

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 2 DECEMBER 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), R J Cleaver, Mrs J E Killey, N Sear, T J N Smith, J Tyrrell, T R Ashton and A M Hall

Added Members

Councillors: P Bradwell and S Roe were also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:

Andy Cook (Service Manager - Future4Me), Linda Dennett (Assistant Director - Children's Health and Commissioning), Nicky Myers (Interim Head of Service Early Years & Childcare Support), Tony Pryce (Joint Diversionary Panel Co-Ordinator), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director of Early Help), Geraldine O'Neill (Lead Consultant - Early Years Entitlement) and Lynn Wilkinson (Lead Nurse for Children's Health 0-19)

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Tyrrell, C Matthews and R Wright.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups) Regulation 1990, Councillor T Ashton was replacing Councillor R Wright and Councillor A Hall was replacing Councillor C Matthews for this meeting only.

10 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this point in proceedings.

11 MINUTES OF THE RECONVENED MEETING (09/09/2022) HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the reconvened meeting held on 21 October 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2022

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RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 October 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROCUREMENT AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- Democratic Services had held an election for a new Parent Governor Representative to replace Miss Alex Sayer on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. Unfortunately, no nominations were received, and Democratic Services were looking to hold a further election in the new year.
- Democratic Services had been advised by the Diocese of Lincoln that Reverend Philip Johnson was no longer the Church Representative on the Committee. Reverend Johnson was appointed as the Church Representative in November 2017. On behalf of the Committee, he gave thanks to Reverend Johnson for his time and commitment over the last five years. A replacement was now being identified by the Diocese of Lincoln.

Councillor Mrs P Bradwell OBE, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement advised the Committee that a youth offending service inspection was happening in the new year, and the results would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

14 JOINT DIVERSIONARY PANEL - UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN EVALUATION

The Committee received a report from Andy Cook, Head of Service – Future4Me and Youth Offending, and Tony Pryce, Joint Diversionary Panel (JDP) Coordinator which updated the Committee on the progress made against the recommendations following the evaluation undertaken of the JDP by the University of Lincoln, which was presented to the Committee in November 2021. Chairman welcomed Detective Chief Inspector Dave McKean from Lincolnshire Police who was also in attendance for this item. It was reported that:

- The JDP was an out-of-court process which worked with young people in Lincolnshire in collaboration with Lincolnshire Police
- Evaluations were positive, and key areas of focus were built upon recommendations received, such as engagement, strategy, victim participation, data analysis, communication and sharing success stories.
- Diversionary approaches were flexible and differed across the country which allowed the JDP to be responsive in responding to evaluations and improving the service.

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- Centring the voice of the young people was a focus and the JDP had updated to ensure all visits were done in person. Physical visits were beneficial in communicating with the young person about their offence and ensuring intervention was specific to the child's needs.
- Further changes had been made to centre the voice of the victims during the panel process, and responses were restorative; meetings were held between the offending Young Person and victims which proved a powerful experience for both parties.
- Support to victims continued after the Panel in accordance with the Victim's Code and the Victim's Charter.

During consideration of the report, the following was noted:

- Ensuring young people did not reoffend was a core part of the work undertaken by the JDP, and the restorative element of the Panel had decreased reoffending figures. Engagement with victims provided valuable insights that challenged the young people about their behaviour and discouraged them from reoffending. This was tracked closely, and reoffending rates were ten points below the statutory work from the Court system.
- The Executive Director of Children's Services highlighted the difference between the reoffending rates tracked by the JDP and the information which was received by the Committee on reoffending rates. The latter applied to more serious convictions where young people were more entrenched in their behaviour. This pertained to a minority of cases, and support was provided to these children.
- An inspection of the Youth Offending Service was due to take place in the new year and its outcome would capture information on how Lincolnshire's JDP benchmarked against other local authorities. Work was ongoing with the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Education on how to improve the service.
- Members suggested that further quantitative data and analysis would be useful to provide further perspective, and the Head of Service highlighted that the data provided in the report mostly related to demographic information and offence type as the recommendations were the focus of the report. He assured the Committee that further data was available and this was provided to the Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board.
- Good practice was being promoted in District Councils and their Chief Executives through meetings, and the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement and the Executive Director of Children's Services agreed to share information about the JDP and its success to all Members of the Council
- It was requested that Officers visit East Lindsey District Council to share the successes of the Panel.

RESOLVED

That the Committee reviewed the report and was satisfied with the progress made against the recommendations contained within the evaluation and the on-going development of the Joint Diversionary Panel.

15 COVID IMPACT AND RESPONSE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Nicky Myers, the Interim Head of Service for Early Years and Childcare Support, and Lynn Wilkinson, Lead Nurse for Children's Health 0-19, delivered a report on the impact of the pandemic on young children's learning and development. Linda Dennett, Assistant Director for Children's Health and Commissioning was also in attendance for this item. It was reported that:

- OFSTED had concluded the pandemic had affected verbal skills of children. Providers subsequently ensured children were learning in language-based environments to encourage better communication and vocabulary.
- The Early Year Foundation Stage compiled a validated data set which highlighted a national drop in outcomes for 'good' levels of development; Lincolnshire's performance was 64.2%, 1% below the national average of 65.2% whereas the previous data set from 2019 had illustrated a 2.2% difference.
- Lincolnshire's outcomes were above national and regional averages in most goals, particularly in the prime areas of learning but were below average in Self-Regulation, Writing and both Mathematical goals.
- Data-sharing with the Teaching School Hub enabled the delivery of bespoke support for children in reception classes.
- The Early Years Recovery Programme had been announced by Government to offer further support for child development.
- LCC was working with parents to ensure they have an awareness of entitlement for funded places to benefit social and behavioral outcomes of children. Levels of families eligible for the 2-year-old entitlement had reduced nationally, however the number of children accessing provision in Lincolnshire was maintained.
- Attendance at children's centers had increased since the Pandemic.
- The government had selected Lincolnshire as one of the authorities to benefit from the Family Hub Programme.
- The provision of some health services became virtual due to COVID restrictions and was exacerbated by a national workforce shortage for nurses and health visitors. Visits were now conducted physically.
- The pandemic highlighted parental demands on the service in terms of parental mental health, conflict, growth, language, and behavioral concerns on a regional and national scale.
- There was an increase of non-attendance at appointments, for example 246.25 hours were lost in June 2022. This was now being monitored monthly by a Working Group.

- 8-12 month contact by family health workers was received well since its introduction in October 2022.

During consideration of the report, the following was noted:

- Members considered the long-term impact of the pandemic on speech and communication, and the Interim Head of Service informed the Committee that speech and language referrals to the service had increased by 10% nationally. The Early Language Indication Measure (ELIM) had also been introduced as a tool to identify children who are likely to experience speech problems, and all partners in the early years sector were working on pathways to ensure children receive the earliest possible support.
- The National Family Hub programme contributed all funding to early years and catch-up strategies which alleviated some pressure from schools.
- Student health visitors had been hired to help provision and performance return to pre-pandemic levels; the benefits of which would be identifiable in 2023. The Executive Director for Children's Health and Commissioning highlighted Lincolnshire's performance had benchmarked above other authorities throughout the pandemic.
- 'Self-regulation' regarding GLD goals alluded to behavioral regulation of children in Lincolnshire.
- It was questioned whether the service would still perform at full capacity, i.e., if non-attendance rates were 0. The Assistant Director for Children's Health and Commissioning assured additional staff would support in completing key tasks. Results from the Working Group were anticipated to identify reasons why people were not attending; text reminders had already led to a decrease of non-attendance.
- Attendance at children's centres was 62.72% although registration was 100%, but strategies were in place and attendance had returned to pre-pandemic levels. Children were registered through the school readiness offer.
- Immunisation of children was reported to be below the required 95% for herd immunity. The Assistant Director for Children's Health and Commissioning explained this was under the remit of general practitioners and practice nurses; she was in attendance of immunisation committees and had information to identify surgeries where immunisation was lower.
- Lincolnshire had adopted specific strategies and consequently was performing differently to other and catch-up strategies were particularly beneficial in Boston and South Holland. This performance was exacerbated by there being no reduction of service during the pandemic.
- Individual caseloads had increased since the pandemic and were consistently monitored.
- The student Health Visitor recruitment strategy was praised by members, and the Committee requested further updates on non-attendance.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted.
2. That the approaches used by the Early Years and Health Visiting services to support improved outcomes for children in Lincolnshire be supported by the Committee.

**16 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE SUCCESS FRAMEWORK
2022-23 - QUARTER 2**

Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director for Early Help, delivered a report which summarised the Service Level Performance against the Success Framework 2022-23 for Quarter 2.

It was reported that:

- Three measures had exceeded targets, two targets were met, two targets were not met, and one measure could not be reported on.
- The Joint Diversionary Panel had the most profound impact on keeping children out of the judicial system; there were 106 in 100,000 young people who had received a police caution or were convicted or sentenced following court attendance.
- Lincolnshire positively benchmarked on the amount of time taken to find children an adoptive family. The number of children in care had also increased but this figure also benchmarked well nationally.
- There was an increase of 16- to 17-year-old young people in care who were participating in education.
- The rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan was below target due to the impact of the pandemic on families and services.
- The average time taken to move a child from care to an adoptive family was also below target and this was attributed to court delays. Time scales were also longer as efforts were made to ensure children were placed for adoption where possible, and many children were initially placed with foster carers before they were adopted which also impacted time scales.
- The juvenile rate of reoffending could not be reported on due to a delay in the production of the Re-offending data published by the Ministry of Justice.

During consideration of the report, the following was noted:

- Members questioned whether court delays were the primary factor impacting adoption time scales; the Assistant Director for Early Help highlighted that extensive work was done to ensure children were adopted under the right circumstances which contributed towards longer time scales.

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- The Executive Director for Children’s Services highlighted that Lincolnshire had received many arrivals of young asylum-seekers through the National Transfer Scheme and these individuals would have to make 0.1% of the population for Lincolnshire to have reached capacity. The Executive Councillor for Children’s Services, Community Safety and Procurement clarified that there were 48 asylum-seeking children in the county, with four being under the age of 16.
- The impacts of the cost-of-living crisis were being closely monitored by the performance team and senior managers, but the potential effect on the care system was still unknown.
- It was reported that children who were incarcerated were categorised as being in suitable education, employment, or training however it was clarified this was a national measure.
- Child Protection Plans were monitored closely; despite statistics fluctuating throughout Covid, the early help provisions available in Lincolnshire were exceptional. If Lincolnshire was to move closer to its statistical neighbours, The Executive Director for Children’s Services acknowledged it would have an impact on finances.
- The quality of conferences was impacted during the pandemic as they were required to be held virtually. Changes had been implemented to ensure all key members were physically present which benefitted both the child and their families.
- The Committee requested an update on the recruitment campaigns for foster parents. Lincolnshire was reported to benchmark well, but there was a need for increased foster, adoptive and respite care.
- The recent John Lewis advertisement had promoted foster caring, with Lincolnshire having received 11 enquiries since the advert’s introduction.
- Officers commended the consistent hard work of foster parents.

RESOLVED

That the Committee reviewed the report and was satisfied with the performance of the measure that were either above or below the target range.

17 HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF) SUMMER 2022 UPDATE

Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service for Early Years and Childcare Support, and Denise Hornsey, Senior Project Manager delivered a report which provided an update on the delivery of the HAF Programme during Summer 2022 to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. It was reported that:

- Overall, HAF was successful during Summer 2022. 3752 children had engaged with HAF provision which demonstrated an increase compared to Easter 2022 and Summer 2021.

