



Nottingham City Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021

Time: 10.00 am

Place: LB 41 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG
Please see information at the bottom of this agenda front sheet about requirements for ensuring Covid-safety.

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 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Appointment of the Vice Chair**
- 4 Minutes** 3 - 12
To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021
- 5 Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference** 13 - 16
For noting
- 6 Primary School Exclusions and Family Support** 17 - 22
- 7 Reviewing Services for Child in Care/ Child Protection** 23 - 30
- 8 Work Programme** 31 - 36
- 9 Future Meeting Dates**
To agree to meet at 10am on the following dates:
2021 – 29 July, 30 September, 25 November
2022 – 27 January, 31 March

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.

In order to hold this meeting in as Covid-safe a way as possible, all attendees are asked to follow current Government guidance and:

- remain seated and maintain distancing between seats through the meeting; please also remember to maintain distancing while entering and leaving the room;
- wear face coverings throughout the meeting;
- make use of the hand sanitiser available and, when moving about the building follow signs about traffic flows, lift capacities etc; and
- comply with Test and Trace requirements by scanning the QR code at the entrance to the building and/or giving name and contact details to the Governance Officer at the meeting.

Citizens attending meetings are asked to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting to be issued with visitor badges and accompanied to the meeting room.

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

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom on 25 March 2021 from 10.00 am - 11.53 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Carole McCulloch (Chair)
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Jane Lakey
Councillor Chantal Lee
Councillor Maria Watson

Absent

Councillor Salma Mumtaz
Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Cheryl Barnard	- Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Kathryn Bouchlaghem	- Early Years Manager
Katherine Crossley	- Early Years Project Officer
Nicholas Lee	- Director of Education Services
Catherine Underwood	- Corporate Director for People
Helen Watson	- Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services
Marylou Hemsley	- Governance Officer
Kim Pocock	- Scrutiny Officer

28 Helen Blackman - A Minute's Silence

A minute's silence was held to remember Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Integrated Services, who died from Covid 19 complications on 3 March 2021.

29 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Salma Mumtaz (medical appointment) and Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos (unwell).

30 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

31 Declarations of Interest

None.

32 Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Helen Watson, Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services and Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People attended the meeting to provide the Committee with an update on progress to address the priority actions arising from the Ofsted Focused Visit, carried out in February 2020. She highlighted the following information:

- a) Following consideration of the Council's arrangements for, and evidence in relation to, children in need and those subject to a child protection plan (focusing on children at risk of neglect) in February 2020, Ofsted issued two priority actions:
 - 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; and
 - 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.
- b) The Children at the Heart Improvement Board (a partnership board) is well established and is meeting regularly. The Board provides a mechanism for holding partners to account in their work to achieve positive outcomes for children and has invited front line colleagues to present information on their work, to enable a true understanding of the challenges facing the workforce.
- c) Helen Watson has been supporting the work to deliver the Improvement Plan and will continue to work with Children's Integrated Services as Interim Director.
- d) In response to the first priority to improve social work practice, progress has been made in the following key areas, in addition to the work of the Children at Heart Improvement Board:
 - the Council's Partner in Practice (PiP), Essex County Council, has undertaken work to support the Council (funded by the Department of Education), including diagnostics (eg fieldwork and duty services), a programme of improvement and a review of improvement progress using its PiP review framework, identifying some positive changes since work began on improvements;
 - a Director of Practice Improvement has provided additional leadership capacity for 9 months and a Principal Social Worker was recruited in November 2020;
 - a Practice Forum was established in June and has met fortnightly since then to look in depth at practice and improvement;
 - a Communications Plan has been developed in consultation with the Practice Forum and other feedback has been gathered from the Forum to facilitate change;
 - the Practice Model has been redeveloped and training has been provided for staff, including retraining and master classes;

- practice tools were launched as part of the Neglect Practice Guidance, with training provided for staff, and distributed via the Practice Forum to improve engagement with children and young people;
 - a partnership Neglect Strategy has been drafted and neglect practice guidance has been launched with a high number of staff attending events to learn more;
 - a Workforce Strategy has been developed and is almost ready to sign off;
 - the Service has re-joined Research in Practice, which provides a range of materials to provide bespoke training (eg neglect and child poverty) and support to staff;
 - the supervision policy has been re-launched;
 - Practice Standards have been re-developed;
 - the Audit Programme has been reshaped with a new process in place whereby individual auditors look at case files, working closely with practitioners and including evaluations of their support by children, young people and families;
 - the framework for hearing the voice of/ lived experiences of the child has been refreshed; and
 - additional capacity has been added to the Independent Reviewing Officer Service.
- e) In response to the second priority to improve workforce capacity, the Service outlined the following key areas of progress:
- a new Social Work progression and pay structure has been put in place and this is consistently benchmarked against other local authorities;
 - a new microsite has been launched by HR colleagues, which is supporting the ability to recruit high quality social workers;
 - the rolling recruitment of Social Workers has continued;
 - the advert and offer for agency social workers have been refreshed and have seen the positive transition of some agency workers to becoming permanent members of staff;
 - an agency social work fieldwork team was recruited for 6 months, which was able to significantly drive cases at a point of high pressure in the system;
 - contact workers have been recruited to release social workers to carry out the more detailed intervention work; and
 - temporary additional business support in field work teams have been recruited.
- f) Three workstreams have been established to move the Improvement Programme forward:
- Workstream One – to continue the journey to ensure that children will benefit from consistently good social work practice through the creation of conditions for good social work to flourish (including a series of workshops with all teams); prioritising neglect in social work practice; achieving permanence for children in care and care leavers and focusing on outcomes for these children; focusing on family interventions and delivery models and on the Fostering Service, to keep children in the city wherever possible.

