



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2019 at 10.00 AM
in COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN LINGS
LN1 1YL

MEMBERSHIP

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors D Brailsford, R L Foulkes, A G Hagues, S R Parkin, Clio Perraton-Williams, R H Trollope-Bellew and M A Whittington

Added Members (non-voting): Polly Coombes, Ann Wright, Amy-Louise Butler, Amy Lavery and Elizabeth Bunney

AGENDA

Item	Title	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
2	Declarations of Members' Interest	
3	Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting held on 25 July 2019	3 - 12
4	Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillor and Lead Officer	Verbal Report
5	Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report April 2018 to March 2019 <i>(To consider a report from Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with the end of year report (April 2018 to March 2019) for Legal Services Lincolnshire)</i>	13 - 36

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| 6 | Caring2Learn - Year 2 Update
<i>(To consider a report from Krysta Parsons, Project Manager, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update on the implementation and impact of the Caring2Learn project)</i> | 37 - 136 |
| 7 | Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose
<i>(To receive a report from Yvonne Shearwood, Children's Services Manager - Regulated (South and Adoption), which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of the adoption service)</i> | 137 - 202 |
| 8 | Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose
<i>(To receive a report from John Harris, Children's Services Manager - Regulated (North and Fostering), which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of the fostering service)</i> | 203 - 250 |
| 9 | Private Fostering Annual Report 2018/19
<i>(To receive a report from John Harris, Children's Services Manager - Regulated (North and Fostering), which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview on the private fostering service)</i> | 251 - 278 |
| 10 | Quarter 1 Performance Report for Looked After Children
<i>(To receive a report from Janice Spencer OBE, Interim Director of Children's Services, which invites the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider and comment on the Looked After Children Performance Measures for Quarter 1 2019/20)</i> | 279 - 294 |
| 11 | Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme
<i>(To receive a report from Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, which enables the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year)</i> | 295 - 298 |

Distributed on Wednesday, 11 September 2019

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Katrina Cope via telephone 01522 552104 or alternatively via email at katrina.cope@lincolnshire.gov.uk



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 25 JULY 2019

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors D Brailsford, R L Foulkes, S R Parkin and M A Whittington.

Added Members: Polly Coombes (Foster Carer), Ann Wright (Foster Carer) and Amy Lavery (Children In Care Council).

Officers in attendance:-

Katrina Hewitt (Project Officer Participation Team, Young Inspectors), Sarah Lane (Virtual School Team Manager), Lisa Adams (Service Manager, Barnardos), Michelle Andrews (Head of Early Years), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Carolyn Knight (Quality and Standards Manager), Kerry Mitchell (Assistant Director Barnardo's (Lincolnshire), Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager), Janice Spencer OBE (Interim Director of Children's Services) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer).

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Brailsford be elected as Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2019/20.

COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD IN THE CHAIR

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor C L Perraton-Williams be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2019/20.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A G Hagues, C L Perraton-Williams and R Trollope-Bellew.

An apology for absence was also received from Amy-Louise Butler (Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust).

4 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage of the proceedings.

2
CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
25 JULY 2019

5 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED

That the following meeting dates and times be agreed for the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2020.

Thursday 23 January 2020 at 10.00am;
Thursday 12 March 2020 at 10.00am;
Thursday 14 May 2020 at 10.00am;
Thursday 23 July at 10.00am;
Thursday 17 September 2020 at 10.00am; and
Thursday 19 November 2020 at 10.00am.

6 REVIEW OF THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVER STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report from Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which invited the Panel to review the progress made against the priorities and actions identified in the Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy Action Plan.

Detailed at Appendix A was a copy of the Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy 2018/2021 Priorities, Actions and Progress Action Plan.

It was noted that the action plan was designed to track the activity to achieve the aspirations set out in the strategy. It was noted further that this strategy was the first of its kind to be developed on a multi-agency basis; and was supported by Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP).

During consideration of the action plan, the Panel raised the following issues:-

- The status of the strategy – The Panel was advised that the strategy would be monitored by the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Quality Assurance Board. It was highlighted that the purpose of the strategy was to hold the service to account;
- A question was asked as to whether other agencies were using Signs of Safety. Confirmation was given that all agencies understood and were using Signs of Safety. The Panel was advised that the Ofsted Inspection had found that Signs of Safety was well embedded. It was also noted that Early Help was currently being refreshed to prevent momentum being lost; and to ensure that areas were constantly reviewed;
- It was highlighted that success needed to be celebrated - It was agreed that there needed to be an area within County Offices to display some of the achievements of Lincolnshire's young people. It was agreed that the Corporate Parenting Manager would look into this matter further;
- Clarification was given that young people in an emergency situation were not waiting to be seen, they would be seen by crisis response team;

- Sharing of information – The Panel was advised that Mosaic was accessed by Social Care, some health services; the leaving care service and adult social care. It was noted that the aspiration was for all relevant records to be viewed by all involved;
- Care leavers being exempt from paying council tax until they were 25 years of age. The Panel was advised that currently care leavers were exempt from paying council tax in all seven districts up to the age of 21; and that negotiations were underway to increase the age to 25. Dual hatted Councillors advised that they would promote the matter with their respective district councils. It was highlighted that North Kesteven District Council had already increased the age to 25. The Scrutiny Officer agreed to provide the Corporate Parenting Manager with a list of dual hatted members;
- Housing provision for the most challenging young people. It was highlighted that sometimes this proved to be a challenge as some district councils were not in charge of their housing stock. It was suggested that more contact needed to be made with local landlords and housing associations. Some members offered help to the Corporate Parenting Manager in approaching housing associations in their areas. The Panel noted that all districts had signed up to being Corporate Parents; and were aware of the need to continually promote the need of care leavers;
- Vulnerability of care leavers and Looked After Children who were often influenced by outside pressures. The Panel was advised that there was the Joint Diversionary Panel, which recognised the vulnerability of young people and provided diversionary routes to avoid young people entering the criminal justice system;
- One member enquired as to when the amber indicators would become green. Officers advised that work was on-going and that when the Panel considered the item next, some progress would have been made.

In conclusion, the Panel welcomed the report and requested that a further review of the action plan should be undertaken in 12 months' time.

RESOLVED

1. That a further report on the Looked After Children and Care Leaver Strategy Action Plan be presented to the Panel in 12 months' time.
2. That the Corporate Parenting Manager be authorised to look into finding a 'Celebration Wall' to display information relating to the achievements of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

7 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR'S SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report from Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager, which invited the Panel to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service.

The Quality and Standards Manager presented the report and advised that Panel that every child who was 'looked after' by Lincolnshire County Council had to have a Care

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
25 JULY 2019**

Plan. It was highlighted that this document detailed the long-term plan for the child's upbringing and the arrangements made by Lincolnshire Children's Services to meet the child's day-to-day needs. The Panel was also advised that there was a legal requirement for every child who was looked after to have an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) appointed to them under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Details of the statutory duties of the Independent Reviewing Officer were shown at the bottom of page 33.

The Panel noted that it was a statutory requirement to provide an annual report in respect of the Local Authority's Independent Reviewing Service. Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service for the Panel's consideration.

The Panel was advised that the actions from the previous year were either complete, or in the process of being completed. The report provided an update on what had been done throughout the year; the number of Looked After Children and the IRO Service; Child Protection; Quality Assurance of the IRO Service; and the priorities for 2019/20.

The Panel were invited to consider the Annual Report and endorse the priorities for 2019/20.

During discussion, the Panel raised the following issues:-

- Stability of Staff within the Service – One member highlighted the positive effect stability of staff had on the service. The Panel was advised that the vacancy rate in Children's Services was currently at 3.7%;
- One member suggested that the report needed comments from Looked After Children; and pictorial evidence to bring the document alive;
- Page 61 – Children's views about their review and conferences. One member felt that the paragraph was too short to identify any general issues. The Panel was advised that action plans were in place to address any concerns. The Panel was advised further that the young inspectors were doing some work regarding young people being in control of their meetings; and some specific training was being developed on how young people should chair their own meeting. Panel members requested an update on the work being undertaken by the young inspectors being presented to a future meeting; and
- Page 63 – Priorities for 2019/20 – second bullet point – Clarification was sort as to whether the 'To engage parents more pro-actively' referred to birth parents. The Panel was advised that this priority was referring to birth parents. One member highlighted that having a birth parent engaged was very important for the child.

In conclusion, the Panel welcomed the report and the progress made.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual report of the Independent Chair's Service be received and that the priorities for 2019/20 as detailed in the report be endorsed.

2. That an update on the work of the Young Inspectors with regard to reviews be received by the Panel at a future meeting.

8 REGULATION 44 INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE REPORT

The Panel received a report from Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager, which provided an update on the work of the Independent Visitor.

The Panel was advised that Independent Visitors conducted monthly visits to the seven children's homes within Lincolnshire and produced reports to the management team which were also shared with Ofsted.

It was reported that in addition, the service had recently begun to visit Denton Avenue supported accommodation on a quarterly basis.

Attached at Appendix A was a copy of the Independent Visiting Service report covering the period from October 2018 to June 2019.

It was noted that visitor reports reflected the implementation of Signs of Safety across the authority, which ensured consistency of practice within a framework that all staff utilised within children's services.

The Panel was advised that overall the level of care provided in the homes was good and in some instances was exceptional. It was reported that there was an ethos of reflective practice and approaches within the homes, which ensured that learning was shared across teams. It was highlighted that staff had been resilient and had remained motivated even when there had been staffing issues; and management challenges.

The report highlighted that the staff and manager's commitment to providing good quality service to the young people in spite of the challenges was to be commended.

The Panel was advised that good quality training was being delivered and that access was being provided to a range of courses to aid the on-going development of staff. It was highlighted that some training was tailored to meet individual children's needs; an example given was a CAMHS Psychologist delivering training to a team meeting focusing on the impact of trauma on a child's development.

It was highlighted that transport at times was a challenge, due to the amount of time a young person spent travelling from the home to school; and that some escorts did not fully understand the needs of the young person. It was highlighted that in these instances staff had been proactive in advocating the needs of the young people.

It was reported that the homes offered a variety of activities to enable the young people to meet their needs and interests.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
25 JULY 2019**

The Panel noted that a number of modernisations were on-going or in the process of being completed. Particular reference was made to the significant refurbishment at Albion Street.

Reference was also made to the swift and supportive response from Beacon, Strut and Haven to the emergency admissions of young people arising from the suspension of a private children's home provider.

The Panel was advised that 4 of the homes were rated as 'outstanding', 2 were rated as 'good' and one (Albion Street) 'required improvement'. The Committee was reassured that a plan was in place to address the issues at Albion Street.

During discussion, the Panel raised the following issues:-

- One member expressed thanks to staff for the provision of an excellent sensory garden at the Haven; and
- Some concern was expressed relating to the refurbishment of Albion Street, and to the fact that there should not be any slippage in the programme of works. Reassurance was given that a comprehensive action plan was in place to ensure that the work was completed on time.

The Chairman extended thanks on behalf of the Panel to officers for an excellent report.

RESOLVED

That the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service Report be received.

9 LINCOLNSHIRE LEAVING CARE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel received a report from Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services, which invited comments on the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Annual Report.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's and Kerry Mitchell, Assistant Director, Barnardo's.

The Panel was advised that the current contract for the Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service was delivered by Barnardo's. It was highlighted that the current contract would be in place until 31 March 2020.

In guiding the Panel through the report particular reference was made to: accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation. It was highlighted that the service offered advice, support and assistance in accommodation options for the over 18's. It was reported that Barnardo's now had a dedicated Accommodation Worker who helped young people at 18 to register for social housing and to navigate through the bureaucracy attached to having a property. The Officer was also supporting young people applying for supported accommodation through the Avenue and Youth Housing; creating a portfolio of information regarding social and private provision;

working very closely with providers to improve how the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service shared information prior to allocation; and acting as a single point of contact between providers and the Leaving Care service.

The Panel noted that Barnardo's had recently commissioned a review of the Lincolnshire Supported Lodgings Scheme to ensure that it remained a flexible and viable option for a number of young people transitioning into adulthood. It was noted further that the scheme had seen some brilliant outcomes with 23 placements at the moment.

Details relating to accessing Education, Employment and Training opportunities were shown on pages 83 and 84 of the report. The Panel was advised that the Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme and the Work Preparation and Work Experience Scheme continued to offer Lincolnshire Care Leavers a pathway into work and financial self-sufficiency. Details of bespoke packages of support were shown on page 83 of the report. It was highlighted that currently there were 10 young people attending university. Page 84 of the report provided information as to the role of the Leaving Care Worker.

The Panel was advised that Barnardo's had hosted a national event in March 2019 to which two young people from Lincolnshire had been given the opportunity to attend and have professional photographs taken and produce some videos for the event. It was noted that the young people had then attended a dinner, with the support from staff from the service; and the supported lodgings scheme. The Panel was advised further that two nominations had also been put forward from the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service for the Excellence Awards Ceremony held in London in December 2018. The Panel was advised that the Supported Lodgings Team had made it to the 'Top 3' for the Impact Award and that a young carer had been nominated and was subsequently awarded the 'Young Achiever Award' for the East Region.

The Service was also looking to expand the opportunities to work with young people both in Lincolnshire and with the group of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people living in Peterborough.

The report highlighted that from April 2018, all Leaving Care Services across the UK had been asked to extend Personal Advisor Support for all 21-25 year olds, which had included all the young people who had previously been closed to the service, but fell within the age range. It was noted that the extension to the service had been quickly picked up and an additional staffing resource was now taking this piece of work forward.

During discussion, the Panel raised the following points:-

- That Barnardo's was able to replicate the normal parent/child relationship even when the young person was living independently or out of the scope of help from Barnardo's;
- What could be done more to encourage private landlords to have more understanding of Care Leavers. Reassurance was given that in most cases with help from the Accommodation Worker, there were very few situations

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
25 JULY 2019**

when a solution could not be found. It was also highlighted that some young people chose to live in unsuitable accommodation; in these instances Barnardo's would constantly review them. The Panel was advised that the Corporate Parenting Manager was looking at how best to create a housing forum that pulled together a number of providers who

- could then offer greater choice and range of support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers; and
- Availability of Offices – The Panel noted that due to the rural nature of Lincolnshire, offices were based in Lincoln, Louth, Peterborough and Sleaford. The Panel noted further that it was more economical for officers to travel, rather than to acquire any further office space.

RESOLVED

That the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Annual Report be received.

10 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PERFORMANCE MEASURES QUARTER 4

Consideration was given to a report from Caroline Jackson, Commissioning Manager – Performance Services, which provided key performance information for Quarter 4 2018/19 relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was the Looked After Children measures.

The Interim Director – Children's Services presented the report and guided the Committee through Appendix A, making specific reference to the performance indicators that had not been achieved, which were:

- Fostering/adoption of Looked After Children (LAC) aged 10 to 16 years old – The Panel was advised that performance had improved slightly at year end, but remained under target. The Panel noted that the vast majority of children looked after within this age group were placed in foster care settings. However, it was highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of children placed in residential care; and there had also been a concentrated focus on reuniting children with their birth families, and that some of this group were awaiting revocation of their care orders. The Panel was advised that officers were satisfied with the actions being undertaken;
- Stability of Placements of LAC: Number of moves – The Panel noted that the reduction in performance was indicative of children with more complex needs becoming looked after; and that there had been a reduction in the number of foster placements available to match effectively at the point of the initial placement;
- Stability of Placement of LAC: length of placement – It was reported that a considerable amount of work had been done to ensure that foster carers were well supported and that any potential problems were identified early. It was noted that the national and local shortage of foster carers who wanted to care on a long term basis was also a contributing factor. It was felt that this indicator needed refreshing; and

- Care leavers in Education, Employment and Training – The Panel noted that there had been a small dip in the number of care leavers employed or in education and training. The reason for the dip at this stage was unknown. It was highlighted that the Care Leaver Apprenticeship Scheme was being reviewed, so that it could respond to the increased educational requirement implemented by the government to access apprenticeships. It was hoped that a new offer would help young people with fewer qualifications access the Care Leaver Apprenticeship Scheme.

Some concern was raised regarding whether there was any scope in setting a higher performance target for English and Maths. The Panel was advised that the target set was aspirational, and that the challenge was dependent on where the cohort of young people were in the learning cycle. It was noted that Caring to Learn was helping young people identify their skills and interests. It was noted further that the pupil premium was being used to build on an interest or out of school activity. It was highlighted that PEPS provided an aspirational range of options; the challenge was getting the young person to gain a passion for learning in the first instance which then helped with the overall emotional wellbeing.

RESOLVED

That the Looked After Children Performance Measures for Quarter 4 be received.

11 COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Consideration was given to a report from the Corporate Project Support Officer, which provided the Panel with information on the Compliments, Comments and Complaints for Looked After Children for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The Panel noted for the 12 month period there had been one complaint from a young person in Lincolnshire County Council care and that the outcome had been unsubstantiated. It was also highlighted that no compliments had been received regarding Looked After Children during the period.

Details of the statutory complaints process was shown on page 113 of the report.

The Panel noted that complaints had now been brought back in-house from the start of March 2019, and that this would provide the authority with greater control in shaping the future of the complaints process. It was also highlighted that a new case management system (Lagan) had been introduced from 1 April 2019, which would enable detailed reporting to be undertaken, and provide in-depth analysis of complaints being made to the authority.

In conclusion, it was highlighted that due to the small number of complaints in relation to Looked After Children, it was very difficult to pin-point any areas that needed reviewing. It was noted that moving forward the team would be able to obtain

10
CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
25 JULY 2019

comprehensive information before a case was progressed to the first stage of the complaints process, which would help to resolve issues at a lower level.

RESOLVED

That the Compliments, Comments & Complaints report received for Looked After Children be noted.

12 **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report from Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

The work programme was detailed on pages 118 to 121 of the report presented for the Panel to consider.

RESOLVED

That the work programme for 2019/20 as detailed on pages 118 to 121 of the report presented be approved, subject to inclusion of the item raised at Minute Number 7 (2).

13 **CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

RESOLVED

That in accordance with section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

14 **V4C UPDATE REPORT (MARCH AND JUNE 2019)**

RESOLVED

That the actions as detailed in the Exempt report be agreed.

The meeting closed at 12.35 pm

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report April 2018 to March 2019

Summary:

- Within the reporting period, we have seen an increase in the number Care Proceedings issued
- Care Proceedings were concluded in respect of 154 children
- The use of Placement Orders has dropped

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

1. Background

Under the Children Act 1989, there are two types of proceedings in which Children's Services are involved;-

1. Public Law Proceedings
2. Private Law proceedings

Public Law proceedings

An application is made by the Local Authority as it considers that the child(ren) are suffering/are at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of:-

- a. The care given by the parent(s)/relative not being what is reasonable to expect a parents to give; or
- b. The child(ren) being beyond parental control

The Local Authority can apply to the Court for two types of orders under s31 Children Act 1989 (referred to as care proceedings or public law proceedings). The orders the Local Authority can apply for are: Care Order and Supervision Order.

A Care Order (or interim care order) grants the Local Authority parental responsibility for the child (shared with any person having parental responsibility for the child). If a child is made subject to a care order, looked after provisions must

be implemented, including appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer, regular looked after child meetings. Decisions for the child cannot be made without consulting all those who hold parental responsibility. A care order remains in force until the child's 18th birthday.

A Supervision Order (or interim supervision order) directs that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to advise, assist and befriend the child. If a child is made subject to a supervision order, child in need provisions must be followed, including six weekly child in need meetings and regular visits. A Supervision Order is made for a period up to one year, if required the supervision order can be extended by application to the court. An extension can be granted for the order to be in place for up to 3 years.

The Court cannot make a Care or Supervision Order for a child who has reached the age of 17 or is 16 and married.

Private Law Proceedings

Other individuals who are connected with the child are able to make applications for a variety of Orders under Children Act (known as private law proceedings). These include: Child Arrangement Orders directing where the child is to live or who the child is to spend time with (replacing Residence and Contact Orders); Specific Issue Orders directing that something shall or shall not be done; Prohibited Steps Orders preventing a person from doing something restricted in the Order; and s14A Special Guardianship Orders appointing a person or persons who are over 18 years of age and not a parent of the child in question, to be the special guardian(s) of that child. The effect of the Special Guardianship Order is to grant the special guardian heightened parental responsibility for that child, and, to exercise such parental responsibility to the exclusion of everyone else who has parental responsibility for that child.

During these proceedings if the Court is alerted to issues which effect the safety of the child, the Court can direct the Local Authority to complete a section 37 report, setting out whether after investigation the Local Authority considers;

- a) the child(ren) to be at risk of significant harm in the care of their parent/relative such that they seek to apply for a Public law Order to safeguard the child(ren)s welfare
- b) there is no need to issue an application for public law proceedings, however the Local authority consider that they should provide services or assistance for the child(ren) or his family
- c) take any other action with respect to the child.

In any family proceedings concerning the welfare of a child the Court can make a Family Assistance Order under s.16 Children Act 1989, directing the Local Authority to appoint an officer to advise, assist and (where appropriate) befriend any person named in the order (often referred to as the private law alternative to a Supervision Order). A Family Assistance Order is made for a period up to one year. The difference between a Supervision Order and Family Assistance Order is that under a Supervision Order the Local Authority duty is to the child, however,

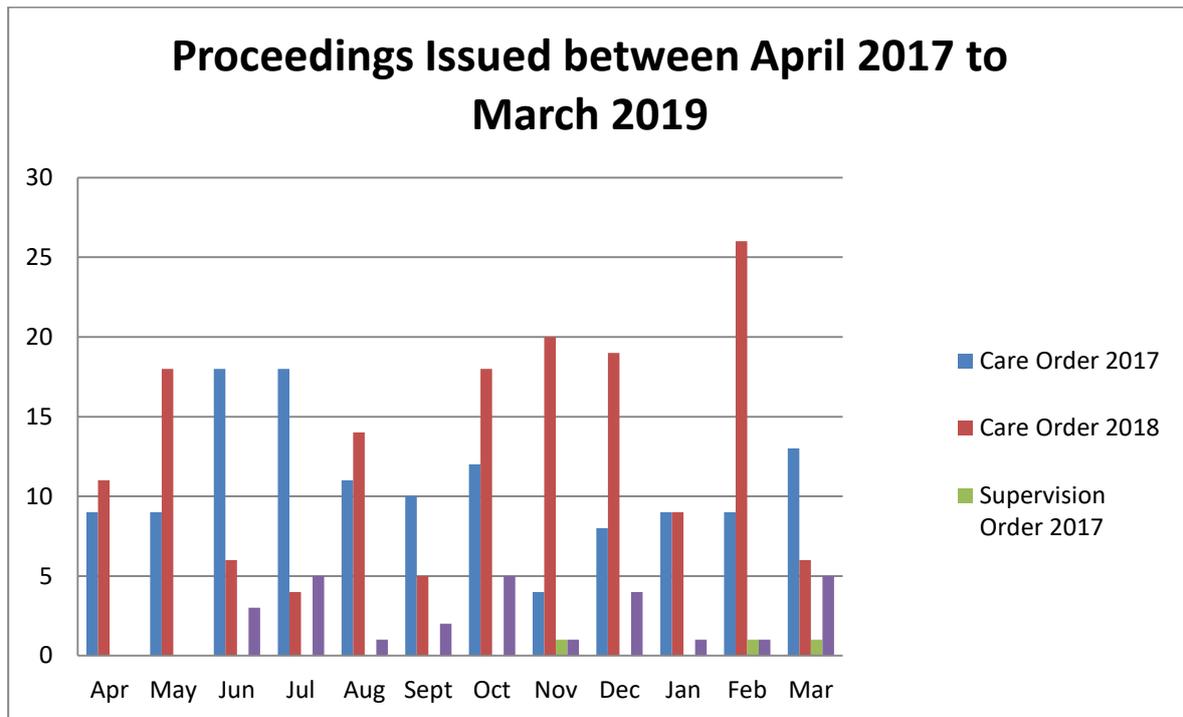
under a Family Assistance Order the duty is to anyone named in the order, which can include the child, parents, special guardians, or any person with whom the child lives or spends time with.

Public Law Proceedings Issued

Between April 2018 and March 2019, care proceedings were issued in respect of 184 children consisting of 156 applications for Care Orders and 28 Supervision Orders.

This is in contrast to applications being made in respect of 135 children period April 2017 - March 2018.

It is important to note that the figures represent the amount of children in respect of whom proceedings were issued. Previously, the legal department saw a spate of case issued in respect of siblings groups of 6 or more children, this trend has reduced recently.



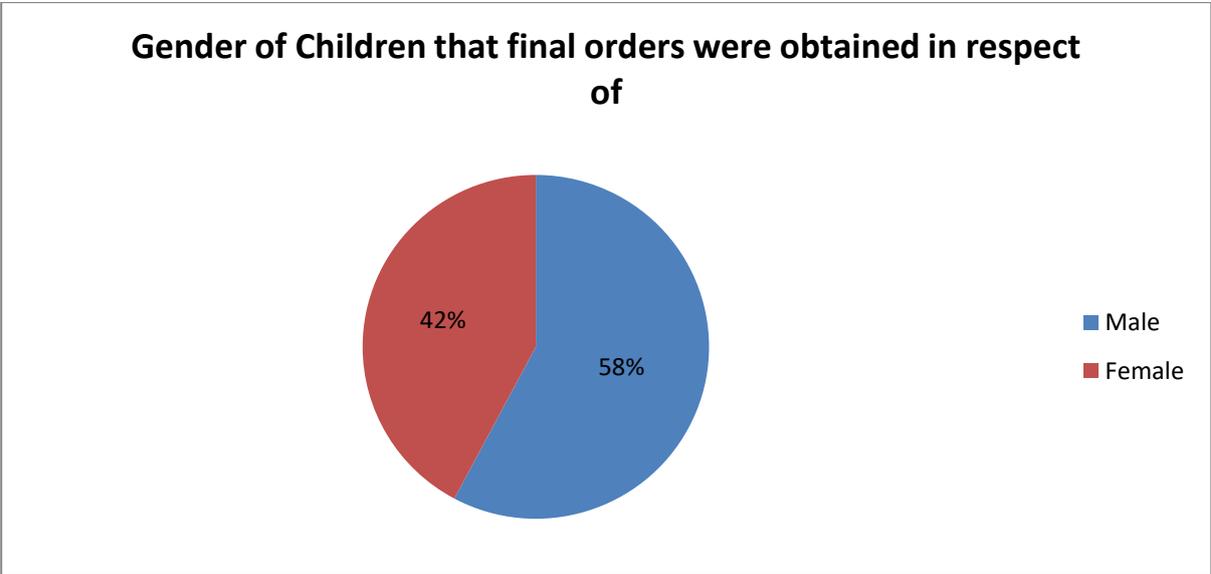
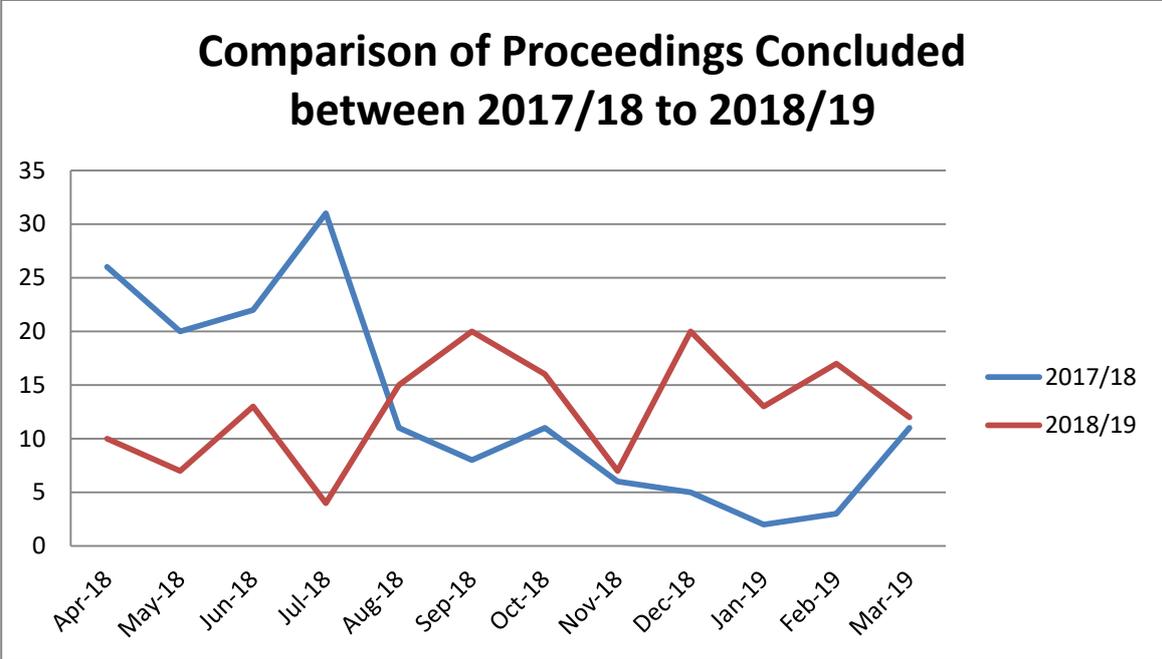
The Court does not require individual applications for Care or Supervision Orders for sibling groups: one application will be made for all the siblings and this is dealt with as one case by the court. However the outcome for each child in a sibling group may be different.

As previously stated, the Local Authority is unable to apply for orders which bestow parental responsibility upon the child's extended family, for example Child Arrangement Order (who the child shall live with), Special Guardianship Order (which grants the special guardian heightened parental responsibility). An application for a Care Order or Supervision Order may be made as a route to such private law orders being made to extended family.

Advantages of care proceedings in these circumstances include: the child being separately represented by their own solicitor; an independent children's guardian being appointed; the proceedings should be completed within 26 weeks; and the parents will be entitled to legal aid, which would not be available in private law proceedings. In addition, extended family members cannot automatically apply for a Special Guardianship Order until the child has lived with them for at least a year before making such application. In Care Proceedings this time period is not required.

Proceedings Concluded

Between April 2018 and March 2019, care proceedings were concluded in respect of 154 children, 89 males and 65 females. The previous financial year proceedings were concluded in respect of 156 children.

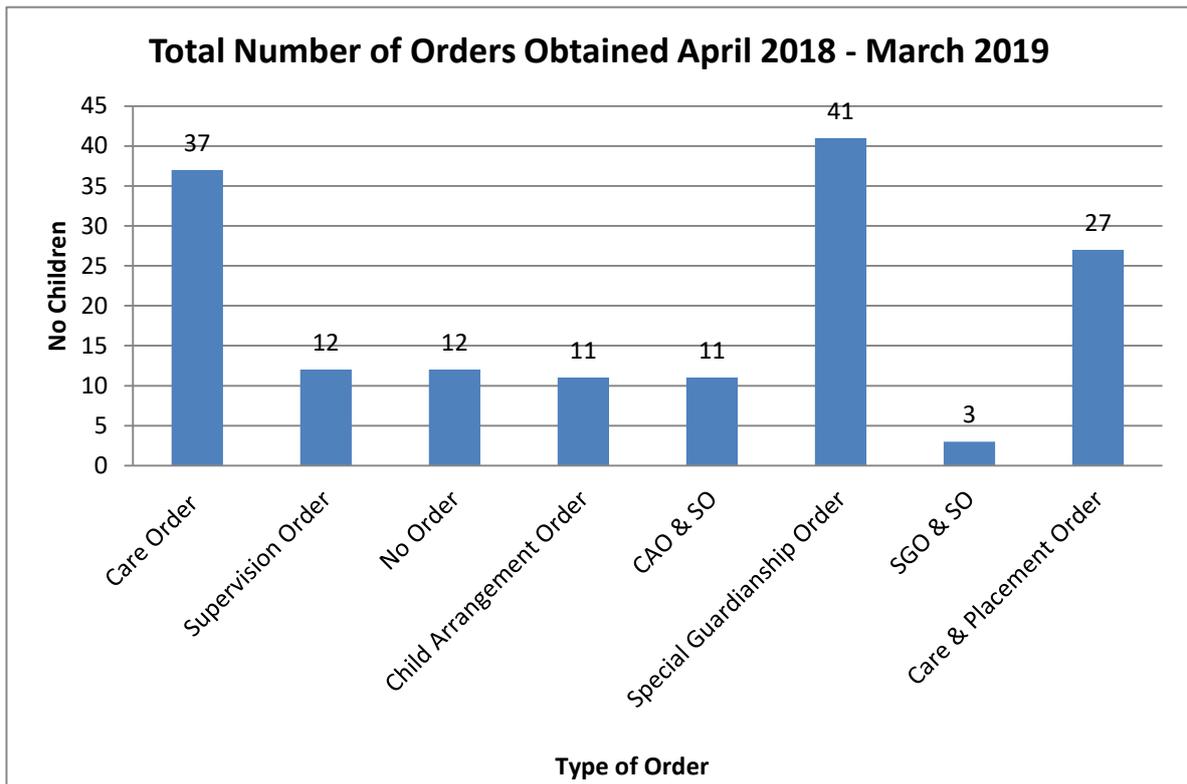


Analysis of Outcomes for children who have been the subject of care proceedings

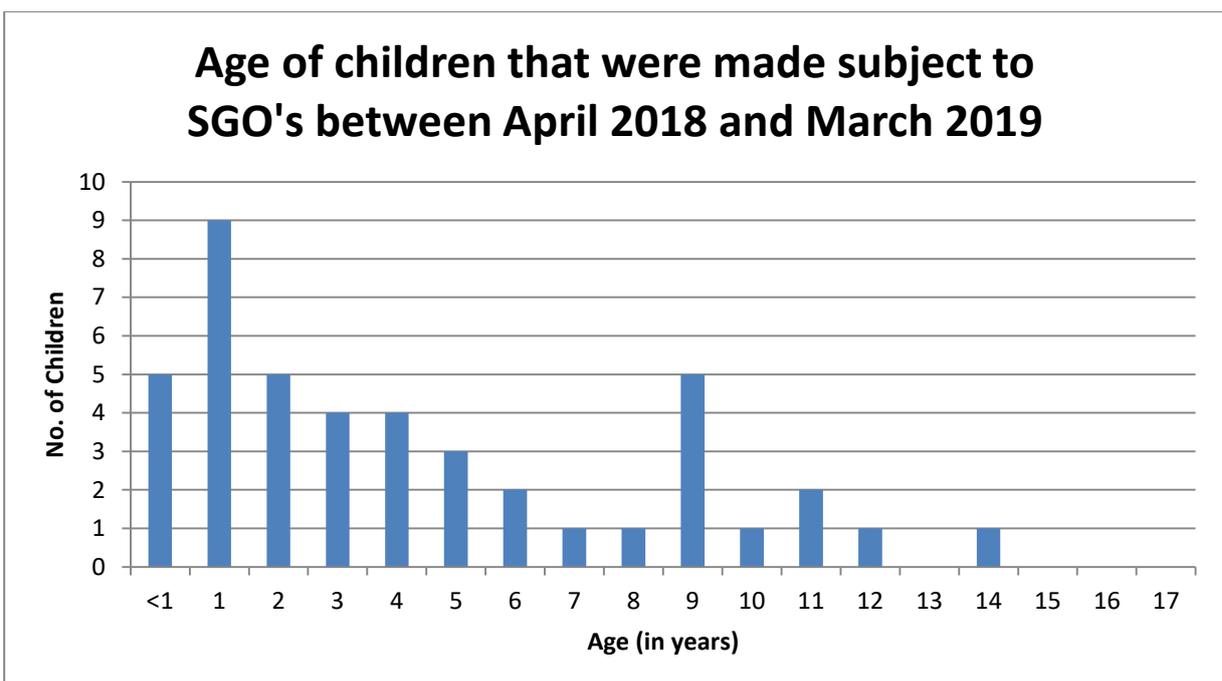
The final orders granted by the Court in 2018/19 in contrast to 2017/18 were as follows:-

Order	Number of Orders 2017/18	Number of Orders 2018/19
Care Order	38	37
Care Order & Placement Order	36	27
Supervision Order	15	12
No Order	2	11
Child Arrangements Order	3	12
Child Arrangements Order & Supervision Order	12	11
Child Arrangements Order and Family Assistance Order	1	0
Special Guardianship Order	30	41
Special Guardianship Order & Supervision Order	14	3
Special Guardianship Order & Child Arrangements Order	4	0
Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order and Supervision Order	1	0

Total Number of combined orders where LA remains involved	2017/18	2018/19
Care Order (to include CO and CO&PO)	74	64
Supervision Order (to include, SO, CAO&SO, SGO & SO, SGO, CAO & SO)	42	26
FAO (CAO&FAO)	1	0
SGO (to include SGO, SGO&SO, SGO&CAO,SGO CAO & SO)	49	44



There has been a reduction in the number of Care and Placement Orders made in 2018/19 (27 Orders, 18% of Orders made) in contrast to 2017/18 (36 Orders, 23% of Orders made). When looking at the number of SGO's made in 2018/19 (44), 27 of those children were under the age of 5 (61% of the SGO's made). Had a family placement not been available for this cohort of children, it is likely that the only option for them would have been a plan of adoption. It is therefore a positive reflection of the ability and willingness of extended family to care for the children, allowing the child to retain links with their birth family including contact with birth parents, in contrast to a plan of adoption where all ties are severed.

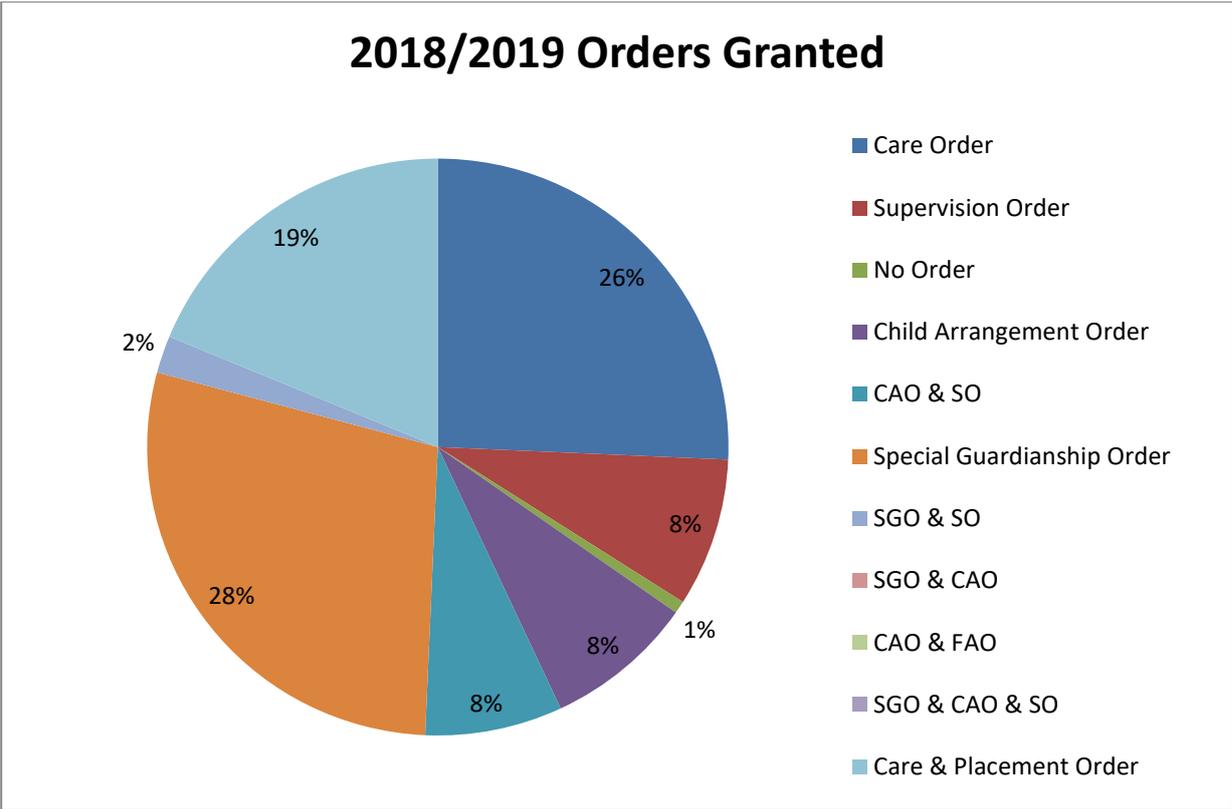


In addition there has been an increase in the number of cases where No Order was granted. Under the Children Act, the Court is obliged to consider **the "No Order Principle"** , when considering whether or not to make one or more Orders in respect of a child, the Court shall not make any Order unless it considers that doing so would be better for the child than making no order at all.

In 2017/18 2 children were not made subject to an Order (1% of the total Orders made), however in 2018/19 11 children were not made subject to an Order (8% of all Orders made). ON the face of the data it would appear that within the course of the proceedings, parents have made drastic changes to their lifestyles resulting in them being able to care for the child(ren) without the need for state intervention. However, when reviewing the cases where No Order was made this is not quite the case:-

- 7 Children (64%) were not made subject to an Order to Lincolnshire County Council, as the Court determined that the Children's ordinary residence was outside of Lincolnshire. Therefore the proceedings were transferred to a neighbouring Authority (4 children 36%) or a foreign Country (3 children 27%) for the proceedings to be heard in the local Court. S such Lincolnshire County Council withdrew their applications.
- Sadly, 1 child (9%) died within the conduct of the proceedings. The child had been born at 24 weeks gestation and suffered many life threatening health complications during her short life requiring urgent hospital treatment including cardiac arrest and a catastrophic brain injury. The child was admitted to hospital with a chest infection, within 1 weeks her health ha deteriorated to the extent that she was considered to be an end of life patient and died a few days later in hospital. As such, Lincolnshire County Council withdrew its application.
- Positively, 3 children (27%) where not made subject to public law Orders, the Local Authority confirming that there was no need for public law Orders and the Court applying the no order Principle. In all of these cases, full parenting assessments and expert psychiatric assessments were completed. The assessments concluded that the parent(s) no longer presented with mental health issues and were able to effectively meet the childs needs, without Local Authority support. The cases concluded within 21,24 and 26 weeks respectively.

Overall when contrasting the number of No Orders, where the No Order Principle has been applied, there has been a minimal increase between 2017/18 (2 children, 1% of Orders made) and 2018/19 (3 children, 2% of all Orders made).



Post proceedings local authority involvement 2018/19

From the Orders made in 2018/19, the Local Authority will have remained statutorily involved with 131 (85%) of the children subject to proceedings, either as a result of the child being looked after (under Care Order), subject to child in need procedures (Supervision Order) or providing support services to Special Guardians (under Special Guardianship Orders).

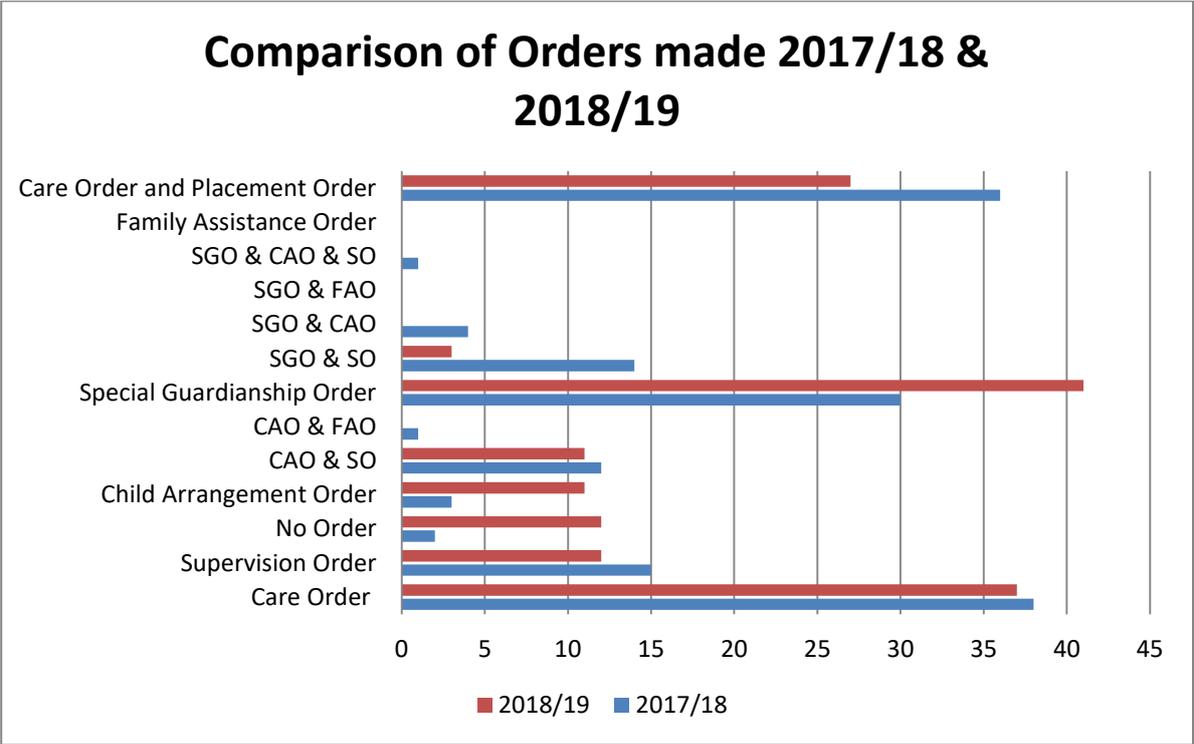
Supervision Orders are initially made for a period of up to one year (however, can be extended on application by the Local Authority, for up to three years), therefore the Local Authority will cease to be involved with 18% (23 children) of those children (provided there is no need to make an application to extend the duration of the Orders) by March 2020.

A plan of adoption should be reviewed at each looked after child review, generally if a child has not been placed with prospective adopters after 18 months, the Local Authority will change the care plan to one of long term foster care and an application be made to Court to discharge the Placement Order. Should all the children subject to a Placement Order in 2018/19 (27 children, 21%) be placed for adoption and later adopted, (within 18 months, September 2020) the Local Authority will only remain involved with 53% (81 children) of the children subject to proceedings in 2018/19.

Support Services under Special Guardianship Orders are provided for up to three years, therefore by April 2022 the Local Authority will not be involved with 34% (44 children) of those children. By such time the Local Authority shall only be involved

with 24% (37 children) of the children subject to proceedings in 2018/19 (those subject to Care Orders).

At Looked After Child (LAC) reviews, the social work team and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will consider whether it remains in the Child's best interests to be subject to a Care Order with the Local Authority sharing parental responsibility for the child, or whether the child's best interests can be served via another Order, for example SGO to extended family member.



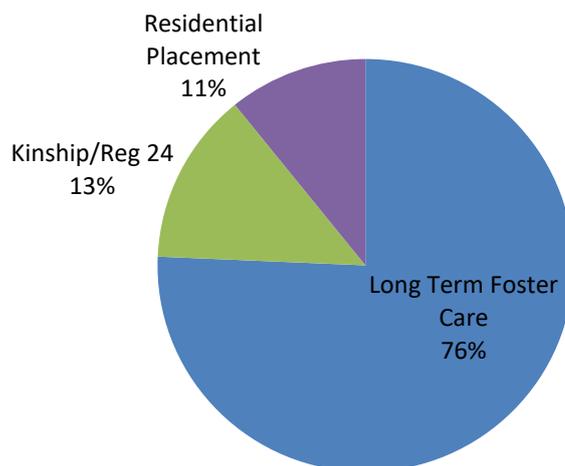
Analysis of care plans for children made the subject of Care Orders

During the period April 2018 to March 2019, a total of 37 children were made subject to care orders. Placement Orders were made alongside Care Orders in respect of 27 children. A Placement Order is applied for where the Local Authority care plan is one of adoption. The effect of Placement Order is that it permits the Local Authority to place the child for adoption. Where a child is placed with prospective adopters the Local Authority continues to share parental responsibility for the child with the adopters and the parents, until such time as an Adoption Order is made.

Provided all the children who were made subject to Placement Orders in the period April 2018 – March 2019, are placed for adoption and adoption Orders made, the Local Authority would not retain parental responsibility for these children and they would not remain subject to Looked After Child procedures. Therefore only 58% of the children made subject to Care Orders would remain Looked After children.

During April 2018 – March 2019 37 children were subject to Care Orders; 5 children's plans were to be cared for by extended family members/friends (kinship/regulation 24 placements where the family member is approved as a foster carer (13%) and the Local Authority holds parental responsibility); 28 children's plans were long term foster care (76%); 4 children's plans were residential care (11%).

Placements for children where stand alone Care Orders were made



Special Guardianship Orders

Special Guardianship Orders were introduced by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, they were initially intended as a permanent legal option for older children, who had a pre-existing relationship with a relative/long terms foster carer/family friend.

When a Special Guardianship Order is made in respect of a previously looked after child (subject to ICO or s20 accommodation) who has been placed by the local authority with the special guardians, there is a statutory duty on the authority to provide support to the placement for 3 years after the order has been made. In addition the court can make additional orders to support the placement.

There has been a rise in the number of Supervision Orders and Family Assistance Orders made accompanying a Special Guardianship Order in recent years. These orders place statutory duties upon the Local Authority to provide additional services and support to the child, special guardian or parents.

The increase may be as a result of the 26 week track to complete proceedings following the implementation of the Public Law Outline in April 2014. The reasons for such orders being made are usually: prospective special guardians being assessed late in proceedings and as such the child being placed with the Special Guardian at the end/conclusion of proceedings without the placement having been tested out; and Special Guardians not willing to facilitate contact arrangements and the Local Authority remaining involved to ensure contact is safely promoted in the child's welfare and child's additional needs.

Nationwide, SGO's have increased, which has also lead to an increase in the breakdown of SGO placements, where children have subsequently been placed in the Care of the Local Authority and subject to further public law proceedings. As a result, to reduce the number of placement breakdowns, guidance was issued by Mr Justice Keehan (Midland Circuit Family Division Liaison Judge) in August 2016, as follows:-

- a) SGO's should not be made, absent compelling and cogent reasons, until the child has lived for an appreciable period (no guidance has been issued regarding the length of an appreciable period, however, HHJ Clark sitting at Lincoln Family Court suggested that this should be at least 10 weeks. Drawing similarities to the situation where prospective adopters have to wait 10 weeks following a child being placed with them before an application for an Adoption Order can be made) with the prospective special guardians;
- b) in some cases a child arrangements order may be the order which meets the welfare best interests of the child;
- c) where the care plan (which details the Local authority's recommendations for a support needed for the child) providing for placement with the prospective special guardians and, in time, support for the prospective special guardians to apply for a SGO is agreed and/or is approved by the court, the proceedings should be concluded with the making of public law (Care Order) or private law orders (Child Arrangement Order);

- d) where a local authority cannot approve a placement of a child with prospective special guardians under the auspices of an interim care order (i.e. the requirements of placement or fostering regulations cannot be met) the court may sanction a placement under an interim Child Arrangement Order;
- e) only in exceptional cases should care proceedings be prolonged solely for the purpose of awaiting the outcome of a trial placement of a child with prospective special guardians and/or the completion of a SGO assessment report.

A national study of the usage of Special Guardianship Orders over time (April 2007- March 2015) was conducted by Brunel University London and Lancaster University, funded by the Nuffield Foundation. The report collated national figures held by Cafcass in public law proceedings, and was circulated at the Local Family Justice Board Meeting in Birmingham by Keenan J on 27 March 2019. The report found that:-

1. There has been a steady rise in the number of Special guardianship Order resulting from public law proceedings since 2007/08.
2. Since 2012/13 the proportion of Placement Orders has declined as the share of Special Guardianship Orders has risen.
3. A new and growing trend is the use of a Supervision Order made to the Local Authority to accompany a Special Guardianship Order, in approximately one third of all cases a Supervision Order is made alongside a Special Guardianship Order, requiring the Local Authority to advise, assist and befriend the supervised child. There are practical and resource implications arising from this new trend, but above all it raises the question why a Supervision Order is necessary and what it can achieve.
4. The age profile of children made subject to Special Guardianship Orders is changing, the proportion of infants under one has increased particularly since 2012. Between 2010-15 children under 5 years of age comprised approximately 60% of Children made subject to a Special Guardianship Order.

The August 2016 guidance has taken time to filter into practice at Lincoln Family Court, as a result was revisited in March 2017.

The further guidance recommends:-

- a) save for exceptional circumstances (a) Family Assistance Orders (FAOs) or Supervision Orders (SOs) should not be made to coerce a LA to provide support to the SGO holders. All such matters should be contained in the SGO Support Plan (details the support required for the child and family to support the placement). A perceived need to provide support to or monitoring of special guardians by means of a FAO or SO would appear to contraindicate the making of an SGO in the first place.
- b) save in exceptional circumstances, a SGO should only be made after the child has lived with the proposed special guardians for an appreciable period of time. In the majority of cases where the agreed way forward is for the LA to place the child or children subject to a SGO but the completion of thorough assessments of the proposed placement would take the case outside the 26 week limit, the court should be invited to make a care order

on a care plan providing that, on the basis that the assessments are positive, an application for a SGO will be made in due course.

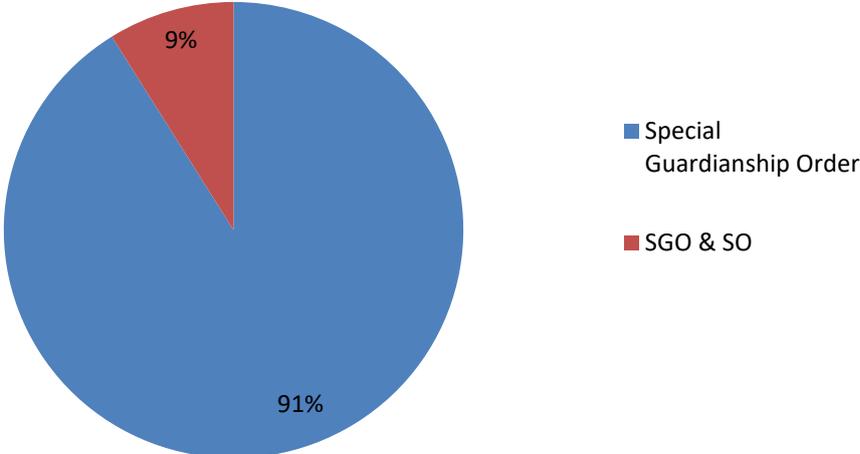
This guidance implies that unless a child has been placed with prospective special guardians from the outset of proceedings being issued, it is unlikely that the proceedings will conclude with an SGO, rather the child will be made subject to a Care Order with a plan to be cared for by kinship carers, which would require that these family members are approved as regulation 24 carers by the Local Authority fostering panel, within 16 weeks of the placement commencing (can be extended a further 8 weeks in exceptional cases). The impact of this guidance could result in an increased number of children being looked after children (under a Care Order) in Lincolnshire.

The guidance going forward should result in a reduction in the number of Supervision Order or Family Assistance Orders being made alongside a Special Guardianship Order, which subjects the child to Child in Need procedures.

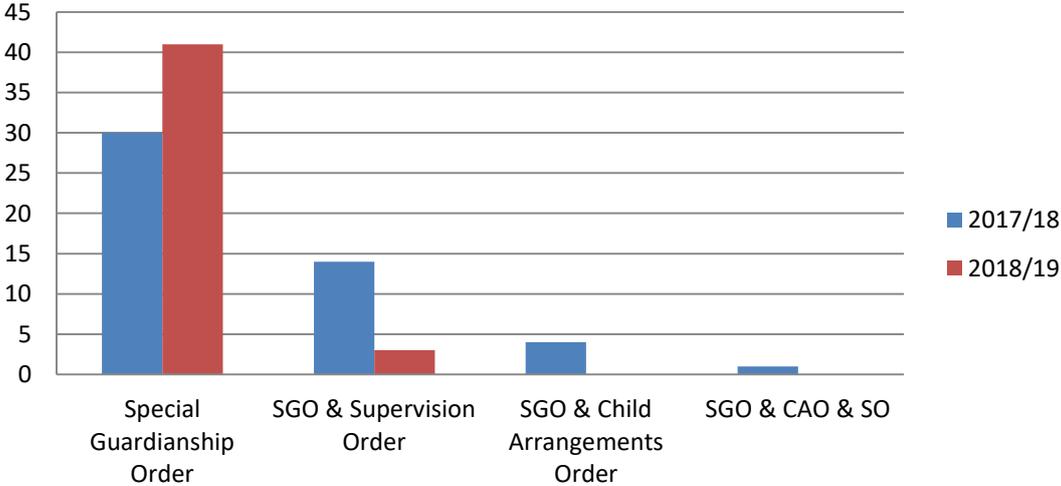
It can be evidenced already from the data collated from the last 3 years (please see table below) that the guidance is starting to have an effect on the conclusion of cases, with an increase in the number of standalone Special Guardianship Orders (93% of cases where SGO made in 2018/19) and reduction in the number of Supervision Orders being made alongside a Special Guardianship Order (7% of cases in 2018/19, no Family Assistance Orders having been made alongside).

Type of Order	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Special Guardianship Order	29 (55%)	30 (61%)	41 (93%)
Special Guardianship Order and Supervision Order	13 (24.5%)	14 (29%)	3 (7%)
Special Guardianship Order and Child Arrangements Order	7 (13%)	4 (8%)	0
Special Guardianship order, Child Arrangements Order and Supervision Order	0	1 (2%)	0
Special Guardianship Order and Family Assistance Order	4 (7.5%)	0	0
Total Orders	53	49	44

SGO's granted in 2018-2019

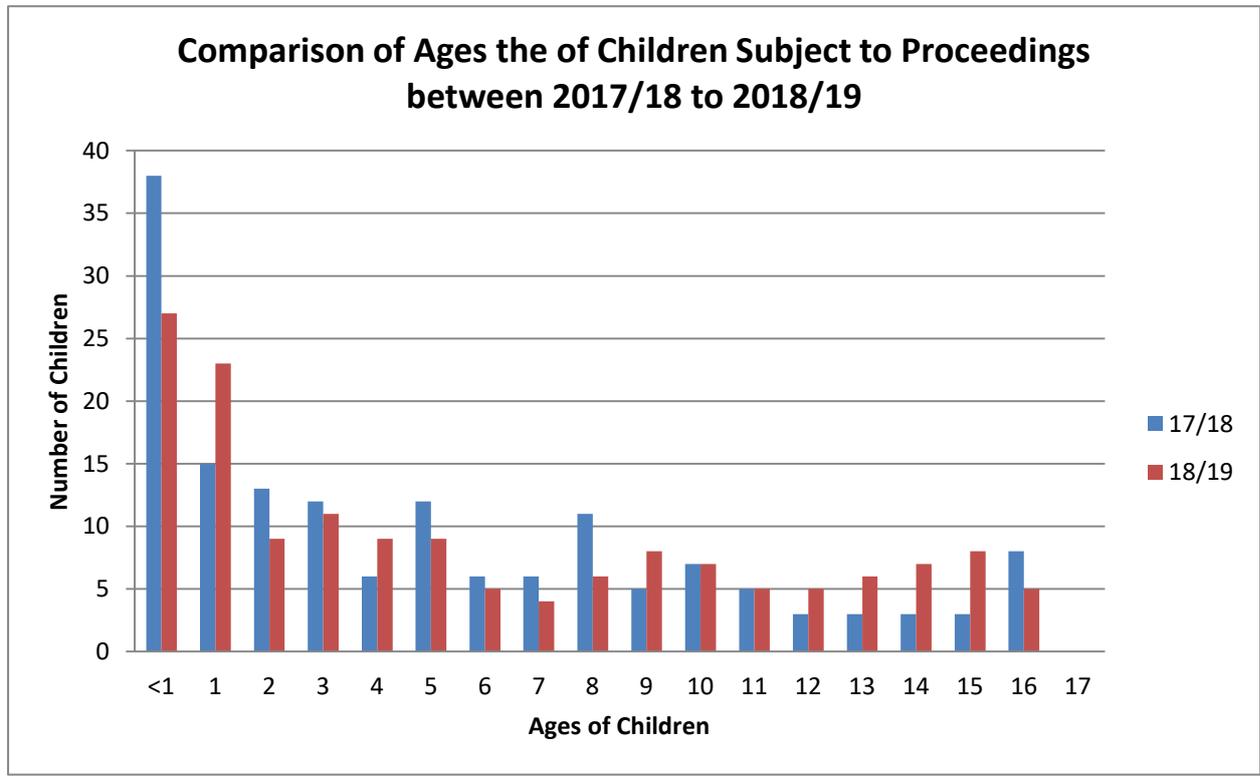


Comparison of SGO's Made between 2017/18 & 2018/19



Age of children who are the subject of care proceedings

The totals are as follows:-



Analysis of ages:-

Age Range	Number of Children	Percentage
0 - <5 years	79	51%
5 - <10 years	32	21%
10 – 16 years	43	28%

Over half the children subject to proceedings concluded 2018/19 are of an age where a plan of adoption could be progressed (0-<5 years). In the event that parents are not able to meet their needs and there are no extended family members who are willing and able to meet their needs.

Timescales for proceedings

On 22 April 2014, the Public Law Outline was enshrined in law. The focus is now on the child's timetable and the need for urgent decisions regarding their future. All s31 Children Act 1989 proceedings are to be completed within 26 weeks (except in exceptional circumstances, where proceedings can be extended by 8 weeks at a time).

The average timescales for proceedings in 2018/19 was 36.5 weeks, in contrast to 34 weeks in 2017/18. The length of proceedings has risen as a result of a number of factors, which have given rise to exceptional circumstances:

- Court availability (cases have had to be concluded outside of 26 weeks given Judicial availability) Increased requests for re-timetabling/further hearings
- Extended family members being identified/seeking assessment late in the proceedings (after the case management hearing to be held no later than 18 business days following issue of proceedings)
- International elements, parents or extended family living abroad, in these situations a referral to the Central Authority has to be made to assist with facilitating assessments being carried out abroad, unfortunately there are delays with the Central Authority accepting referrals which impacts on the start date for such assessments.
- Putative father's have been identified at the eleventh hour, DNA testing has been needed together with further assessments of father's and paternal family members

Lincoln Family Court collates data upon its performance and adherence to the POL, which is circulated on a quarterly basis. The data circulated up to the end of December 2018, recognised that there is a national trend of increased timescales within care proceedings, at an average of 45.6 weeks. The Court has assured that attempts are being made on a local level to reduce the length of proceedings. The average number of hearings per case has remained relatively high at an average of 5.8 hearing per case. The PLO's focus was to have no more than 3 hearings per case.

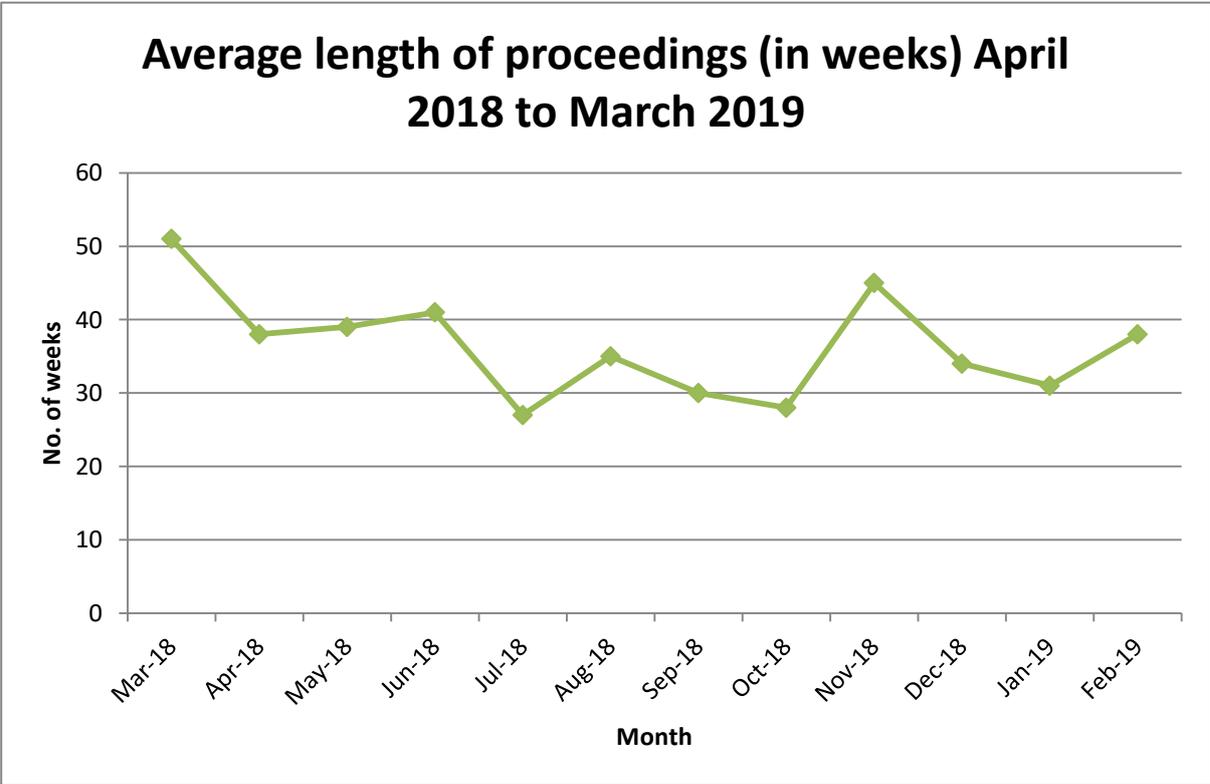
An Internal Audit of a sample of cases exceeding 26 weeks was undertaken, the conclusion of the audit was that delays were purposeful and constructive towards the outcome for the child. Overview of findings for reasons for delay:-

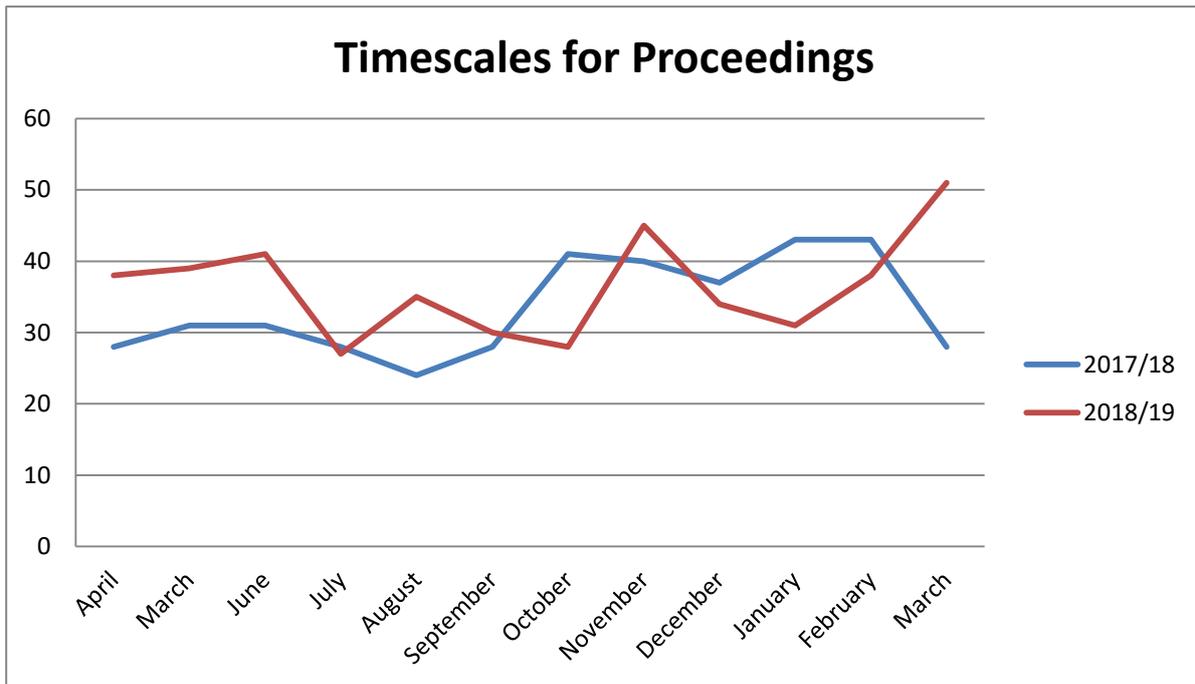
- Quality and timeliness of viabilities
- Lack of adherence to guidance in regards to proposing family and friends assessments (representatives of parents)
- Increase in delays in requests for extensions to proceedings to test out placements/contact
- Extensions due to requirement for expert assessments
- Change of circumstances for parents or current/potential carers requiring a complete change of plan during proceedings
- Not all parents were able or willing to take part in assessments despite encouragement therefore delays to accommodate further efforts to engage.

The Audit identified that updating template documents should be made available and additional training and support should be provided by the Case manager. In April 2019, the new Children and Family Assessment was launched which incorporates the amended risk matrix and places emphasis upon the family to implement their own support plans for the benefit of the children. The case manager has also updated the viability assessment template to ensure a robust assessment process and attempt to limit the number of unnecessary Special Guardianship Assessments.

Timescales per month 2018/19

MONTH	RANGE (IN WEEKS)	AVERAGE (IN WEEKS)
Apr-18	22-50	38
May-18	23-65	39
Jun-18	34-55	41
Jul-18	19-40	27
Aug-18	15-64	35
Sep-18	18-53	30
Oct-18	17-33	28
Nov-18	25-56	45
Dec-18	5-67	34
Jan-19	14-81	31
Feb-19	17-87	38
Mar-19	25-73	51





Timescales Case Studies

Shortest case – 5 weeks, Lincolnshire County Council's involvement ended December 2018

This case is exceptional on its facts and in the view of the writer had Nottinghamshire County Council accepted responsibility for the case at the outset it would not have been a case Lincolnshire County Council needed to issue proceedings in respect of. Lincolnshire's actions were absolutely necessary to safeguard the children's welfare.

Proceedings were issued in November 2018, in respect of four children aged 12, 8, 4 and 3 years respectively. The family had been known to Nottinghamshire Children's Services since the birth of the oldest child in June 2006, owing to concerns of domestic abuse between the mother and her ex-partner (father to the child). Nottinghamshire County Council had sporadic involvement with the family since. In July 2018, the children were residing with their mother at the home of maternal grandmother. Concerns were raised regarding the care being afforded to the children, and the Children were made subject to Child protection Plans in Nottinghamshire. Within a week of the Initial Child Protection Conference the mother moved to Lincolnshire with the children, a transfer in conference was held in August 2018 and the Child protection plans were transferred to Lincolnshire. The family returned to live with maternal grandmother in Nottinghamshire on 15 October 2018.

On 13 November 2018, a housing officer contacted Nottinghamshire Children's Services to inform that information had been received that a 3 year old child was at home alone. Nottinghamshire Police were notified and attended maternal grandmother's address. The mother's partner was found unconscious in the living room at the property, the 3 year old child was sat next to him. Drug paraphernalia was found in the living room which the 3 year old could easily have accessed. The

maternal grandmother returned home, having driven the middle two children to school. The mother was contacted and returned home with the oldest child (who has not had a school place for over a year). All three adults were arrested on suspicion of child cruelty. All three tested positive for cocaine use. All four children were made subject to powers of police protection (PPO), the eldest child was placed with maternal grandfather and the youngest 3 in foster care.

Lincolnshire County Council considered that Nottinghamshire were the designated authority, the precipitating event to warrant proceedings having occurred in Nottinghamshire. In addition the children were living in Nottinghamshire, and the two middle children were registered at school in Nottinghamshire. Lincolnshire County Council asserted that the family are ordinarily resident in Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire County Council, refused responsibility for the children on the basis that the children were subject to Child Protection Plans in Lincolnshire.

Given the urgency of the situation (the PPO's expiring within 72 hours and mother refusing consent to s20 accommodation), Lincolnshire County Council issued care proceedings on 15 November 2018, to safeguard the children's welfare.

An urgent hearing was listed on 16 November 2018, at which the Court made the children subject to Interim Care Orders to Lincolnshire County Council and directed that Nottinghamshire County Council attend the next hearing to deal with the issue of designation.

At the hearing on 12 December 2018, Nottinghamshire County Council continued to oppose they should be the designated Authority. The judge confirmed that he was satisfied that Nottinghamshire is the designated authority. At the relevant time, the mother was in Nottinghamshire, the mother had handed her notice in on her tenancy in Lincolnshire, the children were in school in Nottinghamshire, the precipitating event took place in Nottinghamshire. As such the Court directed that the children be subject to Interim Care orders to Nottinghamshire County Council.

Following designation of Nottinghamshire County Council, Lincolnshire's involvement ceased and the proceedings were transferred to Nottingham Family Court. Hence no orders were made to Lincolnshire County Council.

Longest case – 87 weeks concluded February 2019

Proceedings were issued in on 22 June 2017, at the time of issue the child was 5 months old.

Children's Services had been involved with the family prior to the child's birth, in relation to the child's older sibling. The mother having been known to Children's Services since 2007 with intermittent referrals having been made in respect of the child's older sibling, relating to the mother's mental health, the poor state of the family home, exposure to domestic abuse within the mother's relationships. Since the child's birth, concerns escalated with the children having been made subject to Child Protection Plans under the category of neglect.

On 1 May the mother alleged that the child's father had broken into her home, held her against her will and repeatedly sexually assaulted her, whilst the child was

present. The mother subsequently admitted that she has maintained contact with her ex-partner and he had not broken into her home as she initially alleged.

The mother moved to a refuge with the children on 31 May 2017. On 2 June 2017 the mother left the refuge and returned late in the day, she would not tell staff where she had been or with whom. Two weeks later the mother left the refuge and did not return with the children until 03:30. On 19 June 2017 the mother left the refuge with the children, she did not return that night despite repeated requests and advice to do so, she was reported to the Police as missing. The Police contacted the mother who informed she was in Kent and confirmed she would return to the refuge. She failed to do so. Late in the evening on 21 June 2017, the mother and children were located by the Police in the Norfolk area by the side of a river. Police transported the mother and children back to the refuge.

The case was listed for an urgent hearing on 22 June 2017 for Interim Care Orders and recovery orders, the mother had yet again absconded with the children.

The mother and children were located at the home of maternal grandmother (who had denied knowing where her daughter was) on 29 June 2017. The children were removed from mother's care and placed in foster care (the mother had shaved the children's heads to disguise their appearance)..

A psychiatric report of the mother was commissioned prior to the issue of proceedings, the report concluded that the mother has features of a generalised anxiety disorder, elements of social phobia, she is prone to depression reactive to social stressors. There is a history of compulsive hoarding and diagnosis of historic personality disorder. The experts opinion was that he doubted there will be significant improvement within short timescales, "by which I mean 12 months".

The expert report was completed without sight of the mother's medical records, as such during the proceedings an addendum report was commissioned. The outcome of the initial report was not changed as a result.

As such the Local Authority's plan for the child was one of adoption, a Placement order application having been submitted to the Court on 26 January 2018. The final hearing having been timetabled for 24 April 2018.

On 27 February 2018, there was a change in the allocation of the Children's Guardian, this resulted in the timetable being amended owing to the newly appointed Guardian needing time to familiarise himself with the case, meet the child and form his own views for progression of the case. The Guardian sought further assessment be undertaken, which meant the final hearing could not progress.

In addition, the maternal aunt in March 2018 sought to be assessed for the care of the child. As such the case required extending to allow for a full kinship assessment to be undertaken.

The child's sibling's birth father sought to be assessed to care for him, however had not had contact with the sibling for a significant period. As such this needed to be fully assessed and a transition and monitoring period put into place, in addition to

an expert assessment of the sibling. The difference in the care plans led to the proceedings being separated. The siblings proceedings concluded in January 2019 (81 weeks).

On 15 August 2018, the mother gave birth to the child's younger sibling, the mother appeared to make positive progress, her mental health appeared stable, she appeared to accept the risks her ex-partner (father to the youngest 2 children posed) and stated she was not having contact with him. As such an Interim Supervision Order was made in respect of the younger sibling on 30 August 2018, with a plan for him to remain in his mother's care. The child's proceedings were joined with the new sibling's proceedings.

Given the positive progress the mother was making, further updating parenting assessments and psychiatric assessments were directed to consider whether the mother could care for both younger children, unfortunately the mother failed to engage with these assessments.

On 27 September 2018 the mother and her ex-partner has a argument in Skegness town centre, the mother reported that the meeting was co-incidental. On 11 October 2018, the mother was assaulted by her ex-partner, she later disclosed that she had remained in a relationship with him. An urgent hearing was listed in relation to the younger sibling, he was made subject to an Interim Care order and removed from mothers care on 16 October 2018, he was placed with maternal aunt who had been positively assessed for the care of the older child. This meant that a further assessment of the aunt was required to consider whether she was able to care for both children, together with her own young children. This unfortunately led to further delay for the child's plan.

The mother was distressed following this Court hearing, at the end of October the Police launched a Facebook appeal as the mother was missing, she was found in Milton Keynes and was reported to be intoxicated.

The mother failed to attend contact with the children since October 2018. A Special Guardianship assessment was completed in December 2018, which recommended the maternal aunt and her partner could care for both children. The child moved to the care of her aunt on 23 December 2018. A further updating assessment of the mother was completed in January 2019, unfortunately the mother did not engage with the assessment and the outcome did not recommend that the children were returned to her care.

At the Final Hearing on 22 February 2019 the Court endorsed the plan of the Local Authority and granted a Special Guardianship Order to the maternal aunt and her partner in respect of the child and her younger sibling (the younger siblings proceedings having concluded within 27 weeks). .

The delays to this case were as a result of:-

1. Mother absconding with the children
2. Expert assessments being completed and the impact upon the timetable in waiting for these assessments
3. Mother appearing to make positive progress, however, deceiving professionals

4. Mother giving birth to another child within the course of the proceedings
5. Change in care plan – adoption to kinship care
6. Family members seeking to be assessed at the 11th hour
7. Change in allocation of Children's Guardian owing to sick leave of initial appointed Guardian – resulting in delay whilst the newly appointed Guardian met with the child and formed his opinion upon the progression of the case.
8. Number of Hearings – 14 hearings

Pre-proceedings Initiatives

The PLO emphasises the importance of Local Authorities 'front-loading' care proceedings. This means that wherever possible assessments and investigations should be completed before proceedings are issued to avoid the proceedings continuing beyond the 26 weeks.

Before proceedings are issued local authorities need to consider if the case could be diverted away from proceedings by meeting with parents to discuss what we are worried about in relation to the children's care and seeking their co-operation with work designed to prevent the children suffering significant harm. Parents are entitled to free legal representation at the meeting.

Lincolnshire County Council has innovated two initiatives to focus on cases where proceedings can be reduced in length by work done during the pre-proceedings cases.

Cafcass+

Cafcass+ is a pre-proceedings initiative involving Children's Services, Cafcass and parents and applies to unborn babies only. Parents' consent is needed to proceed with Cafcass+. A Family Court Adviser is appointed the case and attends the pre-proceedings meeting; the objectives are to divert cases away from proceedings where possible and when proceedings are necessary to ensure that assessments are carried out pre-birth to ensure there is no delay in the child's welfare interests.

PSMIP (Parental Substance Misuse Intervention Programme)

The PSMIP programme is a pre-proceedings initiative involving a number of different agencies, but notably Children's Services, Addaction, DART and housing authorities. This is a Lincolnshire County Council pilot project which has been initiated as a result of recommendations by the President of the Family Division which have been based on the success of the of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court.

The aim of the programme is to provide co-ordinated multi-agency services for parents whose children are at risk of removal from their families where one of the significant things that we are worried about is the effect of parental drug or alcohol misuse on the safety of the children in the household.

The main objective of the programme is to reduce the risk to the children in these families whereby it is safe for them to remain with, or be reunified with, their parent and thus divert cases away from care proceedings. The secondary objective is that if the programme is not successful and care proceedings are necessary, the case

will have been frontloaded and evidence gathered during the programme can be used to support an application in care proceedings and complete the case at an early final hearing.

2. Conclusion

a) Within the reporting period, we have seen an increase in the number Care Proceedings issued.

In 2017/2018 132 applications were issued in respect of 135 children.

In 2018/19 156 applications were issued in respect of 184 children.

This equates to an increase of 24 applications and so an increase of 18 %.

This equates to an increase of 49 children/young people and so an increase of 36 %.

In respect of the 184 children, the applications comprised of 156 applications for Care Orders and 28 applications for Supervision Orders.

b) Care Proceedings were concluded in respect of 154 children.

In 2018/19, the number of children placed under Special Guardianship increased.

In 2017/2018 30 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

In 2018/2019 41 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

11 more orders were granted and this equates to an increase in these orders of 36%

c) The use of Placement Orders has dropped.

In 2017/2018 36 Placement Orders were granted.

In 2018/2019 27 Placement Orders were granted.

9 less orders were granted and this equates to a decrease in these orders of 25 %

The decrease in figures is reflective of the use of alternative orders rather than the number of care cases concluded over the year. In 2018/2019 the number of cases concluded remained static as compared to the number of cases that concluded in 2017/2018 as only a decrease of 1% has occurred.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Background Papers

This report was written by Nicola Leaning, who is currently on maternity leave. In her place, please contact Nicola Corby who can be contacted on 01522 552549 or nicola.corby@lincolnshire.gov.uk

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Caring2Learn – Year 2 Update

Summary:

To provide an update on the implementation and impact of the Caring2Learn project for the last twelve months, highlighting successes, findings and next steps in the light of the local authority funding an extension of the project until 2021.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Caring2Learn project update and highlight any recommendations for future consideration.

1. Background

The Caring2Learn project has been in the implementation phase since January 2018. The Caring2Learn Conference on September 21st 2018 launched the second phase of the project to all schools and carers across the county and was attended by over 250 people including Cllrs Brailsford and Foulkes and Janice Spencer, Interim Director of Children's Services.

Caring2Learn is a multi-agency approach focused on improving a wide range of educational outcomes for looked after children and young people from Early Years to post 16. The project has brought together Carers, Education Settings and Children's Services teams working with looked after young people to improve the training and support they receive and also raise the profile and professional voice of foster and residential carers and across the county. We have created an innovative and sustainable multi-agency approach to improve academic outcomes, progress, life chances and opportunities for all Lincolnshire children and young people in care and on the edge of care.

Caring2Learn is supporting schools to be able to nurture and promote wellbeing and attachment and ensure looked after children achieve better than expected progress whilst in care, as well as enhancing training for and raising the profile of the role of Designated Teacher. We are developing foster carers resilience, knowledge and skills to promote learning in the home and help children develop a thirst for learning so that education and aspiration is valued and encouraged. We are also working

alongside Children's Services teams such as the Virtual School, Fostering, LAC, FAST and Early Help to make the links between their work and schools and foster carers and ensure everyone has the knowledge, skills and confidence to work together effectively to promote educational achievement for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Caring2Learn is funded by the DfE as part of the Partners in Practice (PiP) programme until the end of March 2020 when it will be independently evaluated alongside all the PiP projects by ECORYS. Funding for an extension of the project until April 2021 in the first instance was agreed by DLT in June 2019.

Caring2Learn is focused on 3 main areas of work;

- I. The Caring2Learn Award which is made up of good practice frameworks for Learning Homes and Caring Schools. With this award we are able to identify, celebrate and drive good practice for Lincolnshire children and young people in care.
- II. A locality based hub support network for foster and residential carers, designated teachers and education professionals which is facilitated by Foster Carer and School Based Education Champions and brings everyone together to support each other, share good practice, information and problem solve.
- III. Developing and delivering an effective joint training programme bringing together the Cornerstones of Good Practice and supporting everyone in the Triad of Success to build their skills, knowledge and confidence in order to support children and young people to achieve their full potential.

CARING2LEARN TRIAD OF SUCCESS



CARING2LEARN CORNERSTONES OF GOOD PRACTICE



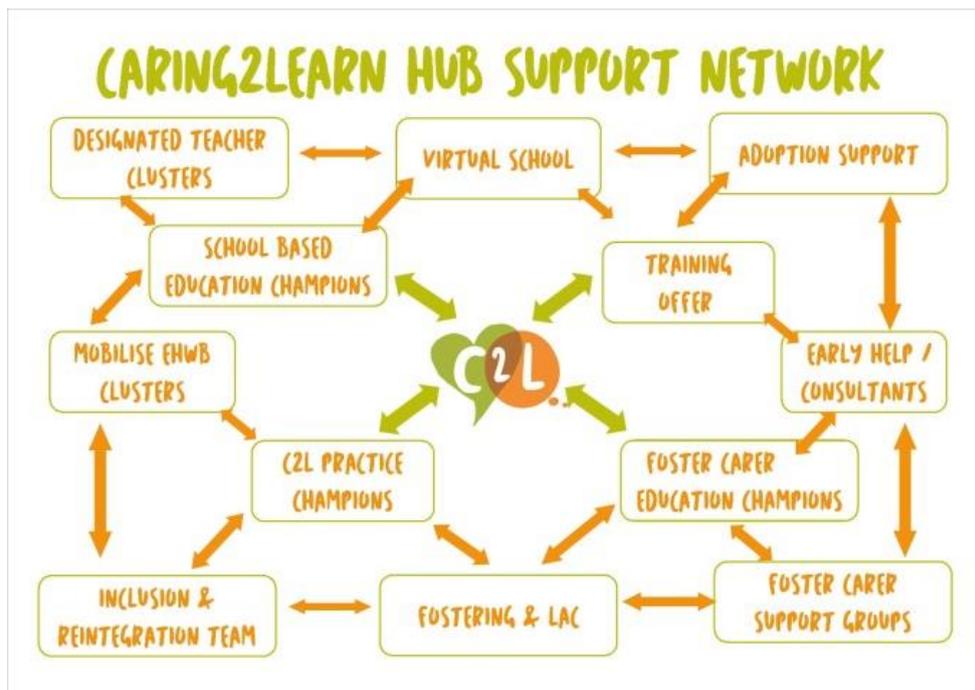
- I. Since 2018 the Learning Homes and Caring Schools toolkits have been accessed by over 68 fostering households and 100 education settings. The original 'mainstream' toolkits have now been developed further so there are Learning Homes Workbooks for carers of babies and children aged 0-5 years, respite carers and also for residential care homes and post-16 provisions. For new foster carers a version of the Learning Homes Workbook incorporating the statutory Fostering Training, Support and Development Standards has been developed which will be mandatory for all new carers to complete within their first twelve months from September 2019. For Caring Schools as well as the toolkit for Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, we now have a version of the toolkit especially for Early Years Providers

and Child Minders. Over the last 18 months 37 Education Settings have achieved the Caring Schools accreditation at either Bronze, Silver or Gold standard and 2 schools have reapplied to have their standard reassessed at a higher level. 20 Fostering households have achieved the Learning Homes accreditation and in July the first 3 residential homes achieved the accreditation as part of the residential pilot group. These good practice toolkits are providing a framework against which we can highlight and celebrate the best practice in education and care and identify, challenge and support weaker practice ensuring that we are demanding the best for our children and young people.

- II. The hub support network has developed into a multi-service approach which incorporates termly Designated Teacher (DT) Cluster Groups jointly facilitated by the Virtual School and Education Champions and a variety of Foster Carer Support and Focus Groups co-facilitated by Supervising Social Workers and Foster Carer Education Champions. These cluster groups form part of the wider support network and are growing into an effective network of support for everyone working with our children and young people. We have 18 Foster Carer Education Champions and 10 School Based Education Champions working to support the network in a number of ways. Foster Carer Champions are split into three working groups;
- School Support –working with schools to build a strong partnership, understand better each other's role and be able to improve the links between carers and schools to promote Learning Home/Caring School principles.
 - Foster Carer Support –developing the locality support groups, individual buddy and mentor support, social groups, problem solving circles, supporting carers to complete the Learning Homes Workbook, supporting Foster Carer recruitment and retention.
 - Learning and Development –Facilitating training for carers, education settings and Children's Service Teams in the Cornerstones of Good Practice, reviewing the current training offer and developing future programmes.

School Based Champions have supported individual schools to develop their practice for looked after children, to complete the toolkit and represented the project at Leadership, SEND and Safeguarding briefings across the county. Education Champions have also been included and integrated into Operational Champions and Practice Champions groups, Practice Workshops and team meetings with great success. Children's Services teams and other professionals have advised and fed back that this has been a positive move and their contribution of ideas and experience around practice, policies and processes has been a great asset.

In July 2019 we held the first 'Big Meet' which was a shared development day with over 60 people from the Caring2Learn Education Champions, the Fostering Team and the Virtual School where we evaluated progress in the last twelve months and drew up joint service plans to develop Caring2Learn over the next twelve months. We will be holding a 'Big Meet' twice a year to track the progress of these plans.



III. We have developed a comprehensive training offer including Restorative Practice, Restorative Peer Mentoring for Children, Social Pedagogy, Trauma Informed Practice, Signs of Safety, Solution Focussed Behaviour Coaching, Kids Skills, Developing Speech, Language and Communication, Solihull Parenting, Supporting Parents of Teenagers and Introduction to the Caring Schools and Learning Homes toolkits. Staff from over 150 education settings, 110 foster carers and a wide range of staff from across Children's Services have attended Caring2Learn training over the last eighteen months and we have received excellent feedback on how this training has improved the understanding, skills, knowledge and confidence of everyone attending. A particular strength identified through evaluation feedback has been the quality of the training, trainer and content which was delivered to groups of multi-disciplinary attendees, building stronger working relationships, allowing wide-ranging discussion, perspective sharing and facilitating greater understanding of each other's roles.

2. Conclusion

The excellent momentum of the project from the first eight months has continued to grow over the last year and we have continued to see the positive way education settings, foster carers and children's services teams have engaged with and helped develop the project. During the outstanding OFSTED inspection of Children's Services in April 2019 the inspectors noted;

"Foster carers are very well trained and supported. This enables them to provide care of a high quality. Foster carers are committed to the children in their care and advocate strongly on their behalf. Foster carers are particularly positive about the recent Caring2Learn initiative, which is helping them better support the education needs of children in their care. Foster carers report feeling listened to and consulted and say that that they are treated as professionals. They feel valued. As a result of the high levels of training and support, Lincolnshire successfully retains foster carers,

and this in turn results in most children experiencing high levels of placement stability and security. Children have a safe and secure home from where they can develop."

The interim evaluation report from ECORYS noted the positive impact of Caring2Learn on practice in schools and wider impact evaluation is also detailed in the Case Studies document attached to this report. As part of the final ECORYS evaluation we are in the process of creating a C2L Data Scorecard which will detail the impact of involvement of schools and carers in the project on attainment, progress, attendance, exclusion, quality of planning and target setting in EPEPs and placement disruption. Initial analysis is starting to show that working in line with the principles of Caring2Learn can have a significant effect on the progress and attainment of underachieving children.

During the last academic year we ran an action research project in conjunction with UCL Institute of Education as part of the Promoting Achievement of Looked-After Children (PALAC) programme. This was focused on the implementation of a 10 week literacy intervention with 10 KS2 pupils in 5 schools. The intervention was based on joint working between Educational Psychologists, Foster Carers, Teachers and Teaching Assistants and included activities based on the individual needs and personal interests of the child. Analysis of the results have shown that within a 5 month period all pupils involved made very good progress with children making on average 27 months progress in their reading comprehension, 12 months progress in word reading and 9 months in spelling. We are now planning to roll out the findings of this study and scale this research up and will be working with Senior Research Fellow Catherine Carroll of St. Mary's University, Twickenham in the next academic year.

It has become more evident over the last eighteen months that the different strands of Caring2Learn impact on and have the potential to positively affect the work of a wide range of teams including the Virtual School, Fostering, Education, Inclusion, SEND, LAC, FAST, Early Help, Leaving Care and Adoption. It is essential therefore that Caring2Learn continues to be a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach as it embeds into business as usual and not be viewed as an 'add-on'. With the further extension of the project we will be continuing to do this and ensure that Caring2Learn is sustainable and future focussed. We have trained Champions as training facilitators who will be working in conjunction with the Learning and Development Team and have identified Caring2Learn Practice Leads from Children's Service Teams to prioritise the work of the project. We are currently exploring further funding, grant and research opportunities and are working with Lincs Higher to jointly fund a range of activities from Mindfulness to Business Enterprise for looked after teenagers.

There has been considerable interest in the project from the DfE, other Local Authorities, schools and organisations. In September 2019 we are embarking on a trial implementation of Caring2Learn with North Lincolnshire Children's Services which includes providing at cost, training and support to their staff, schools and foster carers and also licenses the Caring2Learn toolkits and other materials for use in the local authority with the opportunity for their education settings and carers to achieve the Caring Schools and Learning Homes accreditation. This small scale trial

will explore the viability of the commercial and income generating possibilities of Caring2Learn which could support the continuation of the approach within Lincolnshire for the benefit of our children and young people.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

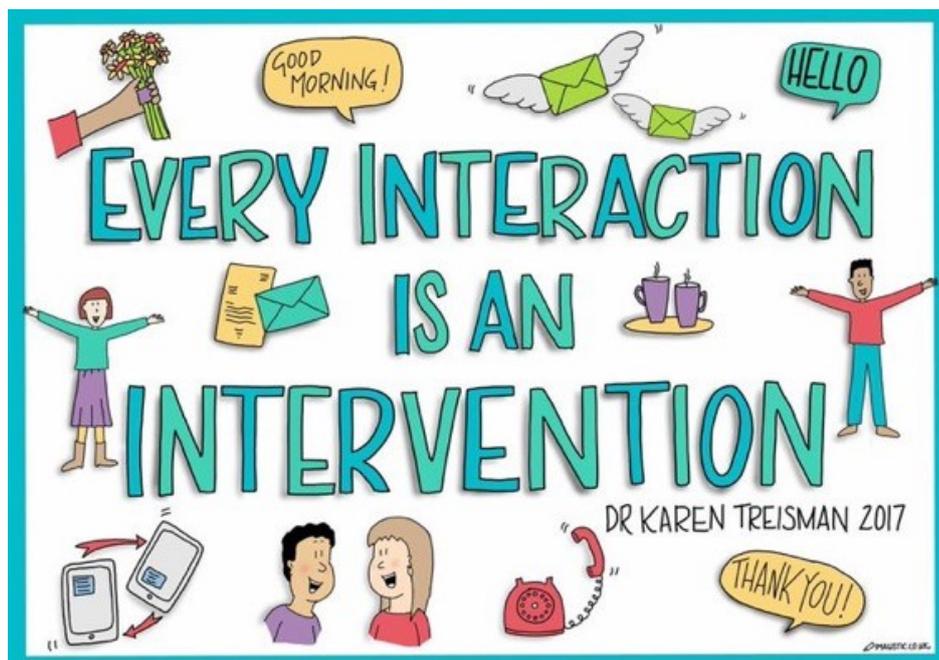
These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Training Schedule Sep-Mar 2020
Appendix B	Caring Schools Toolkit
Appendix C	Learning Homes Workbook
Appendix D	Evaluation Case Studies

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Krysta Parsons, who can be contacted on 01522 555987 or Krysta.Parsons@lincolnshire.gov.uk

1 CARING 2 LEARN

Training/Events Schedule for September 2019 – March 2020





Caring2Learn Events

Restorative Practice (2 day)

Restorative and relational based practice describe a way of being, an underpinning ethos, which enables us to build and maintain healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and repair harm when relationships breakdown. Caring2Learn are currently running a bespoke 2-day training programme, in partnership with Mark Finnis at L30 Relational Systems, which will introduce the principles of Restorative Practice and explain how they can transform your approach to building relationships and resolving conflict with young people within your care. You can find more information on the L30 Website at www.l30relationalsystems.co.uk/childrens-services/

Amazing outcomes and impact on practice reported from those that have attended.

Restorative Practice (1 day)

This course introduces the key principles and Practices of Restorative Practice.

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety is a way of working for all children Services in Lincolnshire. All staff are trained in this area and we would like to offer Foster Carers a similar training so they are fully informed and understand how staff are working and contribute. Following a successful course in March with 100% positive feedback we are running another 2 days.

We will cover the following in this workshop

- The framework
- Danger Statements and Safety Goals
- Scaling
- Appreciative enquiry
- Words and Pictures
- Tools and resources for collecting the voice of the child
- Signs of something (healing, Progress)

Social pedagogy

Social Pedagogy is essentially concerned with well-being, learning and growth of a whole child. It is underpinned by the idea that each person has inherent potential, is valuable, resourceful and can make a meaningful contribution to their wider community .



Caring Schools Inductions

A introduction to the project and award toolkit for new schools thinking of taking part.

Caring2Learn Award support sessions

Sessions for both schools and Foster Carers wishing to access support in starting or completing the Caring2Learn Awards. These are drop in sessions although we ask that you inform us of your intention to come along.

Sessions can also be used to collect a toolkit or find out more about the award/ project or training.

Supporting children that have experienced domestic abuse

Exploring the possible experiences and observing children through a trauma lens.

How can I support children to heal by identifying the skills and learning required for children?

We explore and consider how we can better support these children and the healing process.

Kid Skills Workshop

The art of 'skills thinking'

How to convert children's problems into learnable skills

Playful and practical approach to solving difficulties faced by children with the premise that practically all problems with children can be seen as skills in need of development

(Taken from the work of Dr Ben Furman)

Practice Champion groups

Previously the Social Pedagogy champions group this has developed into a multi agency group that come together to discuss and share practice around different themes.

If you would like more information and become a member of this group please email the Caring2Learn team.

We discuss practice around trauma awareness, restorative practice, social pedagogy, Kid Skills and Signs of Safety.



Solihull for Foster Carers

Session 1	Introduction to the Solihull Approach Foster Carer Course
Session 2	Brain Development
Session 3	Containment
Session 4	Reciprocity
Session 5	Introduction to attachment
Session 6	Understanding your child's behaviour
Session 7	Different styles of parenting
Session 8	Spending time together
Session 9	Rhythm of interaction and sleep
Session 10	Self-regulation and anger
Session 11	Communication and attunement/Rupture and repair
Session 12	Celebration

The course lasts 10 weeks and you are requested to attend all sessions, some sessions are combined to cover all 12.

Supporting Sleep and nightmares

A workshop exploring the resources from Dr Karen Triesman around supporting children experiencing difficulties with sleep and nightmares.

We look at the principles and resources from 'Neon the Night time ninja' resource

Trauma Awareness Practice Day

A day to explore the way we better understand the children we support.

We will explore some key areas and interventions.

"We don't have to be therapists to be therapeutic"



Time2Talk

Following research around why looked after children do not always do as well as their peers has led to findings that this is often due to their speech and language skills and development. This is an identified area for our children that is often under developed and impacts on their ability to learn and progress through developmental milestones and academic achievement. Other children may also struggle to communicate their feelings and build relationships.

Children that are under developed in this area may also experience a feeling of frustration that can lead to challenging behaviour later.

In Lincolnshire Caring2Learn would like to work with Foster Carers that care for children in the under 5 age category and support them to help speech and language development in the children they care for.

Understanding Secondary Trauma in ourselves and those around us

“Self-Care is an essential, not a luxury” (Dr Karen Treisman) We are thrilled to offer a series of workshops to share thoughts on the very important subject of Secondary Trauma and Self-Care, otherwise known as Compassion Fatigue.

This is a must for anyone who is involved in directly caring for others or supporting those who care for others. Compassion fatigue is widely understood to have three separate but related dimensions: burnout, secondary traumatic stress and compassion satisfaction (Stamm) 2010.

We will be exploring this and considering how we ensure we take care of ourselves.

To find out more or book onto any of our events please contact the team at
Caring2Learn@lincolnshire.gov.uk or call 01522 553542.

Caring2Learn training includes Foster carers, children services staff, residential staff, and schools unless otherwise stated.

To request a Learning Home Award induction please contact the team.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time and Date</u>
Understanding Secondary Trauma in ourselves and those around us	Roseberry Classroom, Roseberry House, Skegness PE25 3HA	10th September 2019 10am-2pm
Understanding Secondary Trauma in ourselves and those around us	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	19th September 2019 10am-2pm
Understanding Secondary Trauma in ourselves and those around us	Lincolnshire County Council Sleaford Area Office, Council Offices, Eastgate, Sleaford NG34 7EB	23rd September 2019 10am-2pm
Caring2Learn Awards Celebration Event (by invitation only)	The Showroom, Lincoln LN6 7QY	27th September 2019 10am-2pm
Restorative Practice (2 day)	Hemswell Court, Hemswell Cliff, Gainsborough DN21 5TQ	7th-8th October 2019 9.30am-4pm
Time2Talk Foster Carers programme	Birchwood Children Centre, Lincoln LN6 OJE	8th October, 5th November, 19th November, 10th December 2019 10am-2pm
Restorative Practice (2 day)	Admiral Rodney Hotel, Horncastle LN9 5DX	9th-10th October 2019 9.30am-4pm

<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time and Date</u>
Solihull for Foster Carers (10 weeks)	Roseberry Classroom, Roseberry House, Skegness PE25 3HA	4th October, 11th October, 18th October, 1st November, 8th November, 15th November, 22nd November, 29th November, 6th December, 13th December 10.30am– 1.30pm
Social Pedagogy Champions Group	St Giles Children Centre, Shelley Drive, Lincoln LN2 4BY	11th October 2019 10am-12.30pm
Caring Schools Induction Session (New schools)	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	11th October 2019 9am-12pm
Caring Schools support Session (Support for schools/ carers with their toolkit)	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	11th October 2019 1pm-4pm (drop in session)
<u>Saturday session</u> Introduction to Social Pedagogy	Lincoln North Children Centre, 7 Welbourn Gardens, Lincoln, LN2 2DD	12th October 2019 9.30am-4pm
Caring Schools Induction Session (New schools)	Mercury House, Foxby Lane Business Park, Gainsborough DN21 1DY	15th October 2019 9am-12pm
Caring Schools/Learning Homes support Session (Support for schools/carers with their toolkit)	Mercury House, Foxby Lane Business Park, Gainsborough DN21 1DY	15th October 2019 1pm-4pm (drop in session)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time and Date</u>
Caring Schools Induction Session (New schools)	Roseberry Classroom, Roseberry House, Skegness PE25 3HA	16th October 2019 9am-12pm
Caring Schools/Learning Homes support Session (Support for schools/carers with their toolkit)	Roseberry Classroom, Roseberry House, Skegness PE25 3HA	16th October 2019 1pm-4pm (drop in session)
Caring Schools Induction Session (New schools)	Wilsford Village Hall, School Lane, Grantham NG32 3PF	18th October 2019 9am-12pm
Caring Schools/Learning Homes support Session (Support for schools/carers with their toolkit)	Wilsford Village Hall, School Lane, Grantham NG32 3PF	18th October 2019 1pm-4pm (drop in session)
Supporting children that have experienced Domestic abuse workshop—a trauma lens perspective	Lincolnshire County Council Sleaford Area Office, Council Offices, Eastgate, Sleaford NG34 7EB	22nd October 2019 10am-2pm
Supporting children with sleep and nightmares	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	1st November 2019 12.30pm– 2pm
Supporting children that have experienced Domestic abuse workshop—a trauma lens perspective	Lincolnshire County Council Sleaford Area Office, Council Offices, Eastgate, Sleaford NG34 7EB	4th November 2019 10am-2pm

<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time and Date</u>
Introduction to Social Pedagogy	Old Barn Hotel, Marston, Grantham NG32 2HT	6th November 2019 9.30am-4pm
Introduction to Social Pedagogy	Hemswell Court, Hemswell Cliff, Gainsborough, DN21 5TQ	7th November 2019 9.30am-4pm
Kid Skills	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	8th November 2019 10am-2pm
Kid Skills	Roseberry Classroom, Roseberry House, Skegness PE25 3HA	20th November 2019 10am-2pm
<u>Saturday session</u> Trauma Awareness	Lincoln North Children's Centre, 7 Welbourn Gardens, Lincoln LN2 2DD	23rd November 2019 10am-2pm
Kid Skills	Lincolnshire County Council Sleaford Area Office, Council Offices, Eastgate, Sleaford NG34 7EB	4th December 2019 10am-2pm
Trauma Awareness Practice Day	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	7th January 2020 9.30am-3.30pm

<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time and Date</u>
Introduction to Restorative Practice	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	10th January 2020 9.30am-3.30pm
Introduction to Restorative Practice	Roseberry Classroom, Roseberry House, Skegness PE25 3HA	16th January 2020 9.30am-3.30pm
2 Day Signs of Safety (schools and carers)	Myles Cross, Macaulay Drive, St Giles, Lincoln LN2 4EL	12th & 13th February 2020 10am-2pm
<u>Saturday Session</u> Introduction to Restorative Practice	Lincoln North Children Centre, 7 Welbourn Gardens, Lincoln, LN2 2DD	18th January 2020 9.30am-4pm
Introduction to Restorative Practice	Lincolnshire County Council Sleaford Area Office, Council Offices, Eastgate, Sleaford NG34 7EB	28th February 2020 9.30am-3.30pm

To book onto any of our events please email

Caring2Learn@lincolnshire.gov.uk or call 01522 553542.

Caring2Learn training includes Foster carers, children services staff, residential staff, and schools unless otherwise stated.

To request a Learning Home Award induction please contact the team.

If you would like one of these sessions delivering to your team/ school on an alternative date please contact us as we may be able to arrange this.

CARING 2 LEARN

CARING SCHOOLS TOOLKIT



Partners in Practice
Putting children first

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

Name of Education Setting:	
Head Teacher:	
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children:	
Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children:	
Start Date:	
Submission Date:	
Award Achieved:	
Renewal Due Date:	
<p>Please register your start date with the Caring2Learn Team by emailing this form to: Caring2Learn@lincolnshire.gov.uk</p>	



CONTENTS

	Welcome	5
	About the Caring2Learn Award	6
Domain 1	Ethos and Leadership: <i>How your setting embeds Caring2Learn principles of support, nurture and well being for vulnerable pupils throughout the whole organisation.</i>	8
Domain 2	A Child Centred Approach: <i>How you work to meet individual or additional learning needs and support wellbeing to get the best out of education for vulnerable learners.</i>	11
Domain 3	Working Together with Carers: <i>How you work as a team with all carers and parents to get the best outcomes for vulnerable young people.</i>	14
Domain 4	Working Together with Professionals and Other Agencies: <i>How you work as a team with Children's Services, other professionals and outside agencies to get the support for vulnerable young people in your setting.</i>	17
	Completing the Toolkit	20
	References	22
	Acknowledgements	

WELCOME

What is Caring2Learn?

Caring2Learn is a research project funded by the Department for Education through the Partners in Practice programme. The overall aim of the project is to improve a wide range of outcomes for Lincolnshire's looked after, previously looked after and other vulnerable children and young people. We want all Lincolnshire education settings to be confident in nurturing vulnerable children and young people so they achieve better than expected progress and we want carers, foster carers and residential care workers, to champion education in the home. We want all our looked after children and young people to feel safe and to belong in their home and school, in order to provide them with a solid foundation to have the confidence to go on to learn, be aspirational and achieve their full potential.

The project aims to:

- improve the learning outcomes for all Lincolnshire looked after, post-looked after and other vulnerable children through knowledgeable Care and Learning communities in which our children and young people feel safe and believe they belong
- upskill and support our Carers and Educators to help them better support children and young people, in and out of their education setting, to improve learning outcomes
- promote good practice to support the wellbeing, emotional and mental health of all vulnerable children at home or in their education setting
- encourage active participation in education and improve the attendance of Lincolnshire looked after, post-looked after and other vulnerable children
- reduce the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions of vulnerable children by creating more effective and nurturing learning environments, policies and procedures which meet the needs of individuals
- have fewer Post-16 looked after young people in Lincolnshire who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) by promoting higher aspiration and self-esteem

By joining the project your setting will play an integral role in meeting these objectives and you will also gain access to a supportive network of Education Settings, Carers and Social Care Professionals all working together to achieve the same goal.

THE CARING2LEARN AWARD

What is a Caring School?

A Caring School can be any type of education setting; early years, primary or secondary, maintained, academy or independent, mainstream, specialist or alternative provision. It is an education setting where the nurture and well-being of all pupils and in particular the most vulnerable is as high a priority as their academic achievement. It is a place where the holistic needs of a child are addressed and their mental health is supported and enhanced so that they can achieve to their full potential. The Caring Schools Award toolkit is designed to help you assess and develop all the ways you support young people in your care to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential. We know that when education and aspiration is promoted and supported in the home young people have a much higher chance of success in school and go on to achieve their goals. Working closely with carers can have a massive impact on how well a young person progresses and can mean the difference to them continuing in education or training for a successful future. With the Caring School Award we want to recognise and celebrate all the amazing ways you do this and also identify any training or development which can help you in your crucial role.

How long do we have to complete this?

The time you take to complete this portfolio will be dependent on your settings individual circumstances, experience and development journey. We will work with you to complete your portfolio ideally within 12 months, although this is flexible if you require additional time.

Who can support my setting?

The Caring2Learn team are on hand to support you – this includes Caring2Learn staff, Education Champions and other settings in the wider support network. You can request support by contacting Caring2Learn@lincolnshire.gov.uk We also offer various individual and group support and networking opportunities. For more information, please contact us. You could also speak to the Virtual School or other Children's Services staff who we are working alongside.

How do I access the training?

Caring2Learn offers many training opportunities along with the Lincolnshire Learning and Development team. We have a training diary on our webpage and in most cases you just need to email us. Do not hesitate to contact us to discuss the training available.

How do I collect evidence?

We would suggest up to 5 pieces of evidence per domain. Evidence can be sought from a number of sources and the more variety the better. We have included evidence tips in each section although please feel free to be creative!

Who decides if I am successful?

The Caring2Learn Award Assessment Board meets three times a year to make decisions on the submitted portfolios. The board is made up of representatives from Education, Children's Services, Social Care and Caring2Learn Education Champions. Successful applicants will be presented with their award at a celebration event during the year.

Do I only apply for the award once?

You will need to update your award portfolio with the Caring2Learn Assessment Board every 3 years to ensure continuous professional development and good practice. You will be provided with updates and training throughout and you should continue to add to your portfolio so that you maintain and develop good practice in your Caring School.



ETHOS AND LEADERSHIP

Domain 1

In our Caring School:

1.1 We embed Caring2Learn principles and values which are shared, acted upon and experienced by our whole education community

1.2 All staff have and promote high aspirations in terms of achievement and well-being for all children and young people and in particular the most vulnerable in our community

1.3 Senior staff promote and model well-being and nurture as a priority. They are visible, available and approachable to all members of the setting's community

1.4 All relevant staff are involved in the decision making and planning for vulnerable children

1.5 We promote a sense of belonging and involvement with the wider community

1.6 The environment is welcoming to all and promotes a sense of belonging and safety for all learners

1.7 We take a positive restorative approach that is based on relationships and positive regard, particularly to resolve conflict and overcome challenges

1.8 All staff have access to training that equips them to support children and young people's wellbeing and social, emotional and mental health

1.9 Governors promote good practice for vulnerable learners and wellbeing as a priority

"Leadership is not about being in charge. Leadership is about taking care of those in your charge."

Simon Sinek

Creating a truly Caring School is not the job of individual staff members or a pastoral team. It needs to be an organisational approach and ethos which permeates every area of the education setting.

It must be led and modelled by senior leadership, teaching and support staff of all levels.

"Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be."

Rita Pierson

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
1.1 We embed Caring2Learn principles and values which are shared, acted upon and experienced by our whole education community	<p>The Setting's own values and principles are based on equality, diversity and inclusion which reflect those of Caring2Learn and these are evident in policies and procedures.</p> <p>There is a whole school/ setting policy for looked after children which details the support available to students, the responsibilities of staff members and contact details of relevant support services outside the setting.</p>	<p>Caring2Learn and the setting's values are known and acted upon by all members of the education community.</p> <p>A wide range of policies reflect and respond to the diversity and individual needs of vulnerable pupils/ students.</p>	<p>Caring2Learn values are fully embedded in the life of the setting and are evident, visible and tangible in the day to day life of the setting and beyond into the wider community.</p> <p>The setting is fully inclusive and able to respond to the reasonable adjustments needed to support vulnerable learners.</p>
1.2 All staff have and promote high aspirations in terms of achievement and well-being for all children and young people and in particular the most vulnerable in our community	<p>All staff encourage children and young people to challenge themselves and achieve to their full potential both academically and pastorally.</p> <p>Teachers set achievable and ambitious targets for children.</p>	<p>Children's achievements are celebrated and recognised alongside those of individuals from the setting and wider community. A full range of talents and achievements are identified and nurtured.</p> <p>The gifted and talented programme includes looked after and other vulnerable children.</p>	<p>High aspirations permeate throughout the education setting. Children's horizons are broadened beyond their current situations through active participation in learning and cultural opportunities. There is a real belief that ALL children can achieve the highest standards.</p>
1.3 Senior staff promote and model well-being and nurture as a priority. They are visible, available and approachable to all members of the setting's community	<p>Staff including the Senior Leadership Team are available on a daily basis and at events for informal conversations and interactions.</p> <p>There is a named Designated Teacher and Wellbeing Lead.</p>	<p>Roles such as Designated Teacher & Wellbeing Lead are held by members of SLT with the power to influence, monitor and challenge.</p> <p>All carers and children know who the SLT and key staff are and what their roles are.</p>	<p>Wellbeing and nurture are a fundamental part of the school development or improvement plan.</p> <p>All staff are known and make time both informal and formally to build relationships.</p>
1.4 All relevant staff are involved in the decision making and planning for vulnerable children	<p>Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants are routinely asked for their views and observations in regard to vulnerable children.</p>	<p>Relevant people are making good quality contributions towards the plans and decision making in regard to vulnerable children.</p>	<p>Relevant staff are taking a lead in effective plans and decision making in regard to vulnerable children.</p>

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
1.5 We promote a sense of belonging and involvement with the wider community	The setting is a valued member of the wider community and makes contributions to this.	The setting actively welcomes members of its wider community into the setting. Encourages children and families to participate in activities that 'give back' or support the community.	The setting is a focal point in the community and leads community based intervention and support. We plan opportunities for carers to feel they have a stake in their children's learning.
1.6 The environment is welcoming to all and promotes a sense of belonging and safety for all learners	The setting is an inviting place. Displays and surroundings celebrate and showcase children's achievement. Visitors, carers and children enjoy a warm and friendly welcome.	The environment represents and reflects all members of their community. For example this may include sensory rooms, reflection corners and parents meeting room etc.	There are areas and spaces that are designed to meet specific needs, such as private areas, calming, quiet and safe spaces. These areas are well known and promoted as accessible to all. Children are empowered to access tailored areas independently or with support.
1.7 We take a positive restorative approach that is based on relationships and positive regard, particularly to resolve conflict and overcome challenges	Behaviour policies and procedures are attuned to a wide range of additional needs. Restorative Practice principles are utilised in conflict resolution, problem solving and building relationships.	Staff are trained in Restorative Practice and this is visible in their daily interactions with children, carers and other staff. We take a restorative approach to behaviour management which is reflected in exclusion rates which are below the Lincolnshire average.	Staff and children have received training in Restorative Practice which is fully embedded and reflected in setting policies, procedures and practice. We share good practice and support other settings and agencies in restorative and solution focussed behaviour approaches.
1.8 All staff have access to training that equips them to support children and young people's wellbeing and social, emotional and mental health.	We are attachment and trauma aware and understand the challenges this poses in regards to learning. We access additional support for children facing social, emotional and mental health challenges. Staff are involved in training & development to enhance understanding of children's wellbeing.	We are an attachment and trauma aware setting and take action and plan to best meet the needs of children that have experienced this. We provide access to therapeutic interventions. We have a trained Mental Health First Aider. Staff Wellbeing is a priority and is actively supported in the setting / workplace.	We advocate good practice and share knowledge and experience with other education settings and services. We provide outreach support for well-being, nurture or mental health needs. There is a staff well-being and mental health strategy which is reviewed regularly.
1.9 Governors promote good practice for vulnerable learners and wellbeing as a priority	There is a named Governor for looked after and previously looked after children and also for wellbeing and mental health.	The Governing Body regularly monitors and reports on wellbeing provision and the achievement of vulnerable learners.	Governors are supportive of and enable the provision of outreach work, sector led support and sharing good practice with other settings.

A CHILD CENTRED APPROACH

Domain 2

In our Caring School:

2.1 ensure the voices of our children and young people are valued, listened to and acted upon

2.2 promote learning inside and outside of the classroom

2.3 provide opportunities for our children to be caring and to take responsibility for the wellbeing of others

2.4 adapt our provision to meet the needs of individuals

2.5 assess, plan for and actively address the emotional and well-being needs of all children

2.6 know our pupils well; their history / background / home life

2.7 design our curriculum and teaching to address the needs of individual children

2.8 provide opportunities to take part in national wellbeing initiatives to raise the profile of and reduce the stigma associated with mental health

"Some of the most wonderful people are the ones who don't fit into boxes."

Tori Amos

A Caring School is flexible enough to meet the needs of individuals in a way that allows them time to develop and thrive despite their challenges and difficulties.

Caring schools ask themselves how can we overcome barriers and provide solutions when faced with issues?

"Our task is to help children communicate with the world using all their potential, strengths and languages, and to overcome any barriers presented by our culture."

Loris Malaguzzi

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
2.1 ensure the voices of our children and young people are valued, listened to and acted upon	<p>Settings have arrangements in place to formally collect the voice of their children.</p> <p>Settings encourage young people to air their views, worries or concerns in private and public forums.</p> <p>Settings always include children's views in plans and assessments such as LAC reviews, Behaviour Plans etc..</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to participate in meetings and reviews that look at planning and assessing with them.</p> <p>The setting takes an open and honest approach to the concerns and worries of a child.</p> <p>Children are encouraged to participate in class discussions school initiatives such as school council, specific roles and tasks in the school.</p>	<p>Young people are enabled to take a leading role when planning and reviewing to meet their own needs or resolve difficulties.</p> <p>Children and young people take the lead in opportunities for developing the voice of the child and extend this to wider networks outside the setting e.g. V4C, MAT Schools Council etc.</p>
2.2 promote learning inside and outside of the classroom	<p>The setting provides a broad and rich curriculum and all children are provided with opportunities to learn outside the classroom and experience learning in different contexts including residential trips.</p>	<p>The setting provides or promotes access to extra-curricular activities which are built into plans for vulnerable children.</p>	<p>The setting provides a wide range of learning and extra-curricular activities to develop individual talents and interests through the use of pupil premium.</p>
2.3 provide opportunities for our children to be caring and to take responsibility for the wellbeing of others	<p>The setting has roles for children including monitors, buddies and play leaders to support the needs of others.</p>	<p>The setting regularly promotes, recognises and celebrates children's achievements in caring for others.</p>	<p>Children and young people take the lead in promoting well-being and caring for others including in the wider community.</p> <p>Young people are involved in training other young people and adults to support wellbeing and develop restorative practices.</p>
2.4 adapt our provision to meet the needs of individuals	<p>The setting assesses and provides for adaptations and reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs in line with statutory and non-statutory requirements.</p>	<p>We work together with carers to provide a consistent approach between home and setting.</p> <p>Our interventions are effective and demonstrate impact, improving the well-being and achievement of learners with additional needs.</p>	<p>We are knowledgeable and skilled in providing for a wide range of additional needs and support learners at all levels to make good progress and achieve success.</p>

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
2.5 assess, plan for and actively address the emotional and well-being needs of all children	<p>Staff monitor and report on children's well-being and emotional stability.</p> <p>All children know staff will listen and respond to them in general and in times of need or crisis.</p>	<p>We provide a programme of activities designed to promote emotional health and well-being for all e.g. Mindfulness, yoga etc.</p> <p>We provide key staff for vulnerable pupils who the child trusts and whom they can seek out in times of difficulty.</p>	<p>We use standardised assessment tools across the setting to regularly measure well-being and plan for interventions based on our assessments. E.g. SDQ, Boxhall, Scaling.</p> <p>We provide specific interventions to support wellbeing e.g. Solution Focussed Coaching, Evolve Together Groups etc.</p> <p>There is access to counselling from a trained person either on site or sign-posted provision.</p>
2.6 know our pupils; history/ background/ home life	<p>We value the uniqueness of each child and believe they all have an inner richness and potential.</p> <p>We encourage relevant information sharing to enable staff to understand our children's lives both past and present.</p> <p>We have open lines of communication to ensure we remain fully informed about home life.</p> <p>Staff make it a priority to know vulnerable children well and to build strong relationships with them.</p>	<p>We honour our children by allowing them to participate in decision making around the content of the information that is shared and with whom.</p> <p>Children are provided with safe spaces to share their experiences and what this means to them.</p> <p>We know about the people that are important to our vulnerable children.</p> <p>Plans developed with children are individualised.</p>	<p>Staff share parts of their personal self with children to allow for stronger relationships.</p> <p>Settings support the understanding and knowledge of other settings to avoid children and carers having to explain things over and over again.</p> <p>Settings use life story work and words and pictures when supporting children to make sense of their past or current situations.</p>
2.7 design our curriculum and teaching to address the needs of individual children	<p>The curriculum is tailored and adapted to ensure it meets varied or additional learning needs, abilities and levels of concentration.</p>	<p>We deliver an innovative curriculum which provides access to a range of approaches to learning eg. Forest School, education business partnerships etc.</p>	<p>We explore shared provision to extend opportunities for children and provide for and seek support from other education settings.</p>
2.8 provide opportunities to take part in national wellbeing initiatives to raise the profile of and reduce the stigma associated with mental health	<p>We include PHSE as part of our overall curriculum.</p> <p>We take part in initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week, Mental Health Awareness Week etc.</p>	<p>Our PHSE curriculum is well developed and is celebrated alongside academic subjects and achievements.</p>	<p>We are accredited in a number of wellbeing and Mental Health initiatives e.g. Young Carers Award, The Autism Friendly Award, The Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark Award etc</p>

WORKING TOGETHER WITH CARERS

Domain 3

In our Caring School:

3.1 establish a good relationship with carers to promote good communication and understanding of learning needs and wellbeing and promote home learning

3.2 ensure the voices of our carers are listened to and acted upon

3.3 work with carers to promote good attendance and help remove barriers to attending

3.4 promote, engage, encourage and facilitate carers involvement in the wider life of their child and the setting

3.5 work with carers to support their access to wellbeing and mental health support services

Building strong, trusting and collaborative relationships with carers is a priority for a Caring School.

Vulnerable learners thrive in education settings where carers are genuinely viewed as a member of the team and their knowledge and understanding of the child is valued.

"Together may we give our children the roots to grow and the wings to fly."

Anon

Full engagement with foster carers who have the most direct knowledge of children in care and often have the clearest idea of their strengths, limitations and idiosyncrasies is important. Regular dialogue from a position of mutual respect and partnership underpins successful schooling."

Cameron, Connery & Jackson

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>3.1 establish a good relationship with carers to promote good communication and understanding of learning needs and wellbeing and promote home learning</p>	<p>We respect the views of our carers and work with them in the best interests of the child.</p> <p>We are open and honest with carers and encourage them to be the same.</p> <p>We have systems in place to communicate effectively with all carers through face-to-face, phone, text and email.</p> <p>We make contact with new carers and ensure they know who the key contact for their child is.</p> <p>We ensure we have up to date contact information to provide updates for carers regarding meetings, events and news.</p>	<p>We ensure that carers are fully informed about their child and agree the form and frequency of updates in line with their preferences.</p> <p>We plan for specific, additional methods of communication when needed to support good home/setting relationships.</p> <p>Our setting takes a proactive responsibility for establishing communication with home.</p> <p>We are transparent in the decision making we take and explain this clearly to carers.</p>	<p>We provide workshops and forums to develop the skills and knowledge of carers to enable them to support wellbeing and learning in the home.</p> <p>We utilise the skills and knowledge of our caring community to develop our learning.</p>
<p>3.2 ensure the voices of our carers are listened to and acted upon</p>	<p>Settings have arrangements in place to formally collect the voice of their carers.</p> <p>Settings encourage carers to air their views, worries or concerns.</p> <p>Settings include carers views in plans and assessments.</p>	<p>We encourage carers to participate and contribute to their children's reviews and plans.</p> <p>The setting takes an open and honest approach to the concerns and worries of a carer and has clear systems and procedures in place to allow this.</p> <p>Carers are familiar with and confident with the assessment and planning documents used with their children.</p>	<p>Settings encourage and support families to plan together to meet the needs of their children.</p> <p>Settings make reasonable adjustments to planned events to meet the requirements of carers and their family.</p> <p>Carers take the lead in supporting the school ensure the voice of parents and carers is valued. E.g. PTA led forums. Parent/Carer Governors</p>

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
3.3 work with carers to promote good attendance and help remove barriers to attending	<p>We promote the importance of good attendance and monitor dips and themes in order to support.</p> <p>We discuss concerns regarding attendance with carers at an early stage.</p> <p>We follow the Early Help Pathway in regards to worries or concerns about a child.</p>	<p>We plan and consider flexibility around attendance in the best interests of children, for example reduced timetables as a short term measure or limited participation in certain areas of the curriculum.</p> <p>We advise carers on the services and support functions that can help them in the home to overcome barriers and challenges outside of the setting.</p>	<p>The setting has support mechanisms to support carers with issues and challenges to attendance, such as mental health and routines.</p> <p>We take a supportive and inquisitive view on issues of attendance and employ bespoke approaches to improving this.</p> <p>We seek all alternative routes before using forms of statutory intervention.</p>
3.4 promote, engage, encourage and facilitate carers involvement in the wider life of their child and the setting	<p>We encourage and welcome the participation of carers in events such as PTA, fundraising, social and celebratory occasions.</p>	<p>We seek to understand and recognise the difficulties some carers have in access in events and plan with other agencies to overcome barriers where possible. E.g. Crèche, different timings, travel etc.</p>	<p>Where carers are unable to attend important events we put alternative arrangement in place to ensure young people and families feel supported and valued.</p>
3.5 work with carers to support their access to wellbeing and mental health support services	<p>We signpost Carers to other support, agencies and services such as The Family Services Directory, Kooth, Healthy Minds, CAMHS etc.</p>	<p>We support the findings, advice and recommendations from external support services and ensure they are fully implemented into our setting.</p>	<p>We are active in providing support for families as a whole who are dealing with mental health issues and challenges through Parents Support Advisors, Family Support Workers, Family Support Groups etc.</p>

WORKING WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Domain 4

In our Caring School:

4.1 ensure the relevant professionals in settings are aware of and have good communication with the child's 'key' professional

4.2 work effectively with other professionals and agencies to support the holistic needs of a child and access specialist services when needed

4.3 work with other professionals to ensure that children and young people in our care can access education and extra-curricular activities

4.4 advocate for the child's best interests with other professionals

4.5 have a clear and timely system for sharing information/concerns around our children with other professionals

4.6 ensure attendance at EPEP, LAC, TAC CIN, CP SEND meetings are a priority for relevant setting staff

4.7 work together with the Virtual School and other agencies around how pupil premium will be allocated and spent

4.8 establish clear lines of communication and good partnership working with other settings

*"Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success."*

Henry Ford

Caring Schools are most often the conduit through which true multi-agency working develops and succeeds.

Caring schools build and maintain strong working relationships with a multitude of professionals, services and agencies to get the best for their vulnerable learners.

"How wonderful is it that no one need wait a single minute to improve the world."

Anne Frank

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
4.1 ensure the relevant professionals in settings are aware of and have good communication with the child's 'key' professional	Relevant staff are aware that a key professional is in place for individual children and how they can contact them directly or through lead people in their setting.	Relevant staff have direct communication with key professionals where appropriate or are kept informed as part of the child's network.	Provide agreed, regular updates to the child's key professional to inform effective decision-making, interventions and risk management.
4.2 work effectively with other professionals and agencies to support the holistic needs of a child and access specialist services when needed	<p>Staff are clear about how they can support social workers, carers and the child's birth parents to ensure that the vulnerable children in their school receive the support they need.</p> <p>Settings explore the families' resource, networks and universal provision before accessing alternative provisions.</p>	<p>Staff will follow the Early Help Pathway and ensure that appropriate forms of assessment are completed.</p> <p>Staff contribute to and support other professionals and agencies when completing assessments and plans.</p> <p>Staff have an ongoing knowledge and remain up to date in regards to external services and resources.</p> <p>Assessments are holistic and schools request external services and support as part of a multi-agency response.</p>	<p>Schools will use funding and access relevant services in order to meet the needs of their children by amending the scope of their support packages and services.</p> <p>Schools will share good practice and support services and packages with other settings/ services.</p> <p>Schools will share community resource and services to meet the needs of their vulnerable children.</p>
4.3 work with other professionals to ensure that children and young people in our care can access education and extra-curricular activities	Provide information to children and carers around the services available in and out of school.	<p>Settings access external provision and inform their carers and children about wider activities they can participate in.</p> <p>Settings support children to access alternative forms of education to improve learning outcomes.</p>	<p>The setting takes steps to network with other schools and external agencies to share good practice and improve educational opportunities for vulnerable children outside of school.</p> <p>Settings provide shared learning activities and events to children and their families in school.</p>
4.4 advocate for the child's best interests with other professionals	<p>Settings support and challenge decisions made by other professionals and carers for the benefit of the child.</p> <p>Staff advocate clearly the voice of a child and make decisions in the best interest of the child, being flexible around policy and procedure. E.g. 'child before process'.</p>	<p>Actively seek the voice of the child and present that effectively to impact on decision making.</p> <p>Support children to express themselves within a safe environment.</p> <p>Actively seek to better understand the views of other agencies and professionals and their rationale for decisions.</p>	<p>When conflict arises or communication breaks down settings strive to resolve difficulties and look for restorative outcomes.</p> <p>Encourage and advocate an open and honest approach when explaining things to children.</p> <p>Help children to make decisions for themselves and inform decision making.</p>

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE:

In our Caring School we:	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
4.5 have a clear and timely system for sharing information / concerns around our children with other professionals	<p>Have effective policies and procedures in place in line with statutory guidance for safeguarding and looked after children and following Lincolnshire's Early Help Pathway.</p> <p>There is a system of confidential record keeping about incidences and external contacts relating to vulnerable children and staff know how to use it.</p>	<p>Staff contribute towards the coordination of plans and systems for sharing information. They are able to make changes to the nature of support and risk management when needed.</p>	<p>Staff lead the coordination of plans and systems for sharing information. They are able to make changes to the nature of support and risk management when needed.</p>
4.6 ensure attendance at EPEP, LAC, TAC CIN, CP SEND meetings are a priority for relevant setting staff	<p>Prioritises meetings for vulnerable children and allows the relevant staff time to prepare and attend as necessary.</p> <p>The Senior Leader for Inclusion, Safeguarding or Designated Teacher for LAC & Post LAC has oversight of all reviews and plans for individual children.</p>	<p>Staff attend and prepare for reviews with other agencies and carers.</p> <p>Staff are fully informed on arrival and have an update in regards to any responsibilities in the current plan.</p>	<p>Relevant staff members take a lead in effective coordination of meetings, plans and decision making in regard to vulnerable children.</p>
4.7 work together with the Virtual School and other agencies around how pupil premium will be allocated and spent	<p>A key staff member updates the EPEP regularly and attends the PEP meeting 3 times a year.</p> <p>Targets and funding are linked to raising the educational achievement and wellbeing of children and young people.</p> <p>Settings census is up to date to ensure for accurate allocation of Pupil Premium through the school budget.</p>	<p>Settings ensure that the allocation and spending of pupil premium is used to its maximum potential in meeting the needs of children that have barriers to learning.</p> <p>The use of pupil premium is highlighted in children's plans and progression and the use of this funding is captured and monitored to ensure its use is effective.</p>	<p>Children and families are aware of funding and contribute towards the decision making in regards to how this is used.</p>
4.8 establish clear lines of communication and good partnership working with other settings	<p>There are measures in place to help peers support children in care on joining a school</p> <p>Transition plans are clear and in place for children to support changes of class, settings or staff for vulnerable children.</p>	<p>Settings establish and secure good information sharing and joined up thinking with other settings that have siblings on role, both formally and informally.</p>	<p>The setting takes steps to network with other schools and external agencies to share good practice and improve educational provision for vulnerable children.</p>

COMPLETING THE TOOLKIT

A member of the SLT is available every morning in the playground to welcome families and deal with enquiries and requests.

What our current practice looks like?

- Describe what your setting currently does to meet each criteria
- Use bullet points and be succinct but explain how the criteria is demonstrated in your day to day practice
- Refer to evidence documents, links to the school website or what pupils and parents tell you

What is the impact of this on children & young people?

- Describe the real impact of your practice on an individual or group of pupils in a case study
- Provide evidence of improved outcomes or progress for individual children or vulnerable groups e.g. attendance, progress, attainment or exclusion data in line with, above or showing an improving trend towards national standards

The staff member responsible for looked after children is highlighted on the school website with contact details included.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide up to 5 pieces of evidence per domain
- A case study describing the story or journey of success, improvement or progress of a vulnerable child can demonstrate your settings effectiveness across a number of criteria
- Photos speak a thousand words but include one or two only! (Please ensure you have permission to publicly share photos or that they do not show the faces of children)
- Do not include blank forms or templates but do include anonymised plans, meeting minutes or review documents which demonstrate how you support your vulnerable learners
- Include links to your school website or statutory information webpages such as OFSTED reports or DfE Performance Data
- Include results and quotes from pupil, parent/carer and child questionnaires and surveys or thank you cards and letters

Behaviour is excellent. There have been 0 permanent exclusions and only 4 fixed term exclusions in the last 3 years.

Proposed actions / next steps for development:

- What are you going to do in the short and longer term to maintain and improve provision for looked after children and other vulnerable learners?

COMPLETING THE TOOLKIT

Standard met?

- The practice examples given in the toolkit are not designed to be a 'tick list' or a blueprint for what a Caring School is.
- It is up to you to describe and evidence your practice and provision and use the examples given as a guide to make a decision about the standard met.
- Bronze standard describes practice and provision which all schools meeting their statutory requirements should achieve.
- Silver standard aims to describe enhanced levels of practice, provision, knowledge and experience.
- Gold standard exemplifies settings which go far above statutory requirements to provide their young people with the best provision and practice and also support the dissemination of this excellent practice beyond their own setting.



Submitting your reflection and progress record and evidence portfolio:

- Where possible submissions should be made electronically.
- This can be done via email or cloud transfer e.g. Dropbox.
- If necessary hard copies can be submitted to the Caring2Learn office.

Assessment and Award:

- The Caring2Learn Award Assessment Board meets three times a year to make decisions on the submitted portfolios.
- The board is made up of representatives from Education, Children's Services, Social Care and Caring2Learn Education Champions.
- Successful applicants will be presented with their award at a celebration event during the year.

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This toolkit has been developed in association with:



CARING 2 LEARN

LEARNING HOMES WORKBOOK



Partners in Practice
Putting children first

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

Name of Foster Carer(s):	
Start Date:	
Submission Date:	
Award Achieved:	
Renewal Due Date:	

Please register your start date with the Caring2Learn Team by email to: Caring2learn@lincolnshire.gov.uk



CONTENTS

	Welcome	4
Domain 1	Practical Activities in the Home: <i>How you develop learning, life skills, interests and talents with children in the home.</i>	6
Domain 2	Supporting Education: <i>How you work with schools to support academic learning and get the best out of education for your children.</i>	13
Domain 3	Working with Professionals and Other Agencies: <i>How you work with Children's Services and outside agencies to get the support you need for you and your children.</i>	21
Domain 4	Overall Approach to Learning: <i>How you develop aspiration and a love of learning to help your children achieve their full potential.</i>	27
	References	33
	Training Log	34
	Insert Pages	
	Acknowledgements	

WELCOME

Welcome to the Caring2Learn project, it's great to have you on board! The Learning Homes Award is designed to help you think about all the ways you support the children in your care to achieve their full potential. We know that when education and aspiration is promoted and supported in the home, children have a much higher chance of success in school and go on to achieve their goals. By working closely with school you can have a massive impact on how well a child progresses and your support can mean the difference to them continuing in education or training for a successful future. With the Learning Homes Award we want to recognise and celebrate all the amazing ways you do this, and also identify any training or development which can help you in your crucial role.

How long do I have to complete this?

The time you take to complete this portfolio will be dependent on personal circumstances, experience and development journey. We will work with you to complete your portfolio initially within 12 months, although this is flexible if you require additional time.

Who can support me?

The Caring2Learn team are on hand to support you – this includes Caring2Learn staff, your Supervising Social Worker and Foster Carer Education Champions. You can request support by contacting Caring2Learn@lincolnshire.gov.uk. We also offer various group support and networking opportunities. For more information, please contact us. You may also speak to your young person's LAC Social Worker, education staff and Virtual School Coordinator.

How do I access the training?

Caring2Learn offers many training opportunities along with the Lincolnshire Learning and Development Team. Do not hesitate to contact us or discuss the training available with your Supervising Social Worker.

How do I collect evidence?

We would suggest up to 4 pieces of evidence per indicator. Evidence can be sought from a number of sources and the more variety, the better. We have included evidence tips in each section although please feel free to be creative!

Do I only apply for the award once?

Your portfolio will be presented to the Caring2Learn Assessment Board every 3 years to ensure continuous professional development and good practice. You will be provided with updates and training throughout, and you should continue to add to your portfolio so that you maintain and develop good practice regarding your Learning Home.



PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE HOME

1.1 – Shared activities help create joint memories, build and strengthen relationships, and create social and cultural learning opportunities.

1.2 – Whether researching on the internet, weighing out ingredients, or counting house numbers, doing things together offers opportunities for learning competencies such as memorising, rehearsing, and evaluating.

1.3 – Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggests that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modelling. The theory encompasses attention, memory, and motivation.

Domain 1

In my Learning Home I:

1.1—Take part in activities with children.

1.2—Include learning in everyday life.

1.3—Actively support social learning.

1.4—Encourage children's participation in 'out of school' activities and hobbies.

1.5—Actively try to build self-esteem, self-confidence, and aspirations in children.

1.6—Help children to use digital technologies safely.

1.4 – Young people have opportunities to join clubs and organisations to develop their own interests and talents. These can also help them improve their social skills and inspire them to try new things.

1.5 – Many children with learning and attention issues may have times when they feel like they are not good at anything.

These activities can build up a child's confidence. They are also a good way for a child who struggles in school to learn in a fun, informal environment.

1.6 – The digital world can be dangerous and children need skills to critically engage and recognise when the internet or social media is threatening. Carers can help by establishing a practice of using the internet together and modelling decision making about healthy internet/social media use.

1.1 – TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN

What my current practice looks like?

We go out walking together every day with the dogs.



What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence
- Photos tell a thousand words! (Please ensure photos do not show the faces of children)
- Remember you are evidencing the things you do together as a family

Any actions / next steps for development:

I'm going to take on new challenges to learn new things with our children.

1.2 – INCLUDE LEARNING IN EVERY DAY LIFE

What my current practice looks like?

Helping children learn to cook, allowing them to help in the kitchen preparing meals.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

We do shopping together and work from a shopping list, this has helped their reading and writing.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence
- Photos tell a thousand words! (Please ensure photos do not show the faces of children)
- Remember you are evidencing the way you make learning fun and help children practice their literacy and numeracy skills using everyday activities

Any actions / next steps for development:

1.3 – ACTIVELY SUPPORT SOCIAL LEARNING

What my current practice looks like?

We have lots of family functions and events with friends that we attend as a family

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

On holiday she was able to meet and build friendships with other children—a big step forward!

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence
- Photos tell a thousand words! (Please ensure photos do not show the faces of children)
- You might have examples that show how a child's social skills or confidence have improved since attending events, parties, clubs or meetings e.g. V4C or FAB Awards

Any actions / next steps for development:



1.4 – ENCOURAGE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND HOBBIES

What my current practice looks like?

We promote and support social hobbies. Our foster child attends Rainbows and takes part in their events and trips.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence
- Photos tell a thousand words! (Please ensure photos do not show the faces of children)
- Certificates that celebrate children's progress such as swimming badges, music or dance awards, trophies or medals for competing in competitions



Any actions / next steps for development:

1.5 – ACTIVELY TRY TO BUILD SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-CONFIDENCE AND ASPIRATIONS IN CHILDREN

What my current practice looks like?

We always make a fuss and celebrate with breakfast in bed if they try their best or get certificate from school.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence
- Photos tell a thousand words! (Please ensure photos do not show the faces of children)
- Certificates of achievement or effort, displaying photos of the child and displays showing how you value and support their achievements

Any actions / next steps for development:

I need to find out more information about careers and college options so that I can give them lots of ideas for the future.

1.6 - HELP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES SAFELY

Both children have iPads but only age appropriate games are downloaded and we have parental controls set.

What my current practice looks like?

Online E-Safety Training Completed Date:

What impact this has had on a child in your care?



Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence
- Certificates of training completed
- Resource examples used in the home

Any actions / next steps for development:

I need to know more about social media and the privacy settings that can be used.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION

2.1 – Regular, effective communication is vital for joint understanding of the child's needs, for ensuring consistency between home and school and in addressing emotional/behavioural difficulties. Carers can best advocate for the child when they are the primary contact and establish a strong relationship with the school.

2.2 – Ensure you are registered for school communication systems like Parent mail or text alerts.

2.4 – Foster children feel better supported and a greater sense of agency when their carer takes an active interest in their education and is able to answer questions or offer advice.

2.3 – Many children find disruptions and changes to their usual routines unsettling and difficult to cope with so day to day routines should be consistent as possible and any changes shared/discussed in advance so they can be made aware and feel reassured.

Domain 2

In my Learning Home I:

2.1— Establish a good working relationship with members of school staff to promote good communication and understanding of learning needs and wellbeing.

2.2— Ensure school has contact information so they can provide updates regarding events and achievements.

2.3— Have daily routines in place for the children in my care at home and in school.

2.4— Take an active/engaged interest in the education of the children in my care.

2.5— Promote literacy in the home.

2.6— Provide support at times when children may experience additional stress or anxiety.

2.7— Am aware of pupil premium, and work with education settings and the Virtual School to ensure children access these funds to support learning.

2.5 – Regular reading together, both to and with children extends vocabulary, is an opportunity for closeness and warmth of care, can be calming before bedtime and can help to engage with emotions. It can also develop a love of reading for learning and pleasure.

2.6 – It is important to make sure you are notified well in advance of any school events that might cause added stress to a foster child so you can help, support and prepare them for these times. E.g. exams and tests, celebrations for fathers/mothers day, key members of staff leaving or changing etc.

2.7 – It is important that carers know what additional funding is available to support the learning and development of a child in care or care leaver so that they can have input into how funding is targeted towards meeting their needs.

2.1 – ESTABLISH A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL STAFF TO PROMOTE GOOD COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNING NEEDS AND WELLBEING

What my current practice looks like?

I'm fully aware of the special needs of the children in my care so that they get consistent support at home and in school.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Communication with a key person in school means we both remain informed and are able to offer the right support.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Joint plans or emails with schools where teamwork between school and home is clear
- A testimony from the school that describes and evidences the practice and outcomes described
- Documents from school and other professionals evidencing the key relationships and communication e.g. home/school diary or communication book, Class Dojo messages etc.

Any actions / next steps for development:

2.2 – ENSURE SCHOOL HAS CONTACT INFORMATION SO THEY CAN PROVIDE UPDATES REGARDING EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

What my current practice looks like?

When I have a new child arrive I always contact the school to introduce myself and ensure they have my contact information straight away for updates or emergencies.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Examples of emails or newsfeeds from the school
- Does the school have a social media platform you are a member of e.g. Twitter or Facebook?
- Links to online achievement or recording systems such as Tapestry for early years.

Any actions / next steps for development:

2.3 – HAVE DAILY ROUTINES IN PLACE FOR THE CHILDREN IN MY CARE

What my current practice looks like?

We have a family notice board and calendar on display which always shows what is happening each day.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

By having a set time every day to listen to each other, do chores, read together or do homework it cuts down on arguments.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Testimony from school that evidences the practice and outcomes described
- School timetable or home/school diary which details routines and tasks
- Photos showing your routines in the home and tasks being completed e.g. Homework time, family time etc.

Any actions / next steps for development:

2.4 TAKE AN ACTIVE/ENGAGED INTEREST IN THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN IN MY CARE

What my current practice looks like?

I attend parents evenings, productions, and other meetings and events at school.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

We always discuss the school day on the journey home. Looking at what they have enjoyed that day. The child enjoys this one on one time and this helps our relationship.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Testimony from school that evidences the practice and outcomes described
- Documents from school/other professionals evidencing your participation in school events and celebrating achievement

Any actions / next steps for development:

2.5 – PROMOTE LITERACY IN THE HOME

We encourage reading in different situations like using the subtitles on the TV or making shopping lists.

What my current practice looks like?



What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Do your children have any magazine subscriptions?
- Testimony from school and/or the children's Social Worker which evidences the practice and outcomes described
- Children's reading logs from school will indicate reading at home
- Testimony from school which evidences progress in reading

I will read the same book as my young person and use this as time together to create common interests and conversation.

Any actions / next steps for development:

2.6 – PROVIDE SUPPORT AT TIMES WHEN CHILDREN MAY EXPERIENCE ADDITIONAL STRESS OR ANXIETY

What my current practice looks like?

We have worked with school to adapt the school day so it's more comfortable and makes my young man feel less anxious. For example, he no longer travels on the school bus.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Joint plans with schools/professionals where intervention to manage the additional stress or anxiety is clear, for example, during or after contact or during exams times
- Testimony from school that evidences the practice and outcomes described
- Emails or messages showing good communication and actions to address times of additional stress

Any actions / next steps for development:

2.7 - I AM AWARE OF PUPIL PREMIUM AND WORK WITH EDUCATION SETTINGS AND THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL TO ENSURE CHILDREN ACCESS THESE FUNDS TO SUPPORT LEARNING OUTCOMES

What my current practice looks like?

I am registered to use the EPEP system:

I attend and contribute towards the EPEP for children in my care:

I'm aware who the DT is in my child's school/ education setting:

School:

Designated Teacher Name:

Virtual School Contact:

I ensure that I attend and contribute to the EPEP. I like to get the child's thoughts as they don't like attending and I ensure that they have a voice to explain what they feel they need in order to support their learning.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Pupil premium has been used to access equipment, including a computer for homework and extra revision guides.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Examples of EPEP contribution (this can be accessed online) and/or anonymised targets
- Testimony from the Virtual School coordinator or education setting/school

Any actions / next steps for development:

WORKING WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

3.1 – Although rewarding, fostering and caring for children can be mentally and physically exhausting. It's important to recognise and access support from others when required to ensure you care for your own wellbeing. Ensure communication is effective and the support in place is appropriate for both the child and the foster carer.

3.2 – Specialist help with education may be needed (e.g. to diagnose or support specific learning difficulties, or help with mental health problems), and accessed in a timely way.

Domain 3

In my Learning Home I:

3.1— Discuss and access support when required from the child's Social Worker and my Supervising Social Worker.

3.2— Work with other professionals, and the children in my care, to access specialist services to support learning when required.

3.3— Work with other professionals to ensure that children in my care can access education and activities.

3.4— Share practice and experience with other carers to assist and support the caring community.

3.5— Provide constructive feedback, suggestions and support to services and professionals to help develop informed practice and processes for children and carers.

3.3 – On-going monitoring of the school experience and planning for the future is a responsibility which foster carers may have delegated to them. Where their views are valued it demonstrates to the child that a team approach to championing their education is in force.

3.4 – Providing feedback allows carers to participate in the shaping of better services and practice.

Learning from and with others is an effective means of gaining inspiration and reviewing practice.

3.5 – Sharing best practice and experience is an effective way to support and learn from others. Joining a network or support group supports learning and development for all.

3.1 – DISCUSS AND ACCESS SUPPORT WHEN REQUIRED FROM MY SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER AND THE CHILD'S SOCIAL WORKER

What my current practice looks like?

I make a list of the things I'd like to discuss or questions I want to ask at supervision with my Supervising Social Worker.

I make sure I have good communication and keep the Child's Social Worker up to date so they can provide the right kind of support, at the right time, to the child in my care.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Supervision Prep/notes
- Testimony from your child's social worker evidencing the practice/outcomes described in this section
- Annual review documents

Any actions / next steps for development:

3.2 – WORK WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS AND THE CHILDREN IN MY CARE TO ACCESS SPECIALIST SERVICES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

What my current practice looks like?

Together as a team we helped a child to access counselling and specialist health services. I recognised I was unable to fully meet the child's needs without this kind of intervention.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Testimony from your SSW or your child's social worker evidencing the practice/outcomes described in this section
- Children's plans that show clearly your contribution to accessing specialist services. This may be linked to wellbeing or directly to learning. (LAC plan, EPEP, etc.)
- Emails between you and professionals discussing additional support for learning

Any actions / next steps for development:

3.3 – WORK WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN IN MY CARE CAN ACCESS EDUCATION AND ACTIVITIES

What my current practice looks like?

School attendance was an issue, so as a team – with the child – we put a plan together to address the barriers. At first this was a reduced timetable, which slowly increased to full time.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?



Top Tips for Evidence:

- Testimony from your child's social worker/school evidencing the practice/outcomes described in this section
- Children's plans that show how barriers to learning have been overcome. This may be linked to wellbeing or directly to learning. (LAC plan, ePEP, EHCP etc.)
- Attendance awards or certificates, improved assessment grades or progress measures (anonymised)

Any actions / next steps for development:

3.4 – SHARE PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER CARERS TO ASSIST AND SUPPORT THE CARING COMMUNITY

What my current practice looks like?

I attend Fostering social events and support groups that help me meet other carers, exchange details to offer friendships and support when needed.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

My SSW put me in touch with a more experienced carer. They have been able to give me advice and support and I feel I can now better support the child in my care.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Testimony from the Fostering Team or your SSW about the events and support you have offered in formal settings
- Examples or testimonies from other carers about the support they have received from you
- Are you a buddy or Education Champion? Do you take on additional tasks such as helping at events or training, sharing your experiences with others?

Any actions / next steps for development:

3.5 – PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK, SUGGESTIONS AND SUPPORT TO SERVICES AND PROFESSIONALS TO HELP DEVELOP INFORMED PRACTICE AND PROCESSES FOR CHILDREN AND CARERS

What my current practice looks like?

I attend Fostering support sessions and give feedback on the service. I have seen a change in things since taking part.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Thank you cards, recognition from other professionals/ agencies
- Emails/feedback forms completed
- Supervision notes/communication with other professionals
- Contributions at the Fostering support sessions.

Any actions / next steps for development:

OVERALL APPROACH TO LEARNING

4.1 – Creating goals and completing them is critical to educational achievement, and needs practice in everyday life settings. These values might be framed as ‘doing one’s best at whatever you do’, and ‘complete what you start’.

4.2 – Having a questioning perspective on behalf of the child you work with helps to model learning. For example, sentences that begin ‘I wonder if...’ lead to conjecture and theory building.

Domain 4

In my Learning Home I:

4.1— Actively promote values to support learning, such as effort and persistence, in everyday life.

4.2— Actively encourage my family to be curious about everyday life.

4.3— Advocate for children and young people in my care.

4.4— Am self-aware and can reflect with support to identify my own development needs and plan to make progress in these areas.

4.5— Undertake formal or ongoing learning.

4.3 – Active parental support is a critical factor in children’s educational success. This includes having the confidence to advocate for children with school staff and other professionals. Everyone needs a champion.

4.4 – Self-reflection helps to make sense of what is happening and take action to improve practice.

Taking time to re-assess your approach can enable you to be flexible and respond to individual needs.

4.5 – Sharing best practice and experience is an effective way to support and learn from others. Joining a network or support group supports learning and development for all.

4.1 – ACTIVELY PROMOTE VALUES TO SUPPORT LEARNING, SUCH AS EFFORT AND PERSISTENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

What my current practice looks like?

As a family we set goals to achieve together. We don't always achieve them the first time, but we demonstrate that we keep trying by changing tactics.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Plans for family or individual targets and goals
- Reward charts, 'marble jars' or award certificates for effort or achievement
- Photos of longer term or ongoing targets or projects undertaken

Any actions / next steps for development:



4.2 – AS A FAMILY WE ARE ACTIVELY CURIOUS ABOUT EVERYDAY LIFE



What my current practice looks like?

We encourage children to be curious. We watch a programme called 'How it's Made' and it creates lots of conversations and questions.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

At dinner time I will always talk about events and news that has happened, or something interesting I found out that day. This always generates conversations and questions.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Remember, pictures tell us a thousand words!
- Testimonies from other professionals, school and household members (including children)
- Contributions to school projects /subjects

Any actions / next steps for development:

4.3 – ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MY CARE

What my current practice looks like?

I always share my observations and experiences with others in the child's team to make sure their voice is fully represented and part of any plans or interventions.

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

I help and encourage him to think through what he wants to say. To avoid arguments he will discuss feelings with me then we will plan how he can explain his feelings to others. I sometimes help to explain.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Practice examples of voice of the child work completed by carers e.g. 3 Houses, Words & Pictures
- Recorded observations, indicating the voice of the child
- Progress and intervention evidenced within planning as a result of the voice of the child you have contributed to.

Any actions / next steps for development:

4.4 - I AM SELF-AWARE & CAN REFLECT. WITH SUPPORT TO IDENTIFY MY OWN DEVELOPMENT NEEDS & PLAN TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THESE AREAS

What my current practice looks like?

I welcome feedback around my practice from others and often have time to think about the way I have dealt with things after, to establish if I could do it better next time or recognise my achievements..

What impact this has had on a child in your care?

Since completing Restorative Practice training I have changed the way I deal with conflict and build relationships with children. I have noticed far less incidents escalating since doing this.

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Provide Supervision notes/Annual Review or appraisal
- Actions/Next steps within my Caring2Learn portfolio
- Attending training/events

Any actions / next steps for development:

4.5 – I UNDERTAKE FORMAL OR ONGOING TRAINING

What my current practice looks like?

My mandatory training is up to date:

I attend lots of training. As well as being a good chance to meet others and improve my own practice in the home, it also ensures I remain up to date and can understand the approaches and language used by others.

What impact this has had on you and a child in your care?

Top Tips for Evidence:

- Completed Training Log within this portfolio
- Annual appraisal and links to training
- Attendance recorded at training and events
- Certificates of achievement or attendance



Any actions / next steps for development:

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CASE STUDIES AND IMPACT EVALUATIONS

FOSTER CARER & SCHOOL BASED EDUCATION CHAMPIONS 2018/2019



On the following pages we have collected a series of case studies and individual impact studies which have been written by Foster Carers and Education Settings who have been involved in the Caring2Learn project since it's launch in the spring of 2018.

They detail the experiences of participants involved with the Caring2Learn Award process and those who have had access to the training and support programme over the last 16 months and the impact this involvement has had on them and children and young people in the care.



The group Caring2Learn was started with 16 Foster Carer Champions chosen from interviews throughout Lincolnshire County Council. I was chosen to be part of this group. At first, I was shy and nervous about doing this and going forward with the project.

What's it all about?

Promoting life skills and helping with the education of the fostered (LAC) children that live with me permanently. This is carried out by working with professionals including: teachers, social workers and the virtual school.

Firstly, we started out by having monthly meetings and going through the work book that we had to complete in order to be awarded the Caring2Learn Learning Homes Award. This was a fantastic way to meet other people in the same boat as myself and made me less nervous as we talked about what goes on at home and school with our young people. We all attended the training schedule and met with teachers and foster carers from across Lincolnshire which greatly opened my eyes to the needs of the young people. The knowledge that I am learning is phenomenal and has made me more confident and outgoing in my day-to-day life. I have made great friends within the group and found support throughout this time.

The challenge that I was set was to work with a group of schools that were designated to me. I took upon myself the challenge to fulfil this and ended up with six schools all working together in a cluster, which meets once a term at each of the schools. I took the leading role giving talks to the group and am still part of this. On top of this, I have increased the number of schools in the cluster, by two new schools, making it eight in total. Excitingly there may be a possibility of adding a further nine schools (1 federation), in the near future.

The champions group are now organising coffee mornings to hopefully encourage more foster carers to come on board with the programme. Also I help out with new foster carers, on induction days by running through the Caring2Learn workbook and explaining how I worked through the award.

Going forward

We are reviewing the current workbook and will be presenting our new portfolios in three years' time proving that we are still a Learning Home. The benefits for myself belonging in the group is more confidence and being more involved with the children I look after. I am now less scared of talking to professionals as I realise we are all on the same page and doing our best for the young people in our care. We have learnt that it's ok to talk, that our knowledge and wisdom can make a difference.

Throughout the year I have really enjoyed being part of Caring2Learn. I have enjoyed all the training courses and the meetings but the best part is getting to know other foster carers and teachers from other schools in the county and the virtual school which has been excellent. The professionals that have travelled with me on my journey have been amazing and very supportive.

Tracy Chapman

Foster Carer Education Champion

HOW BEING AN EDUCATION CHAMPION WITH THE CARING2LEARN PROJECT HAS IMPACTED ON PLACEMENT STABILITY

My husband and I have been task-centred foster carers for almost five years.

We foster sibling groups, as we are passionate about trying to keep brothers and sisters together. Before becoming a foster carer, I was a primary school teacher, and so came into fostering with the reputation of being able to handle groups of children.

Five months ago, we received into our care three young brothers who have proved to be the most challenging placement we have ever cared for. Within their first week, each of them had run away at least once, my bannister spindle had been broken, the boys were constantly fighting with one another and I had reached the conclusion that I could not take them out on my own and be able to ensure that they were physically safe. At home their behaviour was wild, chaotic, noisy and requiring all of my available time to prevent them from hurting one another.

During my time as an Education Champion I have been privileged to be able to receive training provided by Caring 2 Learn in a lot of areas that were very relevant to my needs as I to seek to become more skilled in caring for traumatised, neglected children. At around the same time as the boys were placed with us, I started attending a ten-week course based on the Solihull Parenting Approach. This group was attended by mostly other foster carer Education Champions. This group was very cohesive and had an immediate understanding of and empathy with the issues that my husband and I were facing with the three boys. In the early weeks of the placement my husband and I were seriously questioning whether we were equal to the challenges that we were finding ourselves in and whether we would be able to sustain the placement. However, attending the Solihull course gave me the opportunity on a weekly basis to step back from the situation, discuss circumstances with other knowledgeable and empathetic carers and receive the support that I needed. Along with the trainer's emphasis on 'caring for the carer' and a weekly dose of humour, we managed to maintain the placement.

I also attended a course about Adverse Childhood Experiences by Dr Karen Treisman, my place having been provided through Caring 2 Learn. This too gave me great insights into the effects on the boys of the traumas that they had been through prior to coming into care. This made me more determined than ever that they should not have a failed placement to add to their catalogue of adverse experiences. Caring 2 Learn also purchased some of the resources written by Dr Treisman, to loan out to carers. I have been working through a workbook with my eldest young man to help him cope with his post-traumatic nightmares. These are now much reduced and he is developing strategies to prevent them and to deal with them should they arise.

Although our three boys still provide challenge on a daily basis, they have made massive strides in learning how to relate to one another, how to function at school, how to play and to start to benefit from the therapeutic approach that my husband and I can provide for them.

Jayne Arnold

Foster Carer & Education Champion



THE IMPACT OF TRAINING ON KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

I have been a Foster carer for 13 years and I joined the caring2learn project as an Education Champion in 2018. During my 13 years of fostering I have been privileged to be a part of supporting many children, it's been a challenge at times but often has provided me with immense enjoyment and satisfaction seeing the children prosper. I gave up employment to become a Foster carer and it's not until joining the care2learn project that I realised how much this project has empowered me, it's great to be part of an adult team helping to promote the project. I now have the best of both worlds feeling part of an adult team but still being able to carry on my passion of fostering. I absolutely love what I do and can't wait to see how the project evolves going forward.

One of many positive outcomes on my caring2learn journey was a problem-solving circle that I ran to help with an issue I had with one of my placements, it helped to solve the problem and it's this sense of team work that I really like. I have met many new friends, colleagues and contacts that I couldn't have done without being an education champion and have also been privileged to attend some outstanding training courses over my time in the role.

Hazel Shaw

I have found that, as a Foster Carer, being part of the Caring 2 Learn project has been very positive. It has given me access to varied and relevant training, enabling me to up skill. All the training supports me in my on-going development as a Foster Carer, which is invaluable. With my increased knowledge, particularly around trauma and the impact it has on the developing brain, I have felt more equipped to access services on behalf of the children in my care.

An example of this was when I was dealing with a referral to the Community Paediatrician. My training from the project made me feel that I had more credibility and resulted in me being seen as more of a professional working within a team. Having the knowledge and training together with the language, resulted in a more productive appointment. In turn this saved time on future appointments/ planning as all the information was discussed to a degree of depth within the initial meeting. As a result of this the child in my care has received the appropriate intervention/support in a relatively short period of time and I have felt more equipped to champion for the child.

Linda Wright

Foster Carer & Education Champion



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL PEDAGOGY TRAINING

It is not easy to comment about good practice as progress is not so measurable but I feel obliged to express how helpful Social Pedagogy has been for the young person in my care and me, even though we have ups and downs.

The young person in my care has serious behaviour difficulties which were dangerous to me, the dog and to my property at times and were so difficult for me to manage as a single carer that I was worried that I will not be able to provide placement for him anymore and I felt bad about it as he experienced rejection many times and I could see that underneath these behaviours was great, intelligent and compassionate young person and ending placement would not help in any way to address difficulties.

Participation in various "Caring to Learn" courses alongside teachers and social workers helped me to feel part of the community supporting young person and understand their role and appreciate their involvement a lot more. This made me more confident in standing for that young person, as I sometimes felt blamed or not listened to by professionals and these joined courses empowered me as part of the solution, not the problem and created amazing and supportive culture of working together and sharing experience.

6 day Social Pedagogy course provided time and space in company of wonderful people to reflect and improve practice. We were able to reflect on my young person's comfort and learning zone and this itself gave him a tool to manage his behaviour as he identified his room as a safe place to deal with own emotions rather than place of "time out" or punishment and I was able to learn a lot more about his life experiences, thoughts and feelings. We still have difficulties but they are manageable and placement does not feel in jeopardy anymore. We are developing language where we are learning to identify feelings and emotions what is not the easiest thing for someone who experienced a lot of neglect and rejection in his life. We share more activities together as I discovered that this matters a lot and is less stressful than pressure to talk and it makes talk easier when necessary. I observed so many positive changes related to improved self-esteem and ability to take responsibility for own behaviour, honesty and ability to cope with requests and rules. Young person is more adaptable to various situations and is able to form stronger, healthier, longer-lasting friendships. These successes make him feel good about himself and trying to enter territories which would be not accessible for him otherwise. Recently he express willingness to work towards going to mainstream school despite having experience of being excluded from them before. He is not ready yet but I think with right support and determination this is achievable and I feel increasingly stronger to support him with that alongside professionals.

Anna Filipiak
Foster Carer



IMPACT ON FOSTER CARER RESILIENCE

Carole and I completed training in April 2016, as tasked centred carers, and shortly after panel we were asked to foster two brothers aged 17 and 14. To say it was a baptism of fire is a massive understatement. The boys were a very challenging introduction to Fostering. They were deeply affected by the abuse and neglect they had suffered over a long period of time. They kept themselves very much to themselves, spending most of their time in their rooms. They gradually became more comfortable in our company but refused to interact on any level with our family and friends. They did go away with us for a week in Lake district, but again while there they just wanted to be on their own and did little with us. As time progressed the elder brother became more comfortable living with us, we helped him with his UCAS application, and he decided to “stay put” with us when he turned 18. As he became more comfortable with living with us, his brother’s attitude changed, and he became more and more disruptive and intent on breaking up the placement. He mainly targeted my wife and subjected her to torrents of abuse when they were alone such as in car when fetching or carrying back and forth to Bourne. Eventually it was clear that his placement could not continue and he was removed. At this his brother blamed us for splitting them up and refused to speak or engage with us on any level. He came home from school and stayed in his room. He also refused to make his contribution from his housing benefit towards his board and lodging under the Staying Put scheme. He eventually moved out in Feb 2017.

Carole was so traumatised by the whole affair we took a break from fostering while we decided if fostering was for us. After a number of conversations with our SSW we started offering respite care to a number of children. This went well and confirmed to us that fostering for us. I also became involved with the Caring2Learn project as an education champion during this time. At the beginning of 2018 we agreed to go back onto the task centred register. In April we agreed to Foster 2 brothers from Vietnam and they have now been with us over a year in which we have supported them through the whole process of coming into care and facing a court case to decide whether or not a full care order was granted.

My involvement with Caring2Learn along with our SSW has more than any other support or training equipped me to cope with the pressures that fostering children bring. It has through some excellent training such as the Restorative Practice course I attended enabled me to tackle problems and issues in a different light and as a result although the role of foster carer is still a difficult one I feel far better equipped to cope. I see Caring to learn as an essential part of foster care training and the approach of linking schools and carers through the dual award is an innovative and ground breaking approach that seeks to ensure that looked after children in Lincolnshire get the best possible chance to succeed and achieve their full potential. As I said at the SSW team meeting, Caring2Learn needs to be promoted at all levels and become an integral part of foster carer induction and continuing training.

David Guy

Foster Carer & Education Champion



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AS FOSTER CARERS

Hello, our names are Steve and Tracey Tyrrell we started fostering in 2001 we are Education Champions and a Learning Home. We are writing this as we believe our personal experience as foster carers should be acknowledged and may help shape the Caring 2 Learn project as it goes forward, it may also help shape the future thinking around services delivered to foster carers in Lincolnshire.

As foster carers we have in the past felt as we are mere tools in the overall corporate umbrella of looking after children within the local authority. The main reasons being that our main contact with the local authority or any of its professionals was at statutory reviews etc., training was always in isolation with other foster carers and limited in scope and quality and we did not get to work with other foster carers or other professionals.

As foster carers the C2L project has provided us with the opportunity to meet and work with many other foster carers and gain valuable knowledge from other carers in the way they interact with the children in their care and interact with the local authority. Because of the project we have networked and trained alongside all branches and professionals of the local authority providing us with a clear understanding of the local authority's services to children placed in care within the county.

The opportunities to access training, such as Restorative Practice, Social Pedagogy, Trauma Informed Practice to name but a few, which we have participated in with other professionals from the local authorities, social workers, teachers, early years etc has increased our capabilities and knowledge as carers to provide the best care to the children in our care and also equipped us as individuals to pass on the ethos behind such training to our children so that they may use it with their children in future years.

Our work with schools and networking with other carers has provided us with a clearer understanding of the importance of education, but education that also uses care and nurturing in its day to day practice and how this benefits our children at home and at school.

The C2L project has enabled and equipped us as carers to examine, challenge and reflect on our learning methodologies with the children in our care to identify new ways of providing learning opportunities within the home so that all our children benefit from living in a learning home. The outcomes for children and future children in our care will be priceless to their future well-being and education.

Steve and Tracey Tyrrell

Foster Carers and Education Champions



STURTON BY STOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sturton by Stow Primary is a small primary school just outside Lincoln, with a very mixed intake of children. We have a relatively large proportion of Looked After children, children eligible for Pupil Premium Funding and children on the SEND register. Because of this, our school ethos of ensuring that we see all children as individuals and aim to meet their specific needs and the multi-agency approach to the project, I was very keen to be involved in the pilot Caring 2 Learn Project. The support of vulnerable children is a key focus in school, and is strongly led by the leadership team. As head, I am also the Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children, our Assistant Head leads on Pupil Premium and our SENCo is a key member of staff. We pride ourselves on seeing each child as an individual and making sure that we know their likes, dislikes, worries, fears and hopes in order to support them in doing the best they can at school. Through our involvement in Caring 2 Learn, we have been able to review and evaluate the support we provide for our looked after children, for all vulnerable children and for all of our children. The key outcomes of this for our school were:

- There are many aspects of our work with vulnerable children that are very effective (e.g. meet and greet in a morning, pupil leadership roles);
- There are effective aspects of our work which we can further develop (e.g. working with parents and carers) to make them even more effective;
- There are some areas which we can focus on (staff training with regard to child mental health).

A key aspect of Caring 2 Learn for me was the Restorative Practice training, which I found incredibly powerful. Again, there were aspects of this that we already used in school with the children and with staff. Through the two days of training I realised the powerful impact this approach could have with the children in school and also in how we work as a staff team to support the children and each other. This is something we will be working on this year and will be continuing to develop and embed across the school in the coming months. We pride ourselves on our work with parents/carers and with outside agencies, including the Virtual School, behavioural support and social care. However, with the pressures on us all, it can sometimes feel like we are all working incredibly hard to support the children without everything being completely integrated. The multi-agency approach of Caring 2 Learn is incredibly powerful and is a key strength of the project. It has provided us with the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with a range of colleagues, and to consider these from different points of view. Taking part in the pilot Caring 2 Learn project has been a valuable opportunity for our school. We have had validation of the good work we already do and we have been challenged to improve our practice further. It is great to know that we are already making a difference to the lives of some of our most vulnerable children, and that we now have practical ideas for making an even bigger difference.

Alison Simmons

Headteacher



BRIDGE HOUSE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

The start of our Caring2Learn journey...

At Bridge House, our focus is always on change. It finds its way into the school motto – “Enter with a past, change it for a future”. It forms the basis of our ethos, that we, well all of us, can make improvements to become better at what we do. Better people, in fact. This is no preachy soundbite: we have seen this happen time and again to our pupils. Whole lives changing before us. The reason why change is so important

to our school lies in the nature of our cohort. They are a disparate bunch alright no generalising or pigeon-holing here! – but they all have some things in common: they did not succeed in mainstream education. They are bereft of confidence and self-esteem. And they are vulnerable. Exactly the type of pupils that Caring2Learn is for. Change is also something that we embrace as a staff group. We know that Caring2Learn will be a transformative process for our school, and we are up for the challenge! We are setting our sights firmly on the Gold level award, but know it will be hard won. We are also currently involved in the Promoting Achievement of Looked After Children (PALAC) Project, which aims to raise attainment for looked-after children, while also providing invaluable research into the efficacy of different practices. The PALAC Project, while still underway, is already starting to show us the importance to LAC pupils of what seem to us to be trivial matters. The introduction of termly rewards. Encouragement to attend after-school clubs. Our data show these leading directly to better effort and progress in the classroom – who would have predicted such a clear, immediate impact? I wouldn't say we were sceptical at the start, but we were certainly cautious. Yet we were also open-minded and willing to make changes, and the results speak for themselves. This is why we are so excited to be embarking on another journey. Every school can always improve – being judged Outstanding does not mean Perfect. Bring on the change, as we strive for a Caring2Learn Gold level award!

With our LAC cohort increasingly dominating our overall school profile, joining Caring2Learn was an easy decision for our senior leaders to make. As we said before, our small school in Boston, Lincolnshire, caters for those who find themselves outside of mainstream education – disengaged and disinterested in their future and potentially impacting negatively on our communities in years to come. Once, a case worker referred to these individuals as “my tribe” and, as ever, our responsibilities towards these young people go well beyond educating, in an academic sense. It is imperative, as practitioners, that we educate the whole.

Caring2Learn has afforded us a period of reflection on our practice; a time to pause, and evaluate all the things we really desire to achieve. Also, to take pride in those things that we have already. Auditing provision in the Reflection and Progress Record can be an incredibly daunting task – a RAG system can often appear a tempestuous sea of colour. An unholy stained-glass window, with each shard of glass glowing with positive or negative connotations. The temptation to massage the palette is great: “I've just had two reds in a row, so this one had better be amber.” Or, in a different section: “They'll never believe



all this green and amber; better slip a red in to make it look realistic.”

But on a cool, August morning, I prefer to see amber as a challenge; red, not as a stop sign that can never change, but an opportunity – the ultimate goal in shaping what we provide and taking it to the next level. There is no point being anything other than honest and humble, because otherwise the process is a waste of time.

Caring2Learn has already provided us with partnerships that may have otherwise never come to fruition. Tracey Chapman, our Foster Care Education Champion, has been a valuable contact, helping us to understand what it is like to be responsible for LAC pupils outside of the relative safety of school. We also have a meeting coming up with what we have grandly styled our “Caring2Learn Local Group” – all of the schools in our area who are part of the scheme. It will be hugely helpful and inspiring to hear their stories and plans... I just hope they’ve got a bit of red too!

Jade Corsson

Designated Teacher For Looked After Children



CARING2LEARN: BOSTON AREA CLUSTER GROUP

Key information

Foster Care Champion: Tracy Chapman

Schools involved: Boston West Academy Ceri Braybrook

Boston Witham Academies Federation Dina Nicholson

Bridge House Independent School Steve Barker Jade Corssen

Fourfields Church of England School, Sutterton Abigail Gray

Frithville Primary School Paul Bargh

St. Thomas' Church of England Primary School Cathy Riglin

Sibsey Free Primary School Graeme Wright

Swineshead St. Mary's C of E Primary School Abigail Gray

Wyberton Primary School Cathy Riglin

Timeline

April 2018 Six Boston Area schools entered the Caring2Learn process

Tracy Chapman (TC) assigned to the schools by the Caring2Learn team

September 2018 TC met with each school individually, starting with Bridge House

TC suggested meeting together as a local networking group

24/09/18 Meeting 1, at Bridge House

26/11/18 Meeting 2, at Boston West

November 2018 7th and 8th schools added to the group

12/02/19 Meeting 3, at St. Thomas'

21/03/19 Meeting 4 (scheduled), at Frithville

Summary

As part of Lincolnshire's commitment to improvements for Looked After Children, the Caring2Learn initiative aims to bring the corporate parents together to drive forward this shared goal.

Professionals within our cluster group are all at different stages of this journey: by working collaboratively, it is hoped a higher standard of practice can be achieved, resulting in direct impact upon the children and carers within our county.

Key to improving the provision offered by schools across Lincolnshire has been the identification and real-



isation of the barriers that pre-exist between carers and education. From this initial identification, a door can be opened to breaking down these barriers, with all parties working towards a positive relationship that puts the child at the heart of what we do.

Anecdotally, members of the cluster group feel that it has been a positive and productive enterprise, and we envisage the group continuing to meet – and growing in membership – for the foreseeable future.

Statement from Tracy Chapman

I was set the challenge of working with the schools that were designated to me.

I took upon myself the challenge to fulfil this and ended up with six schools all working together in a cluster, which meets once a term at each of the schools. I took the leading role giving talks to the group and am still part of this.

On top of this, I have increased the number of schools in the cluster: first, with two new schools joining ; then, by adding a further nine schools in the form of a federation.

As a group, we are now organising coffee mornings to hopefully encourage more foster carers to come on board with the programme.

Meeting 1 – 24/09/18 (hosted by Bridge House)

Theme: Introductions and goals

- ☑ General introductions
- ☑ Each member briefly outlined where their school was in the process and the size of their LAC cohort
- ☑ St. Thomas' / Wyberton already have the Gold Award
- ☑ Discussion of how we think the group should run – informal, with meetings not minuted, but overviews circulated afterwards
- ☑ Advice from Cathy about compiling evidence for a Caring 2 Learn bid
- ☑ Discussions on specific Caring 2 Learn criteria:
 - Networking and sharing good practice and resources with other settings

(2.7 Gold; 4.2 Gold; 4.3 Gold; 4.8 Gold)

- Involvement in community projects and support

(1.5 Gold)

- Helping carers to attend events

(3.4 Gold)

- ☑ Tour of the premises

Meeting 2 – 26/11/18 (hosted by Boston West)

Theme: Caring2Learn bids and next steps



- ☑ Further advice from Cathy on completing the reflection and Progress Record and compiling an evidence portfolio
- ☑ Discussion regarding the range of pastoral support and (specialist) interventions provided by schools
- ☑ Exchange of ideas regarding closer co-operation between our schools, for example:
 - Swimming lessons and enrichment for LAC pupils at Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre
 - Boston Food Bank: shared collections and drop-offs
 - Inter-school sports and activities
 - Recycling and green energy schemes
 - Shared training opportunities
 - Shared resources, e.g. kiln, bee hives, chickens and bushcraft facilities
- ☑ Tour of the premises

Meeting 3 –12/02/19 (hosted by St. Thomas')

Theme: Evidence gathering

- ☑ Welcoming our new members (Abigail and Dina)
- ☑ Discussion around the relative merits of different ePEP systems
- ☑ Update from Bridge House on their collaborations with Tracy, e.g. a coffee morning, swimming lessons for LAC pupils and a meet and greet with carers at a parents/carers evening
- ☑ An external research project, covering BWAf's Caring2Learn bid process
- ☑ Evidence observed at other settings of a restorative circle
- ☑ Cluster group case study presented in draft form, and questionnaire distributed

Achievements to date

- ☑ Bringing together 17 local schools to create a vibrant cluster group
- ☑ Meetings every term, at a different setting each time
- ☑ Providing support for those preparing a Caring 2 Learn bid
- ☑ Allowing the free and ready exchange of ideas and experiences
- ☑ Increasing co-operation and shared initiatives between schools
- ☑ With the benefit of the pupil in mind, increased sharing of information to ease transition into different settings

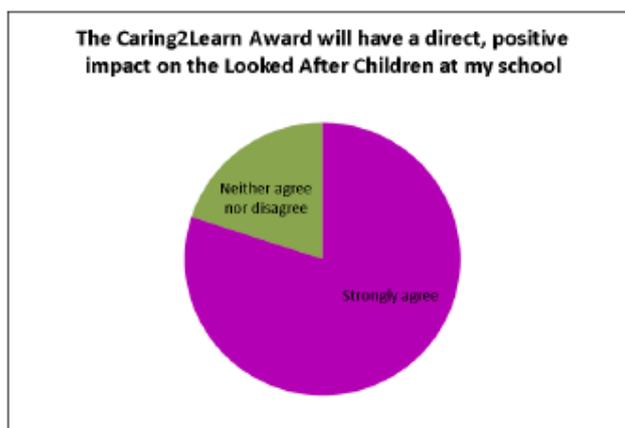
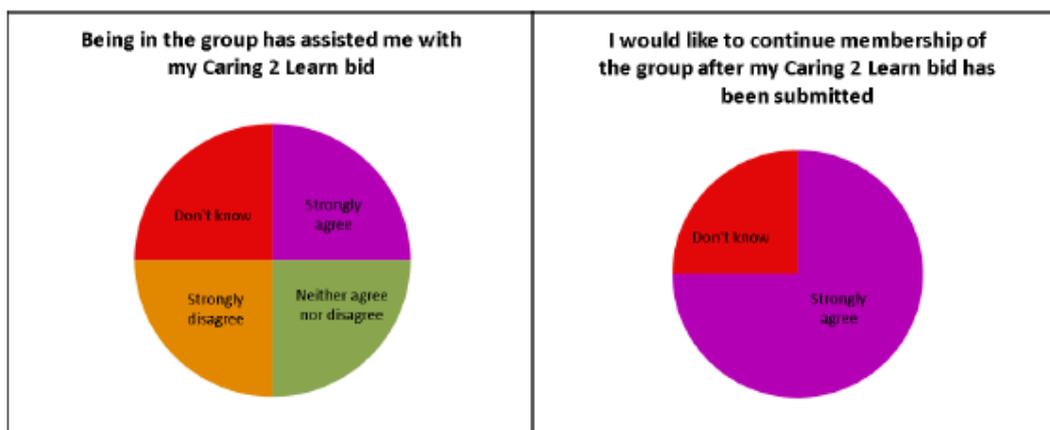
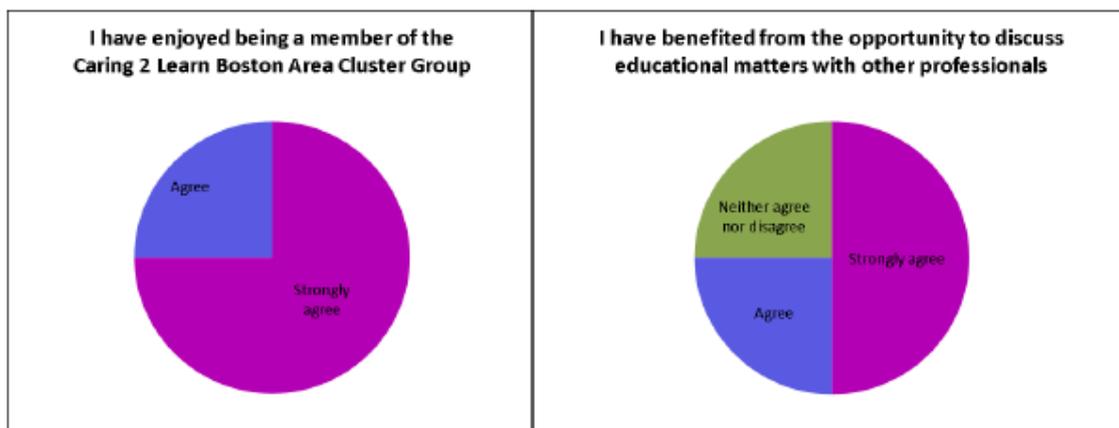
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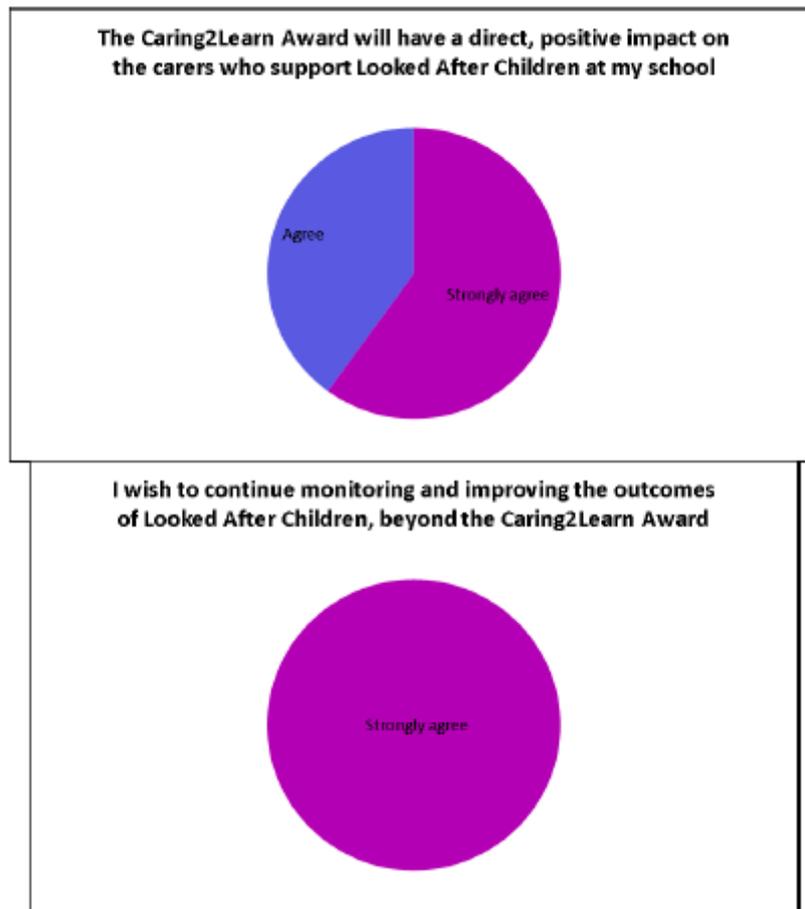
- ☑ For all members of the group to successfully bid for the Caring2Learn Award at their chosen tier
- ☑ For the group to extend beyond the initial Caring2Learn award



- ☑ For the group to expand and attract new members
- ☑ Increased monitoring of the direct impact of the initiative on Looked After Children
- ☑ Increased monitoring of the direct impact of the initiative on carers
- ☑ Regular opportunities for carers to be involved in the education of their children – achieved through shared initiatives
- ☑ Increased pooling of resources and communication between the professionals in the group

Questionnaire results





Selected comments

- ☑ "... the group were very welcoming and supportive. I am in no doubt that, through this network, our school practice and provision for Looked After Children will improve."
- ☑ "I can see the opportunities that may well present themselves regarding wider professionals sharing best practice and supporting schools in achieving the Caring Schools Award."
- ☑ "I have found the group meetings hugely beneficial - not only for my school's Caring2Learn bid, but also for my own CPD. The other professionals have all been very generous in terms of sharing their insights and expertise, and I believe that the group could potentially have far-reaching benefits within and beyond the Caring2Learn process."
- ☑ "I would be interested in remaining within the group should we be given the opportunity to carry out joint projects or become involved in other shared learning opportunities."
- ☑ "Very much looking forward to embedding [Caring2Learn] into the whole school Improvement Plan."

CARING 2 LEARN AT GANF

Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship comprises of two Grantham-based schools, Ambergate Sports College and Sandon School. We cater for pupils between the ages of 3 and 19 with moderate to severe learning difficulties and complex needs. Our pupils' needs are wide ranging; many are on the autistic spectrum, with others having ADHD and varying degrees of developmental delay, and some with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. As such many of our pupils have an extra vulnerability and a proportion of pupils are Looked After, Previously Looked After or eligible for Pupil Premium Funding. Our mission of every second to be Valuable, Inspiring and Personalised underpins everything we do and fits with the ethos of the Caring2Learn project.

As part of the pilot cohort we were very excited to be involved. The impact of the Caring2Learn project both for myself as a practitioner leading it in school and for GANF as a whole has been incredible. There has been no other project like this one nationally and Lincolnshire are leading the way in bridging the gaps between care and education to raise the expectations and outcomes of looked after and vulnerable children.

The many training opportunities provided by the project have impacted the schools directly. This training has been multi-disciplinary and included foster carers, social workers and educators. This in itself is innovative and really broadens the experiences offered in group settings and allows professional reflection. My training in Restorative Practice enabled me to enhance my own teaching and learning skills as well as implement changes throughout the schools. I adapted the knowledge and skills I gained from the training to meet the needs of the pupils in our special school setting. Once I had achieved a suitable model for our schools I led whole school training to develop staff awareness and promote changes across GANF. The feedback from this training was extremely positive and has contributed to the wellbeing of staff and students through this knowledge of a different approach. This allows us as a school to be constantly refining our practice and focus on the welfare and progression of the pupils we work with.

We were extremely proud to achieve the Gold Caring Schools Award in September 2018, validating the outstanding practice we carry out on a daily basis with pupils and carers in our setting. The project has also helped us to refine and promote our practice as well as to add valuable ideas to our toolkit of support for our vulnerable pupils.

Torie Workman

Designated Teacher and Pupil Premium Lead for Sandon School



DEVELOPING TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

Case Study: Bxx 7 year old boy in mainstream school

Bxx is previously looked after (birth parent – child protection order in utero for neglect and drug and alcohol misuse, previous five (siblings) children in care or adopted; foster placement to adoption – death of foster mother; moved to emergency foster care where teenagers with severe behaviour issues were placed; moved out of county for adoption. He attended local nursery where he had full inclusion funding which was “topped up” by the nursery to allow fulltime 1:1 support for Bxx when he was in nursery.

He then moved to the Early Years’ class of a very small local primary school. The school did not apply for any top up funding for Bxx however, the EYFS class was very small in number approximately 12 children with much adult support i.e. 4 adults. Bxx seemed to have a fairly settled year although towards the end of EYFS he became “more difficult” to handle needing an individualised curriculum delivered by one teaching assistant. When he moved to the Year 1 class his behaviour deteriorated dramatically with daily violent outbursts resulting in Bxx physically attacking children and adults. He was excluded a total of 17 times from September to the beginning of February. After October half term he attended school for a total of 2 hours in the afternoon.

His parents applied for a place for Bxx at our school, a very large local primary academy at the end of January after visiting the school and discussing Bxx’s needs and story with the Headteacher. Bxx moved to our school at the beginning of February when in Year 1.

His difficulties included:

- Bxx had been “deaf” for a number of years; only recently being fitted with hearing aids
- Speech was very poor
- Gross motor skills poor – due to being “contained” in a high chair which did not allow him to develop control and muscle mass
- Severe attachment disorder
- Autism
- Rare Genetic disorder which could mean learning difficulties

Bxx attended school mornings only until teaching assistant cover could be found to support Bxx all day. This was funded from the school’s budget. Once cover was found Bxx attended all day. A personalised curriculum was devised and a stock room converted into a “safe space” with tent and learning materials including toys and construction for Bxx.

We believe in a “nurturing and relationship securing” environment. All the staff have been trained in attachment. The Headteacher, pastoral lead teaching assistant and Bxx’s one to one teaching assistants have had further training regarding attachment and trauma. The Headteacher worked with the parents to secure an ECH plan. This was agreed and Bxx was given monetary support which would secure 25 hours one to one teaching assistant time. The Headteacher and parents appealed this decision and eventually support was increased to 32.5 hours.



The Headteacher has encouraged the teaching assistants working with Bxx to encourage complete attachment dependence until Bxx is secure enough to allow himself independence. This has included the use of transitional objects; playing with Bxx and then modelling play to Bxx; but in all interactions with Bxx PACE (Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) is used by all key adults.

Bxx's academic learning is currently secondary to his emotional learning and ability to feel safe in his environment. Bxx takes the lead in both play and more formal learning. Some days Bxx is outside most of the day, other days he spends his time in the Headteacher's office being her Deputy Head – writing, phoning and talking. At Christmas Bxx managed to introduce the Key Stage One Christmas concert to the audience; during merit assembly he stayed for ten minutes in the hall with other children. These are huge achievements for Bxx and his school.

Most days Bxx has aggressive outbursts where he will kick, bite, punch and slap children or adults; or run around the school switching on and off lights; or trash his safe room. Most days the Headteacher and/or Deputy Head will work with the teaching assistant to deescalate the situation and lower Bxx's arousal. If this happens at the end of the day Bxx's parent will come into school to collect him rather than him going into the playground to be collected. Bxx will nearly always then attack his parent.

Bxx is still in mainstream school. There are short times when he can be supported in the classroom (a massive achievement) but mostly he is still learning outside the class. The school is working on ensuring secure attachment and self-regulation for Bxx who has experienced relational and developmental trauma. This work is ongoing. (training via Caring2Learn)

Being involved in Caring2Learn has allowed the staff of my school to access training on trauma informed practice, restorative practice and attachment; this has supported them in their understanding and day to day handling of Bxx. As a result of this Bxx has felt "safer" and more able to self-regulate in school and at times access some academic learning. The Caring2Learn team including the Education and Foster Carer Champions have also been invaluable in offering support and problem solving for staff when days with Bxx have been difficult. Through the training and support of Caring2Learn Bxx and school have achieved a great deal.

At the last Annual Review parents comments were: *"Bxx is a changed boy since attending this school. Not only has his reading, writing and numeracy improved, but his mood, attitude and willingness to learn have also greatly improved. We are really grateful to all the staff. We understand that Bxx still has a long way to go before catching up with his peers and that this may never happen. If possible, we would like him to continue to attend this school where he is happy and settled. However, we are open to your views and expert knowledge and experience if you feel this is not in his best interest. Our main aim for Bxx is that he will learn in a happy and stress free environment, which is his current setting. Thank you to all those involved in Bxx's education."*

Bxx and school have "come a long way"; there is still a long way to go but with support of other "like minded practitioners" in Caring2Learn the school can remain a nurturing and relationship securing environment where children like Bxx can succeed.

Lorraine Marcer

Headteacher

Education Champion



Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Working for a better future



**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel about the work of the Adoption Service in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards National Minimum Standards 2003, 2011, 2014, and the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The National Minimum Standards, together with the Adoption Regulations, form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies.

Under the requirements of the National Standards, Members, in their role as Corporate Parents, should be informed on a regular basis about the activity of the Adoption Service.

The National Minimum Standards for the Adoption Service are broken down into 31 standards. Standard 17 deals with the "monitoring and controlling" and requires the Executive Councillor to satisfy itself that the Adoption Agency is effective and achieves good outcomes for children (Section 17.3). Standard 18 deals with the Statement of Purpose and requires the Executive Councillor to satisfy itself that the Adoption Agency and Adoption Support Agency meet the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose.

The Annual Report at Appendix A and the Statement of Purpose at Appendix B set out the relevant performance information, and identifies the key developments with the service of the last twelve months.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:

- a) Consider the Adoption Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose and highlight any comments for further consideration;
- b) Recommend the approval of the Adoption Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose.

1. Background

In recognition of the highly specialised nature of adoption, Lincolnshire Children's Services operates a discreet Adoption Service, on a countywide basis from three localities. The Annual Report and Statement of Purpose thus present the performance of the service over the previous year 2018-2019 to the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services and Elected Members.

2. Conclusion

The Annual Report attached at Appendix A contains a range of information about the Adoption Agency in relation to performance indicators and measuring good outcomes; the work of the Adoption Panel; and various regulations relating to the Act and Adoption Support.

The Statement of Purpose is attached at Appendix B and its purpose is to ensure children, staff and service users are clear about the aims and objectives of the Adoption Agency and Adoption Support Agency, and what services and facilities it provides. Members of the Adoption Panel and staff working in the Adoption Service have been consulted.

The Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of Standard 18 of the Adoption Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and Regulation 2 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Adoption Annual Report
Appendix B	Adoption Statement of Purpose

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Anne Johnson and Yvonne Shearwood, who can be contacted on 01522 554849 or Yvonne.Shearwood@lincolnshire.gov.uk



Annual Adoption Report 2018/2019

Introduction

This report provides information about the Adoption Service and outcomes for children looked after by Lincolnshire County Council, from the period April 2018 – March 2019 inclusive. The purpose of the Annual Report is to inform the public, Elected Members, partners and staff of the progress and developments of the Adoption Service during this period.

The County Council's Business Plan outlines the organisational values that reflect the Council's Vision and Purpose, providing a set of consistent, simple values that will guide our attitudes and behaviours. These values define how we do things, and are the principles by which we work together and with our customers and partners, and are underpinned by the following statement:

Our vision

Is working for a better future by

- Building on our strengths
- Protecting your lifestyle, and
- Being ambitious for the future

Our purpose

- Investing in infrastructure and the provision of services
- Commissioning for outcomes based on our communities' needs
- Promoting community wellbeing and resilience
- Influencing, coordinating and supporting other organisations that contribute to the life of Lincolnshire, and
- Making the best use of all of our resources

Our purpose within Regulated Services is to ensure that every child in every part of the county achieves their potential, responding appropriately to the assessed needs of all looked after children and young people, to ensure that their life chances are maximised by their experience of the service. The vision is 'Putting Children First'

National Adoption Agenda

The Government continues to maintain a clear focus on minimising delay for children with a plan for adoption and maximising the potential pool of adopters. April 2014 saw the implementation of the main provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014. Key provisions of the Act relate to reform of the family justice system formally

introducing the 26 week timescale for care proceedings and reforming the use of expert reports, both aimed at reducing delay for children. Consideration of Foster-to-Adopt was promoted in this legislation along with a change in emphasis around contact to ensure that the focus remains on the needs of the child.

A further non-ring fenced Adoption Reform Grant was allocated to local authorities in 2014/15 to continue to support the programmes of change underway in the area of adoption. Lincolnshire was awarded 644,283, which was utilised to improve timescales and support adoption activity through to the end of March 2017.

On the 13th March 2014, the Children and Families Bill received royal assent and became the Children and Families Act 2014 on 22nd April 2014. To reflect the changes, regulations, National Minimum Standards and the statutory guidance for adoption were amended and came into force in July 2014. The changes inherent in the Act have continued to be implemented in Lincolnshire, with the establishment of Foster-to-Adopt placements, a two-stage approval process for adopters, and the development and expansion of support services to adoptive families.

On the 1st May 2015, the new Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was rolled out to all local authorities. The fund offered a fast, simple service for local authorities to apply to, meaning that adoptive families can access the support they need, as and when they need it. To access the fund, adoptive families need to have an assessment of adoption support needs completed by the local authority. Where the assessment identifies that therapeutic services would be beneficial to a family, the local authority can apply to the ASF on the family's behalf, who will then release the funding to the local authority.

In April 2016 the Adoption Support Fund was extended to cover adopted people up to the age of 21, children placed under special guardianship who were previously looked after, and adopted children from outside of the UK. In 2017 the fund was extended to SGO families provide that the child had been 'looked after' prior to the order being made.

In October 2016 there was a £5,000 cap put onto individual applications to the Adoption Support Fund, with an expectation for 'match funding' from local authorities. This was followed by a provision of up to £2,500 for the purpose of assessment of therapeutic need over and above the £5,000. Over the period of this report Lincolnshire has continued to make use of the Adoption Support Fund to support adoptive families, and has developed the adoption support offer considerably.

In June 2015, the government published its proposal for the regionalisation of adoption services. The rationale behind this proposal was outlined as:

"By the end of this Parliament, we want to see all local authorities being part of regional agencies. We want to accelerate the pace of change to ensure those children for whom adoption is the right path, are given the best chance of finding a loving, forever family as quickly as possible. This year, we want to provide up to £4.5M of start-up funding to support early adopters to take forward their proposals."

The government invited local authorities and voluntary organisations to combine their resources and submit an expression of interest to become early adopters of regionalisation.

In response to the proposal, The East Midlands Adoption Consortium submitted, and was successful, in its bid for government granted development funding to progress plans for an adoption agency, which would bring together five local authorities, three unitary authorities, and three voluntary agencies into a new regional adoption agency across the East Midlands area. Lincolnshire is a member of the Consortium and is supporting the development of the project. Over the period 2018/19 Lincolnshire has continued to be involved in planning for the region, which has now evolved with Nottingham city, Nottinghamshire, Derby city and Derbyshire operating a 'pilot' regional agency, and Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland working cooperatively together with a now established regional family finding group and plans in place to coordinate the work processes across the region.

In July 2015 the government published the amended aspects of the 2005 Adoption Regulations and accompanying statutory guidance as well as specific aspects of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption. This followed the consultation earlier in the year "Getting it Right: Making it Work" which sought to align the regulations and guidance with part one of the Children and Families Act. The changes reflected the broad scope of the Act in relation to adoption and included:

- A duty to consider placing the child with local authority foster carers who are also approved prospective adopters.
- Where it is considering adoption for siblings, to assess whether the siblings should be placed together or separately, taking into consideration the interests of each child.
- Amending the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 to make clear that, when considering whether contact between a child in care and their birth family (and certain others) is consistent with safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare, the local authority must have regard to the child's care plan.
- A duty on local authorities to inform prospective adopters and adoptive parents of their adoption support entitlements and other prescribed information.

The new regulations also put the Adoption and Children Act Register onto a statutory footing and allowed the Department for Education to pilot adopter led matching.

In July 2015, the Department for Education was allocated £30M to reimburse local authorities for the cost of using the Inter-Agency fee to place hard-to-place children between July 2015 and the end of July 2016. The intention of the Inter-Agency Funding Scheme was to remove any potential barriers to successful adoptions and ensure that as many children as possible found the right, loving parents to support them as they grow and prosper. The scheme covered the costs of inter-agency fees for harder-to-place children. During the period of this report, Lincolnshire's Adoption Service has recovered the cost of three inter-agency fees. There was a change to the inter-agency fees, which was brought in on the 1st November 2016, that the fee

would be payable only for children who had waited more than 18 months from the date of coming into care to the date of adoptive placement. Over the period of this report there were no children who met the new criteria for a claim, as it is rare for any Lincolnshire child to be in care for more than 18 months before being placed for adoption. The inter agency fee ceased in 2017.

Following the decline in the number of decisions for adoption made by the courts and councils, the government on the 14th January 2016 announced that it will seek to change legislation as soon as possible to prioritise the placement of vulnerable children with a loving family where adoption is in the best interest of the child. For the first time ever the law will explicitly state that councils and courts must prioritise the quality of care the child will need to recover from abuse and neglect. Where appropriate, children will be placed as quickly as possible with the person best able to care for them until their 18th birthday, rather than with carers who can't provide the support they need over the long term.

Over the course of 2016, staff members within Adoption Support worked alongside education staff in order to assist schools in developing awareness of the needs of adopted children, and in the autumn of 2016 East Midlands Adoption Support was launched. The funding for this was time limited so the project came to an end in the summer of 2017, but the service had managed to assist many adoptive carers to access and use pupil premium, and had provided a range of support to adoptive and SGO families over the time they were active.

In April 2017, the Pupil Premium was increased again in value and since that date all school aged children adopted from care now benefit from the additional Pupil Premium monies, and the scheme was extended to include children subject to Special guardianship orders provided they were 'looked after' prior to being SGO.

Developing the workforce to ensure all social workers have the skills and knowledge to make swift and robust decisions about the best placements for children that meet their short and long term needs, was seen as a priority, and in Lincolnshire the adoption staff have all been involved in the Signs of Safety framework in order to support their work.

The government also announced plans to change regulations so councils have to carry out more thorough assessments of 'Special Guardians' to make sure children are in the right home, and with the right relatives, rather than distant family members they have never met.

There remains a clear alignment of the local, regional and national agenda which is encapsulated in Lincolnshire County Council's vision "*that every child in every part of the county should achieve their potential*". To achieve this, the work of the Adoption Service is delivered according to the principles that the Council adheres to, specifically:

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Safeguarding
- Aspiration and Well-being
- Learning and achievement
- Best use of Resources

In addition to the above principles, four strategic outcomes for children have been agreed by Children's Services.

- Children and young people are Healthy and Safe
- Develop to their full potential in their early years and are ready for school
- Learn and Achieve
- Children and young people are ready for Adult life.

The report details how the activity of the Adoption Service fits within the framework of the above principles.

Progress on Development Goals identified in 2017/18 Annual Report

Early Intervention and Prevention

The use of the Signs of Safety model has been further embedded into practice, with most of the staff having completed training. The supervising SW's are using 'mapping' as an effective tool in the initial assessment of prospective adopters. The children's workers have developed their skills in using 'words and pictures' to enhance children's understanding of their situation and the plan for adoption and 'groups supervision.' and 'problem solving circles' have become part of the day to day work.

There was continued improvement on the adoption scorecard performance against key threshold measures and in quarter three the government target of 121 days was almost achieved with Lincolnshire showing at 123 days. We continue to perform well in this area, which means that wherever possible Lincolnshire children are placed with their adoptive family as quickly as possible.

There has been an increase in the number of families who we have been able to help through the Adoption Support Fund, and have increased the training to adopters to enable them to parent therapeutically with the introduction of a new 'transitions' course open to both adopters and foster carers, which has been designed to improve the transitions for children from foster care to adoptive families, using a therapeutic model.

Adoption Scorecard

The most relevant indicators refer to the years ending 31st March 2016, 31st March 2017 and 31st March 2018

There are 3 main indicators pertinent to adoption performance:

- (A1) Average time between entering care and being placed for adoption, this has decreased to 372 days with the all England average having decreased to 486 days and statistical neighbour average of 466 days. Lower is better.
- (A2) Average time between gaining authority to place and achieving a match is 141 days, significantly lower than the all England average of 201 and the statistical neighbour average of 203. Lower is better.
- (A3) The percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 74% in Lincolnshire, slightly down on last year but still well above the all England average of 56%.
- Adoptions as a percentage of children leaving care remain strong at 12%.

For the single year 2018/19, performance for Lincolnshire (A1) as at 31st March 19 is 344 days, with (A2) reducing to 141 days.

These remain to be strong figures compared to both statistical neighbours and the national average, and the challenge going forward will be to remain 'on target' as this will be difficult to maintain. There continues to be a small cohort of children whose timescales will fall out of the target and this is due to them being difficult to place or applications from parents for leave of the court to appeal Placement Orders which has been a cause for delay. This year has seen a similar number of children with a plan of adoption, from 45 to 42, which indicates that the trend for high numbers of

children placed on Special Guardianship Orders, have levelled out , as has the number of children coming into care following a marked increase last year. The number of adoption orders granted this year has gone up from only 28 in 2018 to 41 for 2019 , which takes the figures back to the average number for Lincolnshire.

Regionalisation Agenda

RAA's will need to be fully operational by 2020 at the latest, and each region was expected to have demonstrated significant progress by 2017. The East Midlands was one of 19 areas that were given funding to progress scoping work around an East Midlands RAA. The initial expression of interest submitted to the DfE was on behalf of eight local authorities (Lincolnshire, Derby City, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire including Rutland, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire and Peterborough, and three voluntary Adoption Agencies; Adopt Together, Coram East Midlands and Family Care.) An East Midlands RAA Transition Plan was submitted to the DFE and there has been extensive work on this throughout the year, planning the various different 'workstreams' which need to be agreed before regionalisation can take place. This continues to be progressed.

A governance structure has been established with representatives from across the region forming the Project Governance Board.

Safeguarding

Over the course of the year 'Signs of Safety' has continued to be incorporated into the adoption process wherever possible as a model for assessing matches, adoptive placements and for risk assessments, and in direct work with children whilst preparing them for placement. Staff members in the team have been actively involved in developing the use of 'words and pictures' in direct work with children assisting them in understanding the reasons they are in care, and were not safe in their birth families.

The supervising social workers in the team have all completed their adult attachment style training and are now using this alongside 'mapping ' as a way of analysing their initial assessments of adopters, in order to ensure that we are assessing and approving adopters who will be able to manage the needs of the children who require adoptive placements .

In response to research by Julie Selwyn commissioned by the government, which introduced the concept of "Child on Parent" violence, Lincolnshire staff attended training on Non Violent Resistance and then set up an in-house training course for adopters. This is a model of parenting which has been effective in dealing with children and young people who are violent or physically aggressive to their carers. This training is now running on an annual basis.

Aspiration and Well-being

Maximise the benefits to adoptive families in Lincolnshire arising from the Adoption Support Fund.

Over the course of 2018/19 there have been 86 applications to the Adoption Support Fund in order to provide therapeutic input for adopted children and families. The amount of funding granted from the fund to cover these was £242,000.

Of these applications there were three group submissions to support the funding for the 'Safebase' courses for the year. The Safebase course was offered to all newly approved adopters with a child in placement, and to existing adoptive families who were in need of additional therapeutic support. In addition a 'teenage years' Safebase course was held and was attended by mainly SGO carers. Safebase was attended by 30 adoptive and SGO families, almost all of whom gave positive feedback finding the course to be effective and useful to them in their parenting. In addition, there was some funding for Non Violent Resistance courses for adopters which has been on-going and effective.

There were fifty six cases where individual therapy was delivered either by therapeutically trained staff within the Post Adoption Team, or by external providers. In all of the cases there were individual sessions using Theraplay, therapeutic Lifestory work, DDP or sensory integration therapy. There were also nine cases where there was a detailed assessment of therapeutic needs, followed by an intensive period of therapeutic input and attachment focussed therapy, delivered from the external provider. All of the families in receipt of these services have reported them to be positive in helping them to meet the challenge of parenting their adopted children.

Learning and achievement

Maintain strong links with the virtual school and ensure adopted children in schools receive the full benefit from initiatives including the Pupil Premium.

In the autumn of 2015, the Practice Supervisor, Adoption Support, and the Virtual School attended the Head Teacher Briefings in order to promote the Virtual School, advise on the introduction of the Pupil Premium for children adopted from care, and the Adoption Support Service including the Adoption Support Fund. The Briefings received positive feedback with a number of schools subsequently using Adoption Support Services for advice and guidance in promoting outcomes for adopted children. In autumn 2016, the Practice Supervisor for Adoption Support was actively involved with Families First to plan and establish the East Midlands Adoption Support Service linked to schools in order to raise the profile of adopted children and their needs in the school setting. This service launched in spring 2017, but was only funded for a year. In 2018 the Caring2 Learn project started and there are a number of adopters and SGO carers who have been involved in the project.

To implement adoption support training for all adoption social workers to enable team members to work effectively across all adoption support tasks, creating a flexible workforce who can respond to the changing needs of the service.

During 2018/19 the majority of adoption staff team have continued to be trained/supported in 'Theraplay', so that they can support adoptive families with children newly in placement to use therapeutic parenting models in order to enhance the building of positive attachments in the early stages of placement. In some of the

cases, where sibling groups are placed, there is an intensive package of Theraplay to support the transition from foster care into adoptive placement. To compliment this, there are three clinicians within the Adoption Support Team who are trained in Dyadic Therapy, Filial Therapy and Family Therapy, thus creating a flexible and sustainable adoption service.

Also the Team was able to further extend the range of post-adoption activities for children and families during school holidays with new groups focussed on music making at Soundlinks, which resulted in the young people attaining awards; watersports activities which promoted confidence, built skills and teamwork; and a drama workshop to encourage children to express emotions. All of these activities enabled adopted children to meet one another and provided an environment in which the children could talk about being adopted as well as increasing self-esteem.

In October 2016 Lincolnshire won the national award for 'Excellence in Adoption Practice' which was awarded during National Adoption Week and in the autumn of 2018 Lincolnshire were involved in producing a podcast for BBC radio 4 which has won a number of awards, and promoted public awareness about adoption.

Best use of Resources

Use and embed new case management recording system in adoption whilst maintaining business as usual.

The implementation of the new case recording system "Mosaic" was delayed, but the Go Live date was on 2nd December 2016. The staff team were trained in the autumn of 2016, and further training was extended into the spring of 2017. Throughout the change, staff members have been dedicated to resolving difficulties and have maintained the service. Staff members within the adoption team have been involved in rebuilding the Mosaic system so that it is now a useful and effective recording system which is being used by all team members. The final part of the build will be to ensure that the adoption support workflows are correct and effective.

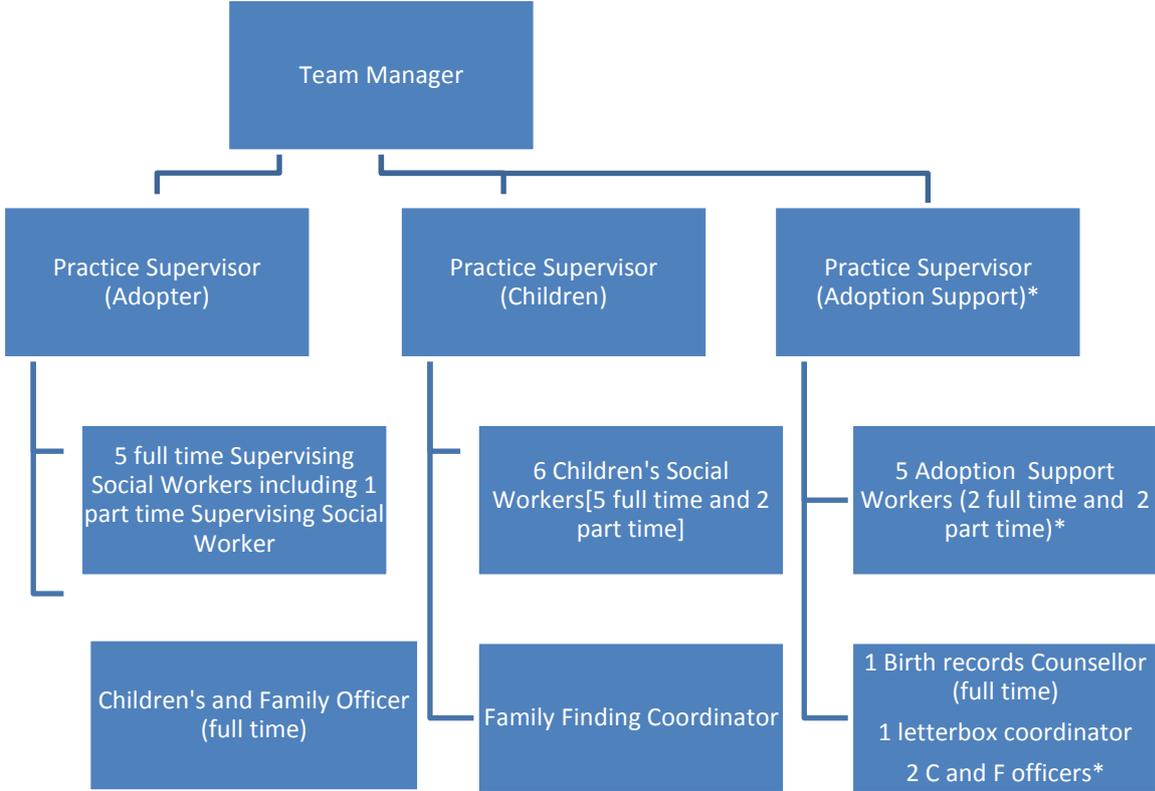
The Adoption Support Model is being developed to include families who have Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). A report was presented to the DMT in October 2015, where there was agreement to the proposal to develop SGO support. Initially support to these families has been incremental with several families benefitting from Theraplay input, Safebase training, or social work intervention to provide them with support. Plans are in place to start to initiate formal assessments and develop a range of services for SGO support, to enable them to have access to training, support groups, and advice and guidance. Support proposed will be two-tiered, with the FAST Teams completing the formal reassessment of SGO support plans. The Adoption Support Team has developed an information leaflet and helpline for Special Guardians. Guardians will be granted access to the e-Learning currently available for foster carers and a quarterly newsletter is being developed. Applications to the ASF will be managed through the adoption service.

Service Role and Structure

The core duties of the Adoption Service remain broadly unchanged. The Adoption Service continues to provide services to children, adopters and birth family members

as required by the National Adoption Minimum Standards 2014 as issued by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the [Care Standards Act 2000](#), Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, the Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005) and the Adoption Statutory Guidance July 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Adoption Team remains a stand-alone countywide service with office bases at Lincoln, Sleaford and Louth.



The Adoption Service is staffed by a Team Manager, three Practice Supervisors, six Children’s Adoption Social Workers and six Supervising Social Workers. The Adoption Support Team has one Birth Records Social Worker, two full-time and two-part time Adoption Support Social Workers, a Children and Families Officer who manages the 'letterbox' and an adoption support worker who supports adoptive families in the community.

The Children’s Adoption Social Workers progress children’s plans for adoption. The Supervising Social Workers recruit and assess prospective adopters, as well as completing step parent adoption assessments. Supervising Social Workers also deliver preparation training courses for adopters. A qualified Social Worker in the Adoption Support Team carries out the agency’s statutory duties of birth record counselling for adopted adults. Lincolnshire does not provide intermediary services

but does provide limited assistance in tracing where it is able. The Adoption Support Social Workers complete work directly with families who have adopted and who are struggling to manage issues specifically linked to their adoption. In addition they organise groups and activities to support adopters and adopted children. The Children and Family Officer co-ordinates the indirect contact arrangements for adopted children and birth relatives together with the completion of life story work for the preparation of children placed for adoption.

Adoption Performance

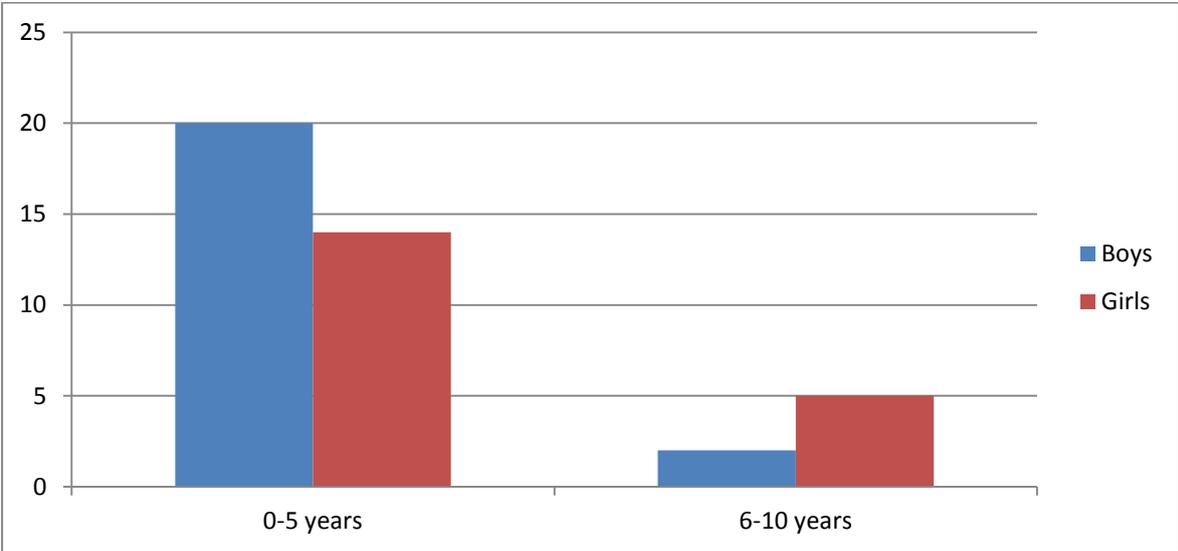
Adoption Orders granted April 2018– March 2019

- In the year to March 2019, 41 adoption orders were granted.
- In addition 63 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

This year has seen an increase in the number of adoptions in Lincolnshire with 41 adoptions being back to the average of between 40 and 50 a year, and it would appear that the number of children being placed on SGO's has levelled out .Performance against the Adoption Scorecard has already been discussed in detail above with performance against all three threshold measure continuing to improve.

Adoption Activity for 2018/2019

Profile of children adopted 2018/2019:



Lincolnshire County Council achieved forty one adoption orders during 2018/2019, an increase of 13 from the previous year and a return to the average number for Lincolnshire. Also there was a change in the demographic as there were 22 boys and 19 girls .There were a number of cases which had been delayed in the courts for many months due to contested adoption cases .Contested adoption cases have become a common theme, as more adoptions are being contested by birth parents , and the court are giving birth families every opportunity , before making the final decision.

The reduction in the numbers of children granted Placement Orders has enabled Lincolnshire to achieve high performance levels for the timely placement of children. There are fewer children waiting and many of the children are pre-matched prior to the court granting the Placement Order. In addition to this, 63 Special Guardianship Orders were granted and these are counted by the DFE as part of the adoption performance measure.

In this year three of the children were placed in Foster-to-Adopt' placements, prior to being adopted, where they benefitted from being securely attached to their prospective adopters from as early as possible in the process. Four children were adopted by their foster carer.

There were five sibling groups. One was a sibling group of three children and there were four sibling groups of two. The other thirty children in the cohort were all singletons .In terms of a profile of ethnicity, there were three children of Eastern European heritage, and one of French heritage. All other children were recorded as White British.

Profile of children with a best interest plan of adoption 2018/19

During April 2018 to March 2019, forty eight children had an agency decision of adoption, of which 42 went on to, be subject to a placement order. This was less than the previous year's figure of sixty, although of the sixty there were only 45 children made subject to placement orders, so in fact the figures were similar .The number of Special Guardianship orders has dipped slightly.

Of the 47 children there were the following groups of siblings:

- 1 group of 3 children
- 5 groups of 2 children
- 35 single children

This is a decrease in the numbers of sibling groups as compared to last year, and will be easier than last year with only one sibling group of three to place. There continued to be use of kinship placements and Special Guardianship Orders throughout the 2018/19 performance year, at a slightly lower rate with the numbers of children in care remaining fairly steady.

Age ranges of children with a best interest plan of adoption 2018/19

Previous year performance in brackets

- 0 - 5 years = 47 [53]
- 6 -10 years = 1 [7]
- 10 plus = 0 [0]

The predominant ethnicity of the children with a best interest plan remains White British although there were two children of Eastern European heritage .These are low numbers as compared with the previous year.

In line with the Government's intention set out in the Children and Family Bill 2014, the matching policy for Lincolnshire is clear that it seeks to place children with adopters who will actively seek to meet all their needs, including those that arise from their culture and ethnicity. However this will not be achieved at the expense of delay for the child in securing an adoptive family.

Children under 5 years remain the largest age group placed for adoption; these children often come as part of a sibling group with older children and therefore the target of the service's recruitment strategy continues to target adopters willing to consider sibling groups and older children.

Profile of children placed for adoption

With regard to placements made this year 38 children were placed as opposed to 37 the previous year, showing that the numbers with adoption plans are fairly steady. Of these, 26 were singleton placements, 6 children were placed in 3 sibling groups of 2, and two groups of three were placed. Of these sibling groups, four of the groups had one child over five. All the other children placed were under five with 24 of them being placed before they were 2 years. There were 24 boys placed and 18 girls, so a similar proportion to last year.

Overall, with some variation in the numbers of sibling groups, this is similar to the previous year as approximately 25 under 5's a year seems to be fairly constant.

Children Awaiting Placement at the close of 2018/19.

At the end of March 2018, there were 7 children whose plans were not agreed by the court and who did not yet have a placement order. There were a further 5 children whose plans were changed by the courts and who either returned home or were placed with relatives on an SGO. There were therefore only 5 children awaiting placement. There are 2 children who are 'difficult to place' or children whose legal position is complex. In addition, there is one sibling group of 3 children who will be difficult to place.

Adopters approved as suitable to adopt during 2018/19

A total of 43 adoptive parents were approved to adopt during 2018/19, with no adopters approved for inter-country adoption. Eleven of these were also approved for Foster to adopt. This is an increase of fifty per cent on the last year's figures as we have increased recruitment in line with the referrals for children with adoption plans coming through the system. The focus of the work during this year was to match the children waiting and place them into adoptive families at the earliest opportunity. The trend changed from one of adopters waiting, to one of children waiting early in the year, but then evened out again, so that by the end of the year adopters were being offered links quite quickly in line with the children coming through. At 31/03/2019 there were 7[9] adopters approved and waiting, three of which were being considered for possible links. In addition there were four adopters fostering children with a view to adoption.

Profile of adopter approval:	
Adoptive families approved for 1 child	37
Adoptive families approved for 2 children	6
Adoptive families approved for 3 children	0
Total:	43
Adopters approved to adopt in following age ranges:	
0 – 5	36
5+	7
Adoptive families approved for Inter-country adoption	0
Adoptive families approved for a Foster-to-Adopt placement	15
Adoptive families approved to adopt a sibling of their adopted child/ren	4

In order to reflect the government's aspiration to encourage foster carers who then go on to adopt we supported four foster families with children in placement to apply directly to the courts for an Adoption Order. This was a higher number than last year. As reported the number of families approved for Foster-to-Adopt has increased as compared to last year with 15 placements made this year.

We will continue to maximise our capacity to recruit for larger sibling group through a mixture of targeted recruitment and the flexible use of support packages for families seeking to adopt three or more children

The Recruitment Team

During this period, the Recruitment Team still consisted of a dedicated Team Manager, three Supervising Social Workers, and a Marketing and Recruitment Officer. The team were supported in their role by two Recruitment Co-ordinators.

The role of the Recruitment Co-ordinator is to log and track initial enquiries, and to act upon the information received and process enquiries in a timely manner.

The Marketing and Recruitment Officer is responsible for delivering the adoption recruitment strategy and subsequent campaigns.

The Adoption Service continued to undertake its own initial visits to determine the suitability of prospective adopters up to the approval stage.

Marketing & Recruitment

Following a relatively quiet period for the previous 2 years, marketing and recruitment activity stepped up again in 2018-2019 as more children were seen coming through for adoption.

Advertising campaign

During this year Lincolnshire Adoption Service launched a new campaign to attract more prospective adopters. The campaign idea was to get people to think about if they could meet a child's needs with advert imagery depicting the priority needs groups for the service i.e. children aged 3 year and over, children with additional needs, siblings, and those placed under the foster to adopt scheme with the tag lines:

- "Someone to give me a future" *Could you be his someone?* (Child aged 3+)
- "Someone to be my champion" *Could you be her someone?* (Additional needs)
- "Someone to give me stability" *Could you be his someone* (Foster to adopt)
- "Someone to keep us together" *Could you be their someone?* (Siblings)

Poster artwork:





A full advertising schedule occurred for the year including:

- Paid for Facebook adverts
- Local advertising within several publications owned by Johnston Press (including digital)
- Local advertising within several publications owned by Iliffe Media (including digital)
- Lincs FM
- Advertising on The Lincolnite and Lincolnshire Reporter websites
- Lincolnshire Life Magazine
- Int Comms
- Local press releases

All advertising in the media directed people to the information evenings to learn more about adoption from staff and approved adopters so that they could make an informed decision about if adoption was right for them and their family.

Information evenings

The adoption information evenings were each run in Lincoln, Grantham and Boston three times throughout 2018-2019. They were all from 7pm – 9pm with the format of the evening being short talks from social workers about what adoption is, why children need adopting and what adopters the service currently needs i.e. those for children aged 3 years and over, sibling groups, children with disabilities and additional needs, and children who have been placed under the Foster to Adopt scheme. This was followed by an animation which was newly commissioned for this year to explain the process to adopt in a visually engaging and easy to understand way. Two adopters / adoptive families then share their experiences of adoption both through a 15 minute talk to the audience. Finally the support which is on offer from the Adoption Support Team was presented to the audience. The evenings finish with

time for the audience to mingle with the adopters and staff to ask any questions they may have one-to-one. If anyone is interested in filling out an IEI at this point they are also invited to do that.

Information evenings run throughout 2018-2019:

- Tuesday 5th June at Branston Hall Hotel, Lincoln
- Tuesday 12th June at Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham
- Tuesday 26th June at Boston West Golf Club, Boston
- Tuesday 16th October at Branston Hall Hotel, Lincoln
- Wednesday 17th October at Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham
- Thursday 18th October at Boston West Golf Club, Boston
- Tuesday 5th February at Branston Hall Hotel, Lincoln
- Tuesday 12th February at Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham
- Tuesday 19th February at Boston West Golf Club, Boston

The information evenings proved to be successful with an average of 9 households attending each event and 1-2 IEIs being completed at each.

County Shows

The adoption service also had representation at Lincolnshire Show on Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st June 2018 in the main Lincolnshire County Council marquee.

Facebook

The eagerly anticipated dedicated fostering and adoption service Facebook page was launched on 18th June 2018 and gained almost 400 followers within the year. The page is being managed by the Marketing and Recruitment Officer for the fostering and adoption services and is predominately being used as a marketing aid to recruit more foster carers and adopters, and to convey key messages including who can adopt, good news stories, and to advertise information evenings etc.

Identity

During 2017-2018 an identity was created for the fostering service which was used on information booklets, the website, advertising etc. A twin identity using different primary colours was created for the adoption service during 2018-2019 and has been rolled out on the information booklet, website and advertising. The idea being that given time, the identities will begin to resonate with the public as being Lincolnshire County Council's Fostering or Adoption Services just by looking at them after they have been in the public eye for a while.

Newsletter

The service has continued to deliver a quarterly e-newsletter to approved adopters which contains information, guidance, news, and events locally and nationally which are in the interests of our adopters.

Figures

Adoption IELs received = 177

Foster to adopt IELs received = 21

Total IELs = 198

Adoption ROIs received = 40

Foster to adopt ROIs received = 2

Total ROIs = 42

This gives a conversion rate of 26% for adoption from enquiry to application, 10% for Foster-to-Adopt from enquiry to application, with a total conversion rate of 20% from enquiry to application. This is an improvement on the figures for the previous year.

Adoption Panel Activity for 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019

The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 17.2 provides a requirement for:

“Adoption Panels to provide a quality assurance feedback to the agency every six months on the quality of reports being presented to the Panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement.”

Children’s Plans for Adoption

As part of the Quality Assurance Process for children to be considered for Adoption, these reports have been scrutinized in advance by the Panel Advisor along with Team Managers from Fostering, Adoption, FAST, Looked After Children and the Independent Reviewing Service. The Quality Assurance meeting is available each week and cases are booked in consultation with Legal Services and the Adoption Team in advance to ensure the timescales in relation to Care Proceedings are met. This process allows for a rigorous cross-agency check to ensure that the work is of a high enough standard and that the child’s wishes and views are recorded.

When compiling these reports the current Foster Carers provide a profile for the child, which is circulated. The views of parents and birth family are detailed within these reports. If there are no views then the Advisor will request that the facts and reasons why there are no views from the parents are recorded.

Written Legal Advice is provided independent of the case holder and ensures that any matters concerning Re B-S (Children) 2013 are well evidenced for the Agency

Decision Maker and that the plans are robust and there are no legal issues which may prevent the plans from being considered.

The Quality Assurance meeting will collectively scrutinise each report to ensure that in their opinion the Welfare Check list has been addressed and that, if any expert reports have been requested in Care Proceedings these are available. This is particularly important in order to ensure there is a balanced approach and that key points raised have been considered fully within the Childs Permanence Report.

A summary of the assessments are included in the Child Permanence Report and copies of those expert reports are available to the Agency Decision Maker in good time to be read.

The Panel Advisor liaises with the agency to provide any actions and feedback from this forum; this may be addressed with the Adoption Service, FAST Teams, Independent Reviewing Service and Legal Services.

The Agency Decision Maker considers the welfare check list in particular:

“the relationship which the child has with relatives and with any other person in relation to whom the court or agency considers the relationship to be relevant, including (i) the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value to the child of its doing so, (ii) the ability and willingness of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, to provide the child with a secure environment in which the child can develop, and otherwise to meet the child's need and (iii) the wishes and feelings of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child, to ensure that any recommendations made have taken account of these relationships.”

Analysis

Child Permanence Reports detail the child's history well. They are written in a style which is easy to read and consideration is made to how the views of children who are nonverbal, can still be included in the reports.

The wishes and views of birth parents can sometimes be difficult for the workers to report on due to the family disengaging with the workers; however these instances are few and those where the family have disengaged the worker has detailed the reasons why the views have not been forthcoming.

These reports are written to a high standard and they utilise the Signs of Safety tools in their analysis. The reports detail the child's history well and are easily read and understood. The report details the challenges that a child may have faced in their early life including matters which detail the harm which was attributed to the care given to them by their birth family. The reports also provide significant insight into the functioning and experiences of the birth family and extended family members, this allows for a fuller understanding of who was considered and an explanation as to why they could not offer care to a particular child.

This is important information needed for prospective adopters and in due course the child themselves who may come to view these reports at a later stage.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, the following children have had a decision to support a plan for Adoption made by the Agency Decision Maker compared to the previous year.

	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Boys approved for adoption	24	35	17	12
Girls approved for adoption	27	20	6	8
Total children approved for adoption	51	55	23	20
Single children approved	38	41	15	16
Children in sibling groups of two	5 [10]	4 [8]	2 [4]	2 [4]
Children in sibling groups of three	1 [3]	2 [6]	0	0
Children in sibling groups of four	0	0	1 [4]	0
White British children	45	52	22	19
Other white background (European)	2	1	1	1
Other	4	2	0	0
Age Range 0 - 2	39	32	15	11
Age Range 3 - 5	8	15	6	8
Age Range 6 - 8	3	6	2	1
Age Range 9 -11	0	2	0	0
Age Range 11+	1			
% meeting the National Minimum Standard 17.6	100%	100%	100%	100%

Between April 2018 and March 2019, the following children have been placed for Adoption.

National Minimum Standard 17.7

The Adoption Panel makes a considered recommendation on the proposed placement of a child with particular adopters within 6 months of the Adoption Agency Decision Maker deciding the child be placed for adoption.

	2018/19	2016/17	2015/14
Total Children	51	55	23
Linked with adopters in timescale NMS 17.7	19	23	17
Linked with adopters outside timescale NMS 17.7	11	3	1
Awaiting link	21	29	1
Returned to family	0	0	4
% meeting the National Minimum Standard 17.7	78.5%	94.5%	95%

Suitability of Prospective Adopters

There have been twenty three Panels in this period. This figure is a decrease to the previous year, which had twenty four Panels. In that time the following applicants have been approved;

	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total Adopters approved	43	22	32	24
Of which Foster-to-Adopt	15	14	12	0
Foster-to-Adopt New Applications	10	5	12	6
Foster-to-Adopt Subsequent Applications	4	9	5	0

	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Approved for one child	37	13	20	14
Approved for two children	6	9	11	9
Approved for three children	0	0	1	1

	2018/19	2016/17	2015/16
White British	40	21	29
Asian/Asian British – Indian	1	1	2
Other white background	1	0	1
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	1		

% reports meeting the National Minimum Standard 17.7 timescale 78.5%

Again these reports have all been prepared by social workers who meet the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005.

Panel Administration requests the papers are available fourteen days ahead of the Panel date to allow the quality assurance process to take place. Reports are passed to the Advisor who checks that the applicant's statutory checks have been completed and that health checks as well as health and safety checklists have been completed. Alongside this the Advisor will ensure that the assessment is completed and that it adequately covers aspects of the couple's or individual's strengths as adopters and their ability to provide safe care to a child.

The report must ensure that the couple's or individual's child care experience, background history and life story, including education, is detailed as well as their support network and what attitude they have regarding contact arrangements for the future. The couple's or individual's financial details should be contained in the report.

The quality of Prospective Adopters Reports is very good and Adult Style Attachment interviews are being used as well as evidence from referees to appropriately explore skills and strengths.

On occasion the Advisor and Chair have required additional work to be completed prior to formal consideration by Panel however this is rare.

If there is any third party information or clarification of issues sought by Panel the workers will be asked to join Panel ahead of the applicants.

Analysis

There is evidence within the minutes of Panel that detail the sound nature of Panel's consideration of applicants. The current central list provides us with panel members

who have the experience and understanding of the adoption process in order to be able to consider the assessment.

There has been further development in using the referees as a positive source of evidence for the assessment with workers using the referee interview to confirm the views of the workers or in some cases to appropriately challenge the prospective adopter's views.

The Prospective Adopter Reports seen since April 2013 continue to be of a high standard with only single numbers where further information has been needed to achieve the standard.

These reports have all been prepared or been supervised by social workers who meet the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005.

Panel Administration requests the papers are available fourteen days ahead of the Panel date to allow the quality assurance process to take place. Reports are passed to the Advisor who checks that the applicant's statutory checks are up-to-date and that health checks as well as health and safety checklists have been completed and that a comprehensive and detailed contact plan is included within the reports.

The Panel Advisor will request any update of reports, medicals and support plan be prepared ahead of Panel to be circulated to Panel Members ahead of the deadline

The Advisor quality assures all the reports to ensure that a clear explanation as to why this particular family has been suggested as the best match for the child and how they will best meet the child's needs. Any discrepancies between the child and the potential adopters must be detailed in the reports and an explanation as to why this match is seen as suitable and how these discrepancies can be alleviated within the support plan. The Panel Members will also consider the relative strengths of each match and also any areas where they may require further clarity.

The quality of these reports has been good with positive matches for sibling groups and single children. Reports have detailed the needs of children and how the prospective adopters will meet these needs.

Panel have consistently raised issues regarding the ability of couples to maintain the ethnicity or cultural aspects of children and have been satisfied that couples are committed to meeting the child's needs in this area.

Panel minutes show the various matches of children to couples and single carers and confirm that questioning has been relevant and focussed upon the specific task i.e. the match with the adopters to ensure that the needs of a child can be met in the suggested placement.

Adoption Support

The period covered by this report has seen further improvements to the range of adoption support services are provided within the framework set out within the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005. The majority of the support is provided by our in-house team with a limited commissioned service through independent providers. The service is provided on a tiered basis dependent on assessed need.

Tier 1	Wide universal support to adopters includes: Contact coordination, helpline advice, information via the Lincolnshire adoption website. Birth records counselling for adults. Also included in this tier is counselling for birth relatives whose children have been adopted as well as seminars for grandparents of adopters.
Tier 2	All of tier 1 and in addition adoption support groups/activities for adopters and for children affected by adoption. These include a programme of activities which bring adoptive children together to share experiences of adoption as part of leisure activities. This tier also included the Safebase parenting programme.
Tier 3	Previous tier support plus specific adoption support include assessment of need, individual adoption support packages, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Theraplay, EMDR, and Non Violent Resistance, Extended Life Story Work. This tier also includes access to primary mental health services and CAMHS. Since the spring of 2015 with the introduction of the Adoption Support Fund, government funding has been made available to provide for therapeutic input to adoptive children and their families in recognition of their lifelong needs.

Tier 1

The Lincolnshire Adoption website remains the first point of support for adopters and adopted children and during the period covered by the report all written and web materials have been benchmarked against best practice and revised. This secure site has information regarding Theraplay techniques, safeguarding information, including how to help a child access the internet safely. The site advertises adoption activities and groups and enables the Adoption Service to consult users about planned future services. Links to services from Children's Centres and a range of education services are also available from this site. In addition to the website service users can contact the Adoption Helpline for advice and guidance. Adopters can also access a range of e-learning modules.

Adopters can sign up to receiving a regular electronic newsletter which provides information on forth-coming activities, useful short articles offering advice, and encourages contributions from both adoptive parents and children.

In 2018/19 the service received 70 referrals for birth records counselling, which is similar to last year, and only 12 enquiries from birth relatives seeking advice on tracing, which is less than in the previous year. Callers enquiring about tracing relatives were signposted to other agencies as Lincolnshire does not provide intermediary services.

Birth Ties service delivered by After Adoption, supplies counselling to birth relatives who have lost their children to adoption. The contract is at capacity and provided counselling to 26 birth parents /relatives during this year, although with the reduction in numbers of birth parents in care proceedings the nature of the referrals has changed with more of the work now being focussed on birth relatives at a later stage in the process, who may have been self-referrals or referrals through the 'letterbox'.

Contact

Indirect Letterbox contact activity

April 2018 – March 2019

As of 31st March 2019 there were 654 children on the letterbox.

For the twelve month period there were 36 new children added and 52 children removed as they turned 18.

Access to birth records counselling – 70 referrals (27 were requests from other agencies for our files)

Birth relative enquiries – 12 enquiries (for recording and signposting only)

There are 8 letterbox arrangements for families who hold Special Guardianship Orders and 4 where children are not adopted but letterbox contact was ordered by the court.

Direct Contact

- 14 children have direct contact with birth parents
- 16 with siblings
- 15 with non-adopted siblings
- 5 with grandparents

Tier 2

At the core of provision in this Tier is the offer of adoption support groups across the county, coordinated by adopters supported by the service. Attendance by adopters at these groups continues to vary but those who attend report they are appreciated. During this year we have seen the continuation of the Safebase Programme. This four-day training course offered post placement to all adopters has been a highly successful addition to our adoption support provision at this level. The programme is delivered in partnership with After Adoption who also provides our Birth Ties scheme and has been secured for a further three year period ending March 2018. This year we piloted ' Teenage Safebase ' course which was well attended by special guardianship carers and was very well received.

We have further developed our programme of social activities to be organised during the school holidays to enable adopters and children to meet and network. We have provided funding to these Localised Adoption Support Groups totalling £3,500. The groups are adopter led and held Christmas parties, outings to local venues such as Rand Farm Children's Park, family swimming sessions, Eco Centre in Skegness and days at the beach. We have provided the following during the past year

There were:

Woodland Adventure Days for primary age children – July 2018 – 12 attendees

Music Tech Workshops for secondary age children – series of one-day events with the same group of up to 10 children – held in April, June, September 2018 & February 2019

Activities Away, outdoor water based activities for secondary age children – 2 events on 2nd & 23rd August 2018 – one with 10 children and one with 12 children

Theatre Workshop for primary age children – 3 days in February 2019 – 10 attendees

Circus Skills – for primary age children - 29th May - 10 children attended & 16th August - 6 children attended.

Lincoln City Football Club Sports Activity Day – for primary age children – 20 children attended

We also continue to provide on-going training to adopters and this has included;

Non-Violent Resistance training course – one started in April 2018 and ran for 6 weeks – 13 attendees

Talking about Adoption workshops – 5th & 12th June 2018 - 11 people attended

Safebase training courses for adopters – March and September. Attended by 16 families

For teenagers – October 2018 – 10 families attended

Courses advertised by the Training section for adopters, all of the following training was advertised in the newsletters as available to be booked via the LSCB website:

June

14/06/2018 - Diversity (1- day course) at Stanhope Hall, 1 Boston Road, Horncastle, LN9 6EY

18 & 19/06/2018 - Autism / ADHD Awareness (2-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

28/06/2018 - Emergency First Aid at Work (1-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

29/06/2018 - Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (1-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

July

02/07/2018 - Behaviour Management (1-day course) at Myle Cross, Macauley Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4EL

05, 06, & 09/07/2018 - TCI (3-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

11/07/2018 - Safeguarding (1-day course) at Myle Cross, Macauley Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4EL

16/07/2018 - Safe Care (1-day course) at Stanhope Hall, 1 Boston Road, Horncastle, LN9 6EY

September

12/09/2018 - Diversity (1-day course) at Myle Cross, Macauley Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4EL

13/09/2018 - Safeguarding (1-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

18 & 19/09/2018 - Attachment Development (2-day course) at Myle Cross, Macauley Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4EL

25/09/2018 - Safe Care (1-day course) at Myle Cross, Macauley Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4EL

28/09/2018 - Emergency First Aid at Work (1-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

October

04/10/2018 - Emergency First Aid at Work (1-day course) at Deacon Road Business Park, Deacon Road, Lincoln, LN2 4JB
8, 9 & 10/10/2018 - Child and Adult Placement (3-day course) at Myle Cross, Macauley Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4EL
15/10/2018 - Safe Care (1-day course) at Riverside Church Southgate, Sleaford, NG34 7RY
29/10/2018 - Signs of Safety (1-day course) at Sleaford Road, Ruskington, NG34 8SP

March

14, 15 & 18/03/2019 - TCI (3-day course) – Myle Cross Centre, Lincoln, LN2 4EL

Tier 3

This Tier provides specialised therapeutic support to those families who require direct adoption support with tailored plans of support intervention. All adoption support referrals are now completed by the Adoption Support Team. Safeguarding Referrals continue to be assessed by the Family Support and Assessment Teams. 82 adoption support assessments have been completed and the majority indicated some form of therapeutic intervention was required. Cases can be allocated to Post Adoption Support workers who are trained to provide specialist therapeutic input across a range of therapeutic models including Dyadic Therapy, Theraplay, Psychotherapy, EMDR and Non Violent Resistance.

In addition to the above services, we provided direct financial support through allowances for over 100 adoptive families through the period 2018-2019. This totals £750,000 over the year.

During 2018/19 the support service received 82 new referrals that became support cases under Tier 3. The requests for support covered the following areas:

- Attachment difficulties
- Life Story work
- Contact issues
- Requests for funding for support
- Requests for respite care.
- Request for therapeutic or Theraplay input
- Mediation for adoptive families to maintain the adoptive placement.
- Child on parent violence.

It is clear that the service is managing some extremely complex cases with children who have significant difficulties. This is indicative of the Service being able to target support appropriately and reflects a small but highly skilled team. The significant support from the Adoption Support Fund has made a positive difference to the speed at which these specialised services can be delivered, and the range of services which can be offered to adopters. 65 applications were made to the fund and all were successful. Sixty five families received therapeutic support via the Adoption Support Fund. A total of £232,000 was claimed from the fund in 2018/19.

The Local Authority continues to invest in the on-going training of Adoption Support staff ensuring that Clinical supervision is available to therapists within the Team and that staff participate in on going therapeutic training to ensure that the needs of families can be met. This has included further training in DDP and Therapeutic Lifestory work.

National Changes for 2018/19

The government looks set to follow on from the previous one as it seeks to make adoption a priority area in the coming year. The Queen's speech announced the Adoption and Children Bill which was laid before Parliament on 3rd June 2015. The Bill would enable the Secretary of State to require local authorities in England to make arrangements so that their adoption functions (including the recruitment, assessment and approval of prospective adopters) could be carried out by other authorities or adoption agencies. Part of the rationale for this was to enable 'excellent' agencies to support other agencies in their improvement journey. Trailblazer funding was made available to local authorities to form a regional adoption agency. Lincolnshire has been actively involved in developing plans for a regional adoption agency which will consolidate the East Midlands Consortium authorities and the local VAA's.

The target date for achieving regional adoption agencies is 2020, so there will be the need to progress plans for this over the next 12 months.

The Adoption Support Fund went live on the 1st May 2015 and is funded for 2018/19. The Fund will continue to pay for therapeutic services, such as cognitive therapy, play and music therapy, and intensive family support with the aim of helping children to recover from their previous experiences and thrive in their adoptive families. The Fund will enable the continued offer of the Safebase Programme to all adopted families and extend our capacity to deliver direct therapeutic work with adopted children and young people

It is essential that going forward the agency has a clear focus on how best to deliver services in a way that maximises the impact of limited resources and that will include looking at efficiencies which can be delivered through the regionalisation agenda.

Service planning

Our development goals for the coming 12 month period continue to be aligned to the five County Council principles set out at the beginning of the report and the objectives for children which are set out below.

Children and young people are healthy and safe.

To continue to develop the 'signs of safety' model and restorative practice as a part of the adoption process including the framework for preparing children for placement.

Maintain and consolidate progress on improving adoption scorecard performance against key threshold measures to minimise delay for children requiring adoption placements.

Ensure that placements are timely either through placing children as soon as they are subject to a Placement Order or through an early placement scheme, in order to promote positive attachment.

To extend the range of training available to adopters, in order to provide them with therapeutic parenting skills.

To plan and implement training for 'family and friends' of adopters, which will further enable them to support families in their role as adopters.

Children develop full potential in early years and are ready for school

- Extending the Adoption Support Service to include intensive support at the early stage in placements for sibling groups, in order to promote therapeutic parenting, and attachment work early in the placement, so that children are 'ready for school'.
- Making use of the Caring2learn project with adopters.
- Support and develop 'play and stay' adoptive family groups to promote social learning.
- Making good use of nursery provision for adopted children.

Learn and achieve.

- Maximise the benefits to adoptive families in Lincolnshire arising from the Adoption Support Fund.
- New course for adopters to build their confidence in talking to their children about being adopted, and the use of life story.
- Continue to make best use of the pupil premium to support adopted children in school.
 - To be creative and innovative in terms of developing training to include a 'Talk about Adoption' workshop.

Children and young people are ready for adult life.

- Introduce Peer Support Network through the Non Violent resistance course to tackle 'Child on Adopter' violence.
- To continue to provide activities for adopted children who build their skills, recognise their achievements, and build their confidence.

Best use of Resources

- Use and embed new case recording system in adoption whilst maintaining business as usual.
- Explore options to broaden Adoption Support Model to other permanence options starting with Special Guardianship Orders.

- Through the regional lead, to continue to participate and support the emerging regionalisation agenda, positioning Lincolnshire at the forefront of any development.

Summary

The challenge for 2018/19 was to adjust services in line with the significant service developments in the previous year, whilst maintaining high levels of performance against government targets. In addition there has been the challenge of being proactive in responding to trends in the increased numbers of children, set aside the apparent reduction in numbers of adopters coming forward. This was addressed through an increased number of recruitment events. The Service will continue to embed the changes to practice resulting from statutory and legislative reform and translate them into positive outcomes for children being adopted, adoptive families and those needing support post adoption.

Performance in 2018/19 against the key threshold measures in the adoption scorecard has improved both for the single year and for the three year rolling average. The number of adoptions completed this year was back to the average but the timescales have consistently improved. The number of children waiting at the year-end has decreased due to the team being proactive in family finding.

The Adoption Service was subject to scrutiny by Ofsted along with the rest of Children's Services in October 2015. The inspection was undertaken under the new Single Inspection Framework which was intended to provide a far more rigorous test of adoption agencies, with a clear focus on outcomes for children. To again achieve a judgement of 'Outstanding' was a strong endorsement of the professionalism and expertise within the team and the confidence shown to it by senior managers and the council as a whole.

Following this there was considerable interest from a range of other providers around the strategy, systems and practices which sit behind the success of the service. This led to a number of invitations to showcase the Service at regional and national events which has enabled the agency to assist other LA adoption agencies in getting to "Good" and has raised the profile of Lincolnshire's Adoption Service. Hopefully the next year will see further involvement in showcasing our Service.

In March 2017, Lincolnshire was announced to be a 'Partner in Practice' and this has meant that the team has been involved in the Partners in Practice programme. In the coming year it is hoped that there will be similar opportunities for Lincolnshire adoption staff to participate in, and learn from.

Going forward the Service will look to respond positively to the challenges presented through austerity and the regionalisation agenda and, in so doing, maintain its strong focus on delivering excellent outcomes for the children of Lincolnshire who have a plan for adoption.

Yvonne Shearwood
Head of Regulated Services

Anne Johnson
Adoption Team Manager

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Working for a better future

Lincolnshire Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2019

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE LINCOLNSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of standard 18 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and the Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2002, amended (2005,) (2011) and (2013) and the Children and Families Act 2014.

CONTENTS

Page

- 4. Aims, Objectives and Principles of the Adoption Service
- 6. Values
- 8. Standards of Care
- 8. Status and Constitution
- 10. Management Structure
- 12. The Work of the Adoption Service
- 17. Training
- 19. The Process of Recruiting and Approving Adoptive Carers
- 23. Finance
- 24. Complaints and Allegations
- 24. Number of Complaints and their Outcomes
- 26. Advocacy and Children's Rights
- 27. Equality and Diversity
- 28. Ofsted
- 29. Further Information

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Management Structure

Appendix 2 Adoption Panel

Appendix 3 Staffing: Number, Relevant Qualifications and Experience.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The main aims of the Lincolnshire County Council Adoption Service are to:

Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need a permanent placement.

Meet and comply with the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services.

Ensure that all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and developed to fulfil their agency functions.

To identify children for whom the plan is adoption and to work with them and their carers to ensure children enjoy outstanding developmental outcomes, with quick progress to successful placements with their adoptive parents.

Adhere to best practice for permanency planning timescales as set out in adoption legislation and the Public Law Outline, in order to maximise each child's opportunity to experience a stable and secure family life.

Provide appropriate choice of adoption placements for children within Lincolnshire and beyond where appropriate, making full and prompt use of the Adoption East Midlands, other adoption and voluntary adoption agencies and Linkmaker.

To recruit, prepare, assess and fully support prospective adopters to meet the assessed needs of the children requiring adoptive families, including those who take a direct/Foster for Adoption placement.

The focus of assessments will be the applicants' ability to meet the assessed needs of children, promote attachment, improve their understanding of the adoption task and their suitability to be an adoptive parent through on-going quality assurance, and sustain a high standard of assessments. Assessments will be completed within the timescales set out within Statutory Adoption Guidance (2014) wherever possible.

Applicants for inter-country adoption are provided with an appropriate service from skilled and experienced workers.

Ensure that children are well prepared both practically and emotionally for a move to a new permanent family.

Provide links for children, for whom adoption is the plan, with families who can meet their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic needs, whilst recognising that no child should wait indefinitely for the "ideal" match.

Provide a comprehensive support package, including financial support where appropriate to achieve stable and successful placements.

Provide effective and efficient adoption panels to enable adoption plans for relinquished children, prospective adopter assessments and links with children to be progressed without delay.

Ensure that children's plans for adoption are agreed by the Agency Decision Maker and Placement Order applications are made to meet court timescales.

Ensure that issues for contact with the birth family are carefully considered and meet the individual needs of the child.

Ensure that where possible and appropriate, siblings will be placed together and that decisions to separate siblings are made in a timely manner, following a sibling assessment.

In conjunction with other agencies provide a comprehensive range of support services, pre and post order, as detailed in the Adoption Passport and the SGO offer, to children, birth parents, relatives and adoptive parents and those involved in the process of special guardianship applications. To access funding, (where appropriate), on behalf of adoptive families, and those families where children are subject to SGO via the Adoption Support Fund.

To ensure that accurate and up to date records and management information is kept in relation to individual children, adoptive parents and services and to maintain confidentiality and security.

Ensure that customers are fully involved and consulted on service delivery and service development.

Treat all customers with respect and without prejudice or discrimination

Lincolnshire County Council delivers its adoption service through a dedicated Adoption Team managed by a Team Manager.

The main principles underpinning the service are:

Lincolnshire County Council and its adoption agency believe that, wherever possible, it is best for children to be brought up within their birth families. Only where this is not possible, and other appropriate options short of adoption have been considered, then adoption should be considered as a positive alternative for children to enable them to grow and reach maturity within a stable and loving family.

The Statement of Purpose links all sections in the document to the relevant Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 and shares its values with those Standards.

VALUES

Children

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.
- Delays should always be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of the children waiting to be adopted.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family.
- Children, birth parents/guardians, families and adoptive parents will be valued and respected.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential for the National Minimum Standards to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies.

Adopted adults and birth relatives

- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved including adopted adults, and birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual's life.
- Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life.

- Agencies have a duty to provide services that considers the welfare of all parties involved and should consider the implications of decisions and actions for everyone involved.
- Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views and wishes in decision-making.
- Agencies should acknowledge differences in people's circumstances and establish policies that provide non-discriminatory services.
- Adopted adults have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members.

STANDARDS OF CARE TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE AGENCY

The Adoption Service aims to provide safe, secure and high quality care in family settings for children whom a plan for adoption has been agreed. This will be achieved to the standards set out in the Adoption Services Regulations 2002, 2011 and The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012 (referred to as the "Regulations"), the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2010) The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, The Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005), The National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services (2014) and The Statutory Guidance amended (2011) and July (2013 and 2014)

Working together with the Adoption Team, the Adoption Panel and the Panel Adviser, we strive to continuously improve standards of care, informed by inspections, quality audits, safeguarding assurance days as well as new legislation and guidance to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery.

STATUS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE AGENCY

Lincolnshire County Council is an approved Adoption Service provider and will be inspected under the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Adoption Service is managed by the Children's Services Manager through a Team Manager for Adoption. The Team Manager acts as the Adoption Support Services Advisor; (Standard 15).

The Assistant Director for Children Services is the Agency Decision Maker (Standard 17)

Lincolnshire Adoption Panel is constituted in accordance with regulations. (Standard 17)

The adoption panel only considers whether:

- A child who is looked after by Lincolnshire County Council or Rutland should be placed for adoption, where a parent relinquishes their child or consents that adoption is the best outcome for their child.
- Prospective adopters are suitable to adopt, and
- Particular adopters are suitable for a particular child or children

There are sufficient appointed panel members including an independent Chair. The Members of the Adoption Panel will be appraised annually against performance objectives. From 1 April 2011, the Regulations regarding the make-up of panel changed and allowed the adoption agency to draw its members from a list of people known as "the central list" these members the agency considers to have the "appropriate qualifications and/or experience to consider the cases submitted to the adoption panel

for its consideration.” There is no limit to the number of people on the central list and the same people do not have to be appointed to every panel meeting.

The agency can decide how many panel members should sit at each panel meeting, subject to the panel meeting being quorate.

The members of the central list must include (in addition to the independent chair): an adoption social worker with at least three years’ relevant post qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience in adoption work. The medical adviser to the adoption agency is a panel member; also the agency can appoint other people whom the agency considers suitable. Suitable members could include specialists in education, child and adolescent mental health, race and culture; and those who have personal experience of adoption.

A Legal Adviser who provides advice in writing to the panel on any legal issue with implications for a child whose plan is being considered by panel. The Legal Adviser also gives advice to the Agency Decision Maker – the Assistant Director of Children's Services.

Lincolnshire Adoption Agency has medical adviser(s) who examine all children being considered for adoption and report to panel members on the child's health needs. The adviser will also meet with prospective adopters to consider health requirements of individual children.

The Agency Medical Advisers also advise panel members on health issues relating to prospective adoptive parents.

There is a Professional Adviser to the Adoption Panel who advises panel members on procedures, policies and professional issues.

Government has issued new guidance and regulation which came into force on the 1st September 2012 which impact significantly on the work of the Adoption Panel.

The primary change made by the Regulations is that Adoption Panels must not be involved in deciding whether a child should be placed for adoption when the Court will be involved in the decision, where care proceedings are on-going or where the child has no parents, the case must be referred direct to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the decision.

Panel will however still consider cases and make recommendations where the child’s parents will consent to the child being placed for adoption.

THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The named manager of the Lincolnshire Adoption Service is:

Yvonne Shearwood – Service Manager, Regulated Services
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
Lincs
LN1 1BA

Telephone: 01522 552686

Email: Yvonne.shearwood@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Qualifications: BA; CQSW; PGCE; Dip Psy; MSC; ILM

Experience: 32 years working across a range of services with social care. My experience includes working within statutory and regulatory services. The posts engaged in have included front line operational work to that of senior manager.

The nominated manager to manage the Adoption Service in the absence of the named manager under Regulation 5 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 is Anne Johnson.

The adoption teams are locality based and deliver a comprehensive service. These teams manage the permanency planning and family finding role, the recruitment, assessment, approval, support and placement processes which enable children looked after in Lincolnshire County Council to be placed in a range of appropriate adoptive placements.

Nicola Brangam is the dedicated Professional Advisor for both the Adoption and Permanence panels.

The organisational structure of the Service is shown in Appendix 1. The list of current staff is set out in appendix 3. This information in its fullest form is only available to Ofsted.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Service

The Adoption Service works within the overall Quality Assurance Framework for Children and Families, which sets out a range of general and service specific standards and methods by which these standards are monitored. Children for whom adoption is being considered or who have been placed for adoption are reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers. The Adoption Service is subject to a monthly quality assurance meeting, chaired by the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Lincolnshire Adoption Service continually monitors and evaluates its service at every stage of the adoption process to ensure quality and effectiveness. Lincolnshire welcomes feedback from all involved in the adoption process

The activity and performance of the Adoption Service is scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

As part of the regional Adoption Leadership Board and the East Midlands Adoption Consortium, Lincolnshire Adoption Service actively considers and shares good practice and policy development.

The Adoption Service is inspected by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), under the single inspection framework for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers. All local authorities will be inspected under this framework within a three-year period.

Performance of the service is monitored through the National Adoption Scorecard and a range of performance indicators.

THE WORK OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Lincolnshire County Council's vision is

"Putting children first "

The principles that the Council adheres to are:

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Safeguarding
- Aspiration and Well being
- Learning and achievement
- Best use of Resources

In addition to the principles, four strategic outcomes for children have been agreed by Children's Services.

- Children and young people are; Healthy & Safe
- Develop to their potential in their early years and are ready for school
- Learn and Achieve
- Children and young people are; Ready for Adult Life

The Adoption Agency has the expectation all children in its service is encapsulated into these principles, and will work with children to champion the importance of these aspirations.

We will work to develop self-esteem, self-belief and resilience in all children encouraging all children to be the best they can be.

We will use resources to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities.

The Adoption Agency strives to match, wherever possible, a child to an appropriate family, including considerations of ethnic origin and religion. However no child will wait indefinitely for the ideal placement. (Standard 13) The Children and Families Act 2014 supports the adoption reforms set out in "An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay" by ensuring that a search for a perfect or partial ethnic match does not become a barrier to finding a child an adoptive family.

Unless there are clear and specific reasons why this should not happen our aim is to place siblings together. (Standard 13)

All children approved for adoption will receive a guide, which will give age appropriate information about adoption. (Standard 18)

The Adoption Agency will provide support from an individual social worker and, when required, other professionals to enhance a child's understanding of and preparedness for placement. (Standard 15)

Life storybooks and other information which will help children understand their family and background will be provided by the Adoption Agency within the prescribed timescales. (Standard 3, 5, 12)

The Adoption Agency will undertake assessment of needs and placement considerations, which inform matching process to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities. (Standard 1 &10)

Where we anticipate local resources cannot meet their needs the opportunity to be matched with an adoptive family from within the Adoption East Midlands area, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Linkmaker service (Standard 13) shall be actively pursued.

Therapeutic support is provided directly, commissioned or met by referral to other agencies if required as an outcome of assessment. (Standard 15)

For those seeking information counselling and advice in adulthood on tracing birth family members and reunion is available and provide individuals with counselling about the circumstances of their adoption. (Standard 16)

The Agency will offer supervision and support throughout the adoption process. (Standard 15).

To operate an adult to adult information exchange via the Lincolnshire letterbox system. (Standard 16)

To give an opportunity to talk with other young people who may be separated from members of their birth family. (Standard 16)

The Agency will offer information about how to contact the advocacy service provided by Barnardos Lincolnshire. (Standard 16)

Through collaborative working with other agencies we will deliver and co-ordinate support for children, especially those with attachment difficulties, to facilitate the transition to new adoptive families). (Standard 1, 3, 10)

Aspiration and Well Being

All prospective adoptive carers are, as part of their assessment and training required to inform the Agency of the plans that they will make to safeguard and maintain the child's welfare when they are adopted. The Agency will undertake to support carers to locate such services as GP, dentist and education services if required.

Before making the placement the Agency must give the notifications required by AAR 35.6. These are important in ensuring as smooth a transition as possible in the child's health care and education, and in the safeguarding and support arrangements for the child.

Working collaboratively with adopters, local agencies and the Statutory Authorities a plan will be presented to panel outlining the resources that the child needs and how the adopters will be assisted in meeting these needs.

Training is offered to all adoptive families in Lincolnshire to empower them to make a positive and sustained change to their family relationships. Lincolnshire County Council Adoption Agency also offers its adopter's therapeutic parenting advice including "Theraplay" which is presented through the initial training course and is designed to assist adopters in identifying areas that may present challenges to them and where identified as a need, further support from "Theraplay" is available to adopters.

Prior to consideration of the child's plan, a health assessment under regulation 7.1 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 is carried out and a report of this assessment in accordance with those regulations is prepared. Once the agency is considering adoption for the child, it immediately consults its medical adviser to ascertain whether the health information already obtained is sufficient, and sufficiently up to date, this report is needed to fulfil the requirements of the regulations and the need for full information for the child, the adoption panel and the prospective adopter.

This report is presented to Panel and the needs of the child are fully discussed to ensure that any future placement has both the information about the child and a plan as to how these needs are to be met.

Safeguarding

Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Service and its Adoption Service are part of Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children's Board.

The assessment of adopters includes the taking of full employment and accommodation histories. Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and local authority checks are completed on everyone aged over 18 years of age living in the household. A range of referees are contacted and visited.

All adopters have a safer caring assessment prior to approval which highlights key aspects of the safer caring process. Safe caring is an important part of the training offered.

This training is mandatory and covers specific areas such as safer caring, the implications of looking after children who may have been abused and the implications of how a child's attachment may have been affected in their early years.

Allegations that are made against adopters prior to an order being made are investigated using an established procedure whereby all are considered by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). An independent person chairs the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process to ensure its timeliness. Where allegations are made following the granting of an adoption order these are managed using standard Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Aspiration, learning and achievement

Lincolnshire County Council are committed to maximising a child's potential in both academic attainment and personal achievement and will work collaboratively with prospective adopters, local agencies and any party it considers as necessary to plan and maintain the child's education.

From 2013, adopted children were given priority school access and in 2014 all adopted children aged 2 yrs became entitled to free early education. Furthermore, the Pupil Premium was increased and now includes all adopted school children from Reception class through to year 11.

A record of the child's achievements prior to being placed will be available to the prospective carer and information sharing will consider the short medium and long term needs of the child in education. Research has shown that that in the vast majority of cases adoption works. Education and health outcomes are as good as for children growing up with their birth parents. To assist, it is essential that information about their birth families is available to adopters and that there is a Matching Information Meeting before an application is made to the Adoption Panel to match a child with applicants. (Standard 1, 3, 10).

At the Information sharing meeting a well presented contact plan for children with birth relatives and siblings will be available. However Lincolnshire County Council considers that unless there are clear and specific reasons why this should not happen, it is our aim to place siblings together. (Standard 13).

Lincolnshire County Council will provide support from an individual social worker and, if required, other workers to enhance a child's understanding of and preparedness for placement (Standard 15). Alongside of these life storybooks and other information which will help children understand their family and background will be provided. (Standard 3, 5, 12).

Supporting the Adoption Service

All of the work of the Service is delivered through the following relationships and support functions which are described below.

1. Prospective Adopter's Social Worker

The role of the prospective adopter's social worker is to give support to the adopter throughout the assessment process, through placement to order. They also assist and advise with practical difficulties and the provision of equipment. They are a crucial link between the adopter and the child's social worker and the two workers need to work closely to prepare the adopters and share with them information that they need to assist in planning for the placement of a child.

2. Child's Social Worker

The child's social worker is responsible for the overall management of the child's care plan. They have a statutory duty to visit the child in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations (2010) the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services (2014), however in some circumstances the visiting pattern will be more frequent particularly in the early stages of a placement or when there are particular difficulties, up to the time when the adoption order is made.

3. Adoption Support Social Worker

The role of the adoption support social worker is to provide specialised therapeutic support to those families who require direct adoption support to the family with tailored plans of support. Support is underpinned by an assessment of need which is made in line with the Adoption Support Regulations 2005. The Adoption Support Services Adviser is the Team Manager for Adoption who will deal with any enquiries regarding the eligibility for support services and the services provided.

The service is provided on a tiered basis dependent on assessed need

Tier 1	Support to adopters includes: Contact co-ordination, helpline advice, information via the Lincolnshire adoption website. Birth records counselling for adults. Also included in this tier is counselling for birth relatives whose children have been adopted as well as seminars for grandparents of adopters.
Tier 2	All of tier 1 and in addition adoption support groups/activities for adopters and for children affected by adoption. These include a programme of activities which bring adoptive children together to share experiences of adoption as part of leisure activities.
Tier 3	Previous tier support plus specific adoption support include assessment of need, individual adoption support packages, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and Theraplay clinic sessions to promote attachment. This tier also includes access to primary mental health services and CAMHS. Since the launch of the Adoption Support Fund, therapeutic interventions can be claimed from the central fund to ensure that adoptive families have access to therapeutic support.

4. Adoption Support Groups

There are locally held support groups for adopters to attend, their social worker will assist them to join a local support group and discuss with the adopters issues such as information sharing within the group. The Adoption Service will provide adopters with access to our website which provides links to useful information relating to all aspects of adoption and signposting to services and resources. In addition, in 2014 we introduced a quarterly newsletter for adopters, which is sent to all current and past adopters with children under 18.

TRAINING

The Adoption Service ensures that adopters are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care to meet the needs of a child placed in their care.

Training is not an option but a clear expectation of all adopters and is evaluated prior to approval.

The training is delivered by qualified and experienced social workers in partnership with people who have experienced adoption, there is an adoptive carer and an adult who was placed for adoption in the past, and these people's experiences have been positively recognised by those attending the training.

Each experiential adoption preparation course is run over a two day period and covers:

Day One

- Introduction
- Short Icebreaker
- Exploration of the changes that becoming an adoptive parent will bring
- Awareness of separation and loss
- Life story work
- Resilience

Day Two

- Attachment cycle
- Therapeutic Parenting
- Adopted person talking about tracing
- Adopted parent discussing experiences of contact
- Managing behaviour
- Managing contact

In addition to the two day experiential learning all prospective adopters are provided with a workbook during stage 1. Each subject in the workbook has an exercise for prospective adopters to complete. During the experiential learning days, the course facilitators refer to the subjects in the workbook and later in the assessment stage, the completed exercises are discussed with the assessing supervising social worker.

Each workbook covers:

- The adoption process
- Why children come into care: Background factors
- Child Care Law
- Abuse of children and the possible effects
- Effects of early trauma
- Effects of separation and loss in childhood

- Lifestory work and family books
- Child development
- Discrimination
- Resilience
- Contact
- Telling children about their adoption
- Task description of an adoptive parent
- Social networking/e.safety
- Reading list

Pre-approval training is complimented by post approval learning and development opportunities, delivered through E.Learning and more traditional training seminars. All approved adopters are encouraged to attend a parenting programme.

PROCESS OF RECRUITING AND APPROVING ADOPTERS

The recruitment of carers is currently managed and effected from within the joint Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Team.

All initial enquiries relating to adoption are completed online through the Lincolnshire County Council website and are then passed to the Recruitment Co-ordinators or the Recruitment Co-ordinators are telephoned directly. The Recruitment Co-ordinators aim to make contact with all enquirers within 24 hours of them registering their interest online.

The Recruitment Co-ordinators role is to ensure that enquirers have all the information they need and following an initial discussion an initial expression of interest can be completed over the phone and/or a detailed information booklet is made available to all interested applicants about the adoption process which is sent within 5 working days. We are focusing on enhancing the overall customer experience and the Recruitment Co-ordinators represent the Local Authority in a professional manner, being respectful to all enquirers and acknowledging their individual journey to embark on this process.

Within 5 working days of applicants completing their initial expression of interest, the enquirers will receive a telephone call from the agency to arrange an individual interview. Initial enquiry forms can also be filled in on our interactive website. Following this visit, applicants will then submit their formal registration of interest to the agency. Adopters are recruited and assessed in line with Lincolnshire guidance based on the National Minimum Standards and Adoption Regulations.

Recruitment involves:

- Utilising social media to reach wide audiences
- Holding drop-in sessions at Community establishments
- Newspaper advertisements
- Newspaper articles
- Distribution of posters

- Information distributed through displays and presentations
- Word of mouth through existing carers
- Lincolnshire County Council LCC Connects website
- Targeted activity within specific communities in county.
- Participation in a range of county wide events.

The Adoption Agency continues to focus on several specific areas for recruitment; recruiting adopters for sibling groups, children aged over 4 and children with complex health needs and recruiting Foster to Adopt carers.

Foster to Adopt carers will be approved as both foster carers and adopters, but with the purpose of early placement stability for those children where rehabilitation home is unlikely and adoption is a very likely outcome. This would mean that the children in these placements would not have to move from a fostering placement into an adoption placement, thus minimising disruption for the child at a crucial stage in development.

The recruitment strategy has both a community focused approach coupled with digital marketing as it is recognised that we need to maximise our reach to prospective adopters and so we cannot rely on a single method to achieve this.

We have continued to advertise through local media channels and parish magazines but also utilised social media and the Lincolnshire County Council website to advertise events throughout the county.

The Recruitment team continues to co-ordinate informal information drop in sessions where individuals have the opportunity to discuss their present situation and their thoughts on becoming an adopter. Staff are on hand at the events are able to outline the process to them and what this entails. Adopters have also attended events with the Recruitment team and this allows prospective adopters the opportunity to explore the adoption process on a more personal level with someone who has gone through the process themselves.

The prospective carers can be provided with information booklets about Adoption and Foster to Adopt at these events or they can complete a form that will trigger contact from Recruitment Co-ordinator who can begin to obtain details with the hope of progressing to an initial home visit.

The process for the assessment and approval of adopters was reformed on the 1st July 2013 and a new two stage approval process was introduced, so that prospective adopters can be approved to adopt a child more quickly. Under the new two part process, adoption agencies must assess and approve adopters within 6 months. The new process comprises a two month initial training and preparation stage (Stage One). Stage One commences when applicants have formally registered their interest and will end with the agency's decision on whether the prospective adopter can proceed to Stage Two. In Stage One, all required checks and references will be completed. This process is now fully embedded.

Stage Two consists of an in depth assessment and will end with presentation of the prospective adopter report to the adoption panel and the agency decision maker's decision about the suitability of the prospective adopter to adopt a child.

The prospective adopter report is completed by a social worker who is compliant with the restriction on the preparation of adoption reports regulations 2005 and a person is within a prescribed description for the purposes of section 94(1) of the 2005

Act if:—

(a) She is a social worker who is employed by a local authority or registered adoption society and who satisfies at least one of the conditions set out in paragraph (2)(a) or (b);

(b) She is a person who:—

- is participating in a course approved by a Council under section 63 of the 2000 Act for persons wishing to become social workers;
- is employed by, or placed with, a local authority or registered adoption society as part of that course; and
- satisfies the condition set out in paragraph (2)(b); or

(c) She is acting on behalf of a local authority or a registered adoption society and is a social worker who satisfies the conditions in paragraph (2) (a) and (b).

The conditions referred to in paragraph (1) are that the person—

(a) has at least three years' post-qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience of adoption work;

(b) is supervised by a social worker who:—

- is employed by the local authority or registered adoption society in question; and
- has at least three years' post-qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience of adoption work.

The report is presented to the Adoption panel for consideration and a recommendation of their suitability is made. The organisation and composition of this panel is in accordance with Adoption Service Regulations 2011

The Adoption Panel makes recommendations on the suitability of prospective adopters; this recommendation is passed, along with the prospective adopter report, panel's final minutes and any other supporting documentation to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Assistant Director for Children's Services. National Minimum Standards 23.17 sets out the qualifications, knowledge and experience decision-maker must have. The Assistant Director for Children's Services does not have direct line management

responsibility for the adoption panel but has the authority to make decisions on its behalf as to whether the prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child. (AAR 27)

Prospective Adopters are invited to attend panel and participate in the panel discussions.

Feedback is received from those applicants who have commented on the process and have for the most part been satisfied with the experience of being at panel.

Number of Adoptive Carers

A total of 43 adoptive parents were approved to adopt during 2018/19, with no adopters approved for inter-country adoption. This is a significant increase compared to those in the previous year. The focus of the work during this year was to match the children waiting and place them into adoptive families at the earliest opportunity. The trend had changed from one of children waiting to one of adopters waiting. At 31/03/2019 there were 33 adopters approved and waiting, six of whom were being considered for links and four who were fostering with a view to adoption. This reflects the changing picture in adoption where a surplus of children for adoption has been replaced by a surplus of adopters, especially for those looking to adopt singleton children of pre-school age.

Profile of adopter approval:	
Adopters approved for 1 child	34
Adopters approved for 2 children	8
Adopters approved for 3 children	1
Total:	43
Adopters approved to adopt in following age ranges:	
0 – 5	22
5+	2
Adopters approved for Inter-country adoption	0
Adopters approved for a Foster-to-Adopt placement	15
Adopters applying to adopt a sibling of their adopted child/ren	4

In order to reflect the government's aspiration to encourage foster carers who then go on to adopt we supported four foster families with children in placement to apply directly to the courts for an Adoption Order. As reported the number of families approved for Foster-to-Adopt has remained the same as the previous year with eleven placements made this year.

Both the number of adoptive families and approvals under the Foster-to-Adopt scheme have increased this year.

We will continue to maximise our capacity to recruit larger sibling group through a mixture of targeted recruitment and the flexible use of support packages for families seeking to adopt three or more children

Number of Children Placed

With regard to placements made this year 37 which was similar to last year. Of these, 22 were singleton placements, 12 children were placed in 6 sibling groups of 2 and one group of three were placed. Of these sibling groups, 5 of the groups had one child over five. All the other children placed were under five with 22 of them being placed before they were 2 years. There were 24 boys placed and only 27 girls, so some change in demographic as compared with the year before.

Overall, in terms of children placed as part of sibling groups, this is a slight increase on the previous year the numbers of children appears to be increasing gradually .The last quarter of the year saw an increase in the number of children coming through with plans for adoption.

FINANCE

Adopters can be assessed for a means tested allowance based on the needs of the children placed. This allowance is discretionary and is reviewed annually in respect of the needs of each placement and the child. Additional support through a one off settling in grant may also be made.

COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Summary of the Complaints Procedure

The Directorate has a statutory complaints service, the detail of which is contained in the guide for staff 'Handling Comments and Complaints'. It is a three stage process:

- Stage 1 – Informal or problem solving
- Stage 2 – Formal stage at which an independent investigating officer is appointed
- Stage 3 – A formal review by a panel of elected members, chaired by an independent individual

If complainants remain unsatisfied at Stage 3 they can ask for their complaint to be examined by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Staff must ensure that all carers know how and to whom to complain.

Complainants have the right to involve a friend or advocate.

The Customer Relations & Complaints Manager is Tanya Marten

Telephone number: 01522 555237

Email: Tanya.marten@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The Named Manager monitors all complaints and liaises with the Customer Relations & Complaints Manager and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Business Manager. This information is available to authorised persons only. All adopters have access to support and information regarding the complaints procedures.

Independent Reviewing Mechanism

Prospective adopters are given written information about the role of the independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) as part of their preparation process. They are also provided with leaflets about the IRM when information is being prepared for presentation to panel.

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

Nine complaints were made to the Adoption Service during 18/19

Of these complaints, the outcomes were – [4] were Unsubstantiated, 1 is currently at Stage [2] of the complaints procedure and [4] were partially unsubstantiated.

All of the issues raised in complaints were used in order to make changes to the service where this was appropriate.

From 1st April 2009 the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) was established, for prospective adopters who wish to challenge decisions made by panel in respect of their approval status. There have been no representations made to the IRM in 2016/17.

Allegations

Adopters can sometimes be the subject of allegations in respect of the care of the children or young people they are looking after. If this occurs the allegation will be investigated in line with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures with all allegations managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer. In addition to the role of the supervising social worker, adopters can have access to an independent social worker who can offer practical and emotional support.

All allegations and other matters listed in the Regulations are monitored by the manager who ensures that the appropriate notifications to Ofsted and other agencies are carried out.

In 2018/19, there were no allegations in respect of adoptive carers.

ADVOCACY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Lincolnshire County Council commissions its advocacy for children through Voiceability "Total Voice"



Total Voice Lincolnshire

Referral and Information Line: 01529 400 479

Text:

07860 018 887

Email:

tv1@voiceability.org

Website: www.totalvoicelincolnshire.org

When might you want an advocate?

You can ask to speak with advocate if you:

- Have serious concerns about the care you are getting
- Want to be more involved in decisions being made about you and your future
- Want to fight decisions being made about you
- Want to make a complaint



Children's Commissioner for England

Advice guidance and assistance

If you are child or young person who lives away from home or who receives social care, who needs advice or assistance, you can call us on the free phone number **0800 528 0731** or email to advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry involves an urgent concern about a child protection issue, you should contact your local police or social services. Adults can also call the **NSPCC child protection helpline on 0808 800 5000**. Children can call **Childline on 0800 1111**.*

*Above information sourced from:

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/advice>

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Lincolnshire Adoption Service works to the Lincolnshire County Council's Equality and Diversity Policy which is available on the council's intranet site.

The Adoption Service will treat all service users fairly, openly and with respect throughout their approval process. The adoption agency embraces the Customer Care and Service Standards, endorsed by the DfE, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), Adoption UK, and the Consortium for Voluntary Adoption Agencies. Applicants wishing to be approved as adopters will be considered irrespective of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability providing the adoption service considers they can safely meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into independence. The minimum age for applying to adopt is 21 years old.

Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a child or young person's emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability. However Lincolnshire's Adoption Service recognises that it is unacceptable for a child to be denied adoptive parents solely on the grounds that the child and prospective adopter do not share the same racial or cultural background. If the prospective adopter can meet the majority of the child's needs, the service must not delay placing a child because they do not share the child's racial or cultural background.

The Lincolnshire Adoption Service recognises that no child or young person should have to wait indefinitely for the ideal placement.

All policies and procedures concerning the adoption service are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

OFSTED

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting adoption services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

Questions or complaints

The one point of contact for all questions, queries and complaints is the Ofsted National Business Unit.

The telephone number is 08456 40 40 40. The National Business Unit manages all calls and will redirect them as necessary; they can also be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Adoption Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually.

If you require this document in a different language or an alternative format such as large print, audio tape or Braille, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team on 01522 552246 or email diversity@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The Statement of Purpose, Children's Guides and other information are also available on the Lincolnshire County Council website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

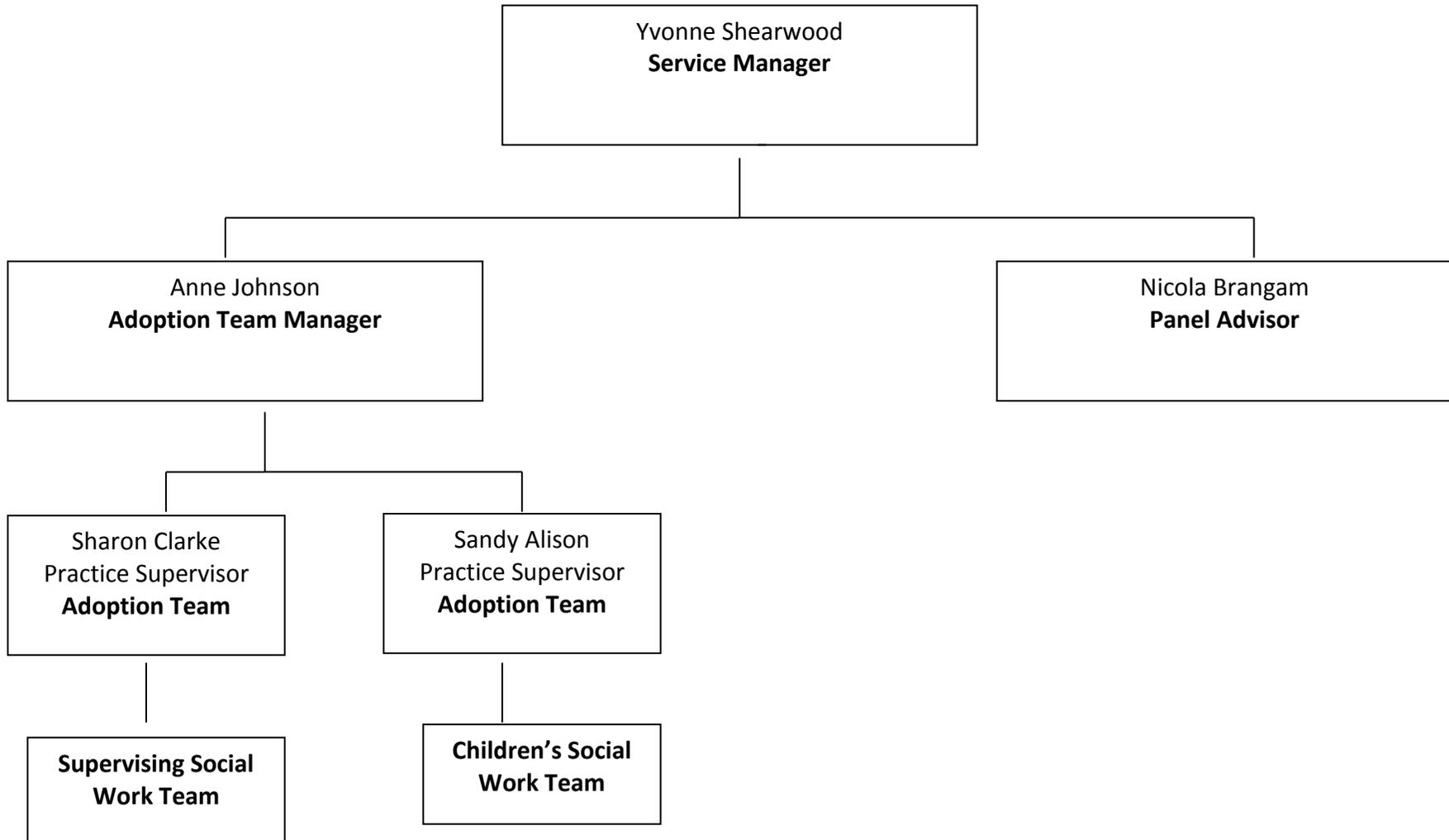
A copy can also be obtained from the registered manager:

Yvonne Shearwood – Service Manager, Regulated Services
County Offices
Newland,
Lincoln
Lincs
LN11BA

Telephone: 01522 554849

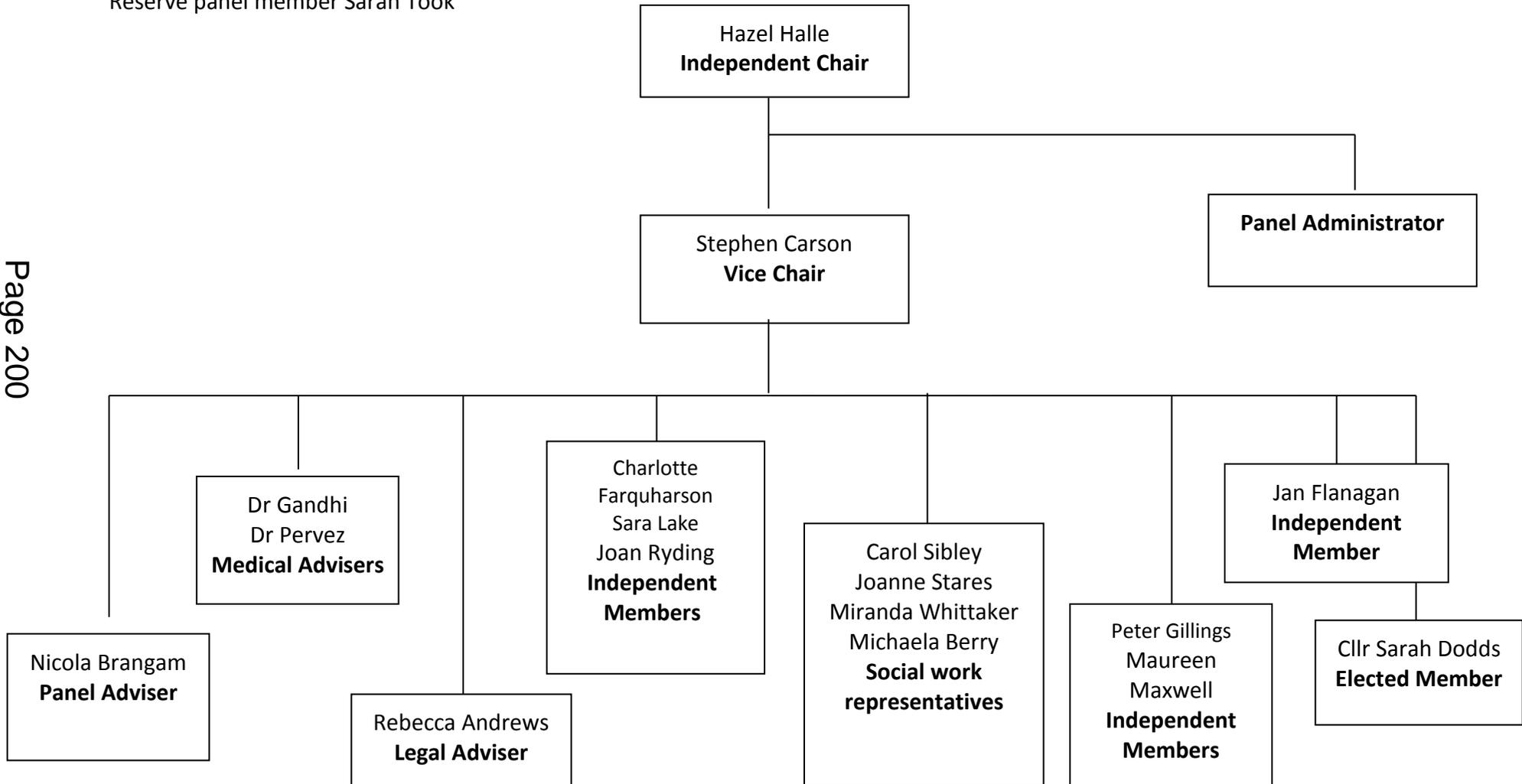
Email: Yvonne.Shearwood@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1
Management structure



Appendix 2
Adoption and Permanence Panel
Reserve panel member Sarah Took

Page 200



Appendix 3
Adoption Service - Staffing

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in LCC Adoption Services
Services Manager Regulated Services (Yvonne Shearwood)	BA Applied Social Studies Certificate of Qualification in Social Worker Post Graduate Certificate in Education (post 16) Diploma in Psychology MSC in Forensic Psychology Institute of Leadership and Management (level 5)	32 years. 7 years in regulated
Team Manager Adoption Services (Anne Johnson)	Certificate in Qualified Social work Certificate of Education Diploma in management PQ6[Practice Teaching award]	43 years (24 years in Regulated Services)
Practice Supervisor Adoption Services (Sharon Clarke)	Dip SW BA hons in SW PQ1	25 Years [20 years in regulated services]
Supervising Social Worker (Di Farrell)	BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies CQSW	27 Years
Supervising Social Worker (Julia Mann)	CQSW BA Combined Studies MA Health Services Studies Post graduate diploma in Social Studies PQ1	15 Years
Supervising Social Worker (Debra Green)	BA (Hons) Social Worker	8 year
Supervising Social Worker (Hannah Fawn)	BA (Hons) Social Worker	4 years
Practice Supervisor (Sandy Allison)	BSc (Hons) Social Work and Social Work Policy DipSW	18 years
Social Worker (Wendy Jennings)	BA (Hons) Social & Behavioural Studies MA, DIPSW Social Work CACDP Level 1 CACDP Level 2	9 years
Social Worker (Mark Abdul)	BA (Hons) Social Work	6 years
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Social Work	9 Years

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in LCC Adoption Services
(Kristin Daniilidis)		
Social Worker (Claire Liddan)	BA (Hons) Social Work	5 years
Supervising Social Worker (Kelly Shaw)	BSc (Hons) Social Work	5 year
Social Worker (Laura Tyrrell)	BA (Hons) Social Work	3 years
Practice Supervisor Sam Carman		
Adoption Support Worker (Dawn Button)	HNC Business and Finance	19 Years
Adoption Support Social Worker (Jeanette Philbin)	DipSW	6 Years
Post Adoption Support Social Worker (Pat Mills)	BA (Hons) Social Worker Higher diploma in therapeutic play MA Integrative psychotherapy/ child psychotherapy Level 1 /2 and advanced EMDR Theraplay 1 and 2 DDP 1 and 2	7 Years
Post Adoption Support Social Worker (Jane Thornton)	BA (Hons) Social Worker	5 years
Adoption Support Social Worker (Jo Poole)	BA (Hons) Social Science CQSW Certificate in Counselling Advanced Certificate in Counselling	14 Years

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel of the work of the Fostering Service for the year 2018/2019 in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services 2011 and Fostering National Minimum Standards. The report provides a written summary of the Service, including relevant performance data, achievements and areas for development.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:

- a) Consider the Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose and highlight any comments for further consideration;
- b) Recommend the approval of the Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose for 2018/2019.

1. Background

Standard 25 of the National Minimum Standards requires that the Fostering service is effectively monitored, including the provision of quarterly written reports and annual service report. The report identifies the successes of the Fostering service and outlines challenges it is facing.

2. Conclusion

The progress within the Service to be recognised and the report attached is an accurate reflection of the Service.

3. Consultation

- a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Annual Fostering Agency Report
Appendix B	Statement of Purpose Fostering

5. Background Papers

This report was written by John Harris, who can be contacted on 01522 554109 or john.harris@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincolnshire Fostering Service Annual Report

April 2018 - March 2019



Introduction

The Fostering Service is a regulated service and subject to inspection under the Care Standards Act, 2000. Fostering has become an increasingly complex service in relation to children and young people who need to be looked after by Lincolnshire County Council (Local Authority). It requires a range of foster carers who are skilled and resourceful. The Service provides quarterly reports to the Directorate Leadership Team and the Executive.

The Local Authority offers a comprehensive range of preventative services delivered under an Early Help offer which enables families to access services as soon as difficulties emerge. In 2018/19, the number of children looked after has fluctuated and after an initial increase, the end of year figure of 614, represents a 7.5% reduction over the previous year. This continued decrease remains at odds with the increasing trend reported nationally. Of the 614, 473 were placed in either in-house foster care or are in pre-adoptive placements; this comprises 77% of the population, this is strong performance and compares favorably with statistical neighbours and all England reporting. An additional 16 children are placed in externally commissioned foster placements. Of these, 5 are unaccompanied migrant children aged between 15 and 18. The figures also reflect a number of children looked after with kinship carers, comprising 15% of the total looked after population, again a strong indicator of supporting children to remain with their birth families.

The Fostering Service is managed by the Head of Regulated Services, through two Team Managers who manage dedicated fostering teams from bases in the north (Lincoln and Louth) and the south (Sleaford). The service has 5 Practice Supervisors who manage day to day practice, and each has lead responsibility for an area of service development. These are currently permanence, duty desk, foster carer recruitment and retention, training, development and support and kinship.

Numbers of Foster Carers:

As at the end of March 2019, there were 290 foster carer households currently registered, including 39 Regulation 24/25 carers and 10 Foster to Adopt carers.

Type	No. of households
Task Centred including Respite	141
Parent and Child/Task Centred	13
CWD Short Break Carers	2
Placement Plus	11
Permanence only	22
Permanence/Task Centred	45
Emergency	5
Remand	2
Family/Friend (Regulation 24/25)	39
Foster to Adopt	10

During the period 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019, there were 75 new fostering households approved, including 17 Foster to Adopt carers and 30 Regulation 24/25 carers. The 28 new mainstream carers provided up to 58 new placements as follows:

Approved places	No. of households
1 child	6
2 children	14
3 children	8

During the period 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019, 33 mainstream households ceased fostering, due to the following reasons:

Reason	No. of households
Change in employment	2
Family circumstances changed	11
Health reasons	4
Moved to an IFA	3
Retired	2
Carers no longer considered suitable	1
Child reached 18	1
Moved out of area	2
Dissatisfaction with service	1
At carers' request	5
SGO for child previously in mainstream placement	1

In addition, 48 Regulation 24/25 carers were deregistered; the majority of which were due to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) being granted.

The recruitment of foster carers is a national challenge with Fostering Network predicting a shortage of 9000 fostering families to meet the needs of children across the country. Despite this, Lincolnshire remains committed and proactive in recruiting foster carers. The Council has invested in a retention payment in recognition of the dedication of carers in supporting our most vulnerable young people with complex needs. Coupled with investment in Caring2Learn and bespoke support packages.

The loss of existing carers at first glance could appear a worry. However, apart from 3 foster carer households who moved to an independent fostering agency the rest were for personal reasons and the deregistration of 48 Reg 24/25 carers is a cause for celebration, as it means these children have been afforded legal stability and security with a family member.

A further success story is the number of young people who remain with their foster carers post 18 in a Staying Put arrangement, at year end there were 49 young people benefitting from this

support.

In Lincolnshire, there is a very active independent fostering market place and the service is very alive to the issues this may bring. In response to these challenges, we have reviewed our recruitment approach to 'cherish every contact' and promote Lincolnshire as the fostering agency of choice.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the needs of the children and young people who require looking after are more complicated and complex and we are seeing a shift in the number of young people who require a residential resource in the first instance. The development of the LAC Strategy over 2019 will support a range of placement options and assist in providing the right match, at the right time for the young person.

Role of Fostering Service

Lincolnshire County Council's Fostering Service provides a range of short term and permanent placements with foster carers who have a diverse range of skills and experience. Foster carers provide family based services ranging from weekend respite to supporting birth parents and carers, preparing a child for adoption, or providing a longer term placement that will see a child through to independence. There continues to be a high number of family members or friends who come forward for assessment within care proceedings.

These "kinship" carers play a unique role in enabling children and young people to remain with people they know and trust, if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents. Kinship carers are afforded the same remuneration, training and support as agency foster carers and are critical to achieving positive outcomes for children. In 2018/19 such placements have continued to be the preferred choice for most children entering care, including those who previously would have had a plan for adoption.

The service continues to offer a trained group of foster carers to provide assessment placements to parents and children, usually babies. These placements focus on a parent's capacity to meet the needs and safeguard the infant, and the foster carers are vital in assisting and supporting, often young parents, to develop basic parenting skills. Additionally, the service offers a range of additional specialist placements that provide for those harder to place young people, as well as emergency and remand placements.

The profile of children who are looked after shows that, the percentage of those under the age of 5 has remained consistent at 24%. At the other end of the age profile, there has been a continued increase in the number of young people looked after aged 12+ and, as a result of Government policy regarding vulnerable and homeless young people, those on remand, and an increase in the number of unaccompanied children, the 16/17 age group now constitutes 23% of Looked After Children, of which 52% are in foster placements. This group is increasingly more complex and presents a significant challenge to carers who manage them. At the same time, the growth in the number of looked after children aged 16 and 17, has seen an increase in the numbers who transition into leaving care services each year and have resulted in an increase in those young people remaining in staying put arrangements post 18 which supports and promotes better life chances and outcomes for young people.

In 2018/19 Lincolnshire has referred children to external fostering agencies but only 3

placements have been made available. The year-end figure of 16 was 2.5% of the total looked after population. The Local Authority has developed an effective commissioning relationship with providers within county and beyond, and regularly reviews quality and cost. The balance between the volume of internal and external provision has maintained the Local Authority within the CIPFA benchmarking group as one of the top performing in terms of children placed with internal carers, and one of the most cost effective in respect of the weekly cost of a Looked after Child with Lincolnshire at £780, as opposed to £971 for average authorities(CIPFA Benchmarking report 2017/18).

Activity and Performance 2018-19



Foster Carer Recruitment

The Recruitment Team comprises of 1 Practice Supervisor, 3 Supervising Social Workers, 1 Marketing and Recruitment Officer, 1 Marketing and Recruitment Assistant, and 2 Recruitment Coordinators. In addition, the duty officers undertake the majority of initial visits to prospective foster carers. The Recruitment Coordinators undertake all the business support tasks associated with Stage 1 of the fostering process and process initial enquires regarding adoption, and the base for this activity is in one location. This continues to enable better oversight of the work coming into the team.

Having a dedicated Recruitment and Retention Team ensures that the recruitment and retention of foster carers for and within Lincolnshire County Council remains a key priority. The team is fully integrated within the main fostering service and is able to respond in a timely manner to the changing needs of the service. The Marketing Officer role is to conceive imaginative, thought provoking and evidence based campaigns to recruit more foster carers and adopters. The 3 SSW's undertake the majority of the Form F Assessments across the county and work to a 6 month target for completion of assessments. This ensures that the assessment of potential foster carers is a priority and enables the mainstream SSW's to focus on supporting approved foster carers, contributing to the retention of those carers and ensuring their needs are being met. The recruitment SSW's oversee and co-deliver the 3 day preparation to foster course for potential foster carers and their children.

Recruitment Activity

From 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, a total of 233 initial expressions of interest (IEI's) forms

were received for fostering, of which, 107 home visits were undertaken. Reasons for not progressing to a home visit include the applicant not having understood the fostering role and recognising that it is not paid employment, the applicant not being suitable to foster, safeguarding concerns or lack of a spare bedroom for fostering and comparing LCC with private agencies. We do know that employment across the UK continues to rise and is at its highest record of 76.1% (ONS, May 2019). Nationally this is having a real impact on recruiting foster carers in the public sector. Private and voluntary fostering agencies had up until recently fared better, however over the past 12 months they too have struggled to recruit and The Fostering Network now state that there is a shortfall of some 9000 foster carers.

Of the 107 initial visits, 40 (37.3) converted to a Registration of Interest (ROI), it is at this stage that Statutory Checks commence. It was at this point, 'Stage 1' that a further 12 applicants ended the process, reasons included safeguarding concerns, significant health issues, changes in personal circumstances including finance, pregnancy, work commitments and landlords refusing to support an application to foster. The remaining 28 were all approved as foster families. Approval rate from Initial Expression of Interest (IEI's) to approval for 2018/19 is 12% compared to our 2017/18 conversion rate of 5.5%, the national rate has consistently hovered around 9% and the East Midlands region around 6 -7%.

The main focus for recruitment this year has been our Information Evening Events. This has been built upon the success of previous year's campaigns. The number of people attending these events has proven to be much more successful than that of country shows and drop-in sessions, with an average of 16 people who are all genuinely interested in fostering attending each event, with a total of 51 IEIs being filled out at these events. The completion of IEI's at Information Events was an initiative started in quarter 1 of 2018 whereby those wishing to take 'the next step' towards fostering could complete an IEI and arrange an initial visit there and then maintaining the 'wanting to foster' momentum. This has continued throughout 2018/19 and has resulted in a significant reduction in time arranging initial visits compared to the process previously whereby details of those wishing to proceed would be given to the Recruitment Coordinator who would then spend time attempting to contact event attendees to arrange a visit.

Our fostering priorities remain permanency, sibling groups, teenagers and children with additional needs. These continue to be the main focus of our campaign by getting people to think about what fostering could bring to their lives. Imagery illustrates the priority needs groups with the tag lines:

"If you could give them love, imagine what they could give you!" (Siblings)

"If you could give him a smile, imagine what he could give you!" (Additional needs)

"If you could give her a future, imagine what she could give you!" (Teenagers)

"If you could give her laughter, imagine what she could give you!" (Permanence)

In October 2018 the service commenced with a separate and dedicated campaign to recruit carers specifically for permanence. To this end a 3 year Permanence Strategy has been developed, this is supported by an annual Permanency Operations Plan. Based on current need and using this to project future requirements the plan is to recruit 24 additional permanent households by 31st October 2022 equating to 8 per year. During 2018/19 a total of 12 permanent links were made involving 16 children/young people.

Innovations for 2018/19

Animation

A 3 minute bespoke animation was commissioned to explain the 2-stage fostering process in a fun, endearing and engaging graphical manner which is easy to understand. The idea being that an animation would keep the audience's attention at events better than a worker talking at them for 15 minutes. The animation has also been posted on the fostering website on 'The Fostering Journey' page and the Facebook page.

Facebook

On the 18th June 2018 the dedicated Fostering & Adoption Facebook page was launched. The page is managed by the fostering service's marketing team and is predominately being used as a marketing aid to recruit more foster carers and convey key messages including who can foster, why people should foster with their local authority, what support the service offers, good news stories, and to advertise information evenings etc.

Foster Carer Involvement and retention

In November 2018, the Fostering Service Annual Survey was launched. 92 surveys were completed and returned. This equates to 31.8% of Lincolnshire's fostering households, an increase from 2017 where just 69 households (23.8%) returned the survey. Analysis of the feedback included. Of the respondees:

- 64.1% of households rate the communication to them from the service as good or excellent. This is an increase from the 2017 survey when 50.7% rated communication as good or excellent. However comments such as "*We feel we have had good communication from our SSW, this is not the case for the children's SWs and I would rate this as a 1*" and "*lack of communication between SSW and child SW*" are common themes across both the 2017/18 surveys.

When asked "*how satisfied are you with your SSW*" 88% responded with good or excellent compared with 77% in 2017. Comments included:- "*The SSW is excellent. She listens to any concerns or problems plus she cares.*", "*I feel very blessed to have a SSW who is so diligent and professional and caring*" and "*We feel we are supported exceptionally well by our SSW. She has stepped in to help on a number of occasions in the last year specifically in negotiating with other SWs.*"

Areas requiring improvement include: "*I would score the SSW as a 4 but seems to be covering 2 people's jobs due to absence hence the service feels like a tick box exercise. Only has time to make 1 or 2 attempts to get a response from the child's SW and if no response we get told there is nothing more that can be done. The periods of full staffing appear to be few and far between. All credit for not caving in under pressure due to lack of staff.*" And "*I have had almost yearly changes of SSW and when first allocated don't seem to acknowledge my previous experience*".

- When asked "*Do you feel that your SSW values your opinion regarding your foster child(ren)*"? an overwhelming 95.6% states "Yes".

Comments included: *"Yes I feel listened to and understood. My SSW is always able to grasp what I'm struggling with and empathises."* And *"One can always tell sincerity. She values my age and experience of birth children, adopted and foster children but she is not afraid to correct me if I'm going wrong."*

- When asked *"How do you feel the service prepared you for having children placed in your home"*? In 2017 30.6% felt that the service could do better in preparing carers for having children placed in their home. In 2018 this dropped to 23.9% it is acknowledged that although better it remains too high. Feedback from carers included: *"Some children placed we don't get enough information and on one occasion I waited weeks."* *"There is still a culture of not sharing all the available information about each case."*

The Service has taken this feedback into consideration and is developing a coordinated response to address the concerns.

Placement Support Workers

There are a total of 8 Placement Support Workers, 4 part-time and 4 full-time working hours to meet individual need across North and South of the county. Their role being to support the Fostering Service in providing a family placement for young people, promote placement stability in an aim to support young people to achieve their maximum potential and support foster carers in areas where there is identified need and be a part of care planning.

Placement Support Workers have a wealth of practice experience, knowledge, skills and are trained in areas such as Social Pedagogy, Theraplay, Therapeutic Parenting Skills, Solihull, Supporting Parents of Teenagers (SPOT) and Triple P Parenting Programmes, Youth work and Attachment. Working closely with Children's Teams, foster carers, children and young people the service continues to target and provide timely support in an aim to promote placement stability and care planning which encompasses children and young people's voices.

Over the last year Placement Support Workers have developed a programme of work to meet identified training needs and equip foster carers with therapeutic skills to support children and young people and placement stability. A Therapeutic Parenting Skills course has been rolled out to small groups of foster carers to gain further understanding of trauma and the impact which this can have on children and providing knowledge and skills around therapeutic skills training. The course is interactive and looks at tools such as PACE, therapeutic games, practical real life strategies when caring for children with attachment difficulties, compassion fatigue and blocked care and the differences which therapeutic parenting can make to the child and their caregiver.

We have Placement Support Workers trained in Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) Programme. One of the important distinctive factors of the Non Violent Resistance Programme is the focus on therapeutic support and psycho-educational intervention which involves the carers only, without the necessity to work directly with the child. The aim of this programme is to empower and support carers preventing and responding to the controlling and aggressive behaviour of children and teenagers.

Three more Placement Support Workers have been trained in Theraplay (Level 1) over the last

year. We are now in the planning stages and putting together a programme of work to be able to deliver Group Theraplay to both children, young people (including teenagers) and their carers to develop relationships, support carers to understand and manage complex behaviours and support the children, young people and their stability.

Placement Stability

Placement stability continues to be a critical factor in offering an effective Fostering Service, and is crucial to ensuring that the Local Authority delivers good outcomes for each Looked After Child. Recruitment activity seeks to improve placement choice at the point of admission to care and the engagement of early help and skilling up of placement support workers seek to offer improved levels of support to sustain placements. Stability is measured by 2 national indicators, NI062 relating to children who experience 3 placement moves within 12 months, and NI063 which relates to children looked after for 2½ years who have been in the same placement for 2 years.

The national indicator NI062 reported 7% at year end. This figure suggests that Children Looked After in Lincolnshire, have a high level of placement stability from the point of coming into care. This is significant in achieving long term positive outcomes. However, the complexity of children requiring placement and reduced placement options have had an impact on the indicator, and is likely to remain a challenge. Over recent years there has been considerable focus on supporting foster carers to maintain placements, and perhaps as a consequence, the NI063 placement stability figure has shown only a small deterioration with a year end figure reported as 67.8%, this is good performance compared nationally. We will continue to place an emphasis on supporting foster carers to promote sustained placement stability. However, we have seen an increase in the number of children subject to care orders with plans for long term fostering and we continue to experience the occasional unplanned ending of seemingly stable placements. We know that recruitment of permanent foster carers remains a challenge and will need to carefully track these individual children to ensure that all possible family finding activity is undertaken.

Family Lincs Care

There are currently two foster carer households within the Family Lincs short term breaks scheme. The service is currently accessed by three children and young people who require respite placements to support their home based care. Of these children/young people one has a physical disability.

The majority of the referrals have historically been generated from the south of the county, with all carers being well positioned to accommodate local respite requests. Three children have been referred via the CWD panel this year. The service acknowledges the decline in demand which appears to relate to direct payments, offering more choice of care options closer to home for Lincolnshire families.

Family Lincs carers offer an annual total of 208 units of care with capacity to offer additional units dependent on demand, each unit totals 8 hours of care. This continues to meet the demand for the service, but does allow some flexibility by offering additional units where required. Moreover, where foster carers have spare capacity these units are used to accommodate other children requiring respite. Despite active recruitment in 2018, no additional

carers have made application for the scheme.

In addition to the defined Family Lincs scheme, the service offers a range of other long term and respite placements for children with disabilities.

Parent and Child placements

Parent and child placements continue to be a positive option for Courts, currently there are 13 carers who are approved to offer parent and child placements. In 2018/19 we received 19 requests for placements. Of these 19 requests 12 were met via in house provision, with 8 placements used, 2 are awaiting placement of parent and child, 1 child was placed with family members and 1 request changed to a child only request.

The outcomes of the 8 in-house placements that were completed during the year have varied. 4 have had outcomes where baby and parents returned to the community with the remaining 4 moving to task centred placements, 2 as a result of the parent leaving the placement.

Demand for placements continues to be varied and has proven hard to predict. As a result, across the year, 7 additional placements have been commissioned from independent providers. A clear issue that continues to arise is the expectation of courts and guardians that the placements continue until the final hearing, even though the assessment is planned for 12 weeks; with an expectation at the planning stage that an exit plan is in place for the end of 12 weeks. 4 placements provided have been made for over the 12 weeks with one placement lasting 34 weeks. As placements continue for longer, this continues to have an obvious effect on the availability of carers for new placements.

The service continues to address this trend with legal representatives, with a view to timetabling a case discussion at the end of the assessment

Staying Put

The 'Staying Put' initiative in Lincolnshire is in its tenth year. It has, since its inception, enabled a total of 131 young people to remain with their previous foster carers.

Staying Put arrangements provide the young person with stability at a key stage of their life remaining until their 21st birthday. On-going support and training for carers is provided by the Fostering Service, with the young people having their own designated Personal Advisor from Barnardo's Leaving Care Service.

To further support young people in their transition to adulthood if they are ready to move on before their 21st birthday or for those who join the armed forces, each young person is given a three month window in which they are supported by their carer. For those young people who attend university and live away; carers receive a retainer in recognition of the on-going support they provide, and to enable the young person to return during holidays and continue life within their family setting.

Lincolnshire's Staying Put Service has developed and grown over the past two years with the number of Staying Put arrangements increasing from 44 young people at the end of March 2018 to 49 young people living in a Staying Put arrangement at the end of March 2019. Of these, 36

were in full time further education with 4 attending university. The remainder were in Employment, on Work Experience Placements or Apprenticeships; with 2 of these on the Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Staying Put offer in Lincolnshire positively reflects the current guidelines and best practice from Fostering Network. Signs of Safety is embedded in the referral forms, licence agreement and annual review forms which were used across the scheme. By further embedding Signs of Safety and introducing Social Pedagogy into practice the Staying Put Scheme will continue to develop ensuring the best outcomes are achieved for our young people and care leavers.

Permanence

The Family Finding group considers all children with a care plan of permanence/long term foster care and has considered 31 children since April 2018. This number included seven sibling sets of two and one sibling set of three.

Out of the 31 children, permanent foster placements were identified for 18. This included 6 sets of siblings and 8 remaining with existing task centred carers and the remaining 10 moving to newly identified carers.

