



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, 17 SEPTEMBER 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=5620> where a live feed will be made available on the day of the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Lincolnshire County Council:

Councillors D Brailsford (Chairman), Clio Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), 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	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
2	Declaration of Members Interest	
3	Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 July 2020	3 - 10
4	Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillor and Lead Officer	

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| 5 | Presentation of the revised Pathway plan
<i>(To receive a report by Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update on the new Pathway Plan)</i> | 11 - 64 |
| 6 | Partners in Practice Programme Update
<i>(To receive a report by Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director Children's Services (Safeguarding), which provides the Panel with an update on the Partners in Practice Programme in Lincolnshire)</i> | 65 - 72 |
| 7 | Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose
<i>(To receive a report by John Harris, Children's Services Manager Regulated (North and Fostering), which informs the Panel of the work of the Fostering Service for the year 2019/2020 in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services 2011 and Fostering National Minimum Standards)</i> | 73 - 116 |
| 8 | Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose
<i>(To receive a report by Yvonne Shearwood, Children's Services Manager Regulated (South and Adoption), which informs the Panel about the work of the Adoption Service in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards National Minimum Standards 2003, 2011, 2014 and the Adoption and Children's Act 2002)</i> | 117 - 180 |
| 9 | Caring2Learn Update
<i>(To receive a report by Krysta Parsons, Project Manager, which provides an update on the implementation and impact of the Caring2Learn project for the last twelve months)</i> | 181 - 186 |
| 10 | Quarter 1 Performance Report for Children in Care
<i>(To receive a report by Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director Children Services (Safeguarding), which provides key performance information for Quarter 1 2020/21 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel)</i> | 187 - 204 |
| 11 | Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme
<i>(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 to ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit)</i> | 205 - 208 |

Distributed on Wednesday, 9 September 2020

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Rachel Wilson via telephone 01522 552107 or alternatively via email at rachel.wilson@lincolnshire.gov.uk



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 23 JULY 2020

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors Clio Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), A G Hagues, R H Trollope-Bellew and M A Whittington

Added Members: Ann Wright (Foster Carer), Amy-Louise Butler (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)) and Elizabeth Bunney (Lincolnshire Community Health Services)

Officers in attendance:-

Lisa Adams (Service Manager, Barnardos), Michelle Andrews (Head of Early Years), Kieran Barnes (Virtual School Head Teacher), Nicola Corby (Principal Lawyer), Ben Lilley (Team Manager, Quality and Standards), Yvonne Shearwood (Children's Service Manager - Regulated (South and Adoption)), Janice Spencer OBE (Assistant Director of Children's Services Safeguarding), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Brailsford be elected as Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2020/21.

COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD IN THE CHAIR

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor C L Perraton-Williams be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2020/21.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S R Parkin and Polly Coombes (Foster Carer).

4 DECLARATION OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS

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

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5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2020

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED

That the following meeting dates for 2021 be approved:

- Thursday, 14 January 2021 at 10.00am
- Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 10.00am
- Thursday, 12 May 2021 at 10.00am
- Thursday, 22 July 2021 at 10.00am

7 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Panel received a report which provided members with the opportunity to consider the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Action Plan. It was reported that the Looked After Children (Children in Care) and Care Leaver Strategy was a key document guiding the work and activity of the Council, as the Corporate Parent, as to how services to support young people in care were designed and developed. The Strategy was written and agreed in 2018 and this was the second review of the action plan.

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

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 queried whether if a child was adopted in another part of the country and came to live in Lincolnshire, how would the funding work in this situation. Would the original authority let the County Council know that the child was in Lincolnshire? The Panel was advised that if a child was adopted in another part of the country and the family moved to Lincolnshire, there was no requirement for the authority to be notified. However, if a child came from another authority to be placed in Lincolnshire, the responsibility remains with Lincolnshire.
- It was noted that the report did answer a lot of members' questions.

- In relation to actions which were showing as amber, it was queried whether there was an estimated time frame for when they should go green. Members were advised that the amber rating usually indicated an open ended piece of work.
- Members looked forward to next year's review of the Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the priorities and actions identified in the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Action Plan be noted.

8 LEAVING CARE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 (APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020)

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

Members were guided through the report and attention was drawn to the following areas – accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation; accessing and maintaining appropriate Education, Employment and Training opportunities; compliments and complaints; and Lincolnshire Leaving Care Contract.

Members were provided with an 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 the link between 'in care' and 'leaving care' was vital.
- It was noted that one young person would be attending their graduation ceremony, and clarification was sought that there would be someone who could attend with them. It was confirmed that Barnardo's officers were trying to get to events such as graduations so they could support young people.
- Officers were thanked for providing the Panel with a positive report.
- It was queried whether it would be considered to approach large employers in Lincolnshire in relation to developing opportunities for apprenticeships for care leavers.
- It was queried how supportive were district councils being and was there anything that dual hatted members could do to help. It was noted that in terms of the district council and housing, the Corporate Parenting Manager had done a lot of work with the districts and they were very supportive. Some districts had more of a turnover of care leavers and so the authority worked very well with them. There had been some individual cases which had been challenging, but the Corporate Parenting Manager had raised the issues with the district and the issues had been sorted out. It was noted that there had been a really good response in relation to the individual cases.
- It was noted that the report only covered up to the end of March 2020 and the impact of Covid-19 would be included in the report for the following year.

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- In response to a question about private renting, it was noted that this was an option for care leavers, and officers would look through the tenancy agreement with the young person and offer support.
- In terms of Covid-19, it was noted that Barnardo's had been successful in getting an additional £13,000 of funding to help care leavers deal with social isolation. This had been used to provide data bundles, mobile phones and laptops so they could access social media. It was also noted that staff had had much more regular contact with care leavers than the statutory requirement. There was also management oversight through Mosaic. Members commented that this was positive news and were pleased that care leavers were being supported in this way.
- One member commented that they were pleased to see that examples of achievements and feedback had been included in the report.
- In terms of the apprenticeships, it was queried whether the scheme was limited to 10 young people, and if there was a wish to increase this number would that create a budget pressure? It was highlighted that Lincolnshire had always been supportive of apprenticeships. It was noted that if there were individual cases where it was thought they would benefit from an apprenticeship and it would go over the 10 places, then the local authority would be approached. The Panel was advised that there was sufficient funding for up to 10 care leavers to engage in apprenticeships, and that number tended to not be reached. However, officers would be happy to approach the departmental leadership team to increase funding if there was a need.

RESOLVED

That the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Annual Report and performance of the Leaving Care Service be noted.

9 VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) UPDATE REPORT

The Panel received a report which provided a summary and overview of activities with regard to V4C between January and June 2020. This was a longer period of time that the agreed quarterly 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.

The report provided an update of V4C activities early in 2020 in January and February, which had not been previously reported and provided 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 had been taking place virtually and remotely.

It was reported that the meetings had been taking place using Zoom and some sessions had been held with Soundlincs. A 12 week programme had commenced

which covered several different musical activities for the group. It was hoped that the Zoom meetings would continue after the move back to physical meetings.

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:

- Members were pleased to see that the lockdown had not stopped activities and that officers were finding new ways to engage with the young people.
- There were concerns that some people found virtual meetings quite difficult, and it was queried what was being done to help and encourage those young people to join virtual meetings. Developing the confidence of young people using platforms such as Zoom was acknowledged as important. One of the youth workers was supporting young people in this by encouraging them to meet in smaller groups to build confidence.
- It was suggested that in the future, virtual meetings in between the physical meeting could provide a drop-in approach. It was confirmed that it was hoped that a hybrid model would be adopted in future, as it gave more opportunity to reach more children and young people.
- In order to participate in virtual meetings, there was a need to have the right technology and it was queried whether the authority was able to give support to those young people who may not have access to the technology to enable them to engage. It was noted that some young people had been using their parent's phones when they did not have their own. There was an aim to address any issues where people did not have access to technology.
- It was queried whether those young people that had not participated in any V4C events were contacted. The Panel was advised that when a young person had been due to attend an event but had not participated, they would be contacted to determine why they had not attended. This was often due to a last minute problem or travel and transport issues.
- In terms of the activities which were suggested for V4C events (when physical activities were taking place), it was queried whether they were chosen in conjunction with the young people. It was confirmed that this was done where possible, but sometimes the suggestions may be led by the youth workers, but the children and young people would choose where they were held. It was noted that when the activity and venue was correct, attendance was increased.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10 LEGAL SERVICES LINCOLNSHIRE END OF YEAR REPORT 2019/20 (APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020)

The Panel received a report which provided an opportunity to consider the Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report 2019/20 (April 2019 – March 2020). It was noted that within this reporting period, an increase in the number of Care Proceedings issued had been seen. It was also noted that the use of Placement

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Orders had dropped, and there had also been a slight decrease in the number of care proceedings concluded.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, the Assistant Director for Children's services and the Principal Lawyer had continued to meet with the designated family judge. There had been a considerable amount of work carried out to maintain the progression of cases through the court system.

Officers were thanked for a thorough report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Consideration was given to a report which introduced the Annual Report on the Independent Reviewing Service. It was highlighted that this was a statutory requirement which served to update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the services to Children in Care in Lincolnshire.

Members were guided through the report and provided with an 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 that there had been issues around engagement with parents and it was queried what could be done to encourage parents to become more involved in the process. It was noted that there had been a move to using a combination of Zoom and Teams Meetings. It was also noted that families were contacted prior to the conference to ensure they were aware of how the meeting would be run.
- The mental health of young people had been identified as a key area, and suggestions had been made that it may be 10 years before the effects of lockdown on mental health were realised. It was noted that part of the challenge of the IRO was to ensure that services were in place for children and their families.
- It was noted that in terms of the number of reviews, every child got at least one review every year.
- There had been contact with children and young people throughout this process, and there had been some positives with the move towards virtual meetings, with some young people more keen to participate through this media. There would be a review at the end of the Covid-19 pandemic of how this worked for young people and if it could be continued.
- It was noted that this new process did not make LAC reviews quicker. However, it meant that case loads were being managed during the current situation.
- It was reported that the staff were dedicated to the work that they did and had been a consistent face for the children for many years. Staff morale was very positive at the moment.

- It was commented that from experience, whether it was a review conference or court date, it was better if the details could be shared with the child or young person as the earliest possible opportunity.
- In terms of mental health, it was reported that the authority had been invited to participate in a longitudinal study with Bristol University. This research would enable a benchmark to be set, officers would be able to provide updates to the Panel as the research progressed.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Service be noted.

12 REGULATION 44 INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the work of the Independent Visitor.

It was reported that Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 made provision for the appointment of an independent visitor. There remained an expectation that the appointment of an Independent Visitor would continue to be the responsibility of the local authority, with clear guidance being offered as to the criteria which needed to be met in terms of ensuring the visitor's independence was clearly demonstrable. The visits continued to be required to be made on a monthly basis.

It was reported that the roll out of signs of safety was working very well and had been embedded in working practices. The countywide training was due to be rescheduled due to Covid-19 and would pick up on all the positive practices. It was noted that the homes had been very good at promoting communication between the staff and the children.

Albion Street and The Beacon had been very successful at recruiting new staff members. All homes were able to evidence multi-agency partnership working. The reports from Visitors indicated that homes were responding very positively to the current situation.

Members of the Panel 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 commented that it was difficult to get a sense of the physical layout of the home virtually. It was queried how the voice of the child was being heard. It was noted that the Independent Visitors still went through the same process in terms of documents that needed to be seen, and they would still also need to observe some sessions and speak to staff and managers as well as some of the young people.
- One member commented that they used to visit Northolme as the visiting member, and it had been noted that the rating had dropped from 'good' to 'requires improvement' and it was queried what the reason for this was. It was noted that this was due to a specific issue which had been picked up by

Ofsted. It was also highlighted that the home had changed to become more therapeutic.

- It was queried that as the country was now starting to come out of lockdown, visits were starting to be allowed to care homes again, and it was queried when visiting member duties might be resumed. It was noted that work was underway to reinstate family time, and that there was a need to minimise risk to the children. Therefore, the homes were encouraging family time to take place outside and to ensure that social distancing was followed.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 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.

It was noted that an update on the research by Bristol University could be brought to the meeting of the Panel in November 2020.

It was highlighted that the next meetings would take place on 17 September 2020 and 19 November 2020.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be received.

The meeting closed at 12.12 pm

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 2020
Subject:	Presentation of the revised Pathway plan

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Corporate Parenting Panel on the new Pathway Plan.

A review of the individual experiences of young people with SEND transitioning into Adult Services was undertaken by the Transitions Scrutiny Panel in 2019. Three key recommendations were presented and instructions were given to LA Officers to respond to these recommendations in order to improve the already good practices currently in place.

The Transitions Scrutiny Panel identified the need to undertake improvements in the following areas of transition:

1. Information and advice through the Local Offer,
2. Improve Health Outcomes, and
3. Review Pathway Plans for Care Leavers.

Ofsted also identified a need to improve the quality of Pathway Plans when Lincolnshire was inspected in 2019.

This paper addresses the review of the Pathway Plan document and process; all other recommendations are being address by other lead officers in separate papers.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to review the new Pathway Planning document, the process, and the content of the covering paper.

1. Background

In 2019 the Scrutiny Panel considered transitions; one of the actions was to reviewing the format and structure of the current Pathway Plan document for Care Leavers. At the time of the review the Panel recognises that although the old document met the requirements of the regulations around Pathway Planning, they believed that the structure of the document needed to be reviewed in order to be more useful in meeting the needs of young people, truly capturing their voice, tracking their progress and planning for their future.

In July 2019 a core group of professionals met to start the review the Pathway Plan. Key representatives from the Children in Care teams, the Family Assessment teams, the Virtual School, Leaving Care, Independent Reviewing Officers and the Children with Disabilities team all gathered to draw together the outline of a revised Pathway Plan and process. The meeting was guided by the feedback from the scrutiny review, the report from the 2019 Ofsted inspection, and of course the views and opinions of young people who had been filling out Pathway Plans with their workers in the preceding few months.

Key feedback from all of those consulted was that the Pathway Plan was too long, the questions were repetitive in nature, young people did not like multiple uses of scaling, and all professionals agreed that the plan was ridged and they were unable to use it creatively to include images or capture the different ways in which young people might choose to express themselves. On the above basis, the decision was made to split out the old Pathway Plan into two different documents to first of all shorten the documents whilst still meeting the regulatory requirements. Splitting the document in two now means there is an Assessment at the age of 16, and then the assessment is followed by a shorter Pathway Plan that is more focused and engaging for young people.

Prior to the roll out of the newly designed document, a raft of training was carried out across the county. Representatives from all the teams who work with young people attended these events, and the feedback from the attendees at the training then fed into final alterations to the document prior to roll out

Appendix A – is the Pathway Assessment. This assessment is completed with the young person just before they turn 16 years old. The assessment at 16 is a regulatory requirement, this point of the young person journey is intended to be an opportunity for all involved to pause and plan, take stock of the past, and prepare the young person for the next 2 years of their life ready for adulthood and independence. The assessment is the bedrock of a good Pathway Plan and all subsequent reviews.

Appendix B - is the Pathway Plan itself. The previous Pathway Plan blended the Pathway Assessment (above) and the Pathway Plan into one document. This amalgamation resulted in the document being lengthy, and the assessment continual being reviewed with the young person when this is in fact required once.

The Pathway Plan is broken down into two elements, the first element being about the young person, their voice, and their wishes. The first section seeks to be more

young person friendly, allowing young people to be creative and seeks to understand who the young person is as a person, rather than just capturing what they need and want out of life. The first section is designed in a way that enables images of direct work and young people's self-expression to be directly attached to their Plan. The process of enabling young people to express themselves in their own way on their plan, through art and other forms of self-expression, is recognised as good practice by the National Care Leaver Benchmarking Forum.

The second stage of the pathway plan has been created in such a way that it meets all of the regulatory requirements of Pathway Planning. The second section seeks to capture an on-going assessment and analysis of needs across certain domains such as accommodation, education, finances, personal wellbeing etc. The plan covers the remaining regulatory requirements whilst also seeking to be concise and remain more engaging for young people.

Appendix C - is how the Pathway Plan will look if the young person is an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC). Research into work with UASC identifies how important it is to "triple plan". It is vital that professional support this group of young people to prepare for the 3 different eventualities of their asylum claim. This must include preparing to remain in the UK, their claim being suspended, and having their claim refused and being sent to back to their country of origin. The document will only look like this, with the additional triple planning stages outlined, if the worker identifies that the young person is a UASC or former UASC. This is again recognised as good practice by the National Care Leaver Benchmarking Forum.

Members should note that the guidance seen in all these documents will never show on the young person final version. The guidance and prompts are for staff to see when filling out the plan on the system only.

Appendix D - is the old Pathway Plan document which is attached for reference and comparison purposes.

2. Conclusion

The Quality and Standards team are currently in the process of auditing the Pathway Plan document, and the initial findings are pleasing. Feedback from staff and young people is that the new document is more flexible and easier to complete. Fewer Young people are resistant to engage in the process of Pathway Planning, and staff believe that the document provides a better framework for discussions to help capture peoples wishes, feelings and actions.

Overall the quality of Pathway Plans was Good, but a greater degree of auditing is required over the next six months to see if further alterations or training is required.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to review the attached documents and offer comments about the Plan and the process.

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	Pathway Assessment
Appendix B	Pathway Plan
Appendix C	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child Pathway Plan
Appendix D	Previous Pathway Plan document

5. Background Papers

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

-LAC Pathway Assessment C1332

Young Person, Family/Carer and Network Details

Young Person's Details

Name	DOB	Gender	Address	Telephone number

Remember these do not have to just be family, or those providing care for the young person, they can be people who do not live close and can contribute by e.g. Facetime, Skype etc. to offer emotional support, but should be led by the family/network.

Members of the current support network (parents/carers/family members, friends, others that offer support)

Name	Relationship	Contact Details	Have they contributed to this assessment? If so how?

This could be anyone who currently cannot or is not willing to support. An example may be a dad in prison, or grandparent/mum/dad who does not currently have contact or a relationship with the young person, (estranged family members etc). A network is considered to be wider than family; the context is friends as well. You could use family finding tools and tips to widen the network. Has a referral to Life Links/Restorative Conversation been considered to repair any strained relationships with networks or connected people and to explore other links?

Details of any other family/friends not currently able to offer support or are not in the network:

Name	DOB	Relationship to child(ren)	Comments

Details of agencies already involved with the young person or any of the family members/ network members

Worker Name	Supporting who	Team / Agency	Contact details	Have they contributed to this assessment? If so how?

We are asking this question as we want to build on the relationships where possible to support the young person into independence and continue relationships.

Relationships - If young person/network is currently working with any agency or professional - who do they have the best relationship with and why?

Family member(s)	Name of worker	Role	Comments

Person completing this assessment with young person

Name

Team:

Assessment Information

Reason for completing this assessment

☐ Moving to Pathway Plan

☐ Significant change in circumstances

Based on the reason we have opened an assessment, what are the young person's initial views of this. (Do they agree, disagree, feel there is more or less of an issue etc). This is the starting point of the young person's journey to independence. Remember to use the words of the young person and their family/network where possible. This should be based on our initial contact.

What are the shared views of the reasons for completing this Assessment

Timeline and Significant Events

The first/worst and last event would be what our records tell us or the young person tells us first happened. We then use this as a tool to gather more information and use these boxes to add perspective in . We are only looking for a snapshot and not an actual assessment at this point. We then expand on these issues within the body of the critical issues domain within the actual assessment.

First Event	Significance and impact to the young person

Worst Event	Significance and impact to the young person

Last Event	Significance and impact to the young person

Young Person and Network Overview

The main body of your assessment should be recorded here in the 'worries and working well section' and should be recorded as a narrative and not bullet points. You should record observations and evidence of what is currently happening in the young person's life and history. As part of the assessment you should use professional curiosity, consider all of the assessment factors and due consideration should be given to the domains within the assessment triangle. Focus should be given to the young person's/parent's/ network's ability to care for them/selves. The young person's development and life stage is a key focus, in line with where they live, their community and looking at past history and any previous involvement as appropriate. You may want to write the assessment as if you are writing it to the young person to make the assessment more powerful. Your network tree can help build your assessment for thinking about wider family and relationships. This also helps to build your safety/pathway plan for whoever might be able to offer support pre, during and post moving to independence and adulthood. Remember your assessment tools such as eco maps, decision making trees, calendaring as well as theory child development. Assessments are multi-disciplinary so include input from other professionals, (health's view, IRO's, Personal Advisor's). Think about contact with siblings and the perspective of others during the assessment. What does the young person say, what do other professionals

say, what observable behaviours have you seen or others working with the family. Consider the rule of optimism and the relationship between the columns, as something that can be a strength or safety but what is the flip side, 'showing that curious mind'. Here we are stipulating the statutory areas....health, education accommodation, finance and life skills.

What is working well?

All of this is collated within the four domains of the assessment from everyone's perspective. Views of others including carers must also be taken into account as part of the process for assessing the young person's needs and this information must be recorded.(including clearly labelled health worker's views, education worker's views, IRO's views)

This section should be a narrative and not just bullet points and should describe the worries/safety. Safety should be tried and tested, not just a one off occasion. If no safety is evident at the time of writing your assessment you can state no safety is currently evident.

Existing Safety / Success (evidence / information about what has happened)

The strengths should be things that happen/take place that address the worries. These do not provide direct safety but can provide support, strengthen family relationships etc. This field is where you develop the safety plan and build on existing strengths to add value to the safety plan. Strengths should be in relation to the worries presented and not just in general.

Existing Strengths (evidence / information about what has happened)

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Are there any worries, and what are they?

Critical issues / harm section should be narrative and not bullet points.

Critical issues/impact (evidence / information about what has happened)

Your complicating factors are everything else that is going on that is not evidenced as 'harm' but is a worry and is making the case harder to deal with

Complicating Factors (evidence) Who or what is making this worry harder to deal with?

This box can be used for information that you wish to include that is not directly linked to the aim of the pause and plan assessment. You may then feel this is important information to aid your pathway plan.

Additional information not covered in worries and working well

What life looks like for me

What does the young person say is the best thing in their life right now that is helping them to prepare for being a healthy independent adult and what else do they need to help them build on these foundations?

Who will help me if things go wrong? What am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Analysis and Scaling

Analysis is; the 'so what' of your pause and plan assessment with a view of whether the young person is becoming ready for his/her adult life. If there are themes or worries we would then pull these out below, these will then help with the building of the Pathway Plan. Consider the bottom line.

Analysis

Statements

Worry Statement	Success Goal	10 being0 being	Who scaled/ scale point	Reason

Views of the Assessment

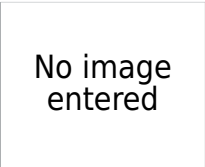
This should be completed once the assessment is complete. Please record whether the carers/ network agree with what has been written

Views of Young Person / Carers / Network

Name	Views

Please be explicit within this section of the assessment
Independent Reviewing Officer's Views of this Assessment

Young Person's Signature



Team Manager's Authorisation

Authorised by

Date authorised and Assessment completed

-LC Leaving Care My Pathway Plan C1107



What life looks like for me

Name	Address	Date of Birth	Age

Current Status

Who am I?

Include overview of current situation - where they are living, why and how that is going. This should be an opportunity for the young person to describe themselves. Help them to put into words who they are. What are their likes/dislikes/interests/pets/food -use own words of young person, think about prompt questions. Does the young person have a disability? Is the young person a parent?

What does life look like for me?

Be clear about any differences of opinion/perspective, challenge young person where necessary and offer more realistic suggestions as a parent would

Workers Comments

Who supports me

Name	Relationship	Contact Numbers	How do they help me

Opportunity to include an Eco map of the support network. Has the worker considered a life links referral through Family Group Conferencing?

Workers Comments

How will I get to where I want to be in life?

Think about who does the young person have the best relationship with? How can we build on these relationships to support the young person to independence? This question needs to identify the exact nature of where the young person is right now. Consider adding in the best things, their worries and consider where they have been. Use best questions/direct work to elicit fuller responses if necessary.

Where am I now?

Be clear about any differences of opinion/perspective, challenge young person where necessary and offer more realistic suggestions as a parent would. What are the young person's aspirations? Consider where they want to work, study, live and those more general desires in life such as holidays, relationships and hobbies.

Where do I want to be?

In young person's words. Use best questions/direct work to elicit fuller responses if necessary. What does the plan look like and who will do what and when? What are the first steps? What needs to change? What do they need help with and what do they feel confident doing on their own?

How do I get there?

On a scale of 0-10, how have things been in the last 6 months? (0 is I feel nothing has changed and I don't know what is happening and 10 is everything is great and on track and I'm excited about my future)

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

Worker and Young Person's Comments

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 07/11/2019

In young person's words. Use best questions/direct work to elicit fuller responses if necessary. This is the space to explore risk, vulnerability and how the young person will keep themselves safe and supported. Thinking about networks and friends. Include a Success Statement and Safety Plan. please consider how we will know when things go wrong or working well so thinking about red flags triggers and stressors and that contingency planning.

Who will help me if things go wrong? What am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Workers Comments

What Needs To Happen Over Next 6 Months

Date of current plan:

Date of last plan:

Signs of Safety Framework

Danger / Worry Statement	Success Goal	10 being... 0 being...	Who scaled	Reason

Education, Employment and Training

Are they in EET, is it going well from young person and others perspectives? What is next step/goal? Any attendance issues? Is young person being supported to achieve aims/aspirations? What is the plan B? Up to date CV/Interview skills/Interview clothes? ID/NI/bank account? Is transition plan in place for young people with disabilities? What funding has the young person accessed? Transport?

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

- ☐ E-PEP completed and uploaded
- ☐ NI Paperwork completed and uploaded

Health and Wellbeing

To consider; where would the young person go to for advice on different health matters? What are the young person's coping strategies if they feel anxious or frustrated? GP/dentist/optician registered and other specialist health needs? Can young person make and attend appointments alone. Impact of prescribed medication and repeat prescriptions. Consider diet/exercise/fitness. Substances/alcohol, does young person know safe alcohol limits/support available from Addaction. Loneliness - hobbies/interests/access to leisure facilities, how does the young person cheer themselves up? Impact of trauma. Emotional wellbeing support - Kooth/Healthy Minds/CAMHS and transfer to adult services. Sexual health - information/advice/testing/supplies. Identity, maintaining positive self image, links with heritage, life story work

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

- ☐ Health Summary Uploaded

Accommodation

Where is the young person living? Is it suitable/what are home conditions like/risk assessment/tenancy status/what changes are needed/when is a move likely/is there a plan B/likely to stay same for 6 months what needs to happen if not/INSA move on, has staying put been discussed/what are the transport links like? Relationships within accommodation?

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Life Skills - what am I good at?

Management of personal hygiene, does young person have necessary ID? Consider details of all elements of travel/cooking/cleaning/shopping/home maintenance/resilience/staying safe (budgeting covered in next section). Be clear about where gaps are what support is needed who will provide this and progress being made.

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Finance

New home grant to be explained. How well does the young person manage money? How much experience do they have? How can they get more experience? What additional support is needed and who will provide this? Any capacity issues? Child trust fund at 18. Living allowance entitlement. Do they have a bank account? Can the young person save? Any debt? What would they do if they ran out of money? Benefits, when to claim and who will do what, DWP specific arrangements for care leavers. University finances? Phone contract?

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Statement of Financial Support from Lincolnshire County Council

Who has agreed this support:	Role	What has been agreed:	How long for:	Date agreed:	What is the young person's contribution:

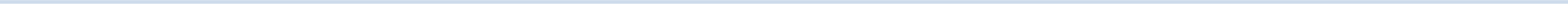
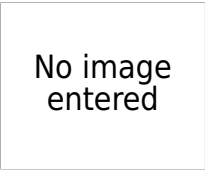
Family, friends and my support network

Remember to include people who do not live close and can contribute by Facetime, Skype etc. Has a referral to Life Links/Restorative Conversation been considered to repair any strained relationships with networks or connected people and to explore other links? Include foster carers. Does family contact need to move on from being supervised? Is the young person in a relationship? What are the dynamics of this? Can the young person see those that are important to them? Are friendship choices a concern? How do the young person's relationships

contribute to making a successful transition to adulthood? Who does the young person turn to for support? Is support needed to practice religion? Does the young person want to be involved in participation group for LCC? Does the young person know what is going on in their local area?

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Young Persons Signature



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-LC Leaving Care My Pathway Plan C1107



What life looks like for me

Name	Address	Date of Birth	Age
Olive Orange	Confidential Address Confidential Address XXX XXX	15/10/2003	16

Current Status

Eligible

Who am I?

What does life look like for me?

Workers Comments

Who supports me

Name	Relationship	Contact Numbers	How do they help me

Workers Comments

How will I get to where I want to be in life?

This question needs to identify the exact nature of where the young person is right now. Consider adding in the best things, their worries and consider where they have been.

Where am I now?

What are the young person's aspirations? Consider where they want to work, study, live and those more general desires in life such as holidays, relationships and hobbies.

Where do I want to be?

What are the first steps, what needs to change, what do they need help with and what do they feel confident doing on their own?

How do I get there?

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On a scale of 0-10, how have things been in the last 6 months? (0 is I feel nothing has changed and I don't know what is happening and 10 is everything is great and on track and I'm excited about my future)

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10

Include a Success Statement and Safety Plan

Who will help me if things go wrong? What am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Workers Comments

Who am I?

What Needs To Happen Over Next 6 Months

Date of current plan:

03/10/2019

Date of last plan:

Immigration Status

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Triple Planning for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children / Young People

As you are claiming Asylum it is important that we look at all of the possible outcomes of your claim and plan for the future. It might be that you remain in the UK and it might be that you become Appeal Rights Exhausted.

include Name, address, tel and e-mail
[Solicitor's Details](#)

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If I stay, if I return home, until my claim is finalised

What needs to be done?	Who by?	By when?

If I have exhausted all appeal rights

What needs to be done?	Who by?	By when?

Signs of Safety Framework

Danger / Worry Statement	Success Goal	10 being... 0 being...	Who scaled	Reason

Education, Employment and Training

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

☐ E-PEP completed and uploaded

Health and Wellbeing

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

☐ [Health Summary Uploaded](#)

Accommodation

[What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?](#)

Life Skills - what am I good at?

Include comments on personal hygiene etc

[What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?](#)

Finance

What can young people access, what are they entitled to (see core offer).

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Statement of Financial Support from Lincolnshire County Council

Who has agreed this support:	Role	What has been agreed:	How long for:	Date agreed:	What is the young person's contribution:

Family, friends and my support network

What's working well, what am I worried about and what needs to happen?

Key Worker's Details

Key Worker

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Independent Reviewing Officer

Team Manager's Details

Team Manager

Young Persons Signature

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LC Leaving Care My Pathway Plan C1107



Personal Information

Stage of Plan:

Date of current plan:

Date of last plan:

Plan within date?
☒ Yes ☐ No

If not, why not?

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 06/08/2020

Young Person's Details

Name	DOB	Age

Leaving Care Status

☐ Qualifying ☐ Relevant ☒ Former relevant ☐ Eligible

Immigration Status - give full details

☒ Valid Driving Licence? ☒ Valid Passport?

☒ Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker?

Triple Planning for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children / Young People

In addition to planning for your future, if you remain in the country you must also plan for what help you will need if you are to return home or if you become 'Appeal Rights Exhausted'

Solicitor's Details

If I return home

What needs to be done?	Who by?	By when?

If I have exhausted all appeal rights

What needs to be done?	Who by?	By when?

Placement Information

Placement Type

x

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 06/08/2020

Next of Kin Information

Next of Kin Contact Details

Name	Relationship	Address	Telephone number(s)

Other important people (Family, Friends, Health, Housing, Education / Training etc)

Name:	Relationship:

Other Key Professionals

Name	Role

Statement of Financial Support from Lincolnshire County Council

Who has agreed this support:	What has been agreed:	How long for:	Date agreed:	What is the young person's contribution:

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 06/08/2020

Leaving Care Worker

Social Worker

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 06/08/2020

Responsible Children's Services Manager

Responsible Leaving Care Service Manager

History

Previous LAC Care Plan

Danger / Worry Statement	Safety Goal / Goal	10 being0 being	Who scaled / scale point	Reason

Bottom line - what must or must not happen

What will your family / carer(s) do?

What will the network do	How will this keep you safe, happy and well	Who will monitor and review	By when	Date completed

What is everyone else going to do?

Action	Who will complete the action	How will we know it's making a difference	By when	Date completed

Additional Comments

Education History

Name of School/College/ University attended	Address/Location	Date from (mm/yy)	Date to (mm/yy)

Qualifications Gained

Qualification name	Level	Grade	Date achieved	Location of certificate

Current and Previous Employment / Work Placement

Date from	Date to	Did you complete it	Did you enjoy it	Comments

Significant Events since last Pathway Plan review:

Date	Details of events

Key Worker's Report

My Pathway Plan

My Details

Name	Date of Birth	Age

Date of current Plan

Date of last Plan

Leaving Care Worker

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 06/08/2020

Social Worker

Current Status

- ☐ Eligible
- ☐ LAC section 31
- ☐ LAC section 20
- ☐ Qualifying
- ☐ Relevant
- ☐ Former Relevant

Participants in the Pathway Plan Review

Name	Relationship

What is my Life Ambition?

Where would I like to be in a year?

What would I like to do in the future?

My Health

What's Working Well	What are you and other people worried about?	What needs to happen?

Health Scaling

Name	Date	Scalepoint	Comments

My Education, Employment and Training

What's Working Well	What are you and other people worried about?	What needs to happen?

Education, Employment and Training Scaling

Name	Date	Scalepoint	Comments

My Money and Accomodation

What's Working Well	What are you and other people worried about?	What needs to happen?

Money and Accomodation Scaling

Name	Date	Scalepoint	Comments

My Family and Friends

What's Working Well	What are you and other people worried about?	What needs to happen?

Family and Friends Scaling

Name	Date	Scalepoint	Comments

My Identity

What's Working Well	What are you and other people worried about?	What needs to happen?

Identity Scaling

Name	Date	Scalepoint	Comments

My Skills / Support Needs

What's Working Well	What are you and other people worried about?	What needs to happen?

Skills / Support Needs Scaling

Name	Date	Scalepoint	Comments

A Bit More About Me

What are the things I enjoy doing? / What are the things that interest me?

Overall Scale as to where I presently am in my life

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Where I Need Support

Support Details

Areas of Support	What support do I need	Who is going to support me	When are they going to support me	How will I know I no longer need support

Is there anything NOT mentioned in the table above that you feel you require support with?

GOALS: What are the 3 most important things I want to achieve to achieve my life ambition?

First Goal

Details

Who will help me?

Second Goal

Details

Who will help me?

Name:

ID:

Printed on: 06/08/2020

--	--

Third Goal

Details

Who will help me?

--	--

Agreement Details

Details of contact agreement from previous pathway plan review

Are you happy with this?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Details of new agreement if different from previous contact agreement

Becoming a member of the Care Leavers Participation Group can give you valuable team work experience, develop your employability skills and help Lincolnshire Leaving Care improve their service. All Care Leavers are welcome.

Would you like more information about the Participation Group? _____

Did your Leaving Care Worker provide information on how you can complain or submit compliments, should you wish to? _____

We all agree to work towards this plan:

Young Person

Signature:

Date:

Leaving Care Worker:

Signature:

Date:

Social Worker:

Signature:

Date:

Add any others involved in this plan

Name	Designation	Signature	Date

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Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)
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Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 2020
Subject:	Partners in Practice Programme Update

Summary:

The report provides the committee members with an update for the Partners in Practice Programme in Lincolnshire.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to seek assurance regarding the progress and outcomes of the Partners in Practice Programme.

1. Background

Partners in Practice (PIP) is a genuine partnership between local and central government by bringing the best practitioners and leaders in children's services to improve the system. This four year programme commenced on the 1 April 2016 with Lincolnshire joining in December 2016 and the programme ending on 31 2020.

The Partners in Practice are amongst the strongest local authorities in the country having achieved an outstanding or good Ofsted inspection. Through the programme they are:

- Continuing to develop, test and evaluate innovation to build understanding of the conditions needed for excellent practice to flourish
- Driving sector led improvement through peer support and challenge to local authorities who need to improve
- Supporting Department for Education (DFE) to shape and test policy on wider programmes and reforms.

Within the Lincolnshire PIP programme sit six individual projects which align directly to the two of the three fundamental pillars of DFE (practice and systems and people and leadership). The projects are:

- Signs of Safety/Restorative Practice (SOS/RP).
- Early Help Review

- Future4Me (previously known as Risk Taking Behaviours)
- Caring2Learn
- Workforce Development
- Improvement Support

Progress to date:

Signs of Safety/Restorative Practice

Project aim

To create a Lincolnshire practice framework which underpins our vision and values and is strength based, solution focused and ensures that families are understood as a whole.

Project achievements:

- Created the practice advisor roles which have had a significant impact in supporting teams to drive and develop the SOS and RP practice framework.
- Developed and launched a single assessment and plan which incorporates the SOS framework (the child and family assessment and progress plan).
- Produced new policies and processes which are aligned to the SOS framework and rebuilt Mosaic workflows to support the workforce.
- Sustainability for SOS/RP plan has been completed and internal training programme has been developed. Funding for the Practice Advisors (PAs) has been found within the internal review of the quality and standards service.
- Passport to excellence practice in respect of future SOS/RP training has been completed and will consist of a one day introduction to practice in Lincolnshire, two day advanced SOS and then one day bespoke workshops including safety planning, RP and words and pictures. These will all be delivered internally by PAs and those staff who have completed the South Yorkshire teaching partnership train the trainers qualification.

This project is now closed as all existing functions have been sustained within existing budgets.

Early Help Review

Project Aim

To improve the interface between early help and social care as this was not flexible enough, did not lend itself to relationship based practice and continuity of relationships and trust for children and families.

Project

- Improved the experience that families receive through a consistent approach and maintenance of existing relationships with lead professionals.
- Redistributed resources across the county and the teams, including a boundary move.
- Created a central early help front door that is now aligned to the customer service centre.

- Reviewed our offer to parents to link with public health nursing, healthy minds and children's centres.

This project is now closed as all existing functions are sustainable within existing budgets.

Caring2Learn

Project Aim

To outline the way forward for an innovative countywide, inter-agency, research based approach to support the development of sustainable practice designed. This would enhance and develop an effective engagement between home, school and children's services which impacted directly on improved short and long term outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Project Achievements

- 40 schools have now been accredited as part of the caring schools award
- 22 fostering households
- 3 of our children's homes have achieved learning home status
- 200 schools, education and early years settings have received training and support
- 200 foster carers and residential homes staff have received training and support
- Caring2Learn team won the Children and Young People Now 'Children in Care' award for 2019 recognised as the local authority who had improved outcomes for looked after children or young people, whether in residential care, foster care or other types of placement

Next Steps

- To continue with developing and delivering Caring2Learn for a further year up to 31 March 2021. The extension of the project will enable Lincolnshire to assess the longer term impact on educational achievement, emotional wellbeing, those children achieving above expected progress and reduction in exclusions of vulnerable children
- Develop extended support and guidance for parents and guardians of previously looked after children
- Support North Lincolnshire virtual school in embedding Caring2Learn in schools across this local authority.
- Explore joint working on teams focussed on early intervention, such as early help and early years

Future4Me

Project Aim

To create and develop the Future4Me team, to progress our aspirations to prioritise reducing criminalisation, working effectively with individuals vulnerable to exploitation or extra familiar risks and provide a robust framework to wherever possible divert young people away from statutory criminal justice and social care systems.

Project Achievements

- Reduced the number of first time entrants into the justice system with the creation and development of the joint diversionary panel
- One of three local authorities chosen to pilot the alternative to AssetPlus
- Created and developed the Boston schools project
- Introduced a consultation clinic for case formulations ensuring all young people entering Future4Me, receive a clinical case formulation to support trajectory and interventions. In 2019, 700 were delivered.
- Dedicated youth housing officer employed to work closely with the corporate parent/leaving care service
- Trauma Informed Practices training for staff, for case formulation and a strong health offer
- Child exploitation and missing, now have weekly and strategic multi-agency child exploitation group) to include oversight of return interviews. The joint diversionary panel has resulted in a reduction of more than 70% of the number of first time entrants within the youth justice system in Lincolnshire. We have established new working practice around missing and exploitation which has included the launch of a new child exploitation screening tool. There is excellent collaboration through the co-ordinators being co-located within the police vulnerable persons unit. We have seen an overall reduction in the number of declined interviews and an increase in timeliness of meeting the 72 hour timescale.

Next Steps

- Continue working on the alternative to AssetPlus pilot
- Development on key areas
- Confirm the profile of need
- Reviewing the 'entry points' for the Service
- Youth homelessness prevention
- Establishing the foundations of trauma informed practices
- Review the effectiveness of the extended service
- Internal evaluation of the project to determine impacts and outcomes and present sustainability plan post 2021.
- Given the substantial lead in time to design and develop the service, the DFE has awarded the project a further year's funding during 20/21. The project will focus mainly on ensuring the right cohort for the F4M model is reached, fidelity to the trauma informed practices, the youth homeless prevention model and evaluate and measure impact of the project.

Workforce Development

Project Aim

To bring together a range of work streams that supports the children's workforce to include research, learn and development, recruitment and retention and teaching partnership.

Project Achievements

- Robust succession planning, coupled with effective staff development to enable internal promotion opportunities.
- Reduction in vacancy rates of staff turnover, increasing staff retention.

- Reduction in agency costs and more appropriate planned use of agency staff to cover short term vacancies
- Confident and competent workforce who are able to effectively support children and families who they are key worker for.
- Revised recruitment process that is candidate focussed, responsive and timely
- More adaptable workforce, enabling staff to move roles across the system, e.g. early help to residential care
- Growing practice skills to support the changing needs of children, young people and families, linked to practice advisors work within quality and standards.
- One front door for all CS training through the learn and development team
- 67 social work staff are now NAAS accredited (National Assessment and Accreditation Scheme).

Next Steps

- One front door for all children's services training through the learn and development team
- To support all social work staff to achieve NAAS accreditation
- Review the mandatory training requirements and what staff have, at what level and develop an improved pathway for children's services staff to reflect roles and responsibilities
- Recruitment and retention, teaching partnership, learning and development, research and workforce development have transitioned into our main business activities, with a majority sitting within the quality and standards service area.

This project is now closed and all functions sustained within existing budgets and are delivered by the Quality and Standards Service.

Improvement Support

Project Aim

To support sector led improvement through our experience as an intervention partner with Rotherham and Northampton by building the vision, values and culture of the organisation through robust self-assessment and acceptance of external feedback.

Project Achievements

- Since the start of PiP in December 2016 to 31 March 2020, Lincolnshire has provided in total 1272 support days to 37 local authorities.

Next Steps

- We are currently involved as the official improvement partner to Northamptonshire County Council until 30 September. The results of their recent Ofsted and action plan, will determine future support requirements, subject to DfE funding approval. This improvement support is funded separately from within the DfE.

Evaluation

The programme and the evaluation are funded by the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme (Innovation Programme hereafter). The evaluation was commissioned by the DFE, and undertaken by Ecorys: an independent research organisation. The final report has not yet been published by the DFE, however below is a summary of the findings. Publication is expected to be later in the year.

This evaluation of the Lincolnshire PiP programme has found largely encouraging findings. Families' and staff experiences have been fundamentally positive, and there have been a number of outcomes achieved for children, young people and families, LCC and partner staff, and Lincolnshire's Children's Services as a service. A Counterfactual Impact Evaluation (CIE) of the Future4Me project found that the reoffending rate among the young people it supported was 11 percentage points lower than the comparison group, who did not receive the project's services. This was a statistically significant finding when compared to a comparator group and offers a high standard of evidence. A CIE of the early help offer did not find a statistically significant impact on referrals to children's services in general or referrals that require no further action, although it did suggest the programme had an initial stabilising effect on referrals. This possible effect could be monitored and further explored in future with longer-term data to see if the stabilising effect continues and/or if the programme results in a statistically significant, detectable impact in the long-run.

Lincolnshire's Children's Services has a history of high-quality delivery (achieving 'Good' or 'Outstanding' ratings by Ofsted), so an overarching question for the evaluation has been to assess the extent to which the PiP programme added value to the type of service that would have been delivered otherwise. Evidence from this evaluation has uncovered areas of added value including those in relation to: embedding the Signs of Safety framework into the local authority's systems and processes, increasing the use of relationship-based practice, extending training to a wider range of professionals across the county; valuing foster carers as professionals and lessening the risk of placement breakdown in particular, as well as the impact of Future4Me as demonstrated by the CIE. The main risk to further progress based on qualitative findings appeared to be staff vacancies and the resulting impact these have on staff capacity. However, quantitatively, Lincolnshire fares better than statistical neighbours and national averages on these counts.

Staff survey responses and stakeholder interviews highlighted a number of critical success factors of the PiP programme, including consultation with staff and families, utilising evidence-based approaches (such as trauma-informed practice advocated by Dr Karen Treisman), high-quality training and effective technology and processes such as supervisions.

Although outside of the scope of this evaluation, it is a reflection the wider potential of the Caring2Learn that Lincolnshire has worked with other local authorities to develop their own practice. For example, at the end of March 2020, the Caring Schools Award has been adopted by 24 schools and education settings in North Lincolnshire.

A culture of critical inquiry and reflective practice (Baginsky et al, 2017), which recognises that progress is rarely uniform, linear or constant, will be crucial for the PiP programme and its lessons to continue to be embedded across Lincolnshire and potentially beyond. Research into the 7 enablers of improvement in children's services summarises this as follows:

'A key finding of our research has been that the improvement activities in which local areas are engaged were consistent, continuous and cumulative. Local areas in the good-to-great stage of their journey had not stopped doing what had enabled them to improve from poor to fair. Instead, they had continued, embedded and built upon these activities...we found that improvement had ceased to be a discrete project and was part of 'core business.' (Bryant et al, 2016)

In this spirit, Lincolnshire's Children's Services has a track record in engaging in internal and external research, including staff surveys and academic studies. This can be enhanced by uncovering gaps in their quantitative evidence – for example by enhancing traditional 'monitoring' measures with wider wellbeing or other evaluative measures: findings from which can drive further progress and can also be contextualised and understood with qualitative evidence.

Funding

In total Lincolnshire has received a £6,563,803k funding for the Partners in Practice programme from December 2016 to March 2020. For complete transparency and management oversight, this funding has been carefully monitored by the DfE on a quarterly basis and internally by finance on a monthly one to ensure each year's funding allocation is spent as forecast in the original project bid. This has been a requirement of the DfE grant conditions to comply with the treasury policies.

At the invitation of the DfE, Lincolnshire submitted a further bid in January 20, to the DfE for PiP funding to continue to develop and test Caring2Learn, Future4Me and sector led Improvement. This was successful and it has been confirmed that Lincolnshire will receive PiP funding of £1,207,908 for 20/21. This will be carefully monitored using the existing process and governance procedures already established for the programme.

2. Conclusion

The Lincolnshire PiP programme added value compared with previous delivery by embedding the Signs of Safety framework, which is a strengths-based approach to children's social care casework and providing training for a wide range of professionals to support effective implementation. Added value was also achieved by the impact of the Caring2Learn project on valuing foster carers as professionals and lessening the risk of placement breakdown.

Children, young people and families reported positive experiences of the PiP related services they received. Professionals generally cited engaging with families in a more meaningful way than before PiP, spending time building relationships and trust with families. Key aspects of the PiP approach have been the holistic

support provided by multi-agency and multi-skilled teams ensuring this was done with, not 'done to', the family by listening to them and utilising their strengths. The roles of the child and family assessment, family network meetings and the involvement of wider networks of family and friends supported these outcomes for children, young people and families.

Furthermore, Lincolnshire recognises and values the importance of sector led improvement and is committed to continuing as an improvement partner for local authorities in need of support during their improvement journey. We have a long proven track record in sector led improvement work with Rotherham, Northampton and with 32 other LA's across the time of the PIP Programme.

Monies have been agreed by the Department for Education (DfE), for 2020/21 amount and regularity of payments has been confirmed. The money will be transferred via a Section 31 grant.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Yes.

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

The equality and impact assessment was completed at the start of the programme.

Individual risks and issues logs have been developed for each project. All risks are monitored through robust governance arrangements.

4. Background Papers

This report was written by Tara Jones, who can be contacted on 01522 552686 or tara.jones@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director – Children's (Safeguarding)
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Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 2020
Subject:	Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel of the work of the Fostering Service for the year 2019/2020 in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services 2011 and Fostering National Minimum Standards. The report provides a written summary of the Service, including relevant performance data, achievements and areas for development.

Actions Required:

That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Service for 2019/2020.

1. Background

Lincolnshire County Council Fostering Service operates within the regulatory framework of the Children Act 1989, Fostering Service Regulations 2011, the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. Fostering services are inspected by Ofsted.

NMS 25 requires the service to provide 3 monthly reports on the service operations to the Local Authority executive. A requirement under NMS 16 is that a Statement of Purpose is provided.

2. Conclusion

The report should be accepted as an accurate overview of the fostering service.

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	Annual Fostering Agency Report
Appendix B	Statement of Purpose Fostering

5. Background Papers

This report was written by John Harris, who can be contacted on 01522 554109 or john.harris@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

A close-up photograph of three children smiling. In the center is a young boy with brown hair, wearing a light blue zip-up hoodie and sunglasses on his head. To his right is a girl with long brown hair, smiling. To his left is another child, partially visible, wearing a red and white striped shirt. The background is a bright, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Lincolnshire Fostering Service Annual Report

April 2019 - March 2020

Introduction

The Fostering Service is a regulated service and subject to inspection under the Care Standards Act, 2000. Fostering has become an increasingly complex service in relation to children and young people who need to be looked after by Lincolnshire County Council (Local Authority). It requires a range of foster carers who are skilled and resourceful. The Service provides quarterly reports to the Directorate Leadership Team and the Executive.

The Local Authority offers a comprehensive range of preventative services delivered under an Early Help offer which enables families to access services as soon as difficulties emerge. In 2019/20, the number of children in care has remained steady with an end of year figure of 626, representing a 2.2% increase over that of the previous year. Of the 626, 473 were placed in either foster care or are in pre-adoptive placements; this comprises 75.5% of the population. This continues to be a strong performance and compares favorably with statistical neighbours and all England reporting. Of these, 27 children placed in externally commissioned foster placements. Of these, 4 are unaccompanied migrant children aged between 15 and 18. The figures also reflect a high number of children in care living with kinship carers, comprising 19% of the total looked after population.

The Fostering Service is managed by the Head of Regulated Services, through two Team Managers who manage dedicated fostering teams from bases in the north (Lincoln and Louth) and the south (Sleaford). The service has 5 Practice Supervisors who manage day to day practice, and each has lead responsibility for an area of service development. These are currently permanence, duty desk, foster carer recruitment and retention, training, development and support and kinship.

Numbers of Foster Carers:

As at the end of March 2020, there were 280 foster carer households currently registered, including 43 Regulation 24/25 carers and 5 Foster to Adopt carers.

Type	No. of households
Task Centred including Respite	136
Parent and Child/Task Centred	12
CWD Short Break Carers	2
Placement Plus	11
Permanence only	19
Permanence/Task Centred	47
Emergency	3
Remand	2
Family/Friend (Regulation 24/25)	43
Foster to Adopt	5

During the period 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020 there were 69 new fostering households approved, including 8 Foster to Adopt carers and 45 Regulation 24/25 carers. The 16 new mainstream carers provided up to 32 new placements as follows:

Approved places	No. of households
1 child	4
2 children	8
3 children	4

During the period 1 April 2019 - 31 March 20, 25 mainstream households ceased fostering, due to the following reasons:

Reason	No. of households
Change in employment	2
Family circumstances changed	10
Health reasons	4
Moved to an IFA	2
Retired	2
Child reached 18	1
Dissatisfaction with service	1
Carer died	3

In addition, 40 Regulation 24/25 carers were deregistered; 17 of these converted to SGO's and 7 were related to the child moving to independence.

The recruitment of foster carers is both a local and a national challenge with Fostering Network predicting a shortage of 8500 fostering families to meet the needs of children across the country. We have sadly seen a decline in approvals this year and that appears to be mirrored across the East Midlands region and reflects the competitive market place and high levels of employment. Despite this, Lincolnshire remains committed and proactive in recruiting foster carers. The Council has invested in a retention payment in recognition of the dedication of carers in supporting our most vulnerable young people with complex needs coupled with investment in Caring2Learn and bespoke support packages.

The loss of existing carers continues to be of concern and reflects the demographics of the foster carer population. The service continues to identify extended family members as carers and this has enabled children to remain within their family networks and local communities.

In Lincolnshire, there is a very active independent fostering market place and the service is very alive to the issues this may bring. We have seen an increase in the number of requests for references relating to residents of Lincolnshire from these Agencies and know from initial visits, that people are weighing up the offers from different agencies before making their application. The recruitment and retention strategy reflects this dynamic and endeavors to ensure that our "offer" remains attractive.

Role of Fostering Service

Lincolnshire County Council's Fostering Service provides a range of short term and permanent placements with foster carers who have a diverse range of skills and experience. Foster carers provide family based services ranging from weekend respite to supporting birth parents and carers, preparing a child for adoption, or providing a longer term placement that will see a child through to independence. There continues to be a high number of family members or friends who come forward for assessment within care proceedings.

- a) The service continues to offer a trained group of foster carers to provide assessment placements to parents and children, usually babies. These placements focus on a parent's capacity to meet the needs and safeguard the infant, and the foster carers are vital in assisting and supporting, often young parents, to develop basic parenting skills. Additionally, the service offers a range of additional specialist placements that provide for those harder to place young people, as well as emergency and remand placements. The demand within the court arena for such placements has increased over the year following legal precedent re GR (children) 2019 which stated that Separation will only be granted if the child's safety demands immediate separation.

The profile of children in care shows that, the percentage of those under the age of 5 has remained consistent at 23.5%. At the other end of the age profile, there has been a continued increase in the number of young people looked after aged 16/17 and they now constitute 22% of Children in Care. There is a reducing number of this age group in foster placements. Of these the number which continue to reside in staying put placements continues to increase. At the same time, the growth in the number of children aged 16 and 17, has resulted in an increase in the numbers who transition into leaving care services each year and a proportionate increase in those young people remaining in staying put arrangements post 18. At year end these numbered 55.

In 2019/20 there has been a significant increase in the number of children referred to independent placements. For 2 of these, the service had been unable to identify a long term foster placement and as a means of providing the children with stability, referrals were made to the independent sector. This is in line with the usual strategy that seeks to minimize the risk of children drifting. However, this year we have also had to refer some children as a result of lack of in house placements. This has been specifically in relation to large sibling groups where Courts have requested that they be placed together. In the last year 2 sibling groups of 4 and 1 of 3 have been placed. As a result the year end figure is 10 higher than at the end of 2019 and comprises 4% of the whole children in care population. The Local Authority has developed an effective commissioning relationship with providers within county and beyond, and regularly reviews quality and cost. Despite the increase, the balance between the volume of internal and external provision has maintained the Local Authority within the CIPFA benchmarking group as one of the top performing in terms of children placed with internal carers, and one of the most cost effective in respect of the weekly cost of a Looked after Child with Lincolnshire at £797, as opposed to £997 for average authorities (CIPFA Benchmarking report 2018/19).

Activity and Performance 2019-20



Foster Carer Recruitment

The Service has a dedicated Recruitment and Retention Team ensures that the recruitment and retention of foster carers for and within Lincolnshire County Council remains a key priority. The team is fully integrated within the main fostering service and is able to respond in a timely manner to the changing needs of the service. The Marketing Officer role is to conceive imaginative, thought provoking and evidence based campaigns to recruit more foster carers and adopters. The 3 SSW's undertake the majority of the Form F Assessments across the county and have developed a revised preparation process with caring2learn for all prospective foster carers.

Recruitment Activity

From 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020:

- 239 Initial Expression of Interest forms (IEIs) were received for fostering
- 143 home visits were undertaken
- 48 Registration of Interest forms (ROIs) were received
- 16 households were newly approved to foster

Information Evenings

11 information evenings were held in total across the county throughout the year. These events resulted in 45 IEIs being completed, 7 of which (to date) have returned ROIs and have panel dates booked for the 2020/2021 financial year.


Facebook

The service has a dedicated Fostering & Adoption Facebook page. The page is managed by the fostering service's marketing team and is predominately being used as a marketing aid to recruit more foster carers and convey key messages including who can foster, why people should foster with their local authority, what support the service offers, good news stories, and to advertise information evenings etc.

Advertising

The campaign for the 2019/2020 year continued from the previous year with adverts using imagery which depicts the priority needs groups for the service i.e. siblings, additional needs, teenagers, and permanence. The tag lines and images were refreshed for 2019/2020 as follows:

- *"If you could spark their creativity, imagine what they could give you!" (Siblings)*
- *"If you could give her joy, imagine*



give
give

**If you could brighten their day,
imagine what they could give you!**

Permanent fostering gives children, including siblings, a chance to be cared for long-term in a safe, stable, and loving family home for the rest of their childhood.

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fostering
01522 554114



what she could give
you!" (Additional
needs)

- *"If you could
him guidance,
imagine what he could
give you!" (Teenagers)*
- *"If you could
brighten their day,
imagine what they
could give you!"
(Permanence)*

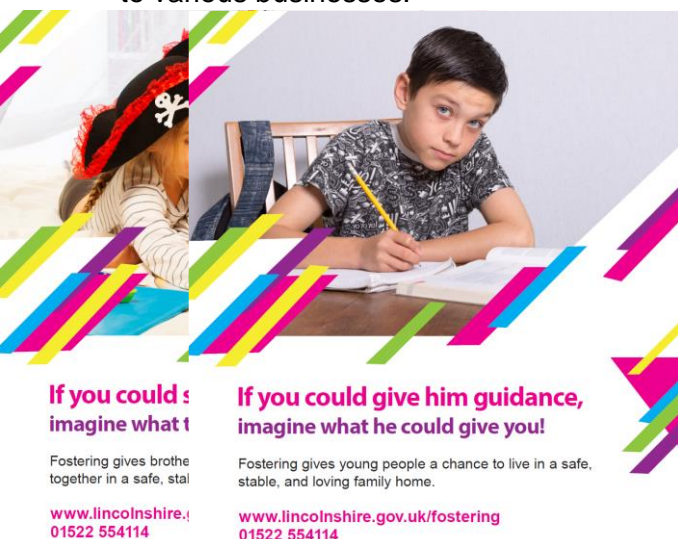
**If you could give her joy,
imagine what she could give you!**

Fostering gives children and young people with additional needs a chance to live in a safe, stable, and loving family home.

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fostering
01522 554114



In addition to this, a series of posters advertising the need for respite foster carers, Parent and Child carers and Family Links carers were also produced and poster drops were carried out across the county to various businesses.



**If you could s
imagine what t**

Fostering gives brothe
together in a safe, stal

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fostering
01522 554114

**If you could give him guidance,
imagine what he could give you!**

Fostering gives young people a chance to live in a safe,
stable, and loving family home.

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fostering
01522 554114

Permanence Campaign

The Permanence Campaign continued this year as per the 3 year Permanence Strategy and Operation Plan produced in 2018/2019. This included advertising in the form of radio adverts, Facebook posts poster and leaflet drops to companies and organisations across the county, 10,000 leaflets distributed via a media partner attending county shows and adverts in various forms of local media including online, newspapers and magazines.

Foster Walk

On 15 June a team of 9 which comprised of fostering staff as well as foster carers, a former LAC, and a birth child of a foster carer took part in the Fostering Network's Foster Walk in London. The staff and foster families who took part raised

money for the Fostering Network prior to the walk and raised £442.72 in total. The idea behind taking part in this was the excellent publicity opportunity to promote fostering in a positive light as foster families and staff from multiple agencies across the country got together to celebrate and raise the profile of fostering.

Foster Carer Retention

As important, at a time when recruitment is particularly challenging, is the issue of retention. The service has invested heavily over recent years in providing foster carers with additional practical and theoretical support. But the innovation of caring2learn has developed a new approach to foster care support one that seeks to recognise their skills and provide them with a range of platforms which enable training to be delivered and for problem solving together. Underpinning the approach has been the recruitment of 22 sessional Foster Carer champions and the development of "hubs" which offer localized opportunities and enhance partnership working with local schools and childcare settings. In addition the facebook page has offered dynamic and creative support and solutions to foster carers and has over 300 participants. Caring2learn has been integrated into the all aspects of the fostering service and appears to be making a real difference to placement stability and foster carer satisfaction. The development of the champion role

has reinforced the key role of a foster carer and seeks to promote and validate their experience and skills. In many ways it has given foster carers a voice. The emphasis upon retention is a response to feedback from both surveys and exit interviews.

Foster carer feedback was actively sought via Focus groups and The Foster Care Survey.

In 2019, a total 120 surveys were completed; 96 were completed and returned by post and 24 were completed online.

Key themes:

72.7% of households rate the communication to them from the service as good or excellent. This is an increase from the previous two years.

Comments included:

- *Our SSW fantastic, very supportive, without the support would probably not be fostering and of course my own family support, finding respite placements has been a struggle too, especially in our area (Spalding)."*
- *"Communication from the business side is good".*

94.6% of households are satisfied or very satisfied with their SSW. The number of households who are satisfied or very satisfied with their SSW has continued to rise since 2017 when the figure was at 77.0%.

- *She is always available and responds promptly to texts/calls/emails. Dates are always in the diary so I know when we'll meet."*
- *"Always on time, flexible with appointments, very approachable."*
- *"Amy always cooperates and listens to me. Amy also lets me know in advance to any changes to her visits. Amy is a credit to her job with LCC."*

98.2% feel that their SSW does value their opinion regarding their foster children and feel that they are listened to, comments included:

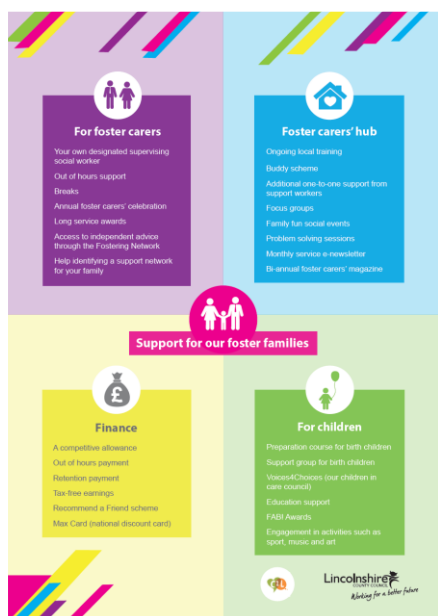
- *"Chloe always values my opinion and support me."*
- *"She listens, we discuss things and she raises any concerns we have with the relevant people."*
- *We always talk things through and come up with good strategies."*

The survey has also identified an inconsistency in the support by Children's Social workers. The service has as a result, shared the findings of the survey with all Social Care teams recognizing that we all have a part to play in supporting and sustaining foster carers.

Infographic

As part of the ongoing work with Caring2Learn considering the importance of foster carer retention, the Marketing Officer devised an infographic highlighting the support offered to our foster families. This is a graphically engaging way of selling our offer in a quick and easy to understand manner to prospective foster carers, as well as newly approved and existing carers.

It is put in the information pack which is sent out to enquirers over the phone / email and also given out at information events. It has also been sent to all existing foster carers as a reminder to the support we offer them.



Placement Support Workers

From foster carer feedback, the importance of the Placement Support Worker should not be underestimated in terms of placement stability and retention. The service has 7 Placement Support Workers, 3 part-time and 4 full-time working hours to meet individual need across North and South of the county.

Over the last two years Placement Support Workers have been working hard developing a programme of work to meet identified training needs and equip foster carers with therapeutic skills to support children, young people and placement stability. A Therapeutic Parenting Skills course has been rolled out to small groups of foster carers and on a 1:1 basis to gain further understanding of trauma and the impact which this can have on children and providing knowledge and skills around therapeutic skills training. The course is interactive and looks at tools such as PACE, therapeutic games, practical real life strategies when caring for children with attachment difficulties, compassion fatigue and blocked care and the differences which therapeutic parenting can make to the child and their caregiver.

Four of the Placement Support Workers who are now trained in Theraplay (Level 1) receive clinical supervision on a monthly basis. Theraplay is an approach to child and family therapy that aims to address behavioural, emotional, or developmental issues and improve the carer-child relationship through play and healthy interaction through structured play therapy sessions for children and their foster carers. Its goal is to enhance attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement. The sessions are designed to be fun, physical, personal, and interactive and replicate the natural, healthy interactions between parents, carers and young children. There remain plans in the future to roll out Group Theraplay to both children, young people (including teenagers) and their carers to develop relationships, support carers to understand and manage complex behaviours and support the children, young people and their stability. The workers also deliver Non-Violent Resistance programmes, the aim of which is to empower & support carers preventing & responding to the controlling and aggressive behaviour of children and teenagers.

Over the last year Placement Support Workers have developed and delivered a 'Life Skills Course' to a group of young people with a plan of permanence aged between 13-17. Eight young people attended the group, six of whom had 100% attendance for all ten weekly sessions. Young people determined the issues that they felt would help them in their transition to independence, and a timetable of activities over sessions lasting two hours per session consisted of confidence building work, budgeting, cooking healthy meals, shopping, paying bills, using public transport, taking part in job interviews are just a few of the items on the agenda. The learning from this course has enabled the Placement Support Workers to now work towards planning and developing the next course and working collaboratively with the

sponsor 'Linc Higher' which were really pleased to hear about the successes of the course, to incorporate a 'Higher Education' element. The service will work with the Leaving Care service to develop a programme that can be delivered to a greater number young people across the County.

Placement Stability

Placement stability continues to be a critical factor in offering an effective Fostering Service, and is crucial to ensuring that the Local Authority delivers good outcomes for each Child in care. The service has been developed and structured to promote stability and support to foster carers. Stability is measured by 2 national indicators, NI062 relating to children who experience 3 placement moves within 12 months, and NI063 which relates to children who have been in care for 2½ years who have been in the same placement for 2 years.

The national indicator NI062 reported 7% at year end. This figure suggests that Children Looked After in Lincolnshire, have a high level of placement stability from the point of coming into care. This is an achievement given the reduction in the number of foster carers and the difficulties in recruitment this year. However, the complexity of children requiring placement and reduced placement options have had an impact on the indicator, and this is likely to remain a challenge. Over recent years there has been considerable focus on supporting foster carers to maintain placements. Placement support workers have been trained to offer therapeutic interventions and caring2learn has developed champions and hub supports to all carers. Together they have supported an improvement in the NI063 placement stability figure with a year-end figure reported as 70.7%; this is good performance compared nationally.

Family Lincs Care

The provision of short term breaks in principle offers children and young people with disabilities experiences away from their primary carers to enhance their personal and social development. This serves to offer support whilst enabling parents/carers and families an opportunity to have a valuable break from their caring responsibilities.

The scheme continues to be serviced by two fostering households that provide regular short terms breaks to two young people. There are continued efforts to further recruit to the scheme and the service recognises the value to those that access these breaks. Those young people that access these breaks do so in an effort to support their home based care arrangements. Both of these children/young people have physical disabilities which are well catered for.

Family Lincs carers offer an annual total of 222 units of care with capacity to offer additional units dependent on demand, each unit totals 8 hours of care. This continues to meet the demand for the service, but does allow some flexibility by offering additional units where required. In the event that foster carers have spare capacity these units are used to accommodate other children requiring respite. Despite active recruitment in 2019, no additional carers have made application for the scheme.

In addition to the defined Family Lincs scheme, the service offers a range of other long term and respite placements for children with disabilities.

Parent and Child placements

As reported in last year's Fostering Service Annual Report parent and child placements continue to be a positive option for Courts, there are currently 12 carers who are approved to offer parent and child placements. In 2019/2020 we received 20 requests for placements. Of these 20 requests 6 placements

were found with LCC in house provision, 4 placements were identified with LCC in house carers but not used, and 10 requests could not be placed with LCC in house carers and went to IFA/relatives/refuge.

Demand for placements has increased over the year as a response to judicial guidelines re separation of new born babies from their parents however the trend remains difficult to predict. As a result there have been 6 requests made from independent providers. This includes two cases whereby the placement with LCC parent and child placement has ended and the courts have directed a further placement is identified. The placements often exceed the assessment period and can effectively block placements for the duration of the care proceedings. In 2020 the scheme will be subject to review.

Permanence

Between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020, Family Finders has continued to meet on a monthly basis to consider children with a care plan of permanence and in need of a long term foster placement. Over the year 39 children have been considered, of these 29 were newly referred from 1st April 2019 onwards.

This is an increase of eight children from the previous year and included 11 sibling sets of two, and two sibling sets of three - the remainder being single children.

Out of the 39 children considered, long term foster placements were identified for 17, made up of five sibling sets of two, one sibling set of three and two single children. As in previous years, placements identified were a mixture of some children (7) remaining with their existing task-centred carers and the others (10) moving to newly identified carers.

A further 6 out of the 39 children moved to a residential placement and 1 child remained in his existing residential placement. Two children (a sibling group) moved to an independent foster placement and 2 children were removed from Family Finders due to a change in their care plan.

Over the course of the year 6 children have been linked at Permanence Panel, 5 of these children were linked with their existing foster families and 1 child was linked following a match identified from Family Finders.

All children referred to Family Finders continue to have profiles produced by the Marketing Officer in the Fostering Team and these are circulated on a monthly basis with all Supervising Social Workers in both North and South Fostering Teams to share with both existing and newly approved foster carers as appropriate. Anonymised profiles are also shared with prospective Foster Carers during the assessment process.

The Permanence Campaign is on-going and includes a variety of advertising methods such as adverts in local press, on the radio and on social media. This continues to be very well received with Facebook posts generating significant interest. Other fostering recruitment activities have continued throughout the year with the need for permanent foster carers remaining a particular focus at the recruitment evening events.

Since 1st April 2019 three new fostering families have been approved for permanence and a further three are currently undergoing assessment.

There continues to be a high level of support in place for both prospective and current permanent foster carers. This includes a bespoke preparation course, the first of which took place during the year with four sets of foster carers attending. Further to this an enhanced rate is paid to foster carers who offer a home to children who have been waiting for a permanent placement for longer than six months as well as on-going training and support from both Supervising Social Workers and Placement Support Workers and a minimum of 14 nights respite per year.

The Family Finders Review panel continues to meet regularly to consider children where no potential placement matches have been identified within a three month period, enabling senior management to have oversight of actions already taken and discussions around any further options to be considered or explored.

Staying Put

The 'Staying Put' initiative in Lincolnshire is in its eleventh year. It has, since its inception, enabled a total of 153 young people to remain with their previous foster carers.

Staying Put arrangements provide the young person with stability at a key stage of their life remaining until their 21st birthday. On-going support and training for carers is provided by the Fostering Service, with the young people having their own designated Personal Advisor from Barnardo's Leaving Care Service.

To further support young people in their transition to adulthood if they are ready to move on before their 21st birthday or for those who join the military, each young person is given a three month window in which they are supported by their carer. For those young people who attend university and live away, carers receive a retainer in recognition of the on-going support they provide, and to enable the young person to return during holidays and continue life within their family setting.

Lincolnshire's Staying Put Service has continued to develop and grow with the number of Staying Put arrangements increasing from 49 young people at the end of March 2019 to 55 young people living in a Staying Put arrangement at the end of March 2020. Of these, 35 were in full time further education with 6 attending university. The others were in employment, on Work Experience Placements or Apprenticeships; with 6 of these on the Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Staying Put offer in Lincolnshire positively reflects the current guidelines and best practice from the Government and Fostering Network. Signs of Safety is used and embedded in all the documents relating to Staying Put with Social Pedagogy being used to support the transition and understanding around moving to adulthood. During 2019 – 2020 a further development has been made in respect of young people transitioning to Adult Services with joint working taking place in respect of Shared Lives. Two LCC foster carers have been approved to be Shared Lives Carers enabling the young people living with them, who are in need of additional support from Adult Services, to remain in their family setting. This development further ensures the best outcomes are achieved for our young people and care leavers.

Kinship Service

The placement of a child within their family and friends network continues to offer a positive alternative for many children enabling them to maintain the links with family and friends and a continued sense of their identity and culture but can also bring with it practice issues in terms of supporting family members to fully understand their role as 'Connected Person Carers' and the expectations of this role.

Since 2015 there has been 6 FTE Supervising Social Workers dedicated to undertake Kinship Assessments. There have been changes in terms of workers covering the kinship agenda as one of Practice Supervisors retired in November 2019 and to ensure consistency, one of the Advanced Practitioners from the service is now acting up to Practice Supervisor role and undertaking some of the those responsibilities.

The number of referrals into the Kinship Team has slightly increased this year. This is most noticeable in the increase in the volume of referrals for Regulation 24 assessments and moving to Special Guardianship Order Assessments when compared to last year. The number of cases presented at Fostering Panel has increased considerably when compared to the previous year (14 cases presented to Panel 2018/19). Most assessments are presented to Panel within 16 weeks of allocation.

The picture below for the year records the number of referrals and reflects the ongoing national picture in terms of the area of service increase in terms of assessments.

Overview of the year – April 2019-31st March 2020

Number of Referrals	SGO	Reg.24 to SGO	Reg.24	Private Fostering
154	57	34	46	17

Of the above figures:

- SGO – 12 applicants withdrew/ did not progress due to placement ending
- SGO – 15 are still in process
- SGO – 4 were negative assessments and the children were not placed
- SGO – 2 case, Court granted a Child Arrangement Order
- SGO – 17 were Statutory Checks completed by Fostering Service
- SGO – 7 progressed but child either remained at home or moved to an alternative placement.

Where children were placed with a likely plan to progress to SGO

- SGO/Reg.24 – 14 SGO granted
- SGO/Reg.24 – 11 are still in process
- SGO/Reg.24 – 9 where child was moved or other Order granted
- Reg.24 – 33 Carers approved at panel
- Reg.24 – 2 children were moved
- Reg.24 – 9 Not yet attended panel
- Reg.24 – 1 carer granted Child Arrangement Order
- Reg.24 – 1 Returned home

The service has continued to offer the specific one day kinship preparation course for both Regulation 24 carers and Special Guardianship applicants, with three having taken place in 2019/2020. The course has continued to receive excellent feedback, particularly in terms of the Therapeutic Parenting input by Placement Support Workers. The course was adapted in September 2019 to ensure specialist therapeutic guidance was being delivered.

Fostering Panel

The Fostering Panel is established and acts in accordance with the regulatory framework provided by The Fostering Service Regulations 2011, Family and Friends Care, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2011, and the Standards set out in the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011. The Foster Panel takes account of the legislation set out in The Children Act 1989, and the Care

The Fostering Panel has the responsibility for making recommendations in relation to:

- The approval of foster carers both short/task centred and long term/permanent foster carers;
- The approval of family members or friends as "connected person" carers for children who are looked after by Lincolnshire County Council, and connected to the applicant as a family member or friend;
- The first annual review of all foster carers and connected persons carers;
- Reviews of carers where there have been serious issues such as Child Protection
- Investigations; or
- Reviews of carers where there are concerns regarding their fostering practice and their suitability.

The current membership of the Panel is as follows:

- Sharon King, Independent Chair
- Chris Sharp, Vice Chair
- Stephen Carson, Independent Vice Chair
- Janet Morris, Independent Member
- Russell Petit, Independent Member
- April Harrison, Independent Member
- Laura Dodd, Independent Member
- Ellie Simmons Independent Member
- Lee Willoughby Independent Member
- Maggie Nisbett Independent Member
- Georgina Sharma, Independent Member
- Paula Bexon, Social Work Representative
- Paula Clayforth, Social Work Representative
- Michelle Maxfield, Social Work Representative
- Joanne Stares, Social Work Representative
- Michaela Berry, Social Work Representative
- Panel Advisor and Administrator in attendance at each panel

The former chair Sue Tribe ceased as Panel Chair in January 2020 and has been successfully succeeded by Sharon King.

The Panel Advisor is responsible for the volume and cost of panel business, in particular the capacity to ensure that connected person cases can be heard within 16 weeks of placement. She ensures that the central list is maintained and updated to allow for all panels to be quorate. There continues to be two Fostering Panels each month.

The Panel receives medical advice within the Social Workers' reports, and this is considered within the assessments. Legal Services provide advice as required, in order to assist in the Panel's recommendations.

Workload of the Panel

The Foster Panel has met on 20 occasions this year, 2 less than the previous year.

Panel recommended for approval the following households:

APPROVAL	2019	2018	2017	2016
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Task Centred/Respite	19	27	13	20
Reg 24/25	43	33	39	39
Permanent Foster Carers	0	2	1	10
Change of Approval	6	7	0	5
Permanence Link	6	10	10	11
Reviews	23	22	17	35
Total	97	101	80	120

Review Breakdowns:

REVIEW	2019	2018	2017	2016
Task Centred	15	12	9	19
Respite			0	0
Remand			0	1
Reg 24/25	6	9	3	12
Permanent Fostering			4	2
Allegation	1	1	1	1

Feedback and Quality Assurance

Panel actively seeks feedback from all participants via a feedback form. The Panel Advisor has reviewed the feedback information from those attending Panel utilizing a scaling system. The average feedback on Fostering Panel achieving is 9/10.

The reports for Panel are signed as being suitable to present at Panel by the Practice Supervisor, for the worker to ensure suitable quality standards are achieved.

The Chairs to the Foster Panel have continued to work closely with the Panel Advisor and the two Team Managers. This has been further strengthened with engagement with members of the Practice Supervisor Group, who are the first line supervisors of staff. These Feedback sessions take place on a six monthly basis and produce an action plan based on the Signs of Safety model. This has enabled both the agency and the Panel to review any areas for development.

The quality of reports presented to Panel continue to be of a good standard, and this has been assisted by the Panel Advisor actively engaging with the Fostering and Looked After Teams, to reiterate the need for sound, evidence based assessments. There is clear evidence of the Signs of Safety Model, and this works well with how the Panel is structured.

There is clear evidence of restorative practice and an understanding of how this approach is particularly important in the work with some of the Kinship carers and a real need to appreciate the responsibility of the Local Authority to support carers to be able to meet fostering standards.

The Child's Voice at Panel is actively encouraged, in particular children attending Panel, particularly in permanent link cases. There has been a clear increase in the participation of children at Panel and the Social Workers and foster carers have continued to be very creative in how young people are supported to present their wishes and feelings to the Panel.

Examples have included art work, Signs of Safety tools, power point presentations of the young person's experiences in foster care. These experiences shared by children and young people continue to be a very powerful reminder for all about the difference that fostering can make for young people in terms of their sense of belonging, their participation, their identity and ultimately providing many young people with a safe place to live and thrive in.

The Panel is also mindful of the training standards and development, and is actively monitoring the activity around training and ensures that any matters raised are referred back to the training. The recent introduction of IFAB (Independent Fostering Advisory Board) has been established as an Independent Quality Assurance System for Fostering Annual Reviews. The regulations specify that following approval as a foster carer the first Annual Review must be heard at Panel with a recommendation as to the suitability to continue to foster.

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to supporting an Independent Scrutiny of Fostering Reviews to ensure a quality service is being provided longer term. IFAB appraises fostering annual reviews on the basis of year 4, year 7 and year 10 following initial approval and this will be undertaken on a monthly basis to encompass a rolling programme of scrutiny and oversight.

IFAB representation includes the Agency Advisor, an Independent Social Worker and an Independent Panel Member and will be supported by Business Support to administer. Feedback from IFAB is shared with the Supervising Social Worker and Team Managers to ensure that good practices and areas for development for the service are regularly addressed and reviewed.

Complaints

In the last year the Fostering Service has received two complaints. Neither complaint was upheld. One complaint was raised by a carer direct in relation to the support available from the service. This complaint positively highlighted and reinforced the importance of quality recording and the importance of communication with fostering families. Likewise the learning from this representation has been shared across the service in an effort to maintain good practice standards.

The second complaint was from a birth parent expressing concern about the care attributed to her child by the foster family. This was resolved at the early resolution stage and was not upheld. The efforts of joint working between the Social Worker and Supervising Social Worker sought to resolve this given the expectations and communication between parties had become conflicted.

The low level representations and concerns were promptly dealt with in the service and satisfactorily resolved. In 2019/2020 there were no matters referred to the Independent Review Mechanism.

Foster Carer Continuous Development

The Fostering Service produces an annual learning and development programme to include practical and e-learning opportunities and continue to provide foster carers with a calendar of face to face training events and e-learning which is accessed through the LSCB website. The Programme is reviewed yearly and the latest edition incorporates Caring 2 Learn and training for staff. The development of the

caring2learn hubs and training offer has further enhanced the training offer to foster carers. The online support and multi-agency meetings have created a dynamic learning community where all carers are provided with learning that integrates social pedagogy, restorative and trauma informed practice.

Alongside the development with the training programme the mandatory TSD completion has been reviewed and is now incorporated into the Learning Home Toolkit, the feedback received has been positive and ensures that newly approved foster carers meet the standards whilst evidencing their continued development. Training continues to be provided by a number of agencies including The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT) Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FASD) which has been welcomed by foster carers. Talking Life; which provide the two day Parent and Child Placement training provides an understanding of the policy, procedures, guidance and practice relating to Parent and Child Placements. Parent and Child Placement training is currently under review to ensure that there is consistency and full understanding of professionals, foster carers and legal as to the purpose of the placement.

Singletons facilitate the Emergency First Aid and the two day paediatric first aid course. Other training resources include the Lincoln ADHD Charity who presents the ADHD course. Autism Union Ltd facilitates autism. The move from in house trainers has received a positive response from foster carers and staff.

The following table identifies the number of carers who have undertaken any form of training this year. Training for Feb and March 2019 was disrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic which has an impact of the figures.

Number of carers attended face to face	418
Number of carers completed e-learning	142

The annual Foster Carers Celebration/ Conference took place at the Petwood Hotel in May 2019; the event was a success with carers being presented with a lapel badge, certificate and gift voucher to recognize their long service award.

Forward Plan 2020/21

Caring2learn

The Hub model will be developed to ensure that the full Caring2learn offer is available to carers across the County.

Foster Care training

The offer to foster carers will be fully reviewed in line with the development of caring 2 learn.

Adult Skills training

Building on the success of the first pilot, further courses to be developed and delivered with Leaving Care Service as part of their 16 + offer.

Lincolnshire Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2020



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE LINCOLNSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of Standard 16 of the Fostering Services Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. To be presented for approval by the Lincolnshire County Council Executive in September each year.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Management Structure

Appendix 2 Fostering Panel

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The main aims of the Lincolnshire County Council Fostering Service are to:

Provide high quality and safe care within a family setting for children and young people who have been assessed as requiring a foster placement.

Provide a range of foster carers able to meet the emotional, physical, cultural, and religious and ethnicity needs of all the children looked after by Lincolnshire County Council.

Lincolnshire County Council delivers its Fostering Service through dedicated Fostering Teams managed by Team Managers covering the north and south of the county.

The main service objectives are to:

Place children and young people in local foster placements where relationships with family, friends and community are maintained and continuity of education, health and cultural links and activities is ensured. In instances where it is not possible to achieve this within the Council's Foster Placements an appropriate placement outside of the resources of the County Council will be sought.

Maintain a sufficient number of foster care placements in relation to the location, numbers, needs, age range and characteristics of the looked after population and review this annually through the recruitment strategy.

Recruit Foster Carers who are trained and supported in providing safe care to children who live with them. The service will determine the number and types of foster placements required and produce an annual recruitment plan.

Carry out an assessment of need on every child prior to accommodation. Where possible a safe family member or friend will be the preferred placement choice.

Provide a safe and nurturing foster placement with every effort made to achieve good outcomes for children in care, within set timescales and to agreed standards. The service aims to ensure that wherever possible, children can meet with their prospective Foster Carers prior to placement and if this is not possible, receive a foster family profile.

Provide for sibling groups to be placed together when this is in their best interests.

Respect and promote the child's heritage, culture and identity.

Promote family time between the child and their family where this is consistent with the care plan.

Achieve permanence for all children who are unable to return safely to their families and promote Staying Put for those young people who are secure within their foster placement

Ensure openness and partnership working between all those involved and concerned with the child's welfare.

Involve young people and Foster Carers in developing services and building their feedback into service development.

Develop and fully consolidate the Caring 2 Learn approach to promote caring schools and learning placements. To support and develop foster care champions across the County to ensure that the model is extended as widely as possible.

The Fostering Service has set targets to achieve best practice for the following Children's Performance Assessment Framework and National Indicators:

NI062 – stability of placements of children in care : number of placement moves.

PAF B79 – the percentage of children in foster placements or placed for adoption.

NI063 – stability of placements of children in care : length of placement.

The main principles underpinning the service are:

Foster Carers will be treated with respect and recognition will be given to the valuable role they play in the care of children in care.

Recruitment of new Foster Carers and staff who work within the service, complies with regulations, national standards and good practice.

Foster Carers are vetted, prepared and assessed in line with national regulations and requirements.

The Lincolnshire Fostering Panel considers all carer applications and reviews of approval.

All approved Foster Carers are required to sign the Foster Care Agreement and the Foster Carer Charter which outlines expectations of the Fostering Service and commits to caring appropriately for children looked after.

Wherever possible all placements are matched to ensure a good fit between the needs of the child and the skills and experience of the foster carer(s).

Every child placed will be subject to the looked after children care planning process.

All Foster Carers are provided with the required documentation and information to support the placement of the child in their care.

Children have their placement and plan reviewed within four weeks of initial placement.

All Foster Carers have a named Supervising Social Worker and children in foster care have a named allocated Social Worker.

STANDARDS OF CARE TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE AGENCY

The Fostering Service aims to provide safe, secure and high quality care in family settings for children who need to be looked after away from home. This will be achieved in accordance with the standards set out in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (referred to as the Regulations), the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations (2010) the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011) along with the policies and procedures of Lincolnshire County Council. These standards will apply equally to family and friends placements. The service complies with the requirements of the Training, Support and Development Standards.

There is a countywide management group whose function is to continuously improve standards of care informed by inspections, audits, new legislation and guidance and evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery.

STATUS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE AGENCY

Lincolnshire County Council is an approved fostering service provider and will be inspected under the Single Inspection framework.

Decision making and arrangements for the management of the service including the appointment of the Fostering Service Manager (Regulation 6) and approval of Foster Carer registrations (Regulation 27) are delegated to the Assistant Director, Children's Services.

A Fostering Panel has been established in accordance with Regulation 23. The Panel is chaired by an independent person with considerable experience of working within Social Care.

Where Lincolnshire County Council needs to use another fostering agency for the provision of placements; the commissioning section of the Council must be contacted to ensure that the process is managed according to the Council's rules on commissioning.

THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The Fostering Service is managed by the Service Manager for Regulated Services; through two Team Managers who manage dedicated fostering teams from bases in Lincoln and Sleaford. The service employs 5 practice supervisors who have lead responsibility for specific areas of delivery.

The registered manager appointed to manage the Fostering Service under Regulation 10 of the Fostering Services Regulations is:

John Harris, Service Manager – Regulated Services
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YL

Telephone: 01522 554109

Email: John.harris@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Qualifications: CQSW, Certificate in Management Studies, Post Graduate Diploma in Health and Social Care.

Experience: more than thirty years of experience of working in the field of social care, specialising in the area of children and families since 1987 and has held first line and senior management posts within the local authority.

The nominated manager to manage the Fostering Service in the absence of the registered manager is Yvonne Shearwood (Service Manager).

The Fostering Teams are locality based and deliver a comprehensive fostering service. These teams manage the recruitment, assessment, approval, support and placement processes which enable children looked after in Lincolnshire County Council to be placed in a range of fostering settings.

Nicola Brangam is the dedicated Professional Advisor for both the Fostering and Permanence Panels.

The organisational structure of the Fostering Service is shown in Appendix 1. The list of current staff is set out in appendix 2. This information in its fullest form is only available to Ofsted.

The Teams are managed by two Team Managers responsible for the service on a geographic basis. Rebecca Dolman is the Team Manager North and has over 10 years' experience in Children's Services. The South Team is managed by Deborah Crawford. She has 20 years' experience of social work and has worked in a range of services from Safeguarding to IRO and has also been employed by CAFCASS.

The teams comprise Practice Supervisors who are responsible for the supervision and development of staff; including Supervising Social Workers who are all qualified and experienced in a range of child care social work and a number of unqualified staff who work within recruitment, placement support and placement duty. In addition, the service employs a dedicated recruitment officer who is responsible for the delivery of the annual recruitment strategy.

THE WORK OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

Putting Children First, is at the heart of our work in Lincolnshire; *Working Together with Families to Enhance Children's Present and Future Lives*

The strategic outcomes that the Council commits to are;

Young People are healthy and safe

Children and Young People develop to their potential in their early years and are ready for school

Children and Young People learn and achieve

Children and Young People are ready for adult life

The expectations for all Children in Care are enshrined within these outcomes.

We will champion the importance of aspiration

We will promote self-esteem, self-belief and resilience in all children

We will encourage all children to be the best they can be

We will use resources to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities

We will work jointly with foster carers to help promote these objectives.

Lincolnshire aims to provide sufficient local placements to enable placement choice and enable children to remain, where appropriate, close to their communities.

Lincolnshire delivers Staying Put opportunities to enable young people to remain in their foster placements post 18.

The training, induction and development of new Foster Carers is in line with the requirements of Standard 20 (NMS) and carers are expected to meet the Training, Support and Development standards within 12 months of approval.

SERVICE AMBITIONS

Young People are Healthy and Safe

All children are registered with GPs and dentists and this is kept under review by team managers. There are designated GPs and a named Doctor and small team of nurses responsible for this group of children. Children and young people placed in foster care have an initial health assessment carried out by a designated GP and are encouraged to have an annual review by the same GP or designated nurse. Medical forms recommended by British Association for Fostering and Adoption (BAAF) are used to record both the initial and annual review and maintain a health profile for each looked after child. Lincolnshire has a strategy to tackle teenage pregnancy. All carers are given a copy of the guidance on sex and relationship education within their handbooks. Carers and young people are able to access further information from the young person's pages on the Council website.

A multi agency commissioning group is in place to understand and improve the health needs of children in care. Health needs of children and young people are regularly monitored through the looked after children review process. The Local Authority has a contract with CAMHS and services for looked after children are prioritised. CAMHS work to a target of seeing all referred children for an initial assessment within 28 days. A forensic psychology assessment service is available to children looked after who have emotional, behavioural, interaction or mental health issues that are manifesting themselves in the form of offending behaviour.

Foster Carers complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for children between the ages of four and sixteen years of age. This is to ensure that services for children who require additional support are accessed swiftly in order to improve emotional well being. The results of all the SDQ's are monitored by a multi-agency group comprising Social Care, CAMHS and Psychology who identify intervention strategies for those whose scores are of concern. Foster carers have access to the CAMHS professional advice line to support in the management of concerning behaviours.

Part of the training programme for Foster Carers focuses on promoting a healthy lifestyle, good diet and exercise. All mainstream Foster Carers have to undertake first aid training as part of their mandatory post approval training. Foster Carers have training sessions on promoting the health of children looked after. This core programme is supplemented through special interest seminars including ADHD, autism and teenage pregnancy.

Foster Carers can access specialist services for those with substance and alcohol misuse problems through Young Addaction.

As part of the assessment process of prospective Foster Carers, a health assessment is undertaken by the carers' GP which the Agency Medical Advisor for the Fostering Panel considers. If there are on-going medical issues, a full medical assessment is undertaken. Full medicals are also completed for all carers seeking approval for permanence. All carers are required to update their health assessment every 3 years. Foster Carers who offer respite care to disabled children are offered specialist training to meet the needs of individual children. Foster Carers are trained in the administration of specific medication.

Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Service and its Fostering Service are part of Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

The assessment of carers includes the taking of full employment and accommodation histories. Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and local authority checks are completed on everyone aged over 18 years of age living in the household. A range of referees are contacted and visited including previous partners who have parented together and birth children.

All Foster Carers attend mandatory training regarding safer caring and the implications of looking after children who may have been abused.

Each set of carers have a safer caring assessment prior to approval which highlights key aspects of the safer caring process and this is reviewed in the light of each placement made. Every effort is taken when placing children to ensure that the assessed needs of the child are carefully matched to the skills and capabilities of the carers. All children placed are subject to a safety plan that identifies any risks that carers will be asked to manage.

All Foster Carers are offered bi monthly formal supervision, in addition to regular visits, to look at their practice. An unannounced visit to the foster home is made at least once each year. Workers in the team are also aware of the particular vulnerability of disabled children.

Allegations against Foster Carers are investigated using an established procedure whereby all are considered by the Local Authority Designated Officer. An independent person chairs the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process. Independent support is offered to carers during the allegations procedure by Foster Talk. In addition the Fostering Service funds each fostering household's membership of the Fostering Network which brings the benefit of legal protection insurance and access to support and advice from their staff, including free legal advice and counselling service.

Children's plans are regularly reviewed through the Children in Care's statutory Review process, and procedures are in place for reporting significant incidents through the OFSTED notification requirements. All children are given information about how to report abuse and carers are prepared in how to manage disclosure and prevent allegations arising in the placement. In addition children and young

people have access to an independent advocacy service. All children are provided with a coming into care kit.

All children and young people are expected to agree with their carer when they go out, where they are going and a time to return. If a young person fails to return at the agreed time, attempts are made to locate them by telephoning friends, family and relatives. Carers can obtain advice about the operation of the Missing from Care protocol from the Emergency Duty Team and are issued with a copy of it within the Foster Carer Handbook.

The process for conducting risk assessments on missing young people and making reports to the police is detailed in the Foster Carer Handbook.

Lincolnshire's Fostering Service Policy is that there is sufficient space within the foster carer's home for a child to have their own room. In certain circumstances, a child/young person may share a bedroom. Full risk assessments for each child/young person sharing must be undertaken before these arrangements are agreed. A matching policy is in place to ensure that effective matching of children to placements is undertaken to improve placement stability and good outcomes for children and young people.

READINESS FOR SCHOOL

All pre-school children who become looked after will be placed in a foster placement equipped to meet their individual needs.

All Foster Carers are encouraged to register with their local Children's' Centre and take up the services available as part of the County's Early Help available to all children.

All children in care are able to access the 15 hours early entitlement at the age of 2 and have access to suitable nursery school provision.

Foster Carers are required and supported to engage children in their care in specific activities in order to develop their self-esteem and socialisation skills.

Children and Young People Learn and Achieve

Lincolnshire County Council are committed to maximising a child's potential in both academic attainment and personal achievement. All young people are expected to attend school and efforts are made to maintain children in their existing schools. Foster Carers who transport children to out of catchment schools have their transport expenses reimbursed.

Foster Carers are aware that it is unacceptable to take children and young people out of school for family holidays. A protocol has been agreed on this matter and has been issued to all carers.

The Fostering Service promotes the educational attainment of children placed with foster carers. Each child in foster care has a Personal Education Plan and, where appropriate, a Leaving Care Pathway Plan. Foster Carers are expected to involve themselves in assisting children in placement to achieve satisfactory attendance, assist with homework and participate in parent/teacher events. Children in care in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 receive additional, tailored tutorial support.

All children in care have an entitlement to the Pupil Premium. This is further enhanced by the Council and the utilisation of the provision is monitored within the PEP process.

There is a designated teacher in every Lincolnshire school with responsibilities for liaison; educational monitoring and pastoral care for children in care. There are four Education Officers whose role is to ensure effective liaison with schools and to promote educational attainment and attendance of children in care. This includes children who live with Foster Carers outside of Lincolnshire.

The Children in Care Education Service is managed by a Virtual Head Teacher. The Virtual Head leads a team working in partnership with schools, carers and other organisations to improve the educational attainment of each Looked after Child.

The Council has introduced a Caring 2 Learn programme which promotes joint working between schools and foster carers to maximise the potential of children in care. The programme is supported by foster carer champions in all areas and has introduced an accredited award.

There is an Educational Psychology service which provides input to vulnerable children including Looked after Children. The service broadens the support and intervention knowledge and skills of carers and schools and actively identifies children in need of psychological involvement within the SDQ process.

The opportunity for children and young people to succeed in hobbies or sports is seen as an important element of the fostering task and is supported through fostering allowance payments. Annual Foster Carer Reviews consider the level of social opportunities young people in placement are supported in attending. Young people are encouraged to participate in a range of activities and interests. Their achievements are recognised each year in an annual award ceremony held under the banner of FAB.

The Children in Care Council has continued to develop and in addition to a steering group, groups in the four quadrants of the County have been established to ensure that the voice of children looked after is heard. These groups operate under the banner of V4C (Voices for Choices) and are held in 4 quadrants of the

County on a quarterly basis. In addition the Big Conversation is held three times per year and gives young looked after people the opportunity to work jointly with Council officers and Members on key areas for development.

Children and Young People are ready for Adult Life

Lincolnshire County Council's Foster Carers are recruited and supported to meet the needs of children placed with them and provide the stability that they require to achieve and ready themselves for adult lives. The authority therefore makes sure that there are no barriers, financial or otherwise, to prevent Foster Carers becoming permanent carers be they adopters, Child Arrangement Order holders or special guardians; where an assessment determines that this is the best outcome for the child. The Council has fully committed to the Staying Put requirement with 55 young people remaining in their present foster placements. Young people are issued with a Skills for Adult Life booklet which identifies and develops the core skills for independent living.

The training plan for Foster Carers contains special interest seminars, which assist carers in helping children progress to independence. On an individual basis, placement support workers will also have a role in helping young people acquire skills for independence and have developed a range of work preparation and apprenticeship opportunities. Children in Care are encouraged to follow courses of higher education and appropriate support is made available to them. In 2019 the tender for Lincolnshire's Leaving Care service was awarded again to Barnardo's. All young people leaving care have a named worker and a clear plan for support in their transition to adulthood. Foster Carers support children in developing independence skills using the Skills for Adult Life booklet.

SUPPORTING THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The work of the Fostering Service is delivered through a number of key relationships and support functions which are described below.

1. Supervising Social Worker

The role of the Supervising Social Worker is to give support and supervision to the Foster Carer household. They also assist with practical difficulties and the provision of equipment. They are a crucial link between the carer and the Child's Social Worker. There is a supervision policy for Foster Carers. Supervision takes place bi monthly and includes a focus on personal development.

Although most support visits will be prearranged the Supervising Social Worker has a duty to undertake at least one unannounced visit per year. They are also responsible for undertaking the annual review of approval, which incorporates the carers' views and those of any birth children and fostered children. The review

also includes reports from social workers and the Supervising Social Worker who will identify strengths and future learning needs. Following completion of the review the foster carer is issued with a statement of re- approval.

2. Child's Social Worker

The child's Social Worker is responsible for the overall management of the child's care plan. They have a statutory duty to visit the child within one week of placement and thereafter at a minimum of six weekly intervals until a child is confirmed as being in their permanent placement when a three monthly visiting pattern may be appropriate. However in most circumstances the visiting pattern will be more frequent and determined by an individual child's needs.

3. Foster Carer Support

The service delivers quarterly focus groups with foster carers across the County. These provide opportunities for engagement with the service, support and training opportunities. The service has developed a group of foster carer mentors who are linked with foster carers at the point of approval and provide an essential support and point of contact to enhance the confidence and skills of newly approved foster carers. The Caring2Learn programme has recruited foster carer champions to provide training and guidance with regard to the development of a learning environment within the foster home. The service operates a number of support groups across the County. This provides further opportunities for learning & development, whilst building upon greater networking.

All Foster Carers receive a handbook which details local policy, information about fostering terms and conditions and guidance about requirements concerning the care and control of children and other procedures. The handbook has been updated and the amended version sent to Foster Carers. The service continues to provide an electronic newsletter which remains the preferred generic communication method between the fostering service and foster carers. This allows us to disseminate information, including training events and dates, social events, good news stories and best practice information to the majority of our foster carers. Those without email or who chose not to receive emails are provided with a copy of the newsletter via their Supervising Social Worker.

All foster carers are provided with individual membership of the Fostering Network.

4. Out of Hours Service - Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

This service provides a team of social workers who are available outside of office hours to offer emergency support to service users and the public. The EDT can

offer telephone advice and has access to placement information and emergency placements with Foster Carers. Early Help Workers and Future4 me staff are available to provide practical assistance out of hours in certain circumstances.

5. Placement Support Workers

The service employs a dedicated group of Placement Support Workers supporting Foster Carers by working with the young people in placement in a range of settings including the carers' homes and community based venues to promote a safe and caring environment that reflects the needs of young people.

Priority support is given to those Foster Carers where young people, for whatever reason, are not currently attending school. The placement support worker ensures that homework is available or some form of educational teaching to promote learning and enable the young person to achieve their maximum potential.

The Placement Support Workers are expected to attend any meetings and contribute to the care plan for the young person and to attend regular training.

Family Centres have been used to facilitate cooking and crafts with young people and Youth Centres have also been used to encourage and develop social interaction with others; whilst trips to local stores to purchase cooking ingredients has helped young people to develop skills in the management of money. During the summer period PSWs join together to provide group activities for children in foster care and provide Foster Carers with information about cost effective activities in their areas.

Placement Support Workers have also worked alongside children in school and have assisted with homework after school.

Swimming lessons have been arranged and young people enrolled in theatre group work and sports lessons, all encouraged and assisted by the Placement Support Workers.

Specific work is also undertaken with individual young people including Life Story work, anger management, building self-esteem, working with sibling groups to develop empathy and understanding, drug and alcohol awareness, sexual health matters, healthy eating, managing a budget and help provided to Foster Carers to establish routines and advise on behavioural issues. All Placement Support Workers have undertaken 'Train the Trainer' for the SPOT course so that they are able to facilitate this training. Placement Support Workers are trained to offer theraplay to provide behavioural and attachment support to foster carers.

TRAINING

The Fostering Service ensures that Foster Carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care to meet the needs of each child placed in their care.

Training of Foster Carers is a significant aspect of the service and is provided both pre and post approval and is included within the Fostering Service's Annual Training Plan.

Training is not an option but a clear expectation of all carers and is evaluated in supervision sessions and annual reviews. A three year cycle of training in Safeguarding, Safe Care and First Aid is a requirement for all carers. In addition, mandatory courses on Diversity and Trauma Awareness are held and should be completed on a 3 yearly basis.

Following feedback from carers the TSD (Training, Standards and Development) and Learning Home Toolkit was combined, the feedback from both staff and carers has been overwhelmingly positive. This ensures that all new carers meet the standards but can also progress and develop their practice and homes to ensure children can heal and meet their full potential. The toolkit encourages training and development in line with Lincolnshire Children Service' priorities and national research. The toolkit encourages the development of relationships between Foster Carers, schools and other professionals and their participation within a community.

Pre-approval training is over three days and is provided in-house with a Supervising Social Worker from the Recruitment Team being the lead facilitator. The course has evolved over the years to reflect changing practice, local experience and the national fostering agenda. In light of the second stage process of recruitment the course has been divided into both preparatory and post approval training. All foster carers are provided with online access to the LSCB (Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board) suite of training.

An Annual Foster Carer celebration Conference is held and offers both training, information and recognises the work that foster carers undertake via a range of long service awards.

PROCESS OF RECRUITING AND APPROVING FOSTER CARERS

Foster Carers are recruited and assessed in line with Lincolnshire guidance based on the National Minimum Standards, Fostering Regulations, Code of Practice (1999).

A Recruitment Team is in place to ensure a prompt response to all first time enquirers. The Practice Supervisor is responsible for the implementation of the Recruitment Strategy and managing all aspects of the recruitment process.

Recruitment involves:

- Co-ordinating evening events whereby foster carers and young people in care attend and give their real life experiences
- Utilising social media to reach wide audiences
- Holding drop-in sessions at Community establishments
- Newspaper advertisements
- Newspaper articles
- Distribution of posters
- Information distributed through displays and presentations
- Word of mouth through existing carers
- The recommend a friend scheme
- Lincolnshire County Council LCC Connects website
- Targeted activity within specific communities in county.
- Participation in a range of county wide events.

All initial enquiries relating to fostering are completed online through the Lincolnshire County Council website and are then passed to the Recruitment Co-ordinators or the Recruitment Co-ordinators are telephoned directly.

The Recruitment Co-ordinators aim to make contact with all enquirers within 24 hours of them registering their interest online. Their role is to ensure that enquirers have all the information they need and following an initial discussion, an initial expression of interest can be completed over the phone and/or a detailed information booklet is made available to all interested applicants about the fostering process which is sent within five working days.

Once an initial expression of interest is received and allocated to a recruitment team worker; they aim to make contact within 24 hours to arrange a mutually agreeable date and time for the initial home visit. The engagement of foster carer champions within this process has been a recent development and gives prospective applicants a helping hand in realising the realities and benefits of becoming a carer for Lincolnshire.

The Recruitment Team is focusing on enhancing the overall customer experience and the Recruitment Co-ordinators represent the Local Authority in a professional manner and being respectful to all enquirers.

As part of the Stage One process statutory checks are undertaken and prospective carers attend a three day preparation group. If all aspects of Stage One are completed then the prospective carers are invited to begin the Stage Two assessment process. The service aims to have all stage 2 applications approved within 6 months. The assessments are completed by qualified social workers and follow the format of the Coram BAAF Form F.

Foster Carer approvals (including family and friends carers) are considered by the Fostering Panel. Applications to become permanent Foster Carers are considered by the Permanence Panel. The composition and organisation of the Panels is in accordance with regulation 23 of the Fostering Services Regulations, 2011.

The service provider decision maker is the Assistant Director, Children's Services.

Every Foster Carer is required to sign a Foster Carer Agreement (regulation 27 (5) – (5b)) prior to the placement of a child. A Supervising Social Worker is allocated to the family; this is usually the person who has undertaken the home study. Foster Carers are provided with a copy of the Foster Carer Charter.

Foster Carers are supervised and supported by a named locally based Supervising Social Worker and the child has their own named Social Worker. Independent Reviewing Officers undertake all childcare reviews.

The Fostering Panel always considers first reviews; however subsequent reviews are normally completed under locality management arrangements, unless there is a disagreement regarding the terms of approval which necessitates referral back to Panel. This year has seen the introduction of IFAB (Independent Fostering Advisory Board) which offers an independent quality assurance System for fostering annual reviews and will appraise reviews on the basis of year 4, year 7 and year 10 following initial approval. This process supports the ethos of a learning organisation by highlighting best practice and subsequent learning from reviews of carers.

Serious complaints or allegations will also be put before Panel to consider whether or not there should be any alterations to the terms of approval. Since April 2009 Foster Carers have the right to challenge decisions through an Independent Mechanism Review or the Councils Corporate complaints section.

FINANCE

Most Foster Carers receive weekly allowances according to the age of the child. Despite the financial difficulties faced by Local Authorities, in 2019 fostering allowances have increased by 2%.

A specialist fostering scheme remains in place targeted on harder to place children. Placement+ Carers are paid higher fees. Carers able to make permanent commitment to children, receive an increased rate of allowance as do those able to take the more complex adolescents. The service also offers parent and child placements and placements for young people on remand.

MONITORING THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICE

Foster Carers have at least one unannounced visit per year. This is undertaken by a Supervising Social Worker. They also receive regular supervision from an allocated Supervising Social Worker. This is held bi-monthly. Each Foster Carer is subject to an annual review and contributions are sought from IRO's, Social Workers and children placed.

The Service Manager monitors a range of matters identified in the National Minimum Standards 2011 (regulation 35 (1)) to ensure that standards are adhered to and that the service is developing to meet the needs of a range of children. Reports are submitted on a quarterly basis to the executive to monitor service development.

Regular quality audits are completed by staff from the Fostering Service at key stages in a Foster Carer's career. These are to ensure compliance with procedures and policy and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention of the Supervising Social Worker.

COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Summary of the Complaints Procedure

The Directorate has a statutory complaints service; the detail of which is contained in the guide for staff 'Handling Comments and Complaints'. It is a three stage process:

- Stage 1 – Local Resolution
- Stage 2 - An independent investigating officer is appointed
- Stage 3 - A formal review by an Independent Panel of independent members plus the Complaints Resolutions Manager.

Staff must ensure that all carers know how and who to complain to.

Complainants have the right to involve a friend or advocate.

The Named Manager monitors all complaints and liaises with the Complaints Officer and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Business Manager. This information is available to authorised persons only. All Foster Carers have access to support and information regarding the complaints procedures and at the point of any investigation, support can also be accessed through membership of Fostering Network; the cost for which will be met by the agency. Complaints are collated and reported to the Corporate Parenting Sub Group and themes are shared within the service. Details of complaints relating to the service are considered within the annual fostering report.

Allegations

Foster Carers can sometimes be the subject of allegations in respect of the care of the children or young people they are looking after. If this occurs the allegation will be investigated in line with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership child protection procedures with all allegations managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer. In addition to the role of the Supervising Social Worker, Foster Carers have access to an Independent Social Worker via Foster Talk who can offer practical and emotional support.

All allegations and other matters are monitored by the manager who ensures that these are retained for agencies to view as appropriate.

ADVOCACY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Lincolnshire County Council commissions its advocacy for children through Voiceability "Total Voice"



Total Voice Lincolnshire

Referral and Information Line: 01529 400 479

Text:

07860 018 887

Email:

tv1@voiceability.org

Website: www.totalvoicelincs.org

When might you want an advocate?

You can ask to speak with advocate if you:

- Have serious concerns about the care you are getting
- Want to be more involved in decisions being made about you and your future
- Want to fight decisions being made about you
- Want to make a complaint.

Office of the Children's Commissioner



Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner is Anne Longfield. She has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on children and young people with difficulties or challenges in their lives, and in particular those living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services.

The Children's Commissioner can be contacted:-

By writing to her at

The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Phoning her on Freephone 020 7783 8330

Emailing at info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Visiting the website www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED

On 31st March 2020 there were 622 children in care to Lincolnshire County Council.

Of this number 446 were placed with Foster Carers (including kinship carers), including 28 placed in independent foster placements and 4 unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Lincolnshire Fostering Service works to the Lincolnshire County Council's Equality and Diversity Policy which is available on the council's intranet site.

The Lincolnshire Fostering Service will treat all service users fairly, openly and with respect throughout the fostering approval process. Applicants wishing to be approved as Foster Carers will be considered irrespective of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability providing the Fostering Service considers they can safely meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into independence.

Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a child or young person's emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability.

The Lincolnshire Fostering Service recognises that no child or young person should have to wait indefinitely for the ideal placement.

OFSTED

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting fostering services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

Questions or complaints

The one point of contact for all questions, queries and complaints is Ofsted.

The telephone number is 0300 123 1231. This number manages all general enquiries and will redirect them as necessary; they can also be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

Ofsted
Piccadilly gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Fostering Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually.

If you require this document in a different language or an alternative format such as large print, audio tape or Braille, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team on 01522 782060.

The Statement of Purpose, Children's Guides and other information are also available on the Lincolnshire County Council website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

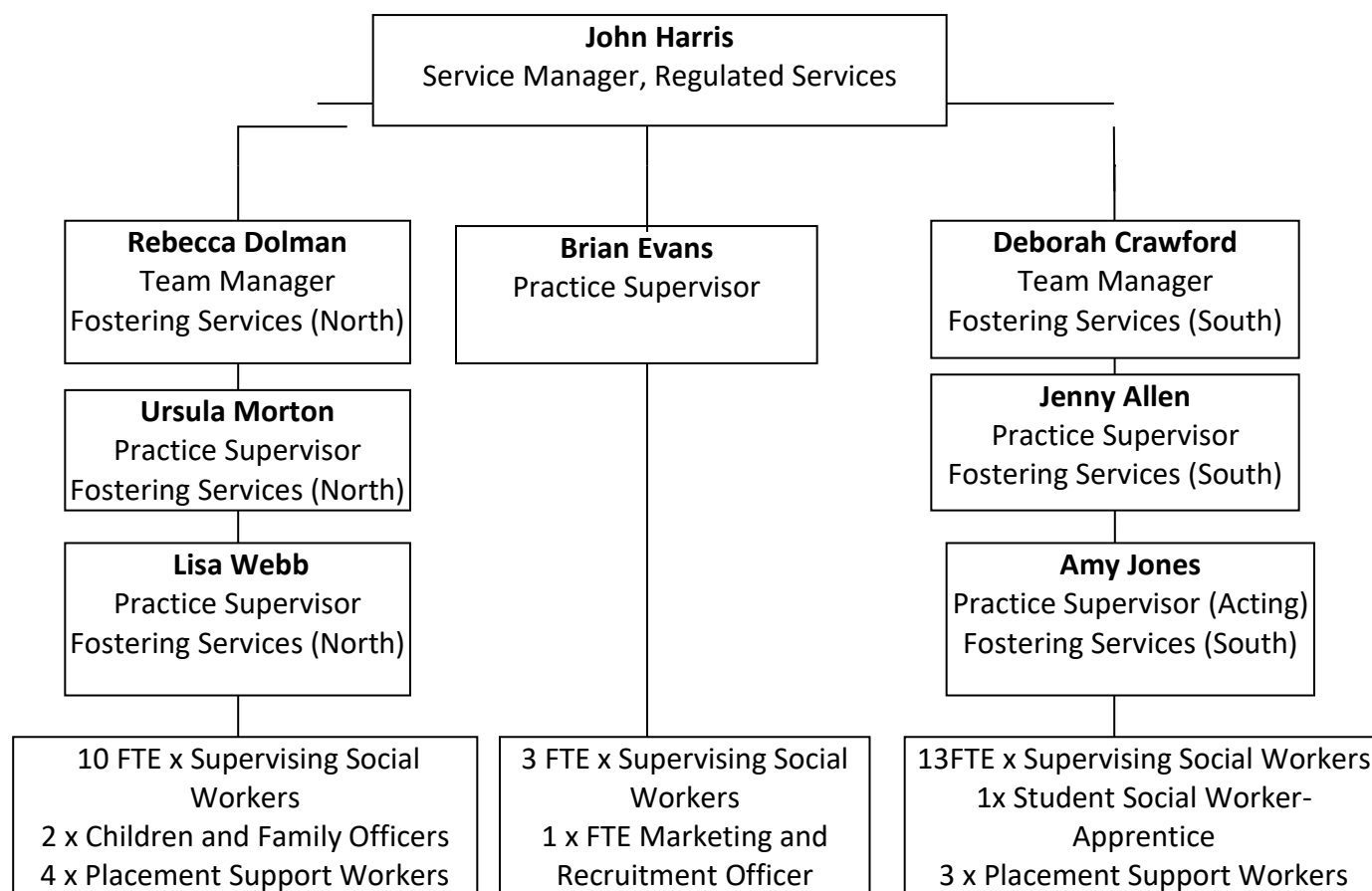
A copy can also be obtained from the registered manager:

John Harris Service Manager – Regulated Services
Lincolnshire County Council
Orchard House
Orchard Street
Lincoln
LN1 1BA
01522 554109

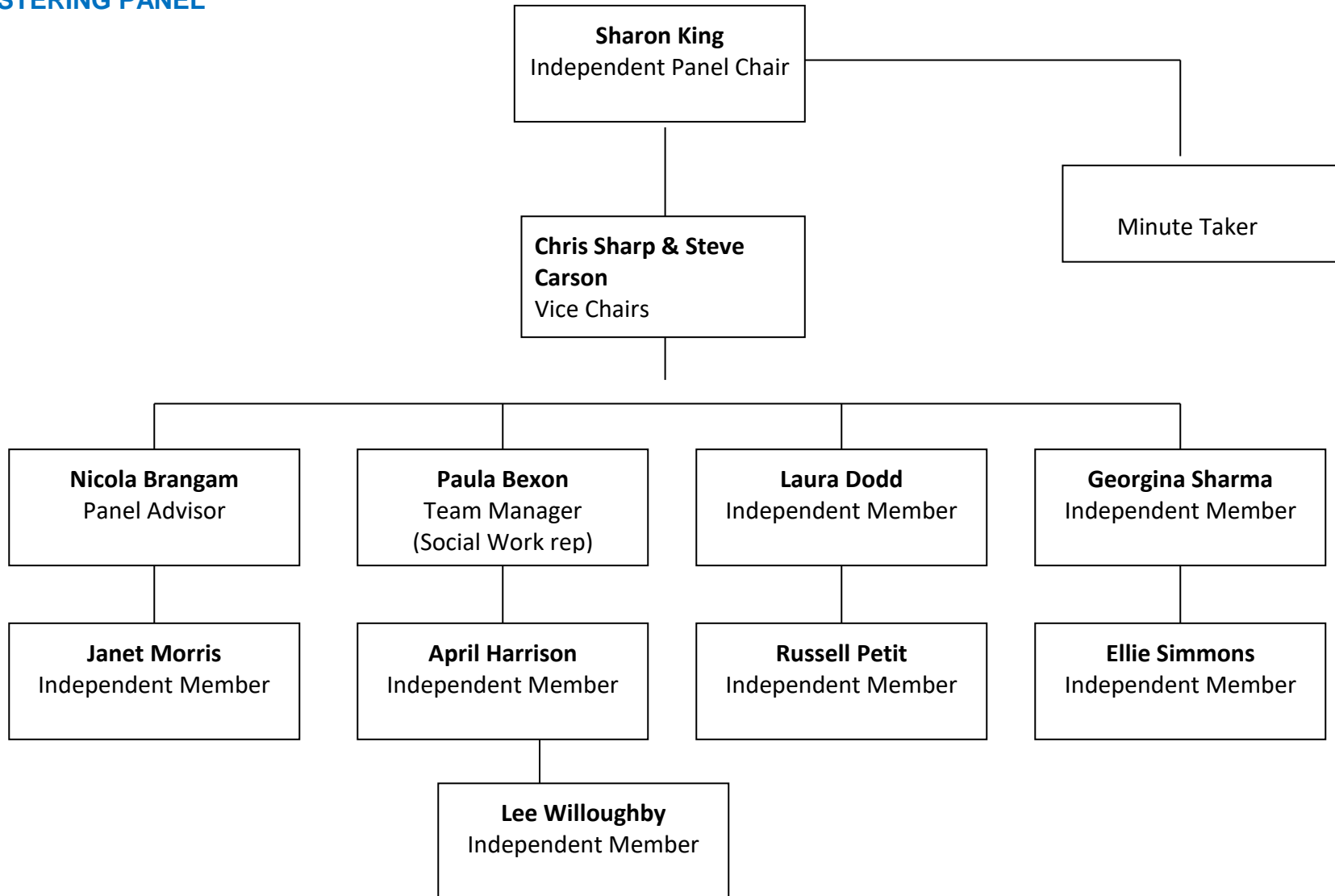
APPENDIX 1 FOSTERING SERVICE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE – SENIOR MANAGEMENT

There are two Team Managers for Fostering Service who line manage the two teams of Fostering Social Workers and Supervising Social Workers.

FOSTERING SERVICE – MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



APPENDIX 2
FOSTERING PANEL



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 2020
Subject:	Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel about the work of the Adoption Service in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards National Minimum Standards 2003, 2011, 2014, and the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The National Minimum Standards, together with the Adoption Regulations, form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies.

Under the requirements of the National Standards, Members, in their role as Corporate Parents, should be informed on a regular basis about the activity of the Adoption Service.

The National Minimum Standards for the Adoption Service are broken down into 31 standards. Standard 17 deals with the "monitoring and controlling" and requires the Executive Councillor to satisfy itself that the Adoption Agency is effective and achieves good outcomes for children (Section 17.3). Standard 18 deals with the Statement of Purpose and requires the Executive Councillor to satisfy itself that the Adoption Agency and Adoption Support Agency meet the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose.

The Annual Report at Appendix A and the Statement of Purpose at Appendix B set out the relevant performance information, and identifies the key developments with the service of the last twelve months.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:

- a) Consider the Adoption Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose and highlight any comments for further consideration;
- b) Recommend the approval of the Adoption Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose.

1. Background

In recognition of the highly specialised nature of adoption, Lincolnshire Children's Services operates a discreet Adoption Service, on a countywide basis from three localities. The Annual Report and Statement of Purpose thus present the performance of the service over the previous year 2019-20 to the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services and Elected Members.

2. Conclusion

The Annual Report attached at Appendix A contains a range of information about the Adoption Agency in relation to performance indicators and measuring good outcomes; the work of the Adoption Panel; and various regulations relating to the Act and Adoption Support.

The Statement of Purpose is attached at Appendix B and its purpose is to ensure children, staff and service users are clear about the aims and objectives of the Adoption Agency and Adoption Support Agency, and what services and facilities it provides. Members of the Adoption Panel and staff working in the Adoption Service have been consulted.

The Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of Standard 18 of the Adoption Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and Regulation 2 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003.

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	Adoption Annual Report
Appendix B	Adoption Statement of Purpose

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Yvonne Shearwood, who can be contacted on 01522 554849 or Yvonne.Shearwood@lincolnshire.gov.uk



Annual Adoption Report 2019/2020

Introduction

This report provides information about the Adoption Service and outcomes for children looked after by Lincolnshire County Council, from the period April 2019 – March 2020 inclusive. The purpose of the Annual Report is to inform the public, Elected Members, partners and staff of the progress and developments of the Adoption Service during this period.

The County Council's Business Plan outlines the organisational values that reflect the Council's Vision and Purpose, providing a set of consistent, simple values that will guide our attitudes and behaviours. These values define how we do things, and are the principles by which we work together and with our customers and partners, and are underpinned by the following statement:

Our vision

Is working for a better future by

- Building on our strengths
- Protecting your lifestyle, and
- Being ambitious for the future

Our purpose

- Investing in infrastructure and the provision of services
- Commissioning for outcomes based on our communities' needs
- Promoting community wellbeing and resilience
- Influencing, coordinating and supporting other organisations that contribute to the life of Lincolnshire, and
- Making the best use of all of our resources

Our purpose within Regulated Services is to ensure that every child in every part of the county achieves their potential, responding appropriately to the assessed needs of all looked after children and young people, to ensure that their life chances are maximised by their experience of the service. The vision is 'Putting Children First'

National Adoption Agenda

The Government continues to maintain a clear focus on minimising delay for children with a plan for adoption and maximising the potential pool of adopters.

On the 13th March 2014, the Children and Families Bill received royal assent and became the Children and Families Act 2014 on 22nd April 2014. To reflect the changes, regulations, National Minimum Standards and the statutory guidance for adoption were amended and came into force in July 2014. The changes inherent in the Act have continued to be implemented in Lincolnshire, with the establishment of Foster-to-Adopt placements, a two-stage approval process for adopters, and the development and expansion of support services to adoptive families.

On the 1st May 2015, the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was rolled out to all local authorities. The fund offered a fast, simple service for local authorities to apply to, meaning that adoptive families can access the support they need, as and when they need it. To access the fund, adoptive families need to have an assessment of adoption support needs completed by the local authority. Where the assessment identifies that therapeutic services would be beneficial to a family, the local authority can apply to the ASF on the family's behalf, who will then release the funding to the local authority.

In June 2015, the government published its proposal for the regionalisation of adoption services. The rationale behind this proposal was outlined as:

"By the end of this Parliament, we want to see all local authorities being part of regional agencies. We want to accelerate the pace of change to ensure those children for whom adoption is the right path, are given the best chance of finding a loving, forever family as quickly as possible. This year, we want to provide up to £4.5M of start-up funding to support early adopters to take forward their proposals."

The government invited local authorities and voluntary organisations to combine their resources and submit an expression of interest to become early adopters of regionalisation.

In response to the proposal, The East Midlands Adoption Consortium submitted, and was successful, in its bid for government granted development funding to progress plans for an adoption agency, which would bring together five local authorities, three unitary authorities, and three voluntary agencies into a new regional adoption agency across the East Midlands area. Lincolnshire was a member of the Consortium supporting the development of the project. Over the period 2018/19 Lincolnshire continued to be involved in planning for the region. Nottingham city, Nottinghamshire, Derby city and Derbyshire operated a 'pilot' regional agency, and then launched as a regional adoption agency last summer. Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland continued to work cooperatively together to develop a partnership with a now established regional family finding group and plans in place to coordinate the work processes across the region.

Developing the workforce to ensure all social workers have the skills and knowledge to make swift and robust decisions about the best placements for children to meet their short and long term needs, was seen as a priority, and in Lincolnshire the adoption staff have all been involved in the Signs of Safety framework in order to support their work. In addition all of the 'SSW' have completed their 'adult attachment interview' training in order to improve the quality of the adopter assessments, and to assist in the process of matching children to adopters.

In April 2019 Lincolnshire were commissioned by Rutland to deliver adoption services on their behalf, so a contract was developed with them, and over the course of the year Lincolnshire conducted a marketing campaign in Rutland and the first adoption information evening in Oakham, where several couples expressed an

interest in becoming adopters . There have been regular meetings with Rutland staff to ensure that the work is completed in a timely way and to track cases. Lincolnshire were actively involved in Rutlands OFSTED inspection in February 2020, by holding a training event with Rutland staff, providing children and adopters files for evidence, and meeting with the inspector. The comments on adoption services in the Rutland OFSTED inspection report were positive.

At the end of March 2019 the statutory adoption register run by Coram BAAF ceased to operate, so Lincolnshire joined the Linkmaker system, which enabled SW staff and adopters to access information on children nationally and to have Lincolnshire children on the national system. This has been effective as the regional colleagues also use this system so there is a regional area where the family finding for the region is held , but also the option to have children on the system nationally so that approved adopters seeking a child can do so through this system .

In April 2019 Lincolnshire were inspected under the new ILACS system by OFSTED and, along with the rest of children's services, were rated 'outstanding'. This was the third consecutive 'outstanding' for Lincolnshire adoption team.

In January 2020 Lincolnshire became involved in a pilot project for Coram/BAAF which focussed on the 'Together or Apart' assessment model which had been constructed and developed by Shelagh Beckett to assist SW's with the task of making lifelong decisions regarding the placing of sibling groups. Unfortunately due to Coronavirus it has not been possible to develop the work on this as was planned so the project has been extended and will be modified to a 'virtual ' model of delivery .

There remains a clear alignment of the local, regional and national agenda which is encapsulated in Lincolnshire County Council's vision "*that every child in every part of the county should achieve their potential*". To achieve this, the work of the Adoption Service is delivered according to the principles that the Council adheres to, specifically:

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Safeguarding
- Aspiration and Well-being
- Learning and achievement
- Best use of Resources

In addition to the above principles, four strategic outcomes for children have been agreed by Children's Services.

- Children and young people are Healthy and Safe
- Develop to their full potential in their early years and are ready for school
- Learn and Achieve
- Children and young people are ready for Adult life.

The report details how the activity of the Adoption Service fits within the framework of the above principles.

Progress on Development Goals identified in 2018/2019 Annual Report

Early Intervention and Prevention

The use of the Signs of Safety model has continued to be embedded into practice, with all of the staff having completed training. The supervising SW's are using 'mapping' as an effective tool in the initial assessment of prospective adopters. The children's workers have developed their skills in using 'words and pictures' to enhance children's understanding of their situation and the plan for adoption and 'groups supervision' and 'problem solving circles' have become part of the day to day work.

There was continued high performance on the adoption scorecard performance against key threshold measures. We continue to perform well in this area, which means that wherever possible Lincolnshire children are placed with their adoptive family as quickly as possible, many within the government timescales.

There has been an increase in the number of families who we have been able to help through the Adoption Support Fund, and have increased the training to adopters to enable them to parent therapeutically. There has been the introduction of a new 'transitions' course open to both adopters and foster carers, which has been designed to improve the transitions for children from foster care to adoptive families, using a therapeutic model.

Adoption Scorecard

The most relevant indicators refer to the years ending 31st March 2016, 31st March 2017 and 31st March 2018

There are 3 main indicators pertinent to adoption performance:

- (A1) Average time between entering care and being placed for adoption, this has decreased to 372 days with the all England average having decreased to 486 days and statistical neighbour average of 466 days. Lower is better.
- (A2) Average time between gaining authority to place and achieving a match is 141 days, significantly lower than the all England average of 201 and the statistical neighbour average of 203. Lower is better.
- (A3) The percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 74% in Lincolnshire, slightly down on last year but still well above the all England average of 56%.
- Adoptions as a percentage of children leaving care remain strong at 12%.

For the single year 2018/19, performance for Lincolnshire (A1) as at 31st March 19 was 344 days, with (A2) reducing to 141 days. For the 2019/20 year the average was 403 [A1] and 141 [A2] (these are Lincolnshire figures as the most recent scorecard has not been published).

These remain to be strong figures compared to both statistical neighbours and the national average, and the challenge going forward will be to remain 'on target'. The increase in the A1 is indicative of the length of care proceedings becoming longer, but the A2 remains the same, and indicates that Lincolnshire children are being

placed in a timely way wherever possible. There continues to be a small cohort of children whose timescales will fall out of the target and this is due to them being difficult to place or applications from parents for leave of the court to appeal Placement Orders which has been a cause for delay. This year has seen a similar number of children with a plan of adoption, from 42 to 43. The trend for high numbers of children placed on Special Guardianship Orders, has reduced. The number of children coming into care following a marked increase last year, has levelled. The number of adoption orders granted this year has gone up significantly from 41 for 2019, to 53 for 2020. This increase is likely to be due to the numbers of adoptions which were contested and therefore took a longer period in the court arena, so many of these adoption orders were from previous years.

Regionalisation Agenda

The East Midlands was one of 19 areas that were given funding to progress scoping work around an East Midlands RAA. The initial expression of interest submitted to the DfE was on behalf of eight local authorities (Lincolnshire, Derby City, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire including Rutland, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire and Peterborough, and three voluntary Adoption Agencies; Adopt Together, Coram East Midlands and Family Care). An East Midlands RAA Transition Plan was submitted to the DfE and there was extensive work on this throughout the year. Adoption East Midlands launched as a regional agency in the summer of 2019. This left Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland continuing to work as a partnership, planning the various different 'workstreams' which need to be agreed before regionalisation can take place. In January 2020 North Lincolnshire made the decision to join the partnership and since then have been part of the regional planning. This continues to be progressed.

A governance structure has been established with representatives from across the region forming the Project Governance Board.

Safeguarding

Over the course of the year 'Signs of Safety' has continued to be incorporated into the adoption process wherever possible as a model for assessing matches, adoptive placements and for risk assessments, and in direct work with children whilst preparing them for placement. Staff members in the team have been actively involved in developing the use of 'words and pictures' in direct work with children assisting them in understanding the reasons they are in care, and were not safe in their birth families.

The supervising social workers in the team have all now completed their adult attachment style training and are using this alongside 'mapping' as a way of analysing their initial assessments of adopters, in order to ensure that we are assessing and approving adopters who will be able to manage the needs of the children who require adoptive placements.

Aspiration and Well-being

Maximise the benefits to adoptive families in Lincolnshire arising from the Adoption Support Fund. There has been an increase in the number of families who have been provided with therapeutic support via the Adoption Support Fund to assist families in utilising therapeutic parenting techniques in their family life.

Over the course of 2019/20 there were been 145 applications to the Adoption Support Fund in order to provide therapeutic input for adopted children and families. The amount of funding granted from the fund to cover these was £350,000.

There were cases where individual therapy was delivered either by therapeutically trained staff within the Post Adoption Team, or by external providers. In all of the cases there were individual sessions using Theraplay, therapeutic Lifestory work, DDP or sensory integration therapy. There were also a number of cases where there was a detailed assessment of therapeutic needs, followed by an intensive period of therapeutic input and attachment focussed therapy, delivered from the external provider. All of the families in receipt of these services have reported them to be positive in helping them to meet the challenge of parenting their adopted children.

Learning and achievement

Maintain strong links with the virtual school and ensure adopted children in schools receive the full benefit from initiatives including the Pupil Premium.

To implement adoption support training for all adoption social workers to enable team members to work effectively across all adoption support tasks, creating a flexible workforce who can respond to the changing needs of the service.

During 2019/20 the majority of adoption staff have continued to be trained/supported in 'Theraplay', so that they can support adoptive families with children newly in placement to use therapeutic parenting models in order to enhance the building of positive attachments in the early stages of placement. In some of the cases, where sibling groups are placed, there is an intensive package of Theraplay to support the transition from foster care into adoptive placement. To compliment this, there are three clinicians within the Adoption Support Team who are trained in Dyadic Therapy, Filial Therapy and Family Therapy, thus creating a flexible and sustainable adoption service.

Also the Team was able to further extend the range of post-adoption activities for children and families during school holidays with groups focussed on music making at Soundlinks, which resulted in the young people attaining awards. There were watersports activities which promoted confidence, built skills and teamwork; forest schools for the younger children to promote awareness of nature and give them new skills and two photography workshops which provided new skills and creativity. All of these activities enabled adopted children to meet one another and provided an

environment in which the children could talk about being adopted as well as increasing self-esteem.

Lincolnshire were involved in producing a podcast for BBC radio 4 which has won a number of awards, and promoted public awareness about adoption. This podcast continues to be used by a number of local authorities in their training and preparation of adopters.

Best use of Resources

Use and embed new case management recording system in adoption whilst maintaining business as usual.

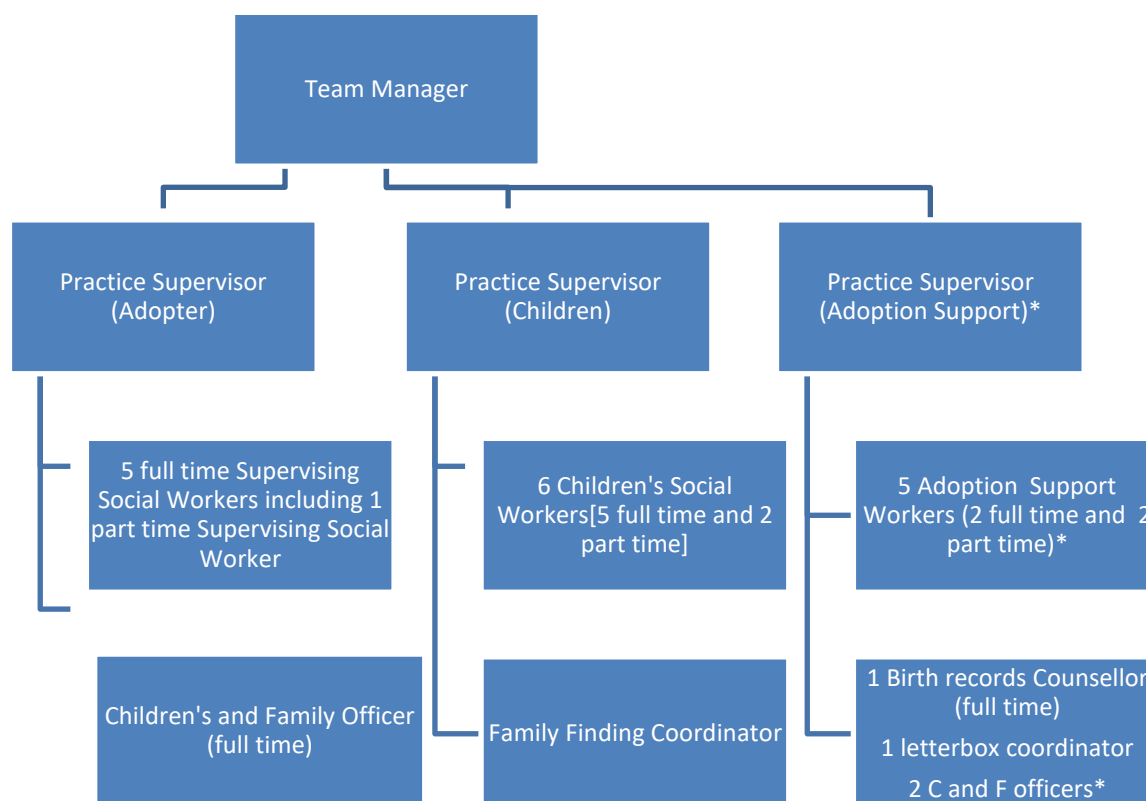
Staffs in the post adoption team have been involved in rebuilding the Mosaic system so that it is now a useful and effective recording system which is being used by all team members. The final part of the build was to ensure that the adoption support workflows are correct and effective. This has now been completed so that the system can be used effectively throughout the service

The post adoption team have begun to develop a range of services for SGO support, to enable them to have access to training, support groups, and advice and guidance. Support proposed will be two-tiered, with the FAST Teams completing the formal reassessment of SGO support plans. The Adoption Support Team has developed an information leaflet and helpline for Special Guardians. Guardians will be granted access to the e-Learning currently available for foster carers and a quarterly newsletter is being developed. Applications to the ASF will be managed through the adoption service.

Service Role and Structure

The core duties of the Adoption Service remain broadly unchanged. The Adoption Service continues to provide services to children, adopters and birth family members as required by the National Adoption Minimum Standards 2014 as issued by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the [Care Standards Act 2000](#), Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, the Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005) and the Adoption Statutory Guidance July 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Adoption Team remains a stand-alone countywide service with office bases at Lincoln, Sleaford and Louth.



The Adoption Service is staffed by a Team Manager, three Practice Supervisors, six Children's Adoption Social Workers and six Supervising Social Workers. The Adoption Support Team has one Birth Records Social Worker, two full-time and two-part time Adoption Support Social Workers, a Children and Families Officer who manages the 'letterbox' and an adoption support worker who supports adoptive families in the community. At the end of the year a new early help worker was appointed to focus on the needs of SGO carers and provide them with support and assessments.

The Children's Adoption Social Workers progress children's plans for adoption. The Supervising Social Workers recruit and assess prospective adopters, as well as completing step parent adoption assessments. Supervising Social Workers also deliver preparation training courses for adopters. A qualified Social Worker in the Adoption Support Team carries out the agency's statutory duties of birth record counselling for adopted adults. Lincolnshire does not provide intermediary services but does provide limited assistance in tracing where it is able. The Adoption Support Social Workers complete work directly with families who have adopted and who are struggling to manage issues specifically linked to their adoption. In addition they organise groups and activities to support adopters and adopted children. The Children and Family Officer coordinates the indirect contact arrangements for adopted children and birth relatives together with the completion of life story work for the preparation of children placed for adoption.

Adoption Performance

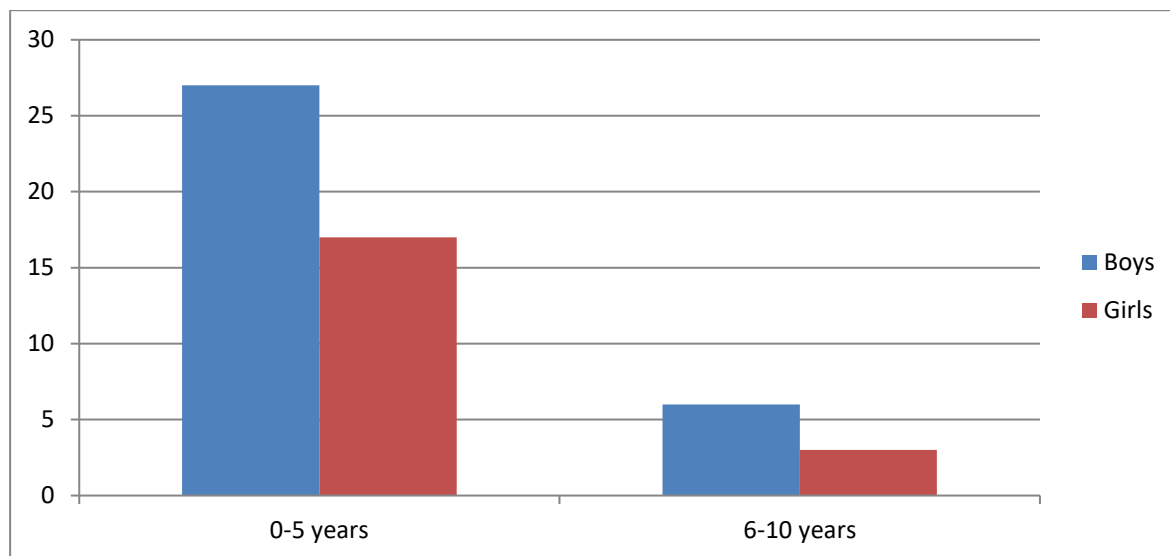
Adoption Orders granted April 2019– March 2020

- In the year to March 2020, 53 adoption orders were granted.
- In addition 33 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

This year has seen an increase in the number of adoptions in Lincolnshire with 53 adoptions being now well above the average .Some of those were orders which have been before the court for many months as a result of having been actively contested by the birth parents which has created considerable delay and therefore the time between placement in adoption and the adoption order being made has been much longer .The number of children being placed on SGO's has significantly reduced from 63 in 2018/19 to only 33 in 2019/20. Performance against the Adoption Scorecard has already been discussed in detail above with performance against all three threshold measure continuing to show good performance which is consistently better than the statistical neighbours, and the England average .

Adoption Activity for 2019/2020

Profile of children adopted 2019/2020:



Lincolnshire County Council achieved fifty three adoption orders during 2019/2020, an increase of 12 from the previous year and taking the figure above the average number for Lincolnshire. Also there was a change in the demographic as there were 33 boys and 20 girls. There were a number of cases which had been delayed in the courts for many months due to contested adoption cases. Contested adoption cases have become a common theme, as more adoptions are being contested by birth parents and the court are giving birth families every opportunity, before making the final decision. This would also account for the increased number of children adopted in the 6-10 age range which has increased by almost 100%.

Lincolnshire has continued to achieve high performance levels for the timely placement of children. There are fewer children waiting and many of the children are pre-matched prior to the court granting the Placement Order. In addition to this, 33 Special Guardianship Orders were granted and these are counted by the DFE as part of the adoption performance measure.

In this year four of the children were placed in Foster-to-Adopt' placements, prior to being adopted, where they benefitted from being securely attached to their prospective adopters from as early as possible in the process. Six children were adopted by their foster carer, which is a significant increase as there were only three children last year. This has implications for fostering and for funding, but has meant that a number of children who would have been difficult to place have been able to remain in their placements and become a member of the family, so is a really positive outcome for the child.

There were seven sibling groups. There were three sibling groups of three children and there were four sibling groups of two. The other thirty four children in the cohort were all singletons. In terms of a profile of ethnicity, there was one child of Eastern

European heritage, two of Middle Eastern heritage. All other children were recorded as White British.

Profile of children with a best interest plan of adoption 2019/20

During April 2019 to March 2020, forty four children had an agency decision of adoption, of which 38 went on to, be subject to a placement order. This was slightly less than the previous year's figure of 48, with 45 children made subject to placement orders, so in fact the figures were similar .The number of Special Guardianship orders has reduced significantly to only 33 .

Of the 44 children there were the following groups of siblings:

- 3 groups of 3 children
- 3 groups of 2 children
- 29 single children

This is an increase in the numbers of sibling groups as compared to last year's there are 3 groups of three who may be difficult to place. There continued to be use of kinship placements and Special Guardianship Orders throughout the 2019/20 performance year, but at a much lower rate with the numbers of children in care remaining fairly steady .By the year end one of the groups of three were not made subject to placement orders and remained with relatives, the other two were delayed in the court process and have not yet had a final hearing .

Age ranges of children with a best interest plan of adoption 2019/20

- 0 - 5 years = 38 [47]
- 6 -10 years = 5 [1]
- 10 plus = 0 [0]

Previous year performance in brackets.

The predominant ethnicity of the children with a best interest plan remains White British although there were three children of Eastern European heritage.

In line with the Government's intention set out in the Children and Family Bill 2014, the matching policy for Lincolnshire is clear that it seeks to place children with adopters who will actively seek to meet all their needs, including those that arise from their culture and ethnicity. However this will not be achieved at the expense of delay for the child in securing an adoptive family.

Children under 5 years remain the largest age group placed for adoption; these children often come as part of a sibling group with older children and therefore the target of the service's recruitment strategy continues to target adopters willing to consider sibling groups and older children.

Profile of children placed for adoption

With regard to placements made this year 28 children were placed as opposed to 38 the previous year, showing that the numbers with adoption plans had reduced somewhat as compared with the year before. Of these, 24 were singleton placements, 4 children were placed in 2 sibling groups of 2, and no groups of three were placed. Of these sibling groups, one of the groups had one child over five. All but two of the other children placed were under five with 22 of them being placed before they were 2 years. There were 18 boys placed and 10 girls, so a similar proportion to last year.

Overall, with some variation in the numbers of sibling groups, this is similar to the previous year as approximately 25 under 5's a year seems to be fairly constant. There has been a significant increase in the number of cases which are delayed in court awaiting placement orders and this has created delay for 10 children who were not placed within NMS 17.7 as they waited several months to be made subject to a placement order.

Children Awaiting Placement at the close of 2019/20.

At the end of March 2020, there were 11 children whose plans were not agreed by the court and who did not yet have a placement order. There were a further 5 children whose plans were changed by the courts and who either returned home or were placed with relatives on an SGO. There were therefore only 7 children awaiting placement. There are 3 young children who have special needs or complex health /development issues. There are a sibling group of 3 children and one older child who will be difficult to place and whose legal position is complex. In addition, there were 8 children who were provisionally linked but not yet formally matched.

Adopters approved as suitable to adopt during 2019/20

A total of 28 adoptive parents were approved to adopt during 2019/2020, with no adopters approved for inter-country adoption. Seven of these were also approved for Foster to adopt. This is a decrease with 15 less adopters than last year's figures but we still ended the year with adopters awaiting placements so were able to meet the referrals for children with adoption plans coming through the system. The focus of the work during this year was to match the children waiting and place them into adoptive families at the earliest opportunity. The trend changed from one of children waiting to one where adopters are ready and waiting so that we always have approved adopters waiting to select positive matches with. At 31/03/2020 there were 10 [7] adopters approved and waiting, eight of which were being considered for possible links. In addition there were four adopters fostering children with a view to adoption.

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total Adopters approved	28	43	22	32	24
Of which Foster-to-Adopt	7	15	14	12	0
Foster-to-Adopt New Applications	6	10	5	12	6

Foster-to-Adopt Subsequent Applications	1	4	9	5	0
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	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Approved for one child	18	37	13	20	14
Approved for two children	10	6	9	11	9
Approved for three children	0	0	0	1	1

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16
White British	25	40	21	29
Asian/Asian British – Indian	0	1	1	2
Other white background	1	1	0	1
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	0	1		

In order to reflect the government's aspiration to encourage foster carers who then go on to adopt we supported four foster families with children in placement to apply directly to the courts for an Adoption Order. This was a lower number than last year. We will continue to maximise our capacity to recruit for larger sibling group through a mixture of targeted recruitment and the flexible use of support packages for families seeking to adopt three or more children

The Recruitment Team

During this period, the Recruitment Team still consisted of a dedicated Team Manager, three Supervising Social Workers, and Marketing and Recruitment Officer. The team were supported in their role by two Recruitment Co-ordinators.

The role of the Recruitment Co-ordinator is to log and track initial enquiries, and to act upon the information received and process enquiries in a timely manner.

The Marketing and Recruitment Officer is responsible for delivering the adoption recruitment strategy and subsequent campaigns.

The Adoption Service continued to undertake its own initial visits to determine the suitability of prospective adopters up to the approval stage.

Marketing & Recruitment

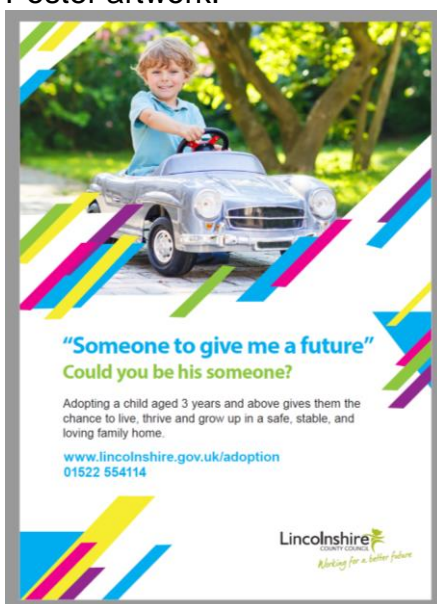
Marketing and recruitment activity stepped up again in 2018-2019 as more children were seen coming through for adoption, and there was an increase in the numbers of adopters coming through the process. In 2019/20 the numbers levelled out again and there were adopters awaiting placement, as the numbers of children reduced slightly .

Advertising campaign

During this year Lincolnshire Adoption Service continued with the campaign to attract more prospective adopters. The campaign idea was to get people to think about if they could meet a child's needs with advert imagery depicting the priority needs groups for the service i.e. children aged 3 year and over, children with additional needs, siblings, and those placed under the foster to adopt scheme with the tag lines:

- *"Someone to give me a future" Could you be his someone? (Child aged 3+)*
- *"Someone to be my champion" Could you be her someone? (Additional needs)*
- *"Someone to give me stability" Could you be his someone (Foster to adopt)*
- *"Someone to keep us together" Could you be their someone? (Siblings)*

Poster artwork:



A full advertising schedule occurred for the year including:

- Paid for Facebook adverts
- Local advertising within several publications owned by Johnston Press (including digital)
- Local advertising within several publications owned by Iliffe Media (including digital)
- Lincs FM
- Advertising on The Lincolnite and Lincolnshire Reporter websites
- Lincolnshire Life Magazine
- Int Comms
- Local press releases

All advertising in the media directed people to the information evenings to learn more about adoption from staff and approved adopters so that they could make an informed decision about if adoption was right for them and their family.

Information evenings

The adoption information evenings were run in Lincoln and Oakham in June, Lincoln and Louth in October for adoption week and Lincoln and Boston in February 2019-2020. They were all from 7pm – 9pm with the format of the evening being short talks from social workers about what adoption is, why children need adopting and what adopters the service currently needs i.e. those for children aged 3 years and over, sibling groups, children with disabilities and additional needs, and children who have been placed under the Foster to Adopt scheme. This was followed by an animation which was commissioned to explain the process to adopt in a visually engaging and easy to understand way. Two adopters/adoptive families then share their experiences of adoption both through a 15 minute talk to the audience. Finally the support which is on offer from the Adoption Support Team was presented to the audience. The evenings finish with time for the audience to mingle with the adopters and staff to ask any questions they may have one-to-one. If anyone is interested in filling out an IEI at this point they are also invited to do that.

Information evenings run throughout 2019-2020:

- Tuesday 4th June at Branston Hall Hotel, Lincoln
- Tuesday 12th June at Breckenborough Hotel, Louth
- Tuesday 15th October at Branston Hall Hotel
- Thursday 17th October at Greetham Valley Hotel, Oakham
- Wednesday 5th February at Branston Hall Hotel, Lincoln
- Tuesday 11th February at Boston

The information evenings proved to be successful with an average of 16 households attending each event and 3- 4 IEIs being completed at each.

County Shows

The adoption service also had representation at Lincolnshire Show on Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th June 2019 in the main Lincolnshire County Council marquee.

Facebook

The eagerly anticipated dedicated fostering and adoption service Facebook page was launched on 18th June 2018 and gained almost 400 followers within the year. The page is being managed by the Marketing and Recruitment Officer for the fostering and adoption services and is predominately being used as a marketing aid to recruit more foster carers and adopters, and to convey key messages including who can adopt, good news stories, and to advertise information evenings etc.

Identity

During 2017-2018 an identity was created for the fostering service which was used on information booklets, the website, advertising etc. A twin identity using different primary colours was created for the adoption service during 2018-2019 and has been rolled out on the information booklet, website and advertising. The idea being that given time, the identities will begin to resonate with the public as being Lincolnshire County Council's Fostering or Adoption Services just by looking at them after they have been in the public eye for a while.

Newsletter

The service has continued to deliver a quarterly e-newsletter to approved adopters which contain information, guidance, news, and events locally and nationally which are in the interests of our adopters.

Figures

Adoption IEIs received = 163

Foster to adopt IEIs received = 24

Total IEIs = 187

Adoption ROIs received = 23

Foster to adopt ROIs received = 7

Total ROIs = 30

This gives a conversion rate of 15% for adoption from enquiry to application, 30% for Foster-to-Adopt from enquiry to application; with a total conversion rate of 16% from enquiry to application. This is a slight reduction as compared to the figures for the previous year.

Adoption Panel Activity for 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 17.2 provides a requirement for:

“Adoption Panels to provide a quality assurance feedback to the agency every six months on the quality of reports being presented to the Panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement.”

Children’s Plans for Adoption

As part of the Quality Assurance Process for children to be considered for Adoption, these reports have been scrutinized in advance by the Panel Advisor along with Team Managers from Fostering, Adoption, FAST, Looked After Children and the Independent Reviewing Service. The Quality Assurance meeting is available each week and cases are booked in consultation with Legal Services and the Adoption Team in advance to ensure the timescales in relation to Care Proceedings are met. This process allows for a rigorous cross-agency check to ensure that the work is of a high enough standard and that the child’s wishes and views are recorded.

When compiling these reports the current Foster Carers provide a profile for the child, which is circulated. The views of parents and birth family are detailed within these reports. If there are no views then the Advisor will request that the facts and reasons why there are no views from the parents are recorded.

Written Legal Advice is provided independent of the case holder and ensures that any matters concerning Re B-S (Children) 2013 are well evidenced for the Agency Decision Maker and that the plans are robust and there are no legal issues which may prevent the plans from being considered.

The Quality Assurance meeting will collectively scrutinise each report to ensure that in their opinion the Welfare Check list has been addressed and that, if any expert reports have been requested in Care Proceedings these are available. This is particularly important in order to ensure there is a balanced approach and that key points raised have been considered fully within the Childs Permanence Report.

A summary of the assessments are included in the Child Permanence Report and copies of those expert reports are available to the Agency Decision Maker in good time to be read.

The Panel Advisor liaises with the agency to provide any actions and feedback from this forum; this may be addressed with the Adoption Service, FAST Teams, Independent Reviewing Service and Legal Services.

The Agency Decision Maker considers the welfare check list in particular:

“the relationship which the child has with relatives and with any other person in relation to whom the court or agency considers the relationship to be relevant, including (i) the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value to the child of its doing so, (ii) the ability and willingness of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, to provide the child with a secure

environment in which the child can develop, and otherwise to meet the child's need and (iii) the wishes and feelings of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child, to ensure that any recommendations made have taken account of these relationships.”

Analysis

Child Permanence Reports detail the child's history well. They are written in a style which is easy to read and consideration is made to how the views of children who are nonverbal, can still be included in the reports.

The wishes and views of birth parents can be difficult for the workers to report on due to the family disengaging with the workers. It would be beneficial to see further evidence of how workers have utilised restorative/relationship based practice to engage with birth family in this early junction. This may have a bearing on a number of outcomes for both the parents and how many contested cases are addressed.

The reports addressing a child's plan of adoption are written to a high standard and they utilise the Signs of Safety tools in their analysis. The reports detail the child's history well and are easily read and understood. The report details the challenges that a child may have faced in their early life including matters which detail the harm which was attributed to the care given to them by their birth family.

The reports also provide significant insight into the functioning and experiences of the birth family and extended family members, this allows for a fuller understanding of who was considered and an explanation as to why they could not offer care to a particular child.

This is key important information for prospective adopters and in due course the child themselves who may come to view these reports at a later stage.

Between April 2019 and March 2020, the following children have had a decision to support a plan for Adoption made by the Agency Decision Maker compared to the previous year.

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Boys approved for adoption	29	24	35	17	12
Girls approved for adoption	15	27	20	6	8
Total children approved for adoption	44	51	55	23	20
Single children approved	31	38	41	15	16
Children in sibling groups of two	5 [10]	5 [10]	4 [8]	2 [4]	2 [4]
Children in sibling groups of three	1 [3]	1 [3]	2 [6]	0	0
Children in sibling groups of four	0	0	0	1 [4]	0
White British children	42	45	52	22	19
Other white background (European)	1	2	1	1	1
Other	2	4	2	0	0
Age Range 0 - 2	36	39	32	15	11
Age Range 3 - 5	8	8	15	6	8
Age Range 6 - 8	0	3	6	2	1
Age Range 9 -11	0	0	2	0	0

Age Range 11+	0	1			
% meeting the National Minimum Standard 17.6	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Between April 2019 and March 2020, the following children have been placed for Adoption.

National Minimum Standard 17.7

The Adoption Panel makes a considered recommendation on the proposed placement of a child with particular adopters within 6 months of the Adoption Agency Decision Maker deciding the child be placed for adoption.

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/14
Total Children	44	51	55	23
Linked with adopters in timescale NMS 17.7	18	19	23	17
Linked with adopters outside timescale NMS 17.7	10	11	3	1
Awaiting link	6	21	29	1
Awaiting link – no placement order	6			
Returned to family	1	0	0	4
Change of care plan	2			
Adopted via Direct Application	1			
% meeting the National Minimum Standard 17.7	65 %	78.5%	94.5%	95%

Suitability of Prospective Adopters

There have been twenty three Adoption/Permanence Panels in this period. In that time the following applicants have been approved;

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total Adopters approved	28	43	22	32	24
Of which Foster-to-Adopt	7	15	14	12	0
Foster-to-Adopt New Applications	6	10	5	12	6
Foster-to-Adopt Subsequent Applications	1	4	9	5	0

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Approved for one child	18	37	13	20	14
Approved for two children	10	6	9	11	9
Approved for three children	0	0	0	1	1

	2019/20	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16
White British	25	40	21	29
Asian/Asian British – Indian	0	1	1	2
Other white background	1	1	0	1

Mixed White/Black Caribbean	0	1		
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% reports meeting the National Minimum Standard 10.6 timescale 82%

Again these reports have all been prepared by social workers who meet the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005.

Panel Administration requests the papers are available fourteen days ahead of the Panel date to allow the quality assurance process to take place. Reports are passed to the Advisor who checks that the applicant's statutory checks have been completed and that health checks as well as health and safety checklists have been completed. Alongside this the Advisor will ensure that the assessment is completed and that it adequately covers aspects of the couple's or individual's strengths as adopters and their ability to provide safe care to a child.

The report must ensure that the couple's or individual's child care experience, background history and life story, including education, is detailed as well as their support network and what attitude they have regarding contact arrangements for the future. The couple's or individual's financial details should be contained in the report.

The quality of Prospective Adopters Reports is very good and Adult Style Attachment interviews are being used as well as evidence from referees to appropriately explore skills and strengths.

On occasion the Advisor and Chair have required additional work to be completed prior to formal consideration by Panel however this is rare.

If there is any third party information or clarification of issues sought by Panel the workers will be asked to join Panel ahead of the applicants.

A further quality assurance check has been agreed when Lincolnshire are considering a link with out of county adopters. These PARs will be checked by both the PS in Lincolnshire and the Panel Advisor to ensure they comply with the standards in Lincolnshire.

Analysis

There is evidence within the minutes of Panel that detail the sound nature of Panel's consideration of applicants. The current central list provides us with panel members who have the experience and understanding of the adoption process in order to be able to consider the assessment.

There has been further development in using the referees as a positive source of evidence for the assessment with workers using the referee interview to confirm the views of the workers or in some cases to appropriately challenge the prospective adopter's views.

The Prospective Adopter Reports continue to be of a high standard with only single numbers where further information has been needed to achieve the standard.

These reports have all been prepared or been supervised by social workers who meet the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005.

Panel Administration requests the papers are available fourteen days ahead of the Panel date to allow the quality assurance process to take place. Reports are passed to the Advisor who checks that the applicant's statutory checks are up-to-date and that health checks as well as health and safety checklists have been completed and that a comprehensive and detailed contact plan is included within the reports.

The Panel Advisor will request any update of reports, medicals and support plan be prepared ahead of Panel to be circulated to Panel Members ahead of the deadline

The Advisor quality assures all the reports to ensure that a full assessment is provided with a clear analysis as to why this particular family has been suggested as the best match for the child and how they will best meet the child's needs.

Further work has been completed with the staff on developing a more thorough narrative by adopters on why they wish to adopt a particular child. This further identifies any potential support needs between the child and the potential adopters. The Panel Members will also consider the relative strengths of each match and also any areas where they may require further clarity.

The quality of these reports has been good with positive matches for sibling groups and single children. Reports have detailed the needs of children and how the prospective adopters will meet these needs.

Panel have consistently raised issues regarding the ability of couples to maintain the ethnicity or cultural aspects of children and have been satisfied that couples are committed to meeting the child's needs in this area.

Panel minutes show the various matches of children to couples and single carers and confirm that questioning has been relevant and focussed upon the specific task i.e. the match with the adopters to ensure that the needs of a child can be met in the suggested placement.

Adoption Support

The period covered by this report has seen further improvements to the range of adoption support services are provided within the framework set out within the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005. The majority of the support is now provided through the Adoption Support Fund, but the therapists within the team still provide packages and there is a limited commissioned service through independent providers. The service is provided on a tiered basis dependent on assessed need.

Tier 1	Wide universal support to adopters includes: Contact coordination, helpline advice, information via the Lincolnshire adoption website. Birth records counselling for adults. Also included in this tier is counselling for birth relatives whose children have been adopted as well as seminars for grandparents of adopters.
Tier 2	All of tier 1 and in addition adoption support groups/activities for adopters and for children affected by adoption. These include a programme of activities which bring adoptive children together to share experiences of

	adoption as part of leisure activities. This tier also included the Safebase parenting programme.
Tier 3	Previous tier support plus specific adoption support include assessment of need, individual adoption support packages, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Theraplay, EMDR, and Non Violent Resistance, Extended Life Story Work. This tier also includes access to primary mental health services and CAMHS. Since the spring of 2015 with the introduction of the Adoption Support Fund, government funding has been made available to provide for therapeutic input to adoptive children and their families in recognition of their lifelong needs.

Tier 1

The Lincolnshire Adoption website remains the first point of support for adopters and adopted children and during the period covered by the report all written and web materials have been benchmarked against best practice and revised. This secure site has information regarding Theraplay techniques, safeguarding information, including how to help a child access the internet safely. The site advertises adoption activities and groups and enables the Adoption Service to consult users about planned future services. Links to services from Children's Centres and a range of education services are also available from this site. In addition to the website service users can contact the Adoption Helpline for advice and guidance. Adopters can also access a range of e-learning modules.

Adopters can sign up to receiving a regular electronic newsletter which provides information on forth-coming activities, useful short articles offering advice, and encourages contributions from both adoptive parents and children.

In 2019/20 the service received 52 referrals for birth records counselling, which is less than last year, and only 10 enquiries from birth relatives seeking advice on tracing, which is less than in the previous year. Callers enquiring about tracing relatives were signposted to other agencies as Lincolnshire does not provide intermediary services. Thirty four people were provided with counselling services and regular sessions and there were 10 requests from out of county where the file information was summarised and provided to the other authority.

The birth families service is now provided by PAC UK who took the contract from After Adoption and provides counselling to birth relatives who have lost their children to adoption. The contract is at capacity and provided counselling to 36 birth parents /relatives during this year, although with the reduction in numbers of birth parents in care proceedings the nature of the referrals has changed with more of the work now being focussed on birth relatives at a later stage in the process, who may have been self-referrals or referrals through the 'letterbox'.

Contact

Indirect Letterbox contact activity

April 2019 – March 2020

As of 31st March 2020 there were 664 children on the letterbox.

For the twelve month period there were 45 new children added and 36 children removed as they turned 18.

Access to birth records counselling – 52 referrals (10 were requests from other agencies for our files)

Birth relative enquiries – 12 enquiries (for recording and signposting only)

There are 8 letterbox arrangements for families who hold Special Guardianship Orders and 4 where children are not adopted but letterbox contact was ordered by the court.

Direct Contact

- 14 children have direct contact with birth parents
- 16 with siblings
- 15 with non-adopted siblings
- 5 with grandparents

Tier 2

At the core of provision in this Tier is the offer of adoption support groups across the county, coordinated by adopters supported by the service. Attendance by adopters at these groups continues to vary but those who attend report they are appreciated. In addition there have been courses delivered in therapeutic parenting , transition to adoption , life story work and 'telling' all of which have been well attended and have had positive feedback from attendees .

We have further developed our programme of social activities to be organised during the school holidays to enable adopters and children to meet and network. We have provided funding to these Localised Adoption Support Groups totalling £3,500. The groups are adopter led and held Christmas parties, outings to local venues such as Rand Farm Children's Park, family swimming sessions, Eco Centre in Skegness and days at the beach. We have provided the following during the past year

There were:

Woodland Adventure Days for primary age children – 3 days in July 2019 – 11 attendees

Music Tech Workshops for secondary age children – series of one-day events with the same group of up to 10 children – held in April, June, September 2019 & February 2020

Activities Away, outdoor water based activities for secondary age children – 2 events in August 2019 – 1st August with 11 children and 15th August with 10 children

Theatre Workshop for primary age children – 3 days in February 2020 – 11 attendees

Circus Skills – for primary age children – 30th May with 7 attendees and 8th August with 8 attendees

We also continue to provide on-going training to adopters and this has included;

Talking about Adoption workshops – June 2019 – 16 attendees

Courses planned by the Training section for adopters, and SGO carers were advertised in the newsletters as available to be booked via the LSCB website:

Tier 3

This Tier provides specialised therapeutic support to those families who require direct adoption support with tailored plans of support intervention. All adoption support referrals are now completed by the Adoption Support Team. Safeguarding Referrals continue to be assessed by the Family Support and Assessment Teams. Over a hundred adoption/SGO support assessments have been completed and the majority indicated some form of therapeutic intervention was required. Cases can be allocated to Post Adoption Support workers who are trained to provide specialist therapeutic input across a range of therapeutic models including Dyadic Therapy, Theraplay, Psychotherapy, EMDR and Non Violent Resistance, but the vast majority are commissioned using the adoption support fund grants .

In addition to the above services, we provided direct financial support through allowances for over 100 adoptive families through the period 2019-2020. This totals £750,000 over the year.

During 2019/20 the support service received 145 new referrals that became support cases under Tier 3. The requests for support covered the following areas:

- Attachment difficulties
- Life Story work
- Contact issues
- Requests for funding for support
- Requests for respite care.
- Request for therapeutic or Theraplay input
- Mediation for adoptive families to maintain the adoptive placement.
- Child on parent violence.

It is clear that the service is managing some extremely complex cases with children who have significant difficulties. This is indicative of the Service being able to target support appropriately and reflects a small but highly skilled team. The significant support from the Adoption Support Fund has made a positive difference to the speed at which these specialised services can be delivered, and the range of services which can be offered to adopters. 145 applications were made to the fund and all were successful. A total of £350,000 was claimed from the fund in 2019/20.

The Local Authority continues to invest in the on-going training of Adoption Support staff ensuring that Clinical supervision is available to therapists within the Team and that staff participate in on going therapeutic training to ensure that the needs of families can be met. This has included further training in DDP and Therapeutic Lifestory work.

National Changes for 2019/20

Lincolnshire has been actively involved in developing plans for a regional adoption agency and is in the process of developing a 'partnership' with Leicester , Leicestershire, Rutland and North Lincolnshire who joined us in January 2020.

The target date for achieving regional adoption agencies is 2020, so there will be the need to progress plans for this over the next 12 months ,with the 'launch' of the new regional adoption partnership.

It is essential that going forward the agency has a clear focus on how best to deliver services in a way that maximises the impact of limited resources and that will include looking at efficiencies which can be delivered through the regionalisation agenda.

Service planning

Our development goals for the coming 12 month period continue to be aligned to the five County Council principles set out at the beginning of the report and the objectives for children which are set out below.

Children and young people are healthy and safe.

To continue to develop the 'signs of safety 'model, and utilisation of restorative practice, in the adoption process, and as the framework for preparing children for placement. Plans are in place for the children's SW to undertake 'restorative ' work wherever possible in their work with birth parents.

Maintain and consolidate progress on improving adoption scorecard performance against key threshold measures to minimise delay for children requiring adoption placements.

Ensure that placements are timely either through placing children as soon as they are subject to a Placement Order or through an early placement scheme, in order to promote positive attachment and making best use of in house , regional and national family finding.

To maintain focus on children's health checks

To extend the range of training available to adopters, to provide them with therapeutic parenting skills

To plan and implement training for 'family and friends' of adopters, and enable them to support families in their role as adopters.

Children develop full potential in early years and are ready for school

- Extending the Adoption Support Service to include intensive support at the early stage in placements for sibling groups, in order to promote therapeutic parenting, and attachment work early in the placement, so that children are 'ready for school '.
- Making use of the Caring 2 learn project with adopters.
- Support and develop 'play and stay' adoptive family groups to promote social learning.
- Making good use of nursery provision for adopted children.

Learn and achieve.

- Maximise the benefits to adoptive families in Lincolnshire arising from the Adoption Support Fund.
- Continue to make best use of the pupil premium to support adopted children in school.
- To be creative and innovative in terms of developing children's activities to include a 'Talk about Adoption' workshop.
- Continue the 'Transitions ' training course for adopters and foster carers together.

Children and young people are ready for adult life.

- Increase the link with the 'leaving care service' to ensure smooth transitions for adopted/SGO young people into independent living .
- To continue to provide activities for adopted children who build their skills, recognise their achievements, and build their confidence.
- Support adopted young people who are in full time further education.

Best use of Resources

- Explore options to broaden Adoption Support Model to other permanence options starting with Special Guardianship Orders.

- Through the regional lead, to continue to participate and support the emerging regionalisation agenda, positioning Lincolnshire at the forefront of any development.
- To make best use of the teams resources to develop adoption support services

Summary

The challenge for 2019/20 was to adjust services in line with the significant service developments, whilst maintaining high levels of performance against government targets. There have been issues relating to the court process, which has created delay for some children, and made the government timescales more challenging to achieve. Also, as more birth parents are contesting adoption orders, this increases the period of time that the cases remain open. The caseloads for the adoption SW's have increased, so all have worked hard to manage this.

There has been a reduction in numbers of adopters coming forward, but this has been sustainable as there were less children coming through, and so we have adopters awaiting placement and thereby still have choice of placement. The Service will continue to embed the changes to practice resulting from statutory and legislative reform and translate them into positive outcomes for children, adoptive families and those needing support post adoption.

There has been extensive activity and progress in building the post adoption / SGO services, and an additional post was established to support SGO families. In addition the team have made significant progress in the management of the Adoption Support Fund to enable Lincolnshire families to benefit from a range of therapeutic services.

Performance in 2019/20 against the key threshold measures in the adoption scorecard has remained high both for the single year and for the three year rolling average. The number of adoptions completed this year was back to the average but the timescales have consistently improved. The number of children waiting at the year-end has decreased due to the team being proactive in family finding.

The Adoption Service was subject to scrutiny by Ofsted along with the rest of Children's Services in April 2019. The inspection was undertaken using the new ILACS Framework with a clear focus on outcomes for children. To again achieve a judgement of 'Outstanding' was a strong endorsement of the professionalism and expertise within the team and the confidence shown to it by senior managers and the council as a whole.

There has been continued interest from a range of other providers around the strategy, systems and practices which sit behind the success of the service. This led to a number of invitations to showcase the Service at regional and national events which has enabled the agency to assist other LA adoption agencies in getting to "Good" and has raised the profile of Lincolnshire's Adoption Service. Hopefully the next year will see further involvement in showcasing our Service.


Going forward the Service will look to respond positively to the challenges presented through austerity and the regionalisation agenda and, in so doing, maintain its strong focus on delivering excellent outcomes for the children of Lincolnshire who have a plan for adoption.



Yvonne Shearwood
Head of Regulated Services

Anne Johnson
Adoption Team Manager

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Working for a better future

Lincolnshire Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2020

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE LINCOLNSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of standard 18 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and the Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2002, amended (2005,) (2011) and (2013) and the Children and Families Act 2014.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Management Structure

Appendix 2 Adoption Panel

Appendix 3 Staffing: Number, Relevant Qualifications and Experience.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The main aims of the Lincolnshire County Council Adoption Service are to:

Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need a permanent placement.

Meet and comply with the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services.

Ensure that all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and developed to fulfil their agency functions.

To identify children for whom the plan is adoption and to work with them and their carers to ensure children enjoy outstanding developmental outcomes, with quick progress to successful placements with their adoptive parents.

Adhere to best practice for permanency planning timescales as set out in adoption legislation and the Public Law Outline, in order to maximise each child's opportunity to experience a stable and secure family life.

Provide appropriate choice of adoption placements for children within Lincolnshire and beyond where appropriate, making full and prompt use of the Adoption East Midlands, other adoption and voluntary adoption agencies and Linkmaker.

To recruit, prepare, assess and fully support prospective adopters to meet the assessed needs of the children requiring adoptive families, including those who take a direct/Foster for Adoption placement.

The focus of assessments will be the applicants' ability to meet the assessed needs of children, promote attachment, improve their understanding of the adoption task and their suitability to be an adoptive parent through on-going quality assurance, and sustain a high standard of assessments. Assessments will be completed within the timescales set out within Statutory Adoption Guidance (2014) wherever possible.

Applicants for inter-country adoption are provided with an appropriate service from skilled and experienced workers.

Ensure that children are well prepared both practically and emotionally for a move to a new permanent family.

Provide links for children, for whom adoption is the plan, with families who can meet their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic needs, whilst recognising that no child should wait indefinitely for the "ideal" match.

Provide a comprehensive support package, including financial support where appropriate to achieve stable and successful placements.

Provide effective and efficient adoption panels to enable adoption plans for relinquished children, prospective adopter assessments and links with children to be progressed without delay.

Ensure that children's plans for adoption are agreed by the Agency Decision Maker and Placement Order applications are made to meet court timescales.

Ensure that issues for contact with the birth family are carefully considered and meet the individual needs of the child.

Ensure that where possible and appropriate, siblings will be placed together and that decisions to separate siblings are made in a timely manner, following a sibling assessment.

In conjunction with other agencies provide a comprehensive range of support services, pre and post order, as detailed in the Adoption Passport and the SGO offer, to children, birth parents, relatives and adoptive parents and those involved in the process of special guardianship applications. To access funding, (where appropriate), on behalf of adoptive families, and those families where children are subject to SGO via the Adoption Support Fund.

To ensure that accurate and up to date records and management information is kept in relation to individual children, adoptive parents and services and to maintain confidentiality and security.

Ensure that customers are fully involved and consulted on service delivery and service development.

Treat all customers with respect and without prejudice or discrimination

Lincolnshire County Council delivers its adoption service through a dedicated Adoption Team managed by a Team Manager.

The main principles underpinning the service are:

Lincolnshire County Council and its adoption agency believe that, wherever possible, it is best for children to be brought up within their birth families. Only where this is not possible, and other appropriate options short of adoption have been considered, then adoption should be considered as a positive alternative for children to enable them to grow and reach maturity within a stable and loving family.

The Statement of Purpose links all sections in the document to the relevant Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 and shares its values with those Standards.

VALUES

Children

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.
- Delays should always be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of the children waiting to be adopted.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family.
- Children, birth parents/guardians, families and adoptive parents will be valued and respected.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential for the National Minimum Standards to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies.

Adopted adults and birth relatives

- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved including adopted adults, and birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual's life.
- Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life.

- Agencies have a duty to provide services that considers the welfare of all parties involved and should consider the implications of decisions and actions for everyone involved.
- Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views and wishes in decision-making.
- Agencies should acknowledge differences in people's circumstances and establish policies that provide non-discriminatory services.
- Adopted adults have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members.

STANDARDS OF CARE TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE AGENCY

The Adoption Service aims to provide safe, secure and high quality care in family settings for children whom a plan for adoption has been agreed. This will be achieved to the standards set out in the Adoption Services Regulations 2002, 2011 and The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012 (referred to as the "Regulations"), the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2010) The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, The Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005), The National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services (2014) and The Statutory Guidance amended (2011) and July (2013 and 2014)

Working together with the Adoption Team, the Adoption Panel and the Panel Adviser, we strive to continuously improve standards of care, informed by inspections, quality audits, safeguarding assurance days as well as new legislation and guidance to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery.

STATUS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE AGENCY

Lincolnshire County Council is an approved Adoption Service provider and will be inspected under the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Adoption Service is managed by the Children's Services Manager through a Team Manager for Adoption. The Team Manager acts as the Adoption Support Services Advisor; (Standard 15).

The Assistant Director for Children Services is the Agency Decision Maker (Standard 17)

Lincolnshire Adoption Panel is constituted in accordance with regulations. (Standard 17)

The adoption panel only considers whether:

- A child who is looked after by Lincolnshire County Council or Rutland should be placed for adoption, where a parent relinquishes their child or consents that adoption is the best outcome for their child.
- Prospective adopters are suitable to adopt, and
- Particular adopters are suitable for a particular child or children

There are sufficient appointed panel members including an independent Chair. The Members of the Adoption Panel will be appraised annually against performance objectives. From 1 April 2011, the Regulations regarding the make-up of panel changed and allowed the adoption agency to draw its members from a list of people known as "the central list" these members the agency considers to have the "appropriate qualifications and/or experience to consider the cases submitted to the adoption panel

for its consideration.” There is no limit to the number of people on the central list and the same people do not have to be appointed to every panel meeting.

The agency can decide how many panel members should sit at each panel meeting, subject to the panel meeting being quorate.

The members of the central list must include (in addition to the independent chair): an adoption social worker with at least three years’ relevant post qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience in adoption work. The medical adviser to the adoption agency is a panel member; also the agency can appoint other people whom the agency considers suitable. Suitable members could include specialists in education, child and adolescent mental health, race and culture; and those who have personal experience of adoption.

A Legal Adviser who provides advice in writing to the panel on any legal issue with implications for a child whose plan is being considered by panel. The Legal Adviser also gives advice to the Agency Decision Maker.

Lincolnshire Adoption Agency has medical adviser(s) who examine all children being considered for adoption and report to panel members on the child's health needs. The adviser will also meet with prospective adopters to consider health requirements of individual children.

The Agency Medical Advisers also advise panel members on health issues relating to prospective adoptive parents.

There is a Professional Adviser to the Adoption Panel who advises panel members on procedures, policies and professional issues.

Government has issued new guidance and regulation which came into force on the 1st September 2012 which impact significantly on the work of the Adoption Panel.

The primary change made by the Regulations is that Adoption Panels must not be involved in deciding whether a child should be placed for adoption when the Court will be involved in the decision, where care proceedings are on-going or where the child has no parents, the case must be referred direct to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the decision.

Panel will however still consider cases and make recommendations where the child’s parents will consent to the child being placed for adoption.

THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The named manager of the Lincolnshire Adoption Service is:

Yvonne Shearwood – Service Manager, Regulated Services
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
Lincs
LN1 1BA

Telephone: 01522 552686

Email: Yvonne.shearwood@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Qualifications: BA; CQSW; PGCE; Dip Psy; MSC; ILM

Experience: 32 years working across a range of services with social care. My experience includes working within statutory and regulatory services. The posts engaged in have included front line operational work to that of senior manager.

The nominated manager to manage the Adoption Service in the absence of the named manager under Regulation 5 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 is Anne Johnson.

The adoption teams are locality based and deliver a comprehensive service. These teams manage the permanency planning and family finding role, the recruitment, assessment, approval, support and placement processes which enable children looked after in Lincolnshire County Council to be placed in a range of appropriate adoptive placements.

Nicola Brangam is the dedicated Professional Advisor for both the Adoption and Permanence panels.

The organisational structure of the Service is shown in Appendix 1. The list of current staff is set out in appendix 3. This information in its fullest form is only available to Ofsted.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Service

The Adoption Service works within the overall Quality Assurance Framework for Children and Families, which sets out a range of general and service specific standards and methods by which these standards are monitored. Children for whom adoption is being considered or who have been placed for adoption are reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers. The Adoption Service is subject to a monthly quality assurance meeting, chaired by the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Lincolnshire Adoption Service continually monitors and evaluates its service at every stage of the adoption process to ensure quality and effectiveness. Lincolnshire welcomes feedback from all involved in the adoption process

The activity and performance of the Adoption Service is scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

As part of the regional Adoption Leadership Board and the East Midlands Adoption Consortium, Lincolnshire Adoption Service actively considers and shares good practice and policy development.

The Adoption Service is inspected by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), under the single inspection framework for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers. All local authorities will be inspected under this framework within a three-year period.

Performance of the service is monitored through the National Adoption Scorecard and a range of performance indicators.

THE WORK OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Lincolnshire County Council's vision is

"Putting children first "

The principles that the Council adheres to are:

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Safeguarding
- Aspiration and Well being
- Learning and achievement
- Best use of Resources

In addition to the principles, four strategic outcomes for children have been agreed by Children's Services.

- Children and young people are; Healthy & Safe
- Develop to their potential in their early years and are ready for school
- Learn and Achieve
- Children and young people are; Ready for Adult Life

The Adoption Agency has the expectation all children in its service is encapsulated into these principles, and will work with children to champion the importance of these aspirations.

We will work to develop self-esteem, self-belief and resilience in all children encouraging all children to be the best they can be.

We will use resources to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities.

The Adoption Agency strives to match, wherever possible, a child to an appropriate family, including considerations of ethnic origin and religion. However no child will wait indefinitely for the ideal placement. (Standard 13) The Children and Families Act 2014 supports the adoption reforms set out in "An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay" by ensuring that a search for a perfect or partial ethnic match does not become a barrier to finding a child an adoptive family.

Unless there are clear and specific reasons why this should not happen our aim is to place siblings together. (Standard 13)

All children approved for adoption will receive a guide, which will give age appropriate information about adoption. (Standard 18)

The Adoption Agency will provide support from an individual social worker and, when required, other professionals to enhance a child's understanding of and preparedness for placement. (Standard 15)

Life storybooks and other information which will help children understand their family and background will be provided by the Adoption Agency within the prescribed timescales. (Standard 3, 5, 12)

The Adoption Agency will undertake assessment of needs and placement considerations, which inform matching process to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities. (Standard 1 & 10)

Where we anticipate local resources cannot meet their needs the opportunity to be matched with an adoptive family from within the Adoption East Midlands area, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Linkmaker service (Standard 13) shall be actively pursued.

Therapeutic support is provided directly, commissioned or met by referral to other agencies if required as an outcome of assessment. (Standard 15)

For those seeking information counselling and advice in adulthood on tracing birth family members and reunion is available and provide individuals with counselling about the circumstances of their adoption. (Standard 16)

The Agency will offer supervision and support throughout the adoption process. (Standard 15).

To operate an adult to adult information exchange via the Lincolnshire letterbox system. (Standard 16)

To give an opportunity to talk with other young people who may be separated from members of their birth family. (Standard 16)

The Agency will offer information about how to contact the advocacy service provided by Barnardos Lincolnshire. (Standard 16)

Through collaborative working with other agencies we will deliver and co-ordinate support for children, especially those with attachment difficulties, to facilitate the transition to new adoptive families). (Standard 1, 3, 10)

Aspiration and Well Being

All prospective adoptive carers are, as part of their assessment and training required to inform the Agency of the plans that they will make to safeguard and maintain the child's welfare when they are adopted. The Agency will undertake to support carers to locate such services as GP, dentist and education services if required.

Before making the placement the Agency must give the notifications required by AAR 35.6. These are important in ensuring as smooth a transition as possible in the child's health care and education, and in the safeguarding and support arrangements for the child.

Working collaboratively with adopters, local agencies and the Statutory Authorities a plan will be presented to panel outlining the resources that the child needs and how the adopters will be assisted in meeting these needs.

Training is offered to all adoptive families in Lincolnshire to empower them to make a positive and sustained change to their family relationships. Lincolnshire County Council Adoption Agency also offers its adopter's therapeutic parenting advice including "Theraplay" which is presented through the initial training course and is designed to assist adopters in identifying areas that may present challenges to them and where identified as a need, further support from "Theraplay" is available to adopters.

Prior to consideration of the child's plan, a health assessment under regulation 7.1 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 is carried out and a report of this assessment in accordance with those regulations is prepared. Once the agency is considering adoption for the child, it immediately consults its medical adviser to ascertain whether the health information already obtained is sufficient, and sufficiently up to date, this report is needed to fulfil the requirements of the regulations and the need for full information for the child, the adoption panel and the prospective adopter.

This report is presented to Panel and the needs of the child are fully discussed to ensure that any future placement has both the information about the child and a plan as to how these needs are to be met.

Safeguarding

Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Service and its Adoption Service are part of Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children's Board.

The assessment of adopters includes the taking of full employment and accommodation histories. Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and local authority checks are completed on everyone aged over 18 years of age living in the household. A range of referees are contacted and visited.

All adopters have a safer caring assessment prior to approval which highlights key aspects of the safer caring process. Safe caring is an important part of the training offered.

This training is mandatory and covers specific areas such as safer caring, the implications of looking after children who may have been abused and the implications of how a child's attachment may have been affected in their early years.

Allegations that are made against adopters prior to an order being made are investigated using an established procedure whereby all are considered by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). An independent person chairs the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process to ensure its timeliness. Where allegations are made following the granting of an adoption order these are managed using standard Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Aspiration, learning and achievement

Lincolnshire County Council are committed to maximising a child's potential in both academic attainment and personal achievement and will work collaboratively with prospective adopters, local agencies and any party it considers as necessary to plan and maintain the child's education.

From 2013, adopted children were given priority school access and in 2014 all adopted children aged 2 yrs became entitled to free early education. Furthermore, the Pupil Premium was increased and now includes all adopted school children from Reception class through to year 11.

A record of the child's achievements prior to being placed will be available to the prospective carer and information sharing will consider the short medium and long term needs of the child in education. Research has shown that that in the vast majority of cases adoption works. Education and health outcomes are as good as for children growing up with their birth parents. To assist, it is essential that information about their birth families is available to adopters and that there is a Matching Information Meeting before an application is made to the Adoption Panel to match a child with applicants. (Standard 1, 3, 10).

At the Information sharing meeting a well presented contact plan for children with birth relatives and siblings will be available. However Lincolnshire County Council considers that unless there are clear and specific reasons why this should not happen, it is our aim to place siblings together. (Standard 13).

Lincolnshire County Council will provide support from an individual social worker and, if required, other workers to enhance a child's understanding of and preparedness for placement (Standard 15). Alongside of these life storybooks and other information which will help children understand their family and background will be provided. (Standard 3, 5, 12).

Supporting the Adoption Service

All of the work of the Service is delivered through the following relationships and support functions which are described below.

1. Prospective Adopter's Social Worker

The role of the prospective adopter's social worker is to give support to the adopter throughout the assessment process, through placement to order. They also assist and advise with practical difficulties and the provision of equipment. They are a crucial link between the adopter and the child's social worker and the two workers need to work closely to prepare the adopters and share with them information that they need to assist in planning for the placement of a child.

2. Child's Social Worker

The child's social worker is responsible for the overall management of the child's care plan. They have a statutory duty to visit the child in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations (2010) the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services (2014), however in some circumstances the visiting pattern will be more frequent particularly in the early stages of a placement or when there are particular difficulties, up to the time when the adoption order is made.

3. Adoption Support Social Worker

The role of the adoption support social worker is to provide specialised therapeutic support to those families who require direct adoption support to the family with tailored plans of support. Support is underpinned by an assessment of need which is made in line with the Adoption Support Regulations 2005. The Adoption Support Services Adviser is the Team Manager for Adoption who will deal with any enquiries regarding the eligibility for support services and the services provided.

The service is provided on a tiered basis dependent on assessed need

Tier 1	Support to adopters includes: Contact co-ordination, helpline advice, information via the Lincolnshire adoption website. Birth records counselling for adults. Also included in this tier is counselling for birth relatives whose children have been adopted as well as seminars for grandparents of adopters.
Tier 2	All of tier 1 and in addition adoption support groups/activities for adopters and for children affected by adoption. These include a programme of activities which bring adoptive children together to share experiences of adoption as part of leisure activities.
Tier 3	Previous tier support plus specific adoption support include assessment of need, individual adoption support packages, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and Theraplay clinic sessions to promote attachment. This tier also includes access to primary mental health services and CAMHS. Since the launch of the Adoption Support Fund, therapeutic interventions can be claimed from the central fund to ensure that adoptive families have access to therapeutic support.

4. Adoption Support Groups

There are locally held support groups for adopters to attend, their social worker will assist them to join a local support group and discuss with the adopters issues such as information sharing within the group. The Adoption Service will provide adopters with access to our website which provides links to useful information relating to all aspects of adoption and signposting to services and resources. In addition, in 2014 we introduced a quarterly newsletter for adopters , which is sent to all current and past adopters with children under 18.

TRAINING

The Adoption Service ensures that adopters are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care to meet the needs of a child placed in their care.

Training is not an option but a clear expectation of all adopters and is evaluated prior to approval.

The training is delivered by qualified and experienced social workers in partnership with people who have experienced adoption, there is an adoptive carer and an adult who was placed for adoption in the past, and these people's experiences have been positively recognised by those attending the training.

Each experiential adoption preparation course is run over a two day period and covers:

Day One

- Introduction
- Short Icebreaker
- Exploration of the changes that becoming an adoptive parent will bring
- Awareness of separation and loss
- Life story work
- Resilience

Day Two

- Attachment cycle
- Therapeutic Parenting
- Adopted person talking about tracing
- Adopted parent discussing experiences of contact
- Managing behaviour
- Managing contact

In addition to the two day experiential learning all prospective adopters are provided with a workbook during stage 1. Each subject in the workbook has an exercise for prospective adopters to complete. During the experiential learning days, the course facilitators refer to the subjects in the workbook and later in the assessment stage, the completed exercises are discussed with the assessing supervising social worker.

Each workbook covers:

- The adoption process
- Why children come into care: Background factors
- Child Care Law
- Abuse of children and the possible effects
- Effects of early trauma
- Effects of separation and loss in childhood

- Lifestory work and family books
- Child development
- Discrimination
- Resilience
- Contact
- Telling children about their adoption
- Task description of an adoptive parent
- Social networking/e.safety
- Reading list

Pre-approval training is complimented by post approval learning and development opportunities, delivered through E.Learning and more traditional training seminars. All approved adopters are encouraged to attend a parenting programme.

PROCESS OF RECRUITING AND APPROVING ADOPTERS

The recruitment of carers is currently managed and effected from within the joint Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Team.

All initial enquiries relating to adoption are completed online through the Lincolnshire County Council website and are then passed to the Recruitment Co-ordinators or the Recruitment Co-ordinators are telephoned directly. The Recruitment Co-ordinators aim to make contact with all enquirers within 24 hours of them registering their interest online.

The Recruitment Co-ordinators role is to ensure that enquirers have all the information they need and following an initial discussion an initial expression of interest can be completed over the phone and/or a detailed information booklet is made available to all interested applicants about the adoption process which is sent within 5 working days. We are focusing on enhancing the overall customer experience and the Recruitment Co-ordinators represent the Local Authority in a professional manner, being respectful to all enquirers and acknowledging their individual journey to embark on this process.

Within 5 working days of applicants completing their initial expression of interest, the enquirers will receive a telephone call from the agency to arrange an individual interview. Initial enquiry forms can also be filled in on our interactive website. Following this visit, applicants will then submit their formal registration of interest to the agency. Adopters are recruited and assessed in line with Lincolnshire guidance based on the National Minimum Standards and Adoption Regulations.

Recruitment involves:

- Utilising social media to reach wide audiences
- Holding drop-in sessions at Community establishments
- Newspaper advertisements
- Newspaper articles
- Distribution of posters

- Information distributed through displays and presentations
- Word of mouth through existing carers
- Lincolnshire County Council LCC Connects website
- Targeted activity within specific communities in county.
- Participation in a range of county wide events.

The Adoption Agency continues to focus on several specific areas for recruitment; recruiting adopters for sibling groups, children aged over 4 and children with complex health needs and recruiting Foster to Adopt carers.

Foster to Adopt carers will be approved as both foster carers and adopters, but with the purpose of early placement stability for those children where rehabilitation home is unlikely and adoption is a very likely outcome. This would mean that the children in these placements would not have to move from a fostering placement into an adoption placement, thus minimising disruption for the child at a crucial stage in development.

The recruitment strategy has both a community focused approach coupled with digital marketing as it is recognised that we need to maximise our reach to prospective adopters and so we cannot rely on a single method to achieve this.

We have continued to advertise through local media channels and parish magazines but also utilised social media and the Lincolnshire County Council website to advertise events throughout the county.

The Recruitment team continues to co-ordinate informal information drop in sessions where individuals have the opportunity to discuss their present situation and their thoughts on becoming an adopter. Staff are on hand at the events are able to outline the process to them and what this entails. Adopters have also attended events with the Recruitment team and this allows prospective adopters the opportunity to explore the adoption process on a more personal level with someone who has gone through the process themselves.

The prospective carers can be provided with information booklets about Adoption and Foster to Adopt at these events or they can complete a form that with trigger contact from Recruitment Co-ordinator who can begin to obtain details with the hope of progressing to an initial home visit.

The process for the assessment and approval of adopters was reformed on the 1st July 2013 and a new two stage approval process was introduced, so that prospective adopters can be approved to adopt a child more quickly. Under the new two part process, adoption agencies must assess and approve adopters within 6 months. The new process comprises a two month initial training and preparation stage (Stage One). Stage One commences when applicants have formally registered their interest and will end with the agency's decision on whether the prospective adopter can proceed to Stage Two. In Stage One, all required checks and references will be completed. This process is now fully embedded.

Stage Two consists of an in depth assessment and will end with presentation of the prospective adopter report to the adoption panel and the agency decision maker's decision about the suitability of the prospective adopter to adopt a child.

The prospective adopter report is completed by a social worker who is compliant with the restriction on the preparation of adoption reports regulations 2005 and a person is within a prescribed description for the purposes of section 94(1) of the 2005

Act if:—

(a) She is a social worker who is employed by a local authority or registered adoption society and who satisfies at least one of the conditions set out in paragraph (2)(a) or (b);

(b) She is a person who:—

- is participating in a course approved by a Council under section 63 of the 2000 Act for persons wishing to become social workers;
- is employed by, or placed with, a local authority or registered adoption society as part of that course; and
- satisfies the condition set out in paragraph (2)(b); or

(c) She is acting on behalf of a local authority or a registered adoption society and is a social worker who satisfies the conditions in paragraph (2) (a) and (b).

The conditions referred to in paragraph (1) are that the person—

(a) has at least three years' post-qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience of adoption work;

(b) is supervised by a social worker who:—

- is employed by the local authority or registered adoption society in question; and
- has at least three years' post-qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience of adoption work.

The report is presented to the Adoption panel for consideration and a recommendation of their suitability is made. The organisation and composition of this panel is in accordance with Adoption Service Regulations 2011

The Adoption Panel makes recommendations on the suitability of prospective adopters; this recommendation is passed, along with the prospective adopter report, panel's final minutes and any other supporting documentation to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Assistant Director for Children's Services. National Minimum Standards 23.17 sets out the qualifications, knowledge and experience decision-maker must have. The Assistant Director for Children's Services does not have direct line management

responsibility for the adoption panel but has the authority to make decisions on its behalf as to whether the prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child. (AAR 27)

Prospective Adopters are invited to attend panel and participate in the panel discussions.

Feedback is received from those applicants who have commented on the process and have for the most part been satisfied with the experience of being at panel.

Number of Adoptive Carers

A total of 28 adoptive parents were approved to adopt during 2019/20, with no adopters approved for inter-country adoption. This is a significant increase compared to those in the previous year. The focus of the work during this year was to match the children waiting and place them into adoptive families at the earliest opportunity. We currently have three children with special needs who we are struggle to place this has reversed the trend from last year where we had a surplus of adopters.

Profile of adopter approval:	
Adopters approved for 1 child	18
Adopters approved for 2 children	10
Adopters approved for 3 children	0
Total:	28
Adopters approved to adopt in following age ranges:	
0 – 5	26
5+	2
Adopters approved for Inter-country adoption	0
Adopters approved for a Foster-to-Adopt placement	7
Adopters applying to adopt a sibling of their adopted child/ren	1

In order to reflect the government's aspiration to encourage foster carers who then go on to adopt we supported four foster families with children in placement to apply directly to the courts for an Adoption Order. As reported the number of families approved for Foster-to-Adopt has remained the same as the previous year with eleven placements made this year.

Both the number of adoptive families and approvals under the Foster-to-Adopt scheme have increased this year.

We will continue to maximise our capacity to recruit larger sibling group through a mixture of targeted recruitment and the flexible use of support packages for families seeking to adopt three or more children

FINANCE

Adopters can be assessed for a means tested allowance based on the needs of the children placed. This allowance is discretionary and is reviewed annually in respect of the needs of each placement and the child. Additional support through a one off settling in grant may also be made.

COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Summary of the Complaints Procedure

The Directorate has a statutory complaints service, the detail of which is contained in the guide for staff 'Handling Comments and Complaints'. It is a three stage process:

- Stage 1 – Informal or problem solving
- Stage 2 – Formal stage at which an independent investigating officer is appointed
- Stage 3 – A formal review by a panel of elected members, chaired by an independent individual

If complainants remain unsatisfied at Stage 3 they can ask for their complaint to be examined by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Staff must ensure that all carers know how and to whom to complain.

Complainants have the right to involve a friend or advocate.

The Customer Relations & Complaints Manager is Tanya Marten

Telephone number: 01522 555237

Email: Tanya.marten@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The Named Manager monitors all complaints and liaises with the Customer Relations & Complaints Manager and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Business Manager. This information is available to authorised persons only. All adopters have access to support and information regarding the complaints procedures.

Independent Reviewing Mechanism

Prospective adopters are given written information about the role of the independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) as part of their preparation process. They are also provided with leaflets about the IRM when information is being prepared for presentation to panel.

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

There has been one complaint were made to the Adoption Service during 19/20 this was not substantiated and was based on the family being unhappy with a decision to pause the adoption process.

Allegations

Adopters can sometimes be the subject of allegations in respect of the care of the children or young people they are looking after. If this occurs the allegation will be investigated in line with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures with all allegations managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer. In addition to the role of the supervising social worker, adopters can have access to an independent social worker who can offer practical and emotional support.

All allegations and other matters listed in the Regulations are monitored by the manager who ensures that the appropriate notifications to Ofsted and other agencies are carried out.

In 2019/20, there were no allegations in respect of adoptive carers.

ADVOCACY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Lincolnshire County Council commissions its advocacy for children through Voiceability "Total Voice"



Total Voice Lincolnshire

Referral and Information Line: 01529 400 479

Text:

07860 018 887

Email:

tv1@voiceability.org

Website: www.totalvoicelincolnshire.org

When might you want an advocate?

You can ask to speak with advocate if you:

- Have serious concerns about the care you are getting
- Want to be more involved in decisions being made about you and your future
- Want to fight decisions being made about you
- Want to make a complaint



Children's Commissioner for England

Advice guidance and assistance

If you are child or young person who lives away from home or who receives social care, who needs advice or assistance, you can call us on the free phone number **0800 528 0731** or email to advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry involves an urgent concern about a child protection issue, you should contact your local police or social services. Adults can also call the **NSPCC child protection helpline on 0808 800 5000**. Children can call **Childline on 0800 1111**.*

*Above information sourced from:

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/advice>

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Lincolnshire Adoption Service works to the Lincolnshire County Council's Equality and Diversity Policy which is available on the council's intranet site.

The Adoption Service will treat all service users fairly, openly and with respect throughout their approval process. The adoption agency embraces the Customer Care and Service Standards, endorsed by the DfE, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), Adoption UK, and the Consortium for Voluntary Adoption Agencies. Applicants wishing to be approved as adopters will be considered irrespective of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability providing the adoption service considers they can safely meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into independence. The minimum age for applying to adopt is 21 years old.

Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a child or young person's emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability. However Lincolnshire's Adoption Service recognises that it is unacceptable for a child to be denied adoptive parents solely on the grounds that the child and prospective adopter do not share the same racial or cultural background. If the prospective adopter can meet the majority of the child's needs, the service must not delay placing a child because they do not share the child's racial or cultural background.

The Lincolnshire Adoption Service recognises that no child or young person should have to wait indefinitely for the ideal placement.

All policies and procedures concerning the adoption service are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

OFSTED

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting adoption services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

Questions or complaints

The one point of contact for all questions, queries and complaints is the Ofsted National Business Unit.

The telephone number is 08456 40 40 40. The National Business Unit manages all calls and will redirect them as necessary; they can also be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Adoption Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually.

If you require this document in a different language or an alternative format such as large print, audio tape or Braille, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team on 01522 552246 or email diversity@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The Statement of Purpose, Children's Guides and other information are also available on the Lincolnshire County Council website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

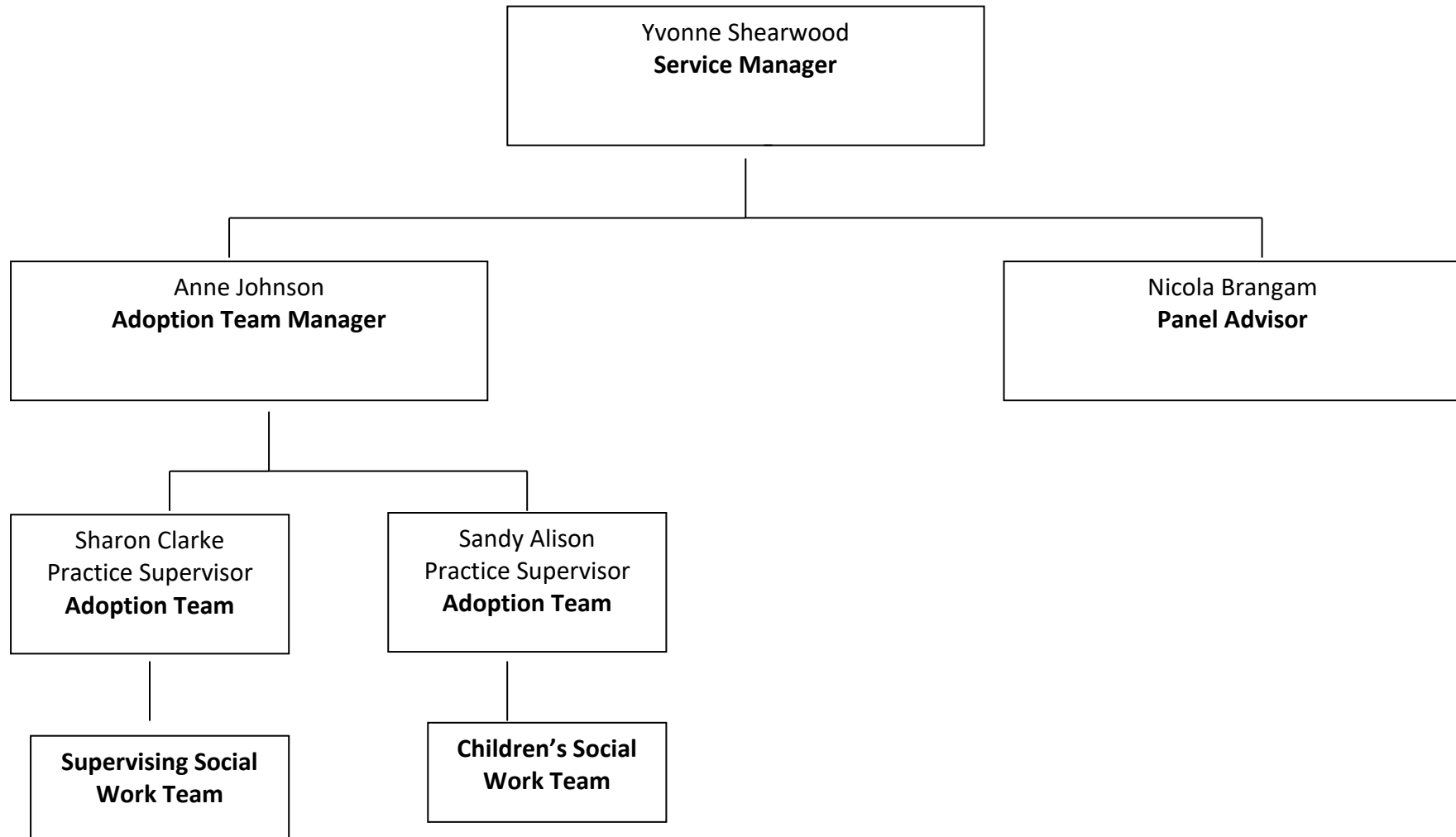
A copy can also be obtained from the registered manager:

Yvonne Shearwood – Service Manager, Regulated Services
County Offices
Newland,
Lincoln
Lincs
LN11BA

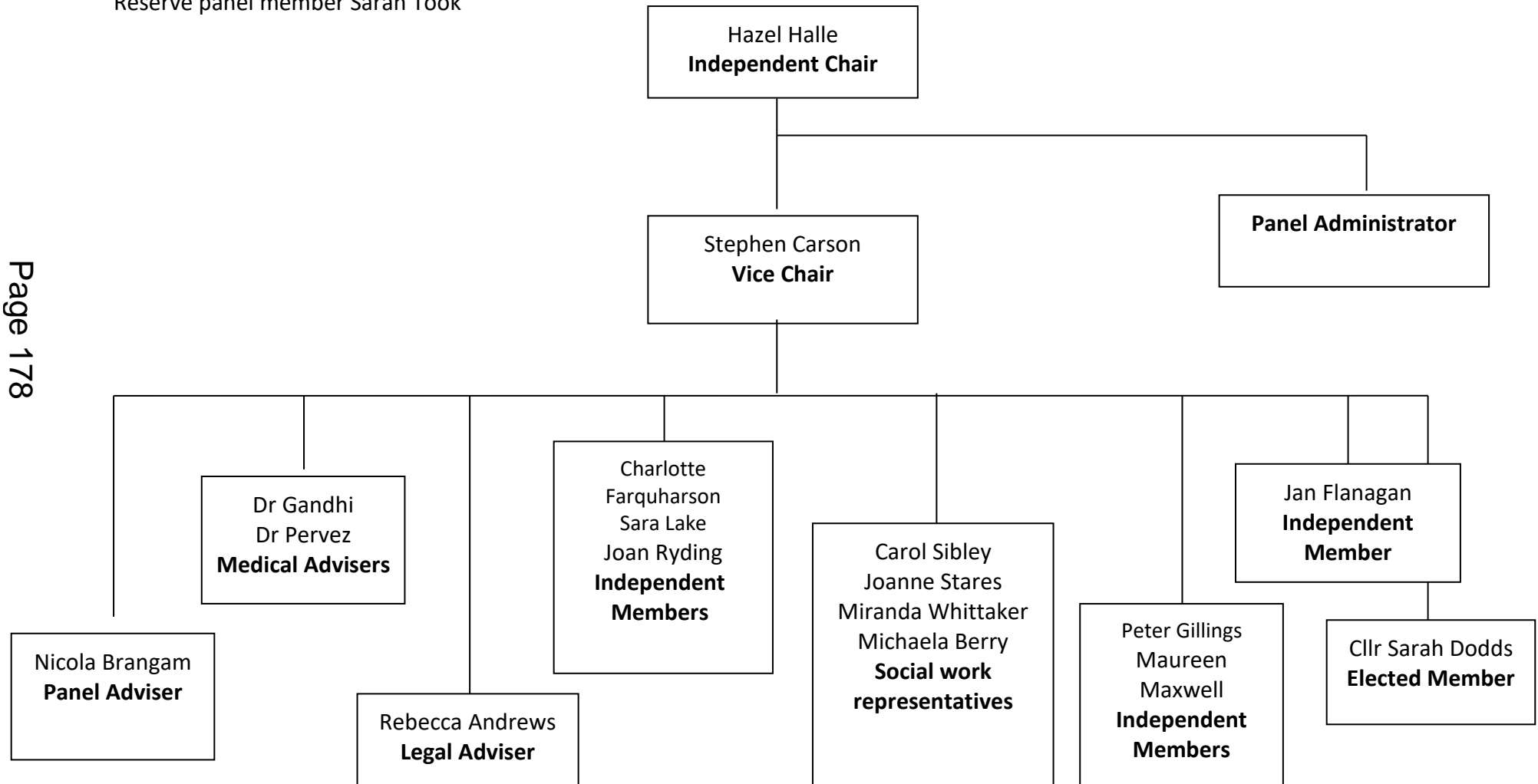
Telephone: 01522 554849

Email: Yvonne.Shearwood@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1
Management structure



Appendix 2
Adoption and Permanence Panel
Reserve panel member Sarah Took



Appendix 3
Adoption Service - Staffing

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in LCC Adoption Services
Services Manager Regulated Services (Yvonne Shearwood)	BA Applied Social Studies Certificate of Qualification in Social Worker Post Graduate Certificate in Education (post 16) Diploma in Psychology MSC in Forensic Psychology Institute of Leadership and Management (level 5)	32 years. 7 years in regulated
Team Manager Adoption Services (Anne Johnson)	Certificate in Qualified Social work Certificate of Education Diploma in management PQ6[Practice Teaching award]	43 years (24 years in Regulated Services)
Practice Supervisor Adoption Services (Sharon Clarke)	Dip SW BA hons in SW PQ1	25 Years [20 years in regulated services]
Supervising Social Worker (Di Farrell)	BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies CQSW	27 Years
Supervising Social Worker (Julia Mann)	CQSW BA Combined Studies MA Health Services Studies Post graduate diploma in Social Studies PQ1	15 Years
Supervising Social Worker (Debra Green)	BA (Hons) Social Worker	8 year
Supervising Social Worker (Hannah Fawn)	BA (Hons) Social Worker	4 years
Practice Supervisor (Sandy Allison)	BSc (Hons) Social Work and Social Work Policy DipSW	18 years
Social Worker (Wendy Jennings)	BA (Hons) Social & Behavioural Studies MA, DIPSW Social Work CACDP Level 1 CACDP Level 2	9 years
Social Worker (Mark Abdul)	BA (Hons) Social Work	6 years
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Social Work	9 Years

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in LCC Adoption Services
(Kristin Daniilidis)		
Social Worker (Claire Liddan)	BA (Hons) Social Work	5 years
Supervising Social Worker (Kelly Shaw)	BSc (Hons) Social Work	5 year
Social Worker (Laura Tyrrell)	BA (Hons) Social Work	3 years
Practice Supervisor Sam Carman		
Adoption Support Worker (Dawn Button)	HNC Business and Finance	19 Years
Adoption Support Social Worker (Jeanette Philbin)	DipSW	6 Years
Post Adoption Support Social Worker (Pat Mills)	BA (Hons) Social Worker Higher diploma in therapeutic play MA Integrative psychotherapy/ child psychotherapy Level 1 /2 and advanced EMDR Theraplay 1 and 2 DDP 1 and 2	7 Years
Post Adoption Support Social Worker (Jane Thornton)	BA (Hons) Social Worker	5 years
Adoption Support Social Worker (Jo Poole)	BA (Hons) Social Science CQSW Certificate in Counselling Advanced Certificate in Counselling	14 Years

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 2020
Subject:	Caring2Learn Update

Summary:

To provide an update on the implementation and impact of the Caring2Learn project for the last twelve months, highlighting successes, findings and next steps in the light of the extension of the Partners in Practice (PiP) project until 2021.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Caring2Learn project update and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

1. Background

The Caring2Learn project has been in existence since January 2018 and aims to improve a wide range of outcomes for our children, both at school and in the home. We have brought together Carers, Education Settings and Children's Services teams working with children in care and developed the training and support they receive. We have created an innovative and sustainable multi-agency approach to improve academic outcomes, progress, life chances and opportunities for all Lincolnshire children and young people in care and on the edge of care. Caring2Learn is supporting schools to be able to nurture and promote wellbeing and attachment and ensure looked after children achieve better progress whilst in care, as well as enhancing training for and raising the profile of the role of the Designated Teacher in schools. We have also researched and tested ways we can directly impact on raising academic attainment by working with schools and children on implementing the Caring2Read Literacy Intervention and the Restorative Practice Peer Mentoring pilot.

We have developed foster carers resilience, knowledge and skills to promote learning in the home and help children develop a thirst for learning so that education and aspiration is valued and encouraged. We have also raised the profile and professional voice of foster carers across the county by introducing the Education Champion role. We are working alongside Children's Services teams such as the Virtual School, Fostering, LAC, FAST and Early Help to develop the

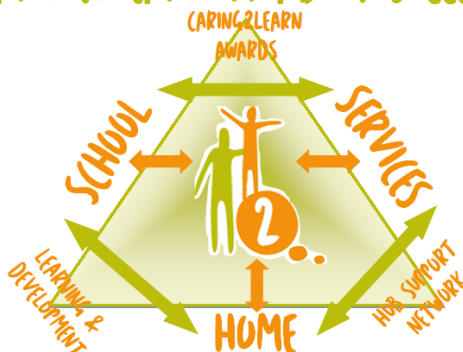
links between their work, schools and foster carers and ensure everyone has the knowledge, skills and confidence to work together effectively to promote educational achievement for our most vulnerable children and young people.

We have now reached the point where Caring2Learn is widely recognised and acknowledged as excellent practice both within Lincolnshire and wider. We were very proud to have won the Children in Care Award at the annual Children and Young People Now Awards in November 2019 last year and alongside that we have been invited to talk about Caring2Learn at a number of regional and international events such as the International Social Pedagogy Association Conference in June. Caring2Learn has continued to be funded this year by the DfE as part of the Partners in Practice (PiP) programme with a further extension until the end of March 2021. The independent evaluation of Caring2Learn by ECORYS, alongside all the PiP projects has been completed and we are just awaiting the publication of the report by the Department for Education later this year.

Caring2Learn is focused on 3 main areas of work;

- I. The Caring2Learn Awards which include a range of good practice frameworks for Learning Homes and Caring Schools. With this award for all types of education providers and carers we are able to identify, celebrate and drive good practice for Lincolnshire children and young people in care.
- II. The Hub Support Network for foster and residential carers, designated teachers in schools, wider education and children's services staff which brings everyone together to support each other, offer advice, share good practice, information and problem solve. This is co-facilitated by Foster Carer and School Based Education Champions.
- III. Delivering an effective joint training programme bringing together the Caring2Learn Cornerstones of Good Practice and supporting everyone in the Triad of Success to build their skills, knowledge and confidence in order to support our children and young people to achieve their full potential.

CARING2LEARN TRIAD OF SUCCESS



CARING2LEARN CORNERSTONES OF GOOD PRACTICE



I. **Caring2Learn Awards:**

Since 2018 42 Education Settings have achieved the Caring Schools Award at either Bronze, Silver or Gold standard and 2 schools have reapplied a second time to have their standard reassessed at a higher level. 26 Fostering households have achieved the Learning Homes Award and 4 Residential Children's Homes. The Learning Homes and Caring Schools toolkits have been accessed by a further 120 fostering households and 120 education settings who are in the process of working through these good practice frameworks and compiling their evidence portfolios. 5 further Fostering Households are currently being assessed and 33 Northolme will be the next of our children's homes to submit for assessment. We also have 24 schools from North Lincolnshire working towards the Caring Schools Award and accessing the training programme funded by the North Lincolnshire Virtual School.

Our version of the Learning Homes Workbook for new foster carers which incorporates the statutory fostering Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs) is now issued to all carers directly following approval and they work to achieve these standards with their SSWs within their first twelve months as carers. This means that from the start of their journey as Lincolnshire Foster Carers they will be focussing on supporting the highest standard of nurture, wellbeing and educational outcomes for our children.

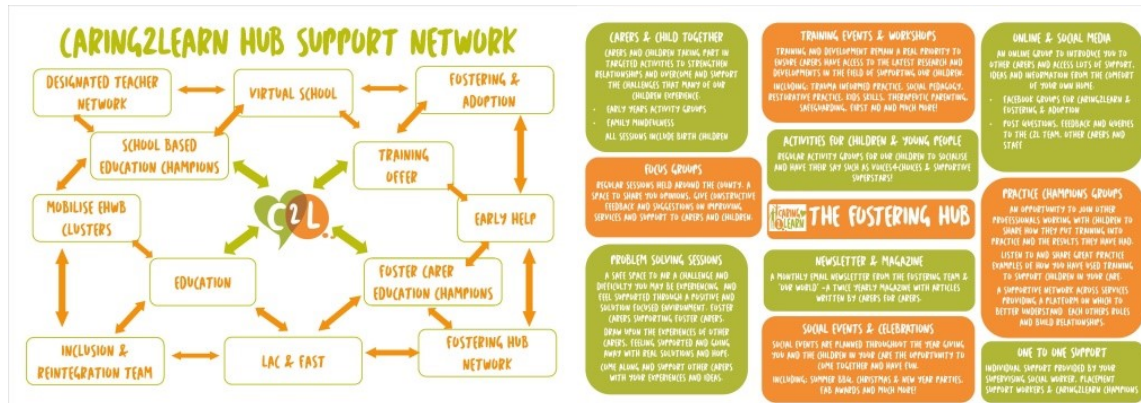
These good practice toolkits continue to provide a framework against which we can highlight, celebrate and also challenge organisations and individuals to ensure the best practice in education and care for our children. Although COVID-19 has disrupted our plans for an annual celebration of everyone's achievements, we have been utilising social media to announce successful participants and plan a press campaign for later in the Autumn.

II. **The Hub Support Network:**

Over the last year we have been able to further develop and embed the Hub Support Network. We have created a wide-ranging support hub which brings together all those involved in the care and education of vulnerable children and families which includes face to face and online support, including through social media for individuals, groups and organisations. The support hub includes the delivery of regular meetings, events and training opportunities and also offers effective peer support through our Foster Carer and School-based Education Champions Team. This multi-service approach which incorporates Designated Teacher (DT) Cluster Groups jointly facilitated by the Virtual School and Education Champions and a variety of Foster Carer Support and Focus Groups, co-facilitated by Foster Carer Education Champions. These groups form part of the wider support network and have grown into a highly effective network of support for everyone working with our children and young people. We have 18 Foster Carer Education Champions and 10 School Based Education Champions working to support the network in a number of ways. Education Champions are split into three working groups focusing on School Support, Foster Carer Support and Learning and Development.

Newly approved carers are now allocated a 'Hub Link' Education Champion who make contact with them, introduce them to a local network of carers, encourage them to engage with the Facebook and WhatsApp groups and begin the training

pathway. We have also set up a Carers2Be group to support those going through the assessment process before approval. Feedback indicates that carers have found this a very supportive approach which reduces feelings of isolation and reinforces they are part of a wider community who are accessible as and when they need. This support is also available to experienced carers who are also being referred into the Hub and provided with a Hub Link.



We are continuing to hold the twice-yearly 'Big Meet' which is a shared multi-agency development day. The last Big Meet in July was held virtually and was attended by 50 people from the Caring2Learn Education Champions, schools and children's services teams. The Big Meet is an excellent information sharing and practice development platform which could be utilised further going forward.

III. Learning and Development:

The training offer which supports the principles of the Triad of Success and is based around the Cornerstones of Good Practice continues to be in demand. We offer joint workshops and training sessions for carers, school and children's services staff which echoes our relational approach, as well as building links between individuals, settings and teams which helps to develop the support network. As a result of the COVID-19 lockdown we had to radically rethink the programme and redesign the workshops so that they could be delivered virtually without losing this relational approach. Since April the training offer has become more popular than ever and in five months we have delivered over 70 sessions to over 700 people during daytimes, evenings and weekends. Feedback about the virtual sessions has been extremely positive and carers, especially have indicated that they have appreciated the flexibility and convenience of this training which they can access from the comfort of their own home without the need to arrange childcare or take time off work etc. (See appendix A)

2. Conclusion

Over the last twelve months Caring2Learn has continued to expand and develop in scope. We have developed more opportunities for joint working and are currently working closely with the Early Help teams to develop a universal and targeted, extended parenting programme which is bespoke for Lincolnshire Carers and Parents. This will be jointly delivered by Caring2Learn and the Parenting Programme Delivery Unit (PPDU) and will form part of the on-going Foster Carer Training Pathway. We are also supporting the recruitment and retention of high

quality foster carers and have reviewed and updated the delivery of the fostering Preparation and Induction courses and also contributed to the development of the new Fostering Friendly Employer scheme.

Together with the Virtual School we are working on developing a comprehensive training and support pathway for new and experienced Designated Teachers for Looked-after Children. We are also working to provide further guidance for parents and guardians of previously looked after children through the development of a Learning Homes Toolkit aimed at parents of adopted children and special guardians. We will continue to support North Lincolnshire Virtual School in embedding Caring2Learn in schools across their local authority. From September onwards we will be rolling out the positive findings of the first and second Literacy Intervention Studies – PALAC & Caring2Read, to support schools promoting effective 'catch-up' intervention strategies utilising the additional tutoring funding from the government. We also plan to run a second round of Peer Mentor Training for secondary schools which are aimed at supporting relational approaches in schools in order to improve behaviour and reduce exclusions.

The situation with COVID-19 and the lockdown has been highly disruptive for the project, for instance we were unable to carry out the final assessments for students in this year's Caring2read Study. However, we were determined to ensure the disruption did not stop us from delivering on our three areas of work. In fact, lockdown clearly demonstrated that the principles of Caring2Learn and the structures that we already had in place were extremely effective in supporting children in the home and in school. Through our Facebook group, which has grown to 560 members, we were able to distribute information and share good practice quickly, offer immediate, flexible and personal support to those in need and by quickly adapting to online platforms, continue to promote the highest standards of excellent practice through high quality training (see appendix b). Following the redeployment of our Practice Supervisor, Rebecca Fleming to work two days a week at 33 Northholme Children's Home we took the opportunity to introduce the Learning Home toolkit and work alongside the managers and staff to develop the home's Caring2Learn approach. Rebecca has led training for all staff, planned and led direct work and therapeutic intervention with children and helped the team get started on their Learning Homes portfolio. Her work there has received excellent feedback and although her redeployment has now finished she is continuing to support the team to further embed Caring2Learn principles. Over the coming months, depending on the COVID-19 restrictions, we hope to be able to move to including some face to face events and further extending the support hub to ensure we have a wide range of events and activities in all 4 quadrants of the county. In September we will launch the magazine 'Our World' which will be a bi-annual publication for carers by carers, delivered to all our fostering households and our extended caring community (see appendix c). Since the project began we have not only been able to further develop our innovative approach but embed Caring2Learn across a wider range of teams and the service areas they cover. We are now starting to be able to see the longer term, positive impact on the wellbeing and academic outcomes of our children and I am currently working with the performance team to gather the data from our last two academic years to demonstrate this. It is clear, moving forward there is much potential for further development and to build on the excellent progress achieved so far.

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	Virtual Training Schedule July-Dec 2020
Appendix B	Caring2Learn in Lockdown videos: March 2020 - https://youtu.be/lxvmpKADptY May 2020 - https://youtu.be/9vBDqsP2qfs
Appendix C	Our World Magazine

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Krysta Parsons, who can be contacted on 01522 555987 or Krysta.Parsons@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy Executive Director - Children's Services
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Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 2020
Subject:	Quarter 1 Performance Report for Children in Care

Summary:

The accompanying appendices to this report provide key performance information for Quarter 1 2020/21 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

The Panel is invited to consider and comment on the performance information contained in the appendices of this report and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that a relevant to Looked after Children used by Children's Service. This is available for questions.

There are 12 measures in total that relate to Looked After Children that are reported on in Quarter 1. Of these measures 5 are outside of the target set by the services. These are:

Fostering/adoption of Looked After Children aged 10 to 16 year olds - This performance remains under target. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings but this has been impacted by the pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers shielding and unable to take additional placements. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders.

Percentage of Looked after Children in the same placement for at least two years - Performance is at 68.9% at year end and continues to gradually improve. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that foster carers are well supported and that potential problems are identified early. Nevertheless we have continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. We have also seen an increase in the number of children with care plans for long term fostering and this will present challenges in achieving placement stability for some children due to the local and national shortage of foster carers who want to care on a long term basis. The fostering service has implemented a recruitment strategy to attract permanent foster carers with the ambition of offering improved placement opportunities for this group of children.

Percentage of Looked after Children with up to date routine immunisations - Throughout the majority of this quarter there has been significant restriction and changes to the way in which health services are delivered to the public and more specifically our children who are looked after. We have had a number of refusers including parents who have their children placed under placement with parent regulations. In addition it has been an on-going challenge to encourage older young people to engage with medical services to have their immunisation. As we move out of such severe Covid restrictions all managers have been requested to ensure that workers are focused on ensuring that these medical needs are prioritised.

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check - Performance in respect of dental checks has been lower than the target for the last three consecutive quarters. This is in a large part to older children resisting appointments with the dentist. As a service area we recognise the need to renew our efforts to ensure that we can increase the number of children particularly older children who are engaging positively in engaging with dental care. The recent lockdown measures implemented for Covid 19, has resulted in dentists being closed for business and this has further impacted on performance.

Stability of placements of looked after children : Number of moves –

This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and slipped under target last year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. The stability of placements has been good during the Covid 19 pandemic but is likely to be affected as children readjust as they return to school. In addition the numbers of children entering care is rising and this increased demand will make the identification of the right placement at the point of admission more challenging.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 1 performance for Looked after Children and Young People, and the Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to raise any questions on the content of the report.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

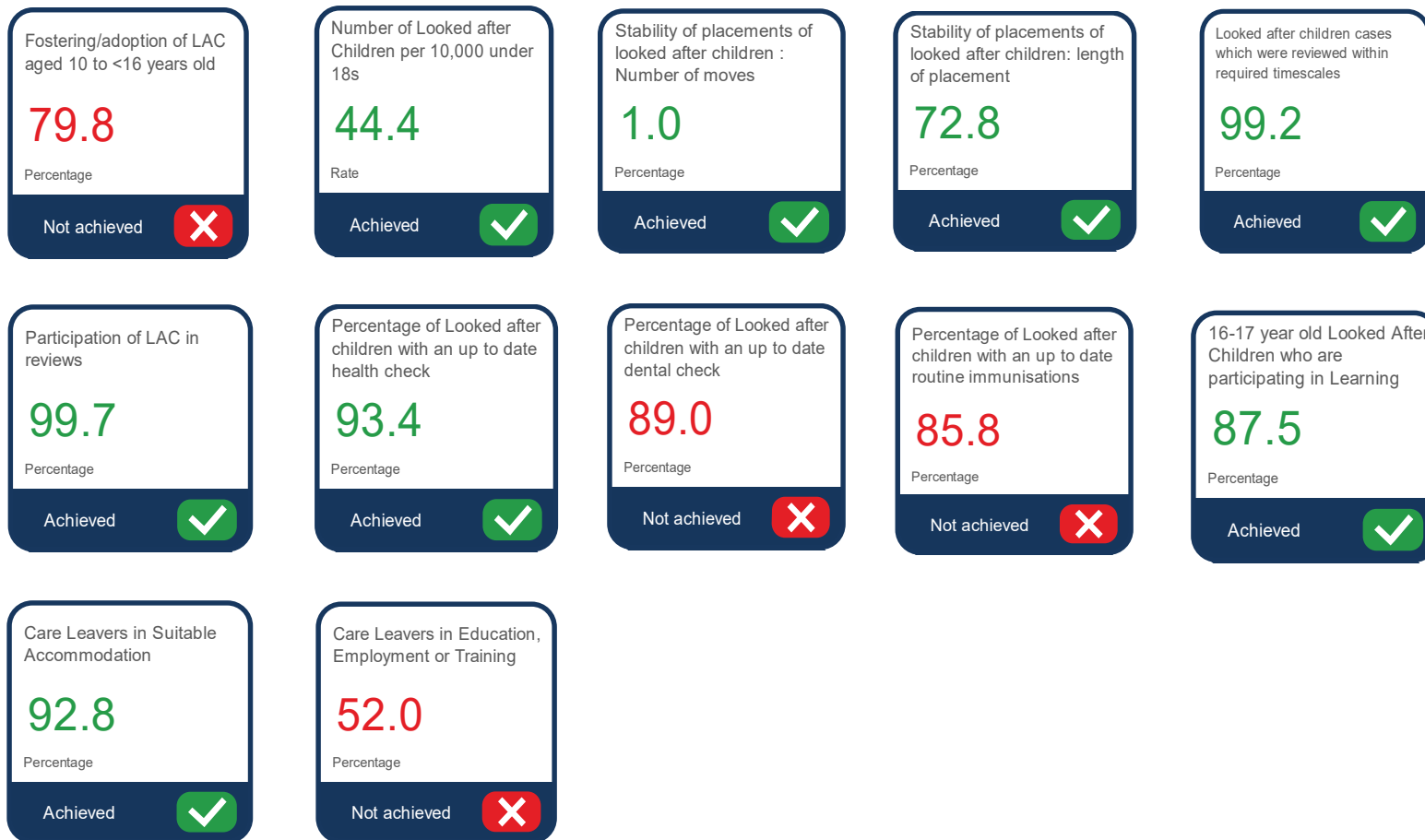
4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Looked after Children Measures

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Simon Hardcastle, who can be contacted at simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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Corporate Parenting Sub Group

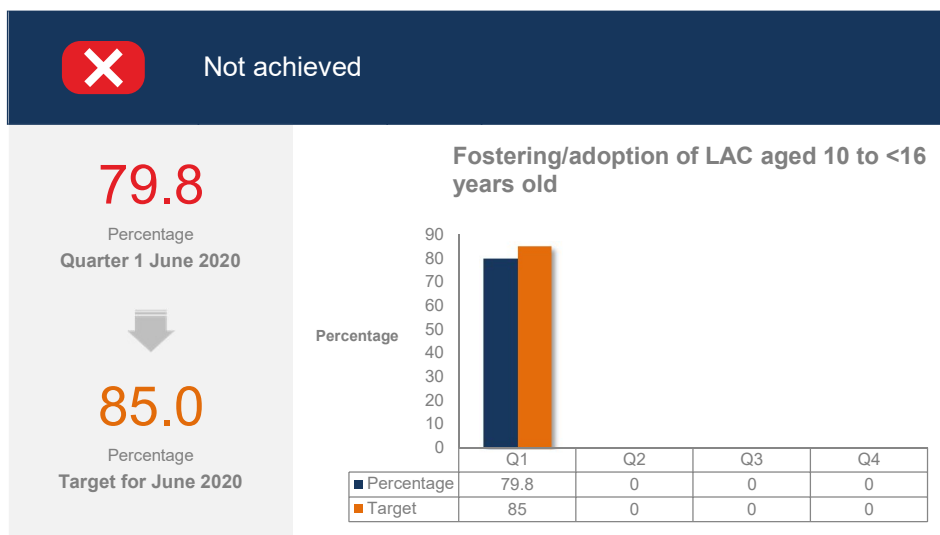


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Fostering/adoption of LAC aged 10 to <16 years old

Percentage of Looked after Children aged 10 to under 16 who have been fostered or placed for adoption



About the latest performance

This performance remains under target. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings but this has been impacted by the pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers shielding and unable to take additional placements. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders.

About the target

Target to remain the same as the previous year, this is to take into account the increase of the number of LAC in the past year.

About the target range

A 2% variance is set for the upper value and 3% for the lower value.

Meeting the upper tolerance level would achieve a performance level not reached in recent years and show a change in the overall trend.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking data no longer available



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Number of Looked after Children per 10,000 under 18s

Looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18. There are a number of reasons why a child may be 'looked after' by the local authority. Most often it is because the child's parents or the people who have parental responsibilities and rights to look after the child are unable to care for the child, have been neglecting the child or the child has committed an offence. The local authority has specific responsibilities and duties towards a child who is being looked after or who has been looked after. This measure is reported taking a snapshot in time. So for example Q2 is performance as at 30th September.

A lower rate of children looked after by the Local Authority indicates a better performance.



Achieved

44.4

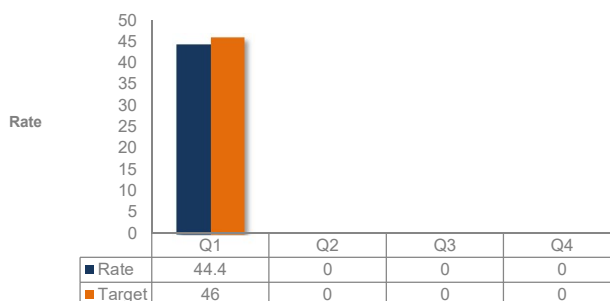
Rate
Quarter 1 June 2020



46.0

Rate
Target for June 2020

Number of Looked after Children per 10,000 under 18s



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Targets have been maintained at the same level as last year, as national comparators are showing an increase.

About the target range

The Upper and lower Target allows for the number of LAC to vary between approximately 622- 694. This is about +/- 35 children from target. Anything above or below this number would be flagged as worse than target, i.e. indicating a significant variance from the current position.

About benchmarking

We benchmark nationally and with similar Local Authorities. Benchmarking data is sourced from the national LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool).



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of looked after children : Number of moves

Percentage of Looked after Children with three or more placements



Achieved

1.0

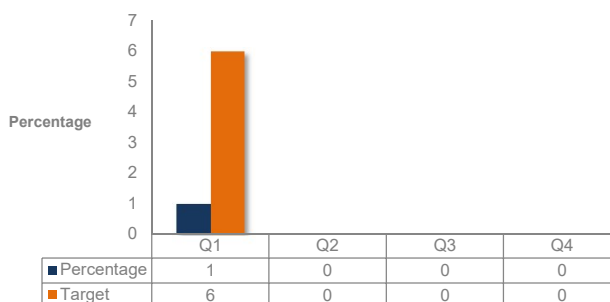
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



6.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Stability of placements of looked after children : Number of moves



About the latest performance

This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and slipped under target last year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. The stability of placements has been good during the Covid 19 pandemic but is likely to be affected as children readjust as they return to school. In addition the numbers of children entering care is rising and this increased demand will make the identification of the right placement at the point of admission more challenging.

About the target

The target has been reduced to 6%, although performance is well below this target the service manager feels with the increase in LAC numbers and the difficulty in recruiting new carers will have an impact on the performance

About the target range

Achieving the upper tolerance level should maintain LCC's position within the top quartile nationally and still maintain LCC as one of the best performing of our statistical neighbours. Anything below the lower level should be shown as a significant improvement over last year.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement

Percentage of Looked after Children in the same placement for at least two years



Achieved

72.8

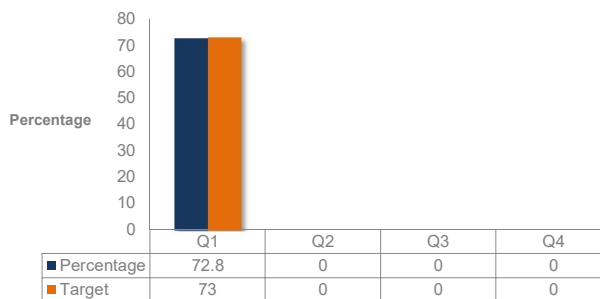
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



73.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target is set 2% lower than the previous year, however this is an incremental increase on recent performance and above the present performance of statistical neighbours. Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

About the target range

Lower tolerances have been set to account for the downward trend currently occurring.

The upper tolerance is set at 1% which should push LCC up into Quartile Band A and more importantly stop the downward trend.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales

Percentage of Looked after Children cases that have been reviewed within timescales



Achieved

99.2

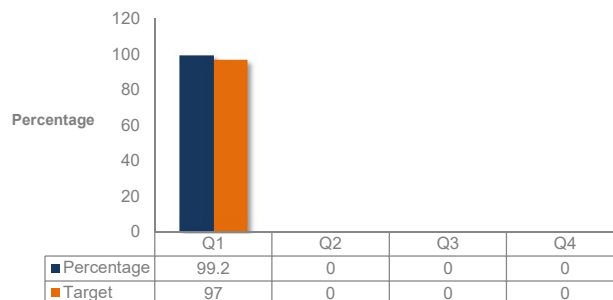
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



97.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target has reduced to 95% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Participation of LAC in reviews

Percentage of Looked after children who participated in their reviews



Achieved

99.7

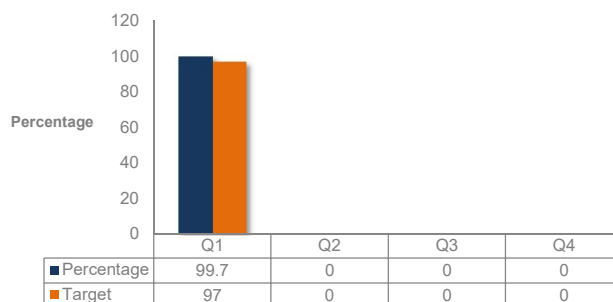
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



97.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Participation of LAC in reviews



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target has reduced to 95% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date health check

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date health check record



Achieved

93.4

Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date health check



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 2% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 93% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check



Not achieved

89.0

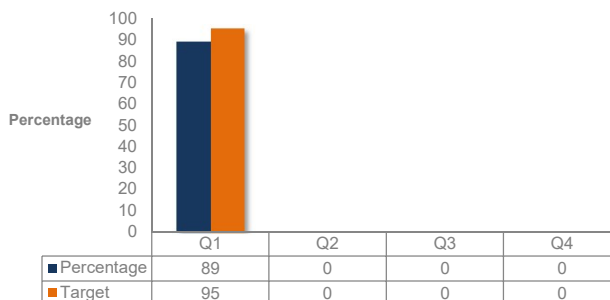
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check



About the latest performance

Performance in respect of dental checks has been lower than the target for the last three consecutive quarters. This is in a large part to older children resisting appointments with the dentist. As a service area we recognise the need to renew our efforts to ensure that we can increase the number of children particularly older children who are engaging positively in engaging with dental care. The recent lockdown measures implemented for Covid 19, has resulted in dentists being closed for business and this has further impacted on performance.

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 2% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 93% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date routine immunisations

Percentage of looked after children with an up to date routine immunisations recorded



Not achieved

85.8

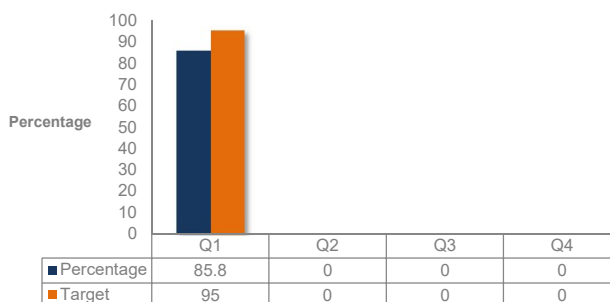
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date routine immunisations



About the latest performance

Throughout the majority of this quarter there has been significant restriction and changes to the way in which health services are delivered to the public and more specifically our children who are looked after. We have had a number of refusers including parents who have their children placed under placement with parent regulations. In addition it has been an on-going challenge to encourage older young people to engage with medical services to have their immunisation. As we move out of such severe Covid restrictions all managers have been requested to ensure that workers are focused on ensuring that these medical needs are prioritised.

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. Achievement of this would indicate that all LAC received all their health checks within timescale – achievement of 100%.

A lower tolerance of 1% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 94% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

16-17 year old Looked After Children who are participating in Learning

This measures young people recorded as being Looked After Children participating in learning at the end of the reporting period and will not take into consideration the length of time that they have been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of Looked After Children participating in learning at the end of the reporting period.
Denominator: Number of Looked After Children at the end of the reporting period.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. The parameters of this measure were previously defined as recording 16-18 year old Looked After Children participating in learning. As of Q1 2017/18 onwards, the Department for Education no longer require monitoring of children aged 18, and so the measure has been amended accordingly, restricting data provision to 16-17 year old Looked After Children only. A higher percentage of Looked After Children participating in learning indicates a better performance.



Achieved

87.5

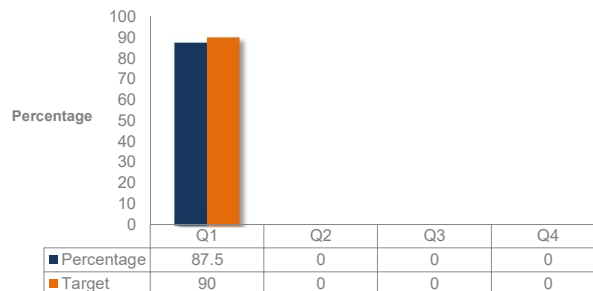
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



90.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

16-17 year old Looked After Children who are participating in Learning



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target to have a small increase on previous year's target.

Q2 & Q3 targets lower to allow for the expected dip at this time of year due to September being the start of the tracking process

About the target range

The target range is set at a level to allow for 2 percentage points above the target and 5 percentage points below the target.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is not available for this cohort.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

A care leaver is a young person who reaches the age of 18 who had been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are living in accommodation deemed as "suitable".

Denominator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. A higher percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation indicates a better performance.



Achieved

92.8

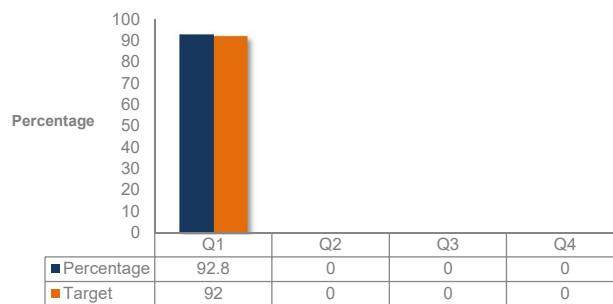
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



92.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target to remain the same as previous year, we are above both national and similar authority average.

About the target range

The lower target has been set at the 25% quartile. Meaning if we fall below this we will not be in the top 25% of authorities. The upper target has been set 5% above this.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

The number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are in either Education, Employment or Training



Not achieved

52.0

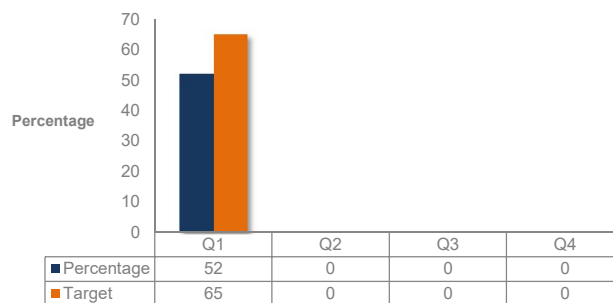
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2020



65.0

Percentage
Target for June 2020

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training



About the latest performance

The exact reason for the fluctuation in EET performance are not always known, but we do know that small fluctuations in this figures are commonplace. Issues affecting access to education and employment are varied and unique to individuals. Lincolnshire's performance is comparable with our statistical neighbours.

The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Leaving Care Service reports on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET and the Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance and is satisfied that the services is tenacious and hard working to reengage young people. The Service also continues to grow the number of employment readiness programmes offered to young people. The Corporate Parenting Manager has commissioned a case by case review of each young person who is not in EET to understand the reasons for fluctuations as it is anticipated that COvid-19 and the impact on the services sector will directly affect care leavers. Most young people start their working lives with jobs in bars, restaurants, shops and front line customer services where the largest job losses are being witnessed. It is anticipated that Covid-19 will impact on EET and the findings will be carefully monitored and reflected in next month's commentary .

About the target

Target remains at 70% as current performance is currently at 69%

About the target range

Upper Tolerance is set to aim to regain Quartile A . Lower tolerance is set to maintain performance at a reasonable level

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	17 September 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

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	Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	John Harris, Children's Services Manager Regulated (North and Fostering)
5	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 1 2020/21 (April to June 2020)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services
6	Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Yvonne Shearwood, Children's Services Manager Regulated (South and Adoption)

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	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 2 2020/21 (July to September 2020)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services
6	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Q2	John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)
For Information Only		
-	Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	John Harris, Children's Services Manager Regulated (North and Fostering)

14 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
4	Leaving Care Service Six Month update report (April to September 2020)	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services
5	Bristol University item	

11 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
3	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Q3	John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)

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

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