



In accordance with the powers granted by the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 this will be a virtual meeting.

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

THURSDAY, 23 JULY 2020 at 10.00 AM
as a VIRTUAL - ONLINE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Access to the meeting is as follows:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and officers of the County Council supporting the meeting will access the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Members of the public and the press may access the meeting via the following link:

<https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=647&Mld=5619> where a live feed will be made available on the day of the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors D Brailsford, Clio Perraton-Williams, R L Foulkes, A G Hagues, S R Parkin, R H Trollope-Bellew and M A Whittington

Added Members (non-voting): Polly Coombes, Ann Wright, Amy-Louise Butler and Elizabeth Bunney

AGENDA

Item	Title	Pages
1	Election of Chairman	
2	Election of Vice-Chairman	
3	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
4	Declaration of Member's Interests	

- 5 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020** 5 - 12
- 6 Future Meeting Dates**
(For the Corporate Parenting Panel to agree the following meeting dates and times for 2021:
- *Thursday, 14 January 2021 at 10.00am*
 - *Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 10.00am*
 - *Thursday, 13 May 2021 at 10.00am*
 - *Thursday, 22 July 2021 at 10.00am*
- 7 Looked After Children and Care Leaver Strategy and Action Plan** 13 - 44
(To receive a report by Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which provides the Panel with an opportunity to review the Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy priorities and action plan)
- 8 Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)** 45 - 54
(To receive a report by Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Service, which provides the Panel with the opportunity to consider the work undertaken on behalf of the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service by Barnardo's)
- 9 Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report** 55 - 72
(To receive a report by Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards, which gives a summary and overview of the activities of V4C between January and June 2020)
- 10 Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)** 73 - 94
(To receive a report by Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer, which provides the Panel with the opportunity to consider the Legal Services end of year report)
- 11 Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2019/20** 95 - 122
(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager, which provides the Panel with an opportunity to consider the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Service)
- 12 Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service - Annual Report 2019/20** 123 - 136
(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager, which provides the Panel with an update on the work of the Independent Visitor)

13 Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

137 - 140

(To receive a report by Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, which enables the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year)

Distributed on Wednesday, 15 July 2020

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Rachel Wilson via telephone 07796 994874 or alternatively via email at rachel.wilson@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 12 MARCH 2020

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Clio Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), R L Foulkes, A G Hagues, S R Parkin and M A Whittington

Officers in attendance:-

John Harris (Head of Regulated Services - Fostering), Ben Lilley (Team Manager, Quality and Standards), Kerry Mitchell (Assistant Director Barnardo's (Lincolnshire)), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R H Trollope-Bellew

48 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M A Whittington wished it to be noted that his son was in receipt of services from Barnado's.

49 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

50 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR AND LEAD OFFICER

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, congratulated Heather Sandy on her appointment as the Executive Director of Children's Services.

The Chairman reported that he had recently attended the Big Conversation in Louth, which was reasonably well attended.

51 OUTCOMES FROM THE 2019 - 20 TELL US SURVEY AND BIG CONSERVATION 20

Consideration was given to a report which provided a summary and overview of two key elements of participation and engagement work within Children's Services over the last quarter period of the year:

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1. Tell Us Survey: This was an annual survey designed to capture the views of children in the authority's care about various aspects of their care experience with the intention being to identify how services could be improved and ensured that children and young people had a forum to raise issues and concerns about their experience in order to help Children's Services develop support further where needed.
2. The Big Conversation: These events were held three times per year (February, May and October) and provided an opportunity for children in the authority's care to share their experience and help shape and improve care services. The Big Conversation meetings enabled children and young people from the four locally based Voices 4 Choices groups (Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council) to come together, also with care leavers to share their views on a range of topics and issues.

The Panel was advised that the Tell Us Survey had been undertaken in 2019 and had received 38 responses, and it was acknowledged that this was not a large amount of responses. Any responses which included 'I could do better' would be forwarded on to a social worker to follow up. It was reported that there were some very positive responses. The number of responses was lower than officers would have liked, but work was on going to improve responses in the future.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was highlighted that there that been four responses answering 'could do better' to questions about 'your education' and 'your future' and it was queried whether it was possible that it was the same four young people responding. It was acknowledged that this was likely and would be flagged up to the social workers.
- It was suggested that next time the length of time the survey was open could be extended. Social workers had tried really hard to encourage young people to complete the surveys.
- There had been a suggestion of whether future survey's should just focus on a particular theme, and just ask four or five questions.
- In terms of the language used, it was noted that progress was being made, and the Council would be dropping use of the term 'Looked After Children' and replacing it with 'Children in Care'
- Members were concerned about the lack of responses, and it was queried whether there was an issue with the responses not being anonymised. However, members were advised that on the survey there was an option to make the responses anonymous.
- Members were encouraged to hear that any negative responses to survey questions were followed up by social workers.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the responses about not being aware of the virtual school, and the Panel was advised that this was being followed up with the Head of the Virtual School.

- It was highlighted that children in care would have meetings which included their social worker, designated teacher and other professionals, and they may not know what everyone's role was.
- A discussion took place regarding the importance of designated teachers and the role they played for children in care, and it was acknowledged that although all children in care would have a designated teacher, the child may not recognise that term. It was suggested it was more important that the child had someone outside the home they felt they could go to for support or advice.
- It was suggested that the language used with children should be changed, as officers were confident that children in care knew their designated teacher as a teacher. It was suggested that it would be better to ask children if they had someone at school they could go to if they needed help rather than asking if they knew who their designated teacher was.
- The LCHS representative advised that when children came for an assessment, they were asked if they knew who they could go to at school if they needed to speak to someone.
- It was noted that some services would send survey's out via text message, asking for a view by responding between 1 - 5 on a particular question.
- It was reported that the recent Big Conversation had followed on from the one held before Christmas 2019, where discussions about reviewing the language used had been taking place. Young people had highlighted that that 'Looked After Children' and 'respite' were terms that they did not like.
- It was queried how much input the young people would have in influencing the terms and the it was noted that they were able to feed in their views via V4C.
- Page 18 of the agenda pack, set out some suggested changes to terminology and it was noted that both the 'Care Plan' and 'Pathway Plan' would be known as 'Future Plan'. It was noted that a young person's view was they did not see a difference between them.
- In terms of the bullying aspect which had been recorded, it was queried what the current situation with this was, and if it was know why they were being bullied. It was noted that these responses has been escalated to the appropriate social workers. It was also suggested that the responses could have been referring to existing bullying situations which had not yet been resolved.
- It was highlighted that the 'Caring Promise' did not place any obligations on the child.
- It was noted that Barnardo's had a Leaving Care Charter, which was a two way responsibility between Barnardo's and the young person, of what could be expected. However, it was noted that this was in need of refreshing.
- One member commented that the care they gave their children was unconditional, and they would like the Care Pledge to also be unconditional, this was particularly important for younger children. However, it was acknowledged that clear boundaries, and each foster family would have their own boundaries which needed to be adhered to.
- It was highlighted that there could be a big difference for young person from being 17 to turning 18. It was known that some 18 year olds did struggle with the transition to being an adult.

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- It was highlighted that the Corporate Parenting Panel recognised the good work of the Participation Officers Rebecca Crooks, Andy Garbutt and Graham Reeve in relation to the Big Conversation.
- Page 25 of the agenda pack provided data on the type of house a young person lived in, and it was queried what the 8% 'other' would include. The Panel was advised that this was likely to be 16-18 year olds living in supported accommodation, secure accommodation or they may have been placed out of county.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the Tell Us Survey and Big Conversation be noted.

52 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Consideration was given to a report which provided key performance information for Quarter 3 2019/20 that was relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Panel was guided through the report and members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and one of the points raised made reference to page 40 of the agenda pack which highlighted that Serco were helping with the provision of work placements for young people leaving care. It was noted that when Serco were bidding for the service, they asked what else they could offer and so offered a number of work placements. A meeting with management at Serco was taking place later in the month to identify how these placements would be managed. Those young people that it was felt would most benefit from these placements would be handpicked to take part.

Work was taking place to make the County Council a foster carer friendly organisation, and officers were also working with other large organisations on this.

It was reported that generally performance was good, and officers were aware of the areas where performance was struggling and by the end of the year the number of immunisations would have improved.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the performance information presented be noted.

53 LINCOLNSHIRE LEAVING CARE - SIX MONTH REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which provided the six month review report to demonstrate the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service in regard to care leavers (18-25 year olds). Areas covered within the report included accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation; accessing and maintaining appropriate Education,

Employment and Training opportunities; compliments and complaints; and Lincolnshire Leaving Care Contract.

It was noted that the report considered data from April to October 2019, and contract monitoring meetings were held monthly between Lincolnshire County Council officers and Barnardo's.

The Panel were guided through the report and were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was confirmed that someone had been appointed to carry out influence and advice work as there was resource to fund this post, and there was a need to do more work with young people to ensure that their needs were being met in the way they wanted.
- The Panel was advised that co-operation with district councils had been good, and if there was a young person who wanted to go on the council housing register or receive council tax relief, the issues were resolved quickly.
- It was reported that district councils had been incredibly flexible, and were giving young people eight or nine choices for housing options, even though they were only required to provide one. Council tax relief for care leavers had also been a priority, but a variance still existed across districts at the age until which this could be claimed. Care leavers were also being given priority on housing lists.
- It was reported that a scheme was running in Scotland called 'Gap Housing', which Barnardo's was planning to roll out in England. Under this scheme, Barnardo's was given small parcels of land by local authorities, and Barnardo's would then build a small number of houses specifically for care leavers. They were hoping to build 50 of these houses in England. They would be small, one bedroom properties, and Barnardo's had partnered with Ikea to furnish them.
- It was reported that as part of the budget setting process, East Lindsey District Council had agreed to provide council tax relief to care leavers up to the age of 25. It was acknowledged that the County Council had asked districts to do this, and it was important to keep the pressure up for the remaining district councils.
- There were concerns around the criteria for level of need for mental health support, as there were reports that young people needed to be at crisis level before they could get any help.
- It was noted that one of the positives in relation to mental health services for Lincolnshire, was that the County Council commissioned the CAMHS service. There was a more gradual drop off of services for young people transitioning to adult services.
- It was noted that in terms of the council tax relief, the biggest financial impact would be on the county council.
- It was noted that parents would help their children to manage paying bills etc. when moving to their own property and suggested that similar guidance should be available for care leavers moving into their own home.

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- It was queried what the theme of the FAB awards and the Panel was advised it was the FAB Party, and it was planned to have live music, a silent disco, and the university were being asked to do the catering again, which would be a selection of party food.

RESOLVED

That the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Six Month Report be noted.

54 FOSTERING REPORT - QUARTER 3

The Corporate Parenting Panel received a report which provided members with the opportunity to review the third quarterly report for 2019/20. It was reported that the Annual Report for 2018/19 was presented to the Corporate Parenting Sub Group in September 2019. The Statement of Purpose had also been revised and was ratified on the same day.

The Panel was advised that the main issue was the recruitment and retention of foster carers. The experience which was being lost was not being replaced in the same way.

It was noted that a number of applications had been received from couples who both worked.

The Panel was informed that there were some fantastic carers, and cared for children with a range of complex needs, which would remain complex. It was also noted that there were also geographical challenges due to the rurality of the county.

It was noted that it was planned to target the Bourne area with recruitment campaigns during this year, as there was a good record of adoptive parents coming from that area.

The Caring2Learn programme had brought positive engagement for a lot of foster carers.

The Panel was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was noted within the report that five of the applications for special guardianship orders were withdrawn, and it was queried if it was known why this was. The Panel was advised that this was possibly due to the impact on the applicants own children.
- It was queried what could be offered by the authority to encourage people to come forward as foster carers. However, it was noted that an allowance was received for fostering, and not many people could survive on one wage. It was important to have the right people doing the caring, for the right reasons.
- It was suggested whether the recruitment of respite carers could be looked at in order to retain long term carers.

- It was queried whether there was anything which could be learnt from independent agencies. However, it was noted that often the main attraction for foster carers registering with independent agencies was that they got paid more. It was thought that the majority of the authority's carers did not become foster carers for financial reward, but because they felt compelled to support Lincolnshire's children.. There were a number of cases where an enhanced payment would be made.
- Reference was made to the Mockingbird Model which had been implemented in Doncaster, and it was queried whether this had been considered for Lincolnshire. Members were advised the authority was trying to take some of the learning from that model, and apply it to Lincolnshire, such as looking at providing a more tangible out of hours support.
- It was noted that the benefit of SGO's were that it enabled people to provide care, that would not normally be thought of. It was suggested whether these SGO's should be retained as mainstream carers.
- It was also queried whether targeting 'empty nesters' as potential foster carers, was an option, as they were experienced parents and were more likely to have the time available.
- It was noted that there were foster carer champions, and they would work to find networks for people.
- It was highlighted that foster carers were often worried that if they did ask for help then it might be thought that they could not manage or carry out the role. It was very hard to get the message across that they would not be criticised for asking for help. It was suggested that sometimes all they needed was someone to listen to them.
- It was queried whether the foster carer champions were encouraged to contact the foster carers that they had not heard from in a while, and it was confirmed that this practice was in place. There was an aim to establish this relationship with every carer that had been through the Fostering Panel so they knew who they could go to for support.

RESOLVED

That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Service.

55 UPDATE ON OUTCOMES OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update on outcomes of Ofsted inspections recently undertaken for Lincoln Strut House, Boston Haven Cottage and 91 Eastgate, Sleaford.

It was reported that all three children homes listed above were rated as outstanding, and it was commented that to achieve this rating was a great achievement, but to retain it was even harder.

The Panel wished to express its thanks to the staff at each of these children's homes for doing an exceptionally good job.

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It was noted that the manager from Haven Cottage, Boston had only returned from holiday the day of the inspection, which was an indication of the high quality of standards in place.

It was queried whether there was a need, as a Panel, to scrutinise the standard of care that children placed out of county were receiving. It was queried whether a report could be received on this at a future meeting.

The Chairman thanked Councillors Foulkes and Whittington as they would be attending Adoption Panels in the coming weeks, and it was requested that they provided an update on their experiences at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the update be noted.
2. That a report in relation to care received by children placed out of county be received at a future meeting.
3. That Councillors Foulkes and Whittington provide an update of their experience attending Adoption Panels at a future meeting.

56 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Panel to comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

RESOLVED

That the work programme for 2020 be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.51 am

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Action Plan

Summary:

The Looked After Children (Children in Care) and Care Leaver Strategy is a key document guiding the work and activity of the Council, as the Corporate Parent, as to how we will design and develop services to support young people in our care. The Strategy was written and agreed in 2018 and this is the second review of the action plan.

The action plan is designed to track the activity that is working to achieve the aspirations set out in the strategy. This strategy is the first of its kind to be developed on a multi-agency basis and is supported by the LSCP and all the partners.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to review the progress against the priorities and actions identified in the Children in Care & Care Leavers Strategy Action Plan, and recommend any changes or actions for future consideration.

1. Background

The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy is a key document guiding the work of the authority and its partners when working with and supporting our young people. The document was written in conjunction with all of the key partners and set out how the organisations will all work to meet the current and future needs of all our young people.

The Children in Care and Care Leaver strategy is designed to support young people to become independent and proactive adults. The Strategy sets out the activity and our aspirations.

This paper covers the action plan of activity deigned to deliver against the strategy. The paper is designed to assure members of the breadth and depth of activity taking place across Lincolnshire to support our Children in Care and Care Leavers. It is worthy to note that a considerable amount of progress has been made in relation to the contribution from wider partners, in particular the Districts Councils and health partners. A clear and comprehensive health history now follows each Looked After young person, and the offer to Care Leavers from the District Councils has alleviated pressures in finding young people suitable accommodation. Council Tax relief is now universal across all 7 districts and Care Leavers have experienced increased support and flexibility from all partners.

The Strategy can be found here: [Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy](#)

A revised Strategy will need to be developed in 2021.

2. Conclusion

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to review the progress against the priorities and actions identified in the Children in Care & Care Leavers Strategy Action Plan, and recommend any changes or actions for future consideration.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021 – Priorities, Actions & Progress

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andrew Morris, who can be contacted on 01522 553916 or andrew.morris@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
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Lincolnshire Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021 – Priorities, Actions & Progress

<p>1) We will further support families in crisis to maximise their ability to continue to care for their own child</p>	<p>Children’s Services, Early Help teams, Health, Social Care teams and all partners</p>	<p>Further develop our early help offer to respond to situations where families/carers are in crisis. We will work to maintain the living arrangements for the child/young person where possible.</p>	<p>The creation of the Future4Me team on the 1st January 2019 provided opportunities to support in a timely manner to families in times of crisis. The team is multi-agency and multi – disciplinary. This is also supported by an extended offer through evenings and weekends to support parents/carers.</p> <p>Progress is continually monitored and at this time the F4M team has had funding extended for a further year. The F4M model remains in place and under continual review. It remains that the model was positively received by Ofsted and remains under development as a effective edge of care function.</p>	
		<p>Ensure our approach is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency with a range of specialisms to meet the needs of young people and their families. Our workforce will have access to specialist consultations to help them to understand how they can better support families, ensuring we address the cause of the crisis and not just the symptom.</p>	<p>Future4Me offers specialist support through a team of clinical psychologists and speech and language therapy. The approach is founded on trauma informed practice, attachment, adverse childhood experiences and child development. This will be founded upon consultation clinics to up skill practitioners and build resilience.</p> <p>Progress to be monitored and updated</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>through a rigours governance structure and was positively received by Ofsted.</p> <p>All staff across LCC are being trained to practice in a trauma informed way.</p>	
		<p>Ensure we have in place a structured and consistent approach which is understood by all. The offer is encapsulated within an early help offer which is restorative in nature and which has its foundations in relationship based practice. We will value the importance of relationships and ensure continuity of support to families of young people.</p>	<p>Lincolnshire has a comprehensive Early Help Offer which is based upon Signs of Safety methodology; and is restorative in nature. The consistency of approach throughout all levels of safeguarding ensures accessibility and effectiveness of Early Help as part of a child or young person's plan.</p> <p>The processes ensure that any requests for support for Looked After Children are considered in light of relationship based practice and who the right person to offer the right support at the right time. This includes significant buy in from partners, especially in the education sector.</p> <p>In addition, the Early Help Strategy and Action Plan identifies Looked After Children are a priority group within the strategy</p>	
		<p>Recognise that different pathways are required to meet the individual needs of young people based on age.</p>	<p>The Putting Children First document has replaced the Meeting the Needs Documents. The thresholds have been developed in consultation with partners via the LSCP.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>Recruit specialist foster carers to help meet needs, including short term support to families in crisis which can include respite to enable them to reflect on how they can best meet the needs of their own child and recover from crisis points.</p>	<p>Further investment in services to prevent a child becoming looked after has been made in the Future4me service targeted on those children who are on the cusp of care or facing a placement disruption.</p> <p>Foster Carers are continually trained and supported to meet the needs of all our young people, especially those with complex and additional needs.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting manager is in the process of drawing together an HR policy that will enable LCC to become a foster carer friendly organisation, thus growing capacity for Foster Carers to be drawn from our own staffing resources. This paper is due to go before CLT in April 2020</p>	
		<p>Provide opportunities for children and their families to experience positive activities.</p>	<p>In addition to the weekly fostering allowance which promotes positive activities, the Authority funds one additional activity to support particular interests of young people and will continue to do so.</p>	
		<p>Refine and promote the Local Offer so families know how to access support and which services are out there to meet their needs.</p>	<p>The Local Offer is being completely redesigned so that it is easier for service-users to navigate. The new version will drive a focus on improved outcomes rather than diagnostic labels and statutory processes.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>A therapeutic parenting manual has been rolled out widely following a pilot across a small number of schools. The learning from this pilot was captured through a Mobilise research project which in turn informed the manual.</p>	
<p>2) Where families are unable to care for their child, we will maximise opportunities for family and friend time so they continue to feel part of their family network</p>	<p>Contact Service, Looked After Children teams and Leaving Care Service</p>	<p>Utilise family group conferencing to enable families at every opportunity to find their own solutions.</p>	<p>Referrals are made into FGC to explore alternative carers or support contact arrangements as there may be family members that can supervise contact safely.</p> <p>Life Links is an initiative that FGC workers are utilising their skills to build networks of support for our leaving care young people from 15.9-25yrs.</p> <p>FGC support the Family to create a support plan utilising the family and friends as a resource when there is a rehab plan for the child.</p> <p>Four members of staff have been trained in Family Finders. Tools have been shared with the wider team to enable all FGC Practitioners to be equipped, to support young people in identifying their networks of support and create a plan of what that support</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>will be for the young person.</p> <p>IROs are promoting the expectation that updated genograms are brought to every review and that FNMs and FGCs are revisited regularly. Family and friend time to be promoted in reviews and parents to be engaged directly by IROs in order to support continued engagement and reassessments in considering exit plans.</p>	
		<p>Enable the workforce to work in a way where they honour the importance of families, and use their authority as a professional in an honest way.</p>	<p>Signs of Safety training for front line staff, leadership support for supervisors and group supervision has supported the workforce to work with families in an honest way.</p> <p>The directorate roll out of Restorative Practice training over the last 2 years has helped embed this.</p> <p>ASYE programme provides extensive support for all newly qualified social workers on an annual basis which provides support on this.</p> <p>Social Workers in Lincolnshire are all subject to NAAS (National Assessment and Accreditation System) and this principle is enshrined within this.</p> <p>Quality assurance through audits,</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			learning events and improved learning from complaints.	
		Utilise virtual mechanisms which enable children and young people to stay in touch with family and friends.	<p>Lincolnshire County Council supports the use of all new technologies to enable young people to keep in touch.</p> <p>The use of Skype, Face time, text, e-mail and all emerging technologies are considered in order to support our Social workers and our young people to stay in touch and communicate.</p> <p>A new raft of technology and high spec laptops have been provided to frontline staff which included web cams, table compatibility and 4G technology to better connect workers, young people and families.</p>	
		Review of contact service so it is transformed into a service which better supports family/friend time .	<p>Provision based across the County to enable contact to take place in the nearest venue to the child's school/placement</p> <p>Where parents work, contacts are offered across four sites on a Saturday</p> <p>Contact Supervisors work up until 6.30pm to better support older children. Working around the child's activities so that contact sessions are at a convenient time for all.</p> <p>Contact Supervisor attends LAC</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>Review's to ensure that contact is reviewed and remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of the child.</p> <p>Supports rehab back home plans to ensure a smooth transition.</p>	
		Further develop life story work so children and young people have an identity, feel that they belong and understand where they connect in their community and have a sense of belonging	All teams have life story workers to undertake this specific task with young people and to ensure the work is done in the right way, at the right pace and at the right time,	
		We will ensure our recording systems enables us to accurately record a young person's life, their history and record in a way which makes records purposeful and relevant to them	Our recording system coupled with our practice model enables us to record the children's journey. By using signs of safety including chronologies on all cases, direct work, family network meetings and life story books we are able to see the child's daily lived experience. This includes using our knowledge of research, theory and evidence.	
3. We will work with our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Children's Services, Leaving Care Service and all partners	Raise awareness of our role as corporate parents, advocating good support, wellbeing and outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers.	<p>The profile and needs of our LAC and Care Leavers is always being promoted by LCC.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Manager coordinates an operational group within the leaving care service which is designed to engage partners and all agencies around the needs of our LAC and Care Leavers.</p> <p>There is a Corporate Parenting strategy</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>is designed to ensure the profile and needs of our young people remains high a priority for elected members and partner's consciousness.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Panel also meets regularly and receives regular updates about the services and wider partnership offer which is made to our young people.</p>	
		<p>Corporate Parenting Panel will regularly request reports on the progress and achievements of Looked after Children and Care Leavers and address any significant barriers to their learning, health and safety.</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Panel meets regularly and continues to oversee and scrutinises the offer to LAC and Care Leavers.</p> <p>The agenda is varied and all aspects of Social Services, health offer and Leaving Care service is subject to scrutiny.</p> <p>There is an aspiration to draw in additional partners to the Corporate Parenting Panel and the lead members are considering this.</p>	
		<p>Further develop the Independent Reviewing Officers role to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people</p>	<p>IROs promote the expectation that updated genograms are brought to every review and that FNMs and FGCs are revisited regularly. Family and friend time to be promoted in reviews and parents to be engaged directly by IROs in order to support continued engagement and reassessments in considering exit plans.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>IROs will write directly to parents who don't attend reviews to support this further.</p> <p>Ensure referrals to life links is embedded in the review process.</p> <p>Explore how placements and team around the child contributes to healing for the child/young person.</p> <p>Continue to develop a culture of challenge to help prevent drift and delay in planning and support</p>	
		Recruit Young Inspectors, who have experience of being in care so they can provide additional insight and challenge to managers and services	LCC always strives to employ care experienced young people as Young Inspectors.	
		Listen to the views of a 'participation group'/voice for the child on how best the lives of Looked After Children and Care Leavers might be improved. Consider how best they can get their message across – e.g. DVD .	<p>The participation team works tirelessly to engage young people and gather their views to help us design services. This is an on-going piece of work and LCC employs 3 people to do this.</p> <p>At this time the participation team are working on "you tube clips" of young people speaking to help us promote the core offer and explain the offer to young people.</p> <p>Young people asked for an expanded and combined participation group with</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>LAC and Care Leavers involved together and this has proven to be very successful.</p> <p>There has also been a drive to increase attendance and V4C ad Big conversation. The identification and use of new meeting spaces has proven to be effective and grown the numbers attending.</p> <p>Young People are also part of the development of the Core offer to Care leavers and have developed information, resources and language to ensure this is communicated to all young people.</p>	
		<p>Develop the role of designated teachers and the Virtual School to further raise awareness of young people’s needs, and help them to advocate for Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	<p>There is a continued role out our trauma-informed training to all schools and we are also promoting a trauma-informed guide to the Pastoral Support Plan (PSP). We've also created assembly/PSHE resources to raise pupils' awareness.</p> <p>The Virtual School provides a range of training opportunities to support DTs in understanding their responsibilities and supporting children and young people who are looked after and previously looked after. These include: DT workshops which provide key updates; an annual DT conference which include a key note speaker and workshops around effective interventions to support looked after</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			children; termly locality based DT networks, to share good practice. Virtual School co-ordinators work closely with schools and settings to ensure the needs of individual children are met and that each young person has an effective and high quality PEP.	
		Create a robust escalation process between services so each agency has a key strategic lead for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.	The LSCP has a very clear escalation process with key senior liaison officers named for each agency. This process has been adopted for escalation purposed for LAC and Care leavers	
		Undertaking thematic review of the support and advocacy offered to Looked After Children and Care Leavers	A review has been scheduled for 2020 and will involve the Young Inspectors and/or V4C.	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>Deliver a series of workshops to celebrate the achievements of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, demonstrating that resilient parenting has a positive impact</p>	<p>LCC celebrates the achievements of LAC and Care Leavers each year through the annual FAB celebrations. The FAB awards are designed by and lead by the wishes of young people. The annual ceremony continues.</p> <p>The academic achievement of our children in care is also celebrated alongside the achievement of all Lincolnshire children at the Annual Lincolnshire Education Awards More bespoke workshops are being designed for the future.</p>	
		<p>Develop a training offer so our staff understand the importance of making sure young people have a sense of belonging and an identity. Develop our staff so they understand the importance of relationship based practice and grow peoples knowledge of the services available through the Local Offer so professionals and families can challenge and act as advocates for young people</p>	<p>As per previous actions. We are still rolling out trauma-informed training to all schools and we are also promoting a trauma-informed guide to the Pastoral Support Plan (PSP). We've also created assembly/PSHE resources to raise staff and pupils' awareness.</p> <p>Significant roll out of Signs of Safety and Restorative Practice training, delivered by national experts, has helped support staff to understand the importance of relationship based practice.</p> <p>The local offer is well known and is promoted through staff briefings and locality events and is constantly under review. The Local Offer has grown considerable in the last year and LCC is</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			now part of a working group to develop a regional offer to Looked After Children and Care Leavers	
		The council and the police will work together to embed the protocol to reduce the criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. We will do this through embedding a restorative culture and restorative approaches.	<p>The Criminalisation of children in care protocol is now launched and embedded in organisations. The protocol was designed in a multi-agency way and included all relevant partners.</p> <p>A launch event took place in 2018 and the protocol is tracked through the LSCP</p>	
<p>4. We will support the good emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	<p>(Virtual School) Quality, Standards Department and all partners</p>	<p>Build on the success of the Virtual School Head (VSH), by working with the CCG's to progress the development of a similar oversight role of a Virtual Mental Health Lead (VMHL). This is to ensure that every child and young person in the care of the local authority is getting the support they need to maintain or improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>The Lincolnshire CCGs are fully committed to supporting of the mental health needs of the Looked After and Carer Leaver cohort of young people.</p> <p>The CCGs are able to cooperate with initiatives to positively support partnership working to implement support networks within the county.</p> <p>The emotional and mental health needs of the child/young person is monitored at the Initial health assessment and the subsequent annual review health assessments.</p> <p>Positive Mental Health outcomes for Children and Young People Looked After and Care Leavers are a priority for the partnership and the CCG have</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>incorporated into their Mental Health provider contract that the aforementioned cohort are fast tracked to effective and appropriate mental health support. Currently the contract is set at 4 weeks, however the current average time from referral to treatment is 2.3 weeks.</p>	
		<p>Enable the strengths and difficulties questionnaire to be supported by a broader set of measures which can trigger a comprehensive mental health assessment.</p>	<p>Virtual School has commissioned EP team to deliver SDQ training for schools, which will be recorded on PEPs from September 19. PEP discussions and targets have a greater focus on the young person's well being. Emotional Wellbeing Toolkit available to all Lincolnshire schools and settings as an additional resource to the Emotional Wellbeing pathway. Training available to schools and opportunities to share good practice through Caring2Learn and Designated Teacher Locality clusters.</p> <p>Caring to Learn has had many success and is embedded by young people, foster careers ad schools alike. Funding for Caring to Learn has been extended</p>	
		<p>Ensure that assessments focus on understanding of the individual's mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that it is based on a knowledge of the context of their current</p>	<p>The Child and Family Assessment incorporates the Signs of Safety Harm Matrix. The matrix is used to help</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>situation and past experiences, rather than solely focusing on the presenting symptoms. The young person, their caregivers, family (where appropriate) and professionals' viewpoints should also be included.</p>	<p>understand past trauma and how this may be impacting on the child/young person's behaviours, emotional welfare and mental health. The matrix captures the viewpoint of the young person, parents, carers and professionals and the information gathered feeds in to the wider assessment of the child's current situation and needs. The use of the harm matrix enables the child/young person to be understood within the context of the harm which they are or have previously experienced.</p> <p>This provides a greater insight to the young person and professionals and promotes more effective care planning to support their emotional and mental health needs. The assessment framework is now well embedded, but good practice dictates that we will audit and review the use and quality of its use.</p>	
		<p>Support caregivers so their own mental health and wellbeing is positive and resilient.</p>	<p>The training care givers are able to access includes support regarding their own well being and resilience and is also included within specific training around behaviour management, safe care and safeguarding. Additional training is available via the LSCB</p>	
		<p>Ensure that everyone working directly with Looked After Children and Care Leavers receive training about children</p>	<p>All staff and partners are supported to completed the LSCP training on mental</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		and young people's mental health so they are equipped with the appropriate skills to support young people	health. The relevant courses are in the IRO training plan and the Annual appraisals process of all staff. Mental health training is also a core element of training for all staff.	
		Ensure the statutory review of a child's care plan by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) includes at each meeting a review of whether or not the mental health needs of the young person have been met.	It is a statutory requirement to address the health of a young person within a review. This is supported by the SDQ process. Any issues are clearly recorded in the chairs report and reflected in the decisions if action is required.	
		Increase the knowledge and intervention skills of the whole workforce. These skills should enable care givers to understand and support young people around the impact of a lack of attachment and experiences of trauma, enhance child development and be aware of cognitive behavioural therapies and interventions.	Children's Services provide an annual learning and development programme for frontline staff and an additional bespoke programme for foster carers, adopters and other relevant people who work directly with Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This includes training related to mental health and cuts across a wide range of training courses. The programmes are reviewed and updated annually.	
		Ensure there is strong collaborative working relationship between schools, health services and the local authority.	The Virtual school co-ordinators ensure that all agencies are working together to effectively support the individual needs of our children and young people. The Virtual school participates in a monthly multi-agency meeting including representatives from CAMHS and LAC Health team to review support for young people who have high SDQ scores. School Nursing Teams are	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>managed overseen by Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services. EHCP are regularly reviewed with Health colleagues.</p>	
		<p>Further develop the concept of trauma-informed practice in schools, ensuring that they become a protective factor in the lives of vulnerable children rather than a source of stress and anxiety</p>	<p>3 days of trauma-informed training were provided by leader in field, Dr Karen Treisman, in Dec 2018 through to Jan 2019. This was repeated in July 2019 with a day 4 looking at trauma-informed organisations.</p> <p>The key messages are being cascaded to schools via the pupil reintegration team through a 2 hr staff INSET on trauma.</p> <p>The Ladder has been adapted to foreground trauma and a trauma-informed PSP guide has been rolled out to all schools. In addition, exemplar assemblies, teaching children themselves about the impact of trauma and how to support one another, are available for schools via the website.</p> <p>The process of developing staffs skills and knowledge in terms of trauma informed practice and addressing the complexities presented in schools will be a continual cycle.</p> <p>Barnardos have also committed to offering on-going training to all its staff to ensure they can practice in a trauma</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		Further strengthen practice between general practitioners and schools.	<p>informed way.</p> <p>Whilst there is no there is no existing formal arrangement for collaborative working between GPs and schools, he relationships are strong in Lincolnshire and the agenda is led by the designated doctor</p> <p>GPs comply with GMC guidance in respect of safeguarding, information sharing and support the health and wellbeing of all Looked After children and Care leavers.</p> <p>Non-compliance with the principals and GNMC guidance would be addressed by the FST/Quality teams.</p>	
		Working with all partners, we will provide restorative approaches to those already engaged in the Criminal Justice System and to reduce further criminalisation of young people as this will enable them to get back on track to achieve their aspirations as law abiding citizens	<p>The latest national data published by the Youth Justice Board in March 2020 indicates that the rate of first time entrants (children formally entering the criminal justice system) in Lincolnshire has dropped by approximately 75% since the diversionary panels came into operation in June 2017.</p> <p>In terms of volume and throughput since the joint diversionary panels became operational 1099 cases of children and young people have been reviewed. The panel have been able to utilise a restorative option in 79% of all</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>cases. This has clearly resulted in numerous children being offered timely support without acquiring a formal criminal conviction. The implications of acquiring a criminal conviction for a child or young person can have potentially long terms negative impacts upon their future. As a direct result of the creation of the panels, the use of Youth Cautions within Lincolnshire has resulted in only 9 youth cautions being issued in the 2019 compared to 330 Youth Cautions in 2015-16.</p>	
<p>5. We will work in partnership with schools and carers to provide good learning opportunities for all</p>	<p>Looked After Children teams and Virtual School</p>	<p>Implement Caring2Learn, learning what works so these aspects of the project can be implemented across all our schools.</p>	<p>The Project has now been in the delivery phase since January 2018 and has won a national award. Funding through until April 2021.</p> <p>Through the project we have created an innovative and sustainable multi-disciplinary approach to improving academic outcomes, progress, life choices and opportunities for all Lincolnshire children in care and on the edge of care.</p> <p>The project has developed and implemented a clearly defined strategy that is supporting schools to be able to nurture and promote wellbeing and attachment, ensure looked after children achieve better than expected</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>12. Hub schools of excellence have been identified and these are working in collaboration with Champions and Carers across the localities to provide a sector-led support network.</p> <p>First year targets from the strategic plan for the involvement of education settings and carers has already been met and looks set to be met moving forward. More schools and carers continue to come on board each month. 74% of carers are trained and 160 schools now take part.</p>	
		Develop strong partnerships and responses to reduce student absences and exclusions from school.	Promote the trauma-informed PSP within schools to ensure that where behaviour is driven by toxic stress, it is mitigated rather than exacerbated by school responses. Use the Ladder of Intervention to move the sector beyond behaviourism	
		Rigorously apply our own and national guidance around the quality of 'offsite' educational settings.	We have introduced a process of moderation and quality assurance of alternative provision (AP) whereby mainstream head teachers take responsibility for this on a rotation, using LCC's agreed QA of AP framework. Ensure all partners and staff practice is trauma-informed	
		Reduce school moves whenever possible to help maintain placement, permanency and enhance educational stability.	Where moves cannot be avoided, ensure that transition is supported by referral to BOSS and that it is trauma-	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			informed	
		Improve access to further and higher education and the understanding Looked After Children and Care Leavers have of these providers.	<p>Virtual school has piloted bespoke taster days at local HE and FE settings for our Year 9 and 10 pupils. Virtual school has strengthened links with LincHigher and post 16 settings. Virtual School co-ordinators have completed accredited Careers Guidance training and quality assurance of PEPs include that they are aspirational and make reference to careers guidance support for our secondary pupils.</p> <p>The Leaving Care service has a full financial offer to young people wishing to access higher education and attend university. Each young person is made aware of the offer if they wish to attend uni or Higher Education. The financial handbook has been revised to reflect the offer more clearly. It is also captured on the Core Offer to care leavers</p>	
		Apply work based research practice to workforce (e.g. PALAC)	A practice bulletin is now regularly circulated regularly to all staff. This document pulls together practice and research into one place. Learning events are taking place on specific practice issues and will include research relevant to the practice issue being addressed.	
		Celebrate the achievements of all our children and young	LCC celebrates the achievements of LAC	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		people.	and Care Leavers each year through the annual FAB celebrations. The FAB awards are designed by and led by the wishes of young people. The annual ceremony continues.	
		<p>We want to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All Looked After Children have access to good nursery provision. – All Care Leavers with children have access to free child care and early education. – Looked After Children are admitted to good settings and schools without undue delay. – All Looked After Children make good progress based on prior attainment including those accessing SEND specialist provision, through highly effective education plans. – That there is a designated teacher in all educational settings including further education. – All designated teachers have access to good training and professional development. – All Education Health Care Planning is carried out on time and required interventions are implemented in a timely way. Where a place in a special school is required, the young person is admitted promptly. – A all Looked After Children are encouraged to attend extra-curricular and recreational interest they enjoy. These are available through the Local Offer. 	<p>The Virtual School works closely with the Early Years Locality Team to promote looked after children's access to early years education.</p> <p>Every child from the age of 3 has a PEP that is reviewed termly with the early years setting and targets set to support progress. The Virtual School commissions the Specialist Teaching Team and the Early Years Locality Teams to carry out assessments for all children aged 2 – 7 years which inform targets to promote communication and language skills.</p> <p>Early Years settings are encouraged to have a designated lead and the Virtual School has commissioned the Educational Psychology Team to deliver bespoke training to Early years settings to support trauma informed practice. FE colleges all have a designated lead who work closely with the VS Progress Co-ordinators to ensure effective post</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>16 PEPs are reviewed termly.</p> <p>The Virtual school work with Social Care to ensure there is no drift and delay in a young person accessing education following a placement move and tuition is put in as an interim arrangement if necessary. Personal Education Plans link closely to EHC plans and ensure that progress towards agreed outcomes is monitored on a termly basis.</p> <p>The Virtual School actively promotes young people's engagement in V4C activities. Additional activities including college taster days are organised and PEP meetings provide a regular opportunity to explore the benefits of attending out of school provision.</p>	
<p>6. We will work with young people so they have the skills and abilities to develop adult based relationships to equip them for independence and their future</p>	<p>Children Services, Adult Services and all partners</p>	<p>Review our assessment processes to ensure that we plan early, and truly understand what the young person wants to achieve in adulthood.</p>	<p>The new child and family assessment went live on 01st April 2019 following a 6 month pilot. The assessment is designed to be completed in collaboration with young person to identify their strengths and aspirations as well as highlighting areas where there may be a worry or further support is required.</p> <p>This restorative approach affords young people the opportunity to be fully engaged in their assessment and care/pathway planning. They are</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>supported to set their own objectives, identify who/what matters to them, who they would like in their support network and what they would like their life to look like as they transition into adulthood.</p> <p>The Pathway Plan document has also been extensively reviewed. The Pathway Plan document is now in full use across all teams. The new assessment is under continual review and there is a planned audit in July 2020 with a working group to refresh and update the document depending the audit outcomes.</p>	
		<p>Recognise the risk and impact of transitions for all children and young people. We will plan to meet individual needs in a co-ordinated way, drawing on the strengths of the young person and their wider networks, so they know what the future holds as they move into the adult world.</p>	<p>The whole authority and its partners recognise the risks and difficulties young people face at points of transition. LAC plan reviews and Pathway Plan performance is strong and young people are always included in their plans and reviews to ensure they are best prepared for all transitions.</p> <p>LCC has now committed to ensuring that every LAC and Care Leavers has access to a "Life Links Meeting" which will be supported by a trained practitioner. The meetings will be facilitated by staff trained in FGC to work on helping young people develop resilience and support in their own way.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			LCC has also re commissioned the leaving Care Service and all young people will, from April 2020 onward, start to have their leaving care worker allocated at the age of 16.	
		At each key transition, whenever possible, involve a child or young person's family and the wider network, especially those who know them best.	LCC has now committed to ensuring that every LAC and Care Leavers has access to a "Life Links meeting" which will be supported by a trained practitioner. The meetings are facilitated by staff trained in FGC to work on helping young people develop resilience and support in their own way for adulthood	
		Value the importance of relationships and work flexibly where ever possible to minimise the negative impact of transitions and changes in relationships	The n Life Links Meetings work to ensure that young people are supported and ready to face the challenges of transition with a supportive network of friends, colleagues, family and professionals	
		Prepare children and young people for transitions in their lives. We will place a specific emphasis on those young people aged between 14-25. The key points of transition for us to consider are: all school key stages to education training and employment; the transition between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and adult mental health; transition between children's social care to adult services, specifically considering those with special education needs and disabilities to ensure they have best access and support to further learning and the world of work. We will also consider the transition between Youth Justice Services to the adult Probation Service.	<p>This will always be an on-going piece of work.</p> <p>Young people transitioning between educational settings are supported by the virtual schools and their Social worker/Leaving Care worker.</p> <p>CAMHS are offered to Care leavers up to the age of 25 in order to minimise the needs for any transition points.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>There is a robust process in place for transitioning of young people from CWD and SEND to adult services. This process was recently subject of a scrutiny review and found to be strong.</p> <p>Strong relationship between young people and adult based CJS services ensure smooth transitions.</p>	
		<p>Explore how we can have an information system or agreement in place which allows all professionals to access information about all those involved with a child and young person. We aspire to have all relevant records available to be viewed by all workers at any time, and for those and records to be written in the third person, so we are always writing to the child/young person when we create records about them</p>	<p>Mosaic is accessed by Social Care, some health services, the leaving care service and adult social care. As far as including additional partners into using Mosaic, we are exploring the ability to use 'portal' technology to allow access but this is a complex aspiration.</p>	
<p>7. We will develop Accommodation pathways so young people have choice and can access accommodation which supports them to prepare for the future in a planned and supportive way</p>	<p>Children’s Accommodation Board & Housing Health and Care delivery group and all partners</p>	<p>In partnership with housing authorities, secure an enhanced accommodation offer for all those leaving care to ensure support and preparation so they can live independently in their community.</p>	<p>A protocol exists between Children Services, Adult Services and the 7 Districts. This protocol articulates how we will all work together to support young people in all our accommodation provisions from the youth housing offer, to Supported Lodgings, thought to Council housing.</p> <p>Care Leavers now have local connection across all 7 Districts and can access youth housing options up to the age of 25.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			Districts Councils are in the process of debating whether care leavers are to be given priority 1 status all housing registers. There is considerable operational experience now where Districts, despite it not being in protocols yet, awarding highest priority to Care Leavers.	
		As nurturing and resilient parents, we will never stop doing our best for Looked After Children and Care Leavers as we would for our own children. We will never refer to them as being intentionally homeless and will work together to prevent homelessness.	<p>The protocol described above articulates how all partner, including the District Councils, will work together and ensure no Care Leaver is ever considered intentionally homeless.</p> <p>The DCS has committed funds to pay for a rent gap scheme to support young people gaining their own tenancy and funding the short fall between benefits and rent.</p>	
		Ensure Care Leavers are exempted from paying council tax until they are 25 years old.	Care Leavers are exempt from paying council tax in all 7 Districts up to the age of 21. Some councils have extended to 25, further negotiations are taking place to increase this to 25 .	
		Re-commission supported accommodation provision so that the provision is more responsive to more complex young people and better reflects the principles in this strategy.	The process of re commissioning the local Youth Housing Service has concluded. The design and specifications includes enhancements to support and accommodate our most complex young people with a focus on returning young people to family and maintaining strong relationships when	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			they cannot. The new provision will go live in July 2020	
		Seek to develop in-house provision to ensure we can meet the needs of our most challenging young people in locally sourced options.	<p>Along with the commissioning of the youth housing offer to include a robust arm to support complex and challenging young people, Lincolnshire has now developed its own local un regulated housing offer to support young people to independence.</p> <p>We are also working with Barnardos to develop parent and baby Supported Lodgings placements.</p> <p>An additional 5 bed spaces have been created to complement the 5 bed spaces already active in the south of the county.</p>	
		Provide an early help worker and emotional wellbeing worker for all those in supported accommodation.	Young people in supported accommodation can access the support of an Early Help worker if needed. A referral can be made to the early help team and is assessed as being needed a worker will be allocated.	
		Create more private tenancy opportunities close to Residential Homes so Care Leavers can stay close to their community and continue to be supported by people they know.	The staying close offer is continuing to develop and is being supported by the unregulated offer Lincolnshire now has. We have had a number of young people successfully transition into private tenancy arrangements close to the residential homes.	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
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Open Report on behalf of Barnardo's

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)

Summary:

This report is the annual report relating to the work undertaken on behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service by Barnardo's. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service in regard to care leavers (18-25 years old).

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to review the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Annual Report and performance of the Leaving Care Service and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

1. Background

This is the annual Corporate Parenting Report to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service in regard to care leavers (18-25 years old). Areas covered within this report include:

- A. Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation
- B. Accessing and maintaining appropriate Education Employment and Training opportunities
- C. Compliments and Complaints
- D. Lincolnshire Leaving Care Contract

For the purposes of this annual report Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (up to the 31st March 2020) was to deliver a Statutory Leaving Care Service for young people aged 18-25. The new contract issued on the 1st April 2020 saw the service extended and for Leaving Care Workers to start working with Looked after Children aged 16 and above. The contract is closely monitored via monthly contract monitoring meetings which are attended by the Contract Monitoring Officer, the Corporate Parenting Manager and one of the Children's Services Managers (with lead responsibility for Looked after Children and Care Leavers)

Data contained within this report covers a twelve month period from April 2019 – March 2020.

Children’s Social Care Return

The SSDA903 statistical return cohort referred to in this report as the ‘Children’s Social Care Return’ relates to an identified group of young people who were looked after by the local authority and have recently left care, information on their 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday is collected annually between the 01 April and the 31 March. The base figure changes annually. The data below covers a twelve month period with differing base figures. Over the past twelve months Barnardo’s have only reported on the 18-21 co-horts and excluded the 17 group in agreement with Commissioning.

Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe Accommodation

CSC Return - Accommodation - Total Return for all Young People											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020
313	322	323	329	329	338	348	355	358	362	363	362
94%	95%	95%	95%	95%	94%	95%	95%	95%	96%	96%	96%

Accommodation - Open Allocated Young People											
Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020
337	343	337	341	340	346	349	356	357	356	362	353
94%	96%	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%	95%	96%	95%	96%	96%

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service offered advice, support and assistance in relation to accommodation options for the over 18’s. As a service we aim to share information in relation to housing options available both within County but also where the young person is currently residing. Within service we have a specialist post holder who specializes in housing provision for Care Leavers and we also have the Leaving Care Workers and Team Managers who have knowledge on services available to young people.

As a matter of routine the Accommodation Worker supports young people at age 18 to register for social housing.

In consequence, by the time a young person is suitably prepared to bid on properties, they have completed all the necessary paperwork, navigated through the local bureaucracy, worked with supported housing providers to practice their tenancy sustainment skills and are ready and waiting to take on and maintain a tenancy.

Within Barnardo’s we continue to work with the Corporate Parenting Manager who has lead responsibility for the Council in relation to housing options for Care Leavers.

We have developed some good links with District Council Housing Teams and the Corporate Parenting Manager continues to offer the District Councils advice, support and assistance in relation to developing the housing offer for Care Leavers.

Barnardo’s Supported Lodgings Scheme

Barnardo’s has completed a review of Lincolnshire Supported Lodgings Scheme to ensure it remains a flexible and viable option for a number of young people transitioning into adulthood. We have developed some new assessment criteria and all new forms have been reviewed by one of our Care Leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Manager sees this type of accommodation as another housing option for Looked after Children and Care Leavers across Lincolnshire.

This scheme gives young people the opportunity to develop independence skills whilst living in a home environment. Advice and guidance is offered in relation to cooking, undertaking household tasks and maintaining education / employment. We have had some excellent outcomes for a number of young people who have accessed this scheme.

Young people live with providers as lodgers – paying rent and a contribution towards utilities and food. Children’s Services pay a support fee dependent upon the level of support required, housing benefit /universal credit is also claimed (where appropriate).

The scheme caters for Care Leavers - Looked after Children over 16 and 16/17 year olds who are homeless and require an ‘assessment bed’

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 the team received 52 referrals, carefully matched with 23 providers

Legal profile of Young People referred from 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020	
Legal status	Number
Section 31 Looked After Child	10
Section 20 Looked after Child	11
Homeless 16/17 child	18
Section 24 Care Leaver	11
Section 23	1
Sec 7 – Guardianship Order	1
Total	52
Number of Placements	35

On 31st March 2020 there were 21 Supported Lodgings Providers offering 31 Supported Lodgings Placements.

Barnardo's are currently progressing the recommendations from the independent review, the assessment procedure has been changed, panel membership is currently under review and we are looking to identify a care experienced young person to sit on the panel.

Accessing and maintaining appropriate Education Employment and Training opportunities

CSC Return - EET - Total Return for all Young People											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020
211	219	216	212	208	213	221	239	243	242	241	239
63%	65%	64%	61%	60%	59%	60%	64%	65%	64%	64%	63%

EET - Open Allocated Young People											
Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020
230	235	226	221	219	223	231	251	257	254	259	254
64%	66%	64%	62%	62%	61%	63%	67%	69%	68%	69%	69%

During the last financial year Leaving Care Workers continued to help young people access career advice information and guidance through the universal routes via colleges and when relevant, universities.

Before leaving care young people have access to teachers from the Virtual School. The Virtual School team developed a part time post to work with Lincolnshire Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people who are living in Cambridgeshire to explore training opportunities for this co-hort.

Barnardo's have a common mission of ***'Increasing Aspiration and Outcomes for Looked after Children and Care leavers'***.

The Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme and the Work Preparation and Work Experience Scheme continue to offer Lincolnshire Care Leavers a pathway into work and financial self-sufficiency.

Within Barnardo's we continue to have two specialist workers who work solely with education and employment providers to explore opportunities for your Care Leavers.

At the beginning of 2020 we started negotiations with Siemens who provide a number of job opportunities across the region. Siemens want to develop a coaching / mentorship/ work experience programme for Lincolnshire Care Leavers. Both the Service Manager and Corporate Parenting Manager have been involved of this development.

Snapshot taken in March 2020 of young people in EET (Education, Employment and Training)

Personal Circumstances March 2020	Number in EET	%
Care Leavers in Barnardo's Supported Lodgings	14	93%
Care Leavers who entered care as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	73	85%
Care Leavers unsuitably housed	4	25%
Care Leavers in custody	1	14%

Compliments and Complaints

Number and % of complaints received and resolved within agreed timescale of 14 days

Complaints Received/Resolved - 2019-20												
Month	Apr 201 9	May 201 9	Jun 2019	Jul 201 9	Aug 201 9	Sep 2019	Oct 201 9	Nov 201 9	Dec 201 9	Jan 2020	Feb 202 0	Mar 202 0
Number	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
% Resolve d	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A
Runnin g Total	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2

Number of compliments received – cumulative

Compliments - 2019-20												
Month	Apr 201 9	May 201 9	Jun 2019	Jul 201 9	Aug 201 9	Sep 201 9	Oct 201 9	Nov 201 9	Dec 201 9	Jan 2020	Feb 202 0	Mar 202 0
Number	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Runnin g Total	0	0	1	1	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5

Success Stories

May 2019 – CEO Awards

From: Lynn Perry
Sent: 29 July 2019 15:24
To: Lisa Adams

Subject: CEO Award Runner-up

Dear Lisa

I just wanted send you my congratulations to you and the team for being awarded runner-up for the May CEO Awards. This is an excellent achievement!

Thank you for the brilliant work you and the team are undertaking at the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service. The dedication of the staff team in delivering and achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people is amazing and the efforts are appreciated.

*Lynn Perry MBE
Corporate Director Children's Services Operations (Interim)*

Media Release

ABOUT BARNARDO'S LINCOLNSHIRE SUPPORTED LODGINGS

The Barnardo's Lincolnshire Supported Lodgings scheme is a dedicated team that supports 16-21-year-olds (25 if in full time education) who are leaving the care system.

It aims to find a caring and supportive home that will ease their journey through to adulthood. It is not just about finding young people a roof over their head. It's about providing a home environment where young care leavers can flourish - with the guidance and supportive extra care that goes with it.

Barnardo's want to recruit supported lodging providers – ordinary people who open up their homes and their lives to provide extraordinary support and mentoring that many of us may take for granted. Providers are different ages and from all backgrounds - some are single, others married, some with children, others not. But all have one thing in common – they have a spare bedroom to offer a young person leaving care and compassion to help turn around a teenager's life and support them to develop the skills they will need to live in a less supported environment.

Once providers are approved by an independent panel they are then matched to a suitable young person. Meetings and weekend overnight stays are arranged before a young person moves in. A small weekly fee is paid and training and on-going support are given. If you would like more information on becoming a Supported Lodgings Provider in Lincolnshire, please email: SupportedLodgingsLincolnshire@barnardos.org.uk or phone 01522 575955

A Level Results – August 2019

Looked After Status	Results	Next steps
Turned 18 on August 2019	Business - Chemistry -	Confirmed place to study Business and Finance at Sheffield Hallam.
Left care September 2018	Sociology - B Psychology - C Government and Politics - C	Unconditional offer to study Law at Nottingham Trent University
Left care March 2019	Business – A History – A Psychology – B Spanish - B	Confirmed place to study History at Nottingham University
Left care June 2019	Business BTEC—Pass Finance— C History— E	Confirmed place at Bristol University for Land based Business Studies

My Experience of CLAS by C (Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme)

The care leaver's apprenticeship scheme is amazing step up for care leavers who want to learn new skills and get a qualification but get paid at the same time.

Before I came onto the apprenticeship scheme I was working part time at Primark and it wasn't what I wanted to continue doing so after talking to my leaving care worker, I was put in contacted with Sue Unwin (Barnardo's) to discuss the idea of doing some work experience at the Youth Hub based at Myles Cross. I thought it was a great idea and it would be really beneficial for me so a meeting was arranged for me and Sue to go meet the manager at the Youth Hub to discuss what hours I'd like to do and the type of work I'd be doing if I chose to do the 13 week work experience programme before looking at the possibility of going onto the care leavers apprenticeship scheme once I'd finished the work experience there.

I thoroughly enjoyed the work experience and I got plenty of support and guidance throughout my time there. Not long before my 21st birthday, I'd been at the Youth Hub a few weeks and the tasks I was doing there were enjoyable and I was happy that I was learning new skills so when Helen came to see me for my weekly review we discussed the idea of looking for a place in the Council for me to do the apprenticeship but at the time I didn't have my photographic I.D so a discussion was had with my leaving care worker and her manager about the possibility of the leaving care service paying for my I.D so I could go onto the apprenticeship scheme, this was arranged I was able to get my provisional driving license. This enabled me to then go onto the apprenticeship scheme. I finished my work

experience and while continuing it I had plenty of support and guidance from both Sue Unwin and Helen Tomlinson (Barnardo's) while finishing it.

Once I finished my work experience I met my manager at the Council where I would be doing my 13 month Business Administration Apprenticeship. During my apprenticeship I got plenty of support from Helen, if I was struggling with a task for a unit of work or I was worried about anything I always knew she was at the end of the phone or an email to help me with whatever I was stuck on or was there to sign post me to someone or somewhere else that would help me with whatever the problem was.

During my apprenticeship I continued to get support from my leaving care worker who had face to face catch up with me and was at the end of a phone for a chat if I was struggling either at work or at home. I feel the apprenticeship has helped me to grow and develop as a person and I have gained lots of new skills, experience and another qualification. I am so pleased I went onto the Care Leavers apprenticeship scheme and think it is a great opportunity for care leavers to get another qualification while earning a wage at the same time.

Email from Young Person re CLAS

From: B

Sent: 29 August 2019

To: Helen Tomlinson

Good morning Helen,

Barnardo's has helped me by giving me a great opportunity that I wouldn't have been able to get on my own. Not only have they have helped me get a job, they have also given me advice with future jobs.

Barnardos have helped me by sorting out personal things. – B

Kind regards,

B

Business Support Apprentice

Transcript of Telephone Conversation (September 2019) with a Young Lady who received Support via the CLAS

She was 17 when we first met (CLAS Worker) and she's almost 29 now. She was on CLAS (teaching assistant) then I got her one of the supported LCC places on a social work degree. She really struggled, had an accident and put 8 stone on. Her birth Mum died and her long term relationship ended. She updates me about her life every 3 or 4 years.

Today she rang to tell me she has a job as a teaching assistant. They literally just offered her it and she wanted me to know. She said she told them all about me at interview and that I inspired her to keep going etc. She's off all her medication, been in a steady relationship for 5 years and has lost 5 stones. The school are

starting her on 16 hours so she can keep her benefits and when she's ready they're going to move her to full time.

to
Melen

Thank-you for all your support
through out my apprenticeship.
You gave me the courage and
motivation not to give up.
The advice has helped me and
I feel more positive about
lots of things now. I hope to
see you at Graduation on 25th
November and if you ever need
any support with work prep
courses or giving advice to care
leavers don't hesitate to call me.

Many Thanks
charlotte

2. Conclusion

This report demonstrates some of the work undertaken by Barnardo's on behalf of the Local Authority between April 2019 – March 2020. This was the final year of a 5 year contract to deliver services for Lincolnshire Care Leavers.

Barnardo's look forward to expanding the current service and delivering services for Looked after Children and Care Leavers aged 16-25.

The staffing establishment has increased moving into the new contract and the following staffing establishment is in place from April 2020:

- 1 Service Manager
- 4.2 FTE Team Managers
- 1 Business Manager
- 6.1 FTE Administrators
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Signs of Safety / Participation and Quality Assurance
- 1 Specialist Accommodation Worker
- 2 Supported Lodgings Workers
- 2 Education, Employment and Training Specialist Workers
- 24 FTE Leaving Care Workers

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lisa Adams, who can be contacted on 01522 575955 or lisa.adams@barnardos.org.uk

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report

Summary:

This report gives a summary and overview of activities with regard to V4C between January and June 2020. This is a longer period of time than the agreed quarterly report timescale due to February's report to the Corporate Parenting Panel focusing on updates regarding the Big Conversation and the Tell Us Survey, and the previous Corporate Parenting Panel being refocused due to matters related to the COVID-19 infection.

This report therefore provides an update of V4C activities early in 2020 in January and February, which have not previously been reported, and provides information on V4C activities over the more recent months within the context of significant disruptions and changes to working practices as a result of the COVID-19 infection, meaning in line with many other activities, V4C meetings have been taking place virtually and remotely.

V4C is Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council with the aim being to share experiences of being looked after in Lincolnshire and to inform teams who support Children in Care what does and does not work for them. V4C meetings are held within Children's Services locality quadrants and are delivered by Senior Youth and Community Development Workers and supported by Children's Services Participation Officers.

This report also provides Corporate Parenting Panel with an update with regard to some future planning and progress.

Actions Required:

Corporate Parenting Panel to provide comment and steer regarding:

- V4C activities and meetings undertaken in 2020
- Future planning and delivery of V4C meetings and activities

1. Background

Activities related to V4C below have been broken down in 2 parts within this section as delivery and format has been distinct following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020:

- V4C update January – March 2020
- V4C update post March 2020 – Virtual V4C Activities

V4C update January – March 2020

V4C activities over January – March 2020 are detailed below and have been outlined within the 4 quadrant areas:

- Lincoln and West Lindsey
- Boston and South Holland
- East Lindsey
- North and South Holland

Lincoln and West Lindsey

A summary of attendance and activity is provided below:

Month of meeting	Venue/Activity	Number of children and young people attended
January	Washingborough Bowl	10
February	Big Conversation 20 Adventure Lincolnshire (outdoor activities)	Meeting cancelled due to low number of bookings
March	Tension Escape Room	10

Alongside the activities the group discussed and continued feedback regarding:

- Language that Cares work, session planning March 2020 onwards
- Revisited Care Pledge and Language that Cares after Big Conversation 20
- Completed planning for future meeting and confirmed music workshops x 4 April – July 2020 (subsequently postponed)

Boston and South Holland

A summary of attendance and activity is provided below:

Month of meeting	Venue/Activity	Number of children and young people attended
January	Alley Catz (bowling), Spalding	6
February	Play Towers (climbing, soft play team challenges), Boston Bowl	10
March	Meeting with karting activity cancelled due to COVID-19 and lockdown	n/a

Alongside the activities the group discussed and continued feedback regarding:

- Language that Cares discussion in preparation for the Big Conversation, activities for V4C meetings going forward
- Team building, emotional wellbeing card feedback and mood board, looking at FAB! Awards activities

North and South Kesteven

A summary of attendance and activity is provided below:

Month of meeting	Venue /Activity	Number of children and young people attended
January	Music activity. The Showroom, Lincoln	6
February – week 1	Music activity. The Showroom, Lincoln	6
February – week 2	Music Activity. The Showroom, Lincoln	6
February – week 4	Music Activity. The Showroom, Lincoln	6

Alongside the activities the group discussed:

- Topics covered: Writing, performing, recording a piece of music about 3 young people in foster care. Collaborative working using 'Garage Band' software and keyboard.
- Activity: Music Project supported by the Showroom, with outcome being a song recorded to play at FAB! Awards ceremony

East Lindsey

A summary of attendance and activity is provided below:

Month of meeting	Venue /Activity	Number of children and young people attended
January	Pantomime, Horncastle	Cancelled due to low bookings
February	Chocolate Workshop, North Sea Observatory	11
March	Planning meeting to design workshop for Designated Teachers Conference with representatives from NK/SK V4C group. No further activities due to COVID-19 and lockdown	4

Alongside the activities the group discussed and continued feedback regarding:

- Language that Cares discussion in preparation for the Big Conversation, activities for V4C meetings going forward

V4C Update March - June 2020: Virtual V4C Activities

The following details are provided in this section:

- Overview And Background
- Risk Assessment and Good Practice – Virtual Groups
- Delivery Planning
- Virtual V4C by Locality
- Participation Activities Across The Groups
- V4C Newsletter and Communications
- Next Steps

Overview and Background

Alongside other Children's Services participation groups, V4C members are being offered the opportunity to have virtual meetings, via Zoom, with their groups in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All current members were contacted during April 2020 by their V4C leads and Virtual V4C was discussed. In recognition of the fact that not all young people feel comfortable being on a video call, or indeed speaking in a group, all members were offered the opportunity to catch up with their group lead individually via telephone, email or 1:1 Zoom call if preferred to keep updated and engaged.

During the initial phases of setting up Virtual V4C, sessions were primarily focused on relaxed activities and conversations to support young people to build their confidence with the technology and this new way of working. Now members have

become settled, the sessions have shifted towards participation and engagement pieces of work that can be delivered via this mechanism. This has involved sending information out to the home for pre-reading prior to the next Zoom meeting.

To enhance users experiences of the Zoom technology, premium licences have been purchased in June for 8 Youth and Community Development Worker staff to improve connectivity and sound quality as well as enabling longer meetings.

Risk Assessment and Good Practice – Virtual Groups

The Participation Team developed a Risk Assessment and Good Practice Guide for Virtual Participation Groups to follow, based on a Leeds City Council Participation Group paper. (See appendix)

Delivery Planning

Debbie Barker, Senior Youth and Community Development Worker and V4C lead for Lincoln and West Lindsey, has coordinated the project across the Youth and Community Development Teams within the Future4Me service. Debbie developed an action plan which detailed all activities required and completed to support the delivery of this project across the county. She has supported team members to establish contact with young people, carers and colleagues to raise awareness of this new project offer.

Virtual V4C by Locality

Following the development work and planning highlighted above, the Virtual V4C meetings and contacts have been taking place since the end of April, and are described below by locality area:

Lincoln and West Lindsey – 11 young people attending meetings

- All young people have been contacted to see if they wish to be involved
- Now running two Virtual Zoom groups to meet the needs of the young people as not all are confident with larger groups or with young people they don't know well. As a result, one is a general group and another based around members from Northolme Children's Home
- Each group currently runs fortnightly on alternate weeks, this enables the more confident young people to join the Northolme Children's Home group. The young people have now asked for the meetings to return to their monthly schedule now that they have become used to the format.
- The 'Cress Egg Head Challenge' has been very popular. Pancake challenge making and decorating a pancake were popular with some fantastic results. The groups have now been doing virtual bingo and a talent competition.
- One young person has moved from Lincoln/West Lindsey to Skegness. Debbie Barker made contact with new foster carer to introduce herself and give an overview of V4C, also sharing information about the East Lindsey group and the present situation with Zoom. The young person has been invited to stay with the Lincoln group as well if they wish

Boston and South Holland – 7 young people attending

- All young people have been contacted with meetings taking place since the end of April
- The group's first zoom went really well with great reaction from the young people. The group is now very settled and runs weekly currently
- During the weeks the young people asked for virtual games of bingo, with all cards sent via mail or post so the young people can take part. Cooking challenges, writing poems about the Health Service and drawing pictures of their heroes and a talent show have also taken place
- The group are continuing to set challenges or activities each week
- The Youth and Community Development Worker organises for a bundle of materials to be sent to each of the young people's homes so they have relevant information and materials to participate

North and South Kesteven – 6 young people attending

- All young people have been contacted to see if they wish to be involved
- The young people have all requested 1:1 Zoom check in meetings. The young people in the group have requested not to have group meetings due to issues around lack of confidence and mental health and wellbeing issues. There is an aim to support to gradually move towards group meetings where possible, with the option of using breakout rooms to pair up or have smaller numbers in the first instance.
- The Youth Worker is involved in one young person's review meetings with their Social Worker and the V4C Zoom meeting has helped with this
- Although the young people are doing 1:1 if more young people wish to join then group Zoom meetings with these will be arranged and young people can join other virtual meetings

East Lindsey – 5 young people attending

- All young people have been contacted with one to one meetings currently taking place via Zoom
- The Senior Youth and Community Development Worker for East Lindsey has been redeployed to another role and another member of staff from the team is now taking over responsibility for developing the meetings
- Group meetings are currently being arranged

Participation Activities Across The Groups

Group leads are supporting their young people to continue to engage in participation activities during this period:

- *Language that Cares* – as this work moves towards its final implementation phase, young people have been invited to record short videos discussing the following questions:
What did you think of the old language?
Why do you think it needs to be changed?
What difference do you think the changes will make to you?
These videos are to be used as part of sharing the changes and training all staff working with Children in Care and Care Leavers in using the new Language That Cares.

- *Caring Promise* – groups have been asked to look at the new document and graphics, as voted for at Big Conversation 20 in February 2020. This is the last opportunity for any feedback/design changes by the young people before the document is finalised and circulated wider
- *soundLINCS* – The Children's Services Participation Team have spoken with the team at soundLINCS to scope the opportunity to provide virtual music sessions to the V4C groups. The initial plan is for 12 weekly sessions covering 3 different areas of music e.g. vocal, instrumental and digital on a rotational basis to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to access something of interest to them where possible. soundLINCS are collating a plan to be shared in July 2020 outlining the programme and costs associated.

V4C Newsletter and Communications

- **Virtual V4C Newsletter**

The Participation Team work with Debbie Barker to produce monthly Virtual V4C newsletters which are used to keep carers, support workers updated with meetings, activities and challenges. The first newsletter May 2020 was circulated to all foster carers in the county with updates being sent out via staff contacts and carers directly (see appendix). There is now an online subscription version of the newsletter in development which will allow readers to subscribe enabling the team to set up a direct line of contact with young people and stakeholders.

- **Foster Carer News, Int. Comms, Daily Briefing and Facebook articles**

Publicity and awareness raising is ongoing: the team have written articles to promote Virtual V4C in the Foster Carer Newsletter, Internal Comms, Covid-19 Daily Briefing and LCC Facebook. Positive responses and enquiries regarding joining sessions are coming through and followed up. See appendix for examples of communications.

Next Steps

A primary issue to consider is future planning to continue with the option of providing virtual V4C meetings in addition to physical meetings and activities when they resume. This will help to offer V4C for young people who are unable or do not wish to attend physical meetings. Further steps are to:

- Continue to support and deliver services to young people within our V4C groups
- Look to further establish and develop meetings in localities and support young people to feel confident in engaging in virtual groups
- Update young people and carers with meetings and activities via the Virtual V4C newsletter
- Continue to raise awareness of Virtual V4C to the wider children in care community via communications with staff, carers, media and newsletters
- Develop the music session delivery schedule with soundLINCS
- Begin to plan for the return of physical meetings and activities

2. Conclusions

- A) Prior to March 2020 the V4C groups continued to achieve more engagement through meetings being activity based and being held in alternative venues to the traditional youth centre based settings. However, attendances and interest do appear to vary based on the type of activity being offered and its location. It is therefore important moving forward that the choice of activities and venues for future V4C meetings should be child and young person led, in addition to ongoing publicity and awareness raising.
- B) Virtual V4C meetings, using Zoom at present, have been popular among certain young people. They offer a different mechanism for young people to communicate, engage and give their views. Some young people prefer this method to physical meetings. It also enables participation where young people are unable to travel to certain locations. It is therefore recommended that these options of meetings continue in some form when physical meetings resume. At the same time, some young people find using platforms such as Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams uncomfortable and difficult, and services need to be mindful and supportive of this.
- C) As the situation across the country changes with regard to the COVID-19 infection, initial planning with regard to future physical meetings needs to be considered.

3. Consultation

Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Risk assessments carried out via the Senior Youth And Community Development Workers

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached	
Appendix A	V4C Virtual Risk Assessment
Appendix B	V4C Newsletter May 2020
Appendix C	Examples of Communication

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Ben Lilley, Team Manager (Quality and Standards), who can be contacted on 07876 212470 or at ben.lilley@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Risk Factor	Risk Management
Staff expertise and knowledge	
That staff members leading on any online-based youth work lack the specific knowledge and skills to keep young people safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should make use of this risk assessment and ensure they have read and taken part in the LCC Guidance and essential training outlined on pages 2/3 of this document • Staff should ensure they have taken part in the necessary training and development to deliver sessions in a way that keeps participants safe and protects their privacy • Teams should include an “Online Working” discussion in all team meeting agendas to give staff the opportunity to share good practice and raise and issues and concerns • Staff should be aware of their local safeguarding children and young people arrangements
Staff unfamiliar with online meeting technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to complete online tutorials for meeting software where available (website support) • Staff to practise setting up of meetings and hosting with colleagues to ensure they understand software functionality and safe usage features.
Accessibility:	
Young people unable to participate due to lack of phone/laptop or internet access/phone credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that meetings are noted so that any young person who is unable to take part can be caught up once physical meeting resume • Staff to record any barriers to participation and look to address/overcome where possible
Lack of camera for video chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even when meetings take place on video-based platforms e.g. Zoom, young people are given the option to take part with their camera turned off • For young people without video phones or laptop with webcam they can “dial in” to the meeting using audio only
Privacy and data protection	
Young people sharing personal details of themselves and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear ground rules shared with all participants and re-iterated at the start of each virtual meeting. Ground rules must state that young people must not share any personal details of themselves and others for example: email address, bank details, home address etc • Headphones may be used if participants have concerns regarding privacy of discussion in immediate surroundings
Young people and staff sharing their contact details with each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When using group-meeting applications such as Zoom or Google Hangouts – young people should sign-in using an ID/username that doesn’t disclose their full name, email address or phone number – For example, Joe Bloggs would sign is as simply Joe B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants should never reference any of their wider social media handles or accounts • All meeting rooms set up on any platform should be password protected and that password/PIN to take part in that meeting should be shared with the participants only
Sharing of inappropriate content	
Participants share text, images or video content that may shock or offend others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the platform permits this – file sharing or image sharing should be switched off for participants • Group ground rules should strictly forbid the sharing of offensive or inappropriate content. Any participant breaking these rules should be removed from the group immediately and contacted by phone by a member of staff. The incident should be recorded and any inappropriate post removed from the group by the person who made it and all group members. This may include them deleting it from the camera roll on their device and then ensuring it is deleted from their “deleted items” folder.
Unwanted or unexpected participants	
Strangers or members of the public access meetings or discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual meetings should always be password protected and the password should not be posted on any open forums • Staff member(s) running the meetings should have a list of all the participants they expect to be taking part. • Participants should “check in” at the start of the meeting and staff should cross reference this against a list of expected participants • If staff or participants notice any online interaction that isn’t from a member of the group or staff team the meeting should be terminated immediately. Staff must debrief and record the incident and ascertain how a member of the public was able to take part. It may be necessary to no longer use that particular platform • As stated previously, participants should never discuss or leave any personal details in any online chat

LCC guidance for video and teleconferencing - Source: IMT Version 3.0 (April 8th 2020)

Please ensure that you have read and understood all advice within this document, particularly **pages 6 – 17** which include the setting up and safe use of the Zoom software.

Essential training

All staff delivering the activities must have completed the online safety training [eSafety - Guidance for Practitioners Working with Children](#)

Supplementary Guidance

PSW Best Practice Guide for Video Calls and Virtual Home Visits –

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#Virtual

Staying connected in lockdown

Hello!

Thank you to everyone who has kept up with V4C using Zoom. Some of you will have taken part in group Zoom meetings, and others in one-to-one meetings with your group leader.

If you haven't joined a Zoom meeting yet, have a chat with your V4C group leader for details.

I like to see my friends on the phone through Zoom as it keeps me in contact with them. It makes me smile when I see them.

Zoom meetings are organised by your V4C group leader. They will give you a special meeting code and password. This means that only people who are invited can join.

We're now looking at how Zoom can be used by V4C to do some work. Our big projects at the moment are:

- Language That Cares - changing the way we talk about Children in Care.
- Caring Promise - what we promise to do for you.

Contact your V4C group leader for more details about Zoom meetings:

Boston & South Holland:

BostonYCDteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

East Lindsey:

ELyouthandcommunityteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

North & South Kesteven:

YCDteam_NKSK@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincoln & West Lindsey:

YCDWteam_LWL@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The Lincoln and West Lindsey group have completed a challenge to cook and decorate a pancake. There were some very impressive creations. Well done all!



Their cress head challenge is under way. They also had a Zoom quiz - hope nobody was cheating!



The Boston and South Holland group have been playing bingo on Zoom! Bingo cards were sent out to the group before the meeting. Two of the group had their own little bingo game at home and offered to



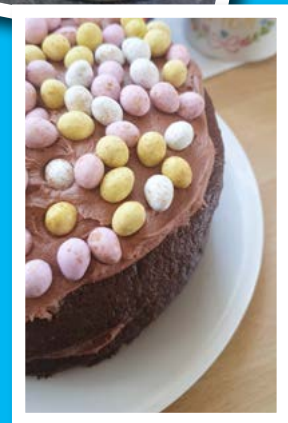
be our bingo callers for the evening. Some of the group saved paper by popping it up on their computers and using little dots to cover the numbers! It was an amazing opportunity to help develop relationships with each other.



All of the young people and staff really enjoyed themselves. The group decided the next meeting will be a quiz night!

The young people in the Boston and South Holland V4C group love to set challenges for one another. Week one saw the Great Virus Bake Off, where they set each other the task to bake anything they liked. However, the theme had to represent where they would first be visiting or would want to visit when lockdown is over. There were some incredible bakes, including McDonalds Cupcakes and Milkshake cakes!

The following week the young people set a craft challenge. This time they challenged each other to create anything that represented the NHS. Some young people used Hamma Beads, others drew pictures. The staff also get involved in the challenges and Amy drew a nurse dressed as super hero!



The third challenge that was set, again by the young people, was to practise their talent over the week ready to bring it to the next meeting and share with each other! Our last session became a talent show amongst the young people. We had some young people playing musical instruments, one young person signed to a song, another wrote and read out a beautiful poem and some young people just wanted to be part of the group and watch.

We are excited to see what other weekly challenges are set!!

WHY

- Why one way and not the other way
- Why blue up and black at blue up at night
- Why green down when below that is brown
and wiggle down
- Why an earth so round when people die to
prove its straight
- Why pictures and words why not rhyme and
mimes
- Why fairies and trolls
- Why Lego imagination and not real
- Why hugs and kisses why not kisses and hugs
- Why bed time and night time with raves and
drugs
- Why oranges and not orange
- Why peanut butter jelly
why not jam and bread

by Saffron

Using to technology to deliver services and keep in touch

I'm really impressed by the way in which you're embracing technology to enable you to carry on working to such a high standard. It's fantastic to see how you are using video conferencing to collaborate with each other and support people out in the community. Thank you all for adapting so well to the new way we're delivering services.

Children's Services Participation Officer Rebecca Crooks has told us how she and her colleagues are reaching out to young people so that they know that they're still being supported.

"Our Voices 4 Choices (V4C), Youth Council, Young Inspectors and Lincolnshire Young Voices members are being offered the opportunity to have virtual meetings, via Zoom, with their groups," she explained.

"All current members have been contacted and have discussed this with their project leads and we have had some really positive feedback from those who have wanted to be involved. Just the opportunity to see a familiar face or two is bringing lots of smiles. For those who are not wanting to be on the virtual call there is the opportunity to catch up with their group lead via telephone or email if preferred to keep updated with what is going on. These are the comments we've received from those involved:

"Definitely think that doing a meet up virtual has been incredibly helpful in these difficult circumstances. Utilising the technology has allowed us to ensure we remember the important work we do as well as continuing to interact as a group to maintain our social connections/relationships, even if it is somewhat hard to adapt to".(Ben - youth council member)

"I think that Katrina Hewitt (the Young Inspectors Project Officer) has done a good job of keeping in touch and I feel informed with what's going on even though we haven't been able to have a meeting".

"It's nice to keep in touch and know that you're still there despite the pandemic".

"I like to see my friends on the phone through Zoom as it keeps me in contact with them. It makes me smile when I see them".

Service update:

Our V4C (Voices4Choices), Youth Council, Young Inspectors and Young Voices members activities have all stopped for now.

However, some of our group lead workers are setting up virtual meetings to enable you all to keep in touch.

#coronavirus



Lincolnshire County Council

· 21 April · Edited ·

If your group has stopped but you haven't been contacted please email participation@lincolnshire.gov.uk and we will get you back in touch with your groups.

Find out more: <https://qoo.ly/35kics>

#StayHomeSaveLives #coronavirus #lincolnshire

You and 6 others

1 comment



Most relevant



Andrew Garbutt I have contacted Ben, Youth Council Chair, for his thoughts.

Like · Reply · 1w



Write a comment...



Keeping in touch with V4C

In a time where we are all missing seeing our friends, Voices 4 Choices (Children in Care Council) are keen to make sure our children and young people have the opportunity to connect during this period of lockdown. We are hosting some online 'get together' opportunities to share stories and experiences, see familiar (and new!) faces and get involved in some fun games and activities.

If you have any young people in your household who you think would like to connect, drop us a line at [participation](mailto:participation@lincolnshire.gov.uk) and we can tell you how to get involved. In preparation, it would be really helpful if you could register an account on the [Zoom website](https://www.zoom.us).

participation@lincolnshire.gov.uk

[www.Zoom.us](https://www.zoom.us)

Virtual meetings for V4C, Youth Council, Young Inspectors and Lincolnshire Young Voices

At this challenging time when many of our young people may be missing their friends and support workers, we want them to know that they are not on their own. Our group lead workers are setting up virtual meetings to keep in touch with young people, talk together and have some fun. Please find out more [here](#).

(source: [Participation Team](#))

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**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)

Summary:

- a) Within the reporting period, we have seen an increase in the number Care Proceedings issued
- b) Care Proceedings were concluded in respect of children
- c) The use of Placement Orders has dropped

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

1. Background

Under the Children Act 1989, there are two types of proceedings in which Children's Services are involved;-

- Public Law Proceedings
- Private Law proceedings

Public Law proceedings

An application is made by the Local Authority as it considers that the child(ren) are suffering/are at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of:-

- a) The care given by the parent(s)/relative not being what is reasonable to expect a parent to give; or
- b) The child(ren) being beyond parental control

The Local Authority can apply to the Court for two types of orders under s31 Children Act 1989 (referred to as care proceedings or public law proceedings). The orders the Local Authority can apply for are: Care Order and Supervision Order.

A Care Order (or interim care order) grants the Local Authority parental responsibility for the child (shared with any person having parental responsibility for the child). If a child is made subject to a care order, looked after provisions must be implemented,

including appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer, regular looked after child meetings. Decisions for the child cannot be made without consulting all those who hold parental responsibility. A care order remains in force until the child's 18th birthday.

A Supervision Order (or interim supervision order) directs that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to advise, assist and befriend the child. If a child is made subject to a supervision order, child in need provisions must be followed, including six weekly child in need meetings and regular visits. A Supervision Order is made for a period up to one year, if required the supervision order can be extended by application to the court. An extension can be granted for the order to be in place for up to 3 years.

The Court cannot make a Care or Supervision Order for a child who has reached the age of 17 or is 16 and married.

Private Law Proceedings

Other individuals who are connected with the child are able to make applications for a variety of Orders under Children Act (known as private law proceedings). These include: Child Arrangement Orders directing where the child is to live or who the child is to spend time with (replacing Residence and Contact Orders); Specific Issue Orders directing that something shall or shall not be done; Prohibited Steps Orders preventing a person from doing something restricted in the Order; and s14A Special Guardianship Orders appointing a person or persons who are over 18 years of age and not a parent of the child in question, to be the special guardian(s) of that child. The effect of the Special Guardianship Order is to grant the special guardian heightened parental responsibility for that child, and, to exercise such parental responsibility to the exclusion of everyone else who has parental responsibility for that child.

During these proceedings if the Court is alerted to issues which effect the safety of the child, the Court can direct the Local Authority to complete a section 37 report, setting out whether after investigation the Local Authority considers;

- a) the child(ren) to be at risk of significant harm in the care of their parent/relative such that they seek to apply for a Public law Order to safeguard the child(ren)s welfare
- b) there is no need to issue an application for public law proceedings, however the Local authority consider that they should provide services or assistance for the child(ren) or his family
- c) c .take any other action with respect to the child.

In any family proceedings concerning the welfare of a child the Court can make a Family Assistance Order under s.16 Children Act 1989, directing the Local Authority to appoint an officer to advise, assist and (where appropriate) befriend any person named in the order (often referred to as the private law alternative to a Supervision Order). A Family Assistance Order is made for a period up to one year. The

difference between a Supervision Order and Family Assistance Order is that under a Supervision Order the Local Authority duty is to the child, however, under a Family Assistance Order the duty is to anyone named in the order, which can include the child, parents, special guardians, or any person with whom the child lives or spends time with.

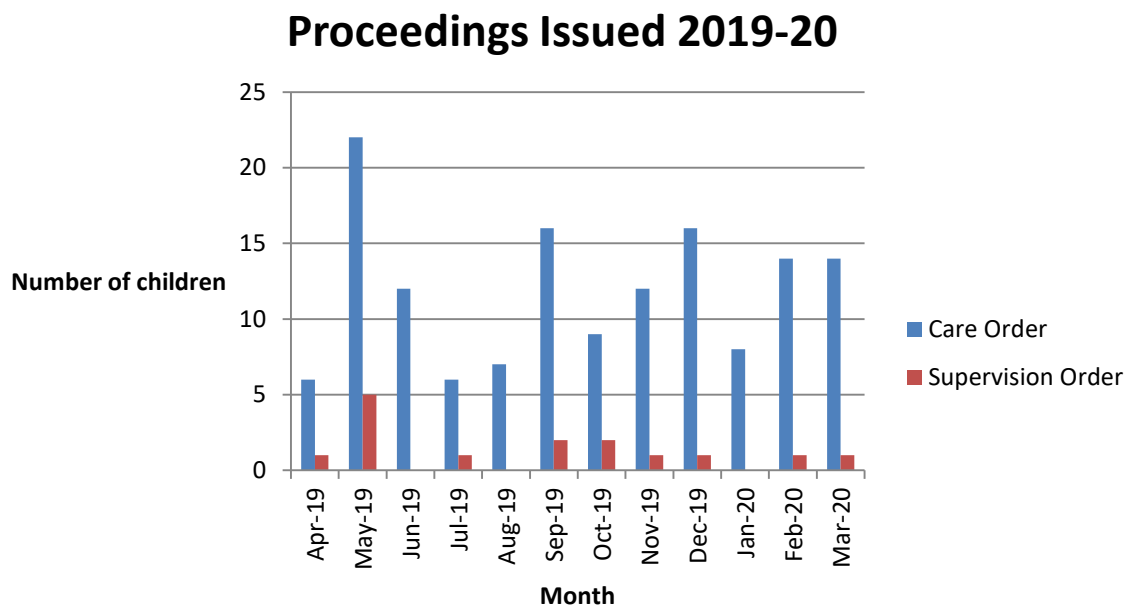
Public Law Proceedings Issued

Between April 2019 and March 2020, care proceedings were issued in respect of **157** children consisting of 142 applications for Care Orders and 15 Supervision Orders.

This is in contrast to applications being made in respect of 184 children during the period April 2018 - March 2019.

It is important to note that the figures represent the amount of children in respect of whom proceedings were issued; it does not necessarily represent the number of separate applications made.

The Court does not require individual applications for Care or Supervision Orders for sibling groups: one application will be made for all the siblings and this is dealt with as one case by the court. However the outcome for each child in a sibling group may be different.



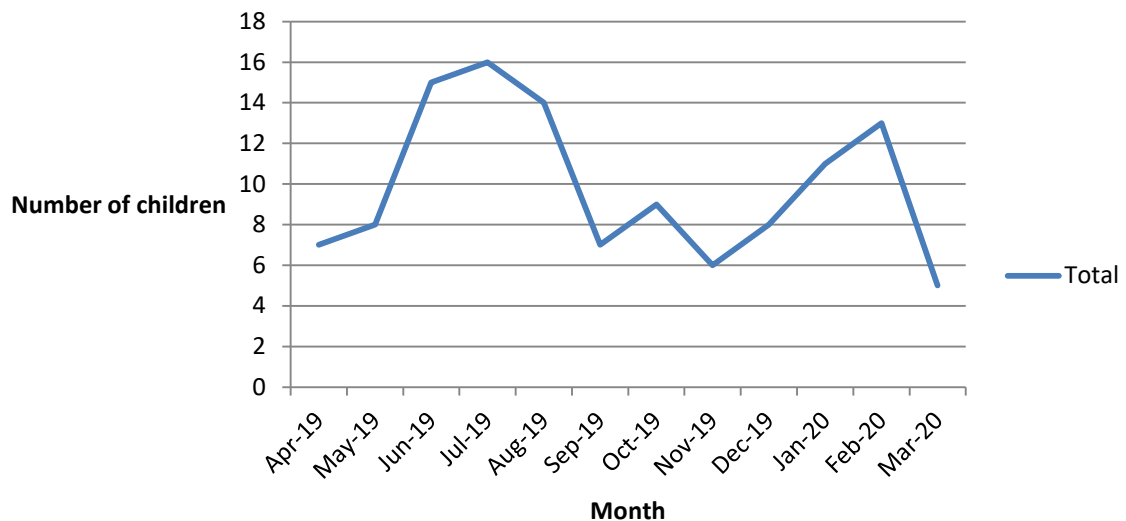
As previously stated, the Local Authority is unable to apply for orders which bestow parental responsibility upon the child's extended family, for example Child Arrangement Order (who the child shall live with), Special Guardianship Order (which grants the special guardian heightened parental responsibility). An application for a Care Order or Supervision Order may be made as a route to such private law orders being made to extended family.

Advantages of care proceedings in these circumstances include: the child being separately represented by their own solicitor; an independent children's guardian being appointed; the proceedings should be completed within 26 weeks; and the parents will be entitled to legal aid, which would not be available in private law proceedings. In addition, extended family members cannot automatically apply for a Special Guardianship Order until the child has lived with them for at least a year before making such application. In Care Proceedings this time period is not required.

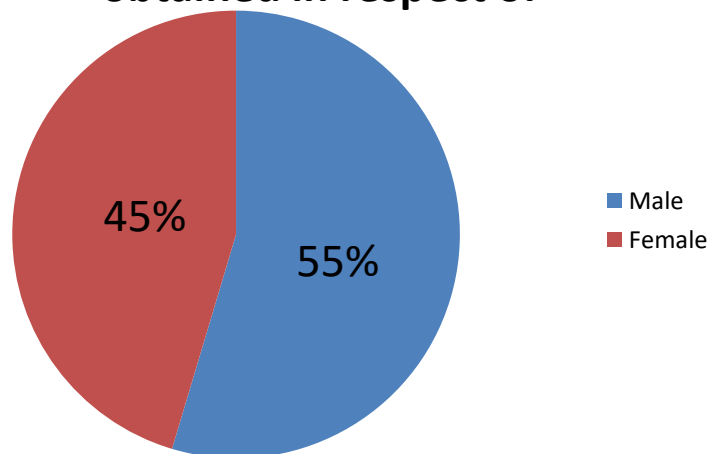
PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED

Between April 2019 and March 2020, care proceedings were concluded in respect of **119** children, 65 males and 54 females. In the previous financial year proceedings were concluded in respect of 154 children.

Proceedings Concluded 2019-20



Gender of Children that final orders were obtained in respect of

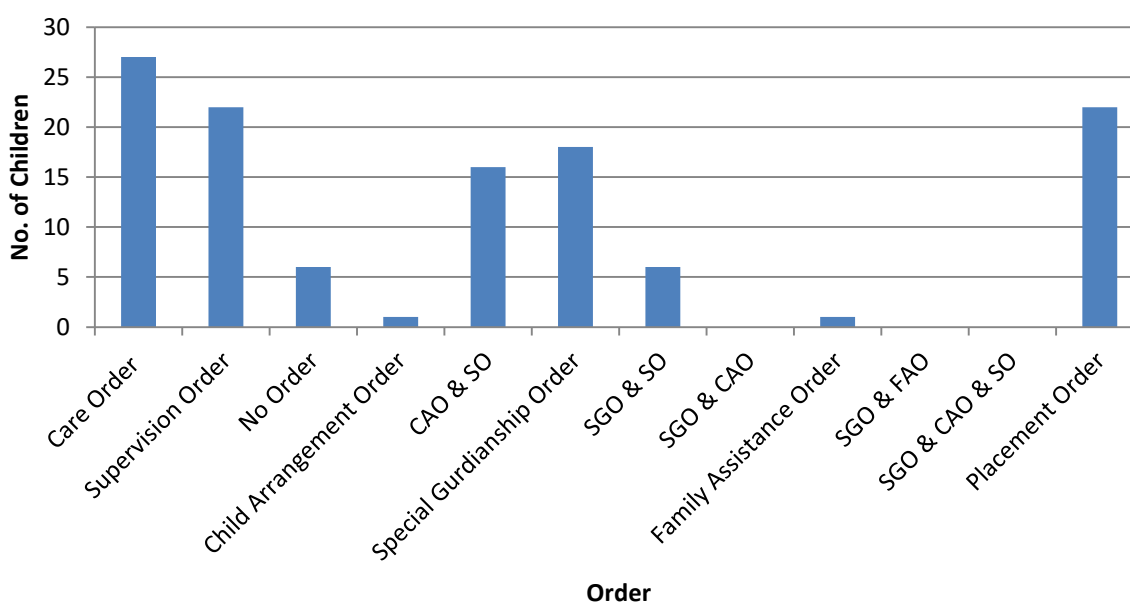


Analysis of Outcomes for children who have been the subject of care proceedings

The final orders granted by the Court in 2018/19 in contrast to 2019/20 were as follows:-

Order	Number of Orders 2018/19	Number of Orders 2019/20
Care Order	37	27
Care Order & Placement Order	27	22
Supervision Order	12	22
No Order	11	6
Child Arrangements Order	12	1
Child Arrangements Order & Supervision Order	11	16
Special Guardianship Order	41	18
Special Guardianship Order & Supervision Order	3	6
Family Assistance Order	0	1

Total Number of Orders Obtained April 2019 - March 2020



Analysis of Orders:

At first glance, it appears from the figures above that there has been a decrease in the number of care and placement orders being made however the percentage of applications resulting in these final orders has remained relatively consistent between 2018/2019 and 2019/2020.

In 2018/2019 24% of children involved in care proceedings were made the subjects of care orders; this figure is 22% for 2019/2020. Similarly, in 2018/2019 17% of children were made subject to care and placement orders. The figure is 18% for 2019/2020. The percentages therefore have remained relatively consistent.

There has however been a rise in the making of supervision orders with only 16% of final outcomes in 2018/2019 including a supervision order and 36% cases involving a final supervision order on 2019/2020. This rise is likely to be accounted for by the fact that a number of cases in 2019/2020 concluded with children being placed with one of their parents where on-going support from the Local Authority was required. Out of the 43 children in respect of whom supervision orders were made in 2019/2020, 31 children were placed with their parents.

There has been a decrease in the number of special guardianship orders being made. In 2018/2019 29% of children were made the subject of SGOs. In 2019/2020 this figure has fallen to 20%. This may again reflect the fact the outcome for a greater number of children over 2019/2020 was that they remained in their parents care.

Post proceedings local authority involvement 2019/2020

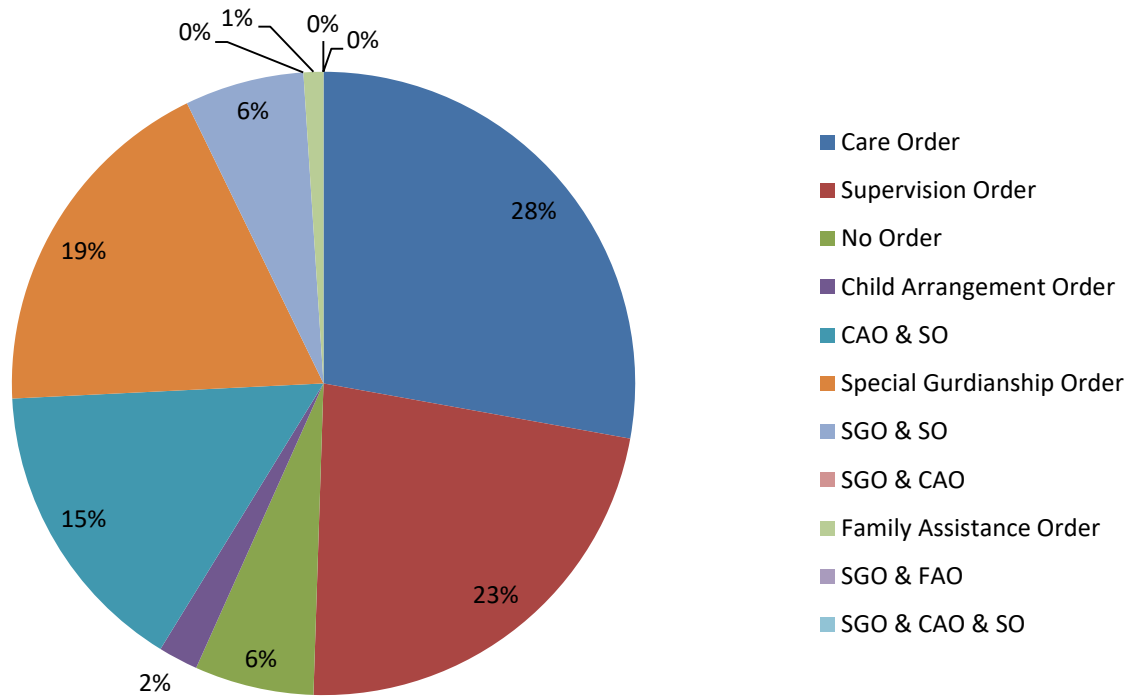
From the Orders made in **2019/2020**, the Local Authority will have remained statutorily involved with **111 (93%)** of the children subject to proceedings, either as a result of the child being looked after (under Care Order), subject to child in need procedures (Supervision Order and Family Assistance Order) or providing support services to Special Guardians (under Special Guardianship Orders).

Supervision Orders and Family Assistance Orders are initially made for a period of up to one year (however, can be extended on application by Local Authority), therefore the Local Authority will cease to be involved with **38 children (32%)** of those children (provided there is no need to make an application to extend the duration of the Orders).

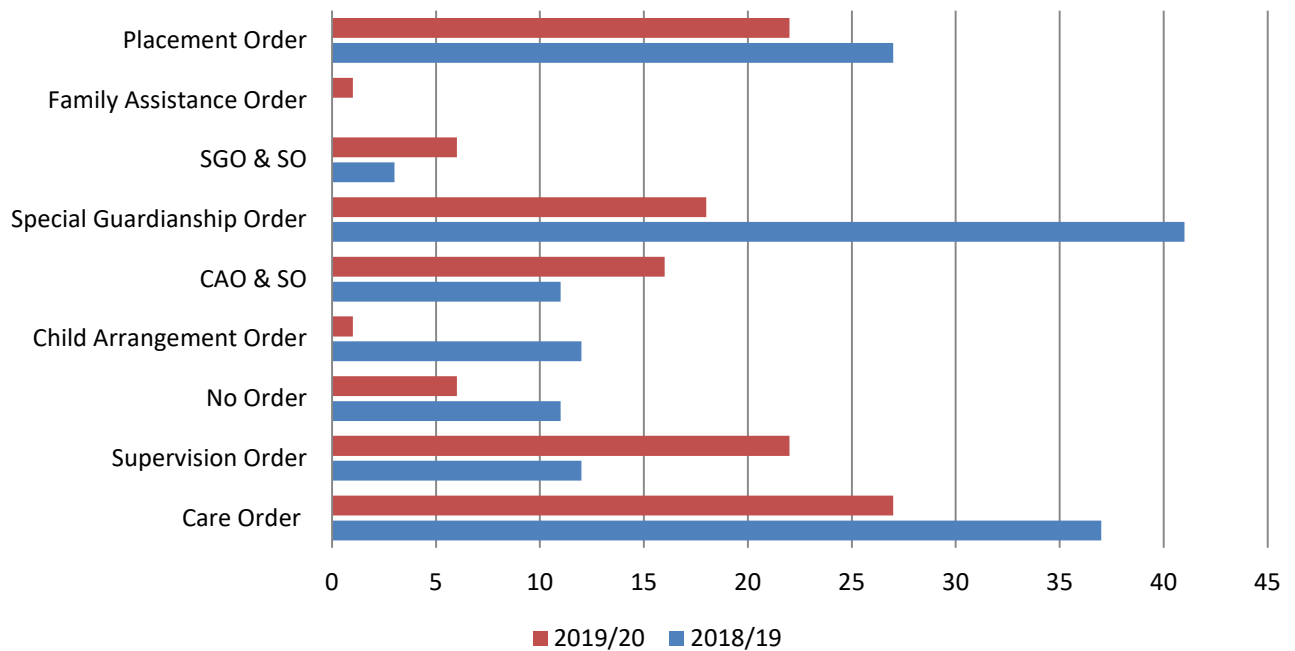
A plan of adoption should be reviewed at each looked after child review, generally if a child has not been placed with prospective adopters after 18 months, the Local Authority will change the care plan to one of long term foster care and an application be made to Court to discharge the Placement Order. Should all the children subject to a Placement Order in **2019/2020 (22 children - 18%)** be placed for adoption and later adopted, within 18 months the Local Authority will only remain involved with **43% (51 children)** of the total number of children subject to proceedings in **2019/2020**.

Support Services under Special Guardianship Orders are provided for up to three years, therefore by April 2021 the Local Authority will not be involved with **20% (24 children)** of those children. By such time the Local Authority shall only be involved with **22% (27 children)** of the children subject to proceedings in **2019/2020** (those subject to Care Orders).

2019/2020 Orders Granted



Comparison of Orders made 2016/17 & 2017/18



Analysis of care plans for children made the subject of Care Orders

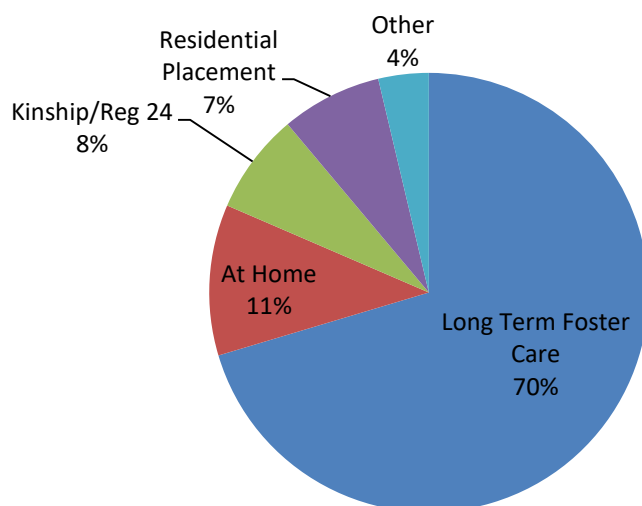
During the period April 2019 to March 2020, a total of **49** children were made subject to care orders. Placement Orders were made alongside Care Orders in respect of **22** children. A Placement Order is applied for where the Local Authority care plan is one of adoption. The effect of Placement Order is that it permits the Local Authority to place the child for adoption. Where a child is placed with prospective adopters the Local Authority continues to share parental responsibility for the child with the adopters and the parents, until such time as an Adoption Order is made.

Provided all the children who were made subject to Placement Orders in the period April 2019 – March 2020, are placed for adoption and adoption Orders made, the Local Authority would not retain parental responsibility for these children and they would not remain subject to Looked After Child procedures. Therefore only **55%** of the children made subject to Care Orders would remain Looked After children.

During April 2019 – March 2020 **27** children were subject to Care Orders, **3** children's plans were that they be: cared for parents with the Local Authority sharing parental responsibility (11%); **2** children's plans were cared for by extended family members/friends (kinship/regulation 24 placements where the family member is approved as a foster carer (7%), and the Local Authority holds parental responsibility); **19** children's plans were long term foster care (70%); **2** children's plans were residential care (7%) with **1** child being placed in a Secure Accommodation Placement at the conclusion of proceedings (3%).

At Looked After Child (LAC) reviews, the social work team and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will consider whether it remains in the Child's best interests to be subject to a Care Order with the Local Authority sharing parental responsibility for the child, or whether the child's best interests can be served via another Order, for example SGO to extended family member. These children's care plans will therefore remain under regular review.

Placements for children where stand alone Care Orders were made



Special Guardianship Orders

When a Special Guardianship Order is made in respect of a previously looked after child (subject to ICO or s20 accommodation) who has been placed by the local authority with the special guardians, there is a statutory duty on the authority to provide support to the placement for 3 years after the order has been made. In addition the court can make additional orders to support the placement.

There has been a rise in the number of Supervision Orders and Family Assistance Orders made accompanying a Special Guardianship Order in recent years. These orders place statutory duties upon the Local Authority to provide additional services and support to the child, special guardian or parents.

The increase may be as a result of the 26 week track to complete proceedings following the implementation of the Public Law Outline in April 2014. The reasons for such orders being made are usually: prospective special guardians being assessed late in proceedings and as such the child being placed with the Special Guardian at the end/conclusion of proceedings without the placement having been tested out; and Special Guardians not willing to facilitate contact arrangements and the Local Authority remaining involved to ensure contact is safely promoted in the child's welfare and child's additional needs.

Nationwide, SGO's have increased, which has also lead to an increase in the breakdown of SGO placements, where children have subsequently been placed in the Care of the Local Authority and subject to further public law proceedings. As a result, to reduce the number of placement breakdowns, guidance was issued by Mr

Justice Keehan (Midland Circuit Family Division Liaison Judge) in August 2016, as follows:-

- a) SGO's should not be made, absent compelling and cogent reasons, until the child has lived for an appreciable period (no guidance has been issued regarding the length of an appreciable period, however, HHJ Clark sitting at Lincoln Family Court suggested that this should be at least 10 weeks. Drawing similarities to the situation where prospective adopters have to wait 10 weeks following a child being placed with them before an application for an Adoption Order can be made) with the prospective special guardians;
- b) in some cases a child arrangements order may be the order which meets the welfare best interests of the child;
- c) where the care plan (which details the Local authority's recommendations for a support needed for the child) providing for placement with the prospective special guardians and, in time, support for the prospective special guardians to apply for a SGO is agreed and/or is approved by the court, the proceedings should be concluded with the making of public law (Care Order) or private law orders (Child Arrangement Order);
- d) where a local authority cannot approve a placement of a child with prospective special guardians under the auspices of an interim care order (i.e. the requirements of placement or fostering regulations cannot be met) the court may sanction a placement under an interim Child Arrangement Order;
- e) only in exceptional cases should care proceedings be prolonged solely for the purpose of awaiting the outcome of a trial placement of a child with prospective special guardians and/or the completion of a SGO assessment report.

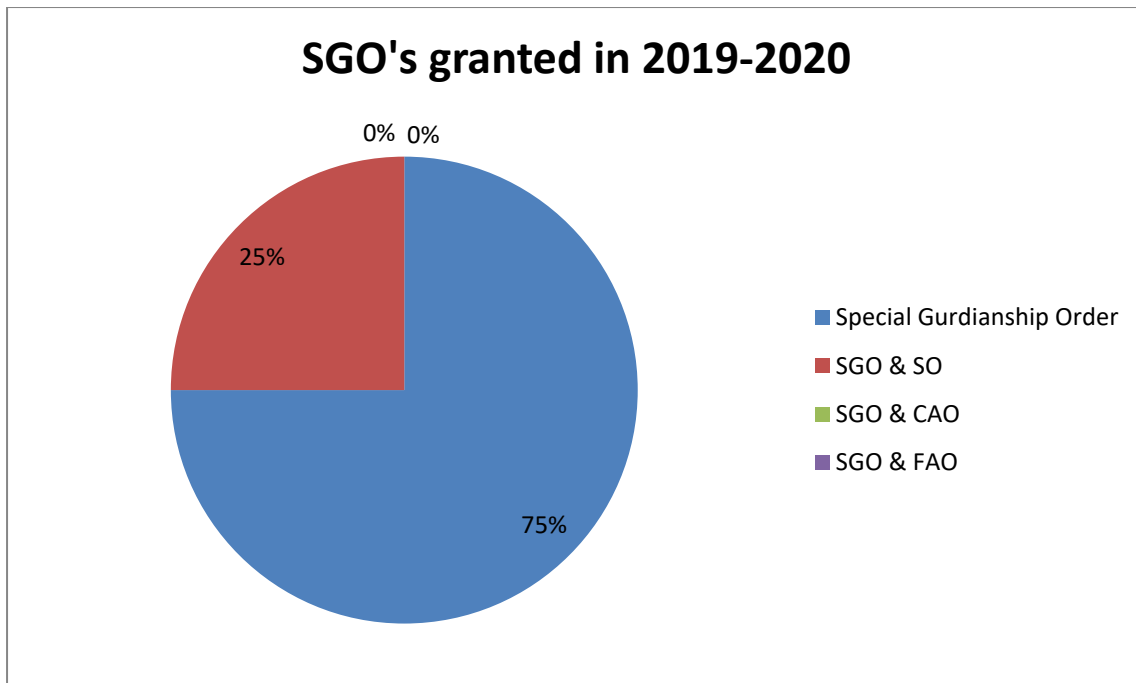
The guidance took a short time to filter into practice at Lincoln Family Court and as a result was revisited in March 2017. This guidance further recommended that save for in exceptional circumstances Family Assistance Orders and Supervision Orders should not be made in conjunction with SGOs to coerce the Local Authority to providing support to SGO holders; all details of support should be included in the SGO support plan. The guidance also suggested that if the child had not been placed with a child for an appreciable period of time, the court should make a care order at the conclusion of proceedings on the understanding that an application for an SGO would be made at a later stage rather than extending the proceedings to allow for further assessments to be undertaken.

This guidance has now been superseded by a Court of Appeal judgement in the case *Re P-S (Children)* [2018] EWCA Civ 1407.

In this case the court of appeal stated that if the assessment process *'cannot be completed justly, fairly and in a manner compatible with the child's welfare within 26 weeks then time must be extended'*. The court confirmed that the concept of a 'short term' care order (i.e. a care order made on the basis that an application to discharge

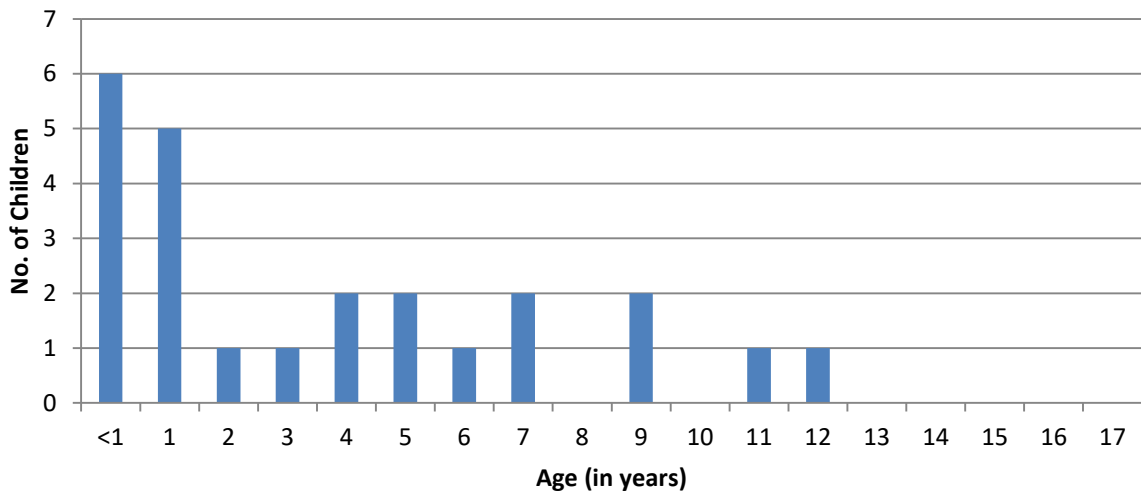
would be made in the not too distant future) did not have any legal basis and was a flawed approach.

As a result, there has now been a further change in court practice with the court more frequently permitting extensions of the 26 week timetable to accommodate further assessments of connected persons so that the court is able to make a final decision at the conclusion of proceedings as to whether a connected person is an appropriate special guardian for the child or not and indeed whether the testing out period has been for an appreciable" period. Although this has an effect on the timetable of proceedings, this thorough testing out of placements should ensure that there is not a substantial increase in the need for supervision orders or family assistance orders alongside SGOs in the future. The implications of *Re P-S* may also provide an explanation for the fall in the number of children being made subject to care orders with the care plan that they live with a family member under Regulation 24 (this being 13% in 2018/2019 and 7% in 2019/2020).



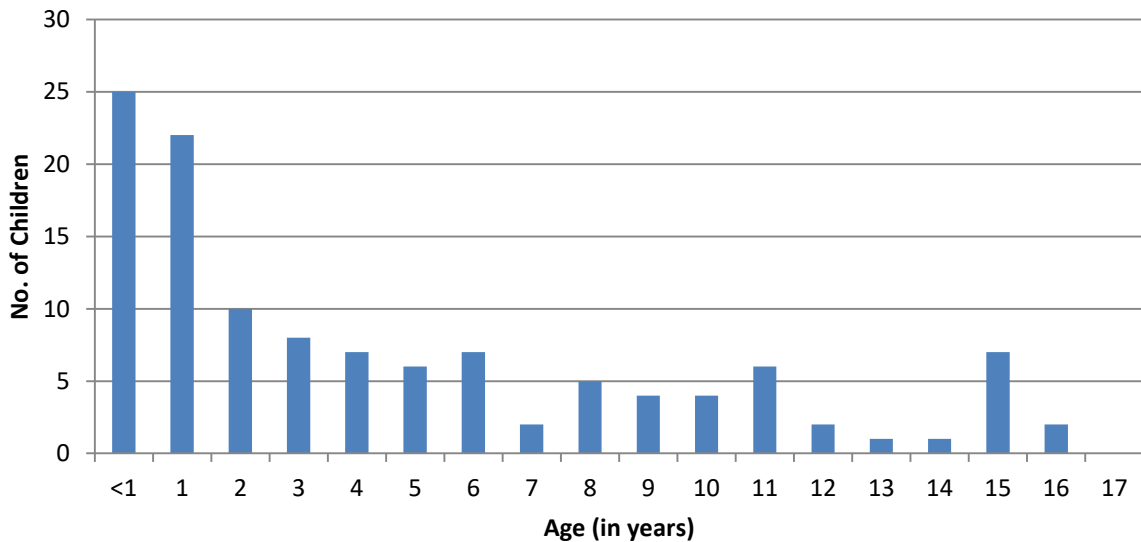
The majority of children made subject to SGOs continue to be below the age of one year with 62.5% children being under the age of 5 years. This level has remained consistent with 61% children subject to SGOs in 2018/2019 being under the age of 5 years. Had a viable family placement not been available for this cohort of children, it is very likely that the only option available would have been a plan of adoption. This therefore continues to be a positive reflection of the ability and willingness of extended family members and connected persons to care for children. In 2019/2020, no children over the age of twelve were made subject to SGOs.

Age of children that were made subject to SGO's between April 2019 and March 2020



Age of children who are the subject of care proceedings

Age of children that s.31 proceedings were concluded in respect of between April 2019 and March 2020



The totals are as follows:-

Analysis of ages:-

Age Range	Number of Children	Percentage
0 - <5 years	72	61%
5 - <10 years	24	20%
10 – 16 years	23	19%

Over half the children subject to proceedings concluded 2019/20 are of an age where a plan of adoption could be progressed if there were no viable family placements available (0 - <5 years).

Timescales for proceedings

On 22 April 2014, the Public Law Outline was enshrined in law. The focus is now on the child's timetable and the need for urgent decisions regarding their future. All s31 Children Act 1989 proceedings are to be completed within 26 weeks (except in exceptional circumstances, where proceedings can be extended by 8 weeks at a time).

The average timescales for proceedings in 2018/19 was **34 weeks**, in contrast to **42 weeks** in 2019/20. The length of proceedings has risen as a result of a number of factors, which have given rise to exceptional circumstances:

- Court availability (cases have had to be concluded outside of 26 weeks given Judicial availability)
- Increased requests for re-timetabling/further hearings
- Extended family members being identified/seeking assessment late in the proceedings (after the case management hearing to be held no later than 18 business days following issue of proceedings)
- International elements, parents or extended family living abroad, in these situations a referral to the Central Authority has to be made to assist with facilitating assessments being carried out abroad, unfortunately there are delays with the Central Authority accepting referrals which impacts on the start date for such assessments.
- Putative fathers have been identified at the eleventh hour, DNA testing has been needed together with further assessments of father's and paternal family members
- Effects of COVID-19, in particular the 'lockdown', resulting in contested final hearings that require evidence having to be adjourned. It is anticipated that the after effects of COVID-19 will continue to cause significant delays, particularly to complex cases requiring lengthy hearings, throughout 2020 and 2021.

An Internal Audit of a sample of cases exceeding 26 weeks has been undertaken, the conclusion of the audit was that the majority of delays were purposeful and constructive towards the outcome for the child however judicial and court availability accounted for a number of delays. Overview of findings for reasons for delay:-

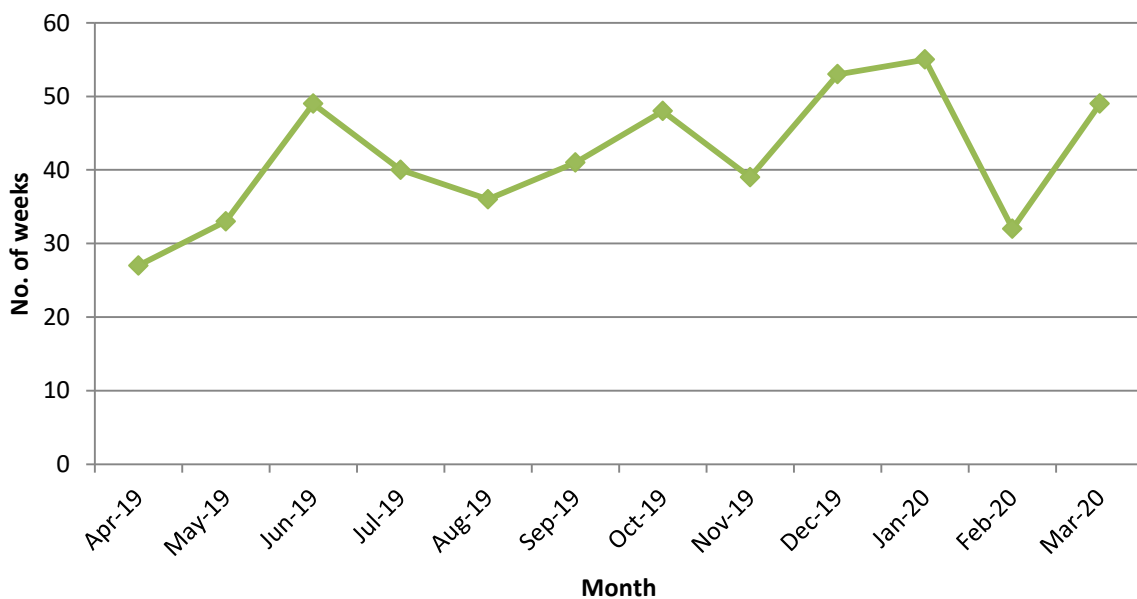
- Judicial availability (this often resulted in significant delays where longer contested hearings were required)
- Lack of adherence to guidance in regards to proposing family and friends assessments (representatives of parents)
- Parents' appeals of interim and final decisions which take a number of weeks to resolve
- Increase in delays in requests for extensions to proceedings to test out placements/contact

- Extensions due to requirement for expert assessments
- Change of circumstances for parents or current/potential carers requiring a complete change of plan during proceedings
- Not all parents were able or willing to take part in assessments despite encouragement therefore delays to accommodate further efforts to engage.
- A decline in the number of specialist experts willing to accept referrals for assessment which has resulted in increased timescales for those experts still willing to accept instructions.

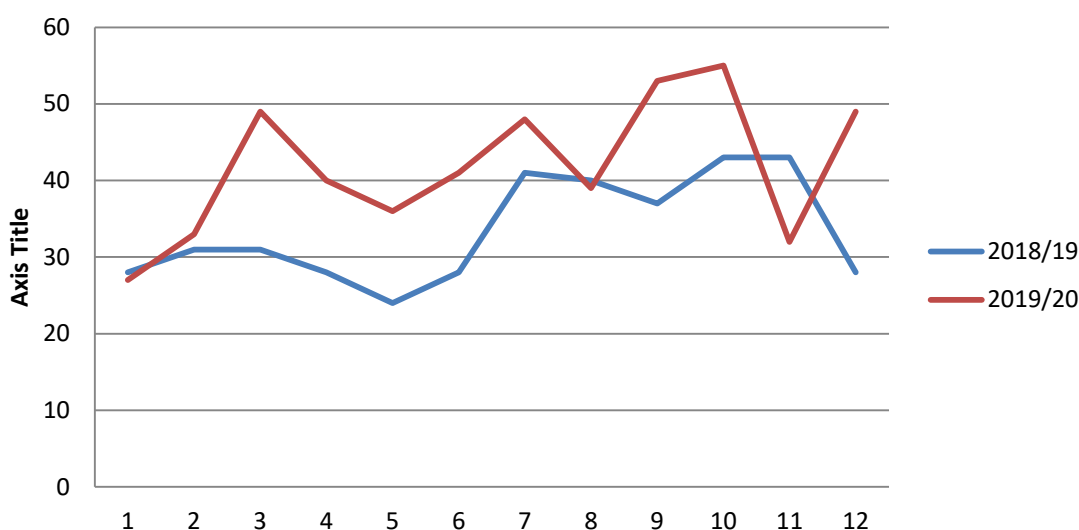
Timescales per month 2019/2020

MONTH	RANGE (IN WEEKS)	AVERAGE (IN WEEKS)
Apr-19	19-60	27
May-19	21-45	33
Jun-19	18-116	49
Jul-19	26-74	40
Aug-19	17-55	36
Sep-19	19-48	41
Oct-19	24-64	48
Nov-19	27-52	39
Dec-19	28-65	53
Jan-20	26-70	55
Feb-20	5-66	32
Mar-20	4-111	49

Average length of proceedings (in weeks) April 2019 to March 2020



Timescales for Proceedings



Comparison between 2018-2019 & 2019-2020

	2018/19	2019/20
April	28	27
May	31	33
June	31	49
July	28	40
August	24	36
September	28	41
October	41	48
November	40	39
December	37	53
January	43	55
February	43	32
March	28	49

Timescales Case Studies

Shortest case – 4 weeks concluded March 2020

This child became known to the Local Authority prior to his birth after a referral was made due to midwifery becoming aware of the risk of the child suffering Menkes Disease and due to concerns about the mother's ability to care for the unborn baby, her preparation for the birth, home conditions and understanding of the parenting role.

Menkes disease is caused by a defective gene that regulates the metabolism of copper in the body. Symptoms include extensive neurodegeneration in the grey matter of the brain, arteries in the brain may become twisted with frayed and split inner walls and the child may have weakened bones resulting in fractures. Menkes

disease is a life limiting condition and a child living with the condition would require a high level of specialist care.

The child was born prematurely at 29 weeks and three days gestation. At two weeks old the child was diagnosed with Menkes disease. Sadly, as a result of this diagnosis and his premature birth, the child required an extended hospital stay following his birth. The child's medical needs changed on a daily basis and at times it was not clear whether the child would survive. The child was found to have suffered a skull fracture and as a result was transferred to Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham. This injury was deemed to have been caused during birth. The child also received treatment for a bilateral hernia.

The Local Authority commenced the pre-proceedings process as a result of concerns being raised regarding the mother's ability to meet the child's needs when he was discharged from hospital. The mother did not regularly attend the hospital and the child was left alone for the majority of the time he was an inpatient. As a result of this hospital staff were unable to complete the necessary teaching with the mother to allow her to undertake the child's care.

As part of the pre-proceedings process, the Local Authority instructed a psychologist to prepare a report on the mother's cognitive functioning and capacity to provide consent about the child's medical treatment. This report concluded that the mother did not meet the criteria for a diagnosed learning disability but had learning difficulties. The report concluded that the mother did have an understanding of the child's needs and the capacity to consent to medical treatment.

The child was ready to be discharged in February 2020. The Local Authority did not support the child being discharged into the care of the mother due to serious concerns about her ability to meet the child's basic care and significant medical needs. As the cognitive functioning report did not deal specifically with the issue of litigation capacity, the Local Authority did not feel able to rely on the mother's S20 consent for the child to be accommodated by foster carers and the Local Authority therefore issued an urgent application for an interim care order. This order was made on 21 February 2020 and the matter was timetabled to a case management hearing. The child was discharged into the care of a specially trained foster carer.

Sadly on 23 March 2020, the child was rushed to hospital by the foster carer. It was suspected that the child had aspirated and had vomit on his lungs.

The mother and maternal grandmother were advised and travelled to hospital to be with the child.

A meeting took place on 25 March 2020 at which the ICU registrar advised it would be in the child's best interests for his breathing tube to be removed for him to be made comfortable having felt they were doing more harm than good prolonging his life. The mother agreed to this and PS and TM supported the mother's decision.

The child sadly passed away later that day. The Local Authority then sought permission to withdraw its application which was granted by the court.

Longest case – 111 weeks concluded March 2020

This child became known to the Local Authority after a referral was received from Pilgrim Hospital about suspected factitious or induced illness.

The child was presented to Pilgrim Hospital on 29 December 2017 with a history of vomiting blood. The child was admitted and clinical observations and examinations were unremarkable. Whilst on the ward, parents informed staff that the child had vomited and showed staff a blood stained baby vest. The child was started on anti-reflux medication and parents were told that sometimes vigorous vomiting can cause a small tear in the oesophagus. Against medical advice the parents discharged the child and took her to the Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham where she was admitted.

Between 3 and 18 January 2018 mother reported to staff at QMC many occasions of the child vomiting blood and produced blood stained clothing in support of this. The child was not observed by staff to vomit on any occasion and blood was not seen in her mouth when she was examined following alleged episodes of vomiting.

Over 17/18 January 2018 matters escalated as the mother and maternal grandmother requested that the child be taken to another hospital for gastroenterology review and a range of other tests. It was explained to parents that the need for this was not indicated by clinical tests. On 18 January the mother and grandmother reported the child had been unresponsive and had not fed for 12 hours. They removed the child from the ward and took her to A&E stating she had had seizures. The child was assessed and found to be a fit baby.

On 19 January 2018 a strategy discussion took place and it was agreed that a S47 investigation should be initiated. The parents and grandmother were asked to leave the hospital. The child remained in hospital until 26 January 2018. No episodes of bleeding or seizures were seen. Whilst in hospital the child had blood tests, an NG tube inserted and an upper GI endoscopy under general anaesthetic.

Testing was undertaken of a blood stained item of the child's clothing produced by the mother. This testing indicated that the blood was adult blood, not the blood of a child.

The Local Authority issued an urgent application for an interim care order which was heard on 25 January 2020. The court determined the threshold for the making of interim orders was met and the court approved the Local Authority's interim care plan that the child be discharged from hospital into the care of her paternal grandmother with parents having supervised contact. Case management hearings took place at which assessments were directed and the matter was timetabled to IRH/Final hearing

A further case management hearing was listed on 20 April 2018. The parents were late attending this hearing and the social worker contacted the paternal grandmother to see if she was aware of their whereabouts. The paternal grandmother informed the social worker that she had been to check on the child that morning and the child was gone. The paternal grandmother was brought to the hearing and gave evidence

that she did not know that the child had been taken and the parents had left a note in the child's cot. ANPR registered the father's car in Dumfries and Galloway at 4.45am that morning. It later became clear that parents had taken the child to Ireland.

On 22 April 2018, the parents took the child to a local police station in Ireland and the child was taken into foster care. Lengthy proceedings in Ireland took place including appeals to the Irish High Court by the parents and eventually following an application made by LCC under the Hague Convention, the child was returned to England on 3 October 2018 and placed in foster care.

On 3 May 2018, the Local Authority applied for an injunction to prevent the parents posting information about the child and the proceedings on Facebook and other social media sites after they posed videos online asking others to support them to 'save' their child, naming the child and giving information about the proceedings.

On 27 September 2018, the mother returned from Ireland. She was charged and convicted of an offence under the Abduction Act 1984 for removing the child from the jurisdiction. The mother received a custodial sentence.

The Local Authority completed parenting assessments of the parents which were negative due to the issues of factitious illness. The parenting assessments also highlighted the mother had a significant history of mental health difficulties including self-harm attempts which had resulted in the mother being admitted to secure psychiatric hospitals under the Mental Health Act. The Local Authority completed viability assessments of the maternal grandmother which was negative. The initial viability assessment prepared on the paternal grandmother was positive however the LA did not complete any further assessment following her involvement in the child's abduction to Ireland. As a result the Local Authority issued an application for a placement order.

The matter was listed for a contested hearing with a time estimate of 15 days due to begin in February 2019. This hearing was adjourned after the mother dispensed of her legal team and was listed to commence on 24 June 2019 after the mother was released from prison. The final hearing took over 50 days of court time in total and was adjourned on a number of occasions due to applications made by the mother and maternal grandmother for adjournments due to ill health, problems with their legal teams and other matters.

In September 2019 the maternal grandmother informed professionals that she had discovered the paternal grandfather had indecent images of the mother as a child and other children on his computer hard drive. The maternal grandmother stated she was unaware of these images being taken or existing when the mother was a child. The maternal grandparents separated.

The court heard live evidence from over 40 witnesses. The oral hearing concluded on 23 January 2020.

A written judgement was handed down on 10 March 2020. The court made findings that the mother had fabricated the bloody vomits and other symptoms the child was said to have suffered and therefore the child was subject to unnecessary medical procedures and therefore suffered significant harm. Findings were made against the

maternal and paternal grandmothers that they assisted the parents in taking the child to Ireland. Further findings were made against the maternal grandmother prioritised the relationship with the maternal grandfather over protecting the mother and her grandchildren from possible sexual abuse. The court made care and placement orders on 10 March 2020.

Pre-proceedings Initiatives

The PLO emphasises the importance of Local Authorities 'front-loading' care proceedings. This means that wherever possible assessments and investigations should be completed before proceedings are issued to avoid the proceedings continuing beyond the 26 weeks.

Before proceedings are issued local authorities need to consider if the case could be diverted away from proceedings by meeting with parents to discuss what we are worried about in relation to the children's care and seeking their co-operation with work designed to prevent the children suffering significant harm. Parents are entitled to free legal representation at the meeting.

Lincolnshire County Council has innovated two initiatives to focus on cases where proceedings can be reduced in length by work done during the pre-proceedings cases.

Cafcass+

Cafcass+ was a pre-proceedings initiative involving Children's Services, Cafcass and parents and applies to unborn babies only. Parents' consent is needed to proceed with Cafcass+. A Family Court Adviser was appointed the case and attended the pre-proceedings meeting; the objectives were to divert cases away from proceedings where possible and when proceedings were necessary to ensure that assessments are carried out pre-birth to ensure there is no delay in the child's welfare interests.

Unfortunately, this scheme has now been suspended. Initially this suspension was put in place in May 2019 due to staffing difficulties within Lincolnshire CAF/CASS. The scheme has now however been indefinitely suspended after members of the judiciary raised concern about the legality of similar schemes in other Local Authority areas. It should be noted that concerns were not raised about the Lincolnshire scheme specifically however CAF/CASS implemented a nationwide review about projects after the criticism in other areas.

Whilst the formal CAF/CASS+ project is not currently running, Lincolnshire social work teams continue to implement the associated protocol to commence pre-proceedings and undertake necessary assessments prior to birth in accordance with the spirit of CAF/CASS+. This objective of this is to try and ensure cases can either be diverted from proceedings promptly or there is sufficient evidence to support an application to court following the baby's birth.

PSMIP (Parental Substance Misuse Intervention Programme)

The PSMIP programme is a pre-proceedings initiative involving a number of different agencies, but notably Children's Services, We Are With You (formerly Addaction) and housing authorities. This is a Lincolnshire County Council pilot project which has been initiated as a result of recommendations by the President of the Family Division which have been based on the success of the of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court.

The aim of the programme is to provide co-ordinated multi-agency services for parents whose children are at risk of removal from their families where one of the significant things that we are worried about is the effect of parental drug or alcohol misuse on the safety of the children in the household.

The main objective of the programme is to reduce the risk to the children in these families whereby it is safe for them to remain with, or be reunified with, their parent and thus divert cases away from care proceedings. The secondary objective is that if the programme is not successful and care proceedings are necessary, the case will have been frontloaded and evidence gathered during the programme can be used to support an application in care proceedings and complete the case at an early final hearing.

2. Conclusion

- a) Within the reporting period, we have seen a slight decrease in the number Care Proceedings issued.

In 2018/2019 156 applications were issued in respect of 184 children.

In 2019/2020 142 applications were issued in respect of 157 children

This equates to a decrease of 14 applications and so a decrease of 8.9 %.

This equates to a decrease of 27 children/young people and so a decrease of 44 %.

In respect of the 157 children, the applications comprised of 142 applications for Care Orders and 15 applications for Supervision Orders.

- b) Care Proceedings were concluded in respect of 119 children.

- c) There has been a rise in Supervision Orders being granted.

In 2018/2019 12 Supervision Orders were granted.

In 2019/2020 22 Supervision Orders were granted.

10 more orders were granted and this equates to an increase in these orders of 83%

- d) The use of Special Guardianship Orders has reduced.

In 2019/2020, the number of children placed under Special Guardianship decreased.

In 2018/2019 41 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.
In 2019/2020 18 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

23 less orders were granted and this equates to a decrease in these orders of 56%

e) The use of Placement Orders has dropped.

In 2018/2019 27 Placement Orders were granted.
In 2019/2020 22 Placement Orders were granted

5 less orders were granted and this equates to a decrease in these orders of 18 %

The decrease in figures is perhaps reflective of the use of pre-proceedings securing outcomes for children outside of proceedings and this also correlates with the increased number of Supervision Orders under which children will remain in the care of their parents.

In 2019/2020 the number of cases concluded has reduced as compared to the number of cases that concluded in 2018/2019 in that a decrease of 22% has occurred, indicative of additional factors impacting upon cases.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Sarah Cragg but is presented by Nicola Corby who can be contacted on 01522 552549 or nicola.corby@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2019/20

Summary:

This report introduces the Annual Report on the Independent Reviewing Service. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the services to Children in Care in Lincolnshire.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Reviewing Service and endorse the priorities for 2020-21.

1. Background

The Lincolnshire County Council – Children's Services Independent Chairs Annual Report for 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020 is attached at Appendix A.

Priorities for 2020 - 2021

1. As a result of Covid 19 and as lockdown restrictions are lifted, recovery plans will be implemented which will take into account the learning from the lockdown period.
2. There is currently a significant piece of work being undertaken by the Participation Team calling children and young people to get feedback on their experiences. Over the next few months we will conduct a themed audit to capture the voice of the child.
3. Work is planned to review young people's participation in conferences as numbers continue to be low.
4. A review of work flows on Mosaic for children in care and pathway plans to support more timely recording.

5. Further work with the Performance Team to ensure reporting requirements are met, this will need to be reviewed and amended in line with any work flow changes
6. A piece of work to address the engagement of father's with child protection conferences.
7. For children leaving care a 'later life' letter to be written by their IRO and consideration to be given to providing them with a copy of all the review reports if they do not already have these.
8. Review quality assurance across the service to ensure this supports driving up standards of practice in Social Care.
9. Explore alternative methods for obtaining feedback from parents and young people, through the use of snap surveys and telephone contact.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2019-20.

2. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service

4. Background Papers

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, who can be contacted on 0152253732 or carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

**Lincolnshire County Council – Children’s Services
Independent Chairs Annual Report
1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020**

The Contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to Quality Assuring and Improving Services for Children in Care

This IRO report provides evidence relating to the IRO Services in Lincolnshire as required by statutory guidance. Due to the core business of the team also including child protection, short breaks and Regulation 44 (inspection of children's homes), where appropriate this report contains information relating to those areas.

The IRO report must be presented to: Corporate Parenting Board and the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Purpose of service and legal context

The IRO Service is set within the framework of the IRO Handbook which provides the statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for children in care.

The guidance is issued as part of a suite of statutory guidance which sets out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for children in care. The aim is to provide children in care with the most appropriate placement to meet their needs and improve their outcomes.

The Child Protection Chairs role is described within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 which is a guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Following section 47 enquiries, an initial child protection conference (ICPC) brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), with the supporters, advocates and practitioners most involved with the child and family.

The purpose of the CPC is to analyse all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child with the family and their network taking the lead. It is the responsibility of the conference to make recommendations on how organisations and agencies work together to safeguard the child in future.

Update on the priorities for 2019 – 2020

Priorities for 2019-20

- **Further embed Signs of Safety (SOS) across CP and LAC - to promote use of Family Network Meetings, genograms, eco maps and safety plans, promote family and friends time.**

All Independent Chairs are SOS Practice Leads and they have attended Practice Lead sessions with SOS Consultant Tracey Hill. Learning is then shared at Team Meetings, in Professional Supervision and Group Learning.

The Quality and Standards Management Team are also Practice Leads and continue to ensure that this approach is embedded at a practice level and in their interactions with team members.

An SOS Practice Adviser linked to the team has attended Team Meetings and Group Learning to offer guidance and support. She has also observed child protection conferences and shared feedback, supported the updating of information leaflets and consultation documents for children, family and professionals.

Group Learning sessions occur on a rolling basis in both the North and South of the county every 6 weeks. The team practice SOS skills, Best Questions, Scaling Questions and Restorative Practice (RP) skills.

Professional Supervision includes Appreciative Inquiry and Case Supervision has been developed to better reflect the specific roles of the IRO and Chairs in relation to their impact upon plans and outcomes for children and young people, SOS, Reflection and Best Questions.

Reviews are child focussed and follow the SOS framework to ensure continuity and consistency of approach from CP to LAC in working with families and children. Chairs role model SOS within CP & LAC; preparing best questions, scaling questions and using genograms and ecomaps. The team continue to develop new ways of working with children within Looked After Reviews, changing language within reports and meetings i.e. "family and friends time, foster parents, foster home." The IRO's and CP Chairs have responded to national feedback from children and young people in relation to what they expect from their reviews and changing the way professionals talk about children in care (TACT Project "Language that Cares" March 2019).

A new Agenda for Child Protection Conferences was developed in a group workshop with the team and the SOS & RP Lead Manager Partners in Practice. This session was introduced by Roz Cordy, Assistant Director and Carolyn Knight Quality and Standards Manager in February 2019 and is now embedded in current practice.

A new template has been developed to integrate SOS into a 'Record of the Meeting' report which now replaces CP minutes. This incorporates the learning from recent Serious Case Reviews and was also later supported in the OFSTED Report June 2019

in relation to the previous format "Child protection minutes are over detailed which makes it difficult for parents and children to pick out the pertinent risks and understand the main concerns."

The Agenda and Record templates have both been reviewed on two occasions now (November 2019 and February 2020) and improved with feedback from the Chairs, the Meeting Support Assistants, the Safeguarding and Review Team and Partners in Practice. Representation by a FAST Team Manager was also included in November 2019.

The IRO's and Chairs have undertaken Restorative Practice (RP) training and the Practice Leads cascade RP techniques to the team. RP is integral in the management of the meetings undertaken by the IRO's and Chairs and in their contact with children and families outside of these. One example of this is that they now contact families prior to Initial Child Protection Conferences in order to ensure that families feel comfortable about the child protection process and that they can ask questions and allay fears to ensure it is more inclusive.

Chairs continue to have their pre meetings with families just prior to the Conference and are now inviting families into the Conference Room ahead of professionals wherever venues allow this to happen.

The Quality and Standards Management Team have attended Restorative Practice Deep Dive sessions – "developing a restorative mind-set and building community."

- **To engage parents more pro-actively and if they don't attend LAC reviews, to make efforts to contact them and if necessary and/or appropriate to write directly to them.**

When parents attend Reviews and Conferences the IRO's and CP Chairs encourage them through SOS, RP and child centred reviews to be part of the plan; to contribute rather than be a spectator. Plans are future focused – specifically for teenagers – promoting changes to family time and relationships particularly if there is a possibility of young person returning to family when they are 18 or possibly younger.

The Chairs continue to make concerted efforts to engage parents in the LAC review process, on some occasions going the extra mile, by offering them transport, or advocating for support with transport to be offered by the social work team, if that was felt to be a barrier to attendance. The Chairs also call parents to gain their views should they be unable to attend. There are many examples of good practice that is aimed to become an established and consistent approach across the whole team.

- **Promoting referrals to Life Links.**

Life Links

In April 2019 it was agreed that the Family Group Conferencing (FGC) Team would support young people transitioning into adulthood. Life Links is offered to young people who are children in care at 15.9 years and care leavers up to the age of 21 years that continue in education and 25 years for young people with Learning Disabilities. An FGC practitioner will be allocated to the young person who will work with them to develop a lifelong network that will support them in their transition into adulthood.

A Family Finder approach is utilised, in particular a calendaring tool. This enables the practitioner to explore the support networks available for the young person to strengthen their support for the future.

The feedback below was received from a Clinical Psychologist working with a Young Person where Life Links has been offered.

'I just wanted to feedback some really positive work I feel one of your staff members has been doing.

I have been supporting a young lady, C, intermittently for 1 year and IF (FGC Practitioner) has been involved for some time. I think the work she has done in connecting C to family support and in the planning and organisation of this has had a significant positive impact on C. As C transitions out of care, she now has a much larger family network to support her moving forward which I know she is very thankful for. Today, C has commented that she feels loved by her family, which is the first time she has said this.'

Since April 2019, 22 referrals have been received into Life Links. Three young people declined the service as they felt that they did not require the support as already had a support network in place and were already having regular contact with family members. 14 young people have worked with their Life Links worker to explore the support networks available for them to strengthen their support for the future. 5 young people remain open to the FGC Team.

- **Ensure that mental health is focussed on particularly in LAC reviews. All IROs to undertake the LSCP mental health course.**

The Chairs are live to the challenges that a young person in care has to face, in terms of their management and healing from the trauma experiences that led for them to be taken into care. The Chairs are taking long term view of the care plans to be geared towards the healing process, even when on the surface a young person appears to be doing well and be settled.

The expectation was for all Independent Chairs to have completed the mental health training offered within the council by 31st March 2020. As there have been new starters within the year, compliance with this will be ascertained at their appraisal reviews throughout June and July.

- **Recommendations from permanence and CP audits to be translated into practice. To include: Chairs reports to further embed clarity around permanence options, timescales, what needs to happen.**

The Quality Assurance Board has been in place since September 2018 and is a strategic decision-making forum to better understand, monitor and progress a number of quality assurance strands within the service area. This includes the coordination of and learning from audit outcomes as well as identifying the key actions to be taken and areas for consideration across the service areas. Feedback and learning takes place during individual supervisions and team meetings.

QA's specific to the role of the Chairs have included observations of CPC's undertaken in Feb & March 2019 and two Audits of CPC plans that ended in less than 3 months in April and September 2019.

A QA of 2nd Review and Permanency of LAC was undertaken in April 2019. The audit identified that the vast majority of the reports seen were of an acceptable standard. Variable practice remains one of the main issues to ensure further improvement but had not resulted in any delay in progressing the care plan for permanence. A repeat QA is planned for April 2020 to ensure that learning is impacting upon practice.

Peer QA of participation was completed in Jan and Feb 2020 to ensure that the IRO's had established the child's wishes and feelings and had taken them into account, where appropriate: promoting the voice of the child; making sure that the child understands how an advocate could help and his/her entitlement to one.

- **Review external escalations process to improve the effectiveness of the process and improve attendance and performance around CP conferences**

This has been completed with LSCP and the new process commenced in September 2019 – a quarterly email is now sent to the Senior Liaison Officer's (SLO) to make them aware of any escalations raised for staff or areas that they cover. The SLO's are also expected to provide a response to how the themes of concerns have been addressed within their area. The Procedure is being updated on LSCP website. A six monthly report about conferences is presented to the LSCP and contains the data on escalations and attendance. In December 2019 a quality assurance activity was undertaken led by Children's Services to address multi-agency reports to child protection conferences. The learning from this was shared with the LSCP and this audit has now been planned to be undertaken annually by the LSCP.

- **To visit children in care within 6 months and maintain/promote on-going contact between reviews.**

This remains a key focus for the team who find creative ways to keep in touch including offering children an opportunity to meet with their IRO in a surgery style arrangement in a particular school.

Visits to children are included in case supervision, professional supervision and appraisal.

- **Chairs to undertake chairing of adoption and SGO disruption meetings. Training to be provided to support this on new procedures.**

Extensive work has been completed drawing on the Independent Chairs' experience and knowledge and lead by Paul Fisher, to develop the framework of managing disruption meetings. The procedure for SGO meetings was agreed by DLT in July 2019. Agenda, guidance, referral process and report templates have been developed and the wording of the policy/procedure has been finalised.

Upon the service agreeing to undertake disruptions meetings, it was believed that these will represent only a very small number of 4-5 meetings a year. However from April 2019 to March 2020 the team received 19 referrals. These referrals have been scrutinised against the newly agreed criteria and allocated if they meet the criteria. An annual QA of disruption meetings is planned for April 2020, the process will have been in place for over 6 months at this point and it is envisaged that the new process will have made an impact for the children involved.

Disruptions meetings for foster care are undertaken by the FGC Service but all disruption meetings are included within the scope of the annual audit. Any learning from this will be addressed in the subsequent year.

- **Feedback from young people and parents is an on-going priority in order to QA the service and identify potential learning which will impact on outcomes for children.**

We offer young people and parents an opportunity to give their feedback in a variety of ways:

- All of the consultation and information leaflets have been updated to reflect SOS and RP and will now be reviewed annually. This has resulted in an increase in responses for looked after reviews.
- When managers undertake practice observations they always attempt to meet with parents/children following the meeting.
- IRO's support young people to complete consultation docs if carers or SW's have not been able to.
- IRO's contact young people before reviews to check how they want their reviews to be managed
- Feedback sheets are given to young people and their family and carers after every LAC review and conference. We have developed a spread sheet that will collate this feedback for analysis using a rag rating and any comments. This will then inform future work programmes, helping us to better understand the impact upon children and families.

- The Young Inspectors were due to undertake qualitative interviews with a number of children in care but due to their staffing difficulties this was postponed. An Independent Chair was tasked to do this in September 2019 and undertook 4 qualitative interviews in the time available.

"Emily said that the reviews have made a 'big difference' to her care, she feels confident to have her say, generally."

"Charlotte finds it positive as people can work together to solve a problem. She was also aware that her IRO is independent."

A qualitative interview will be undertaken by each of the team, the Participation Team and Young Inspectors Project Manager in April and May 2020.

- We have trialled a follow up scheme through Business Support to contact parents post conference to seek their views with mixed success. Further consideration will be given over the forthcoming year regarding how this can become established practice.
- A Snap Survey is being developed to gain feedback from family and professionals after conferences (to replace the current paper based feedback) and it is anticipated that this will go live in May 2020 and will increase participation.
- The Tell Us What You Think survey was designed to capture the views of Children in care about various aspects of their care experience. The intention is to identify the extent to which services are meeting quality standards and the needs of young people. It is also intended to give children and young people a voice to help identify how services can be improved. The outcomes in relation to the IRO role are shared in team meetings.

Other work completed

Two different age appropriate LAC leaflets "All About Your IRO" explains to children and young people the role of the IRO and the review process including details of the IRO, Advocacy and Counselling. They are posted out to all children and young people who become looked after from primary school age to age 18. IRO's also take copies out with them when visiting children.

A similar leaflet has been developed for young people subject to Remand.

A leaflet has been developed for CWD and for Short Term Breaks using a Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). This is an alternative communication system developed to help children understand information and also convey their thoughts and needs.

A leaflet is being developed in conjunction with the Barnardos Leaving Care Team for use with UASC's.

For CWD short term breaks the IRO's update is included in the Child in Need Plan and they now have their own Activity Step in which to capture their involvement. An aide memoir is in place (developed with the CWD team in 2019) to support the IRO's reporting of the LAC or STB review meeting. An audit was completed by CWD and Team Manager which has resulted in updated guidance being sent to both teams in March 2020.

IRO's and Chairs continue to attend Children's Services locality team meetings every 6 months. This has been received very positively by the teams both in having the opportunity to explore the role and expectations of the IRO and Chairs but also to raise matters and find solutions therefore improving practice.

Six monthly meetings with colleagues from CAF/CASS have continued and the existing Protocol has been reviewed and updated again. A joint workshop and problem solving session took place in May 2019 to develop care planning around family time within the PLO process and SGO support planning. A further workshop took place in November 2019 with the focus on Adoption and SGO developments in relation to plans and support for carers. The feedback from these events is positive; working relationships and communication between services has improved.

The Manager of the QA Service also now sits on the local Family Justice Board and this has served to raise the profile of the IRO Service within the court arena. A recent survey by the National IRO Managers Partnership around IRO views in the court arena has recently been shared with them and there may be scope for a further twilight session to the Family lawyers and court staff (including Judges) on the role of the IRO in 2020.

One Team Manager attends the Sector Led Improvement Regional IRO and CP Managers group meeting every quarter. This group developed and rolled out a set of Regional IRO Practice Standards across the East Midlands in order to support consistency of IRO practice across the nine Local Authorities.

Members of the Regional group also arrange regional workshops across the year for IRO's and Chairs. Workshops in 2019 have included;

14th May, Derby – Participation and Engagement.

10th September, Leicester- Contextual Safeguarding, Modern Slavery & Trafficking.

19th November, Lincoln – Outcome Care Planning, communication, language.

In addition the Team Manager also attends the National IRO Managers Partnership, as one of the two regional representatives of East Midlands.

Lincolnshire Children's Services is an Improvement Partner for Northamptonshire. A peer review of SQAS (Safeguarding, Quality Assurance Service) in Northampton took place over 3 days in July 2019 and 3 auditors present from the Q&S Team. The auditors were provided with a scoping document by Northamptonshire with key lines of enquiry.

The review was been undertaken collaboratively to include the IRO's, CP Conference Chairs, LADO, Business Support, Advocates and Independent Visitors, Virtual School Head, the Assessment, LAC & Leaving Care Team Managers, and the Safeguarding Business Manager.

The newly appointed CP manager and the Safeguarding Business Manager from Northampton visited Lincolnshire for the day 17th October to meet with the team managers and business support services manager; sharing best practice and ideas.

In November 2019 senior members from West Sussex visited Lincolnshire for the day to see how Signs of Safety has been implemented from the front door through to adoption. One Team manager and a Chair from the service provided a presentation and supporting documents in order to share how we have made changes to our day to day work, paperwork, processes and practice to align to Signs of Safety as our overarching practice framework. The day enabled West Sussex to gain a real feel of what the vision and practice looks like in Lincolnshire.

In July 2019 one Chair was seconded from Lincolnshire to Northampton for 9 months as part of a team to support an improvement programme. The secondment was extended to July 2020 but was ended in March due to Covid. This enabled the seconded Chair from Lincolnshire to return to frontline practice and update her practice. It also allowed her to share her knowledge, skills and experience of being a Chair with Northampton Social Workers.

OFSTED

Lincolnshire County Council were Inspected by OFSTED 29th April – 3rd May 2019. Services for children and families in Lincolnshire are judged to be "Outstanding".

There were two recommendations from the inspection, one of which had implications for the service. This related to the quality and consistency of Pathway Plans for care leavers. In response, the LA led by the Corporate Parenting Manager has developed a new Pathway Plan Assessment and template, to which our service has also contributed by participating in developing and testing the process on the case management system.

The assessment and plan will be reviewed in June 2020 following feedback from young people and professionals. The Chairs report will also be reviewed at this point in order to ensure that it best reflects the needs of the young people and is compatible with the Pathway Plan.

The OFSTED report specifically commented on the impact of IRO's and CP Chairs:

- Children's progress is closely monitored through the use of scaling tools, at regular, well attended Child Protection Conferences.
- Families are central to the planning to reduce risk.
- Plans are effective and improve children's experiences and outcomes.

- For those children unable to return to their birth families or live within family networks, alternative permanence options are carefully considered with parallel planning occurring from the earliest opportunity.
- Minutes are sensitively written to children following reviews, this means that children have a better understanding about how decisions were made about their lives.
- Staff feel well supported in their roles and are unanimously positive about and committed to working for Lincolnshire.

Learning Day 19th September 2019

Learning Days are undertaken on a regular basis for all teams with the main objective of each day to provide a dedicated reflective learning opportunity for the team. They also provide an opportunity for strengthening relationships between Senior Managers and the Children's Services workforce, Ensuring messages from senior management are being filtered down to the workforce and from the workforce are being share with senior management; providing assurance to senior managers that children and young people feel safe.

The Learning Day for Independent Chairs and LADO teams took place on 19th September and included a collaborative audit in relation to a looked after child and an observation of the LAC review, an observation of an ICPC, discussion with the Reg 44 Officer and LADOs.

The Learning Day was undertaken by one Assistant Director and a Head of Service. Feedback received on the day included the following:

"It was a privilege to hear from such an impressive, values-driven set of professionals, and to observe some of the work. I left feeling humbled by it. Thanks to all involved"

"I would echo all of Mary's comments I had a fabulous day. I will with Mary pull together some more detailed feedback but you have a very child focused, highly motivated and passionate team! "

More formal feedback has since been received and this is being fed into the on-going work of the teams.

Professional Profile of the IRO Service

The Independent Reviewing Service continues to be embedded within the Quality and Standards Service Area of Lincolnshire County Council.

The Independent Chairs Team is made up primarily of two distinct roles: Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Chairs. In a number of Local Authorities these roles are separate roles, often located in separate teams; however this is not the

case in Lincolnshire. Currently there are 18.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Independent Chair posts within the team that cover the county as a whole.

The team also has responsibility for reviewing CWD Short Term Breaks and Regulation 44 Inspections. Both of these roles are also statutory requirements.

In addition there are 3 LADOs within the wider team who are line managed by the Quality and Standards Manager. Two of these posts are permanent and one is a temporary due to the need to manage increased demand. These roles are filled by qualified Social Workers at the same grade as the IRO's and Chairs and are able to assist with covering work on occasion.

Short Term Breaks (STB's)

Short breaks are part of a continuum of services which support children in need and their families. They include the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities for the child or young person, and can take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential or community setting. In Lincolnshire the users of short breaks are disabled children and their families. The breaks usually have two aims: to enable the child to participate in fun, interesting and safe activities; and to provide a break from caring for the parents.

The role of the IRO for children looked after in a series of short breaks is more limited than for children looked after longer term. It is important that IROs are sensitive to the close and active involvement of parents. Given this sensitivity, parents as well as children and young people can highly value their contribution and independent perspective, especially in helping to resolve any difficulties with the placement. IROs have a responsibility to alert the local authority if the placement is not meeting the child's needs.

The performance of this part of the service can now be reported within the OMG reports when needed.

Number of Short Term Break meetings held

Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18
8	12	8	8	1	7	4	9	8
Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19

6	4	5	5	3	11	5	0	8
Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20		
6	6	4	6	4	4	4		

Regulation 44

The Regulation 44 Officer continues to be based within the team. The role is a statutory one to act as an independent person, visit and report on the children's homes. Lincolnshire has 7 residential homes with a wide range of specialism – 1 secure unit, 2 homes accommodating children with disabilities for short breaks, 1 long term home for children with disabilities and 3 children's homes that offer long term placement for children who are looked after.

There has been the launch of new supported living schemes in Grantham and Gainsborough providing accommodation in two houses for 5 young people aged 16-18 for a period of up to six months. This accommodation is to be inspected under the Regulation 44 process however this is 'a light touch' exercise every 4 months.

For details in terms of the service please see the individual report provided for the Corporate Parenting Board.

Staffing

Management Team

Chris Sharp has been a Team Manager during the reporting period. Ildiko Kiss returned from maternity leave in August 2019 and her absence had been covered by Paul Fisher (LADO) who was seconded from April 2018 to August 2019.

From January 2020 Paul Fisher became the second permanent Team Manager.

Chris Sharp is due to leave her post at the end of March 2020 and a new Team Manager, Debbie Johnson has been successfully recruited.

Independent Chairs

The team has experienced a number of changes since April 2019; 3 team members have retired; one temporary Chair left the team to secure a permanent position at another Local Authority; three IRO/Chairs are seconded out of service; one into the LADO Team, one to Learning and Development (both these roles are within the wider service), and another to Northamptonshire to support the council as part of Partners In

Practice. Two further Chairs left in November, one due to maternity leave, another Chair (Independent SW) who had reduced hours in the team, left for personal reasons.

The team experienced further pressure in the summer and autumn of 2019 due to sickness and bereavement absence.

Three full time positions were recruited, two of whom started in June (Cheryl and Drasute) and another (Hayley) at the end of October.

One seconded Chair (Lyndsay) was successfully interviewed in Feb 2020 for a permanent post. The secondment was back filled in the same recruitment drive (Richard) who is due to start in July (some delay due to covid).

Two agency workers have been recruited, one in July 2019 to cover for the Northampton secondment and the second in October 2019.

Looked After population and the IRO service

The numbers of children in care show an upwards trend from March 2019 (615) to March 2020 (626)

In the year April 19-March 20 the IROs have conducted 1620 reviews involving 1914 children

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of Reviews	1513	1501	1587	1623	1547	1620
Number of children	1916	1879	1963	1983	1872	1914

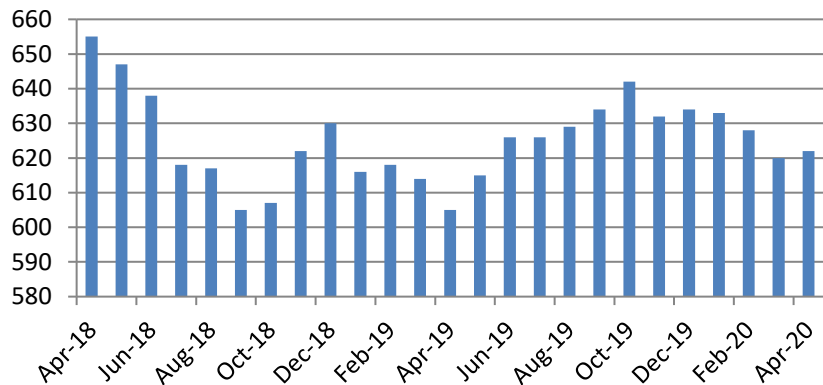
5 young people have been subject to Secure Accommodation under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 and 8 Secure Accommodation Reviews have been held.

Eight young people have been subject to Remands in the reporting period. Nine reviews have been held to date for these young people. Five young people were placed at Wetherby YOI and 3 at Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre.

100% of looked after reviews have been held in timescales and 100 % of children in care have participated in their reviews.

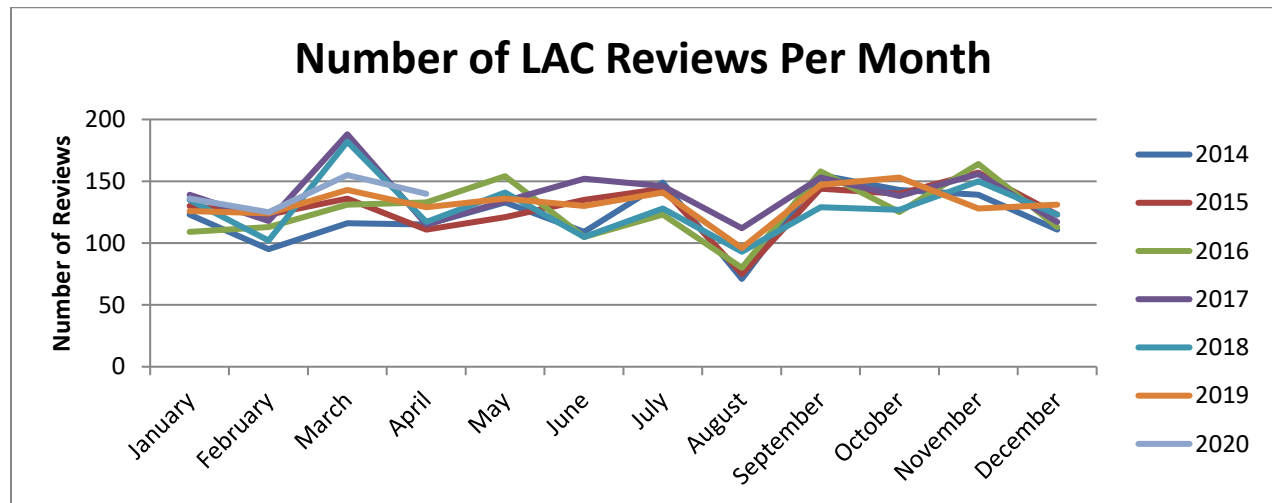
Looked After Population

LAC Population by Month

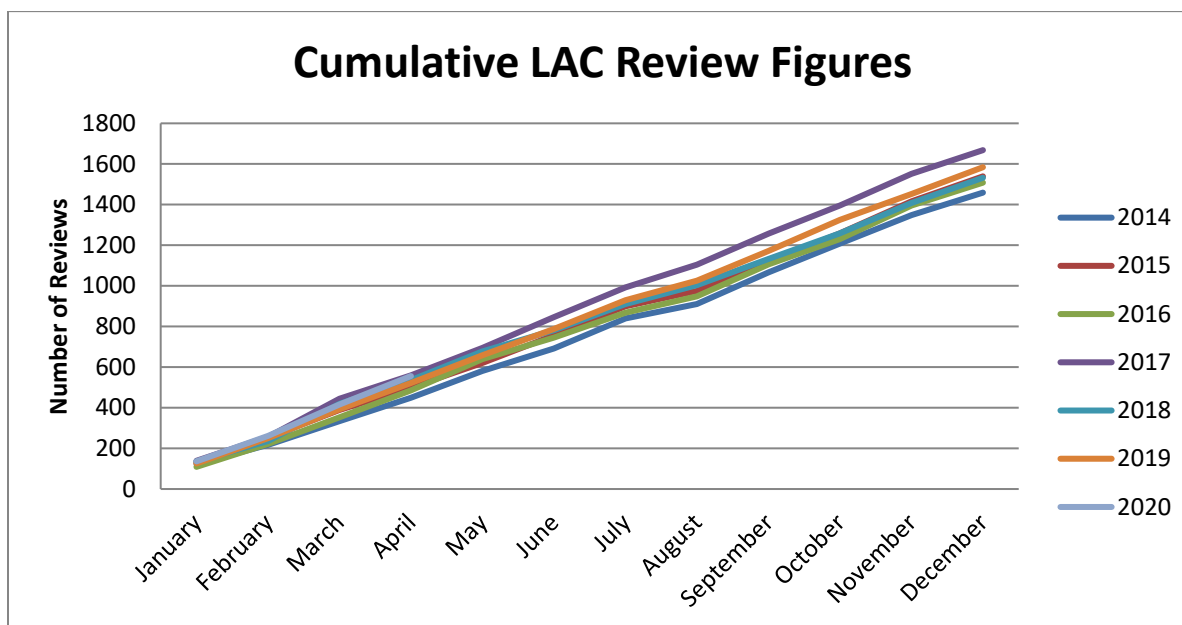


Number of LAC Reviews							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	123 (161 Children)	130 (155 Children)	109 (135 Children)	135 (201 Children)	134 (169 Children)	122 (153 Children)	138 (151 Children)
February	95 (119 Children)	123 (162 Children)	113 (132 Children)	117 (144 Children)	102 (120 Children)	124 (143 Children)	126 (156 Children)
March	116 (145 Children)	136 (172 Children)	131 (179 Children)	186 (226 Children)	181 (226 Children)	145 (176 Children)	155 (179 Children)
April	115 (149 Children)	111 (136 Children)	133 (150 Children)	112 (145 Children)	118 (136 Children)	129 (146 Children)	142 (157 Children)
May	133 (160 Children)	120 (156 Children)	154 (190 Children)	135 (165 Children)	142 (178 Children)	134 (151 Children)	
June	109 (145 Children)	135 (161 Children)	105 (127 Children)	146 (183 Children)	145 (183 Children)	130 (170 Children)	
July	149 (192 Children)	144 (179 Children)	119 (154 Children)	145 (180 Children)	128 (152 Children)	143 (170 Children)	
August	71 (87 Children)	75 (93 Children)	80 (96 Children)	111 (127 Children)	95 (115 Children)	95 (109 Children)	
September	155 (199 Children)	144 (182 Children)	158 (180 Children)	150 (184 Children)	128 (152 Children)	153 (183 Children)	
October	142 (174 Children)	139 (173 Children)	125 (166 Children)	135 (160 Children)	127 (150 Children)	156 (188 Children)	
November	139 (179 Children)	157 (197 Children)	163 (193 Children)	156 (182 Children)	150 (185 Children)	128 (149 Children)	

December	111 (142 Children)	123 (156 Children)	112 (136 Children)	116 (142 Children)	123 (149 Children)	133 (162 Children)
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Cumulative LAC Review Figures 2014- 2020							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	123	130	109	139	135	126	136
February	218	253	222	257	237	250	261
March	334	389	353	445	419	393	416
April	449	500	486	560	536	522	556
May	582	621	640	694	677	658	
June	691	756	745	846	782	788	
July	840	900	868	992	910	929	
August	911	975	948	1104	1003	1025	
September	1066	1119	1106	1257	1132	1172	
October	1209	1259	1231	1395	1259	1325	
November	1348	1416	1395	1551	1409	1453	
December	1459	1539	1508	1668	1532	1584	



Advocacy

Advocacy provision in Lincolnshire is currently provided by Total Voice as part of a commissioned service. The Senior Advocacy Practitioner, Barnardo's, attended a Team Meeting in August 2019 and feedback has been given to the LA Manager of the Advocacy contract to identify changes that could be made to ensure that all young people are appropriately supported and have a voice within their Care Plan and Safety Plan.

IROs routinely check that children and young people know about advocacy and how it can support them in having a real say in decisions affecting their lives. LAC children are opted in to the Advocacy Service who are also automatically invited to LAC Reviews for children aged 8 and over. The advocacy service has worked with 192 young people since 1st April 2019 (125 CP and 67 LAC).

Children and young people's preparation and involvement in reviews

Participation includes attending and/or contributing to their Review. All children and young people are sent a consultation form with their invite. Some have phone calls, emails and separate visits from their IROs in between reviews or in anticipation of a forthcoming review. This is to enable the IRO to build a relationship with the child, ensure that they have the opportunity to discuss any issues/talk about the positives in their lives and to determine how they want the next review to be conducted.

Attending a review is the child or young person's decision and not mandatory.

100% of looked after reviews have been held in timescales and 100 % of children in care over the age of 5 have participated in their review meeting in some form, either through attendance or more indirect means, such as consultation booklet, or their views being represented by a trusted adult or advocate.

Signs of Safety, Restorative Practice and Social Pedagogy are being utilised by staff in partnership with SW colleagues in their planning for reviews and engagement with children and young people. This remains an important strand of work to ensure we can reach out to young people who do not attend to gain feedback and improve participation.

Chairs continue to promote and adapt reviews to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate in line with the wishes of the child or young person. This has meant that reviews can be incredibly varied dependent on the age, circumstances and wishes of the young person, from the more "traditional" review to some very interesting variations.

There still remains the limitations of venues, timing of reviews and working around school holidays that will continue to impact on attendance, however participation still remains a core focus for the Chairs.

Further work will be undertaken over the coming months to identify if there are specific age ranges or groups that are more or less likely to attend their reviews. If there are any specific identifiable trends we would then be looking to identify whether we need to focus our efforts to engage more effectively and identify barriers to attendance that would be relevant to them.

Looked After Review Plans

The Chairs continue to focus on checking the availability and quality of Plans and to escalate if they are missing or are not up to date/relevant to the children's needs. The integrated Care Plan/Chairs Report was launched at the beginning of April 2019, as a cooperative system workflow between Social Work and IRO team. This initially caused difficulties, as one or both parties may have not completed their step in a timely manner, which in turn impacted on the other team's workflow. Following intensive work and collaboration with the other teams, there have been improvements made and it is due for review in May 2020.

Children seen in separate interviews and children attending their reviews

At this time no accurate data can be provided in respect of children/ young people seen in a separate interview by the IRO prior to the review, or with regards to the number of children who attended their reviews. Changes to Mosaic made in April 2019, as detailed above, had some unintended consequences, which has impacted on the data collated. The report that the Performance Team run is being updated but given there is a plan to review the workflow for children in care this may need further amendments in the coming months. There have been on-going meetings with performance to resolve these issues.

Progress-chasing Activities between Looked After Reviews

All IROs have a duty to monitor the progress of their allocated children and young people between reviews. This is to ensure the care plan is progressing and allows them

to intervene and escalate issues where matters are drifting. All young people are provided with the IROs name and contact details at the initial meeting and routinely at reviews

Identifying good practice, problem resolution and escalation

IRO's identify and share good practice with colleagues but also raise concerns with social care teams via positive challenge and formal escalation.

The majority of concerns are still raised by the IROs through positive challenge, and these are recorded on MOSAIC.

The team have been focusing on improving consistency in terms of escalations made and to ensure a better monitoring, reducing drift and delay. Systems are in place to support managerial oversight as well as helping the IRO's in their duty of tracking escalations. The IROs now are sent weekly reminder emails of open formal escalations so that they can follow these up with the respective teams. Also escalations have been included into the individual IROs appraisal goals and are actively discussed during supervisions. The drive is to make the escalations more robust and to increase the use of positive challenge, whenever this is warranted to approve care planning and outcomes for young people.

All Independent Reviewing Officers are required by the regulations to have access to legal advice. Clearly, given the independent nature of the Service, it would not be appropriate for any such advice to be provided by the Children's Services Legal Department. Therefore, arrangements are in place for this service to be delivered by barristers' chambers in Nottingham. To date, this service has not been accessed.

Number of formal LAC Escalations (by month)

April 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Aug 2016	Sept 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	Mar 2017
9	4	0	3	1	3	4	3	6	2	5	8
April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	July 2017	Aug 2017	Sept 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2018	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	Mar 2018
2	5	7	5	1	9	4	5	5	8	4	7
April 2018	May 2018	June 2018	July 2018	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019
4	4	4	5	2	4	1	1	0	3	2	3
April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	July 2019	Aug 2019	Sept 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020
8	3	1	0	0	6	1	2	0	2	7	1
Apr 2020											

3										
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Theme of LAC Formal Escalations (April 2019 to March 2020)

Theme	Number Raised
Drift & Delay	10
Practice Issues (Multiple Issues)	8
Safeguarding Concerns	7
Placement/ Accommodation Concerns	2
Provision of Service	2
Transitions	2
Total Escalations Raised	31

LAC Escalations – 31 Raised, 24 Completed/resolved.

In relation to good practice, Chairs feedback directly to individual workers, copied to Managers when good practice is identified.

Management oversight

The Guidance states that operational social work managers must consider the decisions from the Review before they are finalised. This is due in part to the need to ensure any resource implications have been addressed. Once the decisions are completed the

Manager has 5 days to raise any queries or objections. Managers rarely ask for any amendments to be made and this process appears to work well.

IROs have continued to monitor the quality of care plans, adoption plans and pathway plans and social reports to review. Where any issues were identified, IROs have attempted initially informally to address these and on a few occasions have formally escalated concerns.

Leaving Care – Director's Decision

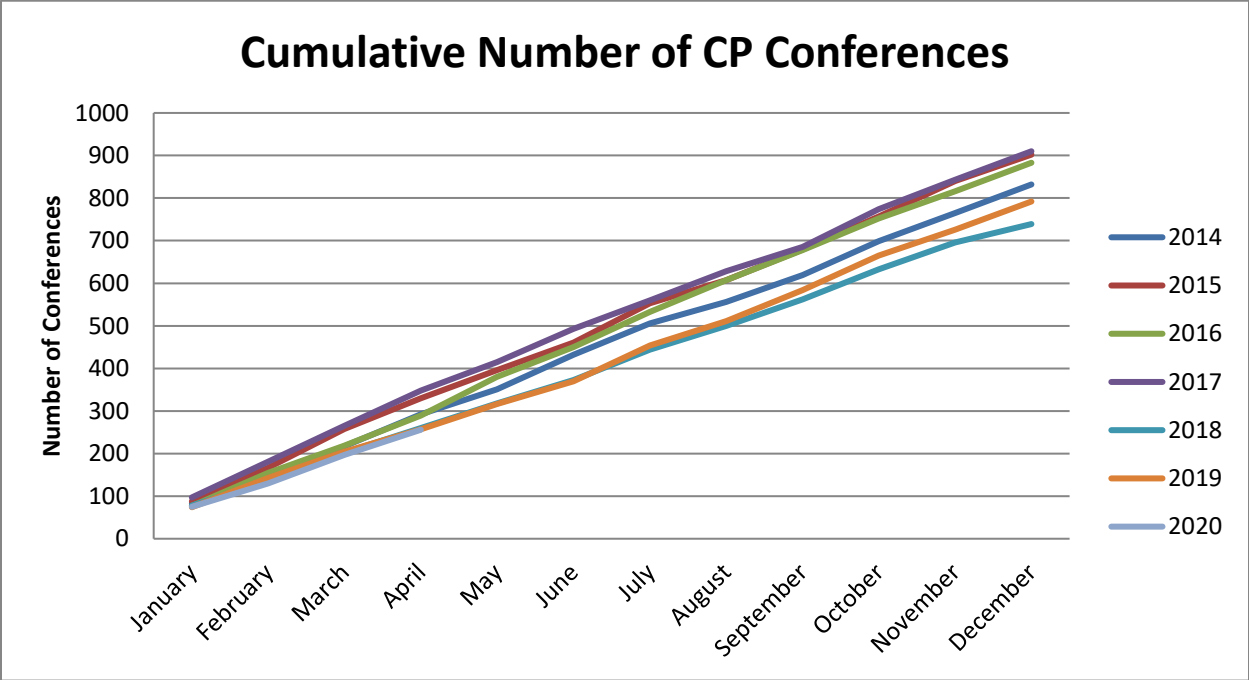
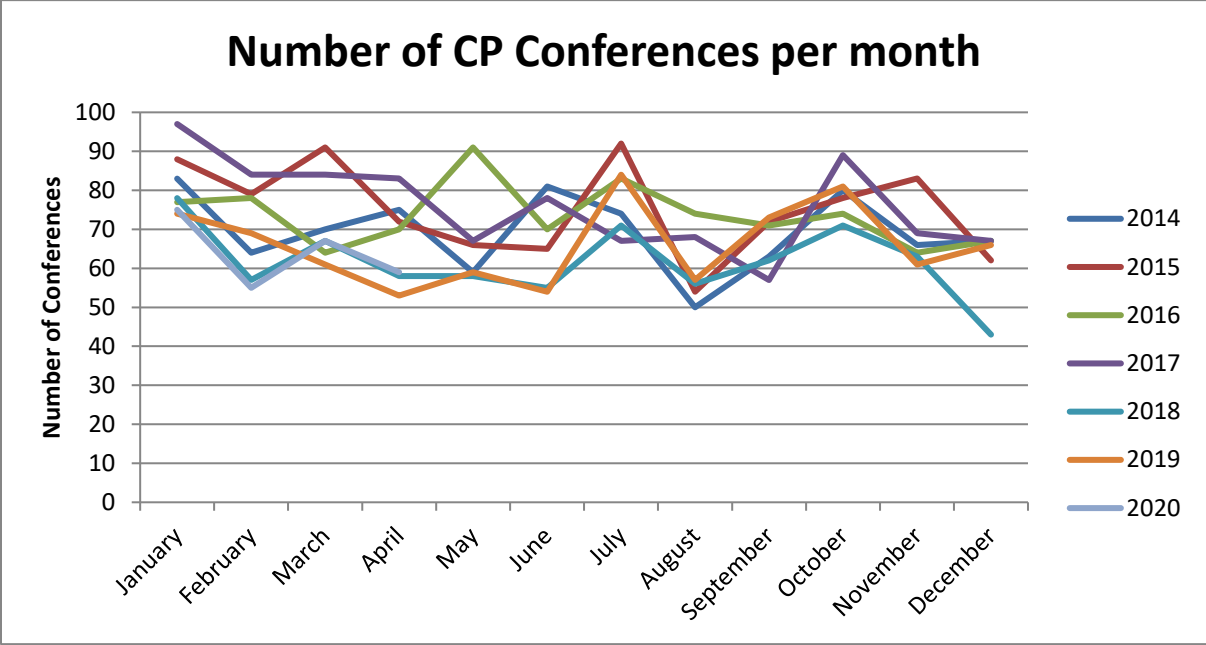
Month	Total	Month	Total	Month	Total
Apr 18	1	Jan 19	0	Oct 19	0
May 18	3	Feb 19	0	Nov 19	0
Jun 18	2	Mar 19	0	Dec 19	2
Jul 18	1	Apr 19	0	Jan 20	0
Aug 18	2	May 19	1	Feb 20	0
Sep 18	0	Jun 19	0	Mar 20	0
Oct 18	1	Jul 19	1	Apr 20	0
Nov 18	1	Aug 19	2		
Dec 18	0	Sep 19	0		

The procedure with regards to Sec. 20 Accommodated young people leaving care before their 18th birthday is understood by Chairs and is discussed within reviews as part of the Care Planning process and Recommendations. Any young person who has been accommodated for more than 20 days and is aged 16 or 17 and wants to leave care has to have this decision considered by the Director.

Child Protection

The numbers of children subject to a CP Plan steadily increased between 1st April 2019 (303) and 31st October 2019 (405) before reducing to 350 by 31st March 2020. This is compared to a consistent period between April 2018 (303) and March 2019 (315).

Cumulative Number of CP Conferences 2014/20							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	83	88	77	97	78	74	75
February	147	167	155	181	135	143	130
March	217	258	219	265	202	204	197
April	292	330	289	348	260	257	256
May	351	396	380	415	318	316	
June	432	461	450	493	373	370	
July	506	553	533	560	444	454	
August	556	607	607	628	500	511	
September	619	679	678	685	562	584	
October	699	757	752	774	633	665	
November	765	840	816	843	696	726	
December	832	902	883	910	739	792	



Number of CP Conferences							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	82 (159 Children)	88 (187 Children)	76 (140 Children)	97 (184 Children)	78 (157 children)	74 (129 children)	72 (128 children)
February	64 (122 Children)	79 (132 Children)	78 (144 Children)	84 (142 Children)	56 (115 children)	69 (133 children)	55 (106 children)

March	70 (132 Children)	91 (190 Children)	64 (112 Children)	83 (157 Children)	66 (128 children)	61 (135 children)	67 (134 children)
April	75 (167 Children)	72 (130 Children)	70 (133 Children)	81 (162 Children)	58 (99 Children)	52 (101 children)	59 (120 children)
May	59 (113 Children)	66 (123 Children)	89 (174 Children)	67 (123 Children)	58 (107 Children)	59 (108 children)	
June	81 (158 Children)	65 (108 Children)	70 (134 Children)	79 (151 Children)	55 (99 Children)	53 (109 children)	
July	74 (143 Children)	92 (172 Children)	83 (162 Children)	67 (141 Children)	71 134 Children)	79 (164 children)	
August	50 (88 Children)	54 (92 Children)	74 (144 Children)	68 (118 Children)	56 (96 Children)	57 (110 children)	
September	63 (134 Children)	71 (136 Children)	71 (129 Children)	57 (124 Children)	62 (118 Children)	73 (166 children)	
October	80 (156 Children)	78 (135 Children)	74 (136 Children)	89 (169 Children)	71 (130 children)	81 (169 children)	
November	66 (113 Children)	85 (163 Children)	64 (120 Children)	69 (136 Children)	63 (110 Children)	60 (120 children)	
December	68 (149 Children)	62 (117 Children)	67 (113 Children)	67 (112 Children)	43 (72 Children)	66 (119 children)	

Timeliness of reviews

100% of child protection meetings were held in timescale.

Children and young people's preparation and involvement in conferences

A number of young people attend conferences and are supported by advocates if they choose to be and the service has worked with 125 young people subject to CP since 1st April 2019. Advocates also attend meetings on behalf of children.

Activities between Child Protection Reviews

Chairs undertake a monitoring check at the midway point between Conferences and a check when preparing for reviews. This is to ensure that statutory tasks have been undertaken and that the plan is progressing and having a positive impact for the child and family. Where there are concerns the Chair will alert the relevant member of the team SW, PS or TM.

For children who are reaching 12 months on a child protection plan a process is in place to review progress, prevent delay and agree a way forward. This discussion has a formal agenda and is led by a different CP Chair to include the allocated Chair, SW, PS and TM. The record of the discussion is saved on the child's case file.

Identifying good practice, problem resolution and escalation

There is a separate and newly updated process in place for child protection escalations relating to reports and attendance which are completed immediately after a child protection. The new process commenced in September 2019 – a Quarterly email is now sent to the Senior Liaison Officer's to make them aware of any escalations raised for staff or areas that they cover.

For the period April 19 to March 20 there were 325 escalations to the following agencies, compared to 284 for the same period in 2018/2019.

Escalations Raised in period Apr 19 – Mar 20

Organisation	Number of Escalations
GP's	134
Education (Schools, Nurseries etc.)	56
Other External*	16
Social Workers / Practice Supervisors	15
Housing (LA's, charities)	14
Hospital Based Worker	14
We Are With You (formerly Addaction)	13
Probation	13
Other Internal*	11
Health Visitors	10
Early Help Worker	5
Police/PPU	5
Midwives	4
Advocate	4
Other Health	3
P3 Charity	3
Child & Young Person's Nurses	3
CAMHS	2
Total Escalations Raised	325

*other internal and other external are comprised of lots of individual job roles where there is only 1 escalation per role, so for the sake of a concise summary these have been grouped

CP Escalations commenced throughout the year

Apr 18	15	Jan 19	26	Oct 19	35
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May 18	33	Feb 19	22	Nov 19	30
Jun 18	27	Mar 19	30	Dec 19	14
Jul 18	27	Apr 19	23	Jan 20	32
Aug 18	20	May 19	24	Feb 20	30
Sep 18	26	Jun 19	14	Mar 20	27
Oct 18	18	Jul 19	33	Apr 20	6
Nov 18	26	Aug 19	15		
Dec 18	12	Sep 19	46		

The overwhelming reason for escalation was no report and no apologies provided. Good practice is reported on in the same way as it is for LAC reviews.

As previously explained, currently this data reflects only the formal escalations made; positive challenge is recorded in the Chairs activity form. The formal escalations are monitored by the Chairs with the support of a weekly report and reminder from the Safeguarding Team. These measures will support the team to reduce any further drift and delay. A total of 325 escalations were raised but only 76 were responded to by Senior Liaison Officers. This was addressed in a report to LSCP in February 2020 and it is hoped that the response rate will improve. One of the issues is that the escalations relate to conferences that have already occurred so the issue for that meeting cannot be resolved. Its primary goal is to raise awareness to SLOs about issues within their agencies, so they can identify staff that persistently either fail to provide a report or do not attend and then address this. SLO's then do not see the need to advise Children's Services (Safeguarding and Review) that they have addressed the issue.

Quality Assurance of the IRO Service

Auditing and observations undertaken by the IRO Manager

Each Team Manager supervises ten members of staff. They undertake two observations of each member of staff; one child protection meeting and one LAC review. Written feedback is provided and discussed in supervision. The observation is undertaken against the Knowledge & Skills Statements.

Conferences are also observed by a number of different professionals, both internal and external staff who want to familiarise themselves with the conference process and learning – this has included colleagues from Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, LCC LSCP Trainers, SOS Practice Advisers.

A comprehensive audit of each chair undertaking a conference was conducted in March 2019 and the learning from this carried forward into this year. A further QA started in March 2020 but was put on hold due to Covid 19 as observations of conferences became more problematic.

Children's Services undertake a programme of QA throughout the year and many themed audits impact on the work of the Chairs. There have been audits around the child and family assessment and also safety planning which Chairs play a part in.

A recent audit of LAC Chairs reports by the Team Managers was fed back to individual members of staff and demonstrated positive progress in this area with some excellent examples that really capture the voice and participation of the child.

Supervision and training

IROs have scheduled monthly supervision (pro rata) and informal supervision as and when required. All IROs have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and are encouraged to attend training through Lincolnshire Learning and Development Team, Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) and the Regional Workshops.

All Independent Reviewing Officers are social workers and registered with the Social Work England (SWE), previously Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). As part of their continued registration, workers are required to undertake five days training/development each year and upload a minimum of 3 pieces of reflective practice per year.

The National Assessment and Accreditation System (NASS) is for child and family practitioners and practice supervisors. It is designed to enhance social workers' knowledge and skills, create a national standard of practice in relation to the post-qualifying standards: help social workers gain a better understanding of their practice, prompt employers to review how they support social workers. The Quality and Standards Manager and the two Team Managers successfully completed and passed their accreditation assessment days in November and December 2019.

The Team Managers have implemented a system to record the training attended by the team to ensure that mandatory training is completed and that training is completed in a timely and co-ordinated way.

Team Meetings are held monthly and include guest speakers and workshops. To date these have included Advocacy, the Corporate Parenting Manager, SGO and Kinship Team, Barnardos Leaving Care Team, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and LAC team.

Priorities for 2020 - 2021

1. As a result of Covid 19 and as lockdown restrictions are lifted, recovery plans will be implemented which will take into account the learning from the lockdown period.
2. There is currently a significant piece of work being undertaken by the Participation Team calling children and young people to get feedback on their experiences. Over the next few months we will conduct a themed audit to capture the voice of the child.
3. Work is planned to review young people's participation in conferences as numbers continue to be low.
4. A review of work flows on Mosaic for children in care and pathway plans to support more timely recording.
5. Further work with the Performance Team to ensure reporting requirements are met, this will need to be reviewed and amended in line with any work flow changes
6. A piece of work to address the engagement of father's with child protection conferences.
7. For children leaving care a 'later life' letter to be written by their IRO and consideration to be given to providing them with a copy of all the review reports if they do not already have these.
8. Review quality assurance across the service to ensure this supports driving up standards of practice in Social Care.
9. Explore alternative methods for obtaining feedback from parents and young people, through the use of snap surveys and telephone contact.

Any resource issues that are putting at risk the delivery of a quality service

None

Carolyn Knight
Quality and Standards Manager

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Annual Report 2019/20

Summary:

This report provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work of the Independent Visitor.

Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 makes provision for the appointment of an Independent Visitor. There remains an expectation that the appointment of an Independent Visitor will continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority, with clear guidance being offered as to the criteria which must be met in terms of ensuring the visitor's independence is clearly demonstrable. The visits continue to be required to be made on a monthly basis.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider and comment on the Independent Visiting Service report and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

1. Background

A copy of the annual report for the independent visiting service for April 2019 to March 2020 is attached as Appendix A.

2. Conclusion

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider and comment on the Independent Visiting Service report and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Risks and impact are identified in monthly reports and shared with the homes on a monthly basis.

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

See report.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	REPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENT VISTING SERVICE April 2019 to March 2020

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Eska Verleg and Dawn Oldroyd, who can be contacted on 07825 973554 and 07833236464 respectively.

**REPORT FOR THE
INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE**

April 2019- 31 March 2020

Dawn Oldroyd and Eska Verleg

Regulation 44 Visitors

Basis of report

This report is being prepared in order to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work of the Independent Visitor.

Introduction

Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 makes provision for the appointment of an Independent Visitor. There remains an expectation that the appointment of an Independent Visitor will continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority, with clear guidance being offered as to the criteria which must be met in terms of ensuring the visitor's independence is clearly demonstrable. The visits continue to be required to be made on a monthly basis.

Within the regulations it is expected the Independent Visitor will report on the quality standards in specified areas. These can be summarised as follows:-

- (a) the quality and purpose of care standard (see regulation 6);
- (b) the children's views, wishes and feelings standard (see regulation 7);
- (c) the education standard (see regulation 8);
- (d) the enjoyment and achievement standard (see regulation 9);
- (e) the health and well-being standard (see regulation 10);
- (f) the positive relationships standard (see regulation 11);
- (g) the protection of children standard (see regulation 12);
- (h) the leadership and management standard (see regulation 13);
- (i) the care planning standard (see regulation 14).

The Independent Visitor continues to be expected to provide a report following each visit. Part six, regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations provides for the reporting of the standards.

The Regulation 44 report maintained its format providing a succinct summary of the homes under the signs of safety headings. The recommendations following each visit are noted under two headings. Under the 'What needs to happen' the Visitor notes all the difficulties, shortfalls that have been observed during a particular visit. Some of these issues, the ones that may have potential significant impact on the young people or may represent a risk, are reiterated under the formal Recommendations section. Also issues that have been consistently raised under 'What needs to happen' but not acted upon by the homes may also become a Recommendation. The use of two tiers allows for an approach that signals any potential difficulties, including one-off matters in time for the home to consider and address timely, before it becomes a problem. The Recommendations therefore gain more weight and represent the urgency and importance of it being acted on without delay. For a period a slightly modified version was trialled, where the recommendations tier had been removed, but maintained the 'What needs to happen' tier, however it is felt by the visitors that valuable information that did not represent immediate concerns, got left behind and as a result it is currently being reviewed again to ensure that all information is given its rightful place and no information is missed or lost in the format of the report.

In line with feedback from OFSTED a statement regarding safeguarding is added to each report to reflect the Reg 44 officers' judgement regarding the welfare of the children and the children being safeguarded during each visit.

The structure of the report conclusion has been revised to ensure that actions identified as needing to happen are clearly outlined with timescales to ensure they are monitored and completed with a clear audit trail.

Covid 19 Pandemic March 2020

In Lincolnshire visits to homes were temporarily suspended on the 18th March till further guidance received, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Independent Visitor

Since September 2019, Regulation 44 visits continued to be undertaken by two Independent Chairs (Visitors) following the retirement of David Proudlove (Visitor). Dawn Oldroyd and Eska Verleg share the visiting duties to the 7 homes, by visiting 4 and 3 homes respectively for a consecutive 4-6 months, after which the two Visitors will change homes for a further 4-6 months period. They have also continued to visit and report on the supported living scheme in Grantham providing accommodation in two houses for 5 young people aged 16-18 for a period of up to six months. There has also been the launch of a similar supported living scheme in Gainsborough. Both accommodations will be inspected under the Regulation 44 process however this is 'a lighter touch' exercise every 4 months. A report has been devised to reflect this approach.

Update: Ildiko Kiss returned from maternity leave and resumed management oversight of the Regulation 44 scheme until January 2020 when Paul Fisher resumed the position of permanent Team manager.

Independednt Chair Cheryl Govier will become a part of the Visitor team and in March started her induction.

Monthly visits have continued within timescales and Dawn and Eska maintain positive working relationships with care home managers, staff and young people. The consistency has enabled them to allay worries and concerns regarding the inspection process, working collaboratively to highlight what's working well and address issues within the homes that contribute to the effective care of the young people. The Visitors have continued to observe shift handovers, team meetings and key worker team discussions to gain further insight into practice within the homes. Weekend visits and conducting visits on different days and different times and around festive events have been beneficial in reflecting the home routines and dynamics. The Visitors speak with key stakeholders including the young people, parents, social workers, health and education partners and other relevant individuals to gain a holistic appraisal of the homes.

Dawn and Eska continue to maintain positive and honest working relationships with all the home management teams. Visitor reports reflect the implementation of Signs of Safety across the authority, in the summary highlighting: what's working well, what we're worried about, what needs to happen (good practice suggestions, emerging issues, matters in progress). This ensures consistency of practice within a framework that all staff utilise within children's services. Recommendations from previous reports are reviewed to ensure that progress is being made within reasonable timescales, where issues remain outstanding Visitors continue to challenge Home

Managers to ensure these are being addressed, additionally the Regulated Homes Service Manager has sight of all reports ensuring additional support can be given if required. Progress in respect of Social Pedagogy (SP) and Restorative Practice (RP) are also reflected within the reports and successes highlighted. Whilst all the homes are at different stages in terms of training and implementation, this oversight continues to ensure that all the homes are promoting and continuously developing in their implementation of these approaches and growing in confidence, whilst promoting good practice.

The dispute resolution procedure continues in place, ensuring that any disagreements are resolved in a timely manner between the Independent Review service and senior managers for the care homes. The process enables the Visitor to retain independence as the process is overseen at an Assistant Director level. This has been used effectively over the last 6 months whereby issues have been resolved efficiently.

The Visitors have attended one Homes Manager Meeting and this was felt to be a positive contribution and the hope is to continue this on a more regular basis to promote the role of the Visitor and to discuss thematic issues arising amongst the homes countywide.

The visitors planned to attend training in April of this year for Reg 44 visitors across the country. However sadly this was cancelled in March due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The hope is to attend the training once this is rescheduled after the restrictions have been lifted. Going forward the plan is to create opportunities to observe other Independent Visitors and visit other homes from neighbouring areas and share examples of good practice with the aim of continuing to develop the Regulation 44 procedures and practice in Lincolnshire. Plans to promote and develop a forum for Reg 44 officers in the Midlands have also been postponed but will be progressed further once restrictions have been lifted.

The voice of the child

Across the service the homes are very good at promoting communication between staff and young people and involving them at all stages using different tools and approaches. All the homes continue to promote display boards that celebrate the voice of the child through 'Voice of the child' and 'You said we did' creative displays. This provides an opportunity for children, professionals and families to enjoy the children's feedback.

Northolme and Eastgate have also done bespoke pieces of work with the children to feed into the Big Conversation regarding more appropriate language to use when we work with children accessing the service. Northolme also informed the process – identifying furniture and soft furnishings as well as looking specifically at things that will be reassuring and helpful to families spending their first night away from familiar surroundings, accessing a new service. The feedback was helpful and practical and an e-mail was sent back to the home to inform the children involved that this will be used in setting up this service.

The Beacon uses activity and planners using visual aids that the children are able to recognise as they have been involved in developed the PECS (pictorial aids for communication). They are promoting training for staff and have a clear plan in place to develop this skill and to ensure the child's voice is reflected in written documentation. They have also undertaken work with all the

young people to gain their wishes for a feature wall in their own bedrooms so it is reflective of their choice.

Within the Lincolnshire Secure Unit the young people continue to inform the multi-disciplinary meeting through their own contribution forms and the Risk Manager enables them to identify their own themes and views which encompass a wide range of topics from summer activities to health issues to how they can develop gym and sporting equipment.

Strut House consistently and routinely use a variety of alternative and preferred methods such as Makaton, PECS and iPads. The staff continue to celebrate the children's voice and also inform new ways of communicating with the children, starting in the induction process to the services. The young people at Strut House have had access to a wide range of activities and experiences throughout the holidays and there are photographic displays throughout the home demonstrating the children's wishes and feelings.

The voice of the child is extremely well represented in reports across the service. Albion Street are currently developing their service in relation to this and the new staff team is supported to develop skills in accessing the voice of the child, this to inform their practice and also to capture this in reports and paperwork. The children are also actively involved in decorating their own rooms and choosing new furnishings for the home- developing a sense of ownership.

Strut House have received some funding recently and they allocated part of the money to purchasing some sensory equipment. Haven Cottage have developed a sensory garden for the young people to have a calm and reflective space and also have the additional use of a summer house which is accessible to all the young people for sensory experiences during the daytime and night.

Within the Lincolnshire Secure Unit, the young people have been confident and vocal in sharing their views with the Visitor and this has been strongly supported by the staff members and responded to favourably by the management team. This has been in relation to whole group issues as well as individual issues and concerns. There was evidence of follow through of actions and the young people clearly felt listened to.

Throughout the majority of the homes there is more evidence of "You said we did" boards and some of the outcomes are reflected within residents meetings. Most of the homes actively promote the compliments and complaints processes (raising day to day issues) and there is very good evidence of the process working and there being a timely response to the young person.

In 2019 one of the young people raised their worry about their experience at Albion Street with Ofsted, leading to an early review.

In both Northolme and Albion Street, children have been supported by staff to make a formal complaint with police due to inappropriate behaviours towards them by another young person resulting in positive restorative work being completed with all parties involved. Social Pedagogy is delivered and recorded to different extents in the homes across the county, with some homes practice being more embedded. Northolme continues to be particularly good with SP work and RP is also part of the ethos in this home.

Eastgate also continue to deliver work that is of an exceptionally high standard and continues to develop this across all areas also informing independence work with the children and Young people of all ages.

Haven Cottage have now started the SP and R P approach and this has featured within their team development day. The team have agreed plans of how to promote SP and RP in a complimentary fashion in terms of recording incidents and reports to inform care planning.

Northolme already has established practice with regards to restorative incident reports and Strut are in the process of developing a restorative/reflective approach to recording incidents. Whilst Strut House initially expressed an uncertainty about how restorative practice could be developed in their service, they soon found a practical approach to the work and both SP and RP is well embedded in their practice using effective means of communication as the basis of their practice and also ensuring all work are informed by detailed planning.

The Independent Advocacy service attend all homes although there have been some delays in sharing reports at times due to staffing and capacity. New advocates have been appointed and they have now been introduced to the staff and the children across the service. Visit dates are recorded in home files and reports are kept in files. The quality of the work has been raised with several managers and this has been taken up with the Advocacy managers and is monitored closely by the home managers and the Independent Visitors. Visitors have adopted a range of skills and activities to engage with the young people in the homes, including one to one discussions, group discussions, playing with young people and enjoying activities in order to gain their voice.

Quality of care

The children within the homes continue to receive a good quality of care. There have been some significant challenges for some care homes regarding the on-going recruitment of staff at a variety of levels, from RCO1 to Homes Manager. Albion Street and The Beacon in particular have done well in recruiting a predominantly new staff team with the main emphasis now being on training and developing confidence amongst the staff team and a consistent way of providing quality of care across the team. Strut House has struggled over the past months with significant changes across the staff team. The RCO3's and the seconded Assistant Team Manager, with the help of Dave Clarke and senior management, have done well (and worked very hard) in ensuring continued quality in delivering the service to the children accessing their short breaks. It however continues to be a priority to secure a permanent management and staff team with a great emphasis on, and prioritising, recruitment.

In some homes there is a bank of regular agency and relief workers who have had access to focussed training and support. This has enabled some homes to develop a consistent staff group where the young people have been able to form a rapport and the staff have had the opportunity to become well accustomed with the home routines. It has become clear to the Visitors that a stable and permanent management and staff team is an essential foundation for providing settled homes and quality care to the young people and this has proven to be quite a struggle for some of the homes during this report period.

Staff and managers have ensured that they have been flexible in covering staffing vacancies, going the extra mile to ensure that young people's daily activities and routines aren't compromised. It has been positive to see the involvement of all staff within the home taking part in the care of young people.

There is good quality training being delivered and also access to a range of courses to aid the on-going development of staff including:

- recording skills training alongside staff from other children's home to develop skills in day to day recording requirements
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training is underway to ensure all staff are up to date with their training.
- Restorative Practice training is to be delivered in-house imminently.
- Social Pedagogy training has been delivered in house to have maximum amount of staff trained and skilled.

There is also tailored training for specific homes such as healthy living or to meet an individual children's needs, such as a CAMHS Psychologist delivering training within a team meeting focusing on the impact of trauma on a child's development. Northolme has continued to develop their service by promoting mindfulness whilst Eastgate continues to provide excellent support to the children in developing Independence tailored to all children's individual needs and across all aspects of life.

There has been positive use of Signs of Safety planned mapping exercises with staff members, some are routinely delivered within team meetings to reflect on individual young people's needs. The secure unit have benefited from one staff member being allocated to develop the key work sessions, particularly focusing on signs of safety and RP and this has made a marked improvement in ensuring quality and frequency of key work sessions in the home.

All the homes are able to evidence multi-agency partnership working and there are routinely contributions from health, police, school, social care and other agencies, undertaken through scheduled monthly meetings and ad hoc communications. The Police and PCSO presence within the homes in a preventative manner is evident in the mainstream homes, building the trust between the young people and police and also the relationship with the staff and police. There is an openness to invite other professionals and agencies into the homes to meet the needs of the young people. Such examples are on-going multi professional risk management meetings that are well attended by all teams.

Home staff follow through with procedures and routinely contact 111, GP's, Pharmacies and specialist health providers where there have been health issues or concerns regarding medication. Medication discrepancies have been appropriately managed and used as an opportunity for effective individual and group learning to minimise the risk of reoccurrence. Young people are routinely taken to standard GP, dentist and optician appointments as well as specialist consultant appointments. There has been a drive on general healthy living across the homes. Albion Street is currently progressing through a plan of significant renovations. Both Beacon and Albion are in the process in developing a more homely and welcoming atmosphere through new features and soft furnishings.

There is evidence that staff continue to attend EPEPs, EHCP reviews, sports days and parents evenings, they routinely engage with teaching staff regarding individual young people to ensure that their educational needs are being met. There is also evidence of staff advocating for the young person when their educational needs are not being met. There have been examples of young people having additional support from Positive Futures and mainstream schools being creative in their delivery of education and promoting attendance. Staff members have planned ahead during holiday periods to promote the transition from primary schools to secondary, or from establishment to establishment. During this time of nationwide lockdown there is a significant drive of both care and

educational staff to work together to ensure the children continue to access appropriate education, continue to attend school where possible and if not, to access well planned educational packages of support. The homes each offer a variety of activities for the young people to meet their needs and interests. The homes have a well-established routine of activities both in and outside the home which promote social inclusion and experiences. Albion Street is currently developing this with the new staff team with staff coming forward and taking the lead on activities and developing new initiatives such as promoting healthy lifestyles. All activities are well risk assessed and even if there are incidents during the activity there is an emphasis on reflecting and reviewing the risk assessment to ensure the young person can still participate rather than withdraw the activity. The homes provide a good variety of activities and actively promote independence where they can and encourage community participation, develop the young people's interests and positive social interactions with peers such as visiting friends after school for tea. Whilst plans at Strut at times had to be changed due to staff availability, efforts have been made to ensure the children continue to have a varied experience and if time out in the community is not possible, time is well planned and used in the home, using the space indoors effectively and creatively.

The young people are also enabled to go on extended trips within the UK or abroad and they have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and half term. Engaging in a variety of activities and also going to the caravan at Butlins. Some homes, such as Northolme are also supporting the children to engage in free community activities as much as possible, leaving paid activities as a treat or an exception. This is to help the children to keep a realistic view of adult life and developing their ability to seek out activities that is available and at hand whilst still having a lot of fun.

Eastgate have developed their outside space adding a bike track and the garage has been changed into a bike workshop where they not only have a lot of fun but also learn a lot of valuable skills and build their confidence.

There is a significant refurbishment underway at Albion Street which has been somewhat delayed in being completed. The new kitchen has been completed and the bright lime green Kitchen brightens up the space. Some of the work planned is waiting for the fire doors to be fitted and this has contributed to a significant delay as the doors had to be specially made for the home. The plans were for the doors to be completed by end of March 2020 and then to be fitted in April 2020 how. The children's rooms have mostly been completed and at least two children have spoken very positively about their 'Own Space'. The laundry has been completed to a high standard and once the doors have been fitted, the carpets will be put down and then the re-decoration will follow.

Northolme has also struggled with fitting appropriate fire doors. Once again the doors had to be ordered to be made to fit. The plans were for the doors to be ready end of March and then to be fitted in April. The home has recently welcomed their new Handy Man and this is a very positive contribution to the team, specifically allocated to this home. The homes seek to ensure that the home environment is clean, well-kept and ultimately safe for the young people. The handyman role has been subject to a restructure whereby they now have a county wide remit so the homes have daily access to maintenance support according to their needs and this is now centrally managed by the manager at the secure unit.

Strut House have extended their exceptional work and support to providing full time care for one young person for a period of time, before preparing him for his transition into specialist long term

care. During this time the home also provided him with space to access education and the home's staff worked closely with educational staff to ensure he continues to access education whilst feeling nurtured and supported in a familiar space. This has had an impact on the other young people accessing the service as capacity has had to be reduced due to the extent of his challenging behaviours, however there is a multi-disciplinary plan in place to move him on to longer term accommodation at the earliest opportunity.

Social Pedagogy and Restorative Practice

Social Pedagogy (SP) and Restorative Practice (RP) is evident within all of the homes to varying degrees, being on the visual display boards and individualised to the child within the home. New staff that join the teams continue to access the training at hand and also engage with support within the teams through the home champions to ensure the practice is embedded and they grow in confidence and skill. SP is used alongside RP to reflect on daily activities and providing a structure for focussed work with the young person following an incident. This is developing in each home and it is fair to say that the homes are at different stages of development in terms of implementing restorative practice. Its use is being aligned with the young persons targets and care plans in order to embed this into the day to day interactions with staff and activities. Staff are reporting that this is complimenting their practice rather than being seen as a standalone piece of work and they are seeing the benefits of linking behaviours to feelings and reflecting on their contribution to dynamics and relationships. It is positive to see the enthusiasm of the champions within the homes, notably Strut House, Eastgate, Northolme and Haven Cottage , and the way in which they are driving developments within and between the homes.

The SP ethos and practices have provided an outlet for a more structured and reflective practice within the staff teams although some homes are at quite an early stage of embedding practice. It is instrumental in supporting the development of deep and meaningful relationships between the staff members and the children/young people and a focused method to support the young people with emotional difficulties.

Challenges

Visits are conducted on a monthly basis, there have been challenges in ensuring that the written reports are completed and fed back in a timely manner, this continues to be a focus for improvement for the visitors.

In respect of planned moves, there is good evidence of risk assessments and matching of children within the homes being undertaken and impact assessments being appropriately used in respect of decision making. This is essential to maintaining stability within the homes however there is some concern in relation to the impact of emergency placements, the mix of young people and their individual needs has continued to present a real challenge for some of the homes during the reported time period. The need to accommodate some young people at short notice has created an additional complexity to the dynamics of the group and whereby particular young people have been challenging and their behaviour has impacted on the staff and young people already residing in the

homes in particular at Albion Street. This has led at times to a chaotic living environment with physical damage to the home environment as well as a negative impact on the other children and injuries to staff. Staff have shown resilience in responding to these issues.

The registered manager at Albion Street in particular has given significant consideration to the cohort of children and aligning it with the completed impact and risk assessments over the last 4 months to address challenges experienced over the last year.

Staffing of the children's homes remains one of the on-going challenges addressed through rolling recruitment and more targeted advertising. HR and the home managers have reviewed the recruitment process and media used during advertisements and has had some success using additional social media to attract local interest. The wording and lay-out of advertisements have also been updated and pictures will also be used in the future to make the advertisements more appealing whilst true.

Ofsted inspections

All of the children's homes are subject to Ofsted inspection. Each home is subject to twice yearly inspections, ordinarily there will be a full inspection annually followed by an interim inspection approximately six months later.

The **Lincolnshire Secure Unit** had an Inspection on the 4 to 5th February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
Outcomes in education and related learning activities	good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Albion Street had an inspection on: 12th December 2019

Inspection date: 12 December 2019

Date of last inspection: 6 August 2019

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

The Beacon, which provides care for children with special needs, had an inspection on 27 to 28 August 2019.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account: good

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 9 April 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Northolme was subject to an inspection on the 12 and 13 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Haven Cottage, which offers short term care to children with special needs, was last subject to a full inspection.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account outstanding

How well children and young people are helped and protected outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 3 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Strut House, a short term unit for children with special needs had an inspection on the 6, 7 January 2020 and continue to be awarded an Outstanding grading.

Eastgate was subject to an OFSTED Rating of the Home from the last inspection Outstanding:
Inspection dates: 27 to 28 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

outstanding

How well children and young people are helped and protected

outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 17 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Conclusion

Overall the homes provide good if not in some instances exceptional levels of care for the young people in their homes. There is an ethos of reflective practice and approaches within the homes; they ensure that learning is shared across the team. The use of champions ensures that practice is continually updated and promoted rather than being lost.

Staff teams have been resilient and remained motivated even when staffing issues and management of young people have caused additional challenges. The recruitment process has been consistently used and staff have assisted between homes at times of need to ensure safe levels of care. Homes continue to promote positive practice and strive for positive outcomes for the young people in their care.

The staff and manager's commitment to providing good quality care to the young people in spite of the challenges is to be commended and is consistently evident across the service.

There is the enthusiasm to develop the role of the Independent Visitor through engagement with Ofsted and engaging at a regional and national level.

Policy and Scrutiny

**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,
Executive Director of Resources**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	23 July 2020
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

Summary:

This item enables the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit. The work programme will be reviewed at each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure that its contents are still relevant and will add value to the work of the Council and partners.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to receive the work programme and identify any items for future meetings.

1. Background

Overview and Scrutiny should be positive, constructive, independent, fair and open. The scrutiny process should be challenging, as its aim is to identify areas for improvement. Scrutiny activity should be targeted, focused and timely and include issues of corporate and local importance, where scrutiny activity can influence and add value.

Members are encouraged to highlight items that could be included for consideration in the work programme.

Work Programme

23 JULY 2020		
Item		Contributor
-	Election of Chairman & Election of Vice-Chairman 2020/21	Democratic Services
1	Corporate Parenting, Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy Priorities Action Plan Update	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager
2	Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)	Barnardo's
3	V4C The Looked After Children Council Update	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards
4	Legal Services Lincolnshire end of year report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)	Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer
5	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
6	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Annual Report 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager

17 SEPTEMBER 2020		
Item		Contributor
1	Caring2Learn Project Update	Krysta Parsons, Project Manager
2	Partners in Practice Review	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services
3	Review of revised Pathway plan document	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager
4	Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Yvonne Shearwood, Children's Services Manager Regulated (South and Adoption)
5	Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	John Harris, Children's Services Manager Regulated (North and Fostering)
6	Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	John Harris, Children's Services Manager Regulated (North and Fostering)
7	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 1 2020/21 (April to June 2020)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services

19 NOVEMBER 2020		
Item		Contributor
1	Independent Reviewing Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2020)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
2	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Six Month Report (April to September 2020)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
3	Children in Care Annual Report 2019/20	John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)
4	V4C The Looked After Children Council Update	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards
5	Leaving Care Service Six Month update report (April to September 2020)	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services
6	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 2 2020/21 (July to September 2020)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services

TBC JANUARY 2021		
Item		Contributor
1	Looked After Children Placement Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan	Amy Allcock, Commissioning Manager: Commercial
2	The Virtual School for Lincolnshire Looked After Children Annual Report	Kieran Barnes, Virtual School Headteacher
3	Young Inspectors Project Update	Katrina Hewitt, Project Officer Lincolnshire Young Inspectors

TBC MARCH 2021		
Item		Contributor
1	V4C The Looked After Children Council Update	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards
2	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 3 2020/21 (October to December 2020)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services

2. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Not Applicable

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

3. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 01522 552102 or by e-mail at daniel.steel@lincolnshire.gov.uk