

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 11 SEPTEMBER 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R Wootten (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, Mrs J Brockway, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, Mrs H N J Powell, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith and L Wootten

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman and Mr P Thompson

Parent Governor Representatives: Mr C V Miller

Councillors: attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director Children's Lead Early Help), Maggie Freeman (Head of 14 - 19 Planning Allocation), Andrew Morris (LSCB Business Manager), Heather Sandy (Chief Commissioning Officer for Learning), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Adams, C R Oxby, S M Tweedale and Mrs S Wray.

Apologies were also received from Mrs E Olivier-Townrow, Debbie Barnes and Keith Batty.

24 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs L Rollings advised that as she was an employer of post -16 education provision she would leave the meeting for consideration of agenda item 4 – Strategic Priorities for 16-18 (25) Education and Training for 2016/17.

25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**26 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 16-18 (25) EDUCATION AND TRAINING
FOR 2016/17**

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on Strategic Priorities for 16 – 18 (25) Education and Training for 2016/17 which was due to be considered by the Executive on 6 October 2015.

The Committee was guided through the report, and it was reported that the picture for post 16 education was similar to that in previous years. There continued to be some successes including attainment levels that were in line with those nationally, relatively low levels of NEET, high participation at age 16, as well as the success of the Supported Internship Programme in securing employment outcomes for young people with SEND.

Members were advised that there were challenges arising from a declining cohort, increasing competition, a reduction of funding in real terms and a funding mechanism that encouraged competition rather than collaboration which were significant and increasing.

It was also noted that there was a potential risk that changes to the way apprenticeships were funded would impact on the financial viability of some Apprenticeship providers and on the number of Apprenticeships offered. Lincolnshire had a large proportion of small and medium enterprises (SME's), some of which were already reluctant to take apprentices due to the perceived additional bureaucracy. Members were advised that the Government had sought to simplify this process as much as possible. However, the relationship between provider and employer would change, which the provider securing public funding in direct proportion to the fee negotiated with the employer. There were concerns that competition, particularly in relation to the popular frameworks, could result in reducing fees with an inevitable impact on quality.

It was reported that student numbers in sixth forms had, overall, increased slightly. However, the increase was not consistent across schools with 17 schools seeing a reduction, some of which were substantial, and in 7 schools there had been a continuing decline in numbers over the last 3 years. As a result, there continued to be concerns in relation to some schools, particularly those with smaller sixth forms.

Members were advised that the Supported Internship Programme, particularly that delivered by the Council's own Promoting Employment Team (PET) had been particularly successful in terms of securing employment outcomes for those students with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At the time of the meeting, 26 out of 36 internees had achieved paid employment, and it was expected that this number would rise before the end of the summer.

It was reported that Lincoln College had been awarded a license to develop 'Career Colleges' including an aerospace course with the RAF and BAE, and it was expected that learners would be recruited from September 2016. There was also a suggestion to develop a construction course and a health and social care course.

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Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- In relation to SEND, the authority had been supporting some individuals for several years post 16 education, and the focus should be on progressing these young adults into adult outcomes including employment where this was appropriate;
- A young person was entitled to education through their education health and care plan. Young people over the age of 25 (or over the age of 21 without an EHC Plan) would be able access programmes that were funded by the adult skills budget;
- The student survey highlighted transport as an issue, but in relation to availability rather than funding;
- It was noted that colleges did have access to bursary funding which could be targeted towards students who were in financial difficulty and where this could have an impact on their attendance. It was in the interest of the college to find ways to retain learners, as their funding was dependent on students finishing their courses;
- It was queried whether it was thought that the introduction of the national living wage in 2016 would lead to more employers taking on apprentices. Members were advised that the minimum wage for apprentices would rise from £2.73 to £3.30 per hour in October 2015, but when they reached the age of 18, employers were required to pay apprentices the national minimum wage. The authority tried to encourage employers to pay over the minimum rate for apprentices;
- It was commented that the focus seemed to be on getting children into higher education;
- It was difficult to promote the apprenticeship route as an alternative to an academic route, when most of the apprenticeships only go up to level 2. There was a need for a progression route to be in place;
- The Council's role was a strategic one and one of influencing in terms of promoting apprenticeships;
- The role of the existing careers service was to support 16-18 year olds who were not engaged in education (NEETs). Where there were particular reasons why they could not engage, e.g. if they were ill, these young people would be taken off the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) list. There would always be a few young people who were between providers, and some would always be difficult to engage with;
- The University Technical College (UTC) provided county wide provision, and transport arrangements were in place but officers would find out what its recruitment pattern was. It was noted that it was run on a business basis, and students were expected to be there from 9am until 5.00pm. In terms of the curriculum, it had to deliver the standard curriculum, and the specific vocational subjects were in addition to this;
- In relation to the new legislation around SEND and the introduction of the requirement for social, health and education needs to be included, it was

