

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
18 JANUARY 2024**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S P ROE (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), Mrs N F Clarke, C Matthews and N Sear

Added Members:

R D Butroid attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Andrew Morris (Head of Service - Leaving Care, Semi-Independent Living and Unaccompanied Children), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Lisa Adams (Service Manager, Barnardos), Linda Dennett (Assistant Director - Children's Health and Commissioning), Paul Fisher (Corporate Parenting Manager), Sarah Lane (Head of Virtual School (for Looked After Children)), Heather Sandy (Executive Director - Children's Services), Nicola Wilkinson (NHS Lincolnshire ICB), Cindy Cooper (Barnardo's), Rebecca Pinder (Head of Safeguarding Children, NHS Lincolnshire ICB) and Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence had been received from Ann Wright and Polly Coombes.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

39 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023

It was agreed that the minutes be amended to remove Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer) from the list of attendees and to include the addition of Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 November be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendment detailed above.

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40 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman announced that he had attended the Foster Carers Christmas Party, which had been a great opportunity to speak with foster carers about their experiences. The Chairman expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the work of foster carers.

The Panel congratulated Sarah Lane on her permanent appointment as Virtual Head Teacher.

41 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service - Leaving Care, Semi-Independent Living and Unaccompanied Children, which set out the key performance information for Quarter 2 of 2023/24 that was relevant to the work of the Panel, as set out within the report and Appendix A.

During the discussion, the following points were recorded:

- It was agreed that the figure for the number of children in care refusing health checks and further data on the number of Foster Children who had access to regular dentistry be circulated.
- The Panel was reassured that Children in Care were able to easily access emergency dental treatment, but there continued to be difficulties finding dentists for standard dental check-ups. Members were concerned about the lack of access to dentistry and the impact this could have on a child.
- Some members expressed concern at the 2% reduction of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training, particularly as this was around 6% behind statistical neighbours. Members were advised that of the 326 care leavers included in the measure, 40 were unable to work due to illness or disability and within those 40, 1 was an unaccompanied child without a status.
- The Panel was assured that all efforts were made to support care leavers into Education, Employment and Training, including the recent recruitment of two employment coaches to support employment aspirations and opportunities of young people. It was acknowledged that some young people did not aspire to continue education and those individuals would be supported by a work coach to support them into employment, if appropriate.
- The Panel acknowledged the complexities in ensuring care leavers continued with education employment and training and whilst they commended the efforts of officers to support care leavers, Members welcomed further in-depth discussion at a future meeting or briefing.
- Whilst Care Leavers were encouraged to attend health checks, many felt fit and well and did not see the need for a health check.
- Many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were more suited to semi-independent living environments as the vast majority of them were 16 and 17 years

old which was a difficult age to secure a foster placement. The semi-independent living settings were well supported by several partner organisations.

- Members welcomed the opportunities offered to care leavers to receive training through apprenticeship schemes, including within the Council. Lincolnshire County Council continued to offer apprenticeships and care leavers were encouraged to apply, however care leavers often lacked the requirements for education attainments which meant they were often not qualified for such schemes. The Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property suggested that he work with the Human Resources team to look at ways around the barriers to accessing apprenticeships at the Council. It was recognised that some schemes would support individuals in undertaking qualifications during the apprenticeship period, which could be useful for those individuals without the relevant qualifications.
- At the time of the meeting, there were 101 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who were placed in Lincolnshire as part of the National Transfer Scheme. Lincolnshire could take a maximum of 144 placements.
- There were currently 10 children in care who were in custody. It was clarified when children were placed on remand, they automatically became a child in care.
- It was requested that for future reports, data on the numbers of children, rather than percentages, be included.

RESOLVED:

That satisfaction be given to the performance of the measures relevant to Children in Care in Quarter 2 of 2023-24.

42 CHILDREN IN CARE JOINT ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service - Leaving Care, Semi-Independent Living and Unaccompanied Children, which invited the Panel to consider the Children in Care Joint Annual Health Report 2022/23, as set out in the report and Appendix A.

The Panel considered the report and during the discussion Members welcomed a breakdown of male/female comparisons within future reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Children in Care Joint Annual Health Report for 2022/23, as attached at Appendix A be endorsed.

43 LINCOLNSHIRE LEAVING CARE SERVICE – SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Programme Manager – Barnardo's, which invited the Panel to consider a six-monthly update on the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service, as set out in the report.

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Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- Members commended an encouraging report and the work to support Care Leavers.
- The Panel welcomed the additional funds and gifts secured for Lincolnshire's Care Leavers.
- Of the six individuals who were classed as being in unsuitable accommodation, some of them were staying with friends and family, and there were two carer leavers whose whereabouts were unknown. Assurance was provided that the service remained open to those individuals and visits and pathway plans continued to be maintained and support continued to be offered.
- There was a lack of providers in Lincolnshire who were able to provide the resource and support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, which is why housing services were commissioned in Peterborough. Until an alternative housing option was available more locally, Peterborough was seen as the most suitable provision. Members also acknowledged that individuals with similar ethnic backgrounds may find comfort in being with others of a similar background.
- Many of the care leavers considered missing were known and in contact with the service. Missing individuals whose whereabouts were unknown would be reported as missing to the police.
- Members requested further detail on the provision offered within the services commissioned at Peterborough at a future meeting or a briefing.
- Trauma informed training revolved around self-resilience and a top-down approach was used in the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service.

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RESOLVED:

That the Leaving Care Service six monthly update report be endorsed.

44 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Panel to consider its work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, as detailed on pages 85 to 88 of the agenda back be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.51 am