- Workstream Two – to support and enable services to make a difference for children, through quality assurance (and keeping staff informed of the outcome of audit work), service reviews, workforce development through the new development plan, new ways of working and encouraging participation and engagement of the workforce, children, young people and their families.
 - Workstream Three – children will benefit from a partnership that works together to improve outcomes for them, to be achieved by strategic alignment of plans and strategies; focusing on partnership working to address youth violence and exploitation, early intervention and early help; and commissioning for good outcomes.
- g) There are a number of risk areas where efforts are being made to mitigate these:
- the consequences of failing to meet statutory responsibilities;
 - recruiting to fill a vacancy in the senior leadership team to ensure capacity;
 - the impact of Covid 19 on planned and improvement activity and the need to re-prioritise (well supported by staff who have shown themselves to be committed and resilient throughout the pandemic);
 - the challenging financial context, in which it is essential to establish sustainable children’s social care;
 - maintaining the pace of the improvement and development programme, where there is more to do in spite of positive achievements to date; and
 - maintaining staffing levels to allow for reasonable caseloads and good social work practice.
- h) Next steps will include preparation for the next Ofsted assurance visit expected by June at the latest; continued working with Essex as a Partner in Practice; Covid roadmap service adjustments including return to the workplace; ongoing engagement with the Department for Education, the Local Government Association and Ofsted; continued excellent partnership engagement; and carrying out benchmarking activity.
- i) The Service’s improvement and development priorities will include addressing wider factors contributing to social work capacity and retention (including IT, enabled working and support and parking and office space); embedding practice improvement for consistency; focusing on wider practice learning and development; and developing a business case for a future operating model.

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

- j) Essex County Council has been on a ten-year journey of improvement since it faced an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted rating. Its Children’s Services is now rated ‘outstanding’. However, demographically it is a very different authority from Nottingham city.
- k) Essex can demonstrate particularly good practice in work on the edge of care, ie to prevent children coming into the system; a high standard of social work practice and effective partnership working. Nottingham’s practitioners and managers have

been able to take great benefit from working with Essex colleagues and their ways of working.

- l) While Essex does challenge Nottingham in a very constructive way, in some areas Nottingham has been able to share some of its positives with Essex, for example adopting the format of Nottingham's case audit pro forma.
- m) When Ofsted visiting in February 2020 the workforce was clearly unable to articulate the practice model in use and the signs of safety elements within it. Positively, the benchmarking work with Essex last December demonstrated that staff are now well able to articulate the model and use it. The focus has been on refining and refreshing the entire workforce and introducing practice standards, leaving Nottingham in a much stronger position.
- n) In response to a concern that work with families is sometimes harsh, colleagues noted that the strength based model is the approach used. There will always be some strengths to find and research shows that working from this base is the most productive and effective way of working.
- o) While £1.5m has been budgeted for improvements (for example business support capacity, contact workers, practice improvement) there have been ongoing requirements to make efficiencies within Children's Integrated Services. Reduction of costs should not undermine the improvement work which has been achieved. In considering savings, the core statutory social work service and its capacity have been protected. Some of the savings relate to the strengths based approach, which can keep children in families rather than going into care or ensure children in care return to their families as soon as possible and save in terms of the costs of care. In addition, savings need to be achieved by looking at how care is bought, eg increasing in-house provision. In addition, modest savings have been found in 'early help'.
- p) The perspective (put forward by Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children and Families in England) that nationally there is too much low risk, ineffective social work, is a live, ongoing issue for the Council. Thresholds for appropriate intervention are regularly considered.
- q) The focus has been on ensuring the basics of good social work practice, access to high quality reflective supervision and getting to a consistently good standard of practice. There is definitely an improving picture, but there is still work to do in a number of areas, eg on high quality chronologies and a focus on building effective relationships with children and families.
- r) In terms of performance, team managers are proactive in addressing issues and putting appropriate training and development plans in place. There have been some cases where action has had to be taken where agency social workers have not provided the quality of work required. There is still work to do to achieve consistency.

- s) Sickness absence levels have improved but the Service is still focused on working with colleagues in HR to pick up on sickness absence issues and offer appropriate support to colleagues.
- t) The learning from the improvement work is supporting a widespread understanding of what good looks like and the feedback from the workforce has been positive. The workforce is passionate and committed and wants to be the best it can be. However, there is a high number of relatively inexperienced, newly qualified members of staff, as well as experienced staff, and the challenge is still to achieve consistency across all elements, ie assessment, planning, review, chronology, supervision etc.
- u) Lead officers have now been identified for key areas of improvement delivery.
- v) Work with the Children in Care Council is ongoing and the relationship is strong. Work with the Youth Cabinet will be picked up as soon as the appropriate member of staff returns from sick leave.
- w) A domestic abuse toolkit has been developed in work with partners which is bespoke to Nottingham city.
- x) Play and Youth Services are involved in the improvement meetings within Children's Integrated Services.
- y) It is difficult to compare the costs of Nottingham's children's services with those of Essex. Essex has had significant investment from the DfE (Department for Education), as a Partner in Practice. It is a very large county – about four times the size of Nottingham city – with a very different demographic, so comparing budgets would not be useful. However, the costs of key areas are discussed, where this might be useful. An example of this is recent discussions with Essex about their placement panel and high cost placements. The investment they have made into their now well established in-house fostering service to ensure that this is the first point of call for their children in care service has brought down the cost of placements significantly. This is an area where Nottingham could benefit.
- z) The Council has its own 'grow our own' social worker scheme as well as adding front line units in the last year, which helps to ensure consistency and quality.

The Chair thanked the contributors and requested an update on progress to implement outstanding actions in 6 months' time.

