

NOTTINGHAM'S CHILD FRIENDLY CITY ACTION PLAN 2023 - 2025



Working towards recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City







Introduction

It is our ambition to make Nottingham a UNICEF Child Friendly City (CFC), a city which values children and young people and where the rights and voices of children and young people are at the heart of all we do. In short, a city where it is good to grow up.

This is a shortened version of our action plan. It has been co-produced with children, young people and parents of early years children from across our city. We will continue to work together to build a city where all children and young people:

- Feel welcome and included.
- Feel confident that they are safe and secure.
- Live healthily.
- Live in a city where their rights are understood and valued.
- Understand how to get their voice heard.
- Help shape the city with their opinions.
- Are able to learn and to express themselves and their cultural heritage.
- Are kind to each other and expect kindness in return.



Our aim is to make the rights of children and young people an integral part of the culture, policies and decisions that are made in our city. At every level we will respect the rights that children and young people have and do what is needed to give them healthy and happy lives.

The Child Friendly Action Plan can be found on our website.



Councillor Cheryl Barnard - Portfolio Holder

Nottingham City Council

Child Friendly Nottingham has been a priority for Nottingham City Council for 5 years and we have been working towards it with a number of initiatives. One notable example has been listening to children's views in the development of the new library and the Collin Street development in the City Centre.

Now Nottingham City Council and partners in One Nottingham and Small Steps Big Changes have agreed that we will work together to make Nottingham an internationally-recognised UNICEF Child Friendly City.



The central idea is this programme is about children's rights. By following children's rights, we will involve children more in decisions that affect them and their lives. We can listen to their voices and build a better future together. We are building a network of children's champions across the city who will help others to know more about children's rights.

This action plan has been developed after extensive conversations and surveys, during our Discovery Phase, with children, young people, and the early years including babies and their parents and carers.

The children and young people provided valuable feedback about their understanding of their rights. They overwhelmingly told us that they want to include everyone. Notably, they said that they want Nottingham to be a kind city. They feel that all children and young people should feel welcome, that in producing an action plan we must think about children from all backgrounds.

It is the voices of children and young people who have inspired and informed this action plan. BUT it is the task of ALL OF US to make Nottingham a child friendly place. This is an action plan developed and agreed by partners, children and young people together. It is not the job of one agency to deliver it. It is the responsibility of everyone to listen to children and young people and to make Nottingham the best place that we can for babies, children and young people.

Nottingham faces a number of serious challenges; it will not be an easy task but together we can rise to overcome those challenges.

You can read about the actions in our plan in which we set out a shared vision for the city with a clear set of goals, as well as the actions that Nottingham City Council and its partners will take to achieve them.

Cheryl Barnard

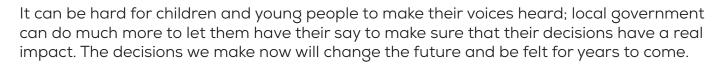
Councillor Cheryl Barnard Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education Nottingham City Council

What does it mean to be a Child Friendly City?

Child Friendly Cities & Communities is a UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) programme that works with councils to put children's rights into practice.

The programme aims to create cities and communities in the UK where all children – whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, or simply visiting their local library – have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

Child Friendly Cities & Communities is part of the global Child Friendly Cities Initiative that reaches over 30 million children in close to 50 countries. In a Child Friendly Nottingham, we want all children and young people to be treated as equals: to gain confidence, be heard and be safe.



Many public and voluntary services play an important role in the lives of children and young people, but they do not always listen to their lived experiences and voices. We aim to make sure that no voices go unheard, regardless of where a child or a young person lives, and whatever their background.

It is important that our children and young people have the information they need to participate in these conversations, so they can be part of the decision making around services where they live and be involved in steering the direction of Nottingham in the future.

KIN

The Outcomes of the Child Friendly Nottingham Action Plan.

1. A Kind and Inclusive city Nottingham is an inclusive and kind city where children and young people are celebrated, valued, respected, and listened to.

2. Children's rights at work Nottingham Councillors, leaders and staff across partner agencies confidently and consistently apply a child rightsbased approach in their work.

Children and young people can access support when they need it

Children and young people can find help from public agencies when they need to and feel confident to do so.

4. Children's decision making

Children and young people are actively involved in local decision making.

5. Children's democracy

Children and young people are actively involved in local democracy.

Communicate clearly with children and young people

Our communications are clear, understandable, and responsive to the views of children and young people. A positive view of children and young people is widely held and promoted across Nottingham.

7. Promote understanding of children's rights

Our communications will promote and encourage understanding of children's rights across Nottingham.

8. Confident and safe in communities

Children and young people feel confident and safe in their communities, such as in the park, neighbourhoods and on the way to and from school.

9. Child friendly city centre

Nottingham city centre is a child friendly place which makes children and young people feel welcome, engaged, and safe.

10. Children feel safe and are safe online

Children and young people to feel safer online, understand how to manage the risks and can recognise how changing technologies might impact on them.

11. Mental health and wellbeing solutions

Children and young people are aware of available mental health and wellbeing support and are able to access local services.

Local Health and Care Organisations, children and young people work closely together to identify gaps in mental health and wellbeing support; collaboration and co-design enables children and young people in Nottingham to suggest solutions for these gaps.

12. Support good mental health

Timely support for children and young people with identified mental health needs and preventative action to maintain good mental wellbeing.

13. Understand health needs and support healthier lives

Nottingham will have a better understanding of children and young people's health needs and preventative health improvement initiatives will support children and young people to live healthier lives.

15. Learning and flourishing

Children and young people feel confident to create and access learning, skills, and training opportunities within the city; they feel enabled to learn new things, flourish and be guided and supported by trusted adults.

14. Celebrating culture and diversity

Children and young people are enabled to use their imagination and creativity to celebrate diversity and their cultural heritage.

16. Active learners and champions for children and young people's voices

Children and young people will be empowered to be active learners and champions for all children and young people's voices.

What do Nottingham's children and young people have to say?

The first part of our Child Friendly City journey was the 'Discovery Phase'. During 2022 and 2023 we formed focus groups in schools and local communities. We joined in partnership with the Nottingham chapter of Citizens UK, paying close attention to their Young People's Manifesto and the views of over 8,000 young people.

We spoke to over 2,000 children and young people of all ages, as well as their parents and carers. We engaged with the under 5s and their parents or carers through Small Steps Big Changes, visited primary schools, secondary



schools, colleges and alternative education providers as well as local youth sessions and Holiday Activity Fund groups.

We held discussions with the Nottingham Primary Parliament and the Nottingham Youth Cabinet. Listening to children and young people helped us to understand the things that are important to them.

We held a Discovery Day attended by children from nine different primary schools, who took part in activities to think about our city.

Some things that our children and young people said that they would like to see in the future:

- Every child feels valued, connected and loved.
- Every child is able to be creative and express themselves.
- A kind, enjoyable city to live in, where everyone belongs.
- Every child feels safer and happier.
- Children having the opportunity to have their voices heard.
- Less litter in the city and its big parks.
- Better free sports activities.
- More parks! And more accessible girl-friendly play spaces.
- A trusted adult looking after us.
- Every child feels able to trust the police and officials; more police coming into schools.
- Free and affordable services.
- A clean healthy environment with fewer petrol cars in neighbourhoods and more electric vehicles.
- Better mental health services with shorter waiting times.
- More places to enjoy being a child.

The children and young people who took part in these activities chose three badges (themes or priorities) from a selection offered by UNICEF UK.

Our children and young people told us:

"Pride and enthusiasm are good for communities. This is how we keep everyone involved".

The UNICEF UK badges which make our plan

UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities & Communities programme, themes or priorities are represented as badges.

Our action plan will work towards achieving ambitions and outcomes in three badges decided by children and young people and three UNICEF UK mandatory badges. These are:

- 1. Safe and Secure.
- 2. Healthy
- 3. Education and Learning
- 4. Culture (mandatory)

- 5. Communication (mandatory)
- 6. Co-operation and Leadership (mandatory)

"Equal and Included" was also very important to our children and young people so we made this our "golden thread" to run throughout the whole programme.

KIN

Nottingham's Golden Thread: A Kind and Inclusive city

Our children and young people said:

"I would like everyone to be treated fairly and no one excluded – all children to be given the opportunity to participate in a range of activities".

We asked children and young people what they associated with not having enough money. Their answers included 'no housing', 'no food' and 'sadness'. It is in this context that barriers to inclusion need to be addressed.

Talking with children and young people the idea of fairness came up repeatedly. Alongside this was the children's wish for Nottingham to be a kind city. Children and young people place a very high importance on fairness and inclusion. Because it is so important to them we decided to adopt Equal and Included as a golden thread that will run through all the badges. Our children and young people said:

"What I love about Nottingham is that it's a very giving place, basically...it's not just a place to go, it's a place where everybody tries to welcome".

Safe and Secure Badge



In all of the conversations which took place during our Discovery Phase, safety and security came out as an overwhelming priority. Children and young people, as well as their parents and carers, will feel confident that they are safe in their communities - whether it's in the park, taking part in activities in their neighbourhoods, in the city centre or on the way to and from school.

While the majority of children and young people we spoke to felt safe in Nottingham, not all did, and most felt that they were not given the opportunity to have a say in their local area. They are concerned about neighbourhood crime, rubbish, litter, dog fouling, gang and knife crime. Our CFC action plan will aim to address safety and security as our first priority.

What will change look like?

Children and young people feel safe online.

Children and young people should feel more confident and safer online. They understand online risks, how to manage those risks and be able to recognise how changing technologies might impact on them.

Children and young people should feel confident and safe in local communities.

Local activities will take place in neighbourhoods across the city, in which children and young people feel that they are safe and welcome to take part. We will publish a report in a family friendly format, which will include evidence that children and young people are engaging in local activities.

- Staff at our partner agencies who are delivering services in the community will feel more confident in working with children and young people.
- Child Friendly Nottingham will promote safe transport for children and young people across the city. We will look for evidence that young people and parents / carers feel more confident when moving around the city.

A Child Friendly City Centre

Nottingham city centre will make parents of young children, children and young people feel welcome, engaged and safe.

Businesses and partners will work collaboratively to build a city centre that is welcoming and dynamic for children, families, and young people in its design. The contribution of children and young people should be visible across the city centre; in activities, shops, displays and exhibitions. Our children and young people said:

"If we had a safe and secure city, more people would move around the city and visit the city".

Healthy Badge



During the discovery phase we asked about the importance of health and well being. Children, young people and parents of early years children recognised that health affects many aspects of life. They understand the impact that poor mental health has on people's ability to lead happy and full lives. They told us of the importance of physical activity. They made connections with the different badges. They identified the need for clean and safe parks and local facilities for good health.

What will change look like?

We will support good mental health for children and young people.

- Children and young people will become more aware of the mental health and wellbeing support that is available and how to access local services.
- We will target improved numbers in the children and young people who experience and live with poor mental health, as measured by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) referral and assessment data, and as reported in our Perception Survey.

We will find new solutions to support mental health and wellbeing.

- Children and young people will be able to access mental health support in a timely manner when they need it. We will work to deliver a sustainable workforce plan for CAMHS.
- Local health and care organisations in Nottingham will work closely with children and young people to identify gaps in mental health and wellbeing support, identifying and addressing the improvements that Nottingham's children and young people would like to see.

We will understand young people's health needs in Nottingham and support healthier lives.

- We will aim for children and young people to be able to take part in local healthy activities and services to support a positive, holistic, healthy lifestyle.
- We will encourage schools to co-produce Health and Wellbeing Plans.
- We will aim to launch an annual Health and Wellbeing Survey for school pupils.
- We will make it our goal for children and young people to receive more support from our integrated wellbeing service 'Eating and Moving for Good Health'.
- Child Friendly Nottingham will support the launch of a vaping cessation service and develop a new 'social prescribing' function in healthcare for children and young people.

We will aim for continuous improvement of positive lifestyle changes, using evidence from integrated wellbeing service referral and delivery data reports, as well as increased uptake of the Healthy Start scheme. We will measure children and young people's involvement using the Health Equity Audit & feedback from the Health Scrutiny Committee. Our children and young people said:

"Poor health leads to anti-social behaviour and crime, poor eating leads to other problems, poor health will impact on jobs and family life".



Education and Learning Badge

Child Friendly Nottingham sets out to explicitly address challenges faced by ethnically diverse communities, local authority looked after children and SEND children within education.

Children and young people from these communities who have a range of abilities and backgrounds, will help co-design, and take part in activities which will support learning and a foundation for development, in schools, colleges, community learning settings, businesses, cultural and creative venues and public organisations. They will support the local authority's corporate parenting responsibility.

What will change look like?

Celebrating culture and diversity

Child Friendly Nottingham will treasure learning. Children and young people in Nottingham should be able to use their imagination and creativity to celebrate their diverse cultural heritage.

- Cultural activities that are run in community centres and local areas will involve protected groups of children and young people in their production. Activities for babies, children and young people should be available all year round.
- Child Friendly Nottingham will seek to mainstream the **Cultural Rucksack** to widen the offer to children and young people within alternative provisions (an alternative to mainstream education), and babies and children in early years settings.
- Children and young people should feel connected to Nottingham city, taking part in its cultural life, expressing themselves creatively and feeling valued.

Learning and flourishing

- Children and young people feel confident to create and access learning, skills and training opportunities within the city, enabling them to learn new things, flourish and be guided and supported by trusted adults.
- Child friendly life learning programmes will be available to babies, children and young people.
- We will aim for a Nottingham Community and Business Group to be established, to support career and work experience opportunities for young people across the city.
- Child Friendly Nottingham will aim to roll out a programme of mentorship across the city.

Our children and young people said:

"We all will need to get a job and education and learning will help us get a better job and make good money. Education is good for careers. It is good to learn from the past, it helps us follow our dreams and be responsible".

Active learning, championing children and young people's voices

- Children and young people will be empowered to be active learners and champions for all children and young people's voices.
- More schools and academies will commit to working towards getting UNICEF 'Rights Respecting Schools' bronze and silver badges. Schools and academies previously working at silver level will work towards RRS Gold.
- There will be a pilot programme for alternative provision to work towards bronze/silver Rights Respecting status.
- Child Friendly Nottingham will develop champions to advocate on behalf of babies, children and young people.
- The educational experience of babies, children and young people in Nottingham will be positive, inclusive and anti-racist, enabling children and young people to advocate for themselves, their peers, and others.
- We will aim to reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions, reported cases of bullying, and an increase in school attendance.



The Culture Badge. A Culture of Children's Rights



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the basis of all of UNICEF's work.

70% of the children and young people we spoke to had heard about human rights but not their protected rights as children and young people. The majority of the young people that we consulted told us that they learned about their rights at school but had not spoken about them at home.

We will make it our goal to embed the UNICEF UK Child Rights-Based Approach (CRBA) Nottingham City Council's culture, more broadly in the organisations that the council work with and in the attitudes of the people in our city as a whole.

What will change look like?

Embedding children's rights in our city's culture and our work:

- Nottingham Councillors and leaders in public, business and community agencies will champion children's rights, demonstrating visible leadership of our commitment to equality and inclusion of young citizens.
- We will make Children's Rights training with UNICEF UK available for partners and professionals across the city.
- A number of senior leaders in Nottingham will become 'Child Friendly Champions' public advocates with a strong understanding of children's rights who will share the work of the programme at every opportunity.
- Partner agencies will record and share their experience of involving children, young people and their parents or carers in decision making; involving people from all backgrounds including marginalised groups.
- Child Friendly Nottingham will use a 'train the trainer' model to grow a network of children's rights trainers.
- Leaders and staff will complete training to feel more confident about children's rights.
- Partner agencies will be more responsive to the issue of how children and young people access their services, they will monitor contacts and use feedback from children and young people to improve accessibility.
- Child Rights Impact Assessments from public agencies will lead to improved understanding of babies, children and young people's needs when delivering services. Agencies will use these to review and share experiences of involving children, young people in decision making.
- 30% of frontline staff in NCC libraries and leisure services will complete training on children's rights.

Co-operation and Leadership Badge



The majority of children and young people we spoke told us that they did not feel that they had a say in their local area, yet 90% of the adults who took part in our Discovery Phase consultation said that involving children in decision making led to better outcomes.

Child Friendly Nottingham will make it a clear goal that children and young people are involved when important choices are made in the city. In a Child Friendly City, our leaders and decision-makers will work together with children and young people to make choices that affect them daily.

It is vital that babies, children and young people from across the city are included, where our strategic goals are shared clearly between organisations. By bringing children and young people's ideas together, we can build the city that they would like to live in.

What will change look like?

Children and young people helping to make decisions in Nottingham

- There should be a variety of ways for children and young people from all backgrounds to help make decisions in Nottingham. We will aim for a measurable increase in children and young people involved in making public decisions, and for decisions made by children and young people to be delivered.
- Partner agencies will report on the level of engagement of children and young people in their decision making.
- A digital library will be created which can be used by partners to develop services. These will be shared on social media and appropriate websites.
- Our Child Friendly City Children and Young People Network will hold annual meetings to discuss priorities. Network representatives will also meet with partners, stakeholders and selected elected members on a regular basis.
- Staff will understand the many challenges faced by babies, children and young people in being heard. More creative approaches will be employed to ensure their voices are included.

Involving young people in local democracy

- Elected officials will visit schools and community venues, and take part in workshops to encourage involvement with local democracy.
- Councillors and others with elected positions in Nottingham will include the rights of children and young people in their election manifestos.
- We plan to hold lessons and workshops in schools and colleges to encourage electoral registration and participation amongst children and young people. Local political groups will actively support increased young voter registration.

Our children and young people said:

"Participation is where everyone takes part in the same thing, and nobody gets left out".

Communication Badge



Cities are places of dialogue, and successful cities function as communities. Not only do our children and young people deserve to be heard, but the communication they get back should be clear, understandable, and responsive to their views.

Over half of the children and young people aged between 5 and 17 that we spoke to listed in-person talking (as groups and individuals) as the best way to communicate with them; over half of over 11-year-olds also listed social media as a preferred method of communication. There was a large gap between the amount of young people who said that adults should always ask their opinion (56%) and those that felt that they are asked for their opinions (26%).

Our Child Friendly plan will aim to make Nottingham a place where children and young people are deeply involved in the conversations which affect them and the city.

What will change look like?

Communicating clearly with children and young people

- Child Friendly Nottingham's communications will be clear, understandable and responsive to the views of children and young people.
- We will involve children and young people in developing communications including in early years settings and in alternative provision.
- We will make it our goal for children and young people to learn how to play an active part in producing content for websites, journals, social media and schools.
- Digital communications including social media will be child and family friendly, designed to include those with particular speech and language needs.
- We will aim for communication professionals at our partner agencies to have an ongoing engagement forum with children and young people in Nottingham.
- Children and young people will be encouraged to visit and take part in activities involving mainstream media, e.g. local BBC, Notts TV or Confetti studios.
- We will aim for a measurable increase in children and young people reporting that responsible and elected adults are listening to their voices.

Promoting and understanding of children's rights across Nottingham

- Our goal is that a positive view of babies, children and young people will be held widely and promoted across Nottingham.
- A greater number of children and young people will know what their rights are according to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- Schools, colleges and other educational centres will work with us to promote activities with the theme of children's rights.

Our children and young people said:

"In the olden days, there was a saying that "children should be seen and not heard"... yes, all children are beautiful, but they might have a voice and they might not agree with something... This is not the modern way!"

How will you know that we have achieved what we set out to do?

Our top priority is to listen to children and young people and what they say about the actions we are taking.

We will engage with babies, children and young people wherever they are. This will include:

- Youth forums
- The Primary Parliament
- Children and young people in schools, in alternative provisions and college
- Children and young people who are in local authority care
- Groups of early years children and their parents and carers
- Marginalised groups, for instance BAME, SEND, refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people.

We will check progress with UNICEF UK and with our partners. We will share information regularly.

We will carry out surveys to get feedback. This will check how children and young people understand their rights. It will also help us understand our progress. We will be able to see how well we are communicating with and about children and young people. We will be able to see if we are achieving a culture change which supports children's rights in Nottingham.

We will look at training data, publish case studies and feedback from our partner agencies.

We will bring together information from our partners. This will include official information and reports about:

- Education
- Public Health
- Community safety
- Transport
- Performance frameworks
- Health services.

We will review and aim to improve positive lifestyle changes. We will use evidence and learnings from our partners to improve services. We will use the take up of the Healthy Start Scheme amongst eligible families to measure success.

We will use a variety of measurements to build evidence of the impact of our work. This will include:

- Children and young people's involvement in official meetings
- Comparing our results with nearby and peer local authorities, where we can
- Recording what is said at our forums and through conversations at events and activities
- Using the reports from the Violence Reduction Youth Advisory Board
- Using reviews, surveys and event assessments
- Collecting agendas and actions from meetings including our Partnership Board.

What Nottingham looks like for our children and young people

55.9% of pupils leaving primary school met the expected levels in reading, writing and maths, compared to 56.5% in the Core Cities and 58.9% nationally



60.6% of GCSE

students gained good passes in Maths and English compared to 65.6% in the Core Cities and 68.8% nationally

16.1% of GCSE students gained good passes in the English Bacc compared to 25.8% in the Core Cities and 26.8% nationally



of people agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together





Nottingham is the

youngest core city

with about

Nottingham population

under 30

We support **690** Children in Need and 528 Children on a Child Protection Plan, as well as their families







85 are semiindependent living placements **67** are in other placement types



42.7% ethnic

minorities (2021 census) average of 37.7% (2021 Census) and 26.5% nationally



People

Nottingham is a city of diverse cultural backgrounds. Nearly half of Nottingham's population are from black or minority ethnic groups, and a quarter were born outside of the UK. We are a city where people have a range of different needs – over a third of households contain one or more people who are classified as disabled under the Equality Act.

Economy

Nottingham is the 11th most deprived district in the country. It contains high levels of economic hardship: half of children who live in Nottingham live in households in poverty. It is a tightly bounded council area surrounded by much wealthier suburbs. About 80% of housing in the city is Band A or B.

Economic pressures play a role in how secure children feel and lead to them becoming excluded. Boys who are eligible for free school meals have considerably lower GCSE attainment than the national average. Girls under 18 are twice as likely to face mental health difficulties and too many children from ethnic minority groups and low-income households are excluded from school.

Care leavers

Compared to similar cities, our care leavers are more likely to be in education. They are also more likely to be in employment and training (67% – 69% compared to 56% – 64%). Our care leavers are also more likely to be in suitable accommodation (93% – 97% compared to 86% – 89%). This is promising because we have a higher proportion of children in care, compared to our peers (109 per 10,000 compared to 96 per 10,000).



Safety

Crime statistics and attitudes to crime make children and young people wary of leaving neighbourhoods, using public transport and visiting the city centre. Perception of safety and personal exposure of risk greatly influence how children and young people behave.

Health

Good health is the cornerstone of a flourishing life, but local indicators show that Nottingham is currently behind England generally across infant mortality, teenage pregnancy, MMR immunisation, children's dental health, child obesity levels, and child inpatient admissions for mental health conditions.

Education

Education is essential to the future health and success of any city. Children's education is a priority for Nottingham City Council, as outlined in the City Council's Strategic Plan. At present, however, educational attainment runs below that of the neighbouring council areas and of England as a whole. Nottingham does have exciting educational developments: Confetti Media Centre and the new Nottingham College campus both provide some of the best learning facilities in the country for 16–17-year-olds. The new central library is a stateof-the-art base for learning.

We have an active network of educational partnerships supporting schools and offering opportunities for Underrepresented children and young people through, for example, the Cultural Rucksack, run by ChalleNGe (the Local Cultural Education Partnership), the Young Creative Awards and the Festival of Science and Curiosity.

Sport

Nottingham's network of active sporting trusts and community organisations positively engage in communities with children and young people, and they are key members of the partnership which is working to make Nottingham a Child Friendly City.



For more information on Child Friendly Nottingham

The programme has a dedicated website here: Child Friendly Nottingham

Get more information about children's rights

Read about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and what it means. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK

Learn about the seven principles of a child rights-based approach A child rights-based approach - Child Friendly Cities & Commuities (unicef.org.uk)



Learn more about Children's Rights with this easy read version

Learn more about the Child Friendly Cities project.

For any further enquiries, get in touch with Child Friendly Nottingham at child.friendly@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

www.childfriendlynottingham.org.uk

