



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

THURSDAY, 9 MAY 2024 at 10.00 AM

in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN LN1 1YL

MEMBERSHIP

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors S P Roe (Chairman), A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), Mrs N F Clarke, C Matthews, N Sear, M A Whittington and 1 Vacancy

Added Members (non-voting): Polly Coombes, Ann Wright, Caroline Sanders, Sarah Bancroft and 1 Vacancy(Children In Care Council Representative)

AGENDA

Item	Title	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
2	Declarations of Interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 March 2024	3 - 8
4	Announcements by the Chairman and Chief Officers	
5	Corporate Parenting Panel Review <i>(To receive a report by Andrew Morris, Head of Service – Leaving Care and Supported Living, which presents the proposed changes to the Panel aimed to achieve tangible outcomes for the young people within the Authority’s care)</i>	9 - 18
6	Lincolnshire Children in Care Council - Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report <i>(To receive a report by Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Quality and Standards), which provides a summary of the recent activities regarding the Lincolnshire Children in Care Council – Voices for Choices (V4C) and the actions planned to support future progress)</i>	19 - 24

- 7 Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027 - Annual Update to the Action Plan** 25 - 44
(To receive a report by Bridie Fletcher, Senior Commissioning Officer (Children's Commissioning), which presents an annual update to the action plan of the Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2027, covering 2023-24)
- 8 Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme** 45 - 48
(To receive a report by Kiara Chatziioannou, which invites the Panel to consider its work programme)

Distributed on Tuesday, 30 April 2024

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, 9th May, 2024, 10.00 am \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/agenda/corporate-parenting-panel-thursday-9th-may-2024-10.00-am)

Should you have any queries on the arrangements for this meeting, please contact Emily Wilcox via telephone 01522 552334 or alternatively via email at emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk



**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
14 MARCH 2024**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S P ROE (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), Mrs N F Clarke, C Matthews and N Sear

Added Members: Ann Wright (Foster Carer) and Sarah Bancroft (Lincolnshire Community Health Services)

Officers in attendance:-

Tara Jones (Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding), Andrew Morris (Head of Service - Leaving Care, Semi-Independent Living and Unaccompanied Children), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Deborah Crawford (Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption), Nicola Wilkinson (NHS Lincolnshire ICB), Sarah Lane (Virtual School Head) and Paul Fisher (Corporate Parenting Manager)

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were recorded from Polly Coombes (Foster Carer) and Caroline Sanders (Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust).

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

47 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2024

It was agreed that the following amendments be made to minute 41 on page 5 of the agenda pack:

- Bullet point 2 on page 5 be amended to clarify that there were 101 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Lincolnshire and the maximum Lincolnshire was expected to take was 144.
- That bullet point 3 on page 5 be amended to reflect that when children are placed on remand they automatically become a child in care.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendments set out above.

48 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF OFFICERS

With sadness the Chairman announced the passing of Councillor Julie Killey, who had been a member of the Panel since November 2020 and represented the Lincoln Park electoral division and was also the Labour Group representative on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Parenting Panel. On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman extended deepest condolences to her family during this difficult time.

The Panel observed a minute's silence as tribute to Councillor Killey.

The Chairman provided an update on the visiting members to Children's Homes – Councillor Gary Taylor has been appointed the visiting member for Spalding and Councillor Matt Boles had been appointed as the visiting member for Gainsborough. The relevant checks and training were underway.

Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding was delighted to report that Riverhead House, the Council's newly built children's home based in Louth, was now fully registered with Ofsted, with the first child placed. Supported accommodation at Denton and Rowston were also now fully registered with Ofsted.

49 LINCOLNSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-23

Consideration was given to a report by Sarah Lane, Virtual School Head, which introduced the Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the Academic Year 2022-23, as set out at Appendix A to the report.

During the discussion on this item, the following points were recorded:

- Young people would always be encouraged to apply to education settings which were geographically the closest, as it was not considered appropriate for young people to be travelling long distances to attend an education setting.
- Officers were not concerned about post 16 attendance data or that Ofsted outcomes had an impact on young people's attendance. Assurance was provided that colleges provided a high level of support for young people despite Ofsted ratings and whilst it was not a statutory requirement, each college had a designated lead to support young people who attended.
- Members welcomed the report and the positive outcomes shown.
- In relation to concerns raised over the increase in Lincolnshire's persistence absence rate from 12.3% to 24.5%, it was acknowledged that this was a complex issue and based on individual circumstance. Many children had found the transition back to education difficult following covid lockdowns.
- Assurance was provided that any young person who was not attending an education setting regularly would be involved in termly targeted support visits and a

multiagency discussion would take place to identify barriers to attending education and address challenges where possible to support attendance. Assurance was provided that attendance was a priority both locally and nationally.

- Members sought assurance that children on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan would no longer be excluded without representation or appeal by the child's family or social worker. Members were reassured that social workers were being upskilled to ensure they could represent pupils at Governor's Pupil Disciplinary committees which would include providing additional information on individuals that may have contributed to exclusions. Parents were kept fully informed throughout the exclusion process and provided with opportunities to challenge exclusions.
- National data suggested rates of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) were increasing. However, Officers acknowledged that Lincolnshire had a higher rate of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), including children in care. There had been an increase in the complexity of children's needs. There was some misunderstanding that an EHCP was necessary to meet the needs of SEND children. However, Officers were working to emphasise that many children's needs could be met without an EHCP.
- Support from the Virtual School ended once a young person turned 18, unless they requested additional support. The Virtual School was working with the Leaving Care Service to potentially extend involvement to the end of the academic year in which the individual turned 18, which was above statutory duties.
- The post of Team Manager was subject to job evaluation due to the increase in duties and once finalised recruitment would commence.

RESOLVED

That the report be reviewed and the Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23 be endorsed.

50 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding, which set out the key performance information for quarter 3 of 2023-24 which was relevant to the work of the Panel, as set out on pages 47 to 70 of the agenda pack.

It was reported that of the 16 measures reported, two did not meet their target and two were ahead of the target. A breakdown was provided at Appendix A to the report.

During the discussion on this item, the following points were recorded:

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

- The need to ensure that Children in Care felt supported to have health checks and ensure they felt safe and looked after was emphasised. Officers highlighted the importance of health promotion from early years settings, although acknowledged

that children coming into care later could sometimes be more difficult to support in terms of health needs.

Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training:

1. In relation to the data on page 48 that stated that 28 young people were unable to work due to illness/disability, the Panel requested that in future, distinctions be made between those with illness and disability.
2. Some members expressed disappointment that the target had still not been met and emphasised the importance of ensuring that all care leavers had the chance to undertake education, employment and training, and that the Council enabled them to take that chance.
3. Officers expected that some of the children in care without an up-to-date health check would also not be engaging in education, employment and training as it was acknowledged that many of these individuals had extremely complex needs and mental health needs. Assurance was provided that emotional wellbeing and mental health workers were now established within the leaving care service who would support those children who were not engaging.
4. Children and Young People were supported by foster carers, social workers, the virtual school and health teams, however many individuals entering their teenage years sought to normalise themselves and made a conscious decision not to engage with health assessments and education support as this was not offered to their peers.
5. A briefing session on the topic of education, employment and training for care leavers was proposed for the 5 June 2024 and members would receive an invitation in due course.
6. Members appreciated that some of the complexities and detail could not be included within the report but suggested it would be useful to provide further explanation within the report to allow members to better understand the data.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be reviewed and that satisfaction with the performance measures relevant to Children in care for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 be recorded;
2. That the request for a distinction between those unable to work due to illness or disability in future reports be noted.

51 FOSTERING QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER THREE

Consideration was given to a report by Deborah Crawford, Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption, which provided an overview of the Fostering Service performance for quarter 3 of 2023-24, as detailed on pages 71 to 94 of the agenda pack.

The Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption emphasised the challenges with recruiting Foster Carers and expressed gratitude to all Lincolnshire’s Foster Carers for their outstanding commitment and level of work.

Ann Wright, Foster Carer Representative appreciated the recognition and high level of support offered to Lincolnshire's Foster Carers.

During the discussion on this item, the following points were recorded:

- The Committee echoed the comments made and thanked both the Fostering Team for their passion, commitment and quality of service and Foster Carers for their hard work and ongoing support.
- It was suggested that more data including key figures be provided in future reports to allow further analysis of Lincolnshire's position, which was supported by Officers.
- The Panel was reassured that Lincolnshire was one of the strongest performing authorities in terms of recruitment and retention of Foster Carers and percentage of Children in Care placed within a family setting.
- Members welcomed the introduction of the Government's Kinship Strategy and the additional flexibility this would bring. It was clarified that the Kinship Strategy was launched in December and it was still unclear which eight local authorities would be selected to take part in the project. Officers felt that the strategy would create a level playing field and fairness across the country to enable families, friends and connected persons to step forward and care for looked after children. Assurance was provided that in Lincolnshire, kinship carers were treated in the same way as foster carers.
- The Panel was advised that the Fosterlink Service had been launched by the Government. Children's Services would be receiving a visit next week from the Department for Education to carry out a health check of where Lincolnshire was in regard to fostering. It was requested that the report setting out the outcomes from the visit be shared with the Panel.
- Officers emphasised that apart from certain children who had an assessed need to be placed in a residential setting, they would always look to place children within a family setting and would always explore foster placements and placements with family members or extended family members as a priority. Although Lincolnshire may look for opportunities for capital funding to build further children's homes in the future, the priority to place children in a family setting was reiterated.
- The Chairman commended the newly built Riverhead children's home in Louth and the positive benefit it offered to Lincolnshire.
- The Panel recognised the ongoing challenges with the efforts made to advertising the role of foster carers.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress made within the Fostering Service had been reviewed.
2. That the report be accepted as an accurate overview of the Fostering Service.
3. That the findings of the Fosterlink Service visit be shared with the Panel.

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

14 MARCH 2024

52 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Panel to review its work programme, as set out on pages 85-88 of the agenda pack.

One amendment to the work programme was reported which was the addition of a report on proposed constitutional changes to the terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel, which would be brought for consideration by the Panel at its meeting on 9 May 2024. The proposals would then be ratified by Full Council on 17 May 2024.

The Chairman reminded members about the Education, Employment and Training workshop which would take place on 5 June 2024 on Microsoft Teams. An appointment would be sent to members of the Panel in due course.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	09 May 2024
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Panel Review

Summary:

This report presents the proposed changes to the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) aimed to achieve tangible outcomes for the young people within the Authority's care.

Actions Required:

That the Panel give consideration to the suggested changes and offer comments on the proposals.

1. Background

- 1.1 We have a highly engaged and top performing Children's Services that cares for our young people and promotes our responsibilities as Corporate Parents - both within the Authority and to our partners and stakeholders.
- 1.2 However, top tier Authorities across the country have been judging that a 'Corporate' approach to parenting doesn't necessarily provide the wanted connection with the young people within its care.
- 1.3 Our Members are firmly of the belief that our care-experienced young people should be at the heart of the corporate parenting process, and that currently we are running this process *for* them, but *without* them.
- 1.4 The current national view is that high level meetings in such a formal setting may limit young people's interest and could serve as a barrier to the children it serves. The review of CPP was launched by Councillor S P Roe and facilitated by Democratic Services representatives.

1.5 This recommendation has followed the decision-making process as follows:

- a) Children DLT - 9 February 2024
- b) Executive DLT with Cllr Bradwell and Cllr Roe – 18 March 2024
- c) Consideration at full council meeting on 17 May 2024

2. Proposal

2.1 It is therefore being proposed that changes be considered to improve our engagement and to become 'Less Corporate, and More Parenting'. These suggestions are made to achieve the following outcomes:

- Putting our young people at the heart of the process, to better help them to feel engaged with, cared for, and inspired – the way any parent would wish to for their child to feel.
- Raising the profile of Corporate Parenting.
- Stimulating better engagement from all directions:
 - through our network of providers who support our young people;
 - from our Elected Members;
 - from the young people covered by this service;
 - from the people and officers who represent our young people; and
 - through our district and parish connections.

2.2 It is envisaged that this can be achieved by making six simple changes:

- (1) create thematic meetings;
- (2) change the performance reporting process;
- (3) changing the governance arrangements of Corporate Parenting Panel meetings;
- (4) utilise different methods of engagement;
- (5) demonstrate our dedication to those in our care; and
- (6) reaffirm the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

2.3 (1) Thematic Meetings

The generic nature of the CPP meetings means that often attendance is by those persons who have a vested interest in the whole, rather than the parts.

By splitting the annual work of the Panel into focused subject headings would enable the right people to come together at the right time such as portfolio holders, key stakeholders, and those with connections that can make true change for our young people. It would also, in turn, encourage any young people with a vested interest or issues in each thematic sub-heading to engage with the process.

Four themed meetings are suggested:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Education, Training, Employment and Careers
3. Criminal Justice Interventions
4. Housing and Accommodation

With cross cutting elements being addressed within each of the themed meetings:

1. Promoting relationships, friends and family time
2. A focus on Permanence
3. A focus on Fostering
4. Residential settings

In the thematic meeting model, relevant partners with a co-responsibility for Corporate Parenting would be invited to attend to help shape service improvements.

2.4 (2) Changing the Governance Arrangements

LCC works hard to reduce the stigma associated with being care-experienced, and it is a well-known fact that young people within Local Authority care prefer not to be identified as such. It is on that premise that a live-streamed meeting prohibits engagement with our Care Leavers. Those currently under the age of 18 would be prohibited from appearing on camera due to safeguarding.

To help make tangible change, discussions will need to permit reference to experiences of care-experienced individuals. When a meeting is public, this level of openness cannot be achieved without breaching confidentiality.

Whilst Lincolnshire County Council operates a very transparent method of examining its functions, and it is very important not to erode this, the benefits of creating a safe space for engagement would be more beneficial.

In return, performance reporting can be altered to ensure that the transparency can be maintained.

2.5 (3) Changing the Performance Reporting Process

The Council is under specific regulation to deliver its corporate parenting duties and there are requirements to ensure our activities, and the performance of those, are used to inform the way in which we parent. However, the way in which the performance is presented is not dictated to us.

It is suggested that the frequency and length of reporting be reviewed, and the majority of performance reports should be presented in line with thematic

meeting subjects. Presenting information on how the service performs in relation to (for example) NEET requirements at the Education themed meeting would bring about informative discussion with the right people to create good outcomes.

There are quarterly reporting requirements to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, and overarching performance reports that will still be presented to the two meetings of the CPP which are not themed.

2.6 (4) Changing Methods of Engagement

It is further suggested that meeting reporting be simplified to be more accessible to younger people dispensing with local authority jargon and acronyms.

CPP meetings can become easier to access by permitting young people to join the meeting remotely.

Making young people feel comfortable to engage will be a challenge that could be met with a small budget for food or travel to and from meetings, or reward for attendance.

2.7 (5) Demonstrated Dedication

For the young people in the care of the Authority, feedback shows that they need demonstrated dedication by way of action. Many have been let down along their journey in life, and therefore these changes could become another way to give them reassurance.

This could be demonstrated by engaging with key officers and Members and having them present at the thematic meetings – this way it may be only one meeting a year they would be required to attend, but it would have meaning and purpose to the young people engaging or hearing feedback. Attendance could be by relevant Scrutiny Chairmen, Portfolio Holders or Executive Directors.

Utilising council resources and influence, as a parent would do, to levy benefits for its 'children' in a transparent manner would also demonstrate the stability that our young people need and trust that the Council is looking after their interests.

(6) Reaffirming the Role of the Corporate Parenting Panel

The Corporate Parenting Panel currently sits alongside the scrutiny function, which can result in some overlap and duplication between the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. In May 2019, the County Council agreed that the Corporate Parenting Panel would report to the Full Council as required, rather than the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, to increase awareness among all members of the work being undertaken in ensuring that the County Council undertakes its duty as Corporate

Parent. Therefore, the Corporate Parenting Panel is an anomaly within the scrutiny function as it does not report to a parent scrutiny committee.

The new model for delivery provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with the opportunity to develop a new distinguishable role for itself. It is suggested that its principal role would be to provide strategic leadership that drives forward a multi-agency approach for improving outcomes and overcoming barriers for those in our care. The terms of reference for the Panel would need to be altered to remove it from 'within' the scrutiny function and to consider its membership accordingly.

Scrutiny of the Panel would however continue to be supported by a scrutiny officer and the Chairman and Scrutiny Officers associated with the subject areas discussed at the new 'thematic' meetings. This opens a dialogue between each area of scrutiny to widen the impact and knowledge of Corporate Parenting across all areas of the authority, thus increasing the profile of the group.

2. Conclusion

Having considered the potential for a greater level of engagement, it is hoped that Members will determine that the changes proposed can make a measurable improvement to the lives of the young people in their care. They will feel better informed and engaged, and Members will be surrounded by contextual first-hand information.

3. Consultation

Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Proposed Amendments to the Terms of Reference for the CPP

5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers Second Report	National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers second report (publishing.service.gov.uk) .

This report was written by Andrew Morris, Head of Service, Leaving Care and Supported Living, who can be contacted at Andrew.morris@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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CHANGES TO THE CONSITUTION REQUIRED FOR CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

6.1 Corporate Parenting Panel

Membership

1. The County Councillor membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel will follow the rules of proportionality and be determined by the County Council on an annual basis.
2. The Panel will comprise of 7 voting Members of Lincolnshire County Council, 3 of which ideally will be District Councillors or have a strong link with districts to enable these views to be represented.
3. Four non-voting representatives will be invited to every meeting: two Foster Carer representatives and two care-experienced representatives.
4. Additional members will be appointed to attend up to two thematic meetings per year in relation to their area of expertise or portfolio. The list below is not exhaustive but gives examples of the partners that will be requested to attend. These members do not have voting rights, but are invited to fully participate in the meeting:
 - Lincolnshire NHS Foundation Trust
 - ICB
 - LPFT (Mental Health)
 - Community Health
 - Acute Trust
 - Relevant Portfolio Holders and Scrutiny Chairs
 - Virtual School
 - Learning Partnership
 - Leaving Care Service
 - Further Education providers
 - Lincolnshire Police
 - Probation Service
 - Youth Offending
 - Lincoln Prison
 - WAWY
 - NACRO
 - District Councils
 - Supported Living Providers

- DWP

~~Five additional members may also be appointed to the Panel in the following categories:~~

- ~~• one Representative of the V4C the Children in Care Council~~
- ~~• one Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust representative~~
- ~~• one Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust representative~~
~~two Foster Carers~~

Chairman and Vice Chairman

5. At its first meeting in each municipal year, the Corporate Parenting Panel will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from the County Councillor membership of the Panel.

Quorum

6. The quorum of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be three, ~~with at least one of the county council Corporate Parenting Panel members in attendance~~ Elected Members.

Replacement

7. Replacement members will be permitted on the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Meetings

8. The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet ~~in public~~ up to six times a year and as otherwise required, four of which will have a thematic focus:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Education, Training, Employment and Careers
- Criminal Justice Interventions
- Housing and Accommodation

9. Meetings will be held at County Offices in Lincoln.

10. All attendees will receive paperwork five clear working days in advance of each meeting and minutes will be published after the event.

Terms of Reference

11. The Corporate Parenting Panel is authorised to undertake the following activities:-

- Ensure that all Councillors and Lincolnshire County Council

Directorates are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents proactively. This will involve the Corporate Parenting Panel organising specific education and training events for all eCouncillors to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be corporate parents.

- Provide clear strategic and political direction and agree clear actions and accountability in relation to corporate parenting and for Members to utilise their skills, knowledge and influence to be active in creating tangible differences for the young people in care.
- Investigate on behalf of all Councillors ways in which the role of corporate parenting can be improved, using examples from other local authorities and countries.
- Ensure that Councillors undertake their annual programme of visits to children's homes.
- Ensure that the needs of children and young people in public care and their carers are prioritised by Councillors and officers.
- Receive quarterly reporting of key performance indicators relating to children and young people in public care.
- Receive regular and/or annual reports on the level and quality of services to children and young people in public care from:
 - the Children's Services Directorate;
 - other Directorates;
 - and organisations. Senior leaders from key partners who share the Corporate Parenting responsibility.
- Monitor the performance, quality and outcomes of the Council's services in relation to children and young people in public care and identify any areas for improvement.
- Engage with children and young people who are in public care or have left care by inviting them to act as advisers to the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Listen to the views of children, young people and their carers and to involve them in the assessment and development of services.
- Champion the provision of Council based work placements and Apprenticeships for looked after young people.
- Promote achievement and acknowledge the aspirations of children and young people in public care by supporting celebration events.
- Meet with Ofsted inspectors where appropriate for their input into inspections.
- Participate as members of the adoption and fostering panels.
- Agree a work plan, reviewing progress, membership of the Panel and attainment of its role and terms of reference.
- Report back formally on these matters in writing to full Council at least annually and more frequently as the Corporate Parenting Panel considers necessary.

COMPOSITION OF OTHER GROUPS

Corporate Parenting Panel	7 Councillors – Politically inclusive (+5 non-voting members as set out in Article 6.11)
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5. CHAIRMEN OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES, SCRUTINY PANELS AND SCRUTINY SUB-GROUPS

- (A) The County Council will appoint the Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from amongst the Councillors sitting on the relevant Committee, except for the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire.
- (B) The Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire will appoint its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
- (C) The County Council will appoint the Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen of the Scrutiny Panels.
- (D) The Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen of the Corporate Parenting ~~Sub-Group~~Panel and ~~the Safeguarding Boards~~any Scrutiny Sub-Group will be appointed by the respective Sub-Group/Panel at its first meeting in each municipal year.



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	09 May 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire Children in Care Council - Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report

Summary:

This report gives a summary and overview of:

- Activities regarding Lincolnshire Children's Services Children in Care Council (V4C) between October 2023 and April 2024.
- Actions to support future V4C planning and progress.

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. The meetings and activities bring children and young people in care together with senior leaders in the Council to hear their views and feedback to help inform service development.

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

During this reporting period, the most recent meetings between children and young people within the Children in Care Council, senior managers and elected members that took place are summarised, along with other Children in Care Council related work and planning for the annual FAB Awards ceremony and activities for June 2024, which is a key aspect of the Children in Care Council focus.

Children in Care Council meetings

In 2023, children and young people were consulted about how they would like Children in Care Council meetings to operate, and feedback was received that evening meetings held in school term time was a barrier to attending due to time constraints, and also that the format of several meetings across the county meant that groups were too small.

As a result, it was agreed that a shift to centralised meetings within the daytime would be trialled with a view that this could increase attendance and engagement. As a result, the Children in Care Council meeting would become a full day, and this would allow:

- Less barriers regarding travel and time, with transport provided/funded where needed.
- More time for the Children in Care Council meeting to take place and have discussions.
- A lunch to be provided.
- A social/fun activity to be offered in the afternoon.
- Meetings to mirror the arrangements of Big Conversations which have seen increased attendance.
- Care Leavers to attend and speak with children in care about their experiences in a single setting.

The first meeting in this format was held in September 2023 where 13 young people attended, which was an increase from previous attendances.

During this reporting period the following meetings have taken place or are due to take place:

Date of Meeting	Venue	Number of young people attended
October half term	Lincoln Escape Rooms	19
28 November 2023	Online meeting to plan training project	6
December 2023	Theatre Royal, Lincoln	14
23 January 2024	Online meeting to plan training project	6
February Half Term	Screddington Community Centre, Sleaford (including cooking activity)	4
21 March 2024	Online meeting to plan training project	6

Easter Holiday	Boston Stump	5
May half term	The Active Arena, Lincoln	To be confirmed after 30 May.

Children in Care Council Meetings

During this reporting period, the following discussions and work has taken place:

Development of a training resource

Meetings and discussions have been focused on the Children in Care Council producing a training resource presentation for professionals working in the children’s workforce in schools and across Lincolnshire that will aim to give the views of children and young people in care with regard to their experiences and how they can be supported and communicated with, in particular in terms of challenging some stereotypes and assumptions. Specific views of the young people about what they feel the training should address include:

- Explaining what foster caring involves.
- The effect of labelling as being in care.
- Challenging bullying of children and young people in care.
- Explaining the different types of care.
- Discussing the different reasons why children and young people are in care.
- Explaining that it is not the fault of the child/young person that they are in care.
- Outlining a range of reasons why children and young people are in care.
- Showing that being in care is not something to be worried about and talking about how it has helped.

It is planned for the training presentation resource to be developed for October 2024 and this will be cascaded via Team Managers in Children’s Services and to schools via Education Support.

Review of the Council’s Offer to Care Leavers

At the request of Barnardo’s Leaving Care Service, a group of six care-experienced young people reviewed and fed back about the Council’s Offer to Care Leavers which is available on the Council’s website.

Feedback from the young people included a recommendation for a specific leaflet to be created detailing information about the following when leaving care:

- Direct debits
- Standing orders
- Gas/electric
- Credit cards

- Council tax
- Money/bills
- Mental health support
- Give leaflets to young people before they leave care, so they have an understanding/preparation.

There is a rolling programme of updates via the Leaving Care Transformation Board, and it is intended revisions will be led by the Leaving Care Service and Children's Services Leads. Parallel to this, additional consultation is being undertaken with care leavers, and this is due to be completed by 26 April and findings from this and the consultation with V4C will inform the future website provision and content. The timescales in relation to changes will be determined within the refresh Leaving Care transformation plan.

Review of Independent Chair and Independent Review Officer (IRO) Feedback Form

Members of the V4C meetings have also reviewed the feedback form used by Independent Chairs and IRO's and worked with managers for the service to suggest and approve the form to be redesigned to be more young person friendly.

FAB Awards 2024

The annual FAB Awards is planned for June 2024 and work is taking place to involve members of V4C in the organisation of the event and involving them in the delivery on the day including them presenting on the day/handing out of medals.

East Midlands Local Authority Regional Participation – Training Resource Project

Children's Services in Lincolnshire is a member of the East Midlands Regional Participation Leads group along with the other local authorities in the region, and is leading a project to develop an online learning resource that will record the views of children and young people in care to share with Social Work and Youth Work students to help them understand how to communicate and support children in care. The project is being co-ordinated with the Social Work department at Nottingham Trent University and planning meetings are ongoing currently.

This regional project is planned to complete the training resource by the end of 2024 and it is expected that it will be shared with professionals across the Children's workforce via the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Positive experiences of being in care

There has been, again, enthusiastic discussion about some of the positive experiences that have come from their care experience, and it was fed back that this included:

- Opportunities provided that would not have access.
- Additional support given at school and with educational opportunities generally.
- Overall better chances in life.

- More people around who want to try to help and support.
- Feeling listened to in school and life.

2. Conclusion

- 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. It remains a challenge to engage children and young people to attend the meetings.
- The Children in Care Council remains a valuable mechanism to capture the views and feelings from children and young people in care and to share with senior managers and elected members. The key to success remains in frontline teams supporting this by referring children and young people to the opportunity to become involved and supporting them to attend.
- Ongoing joined up work will continue with Barnardo's Leaving Care Service to support Care Leavers being involved in the Children in Care Council as they provide a valuable insight and points of discussions.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Risk assessments are completed and collated by Children's Services Participation Officers.

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

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	09 May 2024
Subject:	Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027 – Annual Update to the Action Plan

Summary:

This report presents an annual update to the Action Plan (Appendix A) of the '*Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-27*' covering 2023-24.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:

1. endorse the updated annual Action Plan for the '*Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027*' covering 2023-24.
2. invite Children's Strategic Commissioning to attend in May 2025 to provide an annual update on the Action Plan for the period 2024-25.

1. Background

[Section 22G](#) of the [Children Act 1989](#), and the [Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children \(2010\)](#), is explicit in placing a duty on Local Authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.

Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027

The 2023-27 Sufficiency Strategy was signed off by the Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2023 with the recommendation to report annually on progress against the Action Plan (Appendix A1 of the Strategy), aligning the update to the financial and reporting year.

The Action Plan (Appendix A of this report) has been updated to reflect progress against the actions for the year up to, and including, 31 March 2024.

Lincolnshire Children's Services Independent Placements Market Position Statement 2024-25

The first Market Position Statement 2023-24 was signed off by the Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2023 with the recommendation to update the document annually as a

means of supporting development work with the independent placement sector as well as increasing placement capacity within Lincolnshire.

Data used in the Market Position Statement is currently being ratified and the document will be updated for 2024-25 shortly to reflect changes in demand and the needs of Lincolnshire Children in Care, and will be published on the Council’s Professionals website.

2. Conclusion

The Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to discuss and endorse the updated content of the Action Plan (Appendix A) to the ‘*Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027*’. In addition, the Panel is requested to invite Children’s Strategic Commissioning to attend in May 2025 to provide an annual update on the Action Plan for the period 2024-25.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Risks were identified within the Strategy and elements are included within the Action Plan (Appendix A).

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children In Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-27: 2023-24 Action Plan Update

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 Bridie Fletcher, Senior Commissioning Officer (Children’s Commissioning), who can be contacted on 07748 181381 or by e-mail at bridie.fletcher@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-27 Action Plan – 2023-24 update

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
1	In-house regulated placements	i Increase the number of foster families to meet demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of foster care support and benefits to support retention Programme of foster carer recruitment including succession planning as older foster carers retire Foster carer training package including digital offer and Caring2Learn (C2L) Recruitment of carers for particular groups of young people e.g. UASC, parent and child, teenagers with challenging behaviour Consistent, high quality support to foster carers by social workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual survey has been devised and sent out; this has remained open for 4 weeks collecting feedback around carers experiences of support and their experiences of fostering for LCC, and closes on 25th March 2024 – information will inform the retention strategy and any developments for the support offer, staff development and the wider children’s services practice. The DfE have undertaken a review of the recruitment and assessment practices and strategies in the service as part of a larger sample group of Local Authorities, providing a health check with the expectation of providing some advice and support around improving and developing current practice to improve performance. The annual survey has been used to collect participants intentions around how long they intend to foster for. Additional marketing advice and consultation has been accessed to review the marketing and advertising in the service to review the techniques and maximise productivity. The 2024/25 training offer is now fully accessible to be booked online for carers, although some carers still choose to book training through their SSW for a large majority this has been a welcomed development; automatic reminders and confirmations are sent which has reduced administration time.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marketing Team are currently designing a marketing strategy as part of the 2024/25 plan which focuses on the services key areas of placement need. • Targeted audits and training for staff supports continued professional development with an emphasis on carer experience. • The annual survey has been used to capture the experience of the carer, asking them questions around the experiences of support from their supervising social worker. • Practice Workshops are arranged and taking place monthly, facilitated by the Advanced Practitioners, to support the ongoing personal and professional development of staff; the Advanced Practitioners used themes picked up to organise areas for improvement according to feedback, placement disruptions, reasons for resignations etc. • Work with Commissioning colleagues to block commission placements in the Lincolnshire area to ensure placement choice. • Fosterlink Service diagnostic tests and site visit to explore the strengths and areas for development within Fostering Marketing and Recruitment to support the service in recruitment and retaining fostering families to care for Lincolnshire children; any recommendations to be shared with service and implemented accordingly.
		ii	Information sharing across teams to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop information sharing protocols between service areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing development work and attendance at team meetings to ensure social care and SEND

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
		<p>placement planning is effective and reflects the needs of children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information shared at Placement Management Meeting (PMM) to support placement decisions Continue to support information sharing with in-house Foster Duty Desk and LCCPlacements 	<p>teams are aware of the commissioning process for independent placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective relationships between Commissioning Officers, social workers and SEND caseworkers Clear protocols in place for search and placement approvals by the relevant service area including updated evaluation/approval document. PMM continues to review emerging placement needs and has enabled both social care and the Commissioning Team to consider matching best value and plan future placement moves to meet the needs of CYP. Strategic Placement Management Meeting (SPMM) considers higher level approaches to placements including internal capacity and developments, independent provider market development and emerging local trends that impact on demand. Foster Duty Desk are co-located near LCCPlacements which facilitates information sharing and supports prioritisation of foster care referrals. Regular cost demand trajectory analysis allows review of placement costs and facilitates budget planning. Children’s Services Ofsted inspection (April 2023) praised joint working between social care, SEND, CWD, health, Commissioning Team, the LSU and the independent placement provider about the bespoke package for a high-needs young person who is now thriving in their new residential school.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
		iii Capacity and occupancy of in-house residential homes is effective and meets CYP needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of CYP placed in-house to consider if a move to foster placements would be suitable (in-house or independent) • Review of in-house residential children's homes to ensure they meet the needs of our CiC cohort • Opening of two new residential children's homes in 2023 • Recruitment of high-quality staff including bank and relief staff to ensure workforce is flexible and has sufficient capacity • Monitor occupancy levels to ensure in-house placements are utilised effectively to maximise outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children placed in-house have an appropriate trajectory for their needs; during 2023 2 children successfully moved into foster placements and 2 children returned to their families. • All children placed in in-house residential provision are reviewed at regular intervals at PMM. • Ongoing programme of improvement across in-house residential homes as part of LCC's transformation programme. • Residential recruitment programme has been revamped to attract high quality staff with regular combined and targeted recruitment campaigns and recent involvement in the regional recruitment campaign for the East Midlands area; salaries for RCO1 posts have been uplifted and training and development programme has been established to support progression based on training and competence rather than annual increments i.e. workers are able to move through to RCO2 at an expedited rate if they can complete the relevant training and demonstrate that they can meet the skills required for the role; continue to develop the extensive training programme and regularly add additional courses and bespoke training to meet the individual needs of the children in in-house residential homes. • Additional Service Lead appointed across Residential Estates; the Service Leads work closely with the Homes Managers and Ofsted to ensure continuous journey of improvement and striving for excellence across all of in-house residential homes.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupancy levels are closely managed to ensure that the needs of the children are prioritised and beds may be held vacant for short periods of time if required.
		iv Capacity within the secure estate is sufficient to meet CYP needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and renegotiate the Lincolnshire Secure Unit (LSU) contract with Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in 2026 Commence building the new 24-bed secure children's home Lincolnshire CYP are able to access in-county secure accommodation when needed CYP in secure estate are supported effectively to return to 'mainstream' placements CYP with Deprivation of Liberty orders (DoLS) are accommodated in safe and suitable placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings have started with the Youth Custody Service (YSC) and NHS England (NHSE) on a new potential 7-year LSU contract to start in 2026. Enabling works have started for the new secure children's home and the main contract will be signed in June/July 2024; building work is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. In-county secure accommodation capacity varies as LSU currently has 1 welfare bed which, though it is a national MoJ resource, Lincolnshire has first option to use if it is vacant; the new LSU will have 16 welfare beds which will increase potential capacity for Lincolnshire secure placements. CYP in secure have detailed transition plans to return to mainstream placements or independence following the end of their secure order; LSU temporarily accommodated a young person with complex additional health and SEND needs following the end of one placement and their permanent placement being developed – this approach and the support by the LSU for the young person was praised by Ofsted. DoLS are used appropriately following application to the courts and Commissioning Team work with social care to identify the most appropriate placements to support the order(s).

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
2	Independent regulated placements	i	<p>Independent regulated placements are effective and meet CYP needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual re-opening of the Open Select List to increase numbers of pre-approved suppliers • LCCPlacements team are well-resourced to support service areas with referrals and contract arrangements • Develop relationships with suppliers to negotiate block contracts and block commissioning arrangements, and enhance knowledge of vacancies and new local provision • Children’s Services placement management oversight (in-house and independent) to seek to bring most Lincolnshire CYP back into Lincolnshire-based placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Open Select List (OSL) was re-opened successfully in July 2023 with an increase in pre-approved suppliers across all 7 strands. • LCCPlacements team have increased resource with a new Senior Placement Support Officer to provide day-to-day operational oversight, review of processes and data management; interviews for additional Placement Support Officers have taken place and the team have been strengthened through establishment of permanent posts, along with additional capacity from Business Support. • As of 15th March 2024 the following proportion of independent placements were in Lincolnshire: 35.5% of residential, 42.9% foster care, 53.3% supported accommodation for 16-17 year olds, and 67.7% of Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools/INMS (inc 73.7% of all day placements). • The Relationship-Based Commissioning strand of the CiC Transformation Programme is focused on maximising placement capacity in Lincolnshire for Lincolnshire CYP and working with good, local independent placement providers to develop services that meets the Lincolnshire need, ensuring the growth is in line with the Council’s vision. • PMM and SPPM continue monitor existing external placements and work proactively to identify opportunities to bring Lincolnshire CYP back in to Lincolnshire.
		ii	<p>Independent regulated placements offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable fee increases are agreed with suppliers through the regional panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For independent placements in 2023/24, fee increases were agreed through the regional panel, using the SSDA-developed portal of evidence

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
		<p>Value for Money (VfM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-cohort oversight of placements in line with the aims of the Children in Care (CiC) transformation programme • Review INMS placements with SEND team to ensure suitability and management of referrals, and look to develop a placements overview forum to consider placement demand, capacity and needs trends • Appropriate challenge to placement packages including support and cost reduction, and effective step-down or transition 	<p>submission, with an average 7% increase offered to independent residential children's home placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincolnshire's Children's Commissioning Team Manager has been appointed regional Chair of the fee increase panel, which is under development for 2024/25. Fee increase requests for 2024/25 are now closed and are currently being considered for the next financial year; requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and initial offers will not exceed 4%. • SPMM and PMM continue to have oversight of in-house and independent placements. • PMM for SEND placements is in development with SEND service area and Commissioning Team to provide oversight of high numbers of INMS placements and improve value for money through block commissioning activity. • Commissioning Officers have worked closely with service areas to identify costs and reduce support/care packages where appropriate; demand for placements has increased in some areas such as INMS whilst residential care has noted an increase in complexity of need.
		<p>iii Placements for late entrants into care with complex behaviours deliver high outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing development of placement referral form to ensure young people are represented clearly and positively • Suppliers are upskilled in a range of de-escalation techniques and management of complex behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement referral form continues to be developed to reflect the needs of young people, service areas and providers; update to include supported accommodation Ofsted registration requirements; referral form includes the Valuing Care toolkit showing strengths/needs scaling. • Placement referral response evaluation form awards highest weighted score for in-county

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop effective step-down referral route into in-house supported accommodation and commissioned Youth Housing service 	<p>placements (along with cost and meeting needs of CYP); placement decision signed off by appropriate Head of Service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning Officers work closely with service leads to sustain placement packages for complex young people; use of unregulated placements is closely monitored through clear protocols with AD oversight. PMM and supported accommodation review meetings identify young people who may be in scope of moving to NEST or Denton & Rowston, with placement planning meetings and transition arrangements to support an effective move; NEST intense needs service supports up to 4 solo placements and has been successful in managing some very complex young people, the majority of whom have successfully moved on to either multi-occupancy accommodation hubs, supported adult or fully independent accommodation.
		<p>iv Children with Disabilities (CWD) are supported to access appropriate SEND services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of supplier relationships to increase access to high-quality and effective SEND services Commissioning of CWD Support Services including Early Support and Learning Provision, Targeted Positive Activities, and Domiciliary Care Commissioning of Alternative Provision, Domiciliary Care and CWD Short Breaks through the Open Select List provides VfM Open Select List for SEND services re-opens annually to develop supplier numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning Officers responsible for the oversight of INMS placements have divided providers into complex needs and SEMH categories to provide more focus on relationship develop in these key areas; effective relationships established with in-county INMS provision. The Commissioning Team has undertaken procurements in 2023/24 for CWD Support Services and East Midlands regional SEND mediation, and is currently undertaking a service review on the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service, with a review of Physical Disability (PD) Outreach contract due to start in 2024

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCCPlacements work with service areas to identify placements offering best value and outcomes. The Open Select List (OSL) was re-opened successfully in July 2023 with an increase in pre-approved suppliers across all 7 strands, including the 3 SEND/CWD strands. New strands for regulated Alternative Provision and Online Education are in development and will join the OSL re-opening in 2024.
3	Supported accommodation	i	<p>Numbers of young people in Supported Accommodation are low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned Youth Housing contract continues to deliver VfM and high outcomes through their intensive support placements Young people are accommodated in-house where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Housing contract (NEST) with Nacro has been extended for the final 2 years available until December 2025. Children’s Commissioning is in the early stages of the service review which will start to move through the democratic decision making process from early autumn 2024. NEST offers up to 72 spaces over 3 locations and in a variety of settings from multi-occupancy 24/7 hubs to single intense needs accommodation. As of 15th March 2024, NEST had 88.9% occupancy (inc pending); 25% of occupied spaces were by CiC and 26.5 by care leavers. LCC Winter Household Support Fund 2023 distributed to NEST residents to support with utility bills etc. NEST are one of the partners in the DfE-funded Staying Close Staying Connected project, utilising their experience with independent housing providers to support CiC and care leavers sustain tenancies and access housing out of county as well as provide floating support.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house supported accommodation at Denton & Rowston is at 90% occupancy as of 15th March 2024 with one referral pending. As of 15th March 2024 there are 15 Independent supported accommodation placements, 53.3% of which are in Lincolnshire and 33.3% in adjacent LAs; the remaining 13.3% are out of county due to location of their personal networks.
		ii Care leavers and young people aged 16-17 at risk of homelessness are supported to access suitable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective contract management and appropriate challenge to supported accommodation suppliers to be effective in reducing placement packages Deliver a well-resourced Youth Housing service Review existing commissioned Youth Housing service to determine delivery from January 2026 Young people are supported to access education, employment or training (EET) to increase future opportunities and independence Joined-up access to move-on options e.g. adult accommodation, Intense Housing Management (IHM) accommodation, specialist accommodation Maintain and develop links with District Councils and other housing suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning Officer oversight ensures links between NEST and supported accommodation (inc in-house provision) to ensure CYP are accommodated appropriately; appropriate challenge to accommodation providers regarding placement fees and support packages to obtain best value. Placement review meetings are held with service area, Commissioning Team and social care every 6 weeks to review support packages and identify where young people are ready for their next steps including Adult services, independent tenancy, Nacro Step Forward accommodation and/or applications to social housing. DLUHC-funded care leaver homelessness prevention project is ongoing and has added value by supporting care leavers to access suitable accommodation. Local Connection to all of Lincolnshire is established for Lincolnshire care leavers in agreement with all 7 District Councils, who have also agreed for Council Tax exemption for care leavers from April 2024.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE Staying Close Staying Connected grant has enabled LCC and partners to develop a range of support to CiC and care leavers in residential/supported accommodation including mental health and substance use support, education employment and training (EET) and personal network connectivity to support sustained accommodation and tenancies; the funding is in place until March 2025 and may be extended by DfE, subject to evaluation.
		iii Supported accommodation suppliers are registered with OFSTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported accommodation suppliers register with OFSTED in good time to ensure placements are made in line with regulations • In-house supported accommodation is registered with OFSTED • Supported accommodation contract is reviewed to ensure new regulations are reflected in our service specification and Terms and Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations came into force in 2023; all key or most-used Lincolnshire supported accommodation providers submitted a compliant registration application to Ofsted by the deadline of 27th October 2023 – this includes NEST (youth housing), Barnardo’s Supported Lodgings, UASC, and in-house (Denton & Rowston). • Ofsted inspections will start from September 2024, and guidance has been shared with the supported accommodation sector. • Supported Accommodation service specification and terms and conditions were reviewed in advance of the 2023 re-opening of the OSL and will be reviewed again before the 2024 re-opening. • Contract assurance self-assessment and referral form fields have been updated to ensure independent supported accommodation placements are only made with Ofsted-registered providers. • Commissioning Officers continue to develop knowledge to support providers and internal

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress	
				process development through attendance and engagement with NCB supported accommodation communities or practice and learning events.	
4	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	i	UASC are placed in high quality, culturally appropriate placements that meet their specific support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UASC Closed Ordered List (COL) and the Open Select List (OSL) continue to deliver capacity and timely response to UASC arrivals • Other suppliers are upskilled to be able to offer support to UASC • UASC are supported to access EET soon after they become CiC • Targeted use of Home Office Annex A grant to support service capacity • Ongoing development of in-house, commissioned and community support to the UASC cohort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UASC COL is in place until September 2025 plus 2 years potential extension; 4 providers were awarded ranked places on the list and all 4 providers now have Lincolnshire placements; no new providers can be admitted to the list and all 4 are out of Lincolnshire, though in directly adjacent LAs; no Lincolnshire providers applied who met the quality standards required. • UASC numbers have continued to rise due to the mandatory National Transfer Scheme (NTS) referring young people to LAs from Kent and the south coast; Lincolnshire has accepted 41 NTS referrals since 1st April 2023, including 10 U16s. • There are currently 18 UASC in foster care placements, all of whom are out of county; placements are in multi-cultural areas such as London, Leicester and Birmingham. • East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (EMSMP) is reviewing foster care development support in the region following the success of the UASC-focused 'Place to Call Home' project. • UASC currently make up 10.9% of all Lincolnshire CiC. • UASC are supported into formal education or college as quickly as possible once accommodated; depending on the date of arrival, September start may be difficult so UASC access informal EET and ESOL support, supported by Virtual School pupil premium funding.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UASC are well supported by social workers and their supported accommodation providers to gain independent living skills, understand life in the UK, and apply for leave to remain. • Additional capacity has been created by a 12-month age assessment unit in Gainsborough which supports same-day accommodation in the event social care accept young person's claim of age as being U18 or need to undertake an age assessment; this predominantly supports young people from the east coast adult asylum hotels who claim to be U18 and is contingency for the same issue if/when RAF Scampton become operational. • In response to increased numbers of UASC, Home Office Annex A grant funding has been used to re-base the social care budget for CiC South and has been used to increase social worker capacity. • NEST, Supported Lodgings, Denton & Rowston and independent supported accommodation have all accommodated UASC; support provided by specialist social care teams as well as resources and training courses.
		<p>ii Former-UASC care leavers are supported effectively and are accommodated in high quality suitable accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective links with the Home Office and legal representatives result in timely asylum decisions • Former-UASC care leavers are supported to remain in EET whilst they await their asylum claim outcome • Maintain and develop suitable accommodation options for former-UASC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former-UASC care leavers (18+ year olds) make up c.25% of the wider care leaver cohort and are expected to account for 30% by April 2025. • Positive Home Office decisions are increasingly coming through in good time, providing young people the opportunity to move on to independent accommodation and take up employment; Lincolnshire is currently supporting

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
			<p>care leavers awaiting a decision on their asylum claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish clear and affordable move-on options for the cohort 	<p>no Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE) former-UASC care leavers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of former-UASC care leavers remain in EET whilst they are awaiting a Home Office decision, with approximately 68% of 18+ year olds in education (compared to 48% of the wider care leaver cohort). UASC COL provides for former-UASC care leavers to remain in their accommodation at a reduced rate until they receive a decision from the Home Office, with support provided by LLCS; LLCS continue to work with local housing providers to identify move-on options, including return to Lincolnshire (NEST, supported lodgings etc). Home Office Annex A grant funding has been used to increase capacity within LLCS to support the growing former-UASC care leaver cohort.
5	Care leavers	i	<p>Deliver an effective and appropriately resourced Leaving Care Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing commissioned Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service to determine delivery from April 2025 Consistently high numbers of care leavers in suitable and safe accommodation Care leavers are supported to access education, employment or training (EET) to increase future opportunities and independence Work with local and regional partners to embed care leaver local connection entitlement Supported Lodgings are developed and supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in April 2023 rated the new standalone category on '<i>The experience and progress of care leavers</i>' as 'Good' and Children's Services overall as 'Outstanding'. LLCS management capacity has been increased post-Ofsted along with Leaving Care Worker pay to support recruitment and retention of quality staff. Commissioning Team commenced service review of LLCS in summer 2023; recommendations for future delivery going through democratic process with decision expected by June 2024. Children's Services Feb-24 ChAT shows that 93% of 19-21 year old care leavers are in suitable accommodation.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted use of Rent Gap agreements to support care leavers experiencing short-term financial difficulties • District Councils offering priority for housing for care leavers including Council Tax relief • Ongoing development of the Care Leaver Local Offer and social media communications/platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services Feb-24 ChAT shows that 48% of 19-21 year old care leavers are in EET; LLCS are undertaking a revision of the EET survey they carried out in 2021 into causes of EET and wider determinants of non-engagement such as mental health issues. • Local Connection agreed for Lincolnshire care leavers across all 7 District Councils; East Midlands care leaver manager leads have committed to exploring regional Local Connection; DLUHC are consulting on reforms to social housing allocations and have referenced the Government’s intention to remove Local Connection test nationally for care leavers. • Supported Lodgings are Ofsted-registered and provide accommodation for 18+ year old care leavers, though they also offer assessment beds for U18s pending a permanent placement; 20 Supported Lodgings providers offer up to 23 placements including short-term respite provision. • Head of Service for Leaving Care and Supported Living has agreed a small number of rent gap payments requested via LLCS to support care leavers for short period of time to cover the support element of their housing costs. • LLCS continue to add value to care leavers through donations (food, money etc) and through delegated CiC budget for care leaver expenses including New Homes Grant payments; LCC Winter Household Support Fund 2023 distributed to care leavers to support with utility bills etc.

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiC and Leaving Care Steering Group meet bi-monthly to review health inequalities including UASC and former-UASC care leavers. • Accommodation pathways established with District Councils; Council Tax benefit for all care leavers in Lincolnshire in place by April 2024 along with free prescriptions. • Ongoing development of the Care Leaver Local Offer; LLCS participation worker has developed a number of focus groups to look at specific aspects of service delivery; Barnardo's have commissioned an engagement platform that will support rapid communications to care leavers inc messages, emails and newsletters; FAB! Awards 2023 was held in May 2023 and nominations for the 2024 awards close in the middle of April.
		<p>ii Care leavers are well equipped for independence by the age of 21 as they step down from full service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care leavers have the resources and skills to manage their own accommodation needs, have good mental health, have supportive networks and relationships and are financially secure • Develop mechanisms to enable care leavers to remain close to, or in contact with, networks and areas of their choosing • Links with other LAs re: Local Connection and reciprocal support for care leavers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted inspection in April 2023 highlighted gaps in the 21+ service offer to care leavers, namely around allocated named worker and keeping in touch; this has been included in the CiC Transformation Plan and is one of the key areas of improvement work; Mosaic has been updated to record 21+ visits and all 21+ care leavers have been allocated to a named Team Manager if they are not already open to a Leaving Care Worker. • Processes have been updated and tightened to ensure that, prior to stepping forward, every young person has a revised pathway assessment to ensure they are ready for a less intensive service. • LLCS are one of the partners in the DfE-funded Staying Close Staying Connected project, offering

	Category/ service	Priorities	What needs to happen	Progress
				<p>wellbeing and additional EET support as well as Connective Workers to support CiC resident out of county to identify their key networks and where they want to live when they leave care, including exploring a return to Lincolnshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Connection agreed for Lincolnshire care leavers across all 7 District Councils; East Midlands care leaver manager leads have committed to exploring regional Local Connection; DLUHC are consulting on reforms to social housing allocations and have referenced the Government’s intention to remove Local Connection test nationally for care leavers.

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**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,
Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director – Resources**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	09 May 2024
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:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to:

- (1) Review and approve the work programme; and,
- (2) Highlight any additional activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

1. Background

Current Items

For reference, the Panel's items for this meeting are set out below: -

09 MAY 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Corporate Parenting Panel Review	Andrew Morris, Head of Service - Leaving Care and Supported Living
2. Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor - Children's Services (Quality and Standards)

09 MAY 2024	
Item	Contributor
3. Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2027 - Annual Update to the Action Plan	Bridie Fletcher, Senior Commissioning Officer – Children's Commissioning Amy Allcock, Commissioning Manager - Commercial

Planned Items

The Panel's planned items are listed below:

25 JULY 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Election of the Chairman	Democratic Services Officer
2. Election of the Vice Chairman	Democratic Services Officer
3. Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 4	Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding
4. Fostering Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 4	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
5. Lincolnshire Leaving Care - Six Monthly Update Report by Barnardo's	Lisa Adams, Service Manager, Barnardo's
6. Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
7. Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Annual Report	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker

12 SEPTEMBER 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Children in Care Performance Measures Quarter 1	Tara Jones, Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding
2. Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 1	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
3. Adoption Annual Report 2023-2024	Sharon Clarke, Interim Team Manager, Adoption
4. Adoption Statement of Purpose 2023-2024	Sharon Clarke, Interim Team Manager, Adoption
5. Fostering Annual Report 2023-2024	Emily McAllister, Fostering Team Manager

12 SEPTEMBER 2024	
Item	Contributor
	Nicola Brangam, Fostering Team Manager South
6. Fostering Statement of Purpose 2023-2024	Emily McAllister, Fostering Team Manager Nicola Brangam, Fostering Team Manager South

14 NOVEMBER 2024	
Item	Contributor
1. Independent Reviewing Service Update Report 1 April 2024 - 30 September 2024	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
2. Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report	Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker
3. Fostering Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
4. Private Fostering Annual Report and Statement of Purpose	Deborah Crawford, Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption
5. Annual Report of the Regional Adoption Agency	John Harris, Head of Regional Adoption Agency
6. Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report	Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor - Children's Services (Quality and Standards)

2. Items to be programmed

Report Title	Est Date
Prevalence of emotional health and our response	TBC 2024
CAMHS Annual Report (Caroline Sanders LPFT)	TBC 2024

3. Conclusion

Members of the Panel are invited to review and comment on the work programme and highlight any additional activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

4. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

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 Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 07552 253814 or by e-mail at Tracy.Johnson@lincolnshire.gov.uk.