

CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES

Our Journey to Good

January 2017



Our improvement journey since March 2014



Nottingham
City Council

This document is designed to explain and celebrate the improvements made to Children's Services since our last Ofsted inspection in March 2014.



Foreword

In March 2014 Ofsted inspected our services and judged them to require improvement to be good.

They recognised a lot of strengths and, most importantly, they felt that children in Nottingham were safe. They also identified some areas for development and asked us to develop an action plan to address these. Between 2014 and 2016 we have also benefited from a number of peer reviews and inspections that have helped us to keep testing the quality of our services and inform our plans for continued improvement.

Over the past three years we have made many improvements to our services and to the experiences of children, young people and families. This is thanks to the continued hard work and commitment of colleagues across the Directorate and the wider Council.

With ongoing increases in demand for our services, the implementation of Liquid Logic and roll out of our new operating model we know that 2016 has been a busy year.

This document has been written to remind you of our achievements over the last few years. Hopefully you will recognise some of these achievements as your own and reflect on how far we have travelled as a Directorate when we look at our whole journey.



April 2014 to March 2015

This year saw some big changes:

- We started to move towards integration of two Directorates (Vulnerable Children & Families and Children's Social Care). During 2014 Helen Blackman became Interim Director for this service area and we began our journey towards becoming Children's Integrated Services.
- We made some big changes to our assessment and care planning processes with the introduction of the Continuous Assessment, new templates for Child in Need, Child Protection and Children in Care plans that built on recommendations from Ofsted. We introduced a new audit framework for Children's Social Care that allowed us to look at six key themes and analyse how we improved practice by making comparisons across different cycles of auditing.
- We temporarily increased our IRO capacity from 8 to 14 and from one Manager to two. These arrangements have subsequently been formalised as a permanent increase in the establishment for the service. We have also established a dedicated Local Authority Dedicated Officer (LADO) role.
- We implemented a new structure for our Fostering, Adoption and Post-Order Services to ensure that teams were able to strengthen and develop the specialist skills and knowledge required to support foster carers and adoptive families.
- In October 2014 we had our first cohort of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) start a new induction programme with dedicated learning placements in Duty and Fieldwork teams prior to taking up a permanent role. Many of those workers are still with the Council and have progressed to become Level 2 Social Workers. We have continued to learn and strengthen our NQSW programme in the City. We have also worked hard to retain our most experienced and committed social workers. This has allowed us to stabilise our workforce through the introduction of a market supplement to bring the City's pay in line with that of neighbouring authorities.
- In July 2014 Nottingham City was awarded £42m of Big Lottery Funding to establish the Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) programme. SSBC is a 10 year programme designed to improve the outcomes of 0-3 year olds. SSBC is a new partnership between Nottingham CityCare, the City Council, voluntary sector organisations, parents, families and communities. SSBC focuses on children, parents and communities in Arboretum, Aspley, Bulwell and St Anns.
- During 2014 we established Project Evolution, a project to help us deliver a new case recording system to replace CareFirst, which was heavily criticised by Ofsted during the inspection. We developed a specification and put this out to tender in December 2014.

- We received a Peer Review of Adults Services in November 2014. This review looked at the effectiveness of the joint Children's and Adults Safeguarding Board. One of the main recommendations was for the work of the two Boards to be split out. This led to the creation of a new Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board (NCSCB).
- In March 2015 we also received a visit to our Youth Offending Team to inform a Youth Justice Board stock-take which was published in July 2015. We received very positive feedback about the work of our YOT.
- We introduced supervision logbooks to ensure that everyone was provided with consistent support and we strengthened supervision templates to improve the analysis section and links to Signs of Safety.



April 2015 to March 2016

Our improvement journey gained momentum:

- In May 2015 we launched the first Delivery Plan for our integrated Directorate. This document was designed to explain how the work we do fits with our commitment to improve the lives of children and families in Nottingham City. The plan links our work to the bigger picture for the Council and outlined key principles and priorities for our newly merged Directorate. We also introduced a regular newsletter from the Director to help to keep up to date with good news and important information. During 2015 we confirmed permanent appointments to all the Director and Head of Service roles within the Directorate to create a new Leadership Team.
- Project Evolution continued at a pace. In May 2015 we awarded the contract for our new case recording system to Liquid Logic after many frontline colleagues had tested and fed back their views about a number of potential new systems. Later in 2015 we started the hard work to configure the Liquid Logic system to fit our local model and to make sure that key elements of our practice, like Signs of Safety and whole-family approaches, were reflected.
- We rolled out a new payment scheme for our City Foster Carers to encourage more local carers to join the Council and support our children in care. In January 2016 we started to work with the NSPCC on an innovative project to deliver Life Story work.
- To improve the connection between our work and our partners in schools we established a network for Designated Safeguarding Leads in Schools. To bring challenge and test the impact of our work we established a new Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and to drive the quality of the Virtual School a Virtual School Governing Body was formed. We expanded the remit of the Virtual School to enable children in care 16+ and care leavers to access support.
- Learning from the Casey and Ofsted reviews into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) we established a Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel to coordinate our work across the Council and partners. To further strengthen our work in this area we established a full-time CSE Coordinator. In recognition of the potential links between children who go missing and sexual exploitation we realigned the work of our Missing Children's Team and the CSE Coordinator took over line management of the team. Our CSE Coordinator also chairs the Assessment of Sexual Harm Arrangements (ASHA) Panel to ensure a joined-up approach to this work.
- In December 2016 responsibility for Business Support moved into the Directorate to ensure that we are able to develop a responsive, high quality support service. Since then colleagues have been working to stabilise the Business Support workforce by reducing our reliance on casual workers which is improving the consistency of the support the service can offer.

- In August 2015 we received a Peer Review of our own services. The review concluded that the time was right for us to think about the next steps in the integration of our services. They encouraged us to clarify the language we use and to move away from a step up, step down approach to case transfer. During Autumn 2015 we spent a lot of time consulting with the workforce, shadowing teams and thinking about what we wanted our new integrated operating model to look like. As a result of this work in January 2016 we launched the new Children & Families Direct Hub. The new hub was designed to act as the main 'front door' to all services across the Directorate and included specialist colleagues from early help and targeted teams to ensure that families can access the right support at the right time. At the same time we launched the new Multi Agency Request Form (MARF) to improve the quality of referrals from partners.
- In March 2016 we moved to the next stage of our Operating Model by moving to a new locality hub model. This saw team boundaries shifting to equalise the demands across the City and to enable a return to a North, Central and South model of service delivery. Services across these 3 areas were teamed up to create 6 hubs that include early help, targeted and social work resources. We introduced locality hub meetings to ensure that colleagues across these services had the opportunity to gain a shared understanding of the demands in their hubs and work together to ensure that families are receiving the right level of support and intervention to meet their needs.
- We also launched a new Integrated Working and Case Transfer Procedure (which replaced Step Up/Step Down). This new procedure meant that existing cases were able to transfer between locality teams as family's needs escalated without having to go back through the 'front door' for assessment. The procedure also encouraged collaboration between teams to ensure that families experience a joined-up and streamlined response.
- In 2015/16 our Early Help services reached 7,557 children who attended a total of 104,555 times. Our Targeted Family Support Services worked with over 1000 families and during this year we focussed on embedding whole family approaches in our Targeted Family Support Teams. We began to move away from the Common Assessment Framework terminology towards a whole family assessment and plan, designed to identify and address the needs of adults where these needs may be having an impact on the child's safety and wellbeing.
- In March 2016 our new structure was formally ratified at the Council's Appointment and Conditions of Service (ACOS) Committee. We were now formally the Children's Integrated Services Directorate.
- Our NQSW programme continued and we recruited 20 NQSWs onto the programme during this period.

