



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	9 March 2023
Subject:	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 3

Summary:

This item enables the Panel to consider and comment on the report and accompanying appendices, that provide key performance information for Quarter 3 2022/23, relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

Members of the Panel are invited to consider 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 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 3. Of these measures 6 did not meet their target and 2 are ahead of the target set by the services.

1.1 Measures that did not meet their target:

1.1.1 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.

1.1.2 Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date health check - The number of children in care has increased and there is evidence of more young people aged 16/17 entering care and exercising their right to refuse an assessment. These include young asylum-seeking children who have come through the national transfer scheme. This age group of children are often not committed to accessing their health assessment, although they continue to access healthcare when required. 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 and this measure has significantly improved.

1.1.3 Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check - This measure has improved and is now sitting at 72.9% which remains below the target of 95%. This is due to the ongoing increased difficulties in children being able to access appointments 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 can access emergency dental treatment when required. Furthermore, the NHS is running a Golden Hello Scheme to attract dentists to Lincolnshire to deliver NHS dentistry. Practices across the county have been accepted onto the scheme to attract up to 35 new dentists to the area. If these posts are filled it will significantly improve capacity for NHS dentistry in Lincolnshire.

1.1.4 Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date routine immunisation - 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. Work is currently underway to expedite updating of Lincolnshire County Council systems, and we are now starting to see this measure improve, going from 69% in Q2 to 70.6% in Q3. We anticipate this metric will continue to improve as we move forward.

1.1.5 16–17-year-old Children in Care who are participating in Learning - The performance for this quarter is below the lower target tolerance for this performance indicator by 3% although is a slight improvement on Q3 last year. All our 16- and 17-year-olds are supported by the Virtual School through the Personal Education Planning Process. This brings young people, their social workers, carers, and providers together on a termly basis to focus on educational need and ensures that our young people are supported appropriately while participating in learning. As some of our young people in care struggle to access or sustain engagement in learning, access to therapeutic support and/or alternative routes into educational opportunities are explored through the Personal Education Plan and may be supported by Post 16 Pupil Premium funding.

1.1.6 Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET) –This measure remains below target and has declined slightly. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Service continues to report monthly on the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET. The Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance regularly and monitors those young people who fall into NEET and those that re secure EET. A survey carried out with every Care Leaver who are not in EET highlights that the main barriers to EET are poor mental health (depression and anxiety) a lack of qualifications and substance misuse issues. This paper has been shared with members to aid with context. The aspirations workers and wellbeing workers continue to focus on supporting young people to address those barriers and improve their wellbeing in order that they can get ready to gain employment or re-engage with education.

The Leaving Care service is working with the Corporate Parenting Manager to look at the emotional wellness and the recovery of young people, alongside the plethora of activity, to support young people accessing EET. As mental health/emotional wellbeing is one of the biggest barriers to our young people accessing EET, a wellbeing worker remains in post to offer additional support to those young people with poor mental health and those who are unable access to work. Individual wellbeing and recovery are central to improving the EET in the long term. It is important to note that data set used to measure this performance indicator is fixed in time and is not rolling. This cohort in this measure (903) captures young people within a rigid date of birth range and pulls in information for all the young people, even if they have been closed to Leaving Care Service and we are unable to affect change due to age. The more flexible live measure of data on the Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChaT) shows 51% in EET.

1.2 Measures that are ahead of their target:

1.2.1 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 Q3 remains significantly 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.

1.2.2 Stability of placements of Children in Care: Number of moves - This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. Our performance is currently better than the most recent published data from other East Midland authorities where an average of 9% of children in care experienced 3 placement moves in a year, however, as the measure is cumulative, we would expect this to continue to increase until the end of the financial year when it is anticipated to culminate at around the level of other East Midlands authorities.

The first half of the year's performance was 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 increased post pandemic and new placements are becoming available there continues to be a challenge which reflects at times reduced placement options and complexities of the children and young people placed. The value of matching children to the most appropriate carer remains a considered priority in promoting and maintaining placement stability and improving outcomes for all children in care.

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 and Procurement.

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 Q3

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, who can be contacted on simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank