quality of care provided by the foster carers.

Fostering Panel

2.2 As with all services this has been a challenging year for the Fostering Panel. From the middle of March all the Panels were run virtually rather than in person. This has involved a significant change in the way the Panels operate and are supported. All the attendees are offered a 'test run' to ensure they can connect to Team and access the Panel. When internet connection has not been possible they connect via a phone. Despite the impact of Covid 19 the Panels continue to operate at a minimum of two Panels per month. It is a very different experience for all those involved and Panel members. The feedback received from attendees has been positive and some reflected their appreciation of being made welcome and feeling involved in the virtual Panels. Most importantly Panels have continued to make recommendations about the suitability of foster carers with an increase in the number of approvals on those made last year.

2.3 The virtual Panels have maintained the attendance of applicants and review carers throughout the Panel process including during recommendations by Panel members. If Panel need time to consider their recommendation attendees leave the meeting and the Chair and Panel Advisor then privately informed them of the outcome of Panel immediately following their case being heard. There is a strong commitment to maintaining and enhancing the transparency of the Panel process by continuing this process.

2.4 The quality assurance of the reports and booking into Panel has remained unchanged. There was a significant change in Fostering Regulations between April 2020 and 25th September 2020, which allowed variations on; Panel quoracy, matters presented to Panel, medicals and the timescales for assessments. NCC decided that during this period Connected Persons Extensions of temporary approvals and first reviews where no concerns or issues were identified would be considered by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) without first going to Panel. This assisted the process while allowing Panel consideration of full assessments.

2.5 Panel continue to give full scrutiny to the reports presented. They continued use of the Children in Care Council (CICC) questions that the children felt should be asked of prospective foster carers has been maintained. These questions provide a clear focus on the child's view and are very much valued by the Panel members. Applicants appreciate the opportunity to think into the child's perspective and how they see their role developing as carers. This allows the voice of the child to be clear within the Panel process. Involvement with our looked after children will be further strengthened through plans to have direct virtual engagement with the CICC.

2.6 The following is statistical information detailing the activity of the Panel, according to the types of cases that have been presented.

Fostering and Adoption Panel Activity April – September 2020 with comparative data for the previous 4 years

Table 1 – Fostering Statistics

	April – Sept 2016	April – Sept 2017	April – Sept 2018	April – Sept 2019	April - Sept 2020
Mainstream Applications	9	6	18	12	17
Mainstream Deferral	0	0	4	0	3
Connected Persons	8	10	6	15	19
Connected Persons Extensions	7	3	8	19	6
1 st Annual Reviews	18	11	6	19	4
Reviews following concerns	1	0	0	0	2
Termination of Approval	3	0	0	2	3

Summary of Foster Panel Activity April 2020 - Sept 2020:

54 cases presented to Panel April – September, comprising mainstream fostering and Connected Person applications, Connected Person Extensions, terminations of approval and foster carer reviews. (14 Panels held).

Summary of Foster Panel Activity April 2020 - Sept 2020:

During this period of unprecedented disruption due to Covid 19 the recruitment of mainstream foster carers has been maintained and actually led to an increase in the number of mainstream foster carers approved. Similarly there was an increase in the number of Connected Person assessments presented to Panel. There has been an increase in the number of matters considered by Panel from 67 last year to 90 in the current year. This is the case even with a period of three months when first reviews and Extension of Connected Persons assessments were not presented.

- 2.7 The Panel activity highlights the most significant issues for the Panel as the lack of Panel space. The impact of this pressure is that concerns reviews are delayed and currently assessments of new foster carers and to support our children are waiting six months for a space at Panel. The delay in concerns reviews is one of the issues highlighted by the Chairs' report.
- 2.8 Panel membership has been strengthened with three new members, which has added to the diversity of the membership. Panel members are committed, knowledgeable and child focused in their work. There are challenges for Panel in

consideration of Connected Person applications in considering the potential of family members as carers, with the stresses and complexity this brings. Valuable training has been completed by Panel on Connected Persons placements and has been referenced by members in making their recommendations.

- 2.9 Panel members' appraisals have taken place with the majority commenting on the effectiveness of the virtual Panels and the way this system has been established.
- 2.10 The Fostering Panel will continue to evolve to accommodate changes in policy, procedure, guidance and legislation. Panel members are provided with regular updates and briefings by the Panel Advisor and a minimum annual Panel specific training. This year the training focused on Unconscious Bias to support Panel in awareness as they consider their recommendations.

