



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

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| Report to: | Corporate Parenting Panel |
| Date: | 20 January 2022 |
| Subject: | Children in Care Annual Report 2020-2021 |

Summary:

The Children in Care Annual Report 2020-2021 covers the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Actions Required:

That the Corporate Parenting Panel supports and endorses the key messages and recommendations of the Children in Care Annual Report 2020-2021.

1. Background

This report covers the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. The Department of Health Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children (DCSF/DH, 2015) requires a report on the delivery of service and the progress achieved for the health and wellbeing of children in care. In addition, the Local Authority (LA) requires an annual report to provide a summary of the core activities relating to Children in Care.

The NHS has a major role to play in supporting the LA as Corporate Parent in ensuring the timely and effective delivery of health services to Children in Care. As directed by the Children Act 1989, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England have a duty to comply with the requests from the LA to help them to provide support and services to these children. The NHS is also statutorily obligated to support Children in Care who have been placed by an external LA within the County of Lincolnshire when they have been notified of the placement.

This Annual Report is intended to inform Children in Care, the public, elected members, stakeholder partners and staff of the progress and developments of the services to date. It has been jointly produced by Lincolnshire Community Health Services (LCHS) Looked After Children/ Young Persons (LAC/YP) team, the Children in Care teams from Lincolnshire Local Authority (LLA).

In 2019, following local and national work undertaken by children and young people, regarding professional language and jargon, the decision was made to use the term "children in care" within day-to-day practice.

The key messages within this report are:

- The number of children in the care of Lincolnshire County Council was 680 at year end, an increase of 9.3% over the year. The number of children and young people placed into Lincolnshire by external authorities also continues to rise.
- The 16/17-year-old age group now makes up almost 22% of the looked after population.
- The placement of children within kinship placements remains the preferred outcome for most children who enter care.
- There was an increase in the number of initial health assessments completed within the statutory time frame of 20 working day when Nurses were able to complete these during the pandemic.
- The rate of completion of review health assessments remains amongst the highest in the country, regarding completion within the statutory time frame. Nurse led provision has provided continuity and supported more children to engage in the process.
- Up-to-date immunisation and vaccination of the children in care has been impacted by the COVID19 pandemic.
- The health data used in this report is only a small proportion of the amount of reporting against health issues which has continued to be developed over the last year.

2. Conclusion

Recommendations for 2021-2022

1. LLA, Lincolnshire CCGs and LCHS to continue to work together to improve the number of Initial Health Assessments completed within the statutory timeframe.
2. LCHS to continue to recruit GPs to complete Initial Health Assessments (IHA) and to work with United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT) to agree an arrangement whereby Community Paediatricians complete IHAs as part of their job role.
3. The annual report to be shared with the IRO service to promote improvement in constructive challenge.
4. A revised multi agency approach to the management of and support provided to children with above average Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores.
5. The pilot of "care skills" to be expanded and jointly delivered with the Leaving care service.
6. Official launch of the Children's promise and refresh of the children in care and care leaver's strategy.
7. Roll out of the valuing care toolkit and expansion of our residential estates as part of our transformation programme in response to the shortage of local placements for children in care

3. Consultation

Noted in section 8 of the report.

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

n/a

4. Appendices

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| These are listed below and attached at the back of the report | |
| Appendix A | Children in Care Annual Report 2020-21 |

5. 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 Rachel Freeman, Head of Service Children in Care and Residential Estates, who can be contacted on 07919564803 or by e-mail at rachel.freeman@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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