

## Audit Committee – 26 June 2020

<b>Title of paper:</b>	Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People	<b>Wards affected:</b> All
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<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		
<b>1</b>	Audit Committee note and comment on the progress made with the IICSA Action Plan.	

### 1 Reasons for recommendations

1.1 This report provides an update following the previous item at Audit Committee in September 2019.

### 2 Background

- 2.1 The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) was established as a statutory inquiry on 12 March 2015 to consider the growing evidence of historical institutional failures to protect children from child sexual abuse, and to make recommendations to ensure the best possible protection for children in future.
- 2.2 The inquiry launched 13 investigations into a broad range of institutions identified on the basis of the Panel's criteria for selection of investigations.
- 2.3 In November 2015, Justice Goddard (the then chair of the Inquiry) announced that the independent investigation into child sexual exploitation would look into the historical failure to protect children in the care of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Councils.
- 2.4 A significant number of allegations (including physical and sexual abuse) of non-recent abuse in children's homes previously operated by Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City councils and other organisations, were made, dating back to the 1940's. In response to this, Operation Equinox was launched by the Police which was an overarching umbrella for a variety of operations including Operation Daybreak and Operation Xeres. This Operation has since been disbanded.
- 2.6 A number of civil claims have been made against both the County and City Councils.

### Scope of the Inquiry – The Nottinghamshire Context

2.7 The scope of the Inquiry was set as follows:

- Institutional responses to disclosures of allegations of sexual abuse in relation to Beechwood since 1967 to the present and the barriers to disclosure of such allegations.

- A case study into the institutional responses to disclosure of allegations of child sexual abuse in foster care and the barriers to disclosure of such allegations.
- A case study into the institutional responses to disclosures of allegations of sexual abuse carried out by children against other children in the care of the Councils, and the barriers to disclosure of such allegations.

### **The Public Hearing**

2.8 The Public Hearing ran from 01–26 October (with a one week break).

### **Publication of Findings**

2.9 On 31 July 2019, IICSA published its findings into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children in the care of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils from sexual abuse.

2.10 There were two recommendations for the City Council:

- Nottingham City Council should assess the potential risk posted by current and former foster carers directly provided by the council in relation to the sexual abuse of children. They should also ensure that current and former foster carers provided by external agencies are assessed by those agencies. Any concerns which arise should be referred to the appropriate body or process, including the Disclosure and Barring Service, the local authority designated officer (LADO) or equivalent, the fostering panel and the police.
- Nottingham City Council and its child protection partners should commission an independent, external evaluation of their practice concerning harmful sexual behaviour, including responses, prevention, assessment, intervention and workforce development. An action plan should be set up to ensure that any recommendations are responded to in a timely manner and progress should be reported to City's Safeguarding Children Partnership.

2.11 As part of the wider cross-cutting learning from the 14 strands of the Inquiry, they will return to a number of issues that have emerged during this investigation, including but not limited to:

- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- The barriers to disclosure of sexual abuse by children, including those in care, and proactive steps to reduce those barriers.
- The approach to civil litigation, including the role of insurers.

2.12 The full report can be found [here](#).

2.13 The Council was required to publish its response within six months of the publication of the report and this was done November 2019.

## **3 Background papers other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

3.1 Appendix A detailing progress against the action plan.

**4 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

4.1 Children in the Care of Nottinghamshire Councils: Investigation Report July 2019