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

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Kathryn Bouchlaghem, Early Years Manager, Katherine Crossley, Early Years Project Officer and Nicholas Lee, Director of Education Services attended the meeting to outline the Council's response and progress to address the recommendation arising from a Local Government Association Peer Challenge carried out with Nottingham City

Council in 2019 to develop a collaboratively produced citywide Early Years Strategy, with a particular focus on speech, language and communication. They highlighted the following information:

- a) The Council is working with partners to develop a workable Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Strategy for the city. This has involved establishing and understanding what interventions are being used across the city.
- b) It has been clearly identified (pre pandemic) that some of Nottingham's children are not developing their speech and language skills to the best of their ability. This can impact on all of a child's life skills, including attachment, attainment, offending, good mental health, wellbeing, employment opportunities etc. The pandemic has impacted on the ability to engage with some young children, but the Early Year's Foundation sector has been open throughout and available for parents to use.
- c) Partnership working with other cities (Derby and Leicester) has enabled Nottingham to learn from others, for example the Council aspires to extend its age range for SLC work from 0-5 to 25, as Leicester has done.
- d) It is hoped to replicate across the city, at low cost or no cost, the work with Small Steps Big Changes (National Lottery funded programme of activities designed to give children the best start in life) in Aspley, Bulwell, Hyson Green, Arboretum and St Ann's.
- e) The Peer Reviewers are due to return in the summer this year, by which time the SLC strategy will at least be in draft form if not further progressed. The Health and Wellbeing Board is responsible for overseeing the work to develop the strategy.
- f) There are lots of really positive programmes of work across the city in schools, community settings etc, which support SLC. Going back to basics, eg using the first 100 words, is considered key in how to move forward to a workable citywide partnership strategy.
- g) Early Years colleagues are working with Derby and Leicester to centralise SLC resources for the city and to support parents, carers and professionals to navigate what is available, so that they can help children to develop their SLC skills. Information has been centralised in one place, called the Balanced System pathway, providing clear guidance and support. The Committee was shown a short video which introduces the Balanced System pathway and the range of resources on offer. This tool is being widely shared.
- h) Work is ongoing with partners from birth onwards to encourage parents and provide them with the confidence to take up a free childcare early education place to enable SLC work to begin as early as possible.

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

- i) Inequalities within the workforce are known to have an impact on early years' development. Graduates working within an early years setting can have a significant impact on SLC. While funding previously used to employ graduates in such work is no longer available, in Nottingham approximately 60% of early years' settings within the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, have a graduate-led workforce. Within the schools' early years sector it is 100%.
- j) Drilling down on ward and community data shows that creative language and writing skills for some boys have slipped below the national average. The Council has invested in focused workforce development training to enable support for boys' development of fine motor skills to aid this. In some schools there has been evidence of an improvement in boys' engagement.
- k) The department monitors hard data as part of its responsibility for statutory reporting. EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) data is the first data captured and held on a child's education. However, the provision of data to the local authority is not currently mandatory for all settings, eg schools. It is part of the Council's strategy to engage with all schools, including academy trusts, to build robust data back to 2015.
- l) Work is ongoing to link the health and education 2.5 year-old checks. It is essential to share data with partners as the collection of data and forensic analysis improves, to join up the education and health sectors (the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, based on education, and the Healthy Child Programme) to tackle inequalities.
- m) Attainment and the ability to thrive in education have a significant impact on behaviour and the ability to navigate life beyond school, impacting on worklessness. Colleagues are keen to see the work with young children extending as part of the SLC Strategy.
- n) The levels of deprivation in Nottingham have enabled the Council to access funding for the work with Derby and Leicester, which experience similar widespread challenges with SLC across their cities.
- o) The Council worked closely with health visitors and speech and language therapists to develop the '100 words' programme. It will now be helpful to reinvigorate that through a range of communications to schools, early years' settings, parents' forums etc.
- p) A childcare sufficiency audit has shown that there are enough spaces for under 5 year-olds. The best outreach tool is to engage with parents and carers, as well as schools, to promote the benefits of going to an early years setting. More work needs to be carried out with Health Visitors to formalise promotion toolkits.
- q) To improve the time spent on waiting lists for speech therapy, the Council is working on both training its workforce and how services are commissioned. This is being looked at by the Health and Wellbeing Board. Linked to this is the importance of engaging parents and carers in the Balanced System pathway to empower them to support their child.

- r) The Dolly Parton Library free book per month for under 5 year-olds is a resource on the pathway and has been embraced widely, including by the PVI sector, to support parents with reading to their child and help to identify literacy issues, which can then be addressed.
- s) The overarching vision for SLC would enable work to be extended to support older young people and adults whose learning and progress has been/ is impacted by difficulties with SLC. It was agreed that it would be useful to look at this particularly at a future Committee meeting.
- t) Councillor Barnard agreed to distribute a copy to Committee members of 'Talking About A Generation', which reviews recent developments in policy and practice of SLC on health and wellbeing, educational progress and employability beyond school.

The Chair thanked contributors and requested an update on progress with the SLC strategy, including work with older young people and adults, in one year's time.

34 Work Programme 2021/22

- a) The Chair presented her report which summarised the work of the Committee in 2020/21. The report proposed a number of recommendations for consideration by members in relation to that work, which were discussed and agreed.
- b) The proposed work programme identified a list of items for potential scheduling in 2021/22, suggested by members of the Committee and proposed in the Chair's report. The Committee agreed the list of items as its priorities for 2021/22, to be timetabled following the meeting.
- c) The Committee agreed that it would review progress in implementing outstanding actions from the action plan arising from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse at its May meeting.

RESOLVED to recommend that

- 1) the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People considers establishing Youth Networks for each area of the city to enable partners to share intelligence and tackle challenging issues;**
- 2) the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People explores ways of routinely collecting data on the number of young people that Play and Youth Services work with who have been excluded from school, to help managers ensure that the service is focusing on, and reaching, the young people likely to be most in need of intervention and support;**
- 3) the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People ensures that Play and Youth Services introduces mechanisms and tools to robustly assess what**

is and isn't working well and to evaluate the effectiveness of services, with regular review of this evaluation by senior managers;

- 4) when allocating the Area Based Grant (ABG) the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport ensures that systems and processes are in place so that the Council is satisfied that organisations deliver what is needed, avoiding duplication and gaps in provision, to the standard required, for example through a quality mark and clear agreements about expectations;**
- 5) the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Schools and Communications writes to the relevant Minister to express the importance of continued support for pupils entitled to free school meals during school holidays for as long as the Covid 19 furlough scheme is applied; and**
- 6) the Health Scrutiny Committee considers including in its work programme an item on how children and young people with mental health and wellbeing issues will be supported as the city recovers from the pandemic, with particular reference to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and including the impact on transition of children and young people to adult services.**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 MAY 2021
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure all members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are aware of the terms of reference for the Committee, and the implications for the operation of the Committee during the year.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the terms of reference for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, approved at Council on 26 April 2021.

