

EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR DECISION – 29 JULY 2019

COMMISSIONING OF LINCOLNSHIRE LEAVING CARE SERVICE FROM 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

On 19 July 2019, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered this report and supported the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

The following points were confirmed by the Committee's consideration:

- Procurement process – The tender would go out on ProContract, the Council's Tendering and Contracts System. This would allow suppliers from the national and international market to consider the tender and ensure a competitive process. In addition, the stakeholders involved in developing the proposals would also be made aware of where to find the tender. Staff at the current supplier would have the right to transfer to a new service provider ensuring continuity of staff who knew Lincolnshire's care leavers.
- Labelling of the Leaving Care Service - Consideration would be given to the naming of the service as a number of care leavers did not like it being called the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service. A neutral name (like Kooth for the online counselling service for children and young people) could be more acceptable to these young people.
- Number of Care Leavers and Cost Implications – The number of care leavers fluctuated each month, but were around the 320 mark. The number of looked after children was increasing, with 24% now constituted of 16 and 17 year olds, which in turn was leading to an increase in the number of care leavers and creating cost pressures. In addition, there was uncertainty over the future number of Special Guardianship Orders requesting a Leaving Care Service and how many care leavers aged 21-25 years old who would come back to use the Information, Advice and Guidance extended service, which could cause further cost implications. These cost pressures had been accounted for, and funding for the new Leaving Care Service for the five years from April 2020 had been identified and agreed, and that the cost pressures would be funded from internal efficiencies.
- Support Provided to Care Leavers – The new service with the earlier allocation to Leaving Care at 16 year olds, while young people still received support from social workers, would enable a wider and more flexible level of support to be provided to young people to meet their individual level of need.
- Insourcing the service – Consideration had been given to insourcing the service, especially as insourced services at other councils had been rated as outstanding. There were a number of risks with insourcing, the main one being the transfer of staff with the potential risk of losing some staff who may not want to transfer to the Council. In addition, there would be extra costs to insource the service, and care leavers had highlighted that they valued the independence of an outsourced service from the Council.