



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

THURSDAY, 22 JULY 2021 at 10.00 AM
in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN LN1 1YL

MEMBERSHIP

<u>Lincolnshire County Council:</u>	Councillors K H Cooke, A G Hagues, C Matthews, Clio Perraton-Williams, S P Roe, M A Whittington and 1 Vacancy
<u>Added Members (non-voting):</u>	Polly Coombes, Ann Wright, Amy-Louise Butler, and Elizabeth Bunney

AGENDA

Item	Title	Pages
1	Election of Chairman	
2	Election of Vice-Chairman	
3	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
4	Declaration of Members' Interests	
5	Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021	5 - 12
6	Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillor and Lead Officers	
7	Corporate Parenting Responsibilities <i>(To receive a presentation from Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director – Children's Services, which sets out the Corporate Parenting Responsibilities of Lincolnshire County Council)</i>	

- 8 Final Review of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Action Plan** 13 - 78
(To receive a report by Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which provides members with background information and the Panel will receive a presentation about the service area at the meeting)
- 9 Children in Care Performance Measures - Quarter 4 (January - March 2021)** 79 - 102
(To receive a report by Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director – Children's Services, which provides key performance information for Quarter 4 2020/21 relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel)
- 10 Lincolnshire Leaving Care - Annual Report** 103 - 116
(To receive a report by Lisa Adams, Barnardo's, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an opportunity to consider the Leaving Care Service Annual Report for 2020/21)
- 11 Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report - April 2020 to March 2021** 117 - 138
(To receive a report by Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an opportunity to consider the Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report 2020/21)
- 12 Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report** 139 - 146
(To receive a report by Ben Lilley, Team Manager – Quality and Standards, which provides a summary of the activities of the Voices for Choices (V4C) over the last quarter)
- 13 Independent Reviewing Officer Yearly Report** 147 - 170
(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Senior Manager – Quality and Standards, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an opportunity to consider the Independent Reviewing Officer Yearly Report)
- 14 Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report** 171 - 194
(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Senior Manager – Quality and Standards, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with the opportunity to consider the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service Annual Report 2020/21)
- 15 Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme** 195 - 198
(To receive a report by Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with an opportunity to consider its work programme for the coming year)

Distributed on Wednesday, 14 July 2021

Please note: This meeting will be broadcast live on the internet and access can be sought by accessing [Agenda for Corporate Parenting Panel on Thursday, 22nd July, 2021, 10.00 am \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Rachel Wilson via telephone 01522 552107 or alternatively via email at rachel.wilson@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
11 MARCH 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors R L Foulkes, A G Hagues, Mrs J E Killey, R H Trollope-Bellew and M A Whittington

Added Members: Polly Coombes (Foster Carer), Ann Wright (Foster Carer) and Elizabeth Bunney (Lincolnshire Community Health Services)

Lisa Adams (Service Manager, Barnardo's) attended the meeting as an observer.

Officers in attendance:-

Kieran Barnes (Virtual School Head Teacher), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), John Harris (Head of Regulated Services - Fostering), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Ben Lilley (Team Manager, Quality and Standards), Yvonne Shearwood (Head of Regulated Services South and Adoption), Janice Spencer OBE (Assistant Director of Children's Safeguarding) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C L Perraton-Williams.

50 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor M A Whittington wished that it be noted that his son was in receipt of leaving care services from Barnardo's.

51 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2021

In relation to minute 47, Councillor R Foulkes advised that he had contacted the local newspaper, but at this time they would not be able to publish that sort of article. It was suggested that this could be picked up again once the pandemic was over, by the new Panel.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman advised that this would be the last meeting for John Harris, Head of Regulated Services - Fostering, who would be retiring shortly after working for the Council for 35 years. Deborah Crawford, Fostering Team Manager, had been appointed to replace John as Head of Regulated Services for Fostering. In addition, it was also reported that Yvonne Shearwood would also shortly be leaving her role as Head of Regulated Services for Adoption. Yvonne had been offered an Assistant Director position at North East Lincolnshire Council. On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked John and Yvonne for all their hard work and support to the Panel and wished them both all the very best for the future.

The Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding echoed the comments of the Chairman and added that they had both been a great source of support for children in care and would be greatly missed.

It was also reported that Children's Services had had its annual conversation with Ofsted the previous week. This had been a good conversation, and details would be brought to the Panel in due course.

53 VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Panel with a summary and overview of activities and meetings undertaken between October 2020 and January 2021 in relation to V4C; future V4C planning and progress, including consulting with children and young people within residential settings; and soundLINC'S V4C music sessions for children and young people.

(NOTE: Meeting adjourned at 10.13am due to lost connection and recommenced at 10.21am)

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:-

- Members commented that they were pleased that the V4C delivery staff were visiting residential homes to directly engage with the children and young people. It was acknowledged that times were difficult due to the pandemic restrictions, but progress was still being made and the team was thanked for its work during this time.
- It was commented that it was positive that the soundLINC'S programme was continuing.
- It was noted that there had been some concerns about some of the venues where the meetings had taken place, and it was queried whether assurance would be given that more suitable venues would be used in the future. It was confirmed that substantial work had taken place to scope out potential venues for future meetings. It was also noted that some of the issues highlighted around venues related to the Big Conversation events.

- Members commended the Boston and South Holland Group for all the activities they were undertaking and sought clarification on how often it was meeting. Officers advised that traditionally, the V4C meetings took place monthly, but the Boston and South Holland group had wanted to meet more often than that. It was also noted that this group had demonstrated that virtual meetings of V4C could be delivered successfully.
- There was disappointment that numbers attending on the east coast were still lower than hoped for, particularly considering the facilities which were available in the area.
- It was queried whether the zoom meetings would continue after restrictions were lifted. Members were advised that there were a number of young people who would like to continue to have this option, and it was possible that virtual meetings could run alongside face-to-face meetings.
- It was noted that the attendance at meetings in December 2020 and January 2021 was lower than normal, and it was queried whether attendance was traditionally lower at this time of year, and if not were there any particular reasons for this. It was noted that attendances in previous years at this time had been good, however it was a chaotic time with schools and lockdown restrictions being brought in. Officers reported that since that time attendances had improved.

RESOLVED

That the V4C meetings and activities undertaken be noted and that the Panel support the work for future planning and delivery of V4C meetings and activities.

54 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE MEASURES - QUARTER 3 2020/21 (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2020)

Consideration was given to a report which provided key performance information for quarter 3 2020/21 that was relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

It was reported that seven of the 14 measures which related to Children in Care were outside of the target set by the services.

In relation to the 'Fostering/adoption of LAC aged 10-<18 years old' measure, it was noted that whilst 76.8% was under target, it was still strong performance. Performance in this area was being impacted by the pandemic as fostering options were reduced. There had also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year.

It was noted that the length of placement measure had improved, but it was still below target. The measures related to number of routine immunisations and up to date dental checks were also below target, but this was very much linked to the pandemic, and the NHS not being in a position to deliver the regular immunisations or regular dental treatment. It was however, noted that any child that had needed emergency dental treatment had received it. It was also reported that confirmation had been received that GP practices would be prioritising vulnerable children as services returned to normal.

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 care leavers in employment, education or training, it was queried what the Council could do to encourage its contractors to take on apprentices who were care leavers and whether this could be reported to the Panel. Officers agreed that this could be added in to future reports.
- It was noted that some children had returned to their birth families, and it was confirmed that care orders could be removed to allow this. This would be risk assessed to ensure it was appropriate for the child to return, and the family network would be examined and a support package would be put in place. However, the reduced capacity in the court system had meant that fewer care orders had been removed.
- It was commented that there had been fewer moves for foster children due to the restrictions and foster carers had been able to work through issues, and it was queried whether some lessons had been learned which could help with reducing placement moves in the future. The Panel was advised that new ways of working had been found and a blended approach was now being developed. It was noted that some foster carers had really valued the Zoom meetings with their supervising social workers as they had been able to take place more regularly. Caring 2 Learn had also had a big impact as well as the support that foster carers had found with each other (e.g. WhatsApp groups/Facebook groups) and it was hoped that these were things which would continue.
- In relation to some of the other performance measures which have not reached target due to Covid-19, such as those in education, employment or training and dental check-ups, it was queried how long until that performance would settle down, as next year's performance would be compared to 2020's data. It was suggested that there was also a need for caution as performance may not immediately return to pre-Covid-19 levels. It was noted that with regards to recovery, it was difficult to know when performance would start to return to normal, but once there was access to dental appointments and immunisation appointments, every effort would be made to get the young people seen. The concern was for care leavers in employment, education and training, but there was support from elected members and the Corporate Leadership Team to put additional support into Barnardo's for the next 12 months, and work was underway to explore what the key performance indicators would be in the future.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the performance information contained within the appendices of the report.

55 LONG-TERM MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN CARE IN ENGLAND RESEARCH PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report which provided an overview of the Long-Term Mental Health of Children in Care in England research project to date and planned future phases.

The Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding advised that when the authority was first approached about taking part in the project, it was during the Pandemic, and it was thought that it would be useful to understand the effect of it on young people's mental health. However, when the questionnaire was received it was discovered that it was very lengthy. The authority had a cohort of 117 young people who could complete it and only 25 completed the survey.

It was not as successful as had been hoped, and it was unlikely that there would be any learning for the authority as a result of this, although feedback was still awaited.

As a result of this, the Assistant Director had requested that the strengths and difficulties questionnaire that was used with young people was reinforced, to use that as the tool for looking at their long term emotional and mental health needs.

The Assistant Director expressed disappointment that the project had not delivered the results as hoped, and if the length of the questionnaire had been known, it was unlikely that the authority would have agreed to take part in the project.

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:

- Members commented that they shared the view of the Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding in relation to this project. It was agreed that it was a vital area of research, and it was queried whether there were any of the questions in the survey that it was thought should be asked in the work that the authority did. Members were advised that the 'Tell Us' survey would be re-written with young people.
- It was noted that Bristol University was a well-recognised university for carrying out research.
- It was highlighted that there were 360 questions in the questionnaire for this research project.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

56 FOSTERING QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to a report which provided an overview of activity within the Fostering Service over quarter 3. It was reported that nothing significant had changed, and it

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was noted that the number of foster carers had increased, and placement stability had also increased. Some growth in the numbers of children placed out of county had been seen.

It was also reported that carers were feeling more valued, and the additional funding for carers had been very well received, and there was now more of a foster carer community.

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:

- It was queried when it would be possible to get the FAB awards up and running again. Members were advised that the first Carers Awards had taken place as an online event, and it had gone better than expected, and the message which had come from the foster carers was that they felt valued.
- Members thanked John Harris for all his hard work over his years with the Council and stated that he was leaving the Fostering Service in a great place. It was also commented that the Panel had valued and appreciated his input over the years, and would look forward to working with Deborah Crawford in the future.

RESOLVED

That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Service.

57 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

This report set out the Panel's work programme for 2021. It was highlighted that a date was being identified for an additional meeting in June 2021 for induction of the new Panel.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as presented be noted.

It was announced that this was the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel for Councillor D Brailsford as he would not be standing for election in May. Members expressed their thanks to Councillor D Brailsford for all the work he had done for the Panel and his leadership as Chairman. Officers echoed these thanks, and commented that they had benefitted from his leadership and guidance, and had challenged and supported officers but had always acted with the intention of supporting and improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Chairman commented that one of the things that had impressed him most was the foster carers, and how they always faced challenges, and he continued to be amazed by the enthusiasm they had for what they did, and he congratulated them for everything they did. He also made reference to the Virtual School and Caring2Learn which had had a positive impact on the service, as well as the improvements to working with partners such as Barnardo's and the NHS which had been made over the years, and highlighted the

Outstanding rating which had been received from Ofsted. He also thanked the officers for their professional reports and was grateful for the support he had received from the Democratic Services Team.

In closing, the Chairman commented that he wished that more of his Council colleagues would get involved with Children's Services, and finally that it had been a pleasure to be the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Final review of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Action Plan

Summary:

The Looked After Children (Children in care) and Care Leaver Strategy is a key document guiding the work and activity of the Council, as the Corporate Parent, as to how we will design and develop services to support young people in our care. The Strategy was written and agreed in 2018 and this is the final review of the action plan before the new one is developed this year.

The action plan is designed to track the activity that is working to achieve the aspirations set out in the strategy. This strategy is the first of its kind to be developed on a multi-agency basis and is supported by the LSCP and all the partners.

This report is for background information and the Panel will receive a presentation about the service area at the meeting.

Actions Required:

The Panel is invited to note the report and make comments on the presentation provided at the meeting.

1. Background

The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy is a key document guiding the work of the authority and its partners when working with and supporting our young people. The document was written in conjunction with all the key partners and set out how the organisations will all work to meet the current and future needs of all our young people.

The Children in Care and Care Leaver strategy is designed to support young people to become independent and proactive adults. The Strategy sets out the activity and our aspirations.

This report covers the action plan of activity deigned to deliver against the strategy. The report is designed to assure members of the breadth and depth of activity taking place across Lincolnshire to support our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

It is worthy to note that a considerable amount of progress has been made in relation to the contribution from wider partners, in particular the Districts Councils health partners and mental health services. A clear and comprehensive health history now follows each Looked After young person, and the offer to Care Leavers from the District Councils has alleviated pressures in finding young people suitable accommodation. Council Tax relief is universal across all 7 districts and Care Leavers have experienced increased support and flexibility from all partners. We have jointly funded a specialist mental health nurse in the Children in care and Leaving Care Service and are investing in the Education Training and Employment Aspirations.

A revised strategy is now under development and should be launched early 2022.

2. Conclusion

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to note the progress against the priorities and actions identified in the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Action Plan.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021
Appendix B	Final Action Plan Master

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.

LINCOLNSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2018-2021

WE BELIEVE YOU CAN ACHIEVE

We want all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to feel safe, loved, be heard and to realise their potential, through nurturing, resilient parenting and support.

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1. OUR MORAL PURPOSE

We believe you can achieve.

We want all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to feel safe, loved, be heard and to realise their potential, through nurturing, resilient parenting and support.

This strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers sets out Lincolnshire's ambitions for the next three years. We have high expectations for all children and young people in Lincolnshire, and the vision, principles and plans in the document apply to some of the most vulnerable children and young people within our community, namely those for whom we have corporate parenting responsibilities.

Our overarching aim recognises that we want all children and young people to be cared for within their family/ local community. We will support families to provide nurturing, resilient parenting so children and young people realise their potential within their birth family. Children, young people and families in Lincolnshire will be helped to make changes for themselves, seen as a positive solution to the challenges they face, and are able to get support easily and be understood as a whole family.

Where children and young people do need to be looked after by Lincolnshire, we will support quality family

and friend time. We will do everything we can, across our partnership, to care for them and nurture their aspirations so that they feel safe, loved and are heard. This will support them to realise their potential. It not only applies when children are in care, but also where we have a duty to support them as previously Looked After Children.

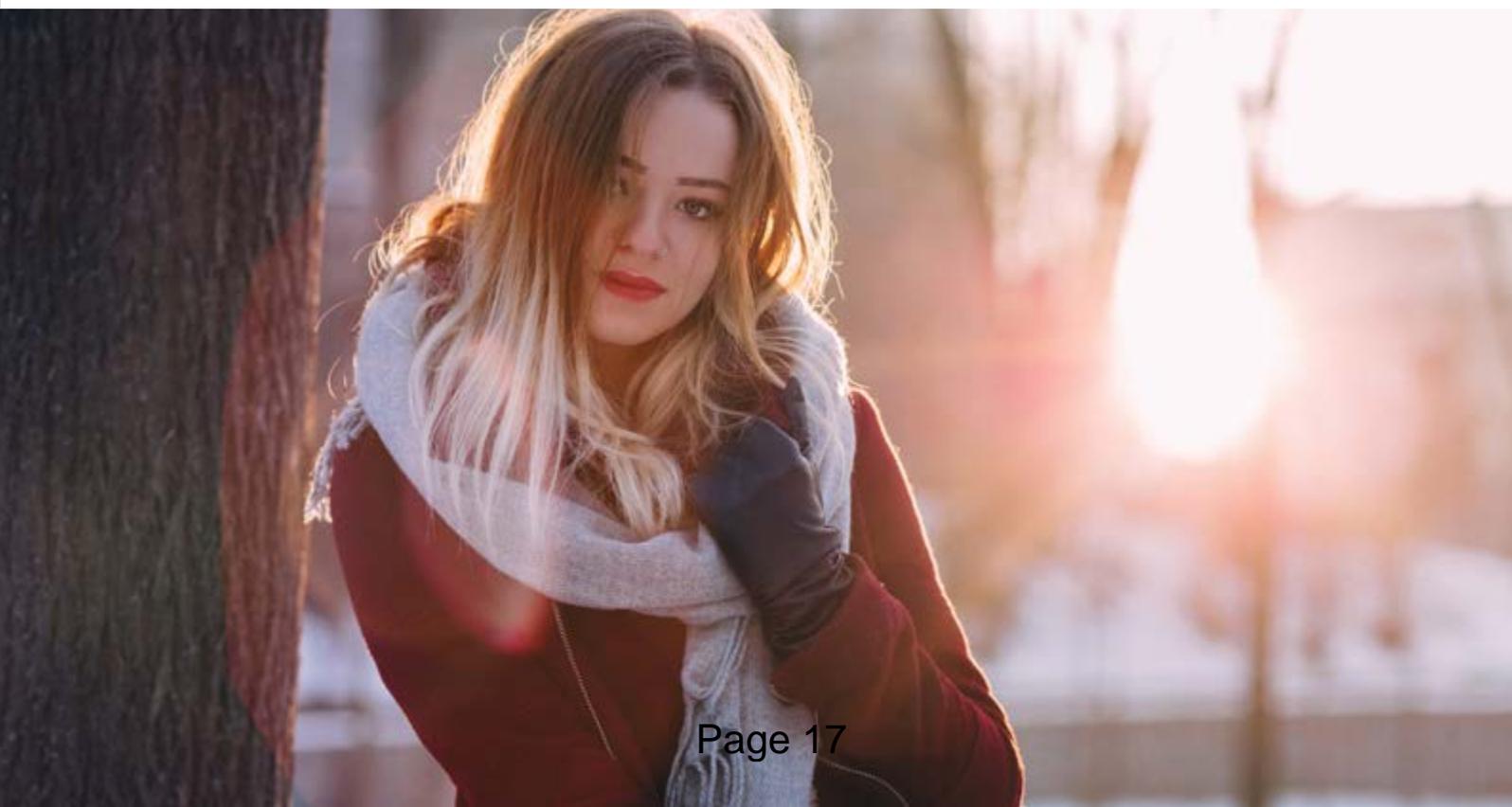
Working with our partner agencies and communities, we will individually and collectively provide nurturing, resilient parenting and support, as we would for our own children. This strategy sets out what we will do to achieve this vision.



Cllr Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE,
Executive Councillor Children's Services



Debbie Barnes OBE,
Director of Children's Services



2. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Despite good work with families where children and young people are at risk of needing to be looked after, the numbers of children in the care of Lincolnshire County Council has continued to rise in recent years. In the last three years we have seen a total 4.4% increase in Lincolnshire. However, this is below the national average.

At March 2018 there were 659 children and young people in our care. At 47.0 per 10,000 population, the

Lincolnshire rate is lower than other local authorities in similar circumstances. Nationally the figure is 60.0 per 10,000 population.

Our aim will always be for appropriate children and young people to be in our care, for as short a period of time as possible, and decisions to bring a child or young person into care will be based on their needs and how we might make things better for them.

3. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The number of Looked After Children has continued to increase steadily over the last nine years. At 31 March 2017 there were 72,670 Looked After Children in the UK, an increase of 3% on 2016. Unquestionably there are poorer outcomes for some Looked After Children and Care Leavers – this is often due to their experiences before coming into care, for example, there is an over representation of Care Leavers in the homeless and prison population.

There are concerns over those young people experiencing poor mental well-being, and others whose education is

weaker as a result of poor attendance and exclusion, resulting in further disengagement. However, Looked After Children tend to make slightly better educational progress than children in need which indicates, as highlighted in the Rees Centre Study of 2015, that being in care can have some positive benefits. The research reinforces that when care is good, Looked After Children make better than expected educational progress whilst in care.





4. WHAT OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS SAY

In the creation of this strategy we are really pleased to have had direct contributions from six children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority and six young people who are currently receiving services as a Care Leaver from Barnardo's who deliver Lincolnshire's Care Leaver service. They all shared similar views regarding their priorities for change and what was most important to them. These are:

- Supporting families in crisis to maximise their potential so that they can continue to care for their child with support through wider family networks
- If children have to be removed from their families, they want to stay in touch with their family, and if possible, have lots of contact with them
- Listening to Looked After Children and Care Leavers and taking their views into account on matters affecting them. They specifically mentioned allowing Looked After Children to have a say in rules around bed times, friends for sleep overs etc.
- Looked After Children want to be allowed to make mistakes and live in a culture of learning and having second chances.

This feedback has been taken into account and is reflected within our shared priorities.

All of the children and young people recognised the unique and important relationship they have with their foster carers. Some were clear that they are not their parents and no matter how good that relationship is, they felt they were supported rather than parented by them. Some children and young people did feel they were their parents. This highlights that our services, whilst needing to meet the needs of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers, must recognise the unique and individual needs of each child and young person. This feedback is reflected in our moral purpose which all young people felt related to them.

All children and young people recognised the importance of relationships. All young people spoken to wanted more quality time with their social workers and time to get to know them. Everyone said that when there has to be change, either of their worker or when they move to having a leaving care worker, they highlighted how

important it was to them to have more time to get to know their new workers. All children and young people were clear in their views that it is easier to work with someone if you know them and they know you.

Young people wanted practical advice to be available to prepare them for their move into adulthood and independence. Skills such as cooking and budgeting are useful, but also important to help them understand the realities of living alone and how to manage more emotional experiences such as loneliness. This was considered a priority area that needed to be improved.

All the young people accessing Care Leaver services told us about their positive experiences of the apprenticeship scheme, and they wanted information about this to be shared with all Looked After young people so they can all benefit from the scheme. This is celebrated in our 'what's working well' section on page 12.



5. PRINCIPLES

The way we deliver our parenting responsibilities to our Looked After Children and Care Leavers is critical to ensure they all have a good experience and upbringing. We believe if the whole workforce across the corporate parenting partnership develop good relationships with young people, based on the principles outlined below, the experience of care by all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers will be improved. These principles are integral to what we want to achieve for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Embedding a relationship-based approach and embracing this way of working is crucial to the successful implementation of our strategy.

These Principles are:

Listening to and responding to the “voice of the young person”

Children and young people need to be consulted at all stages of their care journey as involving them can improve the quality of decisions and lead to more stable school placements and living arrangements.

We recognise that Looked After Children and Care Leavers may not readily talk about their worries or concerns, so it is essential that our entire workforce pay attention: not only to what children and young people say, but also what they do not say. How they behave and react may tell us more about how they are feeling. We will aim to spend quality time alone with each child or young person so they feel more comfortable expressing their feelings and enable them to build trust with us.

The corporate parenting partnership has numerous strategies in place for gathering the voices of children and young people, both informally and formally, on both an individual and targeted group basis. This strategy has been informed through listening to the views of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers and will continue to be reviewed in light of their comments.

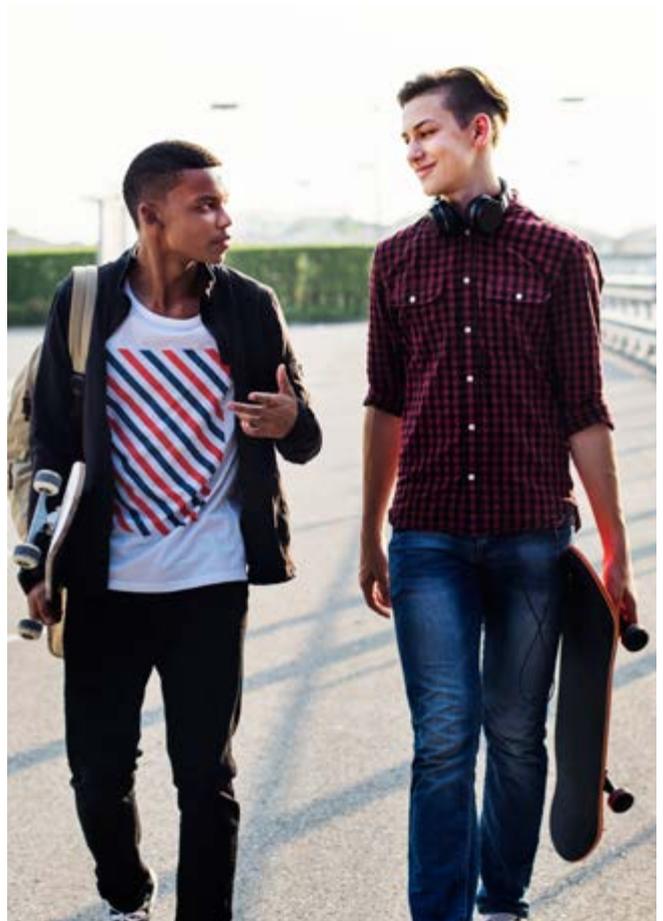
We wish to offer our thanks to Children’s Services Participation team and Barnardo’s Leaving Care Services, but a special thank you and acknowledgement must go to the young people who have taken the time to share their experiences. We recognise their work in the acknowledgment section in this strategy.

To ensure that we continue to listen and hear the voice

of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, we have established a user focus group and refreshed the V4C (Voices for Choices) group and the ‘Tell Us’ survey. The Young Inspectors have been involved throughout the process and we remain committed to working with all our partner agencies so that we collectively and individually listen and hear the views and wishes of our children and young people. The Independent Reviewing officers have a crucial role to question and challenge all partners on behalf of children and young people in our care and to ensure the views of young people are heard.

A nurturing committed workforce

We know that Looked After Children and Care Leavers benefit from developing secure attachments with their caregivers and those people who are responsible for them. Sensitive, responsive, restorative and caring



parenting is associated with secure attachments. Children and young people who have experienced maltreatment are significantly more likely to develop poorer attachments, so we must ensure that our Looked After Children and Care Leavers experience sensitive, nurturing and restorative care, given to them by a highly trained and committed workforce, especially our foster carers.

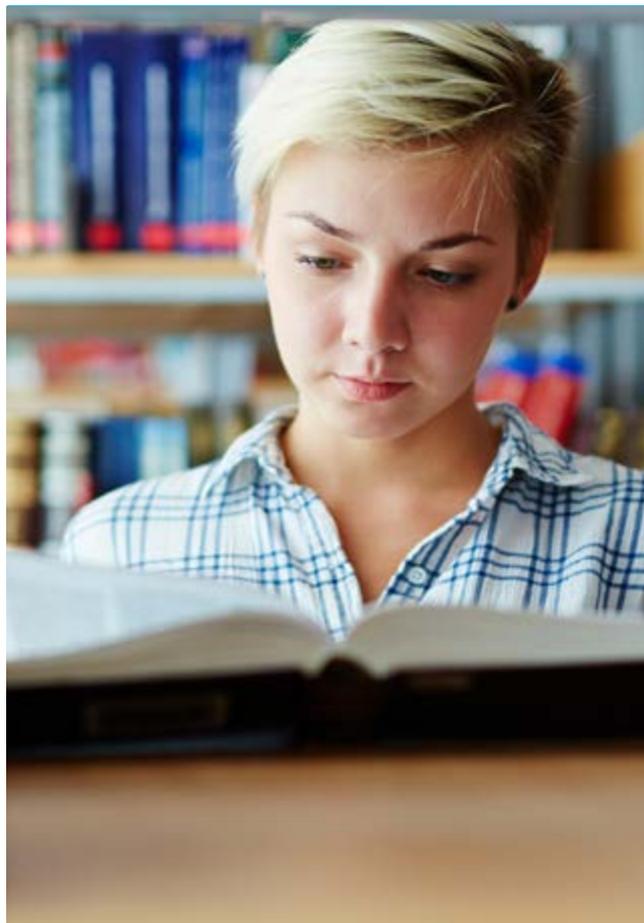
The Lincolnshire corporate parenting partnership will shout loudly and proudly about their aspirations for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Collectively we aspire for all young people to feel safe and loved, listened to and heard, so that they can realise their potential. The strength of the relationship between our workforce and our Looked After Children and Care Leavers is critical to this ambition as it is relationships which lead to positive experiences and a sense of belonging.

Through professional development and effective supervision we will support our workforce to develop and maintain positive and restorative relationships with young people. Led by the leadership teams in each agency, we will create a culture where staff are enabled to have difficult conversations and are able to challenge within their own agency and across agencies so they can truly act as advocates for our children and young people.

Strong family and friend relationships

Across the entire workforce we are committed to developing positive relationships with children, young people, families and their carers. To assist in building strong relationships, we will prioritise stability in the lives of children and young people. Stability in terms of where they live, where they go to school, how they spend time with family and friends, and ensuring consistency of key worker. When relationships and changes have to happen, we are committed to supporting our Looked After Children and Care Leavers through these changes.

We acknowledge the importance of working in collaboration with young people and families and not 'doing to them'; if we do get things wrong we will say so, and we will actively encourage young people to tell us.



Across the partnership there is a commitment to using new technology to enable young people to maintain links and time with family and friends, and grow other important relationships.

Identity and sense of belonging

Inside each and every one of us is a desire to be rooted and to belong. It is essential that our care creates a sense of place and belonging. We want our Looked After Children and Care Leavers to have confidence that we know who they are and that they know we will help them to understand what makes them who they are.

In a complex and uncertain world, knowing who you are and your place in that world matters. It is important to know the place we are from, the place where we live; and to know the place where we would like to be. Place



is about identity and understanding our roots and our connections to where we live and where we came from. For our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, who may be uncertain about where they belong, we must help them to understand this. A sense of belonging will help our Looked After Children and Care Leavers to develop the skills needed to support them to be independent as they approach adulthood. A sense of belonging can reinforce that it's okay to make mistakes as we grow, in fact it is important that Looked After Children and Care Leavers know making mistakes is a normal part of growing up.

Partnership working

Evidence indicates that high-performing local authorities are those with strong leaders who have an aspirational vision of effective corporate parenting for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. These authorities embed partnership and multi-agency working at the heart of the planning process and ensure that children and young people are fully engaged in the design and delivery of services.

The corporate parenting partnership across Lincolnshire is committed to providing strong, visible leadership to

raise aspirations and attainment, and promote joint working to meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Partner agencies in Lincolnshire undoubtedly want to do the best they can and achieve the best possible outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The partnership is committed to improving the lives of children, young people and Care Leavers and believes that an important element in making this happen is to ensure that all staff working with Looked After Children understand the local offer which is available for them, how to access it and to how to advocate for them. This Looked After Children Strategy will be fully endorsed by the following agencies:

Lincolnshire County Council, all seven district councils within Lincolnshire, Barnardo's Leaving Care Service, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, all health providers, schools (including maintained and academies) and the police.

It is important to remember the value of the Independent Reviewing Officers, and the role they have in ensuring partners and all agencies work together to support young people.

6. SO WHICH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DOES THIS STRATEGY REFER TO?

Where Lincolnshire acts as the corporate parent:

- Children and young people cared for by Lincolnshire or supported with accommodation. This includes those taken into care under a voluntary agreement with their parents, children and young people where a care order, or interim care order has been made; emergency orders for protection; and those compulsory accommodated – including those remanded.
- Care Leavers who have previously been Looked After by Lincolnshire.
- All children and young people in the care of Lincolnshire, irrespective of whether they are living in the county or not, are included in this strategy. Where our children are placed outside our geographical boundaries we will liaise with other local authorities and partner agencies to ensure they access the services they need, they are supported to achieve, feel loved and cared for, feel they belong and are able to realise their potential.

When another local authority is the corporate parent:

- For those placed in Lincolnshire by other local authorities, there is an important role for Lincolnshire County Council and partners to ensure there is an awareness of all universal services available to them, including health and education. Universal and targeted support may be provided by health, education and police services to those young people placed in Lincolnshire by other local authorities where Lincolnshire County Council doesn't have corporate parenting responsibilities. Liaison with the host authority through the head of the virtual school and designated safeguarding staff in health is essential to supporting these young people.

Previously Looked After Children:

- For previously Looked After children living in Lincolnshire, we will provide advice and information. This includes those children who have left care under a child arrangement order, special guardianship order and adoption order. Although we are not the corporate parent in these cases, we will provide education and health-related advice and guidance so their families can help them to realise and reach their potential.



7. WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

We have lots to be proud of in Lincolnshire:

- Lincolnshire was previously inspected under the single inspection framework in 2014 and received an overall judgement of 'Good' with adoption assessed as 'Outstanding'
- All children's homes in 2017 were judged by Ofsted to be outstanding or good
- There is a strong fostering strategy in place which means that 77.5% of Looked After Children lived with our own in-house foster carers.
- We were awarded the First4adoptions – Adoptions excellence award for our adoption services
- Supportive Superstars (our way to thank the children of our foster carers for sharing their mum/dad) was shortlisted for the Children and Young People Now Awards in 2017
- 95% of Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation and we have strong relationships with our supported accommodation providers
- 67% of Care Leavers are in education, training or employment. The support offered to Care Leavers is good and we are keen for all Care Leavers to do well. Our Care Leavers praise the apprenticeship and pre apprenticeship work preparation scheme which is delivered through Barnardo's
- In January 2018 we had 20 Care Leavers in university
- There is an emerging 'Care2Learn' approach which supports schools to provide a nurturing environment and where foster carers champion education: this means that everyone is committed to give the child a thirst for learning.
- The Clinical Commissioning Groups are committed to supporting and prioritising the physical health and emotional well-being of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- Lincolnshire is a 'Partner in Practice' identified by the DfE as a local authority whose social care practice is strong and where innovation can assist other local authorities.
- V4C (our Children in Care Council) and other mechanisms to hear the voice of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, all work tirelessly to ensure their voice is heard
- Lincolnshire's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has been judged as outstanding by the CQC in their inspection in 2017
- The FAB awards (Fantastic Amazing Brilliant) and the Big Conversation, enable us to celebrate the achievements of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers and ensure that their voice is heard.



8. CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES

When a child comes into care, the council becomes the corporate parent. Put simply, the term 'corporate parent' means it is the collective responsibility of the council, its elected members, all employees, and its partner agencies to provide the best possible care and upbringings for the children who are looked after by us.

A child in the care of the council should be able to look to the council to be the best parent it can be. Every member and employee of the council has statutory responsibility to act for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child. Our partners also share this responsibility to be a good, caring corporate parent.

Every good parent wants the best for their child, to see their child flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, and enjoy healthy relationships with their peers. We want young people to make the most of leisure opportunities, gain hobbies and interests, and to grow towards adulthood well equipped to lead independent lives. We want our young people to make their way as adults in higher education, to have good careers and jobs, and to be financially secure. That's why, across the corporate parenting partnership, we have the same aspirations for our Looked After Children and Care Leavers as we would for our own children, taking seriously our moral and legal responsibility for enabling them to experience happy and fulfilling lives.

In Lincolnshire we have worked to develop our own corporate parenting guidelines and culture, we acknowledge and endorse the new corporate parenting principles set out in statute. These are:

- 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.

9. DEVELOPING A LOCAL OFFER FOR ALL OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS

Across the corporate parenting partnership, we are committed to articulating what we offer to our Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Describing and explaining what all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers can expect from the council and its partners is important and will enable us to act as advocates for all young people, challenging each other to make sure we do our best for our children and young people.

Our Local Offer to Care Leavers can be found here – [Core Offer to Care Leavers](#)

In addition, all children and young people are able to access universal and early help services which are available within the community. The Local Offer which describes what services Lincolnshire can offer our communities can be found on [Our Local Offer](#) page. We will continue to develop this offer so we and our young people know what services are available in the community to support our Looked After Children, Care Leavers and their carers.

10. OUR PRIORITIES

By capturing the work we are proud of, and by talking to Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as well as undertaking an analysis of need, we have been able to identify priorities that need to be addressed over the next three years to further improve our services.

These priority areas are:

- We will support families in crisis to maximise their ability to continue to care for their own child
- Where families are unable to care for their child, we will maximise opportunities for family and friend time so children and young people continue to feel part of their family network
- We will support our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- We will support the emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- We will work in partnership with schools and further education establishments and carers to provide good learning opportunities for all
- We will work with young people so they have the skills and abilities to develop healthy adult-based relationships and best equip them for independence and their future
- We will develop accommodation pathways so young people have choice and can access accommodation which supports them to prepare for the future in a planned and supportive way.

Actions to deliver our priorities are outlined in Appendix 1.



11. CONCLUSIONS

This strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers sets out our ambitions and principles. It is underpinned by our moral purpose as Corporate Parent. It clarifies to whom the strategy applies and sets out how we want to work, what we want to achieve with our young people and how we want to work together with families to strengthen the family unit even when their child is in care.

We have, through analytical self-evaluation, defined what is working well, what we want to improve and how we are going to do it. We have acknowledged the role of all our partner agencies, and how historically we have all been committed to improving the lives of children, Looked After Children and those who have left our care.

The Lincolnshire Looked After Children and Care Leaver's Strategy for 2018-21 provides strategic and operational direction for all our work, how we approach working with our young people and how we should approach innovations and developments in the coming years.

We have highlighted that an important element in making this happen is the strength of our partnership and the commitment and energy given to supporting all our Looked After Children and our Care leavers. We will ensure that all staff understand the Local Offer which is available to all young people, how to access it and how to advocate for it.

We have identified seven main priorities for everyone to address in the next three years. We have set out what we will do to achieve the priorities, and how we hope to engage children and young people in the progression of this strategy and the ambitions we have set ourselves. We will create a comprehensive action plan with key milestones so Looked After Children and Care Leavers can challenge our progress once this strategy has been agreed.

In summary, we made our aspirations clear at the outset of our strategy:

We want all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to feel safe, loved, be heard and to realise their potential, through nurturing, resilient parenting and support.

This not only applies when children are in care, but it also applies where we have a duty to support people as previously looked after children. Working with our partner agencies and communities, we will collectively provide nurturing, resilient parenting and guidance to our young people, as we would for our own children. We recognise that whatever judgements are made upon our services both internally and through external bodies, the most important judgements are those made by the children and young people themselves. In all matters, we will ask ourselves:

- have we made a positive difference to their lives?
- have we been ambitious on their behalf?
- have we given them every chance of realising their potential?
- have we listened to them?
- have we treated them as individuals?

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will further support families in crisis to maximise their ability to continue to care for their own child (Children's Services, Early Help teams, Health, Social Care teams and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop our early help offer to respond to situations where families/carers are in crisis. We will work to maintain the living arrangements for the child/young person where possible. • Ensure our approach is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency with a range of specialisms to meet the needs of young people and their families. Our workforce will have access to specialist consultations to help them to understand how they can better support families, ensuring we address the cause of the crisis and not just the symptom. • Ensure we have in place a structured and consistent approach which is understood by all. The offer is encapsulated within an early help offer which is restorative in nature and which has its foundations in relationship based practice. We will value the importance of relationships and ensure continuity of support to families of young people. • Recognise that different pathways are required to meet the individual needs of young people based on age. • Recruit specialist foster carers to help meet needs, including short term support to families in crisis which can include respite to enable them to reflect on how they can best meet the needs of their own child and recover from crisis points. • Provide opportunities for children and their families to experience positive activities. • Refine and promote the Local Offer so families know how to access support and which services are out there to meet their needs. 	
<p>Where families are unable to care for their child, we will maximise opportunities for family and friend time so they continue to feel part of their family network (Contact Service, Looked After Children teams and Leaving Care Service)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise family group conferencing to enable families at every opportunity to find their own solutions. • Enable the workforce to work in a way where they honour the importance of families, and use their authority as a professional in an honest way. • Utilise virtual mechanisms which enable children and young people to stay in touch with family and friends. • Review of contact service so it is transformed into a service which better supports family/friend time . • Further develop life story work so children and young people have an identity, feel that they belong and understand where they connect in their community and have a sense of belonging. • We will ensure our recording systems enables us to accurately record a young person's life, their history and record in a way which makes records purposeful and relevant to them. 	
<p>We will work with our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Children's Services, Leaving Care Service and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of our role as corporate parents, advocating good support, wellbeing and outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. • Corporate Parenting Panel will regularly request reports on the progress and achievements of Looked after Children and Care Leavers and address any significant barriers to their learning, health and safety. • Further develop the Independent Reviewing Officers role to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. • Recruit Young Inspectors, who have experience of being in care so they can provide additional insight and challenge to managers and services. 	

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will work with our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers – continued (Children's Services, Leaving Care Service and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the views of a 'participation group'/voice for the child on how best the lives of Looked After Children and Care Leavers might be improved. Consider how best they can get their message across – e.g. DVD. • Develop the role of designated teachers and the Virtual School to further raise awareness of young people's needs, and help them to advocate for Looked After Children and Care Leavers • Review the guidance we give to staff for assessing identity needs of a young person • Create a robust escalation process between services so each agency has a key strategic lead for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. • Undertaking thematic review of the support and advocacy offered to Looked After Children and Care Leavers • Deliver a series of workshops to celebrate the achievements of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, demonstrating that resilient parenting has a positive impact • Develop a training offer so our staff understand the importance of making sure young people have a sense of belonging and an identity. Develop our staff so they understand the importance of relationship based practice and grow peoples knowledge of the services available through the Local Offer so professionals and families can challenge and act as advocates for young people • The council and the police will work together to embed the protocol to reduce the criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. We will do this through embedding a restorative culture and restorative approaches. 	
<p>We will support the good emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Virtual School) (Quality, Standards Department and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the success of the Virtual School Head (VSH), by working with the CCG's to progress the development of a similar oversight role of a Virtual Mental Health Lead (VMHL). This is to ensure that every child and young person in the care of the local authority is getting the support they need to maintain or improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing. • Enable the strengths and difficulties questionnaire to be supported by a broader set of measures which can trigger a comprehensive mental health assessment. • Ensure that assessments focus on understanding of the individual's mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that it is based on a knowledge of the context of their current situation and past experiences, rather than solely focusing on the presenting symptoms. The young person, their caregivers, family (where appropriate) and professionals' viewpoints should also be included. • Support caregivers so their own mental health and wellbeing is positive and resilient. • Ensure that everyone working directly with Looked After Children and Care Leavers receive training about children and young people's mental health so they are equipped with the appropriate skills to support young people. • Ensure the statutory review of a child's care plan by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) includes at each meeting a review of whether or not the mental health needs of the young person have been met. 	

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will support the good emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers – continued (Virtual School) (Quality, Standards Department and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the knowledge and intervention skills of the whole workforce. These skills should enable care givers to understand and support young people around the impact of a lack of attachment and experiences of trauma, enhance child development and be aware of cognitive behavioural therapies and interventions. • Ensure there is strong collaborative working relationship between schools, health services and the local authority. • Further develop and expand the concept of mental health first aid in schools - looking to create a change of culture where there might currently be limited empathy and knowledge of the needs of Looked After Children amongst school leaders. • Further strengthen practice between general practitioners and schools. • Working with all partners, we will provide restorative approaches to those already engaged in the Criminal Justice System and to reduce further criminalisation of young people as this will enable them to get back on track to achieve their aspirations as law abiding citizens. 	
<p>We will work in partnership with schools and carers to provide good learning opportunities for all (Looked After Children teams and Virtual School)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Caring2Learn, learning what works so these aspects of the project can be implemented across all our schools. • Develop strong partnerships and responses to reduce student absences and exclusions from school. • Rigorously apply our own and national guidance around the quality of 'off-site' educational settings. • Reduce school moves whenever possible to help maintain placement, permanency and enhance educational stability. • Improve access to further and higher education and the understanding Looked After Children and Care Leavers have of these providers. • Apply work based research practice to workforce (e.g. PALAC). • Celebrate the achievements of all our children and young people. • We want to make sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All Looked After Children have access to good nursery provision. – All Care Leavers with children have access to free child care and early education. – Looked After Children are admitted to good settings and schools without undue delay. – All Looked After Children make good progress based on prior attainment including those accessing SEND specialist provision, through highly effective education plans. – That there is a designated teacher in all educational settings including further education. – All designated teachers have access to good training and professional development. – All Education Health Care Planning is carried out on time and required interventions are implemented in a timely way. Where a place in a special school is required, the young person is admitted promptly. – All Looked After Children are encouraged to attend extra-curricular and recreational interest they enjoy. These are available through the Local Offer. 	

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will work with young people so they have the skills and abilities to develop adult based relationships to equip them for independence and their future (Children Services, Adult Services and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our assessment processes to ensure that we plan early, and truly understand what the young person wants to achieve in adulthood. • Recognise the risk and impact of transitions for all children and young people. We will plan to meet individual needs in a co-ordinated way, drawing on the strengths of the young person and their wider networks, so they know what the future holds as they move into the adult world. • At each key transition, whenever possible, involve a child or young person's family and the wider network, especially those who know them best. • Value the importance of relationships and work flexibly where ever possible to minimise the negative impact of transitions and changes in relationships. • Prepare children and young people for transitions in their lives. We will place a specific emphasis on those young people aged between 14-25. The key points of transition for us to consider are: all school key stages to education training and employment; the transition between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and adult mental health; transition between children's social care to adult services, specifically considering those with special education needs and disabilities to ensure they have best access and support to further learning and the world of work. We will also consider the transition between Youth Justice Services to the adult Probation Service. • Explore how we can have an information system or agreement in place which allows all professionals to access information about all those involved with a child and young person. We aspire to have all relevant records available to be viewed by all workers at any time, and for those and records to be written in the third person, so we are always writing to the child/young person when we create records about them. 	
<p>We will develop accommodation pathways so young people have choice and can access accommodation which supports them to prepare for the future in a planned and supportive way (Children's Accommodation Board & Housing Health and Care delivery group and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with housing authorities, secure an enhanced accommodation offer for all those leaving care to ensure support and preparation so they can live independently in their community. • As nurturing and resilient parents, we will never stop doing our best for Looked After Children and Care Leavers as we would for our own children. We will never refer to them as being intentionally homeless and will work together to prevent homelessness. • Ensure Care Leavers are exempted from paying council tax until they are 25 years old. • Re-commission supported accommodation provision so that the provision is more responsive to more complex young people and better reflects the principles in this strategy. • Seek to develop in-house provision to ensure we can meet the needs of our most challenging young people in locally sourced options. • Provide an early help worker and emotional wellbeing worker for all those in supported accommodation. • Create more private tenancy opportunities close to Residential Homes so Care Leavers can stay close to their community and continue to be supported by people they know. 	

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Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
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Lincolnshire Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2021 – Priorities, Actions & Progress

<p>1) We will further support families in crisis to maximise their ability to continue to care for their own child</p>	<p>Children’s Services, Early Help teams, Health, Social Care teams and all partners</p>	<p>Further develop our early help offer to respond to situations where families/carers are in crisis. We will work to maintain the living arrangements for the child/young person where possible.</p>	<p>Future4me was established in 2019 and has been recognised as providing a vital response to supporting adolescent children and their families through periods of crisis.</p> <p>Lincolnshire Children Services radically re-designed its approach to working with young people who are at risk of being engaged in criminal activity, entering care in late adolescence or being at risk of exploitation/harm by individuals outside of their family.</p> <p>The creation of Future4Me was founded upon research, previous learning and feedback of both service users and practitioner's experiences. It established a transformational practice framework in working with young people that fits the profile of need for children with presenting complex behaviours and risk factors. In addition the service structure seeks to offer support and guidance to other professionals within the organisation who have a key relationship with the young person.</p> <p>Lincolnshire has been successful in securing an additional £2.5million funding from NHSE/I (Health & Justice) over the next three years, with the potential for another £1.1million per annum until 2030, to</p>	
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Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>consolidate and expand the F4Me health team, developing a Lincs CYP Complex Needs Service to support the mental health of more vulnerable CYP with complex social or health care needs, including children in care homes or foster arrangements, adopted children, young carers, or with a moderate/severe learning disability or autism.</p>	
		<p>Ensure our approach is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency with a range of specialisms to meet the needs of young people and their families. Our workforce will have access to specialist consultations to help them to understand how they can better support families, ensuring we address the cause of the crisis and not just the symptom.</p>	<p>Future4Me provide a dedicated health team consisting of specialists in clinical psychology, speech and language therapy and harmful sexual behaviour. The team has been expanded through long term NHS England funding and will also encapsulate positive future staff and children in care workers to ensure we reach the widest cohort of young people.</p> <p>Through training and practice development the team will embed the principles of trauma informed practice which recognise attachment, adverse childhood experiences and development. Key performance targets and evidence of impact will be monitored by NHS England.</p> <p>The Council has Early Help Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP IAPT) Enhanced Evidenced Based (EEB) Practitioners (4.4 FTE) who receive clinical supervision through CAMHS Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Practitioners. CYP IAPT is also embedded within practice</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			across CAMHS and Healthy Minds Lincolnshire, with Healthy Minds Lincolnshire having a number of Wellbeing Practitioners who are also IAPT trained.	
		Ensure we have in place a structured and consistent approach which is understood by all. The offer is encapsulated within an early help offer which is restorative in nature and which has its foundations in relationship based practice. We will value the importance of relationships and ensure continuity of support to families of young people.	<p>Lincolnshire has a comprehensive Early Help Offer which is based upon Signs of Safety methodology; and is restorative in nature. The consistency of approach throughout all levels of safeguarding ensures accessibility and effectiveness of Early Help as part of a child or young person's plan.</p> <p>The processes ensure that any requests for support for Looked After Children are considered in light of relationship based practice and who the right person to offer the right support at the right time. This includes significant buy in from partners, especially in the education sector.</p> <p>In addition, the Early Help Strategy and Action Plan identifies Looked After Children are a priority group within the strategy</p>	
		Recognise that different pathways are required to meet the individual needs of young people based on age.	The Putting Children First document has replaced the Meeting the Needs Documents. The thresholds have been developed in consultation with partners via the LSCP.	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>Recruit specialist foster carers to help meet needs, including short term support to families in crisis which can include respite to enable them to reflect on how they can best meet the needs of their own child and recover from crisis points.</p>	<p>Further investment in services to prevent a child becoming looked after has been made in the Future4me service targeted on those children who are on the cusp of care or facing a placement disruption.</p> <p>Foster Carers are continually trained and supported to meet the needs of all our young people, especially those with complex and additional needs.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting manager is in the process of drawing together an HR policy that will enable LCC to become a foster carer friendly organisation, thus growing capacity for Foster Carers to be drawn from our own staffing resources. This paper is due to go before CLT in April 2020</p>	
		<p>Provide opportunities for children and their families to experience positive activities.</p>	<p>In addition to the weekly fostering allowance which promotes positive activities, the Authority funds one additional activity to support particular interests of young people and will continue to do so.</p> <p>LCC commissions a number of services that offer a range of positive activities where Children in Care are a priority group for accessing the provision. For example, the Best Start Lincolnshire: Early Years and Family Service offers a</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>wide range of activities for children 0 to 5 years and their families, with vulnerable families being offered quiet times and 1:1 support where they need help and support to identify/access activities within their local Children's Centre.</p> <p>The Council commissions a Music, Arts and Drama service to support Children in Care. The service brings local artists into its in-house residential children's homes to deliver sessions directly to children in care and demonstrate to staff how to support and encourage the child's interests and talents.</p> <p>An Independent Visitor service is commissioned to support those children in care looking for mentorship and adult friendship, outside of professional relationships, with the opportunity for days out in the community, support, advice and guidance.</p> <p>The Council commissions a service offering adapted caravans at Butlins, Skegness for families of children with a disability to enjoy short breaks locally. Capital funding has been awarded to a provider offering short breaks in a countryside location, including specialist sensory provision.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>Refine and promote the Local Offer so families know how to access support and which services are out there to meet their needs.</p>	<p>The Local Offer is being completely redesigned so that it is easier for service-users to navigate. The new version will drive a focus on improved outcomes rather than statutory processes.</p> <p>A therapeutic parenting manual has been rolled out widely following a pilot across a small number of schools. The learning from this pilot was captured through a Mobilise research project which in turn informed the manual.</p>	
<p>2) Where families are unable to care for their child, we will maximise opportunities for family and friend time so they continue to feel part of their family network</p>	<p>Family Time Service, Looked After Children teams and Leaving Care Service</p>	<p>Utilise family group conferencing to enable families at every opportunity to find their own solutions.</p>	<p>Referrals are made into FGC to explore alternative carers or support Family Time arrangements as there may be family members that can supervise Family Time safely.</p> <p>Life Links is an initiative that FGC workers are utilising their skills to build networks of support for our leaving care young people from 15.9-25yrs.</p> <p>FGC support the Family to create a support plan utilising the family and friends as a resource when there is a rehab plan for the child.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>Members of the FGC Team have attended the Family Finders Training to support them in their role. Tools have been shared with the wider team to enable all FGC Practitioners to be equipped, to support young people in identifying their networks of support and create a plan of what that support will be available to the young person and to build their resilience.</p> <p>IROs are promoting the expectation that updated genograms are brought to every review and that FNMs and FGCs are revisited regularly. Family and friend time to be promoted in reviews and parents to be engaged directly by IROs in order to support continued engagement and reassessments in considering exit plans.</p>	
		<p>Enable the workforce to work in a way where they honour the importance of families, and use their authority as a professional in an honest way.</p>	<p>Signs of Safety training for front line staff, leadership support for supervisors and group supervision has supported the workforce to work with families in an honest way.</p> <p>The directorate roll out of Restorative Practice training over the last 2 years has helped embed this.</p> <p>ASYE programme provides extensive support for all newly qualified social</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>workers on an annual basis which provides support on this.</p> <p>Social Workers in Lincolnshire are all subject to NAAS (National Assessment and Accreditation System) and this principle is enshrined within this.</p> <p>Quality assurance through audits, learning events and improved learning from complaints.</p>	
		<p>Utilise virtual mechanisms which enable children and young people to stay in touch with family and friends.</p>	<p>Lincolnshire County Council supports the use of all new technologies to enable young people to keep in touch.</p> <p>The use of Skype, Face time, text, e-mail and all emerging technologies are considered in order to support our Social workers and our young people to stay in touch and communicate.</p> <p>A new raft of technology and high spec laptops have been provided to frontline staff which included web cams, table compatibility and 4G technology to better connect workers, young people and families.</p> <p>Lincolnshire County Council have supported the roll out of new lap-tops for Children in Care and Care Leavers, thus reducing isolation and enabling children and young people to remain in</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			touch with families and extended support groups.	
		Review of family time service so it is transformed into a service which better supports family/friend time .	<p>Provision based across the County to enable family time to take place in the nearest venue to the child's school/placement</p> <p>Where parents work, family time is offered across four sites on a Saturday</p> <p>Family Time Supervisors work up until 6.30pm to better support older children. Working around the child's activities so that contact sessions are at a convenient time for all.</p> <p>Family Time Supervisor attends Child in Care Reviews to ensure that family time is reviewed and remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of the child.</p> <p>The family time service will supports rehab back home plans to ensure a smooth transition.</p>	
		Further develop life story work so children and young people have an identity, feel that they belong and understand where they connect in their community and have a sense of belonging	Our children in care teams have life story workers to undertake this specific task with young people and to ensure the work is done in the right way, at the right pace and at the right time.	
		We will ensure our recording systems enables us to accurately record a young person's life, their history and record in a way which makes records purposeful and	Our recording system coupled with our practice model enables us to record the children's journey. By using signs of	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		relevant to them	safety including chronologies on all cases, direct work, family network meetings and life story books we are able to see the child's daily lived experience. This includes using our knowledge of research, theory and evidence.	
<p>3. We will work with our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	<p>Children’s Services, Leaving Care Service and all partners</p>	<p>Raise awareness of our role as corporate parents, advocating good support, wellbeing and outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>	<p>The profile and needs of our Children in Care and Care Leavers is always being promoted by LCC.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Manager coordinates an operational group within the Leaving Care service which is designed to engage partners and all agencies around the needs of our Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Lincolnshire have also developed a partnership meeting with health that specifically reviews health issues of Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p> <p>There is a Corporate Parenting strategy is designed to ensure the profile and needs of our young people remains high a priority for elected members and partner's consciousness.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Panel also meets regularly and receives regular updates about the services and wider partnership offer which is made to our</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>Corporate Parenting Panel will regularly request reports on the progress and achievements of Looked after Children and Care Leavers and address any significant barriers to their learning, health and safety.</p>	<p>young people.</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Panel meets regularly and continues to oversee and scrutinises the offer to Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p> <p>The agenda is varied and all aspects of Social Services, health offer and Leaving Care service is subject to scrutiny.</p> <p>There is an aspiration to draw in additional partners to the Corporate Parenting Panel and the lead members Have supported the introduction of the police as a core biannual invite to the Corporate panting Panel.</p>	
		<p>Further develop the Independent Reviewing Officers role to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people</p>	<p>IROs promote the expectation that updated genograms are brought to every review and that FNMs and FGCs are revisited regularly. Family and friend time to be promoted in reviews and parents to be engaged directly by IROs in order to support continued engagement and reassessments in considering exit plans.</p> <p>IROs will write directly to parents who don't attend reviews to support this further.</p> <p>Ensure referrals to life links is embedded in the review process.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>Explore how placements and team around the child contributes to healing for the child/young person.</p> <p>Continue to develop a culture of challenge to help prevent drift and delay in planning and support</p>	
		<p>Recruit Young Inspectors, who have experience of being in care so they can provide additional insight and challenge to managers and services</p>	<p>LCC always strives to employ care experienced young people as Young Inspectors.</p> <p>LPFT employ a number of Peer Support Workers as part of the CAMHS and other CYP mental health services in Lincolnshire, these include young people with lived experience of CAMHS from a number of background such as being a looked after child/care leaver. Peer Supporters work with young people to reassure and encourage them to engage with the service but also act as an advocate for them to challenge the service and support service improvement.</p>	
		<p>Listen to the views of a 'participation group'/voice for the child on how best the lives of Looked After Children and Care Leavers might be improved. Consider how best they can get their message across – e.g. DVD .</p>	<p>The participation team works tirelessly to engage young people and gather their views to help us design services. This is an on-going piece of work and LCC employs 3 people to do this.</p> <p>At this time the participation team are working on "you tube clips" of young</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>people speaking to help us promote the core offer and explain the offer to young people.</p> <p>Young people asked for an expanded and combined participation group with Children in Care and Care Leavers involved together and this has proven to be very successful.</p> <p>There has also been a drive to increase attendance and V4C ad Big conversation. The identification and use of new meeting spaces has proven to be effective and grown the numbers attending.</p> <p>Young People are also part of the development of the Core offer to Care leavers and have developed information, resources and language to ensure this is communicated to all young people.</p> <p>Care Leavers were involved with the design of the new Leaving Care Service that commenced in April 2020. A stakeholder engagement workshop was held to develop the Service Specification and Care Leavers contributed with their feedback and views as what they wanted in a new service; these were reflected in the final</p>	

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			<p>document.</p> <p>In January 2021, a project worker was recruited into the Leaving Care service with the remit to enhance the engagement and participation of care leavers in their service. They have recently worked alongside this officer to suggest some peer support groups for the future.</p>	
		<p>Develop the role of designated teachers and the Virtual School to further raise awareness of young people’s needs, and help them to advocate for Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	<p>There is a continued roll out of our trauma-informed training to all schools through BOSS and the work of the Reintegration Team and also worked with the above in promoting a trauma-informed guide to the Pastoral Support Plan (PSP). With the above we have also created assembly/PSHE resources to raise pupils' awareness.</p> <p>The Virtual School provides a range of training opportunities to support Designated Teachers in understanding their responsibilities and supporting children and young people who are looked after and previously looked after. These include: DT workshops which provide key updates; an annual DT conference which include a key note speaker and workshops around effective interventions to support looked after children; termly locality based DT networks, to share good practice. Virtual School co-ordinators work closely with schools and settings to ensure the needs of individual children are met and that each young person has an effective and high</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			quality PEP. This has continued throughout the pandemic.	
		Create a robust escalation process between services so each agency has a key strategic lead for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.	The LSCP has a very clear escalation process with key senior liaison officers named for each agency. This process has been adopted for escalation purposed for LAC and Care leavers LPFT key liaison officer is the 'Safeguarding Public Protection & Mental Capacity Lead' and the CCG officer is the 'Associate Director for Nursing and Quality'.	
		Undertaking thematic review of the support and advocacy offered to Looked After Children and Care Leavers	A review has been scheduled for 2021 and will involve the Young Inspectors and/or V4C.	
		Deliver a series of workshops to celebrate the achievements of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, demonstrating that resilient parenting has a positive impact	LCC celebrates the achievements of Children in Care and Care Leavers each year through the annual FAB celebrations. The FAB awards are designed by and lead by the wishes of young people. The annual ceremony continues. The academic achievement of our children in care is also celebrated	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>alongside the achievement of all Lincolnshire children at the Annual Lincolnshire Education Awards More bespoke workshops are being designed for the future.</p>	
		<p>Develop a training offer so our staff understand the importance of making sure young people have a sense of belonging and an identity. Develop our staff so they understand the importance of relationship based practice and grow peoples knowledge of the services available through the Local Offer so professionals and families can challenge and act as advocates for young people</p>	<p>As per previous actions. We are still rolling out trauma-informed training to all schools and we are also promoting a trauma-informed guide to the Pastoral Support Plan (PSP). We've also created assembly/PSHE resources to raise staff and pupils' awareness.</p> <p>Significant roll out of Signs of Safety and Restorative Practice training, delivered by national experts, has helped support staff to understand the importance of relationship based practice.</p> <p>The local offer is well known and is promoted through staff briefings and locality events and is constantly under review. The Local Offer has grown considerable in the last year and LCC is now part of a working group to develop a regional offer to Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	
		<p>The council and the police will work together to embed the protocol to reduce the criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. We will do this through embedding a restorative culture and restorative approaches.</p>	<p>There is an underlying commitment to the principle of 'child first offender second' within Lincolnshire which recognises the need to work with children and young</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>people in a proportionate way through the criminal justice system. It is supported by Lincolnshire Police and correlates with a reduction in arrests and detention of children in Police custody.</p> <p>The protocol is embedded with the Joint Diversionary Panel process which meets weekly to provide an out of court disposal framework providing intervention and support in a timely and responsive way.</p> <p>The panel has been externally validated by the University of Lincoln and has resulted in significant reductions in children becoming first time entrants in the formal criminal justice system. It also ensures improved outcomes for children, victims of crime and communities in Lincolnshire. The panel overwhelmingly offers restorative and non-criminalising disposals which places a critical importance on early intervention and support for children and families.</p>	
<p>4. We will support the good emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	<p>(Virtual School) Quality, Standards Department and all partners</p>	<p>Build on the success of the Virtual School Head (VSH), by working with the CCG's to progress the development of a similar oversight role of a Virtual Mental Health Lead (VMHL). This is to ensure that every child and young person in the care of the local authority is getting the support they need to maintain or improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>The Lincolnshire CCGs are fully committed to supporting of the mental health needs of the Looked After and Carer Leaver cohort of young people.</p> <p>The CCGs are able to cooperate with initiatives to positively support partnership working to implement support networks within the county.</p> <p>The emotional and mental health needs</p>	

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			<p>of the child/young person is monitored at the Initial health assessment and the subsequent annual review health assessments.</p> <p>Positive Mental Health outcomes for Children and Young People Looked After and Care Leavers are a priority for the partnership and the Mental Health provider contract includes the aforementioned cohort as a vulnerable group who are fast tracked to effective and appropriate mental health support within 4 weeks. CAMHS also has developed a consultation model to provide ongoing support to professionals providing care or support to children in care/care leavers and are working with Barnardo's to establish a Leaving Care mental health worker post.</p> <p>The new Lincs CYP Complex Needs Services currently being developed following a successful bid for NHSE/I (Health & Justice) funding will provide an enhanced offer of consultation, formulation and support to children in care (including care homes, fostering or other wider kinship arrangements), including development of new Children in Care Link Worker roles.</p>	

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			<p>Children in Care and Care Leavers are also one of the priority groups within the Healthy Minds Lincolnshire Service (emotional wellbeing service) and are also fast tracked to effective and appropriate emotional wellbeing support. Initial assessments are undertaken within two weeks (sooner for priority groups) and waiting time from referral to treatment is approximately 6 weeks (sooner for priority groups).</p>	
		<p>Enable the strengths and difficulties questionnaire to be supported by a broader set of measures which can trigger a comprehensive mental health assessment.</p>	<p>The Virtual School commissioned Education Psychologists to deliver SDQ training for schools, this is now recorded on Personal Education Plans (PEPs) PEP discussions and targets have a greater focus on the young person's well being. Emotional Wellbeing Toolkit available to all Lincolnshire schools and settings as an additional resource to the Emotional Wellbeing pathway. Training available to schools and opportunities to share good practice through Caring2Learn and Designated Teacher Locality clusters.</p> <p>Caring 2Learn has had many success and is embedded by young people, foster careers and schools alike as</p>	

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			highlighted in the recent Impower evaluation of March 2021. Funding for Caring 2Learn has been extended to October 2021	
		Ensure that assessments focus on understanding of the individual's mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that it is based on a knowledge of the context of their current situation and past experiences, rather than solely focusing on the presenting symptoms. The young person, their caregivers, family (where appropriate) and professionals' viewpoints should also be included.	The Virtual school co-ordinators ensure that all agencies are working together to effectively support the individual needs of our children and young people. Where appropriate, EHCP Annual Reviews are held in conjunction with PEP meetings and involve inputs from Health Services as required. School Nursing Teams are managed and overseen by Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services.. This provides a greater insight to the young person and professionals and promotes more effective care planning to support their emotional and mental health needs. The assessment framework is now well embedded, but good practice dictates that we will audit and review the use and quality of its use.	
		Support caregivers so their own mental health and wellbeing is positive and resilient.	The training care givers are able to access includes support regarding their own well being and resilience and is also included within specific training around behaviour management, safe care and safeguarding. Additional training is available via the LSCB	
		Ensure that everyone working directly with Looked After Children and Care Leavers receive training about children	All staff and partners are supported to completed the LSCP training on mental	

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		<p>and young people's mental health so they are equipped with the appropriate skills to support young people</p>	<p>health. The relevant courses are in the IRO training plan and the Annual appraisals process of all staff. Mental health training is also a core element of training for all staff.</p> <p>Healthy Minds Lincolnshire contributes to the LSCP training offer by offering emotional wellbeing and mental health training to all children's services professionals. In addition training is offered via the Council's workforce development training programme and a wide range of online training is also available to Lincolnshire schools and academies. Online resources have been developed by Healthy Minds Lincolnshire, CAMHS and Mental Health Support Teams to support parents/carers, YP, including vulnerable groups of YP, and professionals, with a dedicated Covid-19 resource hub.</p> <p>Healthy Minds Lincolnshire also offers emotional wellbeing training to Lincolnshire Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes, as part of the core ITT training offer.</p>	
		<p>Ensure the statutory review of a child's care plan by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) includes at each meeting a review of whether or not the mental health needs of the young person have been met.</p>	<p>It is a statutory requirement to address the health of a young person within a review. This is supported by the SDQ process. Any issues are clearly recorded</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			in the chairs report and reflected in the decisions if action is required.	
		<p>Increase the knowledge and intervention skills of the whole workforce. These skills should enable care givers to understand and support young people around the impact of a lack of attachment and experiences of trauma, enhance child development and be aware of cognitive behavioural therapies and interventions.</p>	<p>Children's Services provide an annual learning and development programme for frontline staff and an additional bespoke programme for foster carers, adopters and other relevant people who work directly with Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This includes training related to mental health and cuts across a wide range of training courses, including training offered by Healthy Minds Lincolnshire (emotional wellbeing service). The programmes are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>The Council's Early Help CYP IAPT EEB Practitioners are trained to deliver direct evidence-based intervention support to Lincolnshire children and young people experiencing emotional wellbeing concerns, including Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p> <p>In addition to their training offer, Healthy Minds Lincolnshire provides CBT-informed intervention support, workshops and resources for children and young people, as well as workshops and resources for parents/carers. In addition, workshops, training and workshops are also available for staff working in Lincolnshire schools and</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>academies. Healthy Minds Lincolnshire also provides support to Lincolnshire schools and academies' pastoral support planning in relation to anxiety-based school refusal and also case consultation sessions to help support schools working with children and young people experiencing emotional wellbeing concerns.</p> <p>Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in identified areas of the County work directly in education settings involved with the MHST programme to provide evidence-based CBT interventions for Lincolnshire children and young people experiencing emotional wellbeing concerns, including Children in Care and Care Leavers and use CBT informed support and resources to help support education setting staff to develop/ embed their whole setting approach to positive emotional wellbeing and mental health.</p>	
		<p>Ensure there is strong collaborative working relationship between schools, health services and the local authority.</p>	<p>The Virtual school co-ordinators ensure that all agencies are working together to effectively support the individual needs of our children and young people. The Virtual school participates in a monthly multi-agency meeting including representatives from CAMHS and Children in Care Health team to review support for young people who</p>	

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			<p>have high SDQ scores. School Nursing Teams are managed overseen by Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services. EHCP are regularly reviewed with Health colleagues.</p> <p>The Healthy Minds Lincolnshire service supports Lincolnshire children and young people aged 0 to 19 years experiencing emotional wellbeing concerns. For school-aged Lincolnshire children attending a Lincolnshire school or academy support wherever possible is provided within the school setting in order to work collaboratively with the school to better meet the needs of the child/young person within the school setting. The service is funded by the Local Authority, with 50% of the funding coming from the High Needs Block of the Designated Schools Budget, the funding from which is also supported by the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership.</p> <p>The MHSTs are funded through NHS England and Health Education England are part of the NHS Long Term Plan to provide even more mental health and emotional wellbeing support to more children and young people aged 5 to 18 years. MHSTs work collaboratively with education setting staff within the MHSTs in order to best support children</p>	

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			<p>and young people, including Children in Care and Care Leavers, and will help to create better links with wider children's services in order to ensure children and young people access the right support at the right time.</p> <p>Joint screening of referrals between CAMHS, Healthy Minds Lincolnshire and MHSTs will also help to ensure that children and young people access the right service at the right time.</p> <p>CAMHS work closely with Early Help and Social Workers on joint cases, to ensure that support is joined up and reflected in wider care planning. They provide support, advice and consultation for any children's professionals in Lincolnshire via the Lincolnshire Here4You line.</p> <p>Lincolnshire's Children's Integrated Commissioning arrangements include a specialist hub/team, who have a detailed knowledge of joint health, care and education commissioning arrangements in Lincolnshire and work to improve joint commissioning across a number of areas, including emotional/mental health and behaviour. This work programme is overseen by a Lincolnshire system Children Integrated Transformation</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			Board, with representation from LCC, the CCG, the three Lincolnshire NHS providers, and GPs/PCNs.	
		Further develop the concept of trauma-informed practice in schools, ensuring that they become a protective factor in the lives of vulnerable children rather than a source of stress and anxiety	<p>3 days of trauma-informed training were provided by leader in field, Dr Karen Treisman, in Dec 2018 through to Jan 2019. This was repeated in July 2019 with a day 4 looking at trauma-informed organisations.</p> <p>The key messages are being cascaded to schools via the pupil reintegration team and the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) along with a Regulation Toolkit for primary and secondary settings through a 2 hr staff School-based training on relational and developmental trauma.</p> <p>The Ladder has been adapted to foreground trauma and a trauma-informed PSP guide has been rolled out to all schools. In addition, exemplar assemblies, teaching children themselves about the impact of trauma and how to support one another, are available for schools.</p> <p>The process of developing staffs skills and knowledge in terms of trauma informed practice and addressing the complexities presented in schools will be a continual cycle. The Inclusion</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>Toolkit, Lincolnshire's version of the graduated approach, supports SENCOs in reframing 'challenging' behaviour as 'distressed' behaviour and promotes a range of evidence-based strategies around how to create a sense of psychological safety for those CYP whose experiences have created hyper-vigilance</p> <p>Barnardos have also committed to offering on-going training to all its staff to ensure they can practice in a trauma informed way.</p> <p>Healthy Minds Lincolnshire acted as lead experts on behalf of the Council to coordinate and deliver the DfE funded Wellbeing for Education Return training and ongoing support to Lincolnshire state-funded schools and academies up until end of March 2021, in order to better equip state funded schools and colleges to promote children and young people's wellbeing, resilience and recovery in response to Covid-19. The training included trauma informed practice and was delivered in partnership with a wide range of partners including the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS), Kooth.com (online counselling service), Kyra Teaching School Alliance</p>	

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			<p>(Mobilise), Autism and Learning Difficulties Service (Working Together Team) and the Council's Caring2Learn Team. Almost 95% of eligible schools and academies attended the training.</p> <p>Lincolnshire's BOSS service worked in partnership with Healthy Minds Lincolnshire provided support to the Youth Housing Contract during the first lockdown focussing on upskilling staff across five youth housing sites within Lincolnshire. This included providing telephone advice/guidance, developing a toolkit for staff to use including restorative approaches, supporting young people's emotional wellbeing needs, financial needs and other concerns.</p>	
		<p>Further strengthen practice between general practitioners and schools.</p>	<p>Whilst there is no there is no existing formal arrangement for collaborative working between GPs and schools, he relationships are strong in Lincolnshire and the agenda is led by the designated doctor</p> <p>GPs comply with GMC guidance in respect of safeguarding, information sharing and support the health and wellbeing of all Looked After children and Care leavers.</p> <p>Non-compliance with the principals and</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>GNMC guidance would be addressed by the FST/Quality teams.</p> <p>Lincolnshire has a system-level CYP Integrated Transformation Board with representation across the LA, CCG, NHS providers and GPs/PCNs. This board provides key governance and oversight for a range of CYP commissioned services across education, health and social care. This is further strengthened by having GP/PCN engagement on specific review board/task and finish groups e.g. CAMHS, MHSTs, behaviour/neurodevelopmental pathway, ensuring any pathways across education and general practice as they are developed are joined up and effective for professionals and CYP/families.</p>	
		<p>Working with all partners, we will provide restorative approaches to those already engaged in the Criminal Justice System and to reduce further criminalisation of young people as this will enable them to get back on track to achieve their aspirations as law abiding citizens</p>	<p>Since Lincolnshire's Joint Diversionary Panel was implemented, there has been far greater use of non-statutory, restorative option outcomes. The Youth Restorative Intervention was established specifically for the JDP with the purpose of not criminalising, instead offering a restorative focus for both the victim and the young person. 337 (85%) of outcomes from JDP in 2019 and 268 (85%) in 2020 were restorative and non-criminalising.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>The panel has been externally validated by the University of Lincoln and has resulted in significant reductions in children becoming first time entrants in the formal criminal justice system. It also ensures improved outcomes for children, victims of crime and communities in Lincolnshire.</p> <p>The panel places a critical importance on early intervention and support for children and families. The use of the simple Police caution has effectively been ceased through the JDP. Within the JDP we take an holistic approach to decision-making which is supported its multi-agency membership and the decision making is evidence-informed and considers the full context of the child's life</p>	
<p>5. We will work in partnership with schools and carers to provide good learning opportunities for all</p>	<p>Looked After Children teams and Virtual School</p>	<p>Implement Caring2Learn, learning what works so these aspects of the project can be implemented across all our schools.</p>	<p>The Project has now been in the delivery phase since January 2018 and has won a national award. Funding through until end of September 2021.</p> <p>Through the project we have created an innovative and sustainable multi-disciplinary approach to improving academic outcomes, progress, life choices and opportunities for all Lincolnshire children in care and on the edge of care.</p> <p>The project has developed and implemented a clearly defined</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>accreditation strategy that is supporting schools to be able to nurture and promote wellbeing and attachment, ensure looked after children achieve better than expected. Hub schools of excellence have been identified and these are working in collaboration with Champions and Carers across the localities to provide a sector-led support network.</p> <p>Caring2Learn has further developed as a consequence of the pandemic with schools and carers continuing to come on board each month. 74% of carers are trained and 160 schools have now taken part..</p>	
		Develop strong partnerships and responses to reduce student absences and exclusions from school.	<p>Promote the trauma-informed PSP within schools to ensure that where behaviour is driven by toxic stress, it is mitigated rather than exacerbated by school responses. Use the Ladder of Intervention to move the sector beyond behaviourism</p> <p>The Lincolnshire BOSS service provides outreach support to Lincolnshire schools and academies aimed at providing a holistic, integrated range of specialist intervention support that helps schools to better support children and young people displaying behaviour that challenges which comprises their</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>learning and school attendance. BOSS works with children and young people at risk of exclusion and aims to reduce the number of children and young people who are excluded or at risk of exclusion. This includes intervention support, workshops and training for the school workforce (including Restorative Practice). Permanent exclusions in Lincolnshire have reduced from 160 in 2015/16 to 123 in 2018/19 (reduction of 23.7%).</p>	
		<p>Rigorously apply our own and national guidance around the quality of 'offsite' educational settings.</p>	<p>We have introduced a process of moderation and quality assurance of alternative provision (AP) whereby mainstream head teachers take responsibility for this on a rotation, using LCC's agreed QA of AP framework. Ensure all partners and staff practice is trauma-informed</p> <p>Robust contract management of commissioned independent Alternative Placement provision, including where to support Home Tuition, using a Joint Evaluation Toolkit with relevant Key Performance Indicators to monitor progress and outcomes for children and young people. Locality Education Leads support to develop and improve the education and curriculum offer.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>Reduce school moves whenever possible to help maintain placement, permanency and enhance educational stability.</p>	<p>Where moves cannot be avoided, ensure that transition is supported by referral to BOSS and that it is trauma-informed</p> <p>Exceptional transport entitlements regularly awarded to support children in care experiencing placement breakdown to continue to access existing educational setting, including placements outside of the Lincolnshire boundaries.</p> <p>Where children are placed in independent settings, referrals are completed on an individual basis and shared across a wide range of Suppliers through the Open Select List process to source the right placement for that young person in the first instance, wherever possible, to avoid multiple placement moves.</p>	
		<p>Improve access to further and higher education and the understanding Looked After Children and Care Leavers have of these providers.</p>	<p>The Virtual school has worked with Colleges to provide pilot bespoke taster days at local HE and FE settings for our Year 9 and 10 pupils. The Virtual school has strengthened links with LincHigher and post 16 settings and all young people in care from 3-18 are supported through the PEP process Virtual School co-ordinators have completed</p>	

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			<p>accredited Careers Guidance training and quality assurance of PEPs include that they are aspirational and make reference to careers guidance support for our secondary pupils.</p> <p>The Leaving Care service has a full financial offer to young people wishing to access higher education and attend university. Each young person is made aware of the offer if they wish to attend university or Higher Education. The financial handbook has been revised to reflect the offer more clearly. It is also captured on the Core Offer to care leavers</p>	
		Apply work based research practice to workforce (e.g. PALAC)	A practice bulletin is now regularly circulated regularly to all staff. This document pulls together practice and research into one place. Learning events are taking place on specific practice issues and will include research relevant to the practice issue being addressed.	
		Celebrate the achievements of all our children and young people.	LCC celebrates the achievements of Children in Care and Care Leavers each year through the annual FAB celebrations. The FAB awards are designed by and led by the wishes of young people. The annual ceremony continues.	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>We want to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All Looked After Children have access to good nursery provision. – All Care Leavers with children have access to free child care and early education. – Looked After Children are admitted to good settings and schools without undue delay. – All Looked After Children make good progress based on prior attainment including those accessing SEND specialist provision, through highly effective education plans. – That there is a designated teacher in all educational settings including further education. – All designated teachers have access to good training and professional development. – All Education Health Care Planning is carried out on time and required interventions are implemented in a timely way. Where a place in a special school is required, the young person is admitted promptly. – All Looked After Children are encouraged to attend extra-curricular and recreational interest they enjoy. These are available through the Local Offer. 	<p>The Virtual School works closely with the Early Years Locality Team to promote looked after children's access to early years education.</p> <p>Every child from the age of 3 has a PEP that is reviewed termly with the early years setting and targets set to support progress. The Virtual School commissions the Specialist Teaching Team and the Early Years Locality Teams to carry out assessments for all children aged 2 – 7 years which inform targets to promote communication and language skills.</p> <p>Early Years settings are encouraged to have a designated lead and the Virtual School has commissioned Educational Psychologists to deliver bespoke training to Early years settings to support trauma informed practice. The Virtual school Team works with Social Care to ensure there is no drift and delay in a young person accessing education following a placement move and tuition is put in as an interim arrangement if necessary. Personal Education Plans link closely to EHC plans and ensure that progress towards agreed outcomes is monitored on a termly basis.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>The Virtual School actively promotes young people's engagement in V4C activities. Additional activities including college taster days are organised and PEP meetings provide a regular opportunity to explore the benefits of attending out of school provision.</p>	
<p>6. We will work with young people so they have the skills and abilities to develop adult based relationships to equip them for independence and their future</p>	<p>Children Services, Adult Services and all partners</p>	<p>Review our assessment processes to ensure that we plan early, and truly understand what the young person wants to achieve in adulthood.</p>	<p>The new child and family assessment went live on 01st April 2019 following a 6 month pilot. The assessment is designed to be completed in collaboration with young person to identify their strengths and aspirations as well as highlighting areas where there may be a worry or further support is required.</p> <p>This restorative approach affords young people the opportunity to be fully engaged in their assessment and care/pathway planning. They are supported to set their own objectives, identify who/what matters to them, who they would like in their support network and what they would like their life to look like as they transition into adulthood.</p> <p>The Pathway Plan document has also been extensively reviewed. The Pathway Plan document is now in full use across all teams. The new</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			assessment has been reviewed and audited. This is now embedded in practice	
		Recognise the risk and impact of transitions for all children and young people. We will plan to meet individual needs in a co-ordinated way, drawing on the strengths of the young person and their wider networks, so they know what the future holds as they move into the adult world.	<p>The whole authority and its partners recognise the risks and difficulties young people face at points of transition. Plan reviews and Pathway Plan performance is strong and young people are always included in their plans and reviews to ensure they are best prepared for all transitions.</p> <p>LCC committed to ensuring that every Children in Care and Care Leavers has access to a "Life Links Meeting" which will be supported by a trained practitioner. The meetings will be facilitated by staff trained in FGC to work on helping young people develop resilience and support in their own way.</p> <p>The new Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service commenced on 1st April 2020 and part of the new service includes the allocation of a Personal Advisor at the younger age of 16, providing care leavers with a longer transition period into adulthood and the opportunity for all professionals supporting that young person to join up support and services around them to allow a good transition into their adult lives.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>Lincolnshire CAMHS are working with the Leaving Care Service to recruit a Leaving Care Mental Health Worker who will support YP through transition into adulthood, ensuring they know how they can get support with their mental health and accessing it.</p> <p>The local CYP MH plan proposes a transition team to work with CYP as and when required to prepare them for exiting mental health services or transitioning to CAMHS and can act as a key point of contact post-discharge.</p>	
		<p>At each key transition, whenever possible, involve a child or young person's family and the wider network, especially those who know them best.</p>	<p>LCC has now committed to ensuring that every Children in Care and Care Leavers has access to a "Life Links meeting" which will be supported by a trained practitioner. The meetings are facilitated by staff trained in FGC to work on helping young people develop resilience and support in their own way for adulthood</p>	
		<p>Value the importance of relationships and work flexibly where ever possible to minimise the negative impact of transitions and changes in relationships</p>	<p>The Life Links Meetings work to ensure that young people are supported and ready to face the challenges of transition with a supportive network of friends, colleagues, family and professionals</p>	
		<p>Prepare children and young people for transitions in their lives. We will place a specific emphasis on those young</p>	<p>This will always be an on-going piece of work.</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>people aged between 14-25. The key points of transition for us to consider are: all school key stages to education training and employment; the transition between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and adult mental health; transition between children’s social care to adult services, specifically considering those with special education needs and disabilities to ensure they have best access and support to further learning and the world of work. We will also consider the transition between Youth Justice Services to the adult Probation Service.</p>	<p>Young people transitioning between educational settings are supported by the virtual schools and their Social worker/Leaving Care worker.</p> <p>CAMHS operate a flexible transition protocol, working with CYP from an appropriate age to transition them out of mental health support or into CAMHS, this could include keeping YP in CAMHS beyond 18 if appropriate. They are currently working in partnership with Barnardo's to recruit a Leaving Care Mental Health worker post to support this. There are also plans as part of the NHS Long Term Plan to develop a transition team to work with CYP and families to ensure a much better supported and robust transition at 18</p> <p>There is a robust process in place for transitioning of young people from CWD and SEND to adult services. This process was recently subject of a scrutiny review and found to be strong.</p> <p>Strong relationship between young people and adult based CJS services ensure smooth transitions.</p>	
		Explore how we can have an information system or	Mosaic is accessed by Social Care, some	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
		<p>agreement in place which allows all professionals to access information about all those involved with a child and young person. We aspire to have all relevant records available to be viewed by all workers at any time, and for those and records to be written in the third person, so we are always writing to the child/young person when we create records about them</p>	<p>health services, the leaving care service and adult social care. As far as including additional partners into using Mosaic, we are exploring the ability to use 'portal' technology to allow access but this is a complex aspiration.</p>	
<p>7. We will develop Accommodation pathways so young people have choice and can access accommodation which supports them to prepare for the future in a planned and supportive way</p>	<p>Children’s Accommodation Board & Housing Health and Care delivery group and all partners</p>	<p>In partnership with housing authorities, secure an enhanced accommodation offer for all those leaving care to ensure support and preparation so they can live independently in their community.</p>	<p>A protocol exists between Children Services, Adult Services and the 7 Districts. This protocol articulates how we all work together to support young people in all our accommodation provisions from the youth housing offer, to Supported Lodgings, thought to Council housing.</p> <p>Care Leavers have local connection across all 7 Districts and can access youth housing options up to the age of 25.</p> <p>Districts Councils ensure care leavers are to be given priority 1 status all housing registers if they are homeless. There is now considerable operational experience now where Districts award highest priority to Care Leavers who are struggling with housing.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting manager is developing a housing transitions panel for introduction Mid 2021</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>The newly commissioned Youth Housing Service that commenced on 1st January 2021 has an increased number of support hours attached to the contract to allow the Provider to support the young people accommodated there, (including care leavers) to develop and strengthen their independent living skills and be able to thrive in their local communities.</p>	
		<p>As nurturing and resilient parents, we will never stop doing our best for Looked After Children and Care Leavers as we would for our own children. We will never refer to them as being intentionally homeless and will work together to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>The protocol described above articulates how all partners, including the District Councils, will work together and ensure no Care Leaver is ever considered intentionally homeless.</p> <p>The DCS has committed funds to pay for a rent gap scheme to support young people gaining their own tenancy and funding the short fall between benefits and rent to minimise the risk of difficulties in retaining housing</p>	
		<p>Ensure Care Leavers are exempted from paying council tax until they are 25 years old.</p>	<p>Care Leavers are exempt from paying council tax in all 7 Districts up to the age of 21. Some councils have extended to 25, further negotiations are taking place to increase this to 25.</p>	
		<p>Re-commission supported accommodation provision so that the provision is more responsive to more complex young people and better reflects the principles in this strategy.</p>	<p>The new Youth Housing contract commenced on 1st January 2021 with a renewed focus on the support element of the contract. A higher value contract</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>has allowed a significant increase in support hours being delivered, with the expectation that the service will now accommodate and support the breadth of complexity of need that young people accessing the service may display. The support element focuses on helping young people to return home to their families and strengthening those relationships where it is appropriate to do so and looks to build young people's resilience and independence in preparation for their adult life.</p>	
		<p>Seek to develop in-house provision to ensure we can meet the needs of our most challenging young people in locally sourced options.</p>	<p>Along with the commissioning of the young people's housing offer, Lincolnshire has developed its own local un regulated housing offer to support young people to independence. There is a 5 bed supported living unit in Gainsborough and one in Grantham.</p> <p>We are also working with Barnardos to develop parent and baby Supported Lodgings placements.</p>	
		<p>Provide an early help worker and emotional wellbeing worker for all those in supported accommodation.</p>	<p>Young people in supported accommodation can access the support of an Early Help worker if needed. A referral can be made to the early help</p>	

Priority	Responsibility	Action	Progress	Red/Amber /Green
			<p>team and is assessed as being needed a worker will be allocated. This includes support via the Council's Early Help CYP IAPT EEB Practitioners who are trained to deliver direct evidence-based intervention for emotional wellbeing concerns.</p> <p>Young people in supported accommodation can also access support from the Healthy Minds Lincolnshire Service (emotional wellbeing service) either via referral from another professional or self-referral via the Lincolnshire Here4You Advice and Referral Line, which is a joint line between Healthy Minds Lincolnshire and CAMHS.</p>	
		<p>Create more private tenancy opportunities close to Residential Homes so Care Leavers can stay close to their community and continue to be supported by people they know.</p>	<p>The staying close offer is continuing to develop and is being supported by the unregulated offer Lincolnshire now has. We have had a number of young people successfully transition into private tenancy arrangements close to the residential homes.</p>	

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 4 2020/21 (January to March 2021)

Summary:

The report and accompanying appendices provide key performance information for Quarter 4 2020/21 which are relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

The Panel is invited to consider and comment on the performance information contained in the appendices of this report and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.

1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Children in Care used by Children's Services. This is available for questions.

There are 16 measures in total that relate to Children in Care that are reported on in Quarter 4. Of these measures 7 are outside of the target set by the services.

These are:

Fostering/adoption of Children in Care aged 10 to <16 years old - This performance has remained under target at year end. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings, but this has been impacted by the pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers shielding and unable to take additional placements. In addition, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves, who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on

reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders which has been delayed by the impact of the pandemic.

Stability of placements of Children in Care: Number of moves - This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and has slipped under target again this year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. The year has been challenging for all children, but foster carers have proven to be very resourceful and committed to the children they care for. However, placement availability has been negatively impacted as some foster carers have chosen to concentrate on the children already in their care and declined to take additional placements. With a backdrop of increased numbers of children in care and a depleted pool of foster carers available, effective matching for children has been more difficult.

Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date health check - The Covid Pandemic has had less negative impact on this area of the children's health than dental care and the immunisation programme. However, the number of children in care has increased and there is evidence of more young people (16/17 age range) exercising their right to refuse an assessment. There have been a number of young people in this age range becoming looked after and generally they are not committed to accessing their health assessment.

The Children in Care Teams continue to encourage and promote health assessments with their young people but have to accept their right to refuse.

More recently there has been an increased delay in Initial Health Assessments due to the nurses no longer being able to undertake these – these have reverted to the GP's who are in very short supply and only limited appointments have been offered.

Where there appears to be a particularly long wait for an appointment the nurses are telephoning the carers to undertake a quick health check (this does not replace the health assessment) to ensure that there are no significant areas of concern/worry that need to be addressed urgently.

Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check - The reduction in the number of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check has been significantly impacted by the Covid Pandemic. During periods of lockdown, National Health Dentists were only dealing with emergencies and outside of lockdown many have continued to restrict the number of patients they will see in any one day due to the increased levels of hygiene/protection that needs to be in place. Many were and are continuing to refuse new registrations.

Prior to Covid, we were seeing increased difficulties in children being able to register with a National Health Service Dentist. Many of these appear to have made the decision to only provide private dentistry thereby impacting on the number of NHS practices available.

Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date routine immunisation - The reduction in the number of routine immunisations has also been significantly impacted by the Covid Pandemic.

The majority of overdue immunisations are the teenage boosters which are undertaken in school. These were clearly delayed due to schools being closed for extended periods of time.

The health immunisation team have now resumed their programme of immunisations. However, it is projected that it will take approximately 18 months for the programme to be fully back on schedule. The team have to catch up on those that have been missed/delayed during the pandemic and also the increase in their workload due to all males now being offered the HPV and all school population being offered the flu immunisation.

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET) - The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Service continues to report on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET and the Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance. Covid-19 and the legacy of it continues to have an impact on the services sector and this does directly affect care leavers. Most young people start their working lives with jobs in bars, restaurants, shops and front-line customer services where the largest job losses are being witnessed and it continues to impact on the ability of these employers to open. It is anticipated that Covid-19 will continue to impact on EET, and the percentage remains in the low to mid 50% range.

Since the last performance funding has been secured from the Covid recovery fund in order to recruit 2 specialist Leaving Care posts for a period of 1 year. The purpose of these 2 posts is to build capacity within the service and to focus specifically on EET. The focus will be on finding employment opportunities, work experience and unpicking and making best use of a range of initiatives and funding that will become available from central government to aid with the recovery from the pandemic.

Children in Care Living Within A Family Environment – This has ended the year ahead of target. It confirms that, for the vast majority of children in care, a family placement is the most effective means of offering care. Of these, 36 children at the end of the year were living with parents and were either subject to an order as part of care proceedings or reunified home.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 4 performance for Children in Care and Young People, and the Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to raise any questions on the content of the report.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

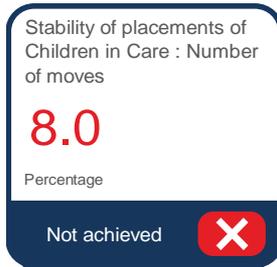
4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children in Care Measures

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 Simon Hardcastle, who can be contacted at simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk.



Corporate Parenting Sub Group



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Fostering/adoption of Children in Care aged 10 to <16 years old

Percentage of Children in Care aged 10 to under 16 who have been fostered or placed for adoption



About the latest performance

This performance has remained under target at year end. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings but this has been impacted by the pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers shielding and unable to take additional placements. In addition, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders which has been delayed by the impact of the pandemic.

About the target

Target reduced to 85% as performance has remained under target at 82% over the past year. This is indicative of a reduction in the number of foster carers, challenges in foster carer recruitment and children with complex needs.

About the target range

A 2% variance is set for the upper value and 3% for the lower value.

Meeting the upper tolerance level would achieve a performance level not reached recently and show a change in the overall trend.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking data no longer available



Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Number of Children in Care per 10,000 under 18s

Children in Care per 10,000 population aged under 18. There are a number of reasons why a child may be 'looked after' by the local authority. Most often it is because the child's parents or the people who have parental responsibilities and rights to look after the child are unable to care for the child, have been neglecting the child or the child has committed an offence. The local authority has specific responsibilities and duties towards a child who is being looked after or who has been looked after. This measure is reported taking a snapshot in time. So for example Q2 is performance as at 30th September.

A lower rate of children looked after by the Local Authority indicates a better performance.



Achieved

46.8

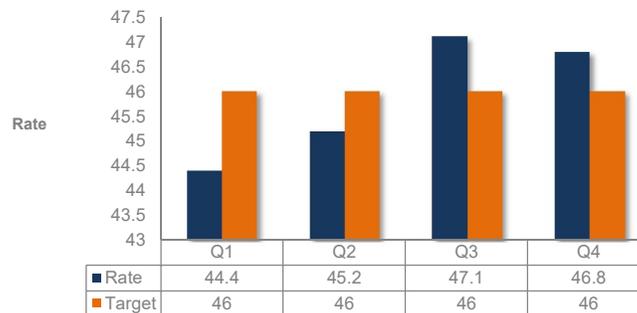
Rate
Quarter 4 March 2021



46.0

Rate
Target for March 2021

Number of Children in Care per 10,000 under 18s



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target Remains Same as Previous Year

About the target range

The Upper and lower Target allows for the number of CiC to vary between approximately 626- 699. This is about +/- 35 children from target.

Anything above or below this number would be flagged as worse than target, i.e. indicating a significant variance from the current position.

About benchmarking

Comparator information is available and is showing an increasing trend

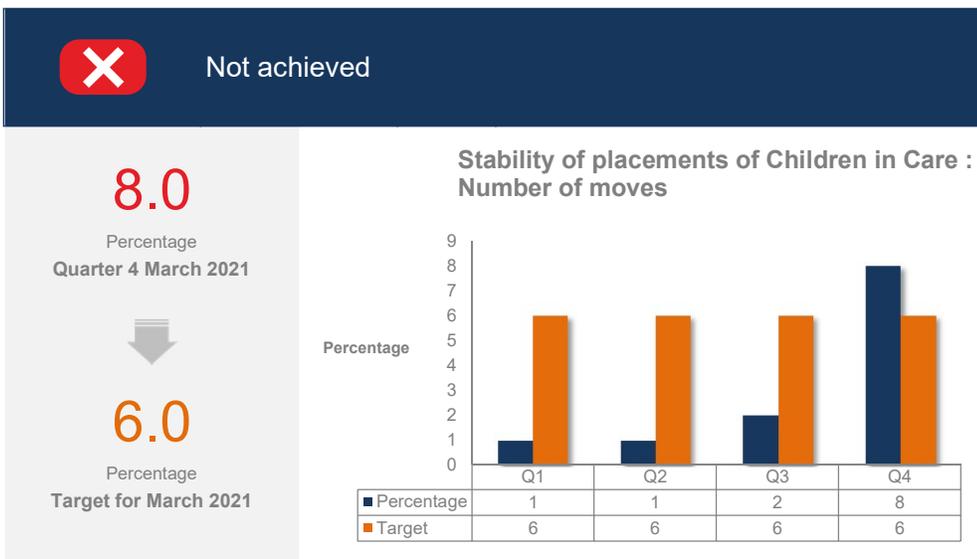


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of Children in Care : Number of moves

Percentage of Children in Care with three or more placements



About the latest performance

This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and has slipped under target again this year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. The year has been challenging for all children but foster carers have proven to be very resourceful and committed to the children they care for. However placement availability has been negatively impacted as some foster carers have chosen to concentrate on the children already in their care and declined to take additional placements. With a back drop of increased numbers of children in care and a depleted pool of foster carers available, effective matching for children has been more difficult.

About the target

Target remains same as 2019/20. Performance remains good in comparison with the 11% stated national figure. However we have seen a derioration this year which reflects the reduced choice of placement options and complexities of young people placed.

About the target range

Achieving the upper tolerance level should maintain LCC's position within the top quartile nationally and still maintain LCC as one of the best performing of our statistical neighbours. Comparative performance within our statistical neighbours is 9.6%. Anything below the lower level should be shown as a significant improvement over last year.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

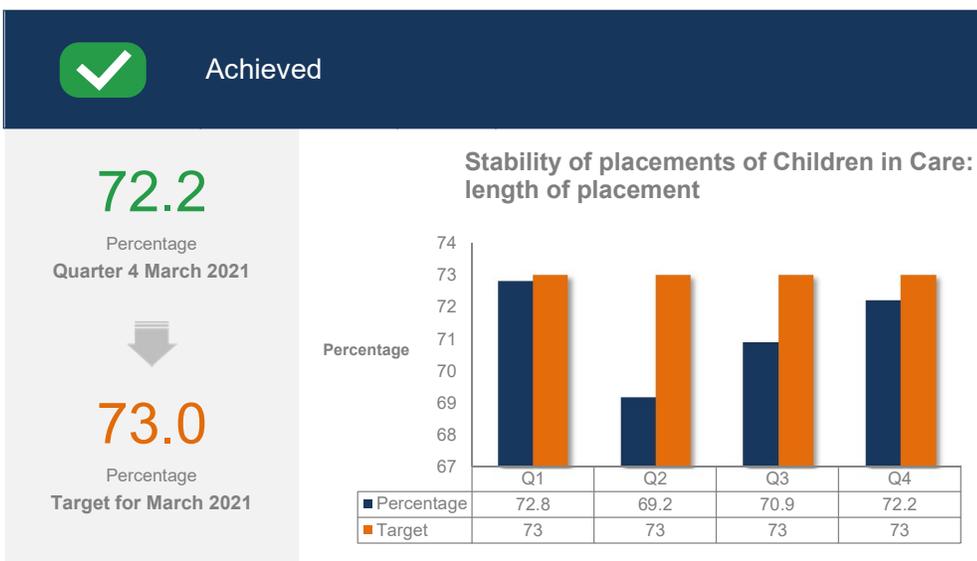


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of placement

Percentage of Children in Care in the same placement for at least two years



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains the same as previous years and above the present performance of statistical neighbours. Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

About the target range

Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

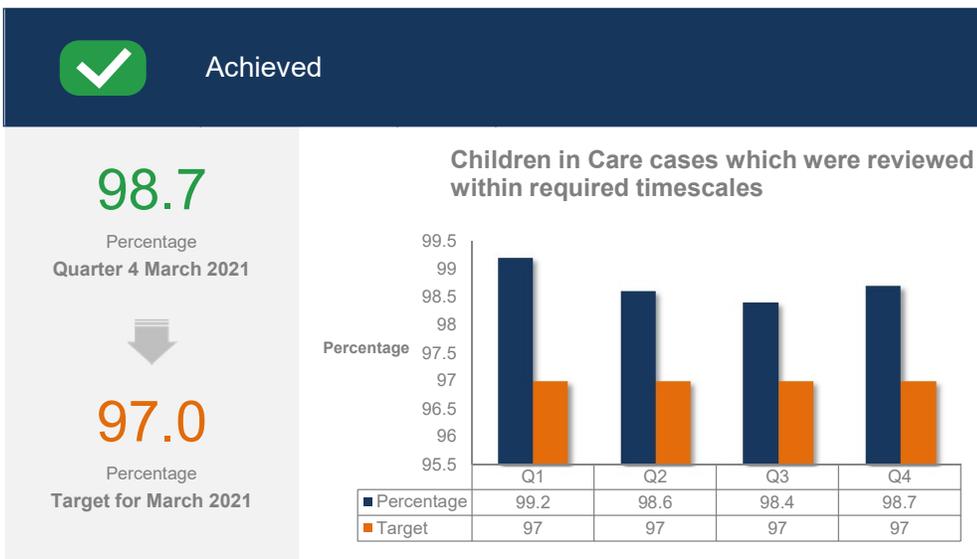


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales

Percentage of Children in Care cases that have been reviewed within timescales



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains at 95% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

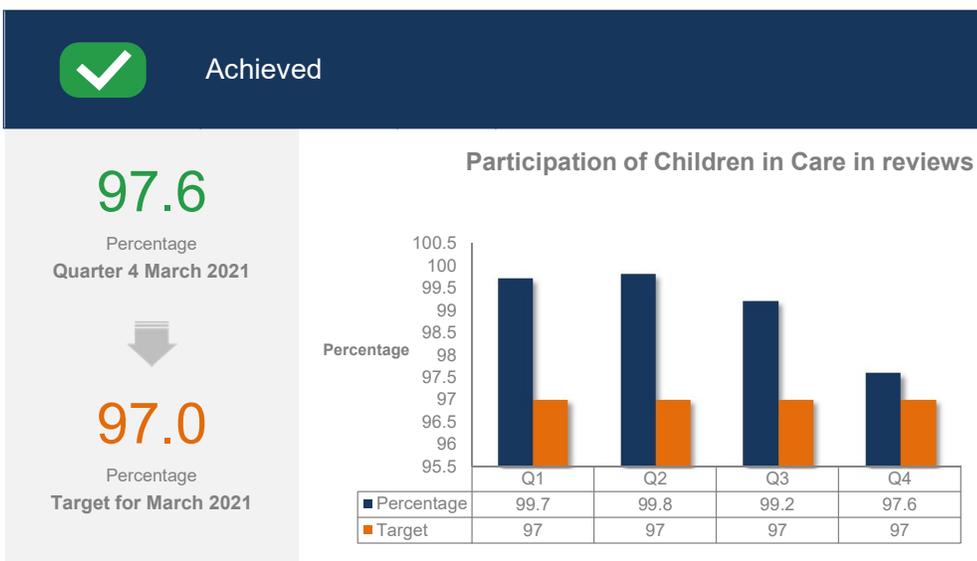


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Participation of Children in Care in reviews

Percentage of Children in Care who participated in their reviews



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains at 95% to take into account current performance.

About the target range

As the target is 95%, an upper value of 5% has been set.

A lower value of 95% has been set to highlight any performance lower than 95%

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

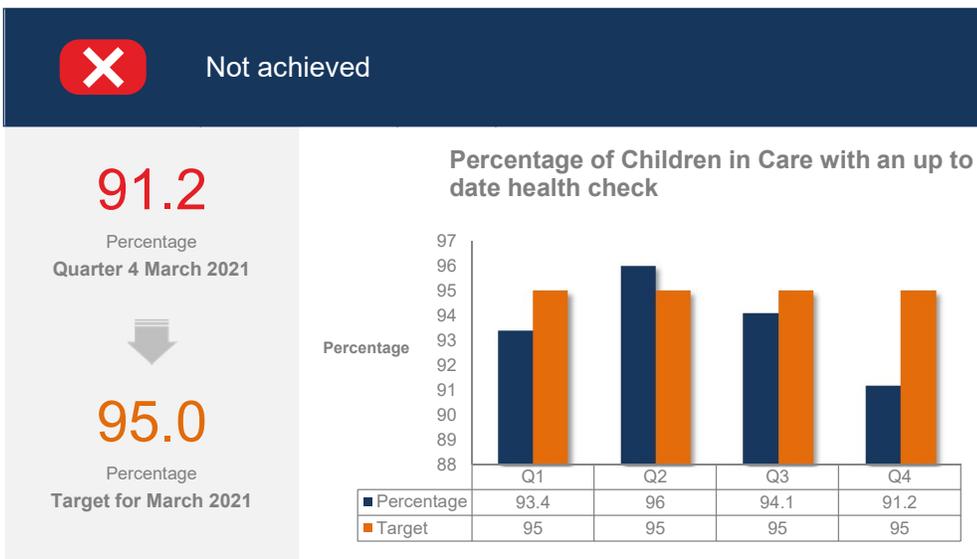


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date health check

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date health check record



About the latest performance

The Covid Pandemic has had less negative impact on this area of the children's health than dental care and the immunisation programme. However, the number of children in care has increased and there is evidence of more young people (16/17 age range) exercising their right to refuse an assessment.

There have been a number young people in this age range becoming looked after and generally they are not committed to accessing their health assessment.

The Children in Care Teams continue to encourage and promote health assessments with their young people but have to accept their right to refuse.

More recently there has been an increased delay in Initial Health Assessments due to the nurses no longer being able to undertake these – these have reverted to the GP's who are in very short supply and only limited appointments have been offered.

Where there appears to be a particularly long wait for an appointment the nurses are telephoning the carers to undertake a quick health check (this does not replace the health assessment) to ensure that there are no significant areas of concern/worry that need to be addressed urgently.

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

A lower tolerance of 2% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 93% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

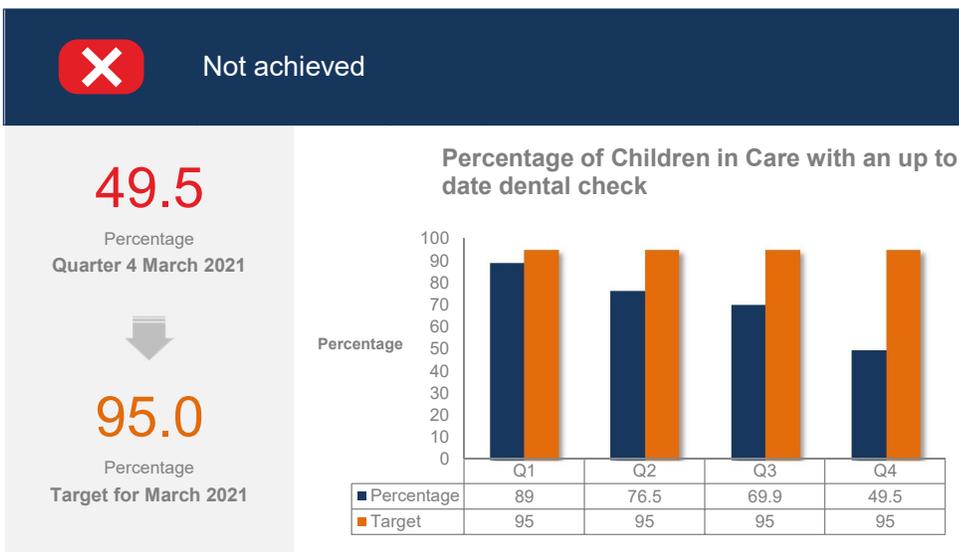


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date dental check

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date dental check



About the latest performance

The reduction in the number of Children in Care with an up to date dental check has been significantly impacted by the Covid Pandemic. During periods of lockdown, National Health Dentists were only dealing with emergencies and outside of lockdown many have continued to restrict the number of patients they will see in any one day due to the increased levels of hygiene/protection that needs to be in place. Many were, and are continuing to refuse new registrations. Prior to Covid, we were seeing increased difficulties in children being able to register with a National Health Service Dentist. Many of these appear to have made the decision to only provide private dentistry thereby impacting on the number of NHS practices available.

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. This would mean that if all checks were done within timescale we would have achieved an excellent outcome, which would be shown as better than target.

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About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

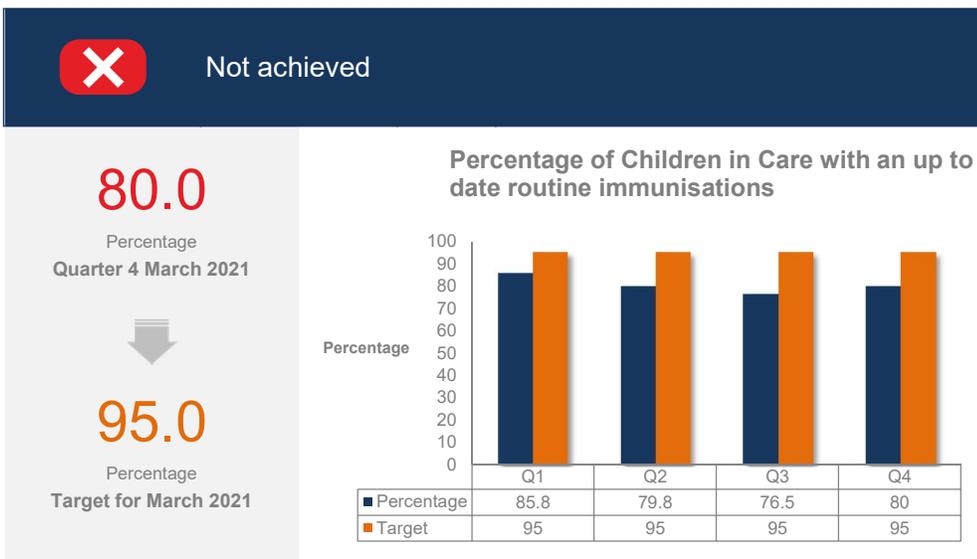


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date routine immunisations

Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date routine immunisations recorded



About the latest performance

The reduction in the number of routine immunisations has also been significantly impacted by the Covid Pandemic.

The majority of overdue immunisations are the teenage boosters which are undertaken in school. These were clearly delayed due to schools being closed for extended periods of time.

The health immunisation team have now resumed their programme of immunisations. However, it is projected that it will take approximately 18 months for the programme to be fully back on schedule. The team have to catch up on those that have been missed/delayed during the pandemic and also the increase in their workload due to all males now being offered the HPV and all school population being offered the flu immunisation.

About the target

Remain as previous year, tolerance allows performance to be in line with this year's performance.

About the target range

An upper tolerance of 4.5% has been set. Achievement of this would indicate that all CiC received all their health checks within timescale – achievement of 100%.

A lower tolerance of 1% has been set to allow for under performance. Data from the last two years shows achieving 94% is very achievable and performance has not often fallen below this marker.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

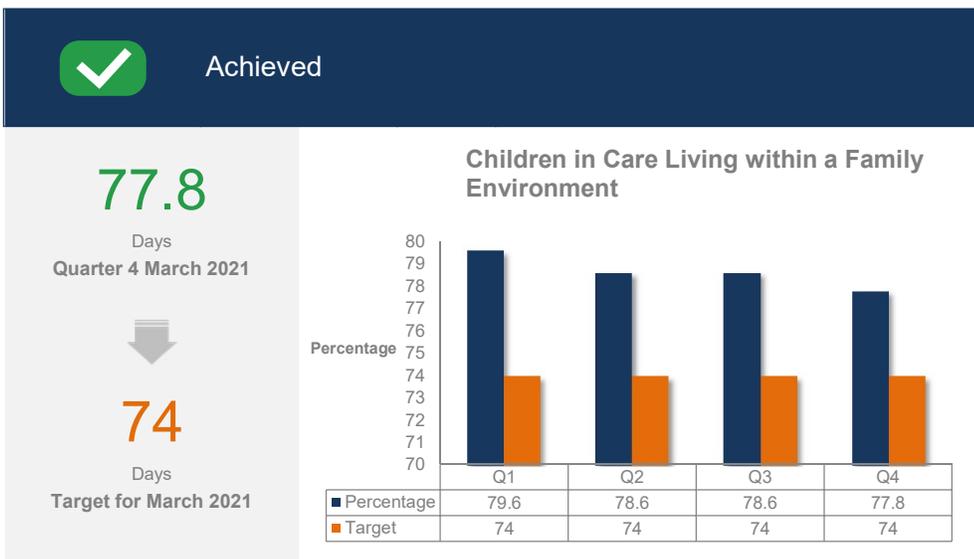


Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Children in Care Living within a Family Environment

Percentage of Children in Care Living within a Family Environment



About the latest performance

This has ended the year ahead of target. It confirms that, for the vast majority of children in care, a family placement is the most effective means of offering care. Of these, 36 children at the end of the year were living with parents and were either subject to an order as part of care proceedings or reunified home.

About the target

The target has been set to 74%. This is a new Performance Indicator which includes children in care living with parents as well as in foster and adoption placements.

About the target range

We would like to see performance between 70% and 77%, so we have set the lower range to -4% and the upper range to +3%.

About benchmarking

We are unable to benchmark against other local authorities as this measure includes children residing with their parents.



Learn and Achieve

Learn and Achieve

Children in Care persistent absence rate

Persistent absence rate for children in care



Data not available

No Data

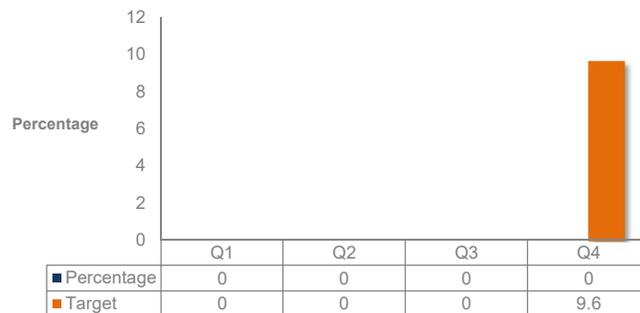
Percentage
Quarter 4 March 2021



9.6

Percentage
Target for March 2021

Children in Care persistent absence rate



About the latest performance

Information not available due to Covid.

About the target

The most recent data available from the 2017/18 SFR gave Lincolnshire's performance at 9.8%. The suggested target is 9.6% \pm 2% giving a range of 7.6% to 11.6% This will mean that we would be in line with the projected National PA figure but also allows room for improvement above the latest reported performance.

About the target range

See Target Rationale

About benchmarking

Benchmarked against National, Regional and Stat neighbours.



Learn and Achieve

Learn and Achieve

Percentage of Children in Care achieving 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs

Percentage of Children in Care achieving 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs



Achieved

8.0

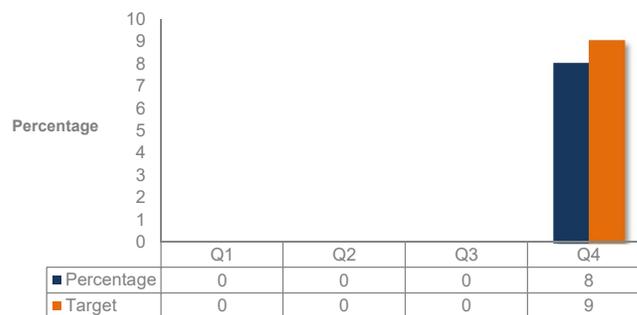
Percentage
Annual



9.0

Percentage
Annual

Percentage of Children in Care achieving 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set. Figure given is local rather than published data and is based on teacher assessed grades rather than exams, so is not comparable to previous years.

About the target

Nationally in 2018, 8% of children in care achieved grade 9-5 in English and maths. In Lincolnshire in 2018, 11% of children in care achieved grade 9-5 in English and maths.

The latest 2019 data is yet to be published but early indications suggest Lincolnshire has dipped to 3% for this measure and national is likely to stay around 8%.

The target has been set to 9% to get our performance back in line with national performance for this measure. A figure of 9% also allows for a 1% increase in this measure nationally if we achieve the target.

About the target range

The tolerances have been made fairly broad on account of cohort size meaning each pupil is worth 2% to Lincolnshire's outcomes. The tolerance allows for flexibility to cohort numbers that will not be finalised for this measure until 31st March 2020.

The upper tolerance I expect would see Lincolnshire's performance be well above the national average and in line with the FFT 50 benchmark; an aspirational target for this cohort. The tolerance would mean that we would need to achieve more than one extra pupil achieving the measure in order to pass the upper target threshold.

The lower tolerance would see Lincolnshire's performance be below the national average by more than one less pupil achieving the measure.

About benchmarking

The FFT 50 benchmark for this cohort (based on 41 out of 50 pupils with FFT benchmarks) suggests our pupils would be in the top 50% of similar pupils nationally if 12% achieved this measure in 2019. Considering that the FFT Benchmark does not account for this cohort being in care and is mainly based on KS2 prior attainment data, the FFT 50 benchmark becomes a very aspirational target for our Child in Care pupils to meet.



Learn and Achieve

Learn and Achieve

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan



Achieved

99.0

Percentage
Quarter 4 March 2021



98.0

Percentage
Target for March 2021

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target remains at 98%, increase in capacity in the Virtual school should see the performance being reached.

About the target range

Lower tolerance is set to 2% below the target which would represent poor performance. The tolerance range reflects the need for emergency placements out of county/in county for a small proportion of children in care.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

16-17 year old Children in Care who are participating in Learning

This measures young people recorded as being Children in Care participating in learning at the end of the reporting period and will not take into consideration the length of time that they have been in local authority care.

Numerator: Number of Children in Care participating in learning at the end of the reporting period.

Denominator: Number of Children in Care at the end of the reporting period.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. The parameters of this measure were previously defined as recording 16-18 year old Children in Care participating in learning. As of Q1 2017/18 onwards, the Department for Education no longer require monitoring of children aged 18, and so the measure has been amended accordingly, restricting data provision to 16-17 year old Children in Care only. A higher percentage of Children in Care participating in learning indicates a better performance.



Achieved

89.5

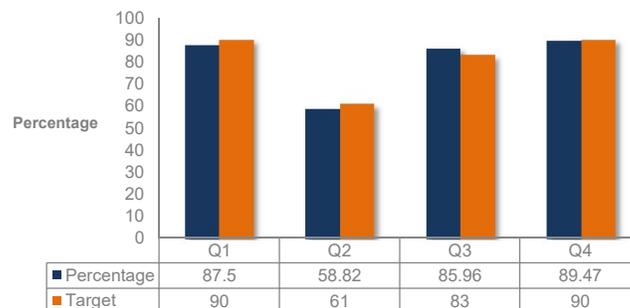
Percentage
Quarter 4 March 2021



90.0

Percentage
Target for March 2021

16-17 year old Children in Care who are participating in Learning



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target has been raised by 1% to 90%. The rationale for this raise is that at the time of target setting performance is 90.4%, above the 2019/20 target of 89%, and is on track to achieve the upper target of 91%. The reason for only a small increase is that as the cohort is very small a change of one or two children moving out of learning can have a significant impact of the percentage in learning. Q2 & Q3 targets lower to allow for the expected dip at this time of year due to September being the start of the tracking process

About the target range

The target range is set at a level to allow for 2 percentage points above the target and 5 percentage points below the target.

About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is not available for this cohort.



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

A care leaver is a young person who reaches the age of 18 who had been in local authority care.
Numerator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are living in accommodation deemed as "suitable".

Denominator: Number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year.

The percentage is calculated as follows: Numerator divided by the denominator multiplied by 100. A higher percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation indicates a better performance.



Achieved

94.0

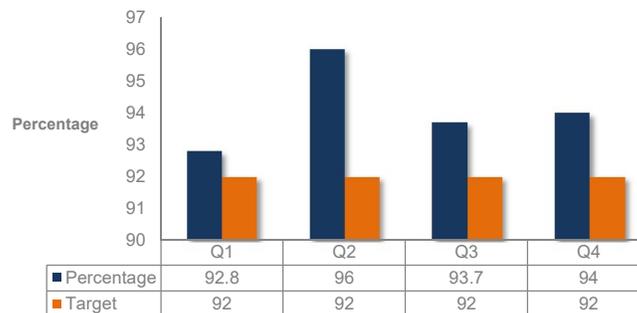
Percentage
Quarter 4 March 2021



92.0

Percentage
Target for March 2021

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation



About the latest performance

Current performance has met the targets set.

About the target

Target to remain the same as previous year, we are above both national and similar authority average

About the target range

The lower target has been set at the 25% quartile. Meaning if we fall below this we will not be in the top 25% of authorities. The upper target has been set 5% above this



Ready for Adult Life

Ready for Adult Life

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

The number of care leavers turning 19 years of age in the year who are in either Education, Employment or Training



Not achieved

49.8

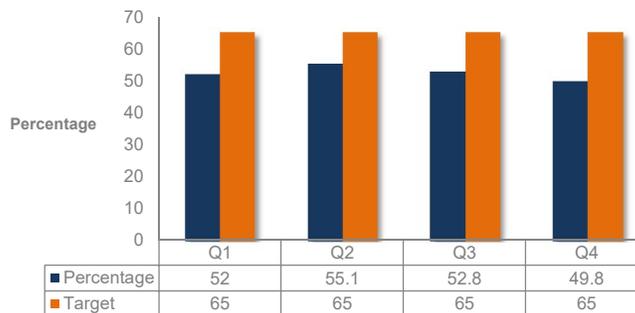
Percentage
Quarter 4 March 2021



65.0

Percentage
Target for March 2021

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training



About the latest performance

The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Service continues to report on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET and the Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance. Covid-19 and the legacy of it continues to have an impact on the services sector and this does directly affect care leavers. Most young people start their working lives with jobs in bars, restaurants, shops and front line customer services where the largest job losses are being witnessed and it continues to impact on the ability of these employers to open. It is anticipated that Covid-19 will continue to impact on EET and the percentage remains in the low to mid 50% range.

Since the last performance funding has been secured from the Covid recovery fund in order to recruit 2 specialist Leaving Care posts for a period of 1 year. The purpose of these 2 posts is to build capacity within the service and to focus specifically on EET. The focus will be on finding employment opportunities, work experience and unpicking and making best use of a range of initiatives and funding that will become available from central government to aid with the recovery from the pandemic.

About the target

Target reduced to 65% this is based on both recent performance and in comparison with other local authorities nationally.

About the target range

Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

About benchmarking

We can compare ourselves both nationally and with similar authorities on an annual basis

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Open report on behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Lincolnshire Leaving Care – Annual Report

Summary:

Annual Update Report Provided by Barnardo's on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (April 2020 – March 2021).

Actions Required:

This report is for background information and the Panel will receive a presentation about the service area at the meeting.

1. 1. Background

This is the annual report to Lincolnshire's Corporate Parenting Panel to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service regarding care leavers. Areas covered within this report include:

- A. Barnardo's Response to Covid.
- B. Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation.
- C. Accessing and maintaining appropriate Education Employment and Training opportunities.
- D. New Initiatives
- E. Compliments and Complaints

Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (since the 1st of April 2020) is to deliver a Statutory Leaving Care Service for young people aged 18-25 and to start working with the Local Authority Children in Care / FAST Teams working with Looked after Children aged 16-18. The contract is closely monitored via monthly contract monitoring meetings which are attended by the Contract Monitoring Officer, the Corporate Parenting Manager and one of the Children's Services Managers (with lead responsibility for Looked after Children and Care Leavers).

Data contained within this report covers a 12-month period from April 2020– March 2021.

A - Barnardo's Response to Covid

It would be very remiss not to provide panel members with a comprehensive insight into the steps Barnardo's have taken in continuing to deliver our statutory duty following the Covid pandemic.

Date	Action Taken
March 2020	Workers were encouraged to work at home—across service we checked that all team members had adequate equipment and working environments.
March 2020	<p>Within service we circulated across service Lincolnshire County Council's position in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancelling all non-essential meetings. • Use phone, not face to face visits. • Not to undertake unnecessary journeys. • Where possible physically distance from colleagues / peers.
March 2020	Information circulated to all team members in relation to been classified as 'business critical keyworkers and letters that could be used to demonstrate this status. Barnardo's also circulated information about team members children been able to access Schools (if required)
March 2020	Prior to the national lockdown Barnardo's had made a national decision to send home all vulnerable workers (including those with health conditions and the over 70's)
23 March 2020	The Management team had identified a Rota to ensure a Team Manager and Administrator was office based (if required) but all Leaving Care Workers and Specialist Workers were home based, however the 23 rd March 2020 was the last day that the offices were open prior to the National Lockdown.
March 2020	<p>All Leaving Care Workers had been tasked to contact all Care Leavers and maintain more regular contact than normal. Team Managers checked compliance by regularly reviewing Mosaic (electronic client record system)</p> <p>Within Barnardo's we started collating daily data that identified the members of staff that were working, if any were self-isolating or any had the Covid infection. This assisted with Business Continuity Planning and was shared with Commissioners (twice weekly initially)</p>
March – July 2020	As a service we did undertake some face-to-face emergency visits with Care Leavers. We had provided all staff (who were not in high-risk groups) with

	<p>PPE and all visits were subject to management approval.</p> <p>Barnardo's had produced a series of method statements that were shared with all team members that helped them in planning visits with young people. We have also undertaken individual 'Self-Assessment' questions that checked how team members were feeling during the pandemic and 'Home Working' risk assessments.</p> <p>Keeping in touch with staff during lockdown and beyond has also been something we have aimed to do. The Team Managers have held regular catch-up phone calls; we've arranged virtual team meetings and hosted some social virtual sessions to encourage team participation.</p>
14 July 2020	<p>This saw the re-opening of the Sleaford and Lincoln offices.</p> <p>These offices had been subject to new Health and Safety Assessments to ensure they were Covid compliant. The assessments also limited the number of staff permitted within the offices and booking arrangements were in place.</p> <p>Staff were still able to work from home, but facilities were also available within the offices if a team member chose to work from an office base.</p>
27 July 2020	<p>The Louth office re-opened subject to the same conditions as the Sleaford and Lincoln offices.</p>
August 2020	<p>August 2020 saw the lifting of the 'shielding requirements' across the UK and from the beginning of August the management team were encouraging more face-to-face visits for Care Leavers.</p> <p>The initial criteria for these visits was as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government guidance on the 1st August was (other than in areas of lockdown) you can meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Indoor – two different households.</u> <u>Outdoors – up to six people</u> 2. Team members had been supplied PPE so that hopefully risk of infection is further reduced. 3. Unless there is a medical reason or risk assessment that has highlighted additional concerns that team members start to book in social distancing visits with all young people that are within 40 miles and where areas are not in local lockdown. <p>This guidance was shared with the Local Authority Commissioners.</p>

	As a service we'd already implemented a spreadsheet to capture all face-to-face visits across the service.
21 September 2020	<p>Following Government advice (following an increase in Covid infections and deaths) information was sent to staff confirming the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barnardo's have stated that they support local practice, if it can be achieved, for people not to work in office until after Christmas. 2. Locally within Leaving Care this can be achieved. So, if you are able and wish to work from home then please do so. This will be reviewed again in a few months. 3. All office (apart from Peterborough- which we are doing next week) have been risk assessed and signed off and are safe to go to office to pick up equipment, complete printing, deal with IT issues, work from if needed etc. If you have a reasons or issues with working from home, then please talk to your line manager and we will of course support you to create and look at solutions. The reason it is being suggested to carry on working from home is to further reduce your risk, but the office can be used if needed as long as people are booked in, and local safety rules are followed.
1 October 2020	Peterborough office re-opened following updated Health and Safety Assessments.
October 2020	Barnardo's started calling on other services across the UK in an attempt to offer more face-to-face visits to Care Leavers who were placed out of County. This hopefully ensures we reach more Lincolnshire Care Leavers across the UK.
October 2020 – March 2021	<p>As a service we have continued to see Lincolnshire Care Leavers using a variety of communication methods such as face to face visits, virtual platforms (such as Zoom and Messenger). We have also kept in contact using phone calls and text messages. We have aimed to deliver a service based on what young people are telling they want.</p> <p>We are accessing our offices but have created a booking system to ensure the offices only support limited numbers of staff at one time.</p>

Within Barnardo's we started collating data both in relation to staff but also noting all direct visits we undertook with Care Leavers. Between the 1st April 2020– 30th March 2021, 1537 face to face visits took place, the management team have continued to review Mosaic to ensure that those young people who couldn't be seen still received regular

phone calls or virtual visits. We have also used other Barnardo's teams across the UK to visit Lincolnshire Care Leavers (living out of County) when required.

Lincolnshire Care Leavers have also benefitted from funding streams that Barnardo's have been able to access (on behalf of Lincolnshire Care Leavers) these have included the following grants / schemes:

- Barnardo's Covid Appeal (£3,000)
- Land Aid Charity Grant (£10,000)
- Ikea (Gifts for all Care Leavers who had Children & household starter packs)
- Donation from Vodaphone of pay as you go handsets & data.
- Donation of Tupperware and storage containers for food storage.

The monies above have been used to purchase:

- Food / Utilities
- Data Bundles
- IT equipment

IKEA 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' Gift Pack



Rubbermaid Storage Containers



B - Accessing and Maintaining Suitable, Safe Accommodation

Children's Social Care Return

The SSDA903 statistical return cohort referred to in this report as the 'Children's Social Care Return' relates to an identified group of young people who were looked after by the local authority and have recently left care, information on their 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday is collected annually between the 01 April and the 31 March. The base figure changes annually. The data below covers a 12-month period with differing base figures. Over the past 12 months Barnardo's have only reported on the 18-21 cohorts and excluded the 17 group in agreement with Commissioning

Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation

SSDA903 Co-hort – Target 90%

SCR Return - Accommodation											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
288	287	288	288	290	362	362	301	299	298	297	299
96%	95%	96%	96%	96%	94%	94%	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%

Open Allocated Cases – Target 90%

Open Allocated Young People - Accommodation											
April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
361	355	356	349	349	350	348	348	359	366	365	378
95%	94%	95%	95%	96%	95%	94%	95%	95%	94%	94%	95%

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service offered advice, support and assistance in relation to accommodation options for young people aged 16-25 (Children in Care, 16- and 17-year-old homeless and Care Leavers). As a service we aim to share information in relation to housing options available both within County but also where the young person is currently residing. Within service we have a specialist post holder who specializes in housing provision for Care Leavers, and we also have the Leaving Care Workers and Team Managers who have knowledge on services available to young people.

Within Barnardo's we continue to work with the Corporate Parenting Manager who has lead responsibility for the Council in relation to housing options for Care Leavers. The transition guidance for 16–18-year-olds enables Leaving Care Workers to start to work alongside Social Workers based within the Local Authority to ensure all Children in Care have the appropriate paperwork in place prior to their 18th Birthday to enable them to claim housing and benefit entitlements.

We have developed some good links with District Council Housing Teams and the Corporate Parenting Manager continues to offer the District Councils advice, support and assistance in relation to developing the housing offer for Care Leavers.

Barnardo's Supported Lodgings Scheme

The Corporate Parenting Manager sees this type of accommodation as another housing option for Looked after Children and Care Leavers across Lincolnshire.

This scheme gives young people the opportunity to develop independence skills whilst living in a home environment. Advice and guidance are offered in relation to cooking, undertaking household tasks and maintaining education / employment. We have had some excellent outcomes for several young people who have accessed this scheme.

Young people live with providers as lodgers – paying rent and a contribution towards utilities and food. Children's Services pay a support fee dependent upon the level of support required; housing benefit /universal credit is also claimed (where appropriate).

The scheme caters for Care Leavers - Looked after Children over 16- and 16/17-year-olds who are homeless and require an 'assessment bed'.

Between 1 April 2020 and 31st March 2021, the team received 30 referrals, carefully matched with 5 providers.

Legal profile of Young People referred from 1 April 2020 – 30 September 2020	
Legal status	Number
Section 31 Looked After Child	10
Section 20 Looked after Child	6
Section 24 Care Leaver	7
Section 17	6
Section 8	1
Total	30
Number of Placements	13

Barnardo's have continued to run its supported lodgings panel throughout 2020 / 21 and have representatives both from the Local Authority and Barnardo's. This panel not only reviews current providers but also considers new applications.

Supported Lodgings Providers have continued to work closely with Barnardo's staff throughout the pandemic. Some have had to shield following Government advice and others have continued to offer a full range of placements. As a service we have been mindful about not making placements moves unless absolutely necessary but have also continued to work with the Local Authority to prioritize urgent placement requests.

C - Accessing and Maintaining Appropriate Education Employment and Training Opportunities

SSDA903 Co-hort – Target 65%

SCR Return – Education, Training and Employment											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
200	197	190	183	166	234	233	174	174	170	171	171
66%	65%	63%	61%	55%	61%	60%	55%	55%	54%	54%	54%

Open Allocated Cases – Target 65%

Open Allocated Young People – Education, Training and Employment											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
264	259	251	240	223	231	228	225	238	245	247	247
69%	69%	67%	65%	61%	62%	62%	61%	63%	63%	64%	65%

The last financial year have been particularly challenging not only for Care Leavers but for the Country as a whole. The initial lockdown saw a number of Care Leavers lose temporary employment and also stop attending college / training.

We have kept a careful watch over our young people who are following the Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme and whilst a number were furloughed during the initial lockdown, we saw all return to their jobs over the summer of 2020.

Within Barnardo's we continue to have two specialist workers who work solely with education and employment providers to explore opportunities for your Care Leavers.

At the beginning of 2020 we started negotiations with Serco who provide a number of job opportunities across the region and in partnership with the County Council. We have developed and launched a 'Care Leavers Mentoring Scheme'. We have now moved onto the second set of Care Leavers who have benefitted from a worker based within Serco to offer career and work advice.

Barnardo's have a common mission of ***'Increasing Aspiration and Outcomes for Looked after Children and Care leavers.*** Employment and Training continues to be a challenging concept not only in Lincolnshire but nationally. We have developed some excellent partnerships with DWP and Job Centres to help target our Care Leavers. We are working with DWP on some of the new initiatives such as a the 'Kick Start' programme, the Kickstart Scheme provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit. This program was delayed during 2020 due to Covid.

The Corporate Parenting Manager continues to be an advocate within Lincolnshire County Council in relation to the 'Care Leavers Covenant'. The Covenant is a promise made by private, public or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently. Central Government feel it's important that Local Authorities work together to secure meaningful offers of employment and support which meet local need. Government believes the only way we can achieve this is through a whole council approach which allows all departments to look at not only what they are able to offer internally but also how they can facilitate and enable support externally from local business.

I have described below (within the New Initiatives section of this report) the funding that Lincolnshire County Council have identified to fund 2 new temporary workers to hopefully enable more Care Leavers to access Education, Training and Employment.

D - New Initiatives

Specialist Employment, Education and Training Posts

Lincolnshire County Council have worked with Barnardo's to develop two new temporary posts to help promote education, employment and training opportunities for Lincolnshire Care Leavers.

We are aware that as we emerge from national restrictions and job retention schemes come to an end the Government are due to roll out numerous job incentive schemes. Within Lincolnshire we don't want to miss any of these opportunities for our Care Leavers. The additional post holders will help to ensure that Lincolnshire Children in Care and Care Leavers receive information and guidance in a timely manner to give them the best opportunity to secure education or employment opportunities.

GAP Homes

Gap housing is a model of accommodation whereby Barnardo's provide capital funding and support to build bespoke modern prefabricated modular housing for use by young people and Care Leavers.

The envisaged model for Lincolnshire is to develop one cluster of 4 houses for young people and 1 house on site with 24/7 staffing. Further to this the cluster will be associated with 4 further units of dispersed Gap houses nearby where more independent young people can be stepped forward.

- 4x Intensive cluster Gap housing beds with onsite staffing
- 4x Dispersed Gap housing beds with staff just off site

The Local Authority and Barnardo's have started to build on the proposals noted above and are currently identifying potential areas of land to build the homes.

Specialist Mental Health Worker

As part of the new contract to expand services to Looked after Children and Care Leavers Barnardo's suggested the development of a specialist Mental Health Worker who would work solely with the service and provide some 1:1 work with Care Leavers, some mentoring and training opportunities for staff and enable better access to CAMHS and adult mental health pathways.

Throughout the last financial year work took place with Barnardo's, Lincolnshire County Council and Health Commissioners to develop and advertise this post.

The new post holder will be based within the Children and Young People's Complex Need Service and will receive supervision from within Barnardo's and also receive clinical supervision from a qualified health practitioner.

Project Worker – Lincolnshire Leaving Care

This is a new senior project worker that works within Lincolnshire Leaving Care. Ben Coles joined the service in January 2021 and has lead responsibility to:

- Develop the group participation offer for Care Leavers.
- Lead on Quality Assurance for the Service
- Embed the Signs of Safety Model across the service.

Even with Covid restrictions in place Ben Coles has started to create some additional participation opportunities for Care Leavers to ensure any new service design is shared with and takes into account young peoples views. Barnardo's office base at Lincoln has recently been decorated, all based on colours and styles picked by Lincolnshire Care Leavers.

E - Compliments and Complaints

Number and % of complaints received and resolved within agreed timescale of 14 days.

Complaints Received/Resolved - 2020-21												
Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
Number	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Resolved	100%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	N/A						
Running Total	1	1	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Number of compliments received – cumulative.

Compliments - 2020-21												
Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
Number	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	0
Running Total	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	5	0	6	0

Success Stories

01 May 2020 – ‘Look North’

One young care leaver from the service was given the opportunity to make a short film/video about being a young person leaving care during Covid-19 which was due to be aired on Look North on the 01 May 2020. The care leaver lacks a great deal of confidence so this is a really brave thing for her to do and although she was nervous she was really excited and pleased with what she did.

Unfortunately the piece was not aired but this did not detract from the positive experience for the young person.

DfE Research - Get Help with Tech

The Department for Education (DfE) are providing a range of support for children and young people through its Get help with Technology Programme which includes the provision of laptops and tablets for young care leavers. Laptops have come through to the local authority and then on to the service for distribution.

As part of the DfE's programme delivery a research opportunity arose and two our young people have been involved in feeding back their experiences and technology needs during Covid.

**Lincolnshire Supported Lodgings
Barnardos North Region Newsletter – July 2020**



Participation

Whilst interviews for staff (and specialist post holders) has been difficult over the past year as a service we have continued to benefit from ensuring Care Leavers are part of the recruitment process. Care Leavers have submitted questions for recent interview panels and have helped provide some model answers.

2. Conclusion

This report reflects the progress and achievements during the first year of a new three-year contract / partnership between Lincolnshire County Council and Barnardo's.

The new staffing establishment from April 2020 is noted below:

- 1 Service Manager
- 4.2 FTE Team Managers
- 1 Business Manager
- 6.1 FTE Administrators
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Signs of Safety / Participation and Quality Assurance
- 1 Specialist Accommodation Worker
- 2 Supported Lodgings Workers
- 2 Education, Employment and Training Specialist Workers
- 24 FTE Leaving Care Workers

Throughout 2020 / 21 we continued recruitment to the service and have had to adapt to providing on-live / virtual inductions. As Covid restrictions have lifted we have ensured staff are now able to visit offices and receive support, advice and guidance when required.

New IT equipment has been made available to all team members during the last financial year providing more portable and reliable laptops / phones³. Consultation

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

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 Lisa Adams, Service Manager who can be contacted on 01522 575 955 or by e-mail at lisa.adams@barnardos.org.uk.

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Legal Services Lincolnshire End of Year Report - April 2020 to March 2021

Summary:

Within the identified period of April 2020 to March 2021 the below are reported: -

- a) An increase in the number Care Proceedings issued.
- b) Care Proceedings were concluded in respect of 81 children.
- c) The proportion of Supervision Orders has fallen significantly.
- d) The proportion of Placement Orders has dropped.

This report is providing the Panel with background information and a presentation will be provided at the meeting.

Actions Required:

The Panel is invited to note the report and comment on the presentation provided at the meeting.

1. Background

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

1. Public Law Proceedings
2. Private Law proceedings

1.1 Public Law proceedings

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

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

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

A Care Order (or interim care order) grants the Local Authority parental responsibility for the child (shared with any person having parental responsibility for the child). If a child is made subject to a care order, looked after provisions must be implemented, including appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer, regular looked after child meetings. Decisions for the child cannot be made without consulting all those who hold parental responsibility. A care order remains in force until the child's 18th birthday.

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

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

1.2 Private Law Proceedings

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

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

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

In any family proceedings concerning the welfare of a child the Court can make a Family Assistance Order under s.16 Children Act 1989, directing the Local Authority to appoint an officer to advise, assist and (where appropriate) befriend any person named in the order (often referred to as the private law alternative to a Supervision Order). A Family Assistance Order is made for a period up to one year. The difference between a Supervision Order and Family Assistance Order is that under a Supervision Order the Local Authority duty is to the child, however, under a Family Assistance Order the duty is to anyone named in the order, which can include the child, parents, special guardians, or any person with whom the child lives or spends time with. In addition, the court can only make a Family Assistance Order if it has the consent of all persons named in the order (apart from the child) whereas a Supervision Order can be imposed on the parties.

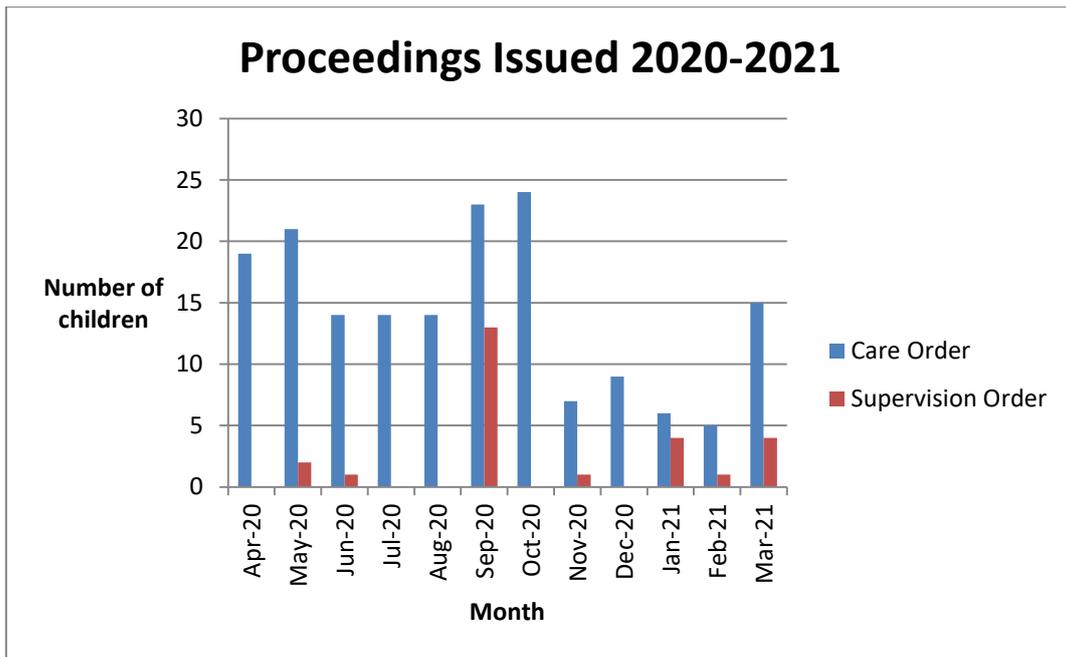
Public Law Proceedings Issued

Between April 2020 and March 2021, care proceedings were issued in respect of **197** children consisting of **171** applications for Care Orders and **26** Supervision Orders.

This is in contrast to applications being made in respect of **157** children during the period April 2019 - March 2020.

It is important to note that the figures represent the number of children in respect of whom proceedings were issued; it does not necessarily represent the number of separate applications made.

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



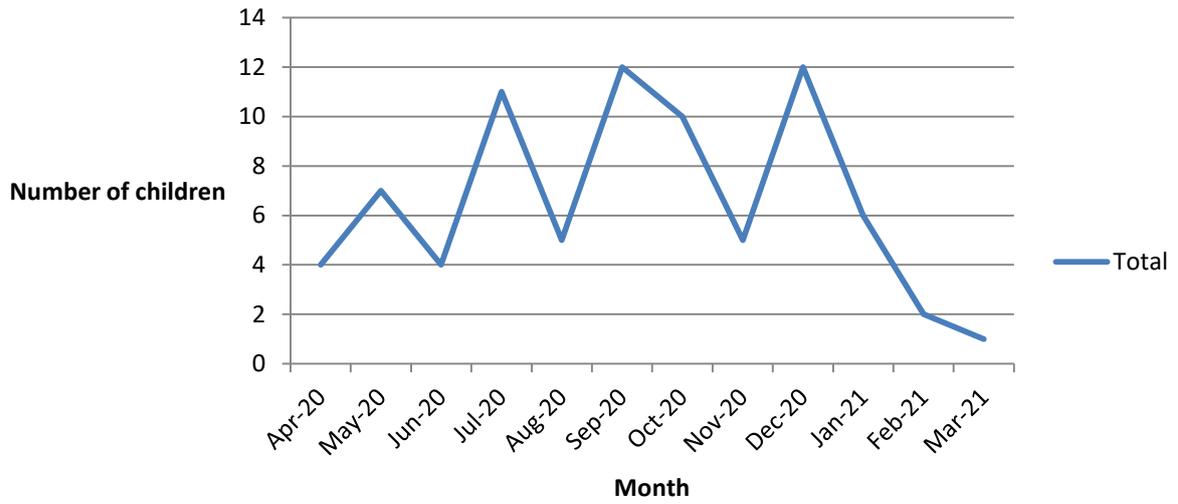
As previously stated, the Local Authority is unable to apply for orders which bestow parental responsibility upon the child's extended family, for example Child Arrangement Order (who the child shall live with), and Special Guardianship Order (which grants the special guardian heightened parental responsibility).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

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

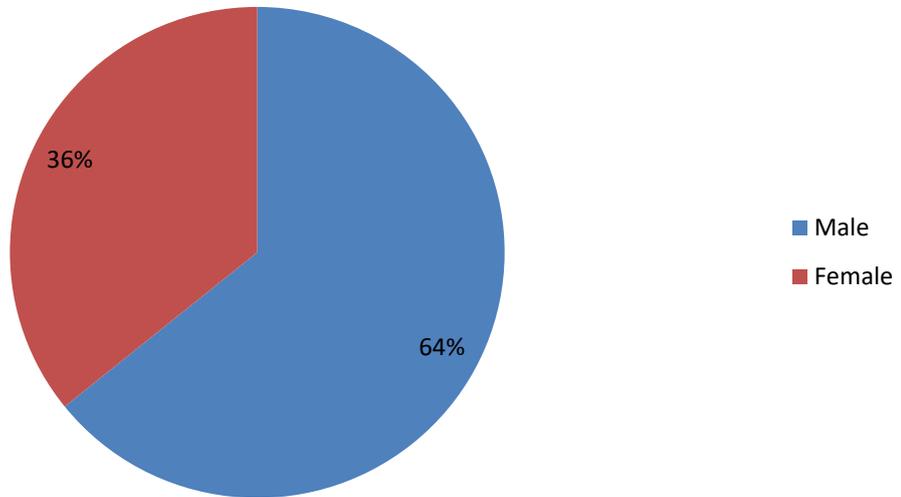
PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED

Between April 2020 and March 2021, care proceedings were concluded in respect of **82** children, **53** males and **29** females. In the previous financial year proceedings were concluded in respect of **119** children.

Proceedings Concluded 2020-21



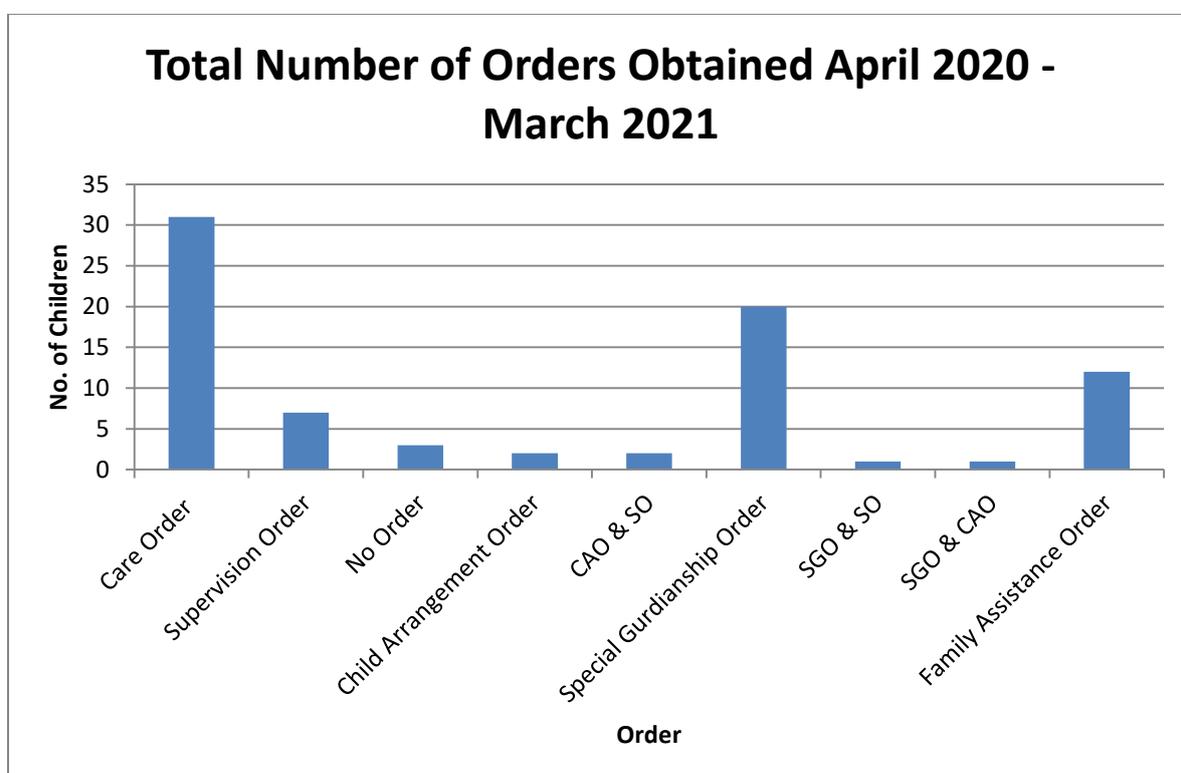
Gender of Children that final orders were obtained in respect of



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

The final orders granted by the Court in 2020/21 in contrast to 2019/20 were as follows: -

<u>Order</u>	<u>Number of Orders 2020/21</u>	<u>Number of Orders 2019/20</u>
Care Order	31	27
Care Order & Placement Order	12	22
Supervision Order	7	22
No Order	3	6
Child Arrangements Order	2	1
Child Arrangements Order & Supervision Order	2	16
Special Guardianship Order	20	18
Special Guardianship Order & Supervision Order	1	6
Family Assistance Order	0	1



Analysis of Orders:

At first glance it appears that the number of cases resulting in the making of care orders has stayed relatively consistent between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 however upon further consideration, it is clear that the proportion of cases concluding with the making of care orders has increased.

In 2019-2020, 22% children were made the subjects of care orders at the conclusion of proceedings. In 2020-2021 this was 38%.

There has been a small decline in the proportion of cases concluding with care and placement orders. In 2019/2020 the percentage of children being made subject to placement orders was 18%. In 2020/2021 this figure has dropped to 14%.

There has also been a sharp decline in the making of supervision orders. In 2020/2021 only 12% of outcomes involved a supervision order. This contrasts with 36% cases involving a final supervision order in 2019/2020.

The increase in the making of care orders and the decline in the making of supervision orders may be as a result of fewer children returning to live with their parents in 2020/2021 at the conclusion of proceedings. It is unusual for a case to conclude on a care order when the child is living at home and in this circumstance a supervision order is very often made. In 2019/2020 31 children were placed with their parents at the conclusion of proceedings under supervision orders. In 2020/2021 only 8 children were placed with their parents at the conclusion of proceedings under supervision orders.

The proportion of special guardianship orders being granted has slightly risen. In 2019/2020 this figure was 20%. In 2020/2021 the proportion of cases resulting in special guardianship orders was 25%.

Post proceedings local authority involvement 2019/2020

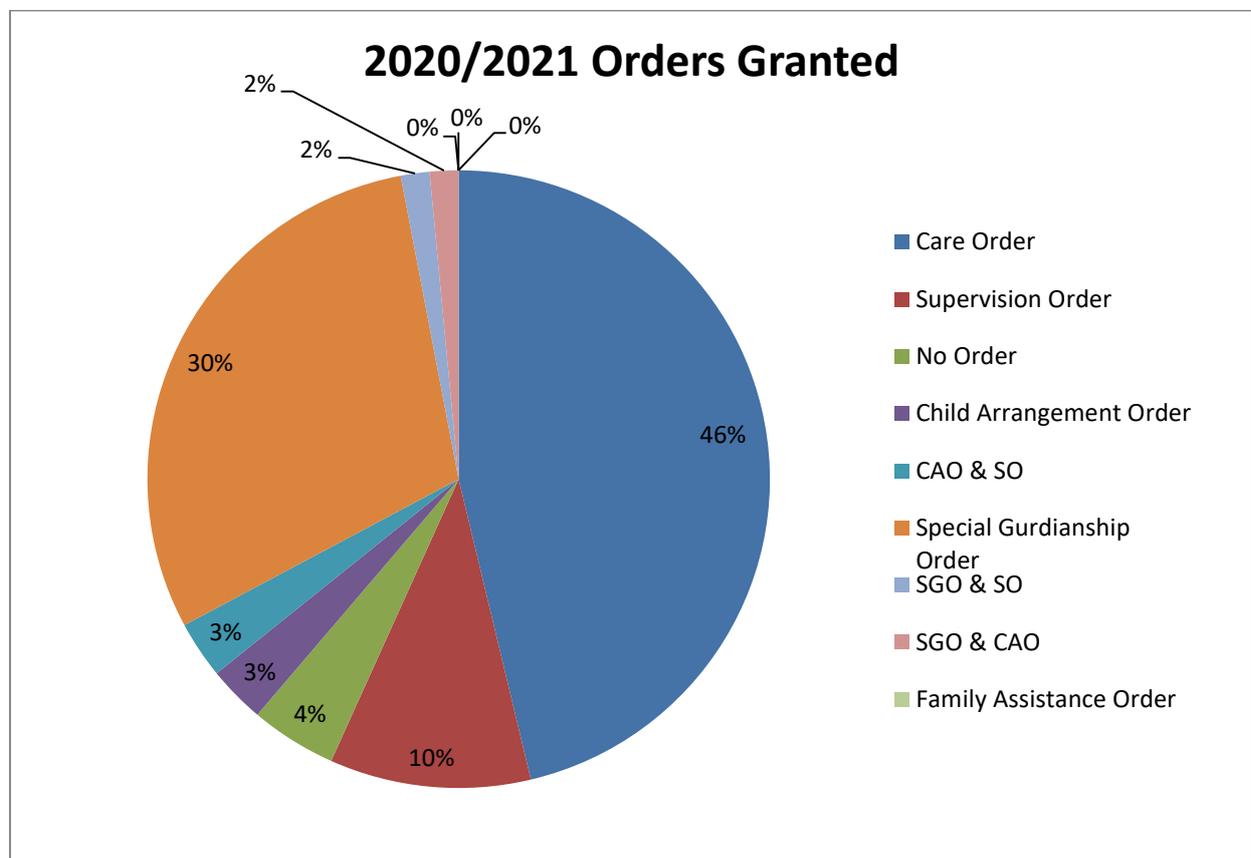
From the Orders made in **2020/2021**, the Local Authority will have remained statutorily involved with **73 (90%)** of the children subject to proceedings, either because of the child being looked after (under Care Order), subject to child in need procedures (Supervision Order and Family Assistance Order) or providing support services to Special Guardians (under Special Guardianship Orders).

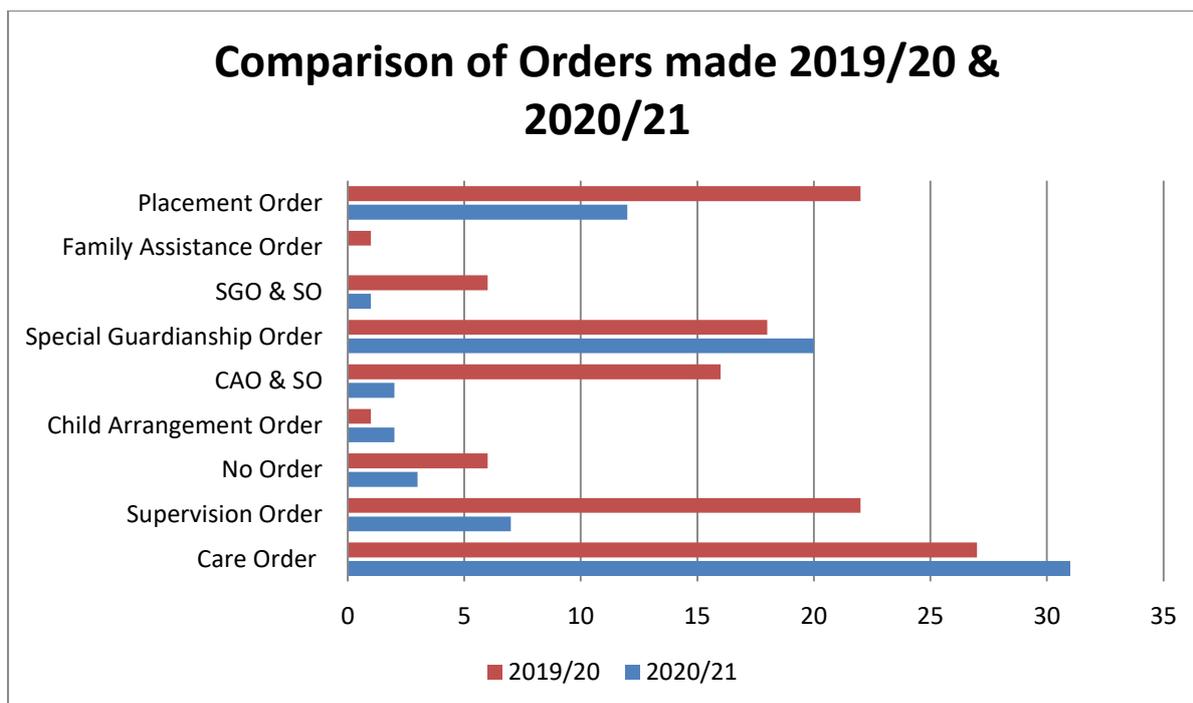
Supervision Orders and Family Assistance Orders are initially made for a period of up to one year (however, can be extended on application by Local Authority), therefore the Local Authority will cease to be involved with **10 children (12%)** of those children (provided there is no need to make an application to extend the duration of the Orders).

A plan of adoption should be reviewed at each looked after child review, generally if a child has not been placed with prospective adopters after 18 months, the Local Authority will

change the care plan to one of long-term foster care and an application be made to Court to discharge the Placement Order. Should all the children subject to a Placement Order in **2020/2021 (12 children - 14%)** be placed for adoption and later adopted, within 18 months the Local Authority will only remain involved with **51 children (62%)** of the total number of children subject to proceedings which concluded in **2020/2021**.

Support Services under Special Guardianship Orders are provided for up to three years, therefore by April 2024 the Local Authority will not be involved with **26% (21 children)** of those children. By such time the Local Authority shall only be involved with **38% (31 children)** of the children subject to proceedings which concluded in **2020/2021** (those subject to Care Orders).





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

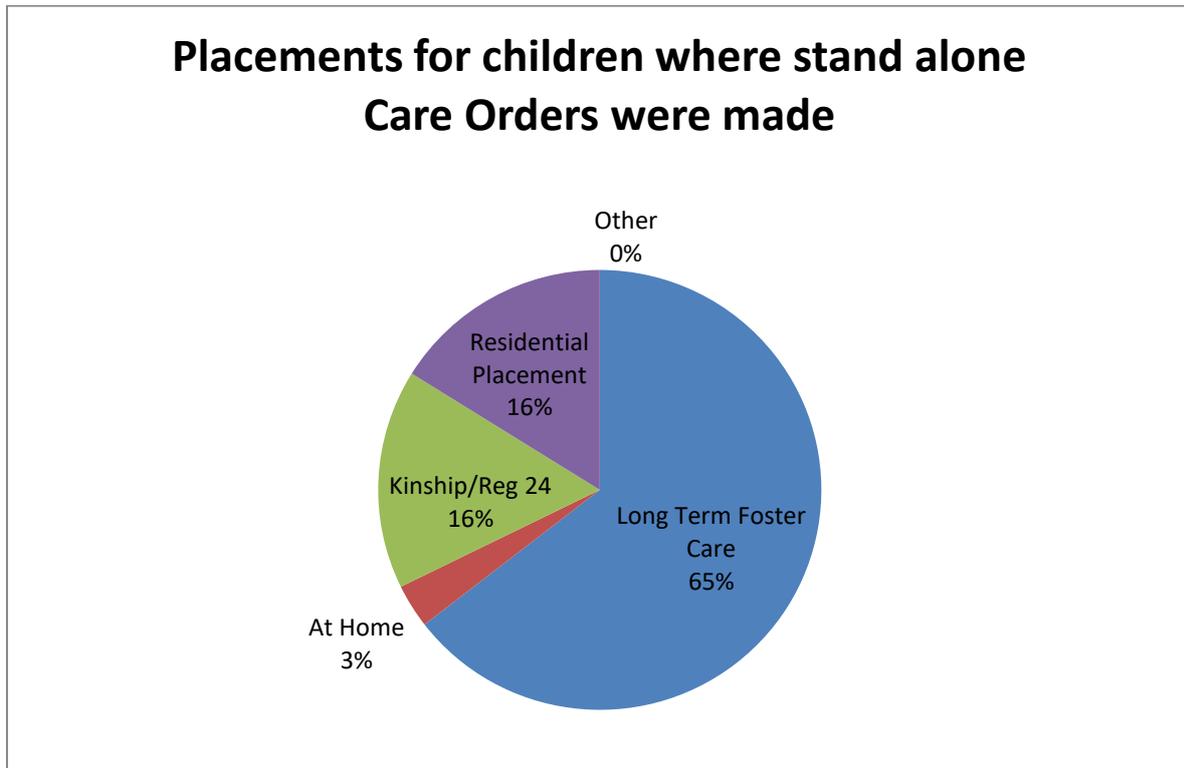
During the period April 2020 to March 2021, a total of **43** children were made subject to care orders. Placement Orders were made alongside Care Orders in respect of **12** children. A Placement Order is applied for where the Local Authority care plan is one of adoption. The effect of Placement Order is that it permits the Local Authority to place the child for adoption. Where a child is placed with prospective adopters the Local Authority continues to share parental responsibility for the child with the adopters and the parents, until such time as an Adoption Order is made.

Provided all the children who were made subject to Placement Orders in the period April 2020 – March 2021, are placed for adoption and adoption Orders made, the Local Authority would not retain parental responsibility for these children, and they would not remain subject to Looked After Child procedures. Therefore **72%** of the children made subject to Care Orders would remain Looked After children.

During April 2020 – March 2021 **31** children were subject to Care Orders, **1** children's plans were that they be: cared for parents with the Local Authority sharing parental responsibility (3%); **5** children's plans were cared for by extended family members/friends (kinship/regulation 24 placements where the family member is approved as a foster carer (16%), and the Local Authority holds parental responsibility); **20** children's plans were long term foster care (65%); **5** children's plans were residential care (16%).

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

the child's best interests can be served via another Order, for example SGO to extended family member. These children's care plans will therefore remain under regular review.



Special Guardianship Orders

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

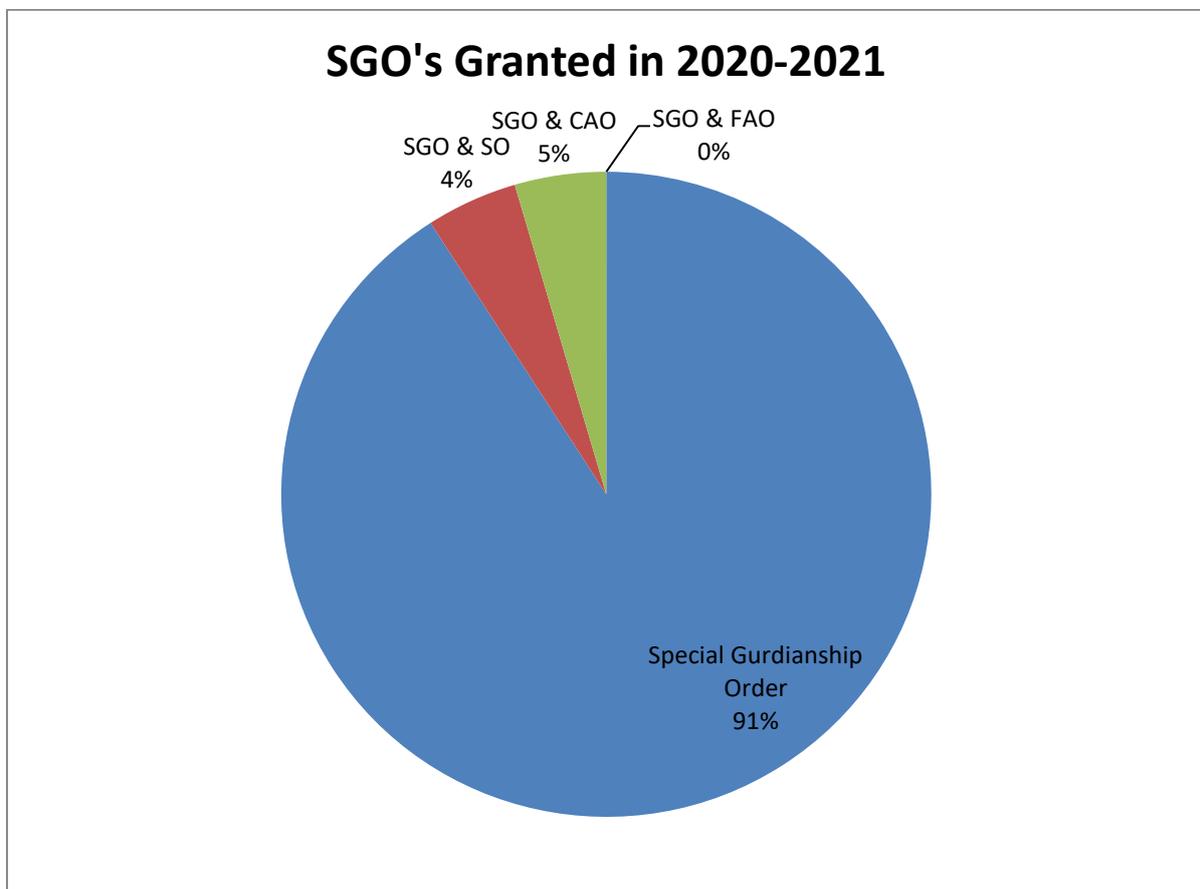
In addition, the court can make additional orders to support the placement such as supervision orders and family assistance orders. There has however over recent years been a decline in the number of supervision orders and family assistance orders being made alongside SGOs. Judicial guidance has emphasised that all of the support a placement requires should be provided as part of and detailed within the Special Guardianship Support Plan thereby removing the need for other orders.

The court has also confirmed in case law that extending proceedings to allow for the testing out of proposed special guardianship placements is a valid justification for extending the statutory 26-week timescale.

In the case *Re P-S (Children) [2018] EWCA Civ 1407* the court of appeal stated that if the assessment process '*cannot be completed justly, fairly and in a manner compatible with the child's welfare within 26 weeks then time must be extended*'. The court confirmed that the concept of a 'short term' care order (i.e., a care order made on the basis that an application

to discharge would be made in the not-too-distant future which was an approach that had been advocated by some judges to ensure matters concluded within the 26-week timeframe) did not have any legal basis and was a flawed approach.

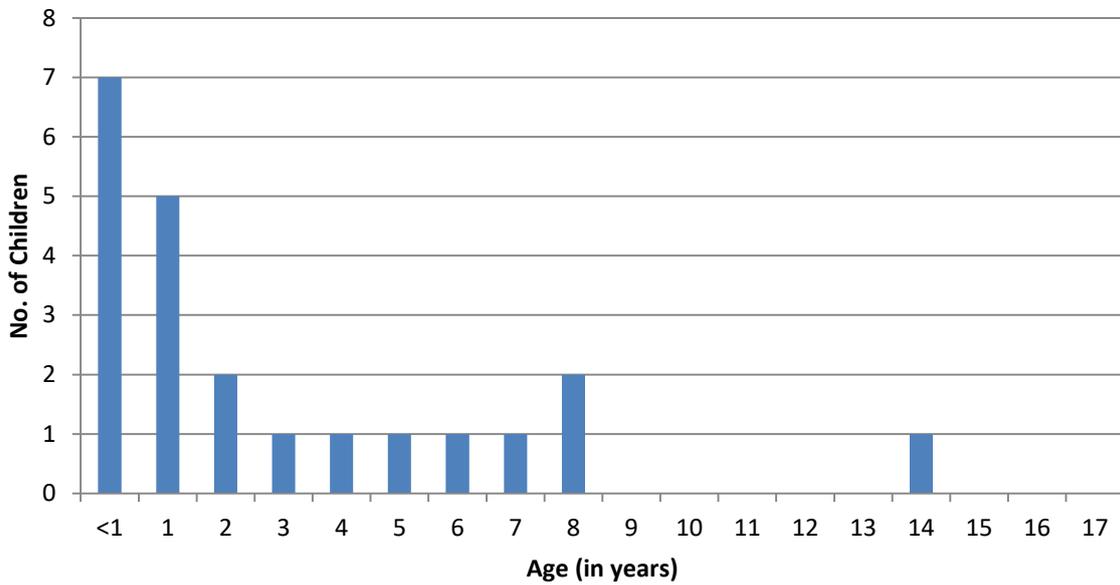
As a result, the court is more frequently permitting extensions of the 26-week timetable to accommodate further assessments of connected persons so that the court is able to make a final decision at the conclusion of proceedings as to whether a connected person is an appropriate special guardian for the child or not and indeed whether the testing out period has been for an "appreciable" period. Although this has an effect on the timetable of proceedings, this thorough testing out of placements should also ensure that there is a reduced need (if any) for supervision orders or family assistance orders alongside SGOs to be granted in the future.



The majority of children made subject to SGOs continue to be below the age of one year with 76% children being under the age of 5 years. This is a slight rise compared with last year with 62.5% children subject to SGOs in 2019/2020 being under the age of 5 years. Had a viable family placement not been available for this cohort of children, it is very likely that the only option available would have been a plan of adoption. This therefore continues to be a positive reflection of the ability and willingness of extended family members and connected persons to care for children.

In 2020/2021, only one child over the age of 9 was made subject to an SGO.

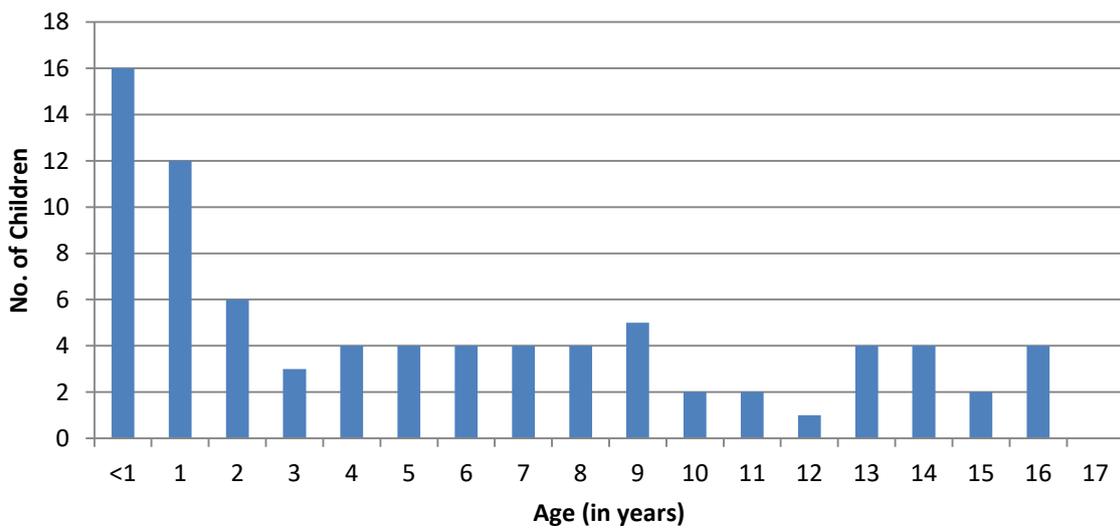
Age of children that were made subject to SGO's between April 2020 and March 2021



Age of children who are the subject of care proceedings

The totals are as follows: -

Age of children that s.31 proceedings were concluded in respect of between April 2020 and March 2021



Analysis of ages: -

Age Range	Number of Children	Percentage
0 - <5 years	41	51%
5 - <10 years	23	28%
10 – 16 years	17	21%

Over half the children subject to proceedings concluded 2020/21 are of an age where a plan of adoption could be progressed if there were no viable family placements available (0 - <5 years).

Timescales for proceedings

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

The average timescales for proceedings in 2019/20 was **42 weeks**, in contrast to **51 weeks** in 2020/21. The length of proceedings has risen as a result of a number of factors.

By far the most significant factor which has prevented cases from finishing in 2020/2021 is the effects of COVID-19 and in particular the 'lockdown'.

The COVID-19 'lockdown' resulted in Lincoln Family Court largely closing to the public. Hearings could no longer take place in person and instead they started being held remotely via telephone conference and video conference. Initially, in March and April 2020, this meant that the court was unable to hear any substantive contested hearings which required giving evidence. This was due to both technical issues preventing the court from joining witnesses into hearings whilst the court was getting used to remote hearing platforms as well as evolving judicial guidance at the beginning of the pandemic which questioned whether contested hearings could be fairly conducted remotely via telephone or video conference. A number of contested hearings that were originally due to take place in March and April 2020 had to be adjourned which prevented these cases from finishing.

Fortunately, the courts, judiciary and Lincolnshire in response, were all able to quickly adapt to holding remote hearings. Further case law was also handed down which confirmed that in principle contested hearings could be conducted remotely in a fair manner as long as each case was considered on its own facts and appropriate measures were put in place to assist full participation of the particular parties which could include some parties attending in person. This meant that contested hearings could start again; many taking place as 'hybrid' hearings whereby some parties would attend court in person and some parties would attend via video conference.

Significant support has been provided to parties in cases by Lincolnshire Children's Services providing accommodation "Hubs" in buildings to facilitate hybrid hearings. These were swiftly set up across Lincolnshire in family centres to meet demand and have meant that parents and legal representatives can attend these Hubs and participate in the remote hearing. This has ensured that cases requiring evidence to be given to the court have been able to be progressed. These Hubs continue to be utilised.

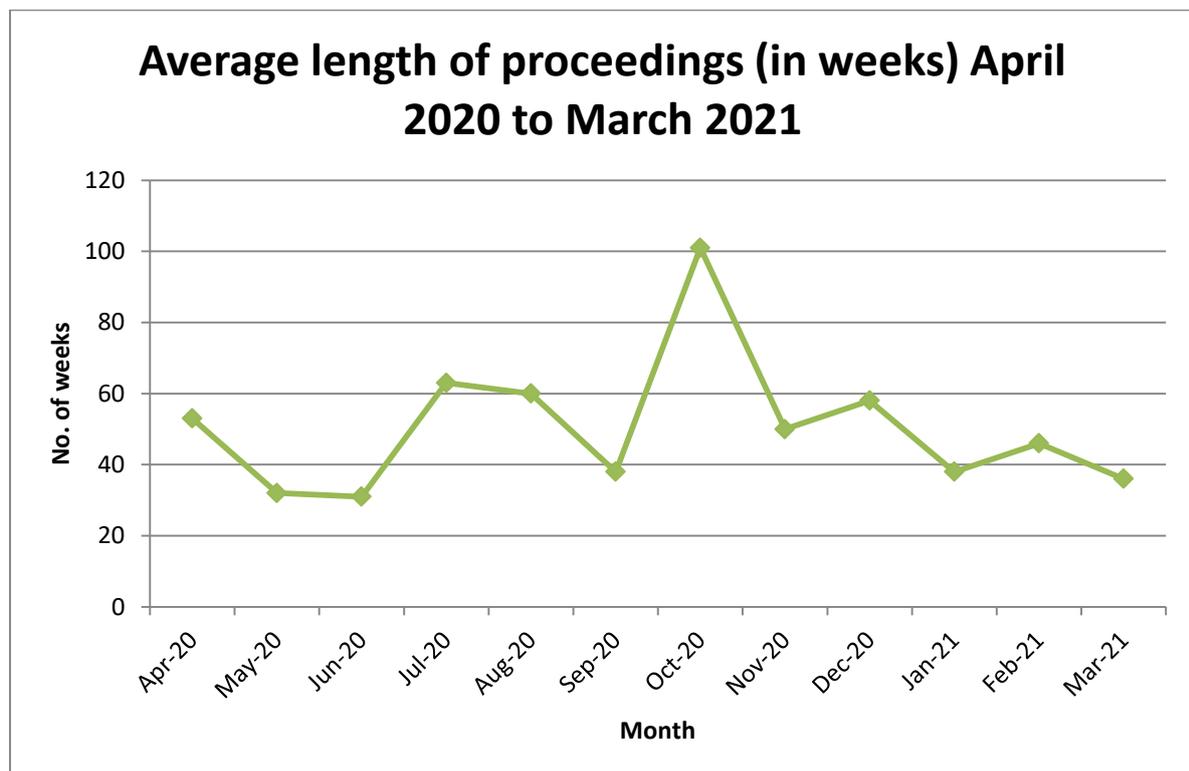
The length of hearings has also increased as a result of remote working which has affected the timetable for proceedings. Contested hearings often take longer when they are conducted remotely as all parties involved need to take regular breaks away from the screen and there are also often technical issues for example with joining and releasing witnesses from the hearings or parties not been able to log onto the link provided by the court for video conferencing in a timely manner. This has resulted in the judiciary requesting that more court time is allotted for contested hearings which reduces the number of hearings that can be dealt with in a day. This causes delay in proceedings concluding as issues with judicial availability and the pressure of COVID-19 requiring the re-listing of numerous multi-day contested hearings means that the court has to look week and months ahead into the court calendar to identify any court time available for multi-day hearings.

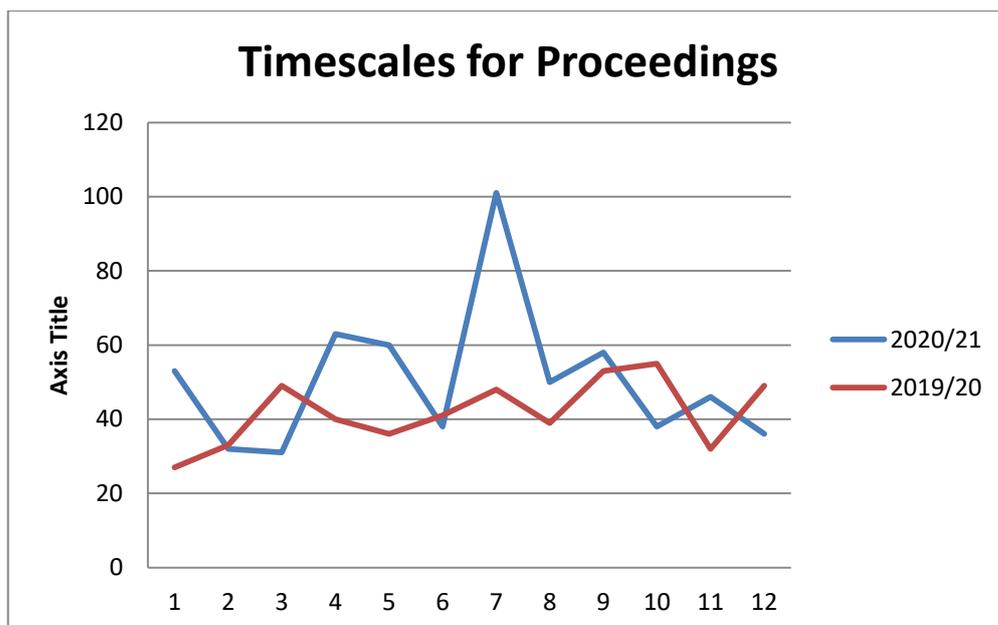
The following factors have also affected the length of proceedings:

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

Timescales per month 2020/2021

MONTH	RANGE (IN WEEKS)	AVERAGE (IN WEEKS)
Apr-20	21-90	53
May-20	19-79	32
Jun-20	23-48	31
Jul-20	45-86	63
Aug-20	51-65	60
Sep-20	20-66	38
Oct-20	27-128	101
Nov-20	33-100	50
Dec-20	37-82	58
Jan-21	17-53	38
Feb-21	46	46
Mar-21	36	36





Comparison between 2019-2020 & 2020-2021		
	2020/21	2019/20
April	53	27
May	32	33
June	31	49
July	63	40
August	60	36
September	38	41
October	101	48
November	50	39
December	58	53
January	38	55
February	46	32
March	36	49

Timescales Case Studies

Shortest case – 17 weeks concluded January 2021

The child became known to the Local Authority after a referral was received from Diana Princes of Wales Hospital in Grimsby due to concerns that the child had suffered a non-accidental injury. The child was not previously known to the Local Authority prior to this incident.

The child was presented at hospital on 9 August 2020 after being referred by her GP due to having a small 50p size lump on her collarbone. It was confirmed by skeletal x-ray on 12 August 2020 that the child had a fracture to her left clavicle. The child's parents were unable

to explain the injury and could not offer any history of a fall or trauma. The treating paediatrician also raised concern that the injury was three to four weeks old, and no medical advice had been sought up until that point. The mother confirmed she had noticed the lump three weeks beforehand but as it was not causing any distress to the child, she did not take any action in relation to it. The treating paediatrician provided a report on 12 August 2020 confirming that in their opinion the fracture was a 'non-accidental injury'.

A safety plan was put in place whereby the child moved to live with her paternal grandmother and paternal grandmother's partner. The child's parents were also permitted to stay at the address, but all their care of the child was supervised by paternal grandmother.

The Local Authority issued proceedings on 11 September 2020 and sought an interim Supervision Order.

The first case management hearing took place on 29 September 2020. At this hearing, the court made an interim Supervision Order, and a number of assessments were timetabled including an expert assessment by a consultant paediatric orthopaedic surgeon. A further case management hearing which dealt with re-timetabling took place on 23 November 2020.

The report from the paediatric orthopaedic surgeon was received on 22 December 2020. The expert concluded that the clavicle fracture was most likely caused by non-inflicted trauma such as an un-witnessed low energy fall or unintentional trauma. The expert confirmed that the parents' late presentation for medical advice was understandable and reasonable in the circumstances as the child was never symptomatic or observed to be in any pain or discomfort.

Following receipt of this report, the LA agreed with parents that supervision of their care of the child was no longer required.

A further case management hearing took place on 6 January 2021. At this hearing the LA sought to withdraw its application on the basis that threshold could not be deemed to be met following receipt of the expert's report as no other concerns had been identified. The court gave permission to withdraw the proceedings and the matter concluded with the making of no order.

Longest case – 128 weeks – concluded October 2020

This matter concerned a family who were known to the Local Authority for a number of years prior to court proceedings being issued. This case originally involved six siblings. A seventh sibling was born during the course of the proceedings.

The family first came to the attention of the Local Authority in 2005. Concerns related to neglect, emotional harm, physical harm and the mother's ability to protect the children from their partners. The children were subject to child protection plans on three occasions: once in 2004, once 2006-2007 and once 2010-2012.

An older sibling was removed from the mother's care in 2016 due to concerns about his behaviour and assaulting his mother. Pre-proceedings was commenced in relation to the six siblings that remained in the family home. An agreement was reached at the initial pre-proceedings meeting that mother would engage in a parenting assessment, early help worker, a domestic violence agency and that her partner (father to the youngest two children) would not be allowed into the family home. Unfortunately, this did not result in any positive change for the family. The children continued to be seen with injuries due to lack of supervision, home conditions were poor, the children were assaulting their mother and each other, there were multiple police call outs to the family home and the mother's partner was seen in the family home.

The Local Authority issued care proceedings on 2 May 2018. The Local Authority initially sought interim care orders with a plan of removal of the six siblings to foster care. The first hearing took place on 22 May 2018. At this hearing after considering the position of the other parties and in particular the Children's Guardian, the LA amended its position and no longer sought immediate removal of the children. Directions were made for the Local Authority to file further evidence in support of its application to remove the children from their mother's care.

A contested hearing was listed on 7 September 2018 to deal with the Local Authority's application to remove the children from their mother's care in the interim. At the hearing the court determined that there was not sufficient evidence to remove the children from their mother's care in the interim. The court made interim Supervision Orders and an updated safety plan was put in place. The matter was timetabled through to a final hearing in November 2018.

A further contested hearing took place on 14, 15 and 16 November 2018. This hearing was originally intended to be a final hearing however could not proceed as such due to the final care plans for the children not having the correct senior management approval and placement order applications not having been issued for the younger children. Instead, the court conducted a fact-finding exercise and determined that the threshold for making public law orders was met. The court made interim care orders and approved the Local Authority's care plan that the children be moved to foster care.

A further case management hearing took place on 30 November 2019. At this hearing the court directed that an expert psychological assessment be prepared of the family. This assessment could not be completed until May 2019 and therefore the proceedings had to be extended to accommodate this. The matter was timetabled through to a final hearing on 9 September 2019.

A further case management hearing took place on 28 May 2019. At this hearing the parents put forward further family members that they wished to be assessed.

A further case management hearing took place on 11 June 2019 to consider the contact between the children and their mother. The Local Authority wished to reduce the level of contact and this was opposed by the mother. At this hearing it was agreed that the case

would not be ready to proceed to a final hearing on 9 September 2019. The matter was therefore re-timetabled to a contested final hearing on 24, 25 and 26 February 2020. This was the first available dates that HHJ Hirst, who heard the fact-finding hearing, was available to be able to hear the matter.

The mother's eighth child was born on 27 September 2019. The mother concealed this pregnancy, and the Local Authority only became aware of the pregnancy when the mother was at 37 weeks gestation. The Local Authority issued proceedings immediately following this child's birth and sought an interim care order. An urgent hearing was listed, and the court made an interim care order on the same day. The matter was adjourned to a contested removal hearing on 30 September 2019. At this hearing the court sanctioned interim removal of the baby from his mother's care overnight; a further hearing was listed on 1 October 2019 so that evidence could be heard by the court. The court heard evidence on 1 October 2019 and endorsed the Local Authority's care plan that the child be removed from his mother's care and placed in a foster placement. The proceedings were consolidated with the proceedings relating to the three older children.

The final hearing listed on 24, 25 and 26 February 2020 had to be vacated because HHJ Hirst was unavailable due to suffering a family bereavement. The final hearing was re-listed for three days commencing 27 April 2020.

On 23 March 2020, the country went into 'lockdown' as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 21 April 2020, HHJ Hirst determined that it would be prejudicial to the mother's right to a fair trial for the contested hearing to proceed via video conference as she wished to fully contest the evidence and she had limited cognitive ability. HHJ Hirst directed that the matter be listed to be heard in person as soon as the COVID-19 restrictions allowed.

The matter was listed for a further case management hearing on 5 August 2020. At this hearing the matter was listed for a contested final hearing beginning 12 October 2020 with a time estimate of four days.

The hearing beginning 12 October 2020 was effective as a final hearing. The court made Care Orders in respect of the older six children and a Care and Placement Order in respect of the youngest child who had been born within the court of the proceedings.

Pre-proceedings Initiatives

Public Law Outline

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

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

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

CAFCASS+

CAFCASS+ was a pre-proceedings initiative involving Children's Services, CAFCASS and parents and applied to unborn babies only. Unfortunately, this scheme is no longer used. Initially this suspension was put in place in May 2019 due to staffing difficulties within Lincolnshire CAFCASS. The scheme has now however been indefinitely suspended after members of the judiciary raised concern about the legality of similar schemes in other Local Authority areas. It should be noted that concerns were not raised about the Lincolnshire scheme specifically however CAFCASS implemented a nationwide review about projects after the criticism in other areas.

Whilst the formal CAFCASS+ project is not currently running, Lincolnshire social work teams continued to implement the associated protocol to commence pre-proceedings and undertake necessary assessments prior to birth in accordance with the spirit of CAFCASS+.

The pre-proceedings process itself had undergone a review and has been made more robust. Referrals to Children's Services now take place at 14 weeks with a view to the first legal planning meeting taking place between weeks 16 – 20. The objectives are:

- To allow time for planned and robust assessments and direct work with families to take place and allow them to demonstrate good enough care of their children so in turn.
- Ensures cases where possible are diverted from proceedings promptly; or
- demonstrate sufficient and robust evidence to support an application to court following the conclusion of assessments.
- As parents are represented, and participate in this process, the concerns of the Local Authority are open and transparent so by the end of the process, parents are not surprised by the outcome and that the case regarding their children will be going to court, particularly important when the child is going to be a new-born baby.

PSMIP (Parental Substance Misuse Intervention Programme)

The PSMIP programme is one that remains in place. It is a pre-proceedings initiative involving a number of different agencies, but notably Children's Services, We Are with You (formerly Addaction) and housing authorities. This is a Lincolnshire County Council pilot

project which has been initiated as a result of recommendations by the President of the Family Division which have been based on the success of the of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court.

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

The main objective of the programme is to reduce the risk to the children in these families whereby it is safe for them to remain with, or be reunified with, their parent and thus divert cases away from care proceedings. The secondary objective is that if the programme is not successful and care proceedings are necessary, the case will have been frontloaded and evidence gathered during the programme can be used to support an application in care proceedings and complete the case at an early final hearing.

2. Conclusion

- a) Within the reporting period, there has been a rise in the number of care proceedings issued.

In 2019/2020 applications were issued in respect of 157 children.

In 2020/2021 applications were issued in respect of 197 children.

This equates to an increase of 40 children (25%)

In respect of the 197 children, the applications comprised of 171 applications for care orders and 26 applications for supervision orders.

- b) Care Proceedings were concluded in respect of 81 children in 2019/2020 compared to 119 in 2020/2021.

- c) There has been a rise in standalone Care Orders being granted.

In 2019/2020 27 Care Orders were granted.

In 2020/2021 31 Care Orders were granted.

4 more standalone care orders were granted, and this equates to an increase in these orders of almost 15%.

- d) There has been a decrease in the number of Supervision Orders being granted

In 2019/2020 22 Supervision Orders were granted.

In 2020/2021 10 Supervision Orders were granted.

17 fewer Supervision Orders were granted which equates to a decrease of 54%.

e) The use of Placement Orders has dropped.

In 2019/2020 22 Placement Orders were granted.

In 2020/2021 12 Placement Orders were granted.

10 fewer orders were granted, and this equates to a decrease in these orders of 45%.

f) There has been a slight increase in the use of Special Guardianship Orders.

In 2019/2020 18 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

In 2020/2021 20 Special Guardianship Orders were granted.

2 more orders were granted, and this equates to an increase in these orders of 11%.

In 2020/2021 the number of cases concluded has significantly reduced as compared to the number of cases that concluded in 2019/2020 in that a decrease of 32% has occurred, indicative of additional factors impacting upon cases.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

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 Sarah Cragg and presented by Nicola Corby who can be contacted on 01522 552549 or nicola.corby@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report

Summary:

This report gives a summary and overview of:

- Activities with regard to V4C between February 2021 – June 2021.
- Future V4C planning and progress, including consulting with children and young people within our residential settings.
- soundLINCS V4C music sessions for children and young people.

V4C is Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council with the aim being to share experiences of being looked after in Lincolnshire and to inform teams who support Children in Care what does and does not work for them. V4C meetings are held within Children's Services locality quadrants and are delivered by Senior Youth and Community Development Workers and supported by Children's Services Participation Officers.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to provide comment and steer regarding:

1. V4C activities and meetings undertaken within the reporting period.
2. Future planning and delivery of V4C meetings and activities.

1. Background

V4C delivery February – June 2021

During this reporting period, due to the on-going restrictions and unavailability of physical activities and meetings, V4C and engagement activities have continued to be delivered, and attempted to be delivered, remotely via the Zoom platform. However, towards the

end of this reporting period physical face to face meetings have begun to be reintroduced and established.

The details below provide a summary of virtual V4C sessions and attendances by locality:

Lincoln and West Lindsey

Date of meeting	Venue	Attendance
February	No meeting due to Co-vid staffing issues	0
3 rd March	Northolme Children’s Home, Gainsborough	6
12 th May	North Hykeham Youth Centre	3
28 th May	Let's Get Quizzical Virtual but held from Northolme	5
2 nd June	Holiday Activity North Hykeham Youth Centre	4
4 th June	Holiday Activity Wild Pines Market Rasen	4

During this period, V4C delivery staff have continued to visit and work with Northolme Children's Residential Home in Gainsborough to speak with and engage directly with the children and young people.

Meetings have now re-started face to face and are going well once per month with young people also joining in the Virtual Let's Get Quizzical activity each month.

Following a Covid risk assessment then group has been meeting at North Hykeham Youth Centre. Young people like the more focused meetings with the Participation Officers setting monthly topics, and the young people attending are engaging well. The V4C group is involved in re-designing and refreshing Children's Services Coming into Care Kit. In addition, in July the intention is to join up the V4C group with young people from the Young Inspectors project to potentially offer them the opportunity to be involved with some future inspection work.

Young people also took part in the June Holiday activities. A request has been made by Northolme to support a young person doing work experience.

The Senior Youth and Community Development Worker is visiting Northolme on a monthly basis to engage with the young people who don't attend the wider sessions and to build relationships with the staff and all young people. This is working well with hosted the 'Let's get Quizzical' virtual quiz being delivered from the home. Young people, staff and a visiting social worker all joined in.

Boston and South Holland

Attendances within the Boston and South Holland locality are below, with regular weekly meetings and some good levels of attendance and engagement:

Date of meeting	Venue	Attendance
10 th Feb	Virtual	7
3 rd Feb	Virtual	7
10 th Feb	Virtual	7
17 th Feb	Virtual	7
24 th Feb	Virtual	7
31 st Feb	Virtual	8
10 th March	Virtual Mother's Day craft	8
21 st March	Virtual	5
17 th March	Virtual Bingo	6
28 th March	Virtual Easter Chicks Creative writing	7
15 th April	Virtual	5
28 th April	Virtual Changes to V4C plus quiz	7
12 th May	Face to face Introduce new face to face structure get to know you ice breaker Big question	7
9 th June	Face to face	3

Session topics have included over this period:

- Easter Activities
- Mother's Day Craft
- Bingo Night
- Creative Writing Competition
- Langue that Cares
- Home office group
- Big Ask
- Coming into Care Kit

Young people have been joining in with the monthly Virtual 'Let's get Quizzical' quiz.

V4C staff have experienced that in the virtual meetings it is more difficult to undertake the V4C topic work as not all the young people are invested or old enough to join in some of

the topics. However, all the information has been passed on to the young people. Younger children are focused on enjoying the arts and crafts activities. The first face to face session went ahead on 12 May with 3 young people being very keen on the more topical side of the meeting.

A Participation Officer led a discussion about how the Coming into Care pack could be updated. Overall, feedback from the older young people said they prefer the more focused session with some time allowed for socialising. Younger children prefer the more the arts / craft type of activity.

North and South Kesteven

Date of meeting	Venue	Attendance
23/2/21	Zoom	2
2/3/21	zoom	1
9/3/21	Phone	1
25/3/21	Zoom	1
06/04/21 – 15/04/21 Over 4 days	Holiday Activities	2 members (4 non V4C members)
29/04/21	Beacon Children's Home (at local park for COVID reasons)	2

Work carried out has included discussing mental health services. In addition, a young person was given the opportunity to be involved in the selection process for a Social Work Team Manager, and that young person has informed me they are continuing to engage in the Young Inspectors programme, which offered the opportunity, and really enjoyed being part of the interviews.

Some young people in care attend holiday activities; although not all were members of V4C, we were able to discuss with them the group and what it is for. They have shown an interest in attending face to face sessions starting in June.

In order to continue to raise awareness of V4C the Beacon Children's Home in Grantham has been recently visited with 2 young people possibly joining V4C as a result. Further contact with Eastgate Children's Home in Sleaford has been made with a further visit arranged to discuss V4C with the children and young people.

East Lindsey

Virtual meetings have been difficult to progress in East Lindsey. Feedback from young people has been that they prefer telephone check-ins, and these have been happening, but group Zoom sessions, when attempted, have not resulted in engagement.

With the lifting of some restrictions, in May it was decided to attempt to re-introduce face to face meetings in East Lindsey. Significant work has been undertaken to contact previous members of the East Lindsey group, support workers, social work team managers, the Virtual School, Barnardo's and social workers that we are aware of that have young people residing in East Lindsey.

Although there was not significant interest to hold a meeting in May, a successful face to face meeting was held on June 15th at Skegness Youth Centre with 5 attendees, with topics discussed including: A future Big Conversation; starting to review the Coming Into Care Kit; review of language used and information from the Lincolnshire Youth Commission.

Going forward Barnardo are intending to bring 2 of their young people to the next V4C meeting in East Lindsey.

V4C Virtual soundLINCS Programme

The soundLINCS music project was established to enable young people from the V4C groups to take part in an activity to support their health and wellbeing.

The project consisted of three different sessions, over a number of dates, delivered by soundLINCS and/or Participation and Youth Work staff:

- Rhymes and Beats
- Learning to play the Ukulele
- Electronic Music Production

Each session had a maximum number of four young people to ensure each person had quality time and got the most out of the activity. Sessions have been held from the end of August through to the end of March with 38 children and young people attending, with details given in the previous V4C Corporate Parenting Panel Report.

Feedback from the sessions has been very positive, with young people requesting further sessions.

As a result, a second phase of soundLINCS V4C workshops has been developed and has operated since October 2020. Following consultation with young people, the content of the sessions delivered, during evening sessions, has been:

- Rhyme and Beats
- Electronic Music Production

Latest attendances (2 sessions per date) are shown below with good engagement from the young people:

Date of meeting	Venue	YP Attendance
23 rd Feb Staff: VC & NS	Virtual Electronic Music	3 0
25 th Feb Staff: DB & NS	Virtual Rhyme Beats	3 1
1 st March Staff: DB & NS	Virtual Electronic Music	3 1
4 th March	Virtual Rhyme Beats	3

Date of meeting	Venue	YP Attendance
Staff: DB & NS		3
8 th March Staff: VC & NS	Virtual Electronic Music	1 0 - IT issues for 2 YP
11 th March Staff: DB & NS	Virtual Rhyme Beats	3 4
15 th March Staff: VC & NS	Virtual Electronic Music	2 1
18 th March Staff: DB & NS	Virtual Rhyme Beats	3 2
23 rd March Staff: VC & NS	Virtual Electronic Music	2 0 - IT issues 2 YP
25 th March Staff: DB & NS	Virtual Rhyme Beats	3 2
3 rd June Staff: DB	Face to face – Recording Studio session	Cancelled due to Covid positive in family

This has been a successful phase of sessions. The Rhymes and Beats sessions have produced two outstanding young people who have created some extremely poignant and moving words and beats. For one young person English is not their first language, however the facilitator was extremely good at supporting the young person to produce some outstanding music and words.

This was so successful another session face to face was arranged (as Covid rules have relaxed) so we could use the soundLINCS music studio to lay their voices onto the tracks. Unfortunately, this had to be postponed due to a family being Covid positive and at the time of this report a new date is yet to be finalised.

A further programme of sessions is being planned for the summer.

'Let's Get Quizzical' – Virtual V4C quiz

'Let's Get Quizzical' is a new monthly virtual online quiz activity across all quadrant areas each month.

Date of meeting	Venue	YP Attendance
24 th February	Virtual Quiz	10
31 st March	Virtual Quiz	8
28 th April	Virtual Quiz	10
21 st May	Virtual hosted live from Northolme residential	12

The monthly quiz enables all young people in care across Lincolnshire to get involved. This is designed to be a good steppingstone to V4C. Young people are able to meet other young people in care. There are 5 main topics including one covering V4C, and this serves to provide information about V4C in a fun way.

In June the quiz was hosted from Northolme via a large screen TV. This provided the opportunity for staff and visiting social workers to join in and worked very well.

V4C Planning

The following points summarise current V4C planning:

- Action planning has taken place that has progressed the return to face-to-face delivery and it is pleasing to report that successful face to face meetings and activities have taken place in this reporting period within the residential homes, youth centres and Wild Pines centre in Market Rasen. The move back to varied face to face sessions is intended to continue.
- V4C staff have also been visiting children and staff in the residential homes to raise awareness of V4C and consult on what they would like future V4C sessions and delivery to look like.
- The option of providing virtual V4C meetings in addition to physical meetings and activities when they resume will continue. This will help to offer V4C for young people who are unable or do not wish to attend physical meetings.
- Due to its continued popularity, there are further soundLINCS music sessions planned for the summer with 6 dates confirmed across July and August comprising 12 different sessions.
- The next Big Conversation: Big Conversation meetings bring together all of the V4C groups and the next meeting has been provisionally booked for October half term at Ancaster Leisure Centre, and this will include activities such as bowling and laser tag on the day.

2. Conclusions

- A) Delivery of V4C meetings and sessions has taken place virtually via Zoom since the Co-vid pandemic. This report evidences good examples of virtual delivery, although it remains inconsistent in terms of successful engagement with children and young people in certain instances.
- B) There have been successful moves to reintroduce face to face meetings within this reporting period and this provides a good base from which to progress.
- C) Feedback from the soundLINCS music programme for V4C members remains consistently positive and more dates have been arranged. This is helping to keep children and young people engaged with V4C staff as part of a social activity, while recognising it is not a session which involves participation work.

- D) As stated in the previous report to the Panel, virtual V4C meetings have been popular among certain young people. They offer a different mechanism for them to communicate, engage and give their views. Some young people prefer this method to physical meetings. It also enables participation where young people are unable to travel to certain locations. It is therefore recommended that these options of meetings continue in some form when physical meetings resume.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Risk assessments are carried out via the Senior Youth and Community Development Workers.

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 Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Quality and Standards), who can be contacted on 07876 212470 or at ben.lilley@lincolnshire.gov.uk.



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Independent Reviewing Officer Yearly Report

Summary:

This report is the yearly report on the Independent Chair's Service. It serves to update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the work undertaken between April 2020 and March 2021. The report includes an update on priorities identified for 2020-21 and new priorities for 2021-22.

This report is submitted to the Panel for background information and a presentation will be provided in the meeting.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to note the yearly report on the Independent Chair's Service and make comments on the presentation to be provided at the meeting.

1. Background

Every child who is 'looked after' (Child in Care-CiC) by Lincolnshire County Council must have a Care Plan. This document details the long-term plan for the child's upbringing, and the arrangements made by Lincolnshire Children's Services to meet the child's day to day needs. All local authorities have a statutory duty to review the Care Plan regularly, within legislative timescales, as stipulated in the Care Planning and Case Review Regulations 2010.

It is a legal requirement for every child who is looked after to have an Independent Reviewing Officer appointed to them under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Independent Reviewing Officers' handbook (2010) specifies that the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) should provide continuity in the oversight of matters relating to a child being looked after, and that they should strive to establish a consistent

relationship with the child. The statutory duties of the Independent Reviewing Officer include the following: -

- Monitor the performance of the local authority and their function in relation to the child's case.
- Participate in any review of the child's case.
- Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration by the appropriate authority.
- Perform any other function which is prescribed by the regulations.

It is a statutory requirement to provide an annual report in respect of the Local Authority's Independent Reviewing Service.

The Independent Chairs Service consists of combined roles so that an Independent Chair is responsible for chairing and managing child protection conferences alongside the IRO duties and functions. The attached report therefore details performance across both these roles to ensure members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are provided with a holistic overview.

2. Conclusion

The last year has thrown up some significant challenges for the independent Chairs and service provision for Children and Families due to Covid and the restrictions in terms of contact, participation, and services. The service has met these challenges in innovative ways, being a frontrunner in the use of virtual meetings and as restrictions have eased, hybrid meetings. This continues to be a work in progress and the service continues to assess and roadmap future ways of working in order to take account of the current Covid restrictions and plan for the future to take the best working practices forward.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire County Council – Children’s Services Independent Reviewing Service yearly report 1st April 2020 – 31st March 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 07879603618 or Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

**Lincolnshire County Council – Children’s Services
Independent Reviewing Service yearly report
1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021**

Due to the spread of Corona virus and the strict measures imposed by the UK government the Quality and Standards Service has had to redesign the delivery of child protection conferencing, Children in Care (Formally known as Looked After Children) reviews and reg 44 under the governments Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for children's social care services. During this unprecedented period the service has continued to hold CP conferences and Children in Care reviews within timescales and ensured the continued participation of children and families who face additional challenges.

The Contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to Quality Assuring and Improving Services for Children in Care

This IRO report provides evidence relating to the IRO Services in Lincolnshire as required by statutory guidance. Due to the core business of the team also including child protection, short breaks and Reg 44, where appropriate this report contains information relating to those areas.

The IRO report must be presented to: Corporate Parenting Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Purpose of service and legal context

The IRO Service is set within the framework of the IRO Handbook which provides the statutory guidance for independent reviewing officers and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for children looked after.

The guidance is issued as part of a suite of statutory guidance which sets out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for looked after children. The aim is to provide looked after children with the most appropriate placement to meet their needs and improve their outcomes.

The CP Chairs role is described within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 which is a guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Following section 47 enquiries, an initial child protection conference (ICPC) brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), with the supporters, advocates and practitioners most involved with the child and family.

The purpose of the CPC is to analyse all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child with the family and their network taking the lead. It is the responsibility of the conference to make recommendations on how organisations and agencies work together to safeguard the child in future.

Update on the priorities for 2020 – 2021

1. As a result of Covid 19 and as lockdown restrictions are lifted, recovery plans will be implemented which will take into account the learning from the lockdown period.

Since the beginning of lock down meetings have been virtual, utilising a number of electronic and telephone methods to ensure the participation of children and families within the meetings. In response to changes in government and local authority policy there has been a small number of hybrid meetings combining in person meetings between the Chairs, SW and family members with online participation from other professionals. Each individual case has been risk assessed by the SW and Chair in order to ensure that the meeting is effectively managed in a safe way under Covid guidance and that the hybrid meeting effectively manages risk and contributes to effective participation.

2. There is currently a significant piece of work being undertaken by the Participation Team calling children and young people to get feedback on their experiences. Over the next few months we will conduct a themed audit to capture the voice of the child.

There was a significant piece of work undertaken by the Participation Team. They contacted two groups of young people, the first group had a review before Covid restrictions and the second group had a review during the Covid restrictions. The results of this piece of work were;

Positive feedback

Both groups:

- 86% are happy with the way Reviews are run/managed

Pre-lockdown group:

- 90% attended their Reviews
- 86% said everyone they wanted to be at their Review attended
- 76% felt listened to
- 71% were able to describe the paperwork they received following their Review
- 76% had no suggestions for improvement

Lockdown group:

- All those who attended their Review felt it was good or okay
- 83% of those who attended and contributed felt listened to
- All of those who attended and contributed were happy with the way their Review was held

Negative feedback

Both groups combined:

- Over one third said they did not know what their IRO is for
- Nearly half have no contact with their IRO between Reviews and some do not know if they do
- Only 55% felt their Review was meaningful

Pre-lockdown group only:

- 33% had no or only some understanding of the Review process
- 29% did not feel their Review was meaningful or did not know if it was meaningful
- 29% had disagreements in their Review. Only 5% of these had been resolved
- Only one-third said that paper work received following their Review was helpful

We continue to work with the participation team to make the best use of feedback in order to create and meet service objectives. Children continue to have direct contact with their IRO's in order to express their views and participate in their reviews.

3. Work is planned to review young people's participation in conferences as numbers continue to be low.

Due to the implementation of Covid restrictions this piece of work has yet to be started. We are seeking to review participation of young people through electronic media during this period to ascertain if there are lessons we are able to take forward regarding increasing participation.

4. A review of workflows on Mosaic for Children in Care and pathway plans to support more timely recording.

The Pathway Assessment was audited and changes made to the process of recording to ensure that these are completed in a timely manner. The new Pathway assessment went live in MOSAIC in March 2021.

The work is on-going in relation to Children in Care steps within MOSAIC has been subsumed into the Valuing Care workstream. Amendments to the language used in the creation of the child care plan and how individual review decisions are recorded have been made. Participation is undertaking a bigger piece of work around language used with and about Children in Care.

5. Further work with the Performance Team to ensure reporting requirements are met, this will need to be reviewed and amended in line with any workflow changes.

We have met to look at our existing performance reports and ensure that information is more accessible and clearer for all involved (e.g. Supervision report to assist Independent Chairs Team Managers with managing supervisions for their staff). We also have a number of new reports being built to automate some of the work that we currently do manually (e.g. report to identify Mosaic worksteps that need closing and completing for children/young people that have now left care).

We are currently working with MOSAIC and Performance regarding reports being in timescale in order to robustly challenge services.

6. A piece of work to address the engagement of fathers with child protection conferences.

Due to the ongoing restrictions the audit mechanisms to review engagement of fathers within conferences has not progressed, but remains a priority.

7. For children leaving care a 'later life' letter to be written by their IRO and consideration to be given to providing them with a copy of all the review reports if they do not already have these.

Discussion has taken place with the Chairs in order to identify the best way to take this forward. There is a keenness within the team to ensure that letters are consistently given to children leaving care post 18 and that reports are compiled and available for the young people. This is an ongoing piece of developmental work.

8. Review quality assurance across the service to ensure this supports driving up standards of practice in Social Care.

As a service we have codified the quality assurance mechanisms in place within the service that contribute to driving up standards. Specific audits have been undertaken in relation to; effectiveness of CP conferences, specific themed audit in respect of sexual abuse, quality of strategy discussions, review of 12 month CP reviews and 2 child protection plans in a 12 month period.

9. Explore alternative methods for obtaining feedback from parents and young people, through the use of snap surveys and telephone contact.

We offer young people and parents an opportunity to give their feedback in a variety of ways:

- All of the consultation and information leaflets have been updated to reflect SOS and Restorative Practice and will be reviewed annually.
- When managers observe IRO/chairs they always attempt to meet with parents/children following the meeting.
- IRO's support young people to complete consultation documents if carers or SW's have not been able to.
- IRO's contact YP's before reviews to check how they want their reviews to be managed
- Feedback sheets are given to young people and their family and carers after every Children in Care (Formally Looked After Children) review and after every Conference. We have developed a spread sheet that will collate this feedback for analysis using a rag rating and any comments. This will then inform future work programmes, helping us to better understand the impact upon children and families.
- We have developed a Snap Survey for professional & family feedback for CP Conferences. This has been running since May 2020. The responses for these are collated on a rolling monthly spreadsheet and are been analysed to inform the service.
- The Tell Us What You Think survey was designed to capture the views of Children in Care about various aspects of their care experience. The intention is to identify the extent to which services are meeting quality standards and the needs of young people. It is also intended to give children and young people a voice to help identify how services can be improved. The outcomes in relation to the IRO role are shared in team meetings.

Other work completed:

Much of the planned work throughout this period has had to be put on hold due to the need to proactively address working practices that have needed to change in response to Covid.

The 6 month meeting with colleagues from CAFCASS was postponed from November and took place in March 2021.

Work continues to be undertaken virtually through CSTM to highlight and reflect working practices and development.

Although there has been disruption, both the regional and national IRO and CP managers group have been meeting. These have continued to meet virtually due to COVID restrictions.

A Team Manager from QA and 2 Independent Chairs were involved in the LSCP task and finish group in respect of re-writing the Pre Birth Protocol for how Lincolnshire responds when there are concerns for the welfare of unborn children. The new protocol has established a clearer pathway for cases of high concern and independent chairs are involved in the chairing of multi-agency strategy meetings.

Professional Profile of the IRO Service

The Independent Reviewing Service continues to be embedded within the Quality and Standards Service Area of Lincolnshire County Council.

The Independent Chairs Team is made up primarily of two distinct roles: Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Chairs. In a number of Local Authorities these roles are separate roles, often located in separate teams, however this is not the case in Lincolnshire. Currently there are 18.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Independent Chair posts within the team that cover the county as a whole.

The team also has responsibility for reviewing CWD Short Term Breaks and Regulation 44 Inspections. Both of these roles are also statutory requirements.

In addition there are 3 LADOs within the wider team who are line managed by the Quality and Standards Manager. These roles are filled by qualified Social Workers at the same grade as the IRO's and Chairs and are able to assist with covering work on occasion.

COVID and sickness absence has proven challenging over the course of the year, this has necessitated the use of 2 agency staff to ensure that service capacity is not impacted on and standards are maintained.

Short Term Breaks (STB's)

Short breaks are part of a continuum of services which support children in need and their families. They include the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities for the child or young person, and can take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential or community setting. In Lincolnshire the users of short breaks are disabled children and their families. The breaks usually have two aims: to enable the child to participate in fun, interesting and safe activities; and to provide a break from caring for the parents.

The role of the IRO for children looked after in a series of short breaks is more limited than for children looked after longer term. It is important that IROs are sensitive to the close and active involvement of parents. Given this sensitivity, parents as well as children and young people can highly value their contribution and independent perspective, especially in helping to resolve any difficulties with the placement. IROs have a responsibility to alert the local authority if the placement is not meeting the child's needs. A large number of short breaks occur that do not require oversight by the IRO due to not meeting the statutory requirements.

Number of Short-Term Break meetings held							
Apr 18	8	Jan 19	6	Oct 19	6	Jul 20	7

May 18	12	Feb 19	4	Nov 19	6	Aug 20	2
Jun 18	8	Mar 19	5	Dec 19	4	Sep 20	4
Jul 18	8	Apr 19	5	Jan 20	6	Oct 20	4
Aug 18	1	May 19	3	Feb 20	4	Nov 20	9
Sep 18	7	Jun 19	11	Mar 20	4	Dec 20	2
Oct 18	4	Jul 19	5	Apr 20	4	Jan 21	4
Nov 18	9	Aug 19	0	May 20	4	Feb 21	3
Dec 18	8	Sep 19	8	Jun 20	6	Mar 21	5

Regulation 44

The Regulation 44 Officers continue to be based within the team. The role is a statutory one to act as an independent person, visit and report on the children's homes. Lincolnshire has 7 residential homes with a wide range of specialism – one Secure unit, two homes accommodating children with disabilities for short breaks, one long term home for children with disabilities and 3 children's homes that offer long term placement for children who are looked after. There are 2 supported living schemes, one in Grantham and the other in Gainsborough providing accommodation young people aged 16-18 for a period of up to six months. This accommodation is to be inspected under the Regulation 44 process however this is 'a light touch' exercise every 4 months.

A temporary Childrens Home was opened in April 2020 as a response to anticipated capacity issues for Children in Care due to Covid. This was managed by one of the Team Managers from QA.

For details in terms of the service please see the individual report provided for the corporate parenting board.

Staffing

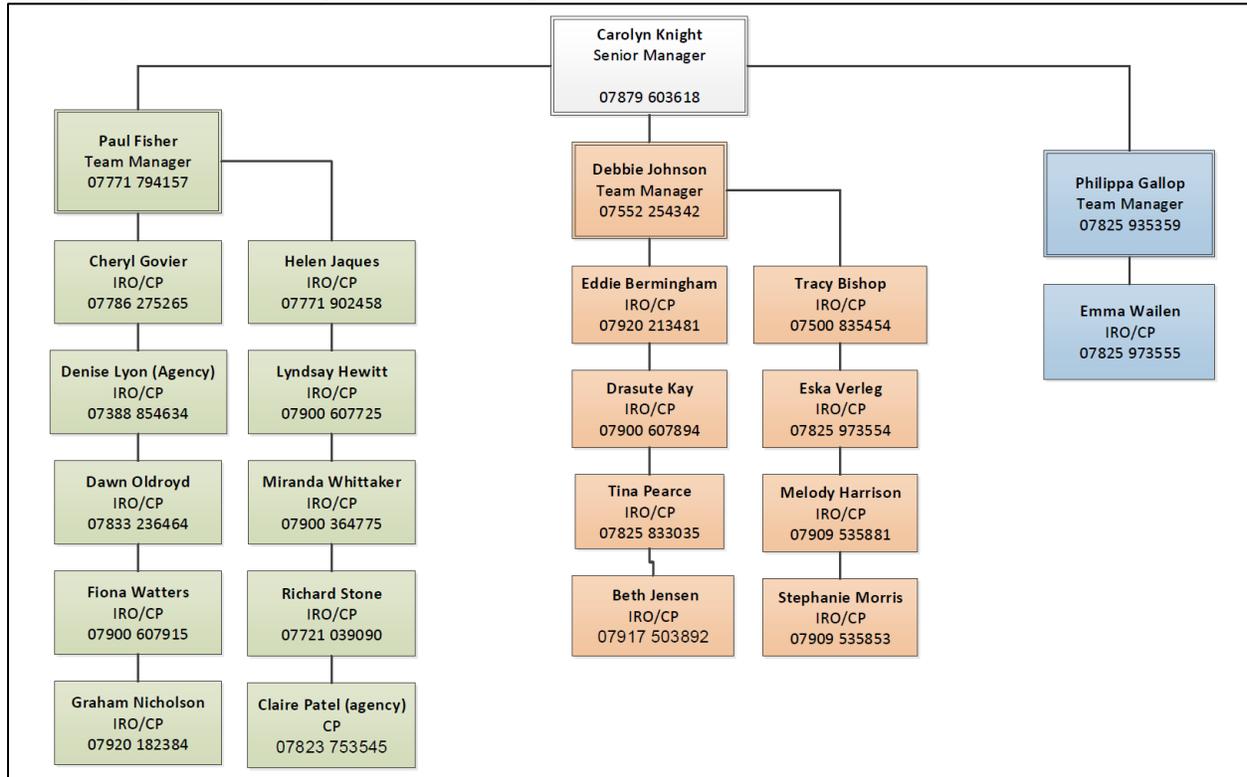
Management Team

Debbie Johnson joined the management team in June replacing Chris Sharp who retired in July. Paul Fisher was seconded to open and manage Wickenby Childrens Home from April to the beginning of August, he is now back in post. Philippa Gallop remains in post and has responsibility for Quality Assurance and management of some of the Chairs.

Independent Chairs

The team has experienced a number of changes since April, one member of staff has left for a new role in a different authority. A seconded member of staff was successful in applying for a permanent role as was an agency member of staff. A member of staff who has been on maternity leave returned to work in January. One member of staff has retired and due to the successful recruitment of Richard Stone we are in the process of filling 2 posts. There is one member of staff who is currently on longer term sick leave. We currently have 2 agency staff in post to cover staffing shortfall and additional work due to COVID and subsequent change in practices.

Due to Covid there has been a significant change in working practices as governmental guidance has continued to change throughout this period. Although there has been savings in terms of travel to and from meetings there has been a significant impact in managing and supporting virtual meetings which has not led to an increase in capacity.



Looked After population and the IRO service

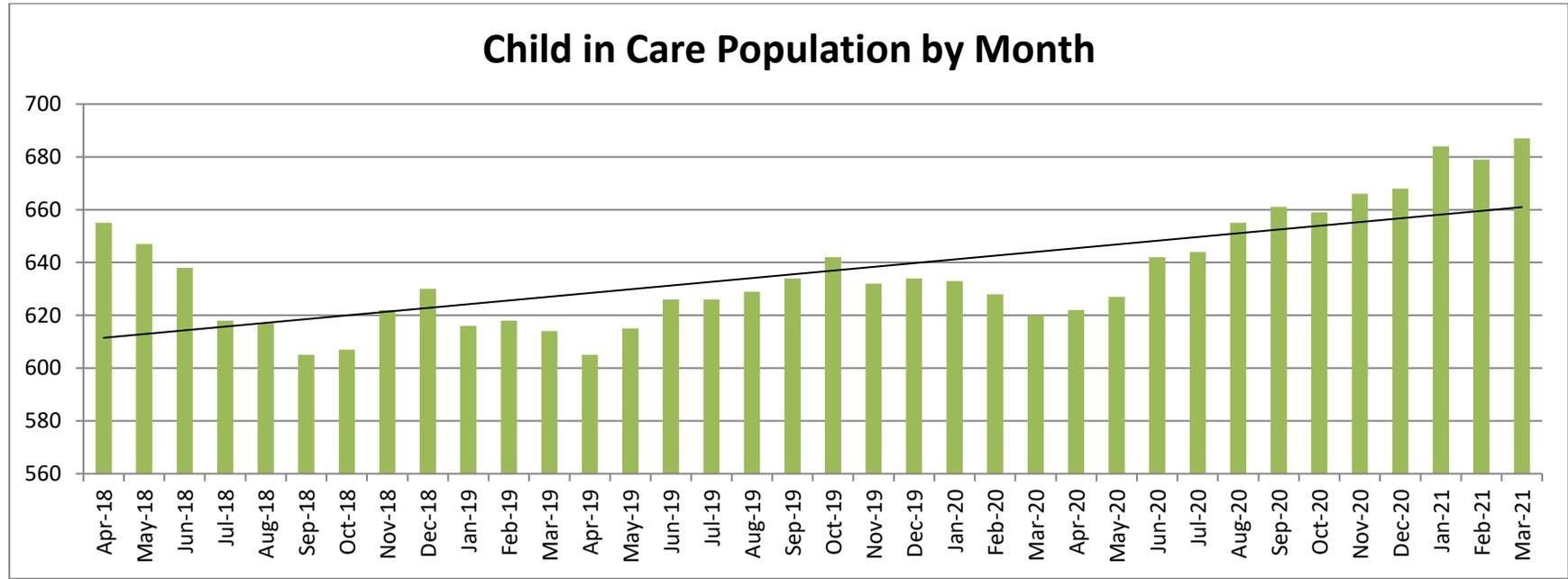
The numbers of looked after children show an upwards trend in comparison to the same period in the last year.

Since April 2020 the IROs have conducted 1505 reviews, in the same period in 2019 there were 1478 reviews. We currently have 687 Children in care as opposed to 620 in March 2020.

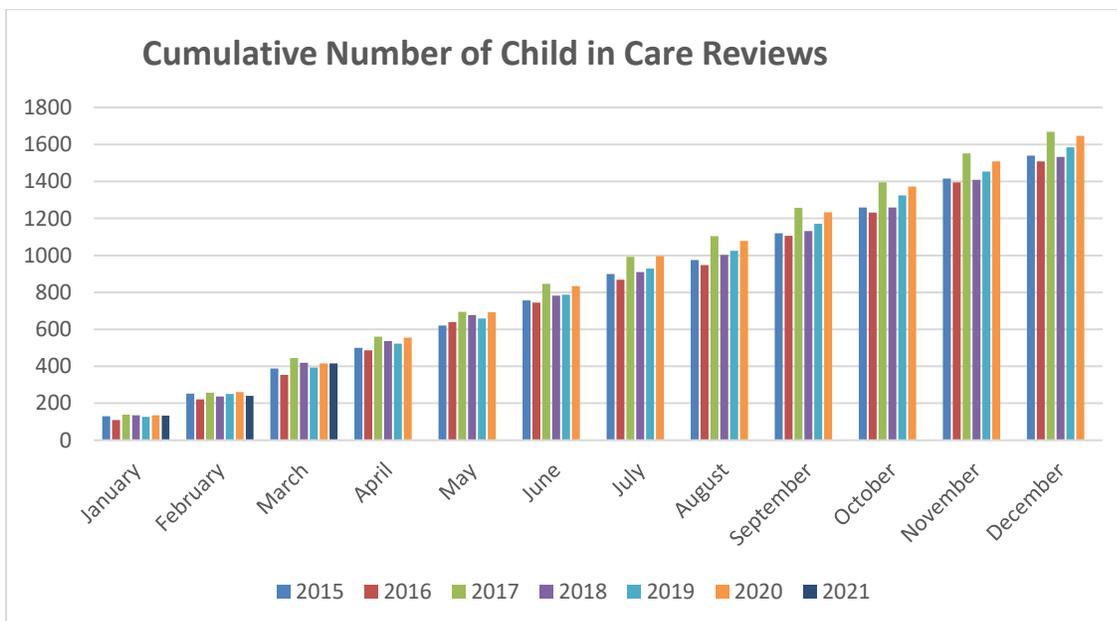
The Children in Care population has seen an upward trend resulting in currently highest Children in Care population in the last 3 years.

5 young people have been subject to Secure Accommodation under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989, the reviews are chaired by the Independent Chair Team Managers.

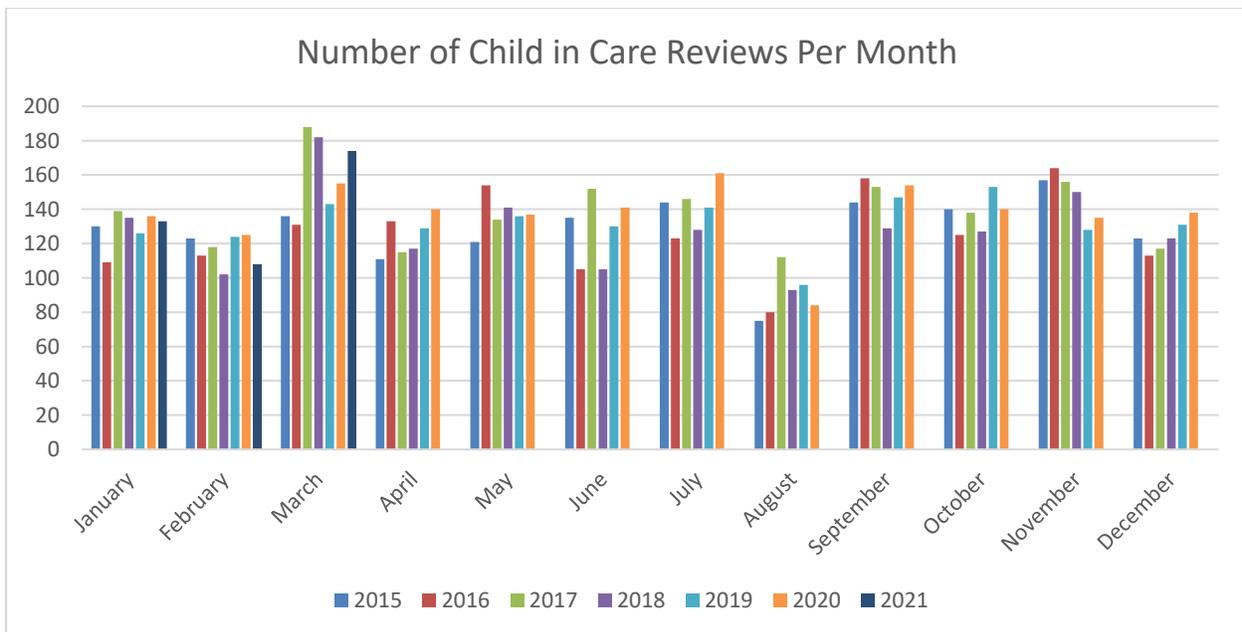
Child in Care Population



Cumulative Number of Child in Care Reviews							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	130	109	139	135	126	136	133
February	253	222	257	237	250	261	241
March	389	353	445	419	393	416	415
April	500	486	560	536	522	556	
May	621	640	694	677	658	693	
June	756	745	846	782	788	834	
July	900	868	992	910	929	995	
August	975	948	1104	1003	1025	1079	
September	1119	1106	1257	1132	1172	1233	
October	1259	1231	1395	1259	1325	1373	
November	1416	1395	1551	1409	1453	1508	
December	1539	1508	1668	1532	1584	1646	



Number of Child in Care Reviews Per Month								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	123	130	109	139	135	126	136	133
February	95	123	113	118	102	124	125	108
March	116	136	131	188	182	143	155	174
April	115	111	133	115	117	129	140	
May	133	121	154	134	141	136	137	
June	109	135	105	152	105	130	141	
July	149	144	123	146	128	141	161	
August	71	75	80	112	93	96	84	
September	155	144	158	153	129	147	154	
October	143	140	125	138	127	153	140	
November	139	157	164	156	150	128	135	
December	111	123	113	117	123	131	138	



Advocacy

Advocacy provision in Lincolnshire is currently provided by Voiceability as part of a commissioned service. The link Advocate attended a virtual team meeting to update the service in relation to the changes as this provision changed in July 2020 from Total Voice.

IROs routinely check that children and young people know about advocacy and how it can support them in having a real say in decisions affecting their lives. Children in Care children are

opted in to the Voiceability who are also automatically invited to Children in Care Reviews for children aged 8 and over.

Timeliness of reviews

The latest performance report shows 98.4% in timescale (674 out of 685 reviews). The remainder are simply down to recording errors however one sibling group of five was held out of timescales for an agreed reason. Safeguarding and Review are working on resolving the recording errors individually with the IRO's. Once these are resolved we will be 680 out of 685 in timescale which is 99.3%.

Children and young people's preparation and involvement in reviews

Participation includes attending and/or contributing to their Review. All children and young people are sent a consultation form with their invite. Some have phone calls, emails and separate visits from their IROs in between reviews or in anticipation of a forthcoming review. This is to enable the IRO to build a relationship with the child, ensure that they have the opportunity to discuss any issues/talk about the positives in their lives and to determine how they want the next review to be conducted. Attending a review is the child or young person's decision and not mandatory.

Since the start of Covid children have been contacted either via the telephone or virtual technology. They have participated in their reviews through these mediums as physical contacts have not always been possible. As identified previously we are looking at the impact of this way of working on participation to ascertain whether this encourages young people to attend or proves to be a barrier. As restrictions ease more hybrid meetings will take place depending on the individual circumstances and wishes of the child.

Signs of Safety, Restorative Practice and Social Pedagogy are being utilised by staff in partnership with SW colleagues in their planning for reviews and engagement with children and young people. This remains an important strand of work to ensure we can reach out to young people who do not attend to gain feedback and improve participation.

Plans for Children in Care

The Chairs continue to focus on ensuring the availability of high quality plans for every child in care. The Chairs raise professional escalations if care plans are not completed or are not of sufficient quality. Work with the MOSAIC team is ongoing to ensure that recording of escalations is robust and can be reported on effectively.

The integrated Care Plan/Chairs Report was launched at the beginning of April 2019, as a cooperative system workflow between Social Work and IRO team, this continues to be problematic in ensuring timely access to SW reports and subsequent recording by the Chairs. The amalgamation of the SW and IRO work steps had led to concerns from the IRO's that their

independent review of the care plan was less well defined within the child's records, however the quality and timeliness of care plans have improved. Additional work is ongoing with the Children in Care Teams, IRO and MOSAIC to support better working between SW's and IRO's to continually improve quality of care planning records.

Children seen in separate interviews and children attending their reviews

We have amended the Chairs Activity step to be able to report on the contact with young people prior to review. This is due to go live in April.

Progress-chasing Activities between Looked After Reviews

All IROs have a duty to monitor the progress of their allocated children and young people between reviews. This is to ensure the care plan is progressing and allows them to intervene and escalate issues where matters are drifting. All young people are provided with the IROs name and contact details at the initial meeting and routinely at reviews

Identifying good practice, problem resolution and escalation

IRO's identify and share good practice with colleagues but also raise concerns with social care teams via positive challenge and formal escalation.

The majority of concerns are still raised by the IROs through positive challenge, without meeting the need for a formal escalation and these are recorded on MOSAIC.

The team have been focusing on improving consistency in terms of escalations made and to ensure a better monitoring, reducing drift and delay. Systems are in place to support managerial oversight as well as helping the IRO's in their duty of tracking escalations. The IROs now are sent weekly reminder emails of open formal escalations so that they can follow these up with the respective teams. Also escalations have been included into the individual IROs appraisal goals and are actively discussed during supervisions. The drive is to make the escalations more robust and to increase the use of positive challenge, whenever this is warranted to approve care planning and outcomes for young people. We have made amendments to the Chairs Activity record to enable more accurate recording.

All Independent Reviewing Officers are required by the regulations to have access to legal advice. Clearly, given the independent nature of the Service, it would not be appropriate for any such advice to be provided by the Children's Services Legal Department. To date legal advice has been sought on one occasion. Q&S Team Managers have flagged that clearer guidance and processes are required regarding access to independent legal advice.

Number of formal escalations (by month)

April 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Aug 2016	Sept 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	Mar 2017
9	4	0	3	1	3	4	3	6	2	5	8
April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	July 2017	Aug 2017	Sept 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2018	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	Mar 2018
2	5	7	5	1	9	4	5	5	8	4	7
April 2018	May 2018	June 2018	July 2018	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019
4	4	4	5	2	4	1	1	0	3	2	2
April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	July 2019	Aug 2019	Sept 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020
8	3	1	0	0	8	1	2	0	2	7	1
April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
3	0	3	4	5	5	0	3	3	5	1	1

Themes of Child in Care Formal Escalations (for the period October 2020 to March 2021)

Theme	Number of Escalations Raised
Safeguarding concerns	7
Placement/ Accommodation concerns	2
Practice Issues (Multiple Issues)	1
Drift & Delay	1
Parental/Family Engagement	1
Legal concerns	1
Total Escalations Raised	13

Management oversight

The Guidance states that operational social work managers must consider the decisions from the Review before they are finalised. This is due in part to the need to ensure any resource implications have been addressed. Once the decisions are completed the Manager has 5 days to raise any queries or objections. Managers rarely ask for any amendments to be made and this process appears to work well.

IROs have continued to monitor the quality of care plans, adoption plans and pathway plans and social reports to review. Where any issues were identified, IROs have attempted initially informally to address these and on a few occasions have formally escalated concerns.

Leaving Care – Director's Decision

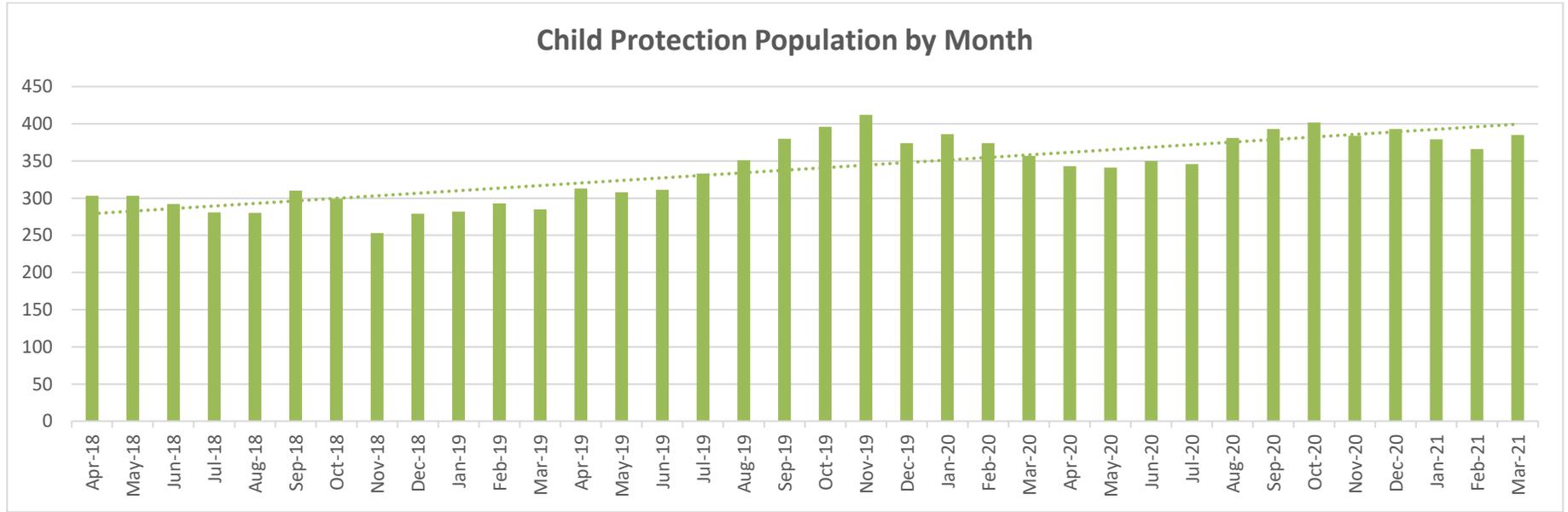
Month	Total	Month	Total	Month	Total	Month	Total
Apr 18	1	Jan 19	0	Oct 19	0	Jul 20	0
May 18	3	Feb 19	0	Nov 19	0	Aug 20	0
Jun 18	2	Mar 19	0	Dec 19	2	Sep 20	0
Jul 18	1	Apr 19	0	Jan 20	0	Oct 20	0
Aug 18	2	May 19	1	Feb 20	0	Nov 20	0
Sep 18	0	Jun 19	0	Mar 20	0	Dec 20	1
Oct 18	1	Jul 19	1	Apr 20	0	Jan 21	0
Nov 18	1	Aug 19	2	May 20	0	Feb 21	0
Dec 18	0	Sep 19	0	Jun 20	0	Mar 21	0

The procedure with regards to Sec. 20 Accommodated young people leaving care before their 18th birthday is understood by Chairs and is discussed within reviews as part of the Care Planning process and Recommendations. Any young person who has been accommodated for more than 20 days and is aged 16 or 17 and wants to leave care has to have this decision considered by the Director.

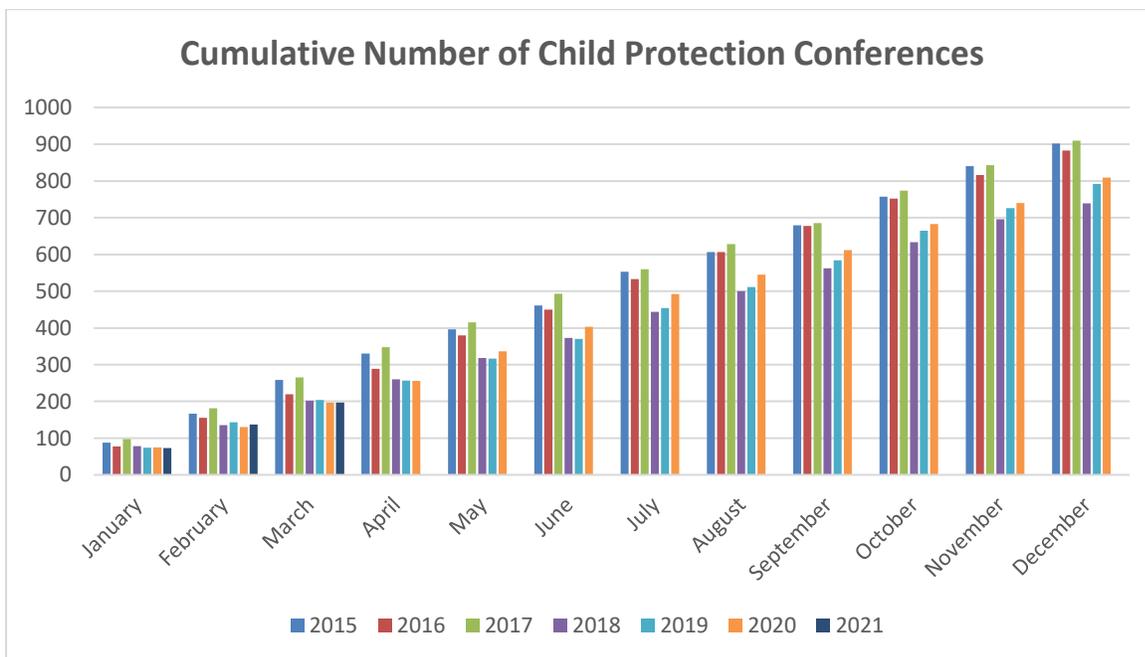
Child Protection

There are currently 385 children subject to a CP plan, the number of children subject to a CP Plan in March 2020 was 357. The number of conferences has increased from 785 19-20 to 809 20-21.

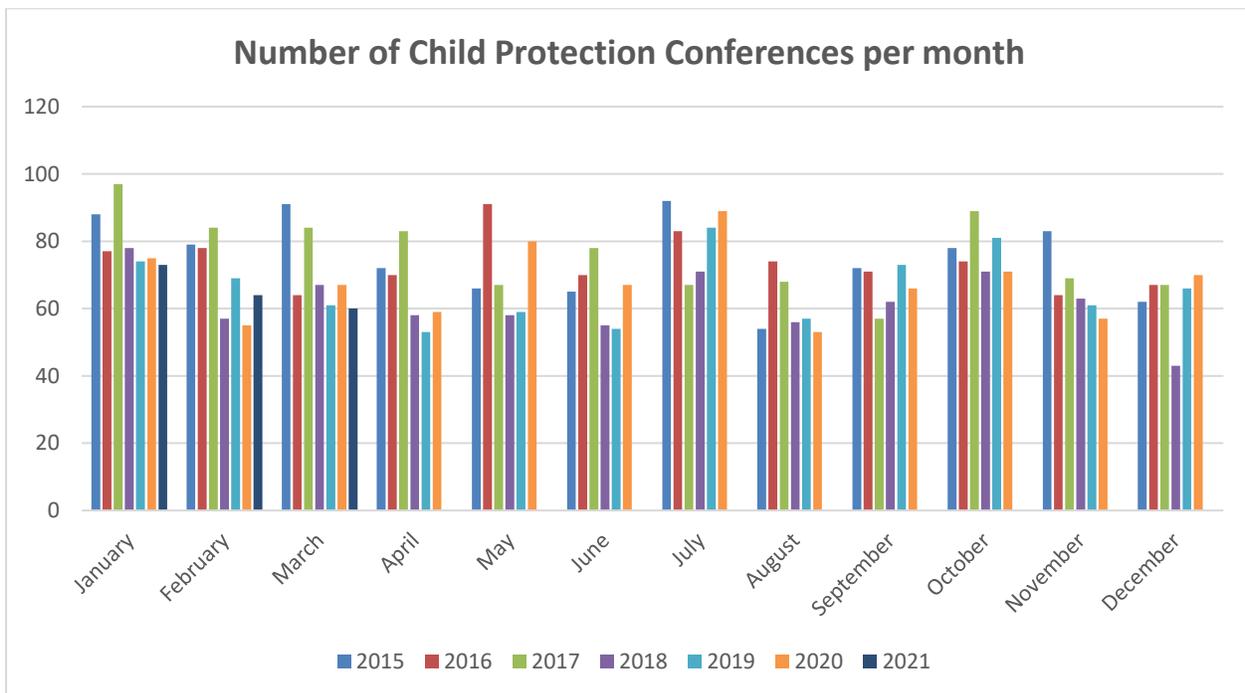
Child Protection Population



Cumulative Number of Child Protection Conferences							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	88	77	97	78	74	75	73
February	167	155	181	135	143	130	137
March	258	219	265	202	204	197	197
April	330	289	348	260	257	256	
May	396	380	415	318	316	336	
June	461	450	493	373	370	403	
July	553	533	560	444	454	492	
August	607	607	628	500	511	545	
September	679	678	685	562	584	612	
October	757	752	774	633	665	683	
November	840	816	843	696	726	740	
December	902	883	910	739	792	809	



Number of Child Protection Conferences per month							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	88	77	97	78	74	75	73
February	79	78	84	57	69	55	64
March	91	64	84	67	61	67	60
April	72	70	83	58	53	59	
May	66	91	67	58	59	80	
June	65	70	78	55	54	67	
July	92	83	67	71	84	89	
August	54	74	68	56	57	53	
September	72	71	57	62	73	66	
October	78	74	89	71	81	71	
November	83	64	69	63	61	57	
December	62	67	67	43	66	70	



Timeliness of reviews

Three conferences took place out of timescale. These are accounted for and were all part of a sibling group, due to the individual circumstances of this case it was agreed by a Q&S Team Manager that this was appropriate. Latest performance report shows 98.8% in timescale.

Children and young people's preparation and involvement in conferences

A number of young people attend conferences and are supported by advocates if they choose to be, advocates also attend meetings on behalf of children.

Activities between Child Protection Reviews

Chairs undertake a monitoring check at the midway point between Conferences and a check when preparing for reviews. This is to ensure that statutory tasks have been undertaken and that the plan is progressing and having a positive impact for the child and family. Where there are concerns the Chair will alert the relevant member of the team Social Worker, Practice Supervisor or Team Manager.

For children who are reaching 12 months on a child protection plan a process is in place to review progress, prevent delay and agree a way forward. This discussion has a formal agenda and is led by a different CP Chair to include the allocated Chair, SW, PS and TM. The record of the discussion is saved the Childs case file.

The 12 Month review process was part of a QA audit, this has been taken to a Locality Team Managers meeting and work is being undertaken to refine the process.

Identifying good practice, problem resolution and escalation

Since September 2019, a quarterly email is now sent to the Senior Liaison Officer's to make them aware of any escalations raised for staff or areas that they cover.

From the 1st April 20 to 31st March 21 there were 158 escalations.

Child Protection Conference Escalations raised in the period October 2020 to March 2021

Organisation	Number of Escalations
GP's	47
Social Workers / Practice Supervisors	9
Education (Nurseries, Schools etc)	5
Other/Misc	4
Hospital Based Worker	4
We Are With You (formerly Addaction)	3
Housing (LA's, charities)	2
Early Help Worker	2
PPU	1
Total escalations raised in this period	77

Number of Child Protection Conference Escalations raised each month

Apr 18	15	Jan 19	26	Oct 19	35	Jul 20	22
May 18	33	Feb 19	22	Nov 19	30	Aug 20	10
Jun 18	27	Mar 19	30	Dec 19	14	Sep 20	19
Jul 18	27	Apr 19	23	Jan 20	32	Oct 20	13
Aug 18	20	May 19	24	Feb 20	30	Nov 20	7
Sep 18	26	Jun 19	14	Mar 20	27	Dec 20	20
Oct 18	18	Jul 19	33	Apr 20	7	Jan 21	17
Nov 18	26	Aug 19	15	May 20	8	Feb 21	12
Dec 18	12	Sep 19	46	Jun 20	16	Mar 21	8

The overwhelming reason for escalation was no report and no apologies provided.

As previously explained, currently this data reflects only the formal escalations made.

Quality Assurance of the IRO Service

Auditing and observations undertaken by the IRO Manager

Managers undertake two observations of each member of staff; one child protection meeting and one Children in Care review. Written feedback is provided and discussed in supervision.

Conferences are also observed by a number of different professionals, both internal and external staff who want to familiarise themselves with the conference process and learning – this has included colleagues from Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, LCC LSCP Trainers, SOS Practice Advisers. This continues to take place under Covid, although these remain solely virtual observations.

Supervision and training

Chairs have scheduled monthly supervision (pro rata) and informal supervision as and when required. All Chairs have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and are encouraged to attend training through Lincolnshire Children's Learning and Development Team, Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) and the Regional Workshops.

Each Chair undertakes annual mandatory training and follows the 6 year Childrens Services development training plan.

All Independent Reviewing Officers are social workers and registered with the Social Work England. As part of their continued registration, workers are required to evidence their continuing professional development.

Team Meetings are held monthly and include guest speakers and workshops, currently these are virtual.

Priorities 2021-22

- The service will be undertaking a review of Conference and CiC physical participation by families and professionals with a road map for attendance.
- Analysis and development of procedures and IT support required for post covid CP and CiC hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings being those attended by invitees in person and via electronic media.
- Integration of current feedback from CP and CiC utilising "Engagement HQ" (centralised feedback development and recording system) when this comes on line.
- Based on Engagement HQ, review of feedback forms and analysis of lessons learnt to effect service delivery.
- Initial trial and review of progress of the new Pre Birth Protocol, implementation of any subsequent amendments from the review.
- Promotion and of the role of the Independent Chair service through the LSCP and individual partners to ensure clarity and accountability.
- Exploration and assessment of the categories of harm by the Independent Chairs within conference, ensuring that sexual harm is captured effectively.
- Challenge and focus by the Independent Chair on ensuring active participation and engagement with any "absent" parent within the child protection framework. With particular emphasis on Fathers.
- A review, analysis and any appropriate change to the 12 Month Conference Review process.

Any resource issues that are putting at risk the delivery of a quality service

The chairs continue at full capacity under the new ways of working and COVID restrictions. Additional capacity has been created through the recruitment of two agency members of staff to address the increase workload. We are reviewing the best way to increase long term capacity in the service and how to implement a post COVID exit strategy.

Carolyn Knight
(Quality and Standards Manager)

Debbie Johnson & Paul Fisher
(Independent Chairs Team Managers)



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report

Summary:

This is the yearly report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service. It serves to update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the work undertaken between March 2020 and April 2021.

This report is submitted to the Panel for background information and a presentation will be delivered in the meeting.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to note the yearly report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service and make comments on the presentation provided at the meeting.

1. Background

This report is being prepared in order to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work of the Independent Visitor.

Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 makes provision for the appointment of an Independent Visitor. There remains an expectation that the appointment of an Independent Visitor will continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority, with clear guidance being offered as to the criteria which must be met in terms of ensuring the visitor's independence is clearly demonstrable. The visits continue to be required to be made on a monthly basis.

The Independent Visitor continues to be expected to provide a report following each visit. Part six, regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations provides for the reporting of the standards.

The Regulation 44 report maintained its format providing a succinct summary of the homes under the signs of safety headings and there remains the inclusion of the

recommendations section to ensure there is clarity in prioritising areas for immediate action where these are identified during visits.

The Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Officers are Independent Reviewing Officers. During this period of reporting, the duties have been exercised by three Independent Visitors who have shared the duties across the seven Local Authority homes and two Independent schemes.

The attached report therefore details the homes performance against the standards and provides an overview of how the standards are being met. A particular focus is given to the way in which the Local Authority have adapted their practice and safeguarded young people during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Conclusion

Overall, the homes have provided good, if not in some instances exceptional, levels of care for the young people in their homes. There have been further concerns raised over the quality of care and leadership within one home and the Local Authority are working proactively to manage this and make the necessary improvements.

The Registered Managers have responded robustly to COVID in very exceptional and unprecedented circumstances to ensure the physical and emotional safety of welfare of the children in their care with positive feedback of their experiences.

Independent Visitors have seen first-hand the motivation and commitment across the homes by staff members that have worked in challenging conditions, but nevertheless have continued to go above and beyond to provide the best care and stability they can to the young people.

Despite the impact of the COVID pandemic, the staff teams have worked tirelessly with the young people and their families to maintain their links and attachments and this has been evidenced in the creative way that family time has been promoted through range of safe opportunities.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Report for the Independent Visiting Service Mar 2020- Apr 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 07879603618 or Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

REPORT FOR THE
INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE
March 2020 – April 2021
Dawn Oldroyd, Cheryl Govier and
Richard Stone
Regulation 44 Visitors

Basis of report

This report is being prepared in order to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work of the Independent Visitor. The scope of this report covers the period from October 2020 (when the last report was submitted) to April 2021.

Introduction

Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 makes provision for the appointment of an Independent Visitor. There remains an expectation that the appointment of an Independent Visitor will continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority, with clear guidance being offered as to the criteria which must be met in terms of ensuring the visitor's independence is clearly demonstrable. The visits continue to be required to be made on a monthly basis.

Within the regulations it is expected the Independent Visitor will report on the quality standards in specified areas. These can be summarised as follows: -

- (a) the quality and purpose of care standard (see regulation 6);
- (b) the children's views, wishes and feelings standard (see regulation 7);
- (c) the education standard (see regulation 8);
- (d) the enjoyment and achievement standard (see regulation 9);
- (e) the health and well-being standard (see regulation 10);
- (f) the positive relationships standard (see regulation 11);
- (g) the protection of children standard (see regulation 12);
- (h) the leadership and management standard (see regulation 13);
- (i) the care planning standard (see regulation 14).

The Independent Visitor continues to be expected to provide a report following each visit. Part six, regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations provides for the reporting of the standards.

The Regulation 44 report maintained its format providing a succinct summary of the homes under the signs of safety headings and there remains the inclusion of the recommendations

section to ensure there is clarity in prioritising areas for immediate action where these are identified during visits.

Covid 19 Pandemic

Visits between October 2020 and April 2021 inclusive were undertaken in person where this was possible. There have been some instances where in person visits have not been possible due to self-isolation and COVID contact within some homes, where an in person visit would potentially compromise the safety and wellbeing of the young people and staff members. This is evidenced within individual reports. In these instances Regulation 44 Officers have been able to use technology such as video to view the homes, meet with children and staff, attending handovers etc. However virtual visits have been avoided wherever possible with the Independent Visitors being flexible and re scheduling visits after isolation periods only where this has been possible within the calendar month to ensure compliance against the monthly visiting schedule. Since the last report there have not been any visits undertake outside of the due timescales.

The homes continue to operate robust and stringent guidelines to ensure that all visits are safe. COVID booking forms are completed by the Independent Visitor and sent to the home prior to any visits which ask a set of questions about the Independent Visitors COVID status, their contact with others and personal details to aid the Governments Test and Trace service. The booking forms are retained by the homes for a period of time to aid any potential Contact and Trace Service contact, after which time they are destroyed on the basis that these contain personal and not business contact details for visitors. Upon arrival at the home the questions are asked again and the Independent Visitors temperature is taken safely at distance and recorded prior to them being physically allowed on the premises.

Independent Visitors frequently sanitise their hands throughout their visits and face masks are mandatory when moving around the buildings. Masks are allowed to be removed when stationary within the buildings and only at times when safe social distance can be maintained. In the homes that provide care for young people with additional needs and underlying health conditions, masks are mandatory at all times and staff members also wear these for additional protection.

The homes have closely followed the Governments lock down restrictions and road map to ease these and there has been evidence within the homes that young people have been fully supported to understand these, through regular young peoples' meetings, group and key working sessions and safety plans for those young people who are able to exercise their independence and spend time in the community on their own.

As the restrictions have eased the homes have been able to further open up to visitors that are significant to the young people, always following the same level of safety precautions. In person visits between the young people and their families has developed further, and for example the Secure unit started to allow safe family visits from April 2021.

Sadly, despite all of the protective measures in place, some homes across the county have experienced outbreaks of COVID cases. As examples the Beacon had 20 plus cases in October 2020 / November 2020 and further outbreak in March 2021. The secure Unit had a COVID outbreak in February 2021 and Strut House has also experienced an outbreak. Other homes have experienced individual cases in staff and young people.

Positively, these have been managed effectively and in a timely manner. Managers have worked closely with Public Health and senior managers. This has involved timely risk assessments, strategic planning and mass testing within the homes. Mandatory face mask wearing has been introduced at these times alongside PPE and intense fog cleaning has been established to further reduce the risk of infection. Where young people have been isolating in their individual rooms, staff members have fully supported them through this period. Many of the regulation 44 reports highlight that the young people said that they felt well supported and cared for during this difficult time for them.

The staff teams continue to be flexible and creative towards caring for the young people with some staff self-electing to 'move in' to reduce the footfall within the buildings and provide continuity of care through these periods. Where this has taken place, managers have been fully supportive, staff members have been given regular breaks and a number of days off afterwards in order to rest and recuperate.

Whilst this has impacted on the young people's education at these times, the homes have been creative in supporting their education with laptops being acquired to support virtual learning and the promotion of their regular routines (wherever possible). As an example the Beacon turned their activity room into an 'education room'.

In line with the Governments current plans, those young people who attend secondary school have been supported to access twice weekly lateral flow tests.

The Local Authority have positively engaged with all front line staff and offered COVID vaccinations to children's homes staff as part of this strategy. This commenced in January 2021 and by the end of April most staff had been offered their second vaccination.

Staff within the children's homes have been 'awarded' a one off payment of £500.00 by the Local Authority in recognition of their hard work and commitment towards caring for the young people during what has been an uncertain and challenging time.

The Independent Visitor

From October 2020, Regulation 44 visits continued to be undertaken by three Independent Visitors Dawn Oldroyd , Cheryl Govier and Richard Stone who shared the visiting duties to the 7 homes and the two supported living schemes in Grantham and Gainsborough which provide accommodation for young people aged 16-18 for a period of up to six months. Both accommodations are inspected under the Regulation 44 process however this is 'a lighter touch' exercise every 4 months. Whilst this is not mandatory, the Local Authority have taken the positive step to commit to this as part of their quality assurance process.

The Independent Visitors have continued to maintain positive working relationships with care home managers, staff and young people. The Independent Visitors continue to develop relationships with the new homes managers that have been appointed since the report was completed.

Since October 2020 there have been a number of changes to the management of the homes. The Beacon has a new Homes Manager. The Registered Manager from Eastgate was appointed as the Interim Manager at Albion Street prior to the new Interim Manager coming into post in January 2021. During her absence the Assistant Manager at Eastgate acted as the Interim Manager. An RCO 3 was also successful in gaining the Assistant Manager position at Rowston and Denton.

The Independent Visitors speak with key stakeholders including the young people, parents, social workers, health and education partners and other relevant individuals to gain a holistic appraisal of the homes.

There has been no need to implement the dispute resolution procedure since the last report was completed, however there has been positive communication between the Regulation 44 team and regulated services to resolve arrangements for delivering the inspections during the Covid pandemic. There has been regular communication between senior management and this has enabled a revised approach to be agreed to resume safe visits.

The voice of the child

All of the homes have had to adapt their processes and practice to ensure that young people's voices have been heard throughout the Covid lockdown and to promote contact between children and their families and professional support network. This has resulted in an increased use of alternative electronic resources to facilitate visits and telephone contact and the implementation of risk assessments.

Due to the lockdown, the Independent Advocate visits became virtual and these were generally conducted by phone each month. Whilst this posed some challenges in engaging the young people, visits are back in person now in person from April 2021. COVID has been a challenge with some of the disability homes finding engagement with the Independent Advocate more problematic due to their additional needs. During these times updates have generally been given. Other homes and the Secure Unit have offered the young people opportunities to speak with Independent Advocates in private.

The homes continue to offer the young people a regular young people's meeting each month or 'Chill and Chat'. These meetings are used as an opportunity for the young people to become involved and have a say in how the home is run and for discussions around the important things that affect them. This has been used effectively to involve them in matters such as arranging activities; safety issues in the home such COVID and encouraging them to become involved in the redecoration of their home, often choosing colour schemes and furnishings as examples. The meetings have also at times taken a restorative approach and the young people have been engaged in discussing peer relationships and resolving some of the challenges that surround a number of young people living together.

During the Independent visits, the young people are always offered an opportunity to speak with their visitor on their own, with a peer or just in naturally occurring situations. As the restrictions have changed the Independent Visitors have been able to stay for the evening meals (where a safe social distance can be maintained) and this has promoted a more

natural way of engaging with the young people. Independent Visitors have been flexible and visited on some Saturdays in order to observe the home outside of weekdays and in the absence of the day to day management. Overall, the young people across the homes say that they feel supported and feel heard.

For those young people who have had a Child in Care review, Independent Visitors have found strong evidence that they have been supported to complete their consultation documents prior to their review and on many occasions individual direct work has been completed to help them consider their views prior to their review. Feedback from Independent Reviewing Officers is often sought and this has been positive with them stating that their young people are fully supported to attend their review by their key worker and helped to ensure their voice is heard

Most of the homes continue to promote display boards that celebrate the voice of the child through 'Voice of the child' and 'You said we did' creative displays. There is also an increased use of photographs to evidence the young people's input and some of the homes are using newsletters and monthly Junior Journals to share information. As examples the Beacon have devised a weekly newsletter from a child to their parent to share their updates and Northolme have a Covid lockdown diary as a keepsake of their pandemic experience.

It has been particularly evident within the disability homes that the myriad of photographic displays really help to portray the young people's voices through their facial expressions and engagement with their peers and staff members. This is especially important given that their use of the verbal word is often limited due to their communication and additional needs. Within the disability homes the young people have communication sheets within their files. This evidences their preferences, likes and dislikes and is often accompanied with pictorial symbols that they can point to for ease of expression.

The young people are encouraged to become involved in meal planning and within the homes the menus each week are set by the young people themselves (within the parameters of promoting a healthy and balanced diet). For those with communication needs, again, pictures are used to help them identify and point to their preferences.

Other examples of how the young people's voices have been captured and heard such as the Secure Unit where exit questionnaires are regularly used to gain their feedback on the care they reviewed and the Health Team now review the young people's views as standard

in their meetings ensuring that their voices are considered in the various aspects of their lives. A young person also in the Secure Unit expressed a wish to wear a cross to a court hearing and this was met due to his cultural needs.

At Albion Street the home has undergone a significant scheme of refurbishment and there is strong evidence through visits that the young people were all encouraged to become involved in picking the furniture, furnishing and colours.

Despite the impact of the Governments lock down, there has been overwhelming evidence within the homes that all of the staff have worked hard to encourage them to participate in activities of their preferences during the school holidays and at weekends.

Quality of care

The children within the homes generally continue to receive a good, and in some homes excellent, quality of care. However, It has been a challenging time for Albion Street and despite the progress made since the last Ofsted Assurance visit in September 2020 (as presented within the last Corporate Regulation 44 Report), a further Inspection visit on 21st and 22nd April 2021 found the home to be inadequate in some areas. At the time of the visit the Ofsted inspectors were concerned over the lack of progress being made and a restrictive accommodation notice was made which outlined that the Local Authority could not accept any further young people for the duration of the notice and until such improvements were made. The inspectors found concerns over the homes leadership and management and its ability to safeguard the young people. At the time of writing this report the Local Authority have taken action to address these concerns and have an action plan in place to address the concerns.

There have been some significant challenges for some care homes regarding the on-going recruitment of staff at a variety of levels, from RCO1 to Homes Manager. However, the homes have embraced these challenges and recruitment has been on going where necessary. The Independent Visitors have found good evidence in homes of new staff being supported and inducted into their new roles.

Albion Street has been managed by the substantive Eastgate Manager and now has an interim appointed manager. Whilst there are concerns over the quality of care raised by Ofsted, the young people within the home had commented that since the Ofsted visit in

September things had improved. However, the home has experienced some significant challenges within the group of young people and this has impacted on the overall quality of care at times. Two of the young people have moved on and one young person has presented as severely disruptive. The staff team have found this a challenge and this has also resulted in a number of allegations being made against the staff team along with a deterioration in relationships within the home that has contributed to the overall way the home has functioned.

The Beacon now has a new Homes Manager who started in October 2020. She was mentored by another experienced homes manager and has adjusted into her new role. Staff feel supported and she has been well received. She is robust in managing the team and practice issues. Staff have fed back that she is supportive and she is already starting to implement some positive changes. Ofsted came 8th and 9th December 2020 for an assurance visit. They found that medications and administration errors were a significant issue. However, there was a plan in place to focus on this at the time of the visit and inspectors considered this. No other serious or widespread concerns were identified.

Across the homes, staff and managers have been flexible in covering staffing vacancies, going the extra mile to ensure that young people's daily activities and routines aren't compromised.

At Haven Cottage the team remains stable. They have not used a single agency worker throughout the pandemic. Members of the team have been trained to deliver night-time care to one YP rather than have an agency worker in post which has resulted in further continuity.

There have been some vacancies in the Secure Unit during October to December. However, these are now filled and there is a stable management team in place. A new model of restraint is also being implemented in the Secure Unit this is being 'rolled out' with in house training being delivered to support this. A recent Ofsted Assurance visit on 2nd – 4th November raised no concerns and no issues or recommendations were highlighted.

As outlined within this report the Assistant Manager at Eastgate acted as the Interim Manager while the registered manager was supporting Albion Street. During this time there was no change in the quality of care provided and the Independent Visits consistently highlighted this.

Training remains a priority within the homes, and whilst there was some initial disruption caused by the impact of COVID, this has started to lessen and staff are now able to complete their training as this is required. Of significance is the TCI and Social Pedagogy training that is now partially in person, which from feedback by staff members has highlighted is more effective this way.

All the homes have continued to participate in multi-agency partnership working, albeit remotely, with Health, Police, Schools, Social Care and other agencies, with continued monthly meetings and ad hoc communications. This is now moving to some in person meetings, with some being hybrid. The homes have adapted extremely well to the new ways of working throughout the pandemic.

Across the homes staff continue to attend EHCP and Epep meetings and have responded well to supporting the children and young people who have had to remain at home during the lockdown period. As outlined within this report, the homes have been flexible in their approach in order to minimise the impact on the young people's routines and stability. The homes continue to provide a range of learning opportunities for the young people according to their individual needs.

The homes continue to follow their scheme of decoration to ensure that they maintain the current quality of the fabric of the building. The autism colours are being used throughout, which is intended to bring a sense of calmness and ease to the environment. They continue to engage the young people in this with examples of meetings being held to discuss this, mood boards being created and the young people being offered trips out to help purchase furnishings of their choice wherever safe and possible due to the restrictions.

Whilst there are concerns raised over Albion Street, the overall quality of the décor and fabric of the building has improved and been maintained to a good standard.

At Eastgate, Northolme and Albion Street the fire doors are now fully completed and replaced leading to a more secure and safe environment for the young people.

Each of the homes has ensured the young people have had access to a range of activities regardless of the limitation of lockdown. There has been a varied approach to in-house craft activities, and outside trips dependant on the COVID restrictions.

Sadly, many of the individual pursuits the young people follow have not been available such as after school clubs, youth clubs, army cadets and riding. However, these are now being offered again due to the change in COVID restrictions and it is positive that the young people will now have a chance to return to these.

Positive examples of activities offered include the Secure Unit creating an activity games pack for use during periods of isolation to encourage physical and mental stimulation. They have also created a sensory garden and the young people have been included in picking out the flowers that are to be grown.

Haven Cottage have themed months and have engaged the young people in 'Under the Sea', Easter and Spring time activities. During these months the outer reception areas is decorated by the young people's creative artwork and crafts and a recent themed dinner evening focussed around the 'Hungry Caterpillar'

At Strut House an RCO2 is taking the lead in coordinating activities with the young people and they have recently developed book bags that contain a number of sensory items for the young people to touch alongside the story in order to bring the experience alive for them. The young people have also painted bird houses in bright colours for the developing garden area and painted stones in the shapes of their favourite characters.

At the Beacon, the activity room is now refurbished with lots of storage, games and more structured activities with the young people. Each Young person has a personal activity plan. One young person has the milk man coming during his stays at his own request and his delight is noticeable.

Eastgate continue to offer the forest school on Sundays and the young people have learned to build fires under supervision, camp out the night and carve wood objects themselves. During the period of lock down after Christmas the garage was turned into a 'police station' and a 'shop' with the young people all engaging in creative play.

Albion street have purchased a range of play equipment and the young people there have had an opportunity to engage with staff building sand models, playing shops and engaging in creative play that, sadly many have missed out on in their formative years.

At Northolme, there have been number of themed nights arranged such as American night where the young people all ate American food and learned about their culture. Discos and

fancy dress nights have been held significant dates such as Christmas and Easter and the young people have had opportunities to spend time at the caravan in Butlins and try their hand as outward bound skills such as orienteering and tracking in the outdoors.

One of the most important priorities for young people is maintaining their sense of identity and links with their families and significant people in their lives. The ever changing restrictions have meant that staff have had to be flexible and responsive to their approach to this. Where face to face visits have not been permitted in private homes staff have supported young people to meet their families outside and in gardens. The use of the Family Time centres has been explored and used to promote a safe and managed environment and as the restrictions changed, young people have been supported to meet for meals in safe organised spaces, parks and the community. The use of video and telephone calls has been widely promoted as has sending cards and letters.

Social Pedagogy and Restorative Practice

Social Pedagogy (SP) and Restorative Practice (RP) continues to develop across the homes and is delivered and recorded to different extents with some homes practice being more embedded than others. However, feedback from the Independent Visitors has been heard and acted upon and it has been noticeable that the range of alternative models used is developing. SP is important as it essentially assists the young people to engage in activities and conversations about the important things that happen within their lives. It aims to make the connections between their 'hands', 'hearts' and 'head', supports social and emotional learning, develops reliance and social skills. This way of working also promotes the young people to consider their own views and how to express these in pro social ways.

New staff that join the teams continue to access the training at hand and also engage with support within the teams through the home champions to ensure the practice is embedded and they grow in confidence and skill. SP continues alongside RP to reflect on daily activities and providing a structure for focussed work with the young person following an incident.

This is still developing in each home and it is fair to say that the homes are at different stages of development in terms of implementing restorative practice. Its use is being aligned with the young person's targets and care plans in order to embed this into the day to day interactions with staff and activities. Staff are reporting that this is complimenting their

practice rather than being seen as a standalone piece of work and they are seeing the benefits of linking behaviours to feelings and reflecting on their contribution to dynamics and relationships.

There is now a much clearer link between SP and responses to incidents and a more restorative approach in resolving and managing these incidents.

Independent Visitors have noted that the homes are responding to their feedback and creatively using strategies to utilise the different models or SP such as setting staff targets to 'try a different model'. There has been a shift from using the 'Common Third' model which focusses on 'doing something' alongside a young person as a social learning activity to other models such as 'positive communication' that lends itself to conflict resolution and the 4 F's which focusses the young person differentiating between the facts and the feelings, helping them to further develop problem solving strategies. As mentioned, whilst SP and RP are widely used after an incident, their uses is now seen more commonly in naturally occurring situations, which further evidences how the staff teams are starting to understand and integrate this into their day to day practice.

Challenges

Covid has clearly been the biggest challenge in terms of requiring a more flexible approach of staff; minimising children's' access to family time, education, face to face contact with significant individuals, managing Covid outbreaks and implementing new health and safety procedures.

The Homes Managers have done an exceptional job in responding to the ever-changing advice and approaches and in supporting both staff and young people through this process. The management team and staff have responded swiftly and robustly to this challenge and it is a credit to them that they have been able to minimise the disruption and anxieties amongst some of our most traumatised children and young people.

The impact of Covid has also coincided with a change in the management teams in some homes which will also have been a challenge for staff and managers alike. However, the feedback from staff and young people has on the whole been very positive and there are signs of real development within these homes.

There have been some anxieties from some staff members within the teams coming out of the lock down and readjusting to the way they care for the young people. The support for staff and their emotional wellbeing has been noticeable.

Conclusion

Overall, the homes continue to provide good, if not in some instances exceptional, levels of care for the young people in their homes. There have been further concerns raised over the quality of care and leadership at Albion Street and the Local Authority are working proactively to manage this and make the necessary improvements. The Registered Managers have responded robustly to COVID in very exceptional and unprecedented circumstances to ensure the physical and emotional safety of welfare of the children in their care with positive feedback of their experiences.

Some of the homes continue to face challenges in respect of staffing however the good will and flexibility of staff has positively supported the care of the young people particularly during times of isolation and COVID outbreaks which, despite the health and safety concerns, have overall been managed well and robustly.

There remain on-going developments across the residential estate in respect of social pedagogy and restorative practice and there is evidence of sharing of skills across practitioners who are coaching less able and developing colleagues. Staff members have been responsive to these opportunities and have embraced these. Independent Visitors have seen first-hand the motivation and commitment across the homes by staff members that have worked in challenging conditions, but nevertheless have continued to go above and beyond to provide the best care and stability they can to the young people.

Despite the impact of the COVID pandemic, the staff teams have worked tirelessly with the young people and their families to maintain their links and attachments and this has been evidenced in the creative way that family time has been promoted through range of safe opportunities.

Ofsted inspections

All of the children's homes are subject to Ofsted inspection. Each home is subject to twice yearly inspections, ordinarily there will be a full inspection annually followed by an interim inspection approximately six months later. However, due to the COVID pandemic Ofsted have been completing Assurance Visits. These have been shorted visits focused on specific areas. At the current time Ofsted are returning to inspection visits in person.

Secure Unit

Assurance Visit

Visit dates: 2 to 4 November 2020

Previous inspection date: 4 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

Albion Street

Date of Last Inspection: 20th & 21st April 2021

Judgement: Inadequate

Compliance Notice and Action Plan:

The leadership and management standard

13. (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that:

(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

(b) promotes their welfare.

(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to

(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;

(g)(ii) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on- feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(g)(ii)(h)

The following steps to rectify the breach of regulation listed must be completed by the date shown

1. Revisit the management monitoring systems at the home and ensure that there are effective systems in place to monitor and review the care provided in the home.
2. Ensure that leaders and managers use systems effectively, to be able to identify any concerns about children's safety or well-being and then act promptly on those concerns. This includes having effective strategies to manage children's self-injurious behaviour, and responding to children's complaints.
3. Take steps to put in place an effective system for managing and tracking allegations made against staff and to review staff lone-working risk assessments.
4. Take steps to implement a robust system for management oversight, analysis and evaluation of all physical interventions in the home.
5. Take steps to ensure that consideration of new placements is robust, detailed and includes full consideration of the impact of a new placement on existing children.

Visit dates: 8 to 9 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 27 August 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance

for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(e))

This particularly relates to ensuring that outcomes from any recorded concern are monitored and recorded when concluded.

1 February 2021

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))

In particular, this refers to staff completing mandatory training, such as safeguarding. It also relates to staff having a robust assessment of their skills and knowledge in the administration of medication.

1 February 2021

Medicines

The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))

This relates to errors in the administration of medication to children in the home.

1 February 2021

Fitness of workers

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.

The registered person may only—

employ an individual to work at the children's home; or

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that—

the individual is of integrity and good character;

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;

the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma");
or,

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

(Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4)(a)(b))

1 April 2021

Employment of staff

The registered person must ensure that all employees—

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.

(Regulation 33 (4)(b))

This relates to staff receiving regular formal supervision.

1 April 2021

Northholme

Last Assurance visit 2 February 2021 – No concerns raised. Safeguarding judged to be good.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
Date of last inspection	5 December 2018
Overall judgement at last inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

Haven Cottage

Heaven Cottage offers short term care to children with special needs, was last subject to a full inspection.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7th January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help protection and care.

Strut House

Strut House is a short-term unit for children with special needs had an inspection on the 6 & 7th January 2020 and continue to be awarded an Outstanding grading.

Eastgate

Eastgate was subject to an OFSTED Rating of the Home from the last inspection
Outstanding: Inspection dates: 27 to 28th January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection, and care.



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

Summary:

This item enables the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit. The work programme will be reviewed at each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure that its contents are still relevant and will add value to the work of the Council and partners.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to agree the work programme and identify any items for future meetings.

1. Background

Overview and Scrutiny should be positive, constructive, independent, fair and open. The scrutiny process should be challenging, as its aim is to identify areas for improvement. Scrutiny activity should be targeted, focused and timely and include issues of corporate and local importance, where scrutiny activity can influence and add value.

Members are encouraged to highlight items that could be included for consideration in the work programme.

Work Programme

22 JULY 2021		
Item		Contributor
-	Election of Chairman & Election of Vice-Chairman 2021/22	Democratic Services
1.	Corporate Parenting responsibilities	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director-Children's Safeguarding
2.	Corporate Parenting, Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy Priorities Action Plan Update	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager
3.	Children in Care Performance Measures - Quarter 4 2020/21 (January to March 2021)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director-Children's Safeguarding
4.	Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2020/21 (April 2020 to March 2021)	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services
5.	Legal Services Lincolnshire end of year report 2020/21 (April 2020 to March 2021)	Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer
6.	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Team Manager (Quality and Standards)
7.	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2020/21 (April 2020 to March 2021)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
8.	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Annual Report 2020/21 (April 2020 to March 2021)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager

9 SEPTEMBER 2021		
Item		Contributor
1	Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
2	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 1 2021/22 (April to June 2021)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding
3	Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

11 NOVEMBER 2021		
	Item	Contributor
1	Independent Reviewing Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2021)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
2	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2021)	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
3	Children in Care Annual Report 2020/21	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
4	V4C The Looked After Children Council Update	Ben Lilley, Team Manager Quality and Standards
5	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 2 2021/22 (July to September 2021)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding
6	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 1	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
7	Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

20 JANUARY 2022		
	Item	Contributor
1	Commissioning Excellence: Meeting the Sufficiency Duty 2018-2022 Annual Update	Amy Allcock, Commissioning Manager - Commercial
2	Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report 2020-2021	Kieran Barnes, Virtual School Headteacher
3	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service - Six Monthly Update Report	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services
4	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

10 MARCH 2022		
	Item	Contributor
1	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Team Manager (Quality and Standards)

10 MARCH 2022	
Item	Contributor
2	Children in Care Performance Measures - Quarter 3 2021/22 (October to December 2021)
3	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 3

Items to be Scheduled:

- National Approach to Council Tax Relief / Exemption for Care Leavers

2. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

3. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 07500 571868 or by e-mail at kiara.chatziioannou@lincolnshire.gov.uk.