

# Joint area review

**Nottinghamshire Children's Services Authority Area**

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Review of services for children and young people

Audit Commission  
Healthcare Commission  
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
Ofsted

**Age group:** All

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Grades</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Areas for investigation through fieldwork during the joint area review</b>	
1. Safeguarding	7
2. Looked after children and young people	10
3. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	14
4. Additional investigations	18
5. Service management	24
6. Capacity to improve	24
<b>Annex A: The APA letter</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Annex B: Summary of the enhanced youth inspection report</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Annex C: Children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Annex D: Summary of joint area review and annual performance assessment arrangements</b>	<b>35</b>

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## Introduction

1. The most recent annual performance assessment (APA) for Nottinghamshire judged the council's children's services as adequate and its capacity to improve as adequate.
2. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
  - at risk or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
  - who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
  - with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
  - the effectiveness of the partners' strategy in countering the impact of deprivation on health outcomes for children and young people (with particular reference to Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw)
  - the impact of the partners' 14–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people.

## Context

4. Nottinghamshire is a large and diverse county covering 805 square miles. The total population is 770,000 of which almost 181,000 are children and young people aged 0–19 years. Ninety-four per cent of children and young people aged 0–15 are from White British backgrounds and 5.4% have Black and minority ethnic heritage. The largest minority ethnic groups are Indian and Pakistani and there is an increasing population from Eastern Europe with 2.7% of school age children and young people not having English as their first language. Partnership arrangements are complex with seven districts (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Rushcliffe), 103 parishes, two Primary Care Trusts (PCT), two Hospital Acute Trusts and five neighbouring local authorities including the city of Nottingham. Deprivation levels in the county are extremely varied. Rushcliffe borough, for example, is one of the 10% least deprived areas in the country whereas Mansfield is amongst the 10% most deprived. Indicators of need are reflected in these wide fluctuations in deprivation across the county.

5. The Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Partnership oversees the development and coordination of integrated services and has produced the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB) is fully operational and incorporates a number of sub-groups with key responsibility for all aspects of safeguarding in the county.

There is an increasing focus in the county on its diverse communities and local partnership working. This is exhibited through the establishment of 50 designated children's centres, 'families' of schools, active local strategic partnerships and the development of Joint Assessment Teams (JATs).

6. Children and young people in Nottinghamshire access primary healthcare through 96 GP practices in Nottinghamshire PCT and 11 practices in Bassetlaw PCT. These also provide health visiting and school nursing services. Three child development centres within the county provide a wide range of assessment and therapeutic services. Hospital care is delivered through two Acute Trusts, Nottingham University Hospital Trust in the south and Sherwood Forest Hospitals, with sites in Mansfield and Newark, in the north. Children and young people from Bassetlaw attend Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospital in Worksop. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are jointly commissioned by the PCTs and the local authority and are delivered by Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust.

7. Nottinghamshire has 290 primary schools, 47 secondary schools and 11 special schools in Nottinghamshire and one confederated pupil referral unit (PRU). There are 255 settings funded to provide nursery education places and two nursery schools, as well as 122 designated nursery classes located within 256 infant and primary schools and one 3–18 school. Post-16 provision is provided through six further education colleges, one sixth form college (located in the City of Nottingham) and 43 schools with sixth forms in the county itself. There are 28 work-based providers funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which excludes the six further education colleges who each have training arms. Nottinghamshire County Council's adult community learning service operates under contract from the LSC to deliver adult and community learning across the county.

8. Children's social care services are provided through six referral and assessment teams, 17 children's services teams, two specialist disability teams, three after-care teams, one family resource team and one generic emergency duty team. The county council operates a customer contact centre which will also handle contacts from the public in respect of children's services. There are five mainstream fostering teams and four specialist fostering teams, one adoption team and one support after adoption team. The fostering service supports over 400 foster households with approximately 360 children and young people placed at any one time, equating to over 70% of the looked after children population in the county. Residential provision in Nottinghamshire includes 11 places in three small units, three specialist units for children with disabilities and one secure children's unit.

## Main findings

9. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- Safeguarding is good, underpinned by up-to-date policies and procedures and with good delivery of assessment and planning processes. The NSCB is operating well and the systematic implementation of JATs, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and children's centres are having a positive impact. Policies to reduce bullying are in place but are not yet fully embedded in school practice.
- Children and young people who are looked after in Nottinghamshire receive a good service. Placement stability is good and offers greater security in all aspects of children's lives including their education and health. Participation by looked after children in their reviews is outstanding. Corporate parenting arrangements are adequate and are being strengthened to facilitate opportunities for on-the-job training and employment in the council and local businesses. Aftercare arrangements are satisfactory but the overall range of aftercare accommodation is not yet sufficient to fully match needs with appropriate resources.
- The services provided for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. There is a joint commitment to inclusion in all settings, a wide range of provision available through the early years services and above average levels of achievement for children and young people. Parents and carers are generally very pleased with the services they receive. Health services such as CAMHS lack sufficient capacity to meet assessed levels of need. Transition arrangements at key points are too variable across the county and across services. Progression pathways for students post- 16 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not consistently available across the whole county.
- Strategies to address health inequalities are adequate and showing impact in some key areas. Partners are working well together and in a wide range of settings to tackle high levels of smoking, teenage conceptions, sexual health and obesity and to increase health awareness and aspiration. The level of alcohol consumption amongst young people, particularly young men, is comparatively high. Good action is being taken to promote health awareness in schools and through the network of children's centres.
- The contribution of services to improving 14–19 provision is adequate with some good aspects. Disadvantaged young people achieve well and make good progress. Strategies for school improvement show early positive signs of progress and impact but it is too soon for the full impact of developments to be seen in standards, especially at Key Stage 4 and on school attendance and exclusions. Diploma development is making good progress in the north of the county but progress is slower elsewhere. There is now a

strong focus on the 14–19 agenda but county-wide plans are yet to be fully implemented and some key stakeholders are not fully engaged.

- Service management is good and capacity to improve is also good. The partnership is setting clear direction for children's services; there is strong leadership by all contributing agencies and partners with full commitment to service integration. Resources have been suitably allocated to children's services in the county and the workforce is well trained, committed and motivated. The self-assessment conducted for the joint area review demonstrated good awareness of strengths and areas for improvement. There are good examples of quality assurance systems in place in the county but these are not yet being consistently utilised.

## Grades

**4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate**

	Local services overall
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Looked after children</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Learning difficulties and/or disabilities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Service management</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>3</b>

## Recommendations

### For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area.

### For action over the next six months

- Implement a county-wide strategy which facilitates a more consistent approach to transition planning and continuity of care across the county, particularly at early years transition and during transition from child to adult services.

- Utilise the outstanding models of quality assurance and case audit available in some parts of the county, to develop a consistent approach to performance management in service delivery county-wide.
- Enhance CAMHS capacity to improve access and to build tier 1 provision to sharpen the focus on emotional well-being and development.
- Ensure there are effective arrangements in place to monitor young people aged 19 years without a suitable employment or training placement.
- Develop resource and performance plans to fully align with priorities within the CYPP.

### **For action in the longer term**

- Evaluate the impact of strategies to reduce bullying and the effectiveness of schools in applying the strategies in day-to-day practice.
- Enhance the provision of after-care accommodation to ensure there is greater choice for care leavers and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Establish wider representation from key stakeholders, particularly from the voluntary sector, business and economic regeneration to contribute to the 14–19 agenda and to increase signposted progression opportunities.

### **Equality and diversity**

10. The children and young people's strategic partnership addresses equality and diversity issues effectively. There is a strong commitment to social inclusion by all partner agencies with decisive action to commit and target resources to reduce the gap in outcomes in the most deprived areas of the county. There is a continued trend of improvement in educational attainment across all key stages. Strategies to reduce health inequalities and assist progression into employment and training for post-16 young people are starting to have measurable impact. Significant progress has been made to facilitate inclusion and to make all services more accessible to all groups across the whole county. Appropriate attention is being given to ensure that Black and minority ethnic families such as new arrivals from Eastern Europe receive suitable help and support. Joint work to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people and Gypsy and Traveller communities in Nottinghamshire has a high profile, both within the county and nationally, with focused action to achieve greater levels of inclusion and raise educational attainment. Racial incident and harassment reporting arrangements are robust and combined with



local initiatives are having discernable impact. There is a good record of inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education where this is felt to be in their best interests, although transition planning for this and other vulnerable groups remains an area for further development. Consultation and participation arrangements in the county are very effective. A new NSCB sub-group is addressing safeguarding issues for children from the Black and minority ethnic community, and the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Support Service has undertaken awareness-raising and staff training in schools.

## Safeguarding



### 11. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is good.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good performance across the range of safeguarding performance indicators.</p> <p>Effective customer service and referral and access systems.</p> <p>Good multi-agency arrangements to respond to domestic violence and when children go missing.</p> <p>Safe recruitment practice across all agencies including councillors and school governors.</p> <p>High quality assurance of reports from child protection coordinators.</p> <p>Good multi-agency public protection arrangements.</p>	<p>Inconsistent engagement of teachers and governors in the application of existing anti-bullying policies.</p> <p>Quality assurance systems are not consistent across the county as a whole.</p> <p>Schools' representation on the NSCB is currently too small and does not facilitate full discussion on the range of school safeguarding matters.</p>

12. The partnership has made good progress to address the wider safeguarding agenda with continued priority attention to child protection arrangements. This work is guided by up-to-date multi-agency procedures including for specialist areas. Key performance data are considered by NSCB and cross-cutting safeguarding issues have been appropriately included in the CYPP. The NSCB is improving its overall coordination and development of safeguarding arrangements. The NCSB provides high quality training programmes and these have been consistently praised by all agencies and are

well attended. The NCSB website provides a good source of safeguarding information for the public and professionals. Helpful and accessible safeguarding information is also available at all children's venues in the county. Current representation of schools on the NCSB is too small and does not facilitate full discussion on school safeguarding matters.

13. Data shows that safeguarding performance is good against all key indicators including those identified in the 2007 APA. The number of core assessments completed is, at 94 per 10,000 population, at a higher rate than comparable areas and the England average (84 per 10,000). Timeliness is also comparatively very good. Case conference processes are well managed by experienced chairpersons. Initial child protection conference rates are good at 39 per 10,000 population (England average 36), with 100% of child protection reviews completed on time. Re-registration rates, which had been comparatively high, have reduced to a level comparable with similar areas. Referral and assessment team staff are well trained and referral and assessment processes are clearly defined with good systems for the transfer of relevant information within social care services and between agencies.

14. The thresholds for access to a range of services are well understood by agencies. All incoming work to social care services is quickly processed with no unallocated cases. Decision-making in respect of levels of need, risk and type of intervention is also good. A very well-resourced and managed customer service centre is an outstanding model facilitating quick access to all council services using a single telephone number. Progress to rebalance services has been good and is exemplified through progress in the establishment of an extensive network of children's centres and extended schools. There are good arrangements for the assessment of parenting skills and for supervised contact through the family support service. Good progress is being made in the roll-out of CAF linked to the systematic introduction of JATs that are based on 'families' of schools and which have a preventative, early intervention focus. CAF training is of good quality and is being systematically provided to all partners. Training in child protection for designated staff and governors of schools is delivered by the education welfare service.

15. Most children and young people in Nottinghamshire say they feel safe. The partnership arranges regular consultation exercises and engages children and young people in policy formulation. The Avoidable Injuries Group provides good quality information to influence and educate children about road safety, the risk of fire and accidents. In 2006, deaths and serious injuries of children and young people from road accidents fell by 51% from the 1994–98 baseline level, and data for 2007 show a further marked reduction to 65% of the original baseline. The PCTs' Safe Sleeping campaign has resulted in a significant reduction in sudden infant deaths and instances of children accessing methadone prescribed for adults have been minimised with the provision of secure medicine cabinets. There has been a recent and successful campaign to raise awareness about private fostering resulting in new notifications.

16. Access to CAMHS for priority groups is good and the partnership is working to increase capacity and to build provision for intervention at earlier stages. At the time of the joint area review the recommendations of a major CAMHS review were being implemented, including a recruitment exercise to increase staffing, and improvements were already evident in referral pathways for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and eating disorders. The timeliness of substance misuse assessments of young people known to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) is very good, as it is for assessments conducted by the dedicated YOS CAMHS. The arrangements to support young carers through a grant-aided voluntary group are also good.

17. The council has appointed an anti-bullying coordinator, and the NSCB multi-agency policy and other materials have been made available to schools. A strategy group is in place to drive forward opportunities for young people to address bullying. This is well supported by an effective peer mentor scheme. Nevertheless, some children and young people reported that bullying was an issue for them and schools did not always show full understanding or offer them the support they felt they needed.

18. Arrangements to monitor the whereabouts of children and to respond to missing children are good, underpinned by comprehensive policies, procedures and guidance. There is specific guidance on children missing from education and arrangements are made for necessary joint responses that are undertaken well. A small local NSPCC project works with young people who are particularly at risk as a result of running away. Police and children's services collaborate well to monitor children and young people who are most at risk.

19. The strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) is comprehensive and showing positive outcomes. There are corporate links to local crime and disorder reduction partnerships in each district. Amongst the successful initiatives are the multi-agency family intervention project that started in Mansfield and has now extended to Ashfield, the work of the YISP in engaging young people at risk of ASB and multi-agency engagement with the planned programme of targeted 'Weeks of action' led by the police. A public survey in 2008 reported that concern about ASB has reduced to 36% from 65% in the previous survey.

20. The work of the YOS has achieved a good reduction in first-time entrants to the youth justice system but, despite a downward trend in re-offending, this remains above that of similar areas and the England average. Targeted actions by the police, Youth Strategy and Safer Schools Partnership have reduced the number of young people who are victims of crime and the number of crimes committed by young people. In 2007–08, a team of police officers and probation officers seconded to the YOS worked with young people not involved in other programmes to reduce offending. Arrangements for communication between the YOS and children's social care have been strengthened to ensure young people at particular risk are clearly identified and action is taken.

21. Processes for safe staff recruitment are very good. The NSCB has completed a multi-agency audit of safer recruitment arrangements. Appropriate checks are made in the council's staff recruitment processes in children's services. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all councillors are about to be introduced that supplement existing arrangements for councillors who act as corporate parents, and new school governors and those retaining that role will also be subject to CRB checks. Schools are provided with good advice on all recruitment, disciplinary and vetting matters.

22. Arrangements to monitor and track adults who may be a risk to children are robust and working effectively. Regular multi-agency public protection arrangement meetings are well attended and consistent. The Domestic Violence framework is used well, engaging partners across the partnership to rigorously tackle this issue. Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) are established in the north of the county to determine joint responses to families where there is domestic violence, and these will be operating across the whole county from September. The existing MARAC has implemented appropriate plans of intervention for 208 cases involving 328 children in the first three months of operation. There is good engagement of the women's aid organisation at district council level. The police contribution to all aspects of safeguarding is very good.

23. A child death review panel is in place which will also meet with the Nottingham City Panel bi-annually. Serious case reviews have been undertaken in accordance with guidance and the outcomes of these and the practice lessons arising, including from national studies, have been well disseminated by the NSCB and through the joint training programme. Arrangements for serious case reviews are being strengthened through greater clarity with regard to terms of reference and timescales and improved quality assurance processes. Child protection coordinators produce high quality reports to managers and practitioners on child protection issues and performance. There are very good examples of quality assurance systems in use in the county but these have not yet been extended to all areas.

## Looked after children and young people

Inadequate

☐

Adequate

☐

Good

☒

Outstanding

☐

24. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good inter-agency assessments and flexible support packages contribute to the year-on-year fall in the number of children who become looked after.</p> <p>Good and sustained progress in ensuring high rates of attendance and very low exclusion rates for looked after children.</p> <p>Continued and sustained progress in supporting looked after children to achieve.</p> <p>Outstanding support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.</p> <p>High quality care from trained and well-supported foster carers.</p> <p>Very good participation of children and young people in reviews.</p>	<p>Bed and breakfast accommodation is used as a last resort for a small number of young people who are leaving care.</p>

25. The partnership is working well to support looked after children and young people safely in the community and provides a good range of locally-based services. Good inter-agency assessments and flexible support packages contribute to the year-on-year reduction in the number of children who become looked after. All looked after children are allocated to a qualified social worker and a high proportion of these are placed in foster care or supported to live with friends and family. A comparatively smaller than average proportion is accommodated in residential care. The participation of looked after children in their reviews is very good at 96% with the most recent data showing 99% of children over the age of four participating in meetings in 2008. The proportion of children looked after placed for adoption is also good. However, the legal complexity of some cases and court delays has had an impact on the timeliness of adoption placements in a few instances.

26. There is a strong commitment to effective planning and inclusive practice resulting in 97% of care plans being reviewed on time. Increased investment in recruitment of foster carers has improved placement choice and the number of carers with skills to meet the needs of children and young people who have special needs. Short-term placement stability is adequate but placement stability overall is good and improving. The percentage of children with three or more placements in a year is low and has reduced steadily year-on-year. The percentage of children in their current foster parent placements for at least two years has improved to 70% and is now in line with England averages.

Arrangements for commissioning and monitoring these placements are very good, with robust independent reviewing procedures. The quality of care in residential children's homes is good. The out-of-hours arrangements work well and an effective emergency duty team backs up experienced and trained foster carers and residential care placements. The response of the council to the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is good, with the recruitment of specially trained foster parents commissioned through the independent sector and the use of advocates. This work now forms 20% of the work of the after-care team. Recent Ofsted inspections of all the authority's children's homes resulted in positive judgements for safety and staff knowledge of child protection.

27. The health needs of looked after children and young people are a priority for the council and its partners with 85% of the looked after cohort receiving health checks, a good rate which is higher than similar areas and the England average. All looked after children have annual dental checks. Health care plans are generally of a good standard and are suitably transferred with children as they move placements to inform their care planning. Good initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles have been developed with good involvement of children and young people in the design of services. Looked after children have priority access to CAMHS with good attention being given to their emotional well-being and development. For example, two young people seen during this review had been helped with their emotional needs by trained youth workers on activities weekends.

28. Looked after children and young people benefit from a wide range of initiatives which promote their self-esteem, raise aspirations and build resilience, including celebratory events and rewards to suit the individual child. They are positively encouraged to become involved in sports and leisure activities. Other agencies offer effective support to looked after children on specific issues, such as the National Children's Homes (NCH) counselling service for children who had been victims of sexual abuse, the FaCe it Hepatitis C education programme and substance misuse services.

29. Looked after children receive good support to attend school and enjoy their time there. The trend in respect of attainment and attendance is an improving one, demonstrating a firm resolve by the partnership to bridge the gap between the educational attainment of looked after children and the general population. Attendance is closely monitored and action taken swiftly to provide support for children identified as at risk of disaffection or exclusion. A recent review by the Looked After Children Education Services recorded attendance at 92% amongst the cohort for a sustained period. The proportion of looked after children who have more than 25 days' absence in a year is well below the comparative averages for this group, at 6.8% in 2006/07 against 14.5% for statistical neighbours and 13.3% nationally. The authority tracks the attainment of children in care through well-established virtual school arrangements and, as a consequence, there has been significant improvement, particularly at secondary stage. Personal education plans are used effectively to

help drive individual achievement. In 2006/07, 73.5% of those eligible at Year 11 sat at least one GCSE or equivalent examination, a considerably higher percentage than both statistical neighbours and nationally at 60.7% and 65.6% respectively. Of this cohort in Nottinghamshire, 15% achieved five A\* to C grades. Similarly, the percentage of looked after children leaving care with one or more A\* to G grades at GCSE was good at 50%, which shows continued improvement over three years although still falling below national performance at 55.1%. Attainment is regularly celebrated and rewarded and good mechanisms are in place to encourage young people to achieve their potential. For example, the gifted and talented group meets regularly to support looked after pupils who have special talents and abilities. In addition, young people who have to move placement or return home are supported financially to remain at schools where they are settled. The peer mentoring project in schools in Mansfield is a good example of a programme which supports vulnerable young people, some of whom are looked after, and equips them to raise awareness and debate key issues that concern them such as bullying, substance misuse and child protection. The training which young people receive is of high quality and has gained national accreditation.

30. Young people leaving care receive good practical and emotional support to help them live independently. All eligible care leavers now have Pathway Plans and have an allocated Personal Adviser. The rates of 19 year olds in education, employment or training are comparatively very good. Those who progress to higher education receive good financial support. Performance against the indicator for 19 year olds in adequate accommodation is very good. However, there are a small number of care leavers who are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation as a last resort measure when all other accommodation options have been exhausted and some inconsistencies remain in the quality of 'move on' accommodation for care leavers across districts. This is recognised by the partnership and work has been commissioned at both strategic and local levels to increase the choice of accommodation available. The work of the Supporting People Team is very active and provides a very good service to care leavers.

31. The council and partners place a high priority on listening to children and young people who are looked after. There is a strong track record of improvements to service delivery as a result of their input. Young people contribute meaningfully to recruitment and training, and were fully involved in the tendering and interviewing of preferred providers. The National Youth Advocacy Service provides a good independent visitor, case advocacy and residential visiting advocacy service which is very much valued by young people.

32. Corporate parenting governance was highlighted as an area for development in the 2007 APA letter. The council has responded positively to this. The leader of the council, portfolio holder and leading opposition members now sit on the corporate parenting panel and have developed plans to take currently adequate arrangements to a higher level. This includes work to provide employment opportunities for looked after young people within the

council and with local businesses and better engagement with children and young people's representation groups. Councillors have a good track record of celebrating the achievement of looked after children and undertaking visits to children's establishments and other services. Children can access independent advice and help, and the children's complaints leaflet includes a freepost tear-off section to complain.

33. The ratio of young people looked after who were subject to final warnings, reprimands and convictions is 1.8, which is now lower than similar areas and the national average of 2.5. This has reduced year-on-year from a high ratio of 3.0 in 2002–03 and demonstrates the commitment in the county to diversionary activities and ensuring looked after children and young people have good access to positive activities.

## Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Good ☒ Outstanding ☐

34. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>The good breadth and depth of the services offered to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the early years phase.</p> <p>The good level of achievement of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>The rebuilt relationships between the council and special schools, the interim outcomes of the Special Educational Needs Review and the action plan for implementation.</p> <p>The innovative development and capacity building programme for short breaks that is being delivered through the pathfinder project.</p>	<p>Transition arrangements are not sufficiently consistent across the county for children and young people and their families/carers in transition, particularly between early years and the primary phase and at 16+ moving from children's to adult health services.</p> <p>The range of sign-posted progression routes to employment for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is too narrow.</p>



The voices of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully heard in all settings and they are widely consulted.	
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35. The council and its partners are committed to the inclusion and social integration of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is well embedded in the CYPP and its practical implementation produces good outcomes for children and young people and their families. Amongst these are the use of consistent signs and symbols for children and young people with communication difficulties in 95% of health, education, social care and leisure facilities across the county and the extension of school annual review meetings to include the review of social care packages so that the needs and provision for individuals can be reviewed holistically.

36. The early years team intervenes effectively to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the advocacy work of the Parent Partnership Service (PPS) is well regarded by parents and carers who appreciate the good level of support and guidance they receive, for example, in the statutory assessment process and in review meetings. The service provides good support in a range of settings, including homes, to children with sensory, physical, learning disabilities and challenging behaviours including autism and Asperger's. Early years specialist teachers act as area SENCOs and all private sector nursery providers are linked to one who makes regular visits. This service, as well as the training provided by the authority, is highly valued. The provision of speech and language therapy when it is available is of very good quality, maximising the outcomes for those children who access services. Waiting lists, however, are long. Parents and carers who are referred to early years services through an established pathway find the services responsive and easy to access, but a small number of parents who sought support coming from less usual settings, such as a women's refuge, had encountered some difficulties.

37. Parents and carers participate fully in the governance of centres through the management boards and broaden the programme by running activities and support groups in response to identified needs. Seventy-five per cent of the county is currently served by a children's centre with a target of 100% coverage by 2010. A number of parents commented on the sense of isolation which they had experienced when their child moved from early years to mainstream primary settings and links were broken. This perception is shared by primary phase SENCOs. The authority has recognised this gap in transition planning at early years and has established parent and sibling support groups and ensured improvements in the level of support offered. Progress has been made to improve all key transition arrangements and there are examples of good practice. However, overall arrangements for transition, and particularly regarding health arrangements from children to adult services, are not yet sufficiently consistent across the whole county.

38. Parents, carers and partners consider that social care services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effective and meet needs well. The review of case files disclosed poor management oversight and files were disorganised, out of chronological order and repetitive. However, gaps in services were recognised and action taken to close them, such as the swift provision of an on-site paediatric nurse at a respite centre for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities when the need had been effectively demonstrated.

39. Respite care arrangements are good and, though currently limited to those with the most acute needs, provision is due to increase significantly. There are currently 147 children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with high-level needs and their families are able to access short breaks in respite centres and the homes of contract carers. This service is flexible and very responsive to the needs and wishes of users. For example, where older young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities wish to remain in their own home when their principle carer goes away on respite, arrangements are made for a part-time carer to stay with them. This has been very well received by parents who feel reassured and has helped to increase young people's sense of independence and self-worth. A much welcomed increase in provision is imminent owing to the successful bid to become a short breaks pathfinder by the council and in partnership with Bassetlaw PCT and Nottinghamshire County teaching PCT. Its project plan, when fully implemented, will extend coverage to all 6,500 children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Nottinghamshire.

40. Direct payments are used effectively to give children and young people and their families greater choice and flexibility in securing care services. An example of this is the encouragement given to Black and minority ethnic families to use payments to recruit carers from their own communities. Support is provided to ensure that the payments are used appropriately and that recipients of the care are safeguarded. There are, however, inconsistencies between districts in how disabled facilities payments are assessed and allocated. The authority has taken action to redress this imbalance by the provision of a means tested 'top up' grant scheme to cover any shortfall where the cost of a care package or service exceeds £30,000.

41. Partnership working between other agencies and health to deliver and develop services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved significantly following the restructuring of the PCTs. Locality working has been prioritised in order to close the gap in health support and to ensure broader provision of a range of health-related services, particularly in the south, such as the provision of school-based nurses and more flexible palliative care provision. Partner agencies are focusing well on extending access to tier 1 CAMHS for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the point and time of need. Attention to developmental work and aligning the service with local JATs to ensure early intervention has been prioritised but it is too early to discern impact.

42. The achievement of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities compares favourably with statistical neighbours and the gap is closing with the performance of their peers. Progress is good or better in two thirds of all primary schools and good or better in over a third of secondary schools. Nottinghamshire was identified by the DFES as a hub of expertise in providing for pupils with special educational needs and the county's 11 special schools have been rated as good to outstanding by Ofsted in recent inspections. Although there is no identified special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, their needs are well met by special schools serving their local area, the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre and in mainstream settings where support is provided by the Behaviour Support Team. This team successfully builds the capacity of schools to manage challenging behaviour through a number of programmes including the development of nurture groups. Establishing such a group in a primary school with an increasing number of fixed-term exclusions led to a 70% fall and the retention in school of two pupils previously at risk of permanent exclusion. No looked after child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been excluded from school in the last two years, as a result of the range of effective support programmes available.

43. During the current year, 100% of final statements were issued within 18 weeks placing the authority in the top quartile for its performance in this area. It has improved from the fourth quartile in 2005. Parents and carers have confidence in the process leading to a low number of appeals to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability Tribunals (1.6% per 10,000 of the school population against a national average of 4.47%). Schools are grouped into 'families' to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities based on patterns of transfer and a 'family SENCO' is appointed to coordinate their work together. Inclusion is well funded by the local authority, which delegates responsibility through family groups of schools who in turn manage SEN budgets. External moderation is undertaken by the Inclusion Support Service, which ensures coherence and consistency of approach across the county.

44. Progressing a comprehensive review of special educational needs across the county has significantly improved the professional relationship between the authority and the special schools headteachers, who no longer feel isolated and disengaged from the processes of discussion and decision-making. The vision for the future is wholly owned by all parties and there are well-developed plans for the implementation phase which include the formation of a soft federation of special schools and their co-location with mainstream schools. More effective collaboration between a special school and its neighbouring mainstream secondary partner has increased the curriculum offer for pupils of both schools.

45. The Connexions prioritise young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and planning for transition at 16+ begins in Year 9. All young people are assigned to an adviser and outcomes are generally good. However, while only 1.8% of statemented young people and 7.5% of those with a learning difficulty and/or disability do not progress to education, employment or training

at 16+ (below the national average for both groups), young people with SEN at School Action Plus are disproportionately represented in the latter group at 15.3% of the total in this category. Provision in further education colleges offers few progression pathways to employment for these young people.

46. Participation opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. They are consulted on a wide range of issues and involved in many activities across the county. There are good examples of consultation leading to changes in services such as the installation of drinking fountains and raised confidence and self-esteem among the pupils. A DVD produced by pupils influenced the design of a school when it was rebuilt. Young inspectors work within user inspection teams in a range of services including libraries and leisure centres. The Young Pioneers group, well supported by the Youth Service, has a very high profile in the county and effectively influences the shape and quality of services. There are many out-of-school opportunities available and access to leisure is promoted successfully by Cool Kidz, a project for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their siblings, which is commissioned from the PPS.

## Other issues identified for further investigation

### **The effectiveness of the partners' strategy in countering the impact of deprivation on health outcomes for children and young people (with particular reference to Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw)**

47. **The effectiveness of the partners' strategy in countering the impact of deprivation on health outcomes for children and young people (with particular reference to Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw) is adequate.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>The teenage pregnancy strategy is being refocused in the hotspot areas with the development of new ways of reaching young people, including young men, within their own communities.</p> <p>There are significantly lower levels of tooth decay than England averages including amongst the most deprived areas in the county.</p>	<p>In some districts the rate of teenage conception remains comparatively high despite concerted effort to reduce the rate.</p> <p>There is insufficient focus and screening in respect of the high rate of chlamydia, particularly in the north of the county.</p> <p>The processes for evaluating the impact of joint strategies are not consistently in place across the whole county.</p>

<p>Commissioning arrangements for CAMHS and action planning is robust with increasing impact.</p> <p>Priority access to specialist CAMHS for looked after children.</p>	
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48. In the last six months there has been a strengthening in the effectiveness and inclusiveness of strategies for partnership working at both strategic and fieldwork levels to reduce the impact of health deprivation on children and young people. The sustained impact on improving the health outcomes for children and young people is yet to be fully realised and evaluated, although the direction of improvement is now clear. The PCTs are actively involved within the partnership and are responsive to their local needs. Key priorities, including addressing identified health inequalities, have been agreed with all partner agencies and are reflected in planning documents.

49. CAMHS are improving, with good partnership working, a refocusing of the strategic direction, effective commissioning arrangements and an operational implementation plan. This is ensuring that development is a fully consultative process with good participation by children and young people in service design. Transitional planning into adult mental health services by the various pathways is under review. Commissioning intentions to ensure the best outcomes for the young person are clearly stated. Health information is being used well to shape the workforce and to ensure the necessary range of skills is available in each location. There are dedicated posts in a number of speciality areas, for example substance misuse and for children who are looked after and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is priority access to specialist CAMHS for looked after children.

50. There is a good range of sexual health services for young people and, although the locations of these are not yet fully accessible to young people in the most rural areas, signposting of services and access to information, advice and guidance is available across the county. Sexual health guides which include contraception, screening and testing advice have been produced with young people and give contact details for local services. The diagnosis of chlamydia rates in the under 16s and 16–19 year olds in the East Midlands Strategic Health Authority area in 2006 was significantly high when compared to national data. This is also reflected in Nottinghamshire where the screening target for 2007–08 was not met by 11%. Teenage pregnancy rates in the county have levelled in the last four years, at 36 per 1,000 conceptions in the population of 15–17 year olds, of which an increasing percentage are leading to abortion. The teenage pregnancy strategy and implementation of the commissioning action plan to reduce high rates of teenage pregnancy in the areas of greatest need have only just started and are still subject to robust needs assessment and impact evaluation. Nevertheless, targeting has been good and the strategy is suitably focused on 'hotspot' areas including Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Carlton, Worksop East and Worksop Northwest. The impact and

focus of services on the engagement of young men is less well defined within a number of the current initiatives and access to information and advice is too variable across the county as a whole. The teenage pregnancy partnership has developed a joint training prospectus based on a pathway approach which focuses on local population changes and behaviour which can be linked to patterns of increased conception rates.

51. The extensive development of children's centres in the county gives parents, carers and their children good levels of support through a wide range of initiatives and projects to maintain healthy lifestyles and to promote emotional well-being. Over 70% of under-five year olds in the disadvantaged areas of the county now have access to children's centres and this rate is increasing as new projects come on line. Full coverage will be in place by 2010. Initiatives have included safety awareness and home-based risk assessments in conjunction with the range of partners, and the introduction of allotments and fruit and vegetable schemes to promote healthy living. Smoking cessation sessions are held in the most deprived areas of the county and where smoking rates remain high. Evaluation of the impact of plans to reduce the incidence of smoking has not been fully completed. Children's centres have named health professionals attached to them and parents value the children's centres' multi-agency approach, although not all health service provision is currently co-located. Where co-location is in place feedback from parents is very positive.

52. Increased investment in the Drug and Alcohol Action Team has ensured there are no waiting lists for access to suitable services for children and their families, and systems and processes are now well embedded into practice. Commissioning is being used to sustain and drive forward change in service delivery, and ensure equality of access across the county. High and increasing alcohol misuse amongst young people remains a considerable challenge. This is demonstrated in a recent local survey completed by over 2,000 young people which showed that amongst 14–18 year olds 51% had consumed alcohol in the last seven days prior to the survey, compared to 47% in 2006–07 and that the number of units drunk was also increasing, particularly amongst males. Additional funding has been allocated to address this problem and to increase health promotion activity in targeted areas of the county. A county-wide multi-agency drug education working group meets regularly to develop, monitor and evaluate programmes and initiatives for children and young people. A range of drug education materials have been developed for use in early years settings, schools and youth projects across the county, many of which have been designed in collaboration with children and young people. A group of primary school children in Newark stated that they were very clear about how much they had learnt about drug misuse and safety from personal, social and health education lessons and how they were involved in selecting illustrations for a new series of drug harm reduction booklets. Over 90% of schools are participating in the Healthy Schools award scheme.

53. There are significantly lower levels of tooth decay, missing and filled teeth than the national averages for England and levels are lower than those in similar authorities; this includes the most deprived areas of the county. Immunisation rates at both second and fifth birthday are in line with statistical neighbours and the England average. The percentage of babies with low birth weight is in line with statistical neighbours and England averages for 2006.

### **The impact of the partners' 14–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people**

54. **The impact of the partners' 14–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people is adequate.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Positive action by the council and its partners to provide a strategic focus for the development of the 14–19 strategy.</p> <p>The school improvement service has developed good infrastructures to manage school improvement, early intervention and curriculum development.</p> <p>Good framework for implementing information, advice and guidance (IAG) across the county with positive outcomes for targeted groups.</p>	<p>Achievement at Key Stage 4 is improving but still below the national average.</p> <p>School attendance is improving and exclusions reducing but performance is still below the national averages.</p>

55. The Acting Strategic Director of Children's Services has taken positive action to raise the profile of the Nottinghamshire 14–19 Partnership. This provides a more effective strategic alignment to oversee the management of 14–19 provision across the county. The revised structure has an improved focus on county-wide development, partnership working and stronger links with Nottingham City Council. The revised strategy document 2007 is good and clearly addresses learner-led principles and national agendas. Staff report a strong confidence in the new leadership and a refreshed sense of direction and purpose.

56. The school improvement service has significantly improved the use of data over the last two years to challenge schools about the achievement of young people. Rigorous systems are in place to track, measure and support school improvement. Increased access to a wide range of detailed reports and effective target-setting is providing an effective performance management tool. Intervention and support are timely as school improvement partners (SIPs) work alongside schools and JATs to identify underperformance and discuss suitable improvement strategies. Recent improving trends in success rates in

schools suggest some impact from these initiatives and the targeted Key Stage 4 intervention strategies. Many schools appreciate the rigour and focus SIPs provide, although some believe there could be more robust challenge.

57. The council has taken positive action to provide strong strategic focus for the development of the 14–19 agenda. Work is in progress and lines for reporting and communication are clear and effective. The 14–19 strategy coordinator has made good progress in involving those schools slow to engage with the new developments. Partnership working has been effective in establishing networks for four new diplomas which come on line in September 2008. Common timetables are in place for the new diplomas and all young people are guaranteed a place in education or training in September 2008. However, a county-wide approach outlining a coherent curriculum and qualification progression plan is lacking. Plans to implement the strategy as a rational response to the wider skills agenda across the county are underdeveloped and the engagement of stakeholders from voluntary agencies, businesses and economic regeneration to extend the availability and range of provision is under-represented. 'Aimhigher' has established productive links with Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham University to support diploma development and progression. Vocational qualifications at Levels 1, 2 and 3 are available across all schools and the piloting of new curriculum developments and sharing of good practice is well established. Young people value the wider choice of programmes such as those provided in innovative specialist enterprise and skills centres in Ashfield and Serlby in the north, but such opportunities are not evenly distributed or accessible to all young people across the county. The formalisation of links with the Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance is facilitating a more coordinated approach to links with industry sectors but needs to be more firmly established.

58. The partnership is effectively promoting participation, and success rates for disadvantaged young people are good. The proportion of 16–19 year olds, including young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are not in education, employment or training is lower than the national average and similar neighbours. The numbers of looked after young people in 2006–07 progressing into education, employment or training is very good and significantly above statistical neighbours and national. Aimhigher is effective in raising aspirations in deprived areas. In 2006–07, 37% more young people from the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the county applied for higher education programmes. Gifted and talented young people benefit from the opportunity to achieve Open University higher education credits whilst still at school. Early years and childcare targets for places in disadvantaged areas have been exceeded for 2006–07. Success rates for non-White learners in work-based learning are good and above the national average. Stimulating and transformational Entry to Employment programmes give young people increased self-esteem and employability skills. Alternative literacy and numeracy tests give many more young people a chance of achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE. The numbers of young people aged 16–18 who are in education and accessing the education maintenance allowance is above the national average.



59. Ofsted reports that college and work-based learning provision are at least satisfactory or better. Annual assessment visits note improving trends in achievement and success rates for young people. A growing number of 16–18 young people from multi-cultural and disadvantaged backgrounds are accessing work-based programmes and making good progress. Overall, the number of young people aged 17 staying in education and training is now higher than the national average. The number of young people completing an apprenticeship is well above national averages.

60. Young people's access to impartial IAG through Connexions and Aimhigher is good. An overall framework for IAG across Nottinghamshire is in place with established IAG groups in each area. A personal advisor (PA) service is available in all schools at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Over 90% of PAs have a Level 4 qualification in guidance. A local prospectus is online to guide and support young people's choice of education and training. A post-16 progression pathways database allows young people to explore routes to higher education and an e-portfolio allows them to log and track the development of their career choice, education and training. Young people choosing diplomas value the advice and guidance given to assist their choices and enjoy discussing how this links to their future careers. The Nottinghamshire teenage pregnancy board has appointed a specialist PA for teenage parents and pregnant teenagers to facilitate better progression into education, employment or training opportunities. The percentage of teenage mothers entering education, employment or training has improved and is now comparable with the national average.

61. In 2006/07, the proportion of 19 year olds whose current activity was not known was higher than the national average and in the same period the numbers of young people at 19 finding a placement was lower than statistical neighbours and the national average. In response, the Not in Education, Employment or Training Steering Group has set challenging targets to improve the placement opportunities for young offenders aged 16–17, young people with ill health and young people with SEN whose needs have not been met through School Action Plus.

62. Attainment, although improving, continues to be below national figures. In the last two years the number of young people achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including mathematics and English is improving faster than the national rate of improvement at 41.7% but remains below statistical neighbours and the national average. Performance across the county is inconsistent, for example one school has increased the number of young people achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE by 20% and another is not meeting the 30% baseline target. The numbers of young people achieving Levels 2 or 3 by age 19 is improving. The numbers of young people achieving A levels is below national figures.

63. The percentage of unauthorised absence in secondary schools in 2006/07 was slightly above that of statistical neighbours and the national average but action taken has been effective and recent data for 2008 indicates an improving trend in the number of young people absent without notification. Secondary permanent exclusions have increased by 21% over the past four years and the authority has recently taken firm action to reverse the trend. Specialist and targeted work through the Behaviour Support Team and Area Admission panels has reduced numbers of fixed-term exclusions for this year. The Nottinghamshire Learning Centre, which includes a network of four PRUs, provides a range of good alternative education programmes across the county and is particularly successful supporting young people with special needs and challenging behaviour. For example, one young man with Asperger's Syndrome had successfully completed a year-long course in video production at a training provider in Nottingham as a result of highly effective support and guidance through the Special Individualised Programmes team. The 14–19 team has piloted alternative curriculum projects to address and support the achievement and engagement of young people at risk of exclusion. Early data for these projects suggests a high level of success in attendance, engagement and achievement.

## Service management

Inadequate



Adequate



Good



Outstanding



## Capacity to improve

Inadequate



Adequate



Good



Outstanding



64. **The management of services for children and young people is good. Service management is good and capacity to improve further is also good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>The Partnership Trust is effective with very strong and decisive leadership from the Acting Strategic Director of Children's Services.</p> <p>Very strong commitment to children's services shown by elected members, the Chief Executive of the council and chief officers in other key agencies.</p>	<p>Not all priorities are suitably underpinned by a resource and performance plan.</p> <p>Target setting within the CYPP is not sufficiently SMART and could be usefully extended to include joint performance and outcome targets.</p>

<p>Clear strategies are now in place which are suitably focused on areas of greatest need.</p> <p>Outstanding capacity to self-assess performance and to use this as an ongoing process to continuously improve performance and outcomes.</p> <p>There is strong financial planning with good examples of increased resources to children's services.</p>	
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65. The council and its partners clearly state an ambitious shared vision in the CYPP. This is to work together to provide integrated services for all Nottinghamshire children and young people, to improve their life chances and to help them maximise their potential. This vision is well supported by clear objectives and targets, informed by the findings of an analysis of needs and socio-economic data. It takes good account of concerns raised by children and young people, parents and carers. An effective gap analysis has identified where improvements are needed, such as in the coordination of provision to support the emotional health and well-being of vulnerable children and young people. However, some of the data and analysis in the original needs assessment was insufficiently robust. A review and refresh of the CYPP is underway and this is drawing on a more rigorous joint strategic needs analysis. A multi-agency CYPP planning group ensures that ambitions are effectively prioritised in partner agencies' plans and is tackling a range of issues, including the development of a strategic framework for equality and diversity. This joint approach means that there is good agreement about how improvements will be achieved.

66. Prioritisation is good and is being further sharpened in the refresh of the CYPP. Priorities are soundly based on the partnership's needs analysis and address the five Every Child Matters outcome areas. Priority actions have been identified to strengthen integrated working both at strategic and operational levels, such as through a consistent approach to parenting support across all agencies. Strong emphasis is given to active participation by children and young people and their families in shaping the design and delivery of services. For example, children and young people with disabilities requested more access to physical education. A target to increase access was set and provisional figures indicate a significant increase in participation. Actions to reduce racial and homophobic prejudice and discrimination have been prioritised. A strong focus on preventative approaches and early intervention, such as by identifying and working with those at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour has enabled problems to be tackled before they escalate, for example with a 17% reduction in the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system.

67. At county-level, strategic plans are well linked. The children and young people's block of the local area agreement is integrated within the CYPP so that focus is maintained on the issues that are important for the county. These include maternity and early years services and targets in the CYPP aim to reduce smoking in pregnancy and increase rates of breastfeeding.

68. The majority of children, young people and their families can access the services and support that they need, although this is less easy for some. Access to services is limited in some rural areas and partners are aware that there is a need for better promotion of services. For some communities, services are easy to access via the spreading network of children's centres and extended schools. The recent purchase of eight youth buses is helping to tackle access problems elsewhere. Where possible, the location of services such as sexual health advice has taken into account young people's concerns about confidentiality.

69. The effectiveness of inter-agency processes for planning and reviewing provision for individual children and young people varies across the county. For example, some teams have secured good inter-agency involvement in reviewing child protection cases, but this approach has not been replicated elsewhere. Identification of lead professionals and use of the CAF are being rolled out. This is strengthening multi-agency support and ensuring better information sharing.

70. The Acting Strategic Director of Children's Services and the portfolio holder provide strong and well-respected leadership. Effective structures are in place to ensure delivery. The partners formally established children's trust arrangements in February 2008 with a Children and Young People's Partnership Board. This is chaired by the portfolio holder and includes all the statutory partners and other stakeholders such as the voluntary sector and Race Equalities Council. Firm direction from the Children's Services Executive Group (CSEG) of senior officers drawn from the partnership, enables the multi-agency planning group to focus effort on agreed priorities. There are children and young people sub-groups in all the district local strategic partnerships. These ensure that action is well targeted locally and that issues affecting children and young people have a high profile in local strategies.

71. There is strong commitment to improving services for children and young people and good capacity across the partnership. At an operational level, partners respond flexibly to identified needs and have strengthened capacity in priority areas, such as the prevention of domestic violence. Actions to achieve targets in each of the main outcome areas are clearly specified in the CYPP with responsibility for delivery assigned to named lead officers. However, the plans had not been costed and the resource implications for partners were unspecified, making it unclear whether plans could be afforded. Nevertheless, targets have been achieved against a range of outcomes, for example a 65% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents, and increases in the level of GCSE achievements, completion of apprenticeships and accredited outcomes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. There is no evidence of performance failure due to lack of resources.

72. Financial capacity is strong. The refreshed CYPP is being underpinned by the council's medium-term financial strategy implementation planning. The council has added £1.3 million to its budget for children and young people and has earmarked further resources for an ambitious Building Schools for the Future programme. The high reserves held by many of the schools place them in a good position for commissioning services. Schools with excessively high reserves have three-year spending plans, monitored by school advisors. Some service budgets have been pooled, for example the jointly commissioned substance misuse services for young people. There is alignment of budgets for CAMHS and some other services, such as those for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

73. Value for money is being effectively secured. The council benchmarks service costs annually to ensure that value for money is being secured and service reviews are undertaken to identify areas for improvement and saving. An effective approach to joint commissioning is developing through CSEG. Some services have been decommissioned where provision has been adequately mainstreamed or where they were found to be ineffective. As a result of changes to commissioning, access to CAMHS has improved, with specialist staff better able to focus on service delivery. The changes have brought about improvements in the use of resources across the partnership and better value for money.

74. Workforce planning is at an early stage. The partners are mapping the existing qualifications, skills and experience of staff against the requirements for delivery of integrated services. There are examples of joint appointments, such as the joint commissioning manager for CAMHS and posts jointly funded with the voluntary sector. There is effective recruitment and retention, for example in social care and education. Training opportunities to enable staff to develop new skills include good secondment opportunities, for example a woman's aid access worker seconded to work with the police.

75. ICT is used effectively to help pinpoint areas for action and to increase efficiency. The Jupiter in Nottinghamshire database collates data such as crime statistics, anti-social behaviour incidents, health information, school exclusions and road traffic incidents from a range of partners. This information is used to identify hotspots which trigger focused intervention, including through multi-agency Weeks of Action. The council provides effective ICT support to schools and plans are well advanced for the customer service centre to deal with children and young people's services enquiries, with the aim of freeing up professional time for direct service delivery.

76. There is good monitoring of performance and a strengthening performance management culture. A partnership management framework is in development. The views of children and young people contribute to service reviews. Some young people are trained as inspectors and their comments have led to changes, such as improved access at the Beth Shalom Centre.

77. Performance is reported six-monthly to the partnership executive and robust action is taken to deal with underperformance. Councillors state that the improved quality of reports has enabled them to challenge performance more effectively, for example GCSE outcomes for looked after children. Target-setting in the current CYPP is not consistently SMART, but a more rigorous approach is being taken in the refreshed version of the plan with increased focus on ensuring that the targets will represent better outcomes for children and young people.

78. The capacity of the council and its partners to further improve outcomes for children and young people is good. A clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement is demonstrated in the self-assessment and the review of the CYPP. Positive outcomes have already been achieved against a wide range of CYPP targets, and strong and effective leadership is empowering staff to further improve services. Systematic approaches to workforce development, improving value for money and to strengthening performance management are in place. Senior politicians and officers across the partnership are united in their commitment to the CYPP agenda and staff show enthusiasm and dedication to achieving better outcomes for Nottinghamshire's children and young people.

## Annex A

### **MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

#### **Summary**

The overall effectiveness of children's services is adequate with some good aspects, although with variation between outcome areas. The contributions with regard to making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being are good. The contributions made to being healthy, staying safe and enjoying and achieving are adequate. Although the direction of travel is positive, when compared to similar councils, the pace of change has not been rapid enough to overcome weaknesses in most outcome areas and those weaknesses are sufficient to make the overall effectiveness no more than adequate.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3152&providerCategoryID=08filename=//APA//apa\\_2007\\_891\\_pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3152&providerCategoryID=08filename=//APA//apa_2007_891_pdf)

## Annex B: Summary of the enhanced youth inspection report

### Main findings

1. The quality of youth work provision in Nottinghamshire is good with outstanding features. The local authority sufficiently secures the provision of youth work. The standard of young people's achievement is good and at times outstanding. Participation in the service is high. Young people develop the skills and confidence, in particular to influence considerably the service, the authority and their communities. Achievement of accredited and recorded outcomes is good. However, the achievement of recorded outcomes is not sufficiently meaningful to the young people. The quality of youth work practice is good, with workers being particularly effective in facilitating opportunities for young people to take responsibility for decision-making. The curriculum range is good and supports very well the five *Every Child Matters* themes. Staff have or are working towards qualifications suitable for their roles, and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Considerable recent and on-going improvement in facilities is enhancing curriculum delivery, with very significant investment by the county council in new buildings. The material investment in the service has resulted in high morale, with both staff and young people feeling valued. Very frequent observations of practice are carried out and are effective in improving the quality of provision. Young people take part in the observation process. While partnership working is well established and adds to the range and quality of provision, progress towards integration of services has been slow and is not yet sufficiently developed.

### Key aspect inspection grades

Key Aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	3
	Quality of youth work practice	3
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	3
3	Leadership and management	3

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale  
4: excellent/outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate/satisfactory; 1: inadequate*

### Strengths

- The standard of young people's achievements is good and sometimes outstanding.



- Young people develop particularly well the skills and confidence to influence the service and their communities.
- The standard of youth work practice is good.
- The good range of opportunities for young people provided by the curriculum is very well linked to the five key *Every Child Matters* outcomes.
- Observation of practice is being very effectively used to improve the quality of provision.
- Support from the local authority to improve and enhance facilities for youth work is good.

### **Areas for development**

- Integration of services is too slow
- The acquisition of recorded outcomes is insufficiently meaningful to young people.

## Annex C

### CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Outcomes for children and young people in Nottinghamshire are good overall. Staying safe, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being are all good. Being healthy and enjoying and achieving are adequate with good and improving features. Service management and capacity to improve are both good. Children and young people who are most vulnerable are increasingly benefiting from targeted services aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting inclusion.
2. Service management in Nottinghamshire is good. Political and managerial leadership is strong and decisive. The views of children and young people are consistently sought and the CYPP demonstrates a strong social inclusion ethos that adds to the well-targeted preventative agenda. Partnership working is increasing capacity and the needs of the most vulnerable groups are constantly considered. Resources are well targeted with effective use of data to monitor and track progress. Quality assurance processes are not sufficiently consistent across the whole county.
3. The combined work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is adequate. Most schools are signed up to the Healthy Schools Award, with 55% already achieving the standard. CAMHS provides good support to the most vulnerable groups, including looked after children and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but capacity is insufficient in some parts of the county. Teenage conception rates are reducing from a high level as the result of concerted effort. Oral health in the county and the rate of immunisations is also good. Smoking and alcohol and drugs misuse remain high in parts of the county and are the focus of targeted action.
4. Children and young people appear safe and services to ensure this are given high priority. The NSCB is providing effective leadership on all aspects of safeguarding. Training programmes are highly regarded and include learning from serious case reviews. Collaboration between agencies working with children and young people is good with effective practice in respect of missing children, domestic violence and the provision of local services to reduce risk and support vulnerable families. Systems to recruit staff safely are well embedded with effective processes for clearances completed through the Criminal Records Bureau. Arrangements for referral, initial assessment and protection planning are good and underpinned by good procedures. Performance against all the key indicators in respect of safeguarding is also good. Arrangements to track high-risk offenders are good.

5. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve well and enjoy their lives is adequate. Schools encourage attendance and good support systems are in place to track and monitor children missing from education. Recent data show improved attendance in all priority absence schools. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is good and above the national average. At Key Stage 2 outcomes are below similar areas but in line in English, mathematics and science. Nottinghamshire's rate of improvement at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is greater than that nationally and the gap with the national average, although still higher, is closing. The last two years' Key Stage 4 results have seen an improvement at twice the rate of the national average. Support to schools is good and focused on aspects where there are particular needs or difficulties. The progress of children and young people who are looked after and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Parents and carers receive outstanding support in helping their children to enjoy school and there is good cooperation and coordination to enable children and young people to enjoy their leisure time.

6. The impact of all services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good with outstanding work to enable children and young people to participate in planning at all levels. Consultation is at the heart of service development and delivery. Children and young people with disabilities are involved well in decisions that affect their lives. Further work is needed to smooth out transition arrangements at all levels. Children and young people have good access to councillors and senior officers. The youth service is effective. A young inspector scheme has been developed to enable young people to 'inspect' local services and provide a user perspective.

7. The impact of services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good overall. Early years and childcare targets have been exceeded. The partnership is highly committed to ensuring that the most disadvantaged young people have access to appropriate education, employment or training. The number of young people not in education, employment or training is lower than the national average and the number of looked after young people remaining in education, employment or training post-16 is higher than the national average. There is access to good quality advice, information and guidance through the Connexions service and Aimhigher. Good progress has been made in developing a more robust and strategic 14–19 partnership group but this is yet to show full impact. Processes to track young people at 19 who do not have suitable placements are underdeveloped.

8. The capacity of council services to improve is good. The CYPP provides a clear sense of direction. The workforce is well trained, motivated and committed to deliver the objectives and resources are available. Self-assessment processes are robust with a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Positive outcomes have already been achieved against a wide range of targets and new strategies are in place that are having demonstrable impact. New innovations like the outstanding customer service

centre, locality working and the large network of children's centres now contribute positively to increased capacity and continuous improvement.

## Annex D

### SUMMARY OF JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors from Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the inspection of children's services*.
2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and these findings plus aspects of the most recent annual performance assessment are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.
3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in Nottinghamshire and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the annual performance assessment of children's services, joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being. This review explores these issues by focusing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after and children at risk or requiring safeguarding and a few additional investigations. It evaluates the collective contribution made by all relevant children's services to outcomes for these children and young people.
4. The review took place in two stages consisting of an analysis stage (where recorded evidence was scrutinised) and a two-week fieldwork stage (where inspectors met children and young people and those who deliver services for them).