

'Every child in every part of the County should achieve their potential'

Review of the Year—Lincolnshire Children's Centres 2013/14

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Message from the Strategic Lead for Children's Centres

I am delighted to welcome you to the Children Centre Review Report. This report gives an overview of the work of Children's Centres in Lincolnshire and illustrates the positive difference our services have made on outcomes for young children and their families over the past year.

Our Children's Centre staff, services and partners are committed to making a positive difference to the children and families they work with and do so through excellent practice. Over the year, significant progress has been made with registrations, attendance and the targeting of vulnerable children and families.

The range of stories throughout this report from parents and partners give a first hand view of the outstanding service provided by the centres and the enthusiasm they have for what they do. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile results are one of the best in the Country and this achievement should be celebrated.

I would like to thank all staff, services and partners for their hard work and ongoing commitment to Children Centres, children and their families.

Stuart Carlton

Assistant Director



'Every child in every part of the County should achieve their potential'

Purpose of the report

To provide Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (CYPSC) with an update on Lincolnshire Children's Centre's during 2013/2014. The report will highlight the impact that has been achieved on delivering improved outcomes for children and their families in Lincolnshire. As well as examples of good practice, we will be recognizing areas for development to ensure that children and families receive the best service possible.

Context

Children Centres are critical in ensuring that children reach their potential and are ready for school and adult life; they provide an environment that promotes growth and learning to enable the children to enter school eager and excited to learn. We have 25 main Children's Centres, with 23 linked sites, all of which are owned and managed by Lincolnshire County Council, apart from the Witham Family Centre, which is run by an Academy funded by Lincolnshire County Council. Children's Centres are multi-agency hubs that provide a package of integrated services delivered by Lincolnshire County Council staff, partner agencies and commissioned providers.

2013/14 has been a good year for Children's Centres with a substantial increase in engagement with families and three Ofsted inspections - all achieving 'Good' in all areas, which is a significant achievement nationally under the new inspection framework. This would indicate that children are accessing a quality early years provision in Lincolnshire Children Centres that contributes to their readiness for school and adult life.

Lincolnshire's commitment to ensuring the children develop to their potential in their early years and are ready for school is central to our Children and Young People's Plan.

Overview: Children's Centres and Ofsted inspections 2013/2014

Children's Centres have statutory Ofsted inspections which make judgments on the quality of the provision and impact on children's outcomes. Inspectors focus particularly on the impact of Children's Centre on targeted young children and their families, especially those that the Centres have identified as being in most need of intervention and support. They make three key judgments that contribute to a judgement on the overall effectiveness of the Centre. The three key judgements are:

- *access to services by young children and their families*
- *the quality and impact of practice and services*
- *the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.*

There is four grades for judgement: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate

During the last year we have had 3 Ofsted Inspections under the new framework in Stamford, Swineshead & Sutterton and Lincoln North. Each of these centre groups have achieved 'good' in all areas. In the data released by Ofsted for the first 6 months of the year, Lincolnshire Children's Centres have 86% of their Children's Centres rated 'good' or 'outstanding', compared to an average of 58% for other authorities in the East Midlands.

Strengths highlighted by Ofsted:

- Family support, including assessment, monitoring and supervision. Also quality of packages of support offered, including parenting programmes
- Information sharing agreements and effective partnerships
- High expectations of leadership teams and excellent planning and evaluation by leaders and Local Authority
- Contract monitoring and target setting
- Safeguarding policies and procedures
- Good quality sessions, particularly for children with disabilities
- Effective use of feedback from users to plan and improve services
- Access to 2 year disadvantaged funding
- Aspirations for parents, encouraging access to volunteering and learning

Overview: Children's Centres and Ofsted inspections 2013/2014

Areas for improvements highlighted by Ofsted:

1. Analysis of data and setting more measureable targets

What are we doing about this:

We are providing support to teams to make better use of the data to inform their planning . Training has been delivered to improve the quality of Self Evaluation (SEF) AND setting SMART targets.

2. Demonstrating increased and sustained engagement

What are we doing about this:

We are constantly working with partners to increase engagement and all centres have commissioned a Parent Engagement contract to support this. The provision includes hand holding families into services.

3. More emphasis on children's educational development and learning at home

What are we doing about this:

Children's Centre teachers have delivered projects to groups of children to support their development and resources are available for families to share at home.

4. Ensure the continuous quality assurance of early years groups

What are we doing about this:

A new quality improvement framework for Early Years Sessions is now in place.

5. Participation of fathers and priority groups

What are we doing about this:

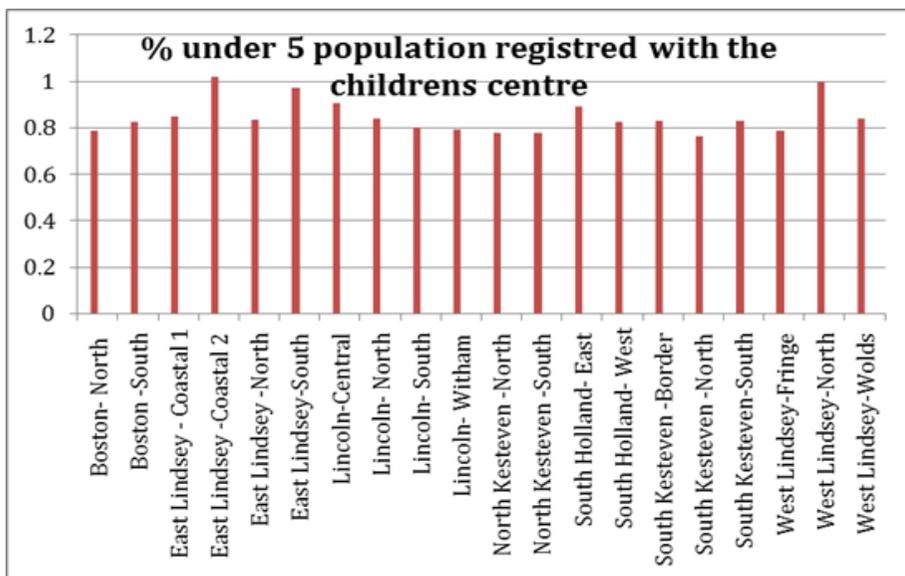
All Centres have reach and participation plans in place to identify and support those excluded groups and centre leaders are expected to ensure that they understand who their priority groups are—this will be further challenged at the next Annual Conversations.

We will describe further our progress against Ofsted Judgements: Access to services by young children and their families; The quality and impact of practice and service; The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.

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Access to services by young children and families

Universal Families—all children under 5 years old



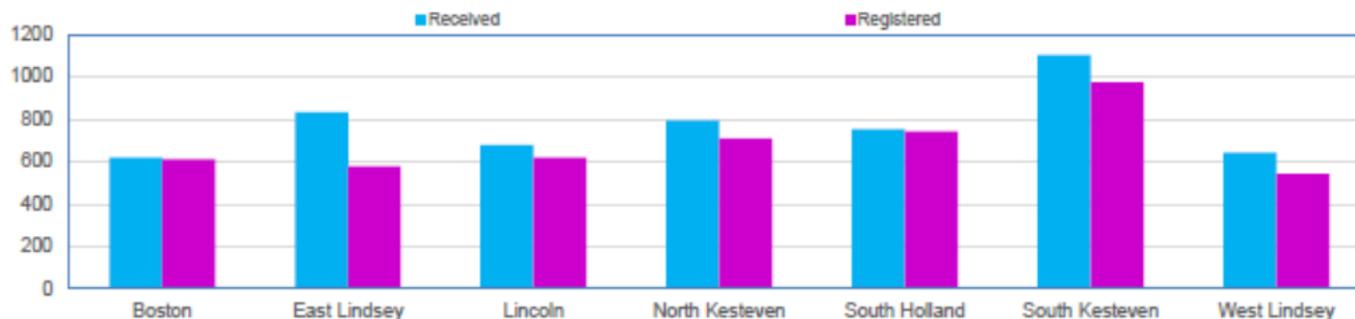
To get a 'Good' or above Ofsted grade, the centres need to register at least 65% of under 5's in their area.

All districts have commissioned a community engagement project that promotes and supports families to access services. In addition to this, **all Lincolnshire Registrars give information about Children's Centres at each birth registration.**

IMPACT:

Membership for the Children's Centre groups across the county is high with all groups having an average of 80% of the families in the reach area being registered with the Children's Centre. In some areas this is higher and in some exceeds the population — this is due to the population data being from the 2011 census and families out of the reach area attending the centres. Of those families registered an average of 55% are accessing services on a regular basis.

Health Notifications Received and Registered (number YTD)



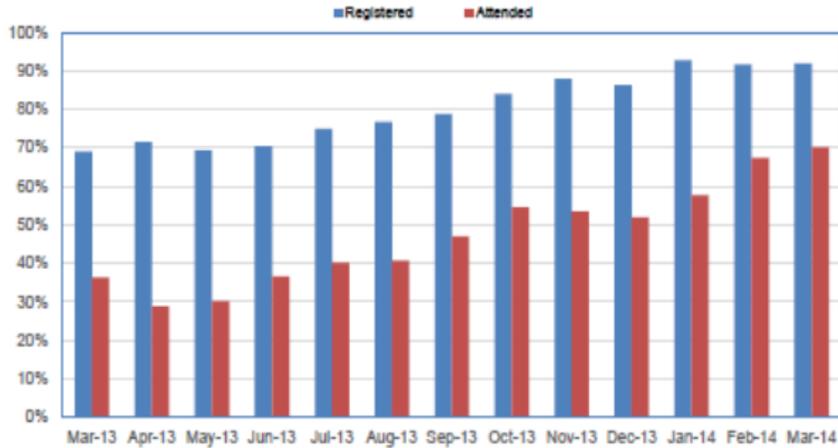
As a result of the Information Sharing Protocol between Health and Children's Centre's, from June 2013 Children's Centre's are receiving weekly information on live births and families moving into the area.

Parental Engagement Officers support these families to access services.

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Access for those that need our services most

Percentage of cases open to Social Care Registered and Attending a Children's Centre



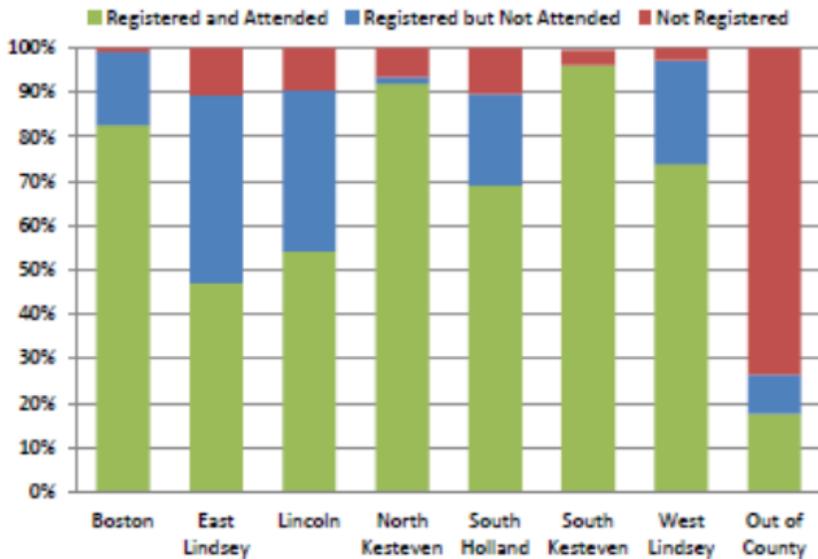
Ofsted expect us to engage with at least 65% of our priority children to achieve 'Good'

Lincolnshire took the decision to set the children on a plan (Team around the child, Child in need, Child protection, Looked after Children) open to Children's Services as a priority. An Information Sharing Protocol between Social Care and Children's Centre's was implemented by senior leaders.

