

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 20 JULY 2018**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R L FOULKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R J Kendrick (Vice-Chairman), M D Boles, Mrs W Bowkett, S R Parkin, M T Fido, C Matthews, A P Maughan, L Wootten, M A Whittington and R Wootten.

Added Members

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs P J Barnett.

Councillors: D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's) was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Executive Director, Children's Services), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Tara Jones (Service Manager Regulated South and Adoption), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director Children's (Lead Early Help)), Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager), Mark Rainey (Commissioning Manager – Commercial), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Paula Bexon (Team Manager), Joanne Fox (Commissioning Officer), Peter Grayson (Detective Superintendent, Lincolnshire Police), Tony Pryce (Joint Diversionary Panel Co-Ordinator) and Stacey Waller (Area Manager - South).

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Reverend Philip Johnson (Church Representative) and Mr S C Rudman (Church Representative).

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, OBE, Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

14 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M A Whittington wished it to be noted that he had an adopted son aged 22, covered by the Leaving Care Service up to the age of 25.

**15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2018**

RESOLVED

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2018**

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 June 2018 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR ADULT CARE, HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Chairman extended congratulations on behalf of the Committee to Councillor Mrs P M Bradwell and Debbie Barnes, who had been awarded OBEs in the Queen's Birthday Honours list for 2018. The Committee noted that this was in recognition of their service to Lincolnshire Children's Services and to their support to improve Children's Social Care in Rotherham.

The Committee was reminded of the visit to the old fire house on Denton Avenue, Grantham, which had been converted to provide supported accommodation for 16 and 17 year old Looked After young people who were in need of the opportunity to gain independence training in a supported environment. The Committee noted that the visit was due to take place on Monday 23 July between 9.30am and 12.30pm. Any member who wished to attend, who had not already been in contact with Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer) was asked to let Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) know at the end of the meeting.

The Chairman also extended congratulations to Councillors and staff who had been successful in completing sponsored events.

The Executive Director for Children's Services advised the Committee that the FAB Awards for Looked After Children had been a successful event, and had been well attended. Councillors who had not managed to attend this year were encouraged to attend the event in the future.

17 ACCOMMODATION PATHWAY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director Children's – Lead Early Help and Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which invited the Committee to consider a report on the Accommodation Pathway for Children and Young People, prior to the report being considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services on 30 July 2018.

The Executive Director for Children's Services introduced the report and advised the Committee that although the County Council was not a Housing Authority, it did have a statutory responsibility for the provision of accommodation for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers up to the age of 21 years; and for providing Care Leavers with advice and guidance to support them to be independent between the ages of 21 – 25.

Mark Rainey, Children's Commissioning Manager – Commercial guided the Committee through the Executive Councillor report attached as Appendix 1; and its associated Appendix, which provided the Committee with a draft copy of the

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2018

Accommodation Pathway. The Accommodation Pathway reflected the existing and proposed accommodation and housing pathways for young people within Lincolnshire including Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

The Committee noted that accommodation was fundamental to the safety and stability of all Lincolnshire young people, and that there was a need to revisit and grow the housing and accommodation options in the county to offer a more localised response.

The key developments around young people's accommodation were highlighted to the Committee, which included:-

- 'Staying Close'– this enabled young people leaving residential care to move into local accommodation in order to 'Stay Close' to their previous residential homes. The Committee was advised that a number of options were being explored at the moment with West Lindsey District Council and with North Kesteven District Council;
- Intensive supported accommodation – The Committee was advised that the property in Grantham was the first property to offer up to 5 semi-independent bed spaces in the south of the county. It was noted that work was currently being done to complete staff training in readiness for the young people moving in. It was noted further that this new offer would lead to significant savings for the Council, along with providing vastly improved, more flexible options, and better quality of service for some of the more complex and difficult young people; and
- Youth Housing Protocol – The Committee was advised that a multi-agency Youth Housing Protocol had now been agreed by all the seven district councils, children's services, adult care and public health directorates. The purpose of the Protocol was to define the working arrangements for all agencies involved in supporting 16 & 17 year olds, including Looked After Children; and Care Leavers aged between 18-21 years who were in need of advice and assistance due to being homeless, or at the risk of being homeless. It was highlighted that the Protocol would also manage the young person's experience of transitioning to adult supported accommodation; and semi-independent living options.

It was reported that the process of reviewing the Youth Housing contract was due to start in September 2018; and that children's services would be undertaking a comprehensive review of existing in-house accommodation services.

In conclusion, it was highlighted that there was a need to build resilience into the available housing options to ensure that it was appropriate and proportionate to meet the needs of children and young people. And that the Accommodation Pathway selected needed to maximise the best use of in-house options to provide increased assurance in respect of quality, longer-term outcomes and good value for money.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2018**

- Page 42 – Social Care Assessment Factors 2016/17. Confirmation was given that these were the primary issues shown and that additional ones would be recorded as other;
- The Committee queried the level of consultation and engagement with local residents in relation to the intensive supported accommodation option in the south of the county. Officers confirmed that engagement with local residents was critical to the success of young people feeling part of the community, and that Children's Services were committed to working in partnership with local communities to ensure its success;
- The Committee recognised the importance of promoting the principle of supporting options for young people leaving residential care to move into local accommodation in order to 'stay close' to their previous residential homes. In addition the Committee highlighted the need to ensure 'staying put' support was promoted through the development of continued personal connections, rather than through institutional support;
- In relation to the INSA Local Offer, the Committee queried what costings had been done in meeting the aspirations of this pilot scheme. Officers confirmed that there was an aspiration to consider similar schemes across the county, in order to reduce significant out of county placement costs, as well as additional cost pressures as a result of the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- The Committee recommended that work should continue to be undertaken to develop close working relationships with Housing Associations and District Councils in relation to the availability of youth housing. In relation to the availability of single bed properties, officers confirmed that these were not always suitable for young people leaving residential care due to higher costs and the challenges of living alone;
- The Committee highlighted the importance of developing a collaborative partnership approach and stressed the need to ensure all partners were aware that Children's Services only had a duty to provide housing support for care leavers up until the age of 21, whilst advice and guidance support continued until age 25; and
- The Committee highlighted the need to ensure the Council utilised the wealth of experience and knowledge of experienced foster carers currently working with Children's Services in the recruitment and development of effective accommodation pathways.

In conclusion, the Committee unanimously supported the recommendations as detailed in the Executive Councillor report; and asked for the comments as detailed below to be passed onto the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously supported the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services as set out in the report.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2018

2. That the following comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services in relation to this item:
- The Committee queried the level of consultation and engagement with local residents in relation to the intensive supported accommodation option in the south of the county. Officers confirmed that engagement with local residents was critical to the success of young people feeling part of the community, and that Children's Services were committed to working in partnership with local communities to ensure its success;
 - The Committee recognised the importance of promoting the principle of supporting options for young people leaving residential care to move into local accommodation in order to 'stay close' to their previous residential homes. In addition the Committee highlighted the need to ensure 'staying put' support was promoted through the development of continued personal connections, rather than through institutional support;
 - In relation to the INSA Local Offer, the Committee queried what costings had been done in meeting the aspirations of this pilot scheme. Officers confirmed that there was an aspiration to consider similar schemes across the county, in order to reduce significant out of county placement costs, as well as additional cost pressures as a result of the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
 - The Committee recommended that work should continue to be undertaken to develop close working relationships with Housing Associations and District Councils in relation to the availability of youth housing. In relation to the availability of single bed properties, officers confirmed that these were not always suitable for young people leaving residential care due to higher costs and the challenges of living alone;
 - The Committee highlighted the importance of developing a collaborative partnership approach and stressed the need to ensure all partners were aware that Children's Services only had a duty to provide housing support for care leavers up until the age of 21, whilst advice and guidance support continued until age 25; and
 - The Committee highlighted the need to ensure the Council utilised the wealth of experience and knowledge of experienced foster carers currently working with Children's Services in the recruitment and development of effective accommodation pathways.

18 EDGE OF CARE SUPPORT SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report from Joanne Fox, Commissioning Officer, which invited the Committee to consider a report on the Edge of Care Support Service, which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services on 30 July 2018.

A copy of the full report to the Executive Councillor was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting:

- Joanne Fox, Commissioning Officer;
- Mark Rainey, Children's Commissioning Manager – Commercial; and
- Paula Bexon, Team Manager.

The Committee was advised that the countywide service currently offered support to struggling families with a view to stabilising these families in times of crisis; preventing the escalation of need, lowering the risk of child abuse and neglect, and reducing the number of children taken into care.

It was reported that the service was currently provided by Safe Families for Children (SFfC), a volunteer organisation (currently there were 227 Lincolnshire volunteers) working in the main with local churches to recruit volunteers to carry out an early intervention approach. It was highlighted that the approach was targeted mainly at secondary prevention, offering support to struggling families with a child under 12 and providing 'edge of care' support as an alternative to a short stay in foster care. It was highlighted that overall performance indicators for the service were good and that the support provided had been shown to have positive benefits for diverting children from care and successfully supporting families through times of crisis. Details relating to the performance of Lincolnshire were shown on pages 61 and 62 of the report.

Attached to the report were the following Appendices:-

- Appendix A – Equality Impact Analysis
- Appendix B – Cost avoidance data

It was reported that currently the service had funded 60 referrals at a cost of £1,250 per referral (£75k per annum). It was highlighted that of the 25 families referenced in the joint audit, the estimated cost avoidance for those families for the period of October 2015 to September 2017 had been calculated at £647,730. It was highlighted further that in comparison, the direct cost to the Service Provider was the equivalent of £187,500, with the Council incurring only limited additional indirect costs in overseeing the contract and the families referred.

The Committee was advised that the contract was due to end on 31 March 2019 and that the recommendation was that the contract should be re-procured by means of an Invitation to Tender.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- The Committee highlighted the excellent work of volunteers currently taking part in the Edge of Care Support Service and stressed the importance of ensuring an effective and seamless transition of volunteers to a new provider;
- The Committee supported the process of re-procurement by means of an invitation to tender as a way of ensuring the Council achieved value for money;

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2018

- A member of the Committee highlighted the need to ensure there was greater awareness of the edge of care support service. Officers confirmed that the service was one part of an offer to provide flexibility to locality teams, as early help could prevent cases being open to social care. Officers highlighted that the Edge of Care Support was a small service with limited resource;
- The Committee supported the benefits of the service by providing cost effectiveness and wider cost avoidance through working with families in crisis to provide timely and appropriately targeted support as an alternative to a short stay in foster care;
- The Committee highlighted the need to ensure any future provider had a strong track record of supporting volunteer networks, to promote continued success of the service; and
- The Committee supported a suggestion that members took part in a service specification workshop for the Edge of Care Support Service.

In conclusion, the Committee unanimously supported the recommendations as detailed in the Executive Councillor report; and asked for the comments raised above to be passed onto the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services, as set out in the report.
2. That the following comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services in relation to this item:-
 - The Committee highlighted the excellent work of volunteers currently taking part in the Edge of Care Support Service and stressed the importance of ensuring an effective and seamless transition of volunteers to a new provider;
 - The Committee supported the process of re-procured by means of an invitation to tender as a way of ensuring the Council achieves value for money;
 - A member of the Committee highlighted the need to ensure there was greater awareness of the edge of care support service. Officers confirmed that the service was one part of an offer to provide flexibility to locality teams, as early help support can prevent the cases being open to social care. Officers highlighted that Edge of Care Support was a small service with limited resource;
 - The Committee supported the benefits of the service by providing cost effectiveness and wider cost avoidance through working with families in crisis to provide timely and appropriately targeted support as an alternative to a short stay in foster care.
 - The Committee highlighted the need to ensure any future provider had a strong track record of supporting volunteer networks, to promote continued success of this service.

19 CORPORATE PARENTING SUB GROUP UPDATE

The Chairman received an update from the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub Group who advised that the draft minutes from the last meeting held on 14 June 2018 were attached at Appendix A to the report.

It was reported that the Sub Group considered the following items at the meeting:-

The Sub Group had received an overview of the impact of the new Act for Care Leavers. The Sub Group had been advised that there was a requirement for care leavers to receive support up to the age of 25. To meet the new obligations, the Council had extended the Leaving Care Service commissioned through Barnardo's in addition to committing additional funding of £120k each year for the next two years in order to enhance service capacity. The Sub Group was advised that this could affect around 700 care leavers between 21 and 25.

The Sub Group had also received an overview of the Independent Reviewing Service. It was highlighted that IT issues had caused some challenges for officers.

The Chairman highlighted that the FAB awards recently held on 30 June 2018 had been a great success and had been well attended. It was highlighted further that there had been 267 nominations which had been an increase on the previous year.

It was also reported that free day passes had been provided by the Mellors Group for all the young people to visit Fantasy Island, Ingoldmells.

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub Group was due to be held on 20 September 2018.

RESOLVED

That the work of the Corporate Parenting Sub Group be supported and the update be noted.

**20 RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT DIVERSIONARY
PANELS (JDP)**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the following presenters:-

- Stacey Waller, Area Manager, South;
- Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director Children's – Lead Early Help;
- Peter Grayson, Chief Superintendent – Lincolnshire Police; and
- Tony Pryce, Joint Diversionary Panel Co-ordinator.

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided the Committee with an update and overview of the impact of the Lincolnshire Joint Diversionary Panel since it had been introduced in June 2017.

It was reported that under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, the Police had been given a range of options of how to deal with a person under the age of 18. The change in legislation provided agencies with greater scope to introduce the most appropriate outcome for criminal offences which could be based on the seriousness and circumstances of the offence but also consider the background of the child or young person.

It was noted that Joint Diversionary Panels in Lincolnshire had been primarily established following detailed analysis of criminal justice disposals for children and young people. The analysis has shown there had been inappropriate use of Police cautions against children and young people. It was therefore highlighted that without significant change in practice, there was a clear potential for increased criminalisation of children in Lincolnshire, especially Looked After Children. The Committee was advised that the use of Youth Cautions without meaningful support or intervention could often represent an essentially administrative process and achieve limited impact.

The Committee was advised that the Joint Diversionary Panel met on a weekly basis to review the cases of children and young people in Lincolnshire who had committed and admitted to a criminal offence. The Committee was advised that prior to the Panel sitting all the relevant information was obtained regarding the child or young person. The Committee was advised further that the voice of the young person and views of victims of crime were also sought to generate a full understanding and picture to inform holistic decision making. It was noted that the Panel was chaired by the Youth Offending Service, but had representation from Lincolnshire Police, Early Help and Team Around the Child Co-ordinators to provide a partnership approach and specialist input.

Details of the formal outcomes were shown on page 107 of the report along with examples of youth restorative intervention outcomes. It was highlighted that the Youth Restorative Intervention outcomes did not criminalise but had a restorative focus for both the victim and the young person.

It was reported that it was highly encouraging that the most recent national performance data indicated that the rate of first time entrants in Lincolnshire had dropped by approximately 22% since the diversionary panels had come into operation. It was reported further that more than 350 cases had been reviewed by the Panel, (details of which were shown on page 110 of the report) a youth restorative option had been used in 82% of all cases. The Committee was advised that early indications suggested a positive impact both in respect of young people not returning to the Panel, but also the absence of further offences post Panel intervention. The Committee was advised further that discussion had been undertaken with the University of Lincoln to secure funding to complete a longitudinal academic evaluation to understand the longer impact of the diversionary interventions.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- Some members of the Committee welcomed the report and the restorative practice options. One member highlighted the need for integration with other areas such as school exclusions, and the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) Strategy. Officers confirmed that there was definitely a correlation with school exclusions and BOSS. The Committee was also advised that as there was a lot more options for support, there was the ability to bespoke the support to the young person's needs, where as previously the no follow up support was provided where a caution was given been given;
- One member enquired whether members of the public were being put at risk, particularly when looking at the Tier 3 example for youth restorative intervention outcomes. The Committee was reassured by Chief Superintendent that for serious offences, the Panel would the set the appropriate interventions due to the broad range of skills on the Panel. The Committee was also advised that the Tier 3 outcome was successful, although the programme would be subject to evaluation;
- The Committee was advised that the last column on the table on page 108 of the report should have the title of 'Other';
- One member enquired that when the performance figures were reported, the number of juvenile first time offenders had been increasing. The Committee was advised that the next performance report should see a decrease in the number of juvenile first time offenders; as there was a time lag with the data provided;
- One member asked whether frontline police officers had access to accurate data when making an arrest. Confirmation was given to the Committee that frontline officers did have access to current information and data;
- One member highlighted the positive input PCSOs had in the community. Officers concurred that PSCOs were very instrumental in strengthening links in the community;
- One member requested the longitudinal academic evaluation being presented to a future meeting of the Committee. Officers provided assurance that this would be subject to evaluation;
- A question was raised as to whether a common language was used between all the different organisations. The Committee was advised that Signs of Safety was the common language used;
- The Committee was advised that if a young person refused to engage there were other options available to try. All actions were assured by the Panel; and
- Some concern was expressed with regard to knife crime. The Committee was advised that any knife offences taken to the Panel always contained the Behind the Blade 1.1 as being at the top of the list. Officers confirmed that Lincolnshire was not experiencing the increased knife incidents that were happening elsewhere in the country. The Committee noted that knife incidents were rare in Lincolnshire.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to the presenters.

RESOLVED

1. That the Restorative Practice – Lincolnshire Diversionary Panels report be received.
2. That the longitudinal academic evaluation information (from Lincoln University) be received at a future Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

21 PARTNERS IN PRACTICE PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received a report from Tara Jones, Children's Service Manager – Partners in Practice, which provided the Committee with an update on Lincolnshire's Partners in Practice Programme.

The Committee was advised that the Department for Education (DfE) reform programme, set out three fundamental pillars of reform which were: People and Leadership, Practice and Systems and Governance and Accountability.

The Committee was advised that the Partners in Practice Programme was scheduled to run until 31 March 2020; and was made up of two work streams Practice and Systems and People and Leadership, which were aligned directly to the three fundamental pillars of the DfE reforms. The Committee was advised further that six individual projects then sat below the overarching workstreams, which when implemented would deliver the desired outcomes and positive impacts. The top of page 113 provided details of the projects, and workstreams.

It was reported that as a Partner in Practice Authority, Lincolnshire had led on the development of the East Midlands Regional Improvement Alliance pilot, to learn, share, improve and innovate across the East Midlands. It was highlighted that following completion of the pilots, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, Local Government Association, the Society of Chief Executives and the Department for Education had given consensus on the establishment of a Regional Improvement Alliance for every region, which would create a self-improving system through a trusted, effective and coherent sector led model.

The Committee noted that the Council had been improvement partners for Rotherham Borough Council and Tower Hamlets Borough Council and had also supported 43 local authorities with their implementation of 'Signs of Safety'.

During a short discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- Funding – Officers confirmed that funding was received from the DfE and that the Council was not subsidising the programme; and
- One member enquired what would happen after 2020 – The Committee was advised that following the pilot, the establishment of a Regional Improvement Alliance for every region, would create a self-improving system through a trusted, effective and coherent sector led model for the future.

RESOLVED

12

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 JULY 2018

That the progress and outcomes of the Partners in Practice Programme be received.

22 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme to ensure that its scrutiny activity was focussed where it could be of greatest benefit.

Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer presented the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee work programme, which was shown on pages 123 to 126 of the report presented.

The Committee was advised that the following items had been requested during the meeting:-

- Evaluation of the Restorative Practice Arrangements; and
- Fostering Allowance;

The Committee also noted that an Edge of Care Workshop would be arranged; and that the Scrutiny Officer would circulate details of potential dates during September 2018.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Work Programme as set out in Appendix A be agreed, subject to the addition of the items detailed above.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm