

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY  
 COMMITTEE  
 16 JUNE 2023**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), A W Briggs, Mrs J E Killey, Mrs S A J Nutman, T J N Smith and M A Whittington

**Added Members**

Church Representative: M Kyle

Parent Governor Representatives:

Councillors: were also in attendance.

attended the meeting as invited guests.

Officers in attendance:-

Linda Dennett (Assistant Director - Children's Health and Commissioning), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Head of Service, Children in Care Transformation and Partners in Practice Programme), Teri Marshall (Education Transport Manager), Eileen McMorrow (Programme Manager, Special Schools Strategy), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director for Children's Education) and Ethan Thorpe (Communications) (Strategic Communications Lead)

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Baxter, C Matthews, N Sear and R Wright.

**2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

Councillor A Briggs declared a pecuniary interest in relation to Item 9 as his partner worked at St Francis Special School, Lincoln.

**3 MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2023**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 April be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

The Chairman had attended the opening of Strut House at its new site at St Francis Special School in Lincoln on 1<sup>st</sup> June. The facility provided short breaks for children and young people (CYP) with severe disabilities and had recently received an 'outstanding' classification from OFSTED.

The Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration announced that the Children's team were working to ensure several special schools were open before September following various refurbishment projects. Additionally, the OFSTED inspection had concluded and Children's Services received an 'outstanding' classification, and she thanked the team who worked consistently to support Lincolnshire's CYP. The OFSTED report had noted that CYP in the county had access to good local services despite Lincolnshire's size and rurality, and that the wide range of staff involved with CYP provided necessary support quickly. She also thanked the Executive for consistently providing financial support to Children's Services and hoped that staff continued their success in offering outstanding care to families.

The Committee thanked all involved in the inspection.

The Executive Director – Children's Services also gave her thanks to the Children's team and the consistent partnership working that occurred between the council, schools, police and health services. She also announced that a report on the outcomes of the inspection would be brought to the Committee's next meeting.

5 TEAM AROUND THE CHILD IN LINCOLNSHIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2022

The Committee received a report from Hannah Pendleton, Head of Service – Boston and South Holland Locality, which provided an overview of the Team Around the Child (TAC) successes and the work of the TAC Consultant Team. The following was reported:

- Service providers and family members developed a plan of support to provide for CYP in cases where their needs were not completely being met.
- The Consultant Team mostly worked alongside education providers and aimed to empower agencies to initiate contact with CYP and their families and take appropriate action.
- Families found the TAC process supportive, and it was reported that 62% of TACs concluded as requirements had been met.
- The Head of Service gave her assurance that there was a strong early help offer in Lincolnshire; resultantly, very few TACs escalated to the point of social care intervention.

- The increasing number of TACs was considered positive as it suggested that more CYP and families were benefitting from support available in Lincolnshire.
- The TAC Champion Initiative celebrated good practice and the work of Lead Professionals.
- Frequent surveys were conducted to identify potential areas for improvement.

During consideration of the report, the following points were highlighted:

- It was questioned how many children there were that previously had received support from social care who now had a TAC, and the Head of Service agreed to circulate further detail on this.
- Members enquired about whether the increase in TAC referrals continued following the Covid-19 pandemic and the Head of Service noted that TACs had steadily increased over the past decade. This was attributed to the heightened confidence of agencies in raising concerns about CYP.
- The Head of Service agreed to circulate information regarding families being supported in hard-to-reach communities and TACs for CYP of parents in the armed forces, however the Assistant Director - Early Help informed the Committee that information regarding armed forces families were not collated, although they were identified and supported through strong working relationships with schools.
- Reasons attributed to why a child required a TAC included a wide range of factors, such as family breakdowns, parents with poor mental health/substance addiction, poor school attendance and relationship difficulties.
- The TAC Consultant Team ensured the voices of CYP were consistently captured; early help assessments were co-produced by professionals, families and the child, who would provide guidance on how they would like to be supported. Additionally, staff within the TAC network suggested the voice of the child drove the process of the team.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Committee has reviewed the Team Around the Child in Lincolnshire Annual Report for 2022.
2. That the Committee has been assured that effective TAC arrangements are in place to support children and young people.

#### 6 YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL UPDATE 2022

The Committee received a report by Hannah Pendleton, Head of Service – Boston and South Holland Locality, which provided a summary on the work undertaken to identify and support Young Carers (YCs) in Lincolnshire. She guided the Committee through the report, and the following points were highlighted:

- The ‘young carers matter’ was a participation group led by CYP that helped capture the voice of YCs and ensured they were celebrated in ways they had chosen.
- Adult Services helped to identify potential YCs as early as possible, and various campaigns had been initiated across Lincolnshire to help raise awareness of YCs and their responsibilities.
- Resources had been developed to identify CYP in more hidden caring arrangements, such as those supporting family members with substance misuse.
- Schools received information and were supported in identifying YCs; Boston High School had hosted a successful pilot scheme alongside the Boston and South Holland Early Help Team and had co-produced a YCs group called ‘The Smile Club’.

During consideration of the report, the following points were highlighted:

- Members commended the hard work of YCs across the county.
- The Head of Service provided further detail on the work undertaken at Boston High School; it involved raising awareness amongst staff members to help them identify YCs and had consequently decided to establish ‘The Smile Club’.
- Across Lincolnshire, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) ensured there was a Young Carers Lead in most schools.
- Members enquired as to whether LCC could support more projects for YCs in schools across Lincolnshire. The Head of Service assured that upskilling schools to recognise and celebrate such caring arrangements was a priority, and question templates were also available for schools to support staff in initiating the right conversations with potential YCs.
- The Head of Service emphasised that every family, child and caring arrangement was unique, therefore the way in which YCs wished to receive support would be unique to them.
- YCs of a very young age were supported by helping them access and use emergency contacts and services.
- Members considered whether the work of YCs resulted in a cost saving for the council, and the Executive Director – Children’s Services informed the Committee that the support provided by YCs did not replace the care that LCC was statutorily required to provide, consequently there were no cost savings.
- Questions were raised about how children in hard-to-reach caring arrangements, such as supporting adults with addiction or complex mental illness, could be supported in self-referring as a YC as it was acknowledged they would be anxious to engage with services. The Head of Service accepted that this was difficult, but these CYP were informed that their work was recognised and were sometimes offered help without involvement from social services. Furthermore, the Executive Director – Children’s Services highlighted that school assemblies attempted to help CYP understand whether they were offering care, and assured that services that wrapped around vulnerable adults, such as doctors, health workers and police, further helped identify YCs.

- Additional information on the volume of YCs in single parent households would be circulated to Committee members.
- Questions were raised about the quantity of YC organisations operating in Lincolnshire and were informed that there was a group in all localities that offered a range of activities for YCs; activities for younger children focused on play, whereas older children were given respite and relief. These groups helped YCs engage with others that understood their situation.
- During the covid-19 pandemic, YC organisations had to run group meetings remotely which did not provide respite, although it was reported that YC did enjoy introducing their homes and families to their peers.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Committee has reviewed the Young Carers Annual Update 2022.
2. That the Committee has been assured on the measures being undertaken to identify and support young carers in Lincolnshire.

#### 7 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members received a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to consider and comment on the contents of its work programme to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit. The following points were highlighted:

- The William Stukeley Primary School decision report was deferred from 21 July to the 8 September Committee meeting due to a delay in receiving details regarding the cost. The decision was now due to be taken by the Leader of the Council between 18 and 22 September.
- The Maples Short Breaks decision report scheduled for 8 September was a decision now due to be taken by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration between 18 and 22 September rather than an Executive decision on 3 October.
- A report on the Re-commissioning of the Portage Service had been added to the 8 September agenda for pre-decision scrutiny prior to a decision by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration between 18 and 22 September.

#### RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme be reviewed and agreed upon.

#### 8 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

#### RESOLVED

**6**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16 JUNE 2023**

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Councillor A W Briggs left the meeting at this point of proceedings.

**9**        REFURBISHMENT AND RE-MODELLING OF ST FRANCIS SCHOOL, LINCOLN

Consideration was given to the exempt report, and the Committee raised a number of questions which were answered by the Officers present.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendations to the Leader of the Council as set out in the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Leader of the Council in relation to this item.

The meeting closed at 11.23 am