



# Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2021 – 2023

## Valuing the Future of Our Children in Care and Care Leavers

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Safer, cleaner, ambitious  
**Nottingham**  
A city we're all proud of



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

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# Our Leadership Team



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## Welcome to Our Plan

In Nottingham we recognise children are ordinarily best cared for within their birth family and we have developed a range of services to help where families are struggling. Some children cannot be cared for in their birth families or wider network, and come into the care of the local authority. For this group of children and young people we have a responsibility, as corporate parents, to provide care and to work with partner agencies to best meet their needs and prepare them for their future.

As corporate parents, we are responsible for ensuring children who come into our care experience safe and positive parenting, are helped to achieve their full potential and pursue their aspirations.

In order for our children to achieve the best possible outcomes, it is essential that all agencies involved in caring and supporting them must work together effectively. This requires a strategy that clearly states areas that require improvement or attention (i.e. our strategic priorities) and what actions will be taken to address these. Ensuring that children in care and care leavers are happy, cared for and properly supported is one of the most important things that we do at Nottingham City Council.

This strategy is based on areas where we have made promises to children in care (CIC) and care leavers (CL), and have been developed in partnership with our young people. The strategic priorities identified within this strategy have also been aligned to Children's Integrated Services directorate priorities and to statutory guidance. Working together in this way will help us to ensure that our children and young people, and those who care for them, get the right help at the right time. In order to do this, we have condensed our strategic priorities set out below into seven areas of promise for our children and care leavers.

Our vision is for a city where every child and young person can enjoy their childhood in a warm and supporting environment, free from poverty and safe from harm; a city where every child grows up to achieve their full potential.

We want to ensure that all of our children in care and care leavers have the right home and support to keep them safe and well. We strive to help them grow into happy, healthy, successful and fulfilled young adults who are optimistic about their future. We recognise that it is essential we help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by Nottingham City Council and our partners.



Helen Blackman  
Director, Children's Integrated Services



Clive Chambers  
Head of Children in Care



Councillor Cheryl Barnard

Catherine Underwood

## What Is Corporate Parenting?

In Nottingham City we support the view set out in Department for Education regarding Corporate Parenting principles, which states

The role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers (relevant and former relevant children). In this context local authorities are often referred to as being the 'corporate parent' of these children and young people, and the critical question that local authorities should ask in adopting such an approach is: 'would this be good enough for my child?'.



We believe that children in care have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe - as other children. We also recognise that there are unique challenges that looked-after children and care leavers face. We are committed to ensuring that Corporate Parenting principles are embedded in the wider work of the City Council so we work collectively to address these challenges.

It is our role as Corporate Parents to advocate on behalf of children in care and care leavers, and to empower them to make their own decisions in preparation for adulthood. We want all of our children in care and care leavers to achieve their full potential and obtain the best possible outcomes, the same outcomes that we would expect for our own children

Nottingham City Council has over 600 children in its care at any one time for whom we are the corporate parent. Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, chairs the Corporate Parenting Board that provides oversight and challenge in relation to all matters involving children in Nottingham City Council's care. The Corporate Parenting Board is held six times each civic year and is attended by elected members, relevant internal colleagues

and contributors from external agencies. The Corporate Parenting Board is informed annually by the Have Your Say survey, which is distributed to all children in care and care leavers for feedback on how they think Children's Services are performing. Target areas for deeper analysis and action are identified through the survey, which shapes the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Board over the following year.

The guidance from the DfE identifies seven principles which should underpin the role of the Corporate Parent

- **to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people**
- **to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings**
- **to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people**
- **to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners**
- **to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people**
- **for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and**
- **to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.**

It is important to set the Corporate Parenting principles in the context of our wider priorities for the work we do with children and families.

## Our Priorities

### **1. Ensure the right children get the right support at the right time**

We want to ensure issues are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity. Our response will be proportionate and solution-focused.

### **2. Create a responsive and flexible system**

We want to ensure that children and their families experience a system that does not stop and start but is simple and streamlined.

### **3. Help families help themselves**

We want to build resilience in families, not dependence.

### **4. Work in partnership with children and their families**

We will listen to the views of children and their families. To address challenges we will work to build on a family's strengths.

### **5. Focus resources on what will make a positive difference**

We will work more smartly, ensuring our resources (workforce and finance) efficiently deliver a measurable improvement.

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## To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

### Have Your Say Survey 2018- 2019

Each year, we circulate the Have Your Say Survey to all of our children in care and care leavers. Launched in 2011, responses to the survey help us gauge how well we are performing against our priorities for Children in Care and Care Leavers Charter. The survey can be returned by the social worker or completed online. There is also an 'easy read' version available to all of our children, to allow all of them to complete the survey.

### Survey Feedback

Although each year the survey helps us focus on the key issues for children in care and care leavers there are some issues which are regularly highlighted as being important:

- Ensuring young people know about advocacy and complaints services so that we can be confident they have the support to make their voice heard.
- Ensuring that young people have the right place to live as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring that we do all we can to prevent changes in a young person's life unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well. We know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can be a difficult experience for children and young people.
- Ensuring we provide all the help our children and young people need, to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood.

Based on the 18/19 results, three specific areas have been identified for further focus through Children in Care Council meetings:

- Changing the culture of care, so that it provides more familial and loving living environments, language and all-round support for children and young people in care. Spreading the responsibility for being corporate parents to more agencies and partners, so that everyone plays their part in helping our CiC and Care Leavers do well in life.
- Improving opportunities for CiC and Care Leavers to prepare for independent living and successful adulthood, through greater support and access to services that help improve their life skills, academic attainment and experiences of work; and develop their social confidence, positive friendships and supportive networks.
- Older CiC and Care Leavers supporting the Have Your Say survey as peer interviewers to encourage more CiC and CL to share their views, experiences and ideas for change. More opportunities for care experienced young people to be involved in training of social workers and foster carers, and participate in recruitment processes for Children's Social Care staff.

Nottingham City is currently also using Mind Of My Own, an app designed to help further capture the child's voice in a digital forum.

### Looked After Reviews

In May 2020 the percentage of children in care who had contributed to their review stood at 90.5%. Children participated in their review process through a number of forums either by attending the meeting, completing the contribution paper or for some having contact either by phone, email or a home visit with the IRO before their review is held. During this period face to face contact was restricted due to the impact of Covid 19 so increased use of contact via virtual meetings was introduced. Feedback from children in care suggests that some young people preferred this method of engagement.

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

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

## **To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people**

Each year young people receive a letter with the new Have Your Say Survey, titled You Said, We Did. This evidences how the wider service has taken the concerns of participants into account to inform service delivery, at an operational level and within the departmental and corporate leadership teams at Nottingham City Council. The areas that the You Said, We Did document will cover for 19/20 have been identified by the CIC Council and will focus on the following:

- Changing the culture of care, so that it provides more familial and loving living environments, language and all-round support for children and young people in care. Spreading the responsibility for being corporate parents to more agencies and partners, so that everyone plays their part in helping our CIC and Care Leavers do well in life.
- Improving opportunities for CIC and Care Leavers to prepare for independent living and successful adulthood, through greater support and access to services that help improve their life skills, academic attainment and experiences of work; and develop their social confidence, positive friendships and supportive networks.
- Older CIC and Care Leavers supporting the Have Your Say survey as peer interviewers to encourage more CIC and CL to share their views, experiences and ideas for change. More opportunities for care experienced young people to be involved in training of social workers and foster carers, and participate in recruitment processes for Children's Social Care staff.

Children in care and care leavers are regularly involved with interview panels for senior management vacancies, training for social workers and the fostering panel for Nottingham City regularly use children's questions formulated with the CIC Council.

## To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people

We believe that aspiration is really important for children in care and care leavers. We know that many of these young people will achieve great things and make a fantastic contribution to society. That said some young people will have had life experiences that make it difficult for them to recognise their potential and we have put in place a series of measures to help young people and their carers with this.

Each year we have two events that celebrate the achievements of children in care and a further event that celebrates the achievements of care leavers. These events are called “Big it up” and really positive experiences for all of those who are involved.

To complement ‘Big it Up’ our Virtual School have engaged us with a national organisation who deliver a project call Unlock. This is led by someone who was in care themselves and connects children in care and puts young people in contact with national leaders from a range of industries. Young people then go on to speak to local people about the support they may be able to offer with their aspirations. The final element of the process involves young people delivering a presentation about their experience to a group including carers, social workers and teaching staff.

### **The impact of the Virtual School**

Nottingham City Virtual School is a statutory service that supports and monitors the education of children in care and previously looked-after children. Our mission is to champion the educational needs of these children, helping them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Virtual School provides advice and support to professionals working with Nottingham City children in care and children who reside in the Nottingham local authority area who have previously been looked-after. We work closely with teachers, school governors, social workers, independent reviewing officers (IROs), parents and carers.

The service monitors the educational provision, attendance, progress and attainment for all Nottingham City looked-after children, irrespective of where they are placed. The Virtual School aims to: promote achievement, raise attainment and ensure equality of opportunity to enhance the life chances of all looked-after children. We play a strategic role in ensuring the corporate parenting responsibilities of the local authority are met, with regard to the education of children in care.

2019 saw a significant decline in the number of children achieving expected educational levels at Key stage 2. This decrease was seen to be across all academic areas of achievement. The virtual school will be looking to capture the journey/progress of children through the system starting at Key stage 1 this should address this issue for future cohorts . The head of the virtual school is currently in the process of exploring the contextual information for each child in this cohort in order to develop strategies to address this gap for these children in order to support them in their educational attainment moving forward.



As of July 2020, 53.9% of care leavers (aged 17 to 21 years) are in employment, education or training; this was slightly below our local target of 55% but in line with the most up to date comparative data from other authorities.

### **Further and Higher Education.**

We have worked with local providers to develop support for children in care who may want to attend university and/or college:

We understand that sometimes it is hard for our young people to enrol at college so Nottingham College offers them the chance to enrol at a different time if they want to. Nottingham College will also provide the following:

- Access to an Achievement Coach, wellbeing support and health advice.
- Support through the college and your personal advisor to support your attendance.
- A named person to support in you to get an appropriate work placement or work experience.
- Support to visit the colleges if you just want to find out more.

For young people who want to go to university:

- We provide a Higher Education (HE) bursary of at least £2,000 and we will help to consider how this is best spent.
- We provide somewhere for young people to stay during University holidays (or funding for this if they prefer to make their own arrangements in the holidays). This is for 21 weeks of non-term time rent.

Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham University offer the following through their Growing Lives Programme:

- Campus visits and/or additional welcome activities.
- Bursary for financial support of £500.
- Dedicated support officer to help you while you are at University.

- A guaranteed offer of University-allocated accommodation for those who accept a place at Nottingham Trent University as their first choice.

Further information about this support is available in our Care Leavers Local Offer, This was developed with and for Care Leavers during 2018. The Care Leavers Local Offer can be found here: [www.asklion.co.uk/careleavers](http://www.asklion.co.uk/careleavers)

## **Jobs**

If a young person feels ready to find a job we will support them by:

- Making sure they have access to the Leaving Care Service employability programme to make positive steps towards training and employment. The programme is recognised by the DWP as a genuine job seeking provision for care leavers. The programme provides opportunities that aim to build confidence so that young people feel able to move onto training or employment. They are involved in all aspects of planning your programme which could involve a mentor.
- Offering delivery of ASDAN courses where young people will have the opportunity to achieve employability qualifications (from entry level to level 2).

## **Work Experience**

Sometimes if a young person is not quite sure what they want to do work experience can help them make a decision. Our care leavers thought this would be a good idea so we have worked with education providers in the city to help give them a range of work experience opportunities. For example, the Work Inspiration scheme at Nottingham Trent University runs throughout the year and provides opportunities across a wide range of work experiences. In addition, Nottingham College will, where possible, seek work placement or experience opportunities for care leavers not enrolled at the college. The DWP also offer work experience and we are continually looking to expand the range of opportunities we are able to offer. out more about work experience.

## **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are a really good way of getting into work. In Nottingham there are lots of opportunities for apprenticeships with Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes as well as other businesses. Nottingham City Council know that these are hard to get so will make sure that young people and their Personal Advisors are told about any apprenticeship opportunities within the City Council at the same time as going to our recruitment agency. Young people will also be offered support. This would include regular review meetings with apprentice managers and PA's; and where needed, access to the additional support e.g. Maths / English



support, resilience coaching and mentoring sessions.

We will also provide additional support by:

- Making sure that any apprenticeship assessments or interviews are at a place that is right for the young person.
- Helping with transport costs to attend interviews for training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews.
- Preparation for interviews and where appropriate financial support to purchase suitable interview clothing.

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## To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

### Local Data

84%% of all our care leavers are in suitable accommodation as of July 2020. 94%% of applicable care leavers have a Pathway Plan that has been completed in the 6 months preceding this date

The number of 18 year old care leavers staying put with a former foster carer in June 2020 was 19.

### Care Leavers Local Offer

In 2017, the government announced the implementation of the 'Keep on Caring' policy document. This policy stipulates that Local Authorities must offer Leaving Care Services to care leavers up to age 25, rather than age 21.

We worked with a range of people and services to develop our local offer, most importantly children and young people themselves to develop our local offer. This is now published on Ask Lion. WE have compared our Local Offer with those of other similar authorities and have started work to refresh this.



## To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people

Nottingham City Council and Nottingham City CCG jointly fund a dedicated CAMHS Service for children in care. This is comprised of social workers as well as staff from other disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry and other health disciplines. The team works in a range of different ways including offering consultation support for the network that supports children in care, direct therapeutic support for some children in care, support groups for foster carers and training.

Care Leavers have been identified as one of priority groups for the Nottingham City Integrated Care Partnership, which is joint City Council/Health led body that coordinates strategic development work across local services. One of the priorities we have just begun to work on is to revise the process for transitions for young people from CAMHS to adult mental health services.

In Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City a CIC multi-agency Service Improvement Forum coordinates activity to improve the health outcomes of children and young people from entering to leaving care. The forum consists of representatives from the clinical commissioning groups, both local authorities, health providers and commissioners of services and an action plan supports the outcomes being achieved. The forum acknowledges that to meet the health needs of children in care and care leavers a partnership approach is required.

In May 2020, our performance headlines in relation to health were as follows:

- 85% of children in care have had a health assessment recorded in the last 12 months.
- 78% of children in care have had a dental check recorded in the last 12 months.
- 83% of children in care have had a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) recorded in the last 12 months.



For children and young people to experience good physical, emotional and mental health and well-being we will:

- Ensure timely referrals are made for statutory health assessments including those young people who are close to leaving care
- Ensure any health recommendations identified within the statutory health assessment are actioned and monitored as part of the looked after review process
- Ensure the health needs of those children and young people placed out of area are met equally to those remaining in Nottingham City
- Ensure that those young people leaving care receive their health history and know where to access their own health information in the future

- Ensure those young people leaving care receive support around meeting their own emotional and physical health needs into adulthood.
- Undertake a strategic health needs assessment for looked after children and care leavers, and use the assessment to inform the design and delivery of services.

## **For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work**

All of our young people in care have an allocated social worker who will work with a range of services to keep them safe. These services will depend on the needs of the child or young person but could include the Police or Youth Justice Service. If children go missing they will be offered return interviews by someone independent of their placement, so we can try to understand what is causing this behaviour.

The Youth Justice Service work closely with young people who have, or are at risk of getting into trouble as a consequence of criminal behaviour. The YJS (and its partners) work hard to prevent offending and re-offending behaviour. It has been effective in its efforts to do this through its use of Restorative Justice (RJ).

Restorative Justice is used to help young people who commit crime to make amends in an effort to repair the damage done and find a positive way forward. Research shows that restorative practice delivers better outcomes for young people across schools, care, community and the Criminal Justice System. The YJS has now been awarded the Restorative Justice Council's Restorative Service Quality Mark (RSQM), which recognises professionalism and high standards in RJ practice.

In Nottingham City we have Children in Care Police Officer who is jointly employed by the City Council and Nottinghamshire Police. She works closely with staff across the directorate to reduce the number of children in care who become involved with the criminal justice system. This work is supported by a joint Reducing Offending Behaviour protocol between the City Council, Police and Crown Prosecution Service that sets out what actions will be taken when a young person in ca,

## Permanence

We understand that when children come into care it is really important that we make decisions about the long term plan for them as soon as possible. Where possible we will work with their immediate and extended family to support them to return home. This may be supported by one of our specialist services such as Multi-Systemic Therapy, Targeted Family Support Team or by organising a Family Network Meeting, which brings family members together to develop their own plan.

If a child cannot return home then we will try to find a family who can care for them throughout their childhood. For those who are young enough we will pursue adoption as the best outcome for them. In order to increase the number of potential adoptive families available for our children we have worked with colleagues across the East Midlands, particularly with colleagues from Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Derby City, to develop a Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption East Midlands. This became operational in April 2019. Adoption East Midlands leads on work to recruit, train, approve and support adoptive carers. Nottingham City Council will remain

responsible for supporting children and young people with adoption plans and helping them move on. To help us with this work we have developed a Permanence Team, who lead on our work with children with adoption plans.

Where adoption is not the right plan for a child we will try to provide them with a long-term foster placement. This requires the young person and foster carer agreeing that this is the right place for them to live throughout their childhood. Plans are agreed by a panel and authorised by the the Director for Children's Integrated Services, who signs a certificate for the young person to confirm that this is where they will live throughout their childhood.

We understand that children in care find changes of Social Worker and Independent Review Officer difficult. We work hard to try to recruit permanent staff. There is a national shortage of social workers that makes it difficult for all Local Authorities to recruit and retain staff, and we are impacted by this challenge. We have developed a range of initiatives to address this such as encouraging staff from other areas of children's services to undertake social work training and remodelling social work pay. We expect to see the benefits of these measures in 2020/21 but we anticipate that social work recruitment is something we are going to have to continue to focus on for the foreseeable future.



## Accommodation

### Local Fostering Data

We use a mix of internal Local Authority recruited foster carers and Local Authority managed residential homes, as well as commissioned independent fostering agencies (IFAs) and external residential homes. Wherever possible we will place children with our carers or homes as we believe this strengthens the partnership that supports them. Since 2015 there has been a year on year increase in the proportion of children living with Nottingham City foster carers. In June 2020 73% of children in care were placed in Foster placements. Of those placements this was 55% were with City Council Foster Carers. This is a consequence of focussed recruitment activity, which we will maintain, and an increase in the number of children placed with family members.

### Residential Provision

At Nottingham City Council during the course of 2018/19 we expanded our internal residential and semi-independent provision. As with internal fostering, internal residential care promotes more effective collaboration between the network of colleagues working with the child, as they will all work for the Local Authority and share the same working methods required to help children thrive.



Where are looking to place a child in care our placement service leads on identify the best match for the child. Wherever possible we will prioritise matches with internal services but if this is not possible we have a commissioning framework that helps us identify external options. In February 2020 we moved from a framework that operated across the East Midlands to a more local model

that we share with Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Derby City. This is part of our work to try to keep children within their own communities where possible and safe.

**To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners**

## Children in Care Services

We are always trying to do more to ensure that all children in care are healthy and safe, have the same opportunities as their peers and can move successfully into adulthood. Children, young people and carers are likely to be supported by a number of different teams as they move through the care process. Whilst we know that this can cause some disruption we think it's important that the support on offer changes as the needs of the child or young person develop.

This section seeks to outline the roles and responsibilities of those teams that work with our children in care and care leavers.

### Social Work Support for Children in Care

The Local Authority's social work support for children in care is provided by one of four types of social care teams. These are:

- Children's Social Care Duty
- Children's Social Care (CSC) Fieldwork Teams
- Children in Care (CIC) Teams
- The Whole Life Disability Service (WLD)

Children's Social Care Duty teams work with children and young people for short periods of time when they are first identified as needing a social worker. Where a child or young person needs a longer-term support they will move to Children's Fieldwork, who, amongst other areas of work, support children subject to a protection plan and those children and young people subject to care proceedings.

Nottingham City has three Children in Care Teams. They work solely with children in care from 0 up to 18 years old. Having dedicated children in care teams promotes specialism and expertise. This, we believe, leads to better outcomes for our young people. We also have a dedicated Permanency Team has been formed, linked to the government agenda to establish Regional Adoption Agencies. This Team deals primarily with children for whom the best outcome is adoption, or another form of permanence.

The WLD is an integrated service, which includes social workers with specialist knowledge in the area of childhood disability. The WLD undertake a number of duties, including those associated with meeting the Authority's statutory requirements in relation to severely disabled children in care. The number of CIC cases held by the WLD is relatively small.

## Residential Services

Nottingham City currently has six mainstream residential homes, one home dedicated to children with complex needs and 5 semi-independent units for young people who are 16 years and over. Additionally, we have a dedicated short breaks home for 11 children and young adults with learning and physical disabilities.

All our homes are safe and welcoming and we are proud to provide high quality care. In June 2020 all of our homes are judged good or outstanding by Ofsted

Every effort is made to provide children and young people with the necessary support needed for them to achieve the best outcomes possible. All units are subject to regular quality assurance, both internally and externally, in order to ensure all young people receive the same high quality care.

## Fostering

The Fostering Service aims to provide high quality family based care that ensures that children in care receive a positive experience of home and family life.

To achieve this we recruit, assess, train and support foster carers to care for children so they achieve the best possible outcomes in regards to their physical, emotional and intellectual development. A variety of foster carers are recruited and trained to meet the diverse needs of children and reflect the ethnic and cultural background of the community we serve. We offer a full and comprehensive training programme to equip carers to be able to meet the complex needs of children in our care

All foster carer applicants are rigorously screened, thoroughly assessed and carefully trained so that they can provide safe and supportive homes for children in care, children placed for adoption.

## Post order support

Support for adopters post order transferred to the Regional Adoption Agency in April 2019. This includes support for adoptive families after the order is granted. We have retained responsibility for support for young people who leave care having been made the subject of a Special Guardianship Order. THs function is based in the Permanence team

## Independent Reviewing Officer Service

The Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) Service operates within the framework of the updated version of the IRO handbook, the national guidance of Working Together 2018 and the national guidance for Fostering. We provide each child in care with an IRO, to ensure their Human Rights are respected.

The main focus of the IRO is to critically examine and quality assure the Care Planning and interventions of the Local Authority in respect of each child or young person looked after. Central

to this is ensuring that the child's wishes and feelings are given full consideration in planning and enabling by their role, improved outcomes. IROs therefore ensure:

- There is robust scrutiny and challenge regarding decisions.
- To challenge the quality of analysis being undertaken, to ensure that plans meets the children's needs.
- That views of children, parents, carers and other professionals are given sufficient weight in care planning.
- That informed reflection occurs on the child's progress and planning for the future.

## Leaving Care Service

The Leaving Care Service work with young people aged between 18 - 25 years who are eligible to receive care leaver support. The service aims to ensure all young people get the best support possible, as they transition into adulthood.

Every young person is given the opportunity to explore their independence with an individual support package that allows them to develop, learn, or re-learn the skills that will be needed for successful independent living.

We have supported a number of young people through further and higher education, with some going on study at a post-graduate level. We are very proud of all our young people who have gone on to achieve huge success.

The Leaving Care Service works with a number of young people who were unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

## The Placement Service

The Children's Placement Service is the single point of access for the formation and quality assurance of care placements. The Service is responsible for providing 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.

The Placement Service undertakes activities to ensure that all children and young people are accessing high quality care placements. There is a dedicated Quality Assurance officer post based in the Placement Service



## Virtual School

The role of the Virtual School is to monitor, support and provide interventions to ensure that children in care achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

The Virtual School works with a network of Designated Teachers who are dedicated to ensuring that our children achieve the best they can in line with all other children.

## Other Internal Services

The Social Care Complaints Service facilitates the resolution of service user dissatisfaction and learns from complaints in order to improve service delivery. There is a concerted effort to ensure that our young people know how to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the support they receive. Regular monitoring of complaints mean trends can be identified and service improvements can be made.

## Support Services and Partner Agencies

We work with a number of partner agencies external to the Authority, all of which share the same vision. Support services and partner agencies include the following:

### Health Provision

The Greater Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) commission the specialist CIC medical and nursing teams to undertake statutory health assessments. This ensures that any physical or emotional needs are addressed as part of the care plan. The health professional will share recommendations for the plan with the child and / or young person's social worker and advice on how to meet any outstanding health needs. For those children and young people placed too far out of Nottingham City boundaries, arrangements will be made with an external health provider to complete assessments and those assessments will be quality assured to ensure they meet an accepted standard. The teams also contribute to supporting the health assessments for those children and young people who are placed in Nottinghamshire from other local authorities.

Nottingham City council commission public health services for children and young people, including the 0 – 19 programme which incorporates the delivery of the Department of Health "health child programme". This service works with the specialist CIC teams. This ensures that the universal and public health needs of CIC are met by appropriately skilled and knowledgeable practitioners.

In addition, a dedicated LAC CAMHS service is jointly commissioned by the Greater Notts CCG and Nottingham City Local Authority to support with emotional and mental health needs of children in care. The CAMHS Children in Care team provides a specialist service and training to support and maintain the emotional and mental health needs of our young people. The team ensures the emotional health needs of young people are reflected in Health Plans and are part of the review process.

The team works to a consultation model working closely with Foster Carers, Social Workers and the wider professional network offering a reflective space to think about the child's history, what the current difficulties or concerns are and to develop a plan. They will also offer support to identify individual therapy for children, where this is needed.



## Independent Visitor and Advocacy Service

The Children's Society and SOVA are the current advocacy and independent visitor providers for Nottingham City Council, and they provide the following to our young people:

- Advice and information for children and young people about their rights. Services include

Independent Persons service is for all eligible children and young people subject to current Secure Accommodation Orders.

- Independent Visitor service provides suitable appointed volunteers to visit any child or young person who is in care where it is deemed to be in the child or young person's best interests. This includes children placed out of the local authority area.

- Residential Visiting Advocacy service provides visits to all residential children's homes and residential schools wherever one of our young people is placed. This includes secure accommodation.

- Issue Based Advocacy. Providing

support for children who are unhappy and feel their wishes and feelings have not been taken into account when adults (professionals) make decisions.

## Futures

Futures are a not-for-profit provider of jobs and skills advice, training, apprenticeships and support to young people and adults who need help preparing for work or training. There are dedicated Futures staff working with our Leaving Care service

## Governance and Monitoring Framework

The Corporate Parenting Board endorses this strategy. Strategic Priorities (SPs) and their corresponding actions will be reviewed in response to updates of the Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the annual children in care and care leavers 'Have Your Say' (HYS) survey, and priorities set by central government. The next scheduled update of this strategy will take place in 2019.

The Children in Care Council (CICC) will assist in the evaluation of progress against identified priorities. The CICC are involved in analysing performance data generated by the annual HYS survey and comparing it review result from the previous year. Priorities for future action are then recommended.

The diagram below shows the relationship between corporate parenting forums within the Authority.

