

External Assurances

Annex E

External Assurance Provider	Assurance Scope : Concerns	Further Assurance Activity
<p>LGA & NCSC</p>	<p>National: NCSC cyber security guidance and alerts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA highlights NCSC alerts • NCSC guidance to mitigate cyber attacks and cyber defence tools. NCSC provide guidance, tools and alerts online including guidance on steps to take when cyber threat is high. 	<p>Mandatory IT Security training has been implemented across the Council for all staff using computers. Training compliance for the Council is reported quarterly to the Information Compliance Assurance Board.</p> <p>The Annual Information Governance and Compliance Assurance Report was presented to Audit Committee on 31 Mar 2023.</p> <p>Internal Audit continue to provide a range of IT audits throughout the year including assessments concerning cyber security.</p>
<p>LGA</p>	<p>Nottingham City Council Corporate Parenting Peer Diagnostic April 2022</p> <p>Peer interviews and a board observation took place in January 2022.</p> <p>Areas for consideration included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of articulated single coherent aspiration or vision • Corporate Parenting Board meets in public, which is quite unusual and can be problematic. • Improvements made in silos for children in care and care leavers. Corporate Parenting Board could act as the bridge. • The Corporate Parenting Board mode of operation could be enhanced. • Partners attend but are unsure of their role, membership is unclear. • Meetings dominated by lengthy reports and presentations from officers. Needs better balance with discussions. • Adopting a variety of means to hear the voices of children 	<p>This was reported to Corporate Parenting Board in May 2022</p> <p>The Board proposed to hold development sessions to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level understanding of corporate parenting • Listening effectively to children’s voices & work programme • Council & senior managers – being effective corporate parents <p>A further training session is due to be held in November facilitated by LGA.</p> <p>Work has been completed in reviewing the existing governance arrangements. This has resulted in The Corporate Parenting Board being changed to a private meeting to facilitate greater discussion in line with the outcome of the Peer diagnostic. Additionally membership has been reviewed and widened with Senior leaders now invited and key wider partners.</p> <p>From 2023-24 meetings are facilitated by People’s directorate as the Board is a non-statutory meeting, so does not require Governance team’s expertise. Corporate Parenting Board will no longer meet in public or publish minutes. It will change its name to Corporate Parenting Panel . The inaugural meeting of the</p>

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		<p>Corporate Parenting Panel is the 14th September. At this meeting the new governance arrangements will be discussed and agreed with members of the panel, a new vision for this work created, Children's and Young People's pledges agreed and a thematic forward plan proposed.</p> <p>The City Council agreed (Jan23) to treat all people with care experience as having a protected characteristic. The Chief Executive was to write to partner organisations to publicise this policy. This responds to a recommendation in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care's final report (May22)</p>
Grant Thornton	<p>Nottingham:</p> <p>Financial Statements Audits – In February 2023 the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton provided an update in respect of their financial statements audit stating 8 significant weaknesses in respect of 2019/20 and subsequent financial statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial sustainability, • company governance and • delays in finalisation of annual accounts • failure to secure improvements in Children's Services • significant inconsistencies between budget and the final outturn in 2021-22 • unlawful transfer from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund • lack of management capacity due to recruitment and retention issues, particularly in corporate and key services • Council not able to demonstrate Best Value through procurement, including non-compliance and identified retrospective approvals. 	<p>The issues are covered by Improvement & Assurance Board directions. A plan to finalise all delayed financial statements audits by March 2024 is in place.</p> <p>Audit Committee will continue to monitor progress on completion of financial statements audits, the finance improvement plan, the IAB directions and the corporate improvement plan (Together for Nottingham).</p> <p>During 2022-23 the extent of unlawful transfers from HRA to General Fund was clarified and the HRA was reimbursed. Further work was undertaken to identify potential management override of controls across other systems and EY were commissioned to provide an assessment of financial controls. This has resulted in a Finance Improvement Plan which is progressing during 2023-24.</p> <p>Internal Audit have reported limited assurance on the control environment for the years 2018-19 to present and will continue to assess the quality of financial controls in key systems and other audits and report any weaknesses or gaps to management for their attention. This activity will align to the FIP.</p>

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Grant Thornton	<p>Nottingham:</p> <p>Selective Licensing Scheme – GT responded to an objection to the 2019/20 accounts in respect of the Council’s Selective Licensing Scheme. Although the objection did not meet the threshold for formal consideration by external auditors, GT continued the review on the basis that others may also object and reported to the Audit Committee on its findings which were summarised as:</p> <p>“Overall, while implementation of Selective Licensing has not gone smoothly, partly because of the significant impact of Covid-19, we do not consider that any formal audit action is needed at this stage: officers have clearly identified lessons from the first scheme which are being addressed in the proposals for second, and indeed it is likely that further benefit will be felt from the first scheme in its remaining year now that a higher level of inspections can be carried out.”</p>	<p>Internal Audit have reviewed the scheme several times during its life and have identified improvements which have overwhelmingly been acted upon.</p> <p>The scheme was for a fixed period of 5 years. A new scheme has now been agreed by the Secretary of State.</p> <p>No further assurance required, however Internal Audit will consider reviewing the new scheme as part of the risk based audit plan.</p>
KPMG	<p>External Audit of Housing Benefit subsidy – A backlog of incomplete Housing Benefit subsidy claim audits arose from 2017 due to the extension of testing arising out of found error in the claims. This resulted in withheld subsidy during 2019-20. NRB and now NCC have been working with KPMG and DWP to enable the audits to be completed and learning to be implemented in claim processing to force down error in subsidy claims.</p>	<p>A process and activities to eliminate the backlog in completion of external audits of Housing Benefit subsidy claims by March 2024 has been agreed between NCC, KPMG and DWP. Claim audits from 2021-22 onwards will be completed over the period to March 2024.</p> <p>Internal Audit have continued to review the outturn of subsidy audits and the associated systems as part of our internal audits of Housing Benefits and make recommendations for improvements where appropriate. IA will continue to review this area as a key part of the annual internal audit of this service to provide assurance that improvements are maintained.</p>

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<p>CQC – Setting Inspection Reports</p>	<p>Nottingham:</p> <p>CQC Inspections in 2022-23</p> <p>19 Barkla Close – Rated Good by CQC. First inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. Based on the CQC review of safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led the service was able to demonstrate how they were meeting some of the underpinning principles of right support, right care, right culture.</p> <p>CQC Inspections in previous years</p> <p>5 services inspected – all rated Good at last inspection except Cherry Trees Resource Centre rated Outstanding – CQC reviewed information about the following services in July 2023 and decided it did not need to reinspect at that point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cherry Trees Resource Centre The Oaks Residential Home Nottingham Home Care Short Breaks Services - Link Work and Sitting <p>The Shared Lives service was registered on 31st May 2022 and has not yet been inspected</p>	<p>No further assurance required</p>
<p>CQC – Adult Social Care:</p>	<p>National:</p> <p>CQC Business Plan 2023-2026</p> <p>The plan notes CQC’s transformation activity focused on being an insight-driven regulator. Key focus points are better listening, safety culture, tackling health inequalities and updated regulatory activities and priorities.</p>	<p>Teams in ASC and Commissioning have preparing for CQC assessment of Adult Social Care, so that NCC can ensure CQC have the opportunity to understand what works well in meeting our duties under the Care Act for citizens and what we are working to improve in Nottingham.</p> <p>A draft self-assessment was produced by the project team and submitted to the East Midlands ADASS group. This supports</p>

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	<p>As part of this approach local authority Adult Social Care services are going to be reviewed and assessed by the Care Quality Commission, in a similar way that Ofsted inspects Children's Services, to determine how they are delivering their Care Act functions. Nottingham is one of 5 pilot sites. There will be up to 20 baseline assessments in 23/24</p> <p>Previous state of care reports have highlighted workforce capacity issues with the potential to significantly impact the ability of providers to continue to provide care.</p>	<p>preparation for the introduction of the CQC Inspection and Assurance framework to be implemented from April 2023.</p> <p>The Care Quality Commission pilot assessment of Adult Social Care started on 31st July.</p> <p>The service continues to offer Social Work degree apprenticeships to support its requirement for qualified Social Workers.</p> <p>ASC transformation continues including automated performance reporting, a provider to deliver OT reviews, options for more independent living, increased independence for older people, strengths based care and support assessments, and an expanded Shared Lives project.</p>
CQC	<p>Integrated Care System Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICB</p> <p>CQC completed an inspection of Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICB in August 2023. We will review the report when it is available to identify any assurances and areas for improvement.</p>	To be considered when the report is available
Competition and Markets Authority	<p>Children's social care market study - March 2022 Children's Placements</p> <p>National:</p> <p>The CMA launched its study in response to concerns raised (Children's Commissioner report in 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAs too often unable to access appropriate placements 	<p>CIS have previously confirmed attention to the theme of children's placements in relation to the Children's Commissioner report.</p> <p>The Children's Placements Manager confirmed that Placement stability is considered and referenced throughout all placement specifications and highlighted as a success criteria/desired outcome for all external contracts</p> <p>CIS have responded to the CMA Children's Social Care Market</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prices paid place significant strain on LA budgets and limit funding of other important activities <p>The CMA found significant problems with the functioning of the placement market, particularly in England and Wales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of placements of the right kind, in the right places, means that children do not consistently get access to care and accommodation that meets their needs • the largest private providers of placements make materially higher profits, and charge materially higher prices, than expected if this market were functioning effectively • some of the largest private providers carry very high levels of debt, creating a risk that disorderly failure of highly-leveraged firms disrupt the placements of children in care. <p>Recommendations fall in 3 categories, in England for LAs these are:</p> <p>Commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger scale market engagement – this is to be developed through the government setting up sub-national bodies with each LA participating in one. Duty of LAs to understand and be able to report on when a placement does not fit need (sufficiency). • National support for purchaser engagement with the market – LAs duties to include providing relevant data for forecasting activity to the engagement body and on sufficiency. • Support for increases in LA foster care – targeted funding for innovative projects by LAs, or groups of LAs, aimed at recruiting and retaining more foster carers to reduce 	<p>Study. CIS have identified work strands to improve commissioning practice, detailed within the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy – and have worked closely with the County and with Health partners to achieve more collaborative commissioning to support improved outcomes for this group.</p> <p>Expansion of the Fostering Service was one of the reviews commissioned as part of People Directorate transformation within theme 7 of NCC Together for Nottingham plan. Improvement of recruitment processes for foster carers is an identified action in the Children’s Social Care Service Redesign, and Executive Board approved procurement of a delivery partner in February 2022.</p>

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	<p>reliance on private placements, subject to careful evaluation to support future policy.</p> <p>Market Barriers / Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (all UK government recommendations regarding regulation, planning and sector review) <p>Provider Failure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (all UK government recommendations regarding oversight regime and managed exit) 	
<p>HM Inspectorate of Probation: Inspection of youth offending services</p>	<p>Youth Offending Inspection Nottingham:</p> <p>Youth Justice Service (YJS) Inspection</p> <p>Nottingham Youth Offending Service was subject to a full three week joint inspection in November and December 2019. This inspection is part of a four-year programme with ratings across three broad areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service; the quality of work done with children and young people sentenced by the courts; and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. <p>Overall, Nottingham City YJS is rated as 'Requires improvement' as reported 19 Mar2020.</p> <p>The following recommendation were made to the Youth Justice Service Management Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> review the out-of-court disposal process, making sure that cases are presented on time, and that decisions are consistent, based on an assessment of the child or young person, and are agreed by a multi-agency panel 	<p>A Nottingham City Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan has been developed. This is monitored by the Youth Justice Management Board which includes the Nottingham Youth Justice Service, Nottingham City Council, the National Probation Service, Nottinghamshire Police and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The improvement plan has seven key objectives each with actions that are RAG rated and updates regarding progress.</p> <p>Progress on the plan is reported to the Youth Justice Management Board quarterly with actions being logged in the Operational Delivery plan, with a completion date of March 2024. Alongside a continuous audit process, the Board is undertaking a review and evaluation process in September 2023 to measure progress against the inspection criteria.</p> <p>The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee was due to review improvements in November 2022 then rescheduled for March 2023, however this has been dropped from the programme without a future review date being set</p>

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	<p>2. ensure the partnership reviews the number of very young children known to the YJS, and that policies and practices do not result in children entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily</p> <p>3. develop victim and restorative justice processes to ensure full consideration of the wishes and needs of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice are applied in every relevant case.</p> <p>The Youth Justice Service heads of service should:</p> <p>4. improve staff's access to clinical supervision and reconsider the use of mandatory interventions while promoting a trauma-informed practice approach to working with children and young people</p> <p>5. seek the views of children and young people, their parents/carers and other stakeholders, so that they can inform future service delivery</p> <p>6. review the quality assurance processes and improve the effectiveness of management oversight in all cases.</p>	<p>In the absence of Children's & Young People Scrutiny Committee review we will consider carrying out a short audit to understand assurances in relation to the HMIP inspection improvement plan.</p> <p>The Service underwent a Peer Review in November 2019 resulting in additional activities on the Operational Delivery Plan.</p> <p>1. The Service is still working to countywide guidance on Out of Court Disposals awaiting the publication of national Youth Justice Board guidance. There is no national standard of what 'good' looks like, but the Service is confident with its quality assurance mechanisms, panel process and scrutiny panels as confirmed by the Peer Review.</p> <p>2. The Service works with the University of Nottingham and Violence Reduction Partnership on both short-, and long-term research into First Time Entrants.</p> <p>3. The Service has identified the need to recruit to two new roles, a Victim and Restorative Justice Practitioner and a Referral and Reparation Co-ordinator to meet the needs of victims within Nottingham. At time of writing the roles were awaiting spending approval having been agreed by the Board as necessary.</p> <p>4. The Service no longer delivers mandatory interventions but are assured of this process through the report quality assurance mechanisms and ongoing supervisory processes.</p> <p>Staff access to clinical supervision as part of being a trauma informed service will only be resolved by considerable cost to the service and through a robust commissioning process. The Service is working with the Violence Reduction Partnership to complete a</p>

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		<p>Trauma Informed Readiness assessment that will highlight further areas of development in this subject matter.</p> <p>6. The Management team state they undertake regular audits as part of their quality assurance process. Through the use of benchmarking exercises and meetings they are assured of a high standard of management oversight. The new Case Management Recording system aids the management team in providing new data analysis and through greater partnership working with Analysis and Insight they are prepared to be fully compliant with the new KPIs of the YJB.</p>
<p>HM Inspectorate of Probation</p>	<p>HMIP The experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system Oct2021</p> <p>In this thematic report HMIP found that many of the boys concerned had experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences and had high levels of need. It set out recommendations including numbers 8-18 for local authorities. 4 of these remain partly met at Nottingham City Council as follows.</p> <p>Local authorities should:</p> <p>10. ensure that black and mixed heritage boys are receiving their legal entitlement to education, including alternative provision when this is deemed necessary, and that the placements are suitable to meet their needs.</p> <p>YOS partnership boards should:</p> <p>12. ensure that all board members contribute data from their individual services that identifies areas of disproportionality and the action being taken to address them, and that this data is used to develop a joint strategic needs assessment</p> <p>YOS managers should:</p> <p>14. establish effective processes for gaining feedback from black and mixed heritage boys on the services they receive and use this</p>	<p>In our review last year we ascertained that there was reasonable assurance that recommendations 8,9,11,13 & 15-17 were met through existing or updated action.</p> <p>Youth Justice Service (YJS) has set out the approach to responding to the remaining gaps in relation to the other 4 recommendations as follows including an updated response to 18:</p> <p>10 The LA utilise the Fair Access (FAP) and School Attendance Order process (SAO) to ensure children are in receipt of a suitable education. Ethnicity is not identified through the school admissions process however the LA has a clear statutory responsibility to ensure all children are in receipt of a suitable full-time education. Alternative Provision (AP) access and suitability is the responsibility of the commissioner and the LA only rarely directly commissions alternative provision.</p> <p>The LA currently do not have the mechanisms or resources to ensure that all black and mixed heritage boys across the city are receiving their legal entitlement to education and if in AP are in a suitable placement as we do not hold the information and access to school data systems. Work is underway to improve data sharing and access that may enable clearer reporting at a city, academy trust, school, and pupil level.</p>

