



Report to Audit Committee Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

26 June 2020

Progress since our last update (September 2019)

An action plan was developed in response to the findings of the report. This was shared with the Inquiry, Victims/Survivors and partners.

Action 1: *To continue to work with victims and survivors to ensure that they have access to the right support both to services provided by the Council and to those not provided by the Council.*

- Nottingham City Council developed a leaflet detailing all services available to survivors. A copy of this can be found [here](#).
- The Corporate Director regularly attends the Survivor Support Group.
- Survivors can access our services through our 'front door' within either Adults or Children's Services. Our staff are then able to signpost them to appropriate services e.g. Benefits and Housing Advice, or support them to access more specialist advice through Health and other partners.
- Discussions have been held at Safeguarding Partnership and our Strategic Safeguarding Lead meets with survivors on behalf of the partnership.
- Our Adults Safeguarding Board have dedicated actions around support to survivors within their action plan.
- The Council has escalated support needs to the CCG to ensure that survivors have access to adequate support (e.g. personalised budgets). The CCG are currently working with 9 individuals.

Action 2: *Access to records for those formerly in care has not been well handled.*

- We have employed a dedicated Information Officer within the Information Compliance Team who is available to help support individuals with the process if requested.
- A letter is sent to historical abuse victims/survivors, introducing our Information Officer as a named contact and offering support with the process.
- If there are no records available for an individual, the Information Officer would work with the individual to try and locate their records elsewhere (usually with another Local Authority).
- Feedback from victims and survivors has highlighted that they find the process helpful and more accessible. It helps for them to have a named point of contact.

Action 3: *To complement our wider strategic work with survivors and their representatives, we will continue to offer to meet with individual victims and survivors (accompanied by their representatives if required) to offer an apology in person and in writing.*

Improvements have been made to the way that non-recent abuse claims are handled following the Inquiry including:

- A written apology letter is offered on settlement of every claim with the offer of a face to face meeting.

- A more empathetic handling of abuse claims, acknowledging that the handling of these cases demands a different approach to a standard public liability claim
- Closer working relationship built with the County Council to improve joint working on claims which span both periods of cover i.e. claims jointly managed by City and County (Information Sharing Agreement to be introduced)
- Regular claim review meetings with County and our legal provider

A system has been set up to ensure that the Corporate Director receives monthly updates on civil claims (new claims received and claims settled) which will ensure no apologies are overlooked.

Action 4: *To consider with safeguarding partners the outcome of the needs assessment being undertaken by Lime Culture and use their conclusions to inform future commissioning of services to support victims of violence and sexual abuse.*

- The Needs Assessment for Sexual Violence and Abuse Survivors in Nottinghamshire was published in October 2019.
- The *Support for Nottinghamshire Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Task and Finish Group* have proposed that Sexual Violence and Abuse commissioning be mainstreamed into existing Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse governance structures.
- The recommendations from the Lime Culture Sexual Violence Needs Assessment have been reviewed and are being managed and implemented by the joint *Support for Nottinghamshire Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Task and Finish Group*.
- The *Sexual Violence Action Network (SVAN)* have drafted an action plan on how they will contribute and implement the needs assessment recommendations.
- Nottingham Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has been successful in its application for the NHSE High Volume Fund as a result of IICSA. The funding has been allocated to provide additional specialist support for victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

Action 5: *In partnership with Police and Crime Commissioners Office and Nottinghamshire County Council colleagues, Nottingham City Council will implement the outcome of the evaluation of the jointly funded Support for Survivors Service.*

- The City Council, County Council, CCG and OPCC have confirmed their joint funding of the Support for Survivors Service and for the sexual violence hub as recommended in the needs assessment.
- The *Support for Nottinghamshire Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Task and Finish Group* will re commission the sexual violence support services for the City and County.

Action 6: *Using the risk-based methodology developed to review the HR cases, NCC will assess the risks posed by current and former foster carers, including those from independent fostering agencies.*

- In partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council, we have written to all agencies who we have placed a child with (since 2013) and those on the East Midlands Commissioning Framework. A seminar was held to provide further detail. This work was scheduled to be completed by April 2020 however as a consequence of the impact of Covid 19 the timescale for completion has been put back to the end of July 2020.
- Internally, more robust measures have been developed. The Head of Service now reads and provides comment on all Schedule 6 notifications that relate to harm to a child.
- We are currently in the process of sourcing external assurance around this work.

Action 7a: *Nottingham City Council and our Safeguarding Partnership will commission an independent external evaluation of our practice using the Harmful Sexual Behaviour*

- This evaluation was launched at a partnership event by the NSPCC in November 2019.
- Individual agencies responded to the review requirements. These were considered by the NSPCC who were due to facilitate a feedback event in Nottingham on March 30th 2020. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 this meeting could not proceed.
- Arrangements are being finalised for a video conference on 23rd June to discuss findings and agree how best to disseminate learning and recommendations to the safeguarding partnership.

Follow up actions:

7b - NCC and our Safeguarding Partnership will consider the recommendations and practice improvements required from the evaluation of practice against the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework.

7c - Commence implementation of the recommendations of the above review and report back to the Safeguarding Partnership.

Action 8a: *To ensure that the scale of sexual abuse of children in care by individuals in a position of trust or any peer that they were placed with, is understood by senior managers and elected members, we will provide a quarterly update on any such allegations to the Safeguarding Partnership.*

- This return includes any children abused in care by people within a position of trust or their peers. The return forms part of the performance framework, which goes to the Safeguarding Business Management Group and then the Safeguarding Partnership.

Subsequent action: to set a protocol at regional LADO network and send a letter nationally (As there is a risk that our children are considered by other LA LADO's)

- We have written to the National LADO Network recommending that when an allegation of "sexual abuse of children in care by individuals in a position of trust or any peer" is made that the LADO in the area where the allegation is made also notifies the LADO for the Local Authority who hold responsibility for that child, this applies to both victim and perpetrator.

Action 8b: We will also introduce a sub section within the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report that separately identifies allegations of sexual abuse of children in care by individuals in a position of trust or any peer that they were placed with.

- The IRO annual report is being written and will be complete by June 19 2020.

Action 9: *Ensure that learning from all relevant sources, including complaints, and regulatory and inspection activity is regularly reviewed to continually improve our services.*

- Our Children's Integrated Service has recently refreshed its quality assurance framework. The new framework contains specific measures relating to reports of concern regarding foster carers and significant information notifications relating to children's homes. This information is shared with senior managers and the Portfolio Holder, and is led by our Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement. The quality assurance framework is complemented by other sources of learning, including the Complaints Service Annual Report and Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report. These reports are presented to the Corporate Parenting Board, as is the Annual Children in Care survey, which enables young people to contribute their views about the care that they receive. Learning is shared in a variety of ways, including the departmental learning and development programme, for example:
 - Every Colleague Matters training was held in February 2020 ('learning from reviews' and 'learning from IICSA' session).

- Our Head of Children in Care has worked with survivors to develop training for foster carers, specifically drawing on learning from the Inquiry.

NEW - Action 10: *Review the approach to responding to allegations of historical abuse (and in particular the role of the LADO).*

- A meeting took place with Nottinghamshire County Council in March to review chapters in our procedures which relate to non-recent abuse. They are now being revised to ensure that our LADO processes are consistent.

Next Steps

- We continue to closely monitor our Action Plan and have a monthly Governance Group to review progress.
- We continue to work in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police to actively support the ongoing criminal investigations, help to identify perpetrators and whenever possible, bring them to justice. We also work in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council to progress Civil Claims and with Nottinghamshire CCG to help victims access the support they need.
- The safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the care of the City is and always will be our highest priority.

Catherine Underwood
Corporate Director for People