



**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

**THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2022 at 10.00 AM**  
**in COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN Lincs LN1 1YL**

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Lincolnshire County Council:**

Councillors S P Roe (Chairman), Clio Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), K H Cooke, A G Hagues, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews and M A Whittington

**Added Members (non-voting):**

Polly Coombes, Ann Wright, Amy-Louise Butler, Elizabeth Bunney and  
1 Vacancy(Children In Care Council Representative)

**AGENDA**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 March 2022</b>	<b>3 - 10</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillors and Chief Officers</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report</b> <i>(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service – Quality and Standards and Principle Social Worker, which invites the Panel to consider the annual report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Service)</i>	<b>11 - 36</b>

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|----------|---|---------------|
| <b>6</b> | <b>Independent Reviewing Service Yearly Report 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022</b><br><i>(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service – Quality and Standards and Principle Social Worker, which invites the Panel to consider the annual report on the Independent Reviewing Service for 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022)</i> | 37 - 70       |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Corporate Parenting Panel Workshop Update</b><br><i>(To receive a verbal report from Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, which provides an update following the Corporate Parenting Panel Workshop)</i>  | Verbal Report |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme</b><br><i>(To receive a report from Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which invites the Panel to consider its work programme)</i>  | 71 - 74       |

Distributed on Wednesday, 4 May 2022

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, 12th May, 2022, 10.00 am \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Emily Wilcox via telephone 07557 486687 or alternatively via email at [emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk)



## CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 10 MARCH 2022

### **PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S P ROE (CHAIRMAN)**

**Lincolnshire County Council:** Councillors K H Cooke, A G Hagues, Mrs J E Killey and M A Whittington

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

Officers in attendance:

Kieran Barnes (Virtual School Head Teacher), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Deborah Crawford (Head of Service, Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care), Rebecca Fleming (Caring2Learn - Practice Supervisor), Rachel Freeman (Interim Head of Service, Children's (Safeguarding)), Ben Lilley (Team Manager, Quality and Standards), Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:

Craig Willingham (Deputy Manager – Children and Young People)

### 47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Matthews and C L Perraton-Williams.

It was also noted that Janice Spencer, Assistant Director – Children's Services had sent her apologies due to an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services.

### 48 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 49 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

50 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman reminded the Panel that a Corporate Parenting Panel Workshop would take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 in which all member of the Panel were invited to attend. The invitation had also been extended to Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, which had been well received by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

The Panel was advised that an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services had commenced.

51 VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Practice Supervisor – Quality and Standards, which provided an update on activities and future planning for Voices for Choices (V4C), Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council, which provided opportunity for children to share their experiences of being a child in care in which learning could be made.

Between October 2021 and February 2022, face to face meetings had recommenced. An overview of activities by locality was provided and could be found within the report.

The sessions encouraged the children to provide feedback on their experiences, further support and provide an opportunity to discuss general issues with the children. Groups continued to successfully participate and provide feedback on a number of issues included climate change and schooling.

Attendance levels varied across all localities and Officers continued to encourage attendance across County and different ways of increasing attendance and to explore new ways of operating V4C.

The Big Conversation had taken place in February half-term was a positive event in which over 25 children and young people had attended.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- There were a number of reasons that children were not attending the sessions, including being involved in other leisure activities and being satisfied with their position and therefore not feeling the need to provide feedback.
- A range of different venues had been explored in order to encourage attendance, including holding the sessions at bowling alleys or soft play centres. However it was noted that this could sometimes detract from the meaning of the event.
- The rurality of Lincolnshire and the limited access to public transport as a barrier to attendance was highlighted. It was confirmed that many children travelled via taxi and transport costs were covered.

- There were currently 720 children in care within Lincolnshire.
- Social media, advertising across teams, visiting children's homes and writing directly to the children and young people were all methods which were used to promote V4C.
- The potential for Member engagement at sessions was welcomed.
- A mix of face to face and virtual sessions as well as holding sessions during half term were suggested as ideas to encourage further attendance.
- Officers were open to holding sessions in a children's homes and other familiar environments as it was suggested that some children may feel more comfortable staying within a familiar environment although this was not possible for all children who did not live within a children's home. Feedback from children had suggested that many children and young people preferred to meet outside of their homes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and endorsed;
2. That the comments made by the Panel be taken under consideration;

52 CHILDREN IN CARE - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care, which provided key performance information for Quarter 3 of 2021/22 which was relevant to the work of the Parenting Panel.

There were currently 720 children in care within Lincolnshire. The number of children in care had increased, which was partly due to the placement of a number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children within Lincolnshire.

The seven measures which had not achieved the target during the quarter were highlighted and could be found within the report and a full breakdown of all of the performance measure was set out at Appendix A.

The recruitment and retention of fosterers remained challenging in a competitive market. The pandemic had also seen a change in peoples desires to continue or become foster carers.

Difficulty accessing NHS dental services nationally as well as the reduction in service as a result of the pandemic meant that the target for the Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check had not been achieved in quarter 3, although the measure had improved. Efforts continued to ensure that all children in care were registered with a dentist and dental checks were being completed.

The Head of Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care was pleased to report that the Children in Care Living Within a Family Environment measure had been exceeded, which emphasised that, for many children in care, a family placement was deemed the most suitable means of

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL  
10 MARCH 2022**

offering care and maintaining children within their family networks. The Council continued to explore enabling children and young people to remain within their family or extended network if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents.

Overall the service was performing well in comparison to national data.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The level of trauma experienced by many unaccompanied asylum seeking children was acknowledged.
- It was confirmed that 104 of the children in care within Lincolnshire were asylum seeking children and this figure was mandated by the Home Office. Funding for those children in Lincolnshire's care would be provided by the Home Office
- Each young person would be allocated a social worker and would have access wide range of support available children, including access to language specialist and mental health services. As with all children placed in Lincolnshire's care, support provided would be bespoke to each individual's needs. The Council were working closely with the relevant teams to ensure that there was adequate support available, which could also mean placing Children in locations where communities could better meet the religious and cultural needs of the children
- Assurance was provided that the Council had adequate resource to support the children where necessary, following the recruitment of four additional staff to support with the rise in children in care within the County.
- Officers had not yet received notification of any Ukrainian Refugee Children being placed within Lincolnshire, but there was awareness that all Lincolnshire authorities were willing to support refugees.
- Targets were set and benchmarked through comparisons with national data and any trends and projections shown nationally.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the comments made be recorded.

53 FOSTERING PERMANENCE REPORT FEBRUARY 2022

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care and the Practice Supervisor, which invited the Panel to consider the Fostering Permanence Report February 2022, which was set out at Appendix A.

The Panel was informed that every child in care was required to have a permanence plan for their long term plan for their care. Fostering Permanence sought to ensure that each child in care had a long term plan which would prepare them for leaving care and adulthood, as well as ensuring they had security, consistence and continuity and the best change to achieve and

contribute to society. The impact of instability in the lives of children and young people was emphasised.

The report set out the different types of permanence, which included a return to birth families, kinship care, special guardianship, fostering, long term fostering, long term residential placements, child arrangement orders and adoption.

A key factor in stability and permanence in foster care was the 'match' between child and carers, which often depends on the 'chemistry' between them. The matching process was applicable for all children in care and events took place regularly, with the next event scheduled for Summer 2022.

Lincolnshire remained focussed on meeting the needs of all children in care and supporting them to have long term stability and reach their full potential.

The Panel watched a short video detailing the story of Ellie and her journey through Lincolnshire's foster care service.

The Panel acknowledged that many children in care had experienced childhood trauma prior to coming into care and welcomed opportunities to encourage permanence and stability through long term foster placement and other means.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be received and comments made be noted;
- (2) that the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the in-House Matching activity of the service in relation to efforts made to secure Permanence for Children in Care.

54 COUNCIL TAX RELIEF TO CHILDREN LEAVING CARE - LOCAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Consideration was given to a report by the Corporate Parenting Manager, which invited the Panel to consider a report which outlined the achievement to secure Council tax exemption and some of the more recent collaboration with district councils and invite the Panel to consider other offers that could be made available.

It was acknowledged that prior to coming into care, many children had experienced childhood trauma and outcomes were therefore poorer based on their experiences.

The offer to Lincolnshire's looked after children and care leavers continued to grow. In partnership with District Council's, Lincolnshire had successfully achieved a Council tax exemption for children in care and care leavers, as well as being able to offer a number of other benefits:

- Every District Council now affords young people priority on housing list and all had agreed that no care leaver would be considered intentionally homeless without a multi-agency meeting first
- Every young person in Lincolnshire could access any of the 7 housing registers for accommodation. The seven Districts waived the local connection requirement for Lincolnshire care leavers
- North Kesteven, South Kesteven, West Lindsey and East Lindsey had all agreed to offer care leavers free access to leisure facilities and fitness and wellbeing service, which was managed on an individual basis through the leaving care service

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Working in partnership with local businesses to help them recognise the difficulties faced by care leavers due to experiences of trauma and to therefore guarantee them interviews and job roles was a further aspiration of the team.
- Officers welcomed support from Members to encourage the remaining Districts to sign up to the scheme for free leisure facilities.
- It was acknowledged that access to apprenticeship opportunities was limited due to the need for qualifications for many schemes.
- The Panel commended the partnership work that had been carried out to provide further opportunities for Lincolnshire's children in care and care leavers. It was agreed that a letter be sent to North Kesteven, South Kesteven, West Lindsey and East Lindsey district council's to send thanks for their offer of free access to leisure facilities and fitness and wellbeing services.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the comments from the discussion be recorded.

## 55 VIRTUAL TOUR OF SECURE UNIT

The Panel received a virtual tour of Lincolnshire's Secure Children's Home.

The Panel welcomed the tour and in response to a number of questions raised, the following points were noted:

- The Panel commended the work that was carried out by the staff at the home and creative and restorative approach that had been adopted which motivated residents in a positive way.
- Referrals were made nationally by the youth referral system and would be screened by the manager of the home. Referrals were largely from the criminal justice system and included those with additional vulnerabilities. There was also one welfare bed available which was nationally managed.
- Young people had access to mental health support through the CAMHS team.

- Staff teams were well established and each child received 1-1 support during the day time, and staffing levels were reduced during the night, depending on the needs of residents.
- Very few serious incident occurred within the home, but children could be separated if it was felt appropriate.
- It was suggested that the Panel receive a report from other children's homes within the County at a future meeting to gain insight into how the homes are ran and potentially hear some direct experiences from children within the homes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and that similar arrangements be arranged for other children's homes be arranged for 2022-23

56 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme, as set out on pages 57-59 of the agenda pack.

It was suggested that the future work programme activity be discussed at the workshop scheduled for the 6 April 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the work programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 11.57 am

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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>12 May 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report</b>

**Summary:**

This is the annual report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service. The report serves to update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the work undertaken between March 2021 and April 2022.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the annual report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service and seek assurance that the Independent Visitors are fulfilling their obligations in visiting the Local Authority homes each month as required and inspecting against the nine (9) quality standards as outlined in Part six (6), regulations 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015.

## **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 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 changes in guidance and post lockdown working practices.

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.

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.

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.

All of the reg 44 inspections have identified for each home that they continue to safeguard the children in their care and promote their wellbeing as defined by Regulation 44.4 (a) & (b).

**3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

NA

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report

## **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](mailto:Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

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**REPORT FOR THE**  
**INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE**  
**April 2021 - March 2022**  
**Kim Murray, Rachael Powis**  
**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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

## **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 April 2021- March 2022 were undertaken in person where this has been possible. There have been some instances where in person visits have not been possible due to COVID contracted within some homes, or Independent Visitors self-isolating and where an in-person visit would potentially compromise the safety and wellbeing of the young people and staff members. Where this has occurred, this has been referenced within individual reports. In these instances, Independent Visitors have been able to use technology such as video calls 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 where this has been possible within the calendar month to ensure compliance against the monthly visiting schedule. This has meant that there have been no visits out of timescales over the course of the last year.

Over the last year the homes continued to operate robust and stringent guidelines to ensure that all visits are safe in line with government and Local Authority guidance as these changed throughout the course of the year. This meant that initially COVID booking forms were completed by the Independent Visitor and sent to the home prior to any visits which asked 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 were retained by the homes for a period of time to aid any potential Contact and Trace Service contact, after which time they were destroyed on the basis that these contain personal and not business contact details for visitors. Upon arrival at the home the questions were asked again, and the Independent Visitors temperature taken safely at distance and recorded prior to them being physically allowed on the premises. As restrictions have eased so has the guidance followed by the Independent Visitors although some homes continued to require more robust measures due to either the nature of the home or the children there.

Independent Visitors continued to frequently sanitise their hands throughout their visits and where face masks were mandatory used these.

Despite all of the protective measures in place, some homes across the county have experienced outbreaks of COVID cases. 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. 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 Independent Visitor**

From April 2021, Regulation 44 visits continued to be undertaken by three Independent Visitors: Kim Murray, Cheryl Govier and Rachael Powis 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 nine 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 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. They continue to develop relationships with the new homes managers that have been appointed since the report was completed.

There has been a change in the Independent Visitors with the reviews now sitting within the LADO Team, this still remains within the Quality and Standards Service.

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 Independent Visitors 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.

### **Home Manager Update**

Since April 2021 there have been a number of changes to the management of the homes. The Registered Manager from Eastgate has now moved into the newly created post of Senior Residential Lead with oversight over all homes other than the Secure Unit and supported accommodation. The Assistant Manager being successful in getting the Manager post at Eastgate, whilst an RCO 3 was successful in getting the Assistant Manager role.

The Home Manager of Haven Cottage retired, and the Assistant Manager has left the home, both these posts were successfully recruited to.

The Manager of Northolme was seconded to be the interim appointed Home Manager of Albion Street, the Assistant Manager of Northolme has stepped up to be the interim appointed Home Manager of Northolme. A Practice Advisor from Quality and Standards moved to Albion St to become the Assistant Manager and has recently been appointed as Homes Manager, and an Assistant Manager has been appointed to the home.

The Home Manager for Strut House has been off for a period of time due to illness, the Assistant Manager of Strut House is currently acting as the Home Manager.

Rowston and Denton had a new manager appointed in May 2021 and a new assistant manager appointed in July 2021.

Although there have been a number of changes in the management of some of the homes, this has been managed successfully with staff and young people responding well to the changes and shown a commitment by the Authority to respond to changing circumstances and address need where it has arisen.

## **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.

The Independent Advocate visits had been virtual during lockdown and for a period of time afterwards, however these have now returned to monthly face to face visits. There has been ongoing discussion regarding their role and responsibilities and the production of a report for the home.

Member visits to the homes has been sporadic across the homes, with some homes having been visited whereas others have not.

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 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.

One thing that should be noted is that the opportunity for young people's anonymous feedback is varied between the homes.

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. 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.

All of the homes continue to promote display boards that celebrate the children through 'Voice of the child', 'You said we did' or 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.

It has been particularly evident within the homes that have children with disabilities that the myriad of photographic displays really helps 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.

There are many 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 received 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.

### **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 continued to be a challenging time for Albion Street, the Ofsted Assurance visit on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 found the home to be inadequate in some areas despite the ongoing progress made by the home. 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 home's Leadership and Management and its ability to safeguard the young people.

A full inspection was carried out by social care regulatory inspectors, Sarah Orriss and Andi Lilley-Tams, on 8 and 9 June 2021, with a monitoring visit taking place on 11 August 2021. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to check progress against a compliance notice which was issued following the inspection that was carried out on 8 and 9 June 2021. The compliance notice was issued to address shortfalls in leadership and management within the home.

Since this time the home has put in place an action plan to address these issues and has positive progress in these areas as well as the care of the children.

There have been some significant challenges for some care homes regarding the ongoing recruitment of staff at a variety of levels, from RCO1 upwards. 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.

The new Senior Residential Lead has started to implement a county wide recruitment process that encompasses all homes in order to recruit effectively and manage changing demands across the residential estate

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.

Training remains a priority within the homes, and whilst there was some initial disruption caused by the impact of COVID, training has continued to be a mixture on online e-learning, virtual and face to face. The homes have continued to commission specialist training, and example of this is medication training at The Beacon as well as ensuring consistency of training through the Homes Managers Meetings.

The Homes Managers continue to promote training across all existing and newly recruited staff, both in terms of mandatory, personal development goals, home needs and accredited training (QCF).

All the homes have continued to participate in multi-agency partnership working, with Health, Police, Schools, Social Care and other agencies, with continued monthly meetings and ad hoc communications. This has moved to some in person meetings, with some being hybrid. The homes have adapted extremely well to the new ways of working throughout the pandemic and the subsequent easing and removal of restrictions.

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 buildings. The autism colours are being used throughout some of the homes, 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.

There has been a varied approach to in-house craft activities, and outside trips by the homes, depending on the restrictions at the time. Homes have moved to having activities into the home, these have included; the sensory bus, Rhubarb Theatre Company, Positive Futures, Sound Lincs and LUSH sensory sessions.

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. Since restrictions have eased, children have recommenced visits to family members, trips away and activities outside of the home. This only being interrupted by children or family members catching COVID or the providers being unable to staff an activity. There has been continuous evidence of children's care plans being progressed in relation to their family time.

The homes have promoted sibling relationships, demonstrating good communication with family members, Social Workers and other homes. This has been particularly positive in three homes where siblings live in different homes. The use of video and telephone calls has been widely promoted as has sending cards and letters.

There have been many examples over the last year where the homes have been actively promoting independence in young people in support of their next steps to independence or move on from the home. Some examples have been around train training, joint visits with siblings that has included shopping and budgeting. Transitions out of the home onto other providers has been very positive, after some challenges this has been particularly well demonstrated by the Beacon. Homes have shown their commitment to their young people through continued support once young people move to independence.

### **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 resilience 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.

There is now a much clearer link between SP and responses to incidents and a more restorative approach in resolving and managing these incidents. On the whole where an incident takes place there is evidence of the young person's Individual Care Management Plan being updated to reflect this.

### **Challenges**

One of the biggest challenges collectively the homes have faced over the last year has been recruitment of staff. Although measures are coming into place through the Senior Residential Lead and Homes Managers have continued with the recruitment processes, there have been staffing shortages within some of the homes. However, there is no evidence that this has impacted on the care and safeguarding of the children in the homes. Staff have stepped up and covered shifts where necessary and provide excellent care of the young people and where necessary agency staff have been used, many remaining in the same home to ensure consistency.

The Homes Managers have done an exceptional job in responding to the easing of restrictions and the governments road map to post COVID normality and in supporting both staff and young people through this process. Although restrictions have eased the homes have had to continue to rise to the challenge of managing staff absence, young people catching covid and provider variability to minimise disruption to the young people.

### **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 changes in guidance and post lockdown working practices.

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.

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.

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.

All of the reg 44 inspections have identified for each home that they continue to safeguard the children in their care and promote their wellbeing as defined by Regulation 44.4 (a) & (b).

## APPENDIX A

### 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.

### SECURE UNIT

Full Inspection Visit

Visit dates: 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Previous inspection date: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Previous inspection judgement: Sustained Effectiveness

Information about this visit

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,     Good

Taking into account

Children's education and learning     Requires improvement to be good

Children's health     Good

How well children and young people are helped and protected     Good

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.

Requirement

Due date

The leadership and management 10 January 2022

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.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(2))

In particular, the registered person should ensure that children’s participation in education is promoted and that leaders and managers have effective oversight of this.

Recommendations

■ □ Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, ensure that the quality of records relating to group work and direct work with children is improved. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

■ The registered person should ensure that any placing authority provides complete and current plans for each child, including care plans and personal education plans. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 56, paragraph 11.5)

■ The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents', supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. In particular, ensure that children's views are recorded in their care and support plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

■ Healthcare professionals work closely with staff across the secure setting in caring for children to achieve the best possible health outcomes. In particular, leaders and managers should facilitate sufficient accommodation to enable healthcare professionals to work alongside care staff, in order to effectively meet children's health needs. ('Healthcare Standards for Children and Young People in secure settings June 2019', page 12, paragraph 1.3.2)

■ The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that children receive impartial careers guidance to help them to prepare for their next steps in education, employment, or training. This recommendation is repeated from the full inspection November 2020 ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

■ The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that the starting points and learning support the needs of children are identified accurately and in a timely way when they arrive at the home. Staff should use this information to plan interesting and challenging learning activities. ('Guide to the children's regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

■ The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. In particular, leaders and managers should recruit staff so that the home can offer a full, balanced curriculum. ('Guide to the children's regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

## Eastgate

**Current Ofsted rating of the home from the last inspection: Outstanding**

Inspection dates: 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, **Outstanding**  
taking into account;

*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 standard of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improve outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

## Albion Street

Date of Last Inspection: 8 and 9 June 2021 with a monitoring visit taking place on 11 August 2021.

A full inspection was carried out by social care regulatory inspectors, Sarah Orriss and Andi Lilley-Tams, on 8 and 9 June 2021, with a monitoring visit taking place on 11 August 2021. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to check progress against a compliance notice which was issued following the inspection that was carried out on 8 and 9 June 2021. The compliance notice was issued to address shortfalls in leadership and management within the home. The following recommendations were made following the visit on 11 August 21:

Requirement	Due date:
<p>The health and well-being standard is that - the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>9 September 2021</p>
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to children’s risk assessments being maintained and updated to reflect current risk factors and robust management oversight of incidents and events in the home.</p>	<p>9 September 2021</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2) (c)(f)(h))</p>	

## Northholme

**Last Ofsted inspection dates:** 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people:** **Good**

Taking into account,

How well children and young people are helped and protected: **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: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: **Good**

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each</p>	17 January 2022

<p>child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the safe storage of potential hazards in the home and ensuring that cigarette lighting materials are removed.</p>	
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**Strut House,**

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,  
Outstanding**

*taking into account,*

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

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.

Date of last inspection: 6 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: **Outstanding**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Due date</b>
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the	1 January 2022

registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to management oversight of the use of restraint, staff and child debriefs and evaluation of incidents involving the use of restraint.

## Haven

### Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

**Requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected

**Requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

**Requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

## 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.

#### Requirement

#### Due date

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 staff—  
assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if

20<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<p>necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;  understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;  that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;  that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(b)(e))  This specifically relates to the recording and reporting procedures for any safeguarding concerns.</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—  ensure the staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;  use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.  (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))  This specifically relates to staff understanding of</p> <p>Safeguarding procedures, administration of medication and management oversight.</p>	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.(Regulation 20(2))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the use of restraint in managing behaviour that is agreed within the behaviour support plan including an assessment of environmental factors.</p>	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medications received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))</p> <p>This specifically relates to staff having adequate training and assessment of competencies to minimise risks of medication errors.</p>	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—  receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p>	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022

<p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(b)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—  within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—  details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;  the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;  details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;  the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure;  within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—  has spoken to the user about the measure; and  has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and  within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This relates to records of restraint being completed in a manner that meets the statutory requirement and that the manager reviews and evaluates all incidents of restraint.</p>	<p>20<sup>th</sup> January 2022</p>



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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>12 May 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Independent Reviewing Service Yearly Report 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022</b>

**Summary:**

This report introduces the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the services to Looked After Children in Lincolnshire.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2022 - 2023.

## **1. Background**

Due to ongoing Coronavirus and the range of measures imposed by the UK government, the Quality and Standards Service continues to redesign the delivery of child protection conferencing and Children in Care (Formally known as Looked After Children) reviews. 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 Assure and Improve Services for Children in Care.

The attached Independent Reviewing Service Yearly report 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 sets out an overview of the services provided to Children subjected to Child Protection Plans, Children in Care and those who receive Short Term Breaks.

The report outlines a range of key priorities for the service together with projected priorities for 2022-2023 and includes the ways in which children and young people are encouraged to be involved in their care planning and how the service advocates for children and young people to ensure that their plans are progressive and tailored to meet their individual needs.

Within the report, key data outlines the current Child Protection and Children in Care population and provides fiscal comparisons to assist the reader to understand how this has changed over time and may impact upon future service delivery.

Management oversight, staff development and quality assurance of the service is also outlined within the context of developing a professional, reflective, and learning service that continues to meet the needs of these groups of children.

### **Legal and Resource information:**

Every child who is 'looked after' 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 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

The chairs continue to work at full capacity under the new ways of working. Despite some meetings being held virtually which has impacted positively on decreased travel time between venues, Chairs are under increasing pressure due to the additional admin tasks involved in new ways of working and the large number of re arranged meetings due to changes of placements and delays with the Courts. Additional capacity has been created through the recruitment of two agency members of staff to cover vacancies in the team and we are currently over established by one agency worker to manage the additional pressures in numbers. It should be noted that the Chairs are at the upper limit in terms of children allocated as set out in the IRO Handbook, which provides guidance around case capacity in order to carry out their duties effectively and best meet the needs of children and young people. We are currently reviewing the best way to increase long term capacity in the service.

## **2. Conclusion**

The main service priorities for 2022 - 2023 are outlined below. A full explanation and update on progress for the year 2021 - 2022, together with any ongoing priorities and

newly identified priorities for the year 2022 – 2023 can be accessed in the full report attached to this overview sheet.

### **Updated Priorities 2022 - 2023**

#### **Ongoing Priorities**

##### **New and creative technology**

The service will be continuing to pursue new ways of working to engage with children, young people, and their parents through the use of technology to facilitate in person, hybrid, and virtual meetings.

##### **Technology in locality conference facilities**

Ongoing analysis and development of procedures and IT support required for post covid CP and CiC hybrid meetings. This will include the ongoing work to ensure that all locality conference facilities are fully equipped for hybrid meetings.

##### **Engagement HQ**

Integration of current feedback from CP and CiC utilising "Engagement HQ" (centralised feedback development and recording system) when this comes online.

##### **Sexual Harm Pathway**

Exploration and assessment of the categories of harm by the Independent Chairs within conference, ensuring that sexual harm is captured effectively. The plan is for the pathway to be finalised and training to commence from September 2022.

#### **Newly Identified Priorities**

##### **Develop Practice Champions**

The service aims to support the Chairs with their continuing professional development and assist with implementation of the various practice stream updates such as Valuing Care, Graded Care -Neglect; CSA; Family Finding; Restorative Practice; Signs of Safety and UASC. Individual Chairs will be taking the lead in one of these specialist areas.

##### **Continuous Dip Sample auditing**

Managers and Chairs will complete dip sample audits on children's files with a focus on children's participation in their care plans and reviews.

##### **Absent Fathers**

A Team Manager is currently taking the lead in a Children's Social Care Fathers task and finish group with the purpose being to evaluate procedures, processes, and ways of working to maximise engagement and participation with fathers. Part of this process is involving fathers so that we understand the impact of our intervention with them, and to positively adapt practices accordingly.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the full Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2022 – 2023 outlined within the document.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

NA

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Independent Reviewing Service Yearly Report

**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](mailto:Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

**Lincolnshire County Council – Children’s Services  
Independent Reviewing Service yearly report  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

*Due to the ongoing Coronavirus and the recurring and changing 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 visits 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-term breaks and Reg 44 visits, 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 Child Protection Conference 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 going forward.

### **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.**

**The plan going forward from January 2022 is that all initial CP meetings are held in a "hybrid" format, the core group and family attending physically and other professionals attending virtually.**

The new Omnicom strain postponed the return to physical meetings in January until March. Since this time, there has been an expectation that all initial Child Protection Conferences will be offered as physical / hybrid meeting, attended by a minimum of the

Chair, Social Worker, family members and core group (professionals who work closely with the family).

CP Chairs are noting that some parents are stating that they feel less comfortable attending physical meetings, opting to attend virtually. Where this is safe to do so, and the parents are engaging to assist with the creation of the CP plan, this has been utilised. However, conferences involving those parents/ carers who are vulnerable such as domestic abuse cases, additional needs such as learning or communication, have been facilitated in person to remove barriers and maximise participation and safety planning.

- **Analysis and development of procedures and IT support required for post covid CP and CiC hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings being those attended by invitees both in person and via electronic media.**

In the interim, equipment has been purchased by the service to enable hybrid meetings to take place at conference rooms around the County. This is also being used to facilitate CiC reviews where appropriate. Each of the Chairs has their own set of portable equipment. Whilst this enables full audio participation in meetings and improves the visibility of physical attendees for those attending online, there is an ongoing piece of work to ensure that all conference rooms have dedicated hybrid equipment which will enable full visual engagement (everybody attending will be able to see and hear each other).

- **Integration of current feedback from CP and CiC utilising "Engagement HQ" (centralised feedback development and recording system) when this comes online.**

We are still awaiting Engagement HQ to come online; however, we continue to collate feedback from children, families, and professionals in order to continue developing the service.

- **Initial trial and review of progress of the new Pre-Birth Protocol, implementation of any subsequent amendments from the review.**

As per the previous report, the Pre-Birth protocol was implemented in December 2020. In June 2021, following 6 months of the IRO service chairing Pre-birth protocol strategy meetings, a review between children's health, midwifery and children's social care took place. The protocol was evaluated as having a positive impact on key outcomes for these most vulnerable of children. Those children that need to come into the care of the local authority once born are identified early and the coordinated multi-agency collaboration was delivering high quality assessments to Court. Where early intervention was welcomed by families and they engaged with services offered, children had been able to remain in the care of their parents with robust child in need plans in place.

A number of updates to the protocol were recommended to the LSCP in July and implemented in August.

- amended timescales, avoiding two CPCs before birth
- addition of requirement that **ALL Strategy discussions** about an unborn baby are to be held as **chaired meetings** (as opposed to series of discussions) by a PS/IRO/TM (we have said in procedure this must be a senior social worker G11 or above)
- Safeguarding and Review are coordinating all pre-birth Strategy meetings and for minutes to be taken.

The benefits are:

- improved coordination of invites and agency information sharing,
- centralised monitoring of the number of ICPC for UBB vs UBB in pre-proceedings;
- take pressure off FAST team PS in terms of meeting organisation;
- centralised diary for partners so it is easy to see when Midwifery and police are already in a meeting with another locality.

The amended pre-birth protocol is in place and responsibility for embedding and reviewing has been passed over to the front-line Social Work Teams.

- **Promotion of the role of the Independent Chair service through the LSCP and individual partners to ensure clarity and accountability.**

Team Managers now sit on the LSCP Operational Delivery Group to ensure that the role is promoted and challenge to partners is effective and timely. We continue to escalate any concerns to partners directly through the use of the monitoring form and LSCP escalation process.

- **Exploration and assessment of the categories of harm by the Independent Chairs within conference, ensuring that sexual harm is captured effectively.**

Children's Services continues to work with LSCP and the What Works Well Centre for Child Sexual Abuse to launch a child sexual abuse pathway. The work to develop the pathway exceeds the exploration of the level of sexual harm referred to Children's Services, it delivers excellent resources and training to all partners. This addresses the needs of victims, the assessment of risk, the progress of the criminal justice process, support to families and upskilling of professionals across the LSCP. The plan is for the pathway to be finalised and training to commence from September 22.

- **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.**

The chairs "Activity Record" has been updated to better capture chairs contact with family members. This is also identified on the monitoring form. During the next 6 months we will be undertaking a review of participation and challenge by the chairs where there hasn't been parental involvement. This is coupled with a Team Manager currently taking the lead in a Children's Social Care Fathers task and finish group with the purpose being to evaluate procedures, processes and ways of working to maximise engagement and

participation with fathers. Part of this process is involving fathers so that we understand the impact of our intervention with them and to adapt practices accordingly.

- **A review, analysis and any appropriate change to the 12 Month Conference Review process.**

An audit and report were compiled reviewing the 12-month conference review. The findings and recommendations from this report was submitted to OMG. As a result, the 12-month reviews have changed to 18 months. Further work is being undertaken within the next 6 months in relation to the agenda and guidance relating to these meetings to make them more effective.

#### **Other work completed:**

A whole service review including full consultation with staff has taken place. This has led to a reshaping of the management structure, with an addition of one Team Manager. There has also been the addition of one full time Independent Chair.

There is an ongoing workstream involving IRO's, Team Managers, CIC service and MOSAIC to develop how Valuing Care is integrated into the care planning and review workflows.

Team Managers are continuing to work within the Valuing Care Governance Group to support the rollout and integration of this way of working.

#### **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. As a result of the consultation there are now 18.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Independent Chair posts within the team that cover the County as a whole. Currently, there are 2 vacant posts which are covered by agency staff until recruitment is able to be undertaken.

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

In addition, there are 4 FTE Local Authority Designated Officers within the wider team who are line managed by a Team 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. The restructure has resulted in all the Chairs and LADO's being on the same job description, which means there is more resilience across the service.

COVID, sickness absence, secondment and recruitment have proven challenging over the course of the year; this has necessitated the use of some agency staff to ensure that service capacity is not impacted upon, 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. A referral form has been developed with CWD to ensure that information and rationale for IRO involvement is captured effectively.

Number of Short-Term Break meetings held

Apr 18	8	Apr 19	5	Apr 20	4	Apr 21	4
May 18	12	May 19	3	May 20	4	May 21	6
Jun 18	8	Jun 19	11	Jun 20	6	Jun 21	7
Jul 18	8	Jul 19	5	Jul 20	7	Jul 21	6
Aug 18	1	Aug 19	0	Aug 20	2	Aug 21	1
Sep 18	7	Sep 19	8	Sep 20	4	Sep 21	7
Oct 18	4	Oct 19	6	Oct 20	4	Oct 21	4
Nov 18	9	Nov 19	6	Nov 20	9	Nov 21	9
Dec 18	8	Dec 19	4	Dec 20	2	Dec 21	6
Jan 19	6	Jan 20	6	Jan 21	4	Jan 22	3
Feb 19	4	Feb 20	4	Feb 21	3	Feb 22	5
Mar 19	5	Mar 20	4	Mar 21	5	Mar 22	4

Regulation 44

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

The Regulation 44 Officers continue to be based within the wider 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 placements for children in care. There are 2 supported living schemes, one in Grantham and the other in Gainsborough providing accommodation for 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.

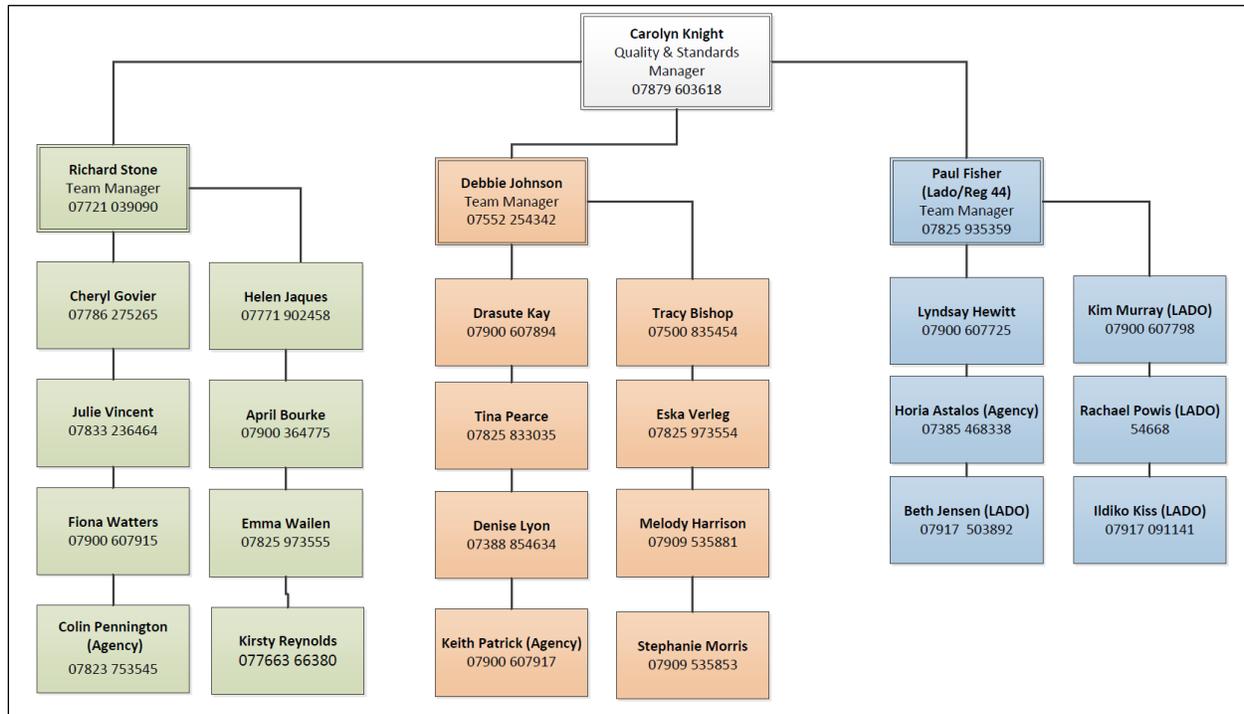
## **Staffing**

### Management Team

There are four Team Managers in the Service. The Chairs are predominantly managed by Debbie Johnson and Richard Stone. Paul Fisher has responsibility for the LADO's and Reg 44 Officers and Philippa Gallop has responsibility for Quality Assurance, Learning and Development, Participation and Liaise.

### Independent Chairs

The team has experienced a number of changes over the last 12 months. Two members of staff have retired. A member of staff has been seconded to Lincoln FAST for the whole year to support front line practice pressures as a supportive measure. There have also been 4 members of staff on long term sick. Two of whom are back at work and the other two due back soon and have return to work plans in place. We have recruited 3 new members of staff from within Children's Services. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, we currently have 3 agency staff in post to cover staffing shortfall.



## Children in Care population and the IRO service

There continues to be an upward trend in the number of young people being in care, 682 (April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021) as opposed to 731 (31<sup>st</sup> March 22).

In the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 the IROs have conducted 1954 reviews. In the same period in 2020-2021 there were 1645 reviews. Workload has been increasing year on year.

Due to the current drift and delay within the court and the impact of a number of foster care changes for some children, reviews are often rescheduled to accommodate this. As an example, between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 225 reviews were re arranged which has had a further impact on workload.

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

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

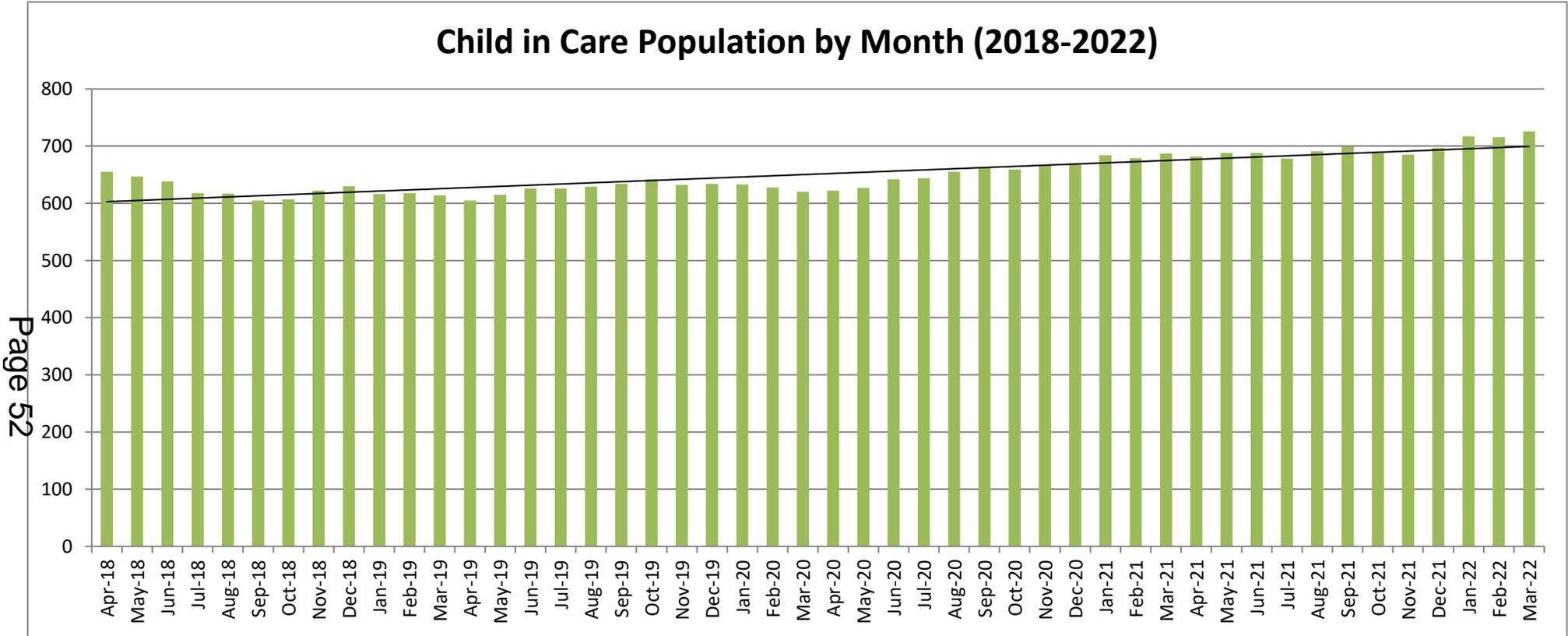
Of the 6 young people subject to secure accommodation, 5 of these are young women with complex trauma histories who require specialist psychological input and therapeutic environments for move on placements, and these have not been available nationally despite extensive searches.

Despite being a small percentage of the CIC population, they represent a significant challenge both in terms of professional time, intervention, and budget.

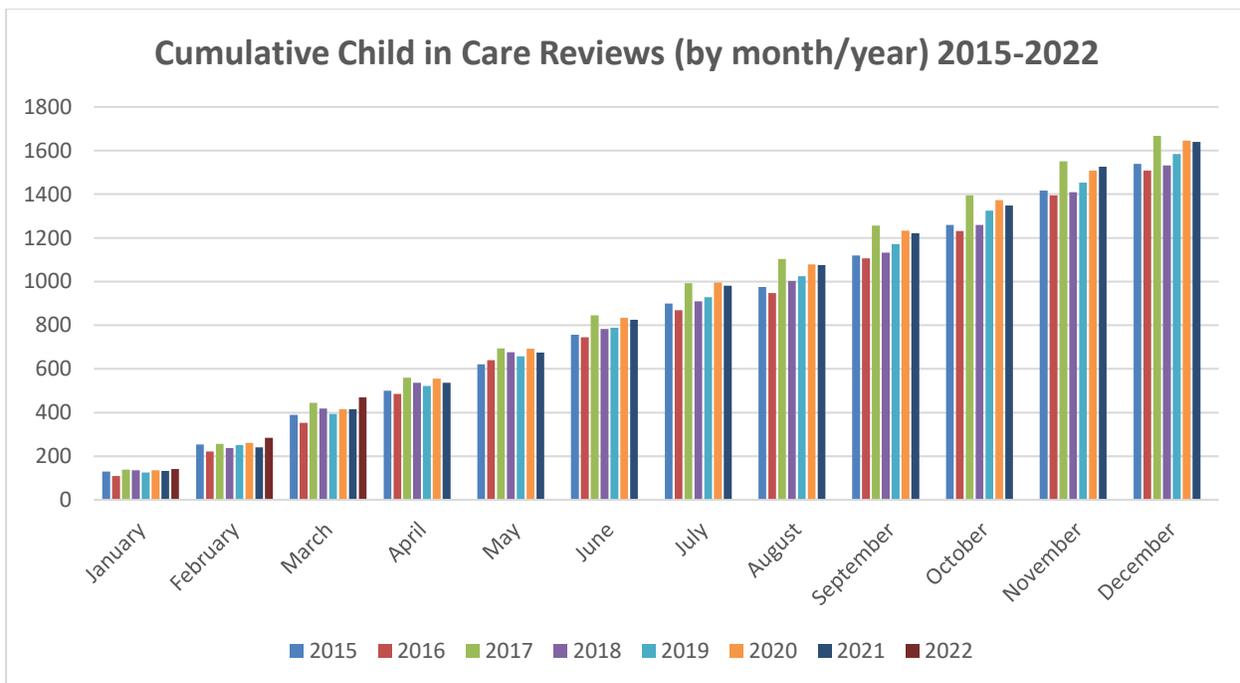
Within the September report we underlined this cohort of young people as requiring additional scrutiny so that we could better understand their journeys and exit planning. This is an ongoing piece of work that will be completed by September 2022.

**Child in Care Population**

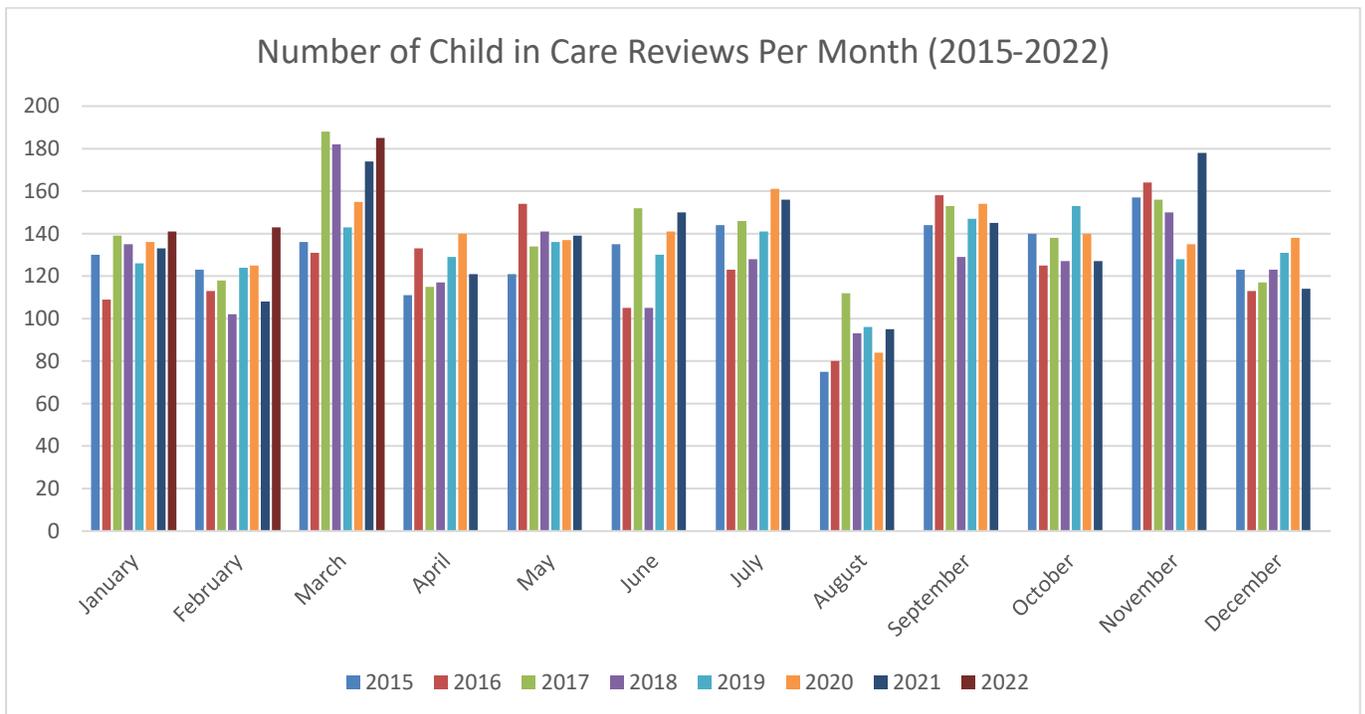
**Child in Care Population by Month (2018-2022)**



Cumulative Child in Care Review Figures (2015- 2022)								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	130	109	139	135	126	136	133	141
February	253	222	257	237	250	261	241	284
March	389	353	445	419	393	416	415	469
April	500	486	560	536	522	556	536	
May	621	640	694	677	658	693	675	
June	756	745	846	782	788	834	825	
July	900	868	992	910	929	995	981	
August	975	948	1104	1003	1025	1079	1076	
September	1119	1106	1257	1132	1172	1233	1221	
October	1259	1231	1395	1259	1325	1373	1348	
November	1416	1395	1551	1409	1453	1508	1526	
December	1539	1508	1668	1532	1584	1646	1640	



Number of Child in Care Reviews Per Month (2015-2022)								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	130	109	139	135	126	136	133	141
February	123	113	118	102	124	125	108	143
March	136	131	188	182	143	155	174	185
April	111	133	115	117	129	140	121	
May	121	154	134	141	136	137	139	
June	135	105	152	105	130	141	150	
July	144	123	146	128	141	161	156	
August	75	80	112	93	96	84	95	
September	144	158	153	129	147	154	145	
October	140	125	138	127	153	140	127	
November	157	164	156	150	128	135	178	
December	123	113	117	123	131	138	114	



## Advocacy

Advocacy provision in Lincolnshire is currently provided by Voiceability as part of a commissioned service.

IRO's 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 Voiceability who are also automatically invited to Children in Care Reviews for children aged 8 and over.

## Timeliness of reviews

Between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 a total of 1694 individual review meetings were held. Out of these 4 were out of timescales, making compliance at 99.77%

Any recording errors are identified and resolved on a weekly basis to ensure that the performance reports are an accurate representation of "actual" performance.

Of the 4 meetings that were out of timescales; One was a result of a technical issue with a Police Protection Order overlapping a Section 20 agreement by one day, two were the result of Interim care Orders being made, whereby the understanding was Interim Supervision Orders were made (later highlighted by the legal team) and one was genuinely out of timescales.

## Children and young people's preparation and involvement in reviews

When we consider how young people participate in their reviews, we look at their attendance at their meetings, and also how they contribute towards the agenda and how 'their review' is run. Our bottom line is that however they choose to contribute, their voice should be at the forefront.

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 depending on their age and development. This is to enable the IRO to build a relationship with the child, ensure that they can 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-19 children have been contacted either via the telephone or virtual technology. As restrictions have eased, the IRO's have started to physically visit young people in person where they have requested this.

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.

Signs of Safety, Restorative Practice, Social Pedagogy and Valuing Care are being utilised by staff in partnership with Social Work 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.

There is an ongoing workstream involving IRO's, Team Managers, CIC service and MOSAIC to develop how Valuing Care is integrated into the care planning and review workflows.

Team Managers are continuing to work within the Valuing Care Governance Group to support the rollout and integration of this way of working.

Additional work is ongoing with the Children in Care Teams, IRO's and MOSAIC to support better working between SW's and IRO's to continually improve quality of care planning records.

#### 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 that 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 a positive challenge, focussing on a restorative approach with social work colleagues without the need for a formal escalation. These are recorded on MOSAIC.

The team continue to focus on improving consistency in terms of escalations made and to ensure 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 are sent weekly reminder emails of open formal escalations so that they can follow these up with the respective teams. 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 twice. An ongoing area of development is clearer guidance and processes regarding access to independent legal advice.

Number of formal escalations per month

Apr 16	9	Apr 17	2	Apr 18	4	Apr 19	8	Apr 20	3	Apr 21	2
May 16	4	May 17	5	May 18	4	May 19	3	May 20	0	May 21	4
Jun 16	0	Jun 17	7	Jun 18	4	Jun 19	1	Jun 20	3	Jun 21	0
Jul 16	3	Jul 17	5	Jul 18	5	Jul 19	0	Jul 20	4	Jul 21	8
Aug 16	1	Aug 17	1	Aug 18	2	Aug 19	0	Aug 20	5	Aug 21	1
Sep 16	3	Sep 17	9	Sep 18	4	Sep 19	8	Sep 20	5	Sep 21	1
Oct 16	4	Oct 17	4	Oct 18	1	Oct 19	1	Oct 20	0	Oct 21	4
Nov 16	3	Nov 17	5	Nov 18	1	Nov 19	2	Nov 20	3	Nov 21	1
Dec 16	6	Dec 17	5	Dec 18	0	Dec 19	0	Dec 20	3	Dec 21	3
Jan 17	2	Jan 18	8	Jan 19	3	Jan 20	2	Jan 21	5	Jan 22	7
Feb 17	5	Feb 18	4	Feb 19	2	Feb 20	7	Feb 21	1	Feb 22	1
Mar 17	8	Mar 18	7	Mar 19	2	Mar 20	1	Mar 21	1	Mar 22	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

Themes of Child in Care Formal Escalations (for the period April 2021 to March 2022)

Theme	Number of Escalations Raised
Safeguarding concerns	8
Practice Issues (Multiple Issues)	7
Placement/ Accommodation concerns	5
Plans (Disagreement)	5
Drift and Delay	3
Blank (No Reason recorded in MOSAIC)	2
Legal concerns	1
Family Time Concerns	1
Provision of Service	1
<b>Total Escalations Raised</b>	<b>33</b>

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 for 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.

Leaving Care – Director's Decision

Apr 18	1	Apr 19	0	Apr 20	0	Apr 21	0
May 18	3	May 19	1	May 20	0	May 21	1
Jun 18	2	Jun 19	0	Jun 20	0	Jun 21	0
Jul 18	1	Jul 19	1	Jul 20	0	Jul 21	0
Aug 18	2	Aug 19	2	Aug 20	0	Aug 21	0
Sep 18	0	Sep 19	0	Sep 20	0	Sep 21	0
Oct 18	1	Oct 19	0	Oct 20	0	Oct 21	1
Nov 18	1	Nov 19	0	Nov 20	0	Nov 21	0
Dec 18	0	Dec 19	2	Dec 20	1	Dec 21	0
Jan 19	0	Jan 20	0	Jan 21	0	Jan 22	0
Feb 19	0	Feb 20	0	Feb 21	0	Feb 22	0
Mar 19	0	Mar 20	0	Mar 21	0	Mar 22	0

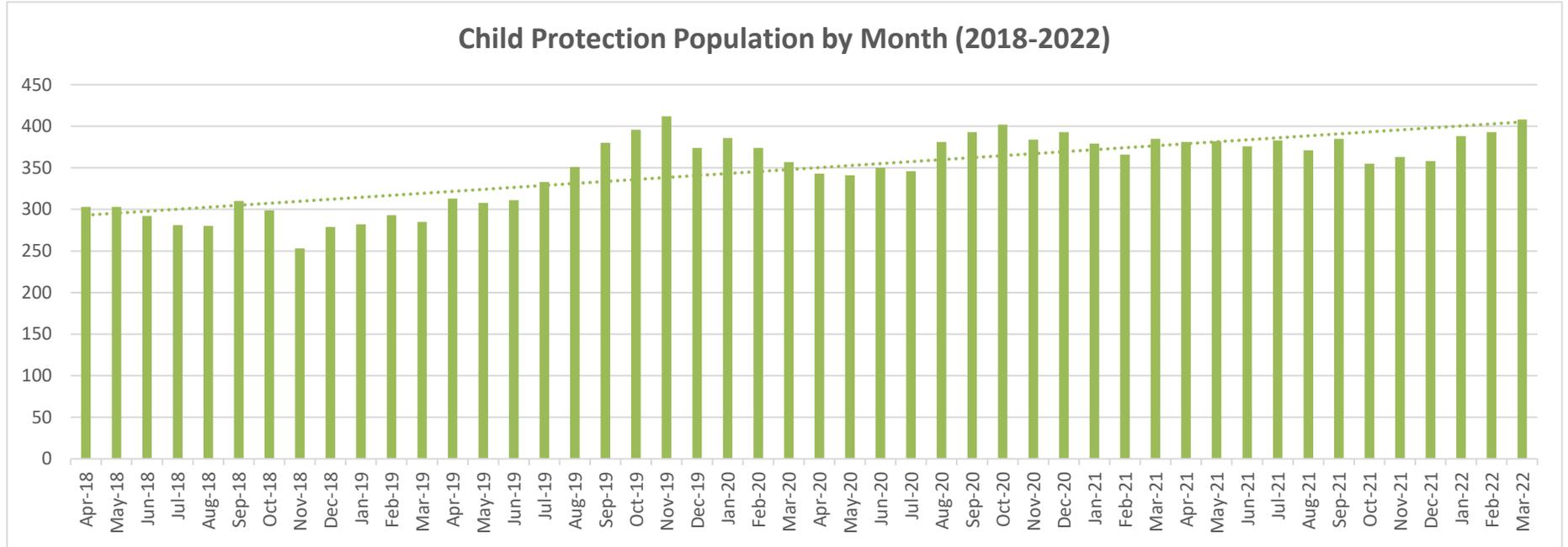
The procedure with regards to Sec. 20 Accommodated young people leaving care before their 18th birthday is understood by Chairs and is discussed within reviews as part of the Care Planning process and Recommendations. Any young person who has been accommodated for more than 20 days and is aged 16 or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

**Child Protection**

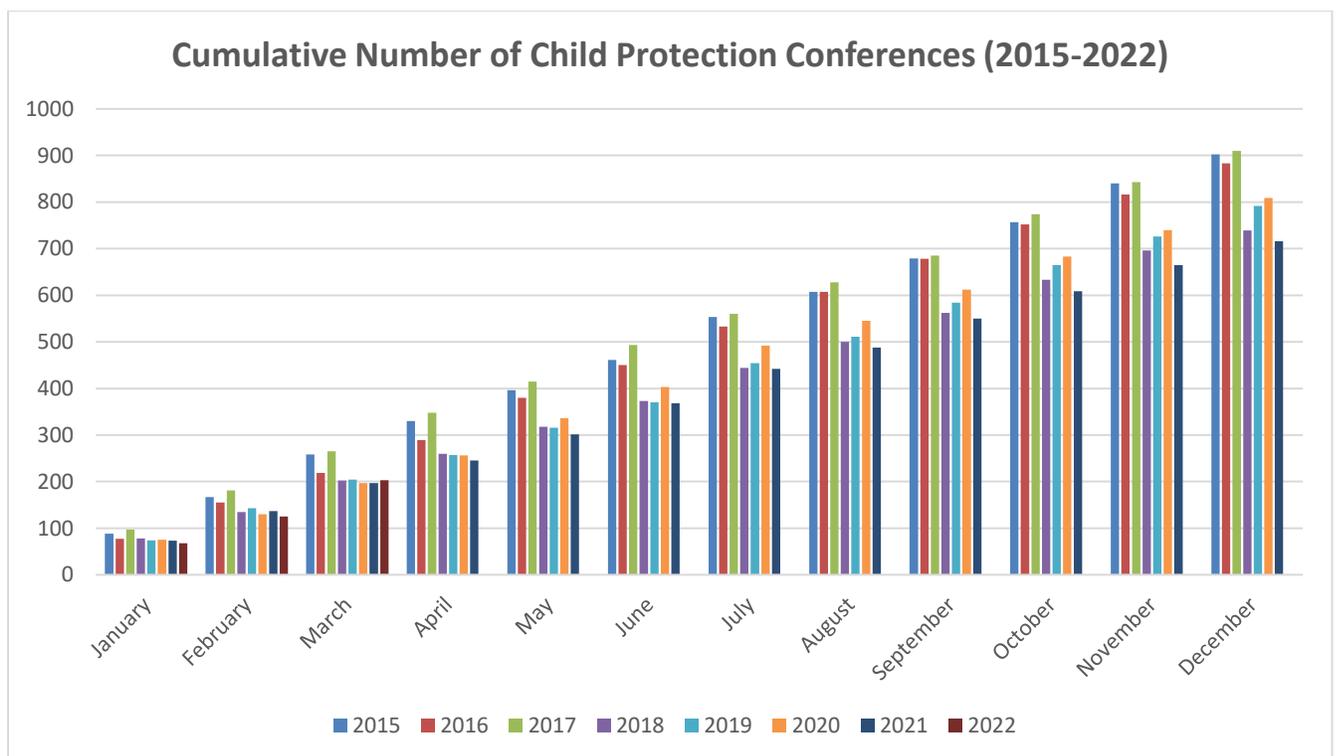
As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 the number of children subject to a CP Plan on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 was 381. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 there are currently 376 children subject to a CP plan. The number of conferences has increased by 5 during this period.

However, it should be noted that the number of unborn babies subject to Pre-Proceedings under the new protocol has increased which has had an impact on the CP plan figures. In the year 2020-2021, 113 Initial CP Conferences were held for unborn babies and by comparison in the year 2021-2022, 47 Initial CP conferences were held.

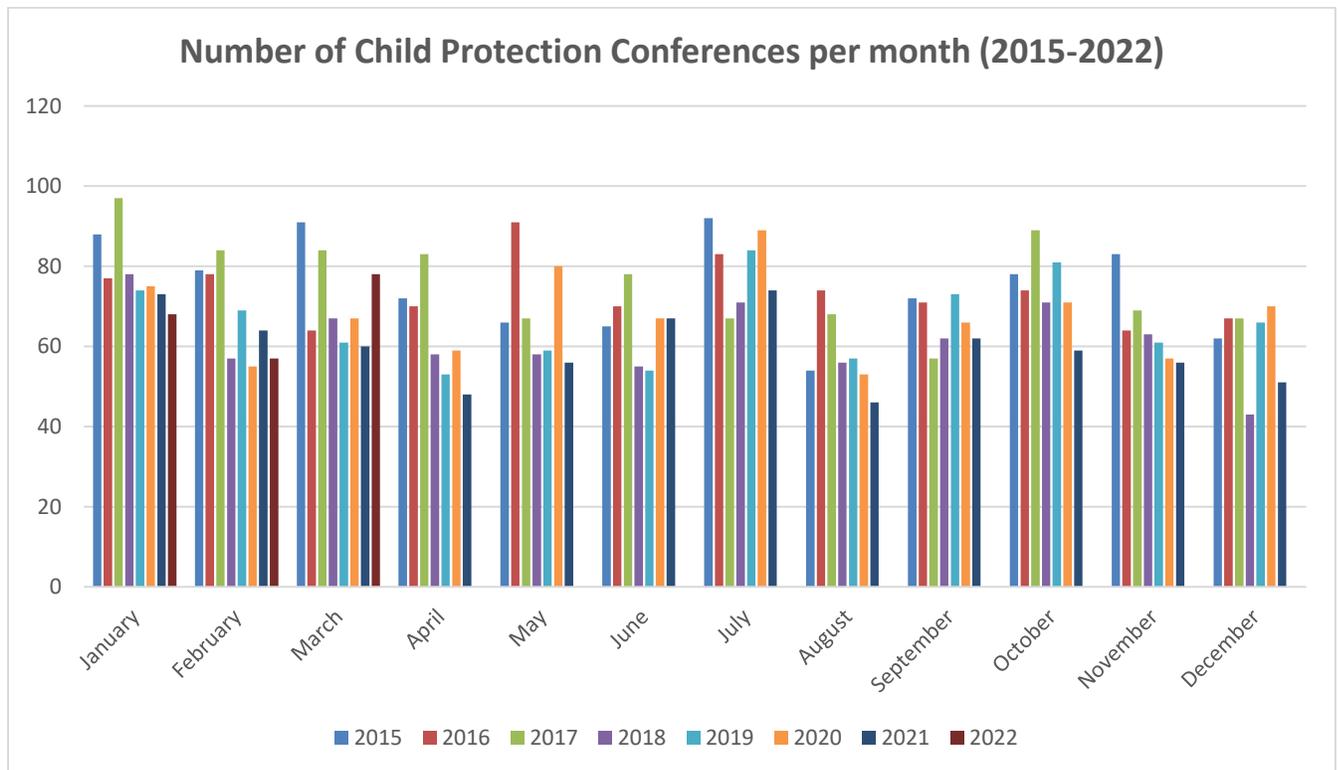
**Child Protection Population**



Cumulative Number of CP Conferences 2015-2022								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	88	77	97	78	74	75	73	68
February	167	155	181	135	143	130	137	125
March	258	219	265	202	204	197	197	203
April	330	289	348	260	257	256	245	
May	396	380	415	318	316	336	301	
June	461	450	493	373	370	403	368	
July	553	533	560	444	454	492	442	
August	607	607	628	500	511	545	488	
September	679	678	685	562	584	612	550	
October	757	752	774	633	665	683	609	
November	840	816	843	696	726	740	665	
December	902	883	910	739	792	809	716	



Number of CP Conferences per month (2015-2022)								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	88	77	97	78	74	75	73	68
February	79	78	84	57	69	55	64	57
March	91	64	84	67	61	67	60	78
April	72	70	83	58	53	59	48	
May	66	91	67	58	59	80	56	
June	65	70	78	55	54	67	67	
July	92	83	67	71	84	89	74	
August	54	74	68	56	57	53	46	
September	72	71	57	62	73	66	62	
October	78	74	89	71	81	71	59	
November	83	64	69	63	61	57	56	
December	62	67	67	43	66	70	51	



### Timeliness of reviews

Between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 the data shows that four conferences took place out of timescale out of 722. These are accounted for and were agreed by a Quality and Standards Team Manager. This equates to 99.45% compliance with 718 taking place within timescales.

From September 2021 the Team Managers are collating the specific reasons for any cancellations or late meetings, for example:

- One conference was delayed due to the mother giving birth early just prior to the conference with the baby requiring specialist hospital care.
- One conference was delayed due to the chair having technical difficulties. The initial meeting took place just prior to the due date but a failure of IT service meant the meeting had to be re-convened.
- One conference was delayed due to the family not receiving the reports prior to the conference
- One conference was delayed due to a significant lack of professionals attending

### Children and young people's preparation and involvement in conferences

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

The service has recently updated leaflets for young people and their families to include information around attending conferences / reviews.

### 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 (such as regular Core Group meetings and child protection visits) 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 such as the Social Worker, Practice Supervisor or Team Manager.

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.

Child Protection Conference Escalations raised in the period April 2021 to March 2022

Organisation	Number of Escalations
GP's	52
Social Workers / Practice Supervisors	16
Education (Nurseries, Schools etc)	11
Early Help Worker	7
Other / Misc Workers	6
Other Health-Related Professionals	5
Health Visitor	4
Probation	3
PPU	1
Barnardo's Advocate	1
Housing Officer	1
<b>Total escalations raised in this period</b>	<b>107</b>

Number of Child Protection Conference Escalations raised each month

Apr 18	15	Apr 19	23	Apr 20	7	Apr 21	1
May 18	33	May 19	24	May 20	8	May 21	9
Jun 18	27	Jun 19	14	Jun 20	16	Jun 21	17
Jul 18	27	Jul 19	33	Jul 20	22	Jul 21	11
Aug 18	20	Aug 19	15	Aug 20	10	Aug 21	10
Sep 18	26	Sep 19	46	Sep 20	19	Sep 21	10
Oct 18	18	Oct 19	35	Oct 20	13	Oct 21	18
Nov 18	26	Nov 19	30	Nov 20	7	Nov 21	3
Dec 18	12	Dec 19	14	Dec 20	20	Dec 21	8
Jan 19	26	Jan 20	32	Jan 21	17	Jan 22	8
Feb 19	22	Feb 20	30	Feb 21	12	Feb 22	3
Mar 19	30	Mar 20	27	Mar 21	8	Mar 22	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>

The overwhelming reason for escalation was no report being prepared for the conference and no apologies provided for non-attendance. The preparation of this report has highlighted the increased number of escalations in relation to GP's. Liaison with the designated Doctor for Safeguarding for children, children in care and adults will be a service priority within the next 3 months.

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

Conferences are 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 LCC, LSCP Trainers and SOS Practice Advisers.

### 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 Children's 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.

### 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. Despite some meetings being held virtually which has impacted positively on decreased travel time between venues, Chairs are under increasing pressure due to the additional admin tasks involved in new ways of working and the large number of re arranged meetings due to changes of placements and delays with the Courts. Additional capacity has been created through the recruitment of two agency members of staff to cover vacancies in the team and we are currently over established by one agency worker to manage the additional pressures in numbers. It should be noted that the Chairs are at the upper limit in terms of children allocated as set out in the IRO Handbook, which provides guidance around case capacity in order to carry out their duties effectively. We are currently reviewing the best way to increase long term capacity in the service.

### Service Priorities 2022-2023

The service priorities outlined below consist of those ongoing priorities from 2021-2022 and newly identified priorities 2022-2023.

## **Priorities 2021-22**

### **Ongoing Priorities**

#### **New and creative technology**

The service will be continuing to pursue new ways of working to engage with children, young people, and their parents through the use of technology to facilitate in person, hybrid and virtual meetings.

#### **Technology in locality conference facilities**

Ongoing analysis and development of procedures and IT support required for post covid CP and CiC hybrid meetings. This will include the ongoing work to ensure that all locality conference facilities are fully equipped for hybrid meetings.

#### **Engagement HQ**

Integration of current feedback from CP and CiC utilising "Engagement HQ" (centralised feedback development and recording system) when this comes online.

#### **Sexual Harm Pathway**

Exploration and assessment of the categories of harm by the Independent Chairs within conference, ensuring that sexual harm is captured effectively. The plan is for the pathway to be finalised and training to commence from September 2022.

### **Newly Identified Priorities**

#### **Develop Practice Champions**

The service aims to support the Chairs with their continuing professional development and assist with implementation of the various practice stream updates such as Valuing

Care, Graded Care -Neglect; CSA; Family Finding; Restorative Practice; Signs of Safety and UASC. Individual Chairs will be taking the lead in one of these specialist areas.

### **Continuous Dip Sample auditing**

Managers and Chairs will complete dip sample audits on children files with a focus on children's participation in their care plans and reviews.

### **Absent Fathers**

A Team Manager is currently taking the lead in a Children's Social Care Fathers task and finish group with the purpose being to evaluate procedures, processes, and ways of working to maximise engagement and participation with fathers. Part of this process is involving fathers so that we understand the impact of our intervention with them, and to positively adapt practices accordingly.

### **Team Manager and Peer Observations**

Now the Local Authority is operating within the post Covid period, the service intends to return to peer audits. Team Managers and Chairs will regularly observe CP Conferences and CiC meetings to feedback on peer performance to aid professional development and practice reflection.

**Carolyn Knight**  
**(Quality and Standards Manager)**

**Debbie Johnson, Paul Fisher & Richard Stone**  
**(Independent Chairs Team Managers)**

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

Report to: **Corporate Parenting Panel**  
Date: **12 May 2022**  
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**

12 MAY 2022	
Item	Contributor
1	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Annual Report 2021/22 Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager

<b>12 MAY 2022</b>		
<b>Item</b>		<b>Contributor</b>
<b>2</b>	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2021/22	Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
<b>3</b>	CPP Workshop – Verbal Update	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager Kieran Barnes, Virtual School Headteacher

<b>7 JULY 2022</b>		
<b>Item</b>		<b>Contributor</b>
<b>1</b>	Election of Chairman & Election of Vice-Chairman 2022/23	Democratic Services
<b>2</b>	Corporate Parenting, Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy Priorities Action Plan Update	Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager
<b>3</b>	Children in Care Performance Measures - Quarter 4 2021/22 (January to March 2022)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director-Children's Safeguarding
<b>4</b>	Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2021/22 (April 2021 to March 2022)	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services
<b>5</b>	Legal Services Lincolnshire end of year report 2021/22 (April 2021 to March 2022)	Nicola Corby, Acting Principal Lawyer
<b>6</b>	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Team Manager (Quality and Standards)

<b>9 SEPTEMBER 2022</b>		
<b>Item</b>		<b>Contributor</b>
<b>1</b>	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 1 2022/23 (April to June 2022)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding
<b>2</b>	Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
<b>3</b>	Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
<b>4</b>	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 1	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

9 SEPTEMBER 2022	
Item	Contributor
5	Adoption Services Marketing and Recruitment Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

11 NOVEMBER 2022	
Item	Contributor
1	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 2 2021/22 (July to September 2022) Janice Spencer, Assistant Director Children's Services
2	Children in Care Annual Report 2021/22 John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)
3	Independent Reviewing Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2022) Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
4	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – Six Month Report (April to September 2022) Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager
5	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Q2 John Harris, Children's Services Manager: Regulated (North and Fostering)
6	Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

## 2. Items to be Scheduled:

- Issues caused at male dominated facilities for young persons (16-17yo) with complex support needs and the engagement in education - beyond good practice.

## 3. Consultation

### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

## 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 Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 07500 571868 or by e-mail at [kiara.chatziioannou@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:kiara.chatziioannou@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

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