- Around 500 children did not attend, and this was being mitigated before Christmas.
- Providing additional HAF for SEND and secondary school children was a priority in the future.
- Improvements were being made ahead of Christmas 2022, such as changes to the booking system and increasing the number of providers to 64 over 162 sites. Additionally, HAF would offer provision to a range of ages and would offer bespoke packages for refugee children.
- There would be 25,000 sessions available during the Christmas period, and funds had been reserved to expand the HAF Programme if demand exceeded provision.
- HAF had delivered to a wider geographical area and had offered extra support to the east coast of Lincolnshire
- Materials were provided to families to support them during the cost of living crisis such as recipe books and health and wellbeing packs.
- There were efforts to maintain a gendered approach to HAF, with girls being encouraged to engage in physical activity.

During consideration of the report, the following was noted:

- Members praised the work of the programme, and the Chairman informed the Committee that he had visited a HAF project in his division and was struck by the enthusiasm of staff and the excitement of the children.
- A session was categorised as an activity lasting for a minimum of four hours and a maximum of six hours.
- Non-attendance was attributed to parents forgetting they had registered or parents or children changing their mind, despite being able to cancel in advance.
- Members questioned whether the HAF provision could be extended to other areas in Lincolnshire such as Horncastle. The Senior Project Manager assured the Committee that there was a HAF club in Horncastle but had temporarily withdrawn provision due to construction work at the school where the club was held. Other schools in Horncastle were approached to host HAF programmes, however this was too costly. It was assured that there would be a HAF programme in Horncastle at Christmas.
- A new theatre HAF programme was due to be delivered in the Stamford area.
- A marketing plan and strategy were being implemented to promote the message of HAF around the county, and the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement had written to all businesses who had supported the scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed the report and was satisfied with the HAF Programme delivered for 2022.

18 EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT

The Committee received a report from Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service for Early Years and Childcare Support, and Geraldine O'Neill, Sustainability and Development Manager for Children's Education, which provided recommendations to support the development of early years and childcare places in Lincolnshire to meet the statutory childcare sufficiency duty including a request to the Secretary of State to convert trajectory funding into capital. It was reported that:

- The annual survey of childcare providers had been engaged with well; 95% of early years providers had responded, and a 100% response rate from clubs offering before/after school and holiday provision.
- A parent survey was hosted through the Let's Talk Lincolnshire platform which yielded almost 1500 responses. The survey identified a heightened need for after school provision which was now being addressed.
- Work around raising awareness of the Family Service Directory was ongoing with the Engagement Team.
- Sustainability within the childcare sector was being affected by the cost of living, increased insurance premiums for childcare providers and staff wages. Collaborative work was being undertaken alongside the Department for Education and other regional colleagues to offer further support.
- A digital campaign was launched to help improve staff retention by promoting careers in childcare.
- There had been some closures of childcare provisions, but this was monitored closely and the sector was expanding places where possible.

During consideration of the report, the following was noted:

- Members questioned why only 61% of parents felt they had sufficient childcare to meet their childcare needs, and whether there was a challenge to meet demand. Assurance was given that a delivery plan was being developed to identify these gaps in provision, alongside collaborating with schools, the private sector and the voluntary sector.
- There was a growing pressure around costs for providing childcare to SEND children, but there was a comprehensive training package offered to all providers to facilitate SEND children. There was also access to SENCo network training around transfer arrangements, and providers had access to additional inclusion and disability funding.
- There were strong commitments made from pre-existing providers wanting to expand their provision, and the Sustainability and Development Manager for

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Children's Education was going to invite local providers to discuss potential areas of expansion.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted.
2. That the recommendation to capitalise £0.780m of Dedicated Schools Grant revenue funding through a Disapplication Request to the Department for Education for Secretary of State approval be supported.

19 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited members to consider and comment on the content of its work programme, to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit. Members noted the work programme and there were no further suggestions.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be agreed.

20 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

21 LINCOLNSHIRE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME NEW BUILD BUSINESS CASE

Consideration was given to the exempt report.

The Committee raised a number of questions which were answered by the Officers present.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations to the Leader of the Council as set out in the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Leader of the Council in relation to this item.

The meeting closed at 12.49 pm