



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
8 MARCH 2024**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), A J Baxter, A W Briggs, C Matthews, Mrs S A J Nutman, N Sear, T J N Smith and R A Wright

Added Members

Church Representative: M Kyle

Parent Governor Representatives: Dr E van der Zee

Councillors Mrs P A Bradwell OBE and S P Roe were also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Linda Dennett (Assistant Director - Children's Health and Commissioning), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director of Early Help), Carolyn Knight (Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker), Nicky Myers (Interim Head of Service Early Years & Childcare Support), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director for Children's Education), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Sarah Nardone (Assistant Director - Sector Led Improvement) and Matt Spoor (Head of Service - Education).

61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M A Whittington.

62 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

None were declared.

63 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2024

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 January 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

64 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman was pleased to report that Scrutiny Panel A, which was conducting a review of Young Carers on behalf of the Committee, had received an introductory presentation about Young Carers in Lincolnshire. It was anticipated that the draft final report from Scrutiny Panel A, which would set out its findings and recommendations, would be brought to the meeting on the 18 October 2024 for approval, before being submitted to the Executive for consideration on 5 November 2024.

65 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2022-23

During this item, Councillor A Baxter declared a personal interest as his daughters had attended a maintained grammar school.

Consideration was given to a report by Nicky Myers, Interim Head of Service for Early Years and Childcare Support and Matt Spoons, Head of Service for Schools Standards, which set out the school performance in Lincolnshire for Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 for the academic year 2022/23, as referenced in the report at pages 15 to 24 of the agenda pack.

Officers were pleased with the results and commended the performance outcomes at all stages of education, however they were not complacent, and highlighted three ongoing projects which would support learning: early reading into KS1, strengthening leadership and SEND leadership development.

Officers were confident that improvements to educational outcomes in Lincolnshire's education settings would continue and were pleased to report that Ofsted outcomes were catching up with national averages.

During the discussion, the following points were recorded:

- Some members expressed disappointment with the high level of data included within the report and wished to see data to support statements to allow an informed judgement to be made. Officers clarified that the format of the report had evolved over time alongside the change in responsibilities with regards to the council's influence of school policies and procedures and curriculum content, as each individual school was now responsible for implementing and analysing its own decisions on curriculum. However, Officers were supportive of including more granular data should the Committee wish to receive it.
- Members raised concerns over reference to grammar schools and their impact the performance of Lincolnshire's education sector. Many members did not support the statements made and expressed caution about the language used, whilst highlighting the importance of encouraging young people with high achievements to stay within

Lincolnshire post education. Officers acknowledged the concerns raised over the language used and would ensure the concerns were reflected going forward.

- It was acknowledged that many young people chose to go to University outside of Lincolnshire, although there were opportunities for apprenticeships and careers within the engineering sector. It was hoped that the medical school would help provide further opportunities.
- The improvements in performance for Early Years Foundation Stage were welcomed.
- Members requested clarity on the comparison between attendance and attainment, which was not clear within the table shown at paragraph g within the report. Officers agreed to provide further explanation in future reports.
- The importance of championing all children no matter whether they attended a grammar school, maintained school or academy was highlighted by the Committee in relation to statements made within the report. Officers provided assurance that the Council would strive to identify and utilise every opportunity provided to support the improvement of both academies and maintained schools.
- The Committee was reassured that many educational settings were evolving with innovative ways to ensure that SEND schools could be well supported and meet the demand within mainstream settings, which was known to lead to better outcomes.
- In terms of performance of the districts at KS2 and KS4, all districts had shown improvement in school performance. A breakdown of the performance for each locality could be provided if requested.
- A targeted list of schools requiring further support had been identified. All activities carried out to support schools were targeted to settings or schools that required it to ensure improvements were made in the right areas.

RESOLVED

1. That in reviewing the report, assurance be given to the outcomes for Lincolnshire schools for the academic year 2022/23.
2. That schools be commended for the results achieved in 2022/23.
3. That a briefing paper be circulated to the Committee which clarifies points identified in the discussion, including
 - More data to support the statements made around grammar schools and the impact on the performance of Lincolnshire's education Sector
 - A breakdown of performance at district level for KS2 and KS4
 - More data to support the comparison between attendance and attainment.
 - More data to support the evidence statements made around academies vs maintained schools, and & SEND vs non-SEND.

66 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE SUCCESS FRAMEWORK 2023-24 QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to a report by Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help, which set out the quarter 3 performance in relation to Children's Services, as set out at pages 25 to 36 of the agenda pack.

The Assistant Director – Early Help was pleased to report that out of the seven measures reported, one had exceeded its target, six had achieved their target and there were no measures which had not met the target.

During the discussion the following points were recorded:

- **PI 26 Average time taken to match a child to an adoptive family:** In response to a question raised, it was clarified that there were tolerances set within targets which meant that measures could be recorded as meeting their target despite not meeting the target figure that had been set.
- **PI 45 16-17 year old Children in Care participating in learning:** The council had now recruited to one of the employment coach roles specifically for children in care and the postholder had begun carrying out targeted work in relation to the cohort of children in care who were not participating in learning in an attempt to find work experience placements. The council was still recruiting to the other post.
- **PI 15 Juvenile first time offenders:** It was clarified that a change in the way data was recorded for this measure, so that data was not collected from the police national computer, was due to a national change which had been made by the Youth Justice Board and was out of the council's control. It was felt that over time the change would be helpful as there could be challenges getting police national computer data in a timely manner.

RESOLVED

That in reviewing the report, satisfaction be recorded for the Children and Young People Service Level Performance for 2023-24 quarter 3.

11:18am – the meeting adjourned for a short break.

67 CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL STATUTORY COMPLAINTS REPORT 2022-23

11:33am – the meeting reconvened.

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service for Quality and Standards, which invited the Committee to consider a report which set out the performance of Children's Services in relation to complaints, as referenced in the report on pages 37 to 52 of the agenda pack.

Officers were reassured that the ongoing investment and work to resolve issues informally where possible had continued to keep the number of complaints low and officers were committed to achieving early resolution. A total of 129 contacts had been received from individuals wishing to complain about the service, of which 27 were resolved informally and only 1.8% of all referrals led to a complaint being made.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Officers said there was not clear reason why there had been a reduction in complaints for quarter 4 but would continue to analyse the data to look for trends.
- The number of contacts received, and complaints made reassured officers that the complaints process was well known, and reports were taken seriously. Members and Officers acknowledged that receiving zero complaints could not be an aspiration whilst ensuring that the complaints process was transparent and accessible.
- Members were encouraged that only 1.8% of all referrals led to a complaint and commended employees within children's service who were seen to be dealing with challenging matters in a sensitive way.
- In relation to the comparison of total social care referrals per district, it was thought that reasons for higher referral rates in some districts could be due to a higher population of children and a higher number of schools in those areas.
- Officers benchmarked complaints data with other councils where possible, however it was acknowledged that it was challenging to make comparisons due to the differences in how complaints were categorised across different authorities.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Complaints Report for 2022/23 be supported and that the low numbers of complaints that were upheld be noted;
2. That the decrease in the number of formal complaints requiring investigation, despite the additional pressures faced during this period and the increase in complaints across other services, be commended.

68 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to consider its work programme as set out on pages 95-98 of the agenda pack.

In response to a question, it was clarified that safeguarding concerns in relation to the death of a child in Lincolnshire were reported to the Committee within the annual report from the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership which would next be considered by the Committee in September 2024.

RESOVLED

That the work programme be agreed

The meeting closed at 11.51 am

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