



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), A J Baxter, A W Briggs, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews, Mrs S A J Nutman, N Sear, T J N Smith and M A Whittington

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Linda Dennett (Assistant Director - Children's Health and Commissioning), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Sarah Nardone (Assistant Director for Sector Led Improvement), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director for Children's Education), Ethan Thorpe (Strategic Communications Lead) and Jess Wosser-Yates (Democratic Services Officer).

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Wright, and Councillor S Roe – Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.

Martin Kyle, the Church Representative, and Emile van der Zee, the Parent Governor Representative, also gave apologies.

11 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared at this point in proceedings.

12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, COMMUNITY SAFETY, PROCUREMENT AND MIGRATION AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman announced that Dr Emile van der Zee had been elected as a new Parent Governor Representative and looked forward to his attendance at the Committee meeting in September.

Additionally, the Chairman had attended the Lincolnshire Education Excellence Awards which celebrated the exceptional commitment and talent within Lincolnshire's educational sector. The Committee was informed that the Young People's Learning Provision won the Community Involvement Award, which was a Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) commissioned programme which supported young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to enter employment.

14 OFSTED INSPECTION OF LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES - OUTCOME REPORT

The Committee received a report and presentation from Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children's Services, which provided an overview into the findings and judgements from the recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services. The Council's Service was judged 'overall' as 'Outstanding', and the following matters were subsequently reported:

- LCC was one of 11 out of the 150 Authorities that were rated overall 'Outstanding' nationally.
- The impact of leaders on social work and practice with children and families was rated 'Outstanding'. Young People (YP) were well supported by a strong corporate and political commitment seen through the development of several new children's homes. Additionally, the Service had successfully responded to challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, and Lincolnshire was influential in sector-led improvements and the Family Hub programme.
- The experiences and progress of children who required help and protection were rated 'Outstanding'. YP benefitted from comprehensive Early Help Assessments, regular and well-attended child protection plan review meetings, and good relationships with practitioners and social workers who centered their voice, and there was a strong partnership approach to help children at risk of child criminal exploitation such as Future4Me.
- The experiences and progress of Children in Care (CiC) were rated 'Outstanding' and resulted in their lives significantly improving. CiC received good educational support and maintained good relationships with Social Workers to ensure their views informed their care plans. Most foster placements were high-quality, and foster parents received exceptional support.
- The experiences and progress of care leavers were rated 'Good'. This was a new judgement area, and it was noted that most care-experienced young people were well supported by care workers and could access a range of special advice and

support for their emotional and mental wellbeing. Most care leavers were also in accommodation that met their needs.

- It was acknowledged that the quality and consistency of planning and case records for care leavers could improve; care leavers were a commissioned service delivered in partnership by Barnardos, and it was assured LCC was currently working with them on conducting a service review.
- The offer to care-experienced young people aged 21 and over also needed to improve, and it was assured immediate actions were underway to address this, as well as a Service Review to ensure the correct level of service was in place.

During consideration of the report, the following points were highlighted:

- The Committee congratulated Children's Services on the overall 'Outstanding' classification.
- Ofsted identified that time scales pertaining to actions in case work could improve, and the Executive Director – Children's Services assured an improvement plan had been developed and was due to be considered by the Directorate Leadership Team (DLT). Additional scrutiny and consideration by the Committee in the future was welcomed.
- Barnardos provided LCC with commissioned guidance and advice and both organisations were assessing their quality assurance processes for care leavers; this collaboration allowed a continuous cycle of improvement through implementing robust standards, particularly when documenting case notes.
- Members were informed that the offer given to care-experienced YP aged 21 was extended until age 25 in Lincolnshire. Additionally, Ofsted assessed that each care leaver should be allocated a case worker, however not all wanted one; the Executive Director – Children's Services consequently emphasised the importance of engaging with CLs directly as part of the Service Review to identify their preferences on this matter.
- Issues around time scales in case work arose as Children's Services did not identify a particular date an action ought to be completed by, despite that these actions were always completed. Some YP appreciated this reflective note-taking, and Members agreed they should be consulted before any changes were made to how case work was documented.
- It was agreed that Officer responses to the questions submitted by the Parent Governor Representative would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee reviews the findings and judgements from the inspection report.
2. That the Committee records its congratulations to Children's Services for the overall judgment of 'Outstanding'.
3. That the Committee receives a progress update in six months' time on the two areas for improvement contained within the inspection report.
4. That a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to congratulate the staff in Children's Services.

**15 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE CORPORATE
PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2022 - 23 - QUARTER 4**

Members received a report from Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Children’s Education, and Sarah Nardone, Assistant Director – Sector Led Improvement which provided a summary of the Service Level Performance against the Success Framework 2023-2024 for Quarter 4. The following matters were reported:

Children are healthy and safe

- Juvenile first-time offending was reported to be 108 which exceeded the target of 125 and this figure had reduced from the last quarter due to the work of the Joint Diversionary Panel.
- Children in Care (CiC) per 10,000 children was 49.1 which exceeded the target of 51.9. It was noted this target had been increased to accommodate the impact of the National Transfer Scheme.
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) was 390 which exceeded the target of 370. High figures were welcomed for this KPI as CPP processes were recognised as acknowledging risks to YP.
- The average time taken to match a child to an adoptive family was 165 days, which exceeded the target of 175 days.
- The average time taken to move a child from care to an adoptive family was 505 days, which fell below the target of 450 days. This was attributed to a legacy of impact from court delays from the pandemic.
- Juvenile re-offending was 45.5% which fell below the target of 37.9% because there was a tradeoff between reoffending rates and lower first-time offending rates. Certain cases had a significant impact on data due to the small number of children in the cohort.

Learn and achieve

- The data for these measures was from 2021 due to a delay in national data being reported.
- Permanent exclusions were 0.07%, which exceeded the target of 0.11%. Low exclusion rates were attributed to abnormal school operating circumstances during the pandemic which rendered exclusions unlikely.
- The achievement gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and their non-FSM eligible peers was 31.1% which did not achieve the target of 30.2%. The impact of the pandemic on school experiences exacerbated complexities around examinations at KS4, although this gap had closed by 1.5% since last quarter. Assurance was provided that the Education Strategic Plan was making good progress.

Readiness for Adult Life

- According to Ofsted, 94% of Care Leavers were in suitable accommodation which achieved the target and young people were making informed choices about their living situations. There was a small number in unsuitable arrangements, although they were in agreement with them.
- 16–17-year-old CiC participating in learning was 83.2% which fell below the target of 90%, although this was an 8% improvement from Quarter 3, and the work of the Virtual School on student participation was noted.

Members were encouraged to review Appendix A which outlined the Service level Performance Indicators, Service Areas and targets.

During consideration of the report, the following was noted:

- The Assistant Director – Children’s Education noted that FSM attainment was a key concern of the service moving forward, as well as reducing the time children are waiting to complete care arrangements. Additionally, the Executive Director – Children’s Services informed the Committee that it was known exclusions were increasing and assured the Service was working to reduce them to relieve pressure on provision.
- Members questioned the extent that LCC could influence academies to reduce the FSM attainment gap. The Assistant Director – Children’s Education noted that work was underway within the Education Strategic Plan to help close this gap and champion outcomes for all YP. It was further noted that it was important to encourage schools to engage with offers available to help attainment, which was communicated through regular leadership briefings and through highlighting activity and appropriate programmes to engage with. It was assured 89% of academies engaged with various offers and activities available.
- It was important that LCC worked with Regional School Commissioners to provide a strong Trust offer for academies.
- Members requested more recent data regarding the time taken to move a CiC to an adoptive family, and it was assured improvements had been observed; typically a child was already with the people they would be living with, but rather there was a delay in the formal conclusion of this process.
- The work of the Joint Diversionary Panel was praised by Officers and Members.
- The number of reoffending young people was small which allowed extensive preventative work to be done with them, and it was assured that criminalising young people was avoided wherever possible. Children’s Services consistently worked closely with Police to disrupt criminal activity, and offered support to families.
- A response would be circulated to Members regarding how many youth reoffenders related to County Lines.
- Members questioned whether FSM eligible children engaged well with education. It was assured that schools offered support through the use of pupil premium and had allocated catch up funding for tuition which most local schools offered. Additionally,

the engagement of FSM eligible children could be observed through the attainment gap with non-FSM eligible children closing by 1.5%.

- It was acknowledged that FSM eligible group grew during the pandemic from around 17,000 to approximately 23,000.
- It was questioned what would be measured by the replacement measure for Juvenile Re-offending from the new KPIs the Youth Justice Board requested. The Assistant Director – Sector Led Improvement assured new KPIs had been identified and were being assessed. There would be governance arrangements around how the new KPIs would fit into the Corporate Plan and the Committee would have the opportunity to consider them.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee's satisfaction with the Children and Young People Service Level Performance for 2022-23 Quarter 4 be recorded.
2. That the 2023-24 Performance Indicators for Children and Young People as shown in Appendix A be agreed.

16 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members received a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to consider and comment on the contents of its work programme to ensure that its scrutiny activity was focused where it can be of greatest benefit. The following was noted:

- An exempt report on Education Provision Planning was added to the agenda for the 20 October meeting, which was a pre-decision scrutiny item prior to a decision by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.
- It was requested that item be added regarding mental health service transitions. The Senior Scrutiny Officer highlighted that the Committee would be receiving a report on the children and young people mental health transformation programme on 1 December and would request officers include a section on transitions.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be approved subject to the above amendment.

The meeting closed at 10.53 am