

**Statutory Officers Report for Health and Wellbeing Board  
Corporate Director of People  
May 2024**

**Children's Integrated Services and Education:**

Ofsted – Monitoring Visit

Last month Children's Services received their fourth Ofsted Monitoring Visit. The focus of this visit was on Children in Care Planning and Achieving Permanence.

Inspectors joined us for two days. During this time they met with members of staff in our Children in Care and Fieldwork teams focusing on the experiences of children in care. They also spent time with some of the children in our care to hear from them first-hand. Inspectors spent most of their time reviewing casework, speaking to Social Workers about their work, the processes we have in place and what it's like to work in our service. Inspectors were focused on understanding the experiences of children in care, how effectively we respond to their needs and how well we plan for their permanency.

Inspectors spoke about how they had met tenacious and committed workers who know their children and work hard to do their best for them. They fed back that staff felt supported by their managers and this support, along with a range of development opportunities and working within a diverse workforce meant they enjoyed working for Nottingham.

Inspectors recognised the additional resources that has been put into the service. They could see how this has had an impact in some areas and this gives them confidence that this would support our continued improvement journey across the whole service by lowering caseloads and supporting increased oversight. They acknowledge that whilst the worker is the lead practitioner for a child, it is the system around them and effective partnership working that enables strong outcomes for children.

As we knew, we have some further work to do on ensuring all children receive the relevant assessments to identify their needs and support long term planning and permanency.

We also need to consistently ensure that clear long-term plans are recorded on the child's record and actions to achieve this are given clear priorities through clear timeframes which reflect the urgency of the identified actions.

Lower caseloads will support more frequent visiting based on the needs of the child and will enable social workers to spend more time with children to undertake direct work with them and build strong, trusting relationships.

Ofsted has now published the [Monitoring Visit letter](#) from this visit.

## D2N2 Fostering Hub Launch

The latest achievement from Children's Services sees the launch of the D2N2 fostering recruitment hub last month. Working alongside colleagues from Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Derby, the aim of the collaboration is to increase the total number of local authority foster carers across our area, and by working together in respect of marketing, recruitment and support the four councils believe we can achieve more than operating as individual authorities. This is to ensure that when it is necessary children can be taken into care locally.

In recognition of the work undertaken our colleagues have received high praise from the Department for Education (DfE) who have said, *"Huge congratulations on the launch of Foster for East Midlands... well done for being the first of the regional clusters to launch...The website looks fantastic and is very welcoming. Thanks to all the staff across the 4 LAs for working so collaboratively and seamlessly together. This is hugely exciting..."*

The new recruitment hub website is now live at [Foster for East Midlands](#).

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## Congratulations to our Children's Homes and Short Breaks Unit

A big congratulations to all the Managers and Staff who work in our Nottingham City Council Children's Homes and Short Breaks unit. They have all achieved fantastic Ofsted inspection results in this last financial year and we are very proud of their achievements.

They look after our city's most vulnerable children and teenagers providing 'Good' and 'Outstanding' care and support, which has been recognised by the regulator.

Here are some of the comments made by Ofsted in their inspection reports:

"At the time of the inspection, there were three children living at the home. Children are receiving good care from an experienced and dedicated staff team. The manager and staff genuinely care for the children and are attentive to their needs".

"All staff have a shared ethos, to support stability within families, and to provide excellent experiences for children. All staff are passionate, confident, and ambitious for the children".

"Children have strong relationships with the managers and staff. They look forward to seeing each other and sharing their news from the day. Staff hold children in mind when they are away from the home and children stay in touch when they move on. This is testament to the relationships they build".

"Staff understand the importance of education and children attend full time. The manager and staff work effectively with external professionals, sharing ideas about how to best support children. An external professional said, 'There is really good communication and a trusting relationship with staff.' Staff promote children's progress, achievements, and learning. This helps children feel valued".

"Leaders and managers have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They recruit staff safely and ensure that they are supported into their

role. When concerns are raised about staff, these are investigated, and appropriate actions are taken to ensure that children and staff are safe”.

“Children are well supported by staff to share their wishes, feelings, and views. Focused discussions happen between staff and children on a regular basis. The manager and staff write to children using child-friendly language. Children feel listened to and cared for”.

“The manager has ensured that staff are provided with excellent training opportunities. The manager also empowers staff and ensures that they feel a part of the development of the team. For example, some staff have attended external training and conferences and were tasked with presenting their learning to the rest of the team. High-quality training means that staff have the tools and knowledge to provide individualised, informed care”.

“Children rarely go missing from home. When they do go missing, staff members follow established protocols to return children home quickly and safely. Staff members ensure that information is shared with relevant external safeguarding agencies. This means that there is a robust multi-agency response when children go missing from home”.

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### Hospital and Home Education Learning Centre

Earlier this month we heard that our Hospital and Home Education Learning Centre has been shortlisted for the TES School Award 2024 as ‘Specialist Provision of the Year’.

The TES School Awards brings Independent and State Schools together to celebrate excellence across the whole education sector.

The Hospital and Home Education Learning Centre is an education provision for children and young people with health needs. It delivers five separate provisions across four sites including:

1. The Children’s Hospital School at the Queens Medical Centre
2. Two wards and a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at the Lookout Education Centre at Hopewood CAMHS Unit
3. Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team (NEST) based at Castle Road
4. Secondary Pathways based at Castle Road
5. Sherwood Pathways based at the Sherwood Education Centre

This is a tremendous endorsement for the work that this team do for our children and young people.

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### New Alternative Provision Free School

As part of the government’s Spring Budget announcement, Raleigh Education Trust’s joint application with the Council for a 100 place Alternative Provision Free

School has been approved. The school is to be named the Bowden Academy after the founder of Raleigh Cycles – Sir Frank Bowden. It will provide places for children who have been permanently excluded from school as well as early intervention places to support children at risk of exclusion. This is a really exciting development for the city and its children.

Whilst the permanent site for the school is yet to be confirmed a project team will now be set up, led by the DfE, to plan the opening of the new school and we will share more updates as we have them.

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### Giving the Gift of Reading

Last month, our city councillors held another Big Reading Challenge by aiming to read stories to as many children as possible to raise money for Nottingham Imagination Library.

The fundraiser started on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April with a class of children enjoying a story session at Nottingham Castle and finished with stories at the new Central Library.

[Nottingham Imagination Library](#) is an amazing scheme that delivers a free book every month to local children from birth up to five years of age.

Supported by the city council, Nottingham Rotary and Small Steps Big Changes, the charity has delivered more than half-a-million books to over 11,000 children in the city since 2009.

The Nottingham Imagination Library helps parents and children to enjoy exploring books together. The scheme is proven to raise children's literacy levels and, by receiving these books, our children are more likely to be ready to start school when they turn five.

Every donation helps:

- £2.16 is the average cost for a child to get a new book
- £26 pays for a child to get a new book each month for a year
- £130 pays for a child to get a book every month from birth until their 5th birthday

You can support the fundraiser here: [www.gofundme.com/f/big-reading-challenge-2024](http://www.gofundme.com/f/big-reading-challenge-2024) and find more information here: [Nottingham Imagination Library – Registered Charity: 1204435 working in partnership with Nottingham City Council, The Rotary Club of Nottingham and Small Steps Big Changes](#)

## Adult Social Care:

### Adult Social Care Hub

The new Adult Social Care Hub went live at the end of February. This new Hub allows citizens, carers or professionals to access information and advice regarding Adult Social Care in Nottingham City Council. The Hub is home to information on preventive and community care options that can support citizens to remain independent and prevent the need for long term care. Doing more online improves the service to citizens who will spend less time waiting on the phone or having to contact the council during office hours. Where people have to contact us, reducing demand will improve response times, meaning we can respond faster, intervene earlier and triage effectively.

[Adult Social Care Hub - Nottingham City Council](#)

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### Extra Care Review – Provider Engagement

The Commissioning Team led a workshop with Extra Care providers using the PATH methodology which is a tool that helps any group develop a shared vision and make plans to move towards that vision. The steps in PATH are **1. Creating the Dream** (what a good life for citizens would look like), **2. One Year From Now** (looking back on the 'past year' and what has been achieved towards the vision) and **3. Grounding it in the Now** (create a tension between the vision of a positive possible future and where we are now in relation to this future). The workshop was really successful, with lots of ideas and constructive challenge and feedback generated which has helped shape the development of a new model of Extra Care.

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### Market Position Statement

The Commissioning Team worked with PeopleToo to develop a new Market Position Statement (MPS) for the Nottingham City Adult Social Care care and support market. An MPS is required to ensure Local Authorities meet their 'market shaping duties under the Care Act 2014'. The MPS has been subject to scrutiny from providers through consultation events in 2023/24. The MPS will help NCC promote best value by identifying gaps in service provision and areas of unmet need. Commissioners and Operational Teams can then prioritise resources where they will have the greatest impact, ensuring that limited resources are used efficiently and effectively. The MPS is a dynamic document and will be updated regularly.

It is available to view on the [Provider Corner of ASKLion](#)

Catherine Underwood

Corporate Director for People  
(May 2024)