



## **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

**THURSDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2021 at 10.00 AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN 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>Declarations of Members' Interests</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for absence/Replacement Members</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 September 2021</b>	<b>3 - 10</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Announcements by the Chairman, Executive Councillor and Lead Officers</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Independent Reviewing Service Six-Month Report - 1st April to 30th September 2021</b> <i>(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, which introduces the six-month report on the Independent Chair's Service)</i>	<b>11 - 36</b>

- |           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service Report 1st April- 30th September 2021</b><br><i>(To receive a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, which introduces the six-month report on the inspection of the Local Authority Children's Homes by the Independent Visitors)</i>                          | 37 - 54   |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Voices for Choices (V4C) - Update Report</b><br><i>(To receive a report by Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Quality and Standards), which provides a summary and overview of activities with regard to V4C between June – October 2021 and future V4C planning and progress, including consulting with children and young people within residential settings)</i> | 55 - 60   |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Quarter 2 Performance Report for Children in Care</b><br><i>(To receive a report by Simon Hardcastle, Performance Support Officer, which provides key performance information for Quarter 2 2021/22 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel)</i>  | 61 - 82   |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2</b><br><i>(To receive a report by Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption, which provides an overview of the Fostering Service Performance for Quarter 2)</i>   | 83 - 98   |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose</b><br><i>(To receive a report from Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption, which informs the Panel about the work of the broader Children's and Fostering Service in relation to Private Fostering)</i>   | 99 - 126  |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme</b><br><i>(To receive a report from Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which enables the Panel to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year)</i>   | 127 - 130 |

Distributed on Wednesday, 3 November 2021

Please note: This meeting will be broadcast live on the internet and access can be sought by accessing [Agenda for Corporate Parenting Panel on Thursday, 11th November, 2021, 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 9 SEPTEMBER 2021

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

**Lincolnshire County Council:** Councillors Clio Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews and M A Whittington

Officers in attendance:-

Nicola Brangam (Children's Services Agency Advisor, Fostering and Adoption), Rebecca Dolman (Team Manager - Fostering North), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Anne Johnson (Adoption Team Manager), Sarah Lane (Virtual School Team Manager), Janice Spencer OBE (Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:-

Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager) and Rachel Freeman (Interim Head of Service – Children's (Safeguarding))

### 16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apoloies for absence were received from Councillor A G Hagues, Elizabeth Bunney (Lincs Community Health Services) and Polly Coombes (Foster Carer).

### 17 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

### 18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 22 JULY 2021

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 19 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Executive Support Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning was pleased to report that the Councillor Development Group had arranged for a training session on corporate parenting to be delivered to all Members. It was hoped that corporate

parenting training would be included as part of the induction process for all Members in future.

## 20 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Children's Services which detailed the Quarter 1 Performance for Children in Care.

Members were advised that out of 15 measures that related to Children in Care in Quarter 1, 10 had met or exceeded the target, and 5 had not met the target.

The Assistant Director – Children's Services highlighted the key areas in the report. A full breakdown of performance was set out in appendix A to the report.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Concerns were raised over the low numbers of care leavers in education, employment or training. Members were reminded that care leavers had further challenges due to their often traumatic background and past experiences. The council had focussed on benchmarking and achievement on an individual basis due to different backgrounds and nature of needs, adopting a holistic approach, rather than employment being the absolute goal for all care leavers. The Panel requested further information on the recruitment of two temporary specialist Leaving Care officers.
- The Panel welcomed regular feedback on the initiatives and work carried out to support care leavers into employment.
- The Panel were pleased to see how well services had recovered from Covid-19 given the difficulties faced.
- Colleagues across the council worked hard to communicate the benefits of vaccination to children, however if they were phrase competent, the council had no control over whether a child chose to be vaccinated.
- The Panel were reassured that historically, resistance to vaccinations had not been common, but appreciated that the vaccination against Covid-19 may bring new challenges.
- The council sometimes had shared parental responsibilities with carers which could be overridden in rare situations, however where a dispute could not be resolved, it was ultimately a matter to be resolved in court.
- It would take around 18 months for the vaccination programme to be back on schedule.
- In response to a question, it was agreed that the Assistant Director – Children's Services provide further explanation for the reason that variances were set within targets, as opposed to one set target.
- The Panel were pleased to see improvements in the stability of placements for children in care.

RESOLVED:

1. That the performance data be noted;
2. That the Panel receive regular reports on the work being undertaken to improve the number of care leavers in education employment or training.

## 21 ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Consideration was given to a report by the Adoption Team Manager which informed the Corporate Parenting Panel about the work of the Adoption Service in accordance with the requirements of the Care Standards National Minimum Standards 2003, 2011, 2014, and the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

The Panel were referred to the annual report and statement of purpose set out at appendices A and B to the report, which set out the relevant performance information and identified the key developments with the service of the last twelve months.

The Panel were informed that national guidance issued as a result of Covid-19 had caused difficulty moving children safely for around 6-8 weeks of the year, which had impacted on yearly data.

Despite challenges faced as a result of the pandemic, officers were proud to have supported 29 adoption orders and made positive changes such as the use of virtual introductions. The service had seen a significant increase in adoption enquiries but were still facing challenges with the adoption of difficult to place children.

The adoption support service had also seen a significant increase in referrals from adopters and special guardianship carers and £620,000 had been obtained from the Adoption Support Fund provided by the government for adoptive families to access therapeutic services, however the pandemic had resulted in longer than normal waiting times.

Members discussed the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Panel were pleased to see the positive progress made with adoption despite the challenges faced over the past year.
- An additional judge had been appointed at Lincoln Crown Court to support with the backlog of work in children's services, however, adoption cases did not take priority.
- A review had commenced with a view to developing services which provided support needs for special guardianship families.
- There were national campaigns which focussed on the adoption of older children and sibling groups. The service worked hard to find suitable families for children who were difficult to place, however it was important to ensure that placements were not forced as this often resulted in further issues for adoptive families.
- The service had benefited from long term stability within their staffing team. Officers were confident had been sufficient plans put in place to ensure that upcoming retirements did not disrupt the level of service provided.

- Officers looked to utilise the adoption support fund to recruit a new early help worker.
- It was the first need of a child to be placed within a family, however where possible, the adoption team sought to consider family arrangements and place a child within a family which had a similar background or ethnicity, which sometimes involved working with other authorities to place a child.
- Work had been undertaken to expand the range of ethnic diversity of the adoptees in the future.
- The Panel sought assurance that minority ethnic groups were considered and supported as part of the adoption process.
- The Adoption Support grant provided by the government was solely to provide therapeutic services to adoptive families. The service also held a provision within their own budget called adoption support, which could provide other services that were not eligible for the grant for example, sensory services.
- The pandemic had presented challenges for many adoptive families due to the isolation and disruption to everyday life, alongside managing other long standing needs. However, some families had thrived and built solid relationships as a result.
- Where appropriate, the service continued virtual communications. However, there were some instances where face to face meetings were important.

## RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the impact of Covid-19 on adoptive families be highlighted;
3. That assurance be provided to the Panel at a later date that ethnic minority groups were duly considered and supported as part of the adoption process.

22 FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Consideration was given to a report by the Fostering Team Manager, which invited the Panel to consider the annual report and statement of purpose for the fostering service.

The Fostering Team Manager acknowledged that it had been a difficult year for fostering households and thanked all Lincolnshire's foster carers for their continued support to foster placements throughout the pandemic and commended their ability to adapt.

There had been an increase in the children in care populations however the number of children contained within family networks had been of a high level.

The fostering service had faced many challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but had adapted to meet the needs of the service. The service continued to offer some training online, which had proven to be successful.

Members were referred to Appendices A and B where they could view the annual report and statement of purpose.

Members discussed the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The council were working with the Home Office and District Councils to support the Afghan refugee families currently based in Lincolnshire. The offer of accommodation to the refugees was a national offer meaning that not all families would remain in Lincolnshire. The Panel welcomed the support offered to the refugees.
- Where possible, unaccompanied migrant children would look to be placed with a family that met their needs. The council continued to be responsible for any children placed out of county.
- The council had a provision to provide supported accommodation to children seeking asylum as well as a scheme which sought to find foster placements for migrant children.
- Permanent foster care was a way of providing task centred care and was usually a short term solution. In the case that a task centred care plan changed to a permanent plan, there was usually already an established relationship in place with the foster carer. Some carers had a preference to take on task centred carers.
- Home assessments had still taken place physically during the period of Covid-19 restrictions, subject to risk assessments. It was important to maintain these visits in person.
- Members were reassured that the police were taking proactive stance to the alarming comments being made towards the refugees settling in Lincolnshire.
- It was questioned whether it would be appropriate for Councillors to visit refugees to welcome them to the county and send a positive message to members of the public. The Assistant Director – Children's Services would liaise with the Home Office to see if this was possible.
- The Chairman thanked officers for allowing him to attend as a guest at a recent fostering adoption panel. Members welcomed the invitation to observe a future adoption panel meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Service for 2020/2021.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL  
9 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Consideration was given to a report by the Fostering Team Manager, which overview of the marketing strategy in the recruitment of Foster carers and Adopters.

The Fostering Team Manager explained that there had been a number of challenges with marketing and recruitment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the team were proud to have adapted the service to manage the difficulties faced and to have adopted a flexible approach to recruitment and marketing throughout the challenging period. The team were proud of the work carried out by carers during a highly difficult time.

The Panel were informed that 10% of Lincolnshire foster carers were retiring. However, the service had seen a large increase in initial enquiries and also had the unique selling point of the Caring2Learn system.

The team had increased their virtual preparations, meeting and marketing had increased, including the launch of a Facebook campaign and an Instagram account. Officers had also worked with the council's communications team to move forms to a digital format to reduce the delay, which had seen a positive response.

The full strategy could be found at appendix A to the report.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Panel were pleased to see such a positive report and sympathised with the difficulties faced during the period.
- The result of a recent recruitment audit to identify the conversion rate from applications to the recruitment of carers had identified strengths of the service as well as areas of improvement. The Panel were pleased to see the move to a digital platform which had resulted in shorter response times.
- It was suggested that officers make use of Councillors' social media pages as a marketing tool to promote fostering and adoption.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering and Adoption Service;
2. That an update be provided on the use of councillors' resources as a marketing tool to promote fostering and adoption.

24 FOSTERING QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1

Consideration was given to a report by the Fostering Team Manager, invited the Panel to consider the Fostering Quarterly Performance report for quarter 1 of 2021/22.

The Fostering Team Manager highlighted some key areas of performance for Quarter 1, which included the success of transformation work to bring Caring2Learn on board with the

fostering service and the positive use of virtual training during the Covid-19 pandemic which had resulted in a significant increase in carers accessing training and a rise in the number of applications. Overall, it had been a positive start for the service following a challenging year.

The Fostering Team Manager was also pleased to announce that all foster carers within Lincolnshire had received an increase of 2% in their allowance to recognise the level of care and dedication from carers.

Members discussed the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Panel were pleased to see that foster carers would be celebrated at the event scheduled for 19 October 2021. The Fostering Team Leader extended the invitation to Councillors, which was welcomed.
- The decrease in the number of people on the 'staying put' scheme was the result of young people opting into an alternative route rather than being opposed to their initial route. The scheme provided more options for young people including another scheme providing supported lodgings.

RESOLVED:

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

## 25 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Health Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Panel to consider their work programme for the coming year, which was set out on pages 170-171 of the agenda pack.

The Health Scrutiny Officer had noted requests to provide further information on the reason for the tolerances set in the Children in Care Quarter One Performance report.

It had been agreed that a further update on care leavers in education, training or employment would be included as part of the next performance update scheduled for the meeting of the Panel on the 11 November 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.57 am

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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>11 November 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Independent Reviewing Service Six-Month Report – 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b>

**Summary:**

This report introduces the Six-Month 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 attached Six-Month Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2021-22.

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Introduction:**

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

## **1.2 Children in Care Services:**

Due to the spread of Coronavirus and the strict measures imposed by the UK government the Quality and Standards Service has had to redesign the delivery of child protection conferencing, Children in Care (formally known as Looked After Children) reviews and Regulation 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 IROs is to Quality Assure and Improve Services for Children in Care.

The attached Independent Reviewing Six-Month Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 sets out an overview of the services provided to children subjected to Child Protection Plans, Children in Care, those who receive Short Term Breaks.

The report outlines a range of key priorities for the service and includes the ways in which children and young people are encouraged to be involved in their care planning, 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.

## **1.3 Review of Service Area:**

There has been a whole service review including full consultation with staff. This has led to a reshaping of the management structure, with an addition of one Team Manager.

The Chairs continue at full capacity under the new ways of working and COVID-19 restrictions. Additional capacity has been created through the recruitment of two agency members of staff to address the increase workload. We are reviewing the best way to increase long term capacity in the service and how to implement a post COVID-19 exit strategy.

## **2. Conclusion**

The main service priorities for 2021 – 2022 are set out below.

The service will be undertaking a review of Child Protection Conferences and Children in Care physical participation by families and professionals with a road map for attendance.

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

Work is being undertaken by the service with the Regional IRO Network to share best practice in relation to conducting hybrid meetings. Feedback has been gathered from partners and families of their experience of different styles of meetings. From this collaboration we have determined that a range of meeting styles will be appropriate depending on the individual circumstances of children and families.

Analysis and development of procedures and IT support required for post covid Child Protection and Children in Care hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings being those attended by invitees in person and via electronic media.

Whilst awaiting the corporate roll out of electronic technology to fully utilise this facility for hybrid meetings, 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 Children in Care reviews where appropriate.

Integration of current feedback from Child Protection Conferences and Children in Care reviews 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 to develop the service.

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

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2020-21.

## 5. Consultation

### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

## 6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Independent Reviewing Service Six-Month Report 1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 <sup>st</sup> September 2021

## 7. 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, Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, who can be contacted on [Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk), or on 0152253732.

**Lincolnshire County Council – Children’s Services**  
**Independent Reviewing Service Six Month report**  
**1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

*Due to the spread of Corona virus and the strict measures imposed by the UK government the Quality and Standards Service has had to redesign the delivery of child protection conferencing, Children in Care (CIC, formerly known as Looked After Children, LAC) 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 Child Protection Conferences and Children in Care reviews within timescales and ensured the continued participation of children and families who face additional challenges.*

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

This IRO report provides evidence relating to the IRO Services in Lincolnshire as required by statutory guidance. Due to the core business of the team also including child protection, short breaks and Reg 44 visits, where appropriate this report contains information relating to those areas. In Lincolnshire the functions of the IRO and Child Protection Chair are merged into one role, that of an Independent Chair.

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

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

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

### **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.**

**Work is being undertaken by the service with the Regional IRO Network to share best practice in relation to conducting hybrid meetings. Feedback has been gathered from partners and families of their experience of different styles of meetings. From this collaboration we have determined that a range of meeting styles will be appropriate depending on the individual circumstances of children and families.**

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

**Whilst awaiting the corporate roll out of electronic technology in order to fully utilise this facility for hybrid meetings, 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.**

- **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 to develop the service.**

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

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 key on 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 must be a senior social worker G11 or above)
- request to Safeguarding and Review to coordinate all the pre-birth Strategy meetings and for minutes to be taken.

The reason for this request is, within the protocol over the last 6 months, where the meetings have been independently chaired, the role of Safeguarding and Review and Meeting Support Assistant has improved quality of information brought to strategy discussions by partners and the records created. This may have a capacity implication for Safeguarding and Review.

However, the benefits are:

- improved coordination of invites and agency information sharing,
  - centralised monitoring of the number of ICPC for unborn babies (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.
- **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.**

**A full audit undertaken in Feb/March 21 was reported on, the findings being shared across the LSCP and the senior leadership team within Children's Services. As a result of these findings a series of multi-agency task and finish groups were established by the LSCP. A bid to the Centre**

for Expertise in Child Sexual Abuse was successful, and Lincolnshire are working in partnership with them 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.

- **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.

- **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 in relation to the agenda and guidance relating to these meetings.

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

There has been a whole service review including full consultation with staff. 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 role out 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 20.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Independent Chair posts

within the team that cover the county as a whole, currently there are 2 posts that are being recruited too.

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 were line managed by the Quality and Standards Manager, following the restructure they now sit under 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. They also do the majority of the Reg 44 work.

COVID, sickness absence and secondment has proven challenging over the course of the year, this has necessitated the use of 3 agency staff to ensure that service capacity is not impacted on, and standards are maintained.

### **Short Term Breaks (STB's)**

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

The role of the IRO for children in care in a series of short breaks is more limited than for children in care 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		
Nov 18	9	Nov 19	6	Nov 20	9		
Dec 18	8	Dec 19	4	Dec 20	2		
Jan 19	6	Jan 20	6	Jan 21	4		
Feb 19	4	Feb 20	4	Feb 21	3		
Mar 19	5	Mar 20	4	Mar 21	5		

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 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 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.

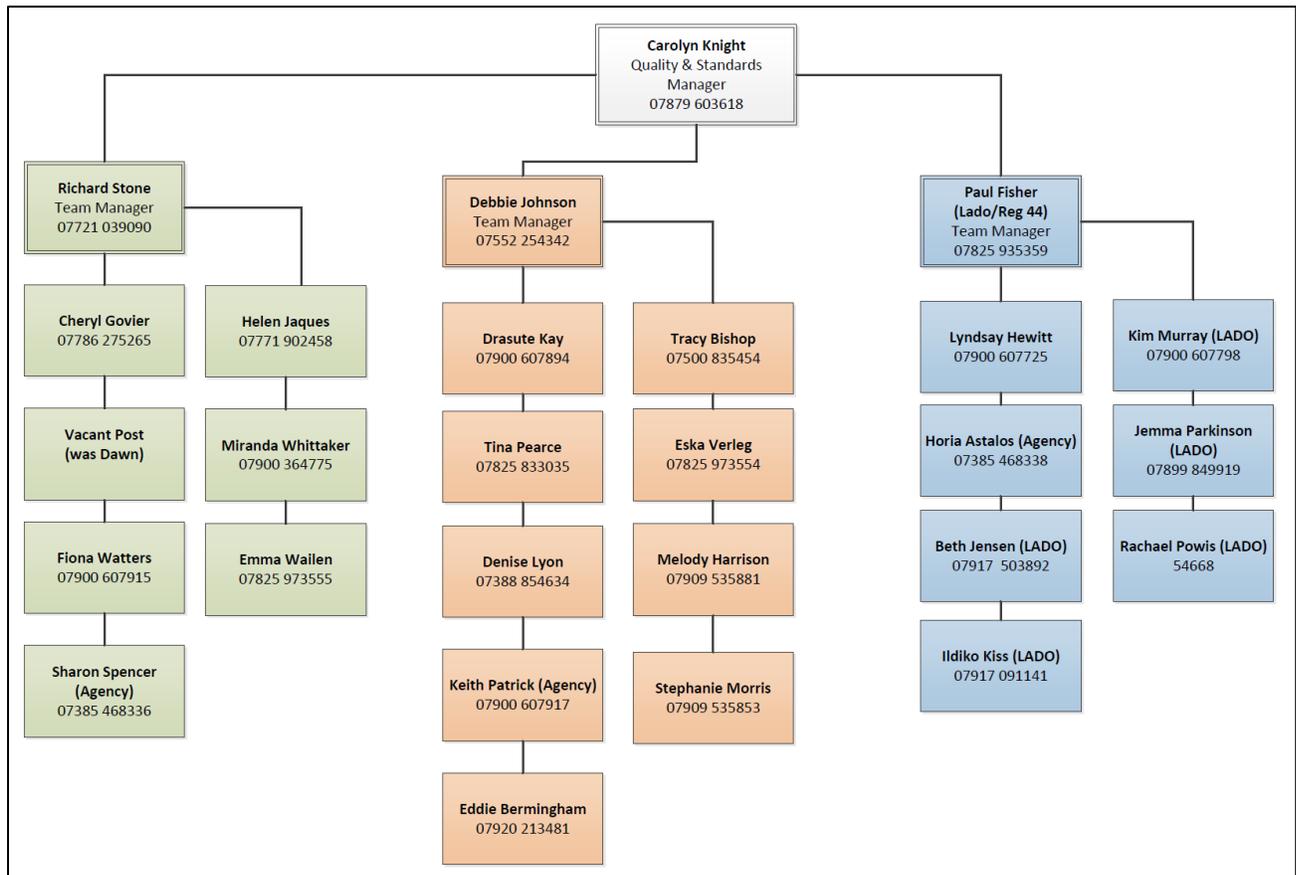
**Staffing**

Management Team

Debbie Johnson and Paul Fisher were joined by Richard Stone in August this year as the additional Team Manager post created through the consultation. The individual Team Managers have taken the lead for developing different aspects of the service. Philippa Gallop remains in post and has responsibility for Quality Assurance.

Independent Chairs

The team has experienced a number of changes since April, one member of staff has left for a new role within the authority. A member of staff has been seconded to Lincoln FAST. Between May and September we have had 2 members of staff on long term sick. We currently have 3 agency staff in post to cover staffing shortfall and additional work due to COVID and subsequent change in practices.



**Children in Care population and the IRO service**

There continues to be an upward trend in the number of young people being in care, 661 (September 20) as opposed to 699 (September 21).

Since April 2021 the IROs have conducted 1221 reviews. In the same period in 2020 there were 1233 reviews.

The Children in Care population has seen an upward trend resulting in currently 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 Chair Team Managers.

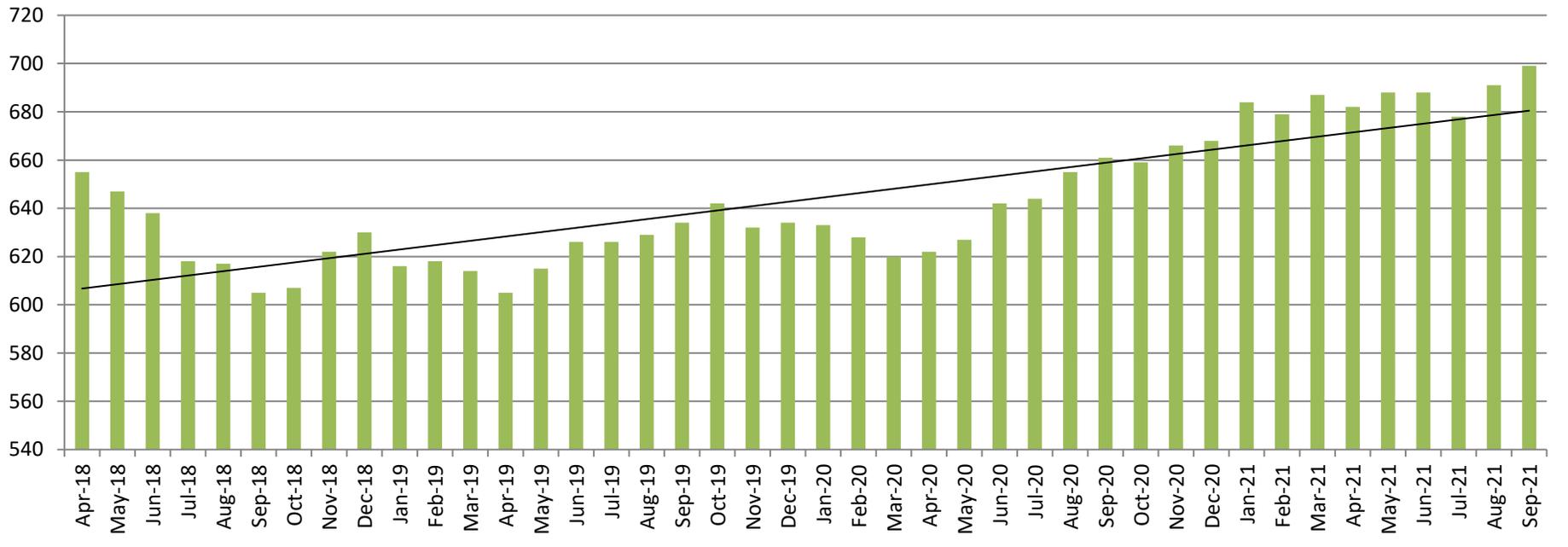
Of the 6 young people subject to secure accommodation 5 of these are young women with complex trauma histories who require specialist psychological input and therapeutic environments for move on placements and these have not been available nationally despite extensive searches.

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

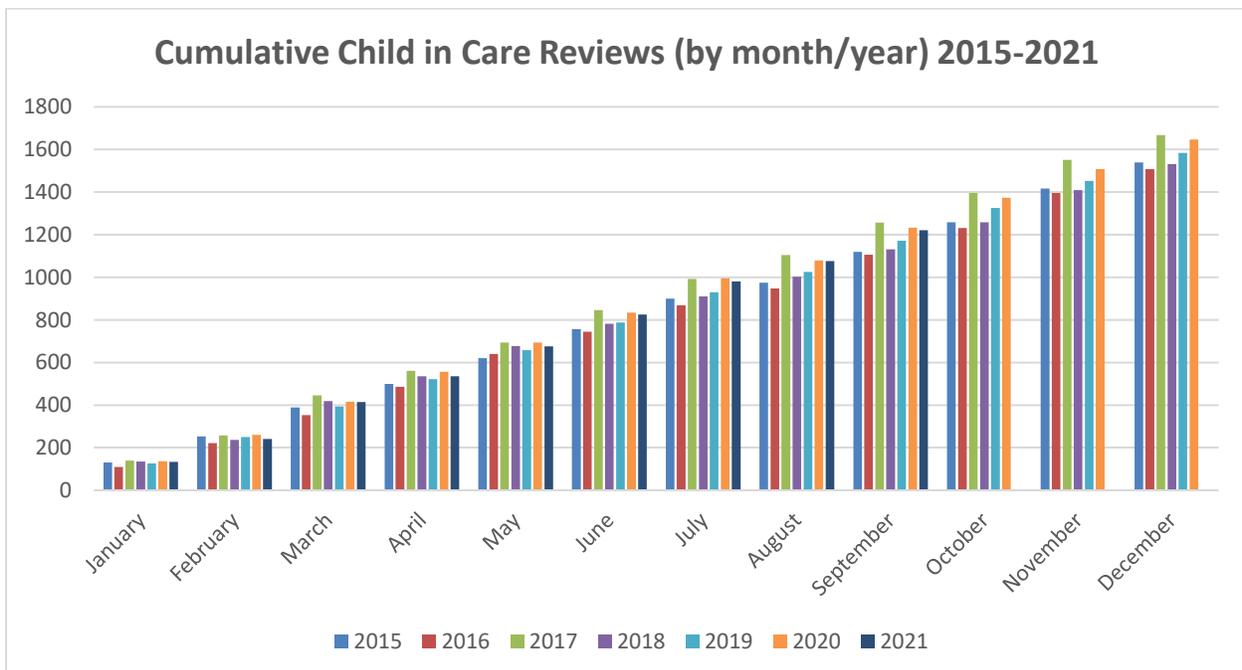
The purpose in underlining this within this report as this cohort of young people requires additional scrutiny, the Quality Assurance Service is undertaking a piece of work to track potential key points in a young person's life where intervention could have diverted the young person away from needing a secure order. We will also be looking at the exit strategies for these young people and the outcomes 6 months after leaving secure accommodation.

**Child in Care Population**

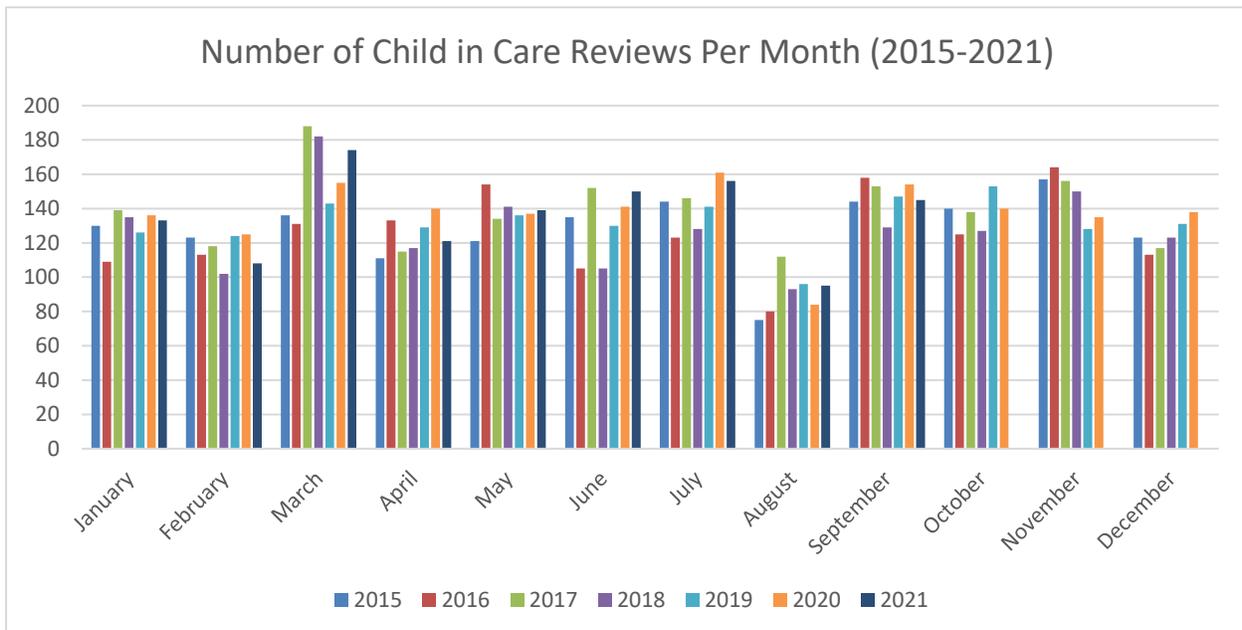
**Child in Care Population by Month (2018-2021)**



Cumulative Number of Child in Care Reviews							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	130	109	139	135	126	136	133
February	253	222	257	237	250	261	241
March	389	353	445	419	393	416	415
April	500	486	560	536	522	556	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	
November	1416	1395	1551	1409	1453	1508	
December	1539	1508	1668	1532	1584	1646	



Number of Child in Care Reviews Per Month								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	123	130	109	139	135	126	136	133
February	95	123	113	118	102	124	125	108
March	116	136	131	188	182	143	155	174
April	115	111	133	115	117	129	140	121
May	133	121	154	134	141	136	137	139
June	109	135	105	152	105	130	141	150
July	149	144	123	146	128	141	161	156
August	71	75	80	112	93	96	84	95
September	155	144	158	153	129	147	154	145
October	143	140	125	138	127	153	140	
November	139	157	164	156	150	128	135	
December	111	123	113	117	123	131	138	



### Advocacy

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

IROs routinely check that children and young people know about advocacy and how it can support them in having a real say in decisions affecting their lives. Children in Care are opted in to Voiceability who are also automatically invited to Children in Care Reviews for children aged 8 and over.

### Timeliness of reviews

The latest performance report shows 99.1% in timescale (693 out of 699 reviews). One was booked out of timescale in error and a sibling group of 5 was held out of timescale for an agreed reason. Any recording errors are identified and resolved on a weekly basis to ensure that the performance reports are an accurate representation of "actual" performance.

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

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

Since the start of Covid children have been contacted either via the telephone or virtual technology. As restrictions have eased the IRO's have started to physically visit young people. 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 role out and integration of this way of working.

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

#### Children seen in separate interviews and children attending their reviews

We have amended the Chairs Activity step to be able to report on the contact with young people prior to review.

#### Progress-chasing Activities between Looked After Reviews

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

#### Identifying good practice, problem resolution and escalation

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

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

The team continue to focus on improving consistency in terms of escalations made and to ensure a better monitoring, reducing drift and delay. Systems are in place to support managerial oversight as well as helping the IRO's in their duty of tracking escalations. The IROs 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		
Nov 16	3	Nov 17	5	Nov 18	1	Nov 19	2	Nov 20	3		
Dec 16	6	Dec 17	5	Dec 18	0	Dec 19	0	Dec 20	3		
Jan 17	2	Jan 18	8	Jan 19	3	Jan 20	2	Jan 21	5		
Feb 17	5	Feb 18	4	Feb 19	2	Feb 20	7	Feb 21	1		
Mar 17	8	Mar 18	7	Mar 19	2	Mar 20	1	Mar 21	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>		

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

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

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

Theme	Number of Escalations Raised
Plans – Disagreement	5
Safeguarding Concerns	5
Blank / Not Recorded	2
Family Time Concerns	1
Legal Concerns	1
Practice Issues (Multiple Concerns)	1
Provision of Service	1
<b>Total Escalations Raised</b>	<b>16</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 to the need to ensure any resource implications have been addressed. Once the decisions are completed the Manager has 5 days to raise any queries or objections. Managers rarely ask for any amendments to be made and this process appears to work well.

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

Leaving Care – Director's Decision

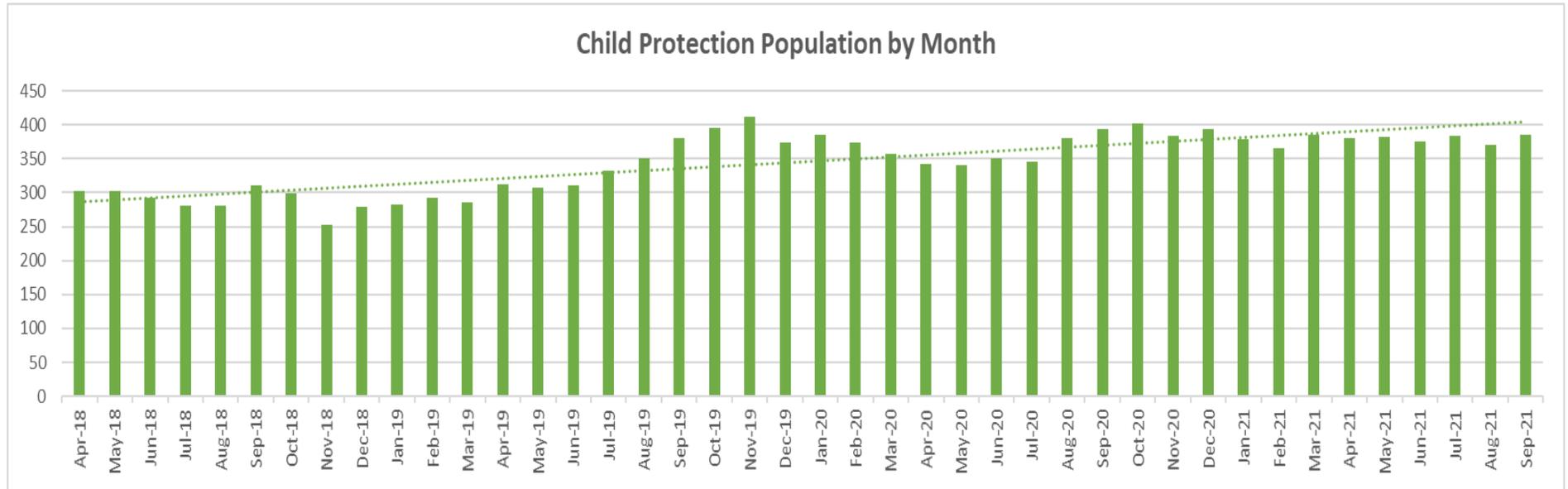
Apr 18	1	Apr 19	0	Apr 20	0	Apr 21	0
May 18	3	May 19	1	May 20	0	May 21	1
Jun 18	2	Jun 19	0	Jun 20	0	Jun 21	0
Jul 18	1	Jul 19	1	Jul 20	0	Jul 21	0
Aug 18	2	Aug 19	2	Aug 20	0	Aug 21	0
Sep 18	0	Sep 19	0	Sep 20	0	Sep 21	0
Oct 18	1	Oct 19	0	Oct 20	0		
Nov 18	1	Nov 19	0	Nov 20	0		
Dec 18	0	Dec 19	2	Dec 20	1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

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

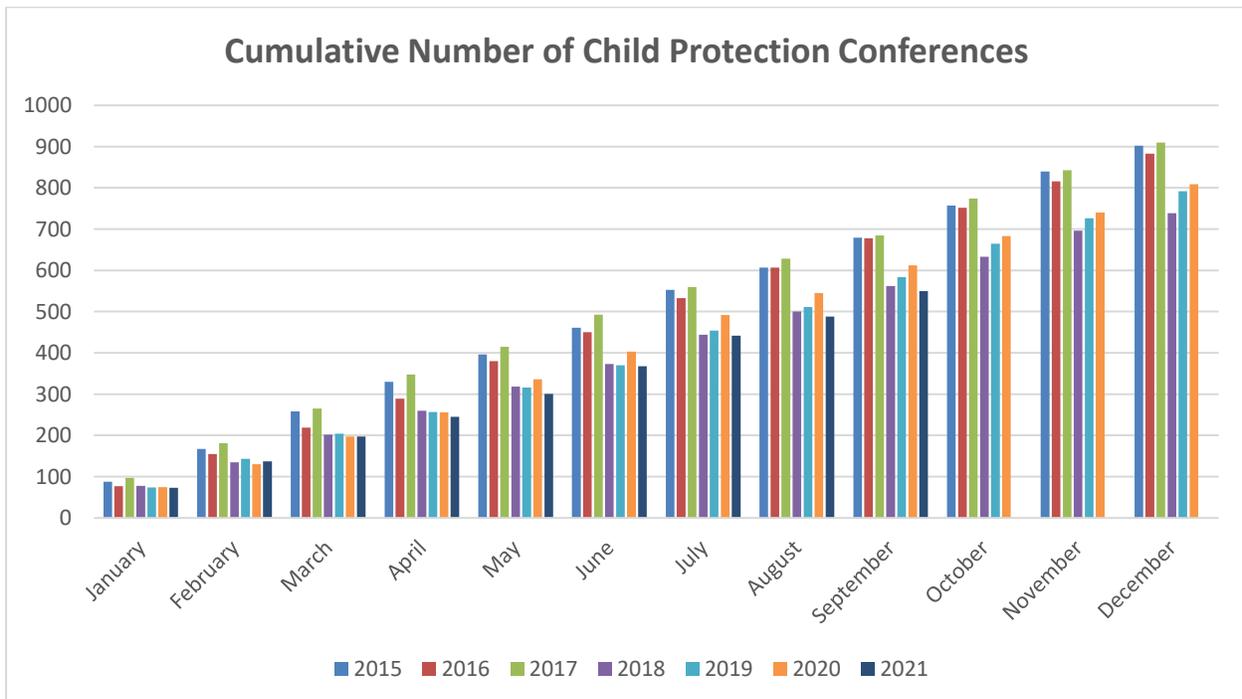
**Child Protection**

There are currently 357 children subject to a CP plan, the number of children subject to a CP Plan in April was 381. The number of conferences has decreased from 612 (September 2020) to 550 (September 2021).

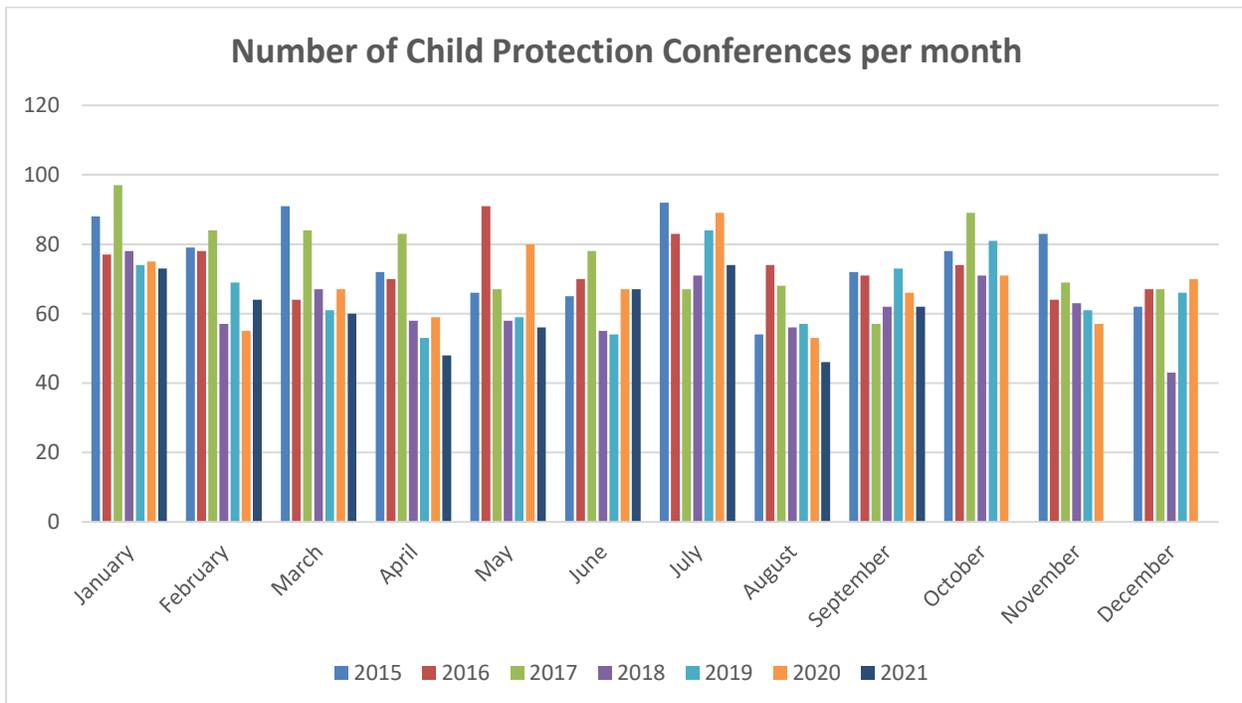
**Child Protection Population**



Cumulative Number of Child Protection Conferences							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	88	77	97	78	74	75	73
February	167	155	181	135	143	130	137
March	258	219	265	202	204	197	197
April	330	289	348	260	257	256	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	
November	840	816	843	696	726	740	
December	902	883	910	739	792	809	



Number of Child Protection Conferences per month							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	88	77	97	78	74	75	73
February	79	78	84	57	69	55	64
March	91	64	84	67	61	67	60
April	72	70	83	58	53	59	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	
November	83	64	69	63	61	57	
December	62	67	67	43	66	70	



### Timeliness of reviews

Eight conferences took place out of timescale. These are accounted for and were agreed by a Quality and Standards Team Manager. Latest performance report shows 97% in timescale. Examples of reasons as to why it is agreed that a conference can go out of timescales are:

- Parental Ill health and hospitalisation
- Family bereavement
- Families moving and transfer out of area, conferences arranged in new local authority
- Timeliness of reports being provided
- Quoracy – The requirement to have the Social Worker and at least two other professional disciplines present to make key recommendations. This is especially important when considering removing children from a child protection plan.

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

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

### Activities between Child Protection Reviews

Chairs undertake a monitoring check at the midway point between Conferences and a check when preparing for reviews. This is to ensure that statutory tasks have been undertaken (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.

There has been a recent change in policy regarding the point at which a child protection plan is scrutinised due to the length of time it has been in place. Up until August 2021 all children subject to plans for 12 months or more had a professional review led by a different CP Chair which included the allocated Chair, SW, PS and TM. From the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 this now takes place once a child has been subject to a CP plan for 18 months or more. This was result of an audit on the 12-month review process, the recommendations of which were taken to the Operational Management Group (OMG) for ratification.

### 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 September 2021**

Organisation	Number of Escalations
GP's	29
Education (Nurseries, Schools etc)	7
Social Workers / Practice Supervisors	6
Other/Misc	5
Early Help Worker	4
Hospital Based Worker	2
PPU	1
Probation	1
Barnardo's Advocate	1
<b>Total escalations raised in this period</b>	<b>56</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	8
Oct 18	18	Oct 19	35	Oct 20	13		
Nov 18	26	Nov 19	30	Nov 20	7		
Dec 18	12	Dec 19	14	Dec 20	20		
Jan 19	26	Jan 20	32	Jan 21	17		
Feb 19	22	Feb 20	30	Feb 21	12		
Mar 19	30	Mar 20	27	Mar 21	8		
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>		

The overwhelming reason for escalation was no report being prepared for the conference and no apologies provided for non-attendance

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 Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, LCC LSCP Trainers, SOS Practice Advisers. This continues to take place under Covid, although these remain solely virtual observations. A number of themed practice audits have taken place which chairs and team managers have contributed too. These are reported on separately by Quality and Standards Team.

#### 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 and COVID restrictions. Additional capacity has been created through the recruitment of two agency members of staff to address the increase workload. We are reviewing the best way to increase long term capacity in the service and how to implement a post COVID exit strategy.

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

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



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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>11 November 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service Report 1<sup>st</sup> April–30<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b>

**Summary:**

This report introduces the 6 monthly Report on the inspection of the Local Authority Childrens Homes by the Independent Visitors. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Corporate Parenting Panel on how the Care Standards are met within these homes in Lincolnshire.

**Actions required:**

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the 6 Monthly Report on the Residential Childrens Homes to ensure they meet the Care Standards and needs of the resident children and young people.

## **1. Background**

Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 makes provision for the appointment of an Independent Visitor. Independent Visitor Inspections seek to demonstrate how each children's home meets the Quality standards for children's homes [Children Homes Regulations 2015 (Part 2)]. 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. Included in the reports are sections highlighting "What's working well", "What are we worried about" and "Recommendations". Each report also contains a response to the report by the Home Manager.

Each visit has been conducted in light of COVID advice and guidance, however the Independent Visitors have continued to visit in person unless restrictions/COVID outbreaks have not allowed this.

They continue to speak to children, staff, Managers, external professionals and parents in order to compile the monthly reports as well as review all appropriate documents.

## **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 are actively promoting multi-agency working and supporting each other to ensure the physical and emotional safety of welfare of the children in their care with positive feedback of their experiences.

The voice of the young people continues to be valued, strived for and promoted being gathered in various methods to ensure they are happy with the care they are being provided. There continues to be extensive promotion to the young people's joy and achievement, by promoting activities in the home as well as the community, a lot of which also support the young people in developing healthy lifestyles.

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

Each of the individual homes has undertaken some levels of recruitment to fill vacant posts. One thing that has been clear that the service as a whole has pulled together through secondments and acting up roles to ensure key positions have been filled and continuity of care is maintained.

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.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Report for the Independent Visiting Service May 2021 – October 2021

**5. Background Papers**

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

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, who can be contacted on [Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk), or 0152253732.

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**Report for the**

**Independent Visiting Service**

**May 2021 – October 2021**

**Cheryl Govier, Kim Murray and 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 May 2021 (when the last report was submitted) to October 2021.

## **Introduction**

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

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

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

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

The Regulation 44 report maintained its format providing a succinct summary of the homes under the signs of safety headings and there remains the inclusion of the recommendations section to ensure there is clarity in prioritising areas for immediate action where these are identified during visits.

## **Covid 19 Pandemic**

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

ensure compliance against the monthly visiting schedule. Since the last report there have not been any visits undertaken outside of the due timescales.

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

Independent Visitors frequently sanitise their hands throughout their visits. Face masks are no longer a government requirement, and some homes no longer enforce these being worn but provide staff the choice to wear masks should they wish. Other homes have continued to enforce a mandatory requirement to wear masks when moving around the home. In these homes masks can be removed when stationary within the buildings and only at times when safe social distance can be maintained. In the homes that provide care for young people with additional needs and underlying health conditions, masks are always mandatory and staff members also wear these for additional protection.

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

As the restrictions have eased the homes have been able to further open to visitors that are significant to the young people, always following the same level of safety precautions. In person visits between the young people and their families has developed further, for example the Beacon has now resumed family time being completed in the home, while previously this was being done in the community.

Sadly, despite all the protective measures in place, some homes across the county have experienced COVID cases. For example, Haven and Northholme had positive cases in August, which at the time the overall numbers of Covid cases in Lincolnshire was on the rise. Despite this only two young people tested positive in Northholme who managed the situation very well preventing the spread of the virus. Haven made the decision after two young people tested positive to close the home for four days, this quick and effective thinking prevented the spread of the virus to both staff and young people. Other homes have experienced individual cases in staff and young people.

Positively, these have all been managed effectively and in a timely manner. Managers have worked closely with Public Health and senior managers. This has involved timely risk assessments, strategic planning and mass testing within the homes. Mandatory face mask wearing has been introduced at these times alongside PPE and intense cleaning has been established to further reduce the risk of infection. 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.

In line with the Governments current plans, those young people who attend secondary school have been supported to access twice weekly lateral flow tests. Young people who wish to have the Covid vaccination have been supported in doing this and Covid boosters for staff members is being offered and fully supported. Following the government guidance and ending of the lockdown, all the homes have been keen and pro-active in supporting the young people accessing the community, from general walks and visits to the shops to regular activities and fun days out.

### **The Independent Visitor**

From April 2021, Regulation 44 visits continued to be undertaken by three Independent Visitors Dawn Oldroyd, Cheryl Govier and Richard Stone. Both Dawn Oldroyd and Richard Stone have slowly transitioned out of the role over the past six months being replaced by Kim Murray and Rachael Powis. Kim Murray and Rachael Powis were able to complete some shadowing opportunities prior to completing solo visits, with Kim starting in April 2021 and Rachael in July 2021. The three regulation visitors continue to share 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 have taken the positive step to commit to this as part of their quality assurance process.

The Independent Visitors have continued to maintain positive working relationships with care home managers, staff, and young people.

The Independent Visitors continue to develop relationships with the new homes managers that have been appointed since the last report was completed.

Since April 2021 there have been several changes to the management of the homes. The Beacon Homes Manager is now registered. The Manager from Eastgate was an interim manager and is now the manager waiting to be registered. Albion Street currently have an interim manager from Northholme, and Northholme have an interim manager. Haven currently has adverts out for both their registered manager and assistant manager. An RCO 3 was also successful in gaining the Assistant Manager position at Rowston and Denton. There has been further movement in the assistant manager positions and from this peer mentoring has been completed between the homes. For example, the new assistant manager at Albion Street peer mentoring /shadowing the new assistant manager at Eastgate.

The managers have continued to maintain positive communication and support across the homes. With regular management groups, and peer audits where two managers are going into other homes to complete audits. In addition, following Albion Street's Ofsted inspection several of the other homes provided training, mentoring and advice to support them in resolving some of the issues identified.

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

There has been no need to implement the dispute resolution procedure since the last report was completed, however there has been positive communication between the Regulation 44 team and regulated services to resolve arrangements for delivering the inspections during the Covid pandemic. There has been regular communication between senior management, with the introduction of the new residential lead, which has continued to support the regulation 44 visits and supported communication.

### **The voice of the child**

All the homes have had to adapt their processes and practice to ensure that young people's voices have been heard throughout Covid 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.

Since the easing of lockdown, the Independent Advocate visits again started to resume face to face visits. In June the advocacy service advised they no longer intended on completing physical reports for the homes, which was challenged by the home managers. Following this challenge, the advocacy service confirmed in September they would resume the completing of reports. These would be generalised reports of the young people's voices but anything specific from an individual child will be raised verbally, and they intended to back date all missing reports.

The homes continue to offer the young people a regular young people's meeting each month or 'Chill and Chat'. These meetings are used as an opportunity for the young people to become involved and have a say in how the home is run and for discussions around the important things that affect them. This has been used effectively to involve them in matters such as arranging activities; safety issues in the home such as COVID and encouraging them to become involved in the redecoration of their home, often choosing colour schemes and furnishings as examples. At the Beacon and Albion Street the young people have been asked their views on a name for the new children home on South Park. 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 several young people living together.

During the Independent visits, the young people are always offered an opportunity to speak with their visitor on their own, with a peer or just in naturally occurring situations. Overall, the young people across the homes say that they feel supported and feel heard.

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

stating that their young people are fully supported to attend their review by their key worker and helped to ensure their voice is heard.

Most of the homes continue to promote display boards that celebrate the voice of the child through 'Voice of the child' and 'You said we did' creative displays. There is also an increased use of photographs to evidence the young people's input and some of the homes are using newsletters and monthly Junior Journals to share information. An example of this is the Beacon continue a weekly newsletter from a child to their parent to share their updates.

It has been particularly evident within the disabilities homes that the myriad of photographic displays really help to portray the young people's voices through their facial expressions and engagement with their peers and staff members. This is especially important given that their use of the verbal word is often limited due to their communication and additional needs. Example- Haven have communication sheets within the young person's 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. Beacon, Secure and Strut have been trying to encourage food from the young people's heritage, which supports their identify.

Other examples of how the young people's voices have been captured and heard is at Albion Street where the young people have been asked what equipment they would like to see in the garden including exploring a forest school. Northholme have re-decorated the young people's bedrooms and they have chosen their own colours and furniture. The Secure Unit completes exit questionnaires to gain their feedback on the care they reviewed. There has been overwhelming evidence within the homes that all the staff have worked hard to encourage the young people to participate in activities of their preferences during the school holidays and at evenings and weekends.

### **Quality of care**

The children within the homes generally continue to receive a good, and in some homes excellent, quality of care. However, it has remained a challenging time for Albion Street. Following the Ofsted full inspection that was carried out on 8 and 9 June 2021 by social care regulatory inspectors, Sarah Orriss and Andi Lilley-Tams a compliance notice was issued to address shortfalls in leadership and management within the home. An Ofsted monitoring visit was undertaken to check the progress against the compliance notice. Following the monitoring visit on 11 August 2021 Ofsted noted that sufficient progress has been made in relation to the compliance notice and due to this it will be removed. Where shortfalls have been identified, an action plan has been identified by managers to address the concerns raised.

There have been some significant challenges for some care homes regarding the on-going recruitment of staff at a variety of levels, from RCO1 to Homes Manager. However, the homes have embraced these challenges and recruitment has been on going where

necessary. The Independent Visitors have found good evidence in homes of new staff being supported and inducted into their new roles.

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

At Haven Cottage the team have continued to be stable, however are currently under-going some changes in structure following both the registered manager and assistant manager putting in notice. The staff team have been honest that they feel anxious for the changes ahead and are going to strongly miss the current managers, but some are viewing this as an opportunity for career advancement. Haven has continued to not use agency workers and supported members of the team in developing some of their care skills to meet the needs of certain young people during the night rather than have agency staff in, which has resulted in further continuity.

There have been some vacancies in the Secure Unit during April to October. However, most of these have been filled or are undergoing current recruitment and there is a stable management team in place. An RCO3 who had been on secondment at Albion Street has recently returned to the team, another RCO3 was successful in acquiring the resettlement officer role within the unit and an RCO2 has now been seconded into this position. A recent interim visit was completed on the 18<sup>th</sup> May where no concerns were received, and the unit has sustained effectiveness.

As outlined within this report the assistant manager has now become the manager, which has provided consistency. She is being supported by the new assistant manager. During this time there was no change in the quality of care provided and the Independent Visits consistently highlighted this.

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

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

Across the homes staff continue to attend EHCP and EPEP meetings and have responded well to supporting the children and young people with returning to education settings. As outlined within this report, the homes have been flexible in their approach in order to minimise the impact on the young people's routines and stability. The homes continue to provide a range of learning opportunities for the young people according to their individual needs.

The homes continue to follow their scheme of decoration to ensure that they maintain the current quality of the fabric of the building. The autism colours are being used throughout some 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, Northolme allowed the young people to paint their bedrooms, mood boards being created, and the young people being offered trips out to help purchase furnishings of their choice wherever safe and possible. Whilst there are concerns raised over Albion Street, the overall quality of the décor and fabric of the building has improved and been maintained to a good standard.

Each of the homes has ensured the young people have had access to a range of activities. There has been a varied approach to in-house craft activities, and outside trips to activities each young person has particular interests in. Many of the individual pursuits the young people follow have been available such as after school clubs, youth clubs, army cadets and riding. When young people have expressed an interest in attending new activities, this has been fully promoted and supported by staff to put in place if required. All the homes are keen to keeping the young people in activities and promote physical exercise and healthy living.

Positive examples of activities offered include the Secure Unit allowing the young people to pick out activities or games they would like purchased, which has included board games and some remote-control drones. They have arranged visits from reptiles, t-shirt printing and a pottery café came in and the young people were able to decorate cups and plates.

Haven Cottage have themed months and have engaged the young people in 'music medley', 'circus /fair', 'harvest/autumn', making activities in line with the theme. During these months the outer reception areas is decorated by the young people's creative artwork and crafts and at times had themed dinner evenings. Haven have additionally been working with the young people doing litter picking in the local community, which pictures have shown then young people fully enjoying and engaging.

At Strut House has developed outside space significantly, all of this is fully tailored for the additional needs of the young people in the home. All the plants are edible, and the young people have engaged with the garden positively planting tomatoes and chives etc. They have ensured equipment has been adapted for example picnic tables with spaces to allow for wheelchair users. Strut house has additionally promoted the young people in accessing the community and completed the Imp trail, supporting the young people developing their independence.

Eastgate continue to offer the forest school and the young people have learned to build fires under supervision, camp out the night and carve wood objects themselves. They have additionally completed a race for life 5K and completed numerous days out including the wolds wildlife park, the deep, Lincoln castle, and went to the lake district to climb the Via Ferrata. This involves climbing high up a mountain using metal rungs, ladders and bridges. The children completed a 4-hour climb. This does not look like it would be an activity for the faint hearted so is yet another accomplishment for the children where they have proved their willingness to challenge themselves and be pushed outside of their comfort zones.

At the Beacon the staff team continue to engage the young people in activities both at the home and now back in the community. In the home staff continue to be very creative in supporting the young people to achieve their targets promoting and planning activities to encourage positive behaviours and achievements. The Beacon continues to use weekly newsletters and monthly summaries on each young person continue to be completed, with the weekly summaries being displayed in the staff office. These are shared with family and social workers and show a range of pictures of the young people doing a variety of activities, with brief descriptions.

At Northolme, the young people have been able to spend time at the caravan at Butlin's as well as promoting individual young people's interest such as cadets, football club and been engaging in creative therapies once a week which the children love. The young people have also been able to try their hand as outward-bound skills such as orienteering and tracking in the outdoors.

One of the most important priorities for young people is maintaining their sense of identity and links with their families and significant people in their lives. The ever-changing restrictions have meant that staff have had to be flexible and responsive to their approach to this. Home visits are now permitted for all the homes with clear safety guidance in place. Each of the homes provide a significant level of support to ensure family time is maintained and promoted. For example, in Northolme a young person is taken to Newcastle every two weeks. Some of the home's complete daily discussions to parents to ensure they are kept up to date and involved. Young people have been supported to meet for meals in safe organised spaces, parks and the community. The use of video and telephone calls has been widely promoted as has sending cards and letters.

### **Social Pedagogy and Restorative Practice**

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

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

This is still developing in each home, and it is fair to say that the homes are at different stages of development in terms of implementing restorative practice. Its use is being aligned with the young persons' targets and care plans in order to embed this into the day-to-day interactions with staff and activities. Staff are reporting that this is complimenting their practice rather than being seen as a standalone piece of work and they are seeing the

benefits of linking behaviours to feelings and reflecting on their contribution to dynamics and relationships.

There is now a much clearer link between SP and responses to incidents and a more restorative approach in resolving and managing these incidents. Some of the homes have been auditing their SP work to ensure a range of models are being used.

### **Challenges**

The main challenge that all homes have experienced across the board has been in regard to staffing and recruitment. With several changes in several of the homes staff teams at times some of the homes have had to manage on a reduced staff team. Despite this and the obvious challenges of increased stress, more shifts, longer hours it has caused in the homes, most staff spoken to has been complimentary of the staff team they work with and have worked together to effectively manage during difficult times.

### **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 are actively promoting multi-agency working and supporting each other to ensure the physical and emotional safety of welfare of the children in their care with positive feedback of their experiences.

The voice of the young people continues to be valued, strived for and promoted being gathered in various methods to ensure they are happy with the care they are being provided. There continues to be extensive promotion to the young people's joy and achievement, by promoting activities in the home as well as the community, a lot of which also support the young people in developing healthy lifestyles.

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

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

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.

## 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. However, due to the COVID pandemic Ofsted have been completing Assurance Visits. These have been shorted visits focused on specific areas. At the current time Ofsted are returning to inspection visits in person.

### SECURE UNIT

#### Assurance Visit

#### Interim Visit

**Visit dates:** 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Previous inspection date:** 4 February 2020

**Previous inspection judgement:** *Good*

#### Information about this visit

Sustained Effectiveness

#### Recent inspection history

#### Inspection date

04/02/2020

24/09/2019

### 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

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)) Due 9<sup>th</sup> September

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 necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and

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.

(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b))

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.

Due 9<sup>th</sup> September

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

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

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.

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

An action plan to address the recommendations made by Ofsted was created and agreed by Senior Manager and has been reviewed with the Reg 44 visits and subsequent reports.

Following the recent inspection the home is clearly striving to make positive changes. The home continues to work collaboratively with higher management, other registered homes managers and external services. The level of support the home is being provided is robust and being positively received by management and staff.

## **Beacon**

**Visit dates:** 23 and 24 September 2021

**Inspection Judgement:** Formal Inspection notification awaiting, however, initial feedback has been provided with indicated that the Inspection judgement is *Good* with areas of *Outstanding*.

**Previous inspection date:** 8 and 9 December 2020

Previous inspection judgement: *Good*

## Northholme

Last Assurance visit 2.2.21 – No concerns raised. Safeguarding judged to be good.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people *good*

How well children and young people are helped and protected  
*requires improvement to be good*

The effectiveness of leaders and managers *good*

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for *good*.

Date of last inspection: 5 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: *outstanding*

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Inspection dates: 6 to 7th January 2020

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

*outstanding*

How well children and young people are helped and protected: *outstanding*

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: *outstanding*

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

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

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

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

*outstanding*

How well children and young people are helped and protected:

*outstanding*

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: *outstanding*

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of *good*. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved

outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>11 November 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Voices for Choices (V4C) - Update Report</b>

**Summary:**

This report gives a summary and overview of:

- Activities with regard to V4C between June – October 2021
- Future V4C planning and progress, including consulting with children and young people within our residential settings

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

**Actions Required:**

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

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

## **1. Background**

### **V4C delivery June – October 2021**

During this reporting period the delivery of V4C groups have been focused on a return to face-to-face meetings following the easing of Co-vid restrictions. Meetings within this period have been held in LCC youth centre buildings and other settings where there are established risk assessments in place.

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

Lincoln and West Lindsey

Date of meeting	Venue	Number of young people attended
4 <sup>th</sup> June	Wild Pines Activity Centre	4
12 <sup>th</sup> July	Northolme Children's Home, Gainsborough	6
21 <sup>st</sup> July	North Hykeham Youth Centre	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> August	Summer activity – Escape Rooms	3
5 <sup>th</sup> August	Summer activities - North Hykeham Youth Centre including rapping	3
12 <sup>th</sup> August	Summer activities - girls session	3
14 <sup>th</sup> September	Northolme Children's Home, Gainsborough	6

Regular face-to-face meetings have been held with young people who are attending enjoying the sessions.

Within the sessions the group have been looking at the work provided by the Participation Team and have completed and discussed the following:

- The Coming into Care kit review
- Should 16 years old vote
- Discussing the work of the Young Inspectors and a potential visit to the group

Over the summer a number of young people have taken part in various holiday activities with good feedback received.

A specific session for girls was held in August with one young person attending who lives in sheltered accommodation, and another from Northolme Children's Home. Both provided feedback that they found the sessions helpful and supportive and helped to look at ways they could cook their own meals and that it was good to have a 'girl space' for a while.

The young people have fed back that they have enjoyed the focused face to face meetings at the Youth Club. They like having space for the activity plus being able to go somewhere quite if they need to speak on a one-to-one basis. Comments of recent sessions have

included: 'It's more relaxed', 'can do more', 'love being able to play pool and cook our tea together'.

Boston and South Holland

Attendances within the Boston and South Holland locality are highlighted below, with regular monthly meetings now taking place and arranged to be face-to-face. The return to a face-to-face format has had challenges, mainly around transporting young people and timings for some of the younger participants, and this will be reviewed after each session to ensure needs are met. Over July and August specific V4C groups were not held as they were combined with holiday activities offered to all children and young people. Unfortunately, a number of young people were unable to attend meetings due to sickness.

Date of meeting	Venue	Number of young people attended
8 <sup>th</sup> September	Boston Youth Centre	4
13 <sup>th</sup> October	Boston Youth Centre	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Albion Street Children's Home, Spalding	
10 <sup>th</sup> November	Boston Youth Centre	

During the September session topics discussed have included:

- Debate around voting and the relevance of politics in the lives of young people
- Climate change
- The Big Conversation meeting in October (a meeting that brings each of the 4 V4C groups together)

The October session included a debate about how young people can be marginalised in school for being in care and how this can be used as a means to bully, and they also talked about how gender can also be a target for bullying. One of the group members who is transitioning was very open to the group about their experiences.

The older young people have completed the PCC survey on mental health; however, this was only open to 14+ years, and it was feedback that younger children should also have been able to complete the survey.

Young people have said they are excited about attending the Big Conversation and this has been backed up with six young people agreeing to take part from Boston and South Holland. It has been requested that a future Big Conversation be held in and around Boston rather than frequently being Lincoln based, and this will be actioned.

Planning has taken place with Albion Street Children’s Home staff in Spalding and it has been agreed to deliver a session within the home once a month with a view of integrating these young people into the sessions at Boston. This delivery will start on 3<sup>rd</sup> November with hopefully six young people taking part.

North and South Kesteven

Attendances for the North and South Kesteven locality are summarised below:

Date of meeting	Venue	Number of young people attended
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Earlsfield Youth Centre, Grantham	3
Summer Programme	Various	10
21 <sup>st</sup> September	Earlsfield Youth Centre, Grantham	3
12 <sup>th</sup> October	Eastgate Children's Home, Sleaford	5

Within North and South Kesteven there was good number of Children in Care that attended several sessions of the holiday provision, and some of those young people have started attending the core offer youth group and V4C in Grantham.

A further visit to Eastgate Children's Home in Sleaford has been undertaken to publicise V4C with the result being that some of the children and young people will hopefully be joining the group for future meetings.

East Lindsey

Virtual meetings have previously been difficult to progress in East Lindsey. However, with face-to-face meetings now re-established a group has been meeting and it is hoped that this will be a basis for attendance to grow further.

Date of meeting	Venue	Number of young people attended
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Skegness Youth Centre	4
20 <sup>th</sup> July	Skegness Youth Centre	3
August	Holiday activities held for all children and young people	
21 <sup>st</sup> September	Skegness Youth Centre	3

The main focus of the meetings has been reviewing and suggesting updates to the Children's Services Coming into Care kit.

The Participation Team have attended sessions and led a discussion about the Coming into Care kit. The young people have been supported to review what the content of the Coming into Care Kit should be (photos below). Young people with experience both of long-term care and from being newly in care offered suggestions and views which have been captured and will be taken forward into the wider review and hopefully discussed at the October Big Conversation event.



Discussion was held regarding the "Big Question". This is an opportunity for young people to discuss and feedback about a specific issue. In this instance the subject was voting rights with a consensus was that they felt 16-year-olds should be allowed to vote.

### **V4C Virtual soundLINCS Programme**

The soundLINCS music project was a series of sessions held to enable young people from the V4C groups to take part in an activity to support their health and wellbeing. The groups will be reviewing future possible options for this activity next year.

### **'Let's Get Quizzical' – Virtual V4C quiz**

'Let's Get Quizzical' has been a monthly virtual online quiz activity across all quadrant areas each month. 4 virtual sessions were held prior to the summer, and it is planned that further sessions will be held as a V4C opportunity for children and young people to attend. This is designed to be a steppingstone to attending the main V4C groups.

### **V4C Planning**

The following points summarise current V4C planning:

- V4C meetings have been taking place across all 4 of the locality quadrants now on a face-to-face basis and this has been the focus of this reporting period. Further

discussions will take place with children and young people with a view to developing V4C further and building attendances.

- V4C staff have been visiting children and staff in the residential homes to raise awareness of V4C and consult on what they would like future V4C sessions and delivery to look like.
- The option of providing virtual V4C meetings in addition to physical meetings is planned to continue. This will help to offer V4C for young people who are unable or do not wish to attend physical meetings.
- There has been positive feedback about the return to face-to-face meetings and the activities taking place within the meetings which will help inform future planning.

## **2. Conclusions**

- A) There has been a successful reintroduction of face-to-face meetings within this reporting period and this provides a good base from which to progress.
- B) The groups have participated successfully in reviewing the Coming into Care Kit and making suggestions to its future content that will be collated at the Big Conversation meeting in October half term.
- C) Ongoing work will continue to publicise V4C and review meeting options, with an aim to gain children and young people's views to encourage attendance and engagement.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

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

## **4. Background Papers**

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

This report was written by Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Quality and Standards), who can be contacted on 07876 212470 or at [ben.lilley@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:ben.lilley@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>11 November 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Quarter 2 Performance Report for Children in Care</b>

**Summary:**

The accompanying appendices to this report provide key performance information for Quarter 2 2021/22 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

**Actions Required:**

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

## 1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Children in Care used by Children's Services. This is available for questions. There are 16 measures in total that relate to Children in Care that are reported on in Quarter 2. Of these measures 8 are outside of the target set by the services.

These are:

**Fostering/adoption of Children in Care aged 10 to <16 years old-** This performance remains under target. The vast majority of children in care within this age group are placed in foster care settings but this has been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers initially being offline or isolating. More recently with the easing the capacity of fostering beds available is still slowly recovering. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family.

**Stability of placements of Children in Care: Number of moves** - This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and slipped under target last year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of children in care experienced 3 placement moves in a year. At this stage performance remains good, but this is a cumulative indicator and may change at year end. The year has been challenging for all children, but foster carers have proven to be very resourceful and committed to the children they care for. However, placement availability has been negatively impacted as some foster carers have chosen to concentrate on the children already in their care and have declined to take additional placements.

**Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check** - This measure has improved from 59.2% in the previous quarter to 65.1%, it is still below the target of 95%. Prior to Covid, we were seeing increased difficulties in children being able to register with a National Health Service Dentist. Many of these appear to have made the decision to only provide private dentistry thereby impacting on the number of NHS practices available. This, coupled with the impact of the COVID19 Pandemic has impacted significantly on the number of Children in Care with an up-to-date dental check.

During periods of lockdown, National Health Dentists were only dealing with emergencies and outside of lockdown many have continued to restrict the number of patients they will see in any one day due to the increased levels of hygiene/protection that needs to be in place. Many were and are continuing to refuse new registrations and the availability of dentists across the county continues to impact on our ability to ensure that all children in care have regular dental checks. Efforts continue to be made to ensure that all children in care are registered with a dentist and dentists are working to ensure that dental checks are being completed, although it is likely to take some time to deal with the backlog of appointments.

**Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to-date routine immunisations** - The number of routine immunisations being completed continues to be impacted by the Covid Pandemic, with the measure staying broadly static at 79.3% in Q2 2021/22 compared to 78.6% in Q1. The majority of overdue immunisations continue to be the teenage boosters which are undertaken in school. These were clearly delayed due to schools being closed for extended periods of time. The health immunisation team have now resumed their programme of immunisations. However, it is projected that it will take approximately 18 months for the programme to be fully back on schedule. The team have to catch up on those that have been missed/delayed during the pandemic and also the increase in their workload due to all males now being offered the HPV and all school population being offered the COVID19 and flu immunisations.

**16–17-year-old Children in Care who are participating in Learning** - The performance for this quarter is below the lower tolerance for this performance indicator by 6.4%. This represents approximately 7 young people. The Virtual school team have identified all of those 16–17-year-olds not participating in learning and have been successful in finding appropriate placements for the majority of students in the period September October

2021. This has brought performance within the tolerance range for this indicator as of October 2021.

**Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation-** The good performance in relation to accommodation continues to be down to good working relationships with District Councils and their willingness to view care leavers as a priority group. The continued flexibility and resilience of our housing provider, Nacro, during and after the pandemic continues to ensure safe accommodation is on offer should also be noted. The above combined with persistent and creative work of leaving care staff has ensured that nearly every care leaver is suitably accommodated. 1 young person left custody, and this is deemed as now being in suitable accommodation as he moved into supported housing driving up performance.

**Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training-** This measure remains below target but is slowly improving despite fluctuations and is up from 49.8% which is the lowest it has been. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Service continues to report on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET and the Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance. A survey has been carried out with every Care Leaver who is not in EET and the main barriers are poor mental health (depression and anxiety) and substance misuse issues. The new Aspirations worker is focusing on supporting young people back into employment and assisting young people to access the Covid-19 recover initiatives, but issues such as poor mental health and substance use continue to be a barrier. The Leaving Care service is working with the Corporate Parenting Manager to look at the emotional wellness and recovery of young people, alongside the plethora of activity to support young people accessing EET, as mental health/emotional wellbeing is one of the biggest barriers to our young people accessing EET. It is anticipated that legacy Covid-19 will continue to impact on emotional wellbeing and EET.

**Children in Care Living Within a Family Environment-** Performance remains above target and has improved slightly on last quarter (79.65% in Q2 2021/22 compared to 78.5% in Q1 2020/21). It confirms that, for the vast majority of children in care, a family placement is deemed the most suitable means of offering care and maintaining children within their family networks.

## **2. Conclusions**

This report summarises the Quarter 2 performance for Children in Care. The Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to review the Report, comment on the Report's content, and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

#### 4. Appendices

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

#### 5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Simon Hardcastle, Performance Support Officer, who can be contacted at [simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family

**455.0** Days

400.0 Target

Achieved 

Average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the Local Authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family

**170** Days

175 Target

Achieved 

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

**79.3** Percentage

85.0 Target

Not achieved 

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

**47.5** Rate

46.0 Target

Achieved 

Stability of placements of Children in Care : Number of moves

**2.0** Percentage

6.0 Target

Achieved 

Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of placement

**73.0** Percentage

73.0 Target

Achieved 

Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales

**99.6** Percentage

97.0 Target

Achieved 

Participation of Children in Care in reviews

**97.8** Percentage

97.0 Target

Achieved 

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

**93.3** Percentage

95.0 Target

Achieved 

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

**65.1** Percentage

95.0 Target

Not achieved 

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

**79.3** Percentage

95.0 Target

Not achieved 

Children in Care Living within a Family Environment

**79.7** Days

74.0 Target

Achieved 

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

**49.6** Percentage

61.0 Target

Not achieved 

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan

**99.5** Percentage

99.5 Target

Achieved 

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

**96.5** Percentage

92.0 Target

Achieved 

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

**51.0** Percentage

65.0 Target

Not achieved 

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## Corporate Parenting Panel



## Healthy and Safe

### Children are Healthy and Safe

#### Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family

Average number of days between the child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. A lower number of days taken to move a child from care into an adoptive family indicates a better performance.



Achieved

455

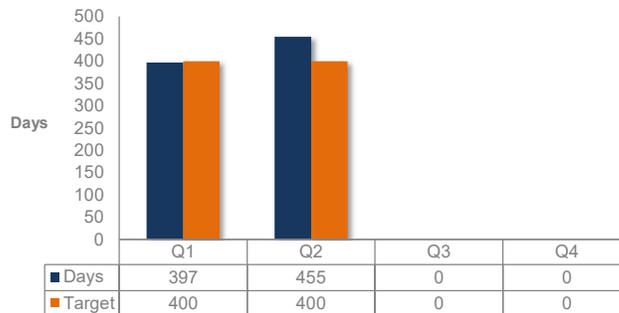
Days  
Quarter 2 September 2021



400

Days  
Target for September 2021

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 415, Q2: 416, Q3: 368, Q4: 386

Current performance has met the targets set

#### About the target

Target set significantly better than national average.

#### About the target range

A lower value of 490 has been set as this would mean performance is worse than the most recent national figures

#### About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is available for 2018, however, 2019 figures have not yet been released.



## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

### Average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the Local Authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family

Average number of days between the local authority receiving the court order to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.  
A lower number of days taken to match a child to an adoptive family indicates a better performance.



Achieved

170

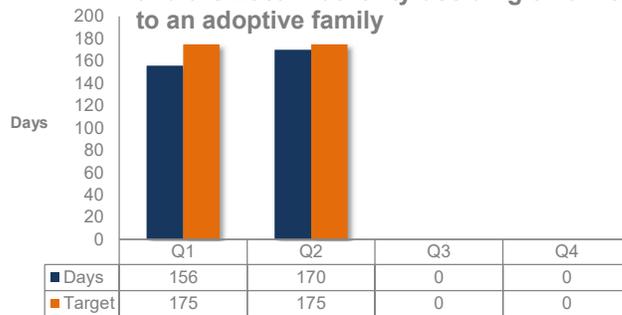
Days  
Quarter 2 September 2021



175

Days  
Target for September 2021

Average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the Local Authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 129, Q2: 131, Q3: 122, Q4: 153

Current performance has met the targets set

#### About the target

Target has reduced to 175 to take into account recent trends of a higher number of adoptions, which is expected to impact figures. However, the revised target remains significantly better than the most recent published National figures.

#### About the target range

Both upper and lower tolerances have been set at 10 days (average).

#### About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is available for 2019

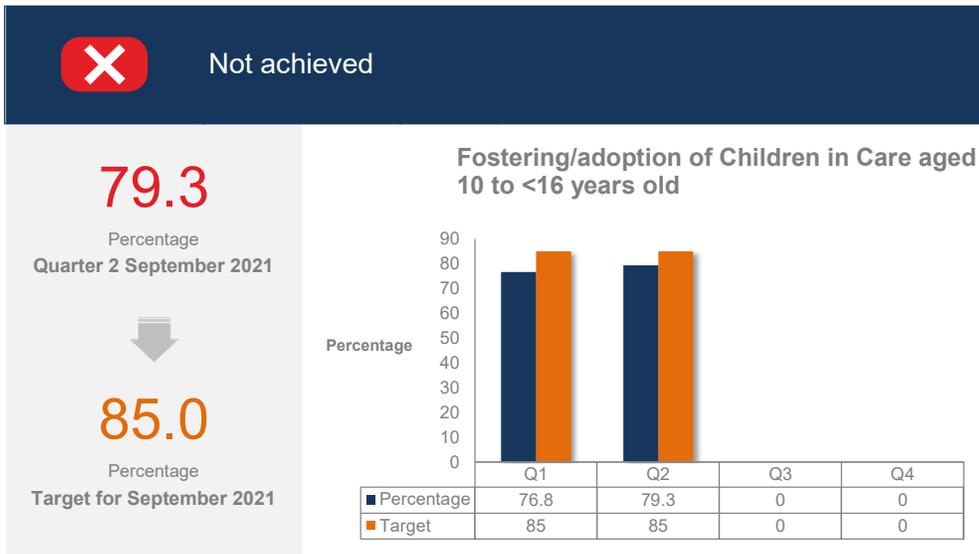


## Healthy and Safe

### Children are Healthy and Safe

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

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 79.8%, Q2: 78.1%, Q3: 76.8%, Q4: 78.9%

This performance remains under target. The vast majority of children in care within this age group are placed in foster care settings but this has been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers initially being offline or isolating. More recently with the easing the capacity of fostering beds available is still slowly recovering. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family environment. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle yet our transformational work which is ongoing supports our practice in identifying local resources for those children who are deemed to have sufficiently progressed and are assessed as suitable for foster care. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their Care Orders or granting of private law orders given the delay in court proceedings.

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

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

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

#### About benchmarking

Benchmarking data no longer available



## Healthy and Safe

### Children are Healthy and Safe

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

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

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



Achieved

47.5

Rate

Quarter 2 September 2021

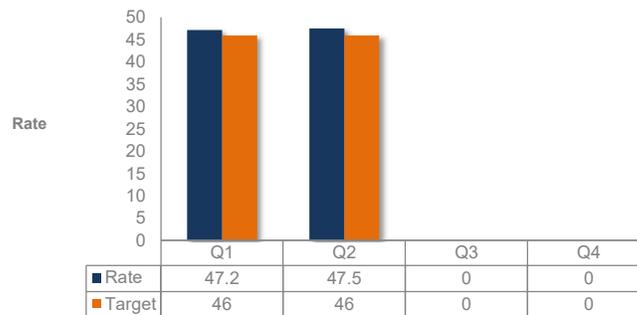


46.0

Rate

Target for September 2021

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 44.4, Q2: 45.2, Q3: 47.1, Q4: 46.8

This measure has achieved target, however, it is currently showing a slight adverse trend. The number of Children in Care has stayed reasonably static compared to Quarter 1 2021/22, but has risen slightly. The number of Children in Care starters over Quarter 2 2021/22 is similar to Quarter 1, however, the number of Children in Care Leavers in Quarter 2 has reduced by around 30 percent compared to Quarter 1. This appears to have pushed the Children in Care per 10,000 figure slightly further up over the past quarter. However, despite the increase, the Lincolnshire number of Children in Care per 10,000 remains significantly below the most recent published figures both nationally and by our statistical neighbours (67 per 10,000 and 62.67 per 10,000 respectively as at 31st March 2020).

#### About the target

Target Remains Same as Previous Year

#### About the target range

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

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

#### About benchmarking

Comparator information is available and is showing an increasing trend

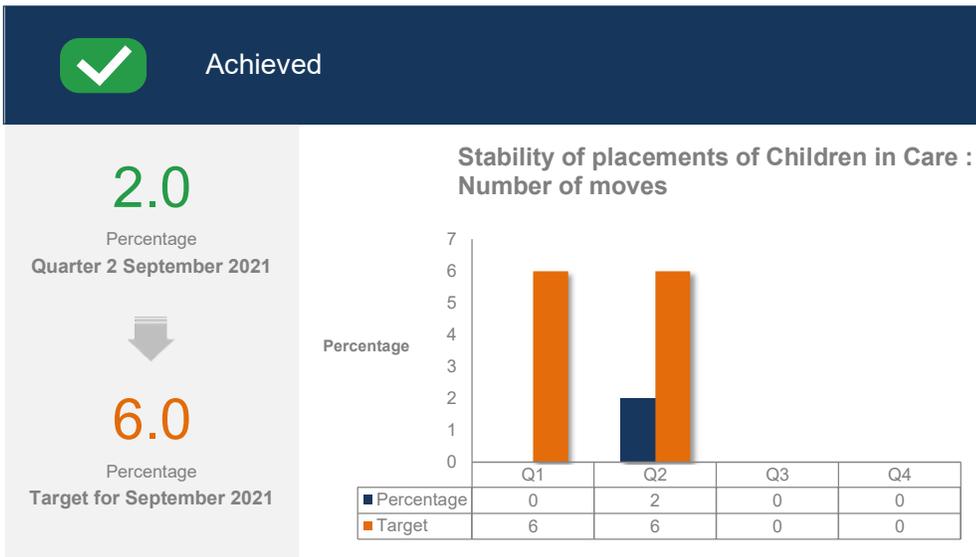


## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

### Stability of placements of Children in Care : Number of moves

Percentage of Children in Care with three or more placements



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 1%, Q2: 1%, Q3: 2%, Q4: 8%

This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and slipped under target last year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of children in care experienced 3 placement moves in a year. At this stage performance remains good, but this is a cumulative indicator and may change at year end. The year has been challenging for all children but foster carers have proven to be very resourceful and committed to the children they care for. However placement availability has been negatively impacted as some foster carers have chosen to concentrate on the children already in their care and have declined to take additional placements.

#### About the target

Target remains same as 2020/21. Performance remains good in comparison with the 11% stated national figure. However we have seen a derioration this year which reflects the reduced choice of placement options and complexities of young people placed.

#### About the target range

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

#### About benchmarking

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

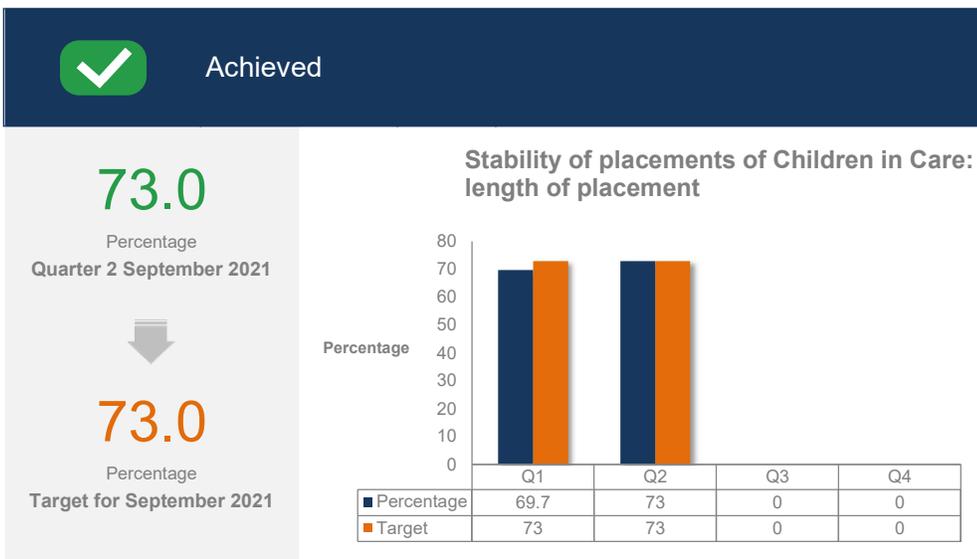


## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

### Stability of placements of Children in Care: length of placement

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 72.8%, Q2: 69.2%, Q3: 70.9%, Q4: 72.2%

Current performance has met the targets set

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

#### About benchmarking

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

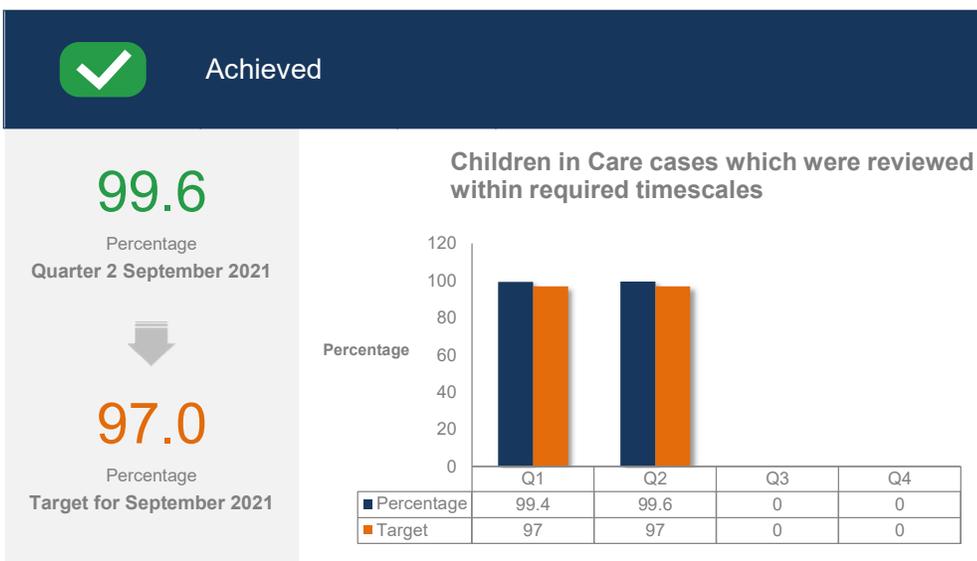


## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

Children in Care cases which were reviewed within required timescales

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



### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 99.2%, Q2: 98.6%, Q3: 98.4%, Q4: 98.7%

Current performance has met the targets set

### About the target

Target remains at 97% to take into account current performance.

### About the target range

As the target is 97%, an upper value of 3% has been set.

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

### About benchmarking

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

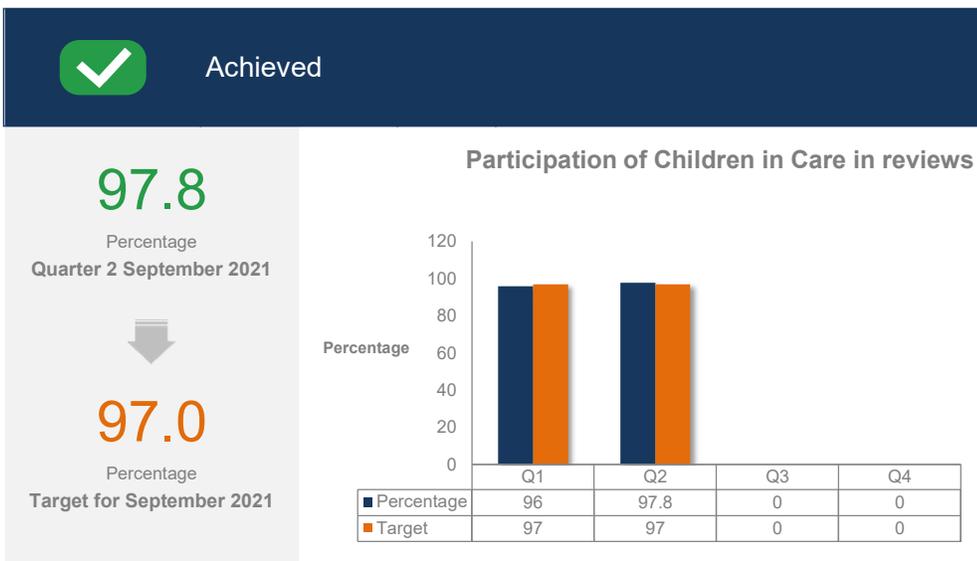


## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

### Participation of Children in Care in reviews

Percentage of Children in Care who participated in their reviews



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 99.7%, Q2: 99.8%, Q3: 99.2%, Q4: 97.6%

Current performance has met the targets set

#### About the target

Target remains at 97% to take into account current performance.

#### About the target range

As the target is 97%, an upper value of 3% has been set.

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

#### About benchmarking

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

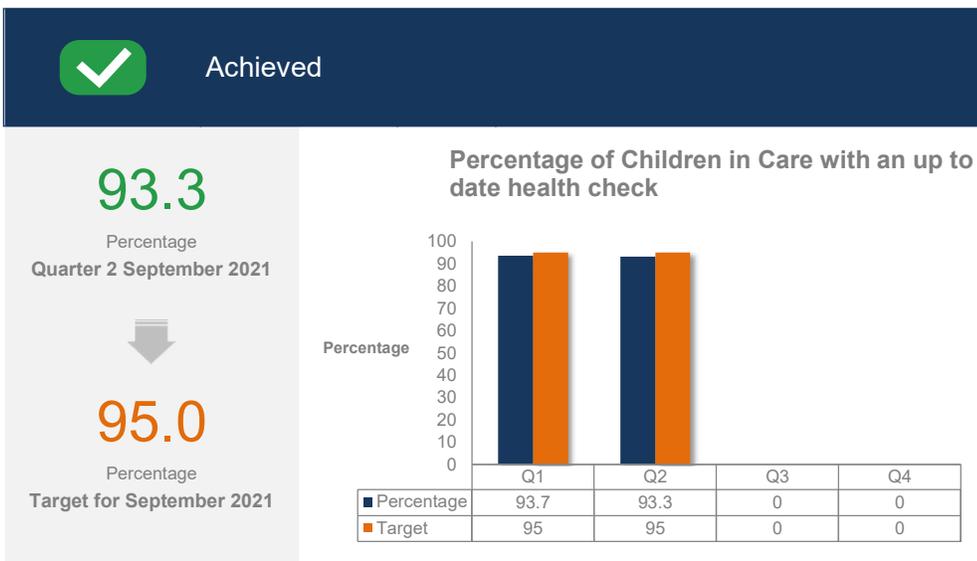


## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

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

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 93.4%, Q2: 96%, Q3: 94.1%, Q4: 91.2%

Current performance has met the targets set

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

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

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

#### About benchmarking

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



## Healthy and Safe

### Children are Healthy and Safe

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

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



Not achieved

65.1

Percentage

Quarter 2 September 2021

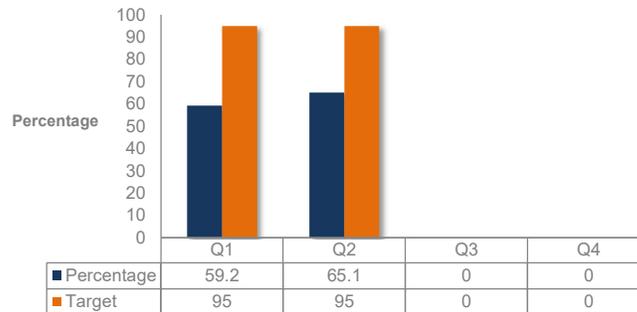


95.0

Percentage

Target for September 2021

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 89%, Q2: 76.5%, Q3: 69.9%, Q4: 49.5%

This measure has improved from 59.2% in the previous quarter to 65.1%, it is still below the target of 95%. Prior to Covid, we were seeing increased difficulties in children being able to register with a National Health Service Dentist. Many of these appear to have made the decision to only provide private dentistry thereby impacting on the number of NHS practices available. This, coupled with the impact of the COVID19 Pandemic has impacted significantly on the number of Children in Care with an up to date dental check.

During periods of lockdown, National Health Dentists were only dealing with emergencies and outside of lockdown many have continued to restrict the number of patients they will see in any one day due to the increased levels of hygiene/protection that needs to be in place. Many were, and are continuing to refuse new registrations and the availability of dentists across the county continues to impact on our ability to ensure that all children in care have regular dental checks. Efforts continue to be made to ensure that all children in care are registered with a dentist and dentists are working to ensure that dental checks are being completed, although it is likely to take some time to deal with the backlog of appointments.

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

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

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

#### About benchmarking

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

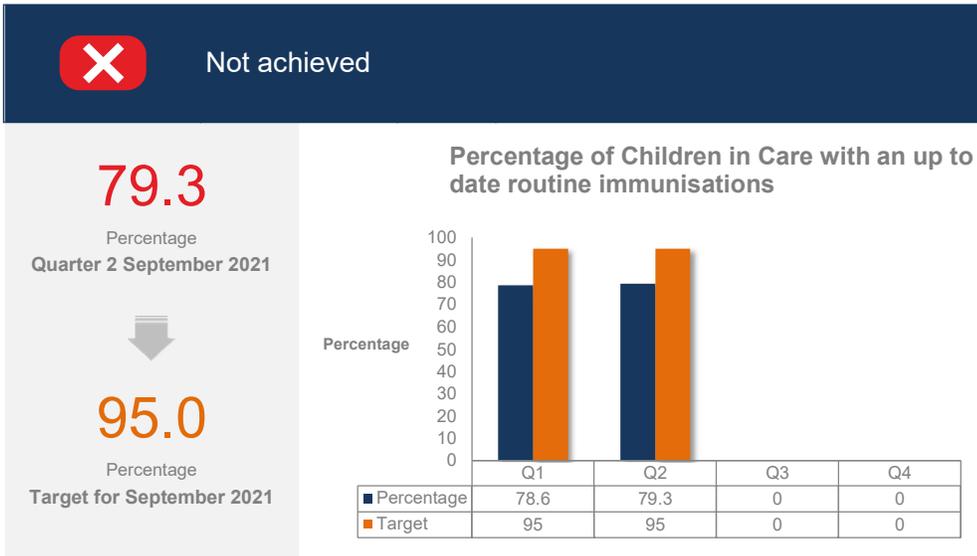


## Healthy and Safe

### Children are Healthy and Safe

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

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 85.8%, Q2: 79.8%, Q3: 76.5%, Q4: 80%

The number of routine immunisations being completed continues to be impacted by the Covid Pandemic, with the measure staying broadly static at 79.3% in Q2 2021/22 compared to 78.6% in Q1. The majority of overdue immunisations continue to be the teenage boosters which are undertaken in school. These were clearly delayed due to schools being closed for extended periods of time. The health immunisation team have now resumed their programme of immunisations. However, it is projected that it will take approximately 18 months for the programme to be fully back on schedule. The team have to catch up on those that have been missed/delayed during the pandemic and also the increase in their workload due to all males now being offered the HPV and all school population being offered the COVID19 and flu immunisations.

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

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

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

#### About benchmarking

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

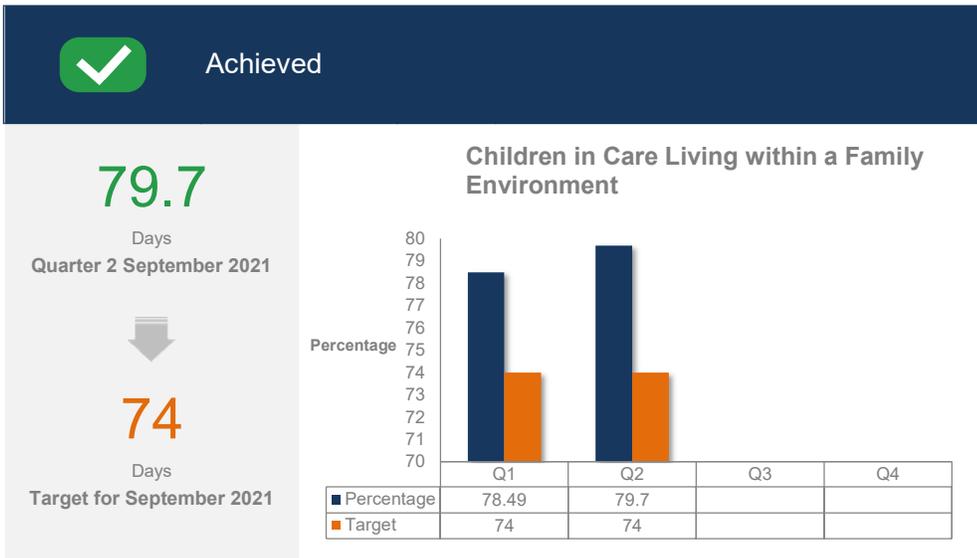


## Healthy and Safe

Children are Healthy and Safe

### Children in Care Living within a Family Environment

Percentage of Children in Care Living within a Family Environment



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 79.6%, Q2: 78.6%, Q3: 78.6%, Q4: 77.8%

Performance remains above target and has improved slightly on last quarter (79.65% in Q2 2021/22 compared to 78.5% in Q1 2020/21). It confirms that, for the vast majority of children in care, a family placement is deemed the most suitable means of offering care and maintaining children within their family networks .

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

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

#### About benchmarking

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



## Learn and Achieve

### Learn and Achieve

### Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan



Achieved

99.5

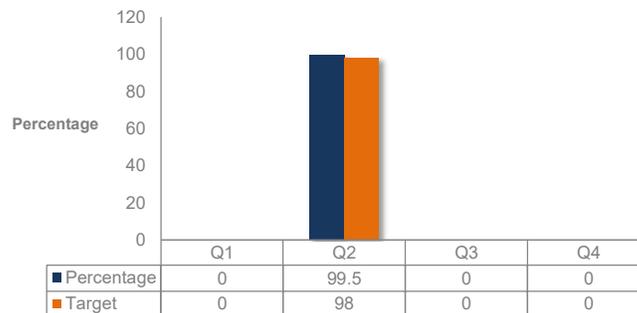
Percentage  
Quarter 2 September 2021



98.0

Percentage  
Target for September 2021

Percentage of Children in Care with a Personal Education Plan



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: N/A, Q2: 100%, Q3: 100%, Q4: 99.9%

Current performance has met the targets set. Data reported following the three school terms throughout the year. Q2 reports Summer Term data (April- July).

#### About the target

Target remains at 98%, reliability of the EPEP system and timely notification of Virtual school should see the performance being reached.

#### About the target range

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

#### About benchmarking

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



## Ready for Adult Life

### Ready for Adult Life

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

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

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

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

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



Not achieved

49.6

Percentage

Quarter 2 September 2021

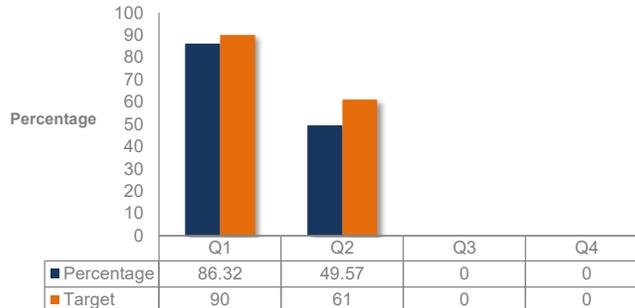


61.0

Percentage

Target for September 2021

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



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 87.5%, Q2: 58.8%, Q3: 85.96%, Q4: 89.47%

The performance for this quarter is below the lower tolerance for this performance indicator by 6.4%. This represents approximately 7 young people. The Virtual school team have identified all of those 16-17 year olds not participating in learning and have been successful in finding appropriate placements for the majority of students in the period September October 2021. This has brought performance within the tolerance range for this indicator as of October 2021.

#### About the target

Target remains the same as the previous year. Q2 & Q3 targets lower to allow for the expected dip at this time of year due to September being the start of the tracking process

#### About the target range

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

#### About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is not available for this cohort



## Ready for Adult Life

### Ready for Adult Life

#### Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

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

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

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



Achieved

96.5

Percentage

Quarter 2 September 2021

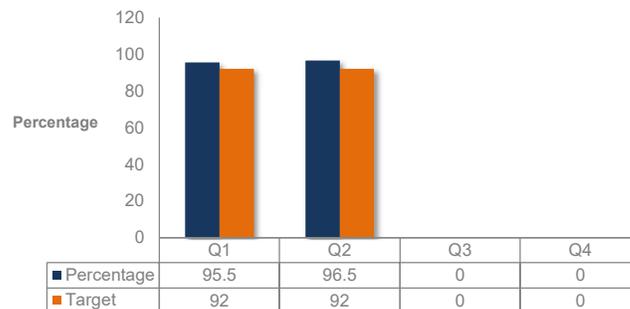


92.0

Percentage

Target for September 2021

Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 92.8%, Q2: 96%, Q3: 93.7%, Q4: 94%

The good performance in relation to accommodation continues to be down to good working relationships with District Councils and their willingness to view care leavers as a priority group. The continued flexibility and resilience of our housing provider, Nacro, during and after the pandemic continues to ensure safe accommodation is on offer should also be noted. The above combined with persistent and creative work of leaving care staff has ensured that nearly every care leaver is suitably accommodated. 1 young person left custody and this is deemed as now being in suitable accommodation as he moved into supported housing driving up performance.

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

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

#### About benchmarking

Benchmarking information is available and we constantly perform better than comparators



## Ready for Adult Life

### Ready for Adult Life

#### Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

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



Not achieved

51.0

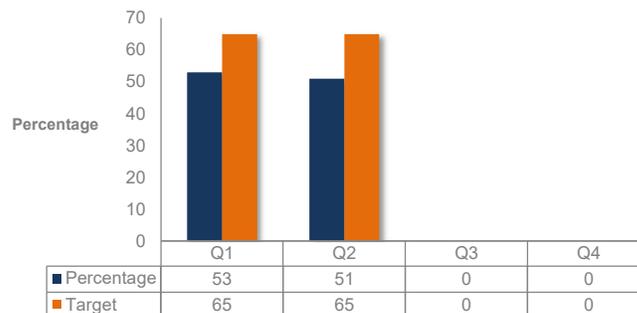
Percentage  
Quarter 2 September 2021



65.0

Percentage  
Target for September 2021

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training



#### About the latest performance

Performance in 2020/21 - Q1: 52%, Q2: 55.1%, Q3: 52.8%, Q4: 49.8%

This measure remains below target but is slowly improving despite fluctuations and is up from 49.8% which is the lowest it has been. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Service continues to report on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET and the Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance. A survey has been carried out with every Care Leaver who is not in EET and the main barriers are poor mental health (depression and anxiety) and substance misuse issues. The new Aspirations worker is focusing on supporting young people back into employment and assisting young people to access the Covid-19 recover initiatives, but issues such as poor mental health and substance use continue to be a barrier. The Leaving Care service is working with the Corporate Parenting Manager to look at the emotional wellness and recovery of young people, alongside the plethora of activity to support young people accessing EET, as mental health/emotional wellbeing is one of the biggest barriers to our young people accessing EET. It is anticipated that legacy Covid-19 will continue to impact on emotional wellbeing and EET.

#### About the target

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

#### About the target range

Tolerances for this measure take into account the current performance.

#### About benchmarking

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

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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>11 November 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 2</b>

**Summary:**

To provide an overview of the Fostering Service Performance Report for Quarter 2.

**Actions Required:**

That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Quarterly Performance Report for Quarter 2.

**1. Background**

To present an overview of the Fostering Quarterly Performance Report to members of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

**2. Conclusion**

The progress within the service to be recognised and the report attached is an accurate reflection of the service.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

n/a

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report

Appendix A	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2
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## **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 Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption, who can be contacted by e-mail at [Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk), or 07786 190414.



# Lincolnshire Fostering Service

QUARTERLY REPORT  
JULY – SEPTEMBER 2021

## **Quarter Two Fostering Report–2021/2022**

The Annual Report for 2020/2021 was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2020. The statement of Purpose was revised and was ratified on the same day. This is the second quarterly report for 2021/2022.

### **Introduction**

In 2021/22, the Fostering Service has an annual budget of £9,100,233. All Foster Carer allowances have been increased by 2% for this financial year. This has ensured that allowances continue to remain in advance of the government recommended minimum rates. This is important as the foster care marketplace is more complex with a number of independent agencies actively recruiting in the area, and in order to retain our competitiveness, allowances are a significant factor.

Foster Carer availability has been compounded by the on-going effects of the Covid 19 pandemic which has resulted in an increase in numbers of children in care and diminishing foster carer availability owing to health and other social factors. The budget also continues to afford flexibility to provide enhanced allowances to certain categories of carers such as those offering permanence or managing children with distressed behaviours that otherwise would be hard to place.

During the second quarter of this year, the service has continued to respond to the continuing recovery phase of the Covid 19 Pandemic crisis by continuing to offer support in a range of ways. Alongside face-to-face supervision and support, the development of the virtual foster care community continues to model the wraparound support services available to all fostering families. This is critical in securing their wellbeing in the invaluable role they undertake in caring for children and promoting placement stability.

Despite the initial challenges of the pandemic regarding placements lost to the service as a result of self-isolation and health vulnerabilities the numbers of carers more available to fostering has increased during this quarter. At one point the service had lost 133 beds but the pressure has eased with the number falling to 96 however this continues to add significant pressure to the service.

At the end of Quarter 2, the number of children in care had continued to rise to 688. At the same time those placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) rose to 39, 5 of whom were unaccompanied migrant children.

During this quarter 65 children became children in care for the first time in this quarter, of these 49 were placed in foster care. The percentage of children in foster placements has remained steady at 72%.

The aftermath of the pandemic remains, and the placement stability figures (children who have been in care continuously for at least 2.5 yrs. who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years) stands at 73% which is an increase in this quarter and above target.

Likewise, the percentage of children in care with 3 or more placements during the year stands at 2% which at this stage in the year performance remains good, but this is a cumulative

indicator and may change at year end. Despite showing promise this continues to be a difficult year yet foster carers have proven to be very resourceful and committed to the children they care for. However, placement availability has been negatively impacted as some foster carers have chosen to concentrate on the children already in their care and declined to take additional placements.

For all placements, the service continues to ensure that foster carers are well supported and that potential problems/issues are identified early. This has been further reinforced by the success of the caring2learn project which has encouraged foster carers to share and find solutions to problems and developed a whole range of tailored training and community support.

All foster carers will be afforded priority for the completion of the Covid 19 booster vaccine programme once available and this will further reflect the value placed on them by the Council. It is anticipated that the take up will be as encouraging as the primary and secondary programme

Within this Covid recovery period recruitment activity continues to show promise. This will need to be carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure that any surge in interest is capitalised upon. The service continues to find innovative ways to reach out to potential foster carers by continuing to make the most of online and social media platforms.

During this period and owing to the continued increase in the children in care numbers, the rise in the number of children placed in Independent Non–Maintained provision (Independent Fostering/Residential Providers) and the resultant increase in costs in the past few years the Council commissioned transformation work relating to children in care.

The fostering service continues to be engaged in various aspects and strands of this transformational work with a strong focus on the core offers to foster carers and developing the Valuing Care Toolkit as a further measure to match foster carers skillset and children's needs.

### **Recruitment and Retention:**

The Recruitment Service continues to recover from the impact of Covid 19, we have seen recruitment activity return to a more stable place that matches previous activity data. Recruitment has developed into an area that is seen as everyone's responsibility with a wider pool of Supervising Social Workers completing half of initial visits. As restrictions have eased the service has adopted a smarter way of working through the use of both face to face and online interactions.

Online activities have brought many benefits and so the fostering service will continue to include online options to increase capacity, accessibility and convenience for Foster Carers in the future. This has included online recruitment events and the preparation course.

The Preparation to Foster Courses continues to be delivered virtually at a frequency of 6 per year in order to support the progression of applicants as quickly as possible. The ambition for 2022 sees 50% of courses taking place virtually and the other half is taking place face to face.

Each course is facilitated by a Supervising Social Worker, Caring2Learn representative and at least one Foster Carer Champion.

Fostering Information events take place on a monthly basis and are held virtually. Those making formal or informal enquiries to foster are encouraged to attend these events. Virtual events have seen a substantial rise in people attending, recent changes to encourage participation has also made these sessions much more interaction and relational. This is supported in the feedback and improvement of conversion to people going on to stage 1.

A recruitment audit and review has been completed to look at each of the different stages to establish current strengths, areas for improvement, trends and establish performance indicators to maximise production and improve the conversion rate of initial enquiry to approval. The work continuing will closely monitor quality with a strong emphasis on good customer service and community. Initial results from the impact of changes in practice and processes can be seen through key performance indicators.

Recruitment activity and forms will have an online system for applicants; this has now been tested and will go live in quarter 3.

Retention of foster carers remains the most effective means of recruitment. Providing individual levels of support to our carers and specifically those newly approved remains crucial.

Caring2Learn and its application of key principles and models of support and learning for foster carers and the wider service have proven the impact these have on foster carer retention and outcomes for children. Caring2Learn has been further embedded within the Fostering service from project to business-as-usual model. Applying these principles within foster carer recruitment has already started to impact on performance in this area.

The Caring2 Learn Practice Supervisor is now fully integrated into the fostering team and takes a lead on all fostering matters including recruitment, retention, training, development and support.

The links with the Virtual School continue to support the fidelity of this global approach in shaping the work in order to support the Learning Homes and Caring Schools to support and drive forward the good practice for all children in care in Lincolnshire.

Work continues to develop a Community Hub approach across the county. This has included the development of multiple forums and ways for Foster Carers to access support from other Foster Carers, Children's Service's teams and Schools. This is providing a more integrated approach to support.

The forums have been developed according to feedback from Foster Carers. All support mechanisms make up a single community hub for all Lincolnshire Foster carers.

The Hub originally consisted of various access points throughout the county to resolve the geographical issues faced by carers and build a strong sense of community with a consistent offer. During the current pandemic it has been possible to explore a virtual offer that ensures carers can access their community more easily. Feedback from the foster carers strongly indicates that virtual platforms have helped carers overcome challenges to attending events, such as childcare.

The Hub largely continues to be supported by the Foster Carer Champions who have roles that cover responsibilities as 'Hub Links'. This replaced the Fostering 'buddy' system and feedback has been positive from both carers and staff.

All new carers continue to be allocated a 'hub link' within the first month of their fostering journey. Hub Links are allocated thoughtfully to promote relationship and connections between carers and their support network. Hub Links have also been allocated to existing carers and Special Guardians where they are experiencing challenges and require additional support. Participation in the different areas of the hub continues to increase; all platforms despite the current restrictions remain in place. Need is monitored to ensure that the right kind of support is identified and delivered. Some carers have welcomed the return of face-to-face support whilst others have remained happy with virtual, arm's length support.

Feedback from carers is to the most part very positive with regards to their feeling really supported.

A retention audit will be completed in October–November 2021, this will involve an in-depth analysis of the carers circumstances that led to a resignation or long periods offline. It is important that we are able to identify clearly the trends and complicating factors surrounding these over recent years to help inform retention and recruitment planning in the future and set targets and predictions.

### **Marketing:**

#### **Figures**

During this quarter 61 Initial Enquiries of Interest (IEI) were received.

There have been 3 newly approved households during quarter 2 providing the following beds:

<b>Fostering Type</b>	<b>Number of beds</b>
Respite / Task Centred / Permanence	1 (2 if siblings)
Respite / Task Centred	2
Respite / Task Centred	1

As of the end of September there are 33 open applications in stages 1 or 2, with 3 of these having a panel date booked before mid-December.

### **Advertising**

#### **July**

- Information Event on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 6:30pm
- Fostering advert running on Lincs FM
- Content article and Facebook remarketing via Reach
- Online advert on Lincolnshire Today website
- Half page advert in Lincolnshire Life magazine and online skyscraper
- Advert in Simply Boston and Spalding magazines

- Paid-for targeted Facebook advert
- Advert in Gainsborough Life magazine
- Article on Int Comms advertising information event
- Foster Carers' Viewpoint focusing on caring for teenagers
- Homepage takeover on Grantham Journal website and 20,000 audience targeted ads across Stamford, Grantham, Spalding, Bourne and Newark websites belonging to the Iliffe Media Group.

### **August**

- Advert and editorial in Lincs and Wolds Scene
- E-newsletter campaign to those who have signed up to the front door newsletter on the website but haven't made an enquiry / filled out an IEI yet with the aim of gaining conversions.
- Foster Carers' Viewpoint focusing on the first placement of some relatively new foster carers
- 20,000 audience targeted ads, HPTO (Grantham Journal and Bourne Local websites) and NPTO (Stamford Mercury, Spalding Today and Newark advertiser websites).
- Article in summer issue of County News magazine addressing fostering myths.

### **September**

- Information Event on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 6:30pm
- Fostering advert running on Lincs FM
- Online advert on Lincolnshire Today website and half page editorial in magazine
- Half page advert in Lincolnshire Life magazine and online skyscraper
- Advert in Lincs and Wolds Scene magazines
- Advert in Simply Spalding and Boston magazines
- Paid-for targeted Facebook advert
- E-newsletter campaign to those who have signed up to the front door newsletter on the website but haven't made an enquiry / filled out an IEI yet with the aim of gaining conversions.
- Article on Int Comms advertising information event
- Foster Carers' Viewpoint focusing on caring for children with FASD

### **Permanence campaign**

The permanence campaign continued with a wide range of advertising as follows:

### **July**

- Half page advert in Lincs and Wolds Scene magazines

### **August**

- Radio advert specifically for permanence running on Lincs FM
- Digital advertising on Lincolnshire Today website
- Half page ad in Lincolnshire Life magazine and skyscraper advert on website
- Targeted paid-for Facebook adverts

- Article on Int Comms

## **September**

- Half page advert in Primary Times
- Advert in Gainsborough Life Magazine

### **Parent & Child Campaign**

During this quarter a campaign to recruit more Parent & Child (P&C) Foster Carers began. As this is a specialist fostering arrangement, the recruitment campaign is focused on the professionalism and skill set needed by the applicants in order for them to be successful Parent & Child foster carer. Our target audience includes (but is not restricted to) child minders, retired professionals, Early Years workers, health / paediatric workers, schools etc. Adverts clearly identify the skills we are asking for and sell our specialist offer, support and training in place for our Parent & Child foster carers.

The campaign is in 3 stages with stage 1 occurring in Quarter 2 and focused on the planning of the campaign and the soft launch to in-house foster carers. Activities included:

- Job description composed
- Information leaflet written and designed
- Engaged with current P&C carer to write case study
- Build a dedicated P&C webpage which adverts can directly link to and an enquiry form for more information
- Weekly adverts for a month on closed Facebook page to in-house foster carers about the need for more P&C carers and the offer in terms of allowance, training and support
- Article in September newsletter to foster carers
- Advert and article in Issue 3 of Our World magazine which went out to foster carers in September.

Stage 2 which targets new Parent and Child carer households externally begins in October (Q3).

### **Our World Magazine – Issue 3**

During this quarter issue 3 of the Foster Carers' Our World Magazine was put together and distributed to carers at the beginning of September. This continues to be a carer led initiative that is beneficial for the fostering community which is written by fostering families for fostering families. The magazine includes sharing experiences, advice, personal tributes, top tips on key issues, recipes and much more.

## **Instagram**

Following on from Facebook, a new Fostering Instagram page was launched at the beginning of September and will focus on the community spirit of fostering in Lincolnshire. The page is still very much in its infancy but as Instagram is very imagery driven having real photos of our fostering community will be important in driving its success moving forward.

## **Family Finding:**

During the second quarter of this year Family Finders has continued to meet on a monthly basis to consider all children with a care plan for long-term fostering who do not already have a placement identified. In light of the gradual easing concerning Covid 19 these meetings continue to take place virtually but will revert back to face to face going forward.

Over this quarter 6 children have been considered a sibling group of 3, a sibling group of 2 and a singleton.

During this period four out of the six children has been removed from Family Finders. The sibling group of three have been placed with a family member following a transition period and the single child has been placed with an independent fostering agency (IFA) following introductions.

The group of two siblings had been placed with an IFA however sadly they could not maintain the placement for both children and one of them has temporarily returned to his previous local authority foster carer. Their social worker is completing a together or apart assessment of these children to determine the best future living arrangements going forward. At this point the service will have a clear understanding of what nature of placement should be resourced.

The Permanence Campaign is on-going and includes a variety of advertising on social media, radio and local publications. In the second quarter this has included, Lincs FM, Lincs Today, Lincolnshire Life, Gainsborough Life, E-newsletter, Int Comms, County News, Lincs Scene, Wolds Scene and Primary Times.

The County Council Fostering web page continues to provide information on long-term fostering and the support available to foster carers.

Another permanence event (similarly to what took place in July) will take place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

As with the monthly Family Finders meetings Family Finders Review meetings, chaired by senior managers, are also taking place virtually to consider children where no suitable match has been identified after a three-month period. This ensures robust oversight in an effort to avoid drift and delay for children.

During this second quarter it has not been necessary to refer any children to Family Finders Reviews

During this quarter, similarly to the first we have had very few children on Family Finders which is unusual. Unfortunately, it continues to remain a challenge to identify long term placements with carers approved for permanence with many children remaining with their task-centred carers on a long-term basis.

### **Training:**

In this quarter due to the on-going Covid 19 Pandemic all face to face training apart from First Aid has been postponed. Some face-to-face events will return in March 2022. In light of this virtual training has been offered to support carer's initiation to fostering and their continued development.

The quarterly virtual training schedule has been circulated to all households.

18 courses were delivered this quarter

312 attendees have taken part from Fostering households.

Courses delivered via Zoom or Teams - 16

### **Training:**

- First Aid training
- Restorative Practice
- Kid Skills
- Safeguarding

### **Practice Workshops:**

- Introducing Social Pedagogy
- Introduction to Restorative Practice
- Introduction to mindfulness, Creating Calm
- Kid skills
- Introduction to Trauma Awareness
- Supporting sleep, nightmares and night terrors.
- Supporting autism, A carers perspective
- Supporting ADHD and FASD, A carers perspective
- Time2talk
- Fostering Weekly Programme (Caring2gether, 6 weeks)

### **E-Learning:**

LSCP courses are still being accessed and Foster Carers attended;

Safeguarding  
Safeguarding refresher  
Hidden harm  
Covid 19  
Think Safe be safe  
Equality and inclusion  
E-safety

### **Learning Homes:**

The toolkit for new carers which includes the standards from the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs) has been well received. We are now starting to see these come in for assessment resulting in carers receiving a Learning Homes award with an expectation to resubmit a portfolio every 3 years to ensure on-going personal and professional development.

Currently there are 75 foster homes and 4 residential settings that have achieved their Learning Homes Award. Due to the number of toolkits collected over recent months and the expectations that all new carers complete the award within 12 months of approval; the service are seeing the number of awarded homes to continue to rise significantly.

### **Celebration Event:**

The Foster Carer Celebration will take place over Zoom on the 19th of October 2021. The event recognises the contribution and achievements of our fostering community. Foster carers will receive their long service awards, a voucher, flower arrangements, lapel badge and personalised certificate. The voucher and lapel badge are given to carers as a token of gratitude and was positively received at last year's event.

This event is fully supported by a wide range of personnel from Lincolnshire County Council and associated Partnerships. All of whom who are committed to achieving the best outcomes for our children and young people in Lincolnshire.

This event seeks to celebrate, show and share amongst the community the wide and varied ways in which foster Carer's support children, young people and their families across their journey. The service will be presenting a number of new awards this year which include the following areas:

- Virtual School
- FAST
- Children in Care
- Residential
- Adoption
- Support to the Fostering Service
- Community Award

Last year the service formally introduced new foster carers to the community, and this was the opportunity to thank them for choosing Lincolnshire as their provider. Likewise, this will remain a feature at this year's event too.

**Kinship:**

Kinship continues to be considered for all children when they first enter care. This consideration continues to be looked at throughout their care journey. The work with area teams continues to take place in order to maintain and improve consistency in viability assessments and referrals. Regular discussions take place with children's social workers and their practice supervisors at an early stage in order to highlight good practice and work collaboratively to formulate plans for the completion of work.

Number of Referrals	SGO	Private Law SGO	Reg.24 to SGO	Reg. 24 / Connected Person	Private Fostering
47	19	4	9	12	3

The second quarter shows a growing trend in the number of kinship referrals received by the service specifically in the number of SGO's and Reg24/Connected person assessments counting for more than half of all referrals. The service has seen a steep increase in SGO assessments; with only 5 being completed in the first quarter and this almost being quadruple at 19 in this second quarter. Private Law SGO assessments have almost halved; with 4 being referred this quarter and 9 being referred in the first quarter.

Referrals for Reg 24 and SGO assessments have remained steady with 9 referrals being received this quarter, and 8 referrals in the first quarter. The number of Reg 24 / connected person assessments and placements, which are not progressing to SGO assessments, has also increased from 8 in the first quarter to 12 in this last quarter. And finally, in regard to private fostering referrals we have seen a slight decrease with only 3 referrals this last quarter, whereas we received 5 in the first quarter. In regard to the total number of referrals and assessments allocated within kinship this has increased from 35 in the first quarter to 47.

There remains a strong focus on joint working between teams. Early discussions with the area teams continue to take place to identify referrals and any issues early on. This allows for the sharing of information relating to the referral to be done at an early stage resulting in clearer and quicker decision making.

**The following is a breakdown of the assessments in the last quarter:**

**Of the 19 x SGO assessments:**

17 x are on-going at the time of writing this report

3 x ended due to the applicants withdrawing

**Of the 4 x Private Law SGO's:**

3 x on-going at the time of writing this report

1 x has ended due to the applicants withdrawing

**Of the 9 x Reg 24 to SGO assessments:**

All are on-going at this time.

**Of the 12 x Reg 24/Connected Person assessments:**

All are on-going at this time.

**Of the 3 x Private Fostering assessments:**

1 x has been completed

2 x are on-going

**What's working well?**

The use of virtual platforms such as Microsoft Teams mean early discussions can take place and speedier decisions made.

More joint supervisions are taking place as a result of the above.

Face to face visits to applicants and carers are taking place as the pandemic restrictions ease.

Joint visits are being undertaken to applicants / carers and children by the Supervising Social Worker and the Children's Social Worker due to the restrictions easing as above.

There is open communication between the Panel booking team and Kinship to ensure a smoother and more effective panel booking system, and to support panels run as best as they can.

Legal Services copy Kinship into all legal memos which inform Kinship of any incoming Kinship work.

**What are we worried about?**

The fostering service are keen to ensure that the quality of the viability assessments is received timely and are of sufficient quality to aid assessments and determine placement options for children

The service has seen over the past quarter an increase in multiple viability assessments for the same child or children. On discussing these with the relevant area team social workers are

completing primary and secondary viability assessments in case just in case their first choice is not viable. This is placing significant pressure on the service.

There are concerns regarding the court timetabling for SGO assessments is at times insufficient to do quality assessments including statutory checks. There has been reduced timescales to as little as 4 weeks from referral to court filing.

The impact in delay of receiving referrals from area teams is an ongoing concern. In an effort to address this all-social care teams have received a One Minute Briefing which is to be recirculated to raise practice standards. The Practice Supervisors do continue to offer feedback and are planning sessions with all teams to share feedback and help with solutions to ease any pressures.

The service has seen an increase in referrals whereby the viability assessment is negative however the Court / Children's Guardian is over ruling the local authority and ordering SGO and / or Reg 24 assessments despite the negative viability. This has resulted in some connected person placements being made that do not meet the fostering national minimum standards and therefore cannot be regulated and are then being managed under s38(6) Children Act 1989.

### **What needs to happen?**

Joint supervisions to continue to be booked for each kinship referral at the point of allocation.

Communication to be sent to Children's teams regarding the importance of timely referrals to ensure that the process for referral is familiar to all staff including new starters.

### **Staying Put:**

Staying Put continues to be discussed at the first review following the young person's 16th birthday with the decision being recorded on their pathway plan; which is then followed up at each review. Discussions around expectations and finances are undertaken with the young person and foster carers with a license agreement being completed prior to them turning 18. This ensures the transition to Staying Put is smooth with young people remaining informed about the process having support and stability to transition into adulthood.

With regards to the number of Staying Put arrangements in the second quarter of 2021-2022 reporting period there was a slight decrease from 41 to 40 young people on the scheme. Of this number 1 of the young people is on an apprenticeship, 8 attending university, 26 are in full time further education and 2 are in employment. The remaining 2 are on the Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme and one has an offer of employment.

In this quarter, 1 young person left the Staying Put Scheme. In the quarter 6 young person joined Staying Put after turning 18 and 7 more will be joining the scheme in quarter 3. Staying Put has remained in contact with providers with meetings and agreements being conducted of Microsoft Teams.

The service has also been working with Shared Lives to ensure that young people with disabilities who are eligible for adult services are able to transition into the most suitable longer term accommodation provision; with there been three successful foster carers/staying put providers taking on the role of a shared lives provider

Due to the situation relating to Covid-19 the service has adapted and continued to offer support and guidance to existing and potential Staying Put providers. A range of methods have been used to convey and discuss information relating to Staying Put using a mixture of telephone, face to face visits and IT platforms. Working together across Children's Services and with Barnardo's Leaving Care Service staying put arrangements have continued to be progressed with license agreements and support around benefits being completed remotely. It is envisaged that more face-to-face visits will resume which coincides with the gradual easing.

### **Conclusion:**

During the last year and to date the impact of Covid 19 continues. Despite the vaccination programme and gradual easing the availability of foster placements to the service remain a concern and an ongoing challenge that sits within the local and national context.

During this quarter placement stability has continued to be strong but placement availability has resulted in an increase in placements sought within the independent sector. This combined with the overall increase in care plans for permanent fostering has continued and represents one of the most significant challenges for the Directorate as the number of plans continues to grow whilst the recruitment of permanent foster carers remains worryingly low.

The service continue to use creative and innovative approaches to reach out to potential foster carers, including making the most of online and social media platforms yet it is envisaged that face to face events will safely to resume to aid our efforts and overall strategy.

The covid recovery is still to be fully understood in terms of longer-term effects however as a service our best efforts and motivation is to remind all households of their continued value to the authority and the children they care for. Maintaining high quality supervision and support is central to this in the context of maximising and mobilising our capacity. Equally, for many households they have and continue to make the difference and have despite the enormous challenges have demonstrated their commitment to the children in their care.

Foster carer's engagement within the virtual fostering community has continued to be a real strength and results in many carers sharing experiences, supporting others and drawing upon their experience in mass. It is a community that is going from strength to strength and for many is a further layer of support to the support and supervision from the service which is a statutory responsibility.

The continued efforts in the areas of recruitment, retention and the broad ranging support offered to fostering families is at the heart of what is delivered in Lincolnshire. This alongside fostering's engagement in the transformation work is where the ongoing support to carers will also evolve and will help shape the service going forward.

Deborah Crawford  
Head of Service - Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care



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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>11 November 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose</b>

**Summary:**

The purpose of the report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel about the work of the broader Children's and Fostering Service in relation to Private Fostering.

The requirements under The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 to Private Fostering are made under the Children's Act 1989. The Private Fostering National Minimum Standards are issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 where local authorities are expected to comply with such requirements.

The National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering Service are broken down into seven standards. Standard 7 deals with the Compliance and Duties and Functions in relation to Private Fostering and it is within this standard that this annual report and statement of purpose are updated to enable Corporate Parenting Panel to satisfy themselves with the evaluation of the Council's work in relation to privately fostered children within Lincolnshire.

The Annual Report at Appendix A and the Statement of Purpose at Appendix B set out the relevant performance information and identifies the way in which the local authority has discharged its function in the last year.

**Actions Required:**

That the reports be accepted as an accurate overview of the Council's function in their discharge of responsibilities in terms of Private Fostering.

**1. Background**

To present an overview of the Statement of Purpose and Annual Report for Private Fostering to members of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

## 2. Conclusion

The progress within the service to be recognised and the report attached is an accurate reflection of the discharged responsibilities.

## 3. Consultation

### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

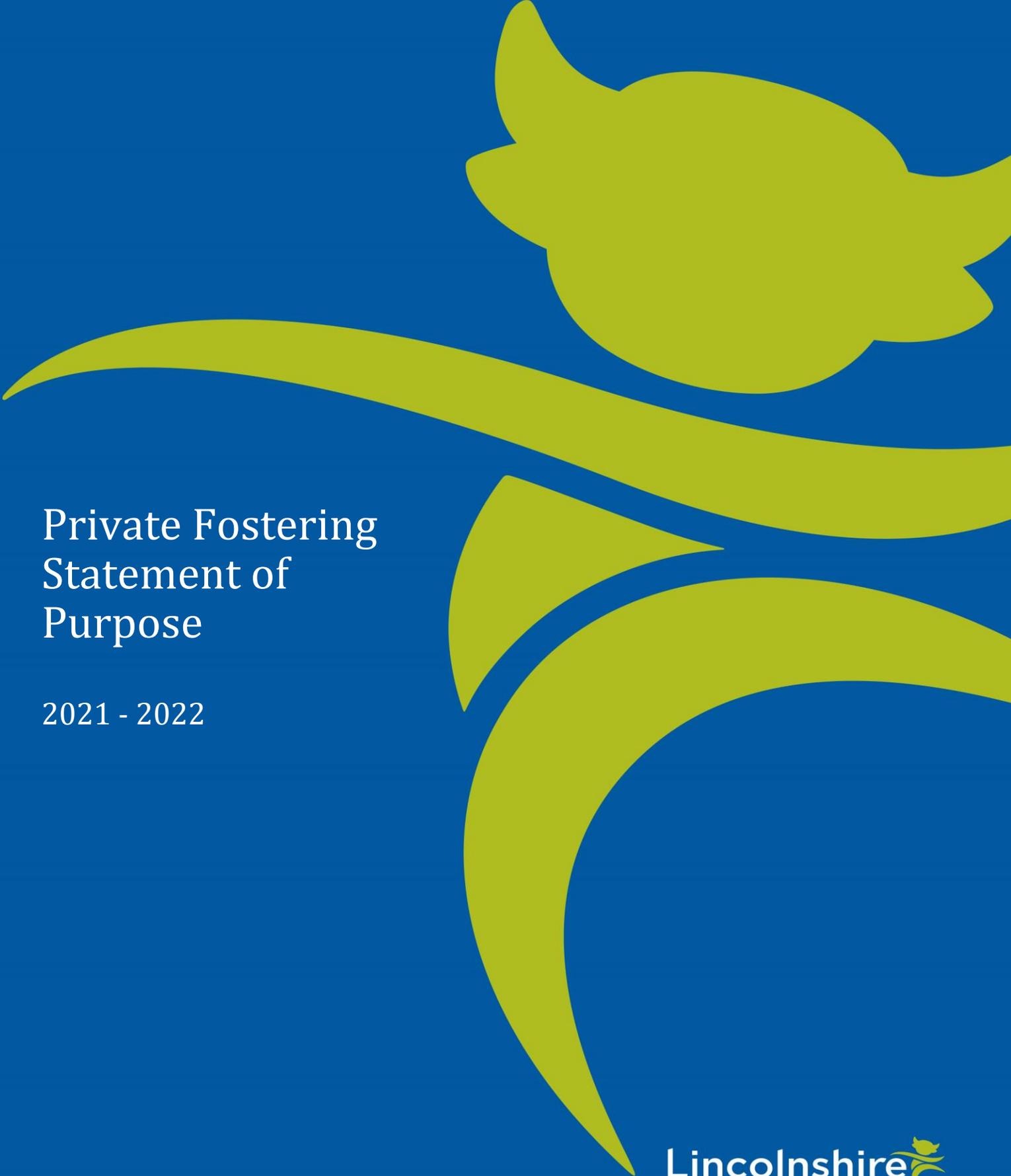
## 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Private Fostering Statement of Purpose
Appendix B	Private Fostering Annual 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 Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption, who can be contacted by e-mail at [Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk), or 07786 190414.

A large, stylized green flower graphic is positioned on the right side of the page. It features a central flower head with several petals and a long, curved stem that arches across the middle of the page. The background is a solid blue color.

# Private Fostering Statement of Purpose

2021 - 2022

## Private Fostering Statement of Purpose

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## **1. Introduction**

This document is a description of private fostering arrangements within Lincolnshire County Council. This statement of purpose is designed to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards 2005 for Private Fostering including Standard 1, and to provide a guide of the service for professionals, the public, council members and external organisations.

This document describes the local authority's duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.

## **2. Regulation**

Private fostering services provided by local authorities are regulated by OFSTED. Their contact details are:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

**Telephone Contact 0300 123 1231**

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, including those in private fostering arrangements.

Maintaining high standards in relation to private fostering service provision is a priority for Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services and remains committed to reviewing this on a continual basis.

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Directorate holds statutory powers and responsibilities as a local authority in relation to private fostering arrangements. These responsibilities are reviewed in partnership with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Children's Services works to ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of the service delivery and all prospective private foster carers are assessed and supported on the

basis of the needs of the individual private foster child/young person regardless of race, religion, class, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

### **3. Legal Definition of a privately fostered child**

In the definition provided by the Children Act 1989 a privately fostered child means:

- A child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than:
  - A parent of his/hers
  - A person who is not a parent of his/hers but who has Parental Responsibility for him/her

And

- He/she has been cared for and accommodated by that person:
  - For 28 days or more

Or

- The period of actual fostering is less than 28 days, but the private foster carer intends to foster him/her for a period of 28 days or more.

In the case of a child with a disability, the upper age limit for child to be privately fostered is 18 years.

A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for him/her:

- Had done so for a period of less than 28 days
- Does not intend to do so for any longer period.

For the purposes of the Act, parent includes unmarried or putative father. Relative means as above, whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership.

An arrangement is deemed as private fostering if it meets the criteria above whether for reward (monetary or otherwise) or not.

Some examples of private fostering arrangements include children/young people with families overseas, black and minority ethnic community, children/young people with parents working or studying in the UK; trafficked children/young people and asylum seekers and refugees, children/young people living with host families for a variety of reasons, i.e., attending language schools, undergoing medical treatment, etc., children and young people residing with friends.

#### **4. The local authority's duties and functions under the Children Act 1989**

Local authorities have a duty to be notified about private fostering arrangements in their area and to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered in their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted and to secure that such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to the authority to be needed (the Children Act 1989 Section 67(1)).

Broadly the duties fall into three types of activity:

- Giving and receiving notifications
- Ascertaining the suitability of private foster carers in their households
- Monitoring placements through visits and written records of visits.

#### **5. Duties under the Children Act 2004, the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005**

The measures in the Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005 are intended to strengthen and enhance the existing private fostering notification scheme.

Local authorities are required to raise public awareness in their area of the requirements regarding notification of private fostering arrangements. Notifications must be given to local authorities when a child/young person is proposed to be privately fostered or is being privately fostered. This will enable local authorities to ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children/young people is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by ongoing assessments and monitoring of arrangements within statutory timescales. These measures, along with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005, focus all local authorities' attention on private fostering and require them to take a more proactive approach

with partner agencies and other professionals in identifying arrangements in their area. They are expected to improve notification rates and compliance with the existing legislative framework for private fostering and, therefore, to address the key problems identified with the former scheme. It is intended that these additional measures will improve the arrangements for safeguarding children/young people in private fostering arrangements.

## **6. Training for relevant staff**

### **Professionals**

Lincolnshire has a commitment to ensure all professionals have a clear and defined understanding of the private fostering regulations and their role and responsibility in relation to private fostering.

Lincolnshire Children's Services will facilitate this by:

1. Publication of the Private Fostering Statement of Purpose
2. Training in relation to private fostering is available for newly qualified social workers in the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE programme) and all new social workers will be required to undertake the e-learning course in private fostering within the first six months of being in their role.
3. Providing information on Share Point (Lincolnshire County Council Intranet) and on [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)
4. Regular update of information through the e-mail network, and internal and external council publications
5. Monitoring feedback for further training requirements.

### **Information is available to professionals and organisations**

Groups include:

- Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services
- Schools – Heads, teachers, designated teachers
- Health care – School Nurses, GPs, Health Visitors
- Education Welfare Service
- Child Protection School Liaison Officers
- Any other professionals in Children's Services who come into contact with children.

- Language Schools
- Independent Schools
- District and Borough Councils
- Police
- Department for Works and Pensions
- Citizens Advice Bureaus
- Faith and community groups
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service
- Libraries
- CAFCASS
- Leisure Centres
- Courts and Youth Offending Services.

## **7. Change of behaviour in relation to private fostering**

It is nationally accepted that the regulations have not been successful enough in identifying and reaching the vulnerable groups of children who may be in privately fostered arrangements. Lincolnshire acknowledges that further promotion is always needed in order to increase the number of notifications with the ultimate aim of detecting the true number of privately fostered children in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire continues to review the publicity material, i.e. posters that are sent to all schools and colleges with a covering letter regarding private fostering and the need to refer any children or young people living in such arrangements.

It is recognised that we need continued engagement from other agencies and the community in order to reach out to the majority of privately fostered children alongside the robust safeguarding processes which are in place.

Leaflets were also devised for children under 11 and young people under 16 explaining what private fostering is and providing a brief overview of the process.

The Lincolnshire County Council website can also be used to find out more detailed information.

Lincolnshire is committed to continually evaluate its effectiveness of activities that contribute to a positive change of behaviour in relation to private fostering, and to review its communication and training plan accordingly.

## **8. Assessment of the suitability of private foster carers and their household**

All privately fostered children/young people within Lincolnshire County Council area will be allocated a Social Worker who will complete a Private Fostering Assessment of Arrangement (PFAAR) within 7 days of the notification, in accordance with national guidance on private fostering. In addition, the Fostering Service will complete an Assessment of the Private Foster Carer(s) within 35 days of the end of the Arrangement Assessment.

The Assessment of Private Foster Carers is completed using the Private Fostering Carers Assessment (PFCA) a specific assessment tool which includes statutory checks and references.

The sign-off of decisions about the overall suitability of the arrangement is done by the Team Manager of the Social Worker to the child, in consultation with the Team Manager of the Fostering Services.

The ongoing visits to see children in their private fostering arrangement are completed in adherence to Regulation 8 by a Social Worker from Children's Services who ensures that they speak with the child so that their voice is heard.

As a minimum, dependent upon the outcome of the previous Regulation 8 visits, once every 12 months the Team Manager will complete a review of the arrangements and confirm their suitability. The Head of Regulated Services is the named person within the local authority with expertise in private fostering whom social workers and managers can contact for advice. This includes decisions regarding requirements, disqualification and prohibition. A Team Manager has been delegated responsibility for leading and developing this service across the county.

**9. Advice/support and information available to private foster carers, parents/those with parental responsibility and privately fostered children**

An allocated social worker will be responsible for working with and supporting each privately fostered child/young person, the private foster carer and parents and others with parental responsibility. They will be the named case holder with contact details provided to all those concerned.

For the duration of Private Foster Carers Assessment, the Fostering Service will provide advice and support either directly to the private foster carer or through the Social Worker. The Fostering Service will notify private foster carers of any relevant training that they may wish to attend. The level of contact that each private foster carer will receive will be determined through the Private Foster Carers Assessment and the Regulation 8 visits.

In addition to statutory visits, other visits when requested by privately fostered children/young people, their parents, or private foster carers, will be undertaken.

Interpreters who are independent of parents and private foster carers will be used where it is the request of the child/young person or where the preferred language is not English.

Private foster carers (including prospective foster carers) will have access to advice on benefit entitlement, parenting strategies techniques, and other appropriate training and support as well be identified.

Parents of prospective/current privately fostered children/young people will also be advised, if in the best interests of the child/young person, of other service provision or other agency help available, which could remove the necessity for the child/young person to be privately fostered.

Coram BAAF guides will be provided to parents, privately fostered children and private foster carers.

#### **10. Ensuring the welfare of privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted**

Partner agencies, voluntary/community sector, faith groups will all be made aware of the notification requirements and of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of privately fostered children/young people.

Children's Services will ensure that privately fostered children/young people's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by staff undertaking the assessments and support of the arrangement and private foster carers.

Customer Service Centre will send the notifications to the Family Assessment and Support Team within one working day to avoid any unnecessary delay. Visits to privately fostered children/young people will be carried out in accordance with statutory timescales and recorded on Mosaic. This includes the recording of whether the child was seen and spoken with alone to ensure that the child's voice is heard.

The assessment of the private fostering arrangement is signed off by two Team Managers. One reviews the child's perspective of the arrangement and the other the abilities of the proposed private foster carer and their ability to meet the child's needs.

This dual signing allows for an extra level of safeguarding to be inserted into the process. The Team Manager of the child's social worker will notify in writing the parent or others with Parental Responsibility, private foster carers and relevant agencies that the child/young person is living in or will live in an private fostering arrangement and that the local authority consents to the arrangement or otherwise.

In accordance with the Social Care Assessments and the national guidance, the Private Fostering Assessments will ensure that the child/young person's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development is satisfactory and the needs arising from his/her religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background are being met. In addition, the assessment will include the suitability of the accommodation and an evaluation of the parenting capacity of the prospective/current private foster carer.

Private foster carers will be given advice on the child/young person's individual needs, which may include advice on any medical condition or learning disability, in order to enhance their ability to care for the child/young person. Support services will be made available to private foster carers, where necessary. They will also encourage the promotion of contact between the child/young person and his/her parents, siblings, extended family and significant others.

All private foster carers will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services check (DBS).

All privately fostered children/young people will have an allocated social worker. Along with their contact details they will be provided with information materials relevant to their age and understanding on what private fostering means. The Coram BAAF publication guide for private fostering is currently provided to each child privately fostered. Information about the advocacy service Total Voice and how to access this is also provided to all children/young people who are privately fostered.

Those children/young people who have been deemed as 'children/young people in need' or 'disabled' under the Children Act 1989 and are privately fostered will at the age of 16/18 years have access to an after-care service.

The Directorate undertakes file audits on a regular basis, and has a policy for the use of requirements, prohibitions, disqualifications and appeals' decisions. Decisions regarding the latter powers will be made whilst bearing in mind the best interests of the individual child/young person.

The local authority will carry out its other duties under the Children Act 1989 wherever there are safeguarding concerns.

When a child leaves the private fostering arrangement the social worker to the child will, wherever possible, visit the child at the new address to determine if other duties under the Children Act 1989 are required before closing the case. If the child moves to another local

authority the social worker will, wherever possible visit the child and shall notify the local authority where the child is living of the child's past circumstances and new address.

**11. The role of other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children, including encouraging notification**

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services will continue working to ensure that partner agencies are given information on their responsibilities regarding notification under the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005. This includes discussion at relevant meetings such as the Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership Operational Delivery Group.

Information materials will continue to be distributed to all relevant agencies.

The Fostering Service will notify private foster carers of any training events that are relevant to looking after children on behalf of parents.

**12. How relevant staff will have an understanding of the Directorate's duties and functions in relation to private fostering**

Children's Services staff will have access to this Statement of Purpose, information materials and training on private fostering including the associated procedures. Other directorates within Lincolnshire County Council and outside agencies will also have these documents, printed information and relevant training as part of corporate multi-agency training.

The Team Manager who is the lead officer for leading and developing the service, will in conjunction with the Head of Service Regulated, continue to inform other Directorates within Lincolnshire County Council and partnership agencies of any new guidance, safeguards and standards.

**13. How the Directorate will ensure that its duties and functions regarding private fostering are included in an induction and other training programmes, and these are reviewed and evaluated annually in line with changes in legislation and guidance**

Children's Services will ensure that its duties and functions in relation to private fostering are included in the annual training plan and will be reviewed in light of any changes in legislation, guidance and best practice developments.

Evaluation via feedback from workers and private foster carers will be collated to see if the training meets the needs of participants of the local authority's duties and functions regarding

private fostering. In addition to this, individual workers' training needs in relation to private fostering will be assessed as part of their continued professional development.

The content of training will be reviewed and evaluated following any comments made by privately fostered children, their parents or private foster carers.

#### **14. Monitoring the discharge of functions and compliance with part 9 of the Children Act 1989**

Under Regulation 12, the lead officer for private fostering, currently the Head of Service-Regulated will monitor the way the Directorate complies with and discharges its statutory duties and functions in relation to private fostering. This officer will monitor compliance with the following duties and functions:

- The promotion of awareness regarding notification requirements
- How the Directorate responds to notifications received, and if these are within timescales
- How the Directorate manages disqualifications, prohibitions, requirements and appeals against these, and refusals to consent to disqualified persons being private foster carers
- How the Directorate exercises its functions under Section 67(5), Children Act 1989
- How the Directorate processes decisions regarding offences committed, bearing in mind the best interests of the child/young person
- How the Directorate assesses the parenting capacity of prospective or actual private foster carers, members of their households and the suitability of their accommodation
- That statutory visits are within timescales and decisions about the suitability of arrangements are also within timescales and approved at managerial level
- That additional visits are made when requested by the child/young person, private foster carer, parents or those with parental responsibility
- That written reports are made in accordance with the Regulations, i.e., conclusions drawn on the arrangement, the child/young person seen alone, wishes and feelings of child/young person, any concerns raised etc.

- That advice and support is provided to private foster carers, parents, those with parental responsibility or any person concerned with the child/young person and recorded.
- That information and support is provided to privately fostered children/young people
- That independent interpreters are used as appropriate
- That a sample of individual child/young person and private foster carer records are regularly reviewed to check that compliance is being fulfilled
- That any concerns raised by privately fostered children/young people are investigated
- That a system for recording the number and nature of enquiries received in relation to private fostering, the responses given, and action taken, is effective.

The monitoring reports of private fostering activity notifications, arrangement assessments and visits under Regulation 8 are completed monthly; the reports are presented to the performance information group and are sent to the Director of Children's Services.

Lincolnshire will aim to create open channels for communication and participation to allow privately foster children, their parents, carers, the front-line professionals and partners to give feed-back on the service and raise any concerns. All recommendations and opinions will be given due consideration and changes of the service will be implemented to ensure continuous improvement.

The Head of Service- Regulated provides the Director of Children's Services with an annual report detailing overall performance and related plans for improvement and monitoring.

#### **15. Reviewing the policy statement**

This policy statement will be reviewed annually in line with any changes in legislation or guidance and will be regularly evaluated by the senior management of Children's Services to ensure that the Council's duties and functions in relation to private fostering are effectively discharged.

#### **Advice on private fostering**

Advice on private fostering can be obtained from the lead officer.

Deborah Crawford

Head of Service - Regulated, Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

Email [Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.crawford@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Telephone 01522 552781

# Private Fostering Annual Report

2020 - 2021

## **Introduction**

The Private Fostering Regulations apply when children or young people, aged under 16 years (18 if they have a disability) live with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. The term 'close relative' has a specific definition within the legislation it includes grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) and step-parents. Children living with people who are not close relatives, such as a cousin, great aunt or family friend need to be assessed and reviewed under the Private Fostering Regulations to ensure the placement is able to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

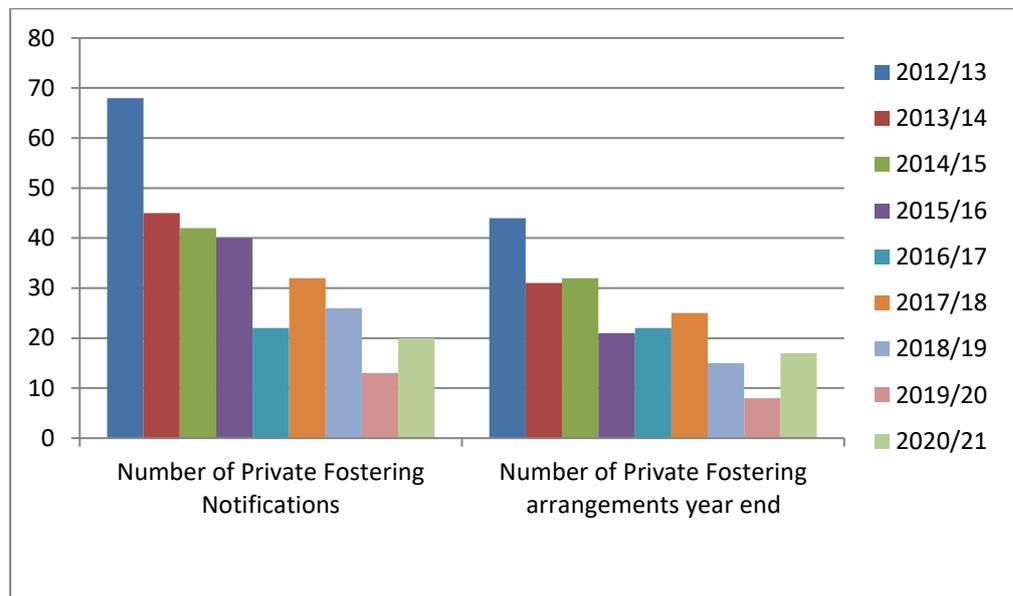
This annual report gives an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in Lincolnshire from April 2020 to end of March 2021. The report details how Lincolnshire County Council has complied with its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and includes how the welfare of privately fostered children has been safeguarded and promoted over the past 12 months. The report also outlines the activities which have been undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements regarding children who are living in private fostering arrangements.

Previous reports have been able to include a summary of the annual statistics provided by all local authorities as part of the Private Fostering Return (PF1 Return) concerning numbers of new notifications, arrangements and visiting patterns. This information is no longer centrally collated by the Government, and it is not possible to provide comparative data.

In Lincolnshire over the past year, we have continued to promote local understanding and awareness of private fostering and sought to improve how we meet the needs of the children and young people concerned.

This includes using audit to review our own performance and to identify where improvements need to be made.

## Data regarding Private Fostering arrangements in Lincolnshire



The chart above shows key data regarding private fostering within Lincolnshire over the past years. From the chart it can be seen that we experienced a peak in the level of notifications in 2012/13, but since then there has been an overall reduction in notifications. The number of ongoing private fostering arrangements has reduced further this year.

Focusing on 2020/2021 the following can be noted:

- There were 20 notifications to the Council spread throughout the County. This represents an increase on the previous year's figure of 13.
- Of the 20 notifications received, 100% of Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Records were completed within the 7 day timescale.
- All the Regulation 7 visits were undertaken within the 7 day timescale.
- All the Regulation 8 visits continue to be tracked with reminders sent to individual workers to ensure these are recorded on Mosaic.

### Procedures

Following the Laming Report in 2003 into the death of Victoria Climbié (who was privately fostered by her Great Aunt at the time of her death), regulations relating to Private Fostering were amended and strengthened by Section 44 of the Children Act 2004. The following year two further documents were published; The National Minimum Standards (NMS) 2005 and The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulation 2005, which clearly set out the role of the Local Authority, the Parent and the Private Foster carer and related professionals.

Under Standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards for private fostering, local authorities are expected to effectively monitor the way in which it discharges its

duties and functions in relation to private fostering, including to provide a written report each year, for consideration by the Director of Children's Services, which includes an evaluation of the outcomes of its work in relation to privately fostered children within its area. (Supporting Criteria 7.9 NMS for Private Fostering). Private fostering arrangements continue to be a focus of the OFSTED Local Authority Inspections.

### **Organisational and Structural Aspects**

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services continues to be committed to maintaining high standards in relation to private fostering service provision and ensuring that this service is continually reviewed.

There is a designated post, the Agency Panel Advisor, who has the lead for private fostering and their role is to monitor the compliance with the National Minimum standards on a monthly basis and to ensure that performance in the area remains high.

The monthly reporting figures that are seen by Social Care Team Managers and Practice Supervisors allow them to maintain their overview of how each team is performing in relation to private fostering.

Daily recording of work undertaken in relation to Private Fostering is recorded on Mosaic.

The specialist fostering service dedicated to kinship/connected person assessments continues to have responsibility for undertaking the assessment of the private foster carer's suitability. There continues to be regular communication between the Practice Supervisor in this team and the Agency Panel Advisor.

### **Background information**

Any parent proposing to have their child cared for by someone other than a close relative for more than 28 days, or a carer who is proposing to look after someone else's child who is not a close relative, should notify Children's Services at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to begin.

This is known as a "Proposed Arrangement". In these circumstances the Customer Service Centre should be contacted, and the referral will be passed on to the relevant locality Family Assessment and Support Team (FAST). However, the more usual presenting situation is one whereby the Customer Service Centre is notified of an arrangement when the child is already with the prospective private foster carer.

According to current agreed private fostering processes, the Customer Service Centre sends the received notifications directly to the Family Assessment and Support Team (FAST) within one working day to avoid any unnecessary delay and

this type of notification bypasses the usual screening process aligned to other social care requests.

FAST undertakes the management of the referral of privately fostered children and their timescale for completing the Private Fostering Assessment of Arrangement (PFAAR) is within 7 working days of referral (notification) and they liaise with the Kinship team for the completion of the assessment of the carer's suitability.

Within each FAST team, there are a small number of Social Workers that tend to be allocated any new private fostering cases and they receive support and advice from their Practice Supervisor.

At this point the Social Worker is required to visit and see the child, the carer and also the parents or those with Parental Responsibility.

Visits to see and speak with privately fostered children/young people are carried out in accordance with statutory timescales and recorded on Mosaic. The visits should include seeing the child, their bedroom and speaking with them alone. This is to ensure that the child's voice is heard and if any actions are needed to promote their welfare.

The assessment of the arrangement (PFAAR) is authorised by the Team Manager of the child's social worker. The decision about the overall suitability of the arrangement is completed by the Team Manager of the social worker to the child, in consultation with the Team Manager of the Fostering Service.

It is the responsibility of the Team Manager of the child's social worker to notify in writing the Parent or others with Parental Responsibility, Private Foster carers and relevant agencies that the child/young person is living in or will live in a Private Fostering Arrangement.

The Practice Supervisors in the Children in Care (CIC) Teams are also notified of the child/young person that is in a private fostering arrangement.

Once the private fostering arrangement has been confirmed, at the point of the second Regulation 8 private fostering visit, the FAST social worker will undertake a joint visit with a worker from the CIC team. On completion of the visit, the overall management will transfer to the CIC Team in order to provide the child/young person with a consistent response for the duration of the arrangement.

Each private fostering arrangement is annually reviewed by the Team Manager in line with the statutory requirements and as such, the cases are open to scrutiny in respect of care planning and intervention.

The Head of Service – Regulated is the named person within the local authority with expertise in private fostering whom social workers and managers can contact for advice.

Decisions regarding requirements, disqualification and prohibition should be referred to the Head of Service for Safeguarding.

### **Activity and Performance 2020-2021 in relation to National Minimum Standards**

#### **National Minimum Standard 1**

**The local authority has a written statement or plan, which sets out its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.**

Lincolnshire Council has a statement of purpose on private fostering which will be reviewed in 2021 for the period 2021-2022.

Information about private fostering is available in schools, through the Lincolnshire County Council website as well as the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP).

#### **National Minimum Standard 2**

**The local authority:**

- **promotes awareness of the notification requirements and ensures that those professionals who may come into contact with privately fostered children understand their role in notification**
- **responds effectively to notifications**
- **and deals with situations where an arrangement comes to their attention, which has not been notified**

#### **Awareness Raising**

The national private fostering week took place week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The private fostering leaflet was distributed to approximately 360 schools & 6 colleges in Lincolnshire as well as other relevant professionals. The LSCP also endorsed the leaflet and distributed it through their own partnership links including twitter feeds.

The website is more informative and user friendly and during Private Fostering week the Council had a social media presence to highlight this issue. Internally awareness was highlighted via a segment in Int Comms.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership has to be satisfied that the welfare of privately fostered children in this area is safeguarded and promoted and that agencies are co-operating. The multi-agency Education sub-group has the private

foster care agenda as a standing item and continues to look at promoting private fostering with partner agencies.

In order to continue to raise the awareness of private fostering and the understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to private fostering;

- Information about private fostering has been provided through the training program, with all staff dealing with private fostering having appropriate on line training. Private fostering training also forms part of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment training provided to social workers.
- The service has a communication plan which is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness and wide distribution to members of the public and partner agencies.
- Posters have been placed in local public buildings, including the following, hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists, libraries, Leisure Centre's, Places of Worship and Children's Centre's advising on the requirements of reporting private fostering situations.
- Information on the Lincolnshire County Council website and the NHS staff Intranet
- The school admissions forms have a section dedicated to private fostering to assist school staff in identifying private fostering arrangements

Lincolnshire is committed to continually evaluate the effectiveness of its activities to ensure that they contribute to a positive change of behaviour in relation to private fostering.

### **Response to Notifications**

In Lincolnshire, the majority of notifications are received once the placement has been made and following a referral by the carer to Customer Service Centre. The current arrangements ensure there is an assured and timely response to all notifications/ referrals. At the end of March 2021, the service received 20 notifications for the year; of these, all had their initial visit completed within the 7 calendar day timescale.

### **National Minimum Standard 3**

#### **Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare**

**The local authority determines effectively the suitability of all aspects of the private fostering arrangement in accordance with the regulations.**

The safeguarding of children who are privately fostered is a responsibility which impacts upon all parts of the local authority, health, district councils and the voluntary and private sectors, and as such the LSCP are proactive in monitoring the multi-agency approach in relation to private fostering.

Private fostering is a standing item on the LSCP agenda; this is a positive step in ensuring that professionals and organisations working with children and families are made aware about private fostering and the need to ensure that Children's Services know about such arrangements to promote the welfare of the child.

Children's Services continue to ensure that privately fostered children/young people's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by qualified social work staff undertaking the assessments and support of the arrangement and private foster carers.

The Agency Panel Advisor undertakes monthly monitoring of the work of the social workers and their supervisors; this monitoring identifies any areas where there may be a need for further discussions for example concerns regarding Parental Responsibility and the clear exercise of it, matters pertaining to permanency planning particularly for younger children. If required, action will be taken on individual cases to ensure compliance with agreed policy and procedure.

The Agency Panel Advisor is supported in her role by a dedicated Business Support Worker who collates the relevant data relating to private fostering and also sends out reminders regarding the timescales for visits.

When completing the PFAAR the child is seen alone as part of the assessment and their wishes and feelings ascertained and taken into account together with the child's needs.

Also, as part of the assessment the FAST social worker makes contact with the parents wherever possible to seek their view with regards to the arrangement and to explain how Parental Responsibility will need to be exercised.

In Lincolnshire all private foster carers are DBS checked and are assessed in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. The PFAAR and the carer's assessment form the completed suitability of the arrangement.

In accordance with Section 69 Children Act 1989, Children's Services have the power to prohibit a person from privately fostering where that person is considered not suitable, where the accommodation is not suitable, where the child's welfare would be harmed, where someone has been convicted for offences against children or where the care of the child is unsatisfactory.

There have been no incidents of prohibition or disqualification during the last year, therefore no legal action was taken.

Each private fostering arrangement is annually reviewed by the Agency Panel Advisor in line with the statutory requirements and as such, the cases are open to scrutiny in respect of care planning and intervention.

#### **National Minimum Standard 4**

**The local authority provides such advice and support to private foster carers and prospective private foster carers as appear to the authority to be needed.**

The dedicated Kinship team who are responsible for the carer's assessment, has ensured that private foster carers have access to the similar support as local authority foster carers. Carers are also encouraged to attend training events or to access the E-Learning programme available.

The website and information pack includes local services that the carer may access including children's centres. As part of the regular visits to the children the social workers will discuss the current situation with those carers who are looking after the children to ensure that any questions or concerns that they have are addressed.

#### **National Minimum Standard 5**

**The local authority provides such advice and information to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area as appears to the authority to be needed.**

The children's social worker provides parents with information regarding the legal and regulatory functions of the local authority during their work with those parents to ensure that they are aware of these and what they may expect from the local authority. This information relates to the name address and contact details of the child's social worker and information on the complaints.

Lincolnshire County Council through the monitoring of the case work for children who are in private fostering arrangements, ensures that plans for rehabilitation to birth families is considered, along with ongoing monitoring of the suitability of those private fostering arrangements

#### **National Minimum Standard 6**

**Children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Privately fostered children are enabled to participate in decisions about their lives.**

All children who are privately fostered in Lincolnshire have an allocated qualified social worker who provides advice and support to the child, private foster carer, and their parent(s) and/or any other person with Parental Responsibility. The level of contact that each private foster carer is determined through the Private Foster Carers Assessment and the Regulation 8 visits.

At the initial and subsequent visits, an information leaflet about private fostering along with a complaints leaflet and information about Total Voice advocacy service are provided to the child/ young person, their carers and family.

There is a requirement for a visit to be made to the carer and child within seven working days when the notification is received, and subsequent visits are to take place every six weeks in the first year and every three months thereafter.

In Lincolnshire we acknowledge the importance of completing the visits in required timescales, to ensure that the children are well cared for in a safe environment, also to identify the help and support available that may assist the private foster carer.

Regular audits are carried out on a range of casework within the authority and these have identified evidence within the assessment and Reg 8 visits, that children are seen alone; that they receive good social work support on an individual basis and are consulted about their views.

In order to ensure that our performance is maintained or improved where possible, the service proactively manages the schedule of visits with advance notice of scheduled dates for visits being forwarded to the allocated Social Worker and their Team Manager. The importance of private fostering continues to be highlighted to all FAST and CIC teams. This will be achieved through varying formats and to consist of:

- One minute briefing to be sent to all staff as part of National Private Fostering Week
- Liaison with Team Managers when a practice issue is raised and provide clear advice regarding the task that needs to be completed.

All children privately fostered in Lincolnshire were encouraged to maintain contact with their birth family and, where possible, their parents. Their religious and cultural requirements were met within the placement and through contact with the family.

#### **National Minimum Standard 7**

**The local authority has in place and implements effectively a system for monitoring the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. It improves practice where this is indicated as necessary by the monitoring system.**

Issues in regards to private fostering recording and completion of private fostering assessments and timescales are regularly discussed in Team Managers' meetings.

The activities of the Private Fostering Service are reported to Director of Children's Services and lead member for Children's Services.

The annual report relating to private fostering is shared with LSCP and this is also an agenda item to ensure that partner agencies are mindful of their own responsibilities in relation to private fostering.

Lincolnshire continues to review and develop a comprehensive service for privately fostered children and all those involved in private fostering, to ensure that the authority complies with relevant legislation and meets the National Minimum Standards in relation to private fostering.

### Complaints and Representations

There have been no complaints or representations during this period; however, Lincolnshire County Council ensures that robust reviews of the services for children in privately fostered arrangements are safe and secure

### Developments for the next twelve months for private fostering in Lincolnshire include:

- Public awareness will continue to be raised through on-going publicity campaign particularly during the private fostering week in October 2021.
- Work with LSCP and partner agencies to ensure that private fostering remains an agenda item for professionals. This will include the promotion of e-learning and participation in the education subgroup.
- Audit of private fostering.

### Overview of the Demographics of Children Privately Fostered 2020-2021

Age		NO		Ethnicity		Gender	
0 - 5	3			Male	6		
6	0	White any other White background	1	Female	14		
7	2	White British	17				
8	0	Other Ethnic Groups / Any other ethnic group	1				
9	0	Asian/Asian British / Chinese	1				
10	1						
11	0						
12	0						
13	5						
14	1						
15	8						
16	0						
17	0						

Lincolnshire County Council remain committed and are pro-active in ensuring that children and young people are provided with permanency and accordingly ensure that the legal status of children remains appropriate to meet their long-term needs.

**Dawn Oldroyd**  
**Agency Advisor Fostering and Adoption**

**Deborah Crawford**  
**Head of Service –Regulated – Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care**



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

Report to: **Corporate Parenting Panel**  
Date: **11 November 2021**  
Subject: **Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme**

**Summary:**

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

**Actions Required:**

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

**1. Background**

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

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

## Work Programme

11 NOVEMBER 2021		
	Item	Contributor
1	Independent Reviewing Service –Yearly Report (April to September 2021)	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
2	Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service – 6 Month Report (April to September 2021)	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
3	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Quality and Standards)
4	Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 2 2021/22 (July to September 2021)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding
5	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
6	Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

20 JANUARY 2022		
	Item	Contributor
1	Commissioning Excellence: Meeting the Sufficiency Duty 2018-2022 Annual Update	Amy Allcock, Commissioning Manager - Commercial
2	Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report 2020-2021	Kieran Barnes, Virtual School Headteacher
3	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service - Six Monthly Update Report	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's Leaving Care Services
4	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 3	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care
5	Children in Care Annual Report 2020/21	Rachel Freeman, Head of Service Children in Care and Residential Estates

10 MARCH 2022		
Item		Contributor
1	Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Quality and Standards)
2	Children in Care Performance Measures - Quarter 3 2021/22 (October to December 2021)	Janice Spencer, Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding
3	Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 4	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care

## 2. Items to be Scheduled:

- National Approach to Council Tax Relief / Exemption for Care Leavers

## 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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