



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
4 MARCH 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), S A J Blackburn, K J Clarke, R J Cleaver, C Matthews, N Sear, T J N Smith and M A Whittington

Councillor S P Roe (Executive Support Councillor Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement) was also in attendance as an invited guest.

Officers in attendance:-

Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer), Sara Gregory (Commissioning Manager – Children's Strategic Commissioning), Kevin Johnson (Programme Manager – Children's Integrated Commissioning), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director - Early Help), Nicky Myers (Interim Head of Service for Early Years), Mark Rainey (Commissioning Manager - Commercial), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director of Children's Education, Matt Spoor (Head of Service for School Standards),

The following officers attended the meeting remotely, via Teams:-

Dan Clayton (Sustainability Manager)

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T A Carter and J Tyrrell, and Mrs M R Machin (Parent Governor Representative) and Alex Sayer (Parent Governor Representative).

It was noted that the Chief Executive, having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, had appointed Councillor K J Clarke to replace Councillor Mrs J E Killey for this meeting only.

61 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this stage of the proceedings.

**62 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2022**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

The Chairman informed Committee Members that they should have received an invitation to a Corporate Parenting Workshop on Tuesday 5th April at 2pm and that their attendance was recommended.

The Chairman reported that he had attended the Big Conversation 22 event in Spalding on 16 February 2022, along with Councillors S P Roe and W H Gray, where they had the opportunity to meet with children in care and care leavers. The event was focussed on what children in care and care leavers wanted from their social workers and key workers to support them, and updates were also provided from V4C, the Children in Care Council, and Barnardo's.

Members were informed that there would be a comfort break before Item 7.

The Assistant Director – Early Help reported that Children's Services was hosting a visit from Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, that morning to see some of the great work being undertaken in Lincolnshire. It was further reported that Children's Services had also received a virtual visit from the Care Quality Commission that week in relation to the 0 – 19 Service, who had been assured of the quality of the delivery of all the services and that the performance was still above national figures.

64 SINGLE SECTION 75 AGREEMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND COUNCIL FUNDING

(NOTE: Councillor C Mathews wished it to be noted that he was a Governor at Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust)

Consideration was given to a report by the Programme Manager – Children's Integrated Commissioning on the establishment of a new single Section 75 commissioning arrangement for children and young people's mental health services from September 2022, which was being presented to the Executive for a decision on 05 April 2022. In addition to the report, the following was reported:

- The recommendations had been supported by the Children's Executive Departmental Leadership Team, Lincolnshire School's Forum, the Council's Commissioning and Commercial Board, the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and the Joint Commissioning Overview Group.
- The recommendations sought to transform children and young people (CYP) mental health services, establish a new single Section 75 commissioning arrangement for

children and young people's mental health services from September 2022, and approve the Council's investments in CYP mental health services.

- The same amount of funding of £724,589 was committed to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services to deliver the Council's statutory duties.
- Significant pressures upon the High Needs Block of the Designated Schools Grant meant that the Council needed to taper funds and increase investments in this area in order to maintain its statutory duties.
- Other options for the transformation had been considered, but the recommended model demonstrated that it minimised waste from duplicated services and offered a more flexible approach that suited the particular circumstances of a rural county.
- Work was underway to evaluate the long-term impacts of the pandemic on service use.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- The current generation of children and young people were considered to have worse mental health outcomes compared to previous generations due to a variety of factors such as social media, pressures of modern life, and family lifestyles, along with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the number of referrals to specialist mental health services for Lincolnshire children and young people were reducing but referrals were now on the increase. There would be a need to reassess how mental health services for children and young people were structured to respond more effectively to those changing needs and ensure if referrals continue to be higher that increased demand could be met.
- The Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) supported recommendations in principle at the Joint Commissioning Overview Group on 24 February 2022 to offset the phased diversion of £1m funding from Healthy Minds Lincolnshire back into the High Needs Block of the Designated Schools Grant with its own investment, so that there would be no overall reduction in funding. The CCG also supported recommendations for additional investment into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- In relation to staffing pressures from the increase in referrals, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT), which was rated outstanding for its mental health services for children and young people, was developing plans for its own in-house workforce/training programme to bring previously untapped resources into the specialist mental health services workforce, such as new psychology graduates. Children's Services was working closely with LPFT and the University of Lincoln to maximise these opportunities across the wider workforce. In addition, a national programme had been introduced in relation to psychological therapy to provide additional training for staff in those emotional wellbeing and mental health frontline services.
- Lincolnshire currently had four Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) available through schools which would increase to eight by 2024, covering about 50% of the county. The MHSTs were a nationally prescribed model and each MHST had to consist of four education mental health practitioners. In Lincolnshire these also

consist of two senior clinical leads. The MHSTs had to undertake a year of training which was nationally prescribed. There were a range of universities across the country which bid to NHS England to run the training programmes. After the year of training for the current MHSTs, there was then a year of embedding that training into practice, and so it was not until the third year that the MHSTs would be fully embedded. There were three core mandatory functions for MHSTs which were around direct intervention work with children and young people, supporting the senior mental health lead in each education setting, and supporting access into more specialist services. The Council was challenging NHS England in relation to the strict criteria that each team had to cover around 8000 children and young people as for a rural county like Lincolnshire with smaller schools, this would mean each team covering approximately 24 or more schools to reach the 8000 criteria. For future MHSTs, the criteria had been reduced to 7000 children and young people, but this was still not ideal for Lincolnshire due to its rurality.

- The two Section 75 agreements currently in place with CAMHS and Healthy Minds Lincolnshire were well managed, and the contract managers worked closely together. The proposal for one Section 75 agreement would not incur additional costs but would enable better use of the financial resources available across the system and avoid duplication, and for services to work much more seamlessly together as children and young people moved across those services. Having the services under one agreement would enable a more streamline approach and better communications across the different services, and for both workforce and financial resources to be moved more fluidly across services, depending on where the demand was. The new MHSTs would provide emotional wellbeing and mental health support in schools and colleges and as Healthy Minds Lincolnshire already provided similar support, there was need to consider how to avoid duplication with the MHSTs and maximise the resources available.
- In addition to Healthy Minds Lincolnshire, CAMHS and MHSTs, there were a number of other early intervention services available for school age children such as the Behaviour Outreach Support Service which supports children at risk of exclusion and the Early Help team which has trained officers to support children's emotional wellbeing. A lot of work was being undertaken in conjunction with Public Health to try to understand the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people in Lincolnshire, and with schools to help them support children and young people to talk about their anxieties and differentiate between normal anxieties such as exam stress and those anxieties which require additional support.
- Improving transition arrangements from children and young people mental health services to adult mental health services was a priority in the NHS long term plan. There were transition arrangements in place, but as the commissioning arrangements moved from Children's Services to Adult Services, there would be different eligibility criteria and therefore not all young people would move into adult mental health services. This was being considered as part of the review of children and young people's mental health services where the Children's Services commissioning team was working with the adult mental health transformation team on all age pathway options. In addition, the LPFT's Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Board would also be looking at how to improve these pathways to ensure

children and young people continue to receive the services they need as they move into adult mental health services.

- Parents and carers were a key factor in supporting children and young people with their emotional wellbeing and mental health. Funding for support for parents and carers was complex due to the different services involved but these services worked together in an integrated and co-ordinated way. Healthy Minds Lincolnshire and the MHSTs provide workshops for parents and carers to support their children and young people at home with their emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns and provide strategies and tips to replicate at home. Some of the workshops were aimed at specific groups of parents and carers who needed support around similar concerns. Pre-recorded workshops or video clips were developed during the pandemic to support professionals, parents and carers, and young people.
- A Section 75 agreement was an agreement that the Council could enter into under the NHS Act 2006 to work in partnership with a NHS body and which allowed the Council to delegate functions to the NHS body to deliver on the Council's behalf. There were robust monitoring arrangements in place including regular partnership board meetings, where the contractor submitted their quarterly performance information for monitoring, and operational meetings were also held throughout the year.

The Committee requested a further update be brought to a future meeting on children and young people mental health services and the outcomes from the review.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations to the Executive, as set out within the report, be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made be passed on to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item.
3. That an update be brought to a future meeting on children and young people mental health services and the outcomes from the review.

65 SCHOOLS' STANDARDS AND RECOVERY

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service for School Standards on standards within the sector led system and the recovery response following the Covid-19 pandemic. The following was reported:

- Scheduled Ofsted inspections in early years and childcare providers were cancelled at the start of the pandemic and routine inspections did not take place although regulatory work continued.
- Ofsted carried out 'interim visits' to early years and childcare providers from 28 September to 21 December 2020.
- Ofsted resumed their routine inspections in April 2021.
- Early Years and Childcare team re-focussed their support for early years and childcare providers based on recovery following the easing of pandemic public

health measures. The team also provided a universal offer of support for all early years providers.

- Throughout the pandemic the county's 48 children's centres had been maintained and prioritised antenatal visits. Children's Centres were now operating at pre-pandemic levels.
- Statutory testing of pupils had been paused throughout the pandemic, and data pertaining to test scores was that which had been previously cited – reflecting 2019 performance.
- Ofsted had judged 84.1% of Lincolnshire Schools to be good or better, as of December 2021 – an increase from the 83.9% which was published in the report, as at November 2021. Statistical neighbours had dropped in this period to 83.9%.
- Boston Borough and the City of Lincoln were the lowest performing districts in Lincolnshire; North Kesteven and South Kesteven were the best performing; and the most improved districts were South Holland and East Lindsey.
- The Teaching School Hub, in Lincoln, replaced the seven Teaching Schools across the county.
- The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board was responsible for driving sector led improvements in Lincolnshire's schools.
- Lincolnshire had been identified as an education investment area by the Government's Levelling-Up White Paper.
- The Education White Paper was due to be published soon, which may allow local authorities to establish their own education trusts.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- Support was in place to help parents access English as an additional language for children in early years settings. The contract was currently being reviewed and a report detailing its commissioning was due to come before the Committee later in the year.
- The Council was focused on SEND capacity to meet needs early and allocate resources effectively. SEND performance was higher than the national average but work was underway to meet capacity and resourcing issues. A report on the High Needs Transformation Programme had been brought to the Committee previously and was due to come before the Committee later in the year.
- A report detailing an analysis of educational attainment for the different categories of SEND in different school settings could be brought to the Committee at a future meeting.
- Schools' curriculum and pathways were being reviewed to help close the gap between male and female performance in school, which included a review of apprenticeship provision and vocational education.
- A report on education investment areas was scheduled for the July meeting.
- Members discussed that the recruitment and retention of teaching staff were important factors in educational performance. However, data was difficult to quantify as it was reliant upon anecdotal accounts.

Members were concerned that support for English as an additional language was not effective in Lincoln and Boston and welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the review of the contract. Members discussed that deprivation and health were also important factors in educational performance and recognised that data may be masked by the county's selective grammar school system.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed the report and was satisfied with the recovery response and actions being undertaken following the Covid-19 pandemic.

66 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE
FRAMEWORK - QUARTER 3

The Committee reconvened at 11:40am.

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Early Help on the Service Level Performance for Quarter 3. It was reported that the following measures did not meet their target:

- Number of Children in Care (PI23) – however, the Council still performed strongly compared to the national average and many children were under 1 year of age.
- Number of 16-17 year old Children in Care participating in Learning (PI45) – however, work was underway to raise aspirations and foster support for these young people.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- Children placed in care in Lincolnshire from authorities outside the county and unaccompanied children seeking asylum did not count towards the figures for Lincolnshire children in care but were represented in other services such as numbers in education.
- There were no significant disparities between districts across the county in terms of children in care based on location.
- The figures represented high numbers of children in care below the age of one, which showed that very young children were being kept safe. These young children often went on to be legally adopted and appropriately came out of the care system.
- Nationally, the numbers of children in care had increased significantly. School attendance was a concern, especially during the public health restrictions of the pandemic.
- The Council was focusing on raising the aspirations of children and young people in care, which included accommodation and transport support, and training and employment guidance.
- Support was in place for unaccompanied children seeking asylum including for those from Afghanistan and Ukraine; however, the full needs and impacts of Ukrainian children was not known at this stage.

- Fluctuations in data tolerance levels were normal, as they reflected key dates throughout the year such as the start of the academic term, which impacted the data for those in care within education.

RESOLVED:

Committee reviewed the report and was satisfied with the performance of the measures that were either above or below the target range.

67 SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL TO SCHOOL (SMOTS) ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report by the Commissioning Manager – Commercial on the progress made regarding the Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy 2020-2023. The following was reported:

- It was a statutory duty of the Council to produce a Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (SMOTS).
- The Council's current strategy was adopted in July 2020.
- Action 1, the creation of a Sustainable Travel Group to set standards for travel to school, was on target and was meeting quarterly with the attendance of the Executive Portfolio Holder.
- Action 2, the development of a programme of Links to School routes, was delayed and ongoing due to two focused projects having been identified at Toynton All Saints School and between Reepham and Cherry Willingham.
- Action 3, engagement with schools to develop travel plans, was delayed and improving due to the impacts of the pandemic on school resources.
- Action 4, the continuation of the Independent Travel Trainer and Max Respect programmes, was delayed and improving due to face-to-face services being interrupted by pandemic public health measures.
- Action 5, the reappraisal of unsuitable routes, was ongoing whilst further funding was being sought.
- Action 6, working in partnership with LRSP to deliver safe travel to school, was delayed and improving due to recruitment difficulties.
- Pre-pandemic levels of the Strategy's delivery were resuming.
- The Strategy was to move to the Place directorate within the Council's organisation.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- It was possible to develop school safety zones around schools that presented a congestion issue at peak times in partnership with the Road Safety team.
- Commissioned school transport was viewed to be sustainable for areas far away from schools.
- The service was awaiting capital budgets for active travel before planning future projects.

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- It was crucial to ensure engagement with parents and carers to create sustainable transport schemes to reduce the level of car use.
- The Post 16 Transport policy requested a £570 contribution per annum for those that were eligible. Council expenditure on post 16 transport was £2 million and a further £1 million was raised from contributions.
- Enforcement of school safety zones was led by the Highways team; however, many schemes were advisory and unenforceable, those that were mandatory had to be enforced by the police. Further information would be sought from Highways.
- The impacts of the recent changes to the Highway Code had not been captured in the Council's strategies, which had been finalised before the changes had been made. However, the changes would be picked up in future strategies and policies.
- School crossing patrol sites were prescribed based upon assessments. Assessments were based on safety outcomes and finding the most economically viable solution. However, there were difficulties recruiting for these posts.
- Transport for children in care was usually organised by social services. The most economical method was always sought, seats were sometimes left free to ensure special arrangements for care needs. Inefficient transport arrangements often became apparent at the beginning of the academic year as it was difficult to gauge needs and entitlement.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed the report and was assured on the progress made so far against the action plan.

68 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited members to consider and comment on the content of its work programme, to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

Members were informed that the following pre-decision scrutiny items had been removed from the agenda for 22 April as, following legal advice, these were to be chief officer decisions:

- Review of Open Select List procurement arrangements for children's independent placements and recommendations from September 2022
- Review of Closed Ordered List commissioning and procurement arrangements for Supported accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and former-UASC care leavers from October 2022

Members were also informed that the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy report had been deferred from the meeting on 17 June 2022 to 9 September 2022 to allow for further engagement with stakeholders before coming to the Executive for decision in October.

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RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be agreed subject to the inclusion of the amendments/suggestion mentioned above.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm