

**Statutory Officers Report for Health and Wellbeing Board
Corporate Director of Children and Education Services (DCS)
February 2025**

Corporate Director of Children and Education Services

I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself as the new Interim Corporate Director of Children and Education Services.

As you will be aware, Jill Colbert left the Council in December 2024 and recruitment is currently taking place for the substantive role (this process will have been finalised by the time of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting).

I have been seconded to Nottingham City Council since June 2024 as the Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services. I am seconded from Lincolnshire County Council where I have worked since 2014, most recently as a Children's Services Assistant Director (Transformation/Sector Led Improvement).

I have worked in Children's Services for nearly 25 years, qualifying as a social worker in 2001. I have worked across a broad spectrum of services and have previously worked in both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, before moving to Lincolnshire. I represent the Association of Directors of Children's Services on a number of national committees, and I am a safeguarding trustee for a Multi Academy Trust.

I am truly excited about the journey ahead as we work together to transform outcomes for children and young people in Nottingham City. With the upcoming Family Help Reforms (Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill) set to take effect from April 2025, we have a unique opportunity to shape the future for families in Nottingham in a meaningful and lasting way. As Nottingham Children's Integrated Services continues its improvement journey, these reforms provide a platform for us to innovate, collaborate, and deliver real change that empowers children, young people, and families to thrive.

I look forward to working with you over the coming weeks, however in the meantime if you wish to raise anything with me, would like to be involved in the work on the Family Help Reforms or would like to indicate any initial ideas that might support areas to focus on to improve joint work across the city, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ofsted – Monitoring Visit

During November 2024, we received our sixth Ofsted Monitoring Visit. The focus of this visit was on Children in Care Planning and Achieving Permanence. During their visit, Inspectors focused on:

- The quality of children's assessments, plans, and reviews.
- The quality of visits and work with children.

- Where children in care live and the support they and their carers receive.
- The quality of management oversight and supervision.
- Stability and sustainability of the children in care service workforce, including the impact of current caseloads on practice.
- Performance and quality assurance oversight of senior leaders.

Inspectors acknowledged the improvements that had been made since the last visit but noted that there is still a lot of work to do.

The letter for this visit has now been [published](#).

Nottingham City Council's Child Friendly City Programme

On Wednesday 6 November, members of Nottingham's Child Friendly City programme team, came together to review their progress with the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) representatives. The morning was spent looking back at the achievements of the last six months and ahead to future initiatives, changes and improvements, all aiming to put children's rights into practice.

Notable achievements include the strength of the partnerships formed across Nottingham to support various workstreams that have supported a child rights based approach and the evidence required for UNICEF UK. As a result of this work; a recent successful event at the council house as part of developing a new Best Start Strategy, part of the 'Healthy Badge' workstream; and the imminent launch of a city-wide survey for children and young people, to gather their views on their experiences of living in Nottingham was launched on World Child's Day on 20 November (see below).

If you're interested in the Child Friendly Nottingham programme or how you can get involved or contribute, please contact: child.friendly@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Marking World Children's Day



On World Children's Day (20 November) children from schools across Nottingham came together to mark the day and to launch Child Friendly Nottingham's children and young people's survey.

This is another important step on Nottingham's ambition to be an accredited UNICEF Child Friendly City.

The event at the Council House was about fun and interactive activity and was themed around Your Voice Matters – Get It Heard. Children took part in website design, voting exercises, designing their own Nottingham children’s magazine, working with sports clubs and key Nottingham partners.

The event highlighted the importance of children and young people getting opportunities to be heard and have their views and experiences taken seriously.

The Child Friendly City (CFN) programme builds on the rights of the child and work is being carried out across the partnership in areas children and young people prioritise.

Full details can be found on the [CFN website here](#).

Nottingham City Council Area SEND Engagement Meeting

Earlier this month, myself and Nick Lee along with colleagues from health were invited to a meeting with Ofsted to look at our arrangements for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the City. In particular the impact that our services are having for children and young people with SEND and our plans for the next 12 months. It was great to see and hear the joint partnership work that is being undertaken across the city and this was recognised by OFSTED.

First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there were 87 First Time Entrants (FTE) into the Criminal Justice System. This is a significant improvement and a huge reduction in previous figures. Comparative analysis shows that Nottingham City FTE rate continues to reduce more significantly than other authorities.

First Time Entrants are people who enter the Criminal Justice System for the first time. To enter the Criminal Justice System, someone must receive a substantive outcome for a criminal offence.

Thank you to colleagues for their partnership and hard work to achieve this reduction.

Sarah Nardone

February 2025