

Nottingham City – update on progress in implementing the Children and Families Act 2014

The Children and Families Act was introduced in 2014. Chapter 3 of the Act relates to Local Authority and local area duties and responsibilities in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The main aims of the Act are to:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people 0-25 and their families
- Replace Statements of special educational needs with Education, Health & Care plans (EHC plans)
- Replace school action/plus with SEN Support
- Ensure that settings implement a graduated response to meet the needs of all young people with SEND
- Provide rights to a Personal budget
- Ensure that the local area co-produces services and strategic developments with children, young people and their families in decision
- Offer impartial mediation and advice
- Provide and independent Information Advice Support (IASS) to young people and families
- Publish the local offer of support and services
- Ensure joined up service delivery through joint commissioning with partners in particular health services
- Ensure young people are appropriately prepared for adulthood

Nottingham City has made significant progress in implementing the reforms and completed the transfer of Statements of SEN to EHC plans in advance of the deadline and supported a neighbouring local authority in completing theirs. In addition:

- Nottingham issued between 98-100% of new EHC plans within the statutory 20 week timeline. This compares very favourably to national figures.
- Nottingham City has significantly more personal budgets than the national average.
- During the 2018-19 academic year, over 60% of the EHC Plans we maintained (and which required a review within that academic year), were amended following review. A large proportion of these amendments included updating outcomes in response to progress, ensuring their relevancy to a student's changing needs. For the 2018-19 academic year, 99% of plans that required amending were amended within 8 weeks, with over 55% of these being turned around within a week of them being requested by casework. Only 1% (7 cases) were outside the 8-week deadline, all due to waiting on information from other services or because parents requested a delay.
- Nottingham City employ Engagement and Advice workers whose role is to gather the views and aspirations of young people and their families as part of the EHC assessment process and to enable EHC plans to be co-produced.
- There has been significant joint SEND services and social care's Whole Life Disability Service (WLDS) to dovetail the timing of social care assessments with that of EHC Reviews. WLDS staff are aiming to prioritise attendance at reviews for students at key transition points, particularly Year 11+ students who are moving settings and those who will imminently transition to adult services. This is to enable EHC Plans to be updated with the most recent social care information before 31 March deadline to ensure that young people have a smooth transition to adulthood.
- SEN Services continues to work closely with health and social care partners including delivering practice improvement days.

Context

There are 46,869 children and young people attending schools in Nottingham. Of these, 6398 children and young people have some kind of SEND (13.7% of the school population)

As of January 2019, 1012 children and young people had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This number continues to rise in line with the national picture.

Nottingham City has a range of good quality provision available for young people with SEND. This includes 5 special all of which are good or outstanding. In addition, There are 5 Focus provisions in Nottingham. These are specialist resources in mainstream schools. 3 cater for young people with Autism and 2 for young people who are profoundly deaf. 585 young people attend specialist schools and specialist post 16 settings and 40 young people attend Focus Provision.

The remainder of young people with SEND have provision made for them in mainstream early years, schools and post 16 settings. Nottingham City provides additional funding for these young people without the need for an EHC plan. Currently 905 children and young people receive this additional high needs funding and inclusion funding.

The 5 year SEND strategy was co-produced with young people and families and published in September 2018 and has been reviewed by the SEND Accountability Board. Targets within the plan are on target to be met. These include:

- Development of additional provision for young people with Autism – this provision will open in September 2020 on the Nethergate Academy site
- Support mainstream schools to improve provision for young people with SEND
 - Additional funding has been ringfenced to support young people in mainstream schools and a review of the high level needs funding system has been completed. A new system will be piloted with schools in Spring 2020.
 - Routes to Inclusion (R2i) is being rollout to all schools in the City. R2i is a toolkit to support children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues. The toolkit was developed with primary SENCOs and launched with primary schools in October 2018. It aims to guide teachers and SENCOs through a systematic process to identify and support children with SEMH, starting with universal provision, various identification tools, assessment tools and evaluation tools. R2i is the process schools are asked to follow before they seek external support for a child with SEMH. The toolkit has been rolled out to primary schools and work has begun with secondary schools in the City.

Nottingham City and the local area are working closely together to ensure that they are prepared for the Local Area Review (LAR). The SEND LAR is an inspection of how all partners in Nottingham City effectively:

- Identify children and young people with SEND
- Assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
- Improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Lead, manage and govern arrangements for SEND in the local area

The 'local area' is the geographical area of the local authority. The inspection will look at the contribution of all partner agencies (in particular education, health and social care) AND will consider children and young people who are resident in that area but receive their support outside of that area. The inspection is expected imminently.