



## Open Report on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>06 July 2023</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2022/23</b>

### Summary:

Annual Report Provided by Barnardo's on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (April 2022 – March 2023).

### Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to review and comment on the contents of this report which are relevant and provide to information on the performance of the Leaving Care Service.

## 1. Background

This is the annual update report to Lincolnshire's Corporate Parenting Panel to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service regarding care experienced young people. 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 and Location
4. Participation / Fundraising
5. Mental Health and Wellbeing
6. Conclusion and New Opportunities

Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (since 1<sup>st</sup> 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 regular 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 Children in Care and Care Leavers).

Data contained within this report demonstrates performance from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

### **Accessing and Maintaining Suitable, Safe Accommodation**

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

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

October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023	February 2023	March 2023
426	427	418	420	415	428
95%	95%	95%	96%	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 Experienced Young People). 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 specialises in housing provision for care experienced young people, 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.

There are some great housing options available for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People who are open to Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service. Housing packages are tailored to meet individual needs (it's never a one size fits all approach). The Leaving Care Service have excellent links with a number of housing providers who work with Lincolnshire young people.

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 Experienced Young People – Children in Care over 16- and 16/17-year-olds who are homeless and require an 'assessment bed'.

Within Lincolnshire (in March 2023) we were working with 17 providers who can provide 30 beds across County (some full-time beds and some respite). 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 2022 / 23 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 have been working with the Local Authority on the 'Staying Close Staying Connected Bid' and in 2023 we will hopefully see the introduction of two new 'Connected Workers' within the team. These new post holders will work alongside the Local Authority Social Workers and Leaving Care Workers to either assist Lincolnshire Young People to seek housing options within the County or help ensure their Leaving Care offer is as good as they would receive if living within County.

### **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%

October	November	December	January	February	March
2022	2022	2022	2023	2023	2023
305	305	295	295	291	306
68%	68%	67%	67%	67%	68%

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 Experienced Young People who fit into this category and explored alongside the allocated Leaving Care Worker the reasons why this cohort 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 Experienced Young People 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

Lincolnshire also benefits from having the Virtual School however young people can only access the support of this service up to the age of 18.

Local Data (not explicit to Care Experienced Young People) indicates that:

- *Lincolnshire has less NEET 16/17-year-olds compared to England and East Midlands average: The latest data (Feb 2023) shows 2.1% of Lincs 16- and 17-year-olds are NEET (National 4.6% and East Midlands 4%).*
- *Lincs 16/17-year-old NEET rate has reduced by 0.8% in the last year when Lincolnshire had higher NEET than England and East Midlands.*
- *Greater Lincolnshire has a population similar in number to Birmingham, spread across an area almost 20 times the size which leads to challenges matching people and jobs, and leaves people without access to the full range of training provision.*
- *The current and long-term labour market challenges are spread across eight Travel to Work Areas covering some of the most deprived and some of the least deprived in the country.*
- *Availability of transport and the cost of travel are major barriers – the critical importance of being able to drive and having a car cannot be overlooked.*

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'.

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 Experienced Young People.

We are embarking on a review of the services we offer to our Care Experienced Young People in relation to our Education, Employment and Training offer. We have noted a significant difference in the emotional wellbeing of Children in Care as they transition into our service, and we already recognize that work has to be more targeted and individualised to encourage some young people to be 'work ready'. We are seeing significant personal achievements in some of our young people after they have benefited from individual work from specialist well-being workers.