3 Background information

- 3.1 On 26 April 2021 Council established the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and agreed its terms of reference.
- 3.2 The Committee is asked to note the terms of reference at this, its first meeting of the new municipal year.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

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 The City Council’s Constitution
- 6.2 Report to Council 26 April 2021

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Kim Pocock, Scrutiny Officer
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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

To provide robust scrutiny of issues and services relevant to the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and young people, in the light of recommendations from the Council's Ofsted Inspection April 2014, and the Jay and Casey Reports (Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham). The work of the Committee should aim to drive and support services to find solutions to problems and/ or set aspirational targets and instill public confidence.

Remit

- a) To set and manage a work programme to fulfil overview and scrutiny responsibilities in relation to children and young people to:
 - (i) provide an appropriate and robust level of challenge to those in authority and hold local decision-makers, including the Council's Executive, to account for their decisions, action and performance;
 - (ii) review policy and contribute to the development of new policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham's children and young people;
 - (iii) explore any matters affecting Nottingham's children and young people;
 - (iv) make reports and recommendations to relevant local agencies in relation to the delivery of their functions, including the Council and its Executive, and monitor implementation of all accepted recommendations;
- b) to work with the other scrutiny committees, to support effective delivery of a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme;
- c) to consider referrals from partners and citizens to support effective delivery of a co-ordinated work programme;
- d) to invite, take account of and respond to the views of local people (including children and young people) about their concerns and the delivery of services in relation to children and young people;
- e) to be required to consider the following issues / topics when developing the work programme, though the Committee's scrutiny activity need not be limited to these matters:
 - (i) safeguarding;
 - (ii) Looked After Children;
 - (iii) vulnerable children and young people (eg in relation to disability, domestic violence, missing);
 - (iv) Child Sexual Exploitation;
 - (v) Early Intervention;
 - (vi) educational attainment;
 - (vii) commissioning of services for children and young people;
 - (viii) performance of services for children and young people;

- f) to consider potential risks to children and young people, how they are being managed and to report concerns as soon as possible to the appropriate individuals/ bodies if risk is identified;
- g) to monitor the progress made by, and effectiveness of the Council and its partners, in addressing the areas of concern and specific recommendations for actions made by Ofsted and any other relevant inspection/ assessment bodies;
- h) to have regard to the work of other committees/panels/boards, such as the Corporate Parenting Board and the Local Safeguarding Board, to avoid duplication, but to ensure that such bodies are held to account when appropriate;
- (i) to commission time-limited panels (no more than 1 panel at any one time) to carry out a review of a matter within its remit. Commissioning includes setting the remit, initial timescale and size of membership to meet the needs of the review to be carried out. Such review panels will be chaired by the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- i) to co-opt people from outside the Council to sit on the Committee or any review panels it commission to support effective delivery of the work programme.

Membership

The Committee has 9 members. Membership must not include members of the Executive Board. The Committee is politically balanced.

When the Committee plans to consider an education issue, the statutory education cooptees* must be invited to be full and equal members of the Committee with voting rights for that specific item.

*Church of England Diocese representative/Roman Catholic Diocese representative/Parent Governors representatives.

Chairing

The Chair will be one of the Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and is appointed by Full Council. The Vice-Chair will be appointed at the first meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee from the membership of the Committee.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 MAY 2021
PRIMARY EXCLUSIONS AND FAMILY SUPPORT
REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE

1 Purpose

1.1 To consider the effectiveness of work being carried out to manage primary permanent exclusions and the support available to families.

2 Action required

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) consider the information provided on primary permanent exclusions and explore the support the Council provides to families whose children are excluded or are at risk of exclusion; and
- b) consider whether any further scrutiny should be carried out in relation to this issue.

3 Background information

3.1 The Committee has been concerned about exclusions of pupils from schools and the issue has been raised while considering other items at its meetings.

3.2 Exclusions from maintained schools are the responsibility of the local authority, which is working to prevent/ reduce exclusions, as well as provide alternative education for those pupils who are excluded.

3.3 As well as its interest in the effectiveness of the work being carried out in relation to excluded primary pupils, the Committee is interested in finding out what support is provided to a child's family to resolve issues and prevent further problems.

4 List of attached information

4.1 Report of the Head of Access to Learning and Inclusion Manager

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 None.

7 Wards affected

7.1 All.

8 Contact information

8.1 Kim Pocock, Scrutiny Officer
Kim.pocock@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
0115 8764321

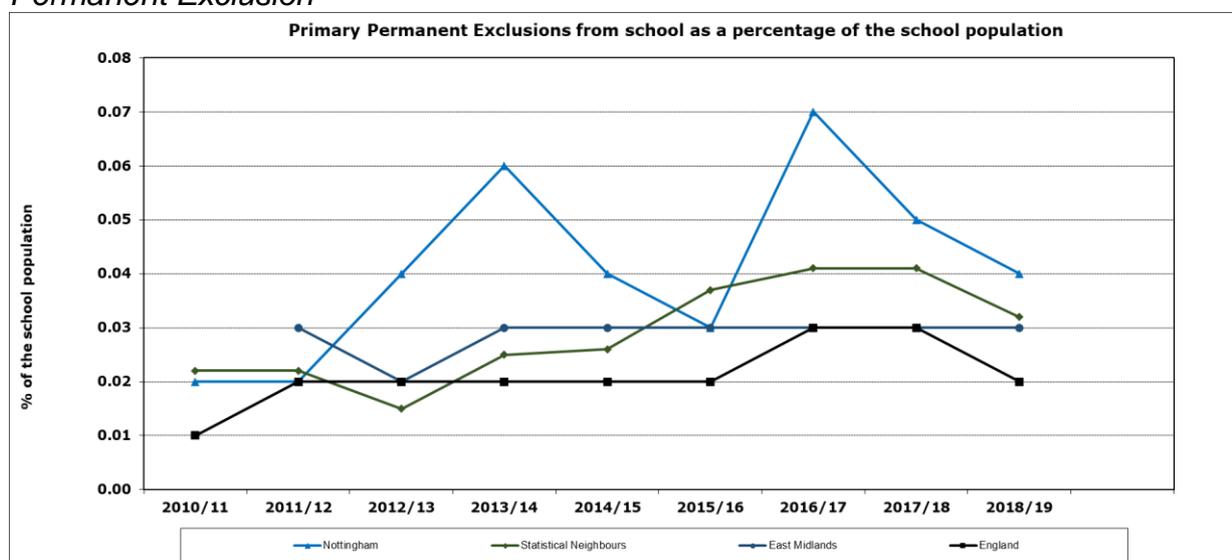
Meeting Title	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Overview of Primary Exclusions
Meeting Date	27 May 2021

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood Helen Watson
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Campbell-Clarke
Report author and contact details:	Peter McConnochie, Head of Access to Learning Michael Wilsher, Inclusion Manager

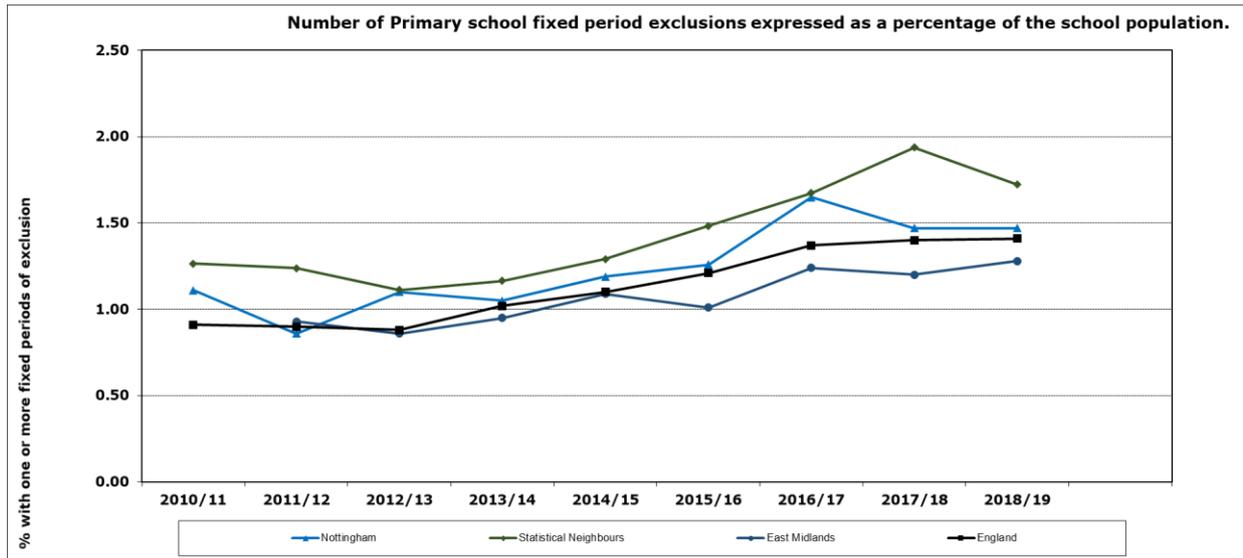
National Context

Nottingham City Council is ranked 121st in primary permanent exclusions and 99th in primary fixed period exclusions (2018/2019) out of 151 local authorities. Since this time the city's permanent exclusion figures have reduced significantly (from 14 in 2018/2019 to 4 in 2019/2020). The City's rate of fixed period exclusion is below other statistical neighbours and broadly in line with the national average.

Permanent Exclusion



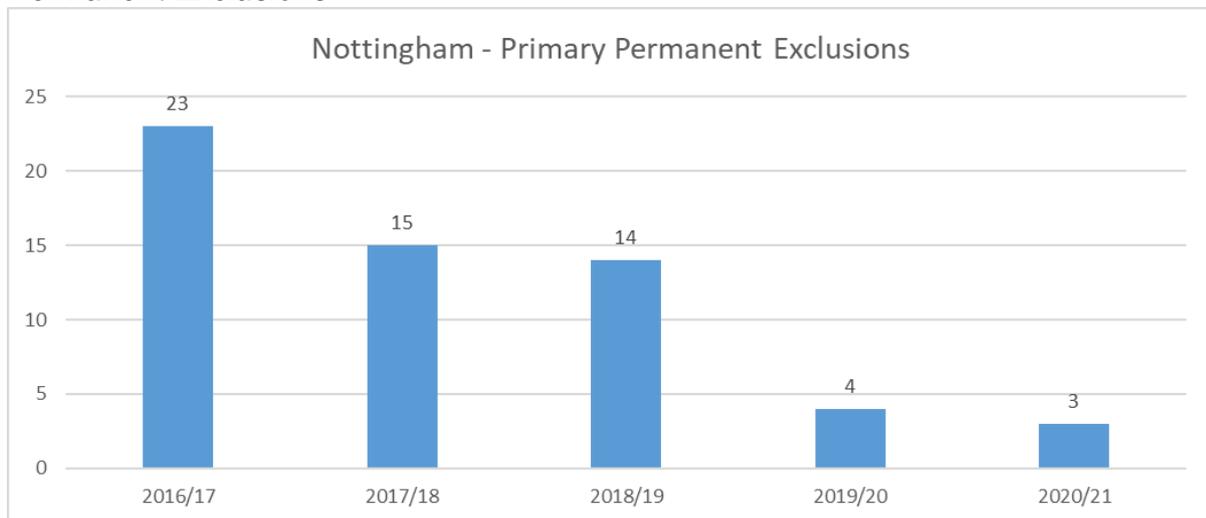
Fixed Period Exclusion



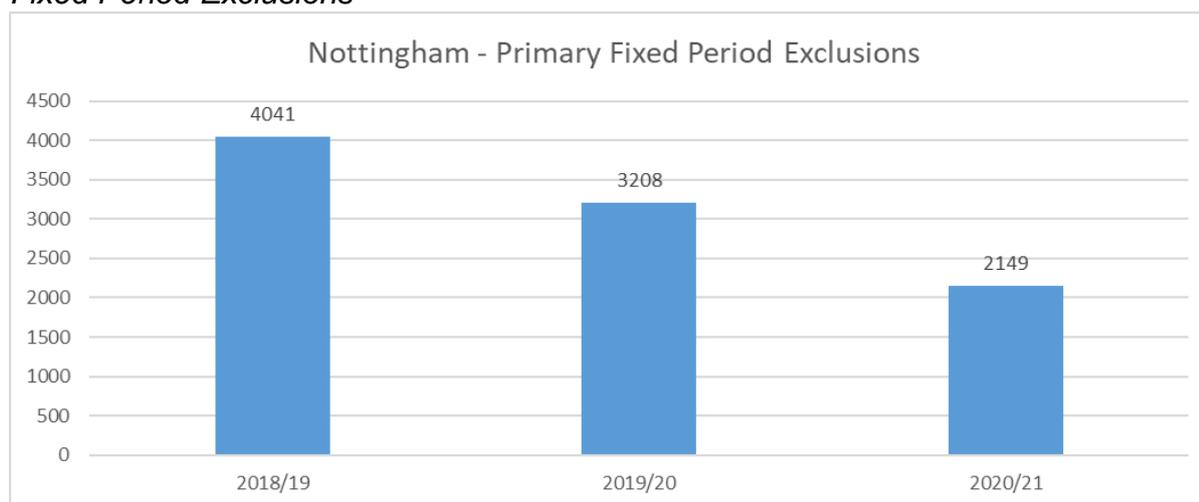
Nottingham City Exclusions

There has been a decrease in the number of exclusions (permanent and fixed period) over the last two years within the City. Permanent exclusions have been reduced dramatically compared to previous years. Whilst the pandemic will have impacted on exclusion data because of school closures, we have not experienced an increase in exclusions from primary schools when pupils have returned to full time education.

Permanent Exclusions



Fixed Period Exclusions



Exclusions by Context

In primary schools, there are two main reasons for exclusion; persistent disruptive behaviour and physical assault (these make up 80% of exclusions)

Exclusions are issued more frequently as the child progresses through primary phase

Primary exclusions are male dominated with over 88% of fixed period exclusions issued to male pupils over the last three years and 95% of permanent exclusions to male students over the last three years.

Most exclusions are issued to white pupils 64% and 32% issued to BME pupils.

SEND

No pupil with an EHCP has been permanently excluded from the Nottingham City Primary School/academy over the past three years, which is significantly below the national exclusion rate of 0.15. The Majority of fixed period and permanent exclusions are issues to pupils with no identified SEND.

Primary Exclusions	SEN CATEGORY	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Grand Total
Fixed Period	Education Health and Care Plan	150	182	0	331
	SEND Support	299	262	22	583
	No SEND	3592	2764	2127	8483
Fixed Period Total		4041	3208	2149	9398
Permanent	Education Health and Care Plan	0	0	0	0
	SEND Support	2	1	3	6
	No SEND	12	3	0	15
Permanent Total		14	4	3	21

Exclusion Provision and Reintegration

Educational provision for permanently excluded pupils is provided by Denewood Academy, which is part of the Raleigh Trust. All pupils are educated on-site with a few pupils accessing specialist provision at Westbury Special School. On average, 4 pupils are reintegrated back into mainstream school each academic year, with an additional 6 (on average) of pupils reintegrating through the year 6- year 7 process.

Strategies to reduce exclusion

Nottingham City's inclusion strategy supports an early identification and intervention as part of a graduated response to additional needs, including social, emotional and behaviour needs. The Routes to Inclusion (R2i) initiative was launched with primary schools in 2019 building whole school capacity to facilitate inclusion and more effectively manage the needs of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour. Embedding R2i

has been inhibited by the pandemic, however, the R2i team continue to work with school across the city.

An intensive Support Team (IST) has been established to support children who have been through the R2i process and remain at risk of permanent exclusion from school. The IST team work directly with the child, family and the school to maintain the school place.

The local authority monitors and tracked all permanent exclusion and has an escalation model for primary and secondary to trigger concerns.

The current strategy is proving successful in reducing exclusions and building capacity in schools to support children who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 MAY 2021
CHILD IN CARE/ CHILD PROTECTION REVIEWING SERVICES
REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE

1 Purpose

1.1 To consider the quality and effectiveness of Children’s Social Care Reviewing Services.

2 Action required

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) consider the effectiveness of Reviewing Services in the light of the information provided; and
- b) consider whether any further scrutiny should be carried out in relation to this issue.

3 Background information

3.1 The Council’s Reviewing Services comprise Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and Child Protection Co-ordinators (CPCs). Both roles require a social work qualification. Local authorities have a duty to appoint an IRO to every child in care. Local authorities are also required to provide independent review of work with children subject to a Child Protection Plan.

3.2 Colleagues will attend the meeting to provide information on the roles and responsibilities of these services and the actions being taken, as well as plans for the future, to improve the outcomes for children who receive them.

4 List of attached information

4.1 Report of the Service Manager, Safeguarding Partnerships

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 None

7 Wards affected

7.1 All

8 Contact information

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Meeting Title	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Overview of Child in Care and Child Protection Reviewing Services
Meeting Date	27 May 2021

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood Helen Watson
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	John Matravers john.matravers@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Introduction

The reviewing services are divided into two distinct service areas:

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) are responsible for quality assuring and improving services for children who are in the care of Nottingham City Council. 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 statutory duties of the IRO are to monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions 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 concerning the case are given due consideration by the appropriate authority; and to perform any other function which is prescribed in these regulations.

Child Protection Coordinators (CPC's) are responsible for quality assuring and improving services for children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Nottingham City.

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.

This report will address Children in Care and Children subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The Reviewing Services sit within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service area offering independence to the role. There are two Principal Managers responsible for Children in Care and Child Protection.

All IRO's and 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.

We continue to have a permanent staff team of both full and part time workers with 2 additional temporary agency IRO's.

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.

The pandemic has significantly affected the way that we currently deliver services and has led to an online approach for all reviews. This initially was a challenge due to the lack of development

time to undertake this approach and parents and carers need to have appropriate technology. However, engagement across the partnership and with families has been strong and where Microsoft Teams has not been able to be accessed by families, their views and support has been provided before and after meetings (as some families have participated by phone). Some strengths have been identified with this approach and these will continue to be applied when we resume to a more traditional approach to reviewing services (for example, many children have preferred the engagement online as it feels less intimidating). There is a positive benefit for resources by reducing travel time for partners and enabling some agencies who have previously struggled to attend reviews to participate more consistently. We are undertaking a formal review of this approach so that we capture positive aspects and continue to improve the services that we provide for our Children in Care.

The virtual reviews have been observed by the Independent Scrutineer for the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership in February 2021. She identified *“Both Conferences were well chaired by the Child Protection Chairs (CPCs) who clearly had a good grasp of their respective cases. Both supported parental involvement and encouraged contributions by agencies. They were also child centred and avoided the meetings becoming overly focussed on the needs of parents. There was very good agency attendance at both Conferences.”*

Roles and Responsibilities for an IRO when reviewing Children in Care

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.

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.

Children in Care Data 2020-21

(Data for 2019/20 is in brackets)

The Children in Care population for 2020-21 within Nottingham City Council was 684 (656). This shows an increase of 4.2% from the previous year. The East Midlands has also seen an increase in this population ranging from Derby +10%, Leicestershire +7% and Derbyshire +4%.

Caseloads are marginally within the limits specified in the IRO handbook, which denotes a caseload of 50-70 per IRO as being manageable. At present 9.5 full time equivalent IRO's hold an average caseload of 69.

In terms of outcomes during 2020-21, there were 24 (26) Adoption Orders granted, 28 (23) Special Guardianship Orders granted (SGO).

Stability of placement is an important factor for children in care and a key performance indicator. In Nottingham 64% (68%) of our children in care have remained in the same placement for at least 2 years or more.

Reviews within timescale were at 95% (90%) which shows an improvement against the previous year. And is above/below our target.

Child participation in their review was 92% (94%). Participation includes attending the meeting or where the child does not wish to by providing their wishes and feelings in a written format. This shows a slight drop and we have identified that the issue here is participation in the first review and have taken steps to address this. Nevertheless, this is still a strong performance given the obvious challenges presented by the pandemic.

IRO's continue to support and encourage young people to chair their own meetings or set their own agenda's where appropriate. This is dependent on the age and understanding of the child but is essential work as we continue to develop our reviewing services to be meaningful to the children in our care.

Contact with young people between reviews continues to improve as caseloads allow. This has been assisted by online contact and the additional capacity provided that has brought caseloads closer to those recommended in the IRO handbook. 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, namely, online, by phone, face to face and using the app. ["Mind Of My Own"](#) 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. The newly launched coming into care pack also supports this.

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.

Developments implemented in 2020/21

- We are re-designing how we conduct CIC Reviews and we are on an improvement journey to make all reviews more child focused. This includes child friendly minutes and inviting who the child wants to be at their review.
- We are engaging with the Child in Care Council to help us understand how the language we have traditionally used affects them and what language they prefer.

- The Child Contribution paper has been revised and is used at every review.
- We have launched a 'coming into care' pack for all children and young people that helps them to understand what is happening and why. It also introduces their IRO in a relationship based way that includes personal characteristics that the IRO is happy to share.
- We are using a case review form to review all statutory elements of the review process. This is an internal document and we share learning across Childrens Services to further strengthen practice.

The IRO service is undergoing a significant transformation process. We ensure that all IRO's have a child focused ethos ensuring we give the child a voice so they feel they have some control over their lives.

We have worked hard in our virtual reviews to ensure we have continued care planning, which does not drift during the pandemic and as a team we are committed to improving outcomes for children and always consider their views within this.

We are strong advocates for children's rights and feel as IRO's we have a good rapport with children and professionals around the child however this can and will be further strengthened.

We challenge the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and we champion the needs of the children we work with. This is demonstrated by addressing issues including; placement stability, progressing care plans for adoption and increased family time.

Priorities for 2021/22

- We will relaunch the IRO Service to the wider social care community and children's partnership so that we can ensure an understanding of the role and functions in the care planning for children. It will also support an understanding of the challenges and roles of all working to support our most vulnerable children.
- As the IRO we aim to visit every child before their 20 day Children in Care Review to talk to them about what is a review and gain their wishes and feelings.
- We will offer training sessions and observation sessions to all our social work community so they can see what the role and function of the IRO actually is outside of chairing a review.
- We will further strengthen our relationship with the social work community.
- We aim to ensure that reviews should only go ahead where there is a completed and shared pre-meeting review report.
- We are undertaking training on our minutes to ensure quality and consistency across the service.
- We will support young people so that they will feel they have the confidence to chair their own meetings.
- We will continue to embed the use of modern technology to engage children more in their review process.

Overview of the reviewing of children subject of a Child Protection Plan

The requirement for the Local Authority to provide independent reviewing of work with Children subject of a Child Protection plan largely mirrors that for Children in Care, with the following requirements specified in the [Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships

- The Child Protection Chair should be a professional who is independent of operational and/or line management responsibilities for the case.
- The CPC should meet the child and parents in advance of the review to ensure they understand the purpose and the process.
- Where possible the same person should chair subsequent Child Protection Conference Reviews.
- They ensure there is a process for challenging any drift and delay identified.
- They ensure that the views of the children, parents and carers are given sufficient weight in planning for the protection of the child.
- 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.

Child Protection Data 2020-21

(Data for 2019/20 is in brackets)

The number of children subject to a child protection plan at the end of 2020/21 was 616 (609). This shows an increase of 1.1% from the previous year. However, the increase from 2018/19 was 100 which showed a rise of 19.6%. This rise followed the Ofsted inspection that highlighted concerns with the identification of neglect. Currently 89 children per 10,000 are subject to a CP plan in Nottingham compared to our statistical neighbours (SNG) who show 63 per 10,000. This highlights that we have significantly higher numbers of children subject to CP plans. However, auditing of thresholds has identified they are appropriately subject to a plan. The work undertaken by Children's Services is leading to better assessment, planning and a strength based relationship approach should start to see these numbers reduce over the next 12 months. It is right that plans are not ended prematurely as we must see sustained evidence of a positive impact on the lived experience of children before a plan can end.

The 6 full time equivalent CPC's currently hold an average of 103 cases but they also collectively chair on average 250 CSE/CCE strategy meetings per year.

Initial Child Protection Conferences' held in timescale has shown a marked improvement this year and we achieved 93% (66%). This also compares favourably with the Statistical Neighbourhood Group average of 79%.

Reviews in timescale also showed an improvement against the previous year as we achieved 95% (90%) and again this compares to the SNG of 90%.

Children subject to a CP plan for over 2 years is 3.7% which is in line with SNG of 4%. We have also audited all of these cases to ensure there is no drift and delay and where this is found appropriate action has been taken.

Children becoming subject to a CP plan for a second time was 27% (32%). This is a significant measure as it indicates those cases where children's lives have not significantly improved following a previous time where they were subject to a Child Protection Plan. Whilst in some cases this will reflect a new risk to the child, it may indicate that for some children improvement may not have been sustained from their first episode of Child Protection. The SNG figure is 24%. We have work to do on this across service areas. The improvement journey should see this figure continue to fall as we will see better quality assessments and plans ending when sustained improvement for the child has been achieved.

Priorities for 2021/22

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

Conclusion:

The two independent reviewing functions perform a crucial role in assuring appropriate and timely planning and intervention for children in care and children who are subject of a child protection plan.

This report provides evidence of the current performance of the service to key performance measures. It also notes the improvement activity which has been undertaken and the further developments planned during this year.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 MAY 2021
WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Committee’s work programme for 2021/22 based on areas of work identified by the Committee at previous meetings and any further suggestions raised at this meeting.

2. Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the work that is currently planned, and has now been scheduled, for the municipal year 2021/22 and make amendments to this programme as appropriate.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The purpose of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is to provide robust scrutiny of issues and services relevant to the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and young people, in the light of recommendations from the Council’s Ofsted Inspection April 2014, and the Jay and Casey Reports (Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham).
- 3.2 The Committee is responsible for setting and managing its own work programme to fulfil this role.
- 3.3 In setting a programme for scrutiny activity, the Committee should aim for an outcome-focused work programme that has clear priorities and a clear link to its roles and responsibilities. The work programme needs to be flexible so that issues which arise as the year progresses can be considered appropriately.
- 3.4 Where there are a number of potential items that could be scrutinised in a given year, consideration of what represents the highest priority or area of risk will assist with work programme planning. Changes and/or additions to the work programme will need to take account of the resources available to the Committee.
- 3.5 The work programme for municipal year 2021/22 is attached at Appendix 1.

4. List of attached information

- 4.1 Appendix 1 –Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2021/22 Work Programme

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 None

7. Wards affected

7.1 All

8. Contact information

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2021/22 Work Programme

Date	Items
27 May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference To note the terms of reference for the Committee • Primary School Exclusion and Family Support To review current data on school exclusions of primary aged children, the impact on families and support provided, the education provision for those excluded from school and what more can be done to reduce the number of permanent exclusions. • Overview of Children in Care/ Child Protection Reviewing Services To consider performance in Children in Care/ Child Protection, with headlines of progress made, changes undertaken, challenges that remain. • Work Programme 2021/22
29 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People While the Portfolio Holder for CYP can be invited to join any item within her/ his remit, this slot is to be used to scrutinise specific aspects of the Portfolio Holder's work to be determined according to relevant priorities at this time. • Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse To review progress in implementing outstanding actions from the action plan arising from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse • Work Programme 2021/22
30 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with the Regional Schools Commissioner and local Academy Trusts to cover the following secondary school issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exclusions (particularly the high level of permanent exclusions) and alternative provision - The impact of Covid-19 on attainment - Educational outcomes/ academic attainment of specific groups eg white working class boys, BAME pupils and gypsy/ Roma children

Date	Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement with wider partners and services in the city • Work Programme 2021/22
25 November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Entitlement To review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability of Early Years providers in light of the Covid-19 pandemic - Access to Early Years provision - Take up of Early Years entitlement, with a focus on awareness of opportunities and cultural issues • Update on progress to implement the Children’s Integrated Services Improvement Programme • Work Programme 2021/22
27 January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with no recourse to public funds To review arrangements in the city for children and young people with no recourse to public funds and to explore support for registering citizenship for children and young people • How the Council engages with children and young people from Traveller families To review how the Council’s provides support and works with partners to meet the range of needs of children and young people from Traveller families • Work Programme 2021/22
31 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech, Language and Communication Services Progress Update To review progress in delivering a city-wide shared strategy which underpins a clear offer of embedded support for speech, language and communication services, with measurable impact, including looking specifically at issues of SLC in older young people and adults. Follow up from presentation and discussion to meeting 25 March 2021.

Date	Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• Scrutiny of Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Schools While the Portfolio Holder for Schools can be invited to join any item within her/ his remit, this slot is to be used to scrutinise specific aspects of the Portfolio Holder's work to be determined according to relevant priorities at this time.</p> <li> <p>• Work Programme 2022/23</p>

Items to Schedule:

1. Children's Safeguarding

To review specifically (a) the Council's awareness of where children reside in order to ensure children are safeguarded and receive appropriate support and services and (b) Child Sexual Exploitation

2. How the Council works to support children and their parents

To review how well the Council co-ordinates, support for children and their parents across services and the impact on their lives (to include Children's Centres, Small Steps Big Changes, Public Health)

3. County Lines, particularly from an education focus

To consider the impact of County Lines on education

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