



Open report on behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	22 July 2021
Subject:	Lincolnshire Leaving Care – Annual Report

Summary:

Annual Update Report Provided by Barnardo's on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (April 2020 – March 2021).

Actions Required:

This report is for background information and the Panel will receive a presentation about the service area at the meeting.

1. 1. Background

This is the annual report to Lincolnshire's Corporate Parenting Panel to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service regarding care leavers. Areas covered within this report include:

- A. Barnardo's Response to Covid.
- B. Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation.
- C. Accessing and maintaining appropriate Education Employment and Training opportunities.
- D. New Initiatives
- E. Compliments and Complaints

Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (since the 1st of April 2020) is to deliver a Statutory Leaving Care Service for young people aged 18-25 and to start working with the Local Authority Children in Care / FAST Teams working with Looked after Children aged 16-18. The contract is closely monitored via monthly contract monitoring meetings which are attended by the Contract Monitoring Officer, the Corporate Parenting Manager and one of the Children's Services Managers (with lead responsibility for Looked after Children and Care Leavers).

Data contained within this report covers a 12-month period from April 2020– March 2021.

A - Barnardo's Response to Covid

It would be very remiss not to provide panel members with a comprehensive insight into the steps Barnardo's have taken in continuing to deliver our statutory duty following the Covid pandemic.

Date	Action Taken
March 2020	Workers were encouraged to work at home—across service we checked that all team members had adequate equipment and working environments.
March 2020	<p>Within service we circulated across service Lincolnshire County Council's position in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancelling all non-essential meetings. • Use phone, not face to face visits. • Not to undertake unnecessary journeys. • Where possible physically distance from colleagues / peers.
March 2020	Information circulated to all team members in relation to been classified as 'business critical keyworkers and letters that could be used to demonstrate this status. Barnardo's also circulated information about team members children been able to access Schools (if required)
March 2020	Prior to the national lockdown Barnardo's had made a national decision to send home all vulnerable workers (including those with health conditions and the over 70's)
23 March 2020	The Management team had identified a Rota to ensure a Team Manager and Administrator was office based (if required) but all Leaving Care Workers and Specialist Workers were home based, however the 23 rd March 2020 was the last day that the offices were open prior to the National Lockdown.
March 2020	<p>All Leaving Care Workers had been tasked to contact all Care Leavers and maintain more regular contact than normal. Team Managers checked compliance by regularly reviewing Mosaic (electronic client record system)</p> <p>Within Barnardo's we started collating daily data that identified the members of staff that were working, if any were self-isolating or any had the Covid infection. This assisted with Business Continuity Planning and was shared with Commissioners (twice weekly initially)</p>
March – July 2020	As a service we did undertake some face-to-face emergency visits with Care Leavers. We had provided all staff (who were not in high-risk groups) with

	<p>PPE and all visits were subject to management approval.</p> <p>Barnardo's had produced a series of method statements that were shared with all team members that helped them in planning visits with young people. We have also undertaken individual 'Self-Assessment' questions that checked how team members were feeling during the pandemic and 'Home Working' risk assessments.</p> <p>Keeping in touch with staff during lockdown and beyond has also been something we have aimed to do. The Team Managers have held regular catch-up phone calls; we've arranged virtual team meetings and hosted some social virtual sessions to encourage team participation.</p>
14 July 2020	<p>This saw the re-opening of the Sleaford and Lincoln offices.</p> <p>These offices had been subject to new Health and Safety Assessments to ensure they were Covid compliant. The assessments also limited the number of staff permitted within the offices and booking arrangements were in place.</p> <p>Staff were still able to work from home, but facilities were also available within the offices if a team member chose to work from an office base.</p>
27 July 2020	<p>The Louth office re-opened subject to the same conditions as the Sleaford and Lincoln offices.</p>
August 2020	<p>August 2020 saw the lifting of the 'shielding requirements' across the UK and from the beginning of August the management team were encouraging more face-to-face visits for Care Leavers.</p> <p>The initial criteria for these visits was as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government guidance on the 1st August was (other than in areas of lockdown) you can meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Indoor – two different households.</u> <u>Outdoors – up to six people</u> 2. Team members had been supplied PPE so that hopefully risk of infection is further reduced. 3. Unless there is a medical reason or risk assessment that has highlighted additional concerns that team members start to book in social distancing visits with all young people that are within 40 miles and where areas are not in local lockdown. <p>This guidance was shared with the Local Authority Commissioners.</p>

	As a service we'd already implemented a spreadsheet to capture all face-to-face visits across the service.
21 September 2020	<p>Following Government advice (following an increase in Covid infections and deaths) information was sent to staff confirming the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barnardo's have stated that they support local practice, if it can be achieved, for people not to work in office until after Christmas. 2. Locally within Leaving Care this can be achieved. So, if you are able and wish to work from home then please do so. This will be reviewed again in a few months. 3. All office (apart from Peterborough- which we are doing next week) have been risk assessed and signed off and are safe to go to office to pick up equipment, complete printing, deal with IT issues, work from if needed etc. If you have a reasons or issues with working from home, then please talk to your line manager and we will of course support you to create and look at solutions. The reason it is being suggested to carry on working from home is to further reduce your risk, but the office can be used if needed as long as people are booked in, and local safety rules are followed.
1 October 2020	Peterborough office re-opened following updated Health and Safety Assessments.
October 2020	Barnardo's started calling on other services across the UK in an attempt to offer more face-to-face visits to Care Leavers who were placed out of County. This hopefully ensures we reach more Lincolnshire Care Leavers across the UK.
October 2020 – March 2021	<p>As a service we have continued to see Lincolnshire Care Leavers using a variety of communication methods such as face to face visits, virtual platforms (such as Zoom and Messenger). We have also kept in contact using phone calls and text messages. We have aimed to deliver a service based on what young people are telling they want.</p> <p>We are accessing our offices but have created a booking system to ensure the offices only support limited numbers of staff at one time.</p>

Within Barnardo's we started collating data both in relation to staff but also noting all direct visits we undertook with Care Leavers. Between the 1st April 2020– 30th March 2021, 1537 face to face visits took place, the management team have continued to review Mosaic to ensure that those young people who couldn't be seen still received regular

phone calls or virtual visits. We have also used other Barnardo's teams across the UK to visit Lincolnshire Care Leavers (living out of County) when required.

Lincolnshire Care Leavers have also benefitted from funding streams that Barnardo's have been able to access (on behalf of Lincolnshire Care Leavers) these have included the following grants / schemes:

- Barnardo's Covid Appeal (£3,000)
- Land Aid Charity Grant (£10,000)
- Ikea (Gifts for all Care Leavers who had Children & household starter packs)
- Donation from Vodaphone of pay as you go handsets & data.
- Donation of Tupperware and storage containers for food storage.

The monies above have been used to purchase:

- Food / Utilities
- Data Bundles
- IT equipment

IKEA 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' Gift Pack



Rubbermaid Storage Containers



B - Accessing and Maintaining Suitable, Safe Accommodation

Children's Social Care Return

The SSDA903 statistical return cohort referred to in this report as the 'Children's Social Care Return' relates to an identified group of young people who were looked after by the local authority and have recently left care, information on their 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday is collected annually between the 01 April and the 31 March. The base figure changes annually. The data below covers a 12-month period with differing base figures. Over the past 12 months Barnardo's have only reported on the 18-21 cohorts and excluded the 17 group in agreement with Commissioning

Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation

SSDA903 Co-hort – Target 90%

SCR Return - Accommodation											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
288	287	288	288	290	362	362	301	299	298	297	299
96%	95%	96%	96%	96%	94%	94%	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%

Open Allocated Cases – Target 90%

Open Allocated Young People - Accommodation											
April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
361	355	356	349	349	350	348	348	359	366	365	378
95%	94%	95%	95%	96%	95%	94%	95%	95%	94%	94%	95%

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service offered advice, support and assistance in relation to accommodation options for young people aged 16-25 (Children in Care, 16- and 17-year-old homeless and Care Leavers). As a service we aim to share information in relation to housing options available both within County but also where the young person is currently residing. Within service we have a specialist post holder who specializes in housing provision for Care Leavers, and we also have the Leaving Care Workers and Team Managers who have knowledge on services available to young people.

Within Barnardo's we continue to work with the Corporate Parenting Manager who has lead responsibility for the Council in relation to housing options for Care Leavers. The transition guidance for 16–18-year-olds enables Leaving Care Workers to start to work alongside Social Workers based within the Local Authority to ensure all Children in Care have the appropriate paperwork in place prior to their 18th Birthday to enable them to claim housing and benefit entitlements.

We have developed some good links with District Council Housing Teams and the Corporate Parenting Manager continues to offer the District Councils advice, support and assistance in relation to developing the housing offer for Care Leavers.

Barnardo's Supported Lodgings Scheme

The Corporate Parenting Manager sees this type of accommodation as another housing option for Looked after Children and Care Leavers across Lincolnshire.

This scheme gives young people the opportunity to develop independence skills whilst living in a home environment. Advice and guidance are offered in relation to cooking, undertaking household tasks and maintaining education / employment. We have had some excellent outcomes for several young people who have accessed this scheme.

Young people live with providers as lodgers – paying rent and a contribution towards utilities and food. Children's Services pay a support fee dependent upon the level of support required; housing benefit /universal credit is also claimed (where appropriate).

The scheme caters for Care Leavers - Looked after Children over 16- and 16/17-year-olds who are homeless and require an 'assessment bed'.

Between 1 April 2020 and 31st March 2021, the team received 30 referrals, carefully matched with 5 providers.

Legal profile of Young People referred from 1 April 2020 – 30 September 2020	
Legal status	Number
Section 31 Looked After Child	10
Section 20 Looked after Child	6
Section 24 Care Leaver	7
Section 17	6
Section 8	1
Total	30
Number of Placements	13

Barnardo's have continued to run its supported lodgings panel throughout 2020 / 21 and have representatives both from the Local Authority and Barnardo's. This panel not only reviews current providers but also considers new applications.

Supported Lodgings Providers have continued to work closely with Barnardo's staff throughout the pandemic. Some have had to shield following Government advice and others have continued to offer a full range of placements. As a service we have been mindful about not making placements moves unless absolutely necessary but have also continued to work with the Local Authority to prioritize urgent placement requests.

C - Accessing and Maintaining Appropriate Education Employment and Training Opportunities

SSDA903 Co-hort – Target 65%

SCR Return – Education, Training and Employment											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
200	197	190	183	166	234	233	174	174	170	171	171
66%	65%	63%	61%	55%	61%	60%	55%	55%	54%	54%	54%

Open Allocated Cases – Target 65%

Open Allocated Young People – Education, Training and Employment											
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
264	259	251	240	223	231	228	225	238	245	247	247
69%	69%	67%	65%	61%	62%	62%	61%	63%	63%	64%	65%

The last financial year have been particularly challenging not only for Care Leavers but for the Country as a whole. The initial lockdown saw a number of Care Leavers lose temporary employment and also stop attending college / training.

We have kept a careful watch over our young people who are following the Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme and whilst a number were furloughed during the initial lockdown, we saw all return to their jobs over the summer of 2020.

Within Barnardo's we continue to have two specialist workers who work solely with education and employment providers to explore opportunities for your Care Leavers.

At the beginning of 2020 we started negotiations with Serco who provide a number of job opportunities across the region and in partnership with the County Council. We have developed and launched a 'Care Leavers Mentoring Scheme'. We have now moved onto the second set of Care Leavers who have benefitted from a worker based within Serco to offer career and work advice.

Barnardo's have a common mission of ***'Increasing Aspiration and Outcomes for Looked after Children and Care leavers.*** Employment and Training continues to be a challenging concept not only in Lincolnshire but nationally. We have developed some excellent partnerships with DWP and Job Centres to help target our Care Leavers. We are working with DWP on some of the new initiatives such as a the 'Kick Start' programme, the Kickstart Scheme provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit. This program was delayed during 2020 due to Covid.

The Corporate Parenting Manager continues to be an advocate within Lincolnshire County Council in relation to the 'Care Leavers Covenant'. The Covenant is a promise made by private, public or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently. Central Government feel it's important that Local Authorities work together to secure meaningful offers of employment and support which meet local need. Government believes the only way we can achieve this is through a whole council approach which allows all departments to look at not only what they are able to offer internally but also how they can facilitate and enable support externally from local business.

I have described below (within the New Initiatives section of this report) the funding that Lincolnshire County Council have identified to fund 2 new temporary workers to hopefully enable more Care Leavers to access Education, Training and Employment.

D - New Initiatives

Specialist Employment, Education and Training Posts

Lincolnshire County Council have worked with Barnardo's to develop two new temporary posts to help promote education, employment and training opportunities for Lincolnshire Care Leavers.

We are aware that as we emerge from national restrictions and job retention schemes come to an end the Government are due to roll out numerous job incentive schemes. Within Lincolnshire we don't want to miss any of these opportunities for our Care Leavers. The additional post holders will help to ensure that Lincolnshire Children in Care and Care Leavers receive information and guidance in a timely manner to give them the best opportunity to secure education or employment opportunities.

GAP Homes

Gap housing is a model of accommodation whereby Barnardo's provide capital funding and support to build bespoke modern prefabricated modular housing for use by young people and Care Leavers.

The envisaged model for Lincolnshire is to develop one cluster of 4 houses for young people and 1 house on site with 24/7 staffing. Further to this the cluster will be associated with 4 further units of dispersed Gap houses nearby where more independent young people can be stepped forward.

- 4x Intensive cluster Gap housing beds with onsite staffing
- 4x Dispersed Gap housing beds with staff just off site

The Local Authority and Barnardo's have started to build on the proposals noted above and are currently identifying potential areas of land to build the homes.

Specialist Mental Health Worker

As part of the new contract to expand services to Looked after Children and Care Leavers Barnardo's suggested the development of a specialist Mental Health Worker who would work solely with the service and provide some 1:1 work with Care Leavers, some mentoring and training opportunities for staff and enable better access to CAMHS and adult mental health pathways.

Throughout the last financial year work took place with Barnardo's, Lincolnshire County Council and Health Commissioners to develop and advertise this post.

The new post holder will be based within the Children and Young People's Complex Need Service and will receive supervision from within Barnardo's and also receive clinical supervision from a qualified health practitioner.

Project Worker – Lincolnshire Leaving Care

This is a new senior project worker that works within Lincolnshire Leaving Care. Ben Coles joined the service in January 2021 and has lead responsibility to:

- Develop the group participation offer for Care Leavers.
- Lead on Quality Assurance for the Service
- Embed the Signs of Safety Model across the service.

Even with Covid restrictions in place Ben Coles has started to create some additional participation opportunities for Care Leavers to ensure any new service design is shared with and takes into account young peoples views. Barnardo's office base at Lincoln has recently been decorated, all based on colours and styles picked by Lincolnshire Care Leavers.

E - Compliments and Complaints

Number and % of complaints received and resolved within agreed timescale of 14 days.

Complaints Received/Resolved - 2020-21												
Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
Number	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Resolved	100%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	N/A						
Running Total	1	1	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Number of compliments received – cumulative.

Compliments - 2020-21												
Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
Number	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	0
Running Total	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	5	0	6	0

Success Stories

01 May 2020 – ‘Look North’

One young care leaver from the service was given the opportunity to make a short film/video about being a young person leaving care during Covid-19 which was due to be aired on Look North on the 01 May 2020. The care leaver lacks a great deal of confidence so this is a really brave thing for her to do and although she was nervous she was really excited and pleased with what she did.

Unfortunately the piece was not aired but this did not detract from the positive experience for the young person.

DfE Research - Get Help with Tech

The Department for Education (DfE) are providing a range of support for children and young people through its Get help with Technology Programme which includes the provision of laptops and tablets for young care leavers. Laptops have come through to the local authority and then on to the service for distribution.

As part of the DfE's programme delivery a research opportunity arose and two our young people have been involved in feeding back their experiences and technology needs during Covid.

**Lincolnshire Supported Lodgings
Barnardos North Region Newsletter – July 2020**

Believe in children
Barnardo's

Barnardo's work in the North during the Coronavirus pandemic
Responding to the needs of children, young people and families 2

Lockdown in Lincs

Sally Robinson, Lincolnshire Supported Lodgings

Our supported lodging providers (SLPs) are doing really well, finding creative ways to keep young people occupied and supported during the lockdown as some are not able to access education.

We have SLPs and young people across Lincolnshire doing hair and nails, beach walking and bike riding, dog walking and cake making, jewellery making and nail art, fence painting, car washing, gym, birthdays, clapping for NHS on Thursdays, VE day celebrations (which explains the Union Jacks in the photos) and we got a mention on Barnardo's radio!

Our SLPs are amazing and the reason I am at work. I can't praise them enough. We are keeping in contact via phone, video and messaging, but it's not the same as our face to face meetings - I really miss the proper contact. I am sure at times they feel isolated but we are getting used to this way of working.

I email and message SLP making sure they know they can call me for work related information or just a chat if they need this - sometimes it's nice not to talk about work!

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Participation

Whilst interviews for staff (and specialist post holders) has been difficult over the past year as a service we have continued to benefit from ensuring Care Leavers are part of the recruitment process. Care Leavers have submitted questions for recent interview panels and have helped provide some model answers.

2. Conclusion

This report reflects the progress and achievements during the first year of a new three-year contract / partnership between Lincolnshire County Council and Barnardo's.

The new staffing establishment from April 2020 is noted below:

- 1 Service Manager
- 4.2 FTE Team Managers
- 1 Business Manager
- 6.1 FTE Administrators
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Signs of Safety / Participation and Quality Assurance
- 1 Specialist Accommodation Worker
- 2 Supported Lodgings Workers
- 2 Education, Employment and Training Specialist Workers
- 24 FTE Leaving Care Workers

Throughout 2020 / 21 we continued recruitment to the service and have had to adapt to providing on-live / virtual inductions. As Covid restrictions have lifted we have ensured staff are now able to visit offices and receive support, advice and guidance when required.

New IT equipment has been made available to all team members during the last financial year providing more portable and reliable laptops / phones³. Consultation

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. 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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