

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 27 September 2022**

**Statement from: Cllr Mrs P A Bradwell OBE - Deputy Leader and Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **Family Hubs and Start for Life programme**

Family Hubs are a way of joining-up the planning and delivery of family services to improve both access and the connections between families, professionals, and providers. This is an exciting opportunity to ensure babies, children and families receive the support they need, with a great Start for Life offer at the core. The programme is supported by central government, with Lincolnshire one of 75 local authority areas eligible for a share of the £300m Family Hubs and Start for Life funding package for 2022–2025. This includes funding for the Family Hubs transformation and services such as parenting support, parent-infant relationships and perinatal mental health support. The wider 0-19 services (or up to 25 with SEND) will also be delivered through the Family Hub model.

#### **Children's Centres**

Attendance at Lincolnshire children's centres has significantly increased since covid restrictions were removed, and our early years provider continues to deliver a wide range of learning opportunities for children and families. Our summer programme, which includes fun with dinosaurs, live animals and the sensory bus, is proving popular with families.

#### **Children's Health**

The children's health 0-19 team continue to focus on the restoration and recovery of the Healthy Child Programme and the provision of high-quality services to families. This ensures that those most in need are identified and that early intervention and support is provided, delivering positive outcomes for children.

#### **Schools**

2022 was the first time that A Level and GCSE pupils faced exams since 2019 because of the disruption caused by covid. The longer-term impacts of the pandemic will become clearer over the next two years as gaps in learning are addressed by schools through the use of targeted funding for intervention and tuition. OfSTED inspections for maintained schools are going well, and it is pleasing to see the high-quality support from our education team recognised in these assessments. Working closely with the Teaching School Hub, the education team ensures that all schools have access to the best professional development possible. The uptake of the different programmes in Lincolnshire is higher than that seen nationally, which is really pleasing.

We have continued to support the Homes for Ukraine scheme by helping well over 200 children into Lincolnshire schools since May. We continue to support Afghan families, with many of the 70 plus children attending the same school for a year, providing much-needed stability.

### **Behaviour Outreach Support Service and Autism and Learning Difficulties Service- new contracts awarded**

Following an open competitive tender, Family Action will continue to deliver the behaviour outreach support service. Meanwhile, a collaboration of special schools, led by Gosberton House Academy, will deliver the new Autism and Learning Difficulties Service. Both commence on 1 September for an initial period of three years, with an option to extend for a further two years. Specifications for the services have been revised to reflect a strong focus on early intervention and prevention and to offer robust training to professionals, alongside skilled outreach support.

### **Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)**

The HAF programme has grown significantly since 2021. During the 2022 summer holidays, there were 97 clubs offering a variety of exciting opportunities and activities, and the feedback has been extremely positive. As well as the free places for eligible children, many clubs have also offered paid-for spaces to other families. In addition, children from Afghanistan and Ukraine have also attended, alongside young carers and other vulnerable children who have been referred to the programme.

### **Children's homes expansion**

Work on Robin House, the new children's home in Lincoln, is progressing well, as is the relocation of Strut House's short-breaks provision to the St Francis Special School site. Meanwhile, planning permission has been granted for a second new children's home in Louth. All of this has been made possible thanks to our successful bid to the DfE for match funding. We look forward to the opening of Strut House and Robin House in autumn 2022, with the Louth home expected to open in October 2023.

### **Fostering**

Work to recruit and retain foster carers continues, and this remains very challenging both regionally and nationally. Following the pandemic, we have seen several households return to this role. We continue to engage with existing and potential foster carers, as well as local employers who wish to become fostering-friendly. The positivity of our staff, foster carer champions and the wider fostering community are a good advertisement for the service and an important way to attract new carers.

## **ADULT SKILLS & FAMILY LEARNING**

The 2021/22 has proved to be a challenging year for those involved in delivering Adult Learning programmes as we continue to work through the legacy of Covid-19. Fantastic work has taken place by our contracted Learning Providers and Family Learning tutors to respond to the needs of our learners and deliver a programme that is relevant to their changing needs. End of year figures show that we worked with over 6,700 learners, delivering over 1,300 qualifications. Throughout 2021/22 the programme continued to be aimed at targeted learners with the effect that 52% of learners were unemployed and looking for work, 28% lived in areas of deprivation and 25% previously had no, or low levels of qualifications.

In spite of the challenges faced, the programme continues to deliver good outcomes for the learners involved. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Hill OBE and Council Chairman Councillor Alison Austin were delighted to present 3 worthy winners with their Learner of the Year Awards at the Lincolnshire Show on 22nd June. From a long list of nominations, the Adult Skills & Family Learning Board selected Ann Slater from Riverside Training in Gainsborough, Gary Martin from Abbey Access Training in Lincoln, and Craig Benton from CLIP in Mablethorpe, in light of their hard work and dedication to Learning.

We are very proud of the work we have done this year in partnership with local community groups and family hosts to provide learning opportunities for Ukrainian families. This includes provision provided in South Kesteven, Stamford, Grantham, Bourne, Boston, Market Deeping and Lincoln. Additional ESOL provision has been organised to meet this extra demand in year. Very positive feedback has been received from our responsive approach.

Contracts have been signed with 21 Learning Providers to deliver training courses to 6,500 learners in the 2022/23 academic year. The service will continue to prioritise under-represented learners with 40% of provision planned to be delivered in areas of deprivation, targeting unemployed learners looking for work, and those with low levels of qualifications who will benefit the most from our programme.

Alongside the Adult Learning programme we are delighted to be able to offer numeracy courses funded out of the £4 million of Multiply funding launching this Autumn. Courses will be targeted at adults aged 19 and over who do not already have a GCSE at grade 4 or above. These new courses will make a real difference to the prospects of adults in Lincolnshire who are being held back from their dream jobs. Training providers have been procured and delivery will commence in October; programme updates will be included in future statements.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

### **Domestic Abuse (DA)**

The DA partnership is now in its second year of operation and is working effectively. In that time a great deal of work has been undertaken to develop the response to DA in Lincolnshire in line with the DA Act statutory duties. These include implementation of the partnership strategy and delivery plan as well as the commissioning plans for the outreach and community-based service and safe accommodation provision.

Since December 2021 one of the main focuses has been the recommissioning of the DA outreach and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) service and commissioning new arrangements in relation to safe accommodation, extending and improving the provision we have in Lincolnshire.

The service specifications and contract variations are being completed to meet the needs of victims and survivors in Lincolnshire based on the extensive need's assessment undertaken in 2021, in addition to more recent demand and prevalence analysis at the beginning of this year, alongside stakeholder and survivor feedback. The new outreach and IDVA service will

be commissioned from April 2023 and the additional safe accommodation support started in May 2022.

DA has a complex financial picture both nationally and locally, however a commissioning budget of £1,655,000 per annum for the outreach and IDVA service has been secured across the three key partners being Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Integrated Care Board (ICB), which is the first tripartite agreement in this area and is a very positive way forward.

The DA partnership team is now fully operational with only one more position to recruit to by the end of the year, which is in relation to the development of a countywide sanctuary scheme. The DA trainer and stay safe education officer have been busy reviewing and developing the training and education offer to schools and professionals and have already expanded this greatly, being able to offer a wider content but also reaching more people including more ages within primary schools.

A variety of operational activity has been taking place including the development and implementation of a partnership communications strategy and communications campaigns, development of the DA website, management, and coordination of the MARAC (Multi agency risk assessment conference) process, developing and implementing a countywide response to child to parent carer abuse as well as starting some targeted work in relation to dementia and our response to perpetrators.

### **Safer Lincolnshire Partnership**

All Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) Core Priority Groups (CPG) are now well underway in drawing up their respective delivery plans to ensure appropriate multi-agency activity is identified to address the strategies allocated to them. A range of measures are in place/being developed, including routine monitoring of the delivery plans, inclusion of outcome measures, a dashboard for priority areas and regular scanning of the community safety 'environment', to ensure appropriate progress is made in respect of the identified issues and that the Strategy Board is alert, and proactive in responding, to emerging issues.

As a result of the new serious violence duty, we are expecting to see serious violence become an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships (the SLP in Lincolnshire) and, ultimately the responsibility of the County Council. This is likely to commence in January 2023 and will bring with it a duty to work in partnership, produce a needs assessment and develop a strategy. At its last meeting the Strategy Board agreed to adopt serious violence as a priority now and establish a CPG ahead of the duty coming in. The Lincolnshire Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) has commissioned and received a needs assessment produced by colleagues in Public Health; the CPG will work through the findings contained within this document to draw up a strategy. The strategy will be presented to the December meeting of the SLP Strategy Board for sign off.

Establishing the serious violence agenda under the SLP is done so in clear recognition that this cross cuts with other areas of business, the Domestic Abuse Partnership in particular, and means that we can have oversight to ensure there is no duplication of activity.

As well as commissioning the serious violence needs assessment, the PCC will fund the post to complete the serious violence strategy and is also providing funding for a Co-ordinator (2-year position) and interim support.

### **Ukraine**

Since Russia invaded Ukraine at the end of February, the County Council has been responsible with partners across the county, for supporting the arrival of Ukrainians fleeing the conflict.

Around 500 Lincolnshire households have received or will shortly welcome Ukrainian guests. Over 860 Ukrainians are now settled in the county, soon to be joined by around 300 more. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all sponsors for offering their hospitality.

Many guests have already moved into education and work, with some now living in their own homes. We are currently contacting hosts whose sponsorship reaches 6 months in September and October, and I'm delighted that over 75% of hosts are continuing to offer accommodation beyond that point. For those sponsors whose arrangements will come to an end, it is not easy to take strangers into your home, but you stood up when needed and I thank you for providing a place of respite from trauma for your guests.

We have recently launched two surveys. Firstly, we are contacting around 3,000 people in Lincolnshire who expressed an interest in being sponsors but have not yet matched with guests. Of these, to date, over 360 have confirmed that they are still willing to be hosts. This is a wonderful response. We are also asking people who have not previously expressed an interest but would like to be sponsors, to contact us. As some existing arrangements come to an end, this gives an excellent pool of people willing to offer ongoing support.

Lastly, I'd like to thank the community groups which have been offering support, the voluntary sector, District Councils, the Wellbeing Service, and other partners, along with staff across the County Council in Children's Services, Trading Standards, Business Support, and elsewhere for their work, often behind the scenes, to ensure that our Ukrainian guests have the support they need at what has been a very distressing time.

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