### **Care Leavers Cohort**

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service is working with approximately 470 young people. Over the last financial year alongside the Local Authority, we have 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

### **Where Do Our Care Leavers Live? (Figures correct as of May 23)**

DISTRICT	COUNTY	NUMBER OF YP
Boston	Lincolnshire	33
East Lindsey	Lincolnshire	46
Lincoln	Lincolnshire	116
North Kesteven	Lincolnshire	36
South Holland	Lincolnshire	19
South Kesteven	Lincolnshire	38
West Lindsey	Lincolnshire	23
Out of County	Avon and Somerset	1
	Belgium	1
	Buckinghamshire	1
	Cambridgeshire (MAJORITY PETERBOROUGH)	88
	County Durham	1
	Derbyshire	8

Devon	2
East Sussex	1
Greater London	7
Greater Manchester	1
Hampshire	2
Humberside	2
Kent	1
Leicestershire	9
Middlesex	1
Norfolk	2
North East Lincolnshire	16
North Yorkshire	4
Northamptonshire	3
Nottinghamshire	28
Scotland	1
South Glamorgan	1
South Yorkshire	6
Staffordshire	1
Tyne & Wear	2
West Midlands	8
West Sussex	1
West Yorkshire	5
Wiltshire	3

### **Participation/ Fundraising**

Barardo's participation offer has grown significantly over the period of this report. We have a dedicated Participation Worker who has developed a number of forums and opportunities for Lincolnshire Care Experienced Young People to participate in. Below is a list of some of the events Lincolnshire Care Experienced Young People have taken part in:

- The Big Conversation
- LGBTQ Group
- Cooking Lessons (Louth, Lincoln and Peterborough)
- Care Review Consultation (on-line and House of Commons)
- Art Events
- Nail Art Class
- Triangles Project (a group of Care Leavers have worked with Barnardo's to create a presentation / event for representatives from the Leaving Care Service, Barnardos, and Local Authority Commissioners)
- Film Production – joint venture with 'My Pocket's' film company
- Football Sessions at Peterborough
- Go Karting Event
- Day at the Seaside

- Banking on Barnardo's (a charity evening where some of our young people attended a star studded event in London).

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 (both at Christmas and Easter).
- We were 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 cash 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 Lincoln, Lincolnshire young people are benefitting from weekly cooking courses and take-home meals following each session.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

#### **Trauma informed practice**

The whole Lincolnshire leaving care service have completed a trauma informed training by Beacon House. To support staff to:

- Gain confidence in their ability to identify and understand how repeated trauma affects children and adolescents.
- Understand the breadth and complexity of Developmental Trauma and associated difficulties.
- Develop their empathic understanding through ideas for experiential learning.
- Understand the principles of a trauma-informed approach to supporting traumatised children and adolescents.
- Learn a range of practical strategies to help regulate distressed children.

#### **WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)**

To allow the staff to give their best to care experienced young people Barnardo's believe we need to create an open culture and culture of wellness – the roles that leaving care workers complete can be complex and trauma reducing or a stressor or triggering for staff and impact their own wellbeing. All members of the leaving care service and the Corporate Parenting Manager have completed their level one WRAP programme, and some have gone on to complete level two WRAP – so within service we can now deliver WRAP programmes to Care Experienced Young People. The first session for Care Leavers is planned for Summer 23.

## **Specialist Post Holders**

As mentioned earlier in this report as a service we have recognized the need for a new type of worker in the service who alongside the allocated Leaving Care Worker can offer some intensive support to improve mental and physical wellbeing. Leaving Care Workers have a duty to visit Care Experienced Young People once every 8 weeks, which for some Lincolnshire Care Leavers doesn't provide the type of support required to help them achieve their goals and ambitions.

Within Lincolnshire Leaving Care we currently have a Mental Health Specialist and a well-being worker. The Mental Health Worker started in post in September 2021 with both clinical and social supervision being provided by Futures for Me, which is part of LPFT, Lincolnshire. A Barnardo's Team Manager attends four meetings per year that include the Clinical Supervisor to enable matrix management and strong partnership working.

From October 2021- January 2022 there have been 176 consultations with Leaving Care Workers and other professionals by the Specialist Mental Health Worker. This has led to 262 signposts and referrals to other services within the community and within LPFT services.

## **2. Conclusion**

This report reflects the progress and achievements during a 12-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

Turnover of staff has continued to be an issue with Leaving Care Workers 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 over a significant period of time.

### **3. Consultation**

#### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

### **4. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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