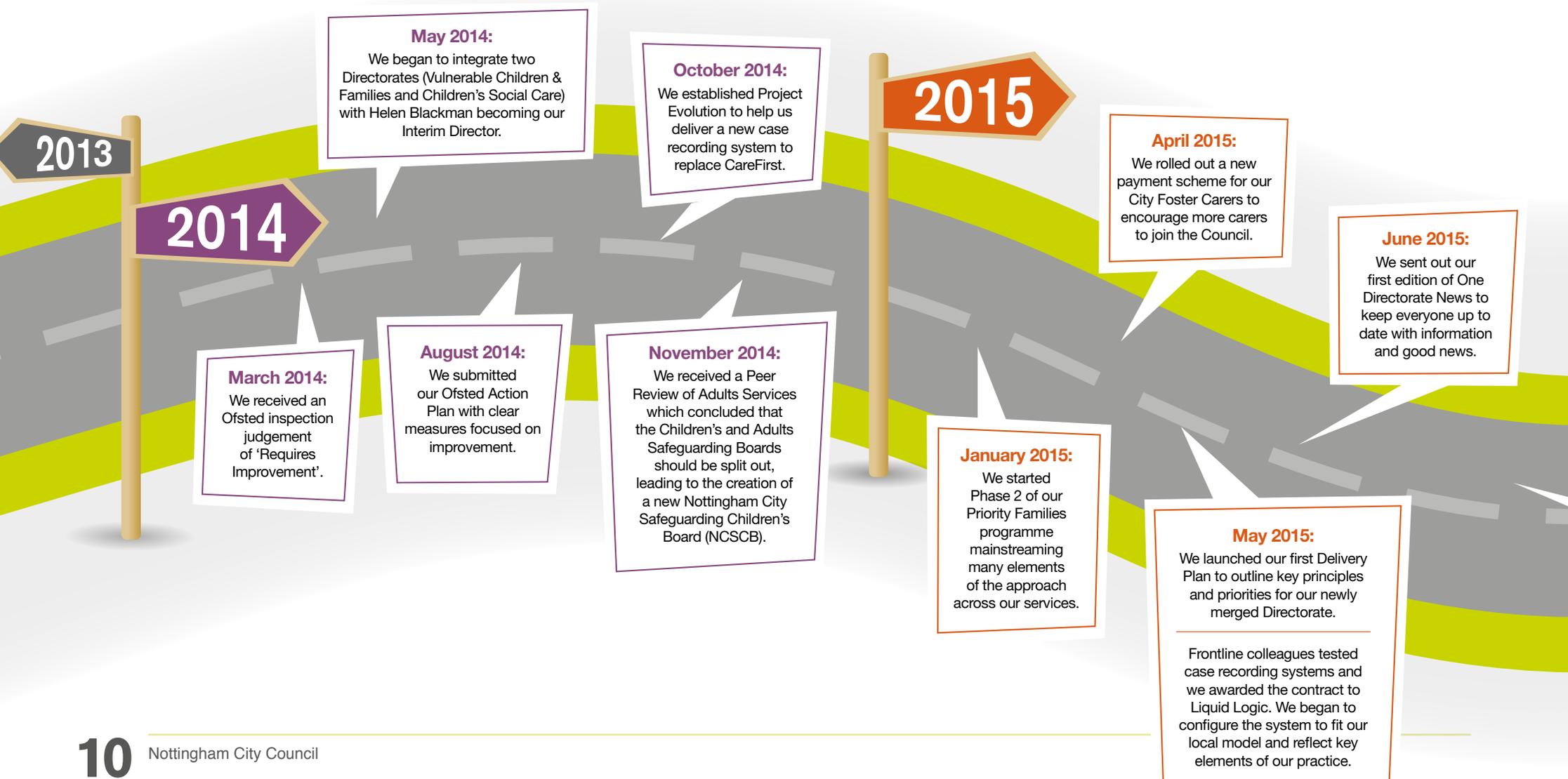
April 2016 to December 2016

Our new direction is now well established:

- The effective implementation of Liquid Logic has been a huge focus. Colleagues from across the Directorate have been involved in developing and testing the new system and we have rolled out a whole workforce training programme. The new system was launched on the 28th November 2016. This is the single biggest achievement and improvement that we have made and will be the key tool to enable us to continue to improve our practice moving forwards.
- We have continued to invest in our workforce. A further 18 NQSWs have joined our services. We have reconfigured budgets to ensure that we are able to permanently fund an adequately resourced Independent Reviewing Service. As a direct consequence of this we have permanently recruited five permanent Independent Reviewing Officers. As a direct response to a request by the Children in Care Council we have prioritised stabilising our Children in Care teams and CiC reviewing activity.
- The NCSCB has adopted a new approach to disseminating learning from Serious Case Reviews with an aim to increase the involvement of frontline practitioners from agencies across the City.
- Our work with Priority Families has continued with more services now beginning to participate. We are on track to meet our national target to work with 1136 families by March 2017. We have listened to colleagues across Children's Integrated Services to ensure that the requirements of the programme are met within Liquid Logic to avoid recording in multiple systems. The programme has also invested in developing innovative group work approaches to pilot new ways of working and test their effectiveness as demands on our early help and targeted services have continued to increase. We are currently piloting a series of parenting programmes and will evaluate their impact in early 2017.
- We received an inspection of our Youth Offending Team (YOT) in June 2016. The inspection found our YOT was high performing. The inspectors commented on the excellent work to keep children and young people safe and the creative approaches used by Case Managers to build positive relationships and encourage engagement of children, young people and their families.
- In July 2016 we received a Safeguarding Assurance Visit to look at the work of our Children & Families Direct and Duty Service. Again, they reiterated that children in the City are safe. They recommended that we think about how to build in more time for reflection before we commence child protection processes. As a result of this we have implemented a 'pause and reflect' approach in these teams, which is enabling a more proportionate response to concerns raised. We're now working to stabilise the workforce in these teams and ensure that all colleagues in these teams have access to regular, high quality reflective supervision.
- In September 2016 we launched our restorative supervision programme. We trained 15 colleagues as restorative supervisors to invest in the resilience and welfare of the frontline workers that children and families depend on.
- In December 2016 we have introduced a new CiC Club as an extension of our CiC Council arrangements to give younger children and their carers an opportunity to participate.
- In December 2016 our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Single Point of Access (SPA) moved to co-locate with C&FD Hub to better integrate and make sure that the right services reach children with behavioural, emotional or mental health needs quickly and effectively.



our journey to good



2016

August 2015:

We expanded the remit of the Virtual School to enable children in care 16+ and care leavers to access support. We established a Governing Body to drive the quality of the Virtual School.

We received a Peer Review of our Directorate which encouraged us to move away from a step up, step down approach to a case transfer model.

October 2015:

Our Great Workforce Programme started with frontline colleagues developing improvement plans for the Directorate.

We established the first Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to bring challenge and test the impact of our work.

March 2016:

We launched our new Locality Hub Model creating six hubs with early help, targeted and social work teams working together to ensure families receive the right support.

We introduced a new Integrated Working and Case Transfer Procedure to ensure families experience a joined-up and streamlined response.

April 2016:

We refreshed our Family Support Pathway to provide clear guidance on thresholds and pathways for support.

July 2016:

We received a Safeguarding Assurance Visit to look at the work of our Children & Families Direct and Duty Service which judged that children in the City are safe.

January 2016:

We launched the new Children & Families Direct Hub designed to act as the "front door" to all Directorate services and we introduced the new Multi Agency Request Form (MARF).

February 2016:

We launched our Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) service to treat young people and their families to resolve clinical and practical concerns.

June 2016:

An inspection of our Youth Offending Team (YOT) judged the service to be highly performing.

November 2016:

Liquid Logic went live! This is the single biggest improvement that we have made and will be the key tool enabling us to improve our practice moving forwards.

