



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	18 January 2024
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 2023/24 that is 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, Procurement and Migration.

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 four did not meet their target and four are ahead of the target set by the services.

1.1 Measures that did not meet their target:

1.1.1 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 (YP) 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 Assessments and this measure has improved.

1.1.2 Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date dental check

This measure is now sitting at 68.5% which remains below the target of 80%. 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. Availability continues to be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, with Dental Practices closing and many restricting their practice to private patients only. In recent months we have worked jointly with health and social care and colleagues in the dental services across the county to agree a pathway for Children in Care to improve their access to dental services. For children who are not registered with a dentist at their health assessment appointments, carers are encouraged to register a child with a dentist as soon as possible.

1.1.3 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 the Immunisation team workload due to all males now being offered the HPV and all of the school population being offered the Covid-19 boosters and flu immunisations. The percentage of children who are up to date with their immunisations is at a higher rate of coverage compared with those of their peers in the general population. All outstanding immunisations are checked quarterly by the CiC/YP health team. Health and Social care colleagues are working together to improve the timely recording of immunisations.

1.1.4 Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET)

This measure remains below target and fluctuates throughout the year by a few percentage points either way. 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. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) tracks this performance regularly and monitors those young people who fall into NEET (not in education, employment or training) and those that re-secure EET. Our EET statistics are slightly below our statistical neighbours who run at 55%. However, our 'in touch with service' statistic for care leavers is way above national average at 98% in comparison to 93% for our statistical neighbours.

1.2 Measures that are ahead of their target:

1.2.1 Stability of placements of Children in Care: Number of moves

This indicator identifies those children who experience three placement moves within the year. At this point, the performance is well within the target range of 6% however, as the measure is cumulative, we would expect this to continue to increase until the end of the financial year.

For all placements, the service continues to ensure that foster carers are well supported and that potential problems are identified early to support them in continuing to care for children whose needs are varied and complex. This has been supported by using the Valuing Care toolkit and the embedded caring2learn approach which has supported and empowered foster carers to share, find and deliver solutions within a context of a tailored fostering service training and support offer. Nevertheless, the service has continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly, and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. The service has also seen an increase in the entrants of older children (teenagers) which poses some challenge in terms of identifying longer term accommodation options, whilst the younger cohort of children with care plans for long-term fostering presents challenges in achieving placement stability due to the local and national shortage of foster carers who want to care on a longer term or permanent basis. In addition to positive fostering recruitment, it is hoped, with the increased cost of living, the increase in fostering allowances has enabled the service to retain our valued volunteers.

1.2.2 Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales

This is testimony to the hard work across Children's Services that to date only one review has gone out of timescales.

1.2.3 Participation of Children in Care in reviews

This is a cumulative measure and there will always be some young people who chose not to participate in reviews despite our best endeavours, so the fact that we have exceeded the target is a testimony to the hard work in engaging young people in their care plans.

1.2.4 16-17 year old Children in Care who are participating in Learning

Performance this quarter is significantly above target and an improvement on last year's Quarter 2 performance of 73.3%. At the end of the reporting period, there were 192 young people in care aged 16 and 17. 164 young people met the criteria for

engaging in learning and were on roll at local colleges, post 16 providers and school sixth forms. Of the remaining 28 young people, two young people were in full time employment (without training), 10 young people were accessing interim/online ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision whilst awaiting a college place and three young people were awaiting confirmation of a college place. Personal Education Plans for the 13 young people not actively engaged in learning aim to identify any potential barriers to progressing into employment, education or training and explore opportunities and appropriate support on a termly basis. Working in partnership with the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service, work experience placements are sought for those young people wanting to seek employment, and short training course opportunities are revisited every term.

2. 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, Procurement and Migration.

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 Measure – Quarter 2

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 – Corporate Transformation, Programmes & Performance, who can be contacted by e-mail at Simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk.