



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	11 March 2021
Subject:	Long-term Mental Health of Children in Care in England Research Project

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Long-term Mental Health of Children in Care in England research project to date and planned future phases.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to consider the report and comment on the research project into the mental health of children and young people in care.

1. Background

The research project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is being led by Bristol University.

The initial research was conducted in two parts. The first part involved the research team utilising data held by the Department for Education. The second part focused on obtaining information from children aged between 11 and 17 who are in care through the completion of a survey. Local authorities were invited to participate in this part of the research of which 19 authorities signed up. On conclusion of the research, regional and local level reports were to be published. Local authorities would then be able to use the research findings to improve practice.

In Lincolnshire, the survey was sent to the social workers of the children and young people identified as part of the cohort. Social workers were asked to support and encourage their looked after children and young people to complete the survey. It became apparent that the survey and its format were not accessible and/or appropriate for all children and young people identified within the cohort due to their additional needs or current circumstances. Social workers were asked to apply their professional judgement in this scenario.

The survey closed on 11 December 2020 by which point 25 children and young people had completed the survey.

The research team has now secured funding to extend the data collection to two additional data collection points in Spring and Autumn 2021. This will enable the research team to track the mental health of the same group of children and young people over an 18 month period and through the Covid-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that a local and national report will be available after each collection point.

2. Conclusion

It is anticipated that having a greater understanding of the mental health of children and young people in care on a local level and from a national perspective will assist frontline workers in developing positive relationships with looked after children and promote service improvement.

There are no additional cost implications for participating in the research.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

There are no adverse risks associated with involvement in this research project.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Research Project – Information Document
Appendix B	Initial Survey Questions

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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