



## Nottinghamshire Children's Trust

### **BRIEFING: The role of the Lead Member for Children's Services regarding the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This briefing provides an overview of the role of the Lead Member for Children's Services regarding Nottinghamshire's Children's Trust and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB).

#### **2. Relationship between Nottinghamshire Children's Trust and NSCB**

- 2.1 Nottinghamshire's Children's Trust is the single, strategic body responsible for ensuring all services co-operate to improve the well-being of local children and young people.
- 2.2 The role of NSCB is to ensure the effectiveness of arrangements made by individual agencies and the wider Trust to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 2.3 The functions of both the Children's Trust and NSCB include responsibility and accountability for keeping children and young people safe. Whilst their roles in this regard are complementary, they are also distinct.
- 2.4 The Children's Trust is responsible for the improvement of outcomes across *all* aspects of children and young people's lives and for the overarching strategic framework for the delivery of these improved outcomes.
- 2.5 The NSCB has a specific role to ensure the Children's Trust pays due regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. A major aspect of the NSCB's function is to challenge and scrutinise individual agencies of the Children's Trust (as well as the Trust as a whole) to ensure they are meeting this requirement effectively and in a co-ordinated way.
- 2.6 The Children's Trust has a challenge and scrutiny role towards the NSCB, including for example, its scrutiny of the annual report of the NSCB.
- 2.7 Therefore, although the NSCB must operate within the framework of the Children's Trust, it must also maintain a separate identity and independent voice to ensure this relationship of mutual challenge can be implemented effectively.

#### **3. Role of the Lead Member for Children's Services**

- 3.1 The role of the Lead Member for Children's Services regarding the Children's Trust and NSCB is set out in "The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services" (DCSF, 2009) and is summarised below. The role is reinforced by "The protection of children in England: action plan. The Government's response to Lord Laming" (DCSF, 2009).

- 3.2 With regard to the Children's Trust, the guidance identifies the following role for the Lead Member (LM). They should:
- promote effective partnership working
  - provide political leadership within, and in partnership beyond, the local authority in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people and narrow the outcomes gap for vulnerable groups of children and young people, by
    - engaging and encouraging local communities and representative organisations to contribute suggestions, comments and ideas on the quality of children's services and how these might be improved
    - setting the overall vision of the Children & Young People's Plan
    - being satisfied that services delivered within the local area are planned, designed, delivered and quality-assured with the involvement of children, young people and their families, and
    - challenging the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and others, where appropriate.
  - champion the interests of children, young people and their families within the local authority's area (including all those receiving services who do not live in the area) by
    - ensuring that the local authority celebrates and showcases examples of children and young people's achievements
    - purposeful engagement with local schools, including through visits and dialogue with pupils and staff
    - political engagement with any elected members on the Local Strategic Partnership/s or the Children's Trust, with members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and with local community organisations
  - ensure that officers are effectively monitoring education arrangements, including standards of achievement in the local area
  - champion early intervention and prevention in delivering services for children, young people and families
  - exercise political leadership that emphasises the importance of reducing child poverty in the local area, and
  - be politically accountable for the audit arrangements adopted by the Council for ensuring data on children's services (which may come from a range of sources) is reliable.
- 3.3 With regard to ensuring the effective relationship between the Children's Trust and NSCB, the Lead Member must:
- champion the interests of children, young people and families by political engagement with any members of the NSCB
  - ensure that the Council's paid officers maintain a clear focus on effective safeguarding arrangements and promoting the safety and welfare of children across all agencies

- contribute to and be satisfied that the local authority demonstrates high standards of corporate parenting, in particular by encouraging Elected Members to promote the educational achievement and health and well-being of looked after children and children leaving care
- be politically accountable for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- ensure effective systems are in place for co-ordination of work with other agencies with relevant responsibilities
- ensure effective quality assurance systems are in place, that these systems are functioning properly and should challenge partners on how they fulfil their responsibilities
- should be a “participant observer” of the NSCB. This means attending meetings, receiving all its written reports, engaging in discussion, seeking clarity and asking questions
- undertake training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- promote effective partnership working
- work closely with other elected members involved in adult social care services to ensure effective transition arrangements are in place and be satisfied that effective arrangements for transitions into adulthood are in place for care leavers
- lead on ensuring that looked after children have their interests protected, their opportunities maximised, their educational achievements enhanced, their voices heard and care services shaped to meet their needs.

#### 3.4 Along with the DCS, the Lead Member must:

- lead and facilitate local partnership arrangements, including information sharing databases and the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- ensure everyone in the local authority and each of the Children’s Trust partners is aware of their shared responsibility for improving outcomes for looked after children and fulfils its responsibilities for children for which it is corporate parent
- work with the Director for Children’s Services to act as corporate parent for looked after children.

##### **Note on context of this briefing:**

1. This briefing is one of a set of four that provide an overview of the roles of the
  - Council’s Leader
  - Council’s Chief Executive
  - Director of Children’s Services
 Therefore, the role of the Council’s Lead Member is set within the context of the roles of the above.
2. This briefing has been produced prior to the publication of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act, expected in autumn 2009 and may be subject to subsequent amendment.
3. This briefing has been produced by Nottinghamshire Children’s Trust and NSCB during the development of a protocol to establish an effective communication and relationship between Nottinghamshire’s Children’s Trust and NSCB. The protocol will outline processes to ensure the role of the Lead Member with regard to the Children’s Trust and NSCB is fully operationalised.