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	<p>feedback to assess, review and improve the quality and suitability of service provision</p> <p>18. offer suitable and appropriate support and intervention to the parents and/or carers of black and mixed heritage boys and regularly review the uptake and suitability of this provision.</p>	<p>Specifically, with black and mixed heritage boys in the YJS, key points of contact with all city schools and academies have been established as YJS single points of contact (SPOC) to support any concerns or issues relating to educational provision or placements. The LA's Complex Placement Coordinator and Head of Access to Learning along with the Education Welfare Service are available to support, provide advice to YJS colleagues or to manage any escalations with regards to lack of education in line with legal entitlement.</p> <p>12 All partners within the partnership regularly share data across a range of demographics, including race and ethnicity at a strategic level. The partnership needs to make improvements on sharing of this data at an operational level to reduce duplication and enable improved service design.</p> <p>14 While we haven't specifically targeted Black and Mixed Heritage boys in the recent feedback exercise that has been undertaken, we have increased our use of service user feedback and engagement surveys with specific regard to the induction experienced by all children on open YJS interventions. We now have an established feedback process that is currently being used to gather responses from children and will be used to review and improve the quality and suitability of service provision. This process can now be targeted thematically and towards specific demographics of service user.</p> <p>18 This is a significant gap in service delivery, there are no specific programmes offered by the YJS and the YJS does not have a parenting service. Staff access parenting support available through the Children's Integrated Services. YJS staff take a whole family approach to ensure that parents and carers are fully involved in their child's intervention and support.</p> <p>The Service has created a Diversity and Identity Action Plan. This plan sets out the Service's aims to have a better understanding of the child's lived experiences, to support the child in their development and achieve, and to ensure the workforce is trained and skilled to address the issues that children bring to the service.</p>

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Ofsted	<p>Nottingham</p> <p>Ofsted and the DfE have continued to work closely regarding improvements with Nottingham following its Ofsted focused visit of February 2020.</p> <p>An Inspection of Nottingham City local authority children’s services took place in July 2022 and the report was published in September 2022. Inspectors rated Services for children who need help and protection as inadequate because there are serious failures, leaving children at continued risk of harm when they are first presented as in need of support.</p> <p>Inspectors stated that the following areas need improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness and timeliness of responses to children’s needs when first presented to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). • Management oversight and direction of front-line work and the local authority designated officer (LADO). • Social work capacity, so that social workers and first-line managers can respond effectively to children in need of help and protection, and that children in care have greater consistency of social worker. • Placement sufficiency for children in care and those with complex needs. • The service response to care leavers aged 21 and over. • The service response to young people who are aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless. • The quality and timeliness of return home interviews. 	<p>All of Nottingham City Council Local Authority Children’s homes are understood to have achieved an Ofsted Inspection result of either Good or Outstanding.</p> <p>An Action Plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the Inspection of Nottingham City local authority children’s services was created with the Children at the Heart Improvement Board including key partners established to drive its delivery. The action plan was agreed with Ofsted and includes support from LGA, DfE and Essex County Council (as a Partner in Practice since May 2020 to support improvement). 