



County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YL

7 October 2021

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Friday, 15 October 2021 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL** for the transaction of the business set out on the attached Agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Debbie Barnes'.

Debbie Barnes OBE
Chief Executive

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
(11 Members of the Council and 3 Added Members)

Councillors R J Kendrick (Chairman), W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), S A J Blackburn, T A Carter, R J Cleaver, K H Cooke, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews, N Sear, J Tyrrell and M A Whittington

Added Members

Church Representative: Reverend P A Johnson

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs M R Machin and Miss A E I Sayer

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA
FRIDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2021**

Item	Title	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence / Replacement Members	
2	Declarations of Members' Interest	
3	Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3 September 2021	5 - 10
4	Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement and Chief Officers	
5	Update on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy <i>(To receive a report from Eileen McMorrow, Programme Manager, Special School Strategy, Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability and Dave Pennington, Head of Property, which provides the Committee with an update on the implementation of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy, approved by the Executive on 6 November 2018)</i>	11 - 68
6	Corporate Parenting Responsibilities <i>(To receive a report and presentation from Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which provides the Committee with an overview of the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities)</i>	69 - 116
7	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2020-21 <i>(To receive a report from Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help, which provides the Committee with the Annual Complaints Report for Children's Services)</i>	117 - 132
8	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme <i>(To receive a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enables the Committee to consider and comment on the contents of its work programme to ensure that its scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit)</i>	133 - 138

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Please note: for more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting

- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details set out above.

Please note: This meeting will be broadcast live on the internet and access can be sought by accessing [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Friday, 15th October, 2021, 10.00 am \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

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<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/search-committee-records>



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
3 SEPTEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), S A J Blackburn, T A Carter, R J Cleaver, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews, N Sear, J Tyrrell and M A Whittington

Councillor S P Roe was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Jo Casey (Head of Service Lincoln and West Lindsey), Andy Cook (Head of Service - Future4Me and Youth Offending), Sheridan Dodsworth (Head of SEND), John Harris (Head of Service - Regional Adoption Agency), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director for Children's Education), J and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

The following officers joined the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams:-

Tara Jones (Head of Service - Children in Care Transformation) and Janice Spencer OBE (Assistant Director of Children's Safeguarding)

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Cooke, and Miss A Sayer, Parent Governor Representative.

20 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

21 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 16 JULY 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

22 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROCUREMENT AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Executive Director – Children's Services advised that she had received a query from Councillor R Cleaver regarding delays to school meal delivery. The Executive Director reassured the Committee that the Council had been working with schools to prepare for this. It was noted that the responsibility for delivering the meals was with the schools. However, members were advised that the Council had not had any approaches from schools or meal providers indicating they were having issues.

23 HIGH NEEDS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided members with an update on the High Needs Transformation Programme. It was reported that Lincolnshire County Council had commissioned IMPOWER to work in partnership with the local authority to review SEND and high needs support.

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

- It was queried whether training sessions were available for those teachers that were involved in the SEND process in schools. The Committee was advised that training had already been rolled out to SENCO's, and it was known that there were some good examples of these processes being used. Train the Trainer training was also being rolled out so that there were champions around the county and in different agencies that would be able to provide the training to their colleagues as well.
- It was commented that it would have been easy to pause this work at the start of the pandemic, but the transformation work continued, which has put Lincolnshire in a good position for the future.
- The transformation programme was fully supported but a concern was raised about whether it had previously been a poor performing service and how many children had not thrived. The Committee was reassured that the service had not previously been judged to be underperforming and had received one of the most positive inspections nationally. However, it was noted that there was always room to improve.
- In relation to the move away from exclusions, it was noted that the position in Lincolnshire was that the right placement could be found for a child without the need for an exclusion, and a planned move was the preferred option. The vast majority of school leaders were able to support the authority with this approach.
- The role of Teaching Assistants (TA) was highlighted as being very important. It was highlighted that there were now TA apprenticeships, and there had been significant developments in training for Teaching Assistants.
- In terms of the aim to move children back into mainstream school within six weeks of exclusion, it was queried whether this was appropriate in all cases. It was noted that

work would be undertaken to limit moves to one if it was thought that child would be going back into a mainstream school. The less time a child spent in the pupil referral unit the better, as this could make the reintegration harder.

- It was queried whether specialised teachers/staff would be required for those schools that developed a Safe Base. Schools would need to demonstrate to the County Council that they had the staff and skills in place to run a Safe Base. It was noted that some schools in Lincolnshire had developed their own unit and would be able to share their practices.
- It was queried whether there was any data or research into the outcomes for these children after they left school. Officers advised that they did try to track transition data, including where they moved onto after school, e.g. training employment, but there was more work that could be done nationally;
- In terms of the Safe Bases, it was hoped that there would be one in every locality, but it would be dependent on what schools were able to offer.

RESOLVED

That the Committee be assured of the purpose and progress of the High Needs Transformation Programme.

24 CHILDREN IN CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided Committee members with an update of the Children in Care (CIC) Transformation Programme. It was reported that the Transformation Programme had been developed in response to the impact of the pandemic upon Children's Services to provide additional resource capacity to respond these challenges. The ambition of the Children's Services CIC Transformation Programme was to ensure that the right help was provided to the right children at the right time and for the right duration.

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

- In relation to the Early Help Assessment, it was queried who the partner agencies were and at what stage the County Council would get involved. Members were advised the authority would become involved if any concerns raised reached the criteria of a safeguarding concern, and then an investigation would be undertaken. It was highlighted that all partner agencies had a responsibility for safeguarding;
- The Police was one of the statutory safeguarding partners and was trained in safeguarding matters, as well as having training in undertaking safeguarding assessments. The authority would not get involved in some early help cases as it did not have the legal right to be involved.
- It was suggested whether it would be useful to offer opportunities to members of the Committee to visit the Customer Service Centre so they could understand more

about the types of calls which were received. A number of councillors expressed an interest in doing this.

- It was noted that the County Council trusted its partner professionals, who were aware of the processes through which any concerns could be escalated if necessary.
- It was queried what action was being taken to manage the increased activity and the reduced foster carer placements which were available, and also what was being done to attract and train new foster families. It was acknowledged that a rise in the numbers of children in care had been seen since the start of the pandemic. However, most had been under five years of age and had been planned moves into care. There had been challenges around foster care as some of the foster carers were vulnerable and so had been unable to take in any children during the pandemic.
- A small percentage change between the in house foster care and private foster care could have a significant impact on the budget, as the cost per external resident placement had increased significantly as Lincolnshire was now competing with other authorities and so providers had raised their prices. Some additional funding had been received to address this increase but this would remain a pressure for some time to come.
- It was noted that the Ofsted inspection had highlighted the excellent support that the authority provided to foster carers.
- It was commented that it was reassuring that the number of foster carer applications was starting to increase again, as it was important for children and young people to have suitable long term placements.
- Support for foster carers was important, particularly enabling them to communicate with each other, as other foster carers may be experiencing similar issues.
- It was clarified that the language audit was a piece of work which was carried out with young people in care about how they felt about the language used to reflect their journey through the care system.
- It was commented that it would be useful for the Committee to receive an update on the development of the two new children's homes. Members were advised that the reports would be coming to this Committee prior to the decisions being made.

RESOLVED

That the Committee be assured of the purpose and progress of the Children in Care Transformation Programme.

(NOTE: The Committee adjourned for a short break at 11.30am, and resumed at 11.40am)

25 FAMILY ADOPTION LINKS - REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which set out progress relating to the development of the Regional Adoption Agency – Family Adoption Links. It was reported that the Government's Education and Adoption Act (2016) had set out expectations for adoption services through the establishment of regional adoption agencies (RAA). Following

discussions with East Midlands authorities, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Leicestershire and Leicester City agreed on an aligned partnership model, this was then expanded to include North Lincolnshire Council in 2020. It was agreed that Lincolnshire County Council would become the lead authority for the RAA and the partnership was launched in October 2020 under the banner of Family Adoption Links.

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

- It was considered more important to find the right placement for a child than the geography of where the placement was;
- It was noted that adoption support was a complex issue and around £1m of funding was drawn down per year. This was reflected in one of the workstreams;
- It was highlighted that one of the challenges was that Lincolnshire had had an outstanding adoption service since 2012 and so there were risks with joining up with other authorities;
- This was a strategic direction from the government, the aim was for every child to have the best opportunity. The aim of the partnership was to place as many children as possible within the partnership;
- It was queried whether the integrated approach had involved a lot of work to make systems compatible. It was acknowledged that this had been challenging, and the point was being approached when decisions about how the partnership would work in the future needed to be made;
- It was highlighted that Northamptonshire would be joining the partnership in the future;

RESOLVED

That the Committee be assured of the progress of the Regional Adoption Agency.

26 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - QUARTER 1

Consideration was given to a report which summarised the Service Level Performance against the Corporate Performance Framework for Quarter 1. The report only summarised those measures which were either above or below the target range.

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

- In relation to the two measures which were unable to be reported on, the data was still being validated and would be shared once the validation process had been completed;

- It was known that there were some issues with the court system, due to the impact of Covid-19, but members were pleased to see that those measures involving the courts were exceeding their targets;
- It was queried how often targets were reviewed and whether the tolerances were reasonable. Members were advised that targets were reviewed on an annual basis at the start of the financial year and were set according to trends and benchmarking with statistical neighbours.
- In relation to tolerances, it was noted that these would be adapted and changed based on factors such as population growth, when the measure was based on actual numbers of children. When the measure/tolerance was a percentage this could remain the same.

RESOLVED

That the Committee be satisfied with the performance of the measures that were either above or below the target range, and the comments made in relation to the performance measures be noted.

27 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report which enabled members to consider and comment of the content of its work programme to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit. It was reported that there were no amendments to the work programme.

In relation to the Corporate Parenting Responsibilities, it was noted that it was also planned to raise this at the Councillor Development Group so that a training session for all councillors could be arranged.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as presented be agreed.

The meeting closed at 12.23 pm

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

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 October 2021
Subject:	Update on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an update on the implementation of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy, approved by the Executive on 6th November 2018. The report summarises the progress made in Year 3 of strategic implementation, within the Capital Build Programme and in all supporting system areas.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

1. Review and comment on the content of this report and progress made in Year 3 of implementation.
2. Receive an update on Year 4 of implementation in October 2022.

1. Background

In November 2018, the Executive granted approval to implement the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy. Implementation of this strategy commenced in January 2019 and will take place over the next five years with the final school changes being made in September 2024.

The strategy will make significant changes to the existing special education provision, creating an integrated and sustainable school system where pupils can attend their nearest special school, confident that their education and health needs can be fully met.

In order to achieve this ambition, the strategy will provide a locality-based, sector-wide approach to special education which will enable all special schools to meet the wide range of needs of pupils within their local community. As existing special schools are designed to

meet specific designations of need, each school has obtained approval to change its designation to enable them to meet All Needs. In addition, the strategy will significantly increase the special school estate by over 500 places, to address existing overcrowding issues and the growing demand, through capital investment to support expansion, in line with projected need. The allocated capital investment is being utilised to improve premises and facilities, enabling each school to offer places to pupils from within their local communities with All Needs.

All special schools have been approved to make significant change to the type of need catered for and expansion where this has been identified and these are outlined in the strategy. All 14 special schools will be able to meet “all needs” once the strategy has been fully implemented.

In order to ensure that all schools within the scheme could meet all needs and fully accommodate local children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), an agreed baseline schedule of accommodation (a document which describes how much and what type of space is needed at each school) was established in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, Building Bulletin 104, which outlines the accommodation needed in a special school, with input from the SEND Alliance members. Representatives from Children's Services and Corporate Property met regularly with Special School Headteachers to discuss overall design principles and to identify what types of spaces were essential to meet all needs. This ensured that the Local Authority (LA) would be building schools based on the needs of children and young people with SEND, and the education leaders involved were able to provide specialist knowledge on accommodation requirements.

A key principles document was developed to ensure a standardised approach to the design of all special schools, which provided the blueprint for all projects in the programme. The key principles document also set out the requirements for all new external spaces as no guidance exists within BB104. All Headteachers agreed that this was an area where the schools could support the scheme to raise funds for external spaces such as sensory gardens and trim trails.

The SEND Alliance Project Board has had full oversight of all schedules of accommodation decisions to ensure equity of provision and fairness within the programme.

2. Programme Update

The Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy commenced implementation in 2019 and is a five-year strategy with the final all needs school due to be ready to meet all needs in 2024.

Implementation is well underway with a number of capital schemes live and supporting operating systems in place. Governance is well established with budget and progress reviews taking place monthly and reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder on a bimonthly basis.

Appendix A provides an overview of the timeline for the capital scheme and shows the projected completion dates for all schools.

2.1 Capital Programme

This report provides an update on the third year of delivery of the capital programme (October 2020 – October 2021).

Corporate Property has been commissioned to deliver this programme by Children's Services, and the directorates are working closely in partnership with schools and contractors to bring each scheme to fruition, despite the significant challenges experienced during this reporting period.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will already have a sound understanding of the schemes which have obtained Executive Councillor approval through the Capital Appraisal process. The Committee has to date scrutinised six schemes and provided its recommendations for Executive Councillor approval.

2.1.1 Progress Overview

A number of key milestones have been met in this reporting period, with the opening of the first all needs special school being the most significant. The capital programme is on course to be completed in line with the agreed timeline and whilst two schemes have faced delay due to design challenges, these have been addressed and all special schools remain on course to meet all needs by 2024.

The key milestones for the capital programme met in this reporting period are:

- Boston Endeavour Academy opened to pupils on 6th September 2021 as the first purpose built, all needs special school in Lincolnshire, replacing the former John Fielding School.
- Completion of new build block at Willoughby Academy, opening to pupils on 6th September 2021, resulting in pupil place increase to 109 (phased increase).
- Completion of new build block at The Eresby School to ensure all needs can be met.
- Opening of self-delivery new build blocks at Ambergate Sports College and The Garth School.
- Construction work commenced at Louth St Bernard's School.
- Planning approved for Spalding Priory School and Lincoln St Christopher's School.

2.1.2 Budget

It is important to note the complexity and magnitude of this programme and appreciate the aspirations of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and its commitment to such a transformational scheme. Embarking on a capital programme which seeks to enhance and improve thirteen school sites over five years whilst transforming the special school system

to add much needed capacity, eradicate excessive journeys and reduce unnecessary out of county placements is ambitious and trail-blazing.

As the capital programme has progressed from initial estimates to live, on-site schemes, it has been necessary to review the requirements of each scheme to ensure the Council is providing the best possible solution for schools and value for money. Building requirements have evolved over this period and the Council has been presented with the opportunity to further enhance the programme's scope through increased investment opportunities.

The Budget Profile set out in Appendix B provides a breakdown of all secured scheme costs and summarised forecast costs where scheme costs are still to be finalised.

As can be seen from Appendix B, the whole life costs of the programme have risen to £86.794m from £56.556m based on actual scheme costs for those which have entered main works contracts and forecast scheme costs on those still to be confirmed post-feasibility.

Since the strategy was approved, Lincolnshire County Council has successfully secured further investment for the programme, with a revised grant allocation of £71.194m so all special schools in the programme can access improved capital solutions and enhanced facilities beyond that of the Council's initial ambitions.

In addition, the Council has agreed to commit £15.600m to address the funding gap left after the authority's free school application to create an additional 111 places in the Lincoln City area was unsuccessful. After such a disappointing decision by the Department for Education, this allocation is evidence of the Council's unwavering dedication to improving the lives of children and young people with SEND through this strategy.

It must be noted that some schemes have presented particular challenges due to their existing condition and this additional funding will allow the Council to address these issues, thereby ensuring these sites are sustainable and have increased longevity.

In addition, increased costs have arisen due to the current global pandemic, with market uncertainty and rising welfare costs in the construction industry, as detailed in this report.

In acknowledging the additional cost of the capital programme and enlarged scope to ensure the best possible provision is available to Lincolnshire's children with SEND, the Council must consider this within the context of the ever-increasing cost pressures within the High Needs allocation.

Children's Services strongly believes this capital infrastructure investment will not only achieve greater outcomes for Lincolnshire pupils, but also be an important financial decision in managing the pressures within the High Needs block by way of reducing expenditure relating to some expensive and unnecessary out of county specialist placements. On occasion, Lincolnshire families are presented with the difficult option of out of county placements due to the lack of capacity in local special schools. This is both

unfair on children and families and expensive to the Council, when needs could be met in a more local provision. It is important for Lincolnshire to continue securing value for money within these demand-led budgets and within the finite funding resource available. By enabling pupils requiring specialist support to go to their nearest suitable school, the LA will be able to achieve operational efficiencies, improved pupils wellbeing and reduce expenditure through its delivery of home to school transport arrangements.

The financial impact of investing now at a capital level will have a positive impact on the Council's financial position long-term. Both the High Need's block allocation and Home to School Transport Budget will continue to be subject to increased financial pressure if the strategy's additional school places are not realised, potentially costing the Council up to an additional £20.612m per annum.

The strategy was collaboratively developed to ensuring a sufficient supply of special school places for children and young people with SEND, local special schools which can meet the needs of all pupils in their local community, a reduction in the travelling time for pupils with SEND by enabling them to attend a special school as close to home as possible and for our children and young people with SEND to be educated locally, bringing value and a sense of belonging to their local communities. Only by ensuring that the capital programme is fully completed can the Local Authority be confident it will achieve its strategic vision.

As identified, the SEND capital budget has been revised upwards for the start of the 2021/22 financial year. Schemes in construction or completed in 2021/22 are on target and on budget due to fixed price contract conditions. However, schemes in pre-construction or design stage are likely to be impacted by market conditions and potential price rises, which is being considered at an overall council capital programme level.

2.1.3 Risk Summary

Covid-19

Covid-19 continues to impact many aspects of the Council's work and it has had a profound effect on the implementation of this strategy. The Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy is a multi-faceted and complex strategy incorporating the fields of education, construction and the Local Authority's statutory responsibility for the education of children and young people with SEND.

Uncertainty has been evident in the construction industry due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly within the supply chain. Equally, schools have experienced unprecedented challenges as they have been required to provide a quality education in a Covid-19 secure environment. The priority for the Local Authority and Special Schools during this pandemic has been the safety and well-being of the most vulnerable communities and this has inevitably affected agencies capacity to drive forward this programme.

However, implementation of the strategy including the capital build programme has continued with the same impetus and drive as it did in the last reporting period, though it has been inevitable that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about some delays to construction schemes.

Covid-19 has had a dramatic and continued impact on the construction industry. Social distancing has increased costs on site (due to increased cleaning and more facilities being needed) and extended timescales. The Local Authority Covid-19 grant met £0.151m of these costs in 2020/21. Restrictions relating to Covid-19 and the safe access to schools have also impacted on the programme's timeline.

Despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic, all schemes have made excellent progress and the programme remains on course for completion with the approved timeline.

Supply Chain issues

There are significant cost pressures within the construction industry arising from a shortage of labour and materials within the supply chain. This is a local, regional, national and global issue which will impact on SEND schemes in the near future. The reasons for the supply chain shortage are multi-faceted and often interdependent:

- 1.1. Global supply chains have been severely disrupted by Covid-19. For example, there are three main global exporters of timber; Russia, China and Canada. Russia and China have restricted exports to cater for their domestic market whilst around half of sawmills in Canada have been forced to shut down due to Covid outbreaks. This has severely restricted global supply and increased prices.
- 1.2. Brexit is disrupting the smooth inflow of goods into the UK; this is because additional checks at ports have created a backlog in clearing containers of up to six weeks. This means that shipping containers cannot be offloaded from cargo ships, contributing to longer lead-in times.
- 1.3. There is a global shortage of shipping containers, leading to astonishing inflationary pressures on the cost of shipping freight. The price for a 40ft container from China to Europe has risen by nearly 500%, as of April 2021.
- 1.4. There has been a significant upsurge in demand as the UK economy emerges from lockdown; this is also replicated in the United States of America which is competing for the same source materials as the UK. The United States recently committed to legislation which allocates \$1.2 *trillion* for infrastructure projects.
- 1.5. There is a shortage of labour within the construction industry as a result of migrant workers returning to their home country and from high profile, high spend construction activity like HS2; this has driven up costs through increased wage demand.

- 1.6. Locally, Lincolnshire notoriously struggles to secure labour and construction management staff (which includes LCC, consultant designers and contractor management) due to its rural geography. This is being exacerbated by the ease of 'working from home' and the lure of projects such as HS2. As an example, Tarmac (one of the largest surfacing contractors in the country) is in the process of amending their business model which will likely result in them not tendering for any further maintenance work and focussing solely on HS2 as there is anecdotally more money to be made with less scrutiny.
- 1.7. HS2 is stockpiling aggregates (and other materials) which impacts on the regional supply chain.
- 1.8. Social distancing has pushed up costs due to increased cleaning and more welfare facilities required on site and Covid is still leading to supply chain disruption due to positive tests and self-isolation.
- 1.9. The lack of qualified HGV drivers, due to the UK skills gap, aging workforce, etc., is impacting on the timely delivery of materials to merchants and to construction sites, leading to potential delays for project completion.

All of the above means that there are shortages of labour, steel, concrete, timber, copper, windows and plaster. The impact of this has been an immediate cost increase of between 5% - 15% for some of these products, with steel rising by 60% in a year.

The risk of cost increase and supply shortage can be mitigated (to some extent) against by using contractors with buying power that allows them to continue to source materials and labour at reasonable prices and lead-in times. However, at the time of writing, it is impossible to predict whether these headwinds will become endemic within the industry or largely remain within residential and SME sectors.

The Programme Team continues to monitor the risks associated with such volatility in the construction supply chain and is reporting through governance structures on a monthly basis

2.1.4 Progress by Scheme

For images of the live capital schemes please see Appendix C – "Progress in Pictures".

- **Boston Endeavour Academy**

The Boston Endeavour Academy is now complete, has been handed over to the Community Inclusive Trust and welcomed its first pupils on 6th September 2021. A formal opening is planned for later in the year and this will be facilitated jointly by LCC and the Academy Trust.

The new school can accommodate 140 pupils, but it has been agreed with the Headteacher to expand the school through a phased approach. This will ensure that the

transition for current students and staff recruitment can be managed effectively. The school has opened for 102 pupils, and this will increase to capacity over an agreed period.

The new school provides 16 classrooms, specialist teaching spaces including science, technology, ICT and art, and a hall. The school will also benefit from a hydrotherapy pool, sensory and soft playrooms and dedicated therapy spaces. Externally there are hard and soft surfaced play areas and sensory, horticulture and wildlife areas.

- **Bourne Willoughby Academy**

Construction of the new block is now complete, has been handed over to the Priory Trust and welcomed its first pupils on 6th September 2021. Contractors are now working on the remodelling aspect of the scheme to parts of the original building.

Willoughby Academy will be able to accommodate 148 pupils when fully complete but until this time, the school has admitted 129 pupils. Capacity will increase by 68 places once the scheme is fully complete, in line with the agreed expansion period.

The new build accommodation block provides six classrooms, hall, specialist secondary teaching spaces including science and technology, as well as small group spaces and hygiene facilities. The existing school will undergo some remodelling work to provide therapy spaces and a medical inspection room to ensure the school can offer, in conjunction with health providers, a robust health offer to all children and young people with SEND in the local area.

A formal opening is planned for early 2022 and this will be facilitated jointly by LCC and the Priory Academy Trust.

- **The Eresby School, Spilsby**

Construction of the new block is now complete, has been handed over to the David Ross Education Trust and welcomed returning pupils on 6th September 2021. Contractors are now working on the remodelling aspect of the scheme to parts of the original building.

The new build accommodation block provides improved facilities including five classrooms, hall, ICT and science spaces as well as small group rooms, hygiene facilities and staff and meeting spaces. The existing school will also undergo extensive remodelling work to provide a design/technology and art room, a physiotherapy space, a visiting professional/therapy space, a parents' room, a hygiene suite, a disabled WC and staff/administration spaces.

A formal opening is planned for early 2022 and this will be facilitated jointly by LCC and the Academy Trust.

- **Louth St Bernard's School**

Phase 1 works to the residential block have completed and been handed over to the Lincolnshire Wolds Federation to reopen this facility. Works continue for the main part of the scheme with the demolition of the old boarding accommodation completed and construction started on the new block build.

The new block will provide enhanced facilities including six classrooms, hall, specialist secondary teaching spaces including science and technology, as well as small group spaces, therapy and hygiene facilities.

The scheme is due for completion by September 2022.

- **Lincoln St Christopher's School**

As the Committee is aware, Lincolnshire's application for a new special free school submitted to the Department for Education in October 2018 was unsuccessful. An extensive options appraisal was undertaken to review the alternatives available to the Local Authority, as demand analysis indicated the need for an additional 111 special school places for Lincoln city and the surrounding area. This report concluded that the most suitable option to ensure Lincoln City has sufficient special school places was to expand the current Local Authority maintained St Christopher's School over two sites, with a new capacity of 333 overall. In order to ensure adequate space and facilities for this number of pupils, it would be necessary to develop a new primary facility on a second site (the former Usher School site, Skellingthorpe Road) with a capacity of 130 and provide extensive remodelling and development to the existing St Christopher's School to create a secondary provision with a capacity of 203.

All statutory processes were subsequently followed with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee recommending the revised proposal in January 2020. Executive approval for the revised proposal was granted in February 2020.

Planning permission has been granted for both the new primary school building and expansion to the existing site to become a secondary provision. Detailed design works are ongoing and contractual negotiations are underway in preparation for the main works to begin.

Construction of the primary school is due to commence in autumn 2021 and complete during spring 2023, with works to the secondary site following on thereafter.

Once all works are completed St Christopher's Primary School will be able to accommodate 130 pupils and the Secondary School will accommodate 203.

- **The Priory and The Garth Schools, Spalding**

Planning permission has been granted for the Priory scheme. Enabling works have been completed over the summer holidays to provide a new plant room, carry out services works and asbestos removal and main works have now commenced.

The project is due to be completed in August 2022 ready for opening to pupils in September 2022.

Works to the Garth site are now completed and existing pupils are benefiting from the improved accommodation.

Once all works are completed The Priory School and The Garth School will join to meet the needs of 177 pupils.

- **Ambergate Sports College and The Sandon School**

Works to the Ambergate site are now complete and the pupils are enjoying the much-improved facilities.

Due to the successful Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) application granted by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) a new Hydrotherapy pool will be built on The Sandon school site, as a condition of the funding allocation. Works on the pool are in development and a planning application has been submitted. The Community Inclusive Trust is self-delivering this project with assistance and significant funding from Lincolnshire County Council.

In order to ensure the combined Grantham provision can accommodate 229 students, it has been necessary to review the original design proposal due to lack of external space across both sites. Alternative options are currently being considered.

- **Horncastle St Lawrence School**

This scheme has been placed on hold whilst a range of design options have been considered; this was necessary after detailed survey information highlighted significant condition issues with the main school building, which placed an unexpected financial pressure on the scheme. A proposal to rebuild the school on the existing site has been identified as the preferred option and feasibility and design process are due to commence in autumn 2021.

- **Lincoln St Francis Special School**

This project was placed on hold whilst the future of the residential wing was determined as it would have an impact on the plans for the school. Now this has been approved, works are due to begin on a feasibility study to ensure the school can meet all needs and a capacity of 150 pupils.

- **Gosberton House Academy**

No works have been undertaken at Gosberton Academy thus far as it falls towards the latter stages of the programme. The project team plan to begin engagement in autumn 2021 in preparation for the feasibility and design process.

2.1.5 SEND Support Structures

2.1.5.1 School Reorganisation Policy

This policy has been developed in order to ensure all special schools, subject to reorganisation, receive equitable and fair funding to meet all reasonable additional costs. It provides a formalised approach to the funding of special school reorganisations to support the Local Authority's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for the children of Lincolnshire. It addresses situations when, as part of its strategic planning of school places, the LA asks a school/academy to expand and take in additional pupils above their agreed capacity temporarily or expands permanently.

Through the development and implementation of this policy, it has been possible to provide a fair and standardised level of funding during this transition period to those schools that the LA wishes to expand permanently and this applies to both maintained and academy special schools.

The policy takes into consideration all circumstances whereby schools are faced with additional costs such as removal costs, loose classroom equipment, IT resources and other such expenditures to ensure they can meet all needs for an increased number of pupils.

This policy has now been approved by the Special Schools Project Board and has been fully implemented. Through support received by the Schools Forum, the Local Authority earmarked £2.000m from the Dedicated Schools Grant reserves underspend to fund the schools re-organisation policy during the transition phase. Additional place funding will be supported through the earmarked funding and the High Needs block.

2.1.5.2 Workforce Development

The Workforce Development workstream has designed the SEND Learning Platform: a sector-led training model for professional development, which will ensure all pupils with SEND can access a quality education, facilitated by skilled and knowledgeable staff.

This tiered learning platform will utilise an existing LCC online portal to provide appropriately targeted access to a wide range of learning resources and training which will be available to all special school staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This is to ensure a culture of SEND awareness and inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life.

Acknowledging the excellent array of training and professional development already commissioned by LCC and also that which is available from other providers, the SEND Learning Platform will bring together, into one place, the high-quality training already

available and utilise the skills and expertise of the Lincolnshire SEND Alliance to develop training provision where gaps have been identified. It will utilise a wide range of learning methods (e-learning, online resources and face to face training) to ensure equity and ease of access, in a geographically vast county.

It is proposed that the workforce development model will be implemented in a phased approach:

PHASE 1: Implemented from February 2022. In line with the immediate purpose of the project, ensuring the workforce within special schools is equipped and trained effectively to support the move to all through, all need.

PHASE 2: Once all special schools are accessing the SEND Learning Platform and have a workforce which is equipped and trained to effectively meet all needs, the content of the platform will be made available to all mainstream schools and to parent/carers.

During this reporting period, the workforce development offer has been approved by the SEND Alliance Project Board who appointed the Lincolnshire Wolds Federation as Lead Representative for the workforce strategy. Development of the specification for the workforce development platform is near completion and work will begin in the autumn term on construction of the content to be uploaded. Formal launch of the platform is planned for March 2022.

2.1.5.3 Health Offer

In order for all special schools to meet all needs, it is imperative that each school can meet the needs of children and young people with more complex medical conditions. At present, the only school with an on-site specialist nursing team and therapists is Lincoln St Francis which is the designated profound and multiple learning disability/physical disability school for the county. In order to enable children to access their local special school, there needs to be a robust and equitable health offer available to all schools. To develop and implement this requirement, a SEND health workstream has been established, made up of officers from the Local Authority, Health Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure an effective health offer can be provided to all special schools.

This partnership workstream has been responsible for the development and implementation of the SEND Strategy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This document sets out the partnership expectations and responsibilities of both the special school and health providers to ensure the health offer is implemented and maintained. This MOU has been co-produced by the workstream's key stakeholders and is currently going through each organisation's governance processes, with full sign off expected imminently.

The workstream is also responsible for developing a system whereby all special schools have the capabilities and confidence to meet the needs of children and young people with the most complex medical needs and those who are long-term ventilated. Senior officers

from the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, LCC and Health Provider Trusts have agreed, in principle, that all children in Lincolnshire should be able to attend a special school as close to home as possible, if required, once it is safe to do so. This workstream is currently developing an infrastructure and guidance framework which will ensure this is possible, in a clinically safe manner.

Specialist Equipment

In order to ensure the most cost-effective use of specialist medical and therapy equipment, all special schools have now joined the existing contractual arrangements held by the Local Authority with specialist equipment providers. All special schools are now part of the Lincolnshire Community Equipment Service, which enables them to order directly through the Council's contractual arrangements. If specialist equipment is deemed to be required by a therapy professional (such as Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist) this will be prescribed and the school can order direct. They receive monthly invoices for the equipment they order and on its return, the school receive a refund for the cost of the equipment. This contract also covers the servicing and maintenance of specialist equipment within the school.

2.1.5.4 Specialist Community Led Panels

The prototype of the Specialist Community Led Panels was launched in June/July 2021 in the Boston and South Holland locality. The panel reviewed the case of two young people who were at risk of being placed in an independent non-maintained special school, if a local special school which could meet need could not be found. Both cases were resolved at this panel, with a successful outcome and the pupils will be educated at their local special school.

Roll-out of these panels will be phased across localities to ensure all supporting systems are fit for purpose, with Lincoln and West Lindsay coming on board in the next short term. Panels are planned for the Lincoln/West Lindsay locality in September and Boston/South Holland in October. East Lindsay and North Kesteven/South Kesteven will both be in place by February 2022.

3. Conclusion

Despite the on-going global challenges which have impacted the implementation of this multi-faceted and complex strategy, significant progress has been made across all aspects of the programme in this reporting period, which has culminated in the opening of the first all needs special school, in budget and on time.

The capital building programme has continued to progress despite the continuing impact of Covid-19 and the unforeseen global volatility in the construction industry. Boston Endeavour Academy is now a fully functioning, all needs school and the new blocks at both Willoughby Academy and The Eresby School have been completed and handed over to the responsible academy trust, on budget and ahead of schedule. Whilst some delays have been inevitable as the Local Authority, schools and our construction partners

attempt to mitigate the challenges of disrupted supply chains and the "pingdemic" impact on the labour market, the wider strategic vision is on track to be implemented in five years from approval as set out in the original strategy.

In order for all schools to be all needs operational, the support systems of workforce development, health and SEND design must be established in readiness for implementation and significant progress has been made with these support systems. As a result, it has been possible for the first three schemes in the programme to operate as all needs schools and welcome children and young people with a wider range of needs.

The effect of the recently implemented Specialist Community Led Panels will be monitored closely over the next reporting period, as its value in reducing the pressures on the High Needs block by avoiding costly out of county placements is essential to the success of the strategy.

4. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Completed – as part of original strategy document.

Live risk and impact log held by Special Schools Project Office.

5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	SEND Outline Programme July 2021
Appendix B	SEND Strategy Budget Profile Committed Funding July 2021
Appendix C	SEND Strategy Progress in Pictures August 2021

6. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy	Building communities of specialist provision (lincolnshire.gov.uk)

This report was written by Eileen McMorrow who can be contacted on 07795 801706 or by e-mail at Eileen.mcmorrow@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

SEND Schools - Outline Programme

V.12 June 2021

	2020				2021				2022				2023				2024			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
Boston Endeavour																				
Bourne Willoughby																				
Spilsby Eresby																				
Louth St Bernards																				
Lincoln St Francis																				
Spalding Prioory																				
Horncastle St Lawrence																				
Lincoln St Christopher's (Primary)																				
Lincoln St Christopher's (Secondary)																				
Gosberton House																				
Grantham Sandon (CIT)																				
Grantham Ambergate (CIT)																				
Spalding Garth (CIT)																				

RIBA 1-4. Preparation, brief and design.
 RIBA 5 & 6. Construction and hand over.

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Project	Project Status	Agreed Programme Budget Allocation (£m)	Forecast Project Outturn (£m)	Actual Spend (£m)	Variance (£m)	Comments
On-site or Completed Projects						
Boston Endeavour	Completed for September 2021	13.3	13.3	12.4	0.0	Project now complete and school is open. Working through final completed works schedule.
Spalding Garth (Grant)	Grant to Trust	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0	Academy Trust Self-delivery completed
Grantham Ambergate (Grant)	Grant to Trust	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.0	Academy Trust Self-delivery completed
Bourne Willoughby	On site	6.5	6.5	5.4	0.0	Modular building completed August 2021; final remodelling phase due to complete December 2021.
Spilsby Eresby	On site	6.6	6.6	5.3	0.0	Modular building completed August 2021; final remodelling phase due to complete December 2021.
Louth St Bernards	On site	8.8	8.8	2.8	0.0	Scheme on schedule.
		<u>36.6</u>	<u>36.6</u>	<u>27.4</u>	<u>0.0</u>	
Pre-construction						
Lincoln St Christophers (Primary & Secondary combined)	Pre-construction	22.7	22.7	1.3	0.0	Forecast as per agreed budget as contract still to be awarded. Pre-construction and future schemes pre-contract subject to market conditions with inherent risk of increase costs. This is being considered at an overall capital programme level.
Spalding Priory	Pre-construction	7.8	7.8	0.6	0.0	Forecast as per agreed budget as contract still to be awarded. Pre-construction and future schemes subject to market conditions with inherent risk of increase costs. This is being considered at an overall capital programme level.
		<u>30.5</u>	<u>30.5</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>0.0</u>	
Future Schemes						
Future schools in programme	Pre-feasibility	19.8	19.8	1.1	0.0	Future schemes not yet in contract so no confirmed scheme costs approved
		<u>19.8</u>	<u>19.8</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>0.0</u>	
Totals						
		<u>86.945</u>	<u>86.942</u>	<u>30.405</u>	<u>0.0</u>	
	Agreed Capital Programme	86.794				
	Covid Costs (2020/21)	0.151				
		<u>86.945</u>				

Notes

Budget revised upwards and agreed in 2021

Covid costs for 20/21 funded and 21/22 costs earmarked against Covid Recovery Grant

On-site and completed schemes subject to fixed price contract certainty and therefore price risks sits with supplier.

Forecast as per agreed budget. Pre-construction and future schemes subject to market conditions with inherent risk of increase costs.

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Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire

October Update
Children and Young People
Scrutiny Committee



Boston Endeavour Academy

Boston Endeavour Academy

Welcome to

Boston Endeavour Academy



Visitors please report to reception

Mr Richard Gammas

01473 342045
1800 47 47 47
www.cit.ac.uk









Bourne Willoughby







Spilsby Eresby









Louth St Bernard's









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Lincoln St Christopher's Primary



Lincoln St Christopher's Secondary



The Priory





Ambergate









Garth









Look at me

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Pineapple
-tastic!





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

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 October 2021
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Summary:

Looked After Children (Children in Care) and Care Leavers are amongst some of the most vulnerable people in our community. By the nature of their life experiences, prior to coming into care, they have more often than not have experienced abuse, neglect, and considerable harm. This group of young people have therefore nearly always experienced significant childhood trauma.

The young people in the care of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) are legally our responsibility and we therefore have a parenting responsibility to them. This report and accompanying presentation seeks to outline what those responsibilities are and bring to life how good corporate parenting can greatly improve the lives and outcomes for our young people.

Actions Required:

Members of the Committee are requested to review and comment on the report and presentation, and consider their role and how best to enhance and discharge their Corporate Parenting duty.

1. Background

The role that the County Council has to play in looking after children is one of the most important things we do. The term 'corporate parent' is broadly understood as being Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children. However, this also includes those working directly in Children's Services, Elected Members, and wider statutory partners in District Councils, the Police and Health. Corporate parenting is an important part of the role of all Members and it is vital that all parts of a local authority, beyond those directly responsible for children in care and pathway planning, recognise they have a key role too.

The Lead Member and all Members are responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed. In doing so, Members and officers need to work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and well-being of children and young people in our care.

Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers (relevant and former relevant children). In this context, the Local Authority is 'corporate parent' to these children and young people, and the critical question we should continually ask ourselves is 'would this be good enough for my child?'

A strong ethos of corporate parenting means that a sense of vision and responsibility towards the children they look after and their care leavers is a priority for everyone. We should recognise that looked-after children have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe - as other children. There are unique challenges that looked-after children and care leavers face that need to be considered when thinking about how to discharge our duty.

It's worthy to note that more than 60% of children become looked-after due to abuse, neglect or experiencing direct harm. These young people are far more likely to have poorer educational and health outcomes than their peers. Local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being for the long term.

Attached at Appendix A is a copy of the Department for Education (DfE) guidance that outlines Corporate Parenting. A presentation will be provided to the Committee at the meeting.

2. Conclusion

Members are requested to review the report and presentation and consider how they can best work to support excellent outcomes for our Children in Care and those Leaving Care.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers - Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018)

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andrew Morris, who can be contacted on 01522 553916 or andrew.morris@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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Department
for Education

Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers

Statutory guidance for local authorities

February 2018

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1. Summary

About this guidance

This guidance is about the role of local authorities and the application of corporate parenting principles as set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Local authorities must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers (relevant children and former relevant children). It should be read and applied alongside the [Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#) and [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers](#).

This guidance is designed to help local authorities consider the kinds of services that may be offered when having regard to the corporate parenting principles. It is not intended to be prescriptive about what must be offered. It is expected, however, that services respond to the individual needs of looked after children and care leavers when they exercise their functions in relation to these children and young people.

Expiry or review date

The guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis but will not be revised unless it is considered that it requires amendment.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

This guidance refers to:

- Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 (the Act)
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (the 2010 Regulations)
- The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (the Care Leavers Regulations)

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for local authorities and their 'relevant partners' (as defined in section 10 of the Children Act 2004) and others who contribute to services provided to looked-after children and care leavers.

The principles are applicable to all local authorities in England whether they are or were the local authority looking after a particular child/young person. They apply to the whole local authority and not just to children's services functions. However, they apply only to local authority functions that are exercised in relation to looked after children and care leavers (see page 11).

For the purpose of this guidance, a local authority in England means:

- A county council in England
- A district council
- A London borough council
- The Common Council, of the City of London (in their capacity as a local authority)
- The Council of the Isles of Scilly; and
- A combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

Main points

- 1.1 The role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers (relevant and former relevant children). In this context local authorities are often referred to as being the 'corporate parent' of these children and young people, and the critical question that local authorities should ask in adopting such an approach is: 'would this be good enough for my child?'
- 1.2 A strong ethos of corporate parenting means that sense of vision and responsibility towards the children they look after and their care leavers is a priority for everyone. They recognise that looked-after children have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe - as other children. But also that there are unique challenges that looked-after children and care leavers face. 60% of children become looked-after due to abuse or neglect and they have poorer educational and health outcomes than their peers¹. Local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being.
- 1.3 All children need love and stability in order to thrive. A strong corporate parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own. This is evidenced by an embedded culture where council officers do all that is reasonably possible to ensure the council is the best 'parent' it can be to the child or young person . [Statutory guidance](#) on the role of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children describes how those roles set the tone for the local authority to be an effective corporate parent.
- 1.4 The term 'corporate parent' is broadly understood by Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children, as well as those working directly in children's services, in relation to how local authorities should approach their responsibilities for looked after children and care leavers. Corporate parenting is an important part of the Ofsted inspection framework and the corporate parenting Principles are referenced in Ofsted's Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.² However, it is vital that all parts of a local authority beyond those directly responsible for care and pathway planning recognise they have a key role too.

¹ [Department for Education, Children looked after in England including adoption: 2015 to 2016](#)

² Framework for the Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018>, p. 58.

- 1.5 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 therefore introduces corporate parenting principles, which comprise of seven needs that local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers (collectively referred to as *looked-after children and young people*).
- 1.6 The corporate parenting principles are intended to secure a better approach to fulfilling existing functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers and for the local authority to facilitate as far as possible secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for looked after children and young people and enable positive outcomes for them.
- 1.7 It will be important for all who exercise functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers – from elected councillors and the teams dealing with placements and care leaver services to those responsible for special educational needs, housing and council tax – to work together to ensure they have a more joined up approach.
- 1.8 The corporate parenting principles are not new requirements, but provide a framework to help local authorities understand and fully comply with existing duties across the whole of their services as they discharge those duties to looked-after children and care leavers.
- 1.9 The corporate parenting principles apply only to local authorities. Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members for Children should nevertheless ensure that relevant partners understand how they can assist local authorities apply the principles in relation to the services those partners may provide. ‘Relevant partners’ include local policing bodies and Chief Officers of Police, local probation boards and probation services, youth offending teams, clinical commissioning groups, NHS England, schools and educational institutions.
- 1.10 The corporate parenting principles are about embedding a positive culture in the local authority towards looked-after children and care leavers and their success will depend on the extent to which directors, councillors, heads of service and front line managers champion and promote understanding of them.
- 1.11 The experiences of looked-after children and care leavers, particularly in regards to whether they feel cared for and listened to, will therefore be an important measure of how successfully local authorities embed the principles.
- 1.12 The corporate parenting principles should be integral to the way in which local authorities approach the development and review of their local offer to care leavers. They will also provide an important framework in promoting the mind-set and culture that will underpin the non-statutory care leaver covenant (see paragraph 3.12).

2. What are the corporate parenting principles?

The principles

- 2.1 In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:
- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
 - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
 - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 2.2 The corporate parenting principles do not exist in a vacuum. They should shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers. The full range of duties placed on local authorities in respect of the children they look after and their care leavers is set out at Annexes 1 and 2.
- 2.3 The corporate parenting principles are not about applying a formulaic approach to how services are delivered in relation to looked-after children and care leavers. Rather they describe the behaviours and attitudes expected of councils when they are acting as any good parent would do by supporting, encouraging and guiding their children to lead healthy, rounded and fulfilled lives. The principles intend to ensure that all councils have high ambitions for the children in their care. In doing so, the application of the principles must respond to the individual needs, vulnerabilities or disadvantages of looked after children and care leavers. This will assist in securing that such children and young people are

not placed at significant disadvantage when compared with the support a non-looked after child or young person may receive from their family.

How the principles work

- 2.4 The detail of what local authorities must do to effectively care for looked-after children and care leavers is addressed through existing legislation, regulations and accompanying statutory guidance. The corporate parenting principles are intended to inform how a local authority carries out those existing responsibilities, whether that is about assessing a looked after child's needs or listening to and taking account of the wishes and feelings of care leavers. The principles are intended to encourage local authorities to be ambitious and aspirational for their looked-after children and care leavers.
- 2.5 The corporate parenting principles do not replace or change existing legal duties, for example in relation to the provision of accommodation for care leavers aged 18 and above.
- 2.6 Local authorities will need to consider the extent to which the corporate parenting principles are relevant to a particular service area or exercise of a particular function. This should be a reasonable and proportionate evaluation based on the extent to which the service/function is being carried out in relation to looked-after children and/or care leavers. This should include arrangements for ensuring that in two tier authorities that district and county councils work closely together. For example, although county councils exercise social services functions to this group of young people, district councils (which do not have social service functions) should consider how the principles apply when they are exercising their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers.

3. Applying the principles to local authority functions

Leadership

- 3.1 Strong corporate parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. The quality of support can be measured in how the child or young person experiences the support they receive and the extent to which they feel listened to and taken seriously. To that end, many top tier local authorities have established Corporate Parenting Boards or Panels to look strategically at the way in which their looked-after children and care leavers experience services. Feedback from looked-after children and care leavers is an important way in which local authorities can consider how effectively the corporate parenting principles are being applied when exercising functions in relation to these young people.
- 3.2 For care leavers, one of the main ways in which local authorities will bring the corporate parenting principles to life will be through their local offer to this group of young people. Through provisions in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, local authorities will also be required to publish information about the services that they offer that may assist care leavers in making a successful transition to independence. Where it considers it appropriate, a local authority should publish information about services for care leavers it has the power to provide but which are offered by others. The local offer should be developed in close partnership and dialogue between senior leaders and young people who are looked-after and care leavers.

Examples of how senior leaders and councillors may champion corporate parenting

- Lead members and senior officers promote the idea that looked-after children and care leavers are part of the local authority 'family'.
- Members of Children in Care Councils (CiCCs) have regular and positive contact with senior managers and the Lead Member for Children, who know them well. CiCC members are part of the selection process for senior staff in the local authority and in the design of an annual questionnaire about services for looked after-children and care leavers.
- Senior officers and councillors demonstrate that they care about what happens to their looked-after children and care leavers by taking their corporate parenting role seriously. For example, by visiting their looked-after children and care leavers who are placed outside or are living outside of the local authority.
- Services and practice change as a result of the views of care leavers. One local authority acted on their views by making changes to the job descriptions of personal advisers (PA) to emphasise their role in encouraging aspirations and getting to know each care leaver well. PA support is now available during weekday evenings.
- A number of local authorities have a yearly takeover day or week for looked-after children who make presentations to the senior management team and social workers on their experiences of being in care and what they would do if they took over.
- One local authority has appointed a Young Director, an apprenticeship for a care leaver, who mirrors the work of the Director of Children's Services. The Young Director engages with staff at all levels to ensure the views of looked after children and young people are at the heart of the work the local authority does. The local authority has a programme of participation activities in place that ensures young people feel like they are driving the quality of the service they receive.

Deciding relevant functions to which the principles apply

- 3.3 Local authorities provide around 700 services to their local communities. For some of these services (e.g. refuse collection, building control, trading standards and environmental protection), it may not be appropriate or necessary to provide a differentiated service to looked-after children or care leavers. Other services (e.g. fostering, education provision, the administration of housing benefit, the

administration of council tax and access to leisure activities) will be more relevant and in these instances, Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children will want to ensure the needs identified as corporate parenting principles are taken into account.

- 3.4 The services that local authorities deliver can be broadly categorised into 14 different types of service. The service areas where consideration of the corporate parenting principles are of most relevance are: education, social care, housing, libraries, leisure and recreation, strategic policies (such as health and well-being plans) and local tax collection.
- 3.5 The seven other types of service provided by local authorities include highways, transport planning, passenger transport, environmental health, waste collection, waste disposal and town and county planning. Looked-after children and care leavers access these services as residents of the local authority area, regardless of their legal status. These services are less likely to require differentiated service for looked-after children or care leavers and therefore the need to have regard to the corporate parenting principles will either not apply or apply only in a limited way. This is because it may not be possible to do anything towards meeting one or more of the identified needs or, although it may be possible, it is not appropriate to do so.
- 3.6 The way in which a local authority operates its corporate services is important to consider in relation to the principles. For example, the way a local authority acts as an employer can have an impact, such as by ring-fencing apprenticeships for care leavers. These opportunities can be provided in any department of the council regardless of the function it performs. For example, there is no reason why a care leaver could not take up an apprenticeship opportunity in the highways department. All services can have a role in providing these opportunities for looked-after children and care leavers. This is different from providing a differentiated service, for instance, a differentiated service for looked-after children or care leavers in relation to a particular function such as waste collection.

The duty to co-operate

- 3.7 While the duty to have regard to the principles applies only to local authorities, other agencies play an important role in supporting them to carry out their responsibilities to be a good corporate parent.

- 3.8 Local authorities are under a duty (section 10 of the Children Act 2004) to make arrangements to promote co-operation between ‘relevant partners’³ with a view to improving the well-being of children in their area. This should include arrangements in relation to looked-after children and care leavers. Local authorities will therefore need to consider the implications of how they take account of the corporate parenting principles – especially the need to help them access services - when they make arrangements under section 10 of the 2004 Act.
- 3.9 Section 10(5) of the 2004 Act places a duty on relevant partners to co-operate with the local authority in the making of these arrangements, therefore promoting and ensuring a joined up approach.

Some examples of key organisations/services local authorities need to think about engaging with

- Early years settings, schools, further and higher education, employers
- Health services, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS)
- Housing services
- The immigration service
- The police and criminal justice agencies

3.10 In making arrangements to co-operate, Chief Executives and Directors of Children’s Services should ensure that:

- there is a shared understanding across the local authority, relevant partners and the agencies with which it works about the needs of looked-after children and care leavers; and that
- their arrangements and strategies for multi-agency working take account of the needs of looked-after children and care leavers.

³ Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 defines relevant partners as including: the district council; the local policing body and the chief officer of police; probation board; any provider of probation services; youth offending team; the Secretary of State in relation to functions under sections 2 and 3 of the Offender Management Act 2007; NHS England; Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs); the governing body of a maintained school; an academy or City Technology College or City Technology College of the Arts; the governing body of an institution within the further education sector; the Secretary of State in relation to functions under section 2 of the Employment and Training Act 1973.

3.11 County councils should ensure they work with their district councils, which also need to have regard to the need to act in accordance with the corporate parenting principles.

The care leaver covenant

3.12 There is wide recognition that care leavers have faced many challenges in their lives and are likely to need much more support than other young people in making the transition to adulthood. We do not expect local authorities to do it all on their own. We therefore want government departments and their agencies, relevant partners, charities and private sector organisations to play their part as part of a wider corporate parenting family. The Department for Education is therefore introducing a 'care leaver covenant' that will enable organisations to make commitments to care leavers within the spirit of the corporate parenting principles in a way that is most appropriate to them.

4. Implementing the principles

Examples of questions for local authorities

- What more could we do to ensure looked-after children and care leavers feel listened to and their suggestions acted on?
- To what extent are the needs and priorities of looked-after children and care leavers reflected in local strategic needs assessments, local service provision, and development plans?
- How can we collectively deliver services to looked-after children and care leavers in a way that is joined-up and which supports young people to make a successful transition to adulthood?
- Are the children and young people in our care enjoying happy, fulfilled childhoods and looking forward to their adult lives, with positive foundations and stable relationships? If not, why not and what can we do to address this?
- How do we know what children and young people's wishes and feelings are and how do we capture their views?
- How can we deliver services to looked-after children and care leavers in a way that mirrors as far as possible the way a good parent would support their child?
- How can we deliver services in a way that recognises the unique circumstances of looked-after children and care leavers?

4.1 There are many good examples of how local authorities are acting as a good corporate parent. Many of these will reflect the spirit of the corporate parenting principles. Authorities with the strongest corporate parenting ethos consider how services can be delivered differently in order to meet the needs of the care population as effectively as possible.

4.2 Although there are seven needs identified, they should not be seen in isolation from each other because they are not mutually exclusive.

4.3 This section focuses on each need and sets out the range of approaches that a local authority might take in having regard to that need at both a strategic level and in relation to individuals. It is not intended to be comprehensive: local

authorities will be expected to apply the corporate parenting principles in their local context, based on the needs, wishes and feelings of the children in their care and their care leavers.

Acting in the best interests and promoting physical and mental health and well-being

- 4.4 All good parents take account of their children's best interests and health and well-being. This is integral to a culture and attitude where investing in the quality of relationships with looked-after children and care leavers is recognised as of crucial importance. Young people will feel listened to, understood and supported to reach their full potential.
- 4.5 There are many different ways in which local authorities can have regard to the need to act in the best interests of and promote health and well-being for looked-after children and care leavers. It may involve understanding the reasons behind challenging behaviour and, for example, encouraging carers and professionals to adopt a restorative approach to problem solving where appropriate. Health and well-being should encompass emotional, mental and physical health and well-being.

Promoting good mental health and well-being

- One local authority has worked with local mental health services in order to respond to the mental health needs of looked-after children and care leavers as they make the transition from care by extending the service to care leavers up to the age of 25. Care leavers can self-refer or ask their personal adviser to refer them where there is a significant emotional health issue that is affecting their life.
- In another authority, care leavers who feel lonely and isolated can self-refer or be referred to volunteer mentors from their local community who have been recruited and trained by the local authority. Care leavers benefit from weekly meetings with their mentor and have the chance to build a personal relationship that is independent of the 'formal care system'. A number of local authorities carry out regular surveys of their looked-after children and care leavers' wellbeing and experience of care and use the surveys' results to drive improvements to care planning.
- Ten local authorities and four police services in the south-west have developed a protocol that recognises the potential of restorative justice approaches where there is an expectation that local authorities, staff and carers will strive to manage challenging behaviour without the involvement of the police wherever possible.
- Many local authorities provide family support workers or contact centres to support contact with looked-after children's birth families.

4.6 Local authorities should consider and be able to demonstrate how they have regard to this need when discharging their functions, for example:

- local authorities and their health partners may consider how physical, emotional and mental health needs are taken into account in developing their local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and their Joint Health and Well-being Strategies (JHWS).
- How local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS England and Public Health England consider the needs of looked after children, and by extension care leavers, when they co-operate to commission services for all children in their area.
- The arrangements in place to ensure that looked after children are not refused a mental health or other health service on the grounds of their placement being short term or unplanned.

- 4.7 In accordance with care planning requirements as set out in Volumes 2 and 3 of The Children Act 1989 guidance and the 2010 Regulations local authorities may also wish to consider how to help children and young people develop their sense of identity in order for them to make sense of their early life experiences, reasons for entering care and family relationships. This might include focussing on the quality of life story work carried out with the children they support.
- 4.8 More broadly, local authorities may wish to consider how to enable looked-after children and care leavers to access services (e.g. sports and leisure services and cultural activities) that promote a young person's well-being as well as access to the outdoors (e.g. parks, beaches and woodlands). Local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos will stress the importance of every child's interests, talents and aptitudes being noticed and nurtured.

Supporting access to leisure and cultural services

Local authorities may want to work with schools and local partnership organisations to help ensure looked after children are able to access local leisure and cultural services. To help achieve this, authorities may wish to work with their local Music Education Hub, bridge organisation and County Sports Partnership.

Music Hubs are groups of organisations working together to create joined up music education provision. Local bridge organisations work with local arts organisations, museums, libraries, music education hubs, further and higher education institutions and other partners, so children and young people can have access to great arts and cultural opportunities.

[Music Education Hub details](#)

[Bridge organisation details](#)

County Sports partnerships work to develop strong local sports offers and can provide details of local sports opportunities and clubs.

[County Sports Partnership details](#)

Encouraging and taking into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people

- 4.9 The second and third principles (having regard to the need to encourage views, wishes and feelings of looked-after children and care leavers; and having regard to the need to take account of them) is fundamental to being a good corporate

parent. These principles include and apply to every looked after child, regardless of their age, circumstances or needs. This includes children with disabilities, education needs (for example speech, language and communication difficulties) or other complex needs. It is also important to encourage and promote the views of those with other barriers to participation, such as young children, young people with cultural or language barriers and those young people who are currently disengaged. Both principles underpin how local authorities can deliver high quality care and pathway planning for looked-after children and care leavers.

- 4.10 The way in which local authorities involve care leavers in the design and development of their local offer to care leavers is a specific example of how local authorities will demonstrate they have regard to the needs identified in the second and third principles. Another tangible way of responding to the need to encourage and take account of the views, wishes and feelings of looked-after children and care leavers, is through the establishment of a Children in Care Council or Care Leaver Forum. Some local authorities use technology. For example, the use of online surveys may allow local authorities to capture the views of a wide section of their looked-after children and care leavers, including those placed out-of-authority.
- 4.11 In some instances, a looked-after child or care leaver may express wishes that are not always in their best interests or which may conflict with other considerations. In such circumstances, local authorities will have to balance the wishes and feelings of the children and young people with what is in their best interests – and like any good parent – have to take into account what is reasonably practicable and achievable. The child’s best interests and their right to be heard are not mutually exclusive. Due consideration must be given to the child’s wishes and feelings, and in circumstances where decisions are made contrary to this, it is equally as important to explain to children and young people why these decisions were made.

Improving participation and acting on what young people say: examples of local authority practice

- Council members and officers are proactive in seeking ways to improve the participation of looked-after children, including those placed out-of-authority, through, for example, the effective use of technology.
- Some local authorities have designed their websites for looked-after children and care leavers by collaborating with children and young people to ensure that it is young people friendly and contains important information about how young people can make their voice heard.
- Other local authorities have developed videos with their Children in Care Councils which communicate what looked-after children want and need from their social workers as well as how they feel about their experiences.
- A number of local authorities make use of apps which allow looked-after children to regularly communicate how they are feeling with their social workers and other professionals, such as advocates.
- The corporate parenting board priorities in one authority are derived from its Children in Care Council review of the authority's pledge for looked after children.
- One local authority changed the times at which Personal Advisers were available to support care leavers as a direct response to feedback from its care leaver forum.
- One local authority is launching a youth-led inspection programme of its children services to ensure their practice reflects their commitment to children and young people.

Helping looked-after children and care leavers gain access and make best use of services

4.12 As corporate parents, local authorities should have regard to the need to help the children they look after and care leavers to secure the services they need. At its most basic level, this principle is about giving some consideration to how looked-after children and care leavers might benefit from and access a particular service based on an understanding of the needs of these children and young

persons. This might be a factor that is considered when either designing or implementing services.

4.13 Another way in which local authorities may take account of this principle would be, for example, in their school choice for looked-after children. The school admission code requires schools to give priority to looked-after children and previously looked-after children in their admission criteria. Local authorities will need to consider how to most effectively use these arrangements. We would expect a local authority to match the best school to the child's needs, which includes where practicable, choosing good or outstanding schools.

4.14 To help children to access and use services will often require persistence. Local authorities should ensure social workers, children's carers and personal advisers have the skills and training they need to help looked-after children and care leavers access the appropriate services.

Examples of local authorities helping looked-after children and care leavers access services and advocating for them in accessing what they need

- Embedding a culture where the local authority builds positive relationships and routinely works with a wide range of agencies to ensure that, for example:
 - specialist health teams secure speedy access for looked-after children to specialist provision such as speech and language therapy.
 - children placed out-of-authority receive the support that they need in a timely way.
- Supporting a vulnerable care leaver through pregnancy and her foster carer to the point where she was ready to return to education and training, helping her find the right course and then to apply successfully for an apprenticeship in the local authority.
- Ensuring that transitions into adult health services are clear and efficient and ensuring that health needs are considered consistently in reviews and assessment meetings so that care leavers are aware of and able to access medical clinics, drug and alcohol services and family planning clinics when necessary.
- Designing an effective local offer for care leavers, in collaboration with care leavers, that sets out the range of available services and how to access them.
- Ensuring there are formalised transition arrangements for care leavers into adult services. For example, young people who will need ongoing support have their needs assessed jointly with adult services soon after their 16th birthday, so that there are no interruptions or delays in receiving help and the support services they need.
- Providing support and training to foster carers to engage with school staff and 'be there' when children need help with school work.
- Equipping carers and others to support children to make the right post-16 choices to access education, employment and training.

Promoting high aspirations and securing best outcomes

4.15 It is important that we set high ambitions and aspirations for looked-after children and care leavers. The fifth principle is intended to promote the cultural mind-set

that looked-after children and care leavers should be treated as individuals for whom, like any good parent, local authorities want the best outcomes possible. This might mean, for example, spotting potential and nurturing it by making it easy for a looked-after child or care leaver to pursue a particular activity they enjoy and are good at, encouraging them to set their sights on a good university if they have the potential to succeed there and exploring all avenues to help them access the support they need to do well.

- 4.16 Local authorities with social service functions are required to have an officer (called a Virtual School Head) whose role is to make sure the authority promotes the educational achievement of the children it looks after. The Virtual School Head has a vital role in ensuring the local authority embeds promoting high aspirations and best outcomes as part of the corporate parenting culture.

Encouraging, aspiring and responding to interests and needs like all parents

- For example, local authorities can help children to access easily a range of extra-curricular and recreational activities. These could include confidence building, cultural and/or sporting activities.
- Corporate parenting boards can routinely promote participation in programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the National Citizenship Service.
- Through the work of personal advisers, changes can be made in the approach to reviewing pathway plans to ensure that those transitioning from care have a positive mind-set about their futures.
- A number of local authorities are offering apprenticeship/traineeships within their local authority to care leavers.
- One local authority has developed a dedicated Employment and Housing Coach who is jointly managed by the council's employment team and leaving care service to increase cross-departmental support for care leavers.
- In one local authority the elected members fund a Trust Fund to promote the aspirations, life experiences and opportunities. Looked-after children and care leavers can apply for up to £400 per annum. Young people can use the money for things like laptops to support educational attainment, the purchase of an outfit for a young person going for a job interview, educational trips abroad or additional social activities.

4.17 At an individual level it will be crucial to build children's confidence and aspiration so they have high expectations of themselves. It will also be important to work together with carers to ensure children can access opportunities such as membership of sports clubs, visits to museums or theatre performances that relate to their interests. Local authorities may also wish to consider ways to help inspire young people to aim high and achieve. That might involve providing early "work tasters" in areas or establishing a mentoring/role models scheme that match young people with successful care leavers.

4.18 At a strategic level, local authorities may consider working with the regional network for collaborative outreach. These networks were designed to encourage more young people into higher education and bring together higher and further education institutions to coordinate their outreach activity. The access

agreements of 80% of higher education specifically include care leavers. Working with the regional network provides a way for authorities to use this and help ensure that outreach activities include looked-after children and care leavers.

Details of these regional networks can be found at:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/ncco/find/>.

Universities working collaboratively with local authorities

There are already a number of universities working collaboratively with local authorities to help looked-after children and care leavers think about higher education and to access it successfully.

York St John University works with the professional support workers, foster carers and other influencers of looked-after children in two Virtual Schools in York and North Yorkshire.

Lincoln University and Bishop Grossetest University run the Joint Universities Mentoring Project (JUMP), which operates in collaboration with local authority, community and university partners to provide care leavers with a mentoring scheme. ⁴

One local authority worked with care leavers and local universities to develop informative video guides for looked-after children and care leavers thinking of going to university.

Being safe and having stability

4.19 In order to thrive, looked-after children and care leavers need to feel and be safe, to have stability in their lives including in their education and work and to build resilience by forging strong and trusted relationships.

4.20 For looked-after children this will mean having regard to the need to maintain, as far as possible, consistency in the home environment, relationships with carers and professionals and school placement. For some care leavers, it may involve supporting a Staying Put arrangement where care leavers and their former foster carers wish to remain living together after the young person reaches the age of 18. It may also mean wider support to help care leavers navigate the inevitable

⁴ <https://www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/guidance/topic-briefings/topic-briefing-care-leavers/>

challenges of moving to independence through early preparation, good planning, securing a range of housing options and maintaining relationships with those whose continued support they might want or need during their transition to adulthood.

4.21 The examples of support in North Somerset (page 29) illustrates how it demonstrates its commitment to meeting the needs of its care leavers. An important way of responding to these needs is the approach local authorities take to housing and homelessness or rent and council tax arrears. For example, in some local authorities, the leaving care team will have a protocol in place with the housing services, which means that the care leaving team is notified as soon as a care leaver has arrears over a certain amount. This means that problems can be identified early rather than escalating to the point where the care leaver loses their tenancy. Many councils have also taken steps to exempt care leavers from council tax altogether.

Promoting safety and stability

Local authorities are proactive in ensuring that looked-after children have advocates to talk to about any concerns and are supported in articulating and taking action on any concerns. Local authorities support carers to provide stability for children, for example, authorities may provide foster carers with additional training to effectively respond to looked-after children's needs.

In one local authority, an individual housing protocol – integral to their pathway plan – was introduced for each care leaver from the age of 16 together with a wide range of accommodation options to match the young person's needs. Alongside this, a non-eviction/placement stability policy is being developed together with consideration of how to address issues of loneliness and isolation experienced by young people moving into independent living.

Another local authority has introduced a 'housing taper' to enable care leavers to pay a reduced rent for longer once they have started earning in recognition of the need for on-going support and to reduce unplanned moves at this key point in a young person's life.

Preparing for adulthood and independent living

Effective planning for managing day-to-day life

Some local authorities are using 'training flats' to help looked-after children and care leavers develop the skills they need to live independently and are putting this in place at an earlier stage. Foster carers and residential care workers are integral to this by encouraging looked-after children to help with cooking and household chores as part of normal family life rather than seeing those activities as tasks to be 'taught' a few weeks before a young person leaves care.

- 4.22 Similar to other young people, looked-after children in their transition to adulthood and care leavers need support to live independent lives. Many care leavers, however, feel under-prepared for living independently. Alongside having to manage practical matters such as paying bills, they often struggle with loneliness and isolation. It is particularly important that local authorities consider the need to help prepare looked-after children and care leavers for making the transition to adulthood and independence. This includes the building up of support networks prior to leaving care, in addition to focussing on practical support and skills, such as managing money. It will be particularly important for local authorities to work with young people in developing their local offer so that it sets out what support care leavers can expect as well as where and how they can access it.
- 4.23 Good preparation, a gradual transition and flexible ongoing support are key to helping young people achieve a successful move to independent living. The most effective local authorities establish joint working arrangements between children's services, housing and other specialist services to help young people prepare for the realities of living independently, involve them in planning and decisions about their housing options, ensure suitable housing and support is in place and are ready to respond with contingency arrangements if things do go wrong.
- 4.24 St Basils and Barnardo's have produced a Care Leavers' Accommodation and Support Framework and toolkit, which can be downloaded [here](#). The framework,

which comprises of five steps, draws together expertise from local authorities as well as leaving care and housing charities.⁵

Local Authority (LA) Case Study

The Government puts £200 into Junior Individual Savings Account (Junior ISAs) for looked-after children. These are long-term tax-advantaged savings accounts, and the young person can then access the funds when they turn eighteen and leave care. Anyone can pay money into these accounts, and some LAs make additional contributions into the Junior ISAs, in the same way that other parents save for their children's long-term futures. This means these young people have a larger nest egg when they leave care. In one LA, £5 a week is added to each child's Junior ISA. The LA also encourages children and young people to save money from their personal allowances, which helps them to develop financial capability skills that will benefit them when they face the challenges of living independently.

4.25 The illustrative local offer, which is published alongside this guidance, exemplifies the kinds of support that local authorities may include in their offer to care leavers. Annex 1 of this guidance sets out the statutory entitlements that a local authority must provide, whilst the local offer provides additional examples of support that a local authority may choose to provide to its care leavers in fulfilling its duties as a corporate parent.

⁵ The five steps to the framework are: training young people on tenancies and the housing market; involving young people in planning their accommodation; reducing housing crisis by having emergency options; commissioning a wide range of housing types; and developing skills and confidence ahead of a move to independent living.

Examples of support for care leavers in North Somerset

North Somerset provides practical and financial help that supports care leavers to achieve key adulthood milestones, such as opening a bank account, and to deal with the emergencies where others would turn to their families for help. This includes:

Financial Help

Offer financial and practical support to help pay Council Tax.

Cover Council Tax if a care leaver takes up an apprenticeship position.

Provide a Leaving Care Grant of £2,000 to each care leaver to buy essential items for their home such as a TV and TV Licence.

Pay for five hours of driving lessons and the cost of driving theory test if in education, employment or training.

Pay 50% of the cost towards broadband internet if living on their own.

Practical help

Visit when care leavers move in to their new housing to ensure they have settled and have everything they need.

Help to open a bank account.

Give health passport to everyone who leaves care at 18, including details of your health history

Provide an exceptional clothing payment of up to £100 if in need of extra money for a winter coat, shoes, warm clothing and maternity clothing.

Offer food parcels, emergency payments, and vouchers or a top up for gas and/or electric if care leavers are in crisis and have no money for food or electricity).

Help to access education and work

Meet public transport costs up to age 21 for those travelling to training, education and apprenticeships and travel costs when travelling to attend an interview.

Provide up to £100 a year towards books, equipment and essential clothing for those in education and up to £100 a year for essential work clothes such as work boots.

Annex 1

Under the Children Act 1989 a 'child' is defined (subject to a couple of exceptions not relevant to this issue) as "a person under the age of 18".

- 1 If a child meets the test in section 20(1) of the Act the Local Authority (LA) is under a statutory obligation to provide accommodation for them.
- 2 Section 22 of the Act (general duty of local authority in relation to children looked after by them) defines what is meant by a "looked-after child" (LAC). A child provided with accommodation by the LA under section 20 of the 1989 Act for a continuous period of 24 hours or more, becomes a looked after child.
- 3 Section 22(3) and (3A) set out a general duty that an LA has in relation to any LAC:

- (3) It shall be the duty of a local authority looking after any child—
 - (a) to safeguard and promote his welfare; and
 - (b) to make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the authority reasonable in his case.

(3A) The duty of a local authority under subsection (3)(a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them includes in particular a duty to promote the child's educational achievement.

So a local authority owes this duty to any child that they are looking after.

- 4 Where a child is looked-after, section 22C sets out the framework for accommodating those children. Section 22C essentially sets out a hierarchy of placement types that the LA must look to accommodate the child in. Their first duty is to try and rehabilitate the child home to their parents or someone with parental responsibility. If that is not practicable then the LA are under a duty to place the child "in the most appropriate placement available". "Placement" in this context is defined in section 22C(6) as:

- (6) In subsection (5) "placement" means—
 - (a) placement with an individual who is a relative, friend or other person connected with C [the child] and who is also a local authority foster parent;
 - (b) placement with a local authority foster parent who does not fall within paragraph (a);

(c) placement in a children's home in respect of which a person is registered under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000; or

(d) subject to section 22D, placement in accordance with other arrangements which comply with any regulations made for the purposes of this section.

There is a duty on the LA to give priority to kinship care placements (that is a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child who is also a local authority foster parent) which although won't be relevant in the majority of cases could be relevant in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) if they have connections with this country and there is someone that could be assessed as a foster carer for them.

5 So the LA must be placing the child in "the most appropriate placement available". Section 22C(7) – (9) provides that:

(7) In determining the most appropriate placement for C, the local authority must, subject to [subsection (9B) and] the other provisions of this Part (in particular, to their duties under section 22)—

(a) give preference to a placement falling within paragraph (a) of subsection (6) over placements falling within the other paragraphs of that subsection;

(b) comply, so far as is reasonably practicable in all the circumstances of C's case, with the requirements of subsection (8); and

(c) comply with subsection (9) unless that is not reasonably practicable.

(8) The local authority must ensure that the placement is such that—

(a) it allows C to live near C's home;

(b) it does not disrupt C's education or training;

(c) if C has a sibling for whom the local authority are also providing accommodation, it enables C and the sibling to live together;

(d) if C is disabled, the accommodation provided is suitable to C's particular needs.

(9) The placement must be such that C is provided with accommodation within the local authority's area.

- 6 Although section 22C(9) provides that the LA is to ensure that the accommodation is within the LA's area, section 22(7) does provide that they only need to comply with ss(9) if it is reasonably practical to do so.
- 7 Placements in a section 22C(6)(d) placement (i.e. a placement in "other arrangements") are unregulated in the sense that they aren't registered and regulated by Ofsted in the same way that a registered children's home would be so the requirements on such settings is lighter touch. However section 22D of the Act applies to such settings and there are specific provisions in the 2010 Regulations which also apply.
- 8 Under section 25A of the Act an LA must appoint an independent reviewing officer (IRO) for any child they are looking after and this appointment should be made before the child's case is first reviewed.

Care planning obligations

- 9 When a child is a looked-after child the 2010 Regulations apply to that child's case.
- 10 Briefly the 2010 Regulations provide that the LA must:
- prepare a care plan for that child before that child (C) is placed by the LA or, if it is not reasonably practical to do so, within 10 days of the child being placed. Regulation 4(5) provides that where the child is aged 16 or over and agrees to be accommodated under section 20 of the Act, the care plan should also be agreed with the child.
 - Regulation 5 sets out what the care plan must include and includes things like the long term plan for the child's upbringing, the arrangements made by the LA to meet the child's needs in relation to health, education and training etc. and must also include the name of the child's IRO. Since August 2014 the care plan must include:
 - (1)(f) where C is—
 - (i) a victim, or there is reason to believe C may be a victim, of trafficking in human beings within the meaning of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings,
 - (ii) an unaccompanied asylum seeking child within the meaning of the Immigration Rules and has applied, or has indicated to the responsible authority an intention to apply, for asylum and has not been granted indefinite leave to remain, that fact.

- The care plan must be kept under review (regulation 6).
- Regulation 7 provides that before a child is first placed, or if that is not reasonably practicable, before the first review of the child's case, the LA must make arrangements for a medical practitioner to examine the child in order to assess the child and provide a written report. The LA must then take all reasonable steps to ensure that the child is provided with the appropriate health care services in accordance with the plan.
- Under regulation 9, before making arrangements to place the child under section 22C, the LA must prepare a placement plan setting out the matters listed in regulation 9 and in Schedule 2. If it is not reasonably practicable to prepare the placement plan before the child is placed it must be prepared within 5 working days of the start of the placement. There are specific requirements in regulation 27 of and Schedule 6 to the 2010 Regulations where a child is being placed in "other arrangements" under s22C(6)(d) of the Act (see below).
- Under regulation 11, where an LA decide to place a child out of area, where the placement is not with a connected person who is an approved foster carer or another LA approved foster carer, the placement must not be put into effect until it has been approved by a nominated officer and where the placement is "at a distance" (not within the area of an adjoining LA) it must be approved by a Director of Children's Services (DCS). Regulation 11 also sets out what the nominated officer or DCS must be satisfied about before they approve the placement.
- Regulation 14 provides that if the LA want to terminate the placement they must comply with the provisions of regulation 14.
- Part 4 of the 2010 Regulations set out the requirements applicable to different types of placement. Regulation 27 provides:

27 General duties of the responsible authority when placing a child in other arrangements

Before placing C [the child] in accommodation in an unregulated setting under section 22C(6)(d), the responsible authority must—

- (a) be satisfied that the accommodation is suitable for C, having regard to the matters set out in Schedule 6,
- (b) unless it is not reasonably practicable, arrange for C to visit the accommodation, and
- (c) inform the IRO.

Schedule 6 to the 2010 Regulations provides:

Matters to be Considered Before Placing C in Accommodation in an Unregulated Setting Under Section 22C(6)(d)

1 In respect of the accommodation, the—

- (a) facilities and services provided,
- (b) state of repair,
- (c) safety,
- (d) location,
- (e) support,
- (f) tenancy status, and
- (g) the financial commitments involved for C and their affordability.

2 In respect of C, C's—

- (a) views about the accommodation,
- (b) understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the accommodation, and
- (c) understanding of funding arrangements.

- Part 5 of the 2010 Regulations deals with visits to LACs. LAs must visit the child in accordance with regulation 28.
- Part 6 of the 2010 Regulations deals with reviews of the child's case and the LA must review the case in accordance with that Part. Regulation 33 sets out the timings of such reviews (first within 20 days of when the child first became looked after, the 2nd not more than 3 months after the first and subsequent reviews at intervals of not more than 6 months).
- Regulation 36 sets out the role that the IRO has in relation to the LAC.
- Part 7 of the 2010 Regulations contains the LA's duties if they are considering ceasing to look after the child.

Annex 2

Categories of Care Leavers

1. A LA has the duties set out in section 23B in relation to a “relevant child”. A “**relevant child**” is defined in section 23A(2) of the Act as one who:
 - (a) is not being looked after by any local authority;
 - (b) was, before last ceasing to be looked after, an eligible child for the purposes of paragraph 19B of Schedule 2; and
 - (c) is aged sixteen or seventeen.

The Care Leavers Regulations provide for an additional category of relevant children in regulation 3; if a child falls within the following criteria:

- (a) is aged sixteen or seventeen,
- (b) is not subject to a care order, and
- (c) on attaining the age of 16 the child was detained, or in hospital, and immediately before being detained or admitted to hospital had been looked after by a local authority for a period or periods amounting in total to at least 13 weeks, which began after the child attained the age of 14.

“**Eligible child**” is defined as a child that is:

- (a) aged sixteen or seventeen; and
 - (b) has been looked after by a local authority for a prescribed period, or periods amounting in all to a prescribed period, which began after he reached a prescribed age and ended after he reached the age of sixteen.
- 2 The relevant prescribed period is set out in the 2010 Regulations as 13 weeks and the prescribed age is 14 years. An eligible child is one who has been looked after for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting to 13 weeks, which began after he reached the age of 14 and ended after he reached the age of 16.
 - 3 **The period of time for which the child should have been looked after to be an eligible child must amount to at least 13 weeks and be between the child’s 14th Birthday and at least one day after their 16th Birthday.** So if a child becomes an LAC at any time after they turn 14 and ceases to be looked after at any time after they turn 16 then they will be an “eligible child”.

- 4 Local authorities also have statutory obligations to **“former relevant children”** who are defined in section 23C(1) of the Act as a young person who is:
- (a) aged 18 or above, and either
 - (b) has been a relevant child and would be one if he were under 18, or
 - (c) immediately before he ceased to be looked after at age 18, was an eligible child.
- 5 LA’s also have some statutory obligations to former relevant children who are **pursuing further education or training** who are defined in section 23CA(1) as a former relevant child who is:
- (a) aged under 25,
 - (b) a former relevant child in relation to whom the duties in section 23C(2),(3) & (4) no longer apply, and
 - (c) he has informed the local authority that he wants to pursue or is pursuing a programme of education or training.
- 6 A final category of **“persons qualifying for advice and assistance”** to whom the LA will owe certain duties (see section 24A and 24B) are defined in section 24 of the Act as a person who is:
- (a) aged at least 16 but is under 21 with respect to whom a special guardianship order is in force (or was in force when they reached 18) and was looked after immediately before the making of that order, or
 - (b) under 21 and at any time after reaching the age of 16 but while he was still a child was, but is no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

What provision is the care leaver entitled to?

This depends on what type of care leaver the young person is.

Eligible Children

- 7 The local authority has the same statutory obligations in relation to eligible children as they do towards other children looked after by them, including a duty to maintain their care plan, carry out regular reviews of their case and appoint an independent reviewing officer (IRO) for the child. In addition they must:

- prepare an assessment of the eligible child's needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide him (both while he is still looked after and after he stops being looked after) (paragraph 19B(4) of Schedule 2 to the Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulation 42 of the 2010 Regulations).
- As soon as possible after the assessment of needs is completed, prepare a pathway plan (which includes the child's care plan) (paragraph 19B(4) of Schedule 2 to the Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 43 of and Schedule 8 to the 2010 Regulations).
- keep the pathway plan under regular review (paragraph 19B(5) of Schedule 2 to the Act).
- appoint a personal adviser for the child (paragraph 19C of Schedule 2 to the Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 44 of the 2010 Regulations).

Relevant Children

8 The local authority that last looked after the relevant child must:

- take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the relevant child even if the child is not in the LA area (section 23B(1) of the Act).
- Prepare an assessment of the relevant child's needs with a view to determining what advice assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide him (unless they already did so when he was an eligible child) (section 23B(3)(a) of the Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulations 4 and 5 of the Care Leavers Regulations).
- As soon as possible after any assessment of needs is completed, prepare a pathway plan (section 23B(3)(b) of the Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of and schedule 1 to the Care Leavers Regulations).
- Keep the pathway plan under regular review (section 23E(1D) of the Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations).
- Appoint a personal adviser for the child (unless they already did so when he was an eligible child) (section 23B(2) of the Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations).

- Safeguard and promote the relevant child’s welfare by maintaining him, providing him with or maintaining him in suitable accommodation and providing assistance in order to meet his needs in relation to education, training or employment as provided for in his pathway plan (section 23B(8) of the Act and regulation 9 of the Care Leavers Regulations; regulation 9 and schedule 2 to the Care Leavers Regulations also make provision about the meaning of “suitable accommodation”).

Former Relevant Children

9 The local authority that last looked after the former relevant child must:

- take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the former relevant child even if the child is not in the LA area, and if they lose touch with him, to re-establish contact (section 23C(2) of the Act) continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review (section 23C(3)(b) of the Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations).
- Continue the appointment of the personal adviser for the child (section 23C(3)(a) of the Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations).
- If his welfare requires it, provide financial assistance by contributing to the former relevant child’s expenses in living near the place where he is, or will be, employed or seeking employment (sections 23C(4)(a) and 24B(1) of the Act) if his welfare and educational and training needs require it, provide financial assistance to enable him to pursue education or training (sections 23C(4)(b) and 24B(2) of the Act).
- If the former relevant child pursues higher education in accordance with his pathway plan, pay him the higher education bursary (section 23C(5A) of the Act and the Children Act 1989 (Higher Education Bursary) (England) Regulations 2009).

To the extent that his welfare requires it, provide “other assistance” which may be in kind and in exceptional circumstances, cash (section 23C(4)(c) and 23C(5)). The case of *R (on the application of) S.O. v London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (2010)*⁶ considered whether section 23C(4)(c) of the Act provides a

⁶ R (on the application of O) v London Borough of Barking and Dagenham [2010] EWCA Civ 1101.

power for the LA to accommodate a former relevant child and held that the subsection does afford an LA with a power to accommodate.¹⁰ The duties in section 23C(2), (3) and (4) of the Act continue until the former relevant child reaches 21 or, where the child's pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond his 21st birthday, they continue for so long as the child pursues that programme and the other duties in section 23C(2), (3) and (4)(b) of the Act also continue for the same period.

- 11 Although local authorities can provide support to any care leavers who want to remain with their former foster carers, a specific duty was placed on local authorities in section 23CZA of the Children Act 1989. This duty places a legal requirement on local authorities to advise, assist and support (which must include financial support) both the young person and their former foster carers when they wish to stay living together after the former relevant child reaches their 18th birthday.

Former relevant children pursuing further education or training

- 12 The local authority which owed duties to a former relevant child under section 23C and 23CA of the Act must:
- appoint a personal adviser for that person (section 23CA(2) of the Act).
 - Carry out an assessment of the needs of that person with a view to determining what assistance (if any) it would be appropriate for them to provide him (section 23CA(3)(a) of the Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulations 4 and 5 of the Care Leavers Regulations).
 - Prepare a pathway plan for that person (section 23CA(3)(b) of the Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of and schedule 1 to the Care Leavers Regulations).
 - To the extent the person's educational or training needs require it, provide financial assistance (section 23CA(4) and (5) of the Act).

Persons qualifying for advice or assistance

- 13 The relevant local authority (as defined in section 24(5) of the Act) must consider whether the person needs help of a kind the local authority can give:
- Under section 24A - to advise and befriend and give assistance.

- Under section 24B - to give financial assistance to a person over 16 years old but under 21 who was either made subject to a special guardianship order immediately after being looked-after by a local authority or who was looked-after but is no longer looked-after in relation to expenses incurred in living near the place where the person is, will be, or is seeking work or where the person is or will be receiving education or training ; or where the person is in full time further or higher education, is under the age of 25 and qualifies for advice and assistance, or would have done if he was under 21, assistance in relation to securing vacation accommodation (sections 24A(2) and (3), and 24B of the Act).

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and victims of trafficking

- 14 Under the Care Leavers Regulations a care leaver's needs in relation to their status as a victim of trafficking or an unaccompanied asylum seeking child must be considered when the local authority is preparing an assessment of needs and to require that, where a child is a victim of trafficking or an unaccompanied asylum seeking child the local authority must consider whether their related needs are being met when reviewing the child's pathway plan.

Annex 3

Table A: functions where consideration of corporate parenting principles should generally apply

	Shire areas			Metropolitan areas	London	
	Unitaries	County councils	District councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	GLA
Education	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Social care	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Housing	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Libraries	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Leisure and recreation	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Local taxation collection	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Table B: functions where corporate parenting principles are less likely to apply

	Shire areas			Metropolitan areas	London	
	Unitaries	County councils	District councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	GLA
Highways	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Transport planning	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Passenger transport	✓	✓				✓
Environmental health	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Waste collection	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Waste disposal	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Planning application	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Further information

Relevant departmental advice and statutory guidance

- Care planning, placement and case review guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-care-planning-placement-and-case-review>
- Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-transition-to-adulthood-for-care-leavers>
- Roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directors-of-childrens-services-roles-and-responsibilities>
- Promoting the health and well-being of looked-after children:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-looked-after-children--2>
- Promoting the education of looked-after children:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>
- Care Leaver Strategy: a cross departmental strategy for young people leaving care: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-on-caring-supporting-young-people-from-care-to-independence>
- Working together to safeguard children:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>



Department
for Education

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

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 October 2021
Subject:	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2020-21

Summary:

This report introduces the Annual Complaints Report for Children's Services. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the performance of Children's Services in relation to complaints. The report only addresses complaints relating to Children's Social Care in line with the statutory requirement and does not contain any data relating to complaints about the wider Children's Services.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and comment on the Annual Complaints Report for 2020/21 and note the low numbers of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld.

1. Background

The report attached at Appendix A provides the Committee with information on the complaints received by Children's Social Care for the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

A total of 136 contacts were received in 2020/2021 from individuals wishing to complain about the service. In recent years, Children's Services has introduced a more restorative approach to complaints, where by when people indicate they are unhappy and are considering making a complaint, a manager in the relevant service reaches out and attempts to resolve the issue before a formal complaint is made. As a result of this approach, 45 complaints were resolved informally, outside of the complaints process, accounting for 33% of all contacts received.

With the resolution of 45 complaints outside of the complaints process, to the service users satisfaction, 2020/2021 saw an overall decrease of the complaints entering the formal process of 18%. A total of 91 complaints formally entered the system. Whilst some

of this can be accounted for in the overall drop the Council saw at the beginning of the year due to the global pandemic, Children's Services has continued to try and resolve concerns as early as possible despite the additional pressures seen over the course of the year. 91 complaints is the lowest number of complaints in the last 10 years which is excellent progress, particularly in a year where services have had to adapt to manage Covid-19 which potentially could have meant increased customer dissatisfaction.

Only 10 complaints were fully upheld. Four of these were due to lack of communication, four due to staff conduct and attitude, and two due to a delay in service. Eighteen complaints were partially upheld: eight due to delay in service, seven due to assessment errors and three due to lack of communication.

Any learning from these complaints has been addressed by the managers for the team with the staff concerned. It is really pleasing to note the low numbers of complaints within the context of Covid and the impact that early resolution is having on the numbers.

2. Conclusion

The process of early informal resolution appears to be making a difference in reducing the number of complaints that enter the formal system. Whilst it was an unusual year because of the Covid pandemic, it is hoped this progress can be maintained this year. Compliments are also collated and the plan is to remind staff of this process so that in future we can report on compliments as well as complaints.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children's Service's Annual Complaints Report for 2020-2021

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Carolyn Knight who can be contacted on 01522 553732 or by e-mail at Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

**Everyone Working Together for
all Children, Young People &
Families to be Happy, Healthy,
Safe and the Best they can be**

**Annual Complaints Report
2020 - 2021**

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Introduction

Lincolnshire County Council is an authority that welcomes all feedback which may serve to increase understanding of the experiences of customers who receive services. With this in mind, the authority is keen to make use of complaints as a means of improving services for children and their families. It is anticipated that the speedy resolution of complaints will maximise the prospect of a good outcome.

This report is written in compliance with the statutory complaints guidance issued by the Department of Education – Getting The Best From Complaints. The report deals with complaints received by children, Young People and their families between the period of 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. This report is provided under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. This report fulfils the Council's statutory duty to produce a report.

This report seeks to outline the themes which arise from complaints received and identify any learning which may be required in order to improve service provision.

1. Complaints definition

A complaint is considered to be an expression of dissatisfaction about a specific incident or a given situation. All complaints received by Lincolnshire County Council are dealt with under the following procedures;

- Statutory complaints procedures
- The schools complaints procedures
- The council's corporate complaints procedure.

This report focuses on complaints that relate specifically to Children's Social Care (including adoption and fostering). School complaints and corporate complaints are dealt with separately and information about them is not included within the scope of this report.

2. Complaints legislation

The regulations require that every local authority appoint a Complaints Manager to ensure provision of a robust social care complaints and representation procedure to eligible service users. The framework for handling Children's Social Care Complaints within England is laid out within the Regulations.

3. Children's Social Care Complaints Procedures

Complaints Management:

Lincolnshire County Council has a dedicated officer who is based within the Customer Feedback Team. Complaints can be made at any point in the local authority with all complaints being

forwarded to the Feedback email account. The mail box is managed by the Customer Feedback Team who will view all complaints. Where complaints may be ambiguous, the complainant will be contacted in order to gain greater clarification. When a complaint is received directly from a child or young person, discussions are held with the Social Worker allocated to the child in order to ascertain whether additional support might be required by the child in order for them to pursue their complaint.

The Complaints Officer's role is to ensure that all complaints which are received are responded to in line with the Statutory Complaints Procedure and to this end they will chase responses to ensure that these are sent out within specified timescales. In addition the Complaints Officer will ensure that information in respect of complaints is recorded in order that themes and issues can be identified.

Complaints Procedure

There are various stages to the complaints process which are outlined below. It should be noted that whilst there are clear timeframes for complaints to be addressed at each stage of the complaints process, there will, on some rare occasions, be a need to extend this timeframe. This may include the complainant child requiring an advocate. If additional time is required the complainant will be notified of this at the earliest opportunity.

Stage one – Local Resolution

Complaints received are forwarded to the appropriate manager to address the concerns. An acknowledgement is sent to the complainant within one working day and in most cases a full response will be provided within ten working days. In some circumstances i.e. where the complaint is particularly complex a further ten days is permitted to address the complaint. When this is the case the complainant will be notified.

Stage two – Independent Investigation

When an individual is dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage one complaint they are able to request an independent investigation. The timeframe for this stage of the complaints process is 25 working days with an extension to 65 working days.

Stage three – Review Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage two investigation they may request an independent panel to review how the complaint was handled. The panel must meet within 30 working days of the request.

It should be noted that whilst the internal process concludes at stage three, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they are able to approach the Local Government Ombudsman. This report does not extend to any issues addressed at this level.

4. Advocacy and Engagement

Lincolnshire County Council commission TotalVoice Lincolnshire to provide independent advocacy for adults and children and young people who might wish to make a complaint. The children's element of this contract is sub contracted to Barnardo's. All children and young people who wish to take advantage of this service are able to do so, in addition any child or young person who become enters care or who become subject to Child Protection procedures are provided with an advocate unless they specifically express that they do not want one. The Complaints Officer ensures that children and young people are aware of this service when they seek to make complaints.

This year there were no cases where there was involvement from the advocacy service. Cases have been exceptionally low with the introduction of an Early Resolution step and this may account for this.

There is always concern that children and young people are unaware or not confident enough to make a complaint which is one of the primary purposes for the Children's Statutory complaint process, however children and young people who are in the system have Social Workers and so if they complain the issue should be resolved locally if the Social Worker is in the position to assist them. All Social Workers are aware that children and young people are entitled to an advocate and any children within Child Protection or Children in Care are provided an advocate automatically unless they opt out.

5. Children in Care

As soon as a child enters care, they are provided with a "coming into care kit." This provides them with information as to how they can express any feelings of dissatisfaction they may have including making formal complaints. There are however a number of informal dispute resolution options which are available to children and young people who are in the care of the local authority. These include the following:-

Independent Reviewing Officers: The Independent Reviewing Officer has a duty to engage with children and young people to ascertain their views in respect of their care plans and also to advise them of their entitlements including their right to complain. Children are encouraged to attend their reviews in order that they are aware of their plan and are able to comment on this. Where children's wishes are contrary to the plan, the Independent Reviewing Officer is able to escalate matters on behalf of the child in order to resolve matters in a timely manner. Where children and young people continue to be dissatisfied, the Independent Reviewing Officer is able to support young people in making formal complaints.

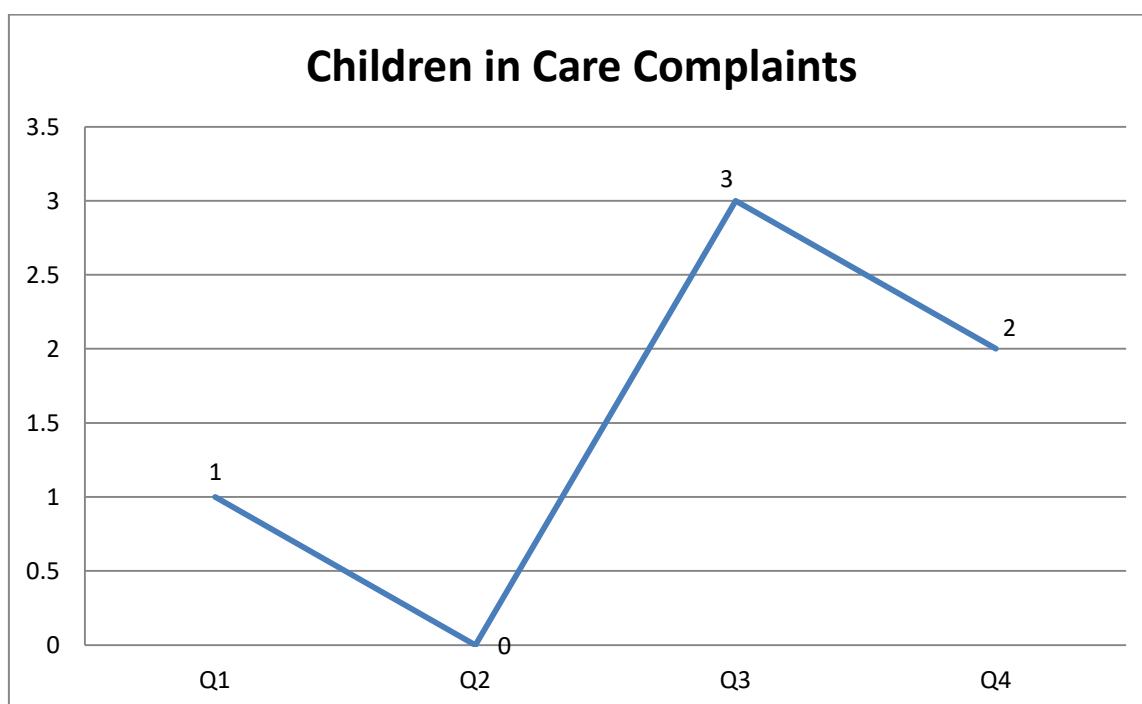
Regulation 44 Visits: The Regulation 44 Officer is an Independent Visitor who visits all residential homes within the authority on a monthly basis. An integral part of the role of the Independent Visitor is to talk to children, young people and their families about their

experiences of the residential home. The Regulation 44 Visitor is able to engage in discussions with the homes manager in order to resolve any issues which the child may identify. Where this early attempt at resolution is unsuccessful, the Independent Visitor is able to support the young person in making a formal complaint.

Social Workers: Social Workers meet with children on a regular basis. A fundamental part of this visiting is ascertaining the wishes and feelings of children and young people. Where children are unhappy with the level of care which they are receiving, their social worker will in the first instance work with the child to see whether changes are able to be made which would comply with the child's wishes. Social Workers are able to direct children to the advocacy service if they wish to pursue a formal complaint.

6. Complaints received around Children in Care

This year has seen no complaints made directly by children who are in care. However 13 contacts were received from parents or carers of children in care. Of these 13 contacts one was resolved informally. This was in relation to an incorrect address being used to send review documents to. The remaining 12 entered the formal complaints process.



Quarter 1

A single complaint was received from a mother who complained that her child's social worker was not sharing information with her and how the authority intended to keep the child safe during the pandemic. This complaint was not upheld and was not escalated to the next stage of the complaints process.

Quarter 2

No complaints in relation to Children in Care were received in this quarter. The national lockdown, as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, remained in place at this time.

Quarter 3

3 complaints were received in the 3rd quarter and were all from parents of children in care.

- Family complained that assessments were taking too long to be sent through. This complaint was not upheld as all relevant documents were sent through in a timely fashion and this was evidenced.
- Parent complained that appropriate safeguarding measures were not taken in the home that their child was resident in, and did not believe their child should remain there. This is directly linked to Covid-19 as the precautions in question were PPE. This complaint was not upheld as the PEE used was in line with central government guidance.
- A final complaint was received from a mother unhappy with the information that had been detailed about her in an assessment. This complaint was not upheld as it was evidenced where the information had been gathered from.

Quarter 4

The 4th quarter saw 2 complaints in regards to children in care and the details of these are as follows;

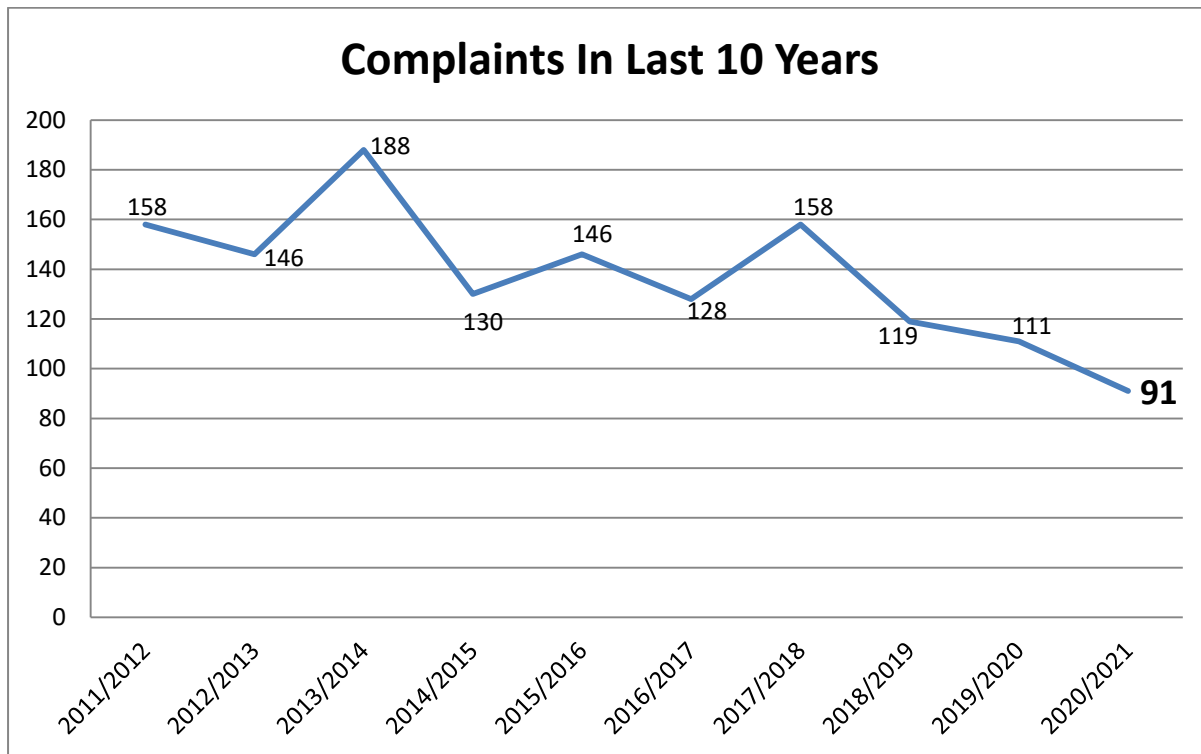
- A parent complained that she felt the information about her included within a report was misleading and she felt discriminated against. This complaint was not upheld as the statements that parent advised were made were not found in any report.
- A Parent complained that she was purposefully being excluded from updates about her son. Parent was unhappy that updates were provided to the SW and not to her and following this the SW was also not keeping parent up to date. This complaint was partially upheld. The parent had specifically stated in a previous correspondence that they wanted no more than a weekly update and SW thought they were acting in line with this. However parent had also requested specific individuals to assist with contact and this was not actioned.

7. Statistical Analysis

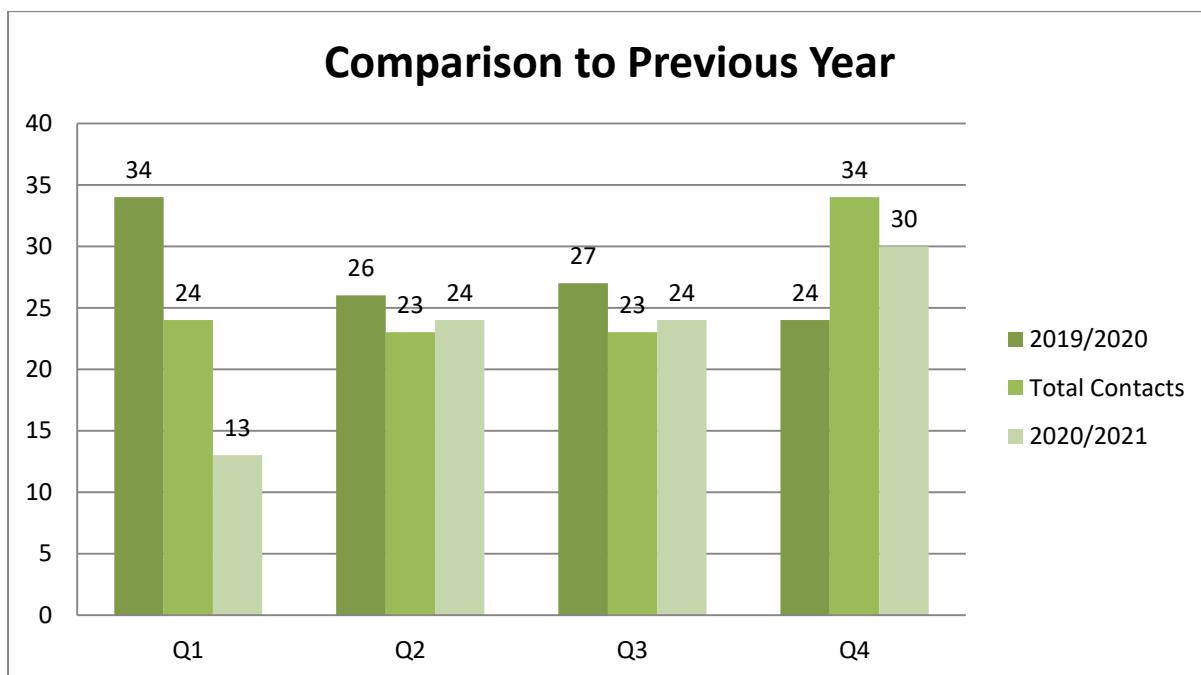
This section will provide an overview and analysis of the handling and management of all Children's social care complaints received in 2020/2021.

A total of 136 contacts were received in 2020/2021 from individuals wishing to complain about the service. Of these complaints 45 were resolved informally, outside of the complaints process, accounting for 33% of all contacts received.

With the resolution of 45 complaints outside of the complaints process, to the service users satisfaction, 2020/2021 saw an overall decrease of the complaints entering the formal process of 18%. Whilst some of this can be accounted for in the overall drop the council saw at the beginning of the year due to the global pandemic, service have continued to try and resolve concerns as early as possible despite the additional pressures seen over the course of the year.



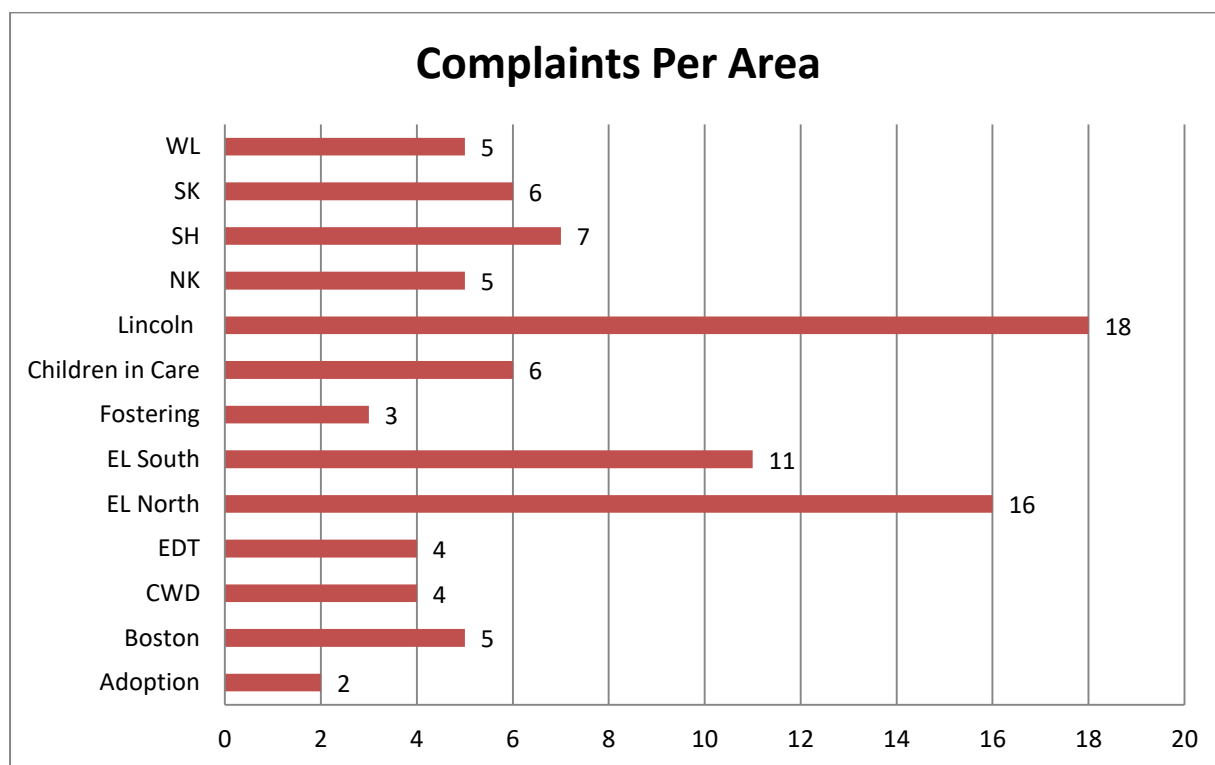
The following shows a breakdown of all contacts received, and the number of these entering the formal process per quarter, in comparison to the previous year.



The differences that we are able to see in both the first quarter and the second quarter are consistent with the themes seen across all service areas in this financial year. The first quarter saw a significant impact on communities given the global crisis at the time and restrictions implemented at the time. It was widely acknowledged that there would be an adjustment for all services in order to continue providing what they were and remaining in line with the strict rules implemented by central government.

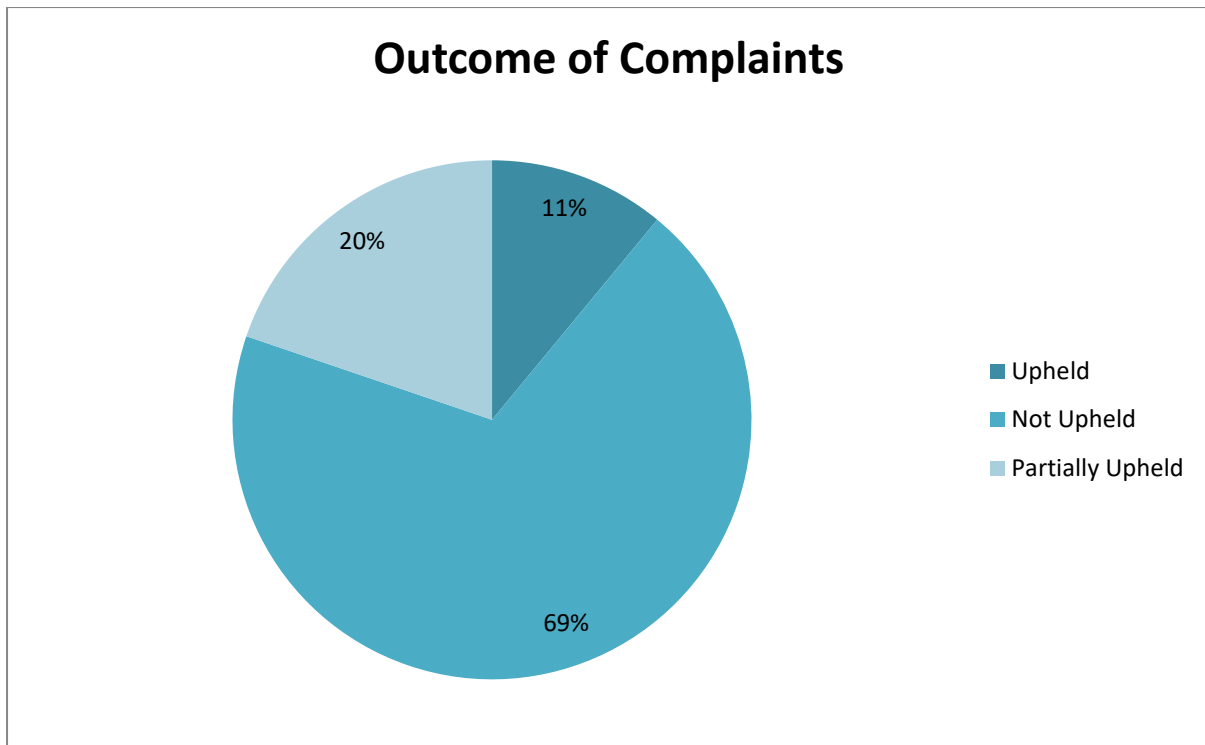
By the final quarter a "new normal" had emerged and this saw all services across the county see a rise in the number of complaints being received. Children's Services have remained in line with other services but a continued focus on resolving concerns and issues as quickly as possible, to the complainants' satisfaction has ensured that the overall figure for the year has not increased to the same levels seen in previous years, prior to the introduction of Early Resolution.

The following shows a breakdown of complaints received by the area they were raised with;



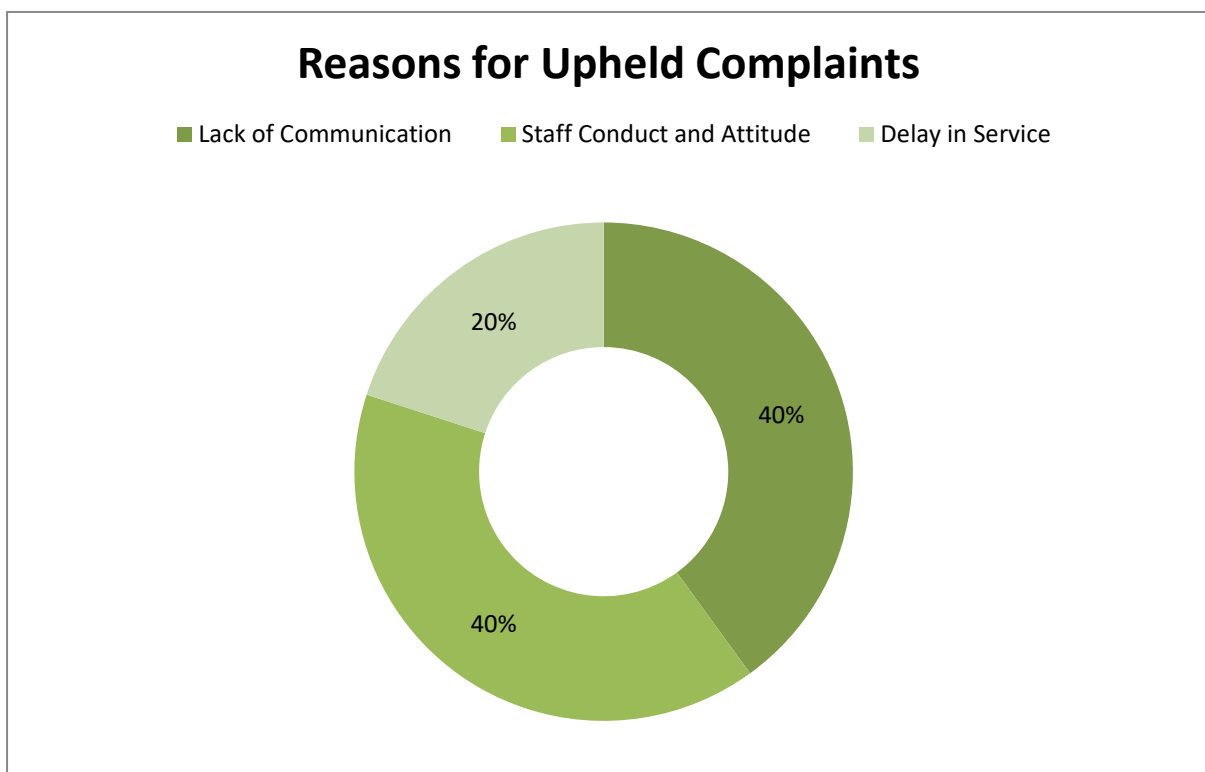
This break down is proportionally consistent with previous years. This year is particularly difficult in terms of analysis as it should be considered that there will be a large number of the complaints submitted to this authority that are as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic. This can be evidenced also in the advice given by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The LGSCO have not investigated cases where the complaint was as a result of the guidance given by central government as they acknowledge that these are not decisions made by local authorities.

The proportional number of complaints that we see above are likely to be a reflection of the number of families being provided services in those areas. The following shows a breakdown of the outcomes of all complaints received;



It is positive to note that the vast majority of complaints, 69%, saw no fault found with the service that had been provided.

Analysis was completed on all complaints which were fully or partially upheld in order to determine if there were any common areas or trends which needed to be considered and improved moving forward, however as noted previously, this was done with consideration of what has occurred this year.

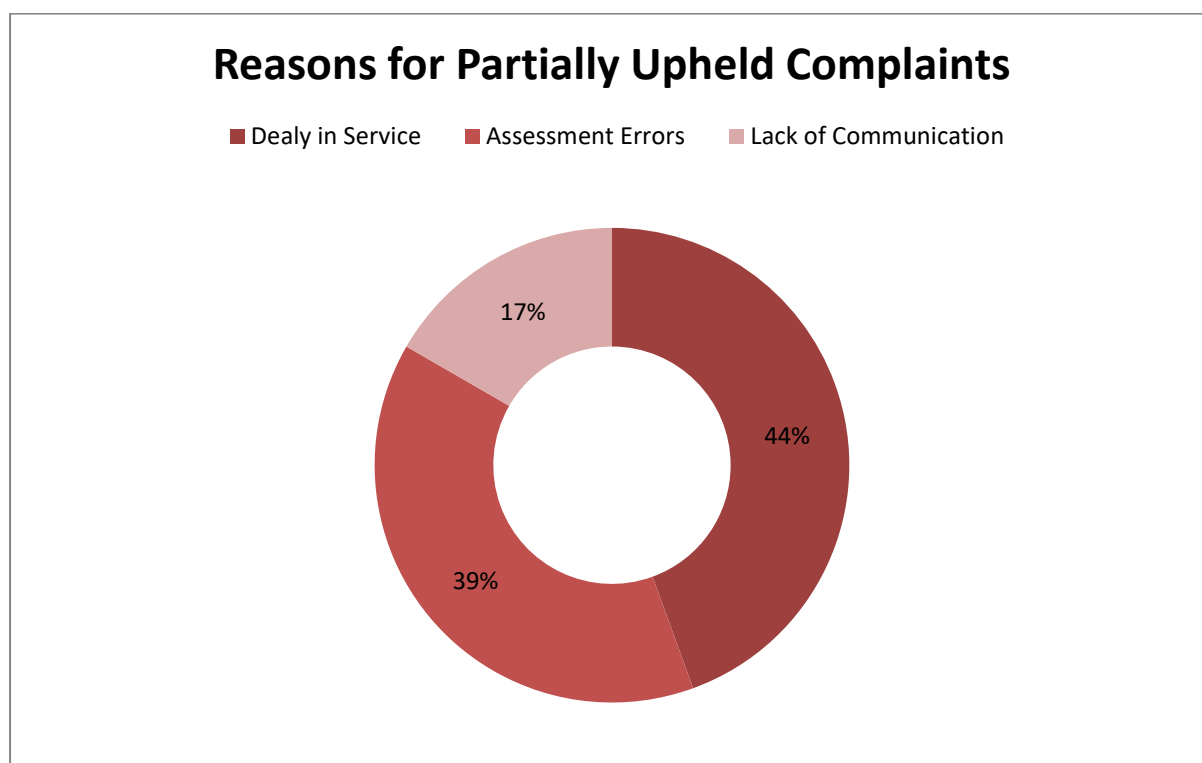


Of the 91 complaints received 10 were upheld. Of these 10 complaints 4 were in relation to a lack of communication from involved staff. This has been an on-going theme and is already an area of improvement that the service is aware of.

4 complaints were in relation to the conduct and attitude of staff. This was in relation to staff in 3 different area teams, and has been dealt with accordingly. It is encouraging that there are no specific teams that see this as trend in the complaints that have been received for their area.

Of those 10 complaints upheld 2 were in relation to delays in service. Given the impact on services and delays being faced as a result of Covid-19 it is encouraging that number being upheld remains low.

The following shows a breakdown of the areas of Partially Upheld complaints where fault was found;



In total 18 complaints were found to be Partially Upheld. The above shows the aspects of those complaints where fault was found.

8 were due to a delay in service. When amalgamated with the complaints where this aspect was fully upheld this accounts for a total of 10 complaints in which the authority agreed that there was fault with the service. Once again it should be considered that there will have been an impact from the global events of the year on this particular area.

7 of these complaints found fault with information included within assessments. In all 7 of these cases errors were rectified and the complainant was satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. A further case is noted below, the only case to have been escalated to 2nd stage of the complaints

process. This aspect was not upheld at the first stage however we are awaiting the outcome of the stage 2 investigation which may result in an increase to this number.

The remaining 3 complaints were in relation to a lack of communication.

Escalations

2020/2021 saw only one complaint escalated to the second stage of the statutory complaints process. The main aspects of this complaint were the following;

- Staff Conduct and Attitude
- Assessment errors

At stage one of the complaints process the complaint was not upheld. This case became particularly complex as one of the two complainants unfortunately passed shortly after a request for escalation was made to the authority.

The second complainant wished to pursue the complaint and at the writing of this report the investigation remains on-going.

8. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

In total 11 referrals were made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in regards to Children's statutory complaints. In two of these cases fault was found. 4 cases saw no fault in the way in which this authority had delivered its services. At the writing of this report 5 cases remain open to the LGSCO.

9. Learning and Recommendations

There is consistency in the areas in which fault is found in the way services have been delivered. The global situation makes the findings of this year difficult to use in making recommendations.

It is clear that learning has already been undertaken by the service given the on-going work in Early resolution of concerns raised, the low number of cases in which fault is found and the significantly lower number of cases where individuals remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint and request an escalation.

Delays in service were an expected outcome of this year however given that fault was found with this in several cases this will continue to be monitored.

Work continues in order to address issues in relation to the lack of communication which has been reported via the complaints process. Workers already have a requirement to meet a certain level of communication with families that they are working with and this is being monitored.

Some individual learning has also been identified through the complaints received and this has been undertaken by the relevant team manager.

10. Summary

As mentioned in this report, analysis and consideration of improvements is difficult to fully identify from this years data, given the significant impact that Covid-19 has had on all services provided by the Local Authority and the direct restrictions placed by central government.

What can be noted is that Children's Services, despite the difficult circumstances and additional pressure of adjusting services, has remained focussed on achieving early resolution for individuals dissatisfied or concerned around services being received. This is reflected in the overall decreased in the number of complaints entering the formal process and the lack of complaints where an escalation to the next stage has been requested.

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Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 October 2021
Subject:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Summary:

This item enables the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme to ensure that its scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit. The Committee is encouraged to highlight items that could be included for consideration in the work programme.

Actions Required:

- (1) To review and agree the Committee's work programme as set out in this report.
- (2) To highlight for discussion any additional scrutiny activity which could be considered for inclusion in the work programme.

1. Background

Current Items

For reference, the Committee's items for this meeting are set out below: -

15 October 2021		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Update on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision; Together in Lincolnshire Strategy	Eileen McMorrow, Programme Manager, Special Schools Strategy Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development	Policy Review (Yearly Update)

15 October 2021		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Corporate Parenting Responsibilities	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager	Induction
Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2020-21	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director - Early Help	Performance Scrutiny

Planned Items

The Committee's planned items are listed below:

19 November 2021		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Restorative Practice - Lincolnshire Joint Diversionary Panels (JDP)	Andy Cook, Service Manager - Future4Me/ Youth Offending Dr Sue Bond-Taylor, University of Lincoln Superintendent Mark Kirwan, Lincolnshire Police Tony Pryce, JDP Coordinator	Performance Scrutiny
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Update	Chris Cook, Chair of LSCP Stacey Waller, LSCP Manager	Performance Scrutiny
Children in Care Transformation - Residential Estate Expansion Programme	Tara Jones, Head of Service - Children in Care Transformation	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Executive Councillor decision on 22 – 30 November 2021)
Wickenby Children's Home	Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development Matthew Stapleton, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Property	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Executive Councillor decision on 22 – 30 November 2021)

19 November 2021		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Service Level Performance against the Corporate Performance Framework – Quarter 2	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help	Performance Scrutiny
The expansion of St Lawrence School, Horncastle (EXEMPT)	Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Leader decision between 22 - 26 November 2021)

14 January 2022		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Council Budget 2022/23	Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children's Services	Budget Scrutiny
Schools Funding Update 2022/23 - Mainstream Schools	Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance – Children's	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Executive Councillor Decision on TBC)
Director of Public Health Annual Report 2021	Derek Ward, Director of Public Health Andy Fox, Consultant in Public Health	Performance Scrutiny
School Improvement – Covid-19 Response	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help Martin Smith, Assistant Director - Education	Performance Scrutiny
Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2020/21	Jill Chandar-Nair, Inclusion and Attendance Manager	Policy Review
Sustainable Modes of Transport to School (SMOTS) Action Plan Update	Mark Rainey, Commissioning Manager - Commercial	Performance Scrutiny

4 March 2022		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Service Level Performance against the Corporate Performance Framework – Quarter 3	Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director – Early Help	Performance Scrutiny
Lincolnshire Local Authority School Performance 2020-21	Martin Smith, Assistant Director - Education	Performance Scrutiny

22 April 2022		
Item	Contributor	Purpose
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Update	Chris Cook, Chair of LSCP Stacey Waller, LSCP Manager	Performance Scrutiny

Items to be scheduled

- Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy – Policy Review

2. Conclusion

The Committee is invited to review, consider and comment on the work programme as set out above and highlight for discussion any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

A list of all upcoming Forward Plan decisions relating to the Committee is also attached at Appendix A.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Forward Plan of Decisions relating to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

4. 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 Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 07552 253814 or by e-mail at tracy.johnson@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM 01 NOVEMBER 2021

DEC REF	MATTERS FOR DECISION	REPORT STATUS	DECISION MAKER AND DATE OF DECISION	PEOPLE/GROUPS CONSULTED PRIOR TO DECISION	DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED	OFFICER(S) FROM WHOM FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED AND REPRESENTATIONS MADE (All officers are based at County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL unless otherwise stated)	DIVISIONS AFFECTED
I021049	The expansion of St Lawrence's School, Horncastle	Exempt	Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications) Between 22 Nov 2021 and 26 Nov 2021	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Reports	Head of Property Development Email: dave.pennington@lincolnshire.gov.uk Programme Manager, Special Schools Strategy Email: eileen.mcmorrow@lincolnshire.gov.uk	Horncastle and the Keals
I022290	Children in Care Transformation - Residential Estate Expansion Programme	Open	Executive Councillor: Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement Between 22 Nov 2021 and 30 Nov 2021	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Reports	Admissions and Education Provision Manager Tel: 01522 553535 E-mail: matthew.clayton@lincolnshire.gov.uk	All Divisions
I022291	Wickenby Children's Home	Open	Executive Councillor: People Management, Legal and Corporate Property Between 22 Nov 2021 and 30 Nov 2021	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Reports	Senior Project Manager Tel: 01522 553807 E- mail: matthew.stapleton@lincolnshire.gov.uk	Ermine and Cathedral

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