

Nottingham City Council

Children's Partnership Board

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom -

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil> on 27 June 2023 from 4.08pm – 5.17pm

Membership (✓ indicates present at meeting)

✓	Cllr Cheryl Barnard (Chair)	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education, NCC
✓	Cllr Samina Riaz	Executive Assistant - Children, Young People and Education NCC
✓	Catherine Underwood	Corporate Director for People, NCC
✓	Sam Morris	Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement, NCC
✓	Ailsa Barr	Director of Children's Integrated Services, NCC
✓	Nick Lee	Director of Education, NCC
	Jon Rea	Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, NCC
	Karon Foulkes	Head of Children's Commissioning and Transformation, NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB
✓	Amanda Payne	Regional Manager, East Midlands, Futures Group
	Mohammed Ramzan	Further Education representative (Nottingham College)
	Ekua Ghansah	Child Friendly City Programme Lead
	Maria Ward	Maintained Primary School Governor
	Sonia Burton	Youth Justice Service , NCC
	Becky O'Brien	Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals, Nottingham CityCare Partnership
✓	Sarah Fielding	Nottingham Schools Trust and Virtual School
✓	Supt. Kathryn Craner	Nottinghamshire Police
✓	Nicky Bridges	Primary Schools' representative (Robin Hood Primary)
	Chad Thompson	Head of Children's Transformation
	Michelle Strong	Secondary Schools' representative (Bulwell Academy)
	Karla Capstick	Small Steps Big Changes representative (Director)
	Karla Banfield	Strategic Commissioning Manager, NCC
✓	Cheryl Steele	Special Schools' representative (Rosehill School)
	Celina Adams	Voluntary Sector
	Claire Perry	Voluntary Sector (Children & Young People's Provider Network)
	David Johns	Consultant in Public Health, NCC
✓	Nichola Rose	The Children's Society

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Dr Maddi Popoola, Education Psychologist and Manager of Mental Health Support Services

Jennifer Hardy, Interim Head of Access to Learning

Mary-Anne Cosgrove, Head of Children in Care

Catherine Ziane-Pryor, Governance Officer

1 Temporary Chair for the meeting

In the temporary absence of the Chair, Councillor Cheryl Barnard, nominations were sought for a Chair.

Resolved for Catherine Underwood to temporarily chair the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Cheryl Barnard (for unavoidable lateness)
Becky O'Brien (CityCare Director of Nursing and AHPs)
Karon Foulkes (NHS ICB)
John Rae – Engagement and Participation Lead (NCC)
Mohammed Ramzan (Nottingham College)
Jules Seblin (Nottingham CVS)

3 Appointment of Vice-Chair

As no nominations were received, this item is deferred to the next meeting.

4 Declarations of Interest

None.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023 confirmed as a true record.

6 Children at Risk of Exclusion

Nick Lee, Director of Education, introduced the item which has been brought forward due to the increasing number of pupils being permanently excluded (pex), which needs to be addressed, as a partnership approach.

Dr Maddi Popoola, Education Psychologist and Manager of Mental Health Support Services, and Jennifer Hardy, Interim Head of Access to Learning, jointly delivered the presentation, which is included in the agenda pack.

Highlighted points are summarised as follows:

- a) It is well documented that pexs have long-term negative impact on the young person and into adulthood, including employability, economically, with the likelihood of entering custody being 33% higher than pupils who had not been pex;
- b) From 181 youth offending cases examined, 65% had been excluded from school, with 47% permanently excluded. It is noted that 80% of the prison population have learning difficulties, or have not learnt to read;
- c) Compared to statistical neighbours, Nottingham historically and currently has higher rates of exclusions and a challenging educational landscape;

