



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2024 at 10.00 AM

In the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN LN1 1YL

MEMBERSHIP

<u>Lincolnshire County Council:</u>	Councillors S P Roe (Chairman), A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), Mrs N F Clarke, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews, N Sear and M A Whittington
<u>Added Members (non-voting):</u>	Polly Coombes, Ann Wright, Carolien Sanders, Sarah Bancroft and 1 Vacancy(Children In Care Council Representative)

AGENDA

Item	Title	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
2	Declarations of Interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2024	3 - 6
4	Announcements by the Chairman and Chief Officers	
5	Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the Academic Year 2022-23 <i>(To receive a report from Sarah Lane, Virtual School Head, which invites the Panel to review and endorse the Virtual School Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23)</i>	7 - 46
6	Children in Care Performance Report Quarter 3 <i>(To receive a report from Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children’s Safeguarding), which invites the Panel to review and comment on the key performance information for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 that is relevant to the work of the Panel)</i>	47 - 70

- 7 Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 3** 71 - 94
(To receive a report from Deborah Crawford, Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption, which invites the Panel to review the Fostering Service performance for Quarter 3 of 2023/24)
- 8 Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme** 95 - 98
(To receive a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invites the Panel to consider its work programme)

Distributed on Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Please note: This meeting will be broadcast live on the internet and access can be sought by accessing [Agenda for Corporate Parenting Panel on Thursday, 14th March, 2024, 10.00 am \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Emily Wilcox via telephone 01522 552334 or alternatively via email at emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk



**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.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
18 JANUARY 2024**

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.
- Of those 144 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who were placed in Lincolnshire as part of the National Transfer Scheme, 101 of them were Children in Care.
- There were currently 10 children in care who were in custody. It was clarified that all children entering custody would automatically become 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.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
18 JANUARY 2024**

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.

-
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



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 March 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the Academic Year 2022-23

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel about the work of Lincolnshire Virtual School in promoting educational outcomes for children in care, children previously looked after and children with a social worker during the academic year 2022-23.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to review and endorse the Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23 attached as Appendix A.

1. Background

The role of the Virtual School is to promote the educational achievement of children in care, children previously looked after, and children with a social worker. Whether educated in Lincolnshire or placed outside of the authority, the Lincolnshire Virtual School team works in partnership with professionals to support our children and young people in care to fulfil their potential, and access opportunities on the same basis as their non-care experienced peers. The Virtual School ensures our children and young people in care have an effective Personal Education Plan which is reviewed termly and aims to identify and remove any barriers to children accessing high quality learning opportunities and making progress in line with their starting points.

Following extensions to the role in 2018 and 2022, the Virtual School now has a statutory duty to promote educational outcomes for children who are previously looking after and a non-statutory duty to promote education outcomes for children with a social worker.

This statutory annual report for the academic year September 2022 to July 2023 highlights the work of the Lincolnshire Virtual School, the Local Authority and partner agencies to improve educational outcomes for children in care, children previously looked and

children with a social worker. The report includes cohort characteristics, the quality of provision and the progress and attainment at all key stages from Early Years to Key Stage 4 for our children in care.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the work of the Lincolnshire Virtual School for the academic year 2022 to 2023 in promoting educational outcomes for children in care, children previously looked after and children with a social worker. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to review and endorse the Annual Report attached at Appendix A.

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	Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23

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 Sarah Lane, Virtual School Head, who can be contacted on 07795 121469 or sarah.lane@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report

For the academic year 2022
– 2023

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The role of the Virtual School

The role of the Virtual School is to promote the educational achievement of children in care, children previously looked after, and children with a social worker. Whether educated in Lincolnshire or placed outside of the authority, the Lincolnshire Virtual School team works in partnership with professionals to support our children and young people to fulfil their potential, and access opportunities on the same basis as their non care experienced peers. The team supports our children and young people in care on a case work basis, endeavouring to build strong relationships and to develop the confidence, self-esteem, and resilience of our students.

The Virtual School ensures that every child in our care aged 3 – 18 years has an up to date, effective and high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) that focuses on the improvement of educational outcomes and informs the allocation of Pupil Premium. Providing support and challenge that encourages high aspirations and individual achievement, with minimal disruption, is central to improving immediate and long-term outcomes for our children in care. In addition, the Virtual School ensures social workers, Designated Teachers and staff in education settings, carers, and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their roles and responsibilities for initiating, developing, and reviewing each child’s PEP. The Virtual School also ensures that professionals are aware of the specific needs and potential educational barriers for children previously looked after and those with a social worker.

1.2 The purpose of this report

This statutory annual report for the academic year 2022 to 2023 highlights the work of the Lincolnshire Virtual School, the Local Authority, and partner agencies to improve educational outcomes for children and young people in the care of Lincolnshire aged 3- 18 years, children previously looked after, and those with a social worker. The report covers the cohort characteristics, the quality of provision, and the progress and attainment at all key stages from Early Years to Key Stage 4 for our children in care.

Key messages within this report are:

- The Lincolnshire Virtual School Team continues to be ambitious for all our care experienced children and those with a social worker. We understand that promoting better educational outcomes is everyone's business. We provide training, challenge, advice and support to schools, Children's Services colleagues, foster carers, parents, and other professionals, so that they can better advocate for the learning of children and young people in their care.
- There remains a continued and growing emphasis on the development of trauma informed home and educational environments, where the specific emotional and educational needs of our children and young people are understood and their potentials fulfilled.
- Most of our children and young people aged 3-18 continue to attend education settings that are graded good or better by Ofsted.

- Pupil Premium is allocated to schools in a timely way and is linked to targets outlined in the children and young people's PEPs. Personal Education Plans are reviewed three times per year, or more if appropriate, for all children and young people in care aged 3-18. A robust quality assurance process promotes consistency in quality and effectiveness across all PEPs.
- Early intervention is key to promoting outcomes. Consequently, all children in care or entering care aged 3-13 continue to receive support from our Specialist Teachers, so that schools are better informed of strategies to improve communication and language needs, if appropriate. A newly extended training pathway enables professionals to further develop their skills in meeting the needs of our young people.
- The Virtual School team works closely with our children and young people, with the specific aim of developing strong and effective working relationships. The voice of our children and young people is heard. We celebrate successes and provide opportunities for them and their families to be better understood. We endeavour to stick with them when things don't go so well and put any potential setbacks into context.

2.0 Our vision to improve outcomes

The Virtual School's vision for improving outcomes is aligned to Lincolnshire Children's Services Children in Care (CiC) and Care Leavers' Strategy 2022-2025.

Our overarching aim recognises that we want all children and young people to be cared for within their families/local communities, and we will support families to provide nurturing, resilient parenting so that children and young people realise their potential within their birth families. Where children/young people need to be looked after by Lincolnshire, we will support quality family and friend time. We will do everything we can, across our partnership to care for them and nurture their aspirations, so that they feel safe, loved, and are heard so that they can realise their potential. This not only applies when children are in care, but also where we have a duty to support them as previously looked after children. Working with our partner agencies and communities, we will individually and collectively provide nurturing, resilient parenting, and support as we would for our own children. This strategy sets out what we will do to achieve this vision with reference to Priority 4 of the Strategy (Learning and Aspirations).

In adherence to the principles outlined in The Children's Services Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-2025, and in partnership with Children's Services colleagues and stakeholders, the Virtual School priorities for 2022-2025 are as follows:

- Developing strong partnerships to promote expected attendance levels and reduce suspensions from school.
- Ensuring all children make good progress based on prior attainment, including those accessing Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) specialist provision through highly effective Personal Education Plans and effective use of Pupil Premium.
- Further improving access to education, employment, and training opportunities. As well as, raising the profile of post 16 children in care and care leavers, through the effective allocation of Post 16 Pupil Premium funding and with support from employment coaches.

- Enabling all Designated Teachers, IROs, carers and appropriate parents to have access to quality training and professional development.
- Reducing school moves whenever possible to help maintain placement and educational stability.
- Applying and sharing best practice to better support and inform our workforce in meeting the needs of children in care, previously looked after children, and children with a social worker.
- Embedding the principles and foundations of Caring2Learn within our training offer to education settings, parents, carers, and professionals supporting our most vulnerable children and young people.
- Working in partnership with schools and early years settings to strengthen parental and carer engagement in learning.
- Developing regional partnership working and network links.
- Improving practice and provision through the development of peer support.

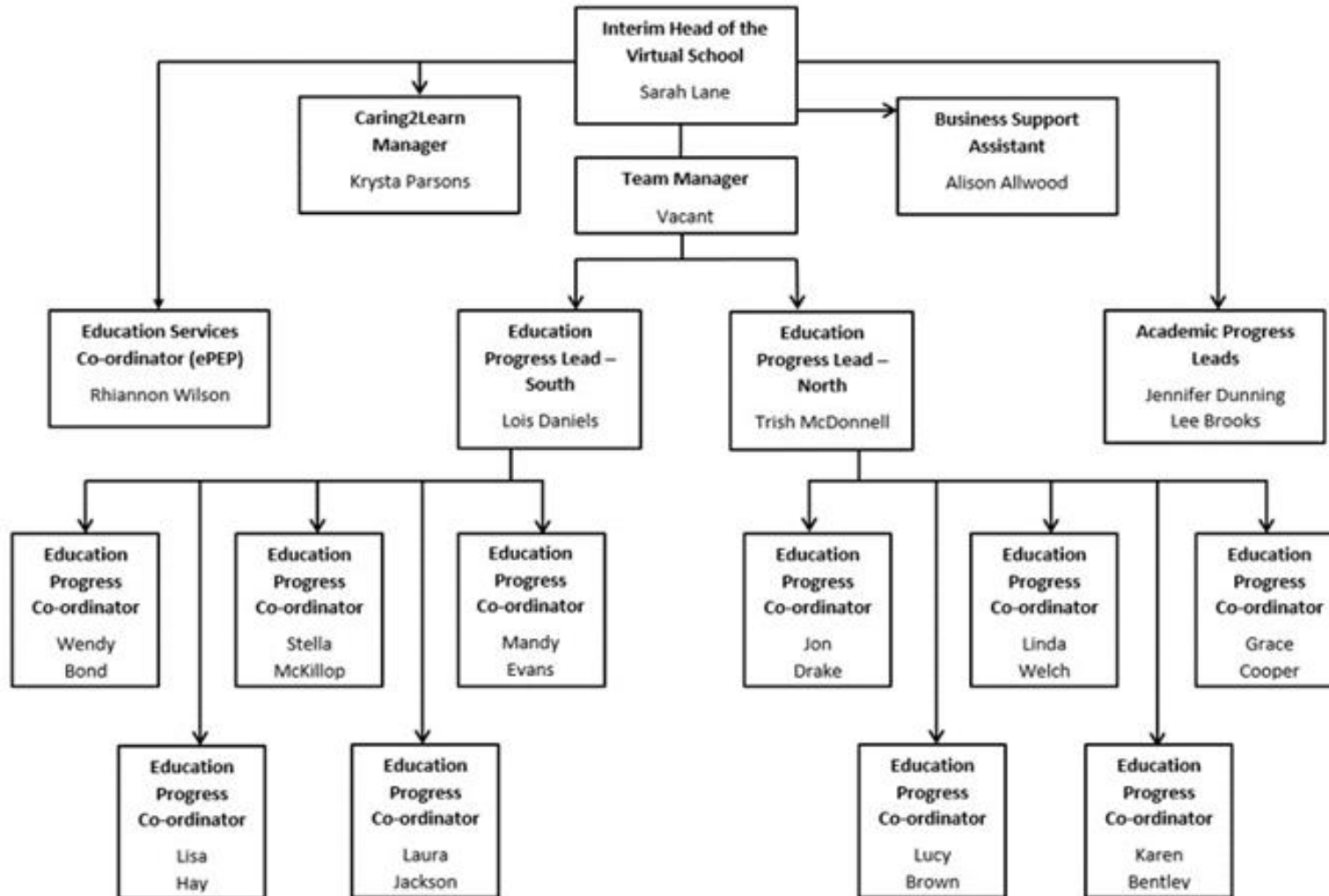
3.0 The structure of the Virtual School

The Lincolnshire Virtual School consists of a team of skilled and resilient professionals who are aspirational for our children in care, and act as education advocates to achieve the very best outcomes.

Every young person in the care of Lincolnshire aged 3-18 has an allocated Education Progress Co-ordinator, who facilitates termly PEP meetings and communication between all professionals. They provide a high level of support to Designated Teachers, social workers, IROs and carers in identifying and overcoming any potential barriers to our children accessing and attending good quality settings, monitoring progress and attainment and having high aspirations. Due to the increase in the number of children in care resulting in higher caseloads, additional grant funding was utilised to create two additional Education Progress Co-ordinator posts, to ensure appropriate focus and support for individual young people continued.

Following the retirement of the previous post holder in February 2023, the existing Team Manager took on the Interim Virtual School Head post for the remainder of the academic year, resulting in a vacant Team Manager post.

Virtual School Team



4.0 Training and development

The Virtual School has a duty to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children in care and previously looked after children and young people, including both social workers and school staff. The existing Virtual School training pathway has been further developed and extended to provide a range of training events delivered by Virtual School Co-ordinators and the Caring2Learn team. The pathway identifies appropriate training for those new to role through to experienced Designated Teachers, as well as learning support assistants. It also includes a combination of face to face and virtual events which can be accessed by carers and Children's Services staff. The Virtual School is integrated within Children's Services and benefits from and contributes to LCC's excellent training offer. The Virtual School Team provides support and training across our residential, Early Help and fostering teams, and our carer community. This includes the circulation of One Minute Briefings for teams to refer to and input at other team meetings.

4.1 Virtual School training pathway

A total of 193 Designated Teachers and Assistant Designated Teachers completed training with the Virtual School during the academic year. This included:

- Introductory e-learning for those new to role
- ePEP training, also attended by foster carers, social workers and residential key workers
- Meeting the needs of children in care
- Meeting the needs of children previously looked after
- Termly Virtual School briefings to hear key updates and share good practice
- Bespoke training for schools and multi-academy trusts

The Virtual School continues to develop training opportunities in response to feedback from schools, educational settings, and professionals.

4.2 Virtual School annual conference

Lincolnshire Virtual School
Conference 2023

Keynote Speaker - Louise Bomber
Specialist teacher, therapist, EEP combat grad, lone and returned author of 'Know Me to Teach Me'. Louise has worked with individual pupils, classes, whole school settings, local authorities, teachers and support staff across both the primary and secondary phases. She has provided consultations and training for education, social services and health. She is the Founding Director of 'outbase' (Brighton and Hove) and 'outbase' (Bristol).

PUTTING CHILDREN AT THE HEART OF OUR PRACTICE
More details released soon!

JUNE 30 2023 | **Hemswell Court**
Lancaster Green, Hemswell Cliff
DN21 5TQ Full Day

In July 2023, we held our first in person conference for headteachers and Designated Teachers since the pandemic. 100 education staff and 30 Children's Services staff attended the event at Hemswell Court. The keynote speech was delivered by Louise Bomber, who is an internationally renowned author, expert, speaker, and teacher focussing on the needs of children in care and previously looked-after children. We also had a range of workshops delivered by both Children's Services teams and external partners, topics included: Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); supporting pupils who have experienced trauma; the body talks to the brain; the importance of language; supporting parental engagement; writing to the child in Personal Education Plans; and the value and importance of music education. Each attendee was also provided with a copy of Louise's book 'Know me to teach me'. Feedback indicated

that 95% of respondents found the conference keynote and workshops interesting and useful. Comments included:

“Excellent. I have followed Louise’s work over many years and found her books really helpful and inspiring.”

“Very engaging and informative. Lots of useful points to work on and use.”

“All of it was very useful - I have already spoken to the SLT about a whole school, therapeutic approach to all children in the school.”

“The keynote speaker’s input was fabulous - will be disseminating it at our next training day.”

4.3 Caring2Learn

The Virtual School has continued to deliver the Caring2Learn learning and development programme, good practice framework, the Caring Schools Award, and the hub support network. In November 2022, we held a presentation event for the Caring Schools Award and presented awards to 26 schools who had achieved the award over the previous two years.

In the Spring Term of 2022, we developed and ran a pilot programme of a series workshops for parents and carers in 4 primary schools. This programme, called Parents2gether, included information on home learning, emotional regulation, wellbeing, behaviour management, and supportive parenting approaches to help parents and schools work together to support their children to achieve. The sessions were supported by school staff and feedback from the sessions was extremely positive, with respondents stating that attending the sessions had helped them understand their children’s behaviour better and built their confidence in providing home learning activities. Three more pilot programmes were then delivered in collaboration with the Early Years team as part of their transition networks. These were held in Lincolnshire nursery and early years settings and their linked feeder reception class schools, and focussed more on helping parents and schools ensure a smooth transition from early years into school. Future developments include ‘train the trainer’ sessions aimed at early years and school staff, enabling them to deliver the programme on a sustainable basis in their own settings.

A multi-agency strategic task and finish group was created during the academic year to shape the future direction of the Caring2Learn approach. This has resulted in the future development of the Caring Schools Toolkit into an online audit of provision which can be accessed by all schools and utilised as a school improvement tool, without the need to complete an award assessment. The task and finish group also reviewed the new joint training offer, and explored ways in which the Caring2Learn approach could continue to be embedded across Children’s Services as part of their business as usual.

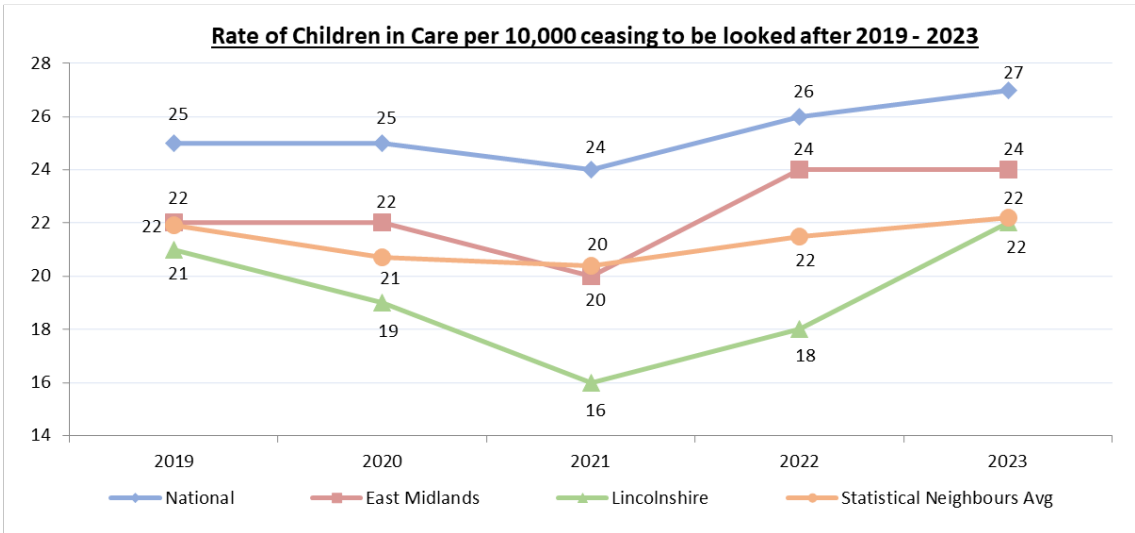
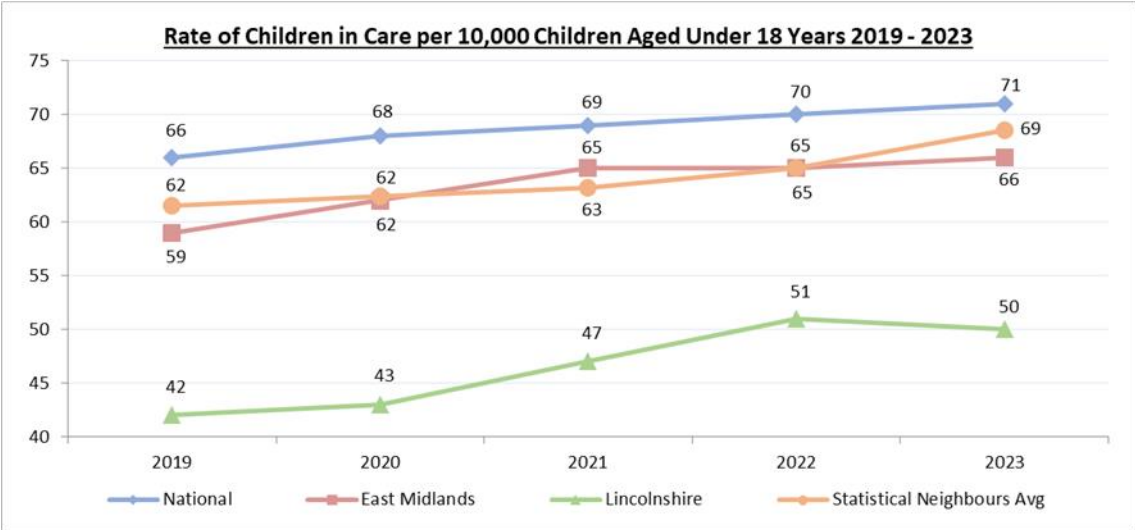
Over the last 12 months we have delivered 50 Caring2Learn workshops including: Caring Schools Award; Trauma Awareness and Trauma Informed Practice; Restorative and Relational Practice; A Relationships based Approach to Inclusion; Relational Repair; An Introduction to Social Pedagogy; Supporting Grief, Loss & Positive Endings; Kids Skills; Creating Calm; and Supporting Sleep & Addressing Nightmares & Night Terrors. These have been attended by over 400 foster carers, education, and Children’s Services staff, as well as teachers and support staff from 40 different schools. We have also delivered a range of whole school training as INSET days and twilight sessions to 8 schools attended by over 350 teaching, learning support, and pastoral staff teams. Feedback on these workshops and training sessions has been

consistently positive with 98% of respondents saying they found the sessions useful and informative and would support their day-to-day practice. In July 2023 we began work on producing a joint programme of training and development which brings together all the Virtual School training and Caring2Learn workshops into one coherent offer. This includes a newly updated Designated Teacher Training Pathway which will be launched for the next academic year.

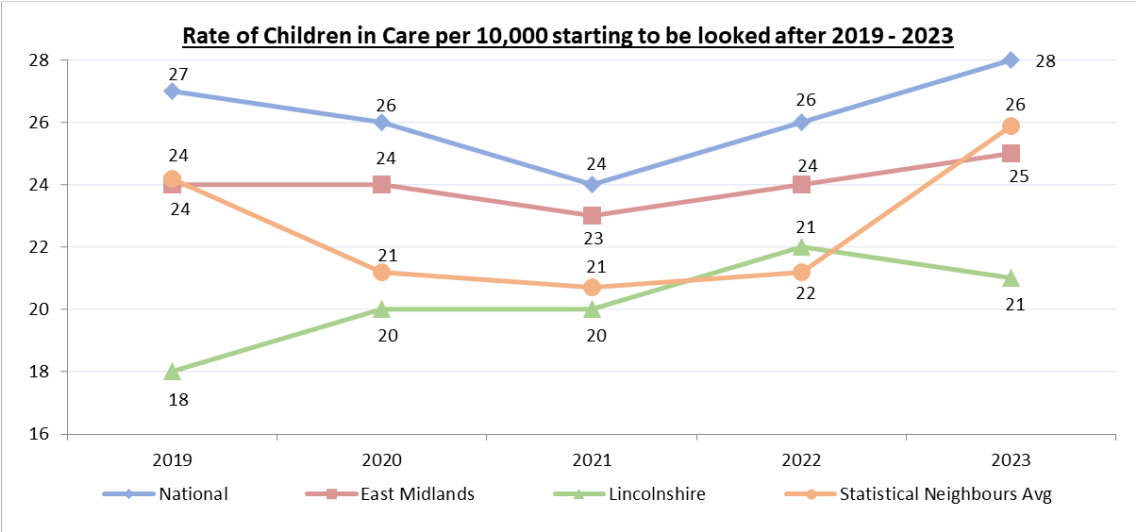
5.0 Cohort characteristics

5.1 Our children in care

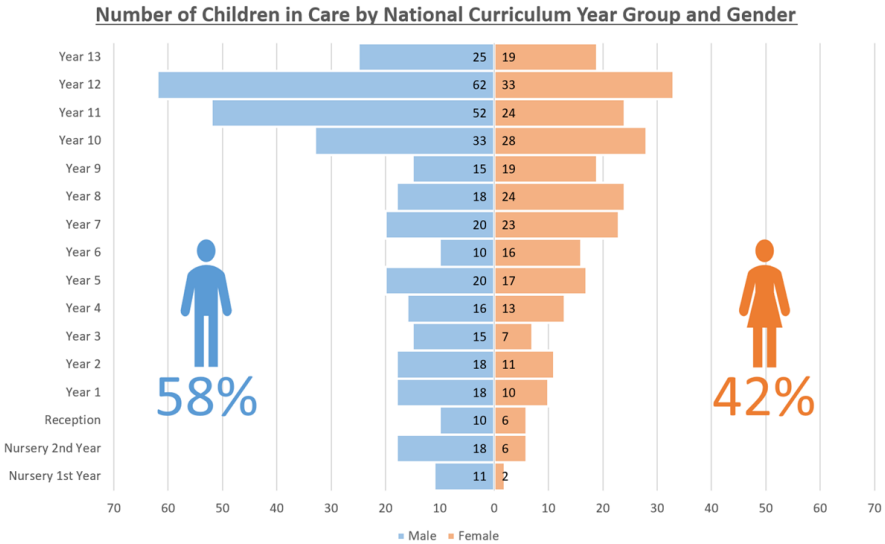
The rate of children in care in Lincolnshire decreased slightly in 2023 slowing the increases seen over the last few years. The rate is still higher than the lows seen in 2019 and 2020 but remains much lower than the rates seen for all of Lincolnshire’s comparators. All of Lincolnshire’s comparators saw increased rates in 2023 compared to 2022, with a small increase for National and East Midlands, and a larger increase for Lincolnshire’s statistical neighbours.



The decrease in rate for Lincolnshire was driven by an increasing rate of children ceasing to be looked after (18 per 10,000 in 2022 and 22 per 10,000 in 2023). This was a much steeper increase than that seen for each of our comparators.

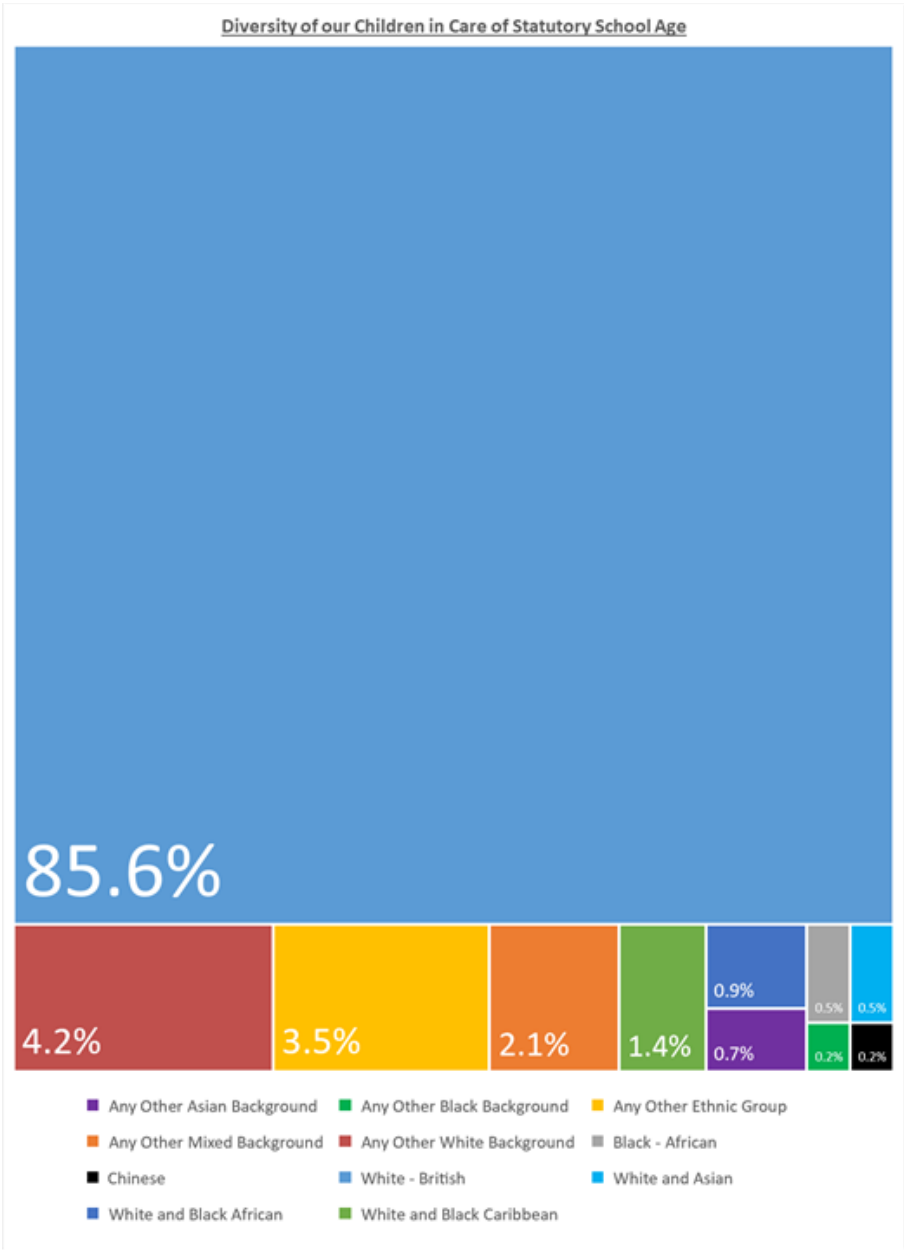


Almost 6 in 10 of our children in care are male. Most of our pupils are of secondary school age, equating to 41% of the children in care cohort. The largest year group is Year 12, making up over 15% of the cohort alone. In total 22% of our children in care cohort are post 16.



Thirty percent of our children in care cohort are primary school age, whilst a further 6% of our cohort are of nursery school age.

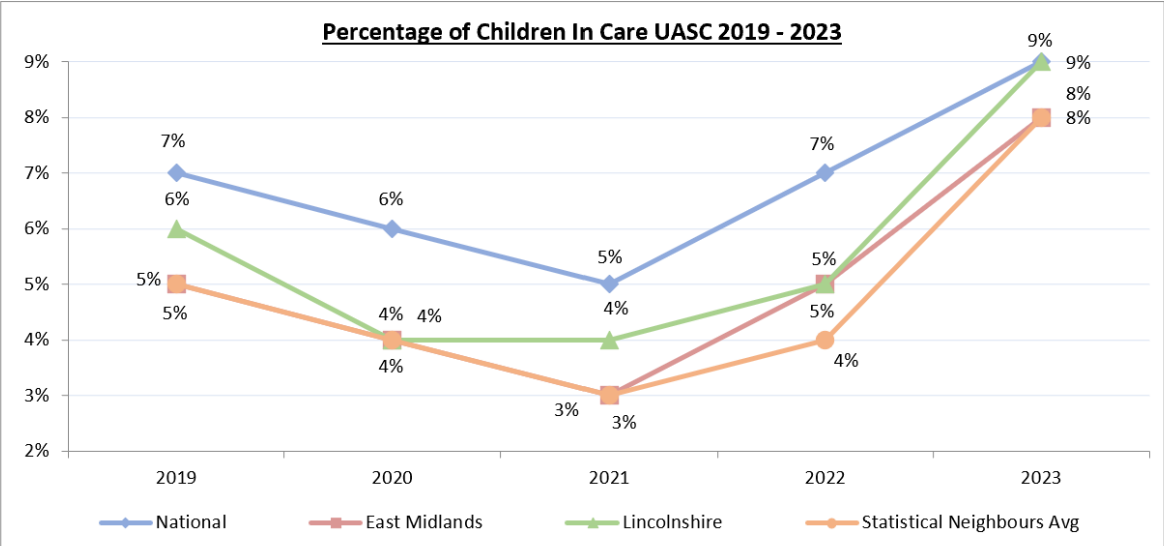
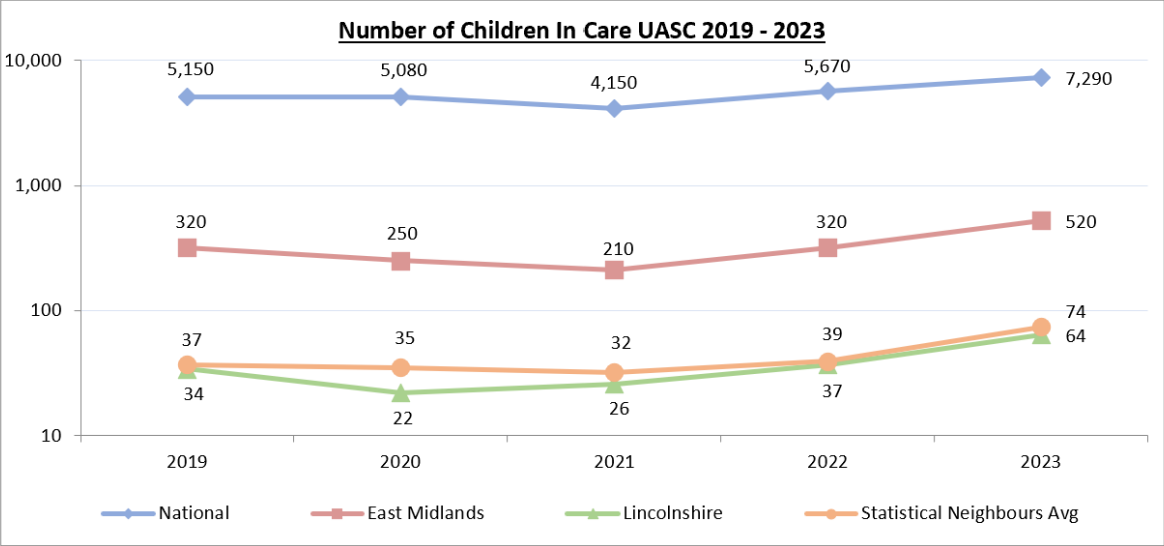
The majority of our children in care are White British, making up over 85% of our cohort.



5.2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

The numbers of young people entering care in Lincolnshire as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) increased significantly in 2023 compared to 2022, as a result of the National Transfer scheme and is the highest it has been in the past 5 years. This increase in 2023 is consistent to the trend seen across all our comparators. The percentage of children in

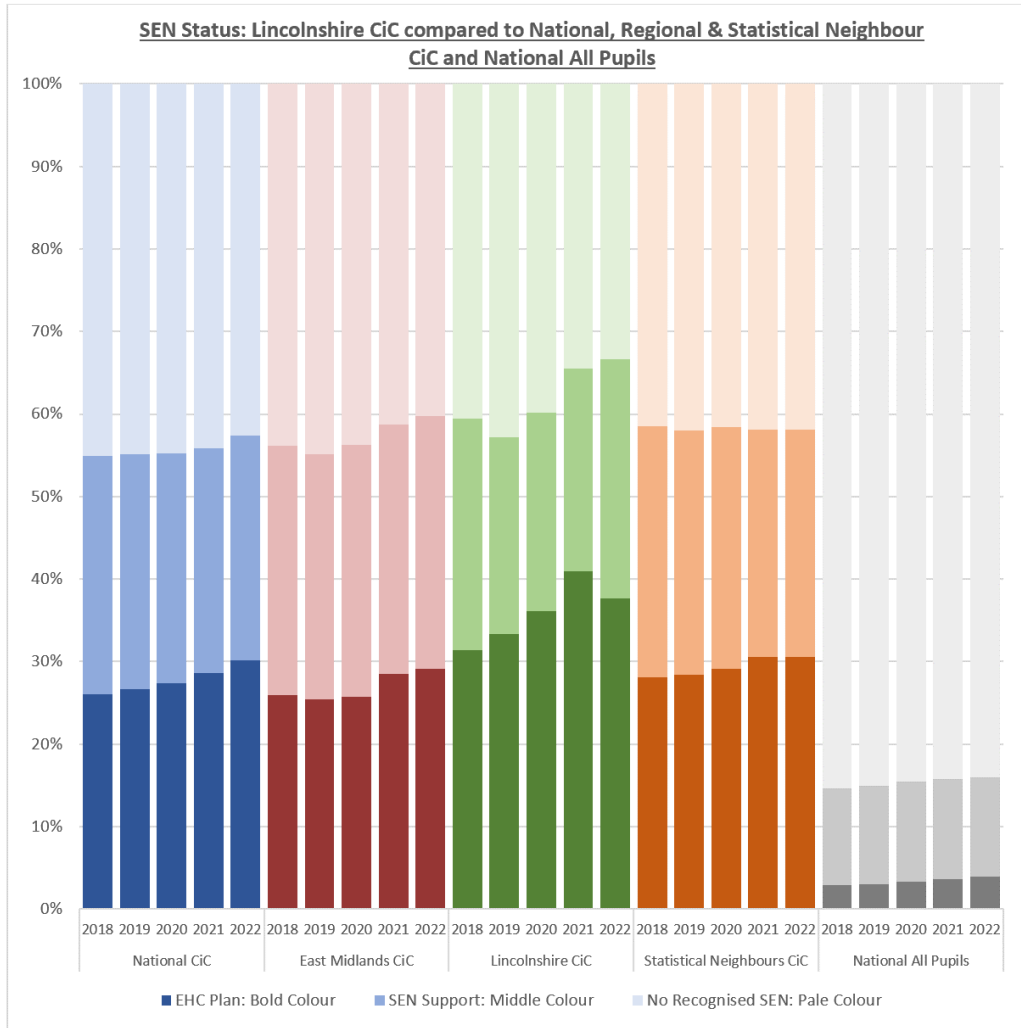
care in Lincolnshire that are UASC (9%) is in line with national data (9%), and above our regional East Midlands (8%) and our statistical neighbours' average (8%).



5.3 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Nationally, 4.0% of the total pupil population have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). National statistics indicate that children in care are nearly four times more likely to have special educational needs when compared with all children nationally. They are also nearly eight times more likely to have an EHCP.

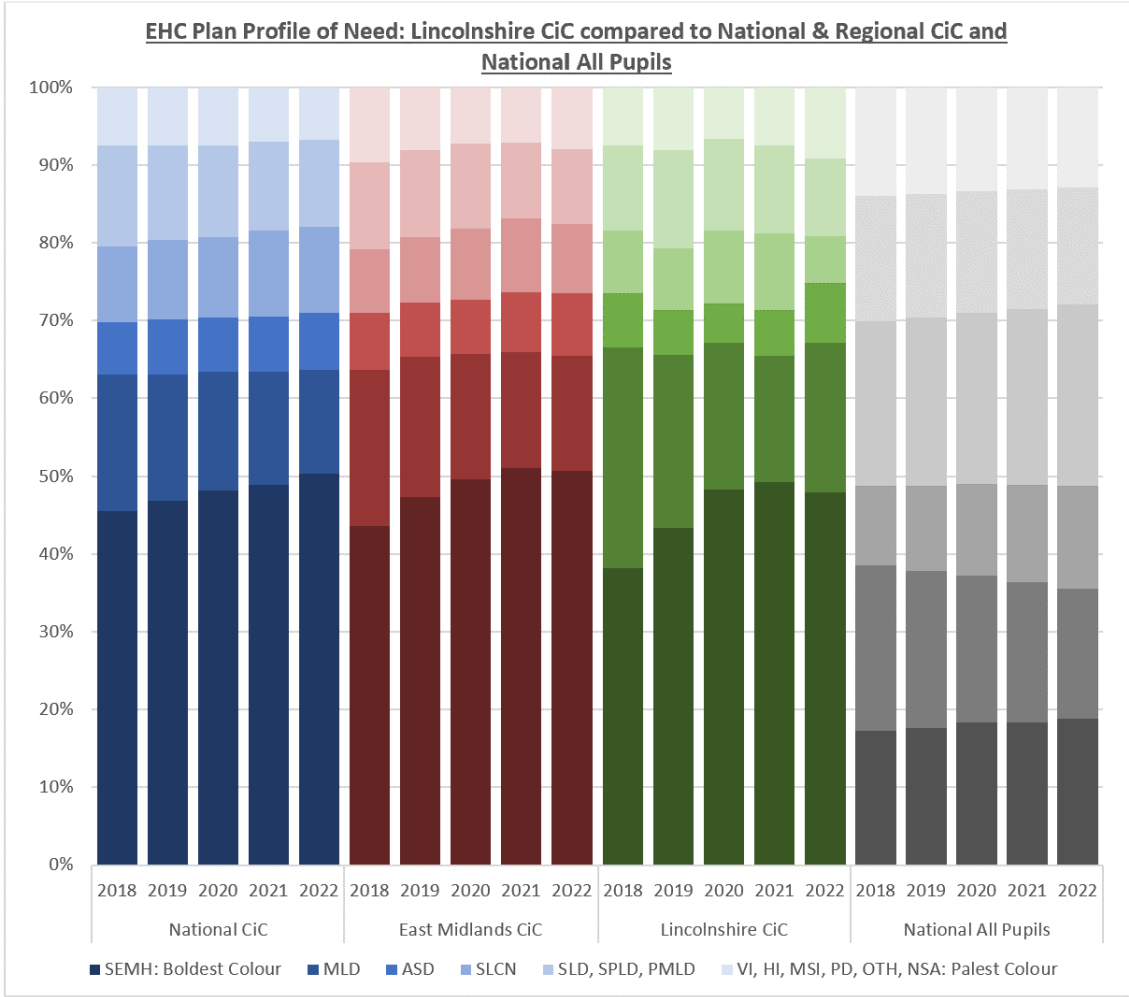
Lincolnshire children in care have a much higher rate of EHCPs (38%) compared to all our comparators (National 30%, East Midlands 29%, statistical neighbours 31%). The trend still looks to be increasing despite a drop from the highs seen in 2021 (41%).



In England, the percentage of children in care with SEN is 57%; of which 27% are at SEN Support and 30% have an EHC plan. This is below the rates seen for Lincolnshire children in care where 67% have SEN; of which 29% are at SEN Support and 38% have an EHC plan. Lincolnshire is also above our other comparators for the percentage of children in care with SEN; with the regional East Midlands figure of 60% and our statistical neighbours' average of 58%.

Lincolnshire saw an increase of 1% in SEN rates for children in care to 67% in 2022, despite the drop of 3% seen in the rate of EHC plans. This is due to an increase of 4% in SEN Support between 2021 and 2022.

Graph Key: SEMH = Social Emotional & Mental Health, MLD = Moderate Learning Difficulty, ASD = Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SLCN = Speech Language & Communication Needs, SLD = Severe Learning Difficulty, SPLD = Specific Learning Difficulty, PMLD = Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty, VI = Visual Impairment, HI = Hearing Impairment, MSI = Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD = Physical Disability, OTH = Other Difficulty & Disability, NSA = SEN Support but no specialist assessment or type of need



The most common primary identified special educational need for children in care is Social, Emotional and Mental Health. This is typically between 45-50% of children in care and is a much higher rate compared to all SEN children nationally, which is typically 17-20%. These children may be supported in either a mainstream setting or a specialist provision. This category of need can often be attributed to experiences that a child had before they entered care, including trauma, inconsistent early years attachment, and in some cases Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder.

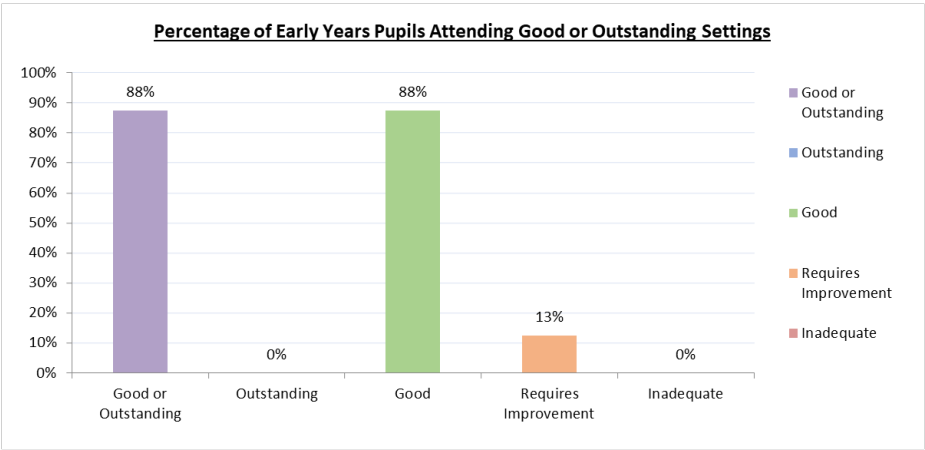
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech Language & Communication Needs (SLCN), and Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) seem to be the fastest growing primary identified need types amongst all SEN children nationally. Although, it only appears to be the trend in SEMH that we have also seen amongst children in care in Lincolnshire.