A further five out of the 31 children moved to a residential placement; 2 moved to an IFA and a further three had a change of care plan.

In addition to this there have been 18 children linked at Permanence Panel with their existing foster families – this includes five sets of siblings.

The new Family Finding procedure was launched in July 2018 and from this date all new referrals are received through Mosaic, with the child's social worker attending the initial Family Finding meeting to provide in depth information about the child and his or her background and needs and to consider any potential matches.

Work has been undertaken to update all of the children's profiles, with more relevant and focused information and a brighter, more engaging appearance. These profiles are shared with all Supervising Social Workers across both North and South Fostering Teams and have been shared with existing foster carers.

The Family Finding lead social workers for North and South Fostering Teams are attending the Foster Carers Support Groups to promote permanence and answer any queries.

In October 2018 a new Permanence campaign was launched, aimed at recruiting eight new permanent fostering families. This has included advertising in local press, radio and social media and has generated significant interest- with some posts on Facebook receiving thousands of views.

Over the year four new fostering families have been approved for permanence and a further five are currently undergoing assessment. Alongside this six existing task centred carers have changed their approval to permanence.

A special Permanence Event was held in March 2019 at The Dower House Hotel in Woodhall Spa – the majority of existing foster carers were invited to this event to hear about the role of a

permanent foster carer and the support that is provided as well as having the opportunity to receive information about children currently on Family Finders and talk with their respective social workers, who were also present.

Support for permanent foster carers has been reviewed and includes a bespoke preparation course (which includes the sharing of suitably anonymised profiles), an enhanced rate for children waiting for a permanent placement longer than six months, specific and/or tailored training, including access to training provided by post adoption support, support from Placement Support Workers trained in Theraplay and Therapeutic parenting and a minimum of 14 nights respite per year.

The Family Finders Review panel continues to meet regularly to consider children where no options have been identified within a three month period. Overall, it has been a successful year for Family Finders with all but two of the 31 children considered during the year having an appropriate placement identified.

Kinship Service

Since 2015 there has been 6 FTE Supervising Social Workers dedicated to undertake Kinship Assessments. In the early part of the year, there was a decrease in the volume of referrals. However, the trend was not sustained and the latter part of the year saw an upturn. At year end, the volume of assessments is at 15%.

The placement of a child within their family and friends network offers a positive alternative for many children enabling them to maintain the links with family and friends and a continued sense of their identity and culture but can also bring with it practice issues in terms of supporting family members to fully understand their role as 'connected person carers' and the expectations of this role.

The picture below for the year records the number of referrals and reflects the ongoing national picture in terms of the area of service increase in terms of assessments.

Overview of the Year 1 –April 2018 to 31-March 2019

Number of Referrals	SGO	Reg.24 to SGO	Reg.24	Private Fostering
152	62	24	41	25

Of the above figures:

- SGO – 8 applicants withdrew/ did not progress due to alternative SGO assessment placement ended for varying reasons
- SGO – 12 are still in process
- SGO – 2 were negative assessments and the children were not placed
- SGO – 1 case, Court granted a Child Arrangement Order

- SGO – 38 were reference and checks completed by Fostering Service as child not LAC
- SGO – 1 positive but remained at home

Where children were placed but with a likely plan to progress to SGO

- SGO/Reg.24 – 8 SGO granted
- SGO/Reg.24 – 7 are still in process
- SGO/Reg.24 – 9 where child was moved or other Order granted
- Reg.24 – 14 Carers Approved at panel
- Reg.24 – 8 children were moved
- Reg.24 – 14 Not yet attended panel
- Reg.24 – 1 carer granted Child Arrangement Order
- Reg.24 – 4 Returned home

The service has continued to offer the specific initial preparation course for both Regulation 24 carers and Special Guardianship applicants, with three having taken place in 2018/19 with consistency in terms of numbers attending. It is a positive initial step to engage families and also connected person carers continue to be invited to the recent county focus groups and foster carers social events.

Fostering Panel

Report from the Independent Chair of Fostering Panel and Agency Panel Advisor

The Fostering Panel is established and acts in accordance with the regulatory framework provided by The Fostering Service Regulations 2011, Family and Friends Care, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2011, and the Standards set out in the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011. The Foster Panel takes account of the legislation set out in The Children Act 1989, and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and Guidance, volume 2, 2010.

The Fostering Panel has the responsibility for making recommendations in relation to:

- The approval of foster carers both short/task centred and long term/permanent foster carers;
- The approval of family members or friends as "connected person" carers for children who are looked after by Lincolnshire County Council, and connected to the applicant as a family member or friend;
- The first annual review of all foster carers and connected persons carers;
- Reviews of carers where there have been serious issues such as Child Protection
- Investigations; or
- Reviews of carers where there are concerns regarding their fostering practice and their suitability.

The current membership of the Panel is as follows:

- Sue Tribe, Independent Panel Chair

- Sharon King, Vice Chair
- Ruth Dewick, Vice Chair
- Dennis Clarke, Independent Member
- Georgina Sharma, Independent Member
- Janet Morris, Independent Member
- Russell Petit, Independent Member
- April Harrison, Independent Member
- Laura Dodd, Independent Member
- Paula Bexon, Social Work Representative
- Michelle Maxfield, Social Work Representative
- Malcolm Rebello, Social Work Representative
- Joanne Stares, Social Work Representative
- Michaela Berry, Social Work Representative
- Panel Advisor and Administrator in attendance at each panel

Currently both vice chairs are independent of the Fostering Agency.

The Panel Advisor is responsible for the volume and cost of panel business, in particular the capacity to ensure that connected person cases can be heard within 16 weeks of placement. She ensures that the central list is maintained and updated to allow for all panels to be quorate. There continues to be two Fostering Panels each month.

The Panel in conjunction with the agency identified an opportunity for improvement with the process surrounding Kinship Regulation 24 assessments in 2018 and subsequently reviewed the process in line with the guidance to gain a more integrated approach which would further embed the Signs of Safety model and assist with the trajectory of each case with colleagues in FAST Teams and LAC.

The key area that was reviewed was specifically the Viability Assessments that are completed this encompassed:

- Immediate Placement Screening Requirements before a child is placed,
- Viability Assessments and the Kinship Assessment.

The rationale for this piece of work was to ensure that key regulations and standards required of "Foster Carers" were clearly embedded in the assessment tools and that there was a clearer succinct assessment that could meet the 16 week timescales. These assessments are presented to the Fostering Panel in conjunction with FAST workers as well as the other key material.

The Panel receives medical advice within the Social Workers' reports, and this is considered within the assessments. Legal Services provide advice as required, in order to assist in the Panel's decision making.

Workload of the Panel

The Foster Panel has met on 22 occasions this year.

Panel recommended for approval the following households:

APPROVAL	2018	2017	2016	2015
Task Centred/Respite	27	13	20	29
Reg 24/25	33	39	39	47
Permanent Foster Carers	2	1	10	17
Change of Approval	7	0	5	7
Permanence Link	10	10	11	25
Reviews	22	17	35	45
Total	101	80	120	170

Review Breakdowns:

REVIEW	2018	2017	2016	2015
Task Centred	12	9	19	20
Respite		0	0	3
Remand		0	1	1
Reg 24/25	9	3	12	16
Permanent Fostering		4	2	1
Allegation	1	1	1	3

Feedback and Quality Assurance

Panel actively seeks feedback from all participants via a feedback form. The Panel Advisor has reviewed the feedback information from those attending Panel utilizing a scaling system. This system has been in operation since November 2015 and is rated out of 10, the average feedback on Fostering Panel achieving 9/10.

The reports for Panel are signed as being suitable to present at Panel by the Practice Supervisor, for the worker to ensure suitable quality standards are achieved.

The Chair to the Foster Panel has continued to work closely with the Panel Advisor and the two Team Managers. This has been further strengthened with engagement with members of the Practice Supervisor Group, who are the first line supervisors of staff. These Feedback sessions take place on a six monthly basis and produce an action plan based on the Signs of Safety model. This has enabled both the agency and the Panel to review any areas for development.

The quality of reports presented to Panel continue to be of a good standard, and this has been assisted by the Panel Advisor actively engaging with the Fostering and Looked After Teams, to

reiterate the need for sound, evidence based assessments. There is clear evidence of the Signs of Safety Model, and this works well with how the Panel is structured. The Panel Members have all been trained in the use of Signs of Safety, and utilise this model in their approach to cases.

The child's voice at Panel is actively encouraged, in particular children attending Panel, particularly in permanent link cases. There has been a clear increase in the participation of children at panel and the Social Workers and foster carers have been very creative in how young people are supported to present their wishes and feelings to the Panel. Examples have included art work, Signs of Safety tools, power point presentations of the young person's experiences in foster care. These experiences shared by children and young people continue to be a very powerful reminder for all about the difference that fostering can make for young people in terms of their sense of belonging, their participation, their identity and ultimately providing many young people with a safe place to live and thrive in.

The Panel is also mindful of the training standards and development, and is actively monitoring the activity around training, and wish to have evidence at the first annual review of the TSD portfolio to ensure these are met within the required timescales.

Foster Carer Continuous Development

The Fostering Service produces an annual learning and development programme to include practical and e-learning opportunities and continue to provide foster carers with a calendar of training events, and e-learning opportunities which are accessed through the LSCB website. Lincolnshire continues to review and develop the training opportunities provided to foster carers to ensure that the training they access reflects the changing needs of Looked After Children. Last year all of the face to face training apart from the Foster Carer induction course was outsourced, initial feedback has been positive. This is measured by the feedback sheets and discussions with SSW in Supervision. New courses that were added included PTSD in children, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Autism and ADHD; these courses are being delivered by Able training, Singletons, TACT, Public Health and Breaking the Cycle. The caring2learn programme has significantly enhanced the training offer and course take up in 2018/19.

The following identifies the number of carers who have undertaken any form of training this year.

Number of carers attended face to face	279
Number of carers completed e-learning	152
Number of carers attending Induction course	20 -2 courses held

The Foster Carer induction course was reviewed and is now delivered as a one day event. The first course took place on the 25th September with ten carers attending, the feedback was positive, and by using the SOS format we were able to engage in the discussions and questions.

Caring2learn

The project has become more embedded within the fostering service this year and focuses on 3 key areas;

Developing a locality based support network for foster and residential carers, designated teachers and education professionals and bringing them together sharing good practice and information on how best to support the education of children and young people in care.

Creating and recruiting to the role of 60 Education Champions, made up of foster carers, residential carers and designated teachers. Their role is to provide peer support and challenge as part of the support network to advocate and support good practice in the area of learning both in formal education settings and the home.

- 1. The developments of the Caring2Learn Award for Learning Homes and Caring Schools, which will assess, celebrate and drive good practice for Lincolnshire Looked after children.**

The toolkits for the Caring2Learn award are complete for both schools and Carers. Engagement from Foster Carers continues to grow in regards to participation in the events and accessing the growing hub. The engagement from the Fostering community is currently 47% of homes. 17 homes have already completed their Learning Homes toolkit. Another 20 Learning Homes submissions as a minimum are expected by July 2019. There are currently 20 Foster Carer Education Champions.

The development of the toolkit to incorporate the fostering TSD is well underway; this will support the development of the Preparation course, induction for carers and overall training offer. All new carers will develop their Learning Homes whilst meeting the standards set out nationally; this will also provide a portfolio of personal and professional development as the award will need to be reviewed every 3 years. Initial feedback on the combined toolkit is very positive.

Foster Carer Education Champions continue to be included and integrated into children's Service forums such as the Partners in Practice briefings, operational champions groups, DT Cluster Groups, Champion forums and Early Help team meetings with great success.

Caring2Learn Champions within children's Service areas have started to develop with representatives from Fostering Teams, the Virtual School and Early Help. The plan over the next 6 months is to extend this and involve other teams such as LAC and FAST.

The Caring2Learn project is working with the Fostering team to establish a "hub" approach where Foster Carers can support others, access support and share good practice. Foster Carer Education Champions will help form, maintain and support these groups with a designated SSW.

As the demand for Foster Carers Champions participation in various areas has developed the group of 20 champions have been divided into 3 key groups with clear roles and responsibilities. Champion groups were informed with a detailed skills audit and the wishes and development needs of the champions in place. These groups will be used to formulate and support the future Caring2learn offer.

Supportive superstars

Supportive Superstars began in July 2015 to recognise the key role that birth children play in fostering households and to thank them for their contribution to fostering. One of the aims of this

group was to support with the retention of foster carers and improve the stability of looked after children's placements.

Over the past year there has been an average of 30 children who have attended the activity days. There has been an emphasis to encourage more South children to become part of the Supportive Superstars group. There were 5 new children from the South of Lincolnshire that attended the most recent event in the Easter holidays. Those that attend are birth children, adopted children and those that are subject to a Special Guardianship Order. They come from a variety of fostering households, including task centred, permanent or kinship.

The group meets three times a year, either facilitated together as one large group or separate to the North and South of the county. The group enables the children to socialise with other children who are from fostering households and to discuss their experiences within a safe environment. There are fun activities to support with the children's self-esteem, confidence and social skills. There are also activities related to fostering, which allows them to have their voice heard. The children have been nominated for a FAB award and invited to attend the awards ceremony in June 2019.

Complaints, Appeals and Representations

In the last year the Fostering Service has received five complaints directly to the service. Four of the complaints were partially substantiated and one was not upheld. One of the complaints was raised by carers in relation to the management of the allegation and the learning from this relates to the importance of communication. The importance of communication and sharing detail was cited in a further complaint and serves to reiterate the importance of sharing assessment outcomes in a timely fashion. The remaining two were in relation to service decisions and recommendations where the carers were not in agreement with the service about interventions and the workers approach.

The low level representations and concerns were promptly dealt with in the service and satisfactorily resolved. In 2018/2019 there were no matters referred to the Independent Review Mechanism.

The themes from complaints and representations have been discussed and reflected upon during professional supervision sessions, practice development workshops and team development days, in an effort to constantly review and improve our service to children, families and fostering households. Additionally, the procedures have been revised to reflect the necessary changes, in a continued effort to provide a high quality service and promote improvements where possible. The service have invested heavily in Restorative Practice where the principles, behaviours and approaches aid to strengthen relationships and support carer's in developing their knowledge and skills in their complex and demanding roles. The continued implementation of Signs of Safety has also served to readily identify and evaluate good working practices on what is working well within the service, together with identifying what needs to happen in terms of individual placements; as well as the service as a whole moving forward.

Quality of care

Foster placements are supervised on a bi-monthly basis by Supervising Social Workers. Support visits are also completed bi-monthly which means that foster carers are seen at a minimum,

every other month by their supervising social worker. Their intervention seeks to challenge and develop foster carers and ensure that the quality of care meets each individual child's needs. All foster homes are subject to a minimum of 1 unannounced visit per annum and the foster carer status is reviewed annually. Team Managers and Practice Supervisors each complete a sample of annual reviews to ensure there is an independent overview. As part of the annual review, the views of children placed and their Social Workers are sought to evidence what is working well and what needs to happen to achieve consistent care.

Children and young people are consulted about the suitability of their placements with the **Tell Us** surveys; this also offers the opportunity for children to offer views about their foster carers.

In 2018/19 of the survey of 8 to 11 year olds:

- 88% of those who completed the survey say that they are happy where they live'
- 100% said that they were supported by their foster carers to make good choices,
- 98% feel they are encouraged to learn and do well.

Of 5 to 7 year olds:

- 80% of children who completed the survey like where they live
- 20% feel it is Okay.

Forward Plan 2019/20

Retention Payments

Following agreement to the funding of retention payments for mainstream foster carers, the service will agree the criteria for payments to be made for implementation by end March 2020.

Caring2learn

The service will seek to embed the Caring2Learn approach to incorporate training, group supervision and carer support groups. The role of the foster care champions will be further developed and champions will be trained in training the trainer's techniques.

Foster Care training

The offer to foster carers will be fully reviewed in line with the development of caring 2 learn agenda. Preparatory training will be integrated into a caring 2 learn approach.

The Training, Support and Development standards (TSD) will be mapped against the caring home's workbook to develop a fully integrated model of training and development for the first year of a foster carer's career.

IFAB

The service will introduce a separate panel body FAB, to provide independent evaluation of foster carer reviews for those who have completed 4,7 and 10 years. It is anticipated that this will begin in July 2019.

Develop LAC Strategy

The development of the LAC Strategy over 2019 will support a range of placement options and assist in providing the right match at the right time for the young person.

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Lincolnshire Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2019



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE LINCOLNSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of Standard 16 of the Fostering Services Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. To be presented for approval by the Lincolnshire County Council Executive in September each year.

CONTENTS

Page

- 4. Aims, Objectives and Principles of the Fostering Service
- 6. Standards of Care
- 6. Status and Constitution
- 7. Management Structure
- 9. The Work of the Fostering Service
- 10. Service Ambitions
- 17. Training
- 18. Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers
- 19. Finance
- 19. Monitoring
- 20. Complaints and Allegations
- 21. Advocacy and Children's Rights
- 22. Number of Children Placed
- 23. Equality and Diversity
- 23. Ofsted
- 24. Further Information

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Management Structure

Appendix 2 Fostering Panel

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The main aims of the Lincolnshire County Council Fostering Service are to:

Provide high quality and safe care within a family setting for children and young people who have been assessed as requiring a foster placement.

Provide a range of foster carers able to meet the emotional, physical, cultural, and religious and ethnicity needs of all the children looked after by Lincolnshire County Council.

Lincolnshire County Council delivers its Fostering Service through dedicated Fostering Teams managed by Team Managers covering the north and south of the county.

The main service objectives are to:

Place children and young people in local foster placements where relationships with family, friends and community are maintained and continuity of education, health and cultural links and activities is ensured. In instances where it is not possible to achieve this within the Council's Foster Placements an appropriate placement outside of the resources of the County Council will be sought.

Maintain a sufficient number of foster care placements in relation to the location, numbers, needs, age range and characteristics of the looked after population and review this annually through the recruitment strategy.

Recruit Foster Carers who are trained and supported in providing safe care to children who live with them. The service will determine the number and types of foster placements required and produce an annual recruitment plan.

Carry out an assessment of need on every child prior to accommodation. Where possible a safe family member or friend will be the preferred placement choice.

Provide a safe and nurturing foster placement with every effort made to achieve good outcomes for the looked after child, within set timescales and to agreed standards. The service aims to ensure that wherever possible, children can meet with their prospective Foster Carers prior to placement and if this is not possible, receive a foster family profile.

Provide for sibling groups to be placed together when this is in their best interests.

Respect and promote the child's heritage, culture and identity.

Promote contact between the child and their family where this is consistent with the care plan.

Achieve permanence for all children who are unable to return safely to their families and promote Staying Put for those children who are secure within their foster placement

Ensure openness and partnership working between all those involved and concerned with the child's welfare.

Involve young people and Foster Carers in developing services and building their feedback into service development.

Develop and integrate the Caring 2 Learn approach to promote caring schools and learning placements. Create foster care champions across the County to ensure that the model is extended as widely as possible.

The Fostering Service has set targets to achieve best practice for the following Children's Performance Assessment Framework and National Indicators:

NI062 – stability of placements of looked after children: number of placement moves.

PAF B79 – the percentage of children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption.

NI063 – stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement.

The main principles underpinning the service are:

Foster Carers will be treated with respect and recognition will be given to the valuable role they play in the care of looked after children.

Recruitment of new Foster Carers and staff who work within the service, complies with regulations, national standards and good practice.

Foster Carers are vetted, prepared and assessed in line with national regulations and requirements.

The Lincolnshire Fostering Panel considers all carer applications and reviews of approval.

All approved Foster Carers are required to sign the Foster Care Agreement and the Foster Carer Charter which outlines expectations of the Fostering Service and commits to caring appropriately for children looked after.

Wherever possible all placements are matched to ensure a good fit between the needs of the child and the skills and experience of the foster carer(s).

Every child placed will be subject to the looked after children care planning process.

All Foster Carers are provided with the required documentation and information to support the placement of the child in their care.

Children have their placement and plan reviewed within four weeks of initial placement.

All Foster Carers have a named Supervising Social Worker and children in foster care have a named allocated Social Worker.

STANDARDS OF CARE TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE AGENCY

The Fostering Service aims to provide safe, secure and high quality care in family settings for children who need to be looked after away from home. This will be achieved in accordance with the standards set out in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (referred to as the Regulations), the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations (2010) the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011) along with the policies and procedures of Lincolnshire County Council. These standards will apply equally to family and friends placements. The service complies with the requirements of the Training, Support and Development Standards.

There is a countywide management group whose function is to continuously improve standards of care informed by inspections, audits, new legislation and guidance and evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery.

STATUS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE AGENCY

Lincolnshire County Council is an approved fostering service provider and will be inspected under the Single Inspection framework.

Decision making and arrangements for the management of the service including the appointment of the Fostering Service Manager (Regulation 6) and approval of Foster Carer registrations (Regulation 27) are delegated to the Assistant Director, Children's Services.

A Fostering Panel has been established in accordance with Regulation 23. The Panel is chaired by an independent person with considerable experience of working within Social Care.

Where Lincolnshire County Council needs to use another fostering agency for the provision of placements; the commissioning section of the Council must be contacted to ensure that the process is managed according to the Council's rules on commissioning.

THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The Fostering Service is managed by the Service Manager for Regulated Services; through two Team Managers who manage dedicated fostering teams from bases in Lincoln and Sleaford. The service employs 5 practice supervisors who have lead responsibility for specific areas of delivery.

The registered manager appointed to manage the Fostering Service under Regulation 10 of the Fostering Services Regulations is:

John Harris, Service Manager – Regulated Services
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YL

Telephone: 01522 554109

Email: John.harris@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Qualifications: CQSW, Certificate in Management Studies, Post Graduate Diploma in Health and Social Care.

Experience: more than thirty years of experience of working in the field of social care, specialising in the area of children and families since 1987 and has held first line and senior management posts within the local authority.

The nominated manager to manage the Fostering Service in the absence of the registered manager is Yvonne Shearwood (Service Manager).

The Fostering Teams are locality based and deliver a comprehensive fostering service. These teams manage the recruitment, assessment, approval, support and placement processes which enable children looked after in Lincolnshire County Council to be placed in a range of fostering settings.

Nicola Brangam is the dedicated Professional Advisor for both the Fostering and Permanence Panels.

The organisational structure of the Fostering Service is shown in Appendix 1. The list of current staff is set out in appendix 2. This information in its fullest form is only available to Ofsted.

The Teams are managed by two Team Managers responsible for the service on a geographic basis. Rebecca Dolman is the Team Manager North and has over 10 years' experience in Children's Services. The South Team is managed by Deborah Crawford. She has 20 years' experience of social work and has worked in a range of services from Safeguarding to IRO and has also been employed by CAFCASS.

The teams comprise Practice Supervisors who are responsible for the supervision and development of staff; including Supervising Social Workers who are all qualified and experienced in a range of child care social work and a number of unqualified staff who work within recruitment, placement support and placement duty. In addition, the service employs a dedicated recruitment officer who is responsible for the delivery of the annual recruitment strategy.

THE WORK OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

Putting Children First, is at the heart of our work in Lincolnshire; *Working Together with Families to Enhance Children's Present and Future Lives*

The strategic outcomes that the Council commits to are;

Young People are healthy and safe

Children and Young People develop to their potential in their early years and are ready for school

Children and Young People learn and achieve

Children and Young People are ready for adult life

The expectations for all children looked after are enshrined within these outcomes.

We will champion the importance of aspiration

We will promote self-esteem, self-belief and resilience in all children

We will encourage all children to be the best they can be

We will use resources to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities

We will work jointly with foster carers to help promote these objectives.

Lincolnshire aims to provide sufficient local placements to enable placement choice and enable children to remain, where appropriate, close to their communities.

Lincolnshire delivers Staying Put opportunities to enable young people to remain in their foster placements post 18.

The training, induction and development of new Foster Carers is in line with the requirements of Standard 20 (NMS) and carers are expected to meet the Training, Support and Development standards within 12 months of approval.

SERVICE AMBITIONS

Young People are Healthy and Safe

All children are registered with GPs and dentists and this is kept under review by team managers. There are 15 designated GPs and a named Doctor and small team of nurses responsible for this group of children. Children and young people placed in foster care have an initial health assessment carried out by a designated GP and are encouraged to have an annual review by the same GP or designated nurse. Medical forms recommended by British Association for Fostering and Adoption (BAAF) are used to record both the initial and annual review and maintain a health profile for each looked after child. Lincolnshire has a strategy to tackle teenage pregnancy. All carers are given a copy of the guidance on sex and relationship education within their handbooks. Carers and young people are able to access further information from the young person's pages on the Council website.

A multi agency commissioning group is in place to understand and improve the health needs of children looked after. Health needs of children and young people are regularly monitored through the looked after children review process. The Local Authority has a contract with CAMHS and services for looked after children are prioritised. CAMHS work to a target of seeing all referred children for an initial assessment within 28 days. A forensic psychology assessment service is available to children looked after who have emotional, behavioural, interaction or mental health issues that are manifesting themselves in the form of offending behaviour.

Foster Carers complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for children between the ages of four and sixteen years of age. This is to ensure that services for children who require additional support are accessed swiftly in order to improve emotional well being. The results of all the SDQ's are monitored by a multi-agency group comprising Social Care, CAMHS and Psychology who identify intervention strategies for those whose scores are of concern. Foster carers have access to the CAMHS professional advice line to support in the management of concerning behaviours.

Part of the training programme for Foster Carers focuses on promoting a healthy lifestyle, good diet and exercise. All mainstream Foster Carers have to undertake first aid training as part of their mandatory post approval training. Foster Carers have training sessions on promoting the health of children looked after. This core programme is supplemented through special interest seminars including ADHD, autism and teenage pregnancy.

Foster Carers can access specialist services for those with substance and alcohol misuse problems through Young Addaction.

As part of the assessment process of prospective Foster Carers, a health assessment is undertaken by the carers' GP which the Agency Medical Advisor for the Fostering Panel considers. If there are on-going medical issues, a full medical assessment is undertaken. Full medicals are also completed for all carers seeking approval for permanence. All carers are required to update their health assessment every 3 years. Foster Carers who offer respite care to disabled children are offered specialist training to meet the needs of individual children. Foster Carers are trained in the administration of specific medication.

Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Service and its Fostering Service are part of Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children's Board.

The assessment of carers includes the taking of full employment and accommodation histories. Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and local authority checks are completed on everyone aged over 18 years of age living in the household. A range of referees are contacted and visited including previous partners who have parented together and birth children.

All Foster Carers attend mandatory training regarding safer caring and the implications of looking after children who may have been abused.

Each set of carers have a safer caring assessment prior to approval which highlights key aspects of the safer caring process and this is reviewed in the light of each placement made. Every effort is taken when placing children to ensure that the assessed needs of the child are carefully matched to the skills and capabilities of the carers. All children placed are subject to a safety plan that identifies any risks that carers will be asked to manage.

All Foster Carers are offered bi monthly formal supervision, in addition to regular visits, to look at their practice. An unannounced visit to the foster home is made at least once each year. Workers in the team are also aware of the particular vulnerability of disabled children.

Allegations against Foster Carers are investigated using an established procedure whereby all are considered by the Local Authority Designated Officer. An independent person chairs the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process. Independent support is offered to carers during the allegations procedure by Foster Talk. In addition the Fostering Service funds each fostering household's membership of the Fostering Network which brings the benefit of legal protection insurance and access to support and advice from their staff, including free legal advice and counselling service.

Children's plans are regularly reviewed through the Looked After Children's Statutory Review process, and procedures are in place for reporting significant incidents through the OFSTED notification requirements. All children are given information about how to report abuse and carers are prepared in how to manage disclosure and prevent allegations arising in the placement. In addition children

and young people have access to an independent advocacy service. All children are provided with a coming into care kit. Do we still have these or the fostering guides?

All children and young people are expected to agree with their carer when they go out, where they are going and a time to return. If a young person fails to return at the agreed time, attempts are made to locate them by telephoning friends, family and relatives. Carers can obtain advice about the operation of the Missing from Care protocol from the Emergency Duty Team and are issued with a copy of it within the Foster Carer Handbook.

The process for conducting risk assessments on missing young people and making reports to the police is detailed in the Foster Carer Handbook.

Lincolnshire's Fostering Service Placement Policy is that there is sufficient space within the foster carer's home for a child to have their own room. In certain circumstances, a child/young person may share a bedroom. Full risk assessments for each child/young person sharing must be undertaken before these arrangements are agreed. A matching policy is in place to ensure that effective matching of children to placements is undertaken to improve placement stability and good outcomes for children and young people.

READINESS FOR SCHOOL

All pre-school children who become looked after will be placed in a foster placement equipped to meet their individual needs.

All Foster Carers are encouraged to register with their local Children's' Centre and take up the services available as part of the County's Early Help available to all children.

All Looked after Children are able to access the 15 hours early entitlement at the age of 2 and have access to suitable nursery school provision.

Foster Carers are required and supported to engage children in their care in specific activities in order to develop their self-esteem and socialisation skills.

Children and Young People Learn and Achieve

Lincolnshire County Council are committed to maximising a child's potential in both academic attainment and personal achievement. All young people are expected to attend school and efforts are made to maintain children in their existing schools. Foster Carers who transport children to out of catchment schools have their transport expenses reimbursed.

Foster Carers are aware that it is unacceptable to take children and young people out of school for family holidays. A protocol has been agreed on this matter and issued to all carers.

The Fostering Service promotes the educational attainment of children placed with foster carers. Each child in foster care has a Personal Education Plan and, where appropriate, a Leaving Care Pathway Plan. Foster Carers are expected to involve themselves in assisting children in placement to achieve satisfactory attendance, assist with homework and participate in parent/teacher events. Looked after Children in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 receive additional, tailored tutorial support.

All Looked after Children have an entitlement to the Pupil Premium. This is further enhanced by the Council and the utilisation of the provision is monitored within the PEP process.

There is a designated teacher in every Lincolnshire school with responsibilities for liaison; educational monitoring and pastoral care for looked after children. There are four Education Officers whose role is to ensure effective liaison with schools and to promote educational attainment and attendance of children looked after. This includes children who live with Foster Carers outside of Lincolnshire.

The Looked after Children Education Service is managed by a Virtual Head Teacher. The Virtual Head leads a team working in partnership with schools, carers and other organisations to improve the educational attainment of each Looked after Child.

The Council has introduced a Caring 2 Learn programme which promotes joint working between schools and foster carers to maximise the potential of looked after children. The programme is supported by foster carer champions in all areas and has introduced an accredited award.

There is an Educational Psychology service which provides input to vulnerable children including Looked after Children. The service broadens the support and intervention knowledge and skills of carers and schools and actively identifies children in need of psychological involvement within the SDQ process.

The opportunity for children and young people to succeed in hobbies or sports is seen as an important element of the fostering task and is supported through fostering allowance payments. Annual Foster Carer Reviews consider the level of social opportunities young people in placement are supported in attending. Young people are encouraged to participate in a range of activities and interests. Their achievements are recognised each year in an annual award ceremony held under the banner of FAB.

The Children in Care Council has continued to develop and in addition to a steering group, groups in the four quadrants of the County have been established to ensure that the voice of children looked after is heard. These groups operate under the banner of V4C (Voices for Choices) and are held in 4 quadrants of the County on a quarterly basis. In addition the Big Conversation is held three times per year and gives young looked after people the opportunity to work jointly with Council officers and Members on key areas for development.

Children and Young People are ready for Adult Life

Lincolnshire County Council's Foster Carers are recruited and supported to meet the needs of children placed with them and provide the stability that they require to achieve and ready themselves for adult lives. The authority therefore makes sure that there are no barriers, financial or otherwise, to prevent Foster Carers becoming permanent carers be they adopters, child arrangement order holders or special guardians; where an assessment determines that this is the best outcome for the child. The Council has fully committed to the Staying Put requirement with over 45 young people remaining in their present foster placements. Young people are issued with a Skills for Adult Life booklet which identifies and develops the core skills for independent living.

The training plan for Foster Carers contains special interest seminars, which assist carers in helping children progress to independence. On an individual basis, placement support workers will also have a role in helping young people acquire skills for independence and have developed a range of work preparation and apprenticeship opportunities. Looked after Children are encouraged to follow courses of higher education and appropriate support is made available to them. In 2014 the tender for Lincolnshire's Leaving Care service was awarded again to Barnardo's. All young people leaving care have a named worker and a clear plan for support in their transition to adulthood. Foster Carers support children in developing independence skills using the Skills for Adult Life booklet.

SUPPORTING THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The work of the Fostering Service is delivered through a number of key relationships and support functions which are described below.

1. Supervising Social Worker

The role of the Supervising Social Worker is to give support and supervision to the Foster Carer. They also assist with practical difficulties and the provision of equipment. They are a crucial link between the carer and the Child's Social Worker. There is a supervision policy for Foster Carers. Supervision takes place bi monthly and includes a focus on personal development.

Although most support visits will be prearranged the Supervising Social Worker has a duty to undertake at least one unannounced visit per year. They are also responsible for undertaking the annual review of approval, which incorporates the carers' views and those of any birth children and fostered children. The review also includes reports from social workers and the supervising social worker who will identify strengths and future learning needs. Following completion of the review the foster carer is issued with a statement of re- approval.

2. Child's Social Worker

The Child's Social Worker is responsible for the overall management of the child's care plan. They have a statutory duty to visit the child within one week of placement and thereafter at a minimum of six weekly intervals until a child is confirmed as being in their permanent placement when a 3 monthly visiting pattern may be appropriate. However in most circumstances the visiting pattern will be more frequent and determined by an individual child's needs.

3. Foster Carer Support

The service delivers quarterly focus groups with foster carers across the County. These provide opportunities for engagement with the service, support and training opportunities. The service has developed a group of foster carer mentors who are linked with foster carers at the point of approval and provide an essential support and point of contact to enhance the confidence and skills of newly approved foster carers. The caring2learn programme has recruited foster carer champions to provide training and guidance with regard to the development of a learning environment within the foster home. The service operates a number of support groups across the County. This provides further opportunities for learning & development, whilst building upon greater networking.

All Foster Carers receive a handbook which details local policy, information about fostering terms and conditions and guidance about requirements concerning the care and control of children and other procedures. The handbook has been updated and the amended version sent to Foster Carers. The service continues to provide an electronic newsletter which is sent out on a monthly basis to all foster carers who have registered their email addresses with the service. This also allows us to send information quickly via an email if needed to alert Foster Carers about forthcoming events or pertinent training.

All foster carers are provided with individual membership of the Fostering Network.

4. Out of Hours Service - Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

This service provides a team of social workers who are available outside of office hours to offer emergency support to service users and the public. The EDT can offer telephone advice and has access to placement information and emergency placements with Foster Carers. Family support workers are available to provide practical assistance out of hours in certain circumstances.

5. Placement Support Workers

The service employs a dedicated group of Placement Support Workers supporting Foster Carers by working with the young people in placement in a range of settings including the carers' homes and community based venues to promote a safe and caring environment that reflects the needs of young people.

Priority support is given to those Foster Carers where young people, for whatever reason, are not currently attending school. The placement support worker ensures that homework is available or some form of educational teaching to promote learning and enable the young person to achieve their maximum potential.

The Placement Support Workers are expected to attend any meetings and contribute to the care plan for the young person and to attend regular training.

Family Centres have been used to facilitate cooking and crafts with young people and Youth Centres have also been used to encourage and develop social interaction with others; whilst trips to local stores to purchase cooking ingredients has helped young people to develop skills in the management of money. During the summer period PSWs join together to provide group activities for children in foster care and provide Foster Carers with information about cost effective activities in their areas.

Placement Support Workers have also worked alongside children in school and have assisted with homework after school.

Swimming lessons have been arranged and young people enrolled in theatre group work and sports lessons, all encouraged and assisted by the Placement Support Workers.

Specific work is also undertaken with individual young people including Life Story work, anger management, building self-esteem, working with sibling groups to develop empathy and understanding, drug and alcohol awareness, sexual health matters, healthy eating, managing a budget and help provided to Foster Carers to establish routines and advise on behavioural issues. All Placement Support Workers have undertaken 'Train the Trainer' for the SPOT course so that they are able to facilitate this training. Placement Support Workers are trained to offer therapy to provide behavioural and attachment support to foster carers.

TRAINING

The Fostering Service ensures that Foster Carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care to meet the needs of each child placed in their care.

Training of Foster Carers is a significant aspect of the service and is provided both pre and post approval and is included within the Fostering Service's Annual Training Plan.

Training is not an option but a clear expectation of all carers and is evaluated in supervision sessions and annual reviews. A three year cycle of training in Safeguarding, Safer Caring and First Aid is a requirement for all carers. In addition, mandatory courses on diversity and behaviour management are held and should be completed on a 3 yearly basis. All carers have been provided with a portfolio of learning and development in order to evidence their competences in accordance with the TSD (Training Support and Development standards).

Pre-approval training is over three days and is provided in-house with a Supervising Social Worker from the Recruitment Team being the lead facilitator. The course has evolved over the years to reflect changing practice, local experience and the national fostering agenda. In light of the second stage process of recruitment the course has been divided into both preparatory and post approval training. All foster carers are provided with online access to the LSCB (Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board) suite of training.

An Annual Foster Carer Conference is held and offers both training, information and recognises the work that foster carers undertake via a range of long service awards.

PROCESS OF RECRUITING AND APPROVING FOSTER CARERS

Foster Carers are recruited and assessed in line with Lincolnshire guidance based on the National Minimum Standards, Fostering Regulations, Code of Practice (1999).

A Recruitment Team is in place to ensure a prompt response to all first time enquirers. The Practice Supervisor is responsible for the implementation of the Recruitment Strategy and managing all aspects of the recruitment process.

Recruitment involves:

- Co-ordinating evening events whereby foster carers and young people in care attend and give their real life experiences
- Utilising social media to reach wide audiences
- Holding drop-in sessions at Community establishments
- Newspaper advertisements
- Newspaper articles
- Distribution of posters
- Information distributed through displays and presentations
- Word of mouth through existing carers
- The recommend a friend scheme
- Lincolnshire County Council LCC Connects website
- Targeted activity within specific communities in county.
- Participation in a range of county wide events.
- Partnership activities with LFCA.

All initial enquiries relating to fostering are completed online through the Lincolnshire County Council website and are then passed to the Recruitment Co-ordinators or the Recruitment Co-ordinators are telephoned directly.

The Recruitment Co-ordinators aim to make contact with all enquirers within 24 hours of them registering their interest online. Their role is to ensure that enquirers have all the information they need and following an initial discussion, an initial expression of interest can be completed over the phone and/or a detailed information booklet is made available to all interested applicants about the fostering process which is sent within five working days.

Once an initial expression of interest is received and allocated to a recruitment team worker; they aim to make contact within 24 hours to arrange a mutually agreeable date and time for the initial home visit.

The Recruitment Team is focusing on enhancing the overall customer experience and the Recruitment Co-ordinators represent the Local Authority in a professional manner and being respectful to all enquirers.

As part of the Stage One process statutory checks are undertaken and prospective carers attend a three day preparation group. If all aspects of Stage One are completed then the prospective carers are invited to begin the Stage Two assessment process. The service aims to have all stage 2 applications approved within 6 months. The assessments are completed by qualified social workers and follow the format of the Coram BAAF Form F.

Foster Carer approvals (including family and friends carers) are considered by the Fostering Panel. Applications to become permanent Foster Carers are

considered by the Permanence Panel. The composition and organisation of the Panels is in accordance with regulation 23 of the Fostering Services Regulations, 2011.

The service provider decision maker is the Assistant Director, Children's Services.

Every Foster Carer is required to sign a Foster Carer Agreement (regulation 27 (5) – (5b)) prior to the placement of a child. A Supervising Social Worker is allocated to the family; this is usually the person who has undertaken the home study. Foster Carers are provided with a copy of the Foster Carer Charter.

Foster Carers are supervised and supported by a named locally based Supervising Social Worker and the child has their own named Social Worker. Independent Reviewing Officers undertake all childcare reviews.

The Fostering Panel always considers first reviews; however subsequent reviews are normally completed under locality management arrangements, unless there is a disagreement regarding the terms of approval which necessitates referral back to Panel. Serious complaints or allegations will also be put before Panel to consider whether or not there should be any alterations to the terms of approval. Since April 2009 Foster Carers have the right to challenge decisions through an Independent Mechanism Review or the Councils Corporate complaints section.

FINANCE

Most Foster Carers receive weekly allowances according to the age of the child. Despite the financial difficulties faced by Local Authorities, in 2018 fostering allowances have increased by 2%.

A specialist fostering scheme remains in place targeted on harder to place children. Placement+ Carers are paid higher fees. Carers able to make permanent commitment to children, receive an increased rate of allowance as do those able to take the more complex adolescents. The service also offers parent and child placements and placements for young people on remand.

MONITORING THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICE

Foster Carers have at least one unannounced visit per year. This is undertaken by a Supervising Social Worker. They also receive regular supervision from an allocated Supervising Social Worker. This is held bi-monthly. Each Foster Carer is subject to an annual review and contributions are sought from IRO's, Social Workers and children placed. Each manager within the service chairs a range of annual reviews within the foster home.

The Service Manager monitors a range of matters identified in the National Minimum Standards 2011 (regulation 35 (1)) to ensure that standards are adhered to and that the service is developing to meet the needs of a range of children. Reports are submitted on a quarterly basis to the executive to monitor service development.

Regular quality audits are completed by staff from the Fostering Service at key stages in a Foster Carer's career. These are to ensure compliance with procedures and policy and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention of the Supervising Social Worker.

COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Summary of the Complaints Procedure

The Directorate has a statutory complaints service; the detail of which is contained in the guide for staff 'Handling Comments and Complaints'. It is a three stage process:

- Stage 1 - Informal or problem solving
- Stage 2 - Formal stage at which an independent investigating officer is appointed
- Stage 3 - A formal review by a panel of independent members, chaired by an independent individual.

Staff must ensure that all carers know how and who to complain to.

Complainants have the right to involve a friend or advocate.

The Named Manager monitors all complaints and liaises with the Complaints Officer and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Business Manager. This information is available to authorised persons only. All Foster Carers have access to support and information regarding the complaints procedures and at the point of any investigation, support can also be accessed through membership of Fostering Network; the cost for which will be met by the agency. Complaints are collated and reported to the Corporate Parenting Sub Group and themes are shared within the service. Details of complaints relating to the service are considered within the annual fostering report.

Allegations

Foster Carers can sometimes be the subject of allegations in respect of the care of the children or young people they are looking after. If this occurs the allegation will be investigated in line with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures with all allegations managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer. In addition to the role of the Supervising Social Worker, Foster Carers have access to an Independent Social Worker via Foster Talk who can offer practical and emotional support.

All allegations and other matters are monitored by the manager who ensures that these are retained for agencies to view as appropriate.

ADVOCACY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Lincolnshire County Council commissions its advocacy for children through Voiceability "Total Voice"



Total Voice Lincolnshire

Referral and Information Line: 01529 400 479

Text:

07860 018 887

Email:

tvl@voiceability.org

Website: www.totalvoicelincolnshire.org

When might you want an advocate?

You can ask to speak with advocate if you:

- Have serious concerns about the care you are getting
- Want to be more involved in decisions being made about you and your future
- Want to fight decisions being made about you
- Want to make a complaint.

Office of the Children's Commissioner



Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner is Anne Longfield. She has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on children and young people with difficulties or challenges in their lives, and in particular those living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services.

The Children's Commissioner can be contacted:-

By writing to her at

The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Phoning her on Freephone 020 7783 8330

Emailing at info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Visiting the website www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED

On 31st March 2019 there were 614 looked after by Lincolnshire County Council.

Of this number 445 were placed with Foster Carers (including kinship carers), including 12 placed in independent foster placements and 34 unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Lincolnshire Fostering Service works to the Lincolnshire County Council's Equality and Diversity Policy which is available on the council's intranet site.

The Lincolnshire Fostering Service will treat all service users fairly, openly and with respect throughout the fostering approval process. Applicants wishing to be approved as Foster Carers will be considered irrespective of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability providing the Fostering Service considers they can safely meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into independence.

Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a child or young person's emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability.

The Lincolnshire Fostering Service recognises that no child or young person should have to wait indefinitely for the ideal placement.

OFSTED

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting fostering services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

Questions or complaints

The one point of contact for all questions, queries and complaints is Ofsted.

The telephone number is 0300 123 1231. This number manages all general enquiries and will redirect them as necessary; they can also be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

Ofsted
Piccadilly gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Fostering Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually.

If you require this document in a different language or an alternative format such as large print, audio tape or Braille, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team on 01522 782060.

The Statement of Purpose, Children's Guides and other information are also available on the Lincolnshire County Council website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

A copy can also be obtained from the registered manager:

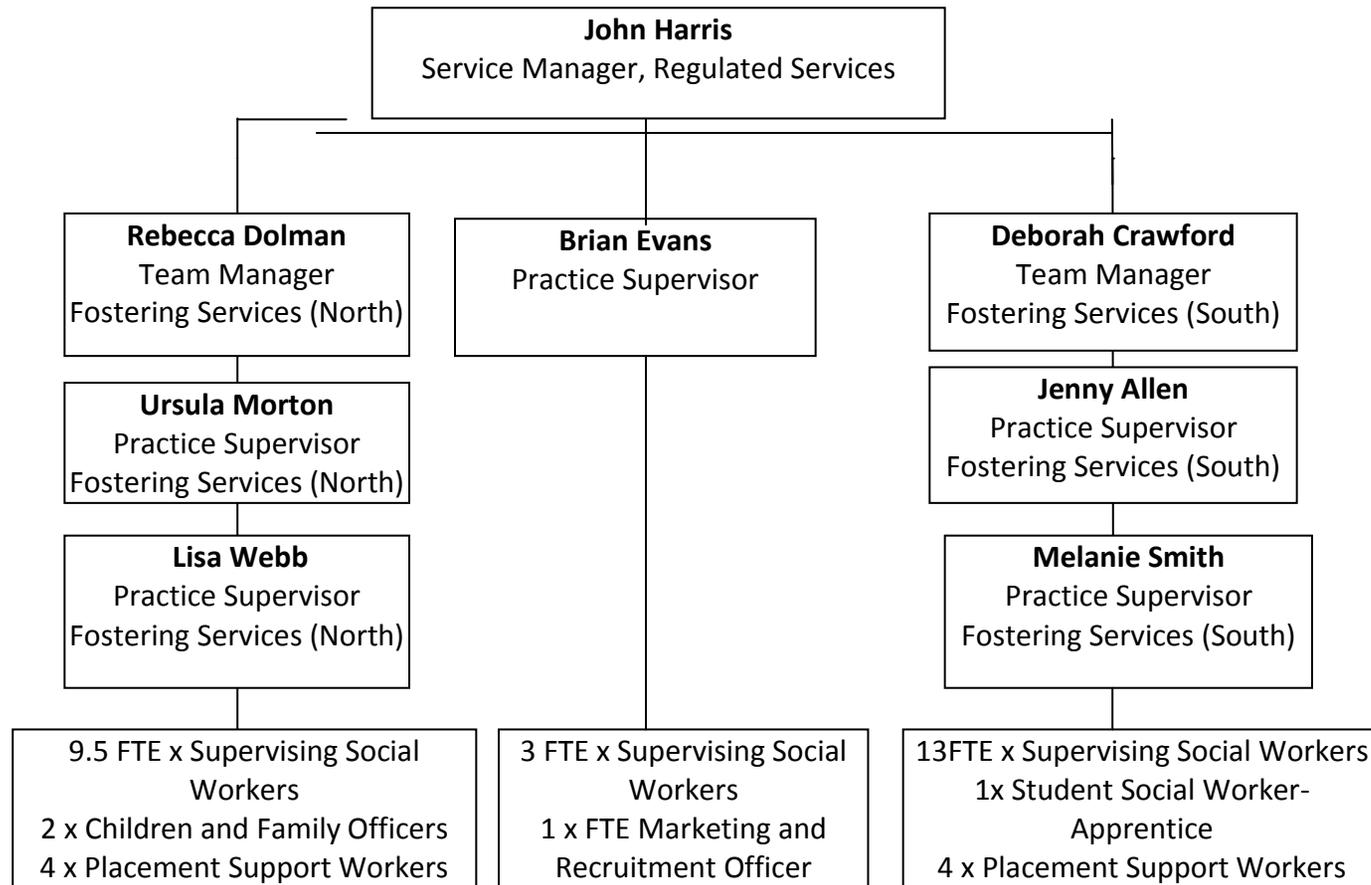
John Harris Service Manager – Regulated Services
Lincolnshire County Council
Orchard House
Orchard Street
Lincoln
LN1 1BA
01522 554109

APPENDIX 1

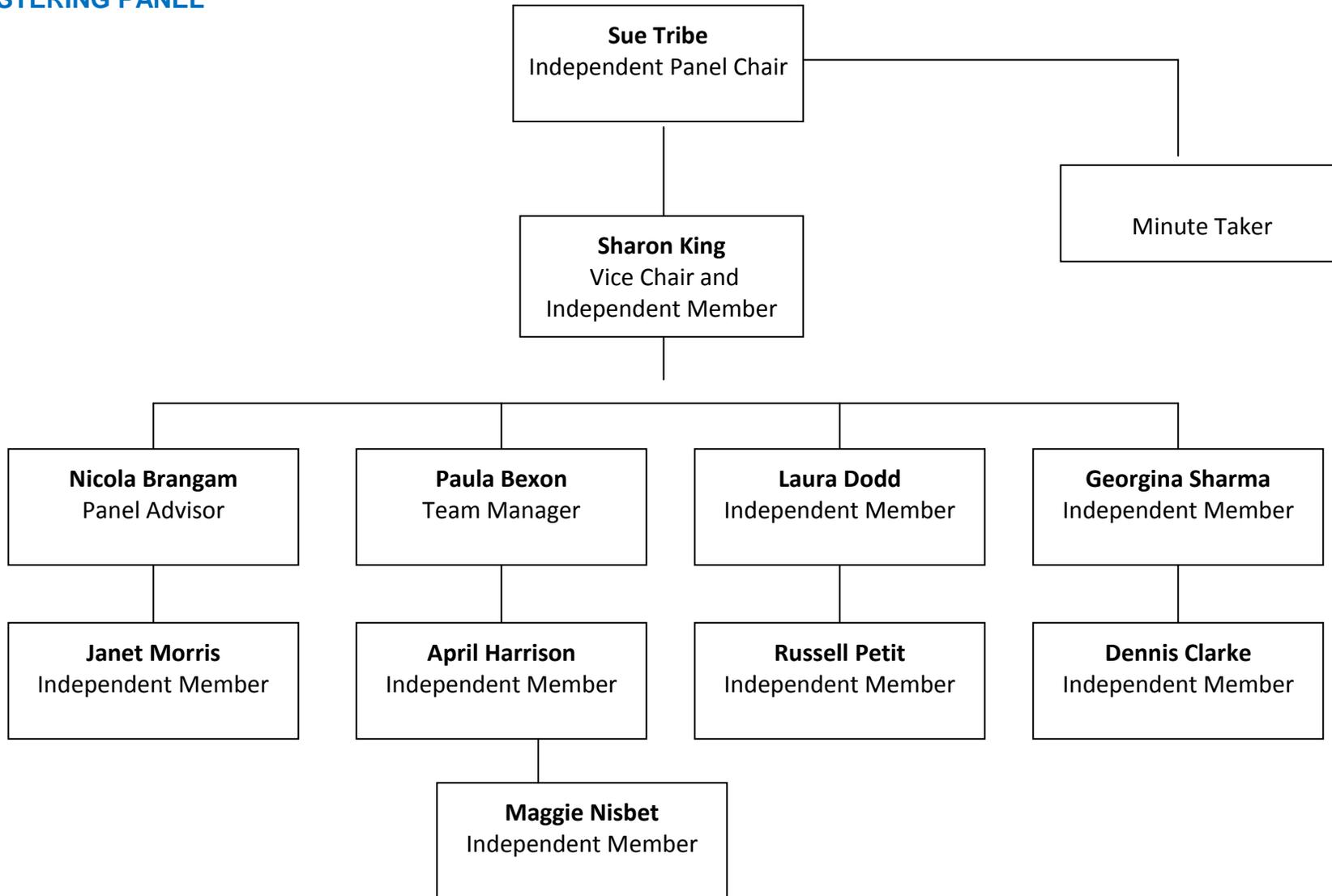
FOSTERING SERVICE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE – SENIOR MANAGEMENT

There are three Team Managers for Fostering Service who line manage the two teams of Fostering Social Workers and Fostering Support Workers and one Team Manager line manage the Recruitment Team.

FOSTERING SERVICE – MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



**APPENDIX 2
FOSTERING PANEL**



**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Private Fostering Annual Report 2018/19

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel of the state of Private Fostering in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act 1989, the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulation 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005, to provide key service performance over the past 12 months.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to review the activity and developments within the service and endorse the current approach to Private Fostering.

1. Background

Private Fostering arrangements are managed jointly by locality Social Work teams and the Fostering service. The report identifies the activity of the financial year 2018/19.

2. Conclusion

That the report for the year 2018/19 to be accepted as an accurate overview of the Service.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Private Fostering Annual Report
Appendix B	Private Fostering Statement of Purpose

5. Background Papers

This report was written by John Harris, who can be contacted on 01522 554109 or john.harris@lincolnshire.gov.uk



Private Fostering Report April 2018 – March 2019

Introduction

The Private Fostering Regulations apply when children or young people, aged under 16 years (18 if they have a disability) live with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. The term 'close relative' has a specific definition within the legislation, it includes grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) and step-parents. Children living with people who are not close relatives, such as a cousin, great aunt or family friend need to be assessed and reviewed under the Private Fostering Regulations to ensure the placement is able to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

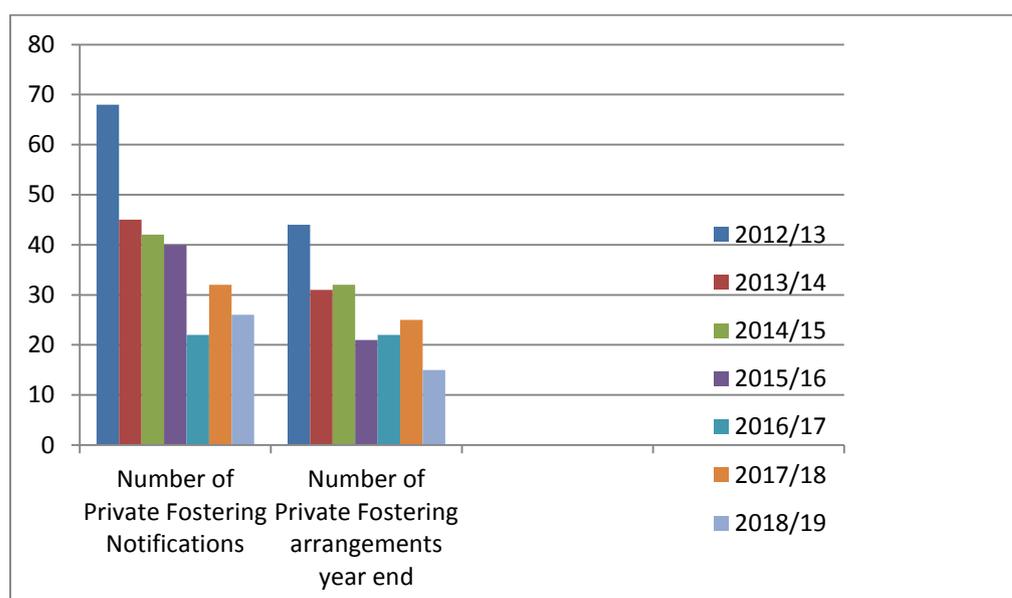
This annual report gives an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in Lincolnshire from April 2017 to end of March 2018. The report details how Lincolnshire County Council has complied with its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and includes how the welfare of privately fostered children has been safeguarded and promoted over the past 12 months. The report also outlines the activities which have been undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements regarding children who are living in private fostering arrangements.

Previous reports have been able to include a summary of the annual statistics provided by all local authorities as part of the Private Fostering Return (PF1 Return) concerning numbers of new notifications, arrangements and visiting patterns. This information is no longer centrally collated by the Government and it is not possible to provide comparative data.

In Lincolnshire over the past year we have continued to promote local understanding and awareness of private fostering and sought to improve how we meet the needs of the children and young people concerned.

This includes using audit to review our own performance and to identify where improvements need to be made.

Data regarding Private Fostering arrangements in Lincolnshire



The chart above shows key data regarding private fostering within Lincolnshire over the past years. From the chart it can be seen that we experienced a peak in the level of notifications in 2012/13, but since then there has been an overall reduction in notifications. The number of ongoing private fostering arrangements has reduced further this year.

Focusing on 2018/2019 the following can be noted:

- There were 26 notifications to the Council spread throughout the County. This represents a decrease on the previous year's figure of 32.
- Of the 26 notifications received, 100% of Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Records were completed within the 7 day timescale.
- All the Regulation 7 visits were undertaken within the 7 day timescale.
- All the Regulation 8 visits continue to be tracked with reminders sent to individual workers to ensure these are recorded on Mosaic.

Procedures

Following the Laming Report into the death of Victoria Climbié (who was privately fostered by her Great Aunt at the time of her death), regulations relating to Private Fostering were amended and strengthened by Section 44 of the Children Act 2004. The following year two further documents were published; The National Minimum Standards 2005 and The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulation 2005, which clearly set out the role of the Local Authority, the Parent and the Private Foster carer and related professionals.

Under Standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards for private fostering, local authorities are expected to effectively monitor the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering, including to

provide a written report each year, for consideration by the Director of Children's Services, which includes an evaluation of the outcomes of its work in relation to privately fostered children within its area. (Supporting Criteria 7.9 NMS for PF). Private fostering arrangements continue to be a focus of the OFSTED Local Authority Inspections.

Organisational and Structural Aspects

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services continues to be committed to maintaining high standards in relation to private fostering service provision and ensuring that this service is continually reviewed.

There is a designated post, the Panel Advisor, who has the lead for private fostering and her role is to monitor the compliance with the National Minimum standards on a monthly basis and to ensure that performance in the area remains high.

The monthly reporting figures that are seen by Social care Team Managers and Practice Supervisors allows them to maintain their overview of how each team is performing in relation to private fostering.

Daily recording of work undertaken in relation to Private Fostering is recorded on Mosaic.

The specialist fostering service dedicated to kinship/connected person assessments continues to have responsibility for undertaking the assessment of the private foster carer's suitability. There continues to be regular communication between the Practice Supervisor in this team and the Agency Advisor for Fostering.

Background information

Any parent proposing to have their child looked after by someone other than a close relative for more than 28 days, or a carer who is proposing to look after someone else's child who is not a close relative, should notify Children's Services at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to begin.

This is known as a "Proposed Arrangement". In these circumstances the Customer Service Centre should be contacted and the referral will be passed on to the relevant locality Family assessment and Support Team. However, the more usual presenting situation is one whereby the Customer Service Centre is notified of an arrangement when the child is already with the private foster carer.

According to current agreed private fostering processes, the Customer Service Centre sends the received notifications directly to The Family Assessment and Support Team (FAST) within one working day to avoid any unnecessary delay and this type of notification bypasses the usual screening process aligned to other social care requests.

FAST undertake the management of the referral of privately fostered children and their timescale for completing the Private Fostering Assessment of Arrangement (PFAAR) is within 7 working days of referral (notification) and they liaise with Kinship/Connected persons team for the completion of the assessment of the carer's suitability.

Within each FAST team there are a small number of Social Workers that tend to be allocated any new private fostering cases and they receive support and advice from their Practice Supervisor.

At this point the Social Worker is required to visit and see the child, the carer and also the Parents or those with Parental Responsibility.

Visits to see and speak with privately fostered children/young people are carried out in accordance with statutory timescales and recorded on Mosaic. The visits should include seeing the child, their bedroom and speaking with them alone. This is to ensure that the child's voice is heard and if any actions are needed to promote their welfare.

The assessment of the arrangement (PFAAR) is authorised by the Team Manager of the child's social worker. The decision about the overall suitability of the arrangement is completed by the Team Manager of the social worker to the child, in consultation with the Team Manager of the Fostering Services.

It is the responsibility of the Team Manager of the child's social worker to notify in writing the Parent or others with Parental Responsibility, Private Foster carers and relevant agencies that the child/young person is living in or will live in a Private Fostering Arrangement.

The Practice Supervisors in the Looked After Children Team are also notified of the child/young person that is in a private fostering arrangement.

Once the private fostering arrangement has been confirmed, at the point of the second Regulation 8 private fostering visit, the FAST worker will undertake a joint visit with a worker from Looked After Children (LAC) teams. On completion of the visit, the overall management will transfer to the LAC Team in order to provide the child/young person with a consistent response for the duration of the arrangement.

Each private fostering arrangement is annually reviewed by the Team Manager in line with the statutory requirements and as such, the cases are open to scrutiny in respect of care planning and intervention.

The Service Manager for Regulated Services is the named person within the local authority with expertise in private fostering whom social workers and managers can contact for advice.

Decisions regarding requirements, disqualification and prohibition should be referred to the Service Manager for Safeguarding.

Activity and Performance 2018-19 in relation to National minimum standards

National Minimum Standard 1

The local authority has a written statement or plan, which sets out its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.

Lincolnshire Council has a statement of purpose on private fostering which has been reviewed 2019.

Information about private fostering is available in schools and through the Lincolnshire County Council website.

National Minimum Standard 2

The local authority:

- **promotes awareness of the notification requirements and ensures that those professionals who may come into contact with privately fostered children understand their role in notification;**
- **responds effectively to notifications;**
- **and deals with situations where an arrangement comes to their attention, which has not been notified**

Awareness Raising

The national private fostering week was in July 2018. The updated private fostering leaflet was distributed to approximately 360 schools & 6 colleges in Lincolnshire as well as other relevant professionals. The LSCB also endorsed the leaflet and distributed it through their own partnership links.

The website is more informative and user friendly and during Private Fostering week the Council had a social media presence to highlight this issue. Internally awareness was highlighted via a segment in Int Comms.

The Safeguarding Children Board has to be satisfied that the welfare of privately fostered children in this area is safeguarded and promoted and that agencies are cooperating. The multi-agency Education sub-group has the private foster care agenda as a standing item and continues to look at promoting private fostering with partner agencies.

In order to continue to raise the awareness of private fostering and the understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to private fostering;

- Information about private fostering has been provided through the training program, with all staff dealing with private fostering having

appropriate on line training. Private fostering training also forms part of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment training provided to social workers.

- The service has a communication plan which is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness and wide distribution to members of the public and partner agencies.
- Posters have been placed in local public buildings, including the following, Hospitals, GP surgeries, Dentists, libraries, Leisure Centres, Places of Worship and Children's Centres advising on the requirements of reporting private fostering situations.
- We have targeted major supermarket chains and those which are specifically Eastern European to raise awareness. Publicity materials in a range of languages and formats have provide contextual information on what is private fostering and contact details for notifying the local authority
- Information on the Lincolnshire County Council website and the NHS staff Intranet
- The school admissions forms have a section dedicated to private fostering to assist school staff in identifying private fostering arrangements

Lincolnshire is committed to continually evaluate the effectiveness of its activities to ensure that they contribute to a positive change of behaviour in relation to private fostering.

Response to Notifications

In Lincolnshire, the majority of notifications are received once the placement has been made and following a referral by the carer to Customer Service Centre. The current arrangements ensure there is an assured and timely response to all notifications/ referrals. At the end of March 2019 we had received 26 notifications for the year; of these, all had their initial visit completed within the 7 day timescale.

National Minimum Standard 3

Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare

The local authority determines effectively the suitability of all aspects of the private fostering arrangement in accordance with the regulations.

The Safeguarding of children who are privately fostered is a responsibility which impacts upon all parts of the local authority, health authority, district councils and the voluntary and private sectors, and as such the LSCB are proactive in monitoring the multi-agency approach in relation to private fostering. Private fostering is a standing item on the LSCB agenda; this is a positive step in ensuring that professionals and organisations working with children and families are made aware about private fostering and the need to ensure that Children's Services know about such arrangements to promote the welfare of the child.

Children's Services continue to ensure that privately fostered children/young people's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by qualified social work staff undertaking the assessments and support of the arrangement and private foster carers.

The Agency Advisor undertakes monthly monitoring of the work of the social workers and their supervisors, this monitoring identifies any areas where there may be a need for further discussions for example concerns regarding Parental Responsibility and the clear exercise of it, matters pertaining to permanency planning particularly for younger children. If required action will be, taken on individual cases to ensure compliance with agreed policy and procedure. The Agency Advisor is supported in her role by a dedicated Business Support Worker who collates the relevant data relating to private fostering and also sends out reminders regarding the timescales for visits.

When completing the PFAAR the child is seen alone as part of the assessment and their wishes and feelings ascertained and taken into account together with the child's needs.

Also as part of the assessment the FAST Social Worker makes contact with the parents wherever possible to seek their view with regards to the arrangement and to explain how parental responsibility will need to be exercised.

In Lincolnshire all private foster carers are DBS checked and are assessed in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. The PFAAR and the carer's assessment form the completed suitability of the arrangement.

Children's Services have the power to prohibit a person from privately fostering where that person is considered not suitable, where the accommodation is not suitable, where the child's welfare would be harmed, where someone has been convicted for offences against children or where the care of the child is unsatisfactory. There have been no incidents of prohibition or disqualification during the last year, therefore no legal action was taken.

Each private fostering arrangement is annually reviewed by the Agency Advisor in line with the statutory requirements and as such, the cases are open to scrutiny in respect of care planning and intervention.

National Minimum Standard 4

The local authority provides such advice and support to private foster carers and prospective private foster carers as appear to the authority to be needed.

The dedicated Kinship team who are responsible for the carer's assessment, has ensured that private foster carers have access to the similar support as

local authority foster carers. Carers are also encouraged to attend training events or to access the ELearning programme available.

The website and information pack includes local services that the carer may access including children's centres. As part of the regular visits to the children the social workers will discuss the current situation with those carers who are looking after the children to ensure that any questions or concerns that they have are addressed.

National Minimum Standard 5

The local authority provides such advice and information to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area as appears to the authority to be needed.

The children's social worker provides parents with information regarding the legal and regulatory functions of the local authority during their work with those parents to ensure that they are aware of these and what they may expect from the local authority. This information relates to the name address and contact details of the child's social worker and information on the complaints.

Lincolnshire County Council through the monitoring of the case work for children who are in private fostering arrangements, ensures that plans for rehabilitation to birth families is considered, along with ongoing monitoring of the suitability of those private fostering arrangements

National Minimum Standard 6

Children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Privately fostered children are enabled to participate in decisions about their lives.

All children who are privately fostered in Lincolnshire have an allocated qualified social worker who provides advice and support to the child, private foster carer, and their parent(s) and/or any other person with parental responsibility. The level of contact that each private foster carer is determined through the Private Foster Carers Assessment and the Regulation 8 visits.

At the initial and subsequent visits, an information leaflet about private fostering along with a complaints leaflet and information about Total Voice advocacy service are provided to the child/ young person, their carers and family.

There is a requirement for a visit to be made to the carer and child within seven working days when the notification is received and subsequent visits are to take place every six weeks in the first year and every three months thereafter.

In Lincolnshire we acknowledge the importance of completing the visits in required timescales, to ensure that the children are well cared for in a safe environment, also to identify the help and support available that may assist the private foster carer.

Regular audits are carried out on a range of casework within the authority and these have identified evidence within the assessment and Reg 8 visits, that children are seen alone; that they receive good social work support on an individual basis and are consulted about their views.

In order to ensure that our performance is maintained or improved where possible, the service proactively manages the schedule of visits with advance notice of scheduled dates for visits being forwarded to the allocated Social Worker and their Team Manager. The importance of Private Fostering continues to be highlighted to all FAST and LAC teams. This will be achieved through varying formats and to consist of:

- One minute briefing to be sent to all staff as part of National Private Fostering Week
- Liaison with Team Managers when a practice issue is raised and provide clear advice regarding the task that needs to be completed.

All children privately fostered in Lincolnshire were encouraged to maintain contact with their birth family and, where possible, their parents. Their religious and cultural requirements were met within the placement and through contact with the family.

National Minimum Standard 7

The local authority has in place and implements effectively a system for monitoring the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. It improves practice where this is indicated as necessary by the monitoring system.

Issues in regards to private fostering recording and completion of private fostering assessments and timescales are regularly discussed in Team Managers meetings.

The activities of the Private Fostering Service are reported to Director of Children's Services and lead member for Children's Services.

The annual report relating to private fostering is shared with LSCB and this is also an agenda item to ensure that partner agencies are mindful of their own responsibilities in relation to private fostering.

Lincolnshire continues to review and develop a comprehensive service for privately fostered children and all those involved in private fostering, to ensure

that the authority complies with relevant legislation and meets the National Minimum Standards in relation to private fostering.

Complaints and Representations

There have been no complaints or representations during this period; however Lincolnshire County Council ensures that robust reviews of the services for children in privately fostered arrangement are safe and secure

Developments for the next twelve months for private fostering in Lincolnshire include:

- Public awareness will continue to be raised through on going publicity campaign particularly during the private fostering week in July 2019
- Work with LSCB and partner agencies to ensure that Private Fostering remains an agenda item for professionals. This will include participation in the education sub group.
- Private Fostering briefing for Head Teachers.
- The One Minute Briefing will be circulated to all staff to continue to raises awareness and ensure that this area of work remains a high priority for Lincolnshire County Council and that staff are clear about the requirements and expectations in these cases.
- The on line learning module will be revised

Overview of the Demographics of Children Privately Fostered 2018-2019

Age		N0		Ethnicity		Gender	
0 - 5	2					Male	11
6	1	White any other background	1			Female	15
7	0	White British	23				
8	1	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups white/Black African	1				
9	0	Black/British Caribbean	1				
10	1						
11	3						
12	3						
13	3						
14	4						
15	6						
16	2						

Lincolnshire County Council remain committed and are pro active in ensuring that children and young people are provided with permanency and accordingly ensure that the legal status of children remains appropriate to meet their long term needs.

Nicola Brangam
Agency Advisor Fostering and Adoption

John Harris
Service Manager for Regulated Services



**Private Fostering
Statement of Purpose**
2018 - 2019

Private Fostering Statement of Purpose

CONTENTS	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Regulation	3
3. Legal definition of a privately fostered child	3
4. The Local Authority's duties and functions under the Children Act 1989	4
5. Local Authority duties under the Children Act 2004, the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005, the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005	5
6. Training for relevant staff	5
7. Change of behaviour in relation to private fostering	7
8. Assessment of the suitability of private foster carers and their household	7
9. Advice/support and information available to private foster carers, parents/those with parental responsibility and privately fostered children	8
10. Ensuring the welfare of privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted	9
11. The role of other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children, including encouraging notification	10
12. How relevant staff will have an understanding of the Directorate's duties and functions in relation to private fostering	11
13. How the Directorate will ensure that its duties and functions regarding private fostering are included in an induction and other training programmes and these are reviewed and evaluated annually in line with changes in legislation and guidance	11
14. Monitoring the discharge of functions and compliance with Part 9 of the Children Act 1989	11
15. Reviewing the policy statement and available advice on private fostering	13

1. Introduction

This document is a description of private fostering arrangements within Lincolnshire County Council. This statement of purpose is designed to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering, Standard 1, and to provide a guide of the service for professionals, the public, council members and external organisations.

This document describes the local authority's duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.

2. Regulation

Private fostering services provided by local authorities are regulated by OFSTED. Their contact details are:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone Contact 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, including those in private fostering arrangements.

Maintaining high standards in relation to private fostering service provision is a priority for Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services and remain committed to reviewing this on a continual basis.

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Directorate holds statutory powers and responsibilities as a local authority in relation to private fostering arrangements. These responsibilities are reviewed in partnership with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board

Children's Services works to ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of the service delivery and all prospective private foster carers are assessed and supported on the basis of the needs of the individual private foster child/young person regardless of race, religion, class, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

3. Legal Definition of a privately fostered child

In the definition provided by The Children Act 1989 a privately fostered child means:

- A Child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than:
 - A parent of his / hers
 - A person who is not a parent of his / hers but who has parental responsibility for him / her

And

- He / she has been cared for and accommodated by that person:
- For 28 days or more

Or

- The period of actual fostering is less than 28 days, but the private foster carer intends to foster him / her for a period of 28 days or more.

In the case of a child with a disability, the upper age limit for child to be privately fostered is 18 years.

A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for him / her:

- Had done so for a period of less than 28 days
- Does not intend to do so for any longer period

For the purposes of the Act, parent includes unmarried or putative father. Relative means as above, whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership.

An arrangement is deemed as private fostering if it meets the criteria above whether for reward (monetary or otherwise) or not.

Some examples of private fostering arrangements include: children/young people with families overseas; black and ethnic minority community children/young people with parents working or studying in the UK; trafficked children/young people and asylum seekers and refugees; children/young people living with host families for a variety of reasons, ie attending language schools, undergoing medical treatment, etc, children and young people residing with friends.

4. The local authority's duties and functions under the Children Act 1989

Local authorities have a duty to be notified about private fostering arrangements in their area and to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered in their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted and to secure that such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to the authority to be needed (The Children Act 1989 Section 67(1)).

Broadly the duties fall into three types of activity:

- Giving and receiving notifications
- Ascertaining the suitability of private foster carers in their households
- Monitoring placements through visits and written records of visits

5. Duties under the Children Act 2004, the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005

The measures in the Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005 are intended to strengthen and enhance the existing private fostering notification scheme.

Local authorities are required to raise public awareness in their area of the requirements regarding notification of private fostering arrangements. Notifications must be given to local authorities when a child/young person is proposed to be privately fostered or is being privately fostered. This will enable local authorities to ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children/young people is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by ongoing assessments and monitoring of arrangements within statutory timescales. These measures, along with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering July 2005, focus all local authorities' attention on private fostering and require them to take a more proactive approach with partner agencies and other professionals in identifying arrangements in their area. They are expected to improve notification rates and compliance with the existing legislative framework for private fostering and, therefore, to address the key problems identified with the former scheme. It is intended that these additional measures will improve the arrangements for safeguarding children/young people in private fostering arrangements.

6. Training for relevant staff

Professionals

Lincolnshire has a commitment to ensure all professionals have a clear and defined understanding of the private fostering regulations and their role and responsibility in relation to private fostering

Lincolnshire Children's Services will facilitate this by:

1. Publication of the Private Fostering Statement of Purpose
2. Training in relation to private fostering is available for newly qualified social workers in the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE programme) and all new social workers will be required to undertake the e-learning course in private fostering within the first six months of starting
3. Providing information via on George (internal intranet service) and on www.lincolnshire.gov.uk
4. Regular update of information through the e-mail network, and internal and external council publications.
5. Monitoring feedback for further training requirements.

Information is available to professionals and organisations

Groups include:

- Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services
- Schools – Heads, teachers, designated teachers
- Health care – School Nurses, GPs, Health Visitors
- Education Welfare Service
- Child Protection School Liaison Officers
- Any other professionals in Children's Services who come into contact with children.
- Language Schools
- Independent Schools
- District and Borough Councils
- Police
- Department for Works and Pensions
- Citizens Advice Bureaus
- Faith and community groups
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service
- Libraries
- CAFCASS

- Leisure Centres
- Courts and Youth Offending Services

7. Change of behaviour in relation to private fostering

It is nationally accepted that the regulations have not been successful enough in identifying and reaching the vulnerable groups of children who may be in privately fostered arrangements. Lincolnshire acknowledges that further promotion is always needed in order to increase the number of notifications with the ultimate aim of detecting the true number of privately fostered children in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire continue to review the publicity material, ie posters that are sent to all schools and colleges with a covering letter regarding private fostering and the need to refer any children or young people living in such arrangements. We recognise that we need continued engagement from other agencies and the community in order to reach out to the majority of privately fostered children alongside the robust safeguarding processes which are in place.

The Lincolnshire County Council website can also be used to find out more detailed information.

Lincolnshire is committed to continually evaluate its effectiveness of activities that contribute to a positive change of behaviour in relation to private fostering, and to review its communication and training plan accordingly.

8. Assessment of the suitability of private foster carers and their household

All privately fostered children/young people within Lincolnshire County Council area will be allocated a Social Worker who will complete a Private Fostering Assessment of Arrangement (PFAAR) within 7 days of the notification, in accordance with national guidance on private fostering. In addition the Fostering Service will complete an Assessment of the Private Foster Carer(s) within 35 days of the end of the Arrangement Assessment. The Assessment of Private Foster Carers is a Lincolnshire model and uses the Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families as its basis. Statutory checks and references are included in the Assessment of the Private Foster Carers.

The sign-off of decisions about the overall suitability of the arrangement is done by the Team Manager of the Social Worker to the child, in consultation with the Team Manager of the Fostering Services.

The ongoing visits to see children in their private fostering arrangement are completed in adherence to Regulation 8 by a Social Worker from Children's Services who ensures that they speak with the child so that their voice is heard.

As a minimum, dependent upon the outcome of the previous Regulation 8 visits, once every 12 months the Team Manager will complete a review of the arrangements and confirm their suitability. The Service Manager for Regulated Services is the named person within the local authority with expertise in private fostering whom Social Workers and managers can contact for advice. This includes decisions regarding requirements, disqualification and prohibition. A Team Manager has been delegated responsibility for leading and developing this service across the county.

9. Advice/support and information available to private foster carers, parents/those with parental responsibility and privately fostered children

An allocated Social Worker will be responsible for working with and supporting each privately fostered child/young person, the private foster carer and parents and others with parental responsibility. They will be the named case holder with contact details provided to all those concerned.

For the duration of Private Foster Carers Assessment, the Fostering Service will provide advice and support either directly to the private foster carer or through the Social Worker. The Fostering Service will notify private foster carers of any relevant training that they may wish to attend. The level of contact that each private foster carer will receive will be determined through the Private Foster Carers Assessment and the Regulation 8 visits.

In addition to statutory visits, other visits when requested by privately fostered children/young people, their parents, or private foster carers, will be undertaken.

Interpreters who are independent of parents and private foster carers will be used where it is the request of the child/young person or where the preferred language is not English.

Private foster carers (including prospective foster carers) will have access to advice on benefit entitlement, parenting strategies techniques, and other appropriate training and support as well be identified.

Parents of prospective/current privately fostered children/young people will also be advised, if in the best interests of the child/young person, of other service provision or other agency help available, which could remove the necessity for the child/young person to be privately fostered.

CoramBAAF guides will be provided to parents, privately fostered children and private foster carers.

10. Ensuring the welfare of privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted

Partner agencies, voluntary/community sector, faith groups will all be made aware of the notification requirements and of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of privately fostered children/young people.

Children's Services will ensure that privately fostered children/young people's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by staff undertaking the assessments and support of the arrangement and private foster carers.

Customer Service Centre will send the notifications to the relevant FAST Team within one working day to avoid any unnecessary delay. Visits to privately fostered children/young people will be carried out in accordance with statutory timescales and recorded on MOSAIC. This includes the recording of whether the child was seen and spoken with alone to ensure that the child's voice is heard.

The assessment of the private fostering arrangement is signed off by two Team Managers. One reviews the child's perspective of the arrangement and the other the abilities of the proposed private foster carer and their ability to meet the child's needs.

This dual signing allows for an extra level of safeguarding to be inserted into the process. The Team Manager of the child's Social Worker will notify in writing the parent or others with parental responsibility, private foster carers and relevant agencies that the child/young person is living in or will live in a private fostering arrangement and that the local authority consents to the arrangement or otherwise.

In line with the national guidance, Private Fostering Assessments will ensure that the child/young person's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development is satisfactory and the needs arising from his/her religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background are being met. In addition, the assessment will include the suitability of the accommodation and an evaluation of the parenting capacity of the prospective/current private foster carer.

Private foster carers will be given advice on the child/young person's individual needs, which may include advice on any medical condition or learning disability, in order to enhance their ability to care for the child/young person. Support services will be made available to private foster carers, where necessary. They will also encourage the promotion of contact between the child/young person and his/her parents, siblings, extended family and significant others.

All private foster carers will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services check (DBS).

All privately fostered children/young people will have an allocated social worker. Along with their contact details they will be provided with information materials relevant to their age and understanding on what private fostering means. The CoramBAAF publication guide for private fostering is currently provided to each child privately fostered. Information about the advocacy service Total Voice and how to access this is also provided to all children/young people who are privately fostered.

Those children/young people who have been deemed as 'children/young people in need' or 'disabled' under the Children Act 1989 and are privately fostered will at the age of 16/18 years have access to an after care service.

The Directorate undertakes file audits on a regular basis, and has a policy for the use of requirements, prohibitions, disqualifications and appeals' decisions. Decisions regarding the latter powers will be made whilst bearing in mind the best interests of the individual child/young person.

The local authority will carry out its other duties under the Children Act 1989 wherever there are safeguarding concerns.

When a child leaves the private fostering arrangement the Social Worker to the child will, wherever possible, visit the child at the new address to determine if other duties under the Children Act 1989 are required before closing the case. If the child moves to another local authority the Social Worker will, wherever possible visit the child and shall notify the local authority where the child is living of the child's past circumstances and new address.

11. The role of other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children, including encouraging notification

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services will continue working to ensure that partner agencies are given information on their responsibilities regarding notification under the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005. This includes discussion at relevant meetings such as the Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding Board Operational Delivery Group.

Information materials will continue to be distributed to all relevant agencies.

The Fostering Service will notify private foster carers of any training events that are relevant to looking after children on behalf of parents.

12. How relevant staff will have an understanding of the Directorate's duties and functions in relation to private fostering

Children's Services own staff will have access to this Statement of Purpose, information materials and training on private fostering including the associated procedures. Other directorates within Lincolnshire County Council and outside agencies will also have these documents, printed information and relevant training as part of corporate multi-agency training. The Team Manager who is the lead officer for leading and developing the service, will in conjunction with the Head of Regulated Services, continue to inform other Directorates within Lincolnshire County Council and partnership agencies of any new guidance, safeguards and standards.

13. How the Directorate will ensure that its duties and functions regarding private fostering are included in an induction and other training programmes and these are reviewed and evaluated annually in line with changes in legislation and guidance

Children's Services will ensure that its duties and functions in relation to private fostering are included in the annual training plan and will be reviewed in light of any changes in legislation, guidance and best practice developments.

Evaluation via feedback from workers and private foster carers will be collated to see if the training meets the needs of participants of the local authority's duties and functions regarding private fostering. In addition to this, individual workers' training needs in relation to private fostering will be assessed as part of their personal development plan

The content of training will be reviewed and evaluated following any comments made by privately fostered children, their parents or private foster carers.

14. Monitoring the discharge of functions and compliance with part 9 of the Children Act 1989

Under Regulation 12, the lead officer for private fostering, currently the Head of Regulated Services, will monitor the way the Directorate complies with and discharges its statutory duties and functions in relation to private fostering. This officer will monitor compliance with the following duties and functions:

- The promotion of awareness regarding notification requirements

- How the Directorate responds to notifications received, and if these are within timescales
- How the Directorate manages disqualifications, prohibitions, requirements and appeals against these, and refusals to consent to disqualified persons being private foster carers
- How the Directorate exercises its functions under Section 67(5), Children Act 1989
- How the Directorate processes decisions regarding offences committed, bearing in mind the best interests of the child / young person
- How the Directorate assesses the parenting capacity of prospective or actual private foster carers, members of their households and the suitability of their accommodation
- That statutory visits are within timescales and decisions about the suitability of arrangements are also within timescales and approved at managerial level
- That additional visits are made when requested by the child / young person, private foster carer, parents or those with parental responsibility
- That written reports are made in accordance with the Regulations, i.e. conclusions drawn on the arrangement, the child / young person seen alone, wishes and feelings of child / young person, any concerns raised etc.
- That advice and support is provided to private foster carers, parents, those with parental responsibility or any person concerned with the child / young person and recorded.
- That information and support is provided to privately fostered children / young people
- That independent interpreters are used as appropriate
- That a sample of individual child / young person and private foster carer records are regularly reviewed to check that compliance is being fulfilled
- That any concerns raised by privately fostered children / young people are investigated
- That a system for recording the number and nature of enquiries received in relation to private fostering, the responses given, and action taken, is effective

The monitoring reports of private fostering activity notifications, arrangement assessments and visits under Regulation 8 are completed monthly.

Lincolnshire will aim to create open channels for communication and participation to allow privately fostered children, their parents, carers, the front line professionals and partners to give feed-back on the service and raise any concerns. All recommendations and opinions will be given due consideration and changes of the service will be implemented to ensure continuous improvement.

The Head of Regulated Services provides the Director of Children's Services with an annual report detailing overall performance and related plans for improvement and monitoring.

15. Reviewing the policy statement

This policy statement will be reviewed annually in line with any changes in legislation or guidance, and will be regularly evaluated by the senior management of Children's Services to ensure that the Council's duties and functions in relation to private fostering are effectively discharged.

Advice on private fostering

Advice on private fostering can be obtained from the lead officer.

John Harris
Head of Regulated Services
Email John.Harris@Lincolnshire.gov.uk
Telephone 01522 554109

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**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Quarter 1 Performance Report for Looked After Children

Summary:

The accompanying appendices to this report provide key performance information for Quarter 1 2019/20 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required: For information

The Panel is 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 Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Looked after Children used by Children's Service. This is available for questions.

There are 13 measures in total that relate to Looked After Children that are reported on in Quarter 1. Of these measures 2 are outside of the target set by the services. These are:

- **Fostering/adoption of Looked After Children aged 10 to 16 year olds** - The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and have enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders.
- **Percentage of Looked after Children in the same placement for at least two years** - Performance is at 68.9% at year end and continues to gradually improve. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that foster

carers are well supported and that potential problems are identified early. Nevertheless we have continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. We have also seen an increase in the number of children with care plans for long term fostering and this will present challenges in achieving placement stability for some children due to the local and national shortage of foster carers who want to care on a long term basis. The fostering service has implemented a recruitment strategy to attract permanent foster carers with the ambition of offering improved placement opportunities for this group of children.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 1 performance for Looked after Children and Young People, and the Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to raise any questions on the content of the report.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

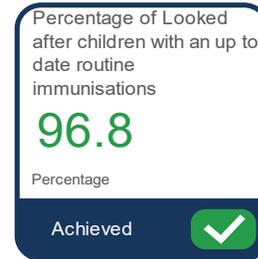
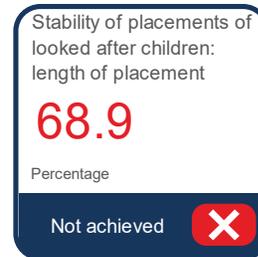
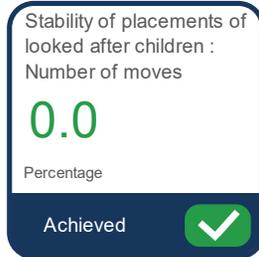
N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Looked after Children Measures

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Kevin Rands, who can be contacted on 01522 553099 or Kevin.Rands@lincolnshire.gov.uk.



Corporate Parenting Sub Group



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Fostering/adoption of LAC aged 10 to <16 years old

Percentage of Looked after Children aged 10 to under 16 who have been fostered or placed for adoption



Not achieved

82.1

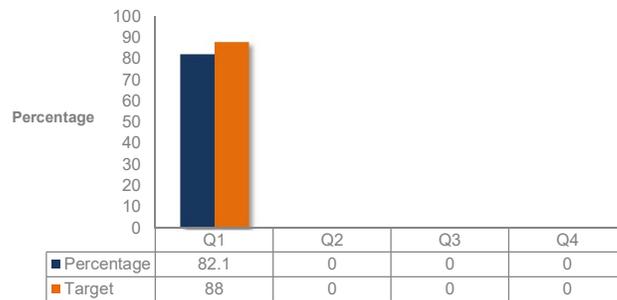
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



88.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Fostering/adoption of LAC aged 10 to <16 years old



About the latest performance

This performance has improved slightly but remains under target. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and have enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders.

About the target

Target to remain the same as the previous year, this is to take into account the increase of the number of LAC in the past year.

About the target range

A 2% variance is set for the upper value and 3% for the lower value.

Meeting the upper tolerance level would achieve a performance level not reached in recent years and show a change in the overall trend.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking data no longer available



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Number of Looked after Children per 10,000 under 18s

Looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18. There are a number of reasons why a child may be 'looked after' by the local authority. Most often it is because the child's parents or the people who have parental responsibilities and rights to look after the child are unable to care for the child, have been neglecting the child or the child has committed an offence. The local authority has specific responsibilities and duties towards a child who is being looked after or who has been looked after. This measure is reported taking a snapshot in time. So for example Q2 is performance as at 30th September.

A lower rate of children looked after by the Local Authority indicates a better performance.



Achieved

43.6

Rate
Quarter 1 June 2019



46.0

Rate
Target for June 2019

Number of Looked after Children per 10,000 under 18s



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Targets have been maintained at the same level as last year, as national comparators are showing an increase.

About the target range

The Upper and lower Target allows for the number of LAC to vary between approximately 622- 694. This is about +/- 35 children from target. Anything above or below this number would be flagged as worse than target, i.e. indicating a significant variance from the current position.

About benchmarking

We benchmark nationally and with similar Local Authorities. Benchmarking data is sourced from the national LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool).



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of looked after children : Number of moves

Percentage of Looked after Children with three or more placements



Achieved

0.0

Percentage

Quarter 1 June 2019

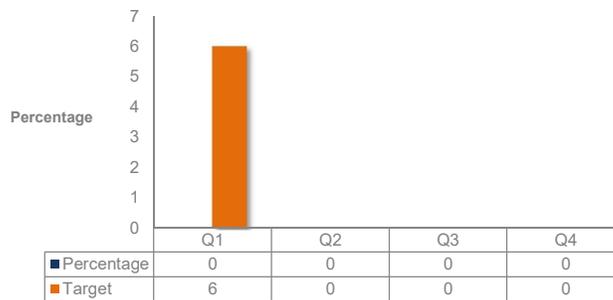


6.0

Percentage

Target for June 2019

Stability of placements of looked after children : Number of moves



About the latest performance

This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and slipped under target last year. In 2018 the Children's Commissioner produced a report on placement stability and identified that 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. The performance at the end of the first quarter is unlikely to be indicative of the trend for the whole year which is dependent on the availability of suitable, matched placements and the complexity of children requiring placements.

About the target

The target has been reduced to 6%, although performance is well below this target the service manager feels with the increase in LAC numbers and the difficulty in recruiting new carers will have an impact on the performance

About the target range

Achieving the upper tolerance level should maintain LCC's position within the top quartile nationally and still maintain LCC as one of the best performing of our statistical neighbours. Anything below the lower level should be shown as a significant improvement over last year.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement

Percentage of Looked after Children in the same placement for at least two years



Not achieved

68.9

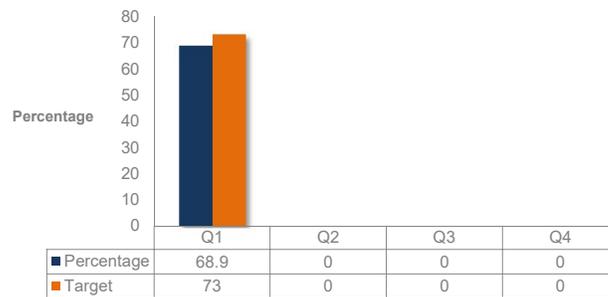
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



73.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement



About the latest performance

Performance is at 68.9% at year end and continues to gradually improve. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that foster carers are well supported and that potential problems are identified early. Nevertheless we have continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. We have also seen an increase in the number of children with care plans for long term fostering and this will present challenges in achieving placement stability for some children due to the local and national shortage of foster carers who want to care on a long term basis. The fostering service has implemented a recruitment strategy to attract permanent foster carers with the ambition of offering improved placement opportunities for this group of children.

About the target

Target is set 2% lower than the previous year, however this is an incremental increase on recent performance and above the present performance of statistical neighbours. Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

About the target range

Lower tolerances have been set to account for the downward trend currently occurring.

The upper tolerance is set at 1% which should push LCC up into Quartile Band A and more importantly stop the downward trend.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales

Percentage of Looked after Children cases that have been reviewed within timescales



Achieved

100.0

Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Target has reduced to 95% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Participation of LAC in reviews

Percentage of Looked after children who participated in their reviews



Achieved

100.0

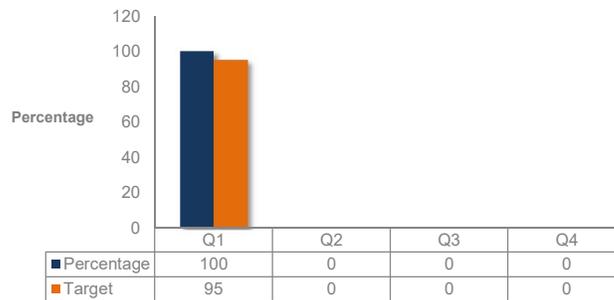
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Participation of LAC in reviews



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Target has reduced to 95% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date health check

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date health check record



Achieved

96.1

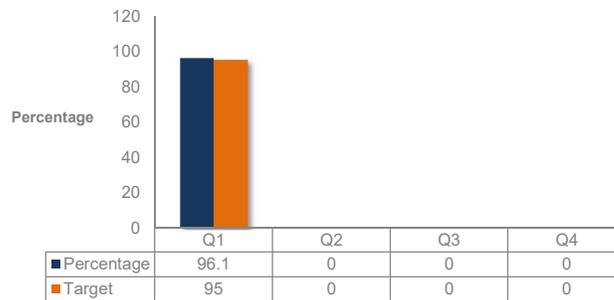
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date health check



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 2% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 93% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check



Achieved

95.9

Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date dental check



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 2% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 93% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date routine immunisations

Percentage of looked after children with an up to date routine immunisations recorded



Achieved

96.8

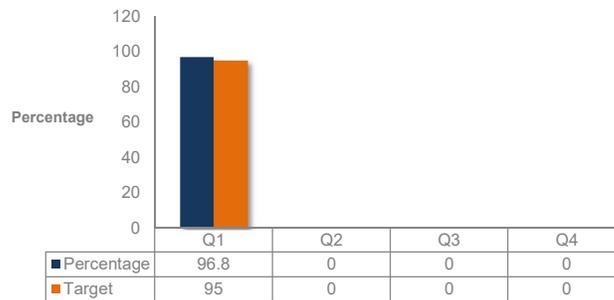
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



95.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Percentage of Looked after children with an up to date routine immunisations



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. Achievement of this would indicate that all LAC received all their health checks within timescale – achievement of 100%.

A lower tolerance of 1% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 94% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis



Learn and Achieve

Learn and Achieve

Percentage of Looked After Children with a Personal Education Plan

Percentage of Looked After Children with a Personal Education Plan



Achieved

99.7

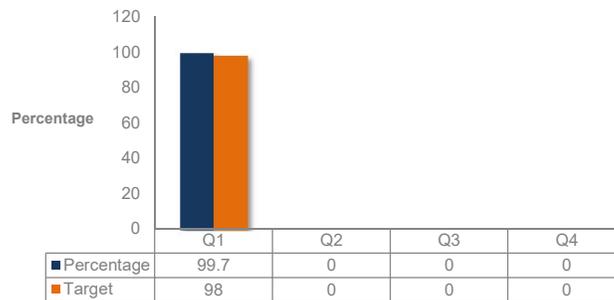
Percentage
Quarter 4 March 2019



98.0

Percentage
Target for March 2019

Percentage of Looked After Children with a Personal Education Plan



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Target remains at 98%, increase in capacity in the Virtual school should see the performance being reached.

About the target range

Lower tolerance is set to 2% below the target which would represent poor performance. The tolerance range reflects the need for emergency placements out of county/in county for a small proportion of children in care.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

16-17 year old Looked After Children who are participating in Learning

This measures young people recorded as being Looked After Children participating in learning at the end of the reporting period and will not take into consideration the length of time that they have been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of Looked After Children participating in learning at the end of the reporting period.

Denominator: Number of Looked After Children at the end of the reporting period.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. The parameters of this measure were previously defined as recording 16-18 year old Looked After Children participating in learning. As of Q1 2017/18 onwards, the Department for Education no longer require monitoring of children aged 18, and so the measure has been amended accordingly, restricting data provision to 16-17 year old Looked After Children only. A higher percentage of Looked After Children participating in learning indicates a better performance.



Achieved

92.1

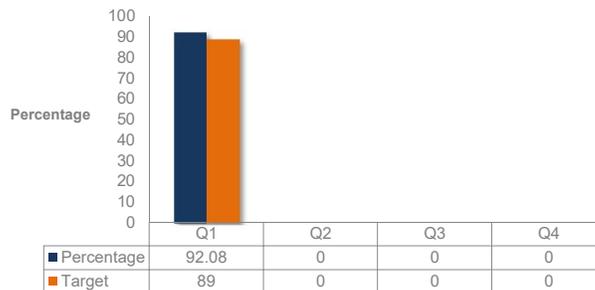
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



89.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

16-17 year old Looked After Children who are participating in Learning



About the latest performance

The Virtual School team works effectively with our social workers, carers students and education providers to ensure that transitions from Year 11 into Year 12 are successful and that all students have an appropriate educational placement that meets their needs Post 16. Once they have accessed a place in Sixth Form or College we regularly monitor and review their progress to ensure they are appropriately supported to become confident learners. At 92.1% Quarter 1 performance remains above the level of 90%, is above the 91.09% recorded in the previous Quarter and is significantly above the 87.5% recorded at the same time last year).

About the target

Target to have a small increase on previous year's target.

Q2 & Q3 targets lower to allow for the expected dip at this time of year due to September being the start of the tracking process

About the target range

The target range is set at a level to allow for 2 percentage points above the target and 5 percentage points below the target.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is not available for this cohort.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

A care leaver is a young person who reaches the age of 18 who had been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are living in accommodation deemed as "suitable".

Denominator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. A higher percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation indicates a better performance.



Achieved

94.4

Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



92.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation



About the latest performance

Please note figures are given for May as reporting is one month behind. Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Target to remain the same as previous year, we are above both national and similar authority average.

About the target range

The lower target has been set at the 25% quartile. Meaning if we fall below this we will not be in the top 25% of authorities. The upper target has been set 5% above this.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

The number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are in either Education, Employment or Training



Achieved

61.2

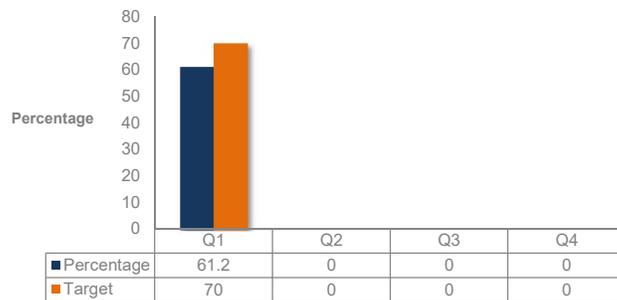
Percentage
Quarter 1 June 2019



70.0

Percentage
Target for June 2019

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training



About the latest performance

Please note figures are given for May as reporting is one month behind. Current performance has met the targets set

About the target

Target remains at 70% as current performance is currently at 69%

About the target range

Upper Tolerance is set to aim to regain Quartile A . Lower tolerance is set to maintain performance at a reasonable level

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

Policy and Scrutiny

**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,
Executive Director of Resources**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	19 September 2019
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

Summary:

This item enables the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit. The work programme will be reviewed at each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure that its contents are still relevant and will add value to the work of the Council and partners.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to approve the work programme for 2019/20 and identify any items for future meetings.

1. Background

Overview and Scrutiny should be positive, constructive, independent, fair and open. The scrutiny process should be challenging, as its aim is to identify areas for improvement. Scrutiny activity should be targeted, focused and timely and include issues of corporate and local importance, where scrutiny activity can influence and add value.

Members are encouraged to highlight items that could be included for consideration in the work programme.

Work Programme

19 SEPTEMBER 2019		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Legal Services Lincolnshire end of year report – April 2018 to March 2019	Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer	
Virtual School Caring2Learn programme Update	Krysta Parsons, Project Manager	Progress Report update on Caring2Learn programme. Year 2 Progress Report.
Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Yvonne Shearwood, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (South and Adoption)	Overview of service and progress and description of regulatory framework of service
Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)	Overview of fostering service
Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)	
Looked After Children Performance Measures Quarter 1 2019/20 (April to June 2019)	Janice Spencer, Interim Director Children's Services	Review performance indicators relating to LAC

14 NOVEMBER 2019		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Independent Reviewing Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2019)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager	Overview of LAC everyday care arrangement
Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2019)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager	Overview of residential care addressing remedial actions
Looked After Children Performance Measures Quarter 2 2019/20 (July to September 2019)	Janice Spencer, Interim Director Children's Services	Review performance indicators relating to LAC
Looked After Children (LAC) Annual Report 2018/19	John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)	

14 NOVEMBER 2019		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
V4C The Looked After Children Council Quarterly Report (June – August 2019)	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards	Monitor progress of V4C and arrange visits to V4C for next quarter

23 JANUARY 2020		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Looked After Children Placement Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan	Mark Rainey, Commissioning Manager: Commercial	Review of strategy and action plan
Leaving Care Service Six Month update report	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services	Overview of service and outcomes of Care Leavers
V4C The Looked After Children Council Quarterly Report (September – November 2019)	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards	Monitor progress of V4C and arrange visits to V4C for next quarter

12 MARCH 2020		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
The Virtual School for Lincolnshire Looked After Children Annual Report	Kieran Barnes, Virtual School Headteacher	Annual Report
Adoption Service Six Month Review	Yvonne Shearwood, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (South and Adoption)	Overview of service and progress and description of regulatory framework of service
Looked After Children Performance Measures Quarter 3 2019/20 (October to December 2019)	Janice Spencer, Interim Director Children's Services	Review performance indicators relating to LAC
V4C The Looked After Children Council Quarterly Report (December 2019 – February 2020)	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards	Monitor progress of V4C and arrange visits to V4C for next quarter

14 MAY 2020		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Legal Services Lincolnshire end of year report – April 2019 to March 2020	Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer	

14 MAY 2020		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Annual Report 2019/20	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager	Overview of residential care addressing remedial actions
Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2019/20	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager	Overview of LAC everyday care arrangement
Looked After Children Performance Measures Quarter 4 2019/20 (January to March 2020)	Janice Spencer, Interim Director Children's Services	Review performance indicators relating to LAC
Looked After Children and Care Leaver Strategy Priorities Action Plan / the Corporate Parenting Strategy Engagement Plan	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager	Review of the Care Leaver Strategy Priorities and Action Plan and Corporate Parenting Strategy Engagement Plan.

23 JULY 2020		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Election of Chairman & Election of Vice-Chairman 2020/21	Katrina Cope, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Looked After Children Performance Measures Quarter 1 2020/21 (April to June 2020)	Janice Spencer, Interim Director Children's Services	Review performance indicators relating to LAC
Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2019/20	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager	Overview of service and outcomes of Care Leavers

2. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Not Applicable

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

3. 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 Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 01522 552102 or by e-mail at daniel.steel@lincolnshire.gov.uk