



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 9 MARCH 2023

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S P ROE (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors Clio Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), A G Hagues, C Matthews and M A Whittington

Added Members: Ann Wright (Foster Carer) and Elizabeth Bunney (Lincolnshire Community Health Services)

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Emily McAllister (Fostering Team Manager), Laura Bonner (Head of Service (East Lindsey Locality)), Deborah Crawford (Head of Service, Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director of Early Help) and Ben Lilley (Team Manager, Quality and Standards)

44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence had been received from K H Cooke and Polly Coombes.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

46 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Panel noted apologies for absence from the Assistant Director – Children’s Safeguarding.

48 CHILDREN IN CARE ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION - IMPACT OF DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DFE) POST 16 PILOT

Consideration was given to a report by the Corporate Parenting Manager, which provided an overview of the impact of the Department for Education (DfE) Post 16 Pupil Premium pilot that ran from October 2021 to March 2022, as set out in appendix A to the report.

The report highlighted the positive impact on the support and provision for young people in care and care leavers at local further education provision and the extension of the pilot was welcomed.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- The Panel welcomed a strong support offer to unaccompanied, who children accounted for 1/3 of children in care in Lincolnshire. The Panel were pleased to hear that each young person was offered access to an English as a second language (ESL) course almost immediately, however it was noted that many of the children could speak English reasonably well.
- The imaginative use of the funding and the support it had provided for young people in care and care leavers was commended.
- The Young People's Learning Provision programmes were ran by Lincolnshire County Council.
- The Panel acknowledged that the circumstances many young people in care and care leavers changed regularly meaning that flexibility in access to places at all points through the year was essential.
- The virtual school cohort often fluctuated slightly in each 12-week period. The benefits of the pilot in being able to offer financial support to allow a more individual focus were highlighted.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and endorsed by the Panel;
2. That the work undertaken as part of the pilot be commended;
3. That the extension of the Post 16 Pupil Premium pilot be supported;
4. That comments made be taken under consideration.

49 VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Practice Supervisor – Quality and Standards, which provided an summary and overview of recent activities regarding Voices for Choices (V4C) and the Big Conversation and actions to support future planning an progress, as referenced in the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- The FAB! Awards would take place on Saturday 17 June. An invite to all Panel Members was agreed to be circulated.
- A staff vacancy in the Lincoln and West Lindsey had now been filled.
- The Panel commended the big conversation event and the platform it provided for progressive conversations between children, young people and professionals.
- The Panel supported the review of V4C.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received;
2. That thanks be recorded for the overall efforts of Officers to engage with Lincolnshire's young people and improve the attendance of V4C meeting and events;
3. That the views and feedback of the Panel be shared with Officers and relevant Portfolio holders in support of their efforts.

50 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE MEASURES QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Children and Young People, which invited the Panel to consider and comment on the key performance information for Quarter 3 of 2022/23, as detailed in the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following information were recorded:

- The Panel were assured that making dentists available to Children in Care was a priority and treatment would be paid for should an child require it.
- It was recognised that there were national challenges with the availability of NHS dental provision. It was hoped that the recruitment of new dentists in Lincolnshire would alleviate issues and ensure that basic health needs for all children were met.
- The majority of money spent on supporting care leavers mental health needs was for pastoral support. The importance of investing in the emotional wellbeing of young people was essential, in particular given the traumatic experiences many children in care and care leavers had experienced, much of the support provided allowed the children to survive basic needs and support them to reach educational achievement.
- A breakdown of the locality of children in care for Lincolnshire was agreed to be circulated.
- The extension of the leaving care service to 25 was essential, given that many care leavers were not ready to enter employment until later in their trajectory, given the experiences they had endured.
- The reasons for a drop in pass rates would be included within future reports.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and accepted as an accurate overview of the service for the Quarter 3 of 2022/23;
2. That satisfaction be given to the assurances provided where targets had not been met;
3. That the comments recorded be taken under consideration by Officers and relevant Portfolio holders.

51 FOSTERING SERVICE QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service – Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care, which provided an overview of the Fostering Service Performance for Quarter 3 of 2022/23, as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

The Head of Service – Fostering Adoption and Leaving Care were pleased to announce that a 12.43% increase in the allowance for Foster Carers 12.43% had been proposed and was subject to a decision by the Executive Councillor for Children’s Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Engagement between the 20th and 31st March 2023.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following information was recorded:

- The Panel welcomed the proposed increase in allowances for foster carers and expressed their thanks to foster carers for their hard work.
- The proposed increase in fostering allowances was partly funded by the Government and partly funded by Lincolnshire County Council. The importance of ensuring support was provided to foster carers and that they felt valued was emphasised.
- There were a number of factors that led to the breakdown in foster placements, such as issues with attachment. The Panel were assured that all efforts were made to prevent breakdown in placements.
- The Panel acknowledged the challenges faced by foster carers at the the end of or breakdown of placements given the changes in family dynamic faced. The Foster Carer representative emphasised the importance of support from the Fostering Service and the fostering community at that time.
- The Fostering Service was on schedule to finish the year with 32 new approvals.
- The Conversion rate from website enquiries to becoming foster carers was around 11%, which was higher than the national average of 6%. Assurance was provided that people were not leaving Lincolnshire’s fostering service to foster with other agencies.
- A breakdown of the numbers of children in care and the type of placement had been put into was agreed to be circulated.
- The Panel acknowledged that most children in fostering placements would remain in the placements, and evidence was clear that those children in ‘staying put’ arrangements had a better opportunity for family life and often had more successes.

Many of the children entering care ages 16 and 17 faced significant challenges and often wished to be placed in solo placements and semi-independent living options.

- Officers emphasised that each child's needs and past experiences were carefully considered to ensure all children were placed in the setting most suitable for them as an individual.

RESOLVED:

4. That the report be received and satisfaction be given to the performance achieved by Fostering Service and the assurances provided around areas that require attention and improvement
5. That the comments recorded be taken under consideration by relevant Officers and Portfolio holders
6. That thanks to Lincolnshire's Foster Carers be recorded.

52 CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, OUTCOMES AND PATHWAYS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service – Future4me and Youth Offending, which provided an overview of the approach to reducing youth crime in Lincolnshire through restorative approaches, as detailed in the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following comments were recorded:

- The Panel commended the report and congratulated the team for the efforts made out to which avoided children getting a criminal record and a young age.
- All data recorded within the report related to Lincolnshire's children.
- It was noted that all children remanded into custody became children in care by virtue of the length of time spent on remand.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and endorsed;
2. That satisfaction be given to the range of actions and activities designed and implemented to safeguard children in care and divert them from entering the formal criminal justice system where appropriate, or act in a restorative manner where young people find themselves in that situation;
3. That the comments made be shared with relevant officer in support of their efforts.

53 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Panel to consider its work programme, as set out at pages 287-290 of the agenda.

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RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the existing work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.56 am