



Appendix A

Report to Executive Board Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

September 2020

The Scope of the Inquiry

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

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

Publication of Findings

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.

There were two recommendations for the City Council,

- Nottingham City Council should assess the potential risk posed 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.

As part of the wider cross-cutting learning from the 14 strands of the Inquiry, the Inquiry committed to 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.

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

Progress against our action plan is detailed within Appendix B.

Next steps and continuous improvement

In response to the Inquiry, there has been significant work undertaken to improve practice and ensure that children in care are kept safe. We have responded to the specific recommendations, but the Inquiry provided further insights into practice that we have sought to incorporate into local practice.

However, we must remain constantly vigilant to the potential harm that children in our care can be exposed to and can never be complacent. Learning tells us that it is vital that we have a transparent and self-challenging system and of the importance of culture.

The key principles that underpin our approach are:

- **Listening to the voice of children both individually, and collectively** – the voice of the child is at the heart of our practice and we have a range of ways to ensure children and young people’s experiences and voices can be heard.
- **Raising awareness** – through training and on-going communication with social workers, residential staff, foster carers and partner agencies.
- **Accountability and visibility** – through reporting on allegations using both the Significant Incident Briefing process and the other routes set out elsewhere in this report. These reports will help us to identify at an early stage patterns and trends and take action to address these.
- **Professional curiosity** – it is our responsibility to explore and understand what is happening, to challenge ourselves and our systems and not to make assumptions.

Nottingham Children’s Services continuous improvement programme, building on our Ofsted Focused Visit action plan, has a strong focus on developing our best practice and our culture which sees children’s voices and experiences at the heart.

Alongside the actions we take within our own services, we work with our safeguarding partners to strengthen our shared system. We continue to work in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police to actively support the ongoing criminal investigations, to help to

identify perpetrators and whenever possible, to 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.

Our work with Survivors of abuse has been a very important area of focus and of learning for us and our partners. We continue to meet regularly with survivors, both individually and as a group, although group meetings have not been possible during Covid-19. A consequence of this has been the shared commitment to commissioning a new model of survivor support services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. This has been absolutely founded on the feedback from survivors. The new service will come into place in January.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the care of the City is and always will be our highest priority.

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