



Nottingham City Council Corporate Parenting Board

Date: Monday, 17 May 2021

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: Dining Room at the Council House

Please see information at the bottom of page 2 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: Mark Leavesley

Direct Dial: 0115 876 4302

- 1 Appointment of Vice-Chair**
- 2 Apologies for absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interests**
If you need advice on declaring an interest, please contact the Governance Officer above, if possible before the day of the meeting.
- 4 Children in Care Placements - Commissioning & Sufficiency Strategy 2021-23** 3 - 26
Report of Corporate Director for People
- 5 Regional Adoption Agency: activity 2020-21** 27 - 32
Report of Adoption East Midlands
- 6 Feedback from themed discussion (Education and Employment) and Children in Care Council update**
Engagement and Participation Lead Officer to report
- 7 Virtual School Peer Review** 33 - 52
Report of Corporate Director for People
- 8 Care Leavers Annual Report 2020-21** 53 - 58
Report of Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services
- 9 Children in Care / Leaving Care: Q4 2020/21 performance** 59 - 72
Report of Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services

10 Work Plan 2021-22
Report of the Chair

73 - 74

11 Dates of future meetings

To agree to meet at 2.00pm on the following Mondays:

<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
19 July	17 January
20 September	21 March
15 November	

Citizens are requested to arrive 15 minutes before the start time above to be taken to the meeting room.

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;
- comply with Test and Trace requirements by scanning the QR code at the entrance to the building and/or giving their name and contact details to the Governance Officer at 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.



Children in Care Placements - Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

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

2021 - 2023



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

Contents

	Page
1. Purpose.....	3
2. Background and Context.....	4
3. Vision and Commitment	5
4. Key Sufficiency Messages.....	10
5. Commissioning Direction	12
6. Market Position and Sufficiency.....	15
7. Recommendations	21

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked After Children and Young People. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty should be undertaken within the context of the planning and co-operation duties which the 2004 Act places on partners in order to improve the wellbeing of the children in the local area.
- 1.2 This Strategy responds to the duty by formalising the approach in which Nottingham City Council (NCC) commissions Children in Care (CiC) placements, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the current gaps, opportunities and commissioning plans for the local placement market.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 Nottingham is a vibrant City with a diverse population. It is a city of business and enterprise, learning and science, sport and culture. Nottingham, like other cities, still faces challenges. Socio-economic factors such as high levels of deprivation; unemployment, domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse, all impact on the volume and complexity of needs presented by children and young people.
- 2.2 Like other local authorities, one of the greatest challenges for the City is improving outcomes for the small cohort of the most highly complex children and young people, who often have multiple needs and display highly challenging behaviours which lead to placement instability and escalating care needs. Radically rethinking the way in which these young people are placed and cared for, to achieve stability and improved outcomes, is a priority for Nottingham City.
- 2.3 Changes in the volume and type of placement demand, combined with financial pressures, legislative changes and learning from serious case reviews, have all impacted upon local sufficiency requirements. Most recently, the Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted upon the care placement market and may continue to in the short and medium term. It is important that Nottingham City remains agile to these challenges, alongside preparing to respond to other current market drivers, including the reforms to unregulated provisions, due to be implemented in September 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority's study into the care placement market, and the independent review of children's social care which launched in January. The next two years will reveal important learning for the sector.
- 2.4 The Local Government Association (LGA) are working to establish a nationwide framework for producing sufficiency statements, to enable consistent monitoring of need for, and delivery of, children's placements. NCC welcome this development and have fed into the consultation regarding the framework format, which is anticipated to include (i) a nationwide database on children's placements that will be used to inform the councils' statements, (ii) a sufficiency statement template, and (iii) a basic predictive tool for monitoring future trends in demand for placements that can be used by all councils in England

3. Vision and Commitment

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

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

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

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

The Commitment

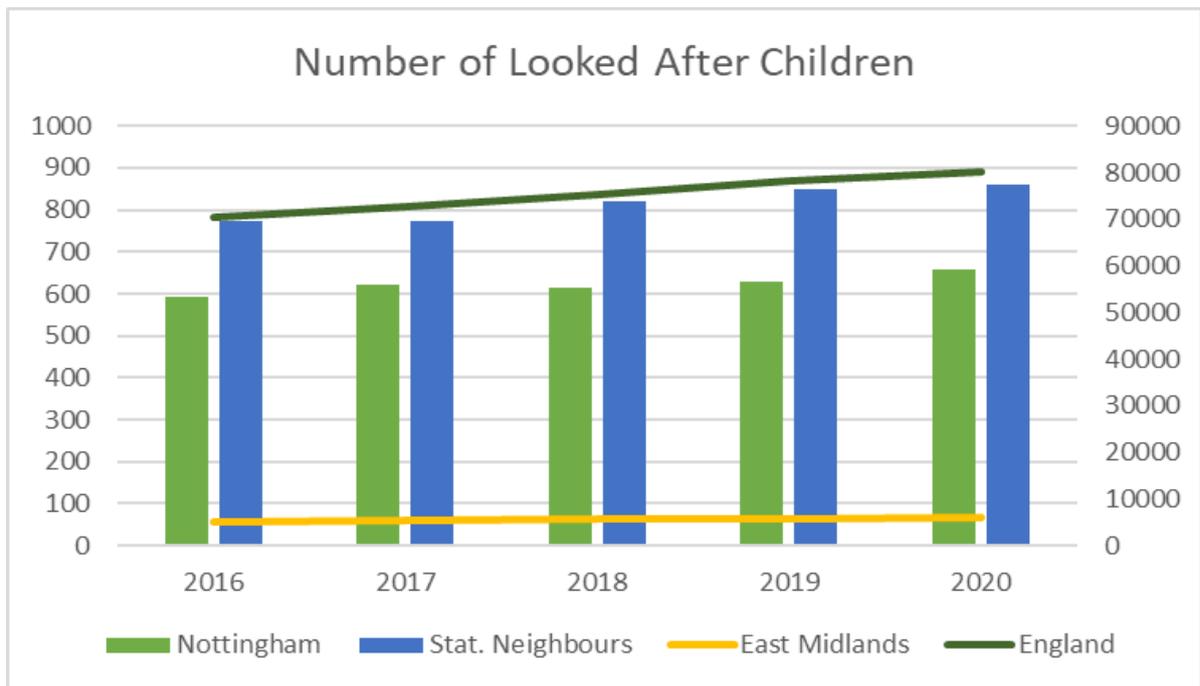
For all of our children and young people, Nottingham City Council commits to:

- ✓ Secure the best possible placement for every child and young person.
- ✓ Achieve consistency in the quality, support and entitlements offered to children and young people within all placement provision, through standardised specifications, contracts and requirements.
- ✓ Improve outcomes for Children in Care, through improved stability and quality of service provision.
- ✓ Keep our Children in Care close to home. Our ambition is place a minimum of 85% of our children and young people locally i.e. within 20 miles of the centre of Nottingham. For those placements made outside of the local area, NCC will ensure that the same levels of monitoring and quality standards are applied.
- ✓ Regularly review the appropriateness of placements and placements plans, and support children to be reunified with their family, wherever safe and in their best interests to do so.
- ✓ Listen to children and young people and maximise opportunities for their feedback to inform and influence service delivery.
- ✓ Measure children and young people's outcomes across all placements, ensuring an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.
- ✓ Articulate to providers what excellent outcomes look like for each child and young person and be open to exploring incentives for over-achievement.
- ✓ Implement effective early intervention, for example;
 - Making a financial commitment where a specialist/therapeutic placement is required, for a period of time determined by a qualified professional
 - Escalate and recommend change when a young person has experienced multiple placement breakdowns
- ✓ Implement robust commissioning, contract and quality assurance processes.

4. Placement Demand

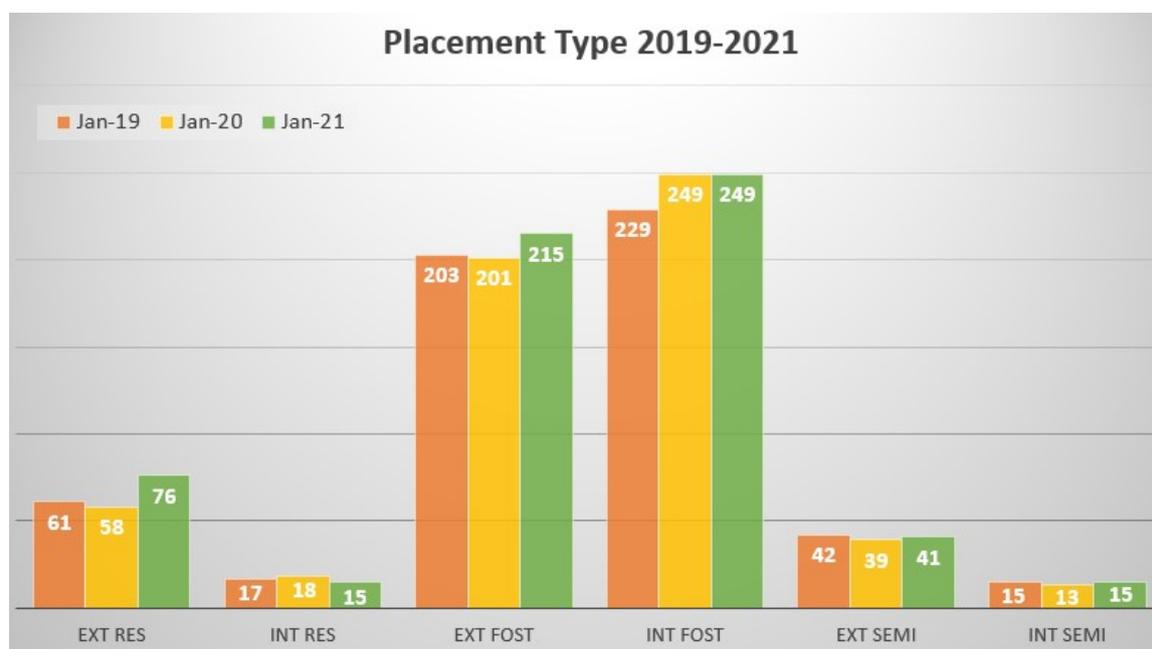
4.1 The number of Children in Care in Nottingham City continues to rise. The data below provides an overview of growth over the past five years, alongside NCC's statistical neighbours, the regional and the national picture. Although a steeper increase can be seen in the most recent year for NCC, it is noted that the overall growth in the last five years, is lower than national and regional growth. The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the resulting lockdown, is not yet well enough understood to forecast future demand; however further growth is anticipated.

Number of Children in Care							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from previous year	Change over five years
Nottingham	594	622	616	628	656	4.5%	10.4%
Stat. Neighbours	774	775	821	849	861	1.4%	11.2%
East Midlands	5170	5360	5620	5840	6110	4.6%	18.0%
England	70410	72610	75370	78140	80080	2.5%	13.7%

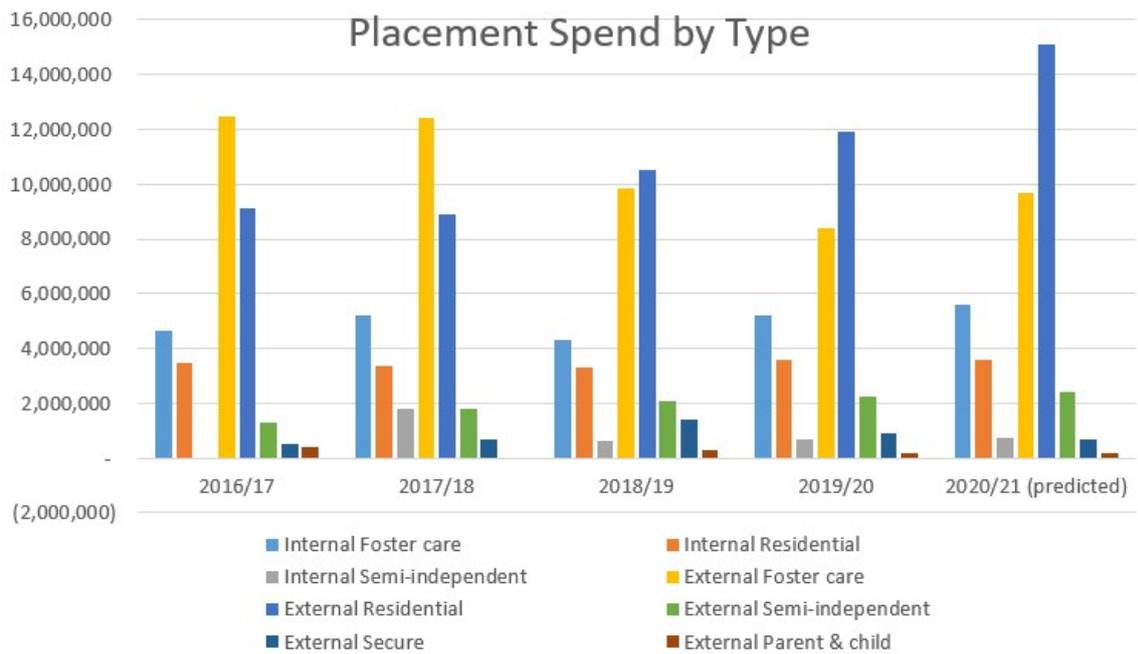


Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from previous year	Change over five years
Nottingham	90	93	91	91	95	4.4%	5.5%
Stat. Neighbours	92.7	90.2	94.7	97	97.5	0.5%	5.2%
East Midlands	53	55	57	59	61	3.4%	15.0%
England	60	62	64	65	67	3.0%	11.6%

4.2 NCC places children and young people across a range of internal (local authority) and external (private) placement provision. The below data details the breakdown of these placement types over the previous three-year period. This information does not capture other placement types, such as Connected Persons, secure or hospital settings.



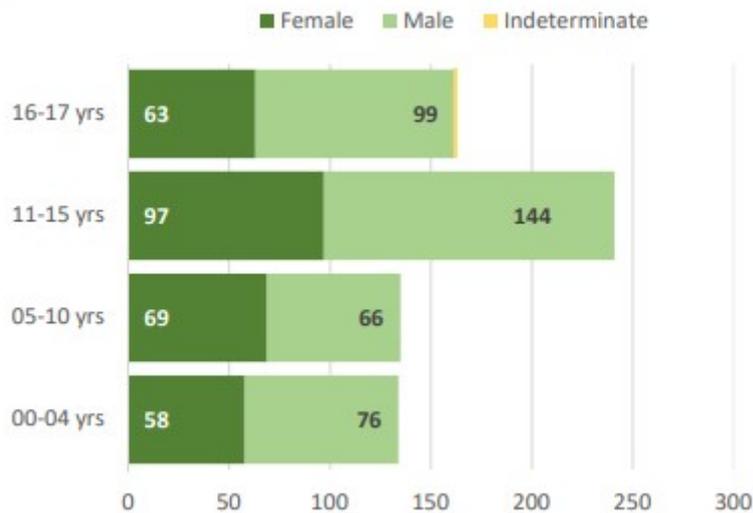
4.3 The proportion of CiC placed within internal fostering, compared to external fostering, has shifted from 45% to 55%. The steep increase in external residential placements over the last 12 months has been in response to an increasing presentation of complex and/or challenging behaviours amongst our children, for which there is insufficient supply of suitable foster carers to meet the demand. The decrease in internal residential was due to an intentional temporary measure to reduce capacity to ensure sufficient staffing levels as the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic hit. The level of demand, locally, regionally and nationally, particularly for fostering placements, is such, that often we find that providers are able to be selective in which children and young people they care for, and are able to set prices reflective of demand and market forces, rather than individual need. Spend by placement type is provided below.



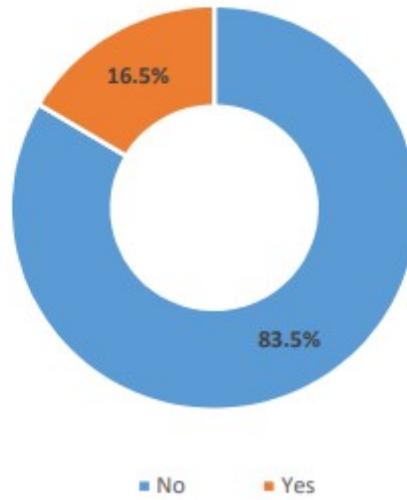
8

4.4 The below data shares insight into the profile of the children and young people placed.

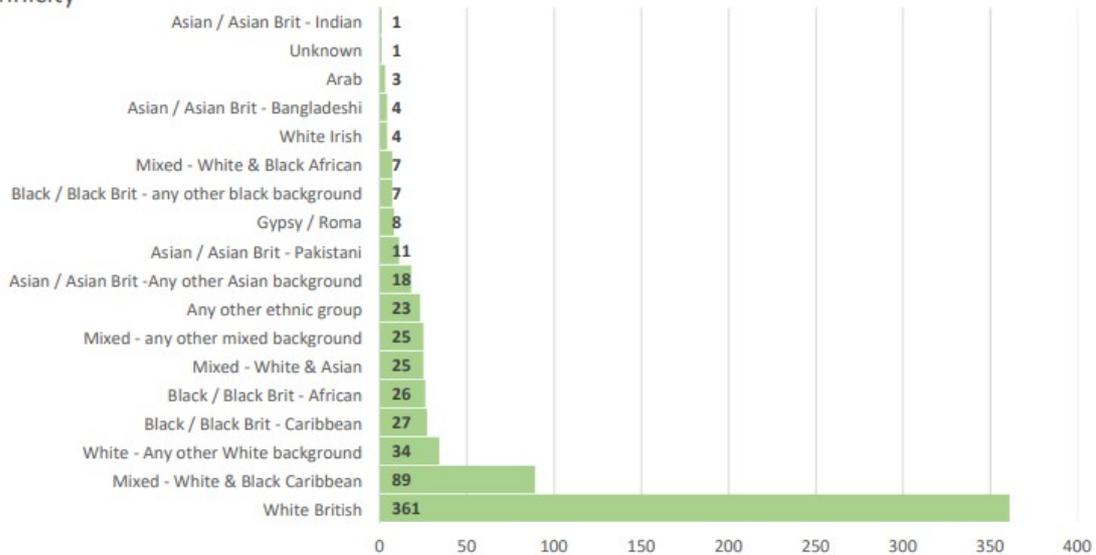
Age Band and Gender



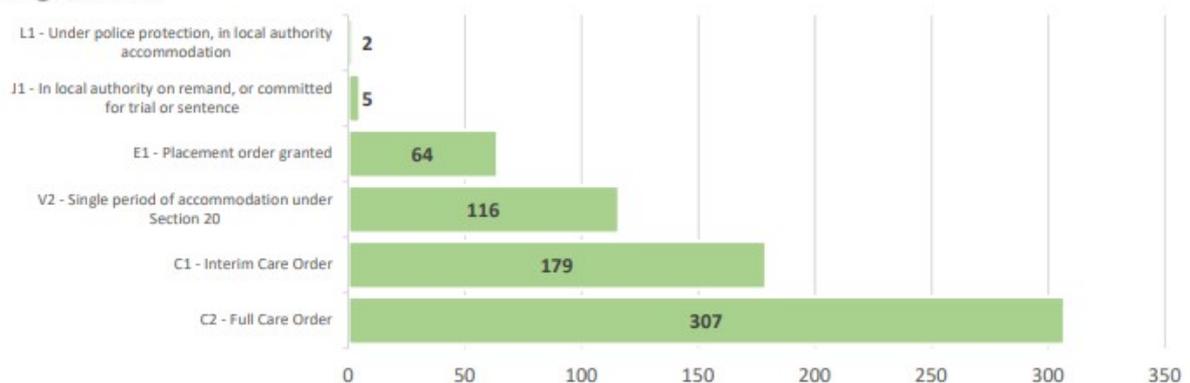
Disability



Ethnicity



Legal Status



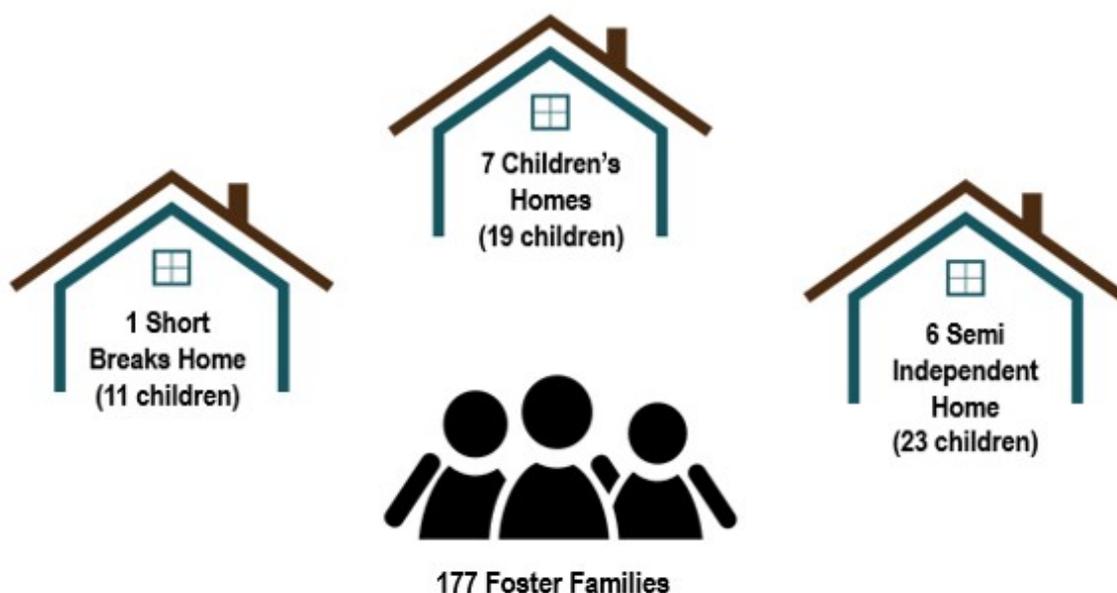
- 4.5 We know that the needs of the children we care for, are increasing in complexity. The majority of our children present with needs that are deemed typical of Children in Care; needs that can be well met within a nurturing family environment. However, for some of our children, due to their childhood experiences of neglect, abuse and trauma for example, their needs are more complex and they may require more coordinated, intensive support. Some of these children and young people display emerging mental health issues, self-harming, sexually inappropriate or challenging behaviours. Some of these children and young people are at risk of, or engaged in, child sexual and criminal exploitation. We require more providers who demonstrate expertise, skill and resilience, to provide care, intervention, treatment and stability, to enable improved outcomes for these children. We see this as a shared responsibility, and want to work collaboratively with providers to achieve this.
- 4.6 There is currently insufficient capacity to meet this demand. Most specifically within fostering placements, for older (10 years plus) and more complex children – also for specialist, secure, parent and child and emergency residential provision.



Key Sufficiency Messages

Strengths and Opportunities

- NCC's well-established, high quality internal provision;



- Seven registered children's homes, caring for up to 19 children. All Ofsted rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'
 - One short breaks unit, caring for up to 11 children. Ofsted rated 'Outstanding'
 - Six unregulated semi-independent homes, able to care for up to 23 young people
 - Established fostering service, providing long-term, short-term and respite family care for over 200 children and young people.
 - Potential for expansion across all internal placement provision
-
- Increased local placements and maximised value for money achieved through NCC's long term residential block contract, established in 2015. Potential for expansion of existing, or new, block contract arrangements.
 - Successful regional 'D2N2' Framework for children's fostering and residential placements, established in 2020. Increasing local placement options.
 - An increasing number of NCC's Children in Care living locally (5% increase over the last five years).
 - Established provider and partner relations, enabling continued market development, influence and management.
 - Effective regional and sub-regional local authority relationships, achieving; shared commissioning, collaborative market management, shared intelligence, analysis, fee review governance and quality assurance.
 - Regional collaboration opportunities for creative, radical redesign of solutions for the most complex placement requirements – e.g. DN2 STARS Pilot (Social Impact

Bond), delivering interventions from Edge of Care to Residential Step-Down, foster placement stability and reunification home, to ensure as many children as possible are able to live in a family environment.

- Assured quality and consistency in the support provision for young people placed in external semi-independent accommodation, through the implementation of an Accredited 16+ Support and Accommodation Scheme, embedding a standardised specification of support and accommodation (including registration with the Decent and Safe Homes (DASH) scheme)
- Comprehensive quality assurance processes.
- Robust contract management processes.
- Support and expansion of local Staying Put arrangements.
- Close partnership working between Health, Education and Social Care, to promote opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people.
- Extensive Edge of Care support through Targeted Support Team (TST), Multi Systemic Therapy Team (MST) and MST Child Abuse and Neglect (MST CAN) and Edge of Care Hub which are identifying and supporting families as an alternative to care.

Areas for Development

- There is a need for increased availability across placement provision, to increase choice, particularly for local complex fostering and residential provision, and for all emergency provision. This includes the need for more black and minority ethnic foster carers, to provide culturally appropriate placements for our children.
- We need more fostering placements for children aged 10 years and above.
- We need more local placement options for parent and child placements, including parent and child assessment provision.
- We need to further expand the opportunities to meet and effectively de-escalate the needs of the most complex children and young people – with a focus on areas of need associated with high-risk, such as; emerging mental health, self-harm, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, offending behaviour, remand placements.
- We need to be agile in our response to the minimum standards which are due to be implemented across unregulated provision for semi-independent living, and develop new approaches and options for the commissioning of placement provision for this cohort (16 – 18 year olds).
- We need to ensure consistency in the quality of all placement provision.
- We need to understand and manage the escalating costs of external placements.

5 Commissioning Direction

Approach

- 5.2 To ensure choice and diversity, NCC will continue to operate within a mixed economy of internal and external provision, commissioned through an appropriate range of mechanisms which are being developed to incentivise the achievement of specific outcomes wherever possible. This will include frameworks, block contracts, spot purchasing, and the use of a Social Impact Bond which brings investor financing alongside grant funding from the Life Chances Fund.
- 5.3 NCC will continue to maximise its use of internal provision. A focus over the coming years will be the development of new and innovative approaches to the recruitment of foster carers, targeted recruitment of carers to meet specific needs represented within our CiC cohort and the exploration of regional local authority fostering initiatives. We are further developing our successful residential estate with the addition of one further children's home, able to care for up to four children.
- 5.4 These commissioning approaches will be implemented as an individual Authority, and in regional and sub-regional partnerships, where we will seek to address common needs and challenges. All commissioning will be strategic and needs-led, with robust procurement and contracting functions embedded. Collaboration between partners, commissioners, the market and children and young people, will promote a market which is truly fit for purpose.
- 5.5 Placements will be made according to what placement can best meet the needs of the child or young person. To ensure this, there will be a consistent application of processes across internal and external provision. Where we are able to meet the needs of a child through an internal placement, this would always be our preferred option, as it allows us to offer fully joined up services for our children.
- 5.6 NCC's priority is to drive up quality and ensure early intervention leading to de-escalation of need and greater placement stability for better outcomes for our children and young people. We recognise that the more we achieve in terms of placement stability and improved outcomes for our children and young people, the greater our influence is on costs and value for money also – partnerships and collaboration with providers is key to achieving both aims.

Regional Collaboration

- 5.7 NCC will continue to build upon strategic relationships with regional local authorities to achieve greater regional and sub-regional collaboration and identify future areas for tactical commissioning. Work to further integrate Health, Education and Social Care through joint planning and funding will sustain shared accountability and inter-agency cooperation, drive efficiencies and prevent duplication.
- 5.8 Regional work continues to be strengthened through the East Midlands commissioning leads group, achieving shared resource, intelligence and planning for care placement commissioning. Through these established East Midlands regional forums, NCC are encouraging creative discussion around radical

approaches to meeting the placement needs of the most complex children and young people. Across the region, local authorities deploy significant resources on placements for a small number of the most complex children and young people. NCC will support the development of new approaches to better meet need and improve outcomes for this cohort.

- 5.9 To this end, a strong commissioning and operational partnership has been developed with Nottinghamshire County and Derby City colleagues, resulting in the development and implementation of a Social Impact Bond. This outcomes-based contract is operating across the three authority areas to support de-escalation from residential care, support foster placements at risk of breakdown (particularly where escalation to residential settings is likely), reunify children in care with primary carers / birth family, and provide Edge of Care services.
- 5.10 Further work is underway to strengthen and expand upon the sub-regional partnership (D2N2), exploring the potential of more joint commissioning approaches with the local market of fostering, residential and semi-independent provision, across the D2N2 area. The local market will be consulted on different approaches to commissioning and contracting, to better meet the needs of our children and young people, and to improve quality, sufficiency and value for money.

Local Placements for Local Children

- 5.11 Nottingham defines a 'local' placement as anywhere within a 20-mile radius from Nottingham City Centre. Where appropriate, the aim is for children and young people to remain living locally, taking into consideration maintaining a young person's educational, health, social and cultural connections and access to resources. Nottingham City currently has 84% of its CiC living with this 20-mile radius (against a target of 85%). This has improved by 5% over the last five years, which is an even greater achievement when compared against a national picture of an overall reduction.

% of Looked After Children Placed within 20 miles from Home							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from previous year	Change over five years
Nottingham	79%	84%	83%	82%	84%	↑ 2%	↑ 5%
Stat. Neighbours	86%	86%	85%	86%	85%	↓ 1%	↓ 1%
East Midlands	84%	84%	85%	85%	81%	↓ 4%	↓ 3%
England	86%	86%	85%	85%	84%	↓ 1%	↓ 2%

- 5.12 NCC continues to work collaboratively with the provider market and with regional local authorities to ensure that the use of local placements for local children and young people is maximised. Small scale block contracting has increased local placement capacity, whilst broader market development will improve co-ordination, provision of more specialist foster care, and advanced placement planning. Where it is not possible to secure a local placement, the remaining matching criteria for a young person will be prioritised and the local authority will evidence that it has done all that is reasonably practicable to secure a suitable placement.

6 Market Position and Sufficiency

Market Development Approach

- 6.1 To effectively shape the market, NCC will maintain a strong visible presence and consult directly with the market, articulating a clear direction for what is required internally and externally to best meet the needs of our children and young people. We believe that the market should be;
- Composed of a mix of small, medium and large organisations from the public, private, voluntary and not for profit sectors, to achieve variety, sustainability and avoid monopolies
 - Dynamic, flexible and responsive - proactively adapting to changing demand and need
 - Person-centred and outcomes-focused
 - Efficient, effective and value for money
- 6.2 The development of such a market locally / regionally requires close partnership working with neighbouring authorities to present a viable proposition to providers in the area. This collaboration will continue on a regional and sub-regional basis, with the aim of creating, developing and sustaining more specific local commissioner-provider partnerships that are better equipped to meet need and demand.

Internal Provision

- 6.3 NCC is committed to maximising the effectiveness of internal provision and securing the best possible placement for every child and young person, in an open market, with consistent application of processes and standards across internal and external provision.
- 6.4 Fostering
In January 2021, 55% of fostered young people were placed with internal foster carers. Whilst the proportion of young people placed with internal foster carers fluctuates over time, the trajectory over the last 12 months has been one of increasing or maintaining internal foster placement numbers. In 2018, 47% of fostered young people were placed with internal foster carers, demonstrating an 8% increase. NCC has pledged to continue the drive to increase the capacity of the internal fostering service over the next two years. It is anticipated that this will enable more children to be placed locally, reduce external spend and achieve improved placement management throughout a child's journey through care, ultimately leading to overall improved outcomes.
- 6.5 It is acknowledged that growing the internal fostering service will be challenging and will take time. The priority will always be finding the right family for the child, and therefore we will always need our local Independent Fostering Agencies to help us achieve this. A priority for NCC is working with these local IFAs to explore alternative commissioning approaches that enable providers to better meet demand, particularly where a bespoke arrangement may enable them to support more complex and challenging children to maintain living within a family environment.

6.6 Residential

NCC has seven registered children's homes, caring for up to 19 children. In addition, NCC has one short breaks unit, caring for up to 11 children. The homes provide high quality consistent care and are rated by Ofsted as either Good or Outstanding. Plans for one further home, able to care for up to four children, is currently in development. The strategic aim of the internal investment is to help NCC to keep its more complex young people closest to the City and the network of care and support services that can be marshalled around those individuals when their placement remains local to the authority.

6.7 Semi Independent

NCC has six unregulated semi-independent homes, able to care for up to 23 young people. These well-established provisions offer consistent, high quality, flexible accommodation and support for those young people embarking upon their journey to full independence. New approaches and options are regularly considered and a plan is being developed to implement a supported lodgings option for these young people, by the Summer of 2021.

Internal Governance

In addition to the Looked After Child planning and review process, NCC have a number of decision making forums which review the quality and appropriateness of placements, and ultimately impact upon placement demand

Edge of Care Panel

The Edge of Care Panel ensures a robust process for determining the threshold for children being accommodated. Through a menu of alternative interventions, such as Multi Systemic Therapy and wrap around support in the home, the Edge of Care Panel is able to prevent inappropriate admissions and facilitate timely rehabilitation where this meets the needs of the child.

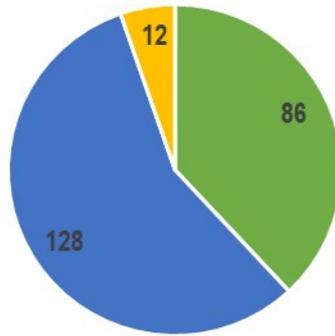
Placements Panel, Reunification Panel, Transitions Panel

These Panels meet on a weekly rotation to review placement progress, placement planning and transition plans for young people preparing for independent living. These panels also consider quality and value for money of placements, and consider requests for placement package variations. Membership spans a broad range of professions, including social care, education and CAMHS - all of whom contribute to determining whether or not each placement is meeting the child or young person's needs.

External Provision

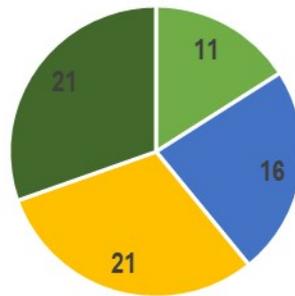
6.8 The external market meets a significant proportion of the City's CiC placement needs, through framework, block contracting and spot purchasing arrangements. Despite the intention to maximise internal provision, it is acknowledged that there is an ongoing need to commission from the external market. The Placement Service undertakes effective, consistent procurement, contract management and quality assurance of all external placements. The data below provides an overview of external placement commissioning, as a snapshot from March 2021;

External Fostering



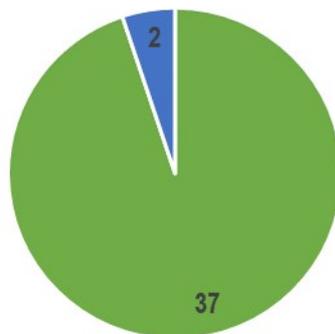
■ D2N2 Framework ■ Historic East Mids Framework ■ Spot Purchased

External Residential



■ Block Contract ■ Historic East Mids Framework
■ D2N2 Framework ■ Spot Purchased

External Semi Independent



■ Accredited Provider ■ Spot Purchase

6.9 D2N2 Children in Care Placement Framework

The East Midlands Regional Children's Framework expired in 2020. The Framework provided a formalised agreement between participating local authorities and independent providers of fostering and residential placement provision. In February 2020, this was superseded by the D2N2 Children in Care Placement Framework, following consideration of the improved benefits achievable through working on a more local footprint. The Framework has brought about benefits including; efficiencies, shared risk, buying power, market influence and information and resource sharing. An annual Market Position Statement is published by the D2N2 Framework, which should be considered alongside this Strategy.

6.10 The framework supports NCC to;

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

6.11 Residential Block Contract

As an identified commissioning priority, in April 2015, NCC implemented a long term block contract for ten residential placements with one external provider. Since implementation and following the move to full usage, the contract has demonstrated a shared approach to ensuring good outcomes, increased local provision, greater placement stability and value for money. The contract to date has supported the achievement of;

- An increased percentage of children and young people placed locally.
- A significant reduction in local authority spend on residential care (alongside improved budget management and forecasting).
- Efficiencies via reduced staff time and travel expenses (e.g. social care and quality assurance visits).
- Efficiencies via reduced need to commission out of area services (e.g. CAMHS, education).
- Greater forward planning for the local authority and provider, leading to improved outcomes and placement stability.
- Greater consistency of service delivered.
- A close and collaborative working relationship with a residential provider that now has a significant local presence

It is the intention of NCC to increase block contracting arrangements, to further achieve these benefits.

6.12 Fostering

The immediate priority will be to secure greater local sufficiency of foster placements for CiC presenting with highly complex needs, to reduce unnecessary disruptions and increase the chance of placement stability and improved outcomes for this cohort. Furthermore, the work to address sufficiency locally for this cohort has a clear aim of avoiding escalation to residential care on the basis of lack of fostering capacity rather than due to children and young people's specific needs.

Directly linked to the increased activity in recruiting foster carers is to ensure carers are well trained and supported to consistently meet the needs of the children placed in their care

6.13 Semi Independent Provision

Unlike fostering and residential provision, semi-independent provision is not regulated by Ofsted and there are very few barriers to new providers establishing themselves. This proves beneficial in terms of ensuring a diverse market which provides choice and encourages healthy competition - however it is also a risk in terms of quality and consistency of services provided.

6.14 In response to this, NCC has undertaken a programme of quality improvement work with local providers, setting new quality standards which include accreditation of properties by the East Midlands Decent and Safe Housing service which is hosted by Derby City Council. An open accreditation process allows providers to commit to NCC's specified standards and helps to ensure that young people are offered consistent quality accommodation and support in their transition to independence. It is believed that further improvement can be achieved through block contracting of this provision, to enable NCC to invest in a more direct and collaborative approach to improved quality and meeting the anticipated minimum standards.

6.15 To further expand our offer, recognising that some young people do not want to 'stay put', we are increasing choices for young people with a plan being developed to deliver a supported lodgings option with the support of host families. These developments, will produce a new family-based alternative to traditional Semi-Independent services.

6.16 Spot Purchasing

Spot purchased provision will be commissioned for services that are not available through internal provision or external regional and local contract arrangements and where there has been no previous or predicted demand. A specific contract has been developed for spot purchased placement services to ensure a robust legal position is maintained.

Contract Management

6.17 An Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) is issued for all commissioned placements and these form a contractual agreement between the local authority and the provider. The IPA provides detail on specific aspects of the placement, the expected objectives/outcomes, fees and consenting signatures from the local authority and the provider

6.18 Meetings are held with all providers of commissioned placements a minimum of once every six months and consider the following areas: contract and compliance monitoring, performance management, business development; individual placements, feedback from social care, health, education, young people, opportunities for improvement/increased value for money and negotiations on the level of support being provided.

Quality Assurance

- 6.19 Through robust commissioning and quality assurance process, NCC ensures that all CiC are accessing well matched, high quality and value for money care placements. A system for monitoring providers, which takes into consideration performance, business viability, inspection judgements, history and complexity of current placements, determines the level and frequency of quality assurance visits. The visits are undertaken by the Placement Service's Quality Assurance Officer and selected social care professionals. Placement feedback from Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and children and young people is gathered to support quality assurance processes. Clear service protocols determine the required actions to be undertaken by NCC where quality concerns are identified.
- 6.20 It is Nottingham City Council's ambition to only place with Ofsted judged 'Good' and 'Outstanding' providers. However, the demand for both fostering and residential placements locally, regionally and nationally, combined with the type and level of young people's needs that are often evident when a placement is required at short notice, mean that we do have to consider offers from providers with lesser Ofsted judgments. The current position with the private market is one that allows providers to be very selective as demand for placements is high. It is therefore natural that such providers may shy away from more challenging or complex young people as they may be seen to pose a risk to a provider's Ofsted grade. When NCC has to place a young person with a provider that has an Ofsted rating of less than 'Good' we ensure that our expectations for the service and what is required to meet the needs of the young person are very clear. When making such a placement NCC Placement Service ensures that robust quality assurance is carried out as soon as possible, and that the provider improves to a level of 'good' within a prompt timescale.

Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy – Recommendations

No	Recommendations
1.	<p>Radical Redesign and Market Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the East Midlands and D2N2 local authority partners to explore alternative commissioning approaches with the local market, to meet the placement needs of all children and young people in the geographical area, including the most complex children and young people across the East Midlands / D2N2, and to ensure choice and value for money. • Maximise opportunity through the STARS, social impact bond, to support complex and challenging children to live within a family setting. • Develop a broader understanding of placement stability across residential and foster care placements to inform requirements within the market and support the work across the region. • Deep dive into financial modelling and highest cost placements. Implementation of a systematic approach to negotiation of high cost placements – predominantly regarding residential provision
2.	<p>Fostering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of NCC foster carers including the use of targeted recruitment campaigns and specifically recruiting carers with relevant backgrounds and a strong desire to care for older and/or more complex young people (to include perspective STARS carers), and parent and child carers • Review of internal training and support offer for foster carers • Bespoke fostering packages for small cohort of complex children • Explore D2N2 collaboration options for internal fostering, shared resource, and external commissioning options • Explore commissioning options for external foster carers for older and complex children • Understand what works to enable carers to continue caring for complex children
3.	<p>Residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to manage the current residential contract to ensure children and young people are placed in local provision that is of high quality and represents value for money. Consider additional developments within the contract to meet emerging needs as required. • Development of further block contracting arrangements for children’s residential care, with a model of smaller group homes – either through existing block contract or via mini competition through D2N2 Framework • Development of internal four bed home • Commissioning of emergency resource (either NCC or D2N2)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist therapeutic and mental health provision • Local parent and child provision
4.	<p>Semi Independent Living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a block contract for semi-independent accommodation and support, to include the provision of emergency resource • Explore opportunity for sub-regional commissioning arrangement to meet any demand outside of the internal and block contracted • Consider the development of additional internal Semi Independent units • Further development and expansion of Staying Put arrangements with internal foster carers. • Implement Supported Lodgings (host families) model as a trial of this approach for specific cohorts 16 years plus as an alternative to Semi-Independent placements • Exploration of 'Gap Homes' model
5.	<p>Support children with complex health needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint work with Health partners to develop placement planning, commissioning and support for children in care with complex needs. To include physical, mental health and learning needs. To develop upon the existing Continuing Care Framework for Children in Care, alongside strengthening pathways for young people entitled to Section 117 support and for young people with health needs that fall outside of the Continuing Care Framework.



This page is intentionally left blank



Corporate Parenting Board – 17 May 2021

Adoption East Midlands: activity 2020-21

This is a report outlining activity of the Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption East Midlands, hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council, covering activity during the second year of operation, April 2020 to March 2021.

Adoption East Midlands (AEM) provides adoption services as a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) on behalf of Derby City, Derbyshire, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils.

Nottinghamshire is the host authority, with all staff being employees of Nottinghamshire, whilst keeping office bases in all four local authorities. The service delivers all adopter recruitment and approval activity, all adoption panel functions, home-finding services and adoption support.

Prospective adopters are recruited, and prepared for adoption, following the Adoption regulations and Statutory Guidance. Adoption panels recommend approval and recommend matches of children and families; these recommendations are considered by the Local Authority decision maker, and AEM supports families as required after adoption order.

The aims of the Regional Adoption Agency, as recorded in the business case, are regional adoption services which:

- provide all children with an adoptive family that meets their needs;
- ensure that those affected by adoption receive the information, support and advice that they need to understand their adoption journey;
- ensure that RAA families are well prepared, enabled and supported to care for the children with plans for adoption;
- deliver improved outcomes for children for whom adoption is the preferred plan for permanence;
- deliver the new service at no additional cost to the partner local authorities.

AEM has been home-finding (identifying adoptive families for children) for 187 children at its busiest and has matched 134 children in the first year of operation, and 153 in the second year of operation. A further 146 children became subject to Placement Orders (court order, which gives permission to place a child with an adoptive family) in the first year, to the end February 2021, 117 Placement orders were granted, 23 of those to Nottingham children. There are some delays in the granting of placement orders, due to the impact of Covid, on Court timescales.

The number of adopters approved in the first year was 82, and to end February 2021 is 86. These figures denote sufficiency to place the children who have been waiting and children newly subject to a Placement Order.

Due to not always having enough placements of the right match available, interagency placements are used. The business plan target was 20% of all placements, and placement activity to date has shown a net of approximately 23% when offset with those AEM placed into AEM families, from other local authorities outside the partnership.

AEM has a dedicated area of website which all adopters can access for current information and support. The aim of the preparation of adopters is to make strong links, such that adopters will always re-visit AEM as the first point of contact for ongoing support. There is a developing comprehensive support offer, and a growing cohesion in service delivery, such that all social workers are able to deliver support and are knowledgeable regarding potential future need. In addition, services are available for all adopters in the geography, and for those living in the geography affected by adoption.

The preparation of adopters is thorough and is always evolving. There is much information online, and preparation includes the opportunity to discuss with experienced adopters, and to make links with others who will be mutually supportive. The preparation falls in stage one of the process, with the aim of enabling prospective adopters to make informed decisions about next steps; AEM is refining the support offer in early placement, to embed thinking that support is seamless and expected. At any one-time AEM has approximately 400 households at any stage of the journey pre order.

AEM operates five adoption panels per month considering adoptive families, and matches with children, as well as plans for children who are not subject to the Court process.

AEM has close working relationships with placing authorities, and thereby works closely to deliver the placements needed, refining the recruitment strategy accordingly. Additional thought is given to preparing adopters to take siblings, and to offer early permanence placements. These placements can be made before there is a Placement Order, and mean the child is placed with the family who may adopt them at a much earlier time in their life. It may also avoid placement moves for children. In the first year there were 22 matches of siblings, and 22 early permanence placements; to end February there were a further 14 early permanence placements and another 22 sibling groups matched. Children are now having life story books for use in their preparation for adoption, and adopters are accessing additional tools such as virtual reality experiences, to truly understand children's lived experience.

Virtual support groups have been offered to those in the early stages of adoption, to offer the opportunity to develop peer networks.

Since AEM went live some children have been matched rapidly - the shortest wait was 13 days from Placement Order - others have waited longer but are being placed, the outcome of permanency is achieved. Those that wait longer are older children, siblings, and mixed heritage children. Families are more likely to express a preference for girls than boys, and the national recruitment campaign will focus on boys and siblings as part of the forward plan for recruitment activity.

There have been a high number of foster carer adoptions, which means continuity for these children. For those children moving family's introductions have been creative, building virtual contact, and using technology during introductions. In our experience, foster carers have been committed to moving children on, and teams have overcome any obstacles, due to vulnerability. Technology has been welcomed and used for keeping in touch. We are beginning to see some challenges, around the impact of Covid lockdowns on small children, who have lacked the usual socialising opportunities, and introductions need more time.

At the end of the first year of operation AEM had an underspend which was transferred to the AEM ring-fenced reserve in accordance with the Inter-Authority agreement. During 2020-21 a proportion of this was returned to each partner. There is again an underspend which will be re distributed. Finance partners from each local Authority meet on a monthly basis.

In this period world events have also highlighted the need for learning and reflection about diversity. AEM fully supports the calls for greater understanding and plans to participate in learning and development to ensure continual development of its anti-racist stance. AEM has begun a working group, representative of all areas of the service, to meet to improve services for adoptive families, from first contact throughout the adoption journey. AEM has an action plan of priority areas to focus on, including recruiting and supporting a diverse range of adopters to meet the needs of children who statistically wait the longest for adoptive families, and services to support transracial placements.

Nottingham

Of the 287 children matched to date 61 were Nottingham children with the number in home-finding ranging from 19 to 39, and 48 children becoming subject to a Placement Order over the time period.

Nottingham has placed children who have been waiting substantial periods of time, the shortest time, from placement order to match was 13 days, the longest 892 days.

Seven sibling groups have been matched.

Around five Nottingham children a year are placed in early permanence placements-foster to adopt.

In this second year there has been a reduction in Best Interest decisions (that a plan of adoption should be pursued) for children from 37 to 22, to the end of February, however Placement orders have remained steady. The number of children matched has risen slightly from 29 to 32 to end February. Adoption orders have remained at approx. 25 each year.

This means the total number of children needing adoption placements has fallen. Children placed have been from less than one-year-old, up to thirteen years old.

The number of families supported by the service after adoption order for Nottingham is approximately 100.

Adoption Support

AEM has supported approximately 600 families after adoption order across the region. This includes a mixture of facilitating adoption support fund applications and therapies, direct work with families, attendance at support groups, children's events, link workers for children, and attachment groups, plus services for adults requesting birth information.

The Adoption Support Fund and COVID-19

On 10th April 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) issued a press release advising that there would be emergency COVID funds (up to £8 million) made available from the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) to meet the needs of adoptive and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) families arising from the Coronavirus outbreak. On 16th April, local authorities and RAAs were allocated a share of the fund to be used to pay for activities not ordinarily accessible by the fund, such as virtual peer to peer support, memberships and subscriptions, on-line therapy, given the social distancing measures that had been introduced and acknowledging the impact on already vulnerable families.

On 16th April, AEM received notification of allocated funds of £324,232 and by 21st April had made the first successful applications ensuring that support could be provided as soon as possible to vulnerable families across the region.

Packages of support were commissioned with the intention of reaching as many families as possible to meet the identified needs of families during these challenging times:

- Annual membership for all Special Guardians (across four regional local authorities) to Grandparents Plus peer support package. In addition, a number (20) of bespoke 1:1 packages for the most vulnerable were also commissioned;
- Annual membership for adopters (pre and post order) to the National Association of Therapeutic Parents. Package includes corporate membership for AEM and professional memberships. 500 memberships purchased;
- Adoption UK – specialist support groups for prospective adopters and post order adopters;
- Adoption UK – Peer to peer mentoring scheme packages (pre and post order) – 50 packages including six sessions per package;
- Adoption Plus – a package of support enabling the delivery of on-line Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) and sensory therapy to referred families. 90 consultation hours were utilised for 15 families;
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) – immediate access for referred families to a number of consultations with specialist practitioners which could be accessed out of hours. In addition, a number of packages of TCI support for families in crisis were also commissioned (these have been used successfully to reduce the risk of family breakdown);
- A number of E-Courses from Adoption Academy for referred families aimed at building resilience in adoptive parents and reducing stress;

- 50 x PCAP (Parent & Child Attachment through Play) interventions which are being used with families who have had children placed either just before lockdown or since (up until the end of December) given the challenges recognised for families of not having an available support network around them (personal and professional) and who will feel overwhelmed and alone during this time.

All packages of support have received excellent feedback to date from families with many saying that without the immediately accessible support, they fear that resilience would have been extremely low and there would be the increased risk of adoptions breaking down.

Positive feedback has been received from many families about support being offered virtually. Common themes are that it is more accessible and that it has encouraged both parents to attend (particularly male carers who traditionally are not as ready to engage in therapy and support).

It has allowed AEM to review their support offer and make progress in working towards their goal of making adoption support more explicit from the start of an adopter's journey (rather than the focus being post order), and available to all not just a few.

Adoption Support requests remain very busy; it is noticeable that for families already accessing a support service from the team, the level of need that they are facing has increased in the current climate with many feelings as though they are experiencing a level of 'crisis'. This has resulted in a significant amount of increased pressure on the social workers in the team who are largely providing a virtual support service focused on containing families during this difficult time.

Whilst some of the group and family services / events traditionally offered by the service have been temporarily suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the further development of our universal offer and pathway to provision has continued and is now being rolled out.

Shelagh Mitchell

Group Manager

Adoption East Midlands

Shelagh.mitchell@adoptioneastmidlands.nottsc.gov.uk

April 2021

This page is intentionally left blank



National Association of

Virtual School Heads

Looking after learning

Virtual School Peer Review in Nottingham City.

Slide 34
Feedback session –

Lead Peer: Paula Sumner - AD Leicestershire

VSH: Helen Moxon –VSH Derbyshire

VSH: Sally Kelly – VSH Bromley

Diagnostic Manager: Alan Clifton - former VSH

The Process

- Outline brief from Notts City
- Application of NAVSH national business process for peer challenge in Virtual Schools (builds on LGA methodology, includes triangulation of findings)
- Receive and undertake background reading/document review/data review
- Agreed a timetable
- One and a half days interviews on line, during which we talked with over 50 people, including leaders, managers, partners, practitioners and Councillors.
- Prepare and deliver a presentation, drawing on over 80 identified strengths and areas for consideration
- Written report (within 15 working days)

NOTE

- This was not an inspection – our aim is to provide you with information to support your continuous improvement
- We can only report on what we read and heard
- In addition to the pre review reading we only spent two days in direct contact with colleagues in Notts City along with partner agencies.
- This is a snapshot at a moment in time
- We are sure that much of what we report will be familiar to you.

Scope

You asked us to consider:

- How effective is the Virtual School structure? Do the roles and responsibilities of staff enable the team to meet statutory duties to monitor, track, report and support the education of children in care?
- The Virtual School has recently implemented the ePEP. What are the potential benefits for children in Care and partners? Will the ePEP support effective, efficient and quality PEP completion for the authority's children in care?
- The Virtual School intends to change its arrangements for the distribution and monitoring of PPP; will the new arrangements enable the Virtual School to ensure its children in care are receiving funding timely and appropriately. Will effective systems be in place to enable the Virtual School to monitor the effective use of PPP to improve attainment, progress and emotional wellbeing for its children in care.
- Are the Virtual Schools current arrangements for tracking, monitoring and supporting children who have been excluded, are without a school place or are on part-time tables effective in ensuring these children are accessing appropriate and quality education, with minimal delay and drift?

What you told us continued

We all try to keep children at the same school. We want them to be as stable as possible.

It is more beneficial to have a direct team (VS) to work with for social workers and foster carers. We know who to go to

Page 38

The Virtual School team has provided excellent support during lock down.....in fact it has been easier to get their involvement.

The PPP attached to the ePEP will hopefully drive performance

Jasmin is an inspirational leader!

The VS are very determined ..a bit like rottweilers some times

What you told us

The VS are fab

The whole Virtual School team are strong advocates for our children

Feel really supported by the Virtual School team – previously only supported during a crisis.

For children of school age in alternative provision we are setting them up to fail if we expect a smooth transition to an FE College

The unlock project is raising aspirations at KS4. I hope it can be sustained

Over-arching Observations

- There is evidence of strong and effective leadership from the VSH.
- There is a clear aspirational vision and analytical use of data.
- The Governing Body, Chaired by the Leader of the Council, with the membership including significant partners, sends a strong message on the importance of Corporate Parenting.
- The provision for UASC through NEST is strong and a strength within the local authority
- At an appropriate time look to further strengthen your published training programme with high profile conferences and multi –agency involvement. Social Care and VS as joint presenters
- Developing partnership between early years team and virtual school

How effective is the Virtual School structure?

Strengths

- Well resourced dedicated team who are well motivated.
- There are established specialisms within the team
- Partners spoke enthusiastically about the members of the team they worked most closely with. This included schools, FE providers and internally with social care.
- The line management of the VSH is unusual – it works and the VSH has strong working relationships with senior leaders across CYPS. However, working directly to an AD (education or social care) with monthly meetings with both might be helpful to formalise the strong informal working relationships.

How effective is the Virtual School structure?

Areas for Consideration

- The VS is mainly funded through DSG and this funding source may be difficult to sustain into the future. Are there contingency plans?
- Revisit involvement of the VS team based on data. When do you get directly involved in case work including those placed out of authority? How do you respond when lobbied by schools or social care colleagues?
- Ensuring staff in EY and Post 16 are enabled to meet statutory duties (transitions)
- Can more be done for the most able in your cohorts?
- Might it be helpful to create a SENCO from within current resources to help align with EHCPs and to develop links with SEND services (in and out of area)

Will the ePEP support effective, efficient and quality PEP completion for the authority's children in care?

Strengths

- The VS has absolutely made the correct decision in moving from a paper based PEP to an electronic system.
- Partners highlighted the quality of the design of the ePEP (will assist with analytics)
- The multi –agency training programme around the introduction of the ePEP has assisted with a successful transition.
- Partners universally commented that the ‘new’ system was better.

Will the ePEP support effective, efficient and quality PEP completion for the authority's children in care?

Areas for Consideration

- Early Years and Post 16 PEP arrangements could be strengthened and completed termly and should be prioritised to move the ePEP system
- The term Pathway PEP can be confusing. Our understanding is they are still separate documents in Notts City.
- Emphasise to partners that a PEP is statutory for all children in care from as soon as they start provision in the early years to post 16 until the age of 18. It is good practice to maintain planning for those in year 13 until the end of their examination year.
- Social Work teams and FE providers both indicated that PEP reports could only be generated termly on the new system. This meant it was difficult to identify outstanding PEPs, and ones that are scheduled. This may be a key to improving compliance.
- Consider the development of a QA Framework: e.g. multi agency team dip sampling of quality from aged 2 to 18. (VS, IRO, DT SW)
- Consider and confirm in guidance who will chair a PEP as there appears an inconsistency in approach, encourage all to complete preparation work for the PEP in advance

Are effective systems be in place to enable the Virtual School to monitor the effective use of PPP to improve attainment, progress and emotional wellbeing for its children in care.

Strengths

- The VS has a published policy that is shared with all partners. The new policy was developed in consultation with schools
- The policy provides helpful advice on good practice that may be effective in supporting children in your care.
- Schools are aware of the allocation of £500 per term and the process for receiving additional funding. (not allocated to independent schools)
- The VS has a generous and pragmatic view to supporting those awaiting a school place, whether this is within or outside of the local authority. Funding is provided for educational provision so a child is not disadvantaged due to delays in securing provision. (within authority delays are considered in line with, but separate to, the IYFA policy)
- Further strengthening VS representation when placement decisions are made by the local authority, so with the exception of emergency placements, education and social care are considered at the same time. This applies equally when a child has a EHCP.
- Key services are commissioned including EP time and tuition.

Are effective systems be in place to enable the Virtual School to monitor the effective use of PPP to improve attainment, progress and emotional wellbeing for its children in care.

Areas for Consideration

- The recording of the impact of PPP on the ePEP is less accessible than was previously the case with the paper model. We are aware this will be remedied this April which enable for better strategic planning of spending
- At an appropriate time it is worth considering how the VS and local authority might celebrate the best practice in the use of PPP. It could take the format of an 'award's evening' or part of 'Big it up' It may be in the format of a report to the GB and Corporate Parenting Board. Encouraging entries to national awards is also worthy of consideration.
- Early years PEPs should be in line with all other looked-after children as soon as a child is in provision. As with other age groups look to link the EY PEP to accountability and the distribution of funding.
- Thinking strategically about the spend of EYFS funding – eg providing specialist speech and language services.
- Consider how Post-16 learners are supported

Current arrangements for tracking, monitoring and supporting children who have been excluded, are without a school place or are on part-time tables.

Strengths

- A number of services have been commissioned by the VS to support the educational progress of children in care who are out of school or who are awaiting a school place namely: Westbury; Intensive Support; Teaching Personnel and Children in Care Regulated Services

The move to welfare call, their data suite and analytics summary provides the opportunity going forward for more detailed tracking and reporting.

- The Intensive support team have a flexible approach to working outside of Notts City an example was provided of work in Derbyshire.
- In comparison to other virtual schools the commissioned services worked with Notts City VS were described as being more involved in knowing the young people.

Current arrangements for tracking, monitoring and supporting children who have been excluded, are without a school place or are on part-time tables.

Areas for consideration

- When tuition has been provided, acknowledging the cost implications, it may be helpful to maintain contact for a short period when a young person is attending school once again.
- In liaison with the care leavers social care team more might be done with transitions. Is there VS contribution to the Notts City 18-25 plan to support young people into ETE
- Review and clarify arrangements for children placed out of county and ensure they receive equitable services
- Look to develop a **consistent** approach to analyse and use the data to track those children who are excluded/out of area/without a school place – linked to attainment and progress. (Derbyshire)

Key Recommendations

- Ensure arrangement for post 16 young people and Early Years in your care are as strong as all other cohorts.
- Ensure there is a balance between compliance and quality of PEPs as you move through this transition period.
- With the planned reduction in DSG support for the Virtual School team in future years – Explore the most effective ways to maintain staffing levels for the benefit of children in your care.

What happens next

- There is now a chance to reflect on our conclusions
- We will produce a draft report for the authority to comment on within 3 weeks
- The final version will be agreed and issued
- The council needs to provide feedback to people who contributed to the review

Thank you

This page is intentionally left blank

Corporate Parenting Board – 17 May 2021

Care Leavers Annual Report 2020/21

Director: Helen Watson - Interim Director, Children's Integrated Services

Report authors and contact details:

Alison Wakefield – Service Manager, Children in Care and Leaving Care Service,
Alison.wakefield@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Colin Brooks – Team Manager, Leaving Care Service
Colin.brooks@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):

This report outlines the work undertaken and progress made by the Leaving Care Service since the Ofsted Inspection in Oct/Nov 2018.

It is the Annual Report on the Service, to update the Board on services provided to young people transitioning from care into adulthood.

Recommendations:

- 1 That the Board continues to support and understand the duties required of the Leaving Care Service.
- 2 To approve the proposals for service redesign of the Leaving Care Service.

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Nottingham City Council has a duty to provide services to those young people defined as Care Leavers under the Statutory Guidance; The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations; Volume 3, Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers, The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

1.2 Research and practice shows that young people who have been in care will have the best chance to succeed as adults if those providing transitional care and support take the following principles into account:

- Is this good enough for my child?
- Provide a second chance if things do not go as expected.
- Is the support package tailored to a young person's individual needs?

These are the principles that Nottingham City Council's Leaving Care Service uses to underpin the service they deliver to our Care Leavers. The service ensures that each young person has a Pathway Plan that outlines the support to be provided which is tailored to meet their individual needs and is reviewed regularly to ensure their transition into adulthood is successful.

1.3 The Leaving Care Service provides a range of services to young people defined under the Leaving Care Act as 'Qualifying', 'Eligible', 'Relevant' or 'Former Relevant', the

definitions for which are set out within statute and relate to the amount of time that a young person has spent in care and their age at the point they left care.

1.4 Nottingham City Council has a duty to provide and sustain young people defined as Care Leavers with suitable accommodation. The Act defines suitable accommodation as the following:

- That which is reasonably practical and suitable for the young person concerning their needs.
- That which the responsible Authority finds satisfactory concerning the character and suitability of the landlord/provider.
- Accommodation that complies with Health and Safety legislation.
- That which takes into account young people's views, training, education and employment needs.

1.5 As the majority of young people approach their 18th birthday, they will be working towards gaining their own tenancy. The Leaving Care Service works closely with Care Leavers to support them to identify suitable accommodation. There is a robust housing protocol in place, which enables Care Leavers to be a priority for housing, with the aim being to ensure our young people are provided with good, safe, quality accommodation. In addition, in specific cases, a direct offer of accommodation is made by NCH to a Care Leaver, rather than the typical bidding process for accommodation. That said there are challenges in identifying accommodation for some young people, particularly those with support needs. This is in part a reflection of the wider challenges of demand versus capacity for social housing. We have seen that due to Covid it has taken longer to identify tenancies for young people, as the availability of one bedroom flats has become stretched; this is because current tenants are not moving, and due to delays in repairs to properties as Covid restrictions limit others being able to enter properties to carry these repairs out in preparation for the young person signing for a tenancy.

1.6 Personal Advisors work closely with NCH Housing Patch managers to ensure young people are provided with the necessary support to sustain their own tenancies. NCH will share information if young people are struggling and there may be a risk to their tenancies. NCH provides support to young people regarding finances and is well accessed by young people. Where young people are facing particular difficulties the Leaving Care service will meet with other agencies to try to identify plans to address these.

1.7 As of 28th April 2021, there are 25 young people 'Staying Put' post 18 years of age in their former foster placements. In 2019/2020 there were a total of 102 young people who remained with their foster carers. Out of 67 Asylum Seekers (former UASC) within the Leaving Care Service, there are 21 Asylum Seekers awaiting the decision from the Home Office whom Nottingham City Council support with finances and accommodation. We currently support 31 asylum seeking young people in total, although 10 of these now have status and are awaiting their benefits claim.

1.8 For a young person in care where it is considered that their needs post 18 will require support from Adult services there is a Transitions process implemented through a Transitions Panel. The allocated children's worker will be attending the Transitions panel to discuss their case; and if it is felt the young person is likely to, or may require post 18 support, the allocated children's worker will be requested to make the referral to Adults for transition support. Once a referral has been received by Adults, they will then screen this and if appropriate will work alongside the allocated children's social worker up to 18. They

will be assessing eligibility for care and support under Adults and housing may be part of that.

1.9 During Covid we have worked closely with the Mental Health Foundation, developing wellbeing packs that are both digital and physical. The foundation also provided 30 phones with unlimited data to ensure that the most vulnerable were able to access this support. The funding for this is finishing in May 2021. There will then be an evaluation and we are hopeful that this service will continue to support those care leavers who may struggle with isolation, but not meet the criteria for Mental Health services in Adults.

1.10 Over the past twelve months, we have seen significant challenges in relation to Covid. We have been creative to ensure that at times when face to face visits were deemed too high risk we have used text messages, phone calls and WhatsApp to keep in contact with the young people we work with. Many of our young people have enjoyed this form of communication and fed this back to us in a participation survey in September 2020.

We asked care leavers *“How well do you feel listened to by the Leaving Care Service 0-10 (10 being always by everyone)”*, 30/35 young people answered 7-10, 14 of these responses being a 10. One young person signed *“Happy”*, one young person did not answer. *“My PA (Personal Advisor) listens when I need him to. He responds ASAP to messages”*

“My PA is always there for me – even when I am shouting and stressed”

When asked *“What do you think about the service from Leaving Care since COVID?”* comments emphasised the range of support that has continued to be offered, and the creativity of Personal Advisors in responding to need. This question shows the importance of us keeping in contact and of consistent supportive relationships.

Feedback emphasised how important it is for young adults to feel listened to, both by those that are working directly with them, and the Council as a whole, as Corporate Parent. We are developing the participation offer for young adults to be able to feedback and contribute to shaping the future of the service.

Since the summer of 2020 care leavers have been included in the returns to the DFE in relation to the department’s contact with young people. This has ensured robust oversight of those who are not engaging and managers have reassured themselves that all efforts are being made to have some form of contact with the young person.

1.11 Current performance with regards to Care Leavers and suitable accommodation stands at 94.7% (Q4 2020/2021). For 2019/2020 our figures were 89.7%. One of the issues affecting this performance is that young people in custody are not counted as being in suitable accommodation. We currently have 18 young people in custody which accounts for the majority of the 5.3% not in suitable accommodation.

1.12 All young people eligible for a Pathway Plan are allocated a Personal Advisor (PA). Within Nottingham City Council these are not qualified Social Workers, they are workers who have the necessary skills, passion and expertise to work with Care Leavers. This includes providing information and support in relation to finances, housing, health, education, training and employment. 92% of Pathway Plans have been completed within timescales, i.e. the last six months. They are the key professionals for co-ordinating Care Leaver support.

1.13 New Statutory guidance determines that local authorities now retain a role as Corporate Parent to care leavers up to the age of 25 years (previously Care Leavers would have a PA up until 21 years of age unless in Higher Education). Young people are now able to continue to receive support when they reach age 21, or to request PA support at any point after age

21 up to age 25, even if they had previously indicated they did not want support. During the year 2020/21 there were 188 contacts from young people aged 21-25 asking for support, this does not include those who remain open due to being at university or any Asylum seekers that we are supporting as these remain allocated to a PA.

1.14 In addition, new statutory guidance requires local authorities to consult on and publish a Local Offer for its care leavers. The Local Offer was initially published in November 2018 and provides information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local authority, including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support. The Local Offer sets out what support all local authority departments will provide (not just Children's Services). We are currently reviewing the Local Offer, looking at increasing the offer to include access to an Aspiration Champion and work experience within the city council.

When asked what they thought, care leavers commented that they had benefited widely from the Local Offer, including Council Tax exemption, YEI, Staying Put, Setting Up Home allowances, priority access to housing and University support. Several specifically mentioned that they appreciated the support of their PA. *"I think it's [the Local Offer] brilliant, really good; I actually searched online to find out more about the Local Offer"*

1.15 The number of young people engaged in education, employment and training (EET) is crucial in ensuring young people succeed in transitioning successfully into adulthood. The Leaving Care Service employs an Employability and Training Support Coordinator who works alongside other Personal Advisors, EET Providers, voluntary organisations, Futures and internal Departments to ensure young people are engaging with education, training or employment. For Q4 2020/2021 our figures for those engaged in EET was 68.4%. Our performance in this area has improved year on year since 2017/18 when performance was at 57.3%.

1.16 The Leaving Care Service have launched an in-house employability programme that supports Nottingham's most disengaged and vulnerable care leavers to make positive steps towards training and employment. The programme is recognised by the DWP as a genuine, progressive job seeking provision for care leavers. The programme provides bespoke opportunities that aim to build a young person's confidence and give them the support that they need to develop the good habits and skills that are essential to sustaining mainstream training or employment. Each bespoke programme gives young people the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience under the guidance of a mentor, provided by an ever increasing network of community partners and internal Nottingham City Council services.

1.17 In addition, the Leaving Care Service has become a registered centre for the delivery of ASDAN courses and all young people have the opportunity to achieve employability qualifications (from entry level to level 2).

1.18 Due to Covid, the annual Achievement Awards had to be cancelled in 2020. We are hopeful that this will be able to go ahead in 2021. The event taking place at the Council House, celebrates the successes of our care leavers. Young people will continue to receive recognition for their achievements across 6 categories; Education, Employment, Apprenticeships, Employability, Contribution to Service Improvement and Outstanding Achievement. In addition to receiving awards for their hard work, young people and their guests enjoy celebrating their success with a 3 course meal and live entertainment by local artists who give up their time to perform for free. The event is usually sponsored by a number of our key partners who provide support and opportunities for our care leavers to enter and progress in EET.

1.19 The Ofsted Inspection in October 2018 identified that the quality of the Leaving Care service has improved since the previous (pilot) inspection. The inspection report comments that:

An increasingly experienced team of personal advisers provides dedicated support to care leavers and uses a range of creative efforts to keep in touch with those vulnerable young people who are harder to engage. A responsive duty service ensures that young people's well-being and wider needs are swiftly addressed. This provides opportunities to develop more trusting relationships with care leavers, and, in turn, to engage them more fully and improve their circumstances.

Specialist workers in the Leaving Care team provide additional capacity and support to personal advisers in order to reduce risks for care leavers and better meet their needs. Good use is made of the 'Shared Lives' scheme to provide extra help to vulnerable care leavers who stay with their former foster carers. This provides continuity of care and stability. The dedicated children in care police officer successfully supports restorative justice interventions, and there have been impressive reductions in offending rates over the last two years.

1.20 The transition from Children in Care to Leaving Care remains one of the most significant challenges for our young people and our service. We have in the past twelve months focused a great deal of effort to address some of the clear issues that present during this time. Our work with Barnardos and the Mental Health Foundation is hoping to assist with appropriate accommodation for those who are struggling but do not meet the criteria for Adult Social Care, those who are struggling with their mental health and loneliness, alongside developing Aspiration Champions for both Children in Care and Care Leavers.

1.21 The Transitions panel has recently been set up to take place monthly, this will look at those young people aged 16.5 to 18, to ensure that we are planning and putting in place all appropriate services at the earliest opportunity to assist with this transition.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 The Board have a corporate duty to understand and promote the services that Nottingham City Council has to undertake legally, to promote the outcomes and opportunities of its Care Leavers.

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 An EIA is not required because the report does not contain financial proposals or 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 The Children Act, 1989; Guidance and Regulations, Volume 3, Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

9.2 The Children (Leaving Care) Act, 2000.

9.3 Children and Young Persons Act, 2008.

9.4 The Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Corporate Parenting Board 17th May 2021

2020/21 Q4 Performance Report Children in Care/Leaving Care

Purpose of report

To provide key performance information for Children in Care and Care Leavers for Q4 period 01.01.2021 to 31.03.2021.

Recommendations:

- 1 That the Board note the contents of the report

Statutory Visits-Target 95%

Whilst the Q4 performance saw a slight dip this quarter to an average 83.3%, the year-end performance is 87%, an improvement on the 2019-20 outturn of 85%. Since March 2020 we have continued to see strong performance in visiting and this is borne out by the data we have been required to report to the DfE due to the Pandemic. We report on children and young people being seen within the preceding 4 weeks and 91% of Children in Care open to Fieldwork services in April had been seen within the previous 4 weeks. For children and young people open to the Children in Care service, they have permanency plans in care and therefore their visiting frequency may be up to 12-weeklies. The reasons for some children not being seen are provided below:

- Those in custody where face to face visits are not agreed by the secure establishment and virtual contact is not in line with statutory frequency.
- Self-isolation due to Covid has impacted on some visits not taking place in timescales.
- Children and young people who are placed in stable long term foster placements have visits agreed at 12 weekly levels.

We are maintaining face to face visits unless it is not appropriate to do so; some are replaced with virtual visits with agreement from Service Managers and guidance has been issued regarding visits. Visits to Care leavers are undertaken at 8 weekly frequencies and as at the report to the DfE in April 69% of young people had been seen at that frequency with detailed scrutiny of those not being seen.

Health and Dental performance

Health Assessments-the expected target is 90% and Q4 performance is slightly below this at 87.3%. We have been working with Health colleagues to address delays identified in Initial Health assessments being requested. There are no issues about young people receiving medical attention when it has been required.

Dental checks-the expected target is 90% and we have seen a month on month deterioration in the measure which currently stands at 49%. Dentists being shut during the Pandemic has impacted on routine appointments, however as restrictions have started to reduce we expect to see an improvement in this measure. We know that children have not been prevented from accessing treatment when required. This deterioration was expected and raised nationally. There is a working group including health and social care colleagues to address this locally.

Pathway Plan

% Pathway Plans, authorised in the last 6months- the target for this measure is 95% and Q4 performance has seen overall improvement:

- **CIC is 86% an increase from 82% at Q3**
- **Care leavers is 92% an increase from 87% at Q3.**

Pathway Plans are key to supporting children in care and care leavers prepare for independence when appropriate to do so. It is an assessment of their needs, identifies any risks and any actions required to support their next steps. We are working on improving the template used to produce the Pathway Plan to make it more user friendly, having had feedback from young people.

For those young people at university, in secure institutions or not engaging with frequent visits, it is proving to remain challenging and colleagues remain tenacious in working with young people to complete or update their Pathway Plans.

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

PEP compliance

- The PEP reporting for the Spring Term will be completed around the 9th May, so social workers and school staff have until the end of April to finalise their PEPs. However, we have looked at the interim figures and although we remain below a target of 95%, currently the compliance rate is **at 80.1%** (a significant improvement from last term which was 58%), so around 87 children have not had a Spring Term PEP completed/finalised yet. We expect that the % of compliant PEPs will increase slightly once the final report is available next week.
- At the last Board I mentioned that some Virtual School Heads were signing off ePEPs without all of the attainment and assessment data being available, however our Virtual School Head is not prepared to do this because the data is fundamental to the plan. All schools are required to carry out termly assessments for their pupils, which is even more important this term to ascertain the learning loss as a result of lockdown- there should therefore be no reason why schools cannot provide this information on the PEP. The Virtual Head was not aware of any virtual schools in the region signing off PEPs without the full information but was going to check with the group.
- The virtual school have been subject of a Peer review, a full presentation has already been provided to today's Board in terms of key strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations.

Placement Stability

% of Children in Care who have had three or more placements in the previous 12 months has remained static over the last quarter at 9% and we know that the Pandemic and a lack of placement choice has had an impact. A shortage of placement availability can limit choice in matching children to the most suitable placements. Whilst the Q4 has seen a further improvement the overall performance remains at 9%. We have continued to offer support to foster carers both virtually and face to face to support stability. Movements for children in care are picked up by the Independent Reviewing Officer during statutory reviews.

% Children in Care who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years-Our performance for Q4 is at 65.3% an increase from Q3 when this was at 62.2%. However, we

are below our last year outturn which was 69%. Our target for this measure is 70%. Some positive reasons for moves:

- Moving children to adoptive placements contributes to this measure but should be considered as a positive move.
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children can sometimes move from residential accommodation to semi-independence quicker once an assessment is undertaken of their needs and will also contribute to this measure.
- Some Young people may ask to move on to semi-independence as they approach leaving care stage rather than moving straight into independence. This is considered to be a good move in line with young people's needs and wishes.

Type of placement

70% of our children in care are in foster care the remainder are in:

- Residential=13.4%
- Independent living= 6%
- Semi-independent living= 1.7%
- Other category including Health placements, placed for adoption, secure accommodation or with parents=8.4%

The ratio of fostered children homed with internal: external foster carers is at 53.6%:46.4%, this is good because our target is 50:50 and Q4 has seen a further small improvement.

The ratio of children and young people in residential internal: external is 21.7%:78.3%

Fostered children that are in Long term fostering placements

The Department for Education target is for 40 to 60% of children fostered to be in long term fostering placements and our performance in Q4 was at 26.2% this has remained static. A robust tracking process has been put in place setting timescales for all children and young people who have been in placement and are to remain long term fostered. The impact of this work is that children in care have a greater sense of security that they are remaining with their foster carers long term.

We have streamlined some of our processes to secure the permanence arrangement of long term fostering for those children and young people for whom it is planned they remain with their carers long term. The Head of Service and the Service Manager are tracking progress on this work.

Children in Care numbers

The average number of children in care during Q4 was 676 and as at the end of Q4 was at 684, this is at a rate of 99 per 10,000. Our Statistical Neighbour Group with whom we compare are at 98 per 10,000. If Nottingham had the Statistical Neighbour Group average rate then we would have 677 children in care. The target we have set is 88 per 10,000. We have robust processes in place to agree entry into care. The increase in cost of placements has impacted on the overall cost of children in care.

We have 2 programmes to support step downs from residential care to foster care, external foster care to internal foster care and also to support re-unification back to parents and wider families with robust packages of support and these are through the STARS project and a new Re-unification programme.

Discharges

During Q4 8 children have been adopted or discharged through Special Guardianship Orders and therefore are no longer children in care. We know there have been delays in discharges through adoption, Special Guardianship and also revocation of Care orders when children are placed with parents and the local authority apply to discharge the care order.

We are still driving discharges through Special Guardianships which allows children to have more “normal” life experiences with wider family and friends rather than being involved in statutory social work services and the interventions in their families by social workers.

Children in Care Reviews

95.9% of Children in Care statutory reviews took place in timescale during Q4, and the target is 97%. This target was previously at 95% and was raised to be more aspirational and the service are determined to continue this improvement. The outturn for 2019-2021 was 89.9% and the Year to date performance is 95% which is an improvement.

% of reviews where the child (excluding under 4's) participated in their review is at 89.9% with Year end at 91.7%. The Strategic Lead for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding has identified an area for improvement in first reviews both with their timeliness and participation by children and will be a focus to support booking of these meetings in a timelier manner and issues such as language and use of interpreters and of where meetings take place. All of this to improve the participation of young people in their reviews.

Quality of practice

At the Q3 Performance update, the Board asked for some information about the quality of practice. During the period June 2020 to March 2021, 83 cases open to Children's Social Care were randomly selected and audited. **22 out of the 83 cases** audited were Children in Care, during Q4 there were 6. Due to the small numbers each quarter, my commentary is for those audited during 2020-21.

The overall judgement was:

Good/Outstanding= 45.5% equates to 10 of the 22 cases

Requires Improvement= 50% equates to 11 of the 22 cases

Inadequate= 4.5% equates to 1 of the 22 cases

Themes for improvement were in keeping children's chronologies up dated and meaningful and updating children's assessments annually. The greatest challenge for both of these areas has been capacity due to high caseloads and the fact children have 6 monthly reports completed for statutory reviews when the social worker will update the child's circumstances. However, the added benefit of updating an assessment is that the colleague is able to analyse information to consider whether the plan remains appropriate and to assess the birth family circumstances have changed. We have over the last year and a half agreed our Practice Standards and all social workers are clear regarding the expectations and we are working with them to improve on this measure. The case judged inadequate was because the outcome for the child was considered inadequate. Having said all of this the Chronologies and Assessments were both judged to be Good or Outstanding in 36.4 and 31.8% respectively and therefore indicates it is not a systemic issue.

For the Leaving Care Service **3 audits** were undertaken between June 2020 and March 2021 of which:

- 1 was judged overall to be Good or Outstanding and

- 2 were judged to Require Improvement.

Sharing learning is agreed by the Service Manager in areas where good or outstanding practice has been noted and for those areas that require improvement actions are agreed with updates being provided by the managers to ensure they are addressed. This update is then shared with the Head of Service thereby closing the loop on audits.

During Q4, we have had 3 more social workers on the higher range of caseloads 19-22 than at Q3 and this a challenge as it has an impact on practice. Newly qualified social workers are on protected cases and we had a vacancy at the end of Q3 which has since been filled which is good.

The service has no Children in Care unallocated. Many children are placed at long distance and therefore it can be a challenge ensuring face to face statutory visits are taking place especially with the added complication of working under Covid restrictions.

Positively the teams offer student placements and this brings in additional capacity to undertake specific tasks on social work cases. In September 2021, we will be running a Frontline hub, one of three in the City, which employs a colleague as a Consultant Social Worker to oversee fast track training of 4 social work students with a view to them being offered permanent roles when they qualify within the directorate. This will be the second cohort; the first cohort will yield 11 qualified social workers in September 2021.

Suitable accommodation/Sufficiency

We are working with Barnardo's to create a Supported lodgings scheme/Gap homes model for supported accommodation for those children in care and care leavers who are not able to sustain a tenancy.

Barnardo's are working with the Government initiative "Place to Call Home" to recruit specific carers/ Hosts for Supported Lodgings for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children and young people also. We have a Panel set for June 2021 to approve identified hosts for the Supported Lodgings scheme which will allow us to formulate a needs led pathway for Care Leavers.

Gap Homes' has been costed out and we are scoping out the feasibility of providing supported accommodation to young people 16 to 18 with the option for those young people who require further support to remain until assessed as ready to sustain their tenancy.

Competition and Marketing Authority (CMA) has launched a national market study into children's social care provision and Nottingham City are engaging in this. The study will examine the lack of availability and increasing costs in children's social care provision, including children's homes and fostering. The study will actively seek views from a range of providers and other stakeholders, including private providers and local authorities.

Care Leavers

Suitability of accommodation and employment, education and training (EET) status are key issues in the lives of care leavers.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation (age 19-21yrs) has gone up from 90% to 94.7% in Q4 which is positive, the target is 90%. Those young people in custody cannot be considered to be in suitable accommodation according to the definition we work to.

We have resolved the housing for one care leaver after 8 months, the Personal advisor working closely with the young person and the local housing providers to secure this.

The percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training (age 19-21years) has risen from 63.8% at Q3 to 68.4% against a target of 60%. We are implementing an Aspirations Champion Scheme to continue to support children and young people with their aspirations as well as scoping out with Barnardo's the implementation of the ASDAN Scheme which will provide certification of skills required for independence. Acknowledging the issues young people face in terms of loneliness and isolation we are also working with Barnardo's to implement a volunteer Befriender scheme to support young people in their transition.

Fostering Service

A dashboard has been set up on our data management system to monitor compliance regarding checks, visits, training for foster carers which is good. Unfortunately, the Dashboard hit a glitch following a Liquid Logic update which has now been rectified. We know some of the data needs cleansing which is underway which will allow a more accurate reflection of performance. The Service has a robust Improvement Plan in place and compliance in respect of Minimum Standards is the priority area we are working on. Recruitment has been maintained throughout the Lockdown periods and we continue to see an increase in Internal Foster carers.

Residential

Children's Residential have continued to deliver services to children throughout the pandemic, on occasions colleagues moving in to live in the home to ensure safe caring. They remain rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding which is excellent. As the Pandemic eases Ofsted will resume Inspections, and we have maintained virtually our required Regulation 44 inspections on all of our Homes.

Recommendations

- 1 Social Care will continue to monitor performance regarding dental checks to ensure this improves as Pandemic restrictions reduce, and to address any barriers**
- 2 Head of Service to work with the Virtual school to ensure any changes to the PEP for non-statutory school age children are strengthened in line with the Peer Review recommendations.**
- 3 Head of Service and Service Manager will continue to drive the work on increasing number of children in long term fostering arrangements.**
- 4 Head of Service and Service Manager to ensure actions identified from audit activity is embedded to improve practice**

Report authors

Tajinder Madahar, Head of Service Children's Duty and Targeted Services, Children in Care and Leaving Care

Sharon Clarke, Head of Service Regulated Services

Helen Watson, Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services

4.5.2021

This page is intentionally left blank

Q4 Performance Report Children in Care/Leaving Care
Corporate Parenting Board
17th May 2021

Tajinder Madahar Head of Service
Sharon Clarke Head of Service Children in Care (Regulated
Services)

Statutory visits-Target 100%

- Year end performance is improved from 2019-20
- Face to face visits maintained unless reason not to, Nottingham's performance is strong

Health and Dental-Target 90%

- 87.3% of children have an up to date health assessment and 49% of children have an up to date dental check.
- Routine appointments impacted by Pandemic-local and national challenge and drive to improve this

Pathway plan-Target 95%

- Children in Care at 82%
- Care leavers at 87%
- Improved reporting and the template is being improved with feedback from young people and practitioners

Personal Education Plans

- 80.1% excellent improvement since last report (58%)
- Consider recommendations of Peer review to further strengthen performance for early years and post 16yrs PEPs

Placement Stability

81% of children have had less than three placements in the previous 12 months and we are at the expected target, offering stability for children and young people

62.2% of children have lived in same placement for at least 2 years, below target, some move on to adoptive placements, some young people move from residential to semi-independence as a transition to independence which is positive

Challenge supporting carers during Covid when they don't always want face to face contact

Type of placement

Our target for numbers of children in internal fostering to external is 50:50 and we have continued to see an increase which is excellent

Although we have 13.4% of our young people in residential care a higher proportion are in external than internal and we are working to increase our residential provision

Fostered to Long term fostering (permanency)

DfE target is to have 40-60% children in care permanently in long term foster placements and our performance has remained at around 26.2%

Robust process and tracker set up to drive this

Children in Care numbers-Target 88 per 10,000

At Q4 we had 684 children in care at 99 per 10,000

Statistical Neighbour Group is at 97% per 10,000

Focus on our review of placements

Discharges

- Court delays can impact on discharges especially when seeking to revoke Care orders following successful reunifications under Placement with Parent regulations
- Q4 achieved 8 discharges through Adoptions and Special Guardianship orders

Children in Care Reviews-Target 97%

- Q4 performance is at 95% which is strong
- Improving performance for children participating in reviews

Quality of Practice

- June 2020 to March 2021 83 cases audited, 22 of these were children in care:
 - 45.5% Good or Outstanding
 - 50% Requires improvement
 - 4.5% (1 case) Inadequate

Areas to improve include updating of Chronologies, Update Assessments although evidence of Good and Outstanding in both categories which is good

- Some case loads are higher than we want them to be which has impact on quality of practice

Suitability of accommodation

- Placement sufficiency report presented to Board today-options for Supported lodgings/Gap homes model
- Engagement with the Competition and Marketing Authority re a market study-Nottingham participating

Care Leavers

- Further improvement 94.7% Care leavers in suitable accommodation, custody is not accepted as suitable. Prioritising with Barnardo's and Mental Health Foundation to assist with suitable accommodation when criteria for Adult services is not met
- Further improvement Percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training 68.4% from Q3 63.8% . Care Leavers Annual report outlines steps taken to improve this measure including ASDAN which supports young people develop skills for learning, work and life!
- **Fostering**
- Dashboard –Improvement plan and check on compliance in respect of minimum standards

Residential

- All Children's Residential are judged by Ofsted to be Good or Outstanding

Next Steps

1. Social Care will continue to monitor performance regarding dental checks to ensure this improves as Pandemic restrictions reduce, and to address any barriers-**impact dental needs identified and met early**
2. Head of Service to work with the Virtual school to ensure any changes to the PEP for non-statutory school age children are strengthened in line with the Peer Review recommendations-**impact parity for all children in care in having educational needs identified and clear plans to meet them**
3. Head of Service and Service Manager to drive the work on increasing number of children in long term fostering arrangements-**impact more children and young people feel secure in their foster placements**
4. Head of Service and Service Manager to ensure actions identified from audit activity is embedded to improve practice-**impact that learning and good practice is shared to achieve good outcomes**

Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2021 - 2022

Report (Corresponding Strategic Priority Statement)	Report Lead	Corporate Parenting Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2021/22 Q1 Performance ▪ Children in Care Council (Verbal Update) ▪ Securing Permanence for CiC – long-term fostering, Adoption / Special Guardianships, reunification. ▪ Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tajinder Madahar? ▪ Jon Rea ▪ Tajinder Madahar / Sharon Clarke ▪ Tajinder Madahar 	19 July 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback from Themed Discussion with CiC Council – Homes and Housing ▪ 2021/22 - Q2 Performance ▪ Reducing Offending Behaviour ▪ Fostering Service Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jon Rea / Lead Board Members ▪ Tajinder Madahar? ▪ Sam Flint / Natalie Pink ▪ Audrey Taylor 	20 September 2021
<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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback from Themed Discussion with CiC Council – Health ▪ Health of Children in Care ▪ CAMH Services for Children in Care ▪ 2021/22 – Q3 Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jon Rea / Lead Board Members ▪ Kathryn Higgins / Katharine Browne ▪ Sharon Clarke / Matthew Jenkins ▪ Tajinder Madahar 	17 January 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	21 March 2022

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, at: <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 reviewer:

- Sophie Russell

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

- Helen Watson

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.