



6 Monthly Lincolnshire Leaving Care Report

This is the 6 monthly update report to Lincolnshire's Corporate Parenting Panel to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service regarding care leavers. Areas covered within this report include:

1. Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation.
2. Accessing and maintaining appropriate Education Employment and Training opportunities.
3. Care Leavers Cohort
4. Participation / Fundraising
5. Conclusion

Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (since the 1st April 2020) is to deliver a Statutory Leaving Care Service for young people aged 18-25 and to start working with the Local Authority Children in Care / FAST Teams working with Children in Care aged 16-18. The contract is closely monitored via monthly contract monitoring meetings which are attended by the Contract Monitoring Officer, the Corporate Parenting Manager and the Head of Regulated Services (with lead responsibility for Fostering, Adoption and Care Leavers).

Data contained within this report demonstrates performance from 1st April 2022 – 30th September 2022

1 - Accessing and Maintaining Suitable, Safe Accommodation

Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation

Percentage of Care Leavers Living in Suitable Accommodation – Target 90%

Apr	May	June	July	August	Sep
2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
403	402	404	414	409	421
94%	94%	94%	95%	95%	95%

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service offered advice, support and assistance in relation to accommodation options for young people aged 16-25 (Children in Care, 16- and 17-year-old homeless and Care Leavers). As a service we aim to share information in relation to housing options available both within County but also where the young person is currently residing. Within service we have a specialist post holder who specializes in housing

provision for Care Leavers, and we also have the Leaving Care Workers and Team Managers who have knowledge on services available to young people.

Barnardo's and the Local Authority monitor and review all young people in 'unsuitable' accommodation monthly, via contract monitoring reports to ensure appropriate plans are in place and support is offered in a timely way.

Within Barnardo's we continue to work with the Corporate Parenting Manager who has lead responsibility for the Council in relation to housing options for Care Leavers. The transition guidance for 16–18-year-olds enables Leaving Care Workers to start to work alongside Social Workers based within the Local Authority to ensure all Children in Care have the appropriate paperwork in place prior to their 18th Birthday to enable them to claim housing and benefit entitlements.

We have developed some good links with District Council Housing Teams and the Corporate Parenting Manager continues to offer the District Councils advice, support and assistance in relation to developing the housing offer for Care Leavers. We have welcomed the joint work we have been able to undertake with the NEST Team (Care Leavers Homeless Prevention)

Barnardo's Supported Lodgings Scheme

This scheme gives young people the opportunity to develop independence skills whilst living in a home environment. Advice and guidance are offered in relation to cooking, undertaking household tasks and maintaining education / employment. We have had some excellent outcomes for several young people who have accessed this scheme.

Young people live with providers as lodgers – paying rent and a contribution towards utilities and food. Children's Services pay a support fee dependent upon the level of support required; housing benefit / universal credit is also claimed (where appropriate).

The scheme caters for Care Leavers - Looked after Children over 16- and 16/17-year-olds who are homeless and require an 'assessment bed'.

Within Lincolnshire (in October 22) we were working with 17 providers who can provide 23 beds across County. The team provide vacancy information over to the Local Authority monthly but have officers available to deal with referral enquiries 5 days / week.

Barnardo's have continued to run its supported lodgings panel throughout 2021/22 and have representatives both from the Local Authority and Barnardo's. This panel not only reviews current providers but also considers new applications.

New Initiatives in relation to housing options for Lincolnshire Care Leavers:

Barnardo's are currently working with the Local Authority and other providers on a funding bid to hopefully create some new posts. Within Leaving Care we are looking to develop some posts that will help young people 'stay connected' with their chosen community

(whether that be in Lincolnshire or out of County) and tap into the local offer and develop and maintain social networks.

Barnardo's are also working nationally and with Lincolnshire County Council to oversee the implementation of the regulations for supported accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds. Within Leaving Care this will impact on the Supported Lodgings Providers. All Local Authorities will need to register their providers by April 2023 and inspections will start in April 2024.

2 - Accessing and Maintaining Appropriate Education Employment and Training Opportunities

Open Allocated Cases – Target 65%

Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept
2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
289	291	289	296	290	296
67%	68%	67%	68%	67%	67%

Within service we continue to target Lincolnshire Care Leavers who are not accessing, education, training or employment opportunities. In March 2022 Barnardo's commissioned some work whereby we have reviewed all Care Leavers who fit into this category and explored alongside the allocated Leaving Care Worker the reasons why Care Leavers are finding it difficult to access opportunities. Data was presented at the Corporate Parenting Meeting in July 2022.

We have expanded the small team of staff who work alongside Care Leavers and the Leaving Care Workers to improve opportunities in relation to education, employment, and training opportunities. The team structure is noted below:

- 1 FTE EET Coordinator
- 2 x 0.5 EET Workers
- 1 FTE Mental Health Specialist
- 1 0.8 Well-Being Worker

Barnardo's (on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council) continue to work with Serco who provide several job opportunities across the region and in partnership with the County Council. We have developed and launched a 'Care Leavers Mentoring Scheme'. We have now moved onto the fifth set of Care Leavers who have benefitted from a worker based within Serco to offer career and work advice.

Barnardo's have a common mission of ***'Increasing Aspiration and Outcomes for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People'***. Employment and Training continues to be a challenging concept not only in Lincolnshire but nationally. We have developed some excellent partnerships with DWP and Job Centres to help target our Care Leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Manager continues to be an advocate within Lincolnshire County Council in relation to the 'Care Leavers Covenant'. The Covenant is a promise made by

private, public or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently.

3 – Care Leavers Cohort

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service is working with approximately 470 young people. Over the first 6 months of this financial year alongside the Local Authority we’ve seen a significant increase in the number of Unaccompanied Young People allocated to Lincolnshire because of the ‘National Transfer Scheme’. Working with young people who arrive from abroad has its challenges given that Leaving Care Workers must have a good working knowledge of the Leaving Care Act and Immigration processes and procedures.

Below figures indicate the increase in our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking cohort over recent months:

Month	Number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking YP open to service
December 2021	70
June 2022	96
December 2022	104

Some Great Achievements for Lincolnshire Care Leavers

- One of Lincolnshire’s Care Leavers went to the British National Wrestling Competition and won a Bronze medal.
- Some of Lincolnshire’s Care Leavers put the finishing touches to the short film they made about ‘transition’.
- Three young people from the Leaving Care Service undertook a 40K trek across the Peak District. Whilst on the journey participants learnt bushcraft, wild cooking, and navigation skills.
- Eight young people from Leaving Care and Children’s Services travelled to London to speak with Politicians and give their views on what needs to happen to improve children’s social care and share their experiences.

4 – Participation/ Fundraising

- We’ve been working hard on our participation offer for young people and Lincolnshire Care Leavers have been involved in several events over the past 6 months. These have included:
- Trips to London to contribute to the ‘Care Review’
- Theatre Trip for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People
- Peak District Trip

We've secured some additional funds and gifts for Lincolnshire Care Leavers, these have included:

- Mobile phones courtesy of Vodafone and Tesco's
- Food Donations from Tesco Lincoln – we've created a great partnership with Tesco's we have regular food donations that are distributed across the County.
- Tesco have donated items to allow the service to create hampers for young people
- We've been able to distribute additional Christmas Gifts to all Care Leavers who are parents (and their children)
- We have created a partnership with a local church in Louth that has led to food and money donations
- The Orthodox Church in Lincoln continues to be an avid supporter of Barnardo's and have donated money and gifts for distribution.
- We have developed a cookery group in Louth and Lincolnshire young people are benefitting from weekly cooking courses and take-home meals following each session.

5 - New Initiatives

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker's New Post

Within Service we have seen one of our existing Leaving Care Workers promoted to a specialist post working with the teams and partners specializing in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people. We have rolled out some training across service and facilitated a work preparation course for this cohort of young people.

Care Leavers Film Project

We have had several Care Leavers from Lincolnshire working with an organization called 'My Pocket's' The Care Leavers have been working on an animation project that will help children in care transition into the service. The link to the film is noted below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1c0LLg7ZCQ>

Service Development

We started a whole service development programme back in December 2020 that has continued through to 2022. We initially established a series of service development sessions that had representation from across all service and we developed several working parties including:

- Induction & Retention
- Communication

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Review of Duty Service
- Allocation of Work
- EET and Supported Lodgings

The groups produced several new policies, procedures and working tools that are widely used across service.

We are still working on the groups noted below; some continue the work of previous groups, and some have been formed to address new issues. The groups are noted below:

- Induction & Retention
- Communication
- Health and Safety
- Positive Destinations (improving outcomes for Care Leavers)
- Reviewing Group

All the above groups are chaired by the Programme Manager to retain senior management oversight and the reviewing group will consider all work previously completed in service to ensure it remains current, in date and useful for the service.

Some of the initial groups were instrumental in creating new posts, identifying training needs and sharing key information with partners. Over the past 12 months members of the team have been offered some specialist training in relation to:

- Trauma Informed Practice
- Formulation – Helping Team members understand how to use a Formulation tool when working with young people
- Positive Intervention Training - behaviour management training programme designed to help staff provide the best possible care, welfare, safety and security, of young people, who present with a range of behaviours of concern.

6 - Conclusion

This report reflects the progress and achievements during a 6-month period for Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service.

The current staffing establishment is noted below:

- 1 Programme Manager
- 4.2 FTE Team Managers
- 1 Senior Administrator

- 6.1 FTE Administrators
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Signs of Safety / Participation and Quality Assurance
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Education, Employment and Training opportunities
- 1 Project Worker 2 – Specialising in Participation
- 1 Specialist Accommodation Worker
- 2 Supported Lodgings Workers
- 2 Education, Employment and Training Specialist Workers
- 1 Well-being Worker
- 1 Specialist Mental Health Worker
- 26 FTE Leaving Care Workers

We continue to see a turnover of staff (within Leaving Care Worker roles) we undertake exit interviews and record reasons for leaving. These are generally linked to workers leaving the service and either joining Lincolnshire County Council or neighbouring authorities for higher wages. This is an ongoing issue that is raised within commissioning meetings.

Lisa Adams

Service Manager

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service

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