6.0 Quality of provision

Between November 2017 and January 2018, the DfE consulted on changes to official statistics in reporting Ofsted outcomes. As a result of this consultation there was a change in the way the latest inspection data is reported for all providers. The grades from the predecessor schools will now be included for schools that have not yet been inspected in their current form, to provide a more comprehensive view of the sector.

6.1 Early Years (Reception)

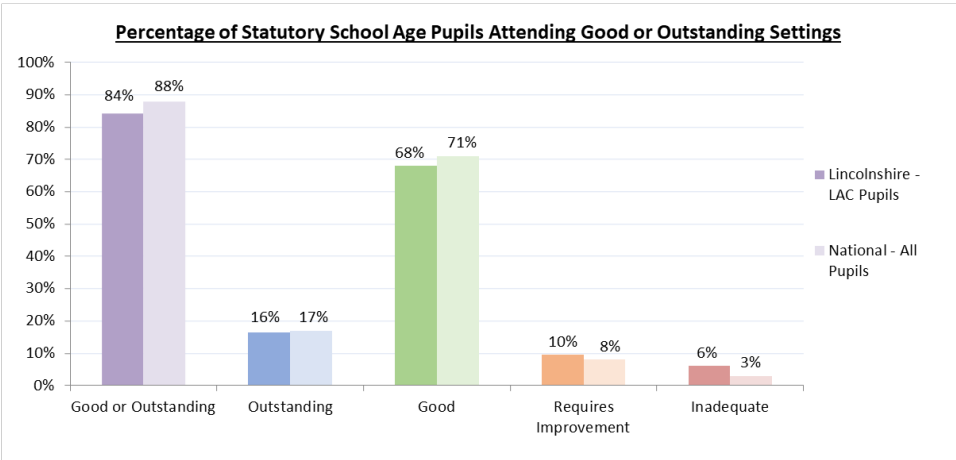
In accordance with data correct as of 31st March 2023, 88% of our children in care placed both in and out of county who were aged four or five, were attending good or outstanding settings as graded by Ofsted. This is a drop of 1% compared with last year.



6.2 Statutory School Age

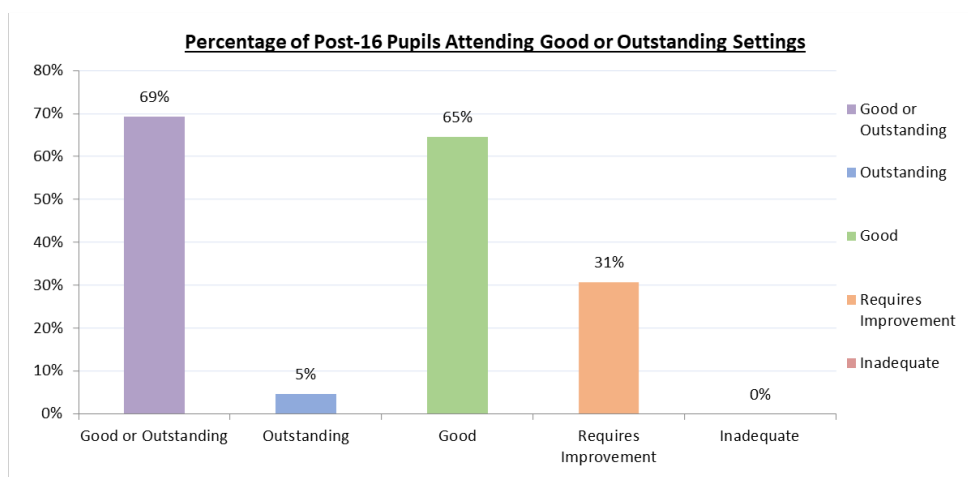
The percentage of children who are of statutory school age attending good or outstanding schools both in and out of county, has increased by 1% compared to last year (84% compared to 83% last year).

In line with statutory guidance, good or outstanding education setting will be prioritised when a new school place is needed. When a child attends a school whose rating lowers following an Ofsted inspection, a multi-agency discussion considers if a school move would be in the best interests of the child and where appropriate, additional support is provided for any of our pupils attending schools that are graded less than good.



6.3 Post 16

Currently, 69% of our post 16 students are attending a good or outstanding setting, with 31% requires improvement and 0% inadequate. This is a decrease of 2% compared to last year, when 71% was reported. Our post 16 students are supported (as per case example below) through the PEP process and, as is the case with our statutory school age students, we work with our wider Children's Services colleagues and others to provide additional support for students attending settings judged to be less than good by Ofsted.



7.0 Personal Education Plans

It is a statutory requirement that every young person in care aged 3 – 18 has a Personal Education Plan. In Lincolnshire, these are recorded electronically and may be referred to as ePEPs. Every child aged 3-18 must have an initial PEP within 10 school days of coming into care. Virtual School co-ordinators facilitate meetings involving the young person and all supporting professionals to develop the PEP. These meetings focus on the voice of the young person, their attendance, academic progress and attainment. They also recognise what is working well, identify any potential barriers, and set SMART targets and agree actions. The PEP is reviewed termly and informs the use of Pupil Premium, interventions, and multi-agency support to enable the young person to make progress. PEPs are now written to the child and this has ensured that the young person is put at the centre of the plan and has had a positive impact on the content and style of language used, making the information much more accessible to the young person.

7.1 PEP compliance

PEP compliance for statutory school aged children for the academic year 2022-2023 has consistently exceeded target (99%). Regardless of where our children and young people are living, three termly meetings are held with these usually taking place either virtually, or at the child/young person's place of education. If a young person is not engaging in education, employment or training, the termly PEPs focus on identifying the potential barriers and identifying opportunities and next steps for supporting their transition back into education or into employment, if appropriate.

PEP Compliance	Autumn Term 2022	Spring Term 2023	Summer Term 2023
Statutory Age	99%	99.53%	100%
Early Years	100%	100%	98.15%
Post 16	99%	99.30%	100%

7.2 PEP quality assurance

Prior to sign off, each PEP is quality assured by the Virtual School co-ordinator and rated red, amber, or green, with additional comments on how the quality of the PEP can be improved. PEP quality assurance (QA) judgements are moderated at monthly team meetings and a sample is moderated on a termly basis by the Virtual School leadership team.

To add a further layer of robustness, a termly stakeholder PEP QA meeting was introduced this academic year. An IRO, social worker, foster carer, and Designated Teacher along with the Virtual School leadership team now review a sample of PEPs and feedback is provided to the team. This has had a positive impact on further supporting the consistent quality of the PEPs and there are plans to involve a wider range of stakeholders in this process.

8.0 Pupil Premium grant allocation

The Virtual School Head has a statutory responsibility for the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding (also referred to as Pupil Premium in this report). PP+ funding is allocated to education settings through the PEP process. Children in care aged 3-5 years were eligible for an annual allocation of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) of £342 during 2022-2023. The PP+ grant allocation per statutory school aged child in care was £2,410 as outlined in the DfE Pupil Premium 2022 to 2023 technical note. The following information relates to the financial period April 2022 – March 2023.

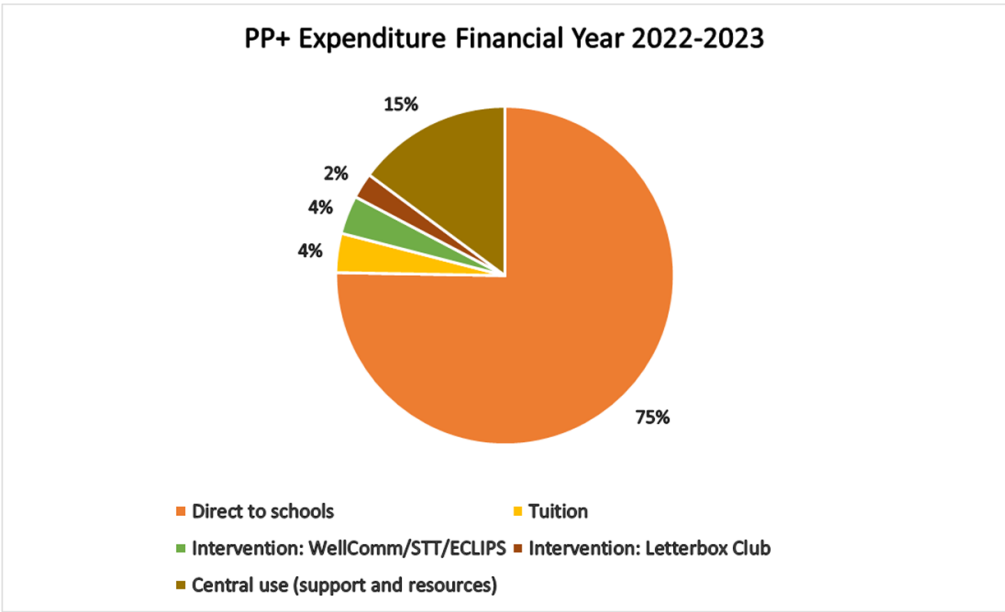
8.1 Early Years Pupil Premium

The Virtual School allocated £33,858 Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding to early years settings during the 2022-2023 financial year. EYPP funding is requested via the PEP process and linked to interventions to improve outcomes. All funding was allocated to early years settings to support children's progress, attainment, and transition into school.

8.2 Pupil Premium Plus for statutory school aged pupils

The allocation from the DfE for the financial year 2022-2023 was £1,185,720; this total is based upon 492 statutory school age children being in the care of Lincolnshire as documented in the final DfE children in care (SSDA903 collection data report) 2022-2023.

75% of the total allocation of PP+ funding went directly to schools. This funding was allocated via funded targets on the ePEP system and included initial allocations ranging from £500 to £1,000 each, as well as additional requests from schools based on individual children’s needs. 4% of PP+ funding was used to directly commission 1:1 tuition support, whilst another 4% was used to fund assessments and interventions undertaken by the Specialist Teaching Team (STT) and the Extended Communication and Language Impairment Provision for Students (ECLIPS) Team to inform academic target setting. 2% was used to fund the Letterbox Club reading and numeracy intervention which promotes learning at home, whilst the remaining 15% was used centrally to fund resources for additional support of students, which included resources and staff training.



The Virtual School also received two additional grants as part of the recovery plan following COVID-19; Recovery Premium and School Led Tutoring (part of the National Tutoring Programme). Funding from both grants was allocated to statutory school aged children on roll at maintained schools and was sent directly to their schools.

8.3 Post 16 Pupil Premium funding

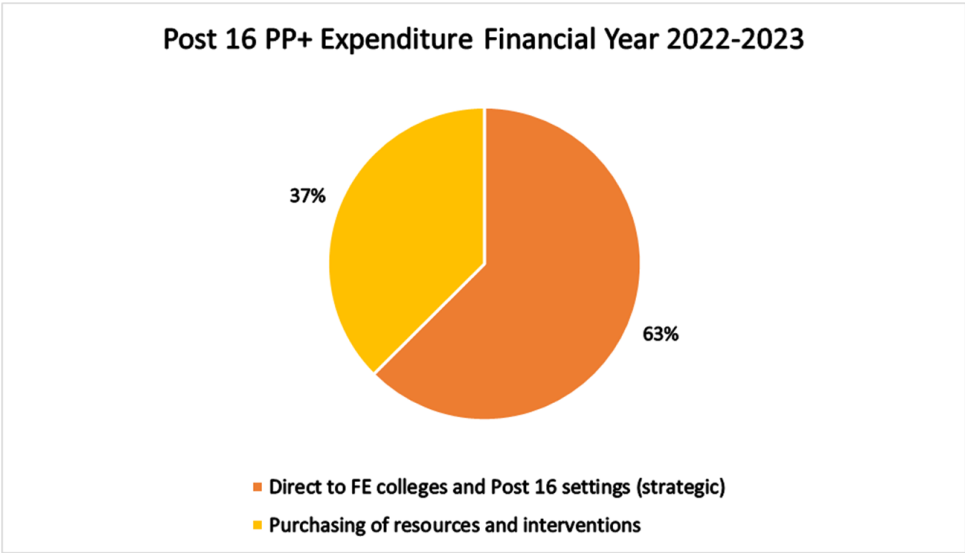
Along with a small number of other local authorities, Lincolnshire Virtual School received a grant as part of the second year of the DfE pilot which extended PP+ funding to support post 16 students in care. 63% of funding was allocated to Further Education (FE) colleges and other post 16 educational settings where a significant number of our students were on roll. This was used strategically by the colleges and settings in a variety of ways, including:

- Additional pastoral support and associated staffing costs to support the quality and delivery of PEPs.
- Sports and other enrichment activities to promote wellbeing and attendance.
- Whole staff training on trauma informed practice and the needs of children in care.
- Enhanced provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) lessons for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

The remaining 37% of post 16 PP+ funding was allocated through the PEP process and was used to purchase resources and interventions for individual young people. Some of this

funding was sent to other teams within LCC Children’s Services and post 16 settings for them to purchase the agreed resources in addition to the Virtual School directly purchasing items. Resources and interventions for individual young people included:

- Laptops to enable completion of course work.
- Additional tuition/online learning courses to promote attainment.
- Equipment and/or clothing needed for courses and work experience placements.
- Contributions to driving lessons to enhance employment opportunities.
- Bicycles or contributions to travel costs to enable education, training, or work experience attendance.



8.3.1 Post 16 case study

DD has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan with a primary need of Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs. She had a difficult end to Year 11 due to the sudden closure of her independent school mid-way through the year. Her Virtual School Co-ordinator supported her transition to another setting to complete her statutory education.

The Virtual School Co-ordinator worked closely with the SEND Caseworker to ensure DD’s EHC plan was fully updated before being shared with the local college as part of the statutory consultation process. The college initially raised some concerns as to whether they could meet DD’s needs but following a meeting with the young person, facilitated by the Virtual School Co-ordinator, a place was offered.

Unfortunately, DD’s GCSE results were lower than she had been expecting and she became very disheartened. Despite a further meeting with the college, her Virtual School Co-ordinator and DD, she decided that she was not yet ready for a large college or the level of written work needed. The Virtual School Co-ordinator supported DD in exploring other options to enable her to re-sit her GCSEs and think about her next steps. She started at the setting and settled in well, completing Year 12.

Following a placement move at the young person’s request, DD engaged with the career’s advice offered at her setting and with the support of her Virtual School Coordinator, she

applied for a place on the L1 Hair and Beauty Course at her new local college. DD asked her Virtual School Co-ordinator to accompany her to the meeting where she was able to confidently answer all the questions and was offered a place to start in the new academic year.

9.0 How regularly do our children attend?

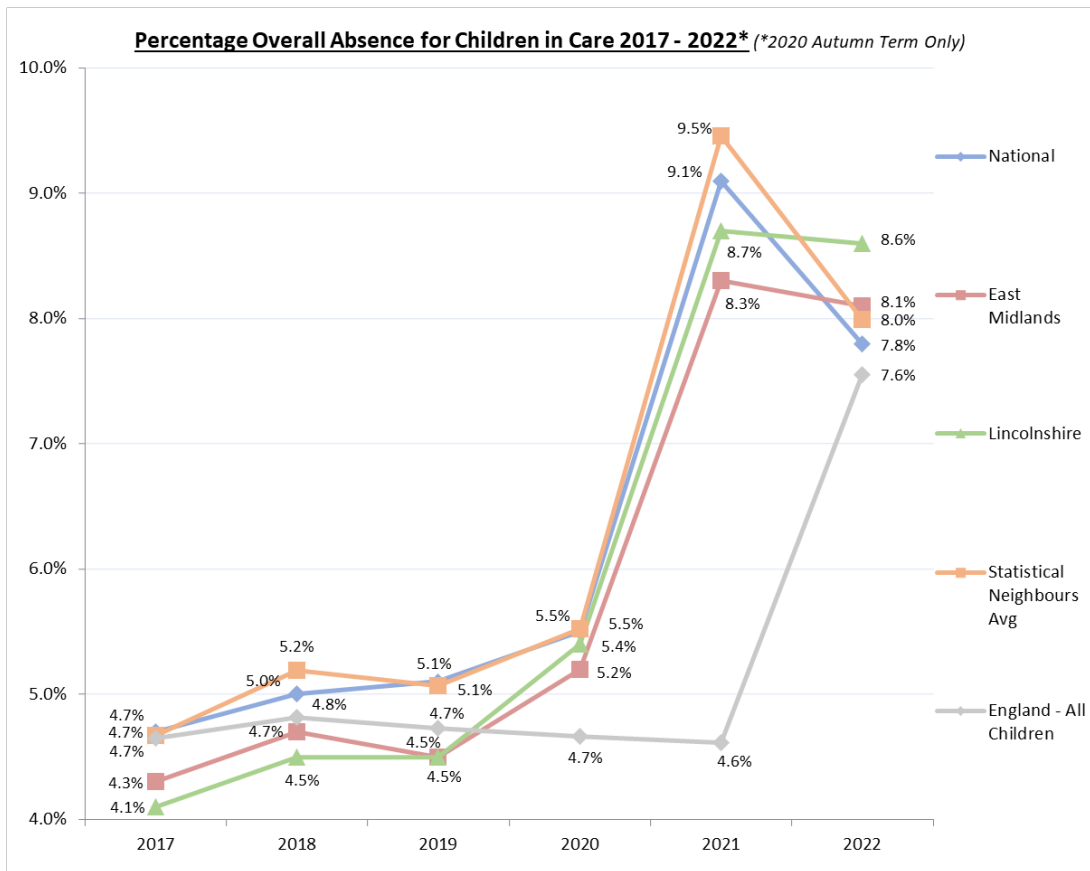
9.1 School attendance

Due to covid restrictions in early 2020, there is no nationally published attendance data for the whole year of 2020. Autumn term 2020 data has been included as a comparison though absence is usually higher in the Autumn term compared to a whole year of data. The 2021 data also shows a significant increase in absence rates for children in care. This is due to Spring term 2021, when only the children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils could attend school during the period of lockdown from 4th January 2021 to 8th March 2021, when restrictions were lifted for all other pupils. Other pupils who were not eligible to attend school during restrictions, were recorded as 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus'. This means that the absence rates for pupils who were prioritised to continue attending school will be higher than for those who were not eligible to attend.

The Autumn term 2020 and whole year 2021 and 2022 data show Lincolnshire children in care trending towards attending less regularly than our national and statistical neighbour average comparators.

It should be noted that significant increases in absence have been seen across the board across all comparators in 2022. The increases have been larger in Lincolnshire and have impacted all pupils. Lincolnshire's overall absence rates for all children has also increased and Lincolnshire now has higher absence rates (absence rate of 8.0%) than all our comparators (East Midlands 7.5%, Statistical Neighbours 7.9%, and National 7.6%).

The main reason for the large increases across all comparators appears to be absence for illness. Nationally absence for illness averaged around 2.5-2.6% pre-pandemic and increased to 4.4% in the most recent academic years (2021-22) data, representing an increase of around 1.8% on average for illness nationally. Lincolnshire saw a larger increase in illness in the 2021-22 academic year of 2.3%. Absence for illness averaged around 2.8% pre-pandemic and increased to 5.1%; this is 0.8% above national and 0.7% above the regional East Midlands average.



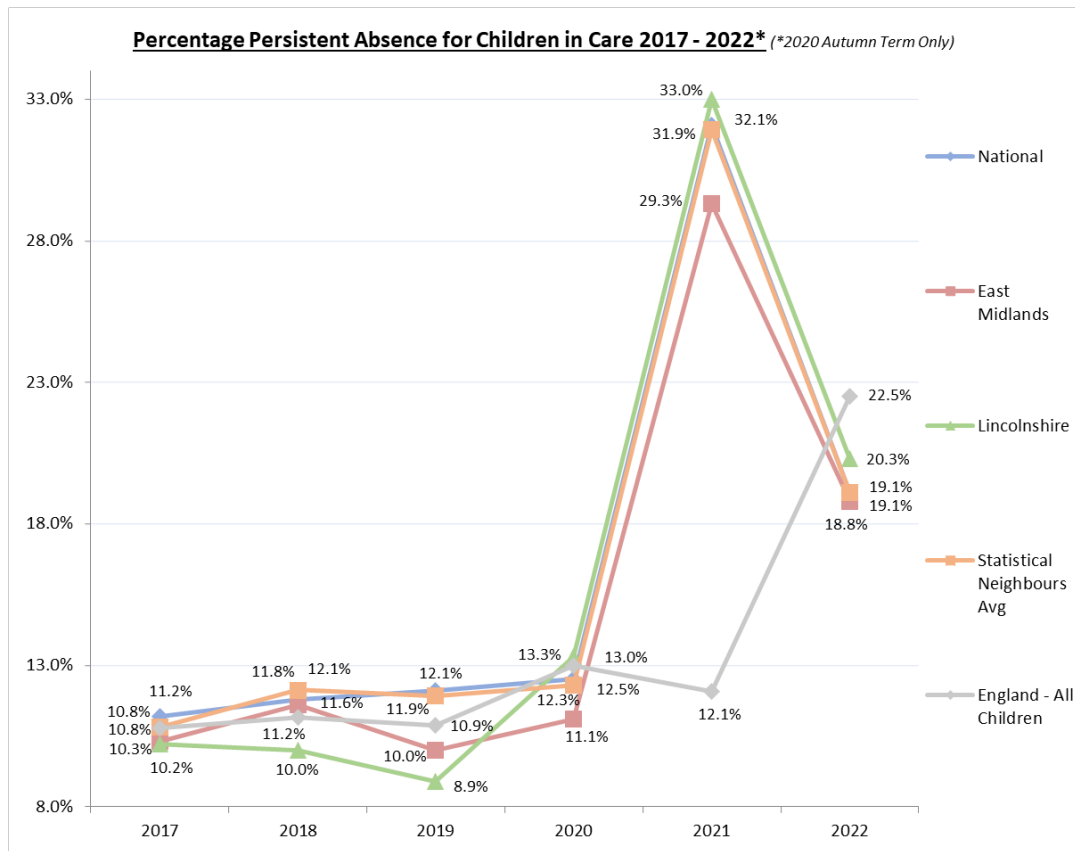
9.2 Persistent Absence (80 – 91% attendance)

The Autumn term 2020 and whole year 2021 and 2022 data indicate that Lincolnshire children in care are trending towards higher persistent absence rates when compared to our national, regional, and statistical neighbour averages. This has left Lincolnshire children in care with a slightly higher persistent absence rate (20.3%) than all our comparators in the most recent year of data.

As with overall absence, there have been large increases in persistent absence across the board for all pupils and all comparators in 2022. The peak in persistent absence for children in care in 2021 was an anomaly compared to all pupils and was due to pupils of critical workers and vulnerable pupils attending during lockdown as described earlier. Lincolnshire's persistent absence rate for all children has increased significantly from 12.3% to 24.5% and is now above the persistent absence rate for Lincolnshire children in care (20.3%) and our comparators' figures for all pupils.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex and are often specific to individual pupils and families. For our children in care, these may include:

- Placement changes which may involve time out of school due to a mid-year application for a new school.
- A young person's wellbeing manifesting in emotionally based school avoidance.
- A temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs.
- Suspension.

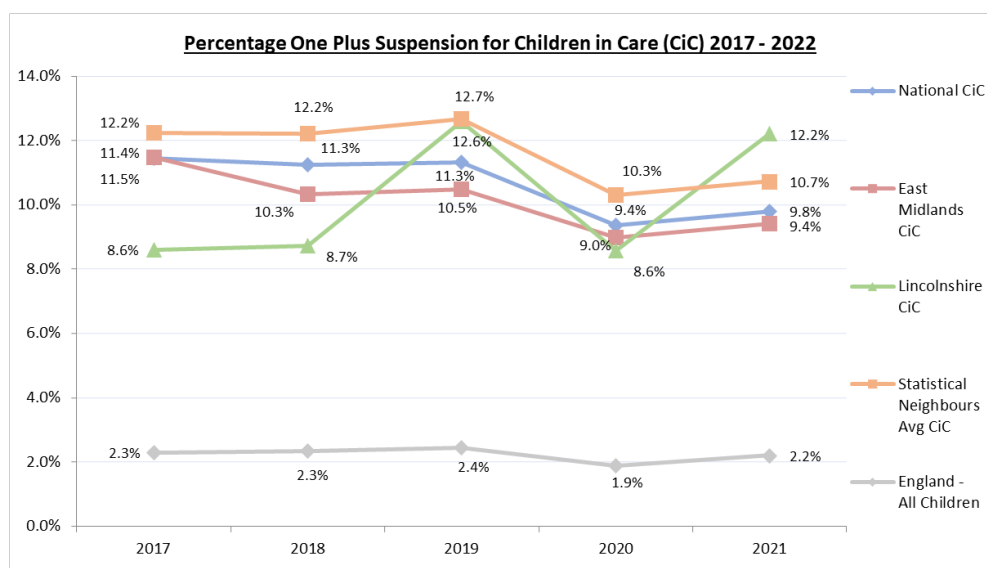


9.3 Suspensions

From September 2021, the Department for Education replaced the term “fixed term exclusion” with “suspension”. Nationally (2017 – 2020), children in care have been around 5 times more likely to be suspended from school for a fixed-term than the national average for all pupils. Lincolnshire children in care were around 4 times more likely to be suspended from school than the national average for all pupils between 2017 and 2018.

There was a large increase in suspensions in Lincolnshire in 2019. This saw the suspension rate in Lincolnshire align with the statistical neighbour average and above our regional and national rates. There was a consistent drop in suspension rates in 2020 across the board for Lincolnshire and all our comparators. The drop seen for Lincolnshire was much greater than all our comparators with the Lincolnshire rate dropping back down the rate seen prior to 2019.

There has again been another large increase in suspensions for all children in Lincolnshire in 2021. This has seen the suspension rate in Lincolnshire to be above all our comparators.



9.4 Permanent Exclusions

The DfE does not publish data relating to the permanent exclusion of children in care. Locally sourced data indicates that in the 2020-21 academic year, one child in care received a permanent exclusion despite significant support and challenge from the Virtual School. The young person had a successful transition into the local authority provision for students who have been permanently excluded and continued to attend regularly and made progress.

9.5 Virtual School support to promote inclusion

Following a focused scrutiny on attendance through the PEP quality assurance process, attendance descriptors were added to the recorded percentages to raise awareness and strengthen aspirations. One of the contributing factors for a PEP to be rated 'green', is that there now must be a recorded discussion and agreed action if the young person's attendance is below the expected 95%.

In addition to the individual monitoring of attendance through the PEPs, half termly monitoring meetings have been introduced. Cohort attendance data is rigorously scrutinized to promote early identification of patterns of reduced attendance to ensure that all professionals supporting individual children can work together to remove any barriers to improved attendance.

The Virtual School Progress Co-ordinators are in regular contact with schools, particularly when a child or young person is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion. Schools are reminded of the support available to reduce the risk of suspension and early conversations are encouraged to enable the Virtual School to provide additional funding for interventions to support our children.

10.0 How well have our children and young people in care achieved?

10.1 Early Years

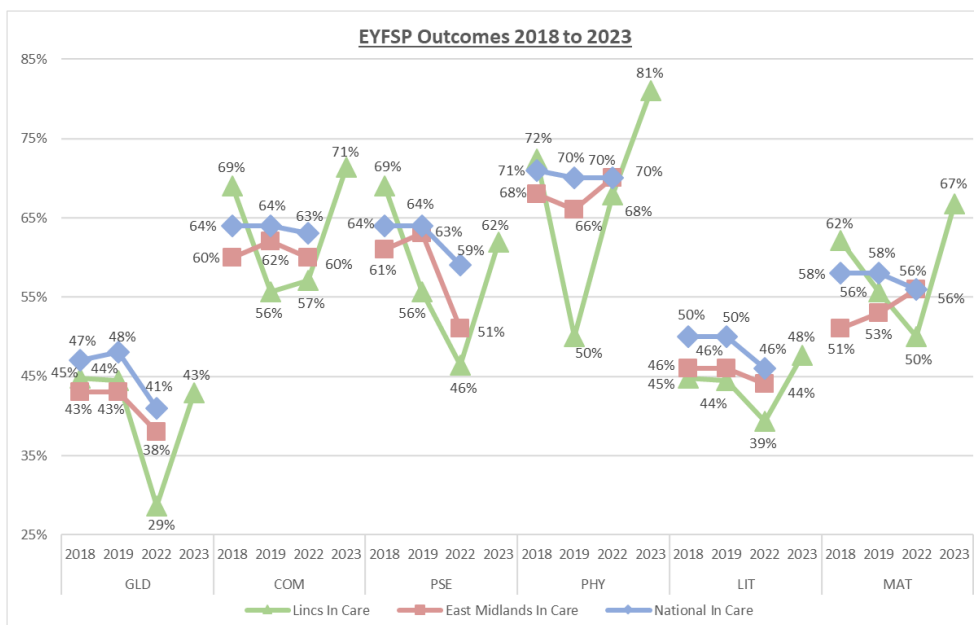
10.1.1 Early Years case study

When AA came into care, she was attending an early years' setting in the grounds of a mainstream primary school. AA presented with very complex needs which were being met in the setting with additional support. Following assessments funded by the Virtual School, it soon became clear that AA needed more specialist support than could be provided by the mainstream primary school she was due to transition to. All professionals agreed at a Personal Education Plan meeting that an EHC needs assessment request would be submitted. Following this assessment process, an EHC plan was issued which stated that AA's needs should be met in a special school. Following a placement move out of county, the Virtual School Co-ordinator liaised with the other local authority SEND team to identify an appropriate school. AA then returned to Lincolnshire and the Virtual School Co-ordinator played a key role in communicating with all professionals to identify appropriate education provision. A special school place was found but was only available at the start of the next academic year. Agreement was sought for AA to attend the nursery school next door to her prospective school for the remainder of the summer term. The Virtual School Co-ordinator arranged a PEP meeting to enable all professionals to share information to support the nursery school in meeting AA's needs and to plan a smooth transition into school. Due to the co-ordinated support, AA has successfully started school, making significant progress in her first few months there.

10.1.2 Early Years – Good Level of Development (GLD)

From 2022 onwards there have been some changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The core areas of learning and development remain the same, but there have been changes to the early learning goals within each area of learning to make them clearer and more specific. This does mean that comparisons between years cannot be made.

In 2023, Lincolnshire's Children in Care (CiC) GLD percentage increased by 14% to 43%. This is likely to be in line or better than our comparators. In the Literacy area of learning 48% of Lincolnshire CiC pupils achieved the expected standard; an increase of 9% when compared to last year (39%). This is likely to be in line with or better than our comparators. In the Mathematics area of learning 67% of Lincolnshire CiC pupils achieved the expected standard; an increase of 17% when compared to last year (50%). This performance will be well above our comparators.



10.2 Key Stage 2

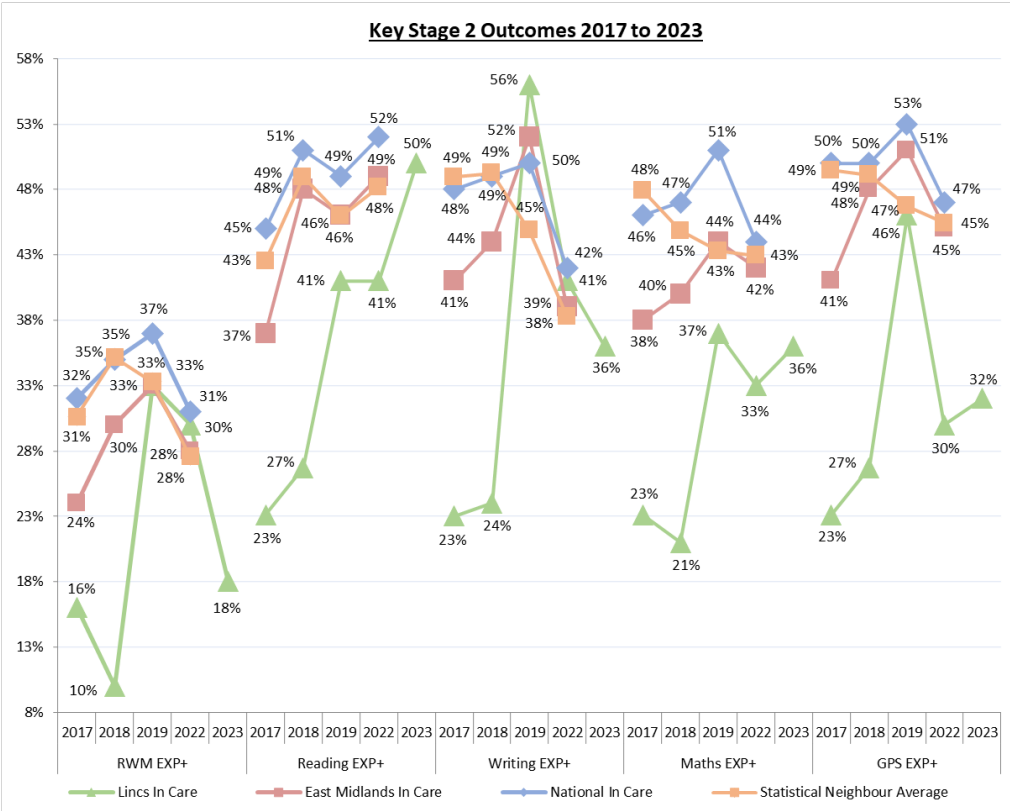
10.2.1 Key Stage 2 case study

BB had been having a very challenging time in placements which impacted on her ability to engage in education. She struggled to access learning in the classroom, her academic progress had stalled, and she found it hard to regulate her emotions and maintain friendships. BB was at significant risk of permanent exclusion due to the challenging behaviour she was exhibiting. The Virtual School Co-ordinator facilitated a multi-agency meeting where it was agreed to apply for a short-term intervention place at the local authority alternative provision academy to provide BB with some stability in her education and to identify how best to support her learning. Her mainstream school maintained involvement during this interim placement and a long-term foster care placement was identified. With stability in her placement, some positive changes to behaviour began to be observed and transition back to her mainstream school started to be planned. BB transitioned back to her school well with great communication between school, the Virtual School Co-ordinator, and her new foster carers, with a bespoke timetable and enhanced support in place. Within a few weeks of being back at school and happy in her placement, BB was spending increasing time in the classroom, had formed good friendships, reconnected and made healthier relationships with staff, and began to fill the gaps in her learning. At a recent PEP meeting, professionals were delighted to hear that BB is now back on target academically, rarely out of the classroom, managing her emotions much more positively, and is happy and settled with her carers.

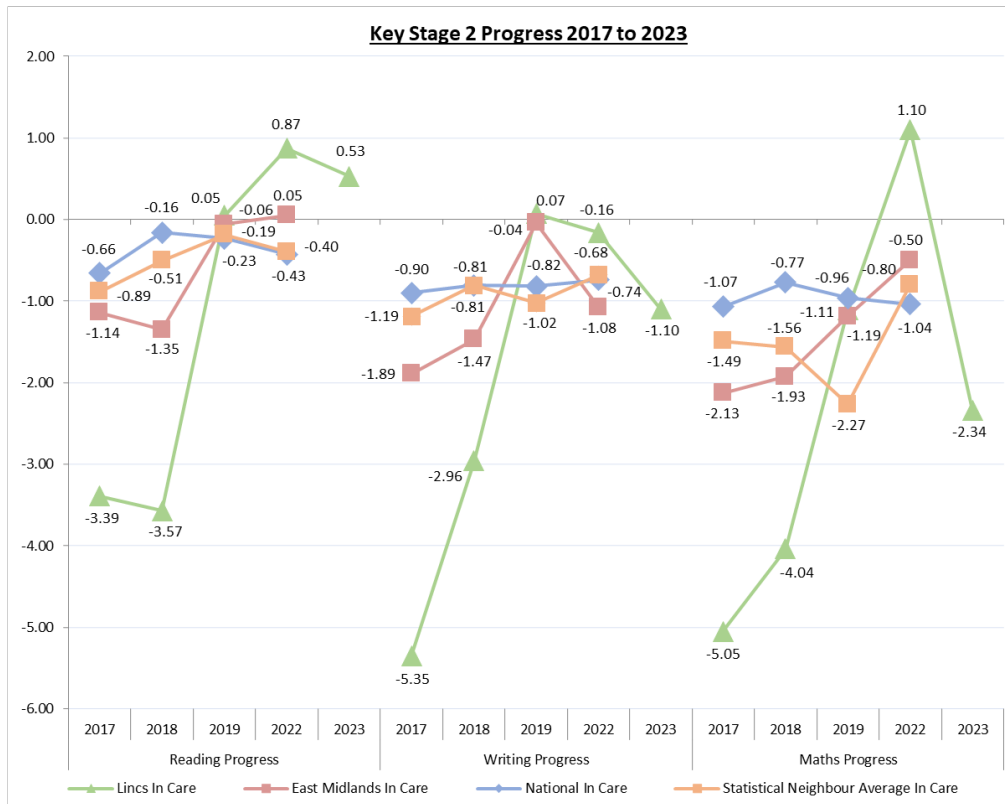
10.2.2 Key Stage 2 – Attainment

Although there is a general upwards trend in all the tested subjects of Reading, Maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling, Lincolnshire's children in care Key Stage 2 outcomes in 2023 are likely to be below national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators.

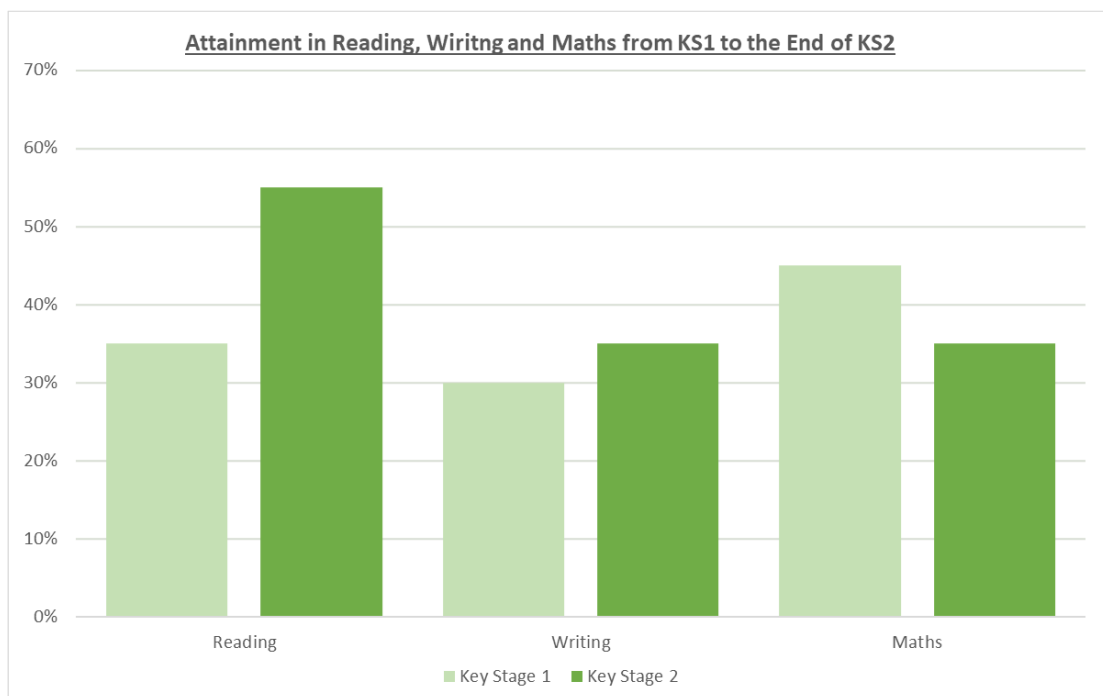
The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths fell by 12% to 18% in 2023 compared to 30% in 2022. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading increased by 9% to 50%, our highest Reading outcome in the 5-year trend. In Writing, there was another drop from 41% in 2022 to 36% in 2023. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in Maths increased by 3% to 36% between 2022 and 2023. In grammar, punctuation and spelling, Lincolnshire children in care also saw an increase from 30% in 2022 to 32% in 2023.



Lincolnshire’s children in care Key Stage 2 progress outcomes between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2023 show a mixed picture. Our progress is likely to be above (Reading), similar (Writing) and below (Maths) to our national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators. This data shows that despite attainment data being below our comparators, for the past 3 years our progress data has been similar or above our comparators.



The graph below shows the outcomes for the same children from when they were assessed at the end of Key Stage 1 and again at the end of Key Stage 2. A marked improvement was seen in Reading and indicates accelerated progress where more children achieved the national expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2 than they did at the end of Key Stage 1. An increase was seen in Writing and a drop seen in Maths.



10.3 Key Stage 4

10.3.1 Key Stage 4 case study

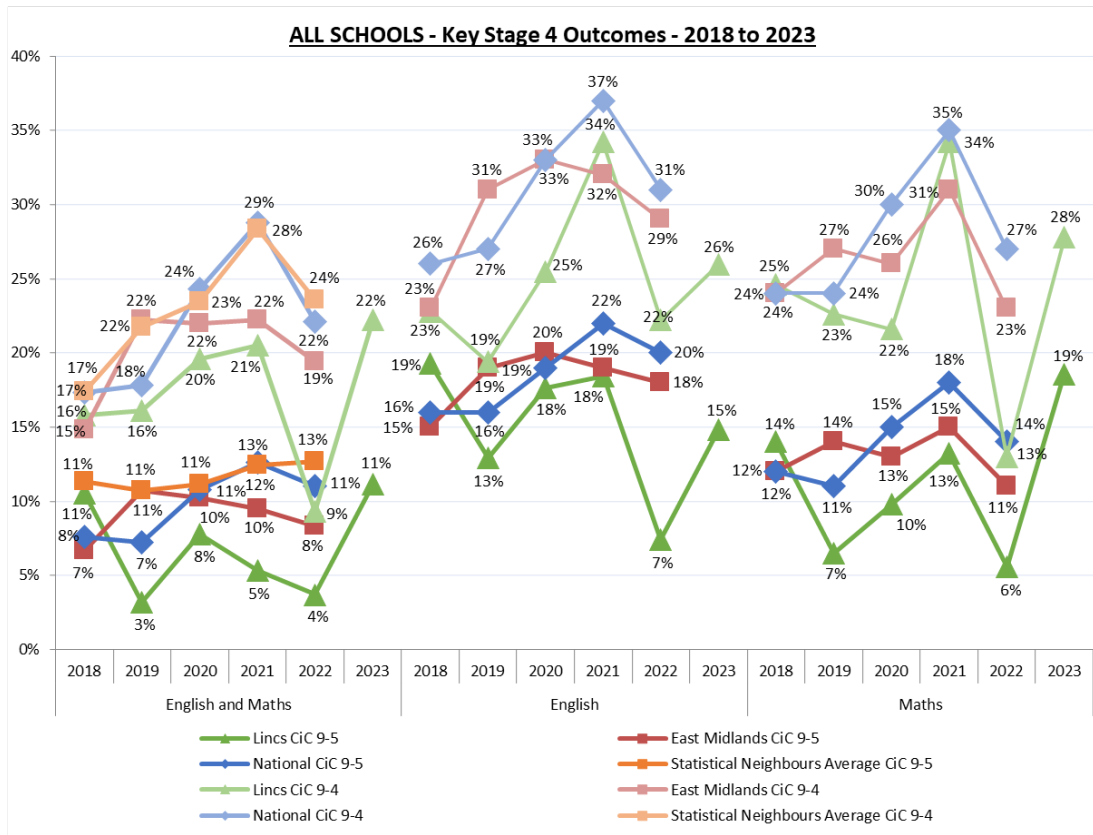
CC came into care in 2015 and has been living with the same foster carer since 2016. CC had identified additional needs and at a Year 6 PEP meeting, the foster carer raised concerns about how CC would cope in a mainstream secondary school and asked if he could attend a special school. The PEP meeting enabled the supporting professionals to reassure the foster carer that the young person's needs were being met in mainstream provision and that attainment data suggested mainstream remained appropriate. A robust transition plan was agreed to support CC's move to his local secondary school and home tuition, funded by Pupil Premium, was put in to bolster CC's academic progress. Home tuition has continued to be in place to support with Maths and English and this was extended in Year 10 to support CC with exam preparation, revision and to consolidate learning in other GCSE subjects. Termly PEP meetings have enabled professionals and carers to monitor CC's progress and identify if any further support or resources are needed. As a result of this, CC is on track to achieve his predicted GCSE grades 4 in English and 3-4 in Maths.

10.3.2 Key Stage 4 – Attainment

Exams years 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023 were exam assessed, whereas 2020 and 2021 were centre assessed grades. The use of centre assessed grade makes any comparison to years where exams were taken difficult.

The outcomes of grade 5 or above in English and Maths have shown an increase of 7% to 11%, compared to last year (4%). This should be broadly in line with national, regional, and statistical neighbour averages when compared to the previous 5 years of data (no national or regional data for 2023 has been published at the time of this report). The outcomes of grade 4 or above in English and Maths have also shown a large increase of 13% to 22%, compared to last year (9%).

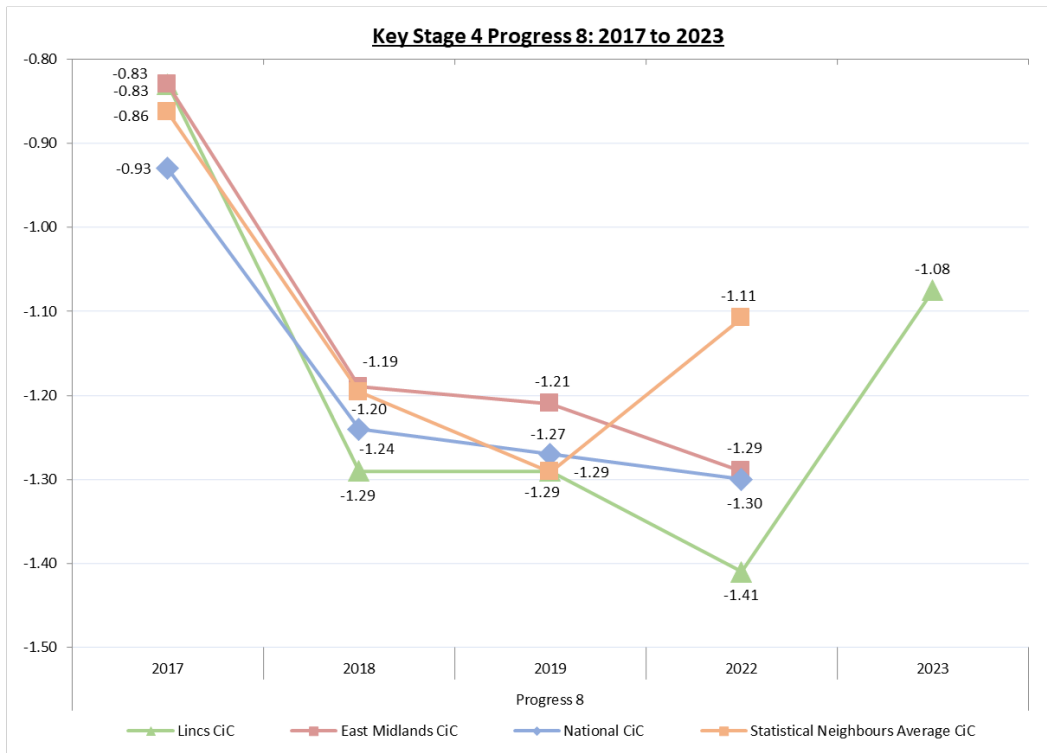
Increases were also seen in the individual subjects of English and Maths, both for grade 4 or above and grade 5 or above. The largest increases were seen in Maths with a 15% increase in grade 4 or above and a 13% increase in grade 5 or above.



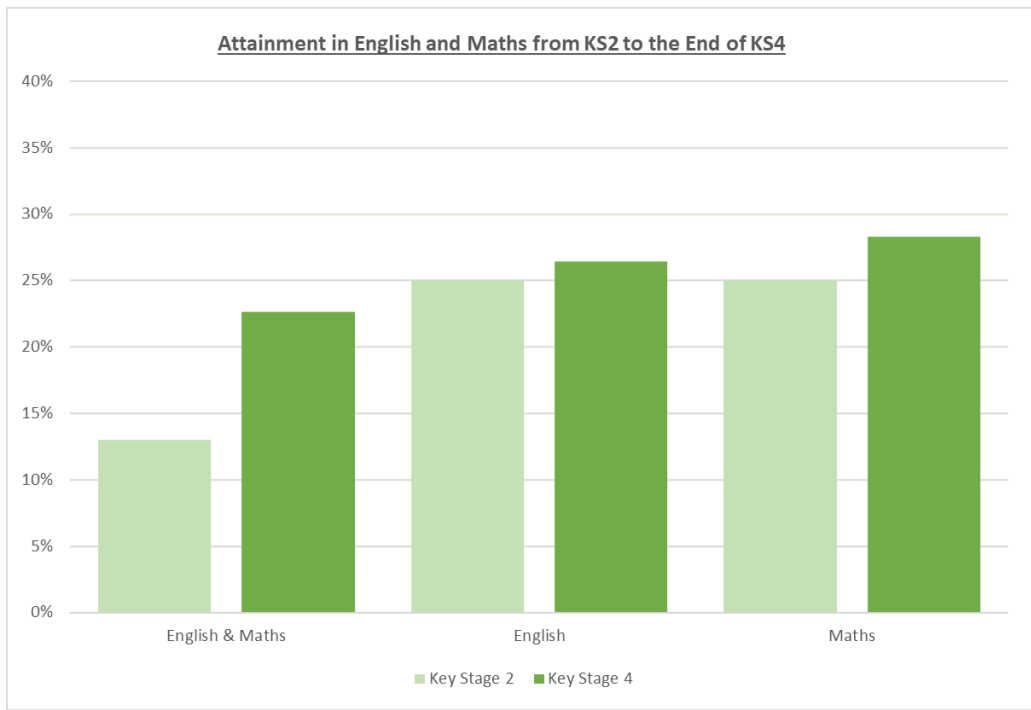
Progress 8 measures the progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 of a pupil by comparing their Attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4 with the average Attainment 8 scores of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point, calculated using assessment results from Key Stage 2. These scores can be aggregated to give an overall Progress 8 score for a cohort of pupils.

The Progress 8 score is represented as a positive or negative number either side of zero. A score of zero means that pupils in the cohort have made the same progress on average as those with similar prior attainment nationally, with a positive score meaning they have made more progress and a negative score meaning they have made less progress. *For example, a negative Progress 8 score of -1 would mean that pupils on average had achieved 1 grade less than pupils with the same prior attainment nationally and vice versa for positive progress scores.*

The progress 8 score for Lincolnshire children in care is likely to have improved compared to last year to -1.08 (-1.41 in 2022, -1.29 in 2019, -1.29 in 2018) when national data is published. Our performance in 2023 could be above our comparators when looking at past performance between 2018 and 2022.



The following graph shows outcomes for the same children from their assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 and again at the end of Key Stage 4. A marked improvement was seen in English and Maths, which indicates accelerated progress where more children achieved the national expected standard at the end of Key Stage 4 than they did at the end of Key Stage 2. Smaller increases were also seen individually for each subject in English and Maths.



10.4 Virtual School interventions to promote progress and attainment

Cohort progress tracking meetings were introduced during this academic year. These enable the Virtual School leadership team to scrutinise the progress of individual year groups to inform any future interventions. Where young people were identified as working below their target grades, individual PEPs were scrutinised to ensure appropriate interventions, targets, and actions were being discussed and put in place to promote the young person's progress.

Specialist Teaching Team (STT) assessments continue to be commissioned for specific cohorts of children who are new into care. The detailed reports identify any underlying difficulties and include suggested targets to inform the PEP. The revised PEP Quality Assurance framework includes a focus on the implementation of STT targets within the Personal Education Plans.

Tuition continues to be recognised as an effective intervention to promote academic progress. Pupil Premium is allocated to schools who can provide this tuition, or tutors are commissioned directly from the LCC SEND Home Tuition team, if schools cannot identify an appropriate tutor.

The Virtual School commissions WellComm assessments, which focus on language and communication for all early years children. These are carried out either by the Early Years Specialist Teachers or the Specialist Teaching Team; these assessments identify suggested targets to further develop our children's progress in this key skill, which underpins academic progress across all subjects.

To promote home learning, the Virtual School has developed some new training sessions specifically for foster carers to help them understand the GCSE curriculums for Maths and English, which we hope will have a positive impact on our young people completing homework. For our younger children, Letterbox parcels from the Book Trust, which include reading books and fun games to promote Literacy and Numeracy, are posted to their homes.

The Virtual School training offer includes focused training on interventions to promote reading, writing and Maths. We are planning to commission a bespoke training course for a number of our secondary schools which will focus on effective strategies for teaching assistants in supporting our young people's learning in Maths and English.

11.0 Individual achievements of our young people

Despite the many challenges that some of our young people face, we are delighted to share some of their significant achievements.

11.1 Year 13 achievements

Student A achieved the required A level grades to secure a place to study Film and Television/Drama and Theatre at Aberystwyth University.

Student B secured a placed at MGA Academy of Performing Arts in Edinburgh to study a BA Hons in Musical Theatre.

Student C secured a place at Northampton University to study E-Sport Gaming.

11.2 Year 11 GCSE achievements

Student D achieved grade 8 in Mathematics; grade 7 in English Literature, Chemistry, and Physics; grade 6 in English Language, Further Mathematics, History, and Biology; grade 5 in French, and Food Preparation & Nutrition.

Student E achieved grade 8 in English Literature; grade 7 in English Language, Combined Science, History, and Sociology; grade 5 in Mathematics, and Spanish; Distinction in Performing Arts.

Student F achieved grade 7 in History; grade 6 in Religious Studies; grade 5 in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, and Chemistry; grade 4 in Physics; Distinction in Performing Arts.

Student G achieved grade 6 in Mathematics; grade 5 in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics; grade 4 in English Literature, and Design & Technology; grade 3 in English Language; Merit in Health & Social Care; Pass in Construction.

Student H achieved grade 7 in English Language; grade 5 in English Literature, Mathematics, and Combined Science.

Student J achieved grade 6 in Mathematics; grade 5 in Combined Science, French, and Art & Design; grade 4 in English Literature, Design & Technology, and Photography; grade 3 in English Language.

Student K achieved grade 5 in English Literature; grade 4 in English Language, Mathematics; grade 4,3 in Combined Science; Distinction in Sports Studies; Merit in Engineering.

Student L achieved grade 5 in English Language; grade 5,4 in Combined Science; grade 4 in Mathematics.

Student M achieved grade 4 in English Language, Mathematics, Geography, and Food Preparation and Nutrition; Distinction in Sports Studies; Grade 3 in Combined Science.

Student N achieved grade 5 in Mathematics, grade 4,4 in Combined Science, Merit in Sport, Music & Performing Arts; grade 3 in English Language and English Literature.

11.3 Our young people's wider achievements

In his Year 9 Autumn Term report, student O achieved 10 outstanding attainment grades.

Student P was filmed as part of a project to share his lived experience. He also played the pantomime dame in his school production.

Q played a lead role in Annie in front of a paying audience.

R wrote a short story that school printed and put a copy in their library for everyone to read. She received a Deputy Headteacher's award for it and read it to everyone during school assembly.

The school followed S's suggestion of holding a coffee morning as a fundraiser for victims of the Turkey/Syria earthquake. He had great fun manning the 'Guess the unicorn' stall.

T was voted class rep and sat on the School Council.

U received a certificate for 'Most Improved in Drama' from his school and was recognised by the Jack Petchey Foundation as an Outstanding Achiever.

W won the Excellence Award at her post 16 setting.

X won a trophy at his school's Year 6 celebrations for being kind.

Y was nominated for the Personal Progress award at his school for achieving so much academically, personally, and socially.

12.0 Extensions to the Virtual School role

12.1 Previously looked after children

The Virtual School continues to work in partnership with our Adoption colleagues to promote educational outcomes for children who are previously looked after and have left care through either a Special Guardianship Order, Adoption, or Child Arrangement order. The whole team have the skills and knowledge to respond to queries from parents, carers, and professionals involved with previously looked after children and offer advice, support, and signposting to other agencies if appropriate.

Lincolnshire Virtual School has been represented on the Regional Adoption Agency (Family Adoption Links) Education Working Group and throughout 2023, we have worked with Virtual School representatives from North Lincolnshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Leicester City to develop an Education Passport, which is a series of documents to support schools and parents to work together to address the specific needs of previously looked after children.

12.2 Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

Over the last year we have continued to develop the role of the Virtual School in promoting the education of children with a social worker (CWSW). Funding for this strategic leadership role is confirmed until the end of March 2025 and the non-statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of children with a social worker' was updated in June 2022 to now define the term 'children with a social worker' to include:

“.....all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons. It includes all children aged 0 to 18 across all education settings subject to a child in need plan or a child protection plan.”

In August 2023 there were a total of 3189 open social care cases with 432 children on a Child Protection plan. As yet, we have no mechanism for tracking children who have previously had a social worker within the past 6 years, but are working with both the census and performance teams to explore how this can be tracked.

Our support has been focused on the following activities as defined in the non-statutory guidance:

- enhancing partnerships between education settings and the local authority so agencies can work together in a child focused manner.
- identifying the needs of the cohort and addressing barriers to poor educational outcomes to ensure pupils make educational progress.
- offering advice and support to key professionals such as social workers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Designated Teachers, and school leaders to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions.

The Caring2Learn Manager, who is the strategic lead for CWSW, liaises with Children’s Services teams and professionals, including the Child Protection Chairs and IROs, Future4Me, Early Help, Attendance, Inclusion and Pupil Reintegration, and FAST to offer advice and guidance. This includes continuing to raise the profile of education and ensure it is a focus alongside safeguarding and welfare concerns for children and young people. A briefing and guidance document has been developed for social workers to support their knowledge and understanding of key educational issues and where they can access further guidance and support across Children’s Services.

In July 2023 a pathway was formulated to support social workers to fulfil their new responsibilities as part of the new ‘Statutory Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities on Permanent Exclusion and Suspensions’. During the academic year 2022/2023, 24 children on a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan were permanently excluded from their school without representation or appeal by the child’s family or social worker. It is proposed that the pathway will outline new processes to ensure social workers have the knowledge and confidence needed to challenge schools and advocate for children on a child protection or child in need plan who are permanently excluded from schools. This will include exercising their right to attend the Governors’ Pupil Disciplinary Committee and make representations for the child.

Training on the role of the Virtual School, meeting the needs of vulnerable children, and therapeutic approaches has been delivered to social work apprentices, newly qualified social workers, the Early Help and Future4Me teams, and the Pupil Reintegration Team.

The Virtual School has also collaborated with the Education Support team on the Lincolnshire Attendance Strategy which was launched following the publication of the new DfE guidance ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’. Included in this strategy is the tracking of attendance data for specific groups such as children open to social care and Future4Me on a term-by-term basis.

In order to support further partnership and multi-agency working, the Caring2Learn Manager is now co-opted onto the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Education Subgroup and attends meetings to further develop the links with schools and education settings. This has enabled the Virtual School to contribute to the development of partnership wide safeguarding policy and awareness raising with schools around the needs of CWSW.

13.0 Priorities for the future

In adherence to the principles outlined in The Children's Services Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-2025, and in partnership with stakeholders, the Virtual School priorities 2023-2025 are as follows.

We will work in partnership with children and young people, schools, social care teams and carers to provide high quality learning opportunities for all by:

- Continuing to develop strong partnerships and robust monitoring to promote expected attendance levels and reduce suspensions from school.
- Ensuring all children make good progress based on prior attainment, including those accessing SEND specialist provision through highly effective Personal Education Plans and effective use of Pupil Premium.
- Further improving access to education, employment and training opportunities, and raising the profile of post 16 children in care and care leavers through the effective allocation of Post 16 Pupil Premium funding and the introduction of employment coaches.
- Enabling all Designated Teachers, IROs, parents, carers, and appropriate professionals to have access to quality training and professional development.
- Reducing school moves whenever possible to help maintain placement and educational stability.
- Applying and sharing best practice to better support and inform our workforce in meeting the needs of children in care, previously looked after children, and children with a social worker.
- Embedding the principles and foundations of Caring2Learn within our offer to education settings, parents, carers, and professionals supporting our children in care.
- Developing regional partnership working and network links.
- Improving practice and provision through the development of peer support.

Underpinning these priorities, we will ensure that:

- Our young people's voices are heard and listened to.
- We celebrate the achievements of all our children and young people.
- Our children in care have effective Personal Education Plans that are reviewed termly.
- Our children have access to good early years provision.
- Our children are admitted to good settings and schools without undue delay.
- Our children are encouraged to attend extra-curricular and recreational activities they enjoy as available through the local offer.

14.0 Summary

This annual report covers the activity of the Lincolnshire Virtual School in the academic year 2022-23 and describes how we have fulfilled our statutory duty to promote improved educational outcomes for our children and young people in care and previously looked after children, and our non-statutory duty to promote educational outcomes for children with a social worker. The report outlines the specific and ever-changing characteristics of our cohorts of children in each year group and provides a context against which their outcomes are better understood.

Using case examples, it also highlights the positive impact that the work of the Virtual School has had on individual children and young people. The Virtual School team understands the need for patience, resilience, innovation, and the importance of building effective relationships to ensure that we can create the environments in which our children and young people can thrive.

In this report we demonstrate:

- A commitment to promoting continuous professional development within the Virtual School team. Also, a determination towards training and support work with Designated Teachers, social care teams, foster carers, IROs, and others.
- The Virtual School team and our SEND, Commissioning, and Social Care colleagues work effectively to ensure that our children and young people are placed in provision Ofsted graded Good or better, and regularly review the placement of those in less than good schools regularly.
- Ongoing development of robust processes to monitor the quality of Personal Education Plans and young people's attendance and academic progress.
- That Pupil Premium is allocated to schools in an efficient and timely manner with the impact of interventions recorded on the PEP, which is reviewed at least three times per year or more often if necessary. Pupil Premium is utilised strategically to fund early intervention strategies.
- That we value the need to build strong relationships with our children and young people over time so that trust can be developed, and advocacy can be effective and based on the views of the child. We take the time to celebrate individual success and see the importance of celebrating success more widely, as appropriate.
- That we have high aspirations for our children and young people and recognise that understanding their needs, building their emotional resilience and self-esteem goes hand in hand with promoting their academic progress.

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 March 2024
Subject:	Children in Care Performance Report Quarter 3

Summary:

This item enables the Panel to consider and comment on the report and accompanying appendices to this report, that provide key performance information for Quarter 3 2023/24 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

Members of the Panel are invited to review and comment on the performance information contained in the appendices of this report and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.

1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Children in Care (CiC) used by Children's Services. This is available for questions.

There are 16 measures in total that relate to CiC that are reported on in Quarter 3. Of these measures, two did not meet their target and two are ahead of the target set by the services.

1.1 Measures that did not meet their target:

1.1.1 Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

This measure remains below target and fluctuates throughout the year. Performance has varied between quarters, in Quarter 2 we reached 49%, but this has fluctuated down again in Quarter 3. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in Education, Employment or Training (EET), and the Service continues to report monthly on the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET.

At the point of writing this Quarter 3 commentary, additional data analysis steps have been followed. Of the 326 young people in cohort:

- two young people were in custody.
- 17 were young parents and not currently able to work/access education due to parenting.
- 11 were unable to access employment due to their immigration status.
- four young people were not in contact with the service, so we do not know their EET status.
- 28 were unable to work due to illness/disability.

The young people where we were unable to affect change represents 15% of the cohort. This means the EET situation where change can be affected is 31.9%. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) tracks this performance regularly and monitors those young people who fall into NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those that are in secure EET.

New data cleaning steps are being implemented to ensure the recording of EET is improved. In addition, we have invested in a shared post across LCC and leaving care of an Employment and Aspirations Coordinator. The purpose of this role is to work with our young people who do not see education as their next step, but instead we offer support, careers advice and guidance, and direct support to assist young people from the age of 16 up to 19 to access and sustain employment.

Our EET statistics are slightly below our statistical neighbours who run at 55%. However, the “In Touch With Service” statistic for care leavers is way above national average at 98% in comparison to 93% for our statistical neighbours.

1.1.2 Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date Health Check

The number of up-to-date health checks for Children in Care for a year or more has risen from 87.9% last quarter to 88.7% this quarter, and there has been much work in the Service to improve the timeliness of health checks. However, the number of children in care has increased since the start of the 2023/24 business year and some are exercising their right to refuse an assessment. Whilst these include young asylum-seeking children who have come through the National Transfer Scheme, it is not evident that they are particularly at risk of refusing their health assessment compared to the rest of the Children in Care cohort. Work is currently ongoing to identify which categories of children are most at risk of refusing or avoiding their health check. The Children in Care teams continue to encourage and promote health assessments with their young people, however these young people can refuse to accept their health assessments.

1.2 Measures that are ahead of their target:

1.2.1 Stability of Placements of Children in Care: Number of Moves

This indicator identifies those children who experience three placement moves within the year. At this point, the performance is well within the target range at 4.9%, however, as the measure is cumulative, we may expect this to increase by the end of the financial year. The service acknowledges that having a stable placement is a key factor in producing good outcomes for children in care and continues to strive to ensure that children and young people who need to be in care can grow and develop in high quality homes that meet their immediate needs and provide them with permanence at the very earliest.

The service continues to ensure that foster carers are recruited and well inducted to this rewarding voluntary role. All carers are well supported and any potential challenges in placements are identified early to support fostering families in continuing to care for children whose needs are complex and varied. This has been supported using the Valuing Care toolkit and the embedded caring2learn approach which has supported and empowered foster carers to share, find and deliver solutions within a context of a tailored fostering service training and support offer. Nevertheless, the service has continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly, and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. Children's Services has also seen an increase in the entrants of older children (aged 11 years and over) which poses some challenges in terms of identifying longer term accommodation options whilst the younger cohort of children with care plans for long-term fostering presents challenges in achieving placement stability due to the significant local and national shortage of foster carers.

1.2.2 16-17 year old Children in Care who are Participating in Learning

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.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 3 performance for Children in Care and Young People, and Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to review and raise any questions on its content and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

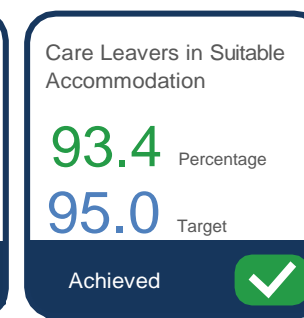
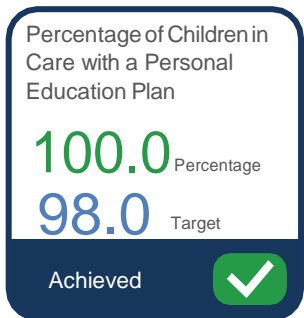
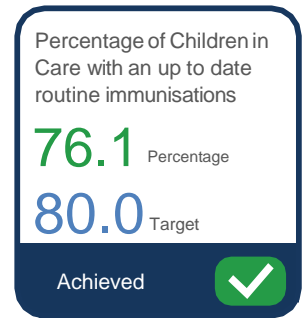
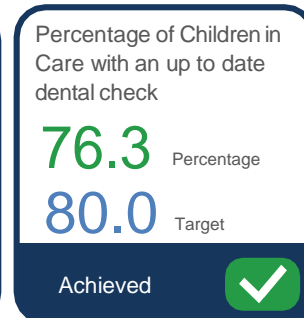
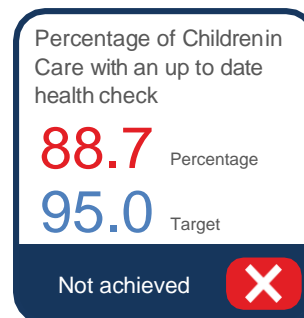
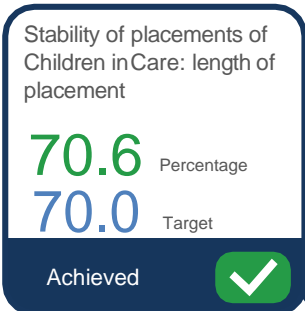
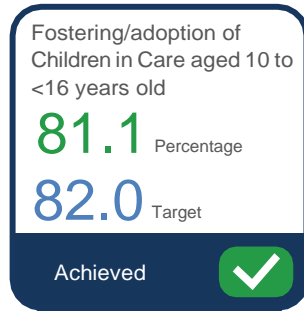
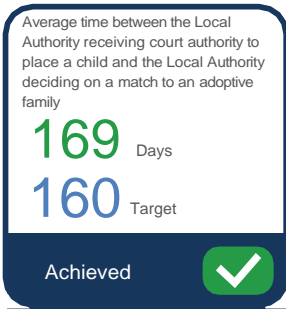
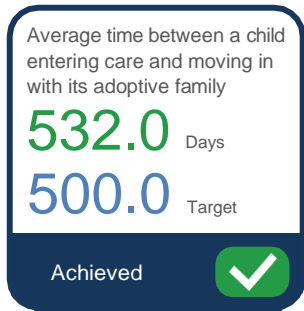
4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children in Care - Performance Measures – Quarter 3

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 Simon Hardcastle, Performance Support Officer – Corporate Transformation, Programmes & Performance, who can be contacted by e-mail at Simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk.



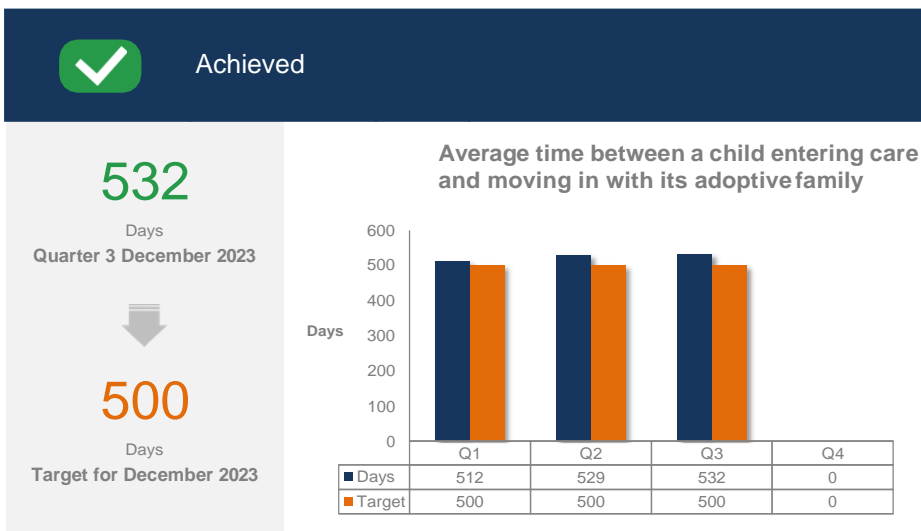


Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family

Average number of days between the child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. A lower number of days taken to move a child from care into an adoptive family indicates a better performance.



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 513, Q2: 497, Q3: 517, Q4: 505

This measure is a 'rolling' 3 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 2000 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.

About the target

There has been delay in court proceedings that will have impact on our average days over the next year.

About the target range

If we were to go above 550 day we would want to highlight this to Scrutiny members.

About benchmarking

No benchmarking information is available.



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the Local Authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family

Average number of days between the local authority receiving the court order to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.

A lower number of days taken to match a child to an adoptive family indicates a better performance.



Achieved

169

Days

Quarter 3 December 2023

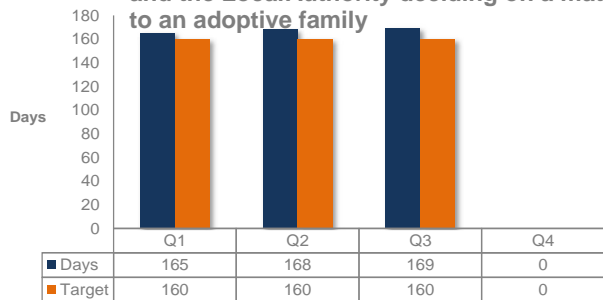


160

Days

Target for December 2023

Average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the Local Authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 167, Q2: 160, Q3: 161, Q4: 165

There are signs that the timescale is continuing to decline, this has, however been impacted in 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 178 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.

About the target

There are signs that this timescale is going down, and this has been helped by the family finding processes in the region as well as in house

About the target range

Both upper and lower tolerances have been set at 10 days (average

About benchmarking

No benchmarking information is available.



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Fostering/adoption of Children in Care aged 10 to <16 years old

Percentage of Children in Care aged 10 to under 16 who have been fostered or placed for adoption



Achieved

81.1

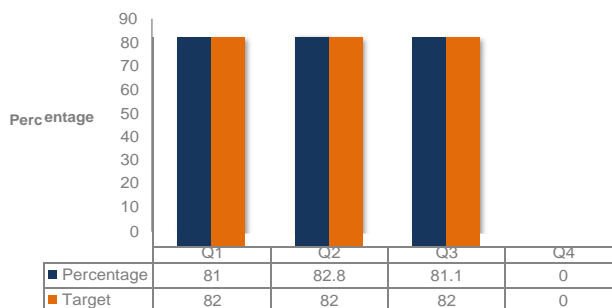
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



82.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Fostering/adoption of Children in Care aged 10 to <16 years old



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 79.4%, Q2: 80%, Q3: 80.7%, Q4: 80%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target to remain the same as previous year at 82%, performance has improved over the last year and has remained above 80%. This is indicative of a reduction in the number of foster carers, challenges in foster carer recruitment and children with complex needs.

About the target range

A 3% variance is set for the upper value and 2% for the lower value.

About benchmarking

benchmarking data no longer available.



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Number of Children in Care per 10,000 under 18s

Children in Care per 10,000 population aged under 18. There are a number of reasons why a child may be 'looked after' by the local authority. Most often it is because the child's parents or the people who have parental responsibilities and rights to look after the child are unable to care for the child, have been neglecting the child or the child has committed an offence. The local authority has specific responsibilities and duties towards a child who is being looked after or who has been looked after. This measure is reported taking a snapshot in time. So for example Q2 is performance as at 30th September.

A lower rate of children looked after by the Local Authority indicates a better performance.



Achieved

51.8

Rate

Quarter 3 December 2023

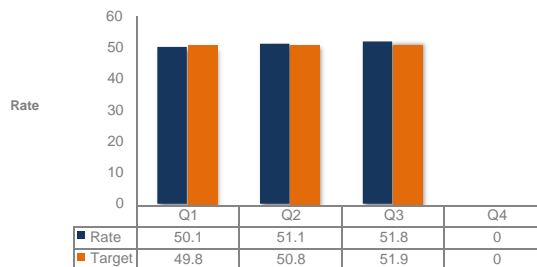


51.9

Rate

Target for December 2023

Number of Children in Care per 10,000 under 18s



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 50.1, Q2: 50, Q3: 51.3, Q4: 49.1

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 31st March 2023).

About the target

The target remains the same as last year due to sustained consistency. The unsettling situation in the Ukraine may impact and the increasing number of children who are presenting with more complex needs.

About the target range

The target varies per quarter to take into account variances in the projected Children in Care cohort throughout the year. The tolerance allows for the number of Children in Care to vary by approximately -35 children and +70 children either side of the target each quarter.

Anything above or below this number would be flagged, indicating a significant variance from the current position.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of Children in Care: Number of moves

Percentage of Children in Care with three or more placements



Achieved

4.9

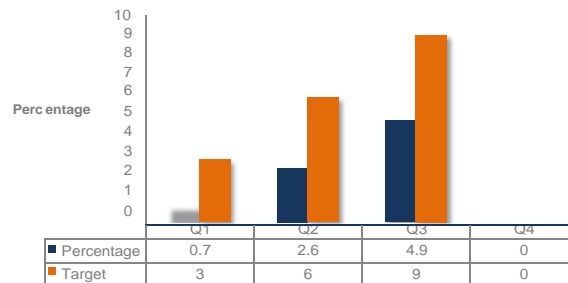
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



9.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Stability of placements of Children in Care :
Number of moves



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 1%, Q2: 5%, Q3: 6%, Q4: 9%

This indicator identifies those children who experience 3 placement moves within the year. At this point, the performance is well within the target range at 4.9% however, as the measure is cumulative, we may expect this to increase by the end of the financial year. The service acknowledges that having a stable placement is a key factor in producing good outcomes for children in care and continues to strive to ensure that children and young people who need to be in care can grow and develop in high quality homes that meet their immediate needs and provide them with permanence at the very earliest.

The service continues to ensure that foster carers are recruited and well inducted to this rewarding voluntary role. All carers are well supported and that any potential challenges in placements are identified early to support fostering families in continuing to care for children whose needs are complex and varied. This has been supported using the Valuing Care toolkit and the embedded caring2learn approach which has supported and empowered foster carers to share, find and deliver solutions within a context of a tailored fostering service training and support offer. Nevertheless, the service has continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly, and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. Children's Services has also seen an increase in the entrants of older children (aged 11 years and over) which poses some challenges in terms of identifying longer term accommodation options whilst the younger cohort of children with care plans for long-term fostering presents challenges in achieving placement stability due to the significant local and national shortage of foster carers.

About the target

Target is set at 9%, current performance at qtr 3 is showing 7%, however we know that the data cleaning for the 903 will increase this figure to 9% which was similar to last years position.

About the target range

We have applied a tolerance for each quarter to allow for the cumulative performance throughout the year. Our stat neighbours for last year were performing at 9% which matches our target for this year.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

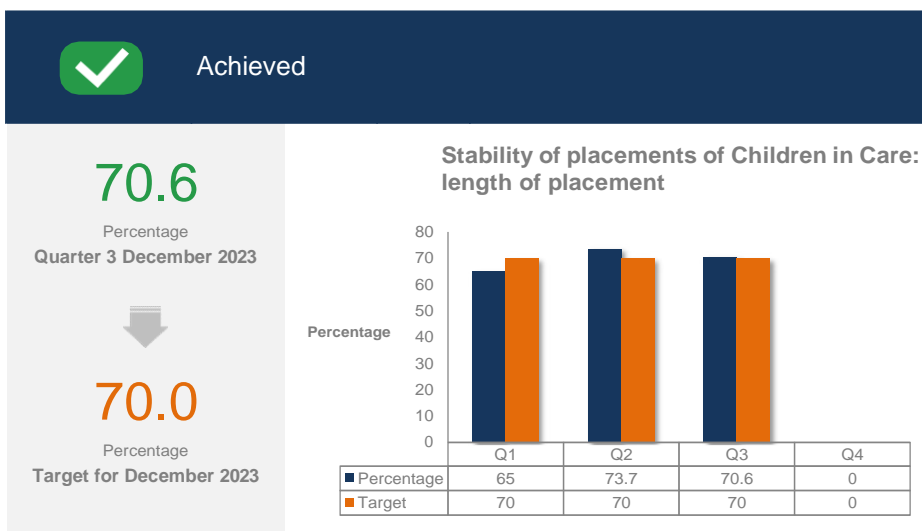


Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of placement

Percentage of Children in Care in the same placement for at least two years



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 67.6%, Q2: 70.3%, Q3: 69.9%, Q4: 64.2%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target to remain the same as the previous year. Performance over this year has remained consistent at around 69%.

About the target range

Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales

Percentage of Children in Care cases that have been reviewed within timescales



Achieved

99.5

Percentage

Quarter 3 December 2023

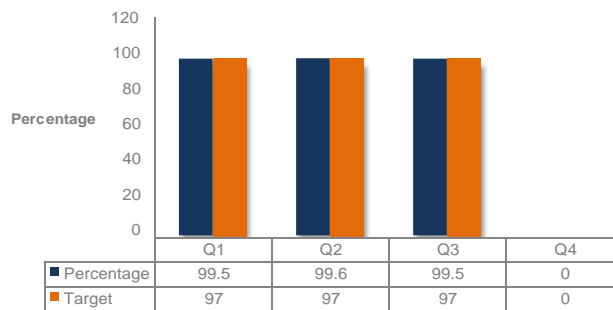


97.0

Percentage

Target for December 2023

Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 99.9%, Q2: 99.5%, Q3: 99.1%, Q4: 98.8%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains at 97% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 4.5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Participation of Children in Care in reviews

Percentage of Children in Care who participated in their reviews



Achieved

99.8

Percentage

Quarter 3 December 2023

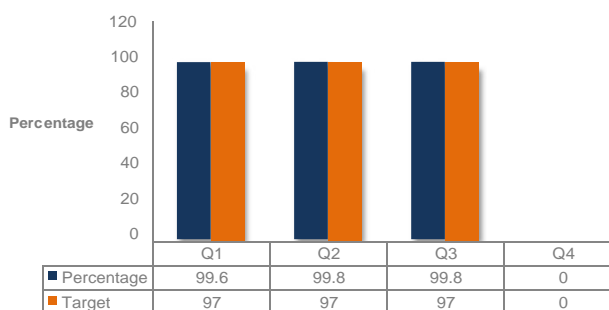


97.0

Percentage

Target for December 2023

Participation of Children in Care in reviews



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 94.8%, Q2: 94.6%, Q3: 98.6%, Q4: 98.6%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains at 97% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 4.5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date health check

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date health check record



Not achieved

88.7

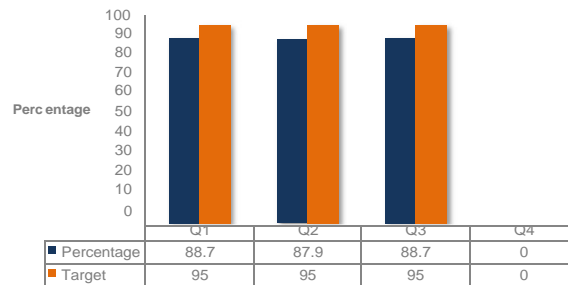
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



95.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date health check



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 88.3%, Q2: 90.1%, Q3: 89.6%, Q4: 90.9%

The number of up-to-date health checks for Children in Care for a year or more has risen from 87.9% last quarter to 88.7% this quarter, and there has been much work in the Service to improve the timeliness of health checks. However, the number of children in care has increased since the start of the 2023/24 business year and some are exercising their right to refuse an assessment. Whilst these include young asylum seeking children who have come through the National Transfer Scheme, it is not evident that they are particularly at risk of refusing their health assessment compared to the rest of the Child in Care cohort. Work is currently ongoing to identify which categories of children are most at risk of refusing or avoiding their health check. The Children in Care Teams continue to encourage and promote health assessments with their young people, however these young people can refuse to accept their Health assessments.

About the target

Target remains as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 2% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 93% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date dental check

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date dental check



Achieved

76.3

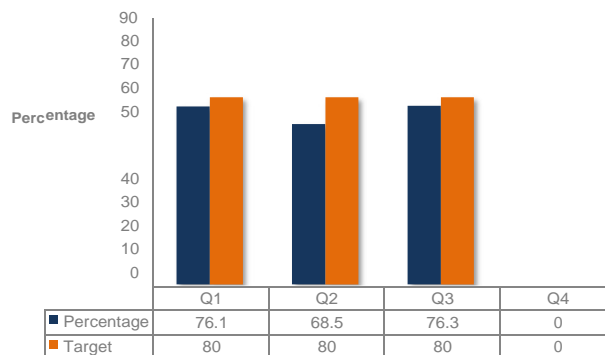
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



80.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date dental check



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 71.1%, Q2: 72.5%, Q3: 72.9%, Q4: 77.5%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains as last year due to sustained consistency.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 5% has been set to allow for under performance.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date routine immunisations

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date routine immunisations recorded



Achieved

76.1

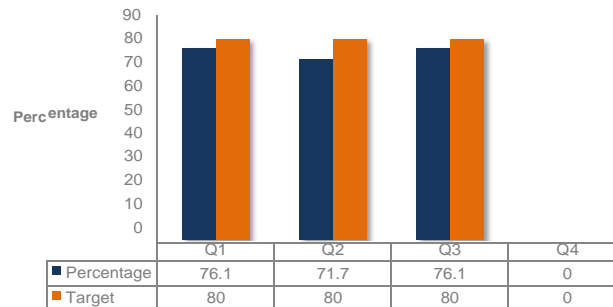
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



80.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date routine immunisations



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 70.5%, Q2: 69%, Q3: 70.6%, Q4: 75.5%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains as last year due to sustained consistency.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 5% has been set to allow for under performance.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Children Are Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Children in Care Living within a Family Environment

Percentage of Children in Care Living within a Family Environment



Achieved

86.4

Days

Quarter 3 December 2023

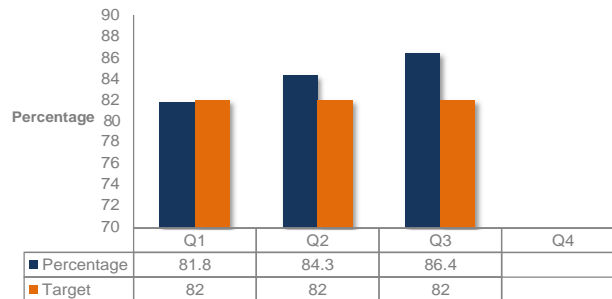


82

Days

Target for December 2023

Children in Care Living within a Family Environment



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Q1: 80.4%, Q2: 79.2%, Q3: 79.0%, Q4: 77.3%

Performance in 2022/23 - Excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Q1: 84.2%, Q2 83.7%, Q3: 84.0%, Q4: 83.0%

Performance in 2023/24 - Including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Q1: 76.3%, Q2: 77.7%, Q3: 79.0%

Performance in 2023/24 - Excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Q1: 81.8%, Q2: 84.3%, Q3: 86.4%

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) have a large impact on the total percentage of children in care living within a family environment as the majority of them are over 16 and are more suited to semi-independent living arrangements. The number of Unaccompanied children has been rising steadily, making up around 9% of the total child in care population in Lincolnshire at the start of the 2023/24 business year. To illustrate the underlying level of children living within a family environment without the cohort of UASC, we are now providing figures both including and excluding UASC in the Corporate Plan, but this commentary will focus on excluding UASC, with an updated target of 82%.

In Quarter 3, this measure is performing better than the target tolerance range of 80-85%. It has increased markedly since Quarter 2, which had a figure of 84.3% (excluding UASC). Family placements are a continued focus for the Council as for many children in care, a family placement is deemed the most suitable means of offering care and maintaining children within their family networks. The Council continue to explore enabling children and young people to remain within their family or extended network if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents.

About the target

Target remains as last year due to sustained consistency.

About the target range

We aim to have the majority of our children in care placed within a family environment where appropriate. Anything above 82% is worthy of celebration and anything below 77% needs to be addressed with actions.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking data is not available due to the measure being a local measure



Learn and Achieve

Learn and Achieve

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan



Achieved

100.0

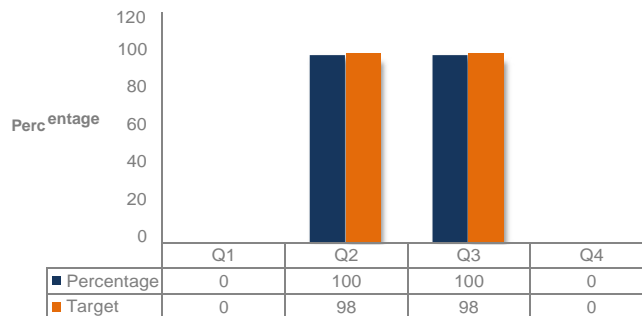
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



98.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: N/A, Q2: 100%, Q3: 99%, Q4: 99.5%

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains at 98%, reliability of the EPEP system and timely notification of Virtual school should see the performance being reached.

About the target range

Lower tolerance is set to 2% below the target which would represent poor performance. The tolerance range reflects the need for emergency placements out of county/in county for a small proportion of children in care.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis.



Readiness for Adult Life

Readiness for Adult Life

16-17 year old Children in Care who are participating in Learning

This measures young people recorded as being Children in Care participating in learning at the end of the reporting period and will not take into consideration the length of time that they have been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of Children in Care participating in learning at the end of the reporting period.

Denominator: Number of Children in Care at the end of the reporting period.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. The parameters of this measure were previously defined as recording 16-18 year old Children in Care participating in learning. As of Q1 2017/18 onwards, the Department for Education no longer require monitoring of children aged 18, and so the measure has been amended accordingly, restricting data provision to 16-17 year old Children in Care only. A higher percentage of Children in Care participating in learning indicates a better performance.



Achieved

91.7

Percentage

Quarter 3 December 2023

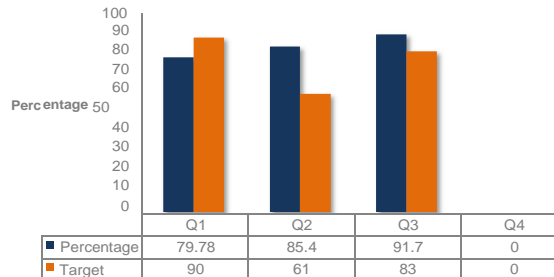


83.0

Percentage

Target for December 2023

16-17 year old Children in Care who are participating in Learning



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 81.4%, Q2:73.3%, Q3: 75%, Q4: 83.2%

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, 2 young people were in full time employment (without training) and 13 young people were not actively engaged in any education, employment or training. 7 of these young people have remained not engaging in employment, education or training since Quarter 2 2023/24, 2 young people are new into care and 4 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.

About the target

Target remains the same as the previous year. Q2 & Q3 targets lower to allow for the expected dip at this time of year due to September being the start of the tracking process

About the target range

The target range is set at a level to allow for 2 percentage points above the target and 5 percentage points below the target.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is not available for this cohort



Readiness for Adult Life

Readiness for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

A care leaver is a young person who reaches the age of 18 who had been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are living in accommodation deemed as "suitable".

Denominator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. A higher percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation indicates a better performance.



Achieved

93.4

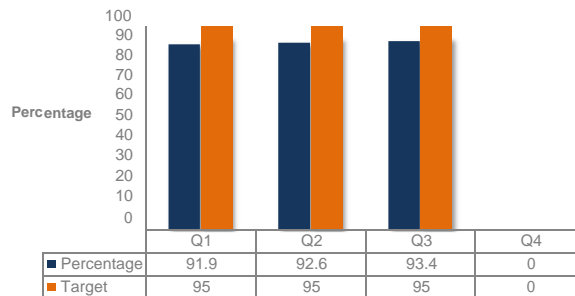
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



95.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 92.4%, Q2: 93.5%, Q3: 92%, Q4: 91.7%

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 mother's 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.

About the target

Target has remained the same. Performance in the low nineties and if we achieve this or higher this reflects good performance overall.

About the target range

The lower target has been set at the 25% quartile. Meaning if we fall below this we will not be in the top 25% of authorities. The upper target has been set 5% above this.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is available.



Readiness for Adult Life

Readiness for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

The number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are in either Education, Employment or Training



Not achieved

46.9

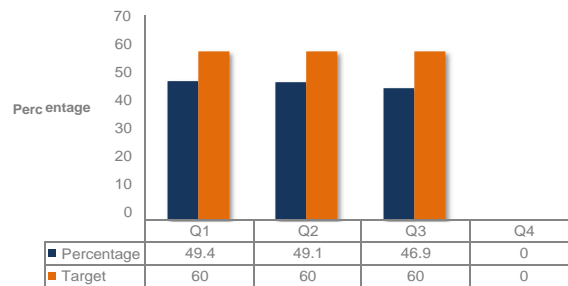
Percentage
Quarter 3 December 2023



60.0

Percentage
Target for December 2023

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training



About the latest performance

Performance in 2022/23 - Q1: 54.3%, Q2: 50.7%, Q3: 47.3%, Q4: 47.1%

This measure remains below target and fluctuates throughout the year. Performance has varied between quarters, in Q2 we reached 49%, but this has fluctuated down again in Q3. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in Education, Employment or Training (EET), and the Service continues to report monthly on the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET.

At the point of writing this Q3 commentary, additional data analysis steps have been followed - of the 326 young people in cohort:

- 2 young people were in custody.
- 17 were young parents and not currently able to work/access education due to parenting.
- 11 were unable to access employment due to their immigration status.
- 4 young people were not in contact with the service, so we do not know their EET status.
- 28 were unable to work due to illness/disability.

The young people where we were unable to affect change represents 15% of the cohort. This means the EET situation where change can be affected is 31.9%. LCC tracks this performance regularly and monitors those young people who fall into NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those that are in secure EET.

New data cleaning steps are being implemented to ensure the recording of EET is improved. In addition, we have invested in a shared post across LCC and leaving care of an Employment and Aspirations Coordinator. The purpose of this role is to work with our young people who do not see education as their next step, but instead we offer support, careers advice and guidance, and direct support to assist young people from the age of 16 up to 19 to access and sustain employment.

Our EET statistics are slightly below our stat neighbours who run at 55%. However, the "In Touch With Service" statistic for care leavers is way above national average at 98% in comparison to 93% for our stat neighbours.

About the target

Target to remain the same as this is based on both recent performance and in comparison with other local authorities nationally.

About the target range

Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 March 2024
Subject:	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter Three

Summary:

This report provides an overview of the Fostering Service Performance for Quarter Three (October 2023 – December 2023).

Actions Required:

That the Corporate Parenting Panel reviews and comments on the contents of this report, and that the attached report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Service.

1. Background

The report presents an update on the performance of the Fostering Service in accordance with Standard 25 of the National Minimum Standards 2011.

2. Conclusion

The Panel is invited to review the work and progress within the service and accept the attached report as an accurate reflection and overview of the service delivery during this period.

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	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 3 October 2023-December 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 Deborah Crawford, Head of Service, Fostering and Adoption, who can be contacted on Tel 01522 552781 or Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk



2023-24

QUARTER 3 REPORT

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

LINCOLNSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE

Quarter Three Fostering Report 2023/2024:

The Annual Report for 2022/2023 was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2023. The Statement of Purpose was revised and was ratified on the same day.

This is the third quarter report from the fostering service covering the period October – December 2023.

Introduction:

In 2023/2024, the Fostering Service has an annual budget of £9,985,323. All fostering allowances were increased by 12% for this financial year which has ensured that allowances continue to remain above the government recommended minimum rates. Lincolnshire fostering service promptly implemented this increase at the very start of the financial year to boost allowances to support fostering families to cover the cost of caring for the child/ren. This much needed increase arose following the announcement of the strategy of the reform of children's social care: *Stable Homes, Built on Love*.

The timing of such an increase was critical given the national numbers of carers ceasing to foster with confirmation of 43,400 approved fostering households in England (Children in Care published November 2023 from www.gov.uk).

The data further serves to highlight the concerning downward trend in the number of foster carer applications and newly appointed carers. In 2022/2023 a total of 4,080 fostering households were approved, with 5,130 resigning resulting in a deficit of 1,050. Research via the Fostering Network, the UK's Leading Charity has identified a further 6,000 fostering families are needed immediately in England to ensure all foster children can live with the right family for them.

The above in conjunction with the increased numbers of children entering care has resulted in a national shortage of foster placements. The most recent Children in Care data (www.gov.uk) revealed that at the end of March 2023 confirmed there were 83,840 children being cared for by local authorities which is an increase by 2% from March 2022 with this being a further rise in recent years.

Nationally and regionally, it is regarded that the fostering marketplace continues to be extremely challenging with competition at a peak level with several independent agencies recruiting in the Lincolnshire region. When the Council are unable to source and match internal resources there is a reliance on using commissioned foster placements. We readily acknowledge that there are occasions when this is unavoidable, but the sourcing of these commissioned placements is becoming more difficult owing to all providers across the region and country reportedly facing the same challenges in terms of carer numbers, choice and fostering placement availability. Additionally, the increased rates of sourcing independent placements are a financial burden to the Council.

In recognition of the national context and concerns relating to the fostering agenda and as announced in *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, the Department for Education launched Fosterlink Service in December 2023 whose aim is designed to support Local Authorities to review and improve their fostering recruitment practices. This service will be available from the start of January 2024 and its ambition is to provide an in-depth diagnostic overview of local authorities current fostering recruitment practices and recommend and share examples for improvement. Lincolnshire warmly welcome this visit scheduled for March 2024.

Likewise in December 2023, the government published the first Kinship Strategy that also originated from the government's strategy for children's social care where they set out the vision and reinforced children's existing legal rights to a family life wherever possible. This strategy serves to further emphasise the family first culture that empowers family networks and puts them at the heart of the decision making, whilst ensuring all children are kept safe and can thrive.

Lincolnshire already have a very well-established kinship (sometimes known as family and friends care) first approach and at present we have 21% of our approved fostering households caring for related children or known to them via their social network.

The strategy is welcomed across the country in an effort to provide all kinship households with a national standard including an updated kinship care definition laid down in renewed statutory guidance, advice on how all local authorities support kinship carers, appoint a kinship ambassador role to work with local authorities to raise standards and share best practice and launch a kinship allowance, paid at the same as fostering allowance beginning in 8 pathfinder local authorities (who are yet to be selected).

The entire vision is aimed at ensuring that all local authorities identify, recognise and value this group of carers who need to be empowered to ensure children can have the best chances in life to preserve these personal and family relationships and maintain important connections lifelong.

Children's Services in Lincolnshire welcome this national strategy and whilst are reassured that our local approach to Kinship is already well developed and in keeping with the principles launched, it is a welcomed and opportune time to review our practices and secure reassurance on what our areas of practice strengths are and areas for development.

This quarter has also seen the work on the Pathfinder which was announced in February 2023 as a further part of the reforms under *Stable Homes, Built on Love*. In July 2023 Lincolnshire received confirmation of their status in the first wave of this initiative to design and test radical reforms across several policies. This includes the family network pilot and whilst this pillar of the pathfinder does not sit with fostering directly, it emphasises the value and importance of family led solutions to aid families to play a more active role in providing loving, safe and stable homes for children hopefully in the longer term thus reducing the need for children to enter care.

In turn, Lincolnshire's Fostering Service continues to be committed to providing as many children in care as possible with a family experience in an approved fostering household. To

this end, our efforts continue to be robust in our efforts to recruit and retain our fostering resources who remain a precious commodity for the children and our local authority.

It is recognised across the whole of the children's service and the fostering community that the retention and ongoing recruitment of foster carers continues to be an absolute priority. Whilst remuneration, supervision and support are strong components of the Lincolnshire offer, the continued presence of the fostering community online is one aspect of the support offer that carers have reported remains an interesting and valuable forum. The online presence invites contributions from all with varied experience and significant knowledge about their volunteer role.

Giving due regard to the fostering allowances is crucial in terms of supporting Lincolnshire fostering, maintaining children in their local community where possible and ensuring positive and sustained services in the future. To retain our competitiveness, allowances are a significant factor alongside the continued annual retention payments within a framework of high-quality supervision and support. The budget continues to afford flexibility to provide enhanced allowances to certain categories of carers such as those offering permanence or managing particularly distressed children and those with challenging behaviours.

Additionally, the authority support fostering families with recognised discount cards that are compatible with what is available to Lincolnshire County Council Social Care staff alongside all other employees. This affords an additional benefit for carers longer term.

The Fostering Network, the UK's leading fostering charity published research in 2023 into fostering recruitment and retention in England. This includes a range of recommendations for fostering services including incorporating lived experience into application processes and building quality relationships, and ensuring good support for foster families, timely, transparent administration of payments to foster carers, and offering exit interviews to all resigning foster carers.

The above is a kindly reminder of the good practice and what serves to influence people's motivations to apply to this authority and continue to foster for Lincolnshire.

The service has seen 12 new fostering households join the fostering community since the start of April 2023 with further fostering assessments progressing and being scheduled on the fostering panel later this year. This is lower than predicted and forecasted but is reflective of a national system that is under immense pressure. With continued efforts, review of our recruitment strategy and the support from national government then it is hoped that we continue to promote interest and applications across our community to care for local children. This combined with a rebranding and using the intelligence from the Ofsted Data return that inform government policy, are critical steps in keeping at the front of an ever increasing and a fiercely competitive market.

At the end of December 2023, the number of children in care stood at 756 with 522 of these children being in foster care across internal and external placements. This equates to 69% of the children in care population. These figures include a total of 69 children in commissioned

placements with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) which reflects an increase of 13 since the end of August 2023.

Over the period from October to December 2023, 92 children became children in care for the first time, of these 54 were placed in foster care and Kinship care arrangements. The remaining children were placed in residential care within Lincolnshire's own provision, independent residential establishments, NHS residential establishments and Independent Living within a supported accommodation setting.

In relation to the Children in Care stability data, which concerns children who have been in care continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years (NI063) stands at 71.6% which is above the target range forecasted. Meanwhile our efforts continue to support carers in managing the children they care for, and the distressed behaviours seen. Likewise, the service works collaboratively with other parts of the council and partner agencies to support carers and review within support and disruptions meetings whether placement breakdowns could have been prevented.

Likewise, the percentage of children in care with three or more placements during the year stands at 4.9% which at this stage in the year remains good, but this is a cumulative indicator and may change at year end. Despite showing promise this continues to be a difficult year, yet Foster Carers have continued to reflect their resilience and their willingness to be very resourceful and committed to the children they care for. However, placement availability has been negatively impacted as some Foster Carers have chosen to concentrate on the children already in their care and declined to take additional placements.

The number of children and young people exiting care stood at 78 children with the highest proportion leaving care by the route of adoption, reunification to family, moving to living independently within supported accommodation and through Special Guardianship Orders.

The fostering service continues to be engaged in developmental work with a strong focus on the core offer to foster carers and the ongoing development and practice of the Valuing Care Toolkit which is an integral part of the foster carer's annual reviews, experience and fostering assessments.

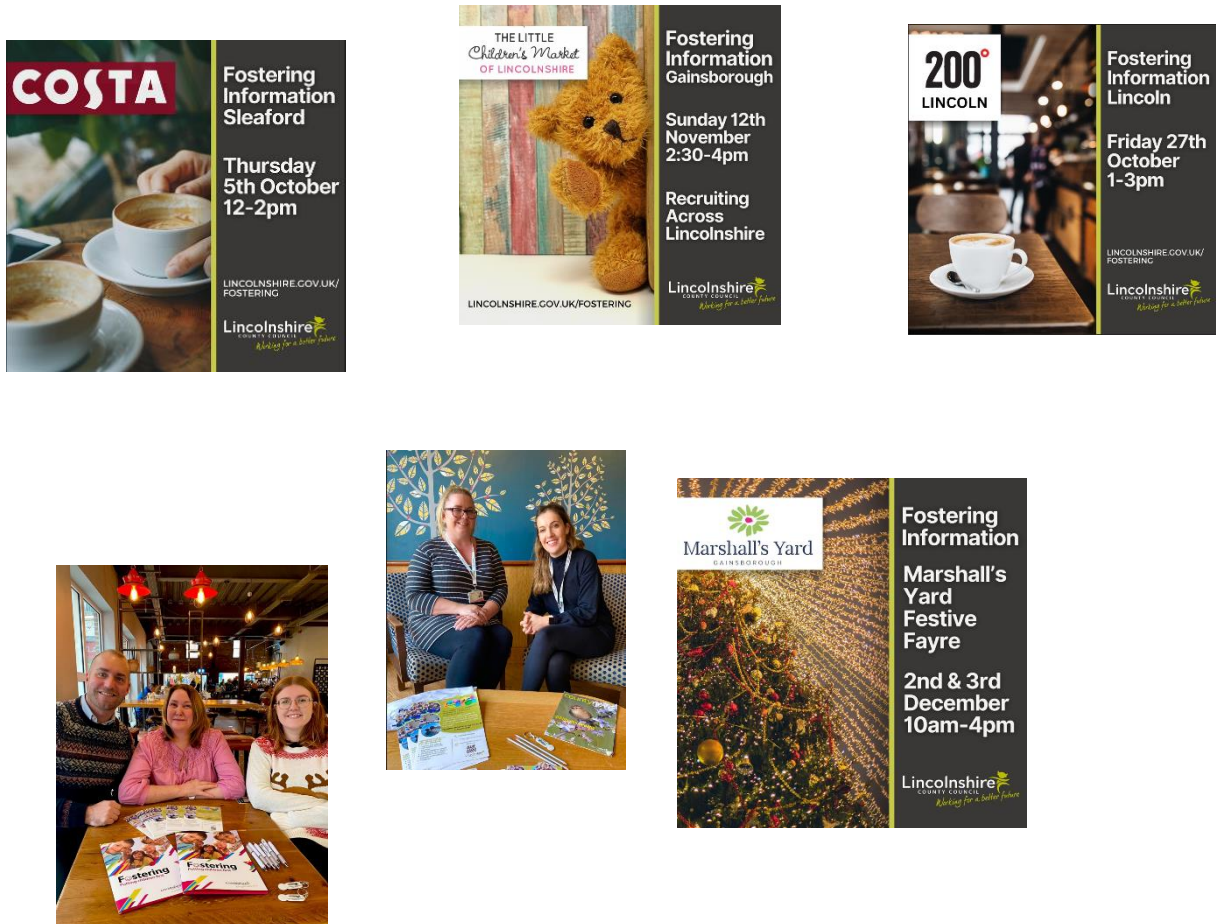
This quarter has seen a further busy period for the fostering service in conjunction with the national launch of initiatives and practice guidance across this regulated service. The valuable contribution of our carers and staff continues to be appreciated and recognised as we moved towards and embark upon a new year with a new set of challenges and solutions.

Recruitment and Retention:

Although forward thinking and innovative, the service has experienced continuing challenges attracting new foster carers to the service, meeting the demand of finding children placements and retaining its current foster carer population.

The strategy for fostering recruitment begins with awareness within the community, running a campaign, a call to action for local people for local children. Lincolnshire fostering service

are achieving this by increasing their visibility out in the community, by attending community events and being visible in public spaces. This is something that we will be enhancing in the new calendar year.



With limited amount of people coming forward it has never been so important to convert those good quality applicants to approval. Research completed by the Fostering Network (May 2023) stated that negative experiences when applying to become a foster carer, such as poor communication, delays or insufficient information from fostering services were common and put applicants off a provider and becoming a foster carer, with 71% of completed foster carer applications being withdrawn.

This emphasises the importance of good customer service and this work continues for the service, ensuring customer satisfaction and the development of a sense of community. A strong commitment to the applicants' experiences and good customer service supports a higher-than-average conversion rates from application to approval.

Lincolnshire fostering service is currently achieving results higher than the average identified by the fostering network in their research, demonstrating the strength of the customer service. However, foster carers recruitment and conversion rates research report commissioned by the Department for Education Government Social Research Dept in July 2023 identified some key findings that our service has considered and will do so as the service

move forward. These findings combined with the Fosterlink Service findings will help refocus our efforts in recruitment and enable the service to build upon the efforts despite the documented challenges.

Online creative, targeted marketing continues to provide the service with the flexibility and low-cost options of supporting part of the services’ recruitment activity. The fostering service uses online options to increase capacity, accessibility, and convenience for foster carers and fostering applicants. This includes online recruitment events and the fostering preparation course which will be a hybrid approach going forward to maximise participation and learning for all applicants. In addition to the online events, the community events have created face to face opportunities for people to attend for information and to discuss fostering informally with a member of the team.

Online information events are being advertised through paid adds on social media across greater Lincolnshire. These also direct people towards the fostering service webpage. The traffic to the fostering website and the clicking onto the enquiry form is much higher than those completed forms being received by the service. The fostering service has evaluated this and developed in response a quick enquiry form option for people that are not ready to complete an application form and simply wish to ask a question or in the initial stages of considering fostering. The application to foster remains an option on the page and is still being completed. Data will be monitored to see if this increases the number of initial enquiries to the service over time.

Plans to review the webpage has started, ensuring it is user friendly and the landing page gives a good first impression of the service.

The recruitment team over the last 6 months have been collecting data to understand what people’s motivations are for wanting to foster when they contact the Fostering service, the categories were suggested in the fostering networks recruitment and retention national survey (2023). The data collected is below.

Reason	Percentage
Enjoy working with children	14%
Empty Nest/Spare room	5%
Know foster carers	10%
Wanting to make a difference	40%
Extend current family	6%
Retirement	1%
Other	23%

It is important that the future marketing strategy considers the motivations for fostering and the fostering service ensures it is used in its advertising and campaigns.

Replacing those who leave the fostering community during the year is essential. Every year the service expects to lose carers, some of these are unavoidable as carers come to the end of their fostering careers, retire, people's circumstances change, or they experience ill health. The focus remains on learning from those the service loses that could have been avoided but also understanding more about why people choose to remain.

To date the service has deregistered 20 fostering households, 8 were related to moving out of the area or poor health. 1 was due to dissatisfaction with the service and 2 due to financial reasons. 9 due to changes in circumstances or were unspecified.

The service continues to provide an integrated approach to support. The investment in a community approach to support is clearly felt by those engaged with this being reported as a one of the strongest parts of the support offer in the last annual survey. The service hopes to see the same response in the annual survey which will be distributed in February 2024.

The hub continues to be supported by the Foster Carer Champions who have roles that cover responsibilities as 'Hub Links'. They also hold social groups and support with workshop delivery. Social groups have been arranged across the county and are facilitated by the foster carer champions and informal meets and greets in public.

The Placement Support Workers remain a key part of the support offer for the service, offering a high level of intervention to families and those with children in difficulty.

In October 2023 half term, the Fostering Service hosted an activity day for Birth children as part of the Supportive superstars offer, bringing the birth children of foster carers together to share experiences and meet each other. With an autumn theme children carved pumpkins, completed arts and crafts, played games and ate lunch together.



In December, the North and South Teams hosted two Christmas Parties, welcoming foster carers and their families to join the team for organised activities, a buffet, and a present from Santa. The annual event is well received and enjoyed by fostering households. Feedback from the community was positive.

Marketing:

During the months of October, November and December 2023, 32 Initial Enquiries of Interest (IEI) were received from the public enquiring about becoming a foster carer. The total for the year to date is 130.

During this quarter there has been 7 approved fostering households. The service currently has 13 assessments in progress. Currently 9 are in stage 1 and 4 assessments at stage 2, 3 potential foster carers will be attending Panel in January 2024 and 1 in March 2024. All assessments have an allocated Supervising Social Worker.

Since April 23 to the end of December 23 there has been 12 fostering household approvals.

Advertising:

In Lincolnshire, the service continually reviews the marketing strategy and continuously develops the approach as being a local option for carers wanting to care for Lincolnshire children.

The short break (respite) campaign ended on 30th November 2023 and the permanence campaign started on 1st December 2023, with the introduction of a new paid advert.



The research sets out and it is widely acknowledged fostering is something families will think about over a prolonged period before applying, the service currently has 4 adverts on Facebook and users will see these on their newsfeeds, they will act as a regular reminder.

The last six months have had a continuous and busy approach to identifying Lincolnshire as a number one choice. The efforts are detailed below:

October – December 2023

- As part of the permanence campaign, the service has shared anonymised profiles on social media of children seeking long term homes.
- The Refer a friend promotion continues with current households in the foster carers WhatsApp groups and features in the fostering monthly newsletter. Linked to motivations to foster the service has seen an increase of foster carers referring their friends and families.
- Lincs FM and Greatest Hits radio play 3 adverts. This includes a general fostering advert, a respite/short breaks advert and a long-term fostering advert.
- Int Comms for Lincolnshire County Council have shared monthly updates including details of information events about fostering to staff across the organisation. In December an article appeared on the Lincolnshire County Council website and in County News online.
- Lincolnshire County Council have shared posts about fostering on their social media pages weekly.
- Lincolnshire Fostering Service staff have visited coffee shops in Lincoln and Sleaford, a two-day Christmas market event at Marshalls Yard in Gainsborough, and commenced a new initiative with Little Children's Market.
- The Marketing campaign at Marshalls Yard in Gainsborough was renewed for this new season, a digital display on their large advertising screen in the main shopping area, displaying a video clip every few minutes.
- One of Lincolnshire's foster carers featured in a Lincolnite article where they raised awareness around the shortage of foster carers and the need for local people to come forward.
- The Services Team Manager was interviewed to raise awareness of the need of more foster carers on BBC Lincolnshire Radio.

Permanence:

The number of children requiring a long-term foster home is at its highest rate with the foster service in partnership seeking forever homes for 36 children. Although many children moving onto permanence see these arrangements secured through their task centred foster carers where lasting relationships have been built, for some children permanence hasn't been made possible in their current arrangements. Finding new carers remains a priority from both within the fostering service's current pool of carers and through targeted recruitment activity.

Personalised profiles and campaigns are created for children seeking permanent foster homes, this includes anonymised profiles which are shared online, bringing children to life to create connection between adults and children they may be able to care for. Anonymised profiles are used for public use, allowing them to be shared on the Council's social media

platforms as part of the marketing campaigns to attract members of the public and raise awareness amongst Lincolnshire's communities about permanence and the need for long term carers in their area. A campaign ad is played on Lincs FM and Greatest Hits Radio and there is a dedicated page on the councils.gov webpage.

Early in the fostering assessment process, children's profiles are shared with applicants, supporting people to consider permanence as a type of fostering they may want to consider, to attract people to attend family finders' events or start matching early in the assessment process. Consideration for potential matches allows the Supervising Social Worker to consider this as part of the assessment and recommendations for skills and knowledge development.

The service recognises that people's circumstances change, and Supervising Social Workers continue to have conversations about different types of fostering keeping long-term fostering on the agenda during annual reviews and supervisions. Long-term fostering events are widely advertised, and carers are encouraged to attend family finding events.

Following last year's successful campaign for permanence a similar campaign will run throughout December 2023-January 2024. It is thought this time of year is a suitable time to advertise this type of fostering.

Below is an example of our permanence advert played on social media.



Family Finding:

The third quarter of Family Finders has continued to be a busy and productive time for the service. Family Finders continues to meet monthly to assess the potential plans for the children and consider matching with potential carers. Joint working with the Children in Care Team, residential providers and placement support workers continues to ensure that all the needs of a child are considered.

This quarter, nine additional children have been referred to Family Finders. This includes two sibling groups of two and five singletons. In total there are now thirty-six children referred to Family Finders all of whom require long term, stable homes. This includes twenty-four individual children and six sibling groups (all in groups of two). Of these children eight are currently placed in residential settings, seven are placed in Independent Fostering Agencies and the remaining twenty one remain living with council Foster Carers.

In this quarter sibling assessments have been completed on two sets of siblings which means Family Finders have updated the children's profiles to demonstrate we are now seeking singleton placements for these children in question.

The children's profiles are regularly updated, and anonymous versions shared on social media, these are also distributed to existing foster carers. A specific permanence campaign has been in progress for one child in particular that has been with Family Finders for some time though yet there have been no appropriate matches. This quarter two sets of carers have come forward to offer to care for children currently in their care permanently and further discussions are taking place regarding this.

In December 2023, the Fostering Service held a Family Finding Event at Lincoln Golf Centre to raise awareness of some of the children needing permanence. The event was opened and closed by Head of Service, Deborah Crawford and several social workers, foster carers and support workers attended. In total fifteen carers interested in permanence attended from nine households.

Three of the households were still in the assessment process and six households were already approved foster carers. There were twenty-one information points around the room pertaining to individual children or sibling groups. There was a specific focus on seven children, five singletons and a sibling group and their foster carers, social workers, placement support workers and residential staff all presented information about these children. This included photographs of the children, videos, anecdotes of them and their Valuing Care Tool was presented and discussed. Thirteen children received expressions of interest with carers wanting to know more information about them and these are currently being explored with the hope of finding some potential matches.

The next Family Finder event is already being organised for May 2024 with a focus on children aged ten and over who need permanence and stability. Despite trying for an earlier date in February 2024 this did not generate the level of interest that we would have wanted. Aside from usual methods of making carers aware of the event (which includes emailing them/ information included in the Newsletter and posted in the WhatsApp group) a personalised

letter has been created to target certain carers that have the skills and knowledge to care for such young people.

Molly

I am 10 years old and
I live in Lincolnshire.

People often describe me as a clever, capable and independent young person who knows her own mind. I am very kind-hearted, loving, thoughtful, compassionate and I have a playful side too.

I love playing all sorts of games and sports and I enjoy being busy. I love being outdoors, going to the park, riding my bike and making dens. I go to street dance club and I support Man City! I like doing arts and craft, playing board games and baking.

I have experienced significant trauma and loss, not only from when I lived with my family, but because of two unsuccessful introductions to carers. I have some attachment needs which means I do not trust adults easily. I sometimes find it difficult to form meaningful relationships. At the moment, I am developing my identity, and finding out where life is going to take me.

I need experienced and resilient carers who have perhaps cared for children with similar needs. I need carers who can implement routine and boundaries but who are also flexible and can adapt to my needs. In my forever home I need consistency as I can find change difficult. My relationship with my family is important to me, so it is important that my carers are able to support current arrangements and adjust to any future changes to family time.

If you would like to speak to us about creating a forever home for Molly, email Fostering@Lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future





Libby

I am 10 years old, I am in year 6 and I live in Lincolnshire.

I like watching YouTube videos, doing arts & crafts and most of all playing with my LOL dolls, barbies and baby dolls! I also like listening to music and going out to play on the trampoline or ride my bike.



I am described as a lovely little girl and am happiest when chatting, singing or dancing. I am eager to please which can result in me needing extra support to tell the truth in difficult situations. I've recently developed a love for dogs and have been actively involved in feeding, walking and playing with my foster carer's dog.



I go to after school and breakfast club and have been known to enjoy helping my teachers as I get 1:1 time with trusted adults. I have been known to prefer adult attention in preference to other children and love going to school. I've been going to swimming lessons and I particularly enjoy cheerleading club!



I am currently working to build my vocabulary to form more complex sentences. I am presenting signs of global development delay however am always happy to give a good go at any work that is presented to me.



If you would like to speak to us about creating a forever home for Libby, email Fostering@Lincolnshire.gov.uk



Training and Development:

All foster carers receive training prior to approval. Children and young people need foster carers with a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience that will develop over time. All foster carers are provided with ongoing training and support to support their personal and professional development, developing the skills they need to help children thrive. Ongoing learning and development also ensure foster carers remain up to date with fostering practices and policy.

Foster carers commit a huge amount of time and energy to caring for the children in their care, special attention has been given in the services training offer to carers in supporting fostering families to develop patience, resilience, and confidence in dealing with situations which do not always go as planned. Lincolnshire believes well prepared households will experience a smoother transition and are less likely to leave fostering owing to being dissatisfied.

Foster carers are also encouraged to reflect on their actions to learn from experiences and continuously develop their skills through supervision and their annual review with their Supervising Social Worker. A training package offering progression supports even the most experienced carers.

The fostering training offer is currently under review, the fostering Service will dispatch a new offer in January 2024, which considers themes identified from quality audits, exit interviews and feedback from the fostering community. The service ensures that carers are updated on events that are offered by partner agencies and organisations such as the National Association of Therapeutic Parents and the Fostering Network. These expand and compliment the available learning opportunities provided inhouse, avoids duplication and helps to build relationships across services.

Between October-November 2023 there were 16 courses delivered with 361 attendees taking part from fostering households.

Accredited Training Courses:

- First Aid/ paediatric training
- Safeguarding
- Safe Care
- Fostering Preparation Course
- Foster Carer Induction

Practice Workshops:

- Introducing Social Pedagogy
- Introduction to Restorative Practice
- Introduction to Trauma Awareness

- Relational repair
- Fostering Weekly therapeutic parenting Programme (Caring2gether, 6 weeks)
- TSD Support (Training, Standards and Development)

E-Learning:

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) eLearning courses are still being accessed and Foster Carers have attended.

- Safeguarding
- Safeguarding refresher
- Hidden harm
- Covid 19
- Think safe be safe
- Equality and inclusion
- E-safety

Learning Homes:

The Learning Home toolkit continues to be completed and the values, models and theory underpin the training and practice model for supporting foster carers.

The principles and actions set out as evidenced based practice is advocated to all foster carers to encourage them to champion education in its widest sense for the best outcomes for children and young people.

All foster carers are also required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care (TSDs) as part of the requirements within the first 12 months (mainstream carers) and 18 months (kinship carers) of approval. This ensures they have the skills, knowledge and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and the policies and procedures they are working within as foster carers.

The TSDs sets out for each foster carer the minimum that is expected, in Lincolnshire the Fostering service strives for the best outcomes for its children and therefore with the combined Learning Home criteria developed in partnership with the Institute of Education, through the Caring2Learn Project it ensures that children live in homes where expectations for carers learning and development is high, supporting better outcomes for their children and young people.

The services continue to support the development and awarding of Learning homes.

Celebration Event:

The Foster Carers Celebration planning for 2024 is now underway and due to take place on 19th April 2024. With the success of last year's face to face event following two years of celebrations online during the pandemic this year's event will take place in the south of the county at the Old Barn, in Marston near Grantham.

The event will mark Lincolnshire foster carers recognition for long service, this year celebrating long service up to 30 years!

In 2022 Lincolnshire fostering service introduced recognition awards, although foster carers appreciated the long service awards they deserve to be recognised for their contributions and dedication to outcomes and the differences they make to the children in their care. This year recognition will be awarded in the following areas from a range of Children Service areas:

- **Fostering-** Support to Service

- **Fostering-** Community Support

- **Fostering-** Outstanding Achievement

- **FAST Award-** Outstanding practice and outcomes for children

- **Children in Care Award** - Outstanding practice and outcomes for children

- **Adoption** – Outstanding practice when supporting transitions to adoption

- **Residential** – Partnership Working and continued commitment to children in residential care

- **Virtual School-** Outstanding practice and outcomes for children

- **IRO Award-** Advocating on behalf of children, outstanding practice, and outcomes for children

- **Leaving Care-** Supporting Independence and young adults

Kinship:

“Kinship carers are often a lifeline to vulnerable children who can no longer live at home”.
(Championing Kinship Care, The National Kinship Care Strategy, 2023)

“In 2021, there were more than 130,000 children living in kinship care in England. Children who grow up in kinship care often have better outcomes than children who grow up in other types of non-parental care.

Evidence shows that, compared to these groups, children in kinship care:

- *are more likely to have stable, permanent homes*
- *achieve higher levels of employment later in life*
- *have better social and emotional wellbeing*
- *and better long-term physical health compared to children in foster or residential care*
- *are more likely to be kept with their siblings compared to those in foster care*
- *are more likely to report that they feel loved.”*

(Sacker et al 2021. The lifelong health and wellbeing trajectories of people who have been in care. Cited in Championing Kinship Care National strategy 2023)

As both Childrens Services and a fostering service we fully recognise and welcome the Governments Strategy in respect of Kinship Care and the further opportunities this will bring to support both our young people and their carers.

Every child deserves to thrive and to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. A key principle of the Children Act 1989 reminds us that children are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives unless this is not safe for them to do so.

The Kinship Care Strategy 2023 is one part of an ongoing wider systemic review of Children’s Social Care as mentioned in the introduction of this report.

In the last year, three significant reviews have been published by the government which together call for fundamental reform to children’s social care. The Independent Review of Children’s Social care set out how we can put love and the overriding importance of relationships back at the centre of what children’s social care does.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s review into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson reminded us of the absolute priority that must be given to protecting children and keeping them safe. Similarly, the Competition and Markets Authority review was instrumental in highlighting that nationally more can be achieved to identify the right homes are in the right places for children who come into care.

These three reviews have provided a once in a generation opportunity to reset children’s social care and create the environment where there is further potential to transform lives for the better.

Lincolnshire County Council remains committed to exploring family networks at the earliest opportunity and in conjunction with the fostering service we are committed to supporting all of children who have experienced trauma to be safeguarded and to grow and develop within their family networks, to have their health needs met and supported, to achieve their potential, to have aspirations, to develop healthy relationships and be nurtured through loving families who support and care for them.

The Kinship Strategy is focused on improving the support and service provision for kinship families, and this is in line with Lincolnshire’s values and practices. Upon reflection the recommendations and from the reform outlined in the strategy, it is evident that much of what is set out is already in place or developing within Lincolnshire.

Turning to the performance for this quarter, the service has continued to see a steady pace of referrals and kinship work in line with previous quarters. This quarter (quarter three) has seen the allocation of 47 pieces of kinship work, which is consistent in comparison to work allocated earlier this financial year; with 42 pieces of kinship work being allocated in quarter one, and 54 pieces of work being allocated in quarter two. The figures for this quarter are broken down in to types of work below:

Number of Referrals	SGO Only	Reg.24 / SGO	Reg. 24 / Connected Person	Private Fostering	S38(6) assessments	Statutory Checks/CAO
47	9	16	9	4	2	7

When considering the total number of kinship placements being made under temporary approval Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010 the service has a total number of twenty-five in quarter three. This is consistent with quarter two which saw a total number of twenty-seven kinship placements under Regulation 24. The figures for Special Guardianship Order assessments (SGO) also remains consistent with twenty-five SGO assessments being allocated in quarter three, and twenty-five being allocated in quarter two.

Overall, our commitment and exploration of family networks remains high and is encouraging. The service is committed to children being placed and supported in kinship care arrangements where it is safe to do so. The kinship carers benefit from having dedicated support from experienced Supervising Social Workers from the fostering service who will work alongside them often at particularly challenging times.

Those Kinship carers are eligible for the current rate of fostering allowance, training opportunities and are regarded in the same way as other carers from a fostering allowance and service delivery perspective.

Staying Put:

The 'Don't Move Me' campaign led by the Fostering Network promotes the Staying Put scheme to enable young people to be able to remain in their foster placement post 18. It is known that this arrangement provides more stability for young people into early adulthood, and a scheme Lincolnshire is passionate about. As part of promoting the scheme's success it is embedded in Lincolnshire's practice to be introduced early in the planning process for the young person, making foster carers and young people aware of the scheme, and involving the young people and their carers in the discussions and decisions about their next steps.

During quarter three the total number of young people in Staying Put arrangements stood at thirty-five. Of these thirty-five young people;

- Five were in university,
- Seventeen in further education,
- Five were in employment,
- One was on an apprenticeship,
- One was on was on a Care Leavers Apprenticeship,
- One was being supported into self-employment and,
- Five young people were temporarily not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Of the five NEET young people, one was awaiting their asylum status outcome and therefore unable to be in education or employment, two had been made redundant and were proactively seeking employment, one was gaining employability skills through volunteering and one young person had left their college course. The Leaving Care service is supporting all these young people to actively seek appropriate employment or learning opportunities.

Staying Put continues to receive a steady flow of referrals from Children in Care Social Workers. There are currently sixteen young people waiting to join the scheme when they turn eighteen years of age.

During quarter three the service had five positive 'move ons' from the Staying Put scheme. This is as follows:

- Two turned 21 years old and remained with their Staying Put provider on alternate arrangements.
- One moved into accommodation with their partner.
- One moved into their own property with their young child.

- One moved into supported accommodation in an alternative area of Lincolnshire.

One young person had expressed a firm intention to move on from Staying Put into independent living, however decided against this due to the quality of accommodation and support they received on the Staying Put scheme. As part of Pathway Planning with young people are informed of all their options for when they turn eighteen; this includes the Staying Put scheme and moving on to other types of accommodation. The young person is supported to explore these options, and in this case the young person had visited other accommodation providers and following this felt that Staying Put was the most suitable option for them.

The number of external Staying Put arrangements remains static at seven in quarter three with arrangements in Leeds, Mansfield, Brigg, Peterborough, Ilford, Birmingham, and Leicester.

Staying Put actively supports young people's ambitions to move into higher education with Staying Put retainer arrangements in place for five young people attending universities across England and Wales.

The Staying Put scheme continues to successfully provide Lincolnshire young people with time, security, and a caring home in which to develop the skills to transition successfully into adulthood. It also offers stability and continuity to young people as they enter adulthood allowing them to concentrate on their learning and employment.

Raising awareness of the Staying Put scheme remains a priority to ensure as many young people as possible have access to the scheme. This has involved the scheme being published in the Fostering newsletter and being a standing item on new staff inductions.

Conclusion:

During this third quarter of the year there have continued to be pressures on fostering placement capacity yet despite this most children are placed within the Lincolnshire County Council approved foster carer community. There has and will continue to be a reliance on external resources hence the need for this service to recruit and retain carers to maximise placement choice and sufficiency.

There are many variables that can affect the match of a child with a carer and the strengths-based approach together with the Valuing Care toolkit enables those searches to take place and give the children the best possible chance to achieve positive and child focussed outcomes.

The service continues to prioritise the matching of children with permanent carers where possible and has seen positive and encouraging events in July 2023 and December 2023 with plans in place to host an event in May 2024.

It is important to note the findings of Ofsted who conducted their inspection in April 2023 that the work of the service is outstanding and the efforts to secure children placements minimising delay and create stability and permanence was regarded as quality work. This is

something that all carers and staff have had fed back to them which is testament to the calibre of carers and those the council employ.

The service and council work hard to recruit and retain foster carers and after a very successful year last year the ambition and aspiration is to continue in our efforts. The service is aware and is impacted by the national challenges, the predicted shortfall of carers by 2025, the economic climate, yet focuses on securing carers that can empathise, love, and support the children who have experienced trauma.

The fostering core offer and tiered approach to involve applicants commencing this journey has been warmly received and hopefully delivers a key valuable message from the outset. Despite this the service takes nothing for granted and the rate of increased payments in April 2023 and the announcement of the national minimum allowance by the government in December 2023 will be received positively. Any decision to review payments for the new financial year and retain the retention payments would be warmly welcomed.

During the year to date supervision and support to carers has been ongoing and invaluable in terms of maintaining best practice standards and improving placement stability. Many fostering households continue to make the difference and have despite the enormous challenges in recent years, demonstrate their commitment to the Lincolnshire children in their care. Carers go above and beyond with their good will wholeheartedly appreciated.

The service continues to be heartened by the interest from the Lincolnshire public in the fostering role and the service hope to secure an increased trend in registrations of interest and applications going forward. The efforts of foster carers, staff and the community in generating interest and delivering high quality services is a continued achievement.

The anticipated visit from Fosterlink in the new year is an additional opportunity to review our recruitment activity, review our fostering schemes and consider what additional efforts the service can make to build our resources for Lincolnshire children.

The continued efforts to maintain and develop the core offer for fostering households will remain under constant review. This is essential given the current challenging climate both locally and nationally regarding placement sufficiency for local authorities and the independent market. Despite the landscape being tough, Lincolnshire are committed to maintain and further enhance an effective and ambitious service that continue to want to grow their caring community to give children the opportunity to live their best lives with Lincolnshire families wherever possible.

Deborah Crawford

Children's Head of Regulated Services



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 March 2024
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

Summary:

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

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to:

- (1) Review and approve the work programme; and,
- (2) Highlight any additional activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

1. Background

Current Items

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

14 MARCH 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the Academic Year 2022-23	Sarah Lane, Virtual School Head
2. Children in Care Performance Report Quarter 3	Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children’s Safeguarding

14 MARCH 2024	
Item	Contributor
3. Fostering Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 3	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption

Planned Items

The Panel's planned items are listed below:

09 MAY 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor - Children's Services (Quality and Standards)
2. Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027 - Annual Update on Action Plan	Bridie Fletcher, Senior Commissioning Officer – Children's Commissioning Amy Allcock, Commissioning Manager - Commercial

25 JULY 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Election of the Chairman	Democratic Services Officer
2. Election of the Vice Chairman	Democratic Services Officer
3. Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 4	Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding
4. Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 4	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
5. Lincolnshire Leaving Care - Six Monthly Update Report by Barnardo's	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's
6. Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
7. Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Annual Report	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker

12 SEPTEMBER 2024		
	Item	Contributor
1.	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 1	Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children’s Safeguarding
2.	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 1	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
3.	Adoption Annual Report 2023-2024	Sharon Clarke, Interim Team Manager, Adoption
4.	Adoption Statement of Purpose 2023-2024	Sharon Clarke, Interim Team Manager, Adoption
5.	Fostering Annual Report 2023-2024	Emily McAllister, Fostering Team Manager Nicola Brangam, Fostering Team Manager South
6.	Fostering Statement of Purpose 2023-2024	Emily McAllister, Fostering Team Manager Nicola Brangam, Fostering Team Manager South

14 NOVEMBER 2024		
	Item	Contributor
1.	Independent Reviewing Service Update Report 1 April 2024 - 30 September 2024	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
2.	Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
3.	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
4.	Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
5.	Annual Report of the Regional Adoption Agency	John Harris, Head of Regional Adoption Agency
6.	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor - Children’s Services (Quality and Standards)

2. Items to be programmed

Report Title	Est Date
School attendance	TBC 2024
Prevalence of emotional health and our response	TBC 2024
CAMHS Annual Report (Caroline Sanders LPFT)	TBC 2024

3. Conclusion

Members of the Panel are invited to review and comment on the work programme and highlight any additional activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

4. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

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