34 improvement actions were reported complete by 30Mar2023</p> <p>In their April 2023 monitoring visit report, inspectors acknowledged that improvements were being made in Children’s Services. In particular, they found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children are being seen more quickly than previously but there is further improvement to be made in this area • 16/17 yr olds at risk of homelessness receive a better service <p>A further visit took place in July 2023 and the monitoring visit letter has been published at the end of August 2023. The letter indicates areas of strength including identifying the right areas for improvement and development, which helps focus senior leaders’ work to strengthen practice and learning. Stability of the workforce and the quality of supervision and management oversight are high on senior leaders’ agenda and Ofsted confirm that they are appropriate priorities as part of the transformation programme. The letter pointed out areas of continuing concern including continuity of social worker allocation, consistency of quality of recording in some children’s records, a limited information about children’s views in some children’s records, and sometimes a lack of</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of children missing from education and those who are electively home educated. <p>Care Leavers</p> <p>A new Ofsted framework has been in place from April 2023 for determining a judgment on adequacy of local authority arrangements for Care Leavers.</p> <p>Children’s Homes Inspections have been completed in previous years with all homes rated either Good or Outstanding</p>	<p>information about children’s presentation and their home environment. It also noted that there is a temporary investment in additional agency social workers and that senior leaders know that improvements need to be sustainable.</p> <p>During the improvement journey since the 2020 report, assurances have been provided to CLT, Leadership Group, Executive Panel, Executive Board, Audit Committee and the Children’s and Young People Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Transformation plans pointed to areas where improvement opportunities existed through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier intervention to prevent children in need and child protection plans • Managing the length of these plans • Revised focus on early intervention • Rebalancing some care provided from residential to foster care • Enabling more children to leave care earlier <p>In addition planned transformation scope included helping families stay together, reducing bottlenecks and improving processes. Implementation of transformations from Design and Trial phases were due to start in Spring 2023 and flow through to Winter 2023/24 with a focus on sustaining improvements towards the end of the period.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Board receives quarterly performance tracking reports in respect of work with Children in Care and Children Leaving Care.</p> <p>Children’s Partnership Board is to receive further updates on progress related to the Ofsted (Sep23, Mar24)</p>

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		<p>The Council set out a new app based local offer for Care Leavers in June 2023 which was designed to meet the requirements in the Ofsted framework.</p>
<p>Ofsted and Care Quality Commission</p>	<p>Nottingham: SEND Local Area Review</p> <p>The inspection did not identify any significant weaknesses in Nottingham City’s SEND provision that would require the inspectorates to issue a Written Statement of Action.</p> <p>The report included strengths and areas for improvement. Areas for improvement are listed below.</p> <p>Identifying needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for early identification not communicated well enough • The system to identify and meet needs is not well-enough understood by all parents. • Strategy to transfer from children’s services into adult services not yet in place. Support needs improvement. • Too long a wait for assessments to identify possible autism spectrum disorder • Some parents are resorting to paying for private assessments and therapies due to assessment waiting times <p>Meeting needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consistent quality assurance process for EHC plans. 	<p>SEND</p> <p>Nottingham City LA has a statutory responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient, high quality provision available locally to meet the needs of learners with SEND.</p> <p>Actions in respect of the report’s findings were reported to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in January 2022. Among these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning future SEND plans and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with findings • Developing a local communications strategy • Commissioning a 3 bed unit for the most complex children and families experiencing crisis <p>The November 2021 meeting had heard about action to improve inclusion. The Minister for Children and Families wrote to colleagues at NCC congratulating them on the findings in the NCC Ofsted and CQC SEND inspection report. A further review of progress in relation to SEND was scheduled for March 2023 Childrens & Young People Scrutiny Committee, however the Committee is now scheduled to look at SEND and how the Service has responded to issues identified in Local Area Review, with a particular focus on communications, engagement and co-production with parents and families at its meeting in September 2023.</p> <p>The Children’s Partnership Board received a report on learning from the SEND report in March 2022.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and social care contributions to EHC plans are often lacking in detail. Some descriptions of educational needs are overly complex. • Most parents do not know where to find the extensive published information available for parents. • Until very recently, that professionals accessing the electronic records were not alerted to a child or young person's additional needs, due to lack of template or icon. • There are significant recruitment difficulties within some therapy teams. • The BEMH pathway is not communicated well enough to parents. <p>Improving outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are limited social and recreational opportunities in the community that children and young people with SEND can access. • Recent improvements to the management of resources and funding for CAMHS has yet to make a difference long SEND waiting times • The short-break offer does not currently meet the range of diverse needs and disabilities of children and young people and their families. • The health services available to adults with SEND are not equivalent in quality to those available to children and young people with SEND. • Educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Nottingham are improving but are still too low. 	<p>A SEND Green Paper was issued for consultation in March 2022 and closed in July 2022, proposing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a new national SEND and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards for how needs are identified and met at every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care • streamline the redress process to make it easier to resolve disputes earlier, including through mandatory mediation, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases <p>The proposals have the potential to change the processes for identifying young person's needs (currently through the Education, Health and Care Plan), and the mediation aspect of this service. In late 2022 the government intends to publish a national SEND delivery plan, responding to the consultation with how proposals will be implemented.</p> <p>In March 2023 NCC decided to use a portion of the remaining Contain Outbreak Management Fund over a 3 year period to support return to Business As Usual. This is in compliance with grant criteria to mitigate health outcome and health inequality impact of COVID on Children in Care and with Special Education Needs such as increased need for care and complexity of care arising from COVID and the distortion of care placement markets arising from COVID.</p> <p>In the absence of Children's & Young People Scrutiny Committee review we will consider carrying out a short audit to understand assurances in relation to the SEND review and changes to SEND processes resulting from government proposals.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to understand area leaders' strategy Leaders have not ensured that key information for parents is widely disseminated and fully accessible. 	
National Association of Virtual School Heads	<p>Nottingham:</p> <p>Virtual School Peer review challenge (March 2021)</p> <p>The peer review recognised strengths and made the following recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure arrangement for Post 16 young people and Early Years in your care are as strong as all other cohorts. Ensure there is a balance between compliance and quality of PEPs as you move through this transition period. Both areas require improvement. With the planned reduction in DSG support for the Virtual School team in future years – Explore the most effective ways to maintain staffing levels for the benefit of children in your care <p>The challenge also invited consideration of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of data to inform practice (at case work level) and the interventions provided by the Virtual School. consider allocating SENCO responsibility how the Virtual School might support those placed outside of areas requires clarification so that children placed out of city receive equitable services. contact for a short period when the young person starts attending school again. transition for care leavers and 18-25 support 	<p>Actions from the peer review were included in the Virtual School's annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2021-22</p> <p>The complete 2022-23 SIP has been provided together with that for 2023-24 which shows actions transferred as a result of outcomes of 2022-23 SIP process.</p> <p>The following areas of activity related to the Peer Review were shown as complete or substantially complete in SIPs reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of data PEP quality assurance framework Education within placement planning distribution of Early Years Pupil Premium funding and the subsequent monitoring of impact <p>The remaining areas in the SIP related to the Peer Review are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for children in care placed out of area identifying and celebrating best practice use of PPP Post 16 Early Years <p>The SIP continues to target improvements indicated from each successive year's activity within all the above areas.</p> <p>No further assurance required.</p>

External Assurance Provider	Assurance Scope : Concerns	Further Assurance Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistent analysis and use of data to track children who are excluded, out of area and without a school place 	
LGA - Early Years Peer Challenge	<p>Nottingham: Local Government Association Peer Challenge Programme October 2019.</p> <p>The Local Government Association's (LGA) Peer Challenge programme came to Nottingham from 15-18 October 2019, focusing on speech, language and communication in the early years of a child's life (0-5). The Peer Challenge is part of a plan for improving social mobility through education programme.</p> <p>The programme found a very strong and well informed political leadership and management who are championing the early years agenda for the city, with a committed workforce across the Council, partners and the private, voluntary and independent childcare sector. Whilst integration was evidenced, there were opportunities for providers and commissioners to further develop this work and the need for a city-wide speech, language and communication strategy to provide greater clarity on pathways for families, appropriate referrals to services and more timely interventions.</p> <p>The following key recommendations were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an area wide 0 – 5 Early Years Strategy with a particular focus on speech, language and communication including a shared outcomes framework and data dashboard and a clear offer from children's centres Co-produce a parenting journey from a child's conception through to school 	<p>The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee received a progress report in March 2021 from Early Years on an SLC Strategy which is in development. It is expected that joint commissioning of SLC support including therapy will be a key element of the strategy. Colleagues are working with Derby and Leicester to centralise SLC resources for the city and to support parents, carers and professionals to navigate what is available, so that they can help children to develop their SLC skills. Information has been centralised in one place, called the Balanced System pathway, providing clear guidance and support. Data analysis is a key element of the approach to improvement.</p> <p>In September 2021 the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee received a report on Early Years Entitlements Funding including measures to encourage take up of entitlement, work on the Speech Language and Communication Strategy, and sufficiency of childcare provision.</p> <p>In January 2022 the Schools Forum approved measures to change the funding distribution criteria from April 2022 to ensure settings were supported with SEND needs and fully distribute previous underspends to support heightened Speech Language & Communication needs.</p> <p>A Speech Language & Communication strategy for 0-5 was presented to Health & Wellbeing Board in July 2022. This identified 3 areas where progress was not so good:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) offer to include group sessions ('Chatterbox' or 'Home Talk') with the aim of supporting triage, upskilling wider workforce, avoiding unnecessary assessments and providing input whilst awaiting specialist assessment • Review the use of children's centres as venues for childminder groups, voluntary sector, peer led groups, other partners and more universal provision • Accelerate the integrated approach for the 2 ½ year checks – pilot with nurseries and CityCare the joint completion of the check • Increase the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old funding, working with partner agencies to identify eligible children and parent champions to engage families • Review the approach to identifying and addressing needs of targeted cohorts not reaching GLD through effective data analysis • Consider developing a local authority cohort tracker for the return of summative EYFS data to evidence progress and inform intervention • Ensure that speech, language and communication needs inform Integrated Care System (ICS) long term planning to improve children's outcomes and reduce inequalities • Creation of moderation hubs across the city • Use the documents that were provided for this peer challenge as the basis for a resource for your own workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning arrangements are not understood by third parties. • Sufficient data-sharing agreements are not in place. • Co-production of achieving statutory requirements as taking an integrated approach takes time, and resources. Resources are depleting, and COVID restrictions have had an impact on the way services are able to operate and deliver their services <p>It proposed the following collective aims for partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint commissioners must ensure that commissioning supports the delivery of a whole systems model including universal, targeted and specialist offer delivered seamlessly from a child and family perspective. • Data sharing agreements across agencies in order to ensure that the outcome is achieved of no child or family missing out on support from any part of the system. • Integrated 2 year checks are crucial to providing a robust system of universal identification. • A strategic approach to engagement of families in take up of the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer. • Integration of the 0-5 workforce, with identified baseline training and assessment/understanding of the screening process. <p>Further actions were to be identified along with appropriate measures for success.</p>