



Report for the Health and Wellbeing Board Corporate Director of People September 2020

Children's Services Improvement Journey



As you may be aware, in February we had our Focused Visit from Ofsted to look at our children subject to child in need and child protection planning and, in particular:

- The quality of planning and review;
- The response to children at risk of sustained neglect; and
- The quality of management oversight and supervision to progress plans.

Inspectors identified some significant issues for us to address and they also provided us with helpful feedback and identified areas for improvement. There were two key areas for priority action:

- To address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improve their experiences, and that new and emerging risks are identified and responded to.
- To stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social workers and first line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection.

In response to these (and wider recommendations made around the practice improvements), we developed an action plan that we submitted to Ofsted in March. To drive delivery of this action plan and the necessary improvement required, we developed our monthly Children at the Heart Improvement Board. This Board is chaired by the Chief Executive and has partner representation from a variety of agencies including the Police, Citycare, the Local Government Association, Schools and the Clinical Commissioning Group. We are committed to working with our partners to deliver whole system approaches that will ensure we achieve the best possible outcomes for children who need help and protection and to achieving the sustainable improvement which will make a real difference for children, young people and families.

To support us with our programme of improvement, the Department for Education has enabled to us access support from the Partners in Practice programme. As a result, a team of practitioners and leaders from Essex are working alongside our colleagues to support us in improving our system.

It is vital that we still drive this improvement journey forward as this is about ensuring consistent best practice for all our children and the best chances to improve their outcomes – something we are all proud to deliver. Thank you for all that you continue to do for our children and their families, your support and commitment is crucial to this programme of work.

Adult Social Care

Throughout the pandemic, adult social care teams have continued to ensure that citizens receive the care and support they need. This has meant rapidly adapting to the changing circumstances. The majority of staff across assessment teams have been working from home. Ways of working have been adjusted to ensure that the care and support needs of citizens have been maintained, including redeploying staff to areas of priority and working closely with care providers around the city. Wherever possible, social care assessments are now completed over the telephone to minimise the risks posed to citizens and staff arising from face to face contact. Face-to-face assessments are still completed where this is not possible. We have continued to meet our duties to assess need under the Care Act and have not needed to enact any Care Act easements.

Some services have had to close in order to keep both citizens and staff as safe as possible. This includes day services, due to social distancing requirements. We are now undertaking a review of day service provision to look at how we can continue to provide services in different ways in the future. A new offer will be developed in co-production with citizens, their families and other key stakeholders. This will focus on enabling citizens to live independent lives whilst accessing the support they need, in line with the aims of our strategy.

We are involved in a pilot project, Local People for Local People which is proposing to test a neighbourhood approach to delivering care in the community. The pilot will involve a small team of experienced care workers to provide a range of personal and social care services to citizens in their own homes within a particular neighbourhood. The emphasis will be on carers working with a group of the same citizens and their informal carers to deliver personal care, but also to access all the resources available in their social networks and neighbourhoods to support them to be more independent.

Supporting children to go back to school

With the start of the new school year, it is easy to forget how long it has been since many children have been inside a regular classroom since lockdown began on 23 March.

Our Education Services, Children's Social Care Services and schools have worked closely together over recent months to support Nottingham's children. Our CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) and the Educational Psychology Service in Nottingham City have worked together to deliver a campaign of support to parents and children and young people to relieve some of the anxiety they may be experiencing around returning to school.

The #NottinghamYou'veBeenMissed campaign offers advice over the phone as well as podcasts and videos. The teams have also spent July and August visiting outdoor summer schools.

This is a fantastic service that shows how well our teams work together to come up with new and innovative solutions in times of crisis. You can read more about the campaign here:

<https://www.asklion.co.uk/kb5/nottingham/directory/advice.page?id=tJqH1UfDQDE>

Understanding what Covid-19 has meant for the people we serve

There has been some important survey work done over the summer too. Our Educational Psychologists have undertaken a huge survey of children's experience of Covid-19. We have also had an Ofsted inspector seconded to the education team, who has done an in-depth survey with children who have been permanently excluded from school and who are in alternative provision and their families. They paint a picture of such mixed experiences: children who have thrived away from school pressures; children who have fared poorly without the guidance of teachers; parents who have been able to get creative about supporting their children; and parents who have struggled to manage. We know that the impact is far from equal and that we will be supporting people with this over coming weeks and months.

Imagination Library delivers 250,000 books to children in Nottingham

The book-gifting charity was introduced in the city in 2009 and now has more than 5,600 children registered to have a free book delivered to their door every month – covering ten of the city's 20 wards. The Imagination Library is proven to improve children's literacy levels so that they are more likely to be ready to start school when they turn five. Age-appropriate books are delivered addressed to the child every month from birth, allowing them to build up a library of 60 books over five years. This is a significant milestone for our city – a quarter of a million books is a fantastic gift to the children of Nottingham over the last ten years. Our children deserve the best possible start in life. We know that reading with children is one of the best ways to set them up for a bright future.

More information about the Imagination Library in Nottingham is available at: www.dollybooksnotttingham.org.

Catherine Underwood
Corporate Director for People
(September 2020)

Stay safe and stop the spread of coronavirus



Maintain social distance and keep 2 metres apart where possible



Keep left on pavements and pathways



Wear a face covering in shops and on public transport



Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds



Self-isolate if you have symptoms, and to get a test, call 119 or visit www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested

If you need help you can still call the Council

From August, the advice to people who are shielding has changed. We know this may cause concern for some extremely vulnerable people. We want you to know, if you still need help, you can still call the Council.

We can put you in touch with the community groups, volunteers and food banks offering support in your neighbourhood.

0115 915 5555

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/coronavirus

This information is being translated into different languages and formats and will be available here: www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/coronavirus/translations