Quality of Reports

- 2.11 The Panel as a whole have the opportunity, in addition to the direct feedback to the Agency on the quality of reports presented, to highlight any issues, concerns, themes and acknowledgments of outstanding practice that are then addressed via the Panel Advisor. Their report highlights the issues and have been raised appropriately with the agency.
- 2.12 During this year, the standard of the reports was scored by Panel members as assessor's presentation at the Panel. During this period reports were rated;

Outstanding 24%
Good 62%
Needs improvement 14%
Inadequate .37%

Summary of Panel Chair's reports

- 2.13 As mentioned earlier the Panel Chairs are required to produce a report. The reports of all the Panel chairs have highlighted the following:

Strengths

- The attendance of applicants and reviewed carers throughout the Panel process including recommendations by Panel members has been maintained with virtual Panels to enhance the transparency of the application and Panel process.
- The majority of Fostering reports are of a good standard.
- Agency Decision Maker timescales are being met.
- Child centred services to children and carers.
- Panel Steering Group has met twice this year, and the Panel Chairs and Vice chair are invited to this meeting along with team managers and senior managers across children's integrated services and the Agency Decision Maker.
- Meetings of the Panel chairs, vice chairs and the Panel Advisor have continued to address issues and consistency Panel practices is established.

- Address the delay in reviews with concerns coming to Panel.
- Increase in the membership and representation of younger people with care experiences sitting on Panels.
- Increasing the representation of diversity of Panel membership.
- Address the shortfall in resource for Panel spaces.

2.14 During this difficult year the function and operation of the Fostering Panel has continued to work well. The Fostering Service is working towards ensuring continuous improvements to the Panel and the processes of Panel, including the issues related to resources. Issues raised will continue to be addressed with commitment from all those involved with the Panel to provide safe, stable and secure families for children.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None.

4 FINANCE COMMENTS

4.1 None.

5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS

5.1 None.

6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COMMENTS

6.1 None.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Not required 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 BAAF, Effective Fostering Panels: Guidance on Regulations, Process and Good Practice in fostering Panels in England (updated Fifth Edition) (2019).

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Corporate Parenting Board Forward Plan 2020/21 & 2021/22

Item	Item Lead	Draft Report to Constitutional Services by	Chair's Briefing	Final Report to Constitutional Services by	Meeting date (at 5.30pm)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health of Children in Care ▪ CiC CAMHS Report ▪ 2020/21 Q4 Performance Report ▪ Have Your Say Survey Feedback ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Report Forward Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kathryn Higgins / Melanie Bracewell ▪ Matthew Jenkins ▪ Tajinder Madahar? ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Cllr Barnard 	19 February 2021	01 March 2021 (11am)	03 March 2021	15 March 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Themed Discussion – Education and Employment ▪ Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Review ▪ Leaving Care Annual Report ▪ 2021/22 Q4 Performance Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jon Rea / Lead Board Members ▪ Tajinder Madahar? ▪ Alison Wakefield ▪ Tajinder Madahar 				17 May 2021 – TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2021/22 Q1 Performance ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tajinder Madahar? ▪ Jon Rea 				19 July 2021 – TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Themed Discussion – Homes and Housing ▪ 2021/22 - Q2 Performance ▪ Reducing Offending Behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jon Rea / Lead Board Members ▪ Tajinder Madahar? ▪ Sam Flint / Natalie Pink 				20 September 2021 - TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IV Service Report ▪ Advocacy Service Report ▪ Complaints Service Report ▪ Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CGL? ▪ Children's Society? ▪ Patrick Skeete ▪ John Matravers ▪ Jon Rea 				15 November 2021 - TBC
▪	▪				17 January 2022 - TBC
▪	▪				21 March 2022 - TBC

ATTENTION: IMPORTANT NOTE ON REPORT SUBMISSION

All reports from City Council staff for presentation to the Board must be produced and submitted through the corporate report management system, here: <http://gossweb.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nccextranet/index.aspx?articleid=10263>.

When submitting a report for advice, you will be prompted to select reviewers. You should select the following reviewers:

- Sophie Russell

When submitting a report for departmental sign-off, you should select the following reviewer:

- Helen Blackman

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