

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	25 July 2019
Subject:	Looked After Children Performance Measures Quarter 4

Summary:

The accompanying appendices to this report provide key performance information for Quarter 4 2018/19 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to consider and comment on the Looked After Children Performance Measures and recommend any actions or changes for consideration by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Looked after Children used by Children's Service. This is available for questions.

There are 15 measures in total that relate to Looked After Children. In Quarter 4 there are 4 measures that are outside of the target set by the services. These are:

Fostering/adoption of Looked After Children aged 10 to 16 year olds - This performance has improved slightly at year end but remains under target. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders.

Percentage of Looked after Children with 3 or more placements - This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target was revised at the end of 2017/18 and performance has slipped under that new target. In 2018 the Children's Commissioner produced a report on placement stability and identified that 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. In Lincolnshire despite the reduction in performance, this was 7% at year end. The reduction in performance is indicative of children with more complex needs becoming looked after and a reduction in the number of foster placements available to match effectively at the point of the initial placement.

Percentage of Looked after Children in the same placement for at least two years - Performance is at 67.8% at year end and has fluctuated over the year. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that foster carers are well supported and that potential problems are identified early. Nevertheless we have continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. We have also seen an increase in the number of children with care plans for long term fostering and this will present challenges in achieving placement stability for some children due to the local and national shortage of foster carers who want to care on a long term basis. The fostering service has implemented a recruitment strategy to attract permanent foster carers with the ambition of offering improved placement opportunities for this group of children

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training - There has been a small dip in the number of Care Leavers employed or in education and training (EET). The exact reason is unknown as the issues affecting access to education and employment are varied and unique to individuals. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET, and reports on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET. The Service also continues to grow the number of employment readiness programmes offered to young people, and grow the number of work experience slots available to support young people back into purposeful activity and employment. At a strategic level, the Care Leaver Apprenticeship Scheme (CLAS) is being reviewed in order that we can adapt it to respond to the increased educational requirement implement by the government in order to access apprenticeships. As a result we are in the early stages of developing a new offer to help young people with fewer qualifications access the CLAS in a staggered manner.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 4 performance for Looked after Children and Young People, and the Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to raise any questions on the content of the report.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Looked after Children Measures

5. Background Papers

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 Caroline Jackson, Commissioning Manager – Performance Services, who can be contacted at caroline.jackson@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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