

## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – NOVEMBER 2017

<b>Title of paper:</b>	Children in Care Placements	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services	<b>Wards affected:</b> All
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<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>		
<b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>		
Strategic Regeneration and Development		<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools		<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services		<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer		<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture		<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>		
This report provides an annual update on Nottingham City Council’s Children in Care placements and shares progress against the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy.		
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		
<b>1</b>	To note the contents of the report.	

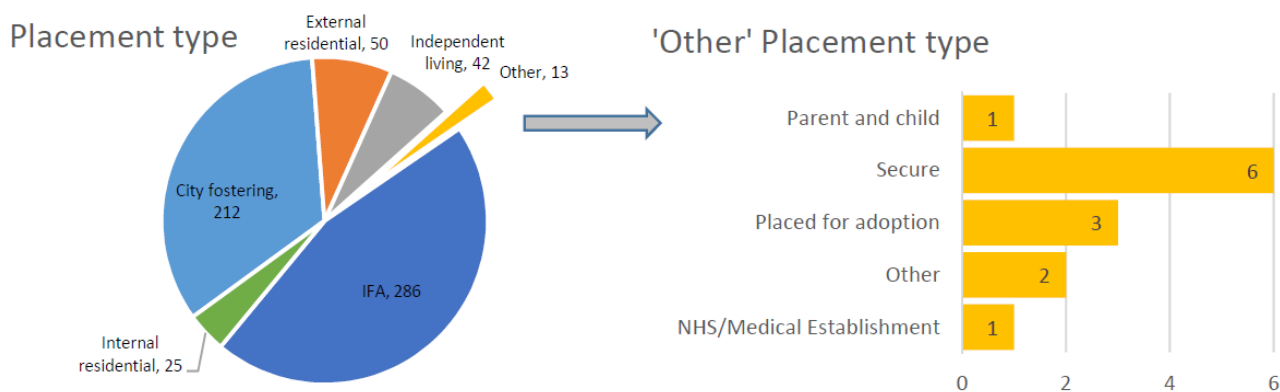
### **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The report provides an annual update to the Board with regards to Nottingham City Council Children in Care placements and progress against the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy.

### **2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

#### Placement Overview

- 2.1 As at 31.08.2017, Nottingham City Council (NCC) had 628 Children in Care (CiC). In line with NCC’s ambition to keep young people within family settings wherever appropriate, and despite the increase in the overall cohort, the proportion of CiC placed in residential settings has decreased by 1%, with foster placements having increased by 2% (to 79% of the overall cohort). Refer to complete placement type breakdown below.



- 2.2 A priority is to support children and young people to remain living locally, taking into consideration maintaining their education, health, social connections and access to resources. In September 2017, 85% of CiC were placed within 20 miles of Nottingham City. This is an increase of 2% on the previous year and means that the 85% target has been reached.
- 2.3 There is concerted effort to maximise the use of internal placements and there is now dedicated capacity within the Placement Service to achieve this. There has been an increase of 3% from the previous year of all CiC placed within internal provision (from 35% to 38%). Further efforts to increase this include; recruitment of new carers, retention of existing carers, maximising the capacity of the existing carer cohort and expansion of the internal residential estate.
- 2.4 Challenges faced by NCC reflect the national picture where placement capacity is limited. There is insufficient supply of local fostering and residential placements for those children and young people presenting with more complex needs. In response to this, NCC are investing in the expansion of their internal provision. This includes increasing capacity within the internal residential estate, alongside significant investment into the recruitment and retention of internal foster carers.

#### Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

- 2.5 The CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy (2016-2018) responds to the Local Authority's statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked after Children and Young People. The Strategy determines the way in which CiC placements are commissioned, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. It lays out the City's vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market. The Strategy was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2016.

#### East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF)

- 2.6 The EMRCF is a consortium of seven local authorities in the East Midlands working in partnership with providers of care placements to achieve consistent, high quality and value for money placements.
- 2.7 After an initial four year contract, the EMRCF was recommissioned in February 2016 for a further four year period. The Framework opens annually to allow new providers

the opportunity to tender for the Framework. The evaluation process is currently open, with NCC working alongside the regional authorities to undertake the scoring of providers who have submitted tenders. The results will be published in January 2018.

- 2.8 The Framework brings about a number of benefits, including;
- maintaining a diverse, healthy and competitive market by enabling new providers to join the Framework annually throughout the life of the contract;
  - achieving efficiencies through streamlined processes and coordinated contract management and performance monitoring;
  - shared risk, buying power, market influence and information and resource sharing.

### Residential Care Contract

- 2.9 In line with the Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy, a block contract for ten residential children's homes placements over a maximum length of ten years, was awarded to Homes2Inspire in April 2015. The ten block contract placements have been full since October 2016. A further two placements have been negotiated at the block contract rate (with only financial commitment for the ten). At September 2017, the full 12 placements were full.
- 2.10 Three of the Homes are currently rated by Ofsted as 'Good'. Two of the Homes are rated by Ofsted as 'Requires Improvement'. These homes are subject to increased quality assurance visits and progress against their Ofsted action plan is closely monitored. The team around the children have reviewed the appropriateness of the continued placements to ensure outcomes are not adversely affected. Due to the complexities of matching multiple children's needs and behaviours in one of the homes, it has been agreed in the best interests for all, that new placements are found for three of the children in placement.
- 2.11 The contract has achieved;
- a reduction in local authority spend on residential care;
  - further efficiencies via reduced staff time, travel expenses and local commissioned resources;
  - greater forward planning for the local authority and provider;
  - supporting more young people to remain living locally.
- Long term, it is anticipated that these will lead to improved outcomes and placement stability for the cohort.

### Semi-Independent Accommodation

- 2.12 NCC has an internal semi-independent estate which provides consistent, quality accommodation and support for 16-18 year olds. In addition to this, local external providers are commissioned on a spot purchase basis, to support the demand for semi-independent placements.
- 2.13 A more robust commissioning and contracting approach is required. In November 2017, it is the intention to procure semi-independent services via an open accreditation process which offers an opportunity to improve outcomes, local sufficiency, consistent quality and greater value for money. This will be available to access placements from in January 2018

## Quality Assurance

2.14 Quality assurance of external placement provision remains a priority for the Placement Service. All external placements are subject to an annual unannounced quality assurance visit. In addition to this, wherever concerns are raised regarding a provision, a visit is undertaken within seven days to ascertain facts surrounding the concerns. Action plans are issued to the provider and monitored by the Placement Service to ensure that appropriate remedial action is undertaken in a timely manner. This approach was cited as a strength in the latest Ofsted inspection.

2.15 In addition to the quality assurance visits, through the role, the Placement Service also;

- works with the CiC Council to ensure that children and young people's feedback meaningfully informs service development and quality improvements
- provides quality assurance reports on individual placements for the weekly Children's Placements Panel to ensure that the multi-agency panel can make informed reviews of young people's cases
- works in partnership with the Youth Offending Team and Nottinghamshire Police to ensure a joined up approach to the management of concerns surrounding NCC CiC placements. This includes attendance at the Concerns Network – a forum lead by Nottinghamshire Police and Youth Offending Service to share intelligence and management strategies between professionals, partner agencies and private providers regarding local concerns and significant events (e.g. child sexual exploitation, individuals or areas of potential risk, recent criminal activities).
- maintains oversight and undertakes analysis of missing/absent episodes to identify trends with regards to providers/areas of concern
- undertaken quality assurance visits for Derby City Council (generating circa £4,000)
- working with Nottinghamshire County Council to monitor the performance of the new Advocacy and Independent Visitor contract

## Continuing Care Funding

2.16 The National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care sets out the process for assessing and agreeing continuing care funding for children with complex health needs.

2.17 An Officer based within the Placement Service leads upon the multi-agency liaison and coordinates the referrals for funding eligibility assessments. Where successful, the funding is used by NCC to contribute to specialist placements which are able to meet the complex needs of the children and young people placed and therefore achieve improved outcomes for the cohort. The Continuing Care funding contribution for 15/16 increased by 47% in 16/17. It is forecast to increase again by 15% by year end of 17/18. This is not taking into account any pending referrals which may be successful, and if so, these will be backdated to the date in which the referral was first submitted.

## Regional Developments

2.18 SEND Placements - The Placement Service are supporting the regional development of improved commissioning arrangements for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.

2.19 DN2 - NCC, in partnership with Derby City and Nottinghamshire County Councils (DN2), has been successful in obtaining an offer in principle of £3m towards outcomes payments from the Life Chances Fund, delivered by the Big Lottery Fund.

2.20 DN2 are now seeking a Social Investor and provider(s) to create an innovative service to support the most complex CiC to ensure improved outcomes and life chances, and to provide financial savings to the Authorities.

2.21 The focus for NCC will be on;

- Residential de-escalation - services working to transition young people from residential care to a family setting (foster placement).
- Placement stabilisation - services working to support foster placements to be maintained where they are at risk of breaking down and therefore preventing the need for more intensive services such as residential care.

The model means that NCC will only pay for outcomes achieved.

### **3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 None.

### **4 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

4.1 None.

### **5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)**

5.1 None.

### **6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

6.1 None.

### **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An EIA is not needed as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions.

### **8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

8.1 None.

**9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

9.1 Children in Care Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2016-2018