confirmed that a young person's needs would be identified in their Education Health and Care Plan and resources allocated accordingly;

- It was queried what control the authority had over the validity of the apprenticeships and that students were completing them, and it was reported that no-one really had control over this. However, Ofsted did have checks in place for employers, and the new system would have outcome payments, so employers would only receive the funding once the apprenticeship had been completed;
- The proposals for three Career Colleges were being designed very specifically for young people to develop practical vocational skills, and it was possible that there would be a potential for the option to recruit young people at 14;
- It was suggested that young people moving from one course to another should not be considered a bad thing, as it built experience and skills, and it was suggested whether there could be an introduction of 'participation points' so that their participation could be recognised. It was thought that this was something which could be discussed with the Local Enterprise partnership (LEP);
- It was acknowledged that the first course a student enrolls on may not be the right one for them, and there were lots of courses with access points, which has had a positive effect. If a student decides to not continue with a course at a point where they could not join another one, they would be placed on a 'holding course' where they could explore lots of different options. Lincoln College was leading on developing this approach;
- In relation to skills, there was a need to integrate into some of the sector led development and school support;
- It was thought that increasingly, students would start making choices at 14 years old rather than 16 in relation to their further education;
- Closing the gap was still a concern, as by 16 if a student was not at the appropriate level of attainment, it was very difficult for any provider to close that gap by 18;
- A publication was produced in partnership with the Employment and Skills Board (ESB) which detailed all the opportunities which were available;
- Colleges would run any programmes which were appropriate for students;
- It was confirmed that the 'Career Colleges' would be physical buildings rather than virtual. It had been suggested that the construction college could be located in Gainsborough;
- Concerns were expressed that colleges were tailoring courses to the demands of students rather than filling the skills gap;
- It was confirmed that schools were allowed to opt out of delivering face to face careers guidance provided by the County Council, and were not required to provide anything in its place, as the legislation stated that schools did not have to provide face to face guidance.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People support the recommendations to the Executive as set out in the report;
2. That the following additional comments be passed to the Executive:

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- Concerns were raised regarding access to funding for young people over 25 with special education needs who wanted to continue learning. It was highlighted that adults and community training would be available which was funded through the adult skills budget. However, this budget was now also being focussed on Apprenticeships.
- It was queried whether poverty affected young people's attendance at post 16 providers. It was noted that this was an issue in East Lindsey, but this was also due to the availability of courses and not just the costs involved. It was highlighted that post 16 students have access to bursary funding for those in financial difficulty and it was in the interests of post 16 providers to retain learners as funding was dependent on the number of learners enrolled on courses.
- Concerns were raised as to whether the national living wage could cause employers to take on more apprentices instead to avoid paying the living wage. It was noted that pay for apprentices was going up from £2.73 to £3.30 per hour for 16 – 18 year olds from October 2015. For those apprentices over 19 and who have completed their first year, they are entitled to the national minimum wage. However, employers were encouraged to pay above the minimum Apprenticeship wage.
- It was questioned whether the new University Technical College (UTC) in Lincoln attracted students from across the County or just Lincoln and the surrounding area, and whether there were any implications for transport. It was highlighted that there was a transport arrangement in place but officers would need to query what the recruitment pattern across the county had been. Students had to be at the UTC from 9am to 5pm and the UTC had to deliver the standard curriculum. The Committee was informed that the Principal had extended an invitation to the Committee to visit the UTC and it was agreed that a visit should be arranged for later this year.
- Some young people dipped in and out of different courses and it was suggested whether a pilot could be trialled where the participation by a young person on different courses could be validated and counted towards their overall post 16 attendance. Officers agreed to speak to the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership about this to see whether it could be looked into. It was noted that there was a need for different access points and talks were ongoing with colleges regarding this. Lincoln College was leading on this by allowing young people who started a course but did not like it to move onto a holding course to experience different options before moving onto a new course.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of progress regarding collaboration between school sixth forms and it was queried what the next steps would be on this issue. It was highlighted that officers would continue to work with school sixth forms on collaboration, but at the current time, funding challenges

had not become so severe as to persuade schools to collaborate. It was noted that this would eventually happen as next year would be the last year of the transitional protection funding.

- It was queried whether the three new careers colleges for aerospace engineering, construction, and health and social care, would be virtual or in physical buildings. It was noted that they would be physical and located in existing provision, with the aerospace engineering careers college hopefully opening next year. Lincoln College had been awarded a license to develop the three careers colleges which would take young people from the age of 14 years old.
- It was questioned whether the three schools which had opted out from purchasing the Council's careers service and were not replacing it with alternative provision were allowed to do that. It was noted that they could as the careers advice offered did not have to be face to face.

27 MULTI AGENCY EARLY HELP AUDIT REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the findings of the Early Help Audit 2015.

The Committee received a presentation which provided further detail in relation to the following areas:

- Audit Methodology
- Overall message: Positive
- What did families say
- Outcomes for families
- Practitioner and case file findings
- What practitioners are saying
- Next steps

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Concerns were raised regarding paperwork not being available for some of the cases which were audited. It was reported that a lot of the cases were randomly selected and were very old cases. Many of the very good or excellent rated cases were newer, more recent cases, as a lot of work relating to case load had been carried out since the time of the older cases, which explained a lot of the results;
- It was suggested that it may be beneficial to carry out a few samples in around six months' time;
- It was found that there was a disconnect between what was being recorded and what families were experiencing, as what families were reporting was much better than what was being recorded. Members were advised that further work on this would be carried out and would be reported back to the Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group;

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- Concerns were expressed regarding the reluctance of lead professionals to come forward when a TAC (Team Around the Child) was initiated, and it was queried whether this was due to a lack of capacity;
- The cases for audit were randomly selected and the families were contacted to ask if they wanted to be involved. Overall the outcome was very positive in terms of what the families got from the TAC process. There were one or two cases with areas which needed further development;
- In terms of capacity, there was now less money and fewer people, and there were an increased number of TAC's being opened. The lead professional would usually be from the school, health authority or local authority;
- The strategy was one of continuing to ensure that children's needs were met early, and officers were working on making the process as simple as possible. The number of TAC's being opened was increasing year on year;
- The support available through the Early Help Consultants would continue to be developed;
- Members were advised that the number of active cases (1781) was at its highest ever level, and continued to grow year on year, and it was felt that this demonstrated a confidence in the system;
- It was noted that officers would not want any professional to feel that they could not meet any additional needs which had been recognised;
- Every baby was automatically registered with a Children's Centre, and so parents needed to opt out rather than opt in;
- It was commented that it was nice to read all the positive comments and outcomes from families that had been through the TAC process;
- It was noted that all TAC's were consent based, and if a parent did not want an early help assessment or TAC they did not need to have one. However, this generally did not happen, but it could be escalated to social care if it was felt that it was needed but was refused;
- Paperwork was being slightly changed so that the work being done with children was reflected in the paperwork;
- In terms of the issues around starting TAC's prior to school holidays, the Early Help Team was aware of these and was working with schools;
- It was noted that an action plan had been developed and was being taken forward;
- In relation to the references to the issue of neglect being the highest single presenting issue in the cases audited, it was noted that in these instances meant that a child's needs were not being met.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the report be noted.

28 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP -
UPDATE

The Committee received a report which enabled members to have an overview of the activities of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, in particular the Sub-Group's consideration of child safeguarding matters.

It was reported that the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group last met on 15 July 2015 where Councillor S R Dodds was elected as the new Vice Chairman.

