



County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YL

29 February 2024

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Friday, 8 March 2024 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL** for the transaction of the business set out on the attached Agenda.

Yours sincerely



Debbie Barnes OBE
Chief Executive

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
(11 Members of the Council and 3 Added Members)

Councillors R J Kendrick (Chairman), W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), A J Baxter, A W Briggs, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews, Mrs S A J Nutman, N Sear, T J N Smith, M A Whittington and R A Wright

Added Members

Church Representative: M Kyle

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs M R Machin and Dr E van der Zee

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA
FRIDAY, 8 MARCH 2024**

Item	Title	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence / Replacement Members	
2	Declarations of Members' Interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 January 2024	5 - 14
4	Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillors and Lead Officers	
5	Lincolnshire School Performance 2022-23 <i>(To receive a report from Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Education, Matt Spoons, Head of Service – School Standards, and Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service – Early Years and Childcare Support on school performances in Lincolnshire for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYRS), Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, and Key Stage 4. The Committee is invited to review the outcomes for the academic year 2022/23).</i>	15 - 24
6	Service Level Performance Reporting against the Success Framework 2023-24 Quarter 3 <i>(To receive a report from Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help, which provides a summary of the Service Level Performance reporting against the Success Framework 2023-24 for Quarter 3)</i>	25 - 36
7	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2022-23 <i>(To receive a report from Carolyn Knight, Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, which updates the Committee on the performance of Children's Services and complaints relating specifically to Children's Social Care)</i>	37 - 52
8	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme <i>(To receive a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enables the Committee to consider and comment on the contents of its work programme to ensure that its scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit).</i>	53 - 60

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Please note: for more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting

- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements

Contact details set out above.

Please note: This meeting will be broadcast live on the internet and access can be sought by accessing [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Friday, 8th March, 2024, 10.00 am \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

All papers for council meetings are available on:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/search-committee-records>



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
12 JANUARY 2024**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), A J Baxter, A W Briggs, C Matthews, Mrs S A J Nutman, N Sear, T J N Smith, M A Whittington and R A Wright

Added Members

Councillors Mrs P A Bradwell OBE and S P Roe were also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Joanne Carr (Inclusion and Attendance Team Leader) Matthew Clayton (Interim Head of Capital Reform & Education Sufficiency), Linda Dennett (Assistant Director - Children's Health and Commissioning), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Neal Kathel (Project Team Leader, Corporate Property), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director of Early Help), Nicky Myers (Interim Head of Service Early Years & Childcare Support), Geraldine O'Neill (Sustainability and Development Manager), Dave Pennington (Head of Property Development), Mark Popplewell (Strategic Finance Lead (Children's Services)), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director for Children's Education), Ethan Thorpe (Strategic Communications Lead) and Jess Wosser-Yates (Democratic Services Officer)

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs. Killey, Martin Kyle, the Church Representative, Dr Emile Van Der Zee, the Parent Governor Representative, and Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding.

50 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared at this point in proceedings.

51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
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52 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had been recently elected as a Co-Sponsor Governor at St. Georges Academy in Sleaford.

There were no announcements made by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration or any of the Lead Officers Present.

It was noted that Councillor S P Roe (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration) left the meeting whilst the Committee considered the budgetary reports (items 5 and 6).

53 COUNCIL BUDGET 2024/25

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director- Children's Services and the Strategic Finance Lead – Children's Services which invited Members to consider the Children's Services Budget Proposals for 2024-25.

Consideration was given to the wider budgetary implications for the Council and those for Children's Services, particularly children's education and children's social care service areas. Officers also highlighted that the Autumn 2022 Statement announced a £2 billion increase in schools funding in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 to respond to emerging cost pressures such as increased costs of utility bills and increase in salary costs, and the latest teachers' pay grant.

The Committee was informed that the budget was partly funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which supported schools, central school services, high needs and the early years service areas. Lincolnshire County Council was one of 106 authorities that mirrored the National Funding Formula (NFF) for mainstream school due to the associated improved financial settlement for schools. The Committee was guided through the report and was informed that the Executive had also considered and supported the budget proposals at its meeting on 9 January 2024.

During consideration of the report, the following matters were highlighted:

- The Committee recognised that Children's Services had very little control over the rising cost pressures due to the unprecedented market conditions, increasing demand, and rising prices, which were causing the 10% increase in the overall budget for Children's Services. Assurance was provided that Children's Services was working hard to mitigate the impact through early intervention and by making sure it remained competitive within a market. In addition, Children's Services was investing in new children's homes so that it was less reliant on the market and could use its own provision.
- The Committee acknowledged that Children's Services had invested in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school provision through the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy programme which started five years ago. It was clarified that since this started, the market had changed considerably for specialist

placements and the SEND system had also changed extensively due to the increased demands. The programme had mitigated the worst impact of those changes, and national data indicated that the Council was bucking the trend around the increases in SEND being seen elsewhere. However, it was not immune to those increases which would come with significant costs. The programme had mitigated significant costs, provided local education for children with SEND, and once completed, the Council would see a positive impact on home to school transport cost pressures for children with SEND when placed in their local special schools. Consideration was now turning to Phase Two of the programme which included a new Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) school, which has funding provisionally earmarked in the Council's capital budget, and identifying what other options were available to increase the Council's own SEND provision to reduce costs further. It was anticipated that the Council would continue to see pressures on the high needs block over the next few years.

- The Committee raised concerns about the increasing costs for alternative provision, which were very high for the number of children and young people it served. It was confirmed that Children's Services was working with schools to make sure they were inclusive and responded to the needs of children, and that children were kept within mainstream settings wherever possible as this enhanced their academic and long-term outcomes. To respond to the market, there were plans in place to expand provision with the alternative provision provider at Myle Cross in Lincoln to meet current demand.
- Concerns were also raised about the increasing number of children in care and the costs of placements, which had seen a 23% average increase in Lincolnshire. It was clarified that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) were included in the children in care figures, but these were grant funded and would not usually go into high cost placements as there was an efficient way of supporting them in place. If the number of UASC were removed from the figures, the number of children brought into care would be fairly stable. According to the latest measurement from April 2023, the number of children in care per 10,000 had fallen by 2%. This was contrary to the national and statistical neighbour figures which had both risen. The significant factor in the high cost for placements was due to market costs and not the increasing number of children in care. Assurance was given that the right children were being brought into the care of the local authority to safeguard them.
- It was suggested that the Council should contact local MPs to lobby for more funding for local government or for a relaxation of, or update to, councils' statutory duties as the current situation was not sustainable or practical. It was highlighted that the home to school transport legislation which governed the Council was established in 1944.
- The Committee was pleased to hear of the proposal for a new SEMH school. It was confirmed that this was at a very early stage in the process and was included in the Council's budget proposals. Children's Services has identified capital funding requirements for this scheme over the next period and the need to have these funds earmarked. The full business case would come through a future meeting of the Committee.
- The Committee questioned the cost pressure of £0.500m for social care transport costs for supervised family time, and it was clarified that this was mainly due to the increase in the national living wage and unfavourable market conditions. To address these cost pressures further, there was a new automated system for planning routes in place and a

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move away from short term contracts, and Children's Services was working with the courts to ensure that family time was agreed in an efficient way to minimise cost and disruption.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the Children's Services budget proposals for 2024/25 as set out in the report.
2. That the comments from the discussion be passed onto the Executive for consideration at its meeting on 6 February 2024.

54 MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FUNDING 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report by the Strategic Finance Lead – Children's Services which invited the Committee to consider whether it supported the principals outlined in the report regarding Mainstream Schools Funding.

It was noted that the Council would continue to adopt the National Funding Formula (NFF) subject to the affordability gap associated with heightened costs of utilities and increased uptake of free school meals (FSM). The Strategic Finance Lead outlined that financial modeling has taken place and explained that the Schools Growth Fund would help relocate 1.1% to support the affordability gap, and the principles outlined in the report were unlikely to change drastically, which included a percentage reduction in the pupil funding within the range for mirroring the NFF.

Members were informed that Officers were currently determining the details of the budget before it was considered by the Lincolnshire Schools Forum at their January meeting. It was summarised that the Council would continue to adopt the NFF and support the principles which sought to address the anticipated affordability gap.

During consideration of the report, the following matters were highlighted:

Affordability Gap

- In relation to addressing the affordability gap, it was confirmed that there were only two options. This included the proposed option to amend the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) or the alternative option of applying a cap on the per pupil increase, where any amounts over the cap would be captured and recycled to try and support the affordability gap. This alternative option was not recommended as if a school had a number of proxy factors which resulted in additional funding, such as free school meals eligibility, this option would financially disadvantage the school. The AWPU option was considered the fairest approach for all schools. A different funding formula could be used, but the Department for Education's framework would limit the available options and the Council would still need to continue to mirror the national funding framework.
- With regards to long term funding of the national funding formula and the affordability gap, it was confirmed that this was difficult to predict as the Council was only informed on a year-by-year basis. The affordability gaps arose each year due to the lag in schools

funding from the use of the prior schools census by the Government, but the Council had to fund schools using the latest census. In addition, since the pandemic and the cost-of-living increases, more families had been triggering free school meals eligibility, which was creating a bigger affordability gap. It was anticipated that there would be an affordability gap in the long term for mainstream schools funding. The Government had responded to some of the significant cost increases which was welcomed, but there was no clarity on what the next funding settlement would be.

Direct National Funding Formula

- The Government was aiming for all local authorities to be on the direct national funding formula by 2027/28. The Council was mirroring the national funding formula, and it was highlighted that it would be a smooth transition for the Council when it was put in place. Unfortunately, the direct formula would remove the local discretion available to councils to respond to the needs and challenges of schools.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Children’s Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration on the basis of the principles and approach as set out in the report.
2. That the Committee’s comments be passed onto the Executive Councillor in relation to this item.

55 CHILDCARE REFORMS & EARLY YEARS FUNDING FORMULA

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Head of Service- Early Years and Childcare Support and the Sustainability and Development Manager on the childcare reforms and early years funding formula. The Strategic Finance Lead – Children’s Services was also in attendance for this item.

It was reported that the Government had announced a £4 billion per annum expansion of childcare services to children under three in England which sought to remove barriers for employment for parents. This expansion would facilitate 30 hours of childcare support for working parents with children over the age of nine months by September 2025.

Additionally, the Government also announced their ambition for all parents of primary school aged children to access childcare in their local area between 8am and 6pm and the Council was developing plans for this universal provision. Local authorities would start to receive a share of £289 million in funding from January 2024, and parents were expected to see an expansion in the availability of wrap-around care from September 2024.

During consideration of the report, the following matters were highlighted:

Provision and Take Up of Childcare Places

- With regards to the current percentage of eligible children already accessing childcare, it was confirmed that it was difficult to pinpoint the exact position at this stage. A survey of

the childcare sector had been conducted to ask about the number of existing children, where they were already attending nursery provision and the parents were paying for the places, as those children would convert to the funded childcare places later this year.

- The current position for the two-year-old places looked favourable in terms of delivery, but more would be known once the entitlement started to be rolled out. This would be carefully monitored, and the development of places adjusted based on the take up.
- The Government had provided some national datasets which indicate the number of families that they thought would be eligible for entitlements. The Government's national datasets were based on information from their departments such as DWP and HMRC. These looked at working families and then the demographics in terms of each local authority and the number of children that they had in that age range. This was used to determine their estimate of potential places that would be taken up. The Council was using this national dataset alongside local intelligence about population figures and the number of children in childcare places to map initial provision. The development of places was often driven by demand so there was a need to balance the national dataset with local intelligence and with existing children already taking up places. Caution was expressed about the use of the Government's dataset as some people may not claim some or all of their benefit entitlements.
- It was recognised that different families would have different choices and therefore it was important to get the messages out about the different initiatives for those families that need to access childcare, and highlight that there was a number of Government offers available to them, such as tax free childcare and Universal Credit, on top of the early years entitlements that were there to support the affordability of childcare for the families that need to access it.
- For early years settings, it was not mandatory for these young children to access those places. Eligible families were engaged with to encourage them to access their entitlements, but it was down to parental choice and preference whether they decided to do so. More detailed work was needed in terms of those families that were not choosing to access their early years entitlement to identify if there were any barriers or if it was out of choice, and whether they were accessing something else such as children's centres or utilising other services but choosing not to access their child's early education place. If barriers existed, such as an insufficiency of childcare places or barriers to do with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) needs, then these would try to be addressed.

SEND Childcare Places

- In relation to children with SEND, the intention was to undertake a focus piece of work this year to address the families that were not accessing provision to identify if there were any barriers, such as the lack of places for children with SEND. More investigation was needed for children with SEND to make sure that those places were accessible. Members requested that this piece of research, into the reasons why there was a lower take up from children with SEND, was brought back to a later meeting of the Committee.
- The census conducted each year would identify the ages of all children, including those in special schools, so that they were all captured.

- There was heavy investment in supporting children with SEND within settings through a programme called the Dingley's Promise, so there was a lot of support and advice provided around inclusion. In addition, there were early year specialist teachers that support all settings to make sure they were inclusive and were skilled and highly trained to meet an individual child's needs within that setting.
- It was highlighted that there could be a number of reasons for less engagement with children with SEND, such as a shortage of accessible places, parents feeling better placed to deal with their children's needs even if an accessible place was available, and advocating for that child's needs as the more complex the needs were, the harder it would be for an individual who did not deal with that on a regular basis.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration as set out in the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed onto the Executive Councillor in relation to this item.

56 ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS, ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report by the Inclusion and Attendance Manager on the annual update on attendance in school, electively home educated (EHE) children and children missing education (CME) for the 2022-23 academic year.

The Committee was guided through the report, and it was noted that the launch of the Lincolnshire Attendance Strategy informed the local response to recommendations arising from the Department for Education (DfE) and its '*Working Together to improve school attendance*' document. The Strategy had overseen the establishment of a new attendance team comprised of four single point of contacts for schools for attendance matters. Schools were also required to adopt an attendance champion who would liaise with the attendance team.

It was reported that there had been an increase in both CME and the issuing of fixed penalty notices, 91% of which related to term time holidays. Additionally, an increase in EHE children and young people had been observed, which was attributed to a myriad of factors such as mental health and anxiety. It was assured that the Council consistently encouraged children to remain in school settings where appropriate.

During consideration of the report, the following matters were highlighted:

- The Inclusion and Attendance Manager encouraged schools to sign up to the DfE Attendance Live Data Dashboard before it became mandatory in September 2024.
- It was clarified that a 'persistent absence' referred to those with 80-90% attendance who were enrolled in school.

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- Members suggested whether fixed penalty notices were effectively a holiday tax and queried as to whether fixed penalty notices had any significant impact on attendance. The Executive Director – Children’s Services noted that they had the most impact where they were issued in the first term. It was noted that the government may potentially increase the fine amount to disincentivise those taking holidays in term times.
- Members explored potential actions to combat absences due to bullying and unhappiness; the Assistant Director – Children’s Education informed the Committee that often retreating from school settings exacerbated mental health problems; additionally, he emphasised the importance of increased attendance which helped create better outcomes for young people. Members also agreed that attendance was important for young people to build resilience and develop social skills.
- The Assistant Director – Children’s Education noted that schools upheld a strong anti-bullying policy and complaints procedure, and it was further assured that most schools maintained a good relationship with pupils and their families.
- Members acknowledged the adverse impact non-attendance had on a young person and their life chances.
- Members noted that school absences in Lincolnshire were higher than the national average.
- The DfE ‘*Working Together*’ document advised early intervention helped to prevent persistent absences.
- Apprehension was raised regarding parents potentially receiving fixed penalty notices in instances where a child was bullied and where attending school would be harmful. It was noted that fixed penalty notices were issued at the Headteacher’s discretion, not at the local authority level. Consequently, the Committee was informed that the government was developing a national framework to establish more consistency with the issuing of penalties.
- Members noted there was a wide range of factors that led a child to be electively home educated.
- The Inclusion and Attendance Team Manager informed the Committee that a Children’s Commissioner Paper had summarised that the Covid-19 pandemic caused long-term implications on attendance.
- Members highlighted that low attendance in Boston exacerbated the overall statistics outlined within the report, although it was assured that work was ongoing to intervene and improve communication between schools and parents in the district.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorses the Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report for the 2022/23 academic year.

57 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to comment on the contents of its work programme.

Members were informed of two amendments to the published work programme:

- A report on the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service was added to the 19 April 2024 agenda for pre-decision scrutiny prior to a decision by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration between 3 and 7 June 2024.
- A report on the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme was also added to the 19 April agenda.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be agreed subject to the above amendments.

58 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**RESOLVED**

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that is considered to contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

59 WELTON WILLIAM FARR (CHURCH OF ENGLAND) COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL - NEW SIXTH FORM BLOCK

Consideration was given to the exempt report, and the Committee raised a number of questions which were answered by the Officers present.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendations to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning) as set out in the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning) in relation to this item.

60 PROGRESS AGAINST HMIP INSPECTION RECOMMENDATIONS - LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

It was noted that this item was for information only.

The meeting closed at 12.59 pm

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Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8 March 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire School Performance 2022-23

Summary:

This report provides an update regarding standards within the sector led system. The report uses validated performance data from Lincolnshire schools national testing and examinations in 2023. The report will cover outcomes at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

Pupil group level data is delayed through Department for Education (DfE) system change.

Actions Required:

The Committee is invited to review and seek assurance on the outcomes for Lincolnshire schools for the academic year 2022/23.

1. Background

Educational Outcomes

It should be noted that due to changes in assessment methodology, direct comparisons between 2019 data and 2023 should not be made.

Statutory National Curriculum Assessment and Examinations as at 2023 Local Performance Data

a) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile

The Good Level of Development (GLD) is used as the key measure to judge outcomes for children at the end of the foundation stage. The EYFS profile is a statutory assessment of children's development at the end of the academic year in which children turn 5. It is not intended to be used for entry level assessment for early years in schools nor is it an accountability measure for schools. Children are defined as having reached a good level of development at the end of the EYFS if they achieve the expected level in the early learning

goals in the prime areas of learning; personal, social, and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language; and the early learning goals in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Since this, the GLD in Lincolnshire was 67.5% in 2023 compared to 64.1% in 2022. This is higher than pupils in the East Midlands (66.8%) and that of the national average (67.3%). The percentage of children achieving a good level of development has increased by 3.4% since 2022.

The validated data was released by the DfE on 30 November 2023:

[Early years foundation stage profile results: 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2022-to-2023)

GLD	2019 Validated	2022* Validated	2023 NCER
National	71.80%	65.20%	67.3%
East Midlands	70.30%	64.60%	66.8%
Lincolnshire	69.60%	64.10%	67.5%
Gap (Lincolnshire and National)	-2.2%	-1.2%	0.2%

*in 2022 there was a drop in GLD Nationally due to the revision of the EYFS and changing some of the goals

We are pleased with the increased outcomes at the end of the foundation stage, placing Lincolnshire above the national average. Lincolnshire has been below the national average since 2017. We recognise that the increase is due to a combination of factors. The Early Childhood Strategy has brought together our collective ambitions to improve the good level of development for Lincolnshire’s children and the momentum for this improvement has been actioned through the steering group.

b) Key Stage Summary

Since 2022:

- At Key Stage (KS) 1, the gap between Lincolnshire and national has narrowed in all subjects and the combined measure.
- At KS2, the gap between Lincolnshire and national has narrowed in Reading and Writing and has remained steady for mathematics.
- At KS4, Lincolnshire has closed the gap with national for progress.

c) KS1 (Aged 7)

This is a local measure of Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Lincolnshire’s KS1 performance remains well below national by 3% on average across every subject, but the gaps are narrowing in all subjects by around 1% per year. In the combined measure of Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM), 4% more pupils attained the expected standard compared with 2022.

Maintained schools continue to outperform academies for a second year. All districts increased performance at KS1 in 2023. North Kesteven is the highest performing District Council based on outcomes.

d) Phonics (Aged 6)

Similarly, 3% more children attained the expected standard compared with 2022. However, the national trend is greater and so our gap with national has widened slightly for this measure. Maintained schools continue to perform better than academies for a second consecutive year in phonics at Year 1. Academies gap in attainment to maintained schools narrowed compared to last year.

e) KS2 (Aged 11)

This is a national measure of RWM combined (a pupil achieved age related or above in all three subjects). Nationally, outcomes have risen from a low base in 2019, and this is reflected in Lincolnshire. Over 60% of Lincolnshire's primary schools are maintained by the Local Authority. Lincolnshire's KS2 performance remains below national and regional neighbours by 2% on average across every subject.

Lincolnshire's maintained schools tend to perform relatively well, however the percentage of pupils achieving the combined measure of RWM at the expected level or above (EXS+) in maintained schools is higher on average than that seen in academies, academy converters, academy Sponsored and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). This is reflected in reading and writing in particular.

Lincolnshire's gaps in attainment to national, for English related subjects (reading, writing and grammar, punctuation, and spelling) have narrowed in 2023 (all narrowing from around 4% below to around 3% below).

Most significantly, we have seen an improvement in the performance of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in mainstream settings. Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have shown the most rapid improvement in outcomes of all pupil groups across all subjects. This is not reflected in the performance of EHCP pupils in specialist settings and SEND schools, where performance has dropped.

North Kesteven is still the top performing District Council overall in 2023 for KS2. Boston Borough and South Kesteven showed the steepest increases in KS2 performance overall in 2023. This was particularly noteworthy due to the socio-economic challenges experienced in Boston Borough. The increases were driven mainly by improvements in writing and maths.

Boston Borough is also top for KS2 progress overall. North Kesteven is top for reading progress, just edging above Boston Borough. Lincoln has also performed well for progress as the second best performing in writing and maths progress.

Lincolnshire has risen to 7th place (out of 12), against our statistical neighbours for progress in reading and now equals our statistical neighbour average. Lincolnshire is now 8th for maths and writing, improving from bottom in the tables previously.

Our overall progress for all subjects is now above our statistical neighbour’s overall average.

f) KS4 (aged 16)

A standard pass is deemed a grade 4, and a good pass is considered a grade 5. This is then calculated into Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores. The subjects included are double-weighted English and Mathematics, and a combination of Science, Computer Science, Geography or History, and a Modern Foreign Language along with a wider choice of subject areas to complete the eight subjects.

50 of Lincolnshire’s 52 secondary schools are academies.

Lincolnshire’s average Attainment 8 score per pupil has remained steady and is ahead of East Midlands and statistical neighbours and is broadly in line with the national average.

Lincolnshire is currently above East Midlands, its statistical neighbours, and broadly in line with the national average, and below the Selective Authority average in the schools’ average of pupils achieving 9-5 and 9-4 in English and Maths GCSEs.

The average Progress 8 score in Lincolnshire has improved. We are now above National (State-Funded), East Midlands and statistical neighbour average of 0.02.

Lincolnshire ranks well against other local authorities (a rank of 1 denotes the best performing Authority).

KS4 2023	A8 RANK	% E&M 9-5 RANK	% E&M 9-4 RANK	P8 RANK
Lincs Rank Nationally (/152)	61	86	78	54
Lincs Rank in East Midlands (/10)	2	5	5	4
Lincs Rank in Stat Neighbours (/12)	1	3	3	2

Compared to the average of two other Selective Authorities, Lincolnshire is below on every outcome measure – except from Progress 8, in which we are above.

Overall, grammar schools seem to negatively impact the performance of our education sector in the county. This is due to the impact of clustering deprived pupils in non-selective schools, creaming off the most able, and attracting and retaining teachers in the grammar schools. The relatively high performance of the grammar schools is more than offset by the under-performance of the non-selective schools. A degree of this under-performance is caused by the grammar school system itself.

Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) make at least as much progress as this group achieves nationally. The gap with their advantaged peers remains.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) support pupils in Lincolnshire continue to perform above the levels of their SEN peers nationally on average. They attain at least in line with national for strong passes in English and Maths. The progress they make is also above the national average.

The progress of pupils with EHCPs is above the national average from their starting points.

g) Impact of Attendance

Our data confirms and reinforces the national picture that the less time children spend in school, the less well they achieve. At primary phase, we can see for those with less than 90% attendance, they are 1.2%-2.2% below where they are expected to be. Those with less than 75% attendance have large negative scores.

Attendance	Number of pupils	Average Reading	Average Writing	Average Maths
≥ 95%	5093	-0.04	0.33	0.01
≥ 90%	7378	-0.21	0.16	-0.24
All	8616	-0.35	-0.11	-0.50
< 90%	1238	-1.24	-1.79	-2.21
< 75%	168	-3.51	-4.65	-5.20

h) Ofsted

Outcomes show that an increasing percentage (87%) of maintained schools are Good or Better compared with only 75% of academies.

i) Collaborations

As a result of the collaboration with the Teaching School Hub (TSH), after only 18 months of project and CPD delivery, 2023 data shows the following outcomes for maintained schools:

- Active English/Spelling Schools had 3% higher outcomes in spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) than non-Active schools.
- Schools receiving school-to-school support from the Hub had 5.7% higher RWM combined KS2.
- Reading was 4.7% higher at KS2 than those who did not participate in CPD or project.

- Writing was 2.2% higher at KS2 than those who did not participate in CPD or project.

A TSH Strategic Board report shows very positive impact in all areas.

2. Actions to Improve Educational Outcomes

Improving educational outcomes for all children in the Early Years

Early Years and Childcare Support (EYCC) analyse Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) data alongside the local Early Years teams in the Autumn term so they can focus on the needs of their own areas, so that delivery in local children centres and support for early years settings can be focussed on specific areas of learning. EYCC have officers who provide support for schools with Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) assessment through training and teachers who are new to the EYFS and termly agreement trialling, yearly sector led moderation opportunities and through an annual quality assurance process.

EYCC colleagues work closely with the TSH to share data and research that bespoke support can be offered to reception classes in schools focussing on key areas such as early language and skills. A pilot project has been commissioned with the TSH to focus on targeted support for nine schools with significantly lower GLD outcomes at the end of the EYFS 2023.

EYCC coordinates a universal training offer to all early years providers focussing on mandatory training and courses linked to national and local initiatives, safeguarding and analysis of patterns of need following Ofsted inspections.

EYCC are working closely with the DfE and local providers to support the delivery of the Stronger Practice Programmes, which the government has announced as a package of measures to support children's educational recovery after the pandemic in the early years.

Lincolnshire's children achieve well overall. There remains a spread of performance across schools and districts in the county and support for education improvement is essential to maintain our trajectory of improvement and to support communities and children. Challenges persist with our influence and engagement across the academy sector.

Educational Locality Leads maintain regular contact with their colleagues within their districts such as SEND, pupil regeneration team (PRT), Early Help/Family Hubs and EYCC. They collaborate to share real time information about factors affecting families, schools, and their localities. In doing so, they build robust knowledge of their geographical areas and communities. They use this, as part of Teams Around the Schools and Districts, to guide and inform school leaders on strategies for improvement and to signpost to the best avenues of support.

Education Locality Leads each have an area of lead responsibility and link with different service areas in Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services and attend link meetings and steering groups as appropriate to ensure education retains an active voice in support for

children and families. This also enables them to bring back up to date intel and knowledge to the rest of the team.

We believe that the Education Team is ideally placed to link with operational multi-agency teams within the Families First Pathfinder initiative to enhance the 'Team around the Family' model and link out to the 'Team Around the School'. The team could offer the support and monitoring for school leaders to secure more robust intelligence for school staff and to guide the team's delivery.

The Education Improvement Strategy

The Lincolnshire Education Team works very closely with our two main partners in the sector, the Partnership of Schools Group (PSG) and the TSH, along with the Lincoln Diocese (DBE). Together, representatives of each group work on our Lincolnshire Education Group (LEG) to steer and drive our Education Strategic One Plan (ESOP). A key part of this is The Education Improvement Strategy.

All maintained schools continue to receive at least one termly visit from their Education Locality Lead, to ensure that their school is in a strong position moving forward. LEG now provides regular leadership briefings for school leaders which are well attended by leaders in both maintained schools and academies.

Education Locality Leads continue to support school leaders to develop their curricula so that pupils are able to learn from wider experiences such as educational visits and visitors to the school. Curriculum adjustments will be informed by an understanding of the critical content for progression in each subject.

Where assessments reveal significant gaps in learning, Locality Leads are working with school leaders to develop targeted support and interventions making sure pupils catch up. The Education Team supports schools to understand how the Recovery Premium can be used to supplement high-quality teaching.

In addition to this, the Education Team now supports or works collaboratively with our key partners within the education sector.

Teaching School Hub

We are proud that we have a Lincolnshire school as a key strategic partner in this new DfE initiative. The Education Team has strong links with the TSH – e.g. Heads of Service sit on the TSH Strategic Board – and through information sharing, support targeted support for schools most in need, through the TSH offer.

Our TSH has collaborated with partners to provide a central front door for access to DfE programmes such as Early Career Teachers (what used to be called NQTs) and the New Professional Qualifications (NPQs) as well as being a central place for schools for access to other hubs and nationally designated specialist centres. The Hub also has DfE approved, and quality assured, additional professional development programmes for teachers.

The Education Team commissions projects from the TSH to address key issues identified by the sector and the team itself. These projects are delivered alongside the universal offer for the TSH.

Working with the TSH, we are now part way through the delivery of a two-year programme to increase pupils' fluency in reading by Year 2 and develop pedagogical approaches of practitioners in relation to communication and language and early reading and to provide a sustainable model to ensure the on-going development of these approaches in Lincolnshire, including the development of reading and language frameworks and assessment approaches. This programme was commissioned in the context of Lincolnshire's children performing less well than the majority of their peers nationally and has already had a positive impact on outcomes as our data is showing.

The focus of the service is on intervening early and supporting schools in driving school improvement activity. We can already see positive impact of our work with maintained schools. The percentage of pupils achieving RWM EXS+ in Maintained schools is higher on average than those in Academies, Academy Converters, Academy Sponsored and MATs. Reading progress in Maintained schools for the majority of pupil groups is higher than their peers in Academies, Academy Converters, Academy Sponsored and MATs. Since September 2022, there are 25 maintained schools who were previously less than good, are good or better or have remained good after an ungraded inspection.

We are planning to continue supporting this journey of improving education standards for primary maintained schools by commissioning further work with the TSH. Academy liaison generally falls to the Assistant Director for Education through keeping in touch meetings and the MAT CEO network meetings.

Currently, there are three projects underway:

- **Early Reading into KS1:** This links to the EYCC Reading Development Project. One year completed.
- **Strengthening Leadership:** This links to Leadership Pathways and National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), focusing on Deputy Leaders as well as Head Teachers. One month completed.
- **SEND Leadership Development:** This links to the SEND workforce development project commissioned with LEARN as part of the SEND Strategy. One year completed.

We are commissioning a new project to develop robust and enhanced Assessment for Learning (AfL) in schools which will link social context and other service provision to in-school provision to support closing the attainment gap.

In addition to this, the Education Team has commissioned a consultant Head Teacher to lead the Gainsborough Aspiration Project (GAP). This project is focussing on drawing together local services and local authority service provision and schools in order to address factors outside

of schools, support families and raise aspirations and ultimately improve outcomes for young people in one of our most deprived areas.

The legacy of the projects will be that schools are more effective in providing support for all pupils and attainment gaps are closing across the county, with a cadre of school-based colleagues on hand to offer support to their peers.

3. Conclusion

Children are now getting a good start as they enter education. Although starting points are below what we hope for in KS2, by the end of KS4 young people catch up and outcomes are broadly in line with national.

Challenges remain in the capacity of the Education Team to scale up projects across all schools, to engage fully with the academy sector and to provide ongoing hands-on advice to all school leaders.

Developing our strategies and services to support schools and to support families in localities will be a key driver of improvement in the future.

4. Consultation

a) Risk and impact analysis

Not applicable

5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Matt Spoons, who can be contacted on 07826959326 or by email at matt.spoons@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children’s Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8 March 2024
Subject:	Service Level Performance Reporting against the Success Framework 2023-24 Quarter 3

Summary:

This report summarises the Service Level Performance against the Success Framework 2023-24 for Quarter 3. All performance that can be reported in Quarter 3 is included in this report.




Full service level reporting to all scrutiny committees can be found here: [Corporate plan – Performance data - Lincolnshire County Council](#)

Actions Required:

The Committee is invited to review and comment on the Children and Young People Service Level Performance for 2023- 24 Quarter 3.

1. Background

This report details the Service Level Performance measures for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee that can be reported in Quarter 3.

- 1 measure exceeded their target 
- 6 measures achieved their target 
- 0 measures did not meet their target 

1.1 Children are Healthy and Safe

1.1.1 Measures that exceeded their target

None in Quarter 3.

1.1.2 Measures that Achieved their target

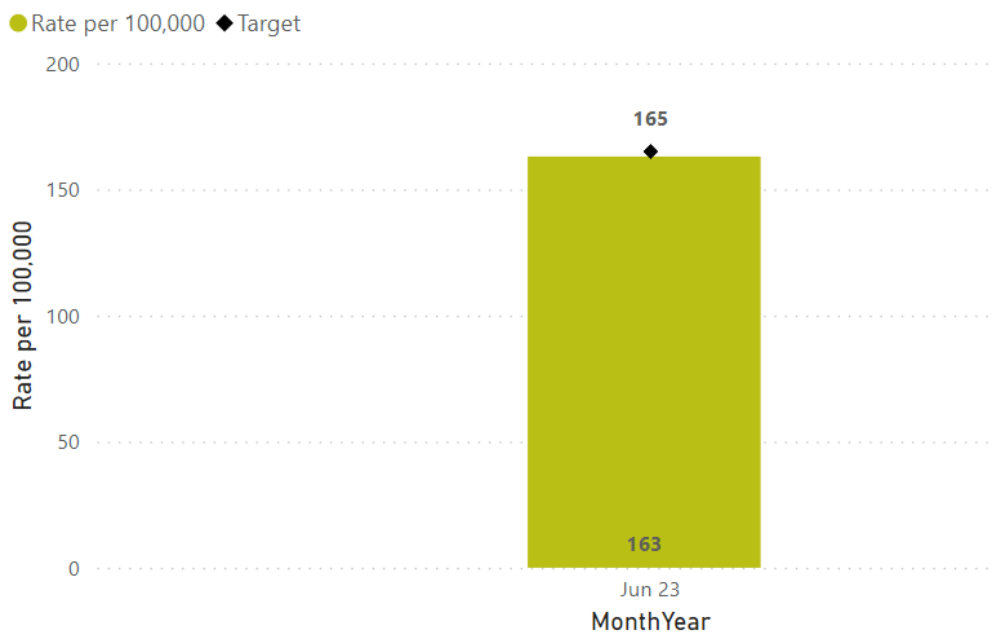
PI 15 Juvenile first time offenders ✓

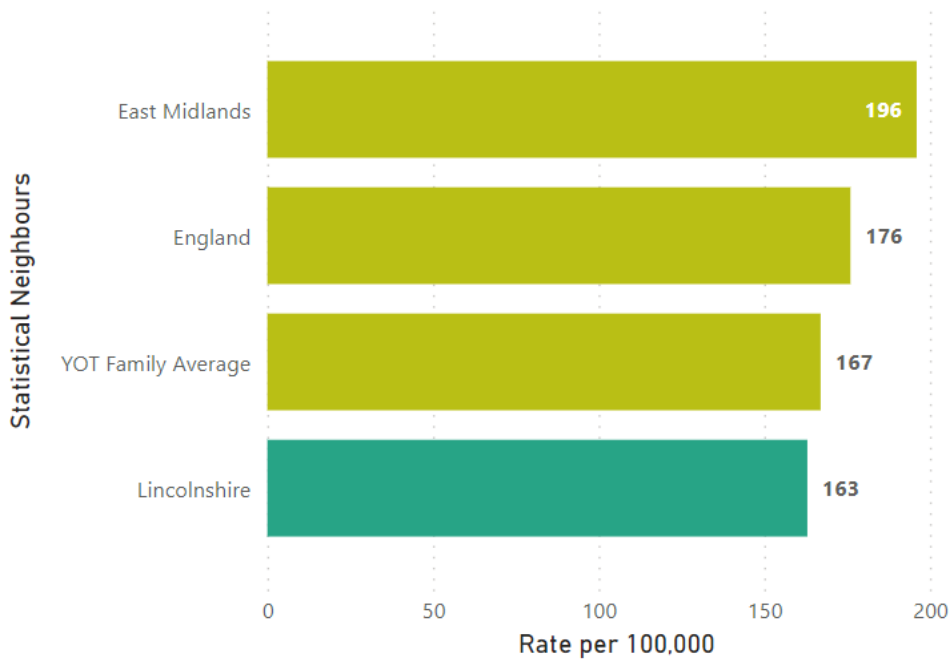
Actual: 163

Target: 165

Whilst this measure was listed previously, it has changed in the way it is calculated, moving from using data from the Police National Computer to using case level data from Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) that is reported quarterly to the Youth Justice Board. Due to the change in data, it was felt that this is not comparable with the data earlier attributed to the measure number and so the measure will start reporting data from Quarter 3 2023/24 and will not report the historical data.

Although we cannot compare with earlier data, the average for our statistical neighbours (excluding Lincolnshire) for the July 2022 - June 2023 period reported in Quarter 3 was 167 per 100,000, so at 163 per 100,000 Lincolnshire is close to the group average for the period in question and Lincolnshire is also significantly below the National level of 176 per 100,000 for the same period. This performance continues to show the success in the Joint Diversionary Panel, and the good work in reducing the criminalisation of our children and young people.





Benchmarking as at June 2023

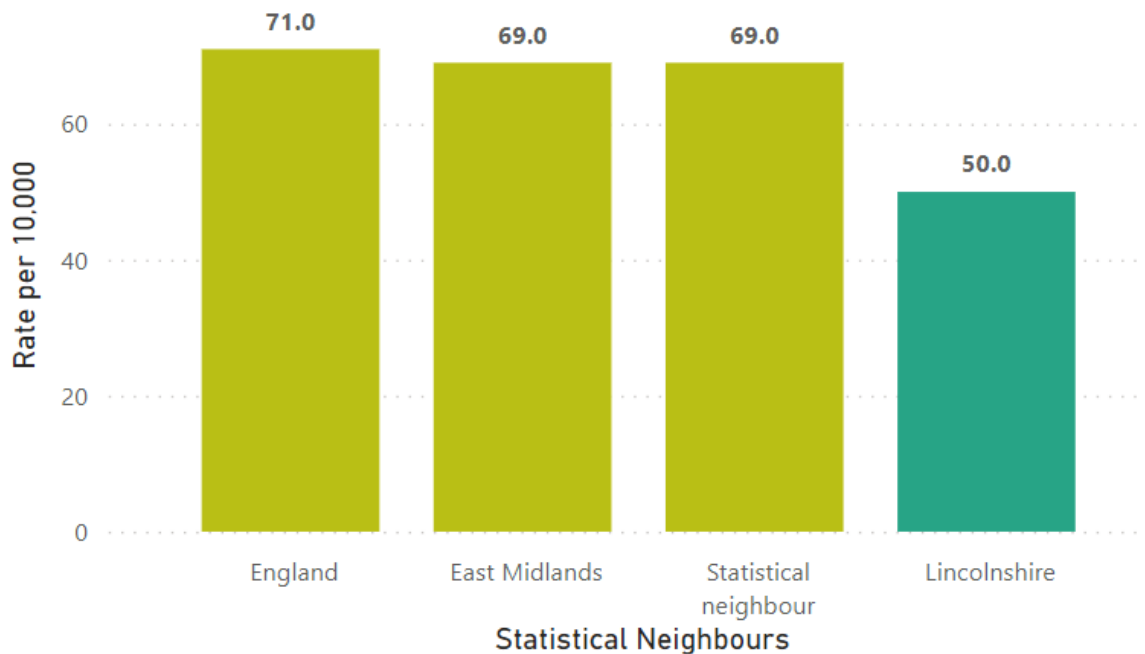
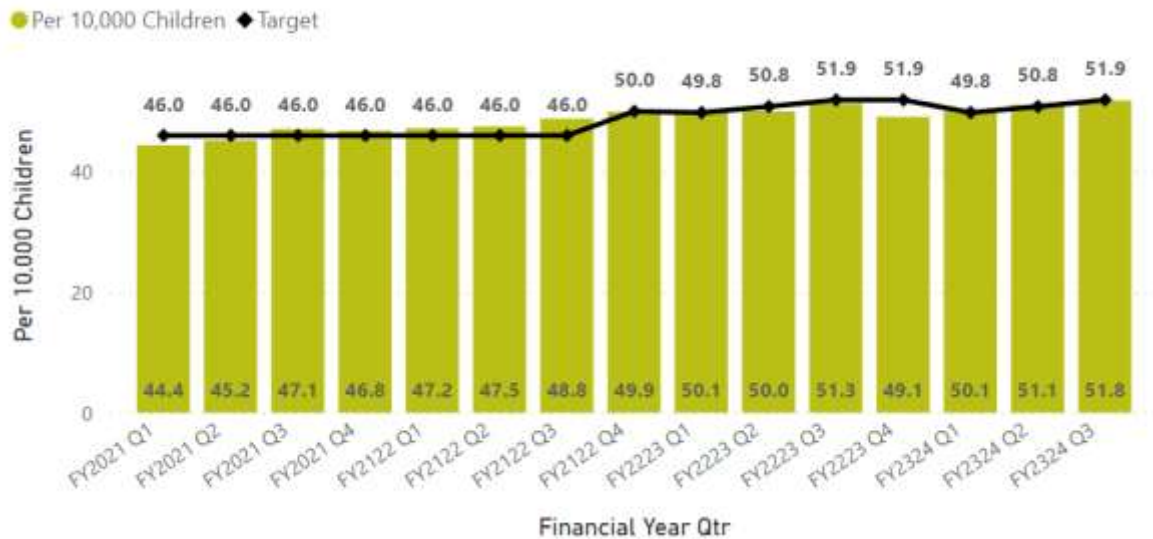
PI 23 Children in Care ✓

Actual: 51.8

Target: 51.9

At 51.8 per 10,000 children in care, this measure is slightly above target (51.9) but is within tolerance, so has therefore been achieved this quarter. This target has been revised upward in comparison to recent years to take into account the effects of the National Transfer Scheme, and the number of children in care per 10,000 remains at a relatively high level compared to recent years. The recent growth in numbers is attributable to the Council’s safeguarding responsibilities and is partly attributable to the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children that have arrived as part of the new temporary mandated National Transfer Scheme. The expectation is that Lincolnshire will take a maximum of 144 children which equates to 0.1% of the general child population and therefore there continues to be a likely impact of growth going forward.

Despite the recent growth and the potential for future increase, there continues to be an emphasis on prevention from children coming into care and exit planning from the care system where it can be achieved. However, even with the increase, the Lincolnshire number of Children in Care (CiC) per 10,000 remains significantly below the most recent published figures both nationally and by our statistical neighbours (71 per 10,000 and 69 per 10,000 respectively as of 31 March 2023).



Benchmarking as at March 2023

PI 24 Children who are subject to a children protection plan ✓

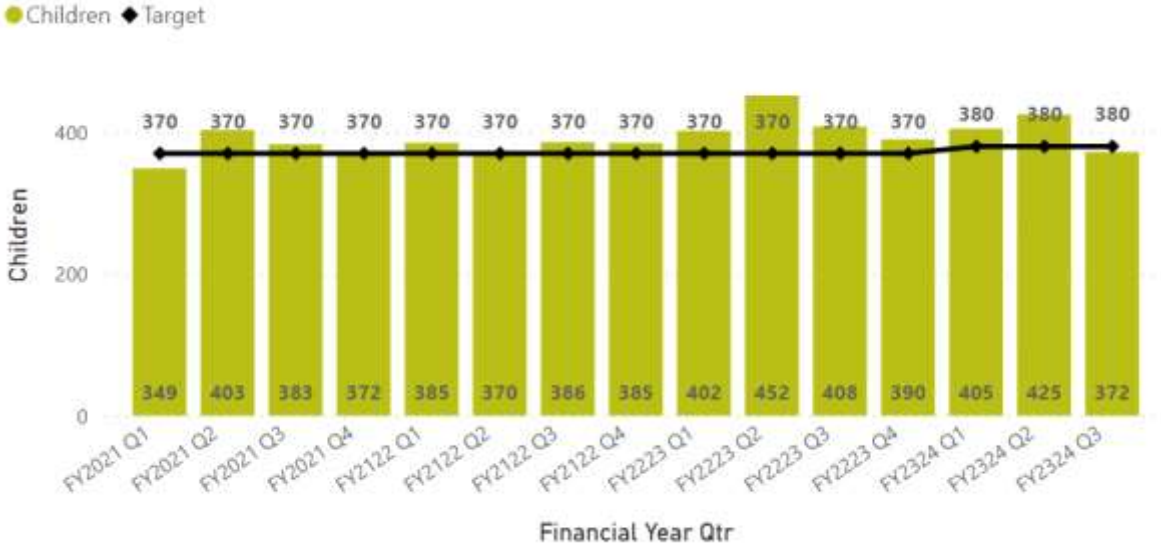
Actual: 372

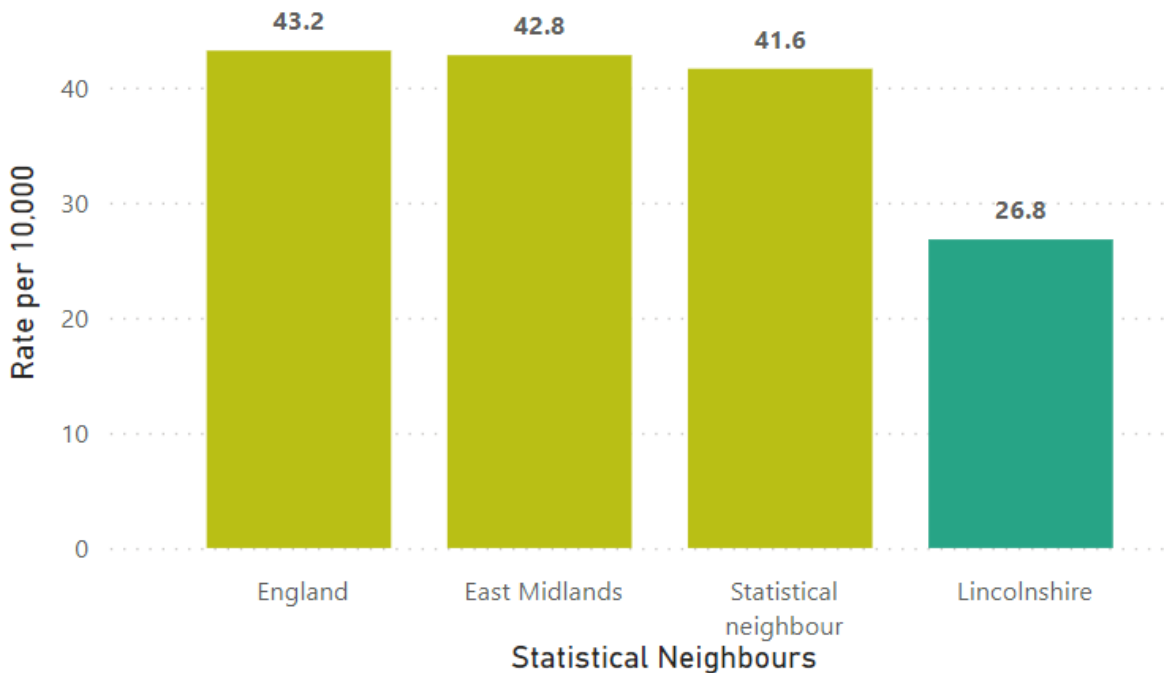
Target: 380

The number of children subject to a child protection plan at the end of Quarter 3 is 372. This reflects an improvement in performance against this measure and takes the number of children on a child protection plan at the end of Quarter 3 very close to the target for performance which is 380. This positive performance is also evidenced when comparing Lincolnshire to the All England and statistical neighbours' rates. The latest national figures

available for this measure are year end 2022/23, when Lincolnshire had 26.8 per 10,000 children subject to a child protection plan compared to the England average of 43.20 per 10,000 and the statistical neighbour average rate of 41.63 per 10,000. Early intervention with families and effective risk management in Lincolnshire continues to take place to ensure that only the right children are subject to a child protection plan. However, child protection plans create safety, and it is important that risk continues to be recognised and managed through plans where appropriate.

The number of children subject to a child protection plan will continue to fluctuate as the decision for a child to be made subject to, or remain on, a child protection plan is based on the risk factors present for the individual child. Additionally, this measure continues to be heavily influenced by families where parents have multiple children. We predicted in Quarter 2 2023/24 a shift back into tolerance range as the year progressed due to the progress that families supported by child protection plans were making. However, we expect to continue to see increased pressures as a result of post covid and social and economic factors contributing to a rise in referrals. This will be particularly evident in those families where there are large sibling groups.





Benchmarking period April 2022 – March 2023

PI 25 Average time taken to move a child from care to an adoptive family ✓

Actual: 532

Target: 500

This measure is a 'rolling' three yearly average. As we have moved forward, the calculation has considered more of the period covered from recovery from the pandemic and the impact of this in terms of court delay for many children, which has in turn increased the rolling average figure.

It is important to note that the figure presented also includes some rare anomalies which have also adversely affected the overall timescales, such as one case which lasted for over 2,000 days due to an unusual amount of disruption as well as an increase in the number of children deemed harder to place in general.

In addition to this there are also some children later adopted by their foster carers, but this measure does not properly take in to account the time they began living with those families, producing a longer timescale than there was in reality. These children have experienced a longer period of stability that does not really show within the figures.



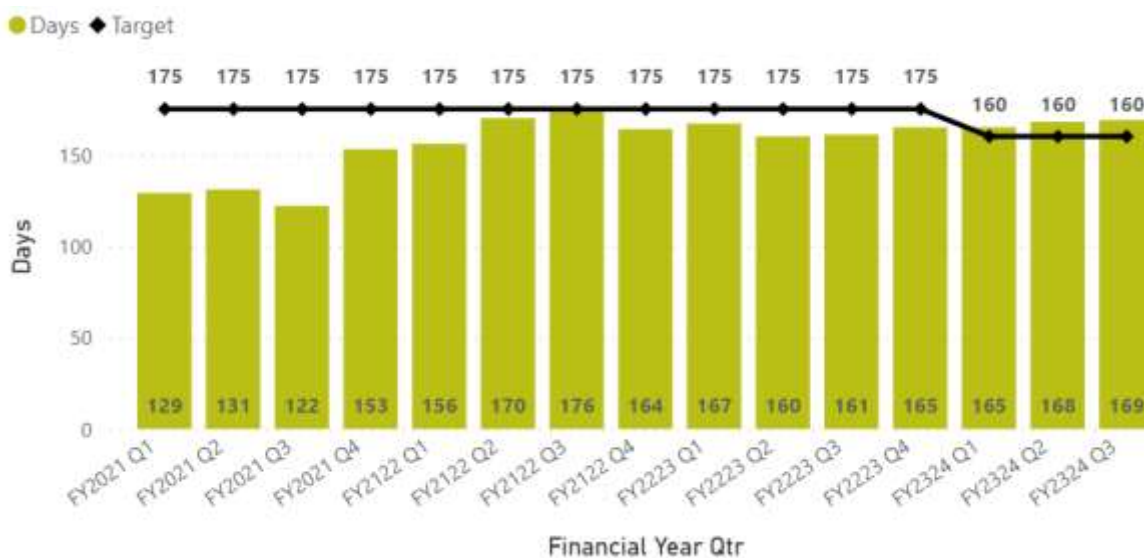
PI 26 Average time taken to match a child to an adoptive family ✓

Actual: 169

Target: 160

There are signs that the timescale is continuing to decline. This has, however, been impacted by an increase in the number of birth parents who are appealing the decision to make a placement order which impacts on the timescales for matching, which has been seen in this quarter as we cannot family find for children whilst an appeal is ongoing.

Despite these challenges, this figure is under the national average of 175 days, meaning that once we have authority to place for adoption, Lincolnshire is able to move children onto their adoptive families in a timely manner.





Benchmarking period April 2017 – March 2020

1.1.3 Measures that did not meet their target

None in Quarter 3.

1.2 Learn and Achieve

Not reported in Quarter 3.

1.3 Readiness for Adult Life

1.3.1 Measures that exceeded their target

PI 45 16 -17 year old Children in Care participating in learning ★

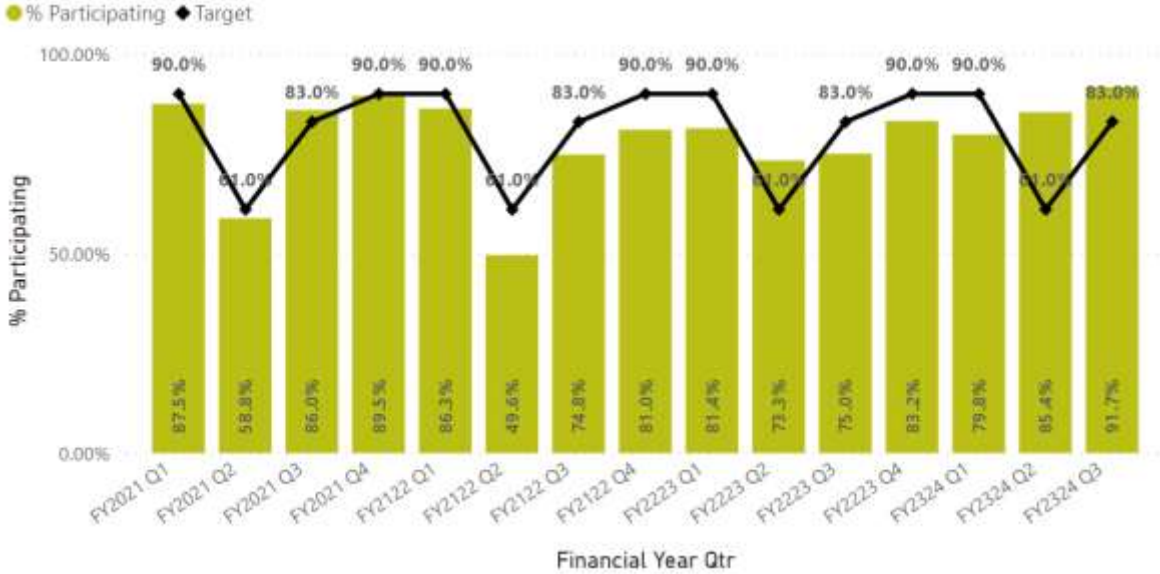
Actual: 91.7

Target: 83

Performance this quarter is above target and an improvement on Quarter 2 2023/24 (85.4%) and Quarter 3 2022/23 (last year) of 75%. At the end of the reporting period, there were 181 young people in care aged 16 and 17 years. Of the 181 young people, 166 met the criteria for engaging in learning and were on roll at local colleges, post 16 providers and school sixth forms. Of the remaining 15 young people, two young people were in full time employment (without training) and 13 young people were not actively engaged in any

education, employment or training. Seven of these young people have remained not engaging in employment, education or training since Quarter 2 2023/24, two young people are new into care and four young people have left their education or training provision due to a change in circumstances.

Personal Education Plans involving the young people and supporting professionals will continue to explore any potential barriers to progressing into employment, education or training and revisit opportunities and appropriate support on a termly basis. Two additional employment coach roles specifically for children in care have been created which will focus on this small group of young people, developing their confidence and skills to promote their transition into work-based training or employment.



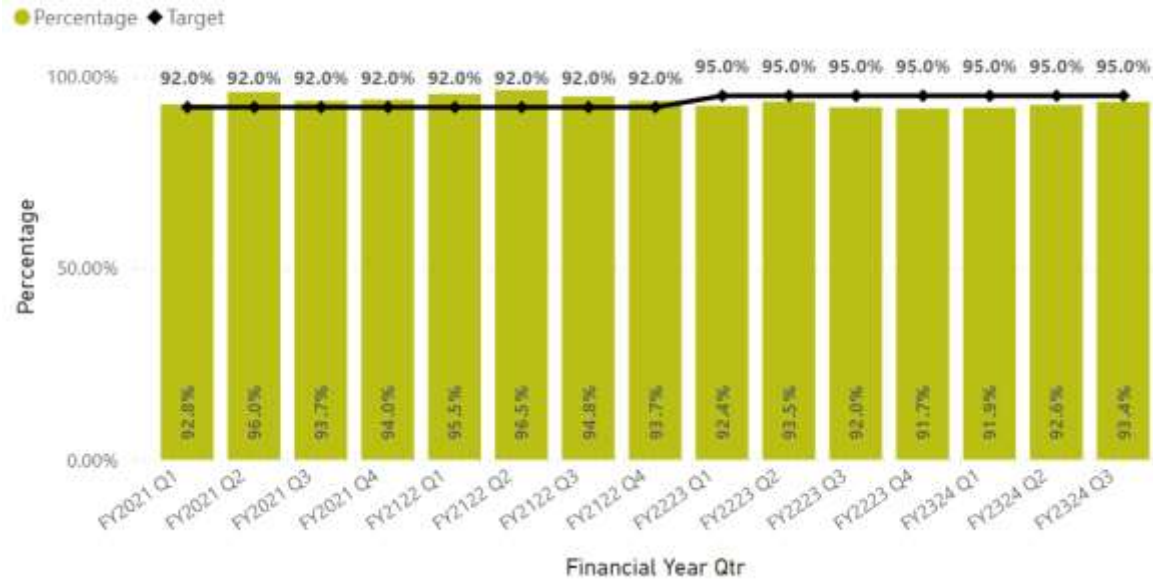
1.3.2 Measures that Achieved their target

PI 46 Care leavers in suitable accommodation ✓

Actual: 93.4
Target: 95

The percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation was 93.4% (253 out of 271) at the end of Quarter 3 2023/24. The definition of the suitability of accommodation is very strict, and whilst the definition would deem some of the accommodation options unsuitable, the young person might be making an informed choice (as an adult) about where they live and how they live. For example, the monthly tracker continues to identify a small number of young people who are choosing to live with friends and sleep on their sofa. This is deemed unsuitable, but the decision to live on a friend’s sofa is the informed choice of the young person. We also know of one young person who still chooses to live in a caravan on their mothers’ driveway; this young person is in EET (Employment, Education or Training) but has declined housing and is considered to be unsuitably housed, but it is their choice to

live where they do. There has also been a decline in the number of young people in custody and this has positively impacted on their lives and this statistic.



Benchmarking as at March 2023

1.3.3 Measures that did not meet their target

None in Quarter 3.

2. Conclusion

The Committee is invited to review and comment on the Children and Young People Service Level Performance for 2023- 24 Quarter 3.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

n/a

4. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Jo Kavanagh, who can be contacted on jo.kavanagh@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children’s Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8 March 2024
Subject:	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2022-23

Summary:

This report introduces the Annual Complaints Report for Children’s Services. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the performance of Children’s Services in relation to complaints. The report only addresses complaints relating to Children’s Social Care in line with the statutory requirement and does not contain any data relating to complaints about the wider Children’s Services.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and comment on the Annual Complaints Report for 2022/23 and note the low numbers of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld.

1. Background

The report attached at Appendix A provides the Committee with information on the complaints received by Children's Social Care for the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

A total of 129 contacts were received in 2022/2023 from individuals wishing to complain about the service. Of these complaints, 27 were resolved informally, outside of the complaints process, accounting for 21% of all contacts received. To put this into context, Children’s Services received 49974 contacts for social care, of which 7140 opened as referrals. 1.8% of all referrals led to a complaint being made. This is a reduction of seven complaints from the previous year.

With the resolution of 27 contacts outside of the complaints process, to the service users satisfaction, 2022/2023 saw an overall decrease of the complaints entering the formal process of 6%. The authority as a whole has seen a significant increase in the number of complaints recorded with the average increase across services being 19%. Children’s Services has continued to try and resolve concerns as early as possible despite the additional pressures seen over the course of the year.

Only seven of the 102 complaints were fully upheld which is a significant decrease from 29 upheld complaints in 2021-2022.

28 complaints were partially upheld. The main themes for full and partially upheld complaints are lack of communication, assessment errors and delays in service. The staff involved are provided with direct feedback, but lessons learned from complaints are actioned and disseminated in line with the Children’s Services quality assurance framework.

2022/2023 saw two complaints escalated to the second stage of the statutory complaints process. The main aspects of these complaints were disagreement with assessment outcome and lack of service.

2. Conclusion

It is reassuring that the on-going investment and work in resolving issues informally wherever this is possible continues to keep the number of complaints low. Children's Services, despite the difficult circumstances and current workforce pressures, has remained focused on achieving early resolution for individuals dissatisfied or concerned around what is being delivered. This is reflected in a reduction in the number of complaints entering the formal process, despite challenges.

In addition to the above, the Children’s Services focus on providing robust responses, addressing all concerns, at the first stage of the formal complaints process has seen only two cases enter the statutory stage two process. The area should continue to focus on the informal resolution of cases in early resolution in order to maintain the positive figures achieved.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Annual Social Care Statutory Complaints Report 2022 to 2023

5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, who can be contacted on 07879603618 or Carolyn.Knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Partners in Practice
Putting children first

**Everyone Working Together for
all Children, Young People &
Families to be Happy, Healthy,
Safe and the Best they can be**

**Annual Complaints Report
2022 - 2023**

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Introduction

Lincolnshire County Council is an authority that welcomes all feedback which may serve to increase understanding of the experiences of customers who receive services. With this in mind, the authority is keen to make use of complaints as a means of improving services for children and their families. It is anticipated that the speedy resolution of complaints will maximise the prospect of a good outcome.

This report is written in compliance with the statutory complaints guidance issued by the Department of Education – Getting The Best From Complaints. The report deals with complaints received from children, Young People and their families between the period of 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023. This report is provided under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. This report fulfils the Council's statutory duty to produce a report.

This report seeks to outline the themes which arise from complaints received and identify any learning which may be required in order to improve service provision.

1. Complaints definition

A complaint is considered to be an expression of dissatisfaction about a specific incident or a given situation. All complaints received by Lincolnshire County Council are dealt with under the following procedures;

- Statutory complaints procedures
- The schools complaints procedures
- The council's corporate complaints procedure.

This report focuses on complaints that relate specifically to Children's Social Care (including adoption and fostering). School complaints and corporate complaints are dealt with separately and information about them is not included within the scope of this report.

2. Complaints legislation

The regulations require that every local authority appoint a Complaints Manager to ensure provision of a robust social care complaints and representation procedure to eligible service users. The framework for handling Children's Social Care Complaints within England is laid out within the Regulations.

3. Children's Social Care Complaints Procedures

Complaints Management:

Lincolnshire County Council has a dedicated officer who is based within the Customer Relations Team. Complaints can be made at any point in the local authority with all complaints being forwarded to the Customer Relations email account. The mailbox is managed by the Customer Relations Team who will view all complaints. Where complaints may be ambiguous, the complainant will be contacted in order to gain greater clarification. When a complaint is received

directly from a child or young person, discussions are held with the Social Worker allocated to the child in order to ascertain whether additional support might be required by the child in order for them to pursue their complaint.

The Complaints Officer's role is to ensure that all complaints which are received are responded to in line with the Statutory Complaints Procedure and to this end they will chase responses to ensure that these are sent out within specified timescales. In addition, the Complaints Officer will ensure that information in respect of complaints is recorded in order that themes and issues can be identified.

Complaints Procedure

There are various stages to the complaints process which are outlined below. It should be noted that whilst there are clear timeframes for complaints to be addressed at each stage of the complaints process, there will, on some rare occasions, be a need to extend this timeframe. This may include the complainant child requiring an advocate. If additional time is required, the complainant will be notified of this at the earliest opportunity.

Stage one – Local Resolution

Complaints received are forwarded to the appropriate manager to address the concerns. An acknowledgement is sent to the complainant within one working day and in most cases a full response will be provided within ten working days. In some circumstances i.e. where the complaint is particularly complex a further ten days is permitted to address the complaint. When this is the case, the complainant will be notified.

Stage two – Independent Investigation

When an individual is dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage one complaint, they are able to request an independent investigation. The timeframe for this stage of the complaints process is 25 working days with an extension to 65 working days.

Stage three – Review Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage two investigation, they may request an independent panel to review how the complaint was handled. The panel must meet within 30 working days of the request.

It should be noted that whilst the internal process concludes at stage three, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they are able to approach the Local Government Ombudsman. This report does not extend to any issues addressed at this level.

4. Advocacy and Engagement

Lincolnshire County Council commission Voiceability Lincolnshire to provide independent advocacy for adults and children and young people who might wish to make a complaint. The children's element of this contract is subcontracted to Barnardo's. All children and young people who wish to take advantage of this service are able to do so, in addition any child or young person who enters care or who becomes subject to Child Protection procedures are provided with an advocate unless they specifically express that they do not want one. The Complaints Officer ensures that children and young people are aware of this service when they seek to make complaints.

This year saw one case where there was involvement from the advocacy service. This case resulted in the complaint escalating no further and service working closely with the complainant to resolve concerns.

There is always concern that children and young people are unaware or not confident enough to make a complaint which is one of the primary purposes for the Children's Statutory complaint process, however children and young people who are in the system have Social Workers and so if they complain the issue should be resolved locally if the Social Worker is in the position to assist them. All Social Workers are aware that children and young people are entitled to an advocate and any children within Child Protection or Children in Care are provided an advocate automatically unless they opt out.

5. Children in Care

As soon as a child enters care, they are provided with a "coming into care kit." This provides them with information as to how they can express any feelings of dissatisfaction they may have including making formal complaints. There are however a number of informal dispute resolution options which are available to children and young people who are in the care of the local authority. These include the following:-

Independent Reviewing Officers: The Independent Reviewing Officer has a duty to engage with children and young people to ascertain their views in respect of their care plans and also to advise them of their entitlements including their right to complain. Children are encouraged to attend their reviews in order that they are aware of their plan and are able to comment on this. Where children's wishes are contrary to the plan, the Independent Reviewing Officer is able to escalate matters on behalf of the child in order to resolve matters in a timely manner. Where children and young people continue to be dissatisfied, the Independent Reviewing Officer is able to support young people in making formal complaints.

Regulation 44 Visits: The Regulation 44 Officer is an Independent Visitor who visits all residential homes within the authority on a monthly basis. An integral part of the role of the Independent Visitor is to talk to children, young people and their families about their experiences of the residential home. The Regulation 44 Visitor can engage in discussions with the homes manager in order to resolve any issues which the child may identify. Where this early attempt at resolution is unsuccessful, the Independent Visitor is able to support the young person in making a formal complaint.

Social Workers: Social Workers meet with children on a regular basis. A fundamental part of this visiting is ascertaining the wishes and feelings of children and young people. Where children are unhappy with the level of care which they are receiving, their social worker will in the first instance work with the child to see whether changes are able to be made which would comply with the child's wishes. Social Workers can direct children to the advocacy service if they wish to pursue a formal complaint.

6. Complaints received around Children in Care

This year has seen no complaints made directly by children who are in care. However 3 complaints were received from parents, carers or other family of children in care. The following is a brief summary of those complaints received in relation to this area.

Quarter 1

- Parent complained that sibling of his child was not being kept with his child despite the courts order that this is maintained. Parent advised that they were not contacted around taking in both children and that there had been a lack of communication from the allocated Social Worker.
In response to this the complainant was advised that as the child in question was not his child they were not immediately entitled to information pertaining to the child. Additionally a viability assessment for the child's placement with the complainant was still on-going. It was also relayed to the complainant that the court findings referred to were 4.5 years ago and as such the siblings were more independent of each other with individual needs that needed to be met. There was no request for an escalation of this case.

Quarter 2

- Complainant advised that they were unhappy around their sibling's social worker discussing their personal history with other family members. When raising this with the social worker complainant felt dismissed despite only wanting to act in the best interesting of their sibling who is in care.
It was explained to the complainant that the matters were raised were around the care provided to them by a grandmother and assessments were being undertaken to assess her ability to provide care for the complainant's siblings. It was agreed that this would remain the sole area discussed in regards to the complainant's history and remain in the context of suitable care for the child in question. This complaint was not escalated any further by the complainant.
- Complaint raised by a foster carer around the lack of support offered to them and a child in their care following allegations made against them by another young person. Complainant also felt that there was a lack of communication from involved workers and as a result has moved to an independent fostering agency. Since doing so complainant was advised that children currently in their care could be removed.
In response to these concerns the complainant was advised that their transfer has been processed in accordance with the Fostering network protocol arrangements, however there were matters that remain the responsibility of the Local Authority to agree/ negotiate in terms of the new provider particularly when there are Lincolnshire children in placement. Additionally it was explained that with all allegations appropriate procedures need to be

completed to ensure the safety of all involved. These procedures were followed appropriately and there were no further matters to investigate. No request for an escalation of this complaint was made.

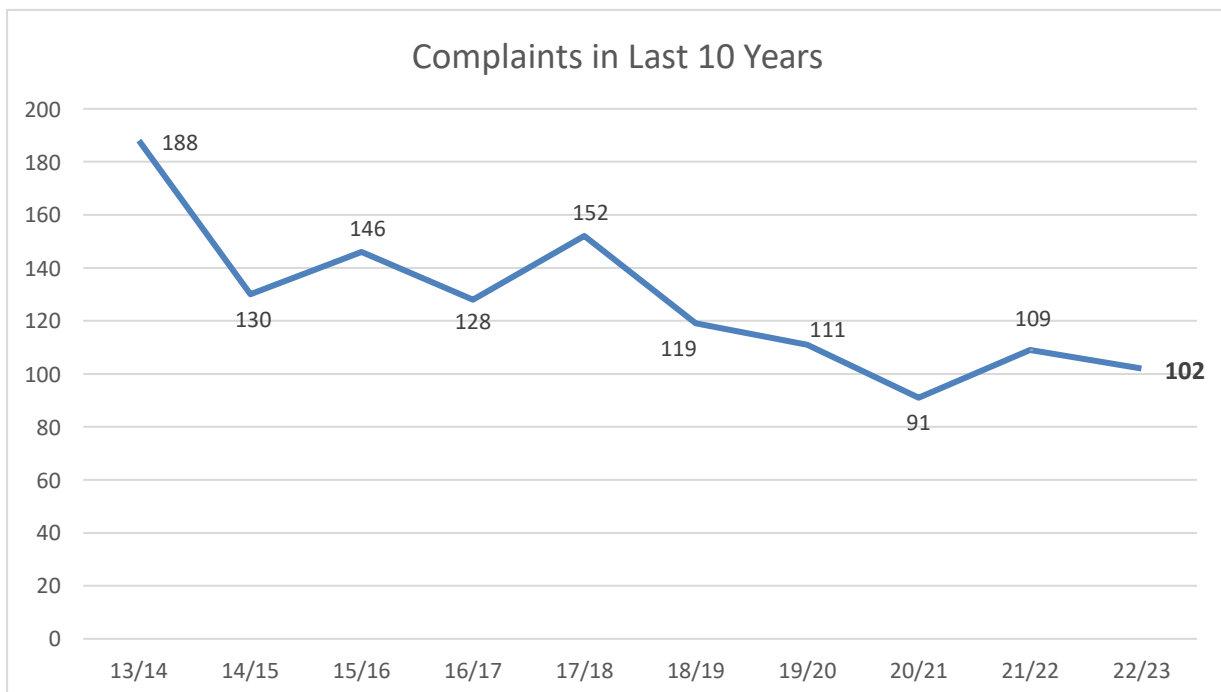
No complaints were raised in relation to this area during the 3rd or 4th quarters.

7. Statistical Analysis

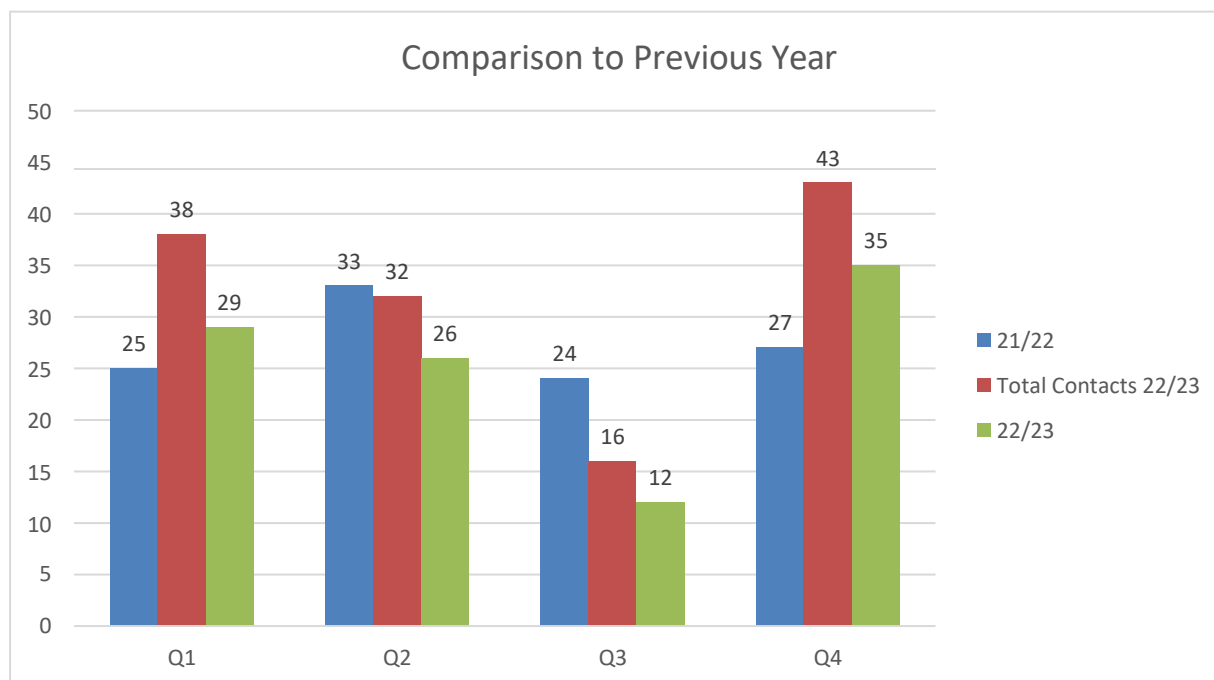
This section will provide an overview and analysis of the handling and management of all Children's social care complaints received in 2022/2023.

A total of 129 contacts were received in 2022/2023 from individuals wishing to complain about the service. Of these complaints 27 were resolved informally, outside of the complaints process, accounting for 21% of all contacts received. To put this into context Children's Services received 49974 contacts for social care of which 7140 opened as referrals. 1.4% of all referrals led to a complaint being made.

With the resolution of 27 contacts outside of the complaints process, to the service users satisfaction, 2022/2023 saw an overall decrease of the complaints entering the formal process of 6%. The authority as a whole has seen a significant increase in the number of complaints recorded with the average increase across services being 19%. Children's services have continued to try and resolve concerns as early as possible despite the additional pressures seen over the course of the year.



The following shows a breakdown of all contacts received, and the number of these entering the formal process per quarter, in comparison to the previous year.

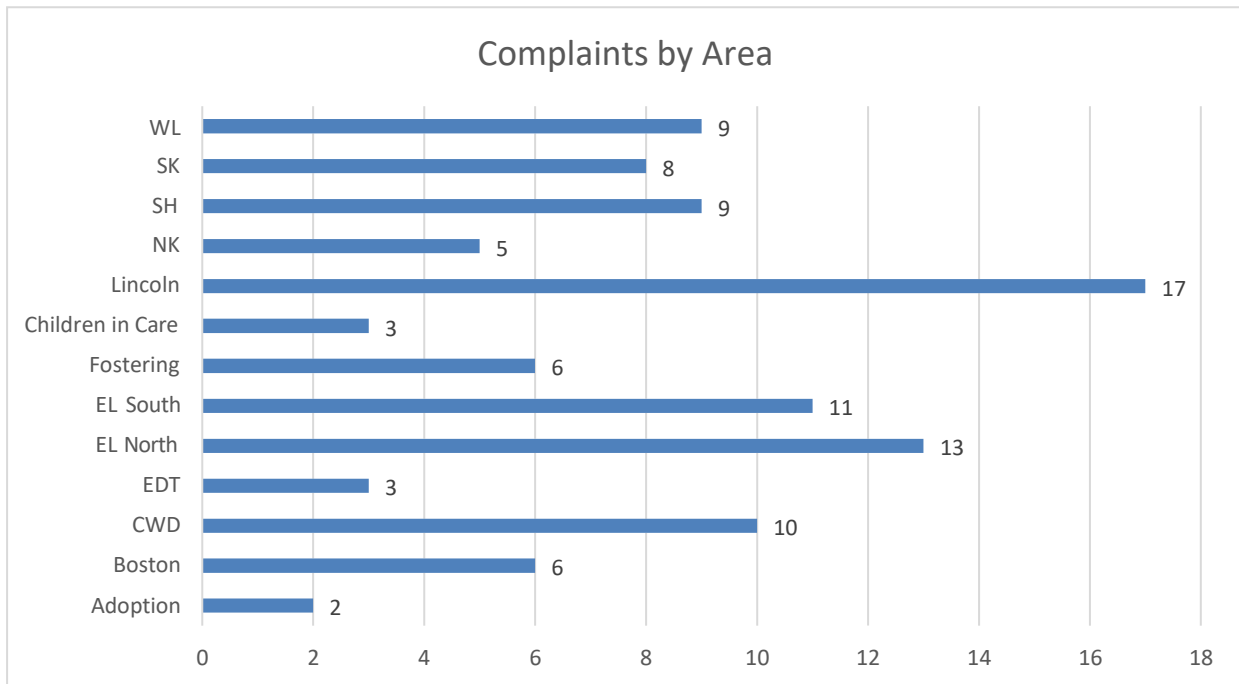


Staff should be commended for achieving a decrease in the number of formal complaints requiring investigation by the Local Authority despite the additional pressures faced during this period and the noted increase of complaints across other services.

In the previous year's report it was considered that the Local Authority may see a significant increase in the number of complaints raised in this area. This was in line with the trends seen across other local authorities via benchmarking data and information provided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

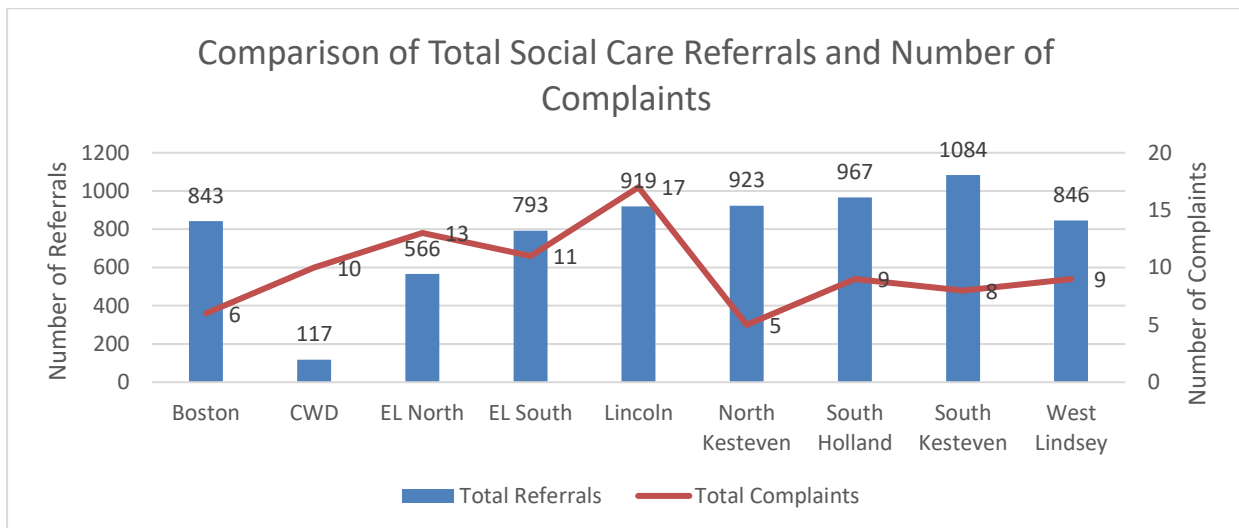
Whilst unable to share the data of other Local Authorities 2022/23 saw an average increase in the number of complaints raised in this area by 18%. This authority's decrease of 6% is extremely positive and a direct result of on-going efforts in achieving informal resolution and taking a restorative approach.

The following shows a breakdown of complaints received by the area they were raised with.



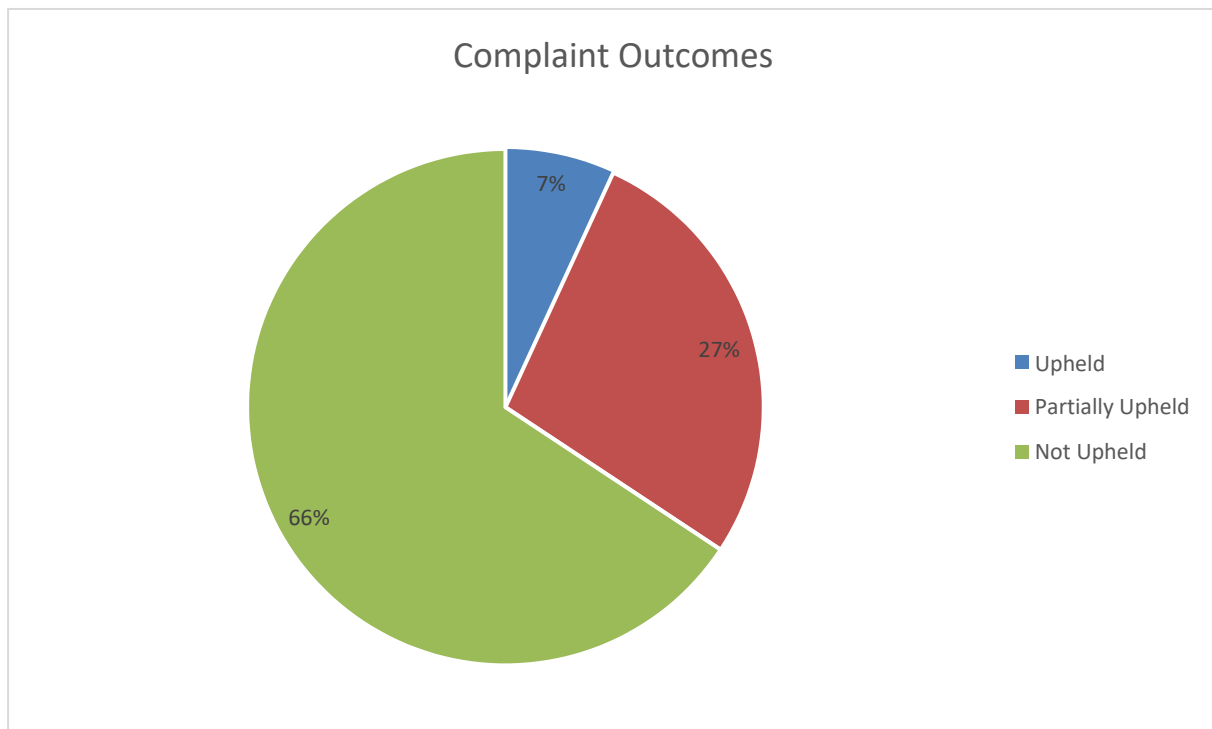
This break down is proportionally consistent with previous years. Given its comparability to both the previous year and pre-pandemic year staff should be commended on their consistency in tackling concerns raised in the most difficult of circumstance.

The proportional number of complaints that we see above are likely to be a reflection of the number of families being provided services in those areas.

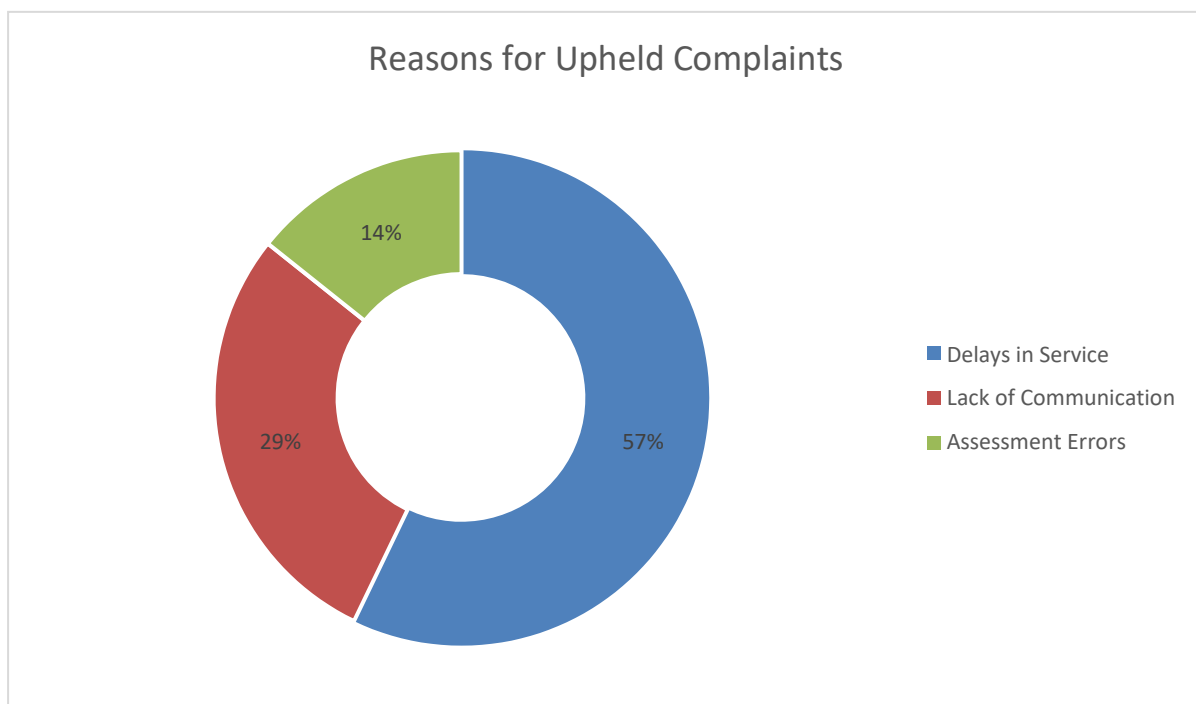


Teams which do not receive referrals (children in care, Fostering, EDT and Adoption) have been omitted from this diagram.

The following shows a breakdown of the outcomes of all complaints received.



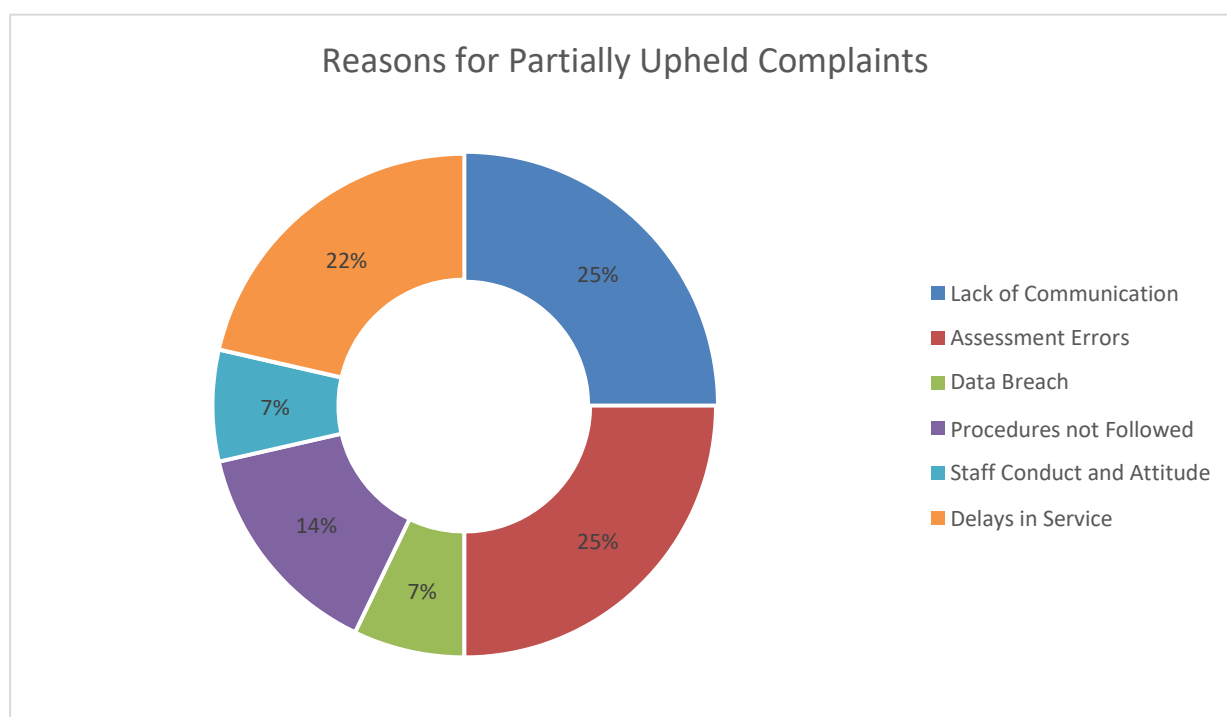
It is positive to note that the majority of complaints, 66%, identified no fault with the service provided. Analysis was completed on all complaints which were fully or partially upheld in order to determine if there were any common areas or trends which needed to be considered and improved moving forward, however this has been completed with the low number in comparison to the number of individuals services are being delivered to.



Of the 102 complaints received, 7 were upheld. Of these 7 complaints 4 were in relation to delays in service, specifically in relation to the completion of assessments. These were all dealt with appropriately and assessments completed as a matter of urgency. None of these cases were escalated any further in the process. 2 cases were as a result of a lack of communication from involved staff. This has been an on-going theme and is already an area of improvement that the service is aware of however given the extremely low number of cases in relation to this area being upheld it should be considered that the work completed by service area to improve this has been very successful.

The final upheld case was in relation to assessment errors, these errors were rectified and it was identified that these had been made as a result of miscommunication; this case was not escalated any further.

The following shows a breakdown of the areas of Partially Upheld complaints where fault was found.



In total 28 complaints were found to be Partially Upheld. The above shows the aspects of those complaints where fault was found.

7 cases were as result of a lack of communication. As stated previously this is an area which is already being addressed appropriately and the low number is once again reflective of the significant work undertaken to improve this area. Delays in service accounted for 6 of the partially upheld cases with 7 cases arising as a result of assessment errors, these cases resulted in corrections being made to any factual inaccuracies and no further escalation of these complaints.

The above areas were also present in cases fully upheld. Cases recorded as partially upheld in these areas were due to some of the concerns raised not being accurate. An example of this being a case where an individual indicated 4 instances of a lack of response to correspondence. Upon investigation it was identified that only one of those instances saw communication not returned; the remaining instances raised were actioned appropriately.

2 cases were as a result of data breaches. These cases were assessed appropriately by the Data Protection Officer, alongside the relevant service manager and no further action was required by the Information Commissioners Office.

4 of these complaints were as a result of procedures not followed. To clarify these cases were not as a result of procedures and processes being ignored but instances where a step within a procedure was missed or delayed. These were rectified as a result of the complaint with support and guidance being provided to involved staff. No cases in relation to this were escalated to the next stage of the complaints process.

The final 2 partially upheld cases were as a result of Staff Conduct and Attitude. Both of these cases were as a result of miscommunication with the relevant staff being provided further guidance. No workers were changed as a result of these complaints and neither of these cases was escalated any further.

Escalations

2022/2023 saw two complaints escalated to the second stage of the statutory complaints process. The main aspects of these complaints were the following:

- Disagree with assessment outcome
- Lack of Service

At stage one of the complaints process the complaint was not upheld in either of these cases. Following the completion of the independent investigation to these complaints one resulted in an outcome of not upheld, with the Investigating Officer agreeing that the Local Authority had delivered services in line with their statutory duty. The second complaint had much the same outcome however it was highlighted that there were missed opportunities for communication which could have resulted in the complainant being more informed around processes. This feedback has been provided to staff in order to improve communication moving forward.

At the time of writing of this report this case remains open at stage 2 independent investigation

8. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

In total 12 referrals were made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in regards to Children's statutory complaints. In two of these cases fault was found. 10 cases saw no fault in the way in which this authority had delivered its services.

9. Learning and Recommendations

Learning has already been undertaken by the service given the on-going work in early resolution of concerns raised, the low number of cases in which fault is found and the significantly lower number of cases where individuals remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint and request an escalation.

The significant improvements made in communication is identifiable through the low numbers of cases where fault has been identified as a result of this. As this remains one of the highest areas around which complaints are raised work should continue in order to achieve any further improvements.

Some individual learning has also been identified through the complaints received and this has been undertaken by the relevant team manager.

10. Summary

What can be surmised from the data presented in this report is the on-going investment and work in resolving issues informally wherever this is possible. Children's services, despite the difficult circumstances and additional pressure of increased workloads, has remained focused on achieving early resolution for individuals dissatisfied or concerned around what is being delivered. This is reflected in the maintaining of number of complaints entering the formal process, with no significant increase, despite challenges.

In addition to the above the Children's services focus on providing robust responses, addressing all concerns, at the first stage of the formal complaints process, has seen only two cases enter the statutory stage 2 process. The area should continue to focus on the informal resolution of cases in early resolution in order to maintain the positive figures achieved.

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**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,
Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director - Resources**

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8 March 2024
Subject:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Summary:

This item enables the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme to ensure that its scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit. The Committee is encouraged to highlight items that could be included for consideration in the work programme.

Actions Required:

- (1) To review and agree the Committee's work programme as set out in this report.
- (2) To highlight for discussion any additional scrutiny activity which could be considered for inclusion in the work programme.

1. Background

Current Items

For reference, the Committee's items for this meeting are set out below: -

08 March 2024			
	Item	Contributor	Purpose
1.	Lincolnshire School Performance 2022 - 23	Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Education Matt Spoons, Head of Service - School Standards Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service Early Years and Childcare Support	Performance Scrutiny

08 March 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
2.	Service Level Performance Reporting Against the Success Framework 2023-24 Quarter 3	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help	Performance Scrutiny
3.	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2022-23	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker	Performance Scrutiny

Planned Items

The Committee's planned items are listed below:

19 April 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
1.	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service from April 2025	Bridie Fletcher, Senior Commissioning Officer – Children's Strategic Commissioning Amy Allcock, Commissioning Manager - Commercial	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Executive Councillor decision between 3 – 7 June 2024)
2.	Children and Young People Mental Health Transformation Programme	Kevin Johnson, Commissioning Manager - Children's Mental Health, LD and Autism Charlotte Gray, Head of Service – Children's Strategic Commissioning	Policy Review
3.	Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme	Andy Cook, Head of Service - Families First for Children Pathfinder	Policy Development

19 April 2024			
Item	Contributor	Purpose	
4.	New Lincolnshire Secure Children's Home build – Main Works Contract (EXEMPT)	<p>Matt Clayton, Interim Head of Capital Reform and Education Sufficiency</p> <p>Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development</p> <p>Dave Clarke, Service Lead - Secure Estate</p> <p>Rachel Freeman, Head of Service Children in Care and Residential Estates</p>	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Executive decision on 8 May 2024)

14 June 2024			
Item	Contributor	Purpose	
1.	Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services - Improvement Plan	Andrew Morris, Head of Service - Leaving Care, Semi-Independent Living and Unaccompanied Children	Inspection Outcome
2.	Children in Care Transformation Programme Update	<p>Matt Clayton, Interim Head of Capital Reform and Education Sufficiency</p> <p>Tracey Robinson, Programme Manager – Sector Led Improvement & Children in Care Transformation</p> <p>Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding</p>	Policy Review
3.	Gosberton House Academy - New Block Extension and External Works as part of the SEND Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy (EXEMPT)	<p>Eileen McMorrow, Programme Manager SEND Strategy</p> <p>Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development</p>	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Leader Decision between 24-28 June 2024)

14 June 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
4.	Minerva House project – remodelling to provide accommodation for Children’s Services (EXEMPT)	Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development Wendy Lanes, Project Manager - Corporate Property	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Leader Decision between 24-28 June 2024)
5.	Primary School Mobile Replacement Scheme (EXEMPT)	Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development Neal Kathel, Project Team Leader, Corporate Property	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Leader decision between 24-28 June 2024)

19 July 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
1.	Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) Annual Report	Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service Early Years and Childcare Support	Policy Review
2.	Service Level Performance Reporting Against the Success Framework 2023-24 Quarter 4	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help	Performance Scrutiny

6 September 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
1.	Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Annual Report 2023	Chris Cook, Chair of LSCP Stacey Waller, LSCP Manager	Yearly Update
2.	Service Level Performance Reporting Against the Success Framework 2024-25 Quarter 1	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help	Performance Scrutiny

18 October 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
1.	Update on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy	Eileen McMorrow, Programme Manager SEND Strategy Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development	Policy Review (Yearly Update)
2.	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2023-24	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director - Early Help	Performance Scrutiny

6 December 2024			
Item		Contributor	Purpose
1.	Childcare Sufficiency in Lincolnshire	Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service Early Years and Childcare Support Geraldine O'Neill, Sustainability and Development Manager	Policy Review
2.	Service Level Performance Reporting Against the Success Framework 2024-25 Quarter 2	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help	Performance Scrutiny

2. Conclusion

The Committee is invited to review, consider and comment on the work programme as set out above and highlight for discussion any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme. A list of all upcoming Forward Plan decisions relating to the Committee is also attached at Appendix A.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Forward Plan of Decisions relating to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

4. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 07552 253814 or by e-mail at tracy.johnson@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM 01 MARCH 2024

DEC REF	MATTERS FOR DECISION	REPORT STATUS	DECISION MAKER AND DATE OF DECISION	PEOPLE/GROUPS CONSULTED PRIOR TO DECISION	DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED	OFFICER(S) FROM WHOM FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED AND REPRESENTATIONS MADE (All officers are based at County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL unless otherwise stated)	DIVISIONS AFFECTED
I032116 New!	New Lincolnshire Secure Children's Home Build - Main Works Contract	Exempt	Executive 8 May 2024	Directorate Leadership Team Corporate Leadership Team Legal Services Finance Services Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Exempt Reports	Interim Head of Capital Reform and Education Sufficiency E-mail: matthew.clayton@lincolnshire.gov.uk	Seaford
I030828	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service from April 2025	Open	Executive Councillor: Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration Between 3 Jun 2024 and 7 Jun 2024	Representatives from Children's Services teams (social care and IROs); care leavers and other stakeholders involved in services for care leavers; Children's Services DLT	Reports	Senior Commissioning Officer E-mail: Bridie.fletcher@lincolnshire.gov.uk	All Divisions
I028654	Gosberton House Academy - New Block Extension and External Works as part of the SEND Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy	Exempt	Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources, Communications and Commissioning) Between 24 Jun 2024 and 28 Jun 2024	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Exempt Reports	Head of Property Development E-mail: dave.pennington@lincolnshire.gov.uk	

I032178	Minerva House project – remodelling to provide accommodation for Children’s Services	Exempt	Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources, Communications and Commissioning) Between 24 Jun 2024 and 28 Jun 2024	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Exempt Reports	Head of Property Development E-mail: dave.pennington@lincolnshire.gov.uk	Holbeach
I030411	Primary School Mobile Replacement Scheme	Exempt	Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources, Communications and Commissioning) Between 24 Jun 2024 and 28 Jun 2024	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Exempt Reports	Head of Property Development E-mail: dave.pennington@lincolnshire.gov.uk	All Divisions