- d) All secondary schools in the City are signed up to the holistic inclusion funding model brought in during 2022 to try to prevent pexs, but exclusion rates continue to rise;
- e) Research has been undertaken to find common identifiers where exclusion is most likely. This has been achieved by speaking to school staff, parents and pupils, to identify root cause themes which led to exclusions and for which interventions and support have been helpful or succeeded;
- f) The presentation sets out the 10 key themes identified as follows:
 - i. creating a vision/shared understanding of inclusion;
 - ii. multi agency working;
 - iii. preventative work;
 - iv. ethnicity;
 - v. relationships between local authority and settings;
 - vi. teacher factors;
 - vii. work with parents and carers;
 - viii. funding and provision;
 - ix. transition;
 - x. mental health;
- g) The decision to permanently excluded pupil is not taken lightly, but pexs in Nottingham are at the highest rate in 10 years with five weeks of term still remaining. 125 pexs have been applied so far this academic year, compared to 112 in total last year, with 18 primary pexs, compared to a total of 11 last year;
- h) The vast majority of excluded pupils have complex lives which schools alone cannot mitigate against, but with co-ordinated multi-agency working, it is believed that pexs can be reduced;
- i) In an effort to prevent pexs, schools identify pupils at risk and refer their cases to the multi-agency 'Children at Risk of Permanent Exclusion Panel' which meets monthly for examination and consideration of supportive action to prevent an exclusion;
- j) To date, 32 young people have been referred to this multi-partner team, of those 7 have been permanently excluded or are still at risk of pex, so it is evident that this approach does work well, but requires more focused resourcing;
- k) 'Include' is a multidiscipline team consisting of mental health and education professionals who will be working with three high excluding secondary schools focusing on children at risk of exclusion in years 7 and 8. Up to a total of 20 pupils from each school will get intensive support, including one-to-one mentoring and the opportunity for these pupils to attend a range of after-school activities from 3pm to 5pm (also to be available to the broader cohort) with a focus on developing self-esteem, a sense of belonging in school and connection with the school, with regular monitoring and reviews;
- l) This model has been developed in liaison with Enfield Council, which previously had previously experienced high levels of exclusion and worked hard to successfully address this issue;

- m) Other local authorities will also be approached, including Bristol, which had successful initiatives around combatting knife crime and carrying of weapons, and avoidance of criminalisation of young people with alternative action;
- n) Officers are also due to meet with Derby education colleagues to discuss their and Lincolnshire's approaches and share best practice;
- o) The CAR Panel has also just started working with primary school children who have had experience of exclusion or near exclusion are about transition to secondary school to ensure they are confident and prepared for the transition. A second primary transition panel will meet in July to plan for the academic year ahead;
- p) The circumstances by which the probability of a child's exclusion builds momentum needs to be addressed, not just through educational establishments, but through broader social involvement across the partnership;
- q) The potential for establishing a Citywide Exclusion Task Force, possibly formed from members of this Board and governed by this Partnership Board, to address the broader issues which lead to children being excluded from school, would be invaluable and an enormous benefit to the city;
- r) In addition, it would be highly beneficial for a citywide digital online directory of services accessible to young people, schools and community groups, may be similar to the 'not alone' website;
- s) an updated inclusion and SEND strategy is being worked on and members of the Board are welcome to join the involvement.

At this point Councillor Barnard joined the meeting and resumed the Chair.

- t) The insight into excluded pupils shows that the vast majority have complex additional needs, alongside limited access to support;
- u) A case study on 2 primary school permanent exclusions has been jointly undertaken with Social Care and Youth Justice Colleagues to unpick what happened. This will be written up and shared to promote a system of learning to help mitigate against further primary school exclusions;

Members of the Board welcomed the work and progress made, adding the following comments:

- v) Many head teachers and teachers across the city welcome the work undertaken to date, and would be keen to be involved going forward;
- w) A citywide digital online directory of services to support avoidance of permanent exclusions would be very much welcomed;
- x) Head teachers are often working with challenging pupil behaviour and additional pupil need. 'Switch up' mentor groups are also used, with primary schools ensuring that secondary schools are aware of current issues as the pupils transition;

- y) there needs to be clarity on how all elements of this work fit together, including 'roots to inclusion', so that schools, teachers and parents are able to identify which area they need to refer to including how to refer, to ensure appropriate and co-ordinated support of pupils;
- z) The CAR panel was set up to address an immediate need, but does need to be strategically aligned and be more procedurally supportive going forward with clear mapping of which teams do what, the support they can offer, and at what stage to approach them would be welcomed;
- aa) The following points were highlighted specifically from a secondary school perspective to reduce secondary school exclusions, such as:
 - i. funding agreement for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs students in school (of which 4 of the 5 exclusions undertaken has SEMH issues in school);
 - ii. the Higher Level Needs (HLN) process needs to be more open, faster and more transparent as to how decisions are made at HLM panel;
 - iii. the slow Speed of Behavioural, Emotional and Mental Health (BEMH) referrals across the city is detrimental to children who, if receiving a positive diagnosis such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, will then have access to a range of additional support mechanisms;
- bb) it is priority for all agencies to work together to work towards reducing its permanent exclusions so the suggestion to establish steering groups with key partners to maintain a coherent overview of inclusion processes and development, training, guidance schools with further work inclusion best practice is welcomed;
- cc) Early intervention with children at risk of exclusion, particularly those transitioning to secondary school is vital and if it happens much earlier than currently, it will also help prevent crisis management of children in a more timely manner;
- dd) steering groups will be established with key partners to maintain a coherent overview of the well-being and inclusion approaches. There will also be further work to develop training and guidance for schools on inclusion and best practice;
- ee) the policies that sit behind the goals need to be reconsidered, including early identification of families in poverty and the timeliness of implementing the poverty proofing toolkits;
- ff) further early intervention work is needed in early years settings with guidance for parents, carers and staff to promote positive behaviour. This must be picked up early;
- gg) The recent launch of family hubs will help with interventions at an early stage;
- hh) A citywide exclusions task force is definitely needed and would be very welcome;
- ii) The work, research and panel approach is very much welcomed. The collective ambition of head teachers is admirable at a time when schools feel they are identified

as being the problem. The ownership of this issue needs to be broadened and it emphasised that all agencies have a role;

- jj) Funding and resources need to be targeted as effectively as possible, so the researching good practice is very much welcomed provides the opportunity to bring the correct partners together to try and make the most effective impact on a very complex problem;
- kk) There are huge issues around poverty and the disruption to children's routines post pandemic and huge issues around mental health and emotional needs. There are multiple streams of work which need to be undertaken;
- ll) Resources and funding is critical, but the city is part of the 'priority education investment area' which provides additional funding, targeted at specific areas, including around persistent absence. It is vital that the funding coming into the city is directed through those evidence based models which will make a difference;
- mm) Family Hubs (children age 0-19, or 0-25 if there are SENs) and the support of parents, parenting and parental behaviour and parental engagement is critical in gauging the opportunity for schools to support keeping children in school, as without parental reinforcement, the work is for more extensive for schools.

Several members of the board including school leaders, expressed a keen interest in contributing to the multi-partner work to identify the circumstances which can lead to pupil exclusion, and formulating approaches to mitigate against this.

7 Care Leavers and the Local Offer

Mary-Anne Cosgrove, Head of Children in Care, delivered a presentation, which is included in the agenda pack.

Highlighted points are summarised as follows:

- a) Some children may come into care quite late, at the age at 15 and 16;
- b) every councillor is a corporate parent;
- c) corporate parents now have new duties;
- d) One of the 8 areas which the 2022 OFSTED inspection identified for improvement was the clarity and quality of information available to care leavers, including of their rights and entitlements, and the statutory requirement for the local authority to provide a personal advisors to support care leavers post-21 years of age;
- e) From April 2023, the OFSTED framework included an additional judgement area focusing on care leavers and ensuring that they are aware of the local offer and continue to be supported up to and beyond 21 years of age;
- f) The presentation sets out how the local authority has responded to the new requirements, including:
 - i. providing an app based accessibility platform specifically for local care leavers;

- ii. establishment of a local task and finish group under place-based work;
 - iii. provided an enhanced Local Offer around transport and plans around Council Tax, Leisure and a Conference with City employers in the Autumn;
 - iv. a cross-department strengthened local offer, including mental health, housing and employment;
 - v. increased personal adviser and management capacity;
 - vi. contact with city and local authority employers;
 - vii. ensuring that locally, care leavers are considered a protected characteristic;
 - viii. the breadth of how the local offer has since been increased set out within the presentation;
- g) Due to a Barnardo's Children's Charity mystery benefactor and grants from Central Government, further work is possible to expand and extend the local offer;
- h) Partnership members and colleagues are requested to consider how they, or someone they know, who has influence and power and could contribute to corporate parenting, possibly creatively/ operationally/with sharing their experience and /or support, mentoring or championing our care leavers, be aspirational and passionate for these young care leavers. Training can be provided, including virtual LGA sessions on Corporate Parenting;
- i) The Pathfinders initiative will open up opportunities in the health sector, with supporting managers to support care leaver and understand their specific challenges. In addition the autumn conference is inviting commercial business and asking what they can offer. The champion's initiative is website which could match people to children and care leavers for one-off meetings, longer term mentoring, and multiple different championing paths;
- j) The Positive Destinations Pathway officer at Futures was closely with the specialist personal advisor for children, not in education, training or employment to identify talking about care and work with them and companies to improve links. Futures will also be managing tutor for 18 to 25-year-olds.

Comments from the partnership included:

- k) It's really important to involve people from across the city to assist with supporting local offer to care leavers;
- l) The involvement of head teachers and the Police would be most welcome;
- m) It is important to ensure that the Corporate Parent Board concentrates its efforts and enables young people in care to have the opportunity to see the routes available for their future, alongside being confident and ambitious with regard to work and career development by being exposed to potential opportunities through work experience;
- n) The majority of partners in attendance today are working within the public sector, but inevitably come into contact with private sector organisations, many of which aspire to add social value for the services they work with and maybe keen to support care leavers. Private sector engagement needs to be encouraged by colleagues, for instance, when commissioning services, consider care leavers, either in a practical manner, such as providing apprenticeship routes, or mentoring or sponsoring activities

which are particularly directed at care leavers. Partners are requested to consider mobilising the experience and funds that sit within the City;

- o) There needs to be improved connectivity with the Careers Hub and the Careers and Enterprise Advisers, with regard to employability. Futures host these roles on behalf of the city and the Local Enterprise Partnership, working with secondary schools to develop enterprise networks and relationships between employers and schools. There are some systems but in place, but maybe further aspect is required to ensure that the care leavers cohort is considered;
- p) Police Super Intendant Kathryn Craner is already an Aspiration Champion for care leavers, and would further welcome Police involvement with careers advisers, including routes into the Police Service and Police apprenticeships and further discussion on Supporting Corporate Parenting Board.

Any partners, appropriate bodies or individuals wishing to support the broadening of the Local Offer for Children in Care, as outlined, should contact Mary-Anne Cosgrove at mary-anne.cosgrove@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

8 Key Messages and Items for Information

There were no key messages or items for information at this time.

9 Forward Plan and Suggestions for future agenda items

Resolved

- 1) to agree the future meeting dates (virtually at 4pm) as follows:**

26 September 2023

12 December 2023

26 March 2023;

- 2) to note the following items suggested for consideration at the next meeting:**

- **Ofsted update (Ailsa Barr) if the results of the recent monitoring visit are in the public domain by then;**
- **Youth Charter (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner);**
- **Small Steps Big Changes (Karla Capstick)**

- 3) for partners to contact Sam Morris (sam.morris@nottinghamcity.gov.uk) with suggestions for any further items for the Partnership's consideration.**