At the meeting, the Scrutiny Sub-Group received an update from the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Chris Cook, on the outcomes from the Serious Case Review of the death of baby W and there was a good discussion on the issues around concealed and denied pregnancies. The LSCB had set up a multi-agency task group to look at this issue and the report from the task group would be brought to a future meeting of the Sub-Group.

The Sub-Group received its regular update on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) where it was reported that work was being done on the number of referrals across the county and why some areas received more than others. A report on the outcomes from this work would also be brought to a future Sub-Group meeting.

The Sub Group also received the Neglect Strategy which was considered by this Committee at the July meeting, and the Early Help Audit which was discussed earlier in the agenda.

It was also reported at the meeting that LSCB recently had its AGM and the strategic priorities were revised for the year. The LSCB as a partnership had agreed the following priorities:

- Early Help
- Exploitation and abuse of children – in a wider context than just Child Sexual Exploitation
- Online pressures and risk – which was previously E-Safety
- Preventing/addressing the impact of substance misuse
- Evidencing the Board's impact

The Scrutiny Sub-group would next meet on 7 October 2015 where it was due to receive the outcomes from any other Serious Case Reviews which had been completed (there were 3 other Serious Case Reviews currently being undertaken), and a further update on CSE and the LSCB Audit Programme.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

29 DIRECT LINKS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH YOUTH CABINET

The Committee was advised that Lincolnshire Youth Cabinet was looking to develop some structured channels for the sharing of views with, and seeking support from, decision makers at Lincolnshire County Council, particularly the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (CYPSC). The report set out some proposals for working more closely with the Youth Cabinet. This would allow Lincolnshire Young People to

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raise issues and share opinions about matters which were of concern to them as well as give feedback on relevant and timely issues under decision by Lincolnshire County Council.

Two members of the Lincolnshire Youth Cabinet were in attendance at the meeting, to ask and answer questions from the Committee.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present and the members of the Youth Cabinet in attendance, in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It had been difficult for the Youth Cabinet to access all schools, and it was suggested that they could present to the head teachers briefing which took place three times a year;
- It was suggested that the next time Strategic Priorities for 16-18 (25) year olds was on the agenda it would be useful to invite members of the Lincolnshire Youth Cabinet to attend so they could share their views;
- Parish Councils were always looking for ways to engage better with young people;
- Members were advised that there were always young people who were willing to get involved, and the Youth Cabinet tried to engage as widely as possible and as often as possible;
- It was thought that a formal attendance by members of the Youth Cabinet would not be required at every formal meeting;
- Some issues were more applicable to young people than others;
- The Youth Cabinet representatives were reminded that they could contact any councillor if there was an issue that they wanted to discuss;
- Councillors were also welcome to attend meetings of the Youth Cabinet;
- In terms of 16-18 training, which was an important issue, it was suggested that some councillors could arrange to meet with representatives of the Youth Cabinet to discuss this;
- It was suggested that one of two councillors volunteered to act as a direct liaison to work with the Youth Cabinet. Councillor Mrs J Brockway and Mr C V Miller (Parent Governor Representative) volunteered to do this;
- There would be a need to identify agenda items as they came through the work programme process that could be of interest to the Youth Cabinet;
- There was a need to ensure that anything that the Youth Cabinet should be consulted on, did happen;
- It was suggested that the dates of the forthcoming Youth Cabinet meetings be passed to the Scrutiny Officer to ensure that someone was available to attend;
- It was also noted that Councillor Mrs H N J Powell volunteered to act as a liaison to the Youth Cabinet as well;
- Representatives of the Youth Cabinet were advised that all agenda's, papers and draft minutes were available to view online five working days prior to the meeting date.