July 2015:

To improve our work in schools we established a network for Designated Safeguarding Leads in Schools.

We launched Safe Families For Children a new volunteer based programme designed to help stabilise families facing crisis.

September 2015:

We appointed Chris Cook as our new NCSCB Independent Chair.

December 2015:

We confirmed permanent appointments to all the Director and Head of Service roles within the Directorate to create a new Leadership Team.

So what?

You might be thinking,
so what?

We've changed a lot
but what difference
has it actually made
to children and young
people in our City?

Here are just a few examples:

- All of our internal residential provision is judged to be good or outstanding, offering high quality care to children living in our small group homes.
- We have reduced our reliance on external residential placements. We have gradually reduced from 71 in November 2014 to 52 in July 2016.
- We have significantly increased the number of young people able to access 'Staying Put' opportunities with their carers. 29 young people have been able to 'stay put' and we have 19 currently open.
- We have invested in more social workers with senior leadership support to over-recruit. This has reduced caseloads across the service.
- We have significantly reduced the number of unallocated child in need cases and have also reduced the length of time for which CiN remain unallocated. We have improved the quality of management oversight of these cases as Team Managers now regularly chair CiN review meetings.
- We have developed a new Employability Programme for our Care Leavers. This programme has made a significant contribution to the 15.9% increase in our care leavers in employment, education or training from 2014/15 (50%) to 2016/17 (65.9%).
- We have continued the positive downward trend in relation to the percentage of CiC who offend from a high of 19.1% in 2006 to just 6% in 2015.
- We can evidence that our work at the edge of care (Multi Systemic Therapy, MST-Child Abuse and Neglect, Edge of Care Hub and Safe Families for Children) is supporting more children to stay safely at home with their birth family.
- Between October 2015 and September 2016 108 young people were seen in SHARP school clinics and 1375 professionals received training. 117 young people received a therapeutic intervention and 97% saw a reduction in self-harm behaviour.
- School attendance has improved again for the seventh year in Nottingham, according to new figures from the Department for Education. Statistics show that Nottingham's absence rate is now 4.5%, compared to 4.4% across England. This has reduced in the city from 7.3% in 2009/10. Nottingham is now ranked 91 out of 152 local authorities, compared to 150 at its lowest point in 2012/13.
- CAMHS developments are now informed by a CAMHS Advocacy Worker who is an 'expert by experience' young adult. They ensure that the views and experiences of service users are heard and acted upon as we shape the service.



What's next?

That's not the end
of the journey...

We'll be launching a new Continuous Improvement Programme in early 2017 but areas we already know we want to focus on are:

- 1 Evaluating the effectiveness of our group work pilot.

- 2 Piloting the use of Family Network Meetings.

- 3 Strengthening the understanding of what services are available across the partnership to ensure families can access the support they need.

- 4 Reviewing our Learning Improvement Framework to ensure that we make the most of all of the work we do to consult and engage with families, monitor performance and audit the quality of our work.

- 5 Implement Mind of My Own (MOMO) - an app designed to enable the voices of children in care and children on a child protection plan to be heard more directly.

- 6 Launching the new Children and Young People's Mental Health Passport.

- 7 Develop a qualifications pathway for colleagues in Early Help and Targeted Services.

- 8 Launch a new induction booklet for the Directorate alongside a series of mandatory induction workshops throughout 2017.

- 9 Implement a Grow Your Own Programme in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University to enable us to create clear pathways for progression into social work careers.

- 8 Development of a new Social Work Teaching Partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Derby/shire Councils.

- 9 Further recruitment to vacant IRO roles to secure permanent Child Protection Chairs.

Thank you. These changes are just the tip of the iceberg and only really enable colleagues across the Directorate to continue to deliver high quality support for children, young people and families. It is still your hard work, dedication and direct work with families in the City that makes the biggest difference to keeping children happy, healthy and safe.





With thanks from

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