



Open Report on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	07 July 2022
Subject:	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service Annual Report 2021/22

Summary:

This is the annual report (April 21 – March 22) to the Corporate Parenting Panel provided by Barnardo's, on Behalf of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service, that aims to demonstrate the performance of Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service regarding care leavers.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to review the information provided in this report and discuss and highlight any relevant points for further consideration.

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:

- (1) Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation.
- (2) Accessing and maintaining appropriate Education Employment and Training opportunities.
- (3) Participation / Fundraising
- (4) New Initiatives
- (5) Conclusion

Lincolnshire County Council's Leaving Care Service is currently delivered by Barnardo's. The contract specification (since 1st 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 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 March 2022.

1 - Accessing and Maintaining Suitable, Safe Accommodation

Accessing and maintaining suitable, safe accommodation

Open Allocated Cases – Target 90%

April	May	June	July	August	September
2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
276	275	280	283	284	283
95%	95%	96%	97%	98%	97%

October	November	December	January	February	March
2021	2021	2021	2022	2022	2022
279	275	273	274	273	273
96%	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%

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. We have welcomed the joint work we have been able to undertake with the NEST Team (Care Leavers Homeless Prevention)

Barnardo’s Supported Lodgings Scheme

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’.

Within Lincolnshire (in March 22) we were working with 16 providers who can provide 23 beds across County. The team provide vacancy information over to the Local Authority monthly but have officers available to deal with referral enquiries 5 days / week.

Barnardo’s have continued to run its supported lodgings panel throughout 2021/22 and have representatives both from the Local Authority and Barnardo’s. This panel not only reviews current providers but also considers new applications.

Barnardo’s media team have been working with one of our Supported Lodgings providers and some Lincolnshire Care Leavers in placement and have created a short film. I have copied the link below to enable members to review this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgD2jp92jik>

2 - 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%

October	November	December	January	February	March
2021	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
282	285	285	292	294	289
68%	60%	68%	68%	68%	68%

Over recent months we have targeted Lincolnshire Care Leavers who are not accessing, education, training or employment opportunities. We have commissioned some work whereby we have reviewed all Care Leavers who fit into this category and explored alongside the allocated Leaving Care Worker the reasons why Care Leavers are finding it difficult to access opportunities.

Noting data from March 2022:

- 09/03/2022 – Lincolnshire had 429 Care Leavers (18 to 21)
- 57% of 17- and 18-year-olds were in EET – England average = 49%
- 55% of 19- to 21-year-olds were in EET – England average = 50%

- 30 young people are unable to work due to illness or disability = 6%
- 22 young people are pregnant or parenting so not working = 5%
- 143 young people are NEET = 33%
- 18 young people were studying in higher education = 4%
- 204 young people are in education / training or employment = 47%
- 12 young people are in apprenticeships = 3%

Noting the work that reviewed this cohort mental health scored higher than any other issue as a challenge/barrier to young people not taking part in EET (employment, education, or training). Disability was the second highest category followed by issues relating to accommodation and behavioral factors. Within Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service we have just started working on a service development group that will continue to review and monitor this group of Care Leavers to target further support to enable them to achieve some positive outcomes. We have expanded the small team of staff who work alongside Care Leavers and the Leaving Care Workers to improve opportunities. The team structure is noted below:

- 1 FTE EET Coordinator
- 2 x 0.5 EET Workers
- 1 FTE Mental Health Specialist
- 1 0.6 Well-Being Worker

Alongside reviewing the NEET cohort (those not accessing Education, Employment or Training) this team also support young people with Work Preparation courses and support all Care Leavers who are on apprenticeships. They also can offer specialist advice across the service relating to employment and training opportunities.

Alongside the Corporate Parenting Manager and Head of the Virtual School the Leaving Care Service contributed to a workshop for elected members that was held on 5th April that considered this NEET cohort.

Barnardo's (on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council) continue to work with Serco who provide several 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 fifth 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.

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.

3 – Participation/ Fundraising

We have been working hard on our participation offer for young people and Lincolnshire Care Leavers have been involved in several events over the past 12 months. These have included:

- Two of Lincolnshire Leaving Care's young people were invited to the Department of Education to meet with the head of Care Review Josh McCallister having contributed to the Care Collaborative. The young people had a tour of the Houses of Parliament and a trip on the London Eye with Lunch.
- Bowling Trips
- Creating Artwork - one of Lincolnshire's pieces of artwork featured as the front cover of a national document exploring the Care Review.
- Christmas meal
- Photo Shoot and film development in Skegness
- Attending the Big Conversation

We have secured some additional funds and gifts for Lincolnshire Care Leavers, these have included:

- We have made links with a hairdresser in Louth who offered £100 of free haircuts for Care Leavers
- We have been in contact with Kate Ferdinand (Social Media personality) she donated several premature baby items to one of our Care Leavers (after one of our Leaving Care Workers contacted her)
- Donation from South Elkington Church (following Team Manager attending the carol service and Harvest Festival)
- Food donations from Trinity in Louth
- Christmas gifts from Morrisons in Skegness (one of our Leaving Care Worker used to work there)
- Fundraising donation from Tesco's in Lincoln totally £507 (one of our Leaving Care Workers led on this donation)
- Cash and gifts from the Orthodox Church in Lincoln (one of the congregations lived in a Barnardos Housing project 60 years ago and is a fabulous supporter of the charity)
- Mobile phones courtesy of Vodafone and Tesco
- Lincolnshire Care Leavers also benefited of the roll out of laptops for Children in Care and Care Leavers from central Government.

4 - New Initiatives

Specialist Employment, Education and Training Posts

As mentioned earlier within the report we have added an additional two joint funded posts into the service:

- Mental Health Specialist (two year post funded by Barnardo's, Health Commissioners and Lincolnshire County Council)
- Well-Being Worker (1 year post funded by Barnardo's and Lincolnshire County Council)

Both post holders will be working with Lincolnshire Care Leavers who would benefit from additional input to improve their mental health and wellbeing. The specialist mental health worker has excellent links into the Local Authority and specialist health teams to ensure that Care Leavers are accessing the right type of support at the right time.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker's New Posts

The Leaving Care Service continue to work the Local Authority to monitor and review the amount of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People arriving in Lincolnshire. As members are aware the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People are growing mainly due to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Given that this group of young people receive a full Leaving Care Service this has had an impact on the number of care leavers that the service works with. The Local Authority have agreed to introduce an additional 2 posts into the service that will be based in the South of the County. One of the post holders is a senior project worker who will have specific duties linked to this cohort.

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 continued to build on the proposals noted above and have identified potential areas of land to build the homes.

Care Leavers Film Project

We have had several Care Leavers from Lincolnshire working with an organization called 'My Pocket's' The Care Leavers are currently working on an animation project that will help children in care transition into the service.

Service Development

We started a whole service development programme back in December 2020 that has continued through to 2022. We initial established a series of service development sessions that had representation from across all service and we developed a number of working parties including:

- Induction & Retention
- Communication
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Review of Duty Service
- Allocation of Work
- EET and Supported Lodgings

The groups produced several new policies, procedures and working tools that are widely used across service.

We are currently starting a new round of Service Development sessions; some continue the work of previous groups, and some have been formed to address new issues. The groups are noted below:

- Induction & Retention
- Communication
- Health and Safety
- Positive Destinations (improving outcomes for Care Leavers)
- Reviewing Group

All the above groups are chaired by the Service Manager to retain senior management oversight and the reviewing group will consider all work previously completed in service to ensure it remains current, in date and useful for the service.

Some of the initial groups were instrumental in creating new posts, identifying training needs and sharing key information with partners. Over the past 12 months members of the team have been offered some specialist training in relation to:

- Trauma Informed Practice
- Formulation – Helping Team members understand how to use a Formulation tool when working with young people
- Positive Intervention Training - behaviour management training programme designed to help staff provide the best possible care, welfare, safety and security, of young people, who present with a range of behaviours of concern.

5. Conclusion

This report reflects the progress and achievements during a 12-month period for Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service.

The current staffing establishment is noted below:

- 1 Service Manager
- 4.2 FTE Team Managers
- 1 Senior Administrator
- 6.1 FTE Administrators

- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Signs of Safety / Participation and Quality Assurance
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- 1 Project Worker 3 – Specialising in Education, Employment and Training opportunities
- 1 Specialist Accommodation Worker
- 2 Supported Lodgings Workers
- 2 Education, Employment and Training Specialist Workers
- 1 Well-being Worker
- 1 Specialist Mental Health Worker
- 26 FTE Leaving Care Workers

We continue to see a turnover of staff (within Leaving Care Worker roles) we undertake exit interviews and record reasons for leaving. These are generally linked to workers leaving the service and either joining Lincolnshire County Council or neighbouring authorities for higher wages. This is an ongoing issue that is raised within commissioning meetings.

6. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

7. 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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