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The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Lincolnshire Youth Cabinet for attending the meeting and stated that the Committee looked forward to working with them in the future.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee supports the following proposals for working more closely with the Youth Cabinet:

1. Timely access to open reports (of relevance) due for presentation at CYPSC. These could be shared once available or a brief report written for the Youth Cabinet by the senior officer due to present at CYPSC;
2. The sharing of draft minutes with key items highlighted for feedback, allowing opportunity to comment directly with CYPSC. Equally the Youth Cabinet would welcome comment to items on its agenda;
3. Access to a formal channel to request consideration of occasional business before scrutiny committees. This may include other committees e.g. Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee;
4. Open invitations to attend occasional Youth Cabinet meetings (currently held Saturdays around the county). CYPSC may also wish to request attendance by the Youth Cabinet at its meetings. For any extraordinary meetings a small meet was preferred rather than attending larger adult meetings;
5. Open to the idea of work experience opportunities (shadowing) for Youth Cabinet Members either as part of school based learning or holiday experience. This could be shared with senior officers and locality teams for a wider experience of Children's Services.

30 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with key performance information for Quarter 1 2015/16 that was relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Vacancy rate of social workers – vacancies were generally covered by agency staff to help manage workloads within the team. There were only one or two teams which did not have any agency staff within them;
- There was a rolling programme of recruitment for social workers. The authority was working on the recruitment of more experienced staff. It was noted that this was a problem nationally as well;
- There were plenty of new social workers graduating from university, and the authority was seeking those with Lincolnshire connections, as those without local connections tended to stay for a few years, gain experience and then move on to a bigger city;
- The Scrutiny Review report on Frontline Social Workers and safeguarding made some very specific recommendations regarding recruitment and retention, and members were advised that most of the recommendations were now ongoing pieces of work. It was noted that there was an update on the

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action plan scheduled to come to the meeting of the Committee in November 2015;

- It was requested whether clarification regarding what the meaning of the symbols used in the performance reports could be included in future reports. Officers agreed to include this next time;
- It was queried whether members could receive information on how complaints were resolved;
- It was noted that the authority did not have any power to investigate complaints within schools, and it was the responsibility of governors to manage the complaints, unless it was a complaint against the head teacher of a maintained school;
- It was noted that the information in the customer satisfaction report only reported the complaints that the authority was made aware of. There may be some that were only reported to schools, and this information would not be fed back to the authority;
- Percentage of Teenage Mothers in EET – it was noted that this target had been reached and the performance was being sustained. Officers would be looking at whether this target could be stretched;
- It was commented that it was positive that all nurseries in the county had been judged as outstanding or good by Ofsted;
- Percentage of 0<5 year olds registered having at least one attendance within last 3 months (Children's Centres) - it was noted that the percentage of targeted families attending was very high;
- In relation to teenage pregnancies, it was noted that this indicator was owned by Public Health, and reported to the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee;
- The targets were reviewed each year;

RESOLVED

That the performance information presented be noted.

31 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider its own work programme for the coming year.

Members were advised that there was to be a report on Troubled Families on the October agenda. Members had previously asked whether it was possible to have some families who had been 'turned around' attend. However, after checking with officers, it was felt that attending a public meeting with so many people might be too daunting for them. Instead officers had identified a couple of families who were willing to meet with some members who would then feed back to the October meeting about these meetings. One family was based in Grantham and could meet on a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. The other family was based in Bourne and could also do Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Volunteers were sought to meet with

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the families in Grantham and Bourne. Councillors Mrs H N J Powell, S R Dodds, L Wootten and R Wootten volunteered to meet with the families.

It was also reported that following the last meeting where the Committee considered a report on progress 8, officers would like to arrange a workshop for the Committee on Progress 8 so that members could gain a better understanding of this. It was planned to hold the workshop on the afternoon of 27 November 2015 after the Committee meeting.

Members were also advised, that due to the unavailability of key officers, the Chairman had requested that the October meeting be moved from Friday, 16 October to Monday, 19 October 2015.

RESOLVED

1. That the content of the work programme as set out in Appendix A of the report be noted;
2. That the content of the Children's Services Forward Plan as set out in Appendix B of the report be noted;
3. That officers arrange for Councillors Mrs H N J Powell, S R Dodds, L Wootten and R Wootten to meet with the 'turned around' families';
4. That a workshop to look in more detail at Progress 8 be arranged for the afternoon of Friday, 27 November 2015;
5. That the meeting scheduled for Friday, 16 October 2015 be moved to Monday, 19 October 2015.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm