



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 January 2023
Subject:	Children in Care Performance Report Quarter 2

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 2 2022/23 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to:

1. consider and comment on the performance information contained in the appendices of this report; and,
2. recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.

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 2. Of these measures 5 did not meet their target and 4 are ahead of the target set by the services.

1.1 Measures that did not meet their target:

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

With the continued delays in cases getting through the court and the gradual recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, Lincolnshire has failed to meet this target this quarter, as

all of the children captured in this data will have been delayed in the Covid pandemic. There has been significant delay in getting cases through the courts during Covid, and this will continue to have some impact on the statistics and data for this year and accounts for the increased timescales. This measure is a 'rolling' 3-yearly average, as we have moved forward the calculation has considered more of the period covered by the pandemic, which has in turn increased the rolling average figure. It is important to note that the figure presented 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. 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.

Participation of Children in Care in reviews - This is a cumulative measure that builds throughout the year. Whilst performance appears to continue below target this quarter work has been undertaken to amend the recording errors on Mosaic and these were completed in early October, so the measure should show an improvement next quarter and will meet target tolerance going forward.

Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date health check - The Covid Pandemic has had less negative impact on this area of the children's health than dental care and the immunisation programme. However, the number of children in care has increased and there is evidence of more young people (16/17 age range) exercising their right to refuse an assessment. There have been a number of young people in this age range becoming looked after and generally they are not committed to accessing their health assessment.

The Children in Care Teams continue to encourage and promote health assessments with their young people but have to accept their right to refuse.

There has been a lot of activity to improve the timeliness of Initial Health Assessment, however there are still challenges due to the availability of GP appointments across the county. Where there appears to be a particularly long wait for an appointment the nurses are telephoning the carers to undertake a triage to identify to ensure that there are no significant areas of concern/worry that need to be addressed urgently. However, this does not replace the health assessment which is still completed by the GP.

Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check - This measure continues to improve and is now sitting at 72.5% which is a slight increase from Q1 but remains below the target of 95%. This is due to the ongoing increased difficulties in children being able to register with a National Health Service Dentist which has been the case for several years now. Many Dentists have made the decision to only provide private dentistry thereby impacting on the number of NHS practices available. This, coupled with the impact of the COVID19 Pandemic has impacted significantly on the

number of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check.

Access to NHS dentistry is a national issue and the availability of dentists across the county continues to impact on our ability to ensure that all children in care have regular dental checks. Efforts continue to be made to ensure that all children in care are registered with a dentist and dentists are working to ensure that dental checks are being completed. It is likely to take some more time to deal with the backlog of appointments, however, children are able to access emergency dental treatment when required.

Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date routine immunisations - The percentage of Children in Care with up to date routine immunisations continues to be impacted by factors such as the Covid Pandemic and an increase in Immunisation team workload due to all males now being offered the HPV and all of the school population being offered the COVID19 boosters and flu immunisations. However, closer inspection of the records of children listed as not having their routine immunisations also indicates that there are delays with updating immunisation records at Lincolnshire County Council at present. The Council records are updated from the records of Lincolnshire Community Health Services, which are showing a higher rate of immunisations for the same cohort. The numbers shown at present therefore do not give an accurate reflection of the current percentage of routine immunisations that have taken place. Work is currently underway to expedite updating of Lincolnshire County Council systems, following which the performance for this measure is expected to improve significantly.

1.2 Measures that are ahead of their target:

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 - Performance in Q2 is continuing to improve and is now better than the target range set at the start of the year. This is due to continued attention to family finding at the earliest opportunity, so that once children are subject to a Placement Order there is wherever possible a placement already identified so that practice is timely and effective.

Stability of placements of Children in Care: Number of moves - This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target remains a challenge, albeit is within the target range. Our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 8% of children in care experienced 3 placement moves in a year. At this stage performance remains good, however, this may change at year end. The first half of the year's performance is promising, however there remain ongoing challenges in respect of placement

availability, resources, and suitability of matching some children with the right fostering household/provision. Whilst placement availability has gradually increased post pandemic with most carers returning to assume this volunteer role, there continue to be some foster carers/providers who are unable to take additional placements owing to their existing commitments. The value of matching children to the most appropriate carer remains a priority in promoting and maintaining placement stability and improving outcomes for all children in care.

16–17-year-old Children in Care who are participating in Learning - The performance is currently showing as better than/exceeding the Q2 target and at 73.3% is showing an improvement on Q2 last year (51.3%). Improved tracking and monitoring of the participation of our Y/P has likely had some impact here. Also, the hard work of the Virtual School, carers, and social workers in supporting YP to visit colleges and other providers is also likely to have supported this improvement. All of our 16- and 17-year-olds are supported by the Virtual School through the Personal Education Planning Process. This brings social workers, carers, and providers together to focus on educational need and ensures that our young people are supported appropriately while participating in learning. We are currently working to support those currently not participating in learning to ensure that they can access therapeutic support and/or appropriate educational opportunities when they are ready to do so.

Children in Care Living Within A Family Environment - The target for 2022-23 reporting has increased from 74% to 80% (with a tolerance range of 77%-82%), and therefore, at 79.2%, this PI has achieved the increased target range. 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.

3. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 2 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 and Procurement.

4. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children in Care - Performance Measures – Q2

6. 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.

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