



Open Report on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	20 January 22
Subject:	Lincolnshire Leaving Care – 6 Monthly Update Report

Summary:

This is a 6 Monthly Update Report Provided by Barnardo's on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (April 21 – September 21).

Actions Required:

The Panel is invited to comment on the contents of this Report and to endorse this 6 Monthly Update.

1. 1. Background

This is the 6 Monthly Update Report to Lincolnshire County Council'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, Complaints and Success Stories

Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (since the 1 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 / Family Assessment and Support Teams (FAST) 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 the Head of Regulated Services (with lead responsibility for Looked after Children and Care Leavers).

Data contained within this report demonstrates performance from 1st April 2021 – 30th September 2021

A - Barnardo’s Response to Covid

Within the last annual Corporate Parenting Report (presented in July 2021) information was provided that demonstrated how the service has continued to operate following Covid restrictions and Government guidance. We continue to have staff working both virtually and office based and adapt working risk assessments dependent on the current Government advice and guidance. Since the initial lockdown in March 2020, we have continued to provide advice, support and guidance on a more frequent basis than the 8 weekly visits we are committed to deliver as part of the current contract. We have prioritized the young people we feel are more at risk and have increased social isolation due to the pandemic.

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)
- Donations from Vodaphone of pay as you go handsets & data.

The monies above have been used to purchase:

- Food / Utilities
- Data Bundles
- IT equipment

B - Accessing and Maintaining Suitable, Safe Accommodation

Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation

Open Allocated Cases – Target 90%

Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sept 21
2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
276	275	280	283	284	283
95%	95%	96%	97%	98%	97%

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' for the purpose of a Social Care Assessment. 'Assessment beds' are infrequently used by the local authority, but they are used as part of the wider resources open to LCC.

Within Lincolnshire (in December 21) we are currently working with 16 providers who are supporting 15 young people in placement. The team provide vacancy information over to the Local Authority on a monthly basis but have officers available to deal with referral enquiries 5 days / week. Based on the figures above we can offer an additional 9 beds for 16–21-year-olds.

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 placement moves unless absolutely necessary but have also continued to work with the Local Authority to prioritise urgent placement requests.

C - Accessing and Maintaining Appropriate Education Employment and Training Opportunities

Open Allocated Cases – Target 65%

Open Allocated Young People – Education, Training and Employment

April	May	June	July	August	September
2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
253	246	251	261	263	278
65%	63%	64%	65%	65%	68%

Within Lincolnshire Leaving Care all Leaving Care Workers have the opportunity to discuss education, training and employment opportunities with all Care Leavers (and the Children in Care that the service works with aged 16-18).

We also have 3 full-time equivalent (FTE) specialist workers (County Wide) who don’t carry a case load but work across county and have some specialist knowledge in relation to the opportunities available for Care Leavers.

The last financial year has been particularly challenging not only for Care Leavers but for the Country as a whole. The initial lockdown saw several Care Leavers lose temporary employment and 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 and 2021.

We have recently undertaken a piece of work across service where we have tried to understand the reason why Care Leavers are not taking up employment, education or training opportunities. We reviewed 52 young people (who we believed could be in education). 27 of the Care Leavers didn’t have a phone or failed to respond to numerous phone calls. Noting the other 25 Care Leavers some information was incorrect on the IT recording system and a further 10% were in the wrong employment category.

Noting the other 15 Care Leavers the reason’s that they gave for not seeking employment or training opportunities are noted below:

- Struggling to get a bank account due to previous fraudulent activity
- Criminal activity – involvement with police and probation
- Alcohol related issues

- No passport or national insurance number
- Applied for over 250 jobs – not got anything
- Depressed/ no motivation
- Substance misuse
- Doesn't like people
- Mental health issues
- Can't afford to work because of accommodation support costs
- Anxiety and depression
- Having gap year before Uni to prioritise mental health
- Rurality
- In police protection

Using this data, we have thought about the type of worker we could develop that may assist to work with this co-hort. There appear to be some 'wellbeing' issues that are stopping Care Leavers accessing opportunities and we are looking to advertise for a well-being worker to sit alongside the employment and training specialists to target the group above and try and encourage engagement and attendance.

I would urge members of the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider the support that is offered in a family environment to ensure young people attend school, college, or work. This can often involve motivation and constant calling in a morning, transporting to college / work, supplementing wages, and not charging board / rent. This is not something we can fully replicate for Children in Care or 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 third 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 delayed new initiatives such as 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.

D - New Initiatives

Specialist Employment, Education and Training Posts

As part of the last annual report, we were able to describe how 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.

One of the posts has been appointed to and the worker sits with the employment and training specialists in the service and has been working with several colleges across County to help identify and prioritise engagement with Care Leavers.

The second post is going to be advertised as the 'wellbeing' worker and prioritise working with the 15 young people currently in service who have identified boundaries and issues stopping them seeking employment and training 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 have identified 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.

The new post holder started work in September 21 and is be based within the Children and Young People's Complex Need Service and receives supervision from within Barnardo's and also receive clinical supervision from a qualified health practitioner.

E – Compliments, Complaints and Success Stories

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

Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Resolved	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Running Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Success Stories

April 2021

One of the young people working on the Care Leavers Apprentice Scheme was working for Lovelle Estate Agents. Based on some mystery shopping that took place at the assessment stage the company were awarded the British Property Awards Gold Certificate. The Manager let the service now how very proud she was of the contribution that S made to the team.

May 2021

Feedback form one of Lincolnshire Care Leavers in relation to Sandy and Bob Cockland (Supported Lodgings Providers for Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service):

"I was living with Sandy and Bob for just over 2 years.

Living with Sandy and Bob was different, they treated me like I was part of their family. And treated me no different. They took me away on holidays with them and their family which I never got growing up with my birth family them and their family don't leave you out and they include you in all family events.

I get asked this all the time, "what was the best and worst bits about living with Sandy and Bob?" There are no bad bits. There like my grandparents. We have the odd bicker over leaving dirty pots and lights on etc but that's just normal family stuff.

It's a nice loving and caring environment they are there through everything and they don't judge. I would 100% recommend SLP to any young person leaving foster care.

To be honest I don't know where I would be now if I didn't live with Sandy and Bob. My life was chaotic in and out of hospitals and custody and moving from place to place. I felt settled there.

While I was living with Sandy and Bob I started drinking again and became unwell and even me being in hospital they still attend all my meetings and appointments and came to visit me.

While I was not under the care of Sandy and Bob they still continued visits and allowed me to still come and stay with them for weekends and day visits. They would even pick me up and take me out.

Over 2 years on I still have regular contact with them and their family and visit them often and they are there whenever I need them.

They are amazing and I don't know what I would do without them. They keep me going everyday."

June 2021

Three of Lincolnshire Care Leavers provided some national feedback to the National Care Journey Collaborative. One of them spent time with Barnardo's chief Executive and representatives from the House of Lords.

September 2021

One of the hairdressers in Louth met with the Louth Team Manager and offered:

- 2 x men's haircuts at £13 each.
- 3 x women's cut and blow dry at £26 each.

Offer greatly accepted by Care Leavers living in the region.

2. Conclusion

This report reflects the progress and achievements during a 6-month period for Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service.

The staffing establishment agreed as part of the current Leaving Care Contract 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

Over the past 6 months we continued to recruit 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. We do have several new Team members and induction packages and coaching for new recruits as been essential in making them feel part of the team and the service

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

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 Lisa Adams, Service Manager, who can be contacted on 01522 575 955 or by e-mail at lisa.adams@barnardos.org.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank