

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 7 MARCH 2014**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR JOHN DUNCOMB HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, J P Churchill, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, J R Hicks, R J Hunter-Clarke, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith, Mrs C A Talbot, S M Tweedale, L Wootten, Mrs S M Wray and T M Trollope-Bellew

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman, Mr P Thompson and Mrs G Wright

Parent Representatives: Mrs E Olivier-Townrow

Councillors: D Brailsford attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director Children's Services), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Linda Graham (Commissioning Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Head of Service Families Working Together), Andrew McLean (Head of Service - Children's Commissioning), Sally Savage (Assistant Director Children's Services), Dave Thompson (Pupil Referral Unit), Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer) and Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer)

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Brockway, R Hunter-Clarke and R Wootten.

Apologies were also received from Mr C V Miller (Parent Representative Added Member) and Dr E van der Zee (Parent Representative Added Member).

Councillor T M Trollope-Bellew was in attendance as replacement member for Councillor R Wootten, who was attending a civic function in his capacity as Chairman of the Council.

75 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of Members' interests were made at this stage of proceedings.

76 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2014

The Chairman proposed two amendments to the minutes, as follows:-

To correct a typographical error in paragraph seven, second to last sentence being amended to read 'Public Health'; and not Public Help; and

To provide further detail on page eight, bullet point two, reference to Page 118 being amended to read: 'It was noted that worklessness not only put a strain on resources because of direct costs relating to benefit payments, but that there was also considerable loss of revenue from the lack of tax and National Insurance contributions.'

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 13 February 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the amendments noted above.

77 FAMILIES WORKING TOGETHER

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which provided an update on the progress of Lincolnshire's response to the Troubled Families' Programme and invited the Committee to consider and comment on the contents of the report.

Jo Kavanagh, Head of Service – Families Working Together, introduced the report and referred members to papers tabled which provided further updated information to that provided in the published report and relevant issues were highlighted.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Feedback received from the Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services following attendance at the launch of the Housing Strategy was positive. The key discussion points at the launch had focussed positively about the journey, prior to the launch, over the previous 18 months and the collaborative working across relevant teams. The national speaker had suggested that Lincolnshire was a leading figure in this particular area.
- 58 referrals to the service had been made so far. Of those referrals, 41% had returned home, 29% were in supported accommodation, 15% stayed with parents, as the cases had been resolved immediately, and a small proportion were staying with friends through "Friends Arrangements".
- The target for working with people to find a resolution was in the region of eight weeks, however Families Working Together would remain involved with the family until other provision had been arranged.
- Although not noted in the report, as the information provided was at the request of the Department for Communities, it was confirmed that traveller families and ethnic minorities were also able to access these services, and

have done. It was agreed to provide a breakdown of groups accessing services to members following the meeting.

- Members requested details of case studies to provide information regarding good practice and how frontline workers deal with such cases. It was confirmed that case studies were available and these would be circulated outwith. An invitation was also extended to those members who would like to see the process first hand.
- No specific guidance had been received from the Families Working Together programme about how to apportion the funding. As Lincolnshire wanted a different approach, a larger proportion of families meeting the criteria now have access to a range of other services.
- Shared learning was undertaken through secondments between teams. For example, the Youth Offending Service had a huge proportion of their caseload linked to Families Working Together therefore four members of their staff were seconded to the FWT team in order to strengthen links.
- Any claims made were now subjected to detailed scrutiny by the DLC and the team currently had 36 claims being currently scrutinised. In addition to this external audit, internal scrutiny arrangements were also in place to ensure compliance.
- Families in need were supported whether a funding/monetary claim could be made or not.
- All staff were trained in safeguarding issues and all families linked to safeguarding could be provided should that be requested. Information sharing was clear in localities due to colocation of different teams and the increased understanding of each other's roles as a result. There was also a mechanism in place for escalation and joint visits undertaken where uses were raised as a concern by more than one team.
- It was confirmed that all Practice Supervisors were leads on Signs of Safety and this was working well. Audit processes were also in place as well as systems to ensure ease of accessibility to result data. Staff were also trained in using the police computer system so information sharing had improved considerably as a result.
- There were a limited number of key workers in the County and, in order for them to work with families to the intensity level required (8-10 hours per week with one family), a caseload of 8-10 was a suitable level for each key worker. Members were asked to consider that this caseload was based on a family which could potentially have more than one child or differing issues so complexity was also a factor when allocating cases.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

78 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 3013/14

At this point of the meeting, the Chairman took the opportunity, on behalf of the Committee, to welcome Sally Savage to Lincolnshire County Council in her position as Assistant Director Children's Services.

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services which provided key performance information for Quarter 3 2013/14 relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Stuart Carlton, Assistant Director for Children's Services, introduced the report and circulated a further update in relation to Performance Indicator NI068 which provided detail regarding the percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to an initial assessment. The figure included details about the number of assessments completed as a result of referrals. It was reported that the national indicator would be phased out by the end of the year as it was no longer required.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- PI 2023SC (Page 28) – it was difficult to manage Child Protection Plans with a target as this was determined by the number of referrals received which could vary considerably on a monthly basis. Additionally, a child protection conference which includes a number of siblings could also increase the figures. It was felt to be useful to have a target figure as a benchmark but noted that this was an indicator which was regularly debated.
- Despite the number of complaints received in schools being included within the report, it was noted that these were for the school to deal with directly. However, should a complaint relate to a specific member of staff and their suitability to work with children, the Local Authority would look at the issues raised through Children's Social Care. If found that any member of staff had acted inappropriately, the case would be investigated fully.
- Child Protection Plans were complex and, although it would appear that a child had been removed from a plan and then put back on, in some cases, the child had moved out of county for the period where they appeared not to have a plan. It was acknowledged that work was ongoing to develop ways to ensure consistent and accurate reporting of this indicator.
- Sally Savage, Assistant Director Children's Services, had been appointed predominantly to work with partners to ensure there was an overarching senior position in the authority for children's commissioning, bringing together the local authority, public health and the Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- Common themes for referral were neglect and domestic abuse/violence issues rather than anything specifically unique to Lincolnshire although Members acknowledged that these reasons do vary over time.
- Two compliments to the Scrutiny Committee had been reported and officers were asked to provide the detail of those compliments, if possible.
- A suggestion was made that the Committee may be able to, in some way, support the complaints process. Advice was given that the complaints process was outlined through a statutory process and, if the Committee were to be included in that process, this could be perceived as not following the process as required legally.
- The complaints process in schools was felt to be particularly daunting for parents and additional support could be required through the process, as it could be extremely stressful. Although there was an appointed School

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Complaints Officer to provide support and advice both to schools and parents, Members suggested that it may be helpful to publicise this for parents also.

- System problems remained a concern for the Committee as input errors were resulting in inaccurate reporting. The new system was expected to be more intuitive and easier to navigate, reducing the amount of error. It was hoped this new system would be in place by January 2015. Members were reassured that data cleansing would continue to be undertaken to ensure that data was correct.
- Social Workers undertake a number of unannounced visits but find that families were not in. It had been suggested that tablets would be beneficial so that they could input data whilst waiting for families, etc, to return. Unfortunately, the current ICS system was unable to be accessed via this method. Judith Hetherington-Smith, Chief Information Officer, and Simon Oliver, Head of IMT, were being consulted on ways to rectify this and to make remote access of systems easier for Social Workers.
- PI CS108 (Page 40) – The ePEP system had now been upgraded and, although this should be assisting staff, frustrations with the new upgrade and required training had initially made this more difficult.
- The majority of referrals made to the ombudsman were relating to Home to School Transport, of which there had been no "findings of fault". In relation to referrals made to the ombudsman on Post 16, national guidelines were to be followed, on two year programme, which made it difficult to provide reassurance to parents. One finding of fault against the Local Authority had been made which would be presented to the Committee in due course.
- Members were reassured that a number of pieces of work were ongoing around bullying issues.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

79 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP
UPDATE

The Chairman of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, Councillor Ron Oxby, provided an update on the progress of the Sub-Group.

Having met on the 29th January 2014, Councillor Oxby had been elected as the Chairman of the Sub-group as Councillor Pat O'Connor was unable to continue as he was no longer a member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

A presentation had been received relating to the changes of the Ofsted inspection framework, following which ten questions were agreed to form the basis for scrutinising the work of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adult Board. Each meeting of the Sub-Group would consider two or three of those questions to assess the performance of the two boards.

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Andy Morris, newly appointed LSCB Business Manager, also attend the meeting and highlighted the LSCB had been carrying out an internal review of children's safeguarding and had discovered certain processes around auditing of serious incidents required further attention. Having revised its business plan, the LSCB had also created a performance framework which the Sub-Group also considered, as noted in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Group was scheduled for 30th April where it would be considering the outcomes from a recent case review, an item of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the first three questions from the Ofsted Framework:-

1. *Can you provide evidence that you coordinate the work of partners in helping, protecting and caring for children and adults in Lincolnshire?*
2. *What are the mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of your arrangements?*
3. *How do you know the multi-agency training in safeguarding is effective?*

During discussion, it was confirmed that the issue requiring further attention was in relation to auditing. It was explained that under the new Ofsted framework, Safeguarding Boards were expected to undertake their own audits in addition to those already taking place. As a result, a process was ongoing to appoint an audit officer to undertake this requirement.

RESOLVED

That the verbal update provided, in addition to the draft minutes of the meeting of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, held on 29th January 2014, be noted.

80 SOLUTIONS 4 - OFFICER AND MEMBER FEEDBACK

Dave Thompson, Solutions 4 Manager, gave a presentation to the Committee which detailed the transition of the Lincolnshire Teaching and Learning Centre (LTLC) from Lincolnshire County Council as an independent maintained school and had been undertaken in a way to ensure that LCC could meet its statutory duties for children not in full time education.

The presentation also asked Members to consider the role of Solutions 4 in meeting the needs of pupils excluded or at risk of exclusion in Key Stage 4.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- It was reported that there were currently 400 "other authority" Looked After Children in Lincolnshire, some of which were looked after by Solutions 4.
- The referring authority was now being challenged as a child would not be accepted into the county without the appropriate funding being apportioned to the child.
- Funding was received from Central Government based on the October count.

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- The Local Authority were not in a position to refuse to a child in to the county but there was a responsibility to have the relevant health and education plans in place. Legislation which would include this had not yet been finalised so discussions with other authorities was being held tentatively at present.
- If a child was resident in Lincolnshire, even if they were from out-of-county, but placed with foster carers for example, the local authority was legally obliged to provide an education for that child.

The Chairman invited Committee Members, who had visited Solutions 4 facilities, to update the Committee with their experiences.

- Councillor Mrs Ransome advised that she had visited two centres and had been impressed with both. Bridge House was found to be academically orientated while Opportune Engineers were more "hands on". Staff and children had embraced her and were enthusiastic in telling her what they do at the centre. Councillor Mrs Ransome asked the Committee to note her concern about the short notice of the notification that funding had been received. It was felt that the security of staff in these centres was essential as to lose them would be detrimental to the children.
- Added Member, Mr Rudman, had visited the Gelder school and found it to be outstanding despite some of the pupils having been excluded from more than one establishment within the county. Mr Rudman had been made to feel very welcome and had been provided with some background details of the pupils, some of which were from very dysfunctional families. It was stressed that the centre tried to provide a safe environment for the pupils and then look at the education element.
- Councillor Churchill visited Opportune Engineers and stressed that these children are challenging but have the ability to succeed. The issue for this centre was that the funding was not available to heat the building and it appeared that there was considerably less spent on the upkeep of these facilities. Councillor Churchill advised that she was scheduled to visit Gelder also.
- Councillors Wootten had been warmly greeted when they visited Bridge House in Boston, who catered for 40 pupils aged 14 to 16. Core subjects were taught to students and most students were expected to gain either a B or C result. Pupils were very much included and they felt that it was an excellent facility.
- Councillor Aron visited Build a Future in Horncastle where he found the staff to be very enthusiastic with some excellent ideas for the future. Funding was also an issue at this centre and he felt the building was also an issue.
- Councillor Dodds also visited Build a Future in Horncastle and felt that the relationship between students the staff seemed rigorous and strong. There was an informal atmosphere but it was clear that there was a mutual respect between staff and students. Transport was an issue especially for post 16 children and Councillor Dodds asked that post 16 travel solutions be seriously considered. She was also concerned regarding capacity at the centre and whether the local authority should be giving consideration to increasing work with these schools as she felt the financial implications of doing so would far exceed the moral and financial cost of allowing these children to fail.

- Added Member, Mrs Olivier-Townrow, visited the Gelder Group and had been extremely impressed with the centre and the children there. Two teachers were with a group of six children but she felt that there was a real challenge to provide the variety within the curriculum for only two teachers. Having talked to pupils individually, they had hinted at the frustration of being actively involved in workshops. Subsequently, Mrs Olivier-Townrow had contacted a production company who offered to undertake some workshops and to provide bursaries also. Mrs Olivier-Townrow felt that this was something which could be further developed.
- The Chairman advised he had also visited Build a Future in Horncastle and, like Councillor Dodds, raised the issue of transport problems for Post 16 pupils. The other issue raised had been budgets.

In response to Members' comments, the following points were noted:-

- In terms of the buildings, health and safety reviews were carried out every 12 weeks and all premises met the minimum legal requirements.
- LCC had changed the transport arrangements in relation to taxis to revert back to 12 month leases for transport. Work was currently ongoing with taxi firms to ensure that they were working directly with Solutions 4 but with support from LCC.
- Concern remained that if there was no assurance of funding flow, the centres would continue to be unable to make significant capital investments. Solutions 4 had written to the providers to advise that funding had been extended for a further year but agreed that a plan of less than three years was not acceptable.
- As long as standards were maintained, there was a plan to roll the contracts on for an additional year and that LCC intended to reprocure Solutions 4 under a framework arrangement for providers but acknowledged that this would need to be longer than on a yearly basis. Members were reassured that funding arrangements were currently being considered although advised that the capital issues raised had not been.
- There was a dedicated grant available from the DfE, of which the majority was spent on the sufficiency of places available. All other issues raised would be considered in the reprocurement.
- Although facilities were made available by the individual providers, Solutions 4 managed the centres overall. The six week deadline was a target, an aspiration, to move pupils out of the system but it was acknowledged that this was not always possible but it gave both Solutions 4 and the pupils a target to work to. Once the children embarked on courses, it was difficult to find a mainstream school providing that particular course. Bridge House, for example, had qualifications in line with mainstream schools.
- At the Gelders Centre, it was reported that there are currently six highly complex students who could have been placed in out-of-county placements at a cost in excess of £100k per placement. It was felt, therefore, that by providing facilities such as these in-county, it would save the authority money.

Councillor Mrs C A Talbot asked that it be noted that she was personal friends of staff at Hillcrest Early Years Academy in Gainsborough.

Councillor B W Keimach also asked the Committee to note that, in relation to a Solutions 4 provider and their ongoing discussions with West Lindsey District Council, he was a District Councillor with WLDC.

In summary, the Committee requested the local authority to consider longer contracts to give more certainty for providers, address the issue of transport including taxis and transport provided directly by providers, general funding and the potential to increase the daily costs.

RESOLVED

1. That the presentation and updates be noted.

At 12.55pm, Councillor B W Keimach left the meeting and did not return.

81 TAKE-UP OF EARLY EDUCATION FOR LESS ADVANTAGED 2 YEAR
 OLDS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which provided the Committee with a comprehensive overview of the take up of free early education places for two year olds in Lincolnshire.

Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services, introduced the report on behalf of Geraldine O'Neill, Lead Consultant (EYE).

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The hourly cost of Early Years Providers had been agreed by a working party in consultation with the voluntary and maintained sectors to work out the average voluntary charge. This is something continually under review via the Lincolnshire School's Forum and is an issue which continues to be refined.
- An individually assessed approach to providers was taken and, through risk assessment, decisions could be taken to move children should a provider prove unsuitable following that assessment.
- There was an inclusion fund so that, for example, an 18 month old child with a significant disability was accessing a pre-school, this would be dealt with by the Birth to Five Service through a similar process to statementing although this was not formal or statutory.
- Looked After Children (LAC) numbers were low and work was ongoing to monitor the exceptions for these children.
- Regarding geographical spread, in rural areas, child care remained a challenge but work was ongoing with childminders to provide better support and to help them become registered to provide early education.
- Funding was available for 40% but there was a commitment to increase that figure. The other 60% would be for the parents to decide if they want to pay for it, although as soon as the child has their third birthday they would be

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- eligible for 15 hours free. Vulnerable children were given priority and it was expected, depending on additional funding, that there would be a waiting list.
- Detail regarding the number of providers available in Lincoln would be provided after the meeting, following a concern that there appeared to be considerable less providers to places in comparison to other areas in the county. It was thought that places were taken by paying parents which could mean the additional funding may not be required.
 - Ofsted used to provide ratings as did the Birth to Five Service, however Ofsted removed that ability. Previously, the local authority had the ability to remove a childcare provision should they have a lower rating than Ofsted but this had now changed.
 - Following a query regarding the inclusion of traveller and ethnic minority families, all two year olds within the county were logged with the Participation Worker who would discuss the offer within families.
 - It was suggested to hold a workshop around this item, possibly through Councillor Development.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

**82 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME 2014**

A report by the Scrutiny Officer was considered, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider its work programme for the coming year.

There were no amendments to the published work programme, although Members were asked to note a potential report for the September meeting relating to a proposal for a new primary academy in North Hykeham (submission to Secretary of State of results and evaluation process to identify an operator), which was yet to be confirmed.

A SEND reform project, which was a council priority project, had formed a stakeholder group to inform, engage and help co produce the reforms set out in the Children's Bill Draft Code of Practice. The Stakeholder Group had requested two representatives from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to sit on that group. The group met on a monthly basis, usually at Grantham College, the next meeting being scheduled for 18th March 2014 at 10.30am.

Councillor J R Hicks advised he would represent the Committee on this group. No other volunteers were identified but further information would be circulated to the Committee to give those not present the opportunity to volunteer.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme, as set out at Appendix A, be agreed.

83 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following item of business contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended

84 LEAVING CARE - COMMISSIONING REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services.

Andrew McLean, Head of Service – Children's Commissioning, and Linda Graham, Commissioning Officer, introduced the report, explaining the details behind the content of the report.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the recommendations to the executive be supported.

The meeting closed at 1.15 pm