



Statutory Officers Report for Health and Wellbeing Board

Corporate Director of Children's Services

September 2019

Corporate Director for People

I mentioned in my last update that I had finally succumbed to pressure from family to retire and that the recruitment campaign for the new Corporate Director was due to commence.

I am delighted to confirm the appointment of Catherine Underwood. As you will be aware, Catherine is our current Director for Adult Social Care. Catherine is enthusiastic and passionate about working in Nottingham, with a proven track record in driving improvement and delivering results that drive change. I am confident that I will be leaving the department in very safe hands.

My final day in the office will be 30th September 2019. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and friendship over the last six years.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

On 31st July, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published its findings into the extent of any historical institutional failures to protect children in the care of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County councils from sexual abuse.

There were two key recommendations, for which we will need to publish our response within six months of the publication of this report:

1. Nottingham City Council should assess the potential risk posted by current and former foster carers directly provided by the council in relation to the sexual abuse of children. They should also ensure that current and former foster carers provided by external agencies are assessed by those agencies. Any concerns which arise should be referred to the appropriate body or process, including the Disclosure and Barring Service, the local authority designated officer (LADO) or equivalent, the fostering panel and the police.
2. Nottingham City Council and its child protection partners should commission an independent, external evaluation of their practice concerning harmful sexual behaviour, including responses, prevention, assessment intervention and workforce development. An action plan should be set up to ensure that any recommendations are responded to in a timely manner and progress should be reported to City's Safeguarding Children Partnership. *We have already commissioned NSPCC to undertake this independent evaluation.*

As part of the wider cross-cutting learning from the 14 strands of the Inquiry, they will return to a number of issues that have emerged during this investigation, including but not limited to:

- Children who exhibit harmful sexual behaviour.

- The barriers to disclosure of sexual abuse by children, including those in care, and proactive steps to reduce those barriers.
- The approach to civil litigation, including the role of insurers.

We have taken the Inquiry extremely seriously and we will be considering its findings very carefully. Our biggest priorities are to make sure we are doing everything we can to protect today's children from harm and provide the best possible support for adult survivors of abuse in childhood.

Like all councils, we constantly striving to improve our services and we will redouble our efforts to do that in light of this report. We will continue to implement changes in response to lessons we have learnt through the Inquiry process.

We are already taking steps to provide 'trauma-informed training' for relevant staff which helps to ensure that survivors of abuse get the appropriate help in accessing the support they need. We are also involving survivors in helping us to shape this and other changes to ensure our policies and services are fit for purpose.

For more information about historical child abuse, including how to get help if you, or someone you know, is affected by abuse please [click here](#) or call 0300 131 0300. If you contact us you will be listened to, taken seriously and given the support you need.

The full report can be found [here](#).

Violence Reduction Unit

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner have recently been notified of a funding allocation to support the partnership to establish a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) for the Nottinghamshire area. Nottinghamshire's VRU will be a small, coordinating hub that will build on the exciting work that is already taking place in the City and County to reduce violence. Central government are keen for all VRUs to utilise a public health approach to identifying and tackling the causes of violence in our communities and will encourage all partners to work together with our communities to take a systemic, evidence-based approach to this issue.

Colleagues from both local authorities and Nottinghamshire Police are being seconded into the Unit to support this work and to ensure that this supports existing activity and to avoid duplication. The VRU is likely to get up and running in September 2019, so watch this space for more information over the next few months.

Our Exam Results

August is a busy time in our secondary academies and local Colleges. You will have seen lots of smiley, jumping youngsters waving pieces of paper in the local news. It is right to celebrate the hard work of all our youngsters. It is also important to recognise the hard work from their teachers and support staff.

Early analysis of this year's GCSE and A Level results indicate a mixed picture of improvements in some areas, but not in others.

Also, a huge congratulations to our Children in Care – provisional results show a 20% increase in the number of children getting 5 or more GCSE's. Thank you to all of our staff and Foster Carers who have supported them.

Alison Michalska
Corporate Director for Children and Adults
(September 2019)