

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

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>26 November 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Looked After Children Performance report - Quarter 2</b>

**Summary:**

The accompanying appendices to this report provide key performance information for Quarter 2 2020/21 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel

**Actions Required:**

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

## 1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Looked after Children used by Children's Service. This is available for questions.

There are 13 measures in total that relate to Looked After Children that are reported on in Quarter 2. Of these measures 7 are outside of the target set by the services. These are:

**Fostering/adoption of Looked After Children aged 10 to 16 year olds** - This performance remains under target. The vast majority of children looked after within this age group are placed in foster care settings but this has been impacted by the pandemic as placement options have been reduced as a result of foster carers shielding and unable to take additional placements. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of younger children in residential placements in the past year. These are often children who have experienced a number of foster placement moves who struggle to adhere to the expectations of living in a family. Residential care has provided a nurturing environment for this group and has enabled them to settle. There has also been a concentrated focus on reunifying children with their birth families this year and some of this group are awaiting revocation of their care orders.

**Percentage of Looked after Children in the same placement for at least two years** - Performance has dipped below 70%. This reduction relates to a child who was removed from her mother's care and children moving to long term placements. There is sadly a number of children who continue to wait for long term placements. For all placements, the service continues to ensure that foster carers are well supported and that potential problems are identified early. This has been reinforced by the success of the Caring2learn project which has encouraged foster carers to share and find solutions to problems and developed a whole range of tailored training. Nevertheless we have continued to see that some stable placements disrupt unexpectedly and this can have a significant impact upon this indicator. Although placement stability has been good during the pandemic, since the return to school some long term placements have come under pressure. We have also seen an increase in the number of children with care plans for long term fostering and this will present challenges in achieving placement stability for some children due to the local and national shortage of foster carers who want to care on a long term basis.

**Percentage of Looked after Children with up to date routine immunisations** - The significant restriction and changes to the way in which health services are delivered to the public continues to impact on our children in care. We also have a number of refusers including parents who have their children placed with them under placement with parent regulations and adolescence. It has been an on-going challenge to encourage older young people to engage with medical services to have their Td/IPV vaccine.

**Percentage of Looked after Children with an up to date dental check** - There have continued to be children placed with parents who have failed to attend dental appointments. The more significant barrier to this data being below target is focused on the restrictions of Covid-19. These have meant dentists have not been available for several months this quarter. Dentists are now back at work, however, the hygiene measures adopted have resulted in them being unable to see the same volume of patients and this has impacted unfavourably on our looked after children. It is anticipated that this will continue for some months to come.

**Stability of placements of Looked after Children: Number of moves** – This is a cumulative indicator identifying those children who experience 3 placement moves. The target is challenging and slipped under target last year although our performance is generally better than other East Midland authorities where an average of 10% of looked after children experienced 3 placement moves in a year. Although the performance remains good, this is a cumulative indicator and is likely to be exceeded at year end. Since children have returned to school, there has been an increase in placement moves and with a growing number of carers choosing to isolate again, placement options are more limited and might result in placements being selected that are not able to meet a child's assessed needs in the medium term.

**Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation** - The good performance is down to better working relationships with District Councils and their willingness to now view care leavers as a priority group. The flexibility and resilience demonstrated by our housing provider, Nacro, during the pandemic ensured safe accommodation was on offer to young people. The above combined with persistent and creative work

of leaving care staff has ensured that nearly every care leaver is suitably accommodated.

**Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training** - At this time of year there is often a small fluctuation in the EET figure as young people start new college courses and a mixture of changing course, seeking new options and finding they don't actually like their course can sometimes increase and decrease performance alike. Issues affecting access to education and employment are varied and unique to individuals, but Lincolnshire's performance is comparable with our statistical neighbours. All the Care Leavers on Apprenticeships are back in the work place and continuing their education and training which is a real positive.

The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Leaving Care Service reports on a monthly basis the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET and the Corporate Parenting Manager tracks this performance and is satisfied that the Service is working to re-engage young people. Covid-19 has inevitably had an impact on the services sector and this does directly affect care leavers. Most young people start their working lives with jobs in bars, restaurants, shops and front line customer services where the largest job losses are being witnessed. It is anticipated that Covid-19 will continue to impact on EET and the findings will be carefully monitored and reflected in next month's commentary.

**2. Conclusion**

This report summarises the Quarter 2 performance for Looked after Children and Young People, and the Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to raise any questions on the content of the report.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

n/a

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Looked After Children Performance Measures

**5. Background Papers**

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

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