

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Item Name:** Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

**Corporate Director and Lead officer:** Catherine Underwood

### 1. Purpose:

On 31 July 2019, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (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 key recommendations and significant learning for Nottingham City Council. This report provides an update on actions undertaken in response to these and wider learning.

### 2. Recommendations:

- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider actions undertaken by the council since the report was published in July 2019 in relation to the key recommendations and also wider learning.

### 3. Background/Context:

- 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. The inquiry launched 13 investigations into a broad range of institutions identified on the basis of the Panel's criteria for selection of investigations.
- 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.

The scope of the Nottinghamshire 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 ran from 01–26 October 2018 (with a one week break).

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 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.

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

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

#### 4. Financial Implications:

The ongoing financial cost resulting from the Inquiry is an agreed commitment to the additional investment for victim and survivor support, as outlined in **Table 1** below and in action 5 of Appendix A:

<b>TABLE 1 – COST OF VICTIM AND SURVIVOR SUPPORT (IICSA)</b>				
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
<b>Hub and Therapy Model</b>	£51,128	£90,185	£90,185	£45,093
<b>ISVA/SSS</b>	£22,222	£22,222	£22,222	£11,111
<b>Contribution towards Sexual Violence Engagement Manager post</b>	£20,000	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>£93,350</b>	<b>£112,407</b>	<b>£112,407</b>	<b>£56,204</b>

Provision has been made for this from the Adult Social Care budget as incorporated within the Medium Term Financial Plan for the initial contract duration (covering up to an including 2023/24), however work is required to consider how this service will be supported beyond this.

Hayley Mason  
Strategic Finance Business Partner

**5. Legal and Procurement comments (if applicable) including risk management considerations:**

Legal Services will continue to support the People directorate as and when required in response to the ICSA inquiry. As set out in the appendix there is a dedicated Information Officer within the Information Compliance Team to support survivors in accessing their records and information.

*Beth Brown*  
*Head of Legal and Governance*

**6. HR and EDI considerations:**

With regards to recommendation 1, HR are committed to working with the Fostering Service when recruiting Foster Carers and ensuring that robust safeguarding checks are undertaken at recruitment stage and any areas of potential concern are identified early so appropriate action can take place.

*Aadil Bhatti*  
*HR Consultant*

**7. Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Considerations:**

None.

**Next Steps/Assurance Processes**

Attached as Appendix A is progress against our Action Plan.

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 any patterns or 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 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 Clinical Commissioning Group 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 have met regularly with survivors, both individually and as a group, and although group meetings have not been possible during Covid-19 the Corporate Director for People has written to the group on behalf of statutory partners to update them throughout the last year. A consequence of our engagement with survivors has been the shared commitment to commissioning a new model of survivor support services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. This has been strongly founded on the feedback from survivors.

Our Insurance providers have offered to provide an expert safeguarding and governance risk consultant to undertake an external assessment of our work undertaken. This is being scoped.

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