IMPACT:

As a result the number of children that are on a plan and registered with a children's centre has increased significantly by 23% over the year with an average of 92% being registered—for this target this puts us into the 'Outstanding' category for Ofsted.

Registrations and Attendance at Children's Centres for cases open to Children's Social Care



Each locality commissions a Parent Engagement Service to support families to engage with the Children's Centre. Each family open to social care, or on the live birth list from health is offered a home visit with the purpose of hand holding more vulnerable families into the centre services. Many centres also have volunteers in place to support families into the centre and/or to run groups within the centres.

IMPACT:

Attendance at a children's centre, or one to one work in the home, with children who are on a plan has doubled in the last year, The county average is currently (Mar 14) 70% and continuing to rise.

The quality and impact of practice and services

Case Studies

There is a wealth of targeted work going on across the county to support children and families. Services are commissioned to support school readiness and to ensure that the achievement gap is narrowed.

GRANTHAM PERINATAL SUPPORT SERVICE

Partnership between Children's Centres, Family Action and Health.

Case Study:

Mum was having mental health difficulties during her pregnancy and was anxious that she would not be able to bond with the baby when it was born. Mum had a history of low mood, anxiety and low self confidence. The project provided a trained volunteer/befriender, who supported mum with weekly listening visits and to prepare for the baby.

Support continued until after mum had the baby. Once baby was born mum was supported by maternal grandparents and mum's low mood and anxiety levels have reduced considerably.

Mum and baby have bonded well and she is coping well with his day to day care.

Partnership working between children's centres, adult learning and family support workers:

Parent from Italy who found herself unemployed and separated from her partner in 2009 was supported to attend universal groups in the centre and to seek help with overcoming her financial difficulties. By 2010 Citizens Advice Bureau had helped her to overcome her debts and she felt more in control of her life.

She accessed the 2 year old disadvantaged funding for her daughter and was supported by the Learning Officer at the children's centre to become work ready.

In 2011 she completed a Steps to Work programme and started to engage with adult learning.

In 2012 she attended an ESOL course and supported other parents for whom English was a second language as a volunteer. In 2013 she completed a PETAL's qualification to enable her to teach adults and was successful in gaining paid employment. Her daughter is happy and healthy now at school, living in a household with a mother that works.

July 2013, once I have pass my PETAL's qualification I am hopeful that I will be able to find work teaching adults. I have decided to give something back to the Children's centre by becoming a vounteer, supporting families with overcoming a language barrier.

After receiving support from the Perinatal project I felt a lot more con-

family
action

The quality and impact of practice and services Universal Provision—what families say

Olly had his assessment with the health visitor. She asked if I used any services, when I explained where we went she said she could tell the difference between parents and children that did attend groups to those that didn't. So thanks to all the staff who are making a difference to Olly and to myself, they are always happy to listen, help and give advice. **CFBT group March 14**



We have just moved up to Toddler PEEP from baby PEEP and thoroughly enjoy our time there. We get a lot out of the session and I feel happy bringing my daughter here. It's safe and fun environment. **CFBT group Oct 13**

The R family has been attending the Children's centres in the Boston area for almost 3 years.

Dad told me that the centres have been invaluable to the wellbeing of their family and played an important role in their parenting.

The whole family has grown in confidence, and Dad is still working at Tesco's as a result of the help and support provided by the centres, Dad said he cannot thank us enough.

Their understanding of their daughter's development shines through, and the family between them attend something almost every day. **Boston Centre Jan 14**

An access to swimming project was developed in West Lindsey after thorough risk assessment. Over the term children developed their skills so that they achieved a Swimming Teachers Association (STA) swimming badge. **Market Rasen 2013**



Improving Health Outcomes

Two key health targets for children's centres are:

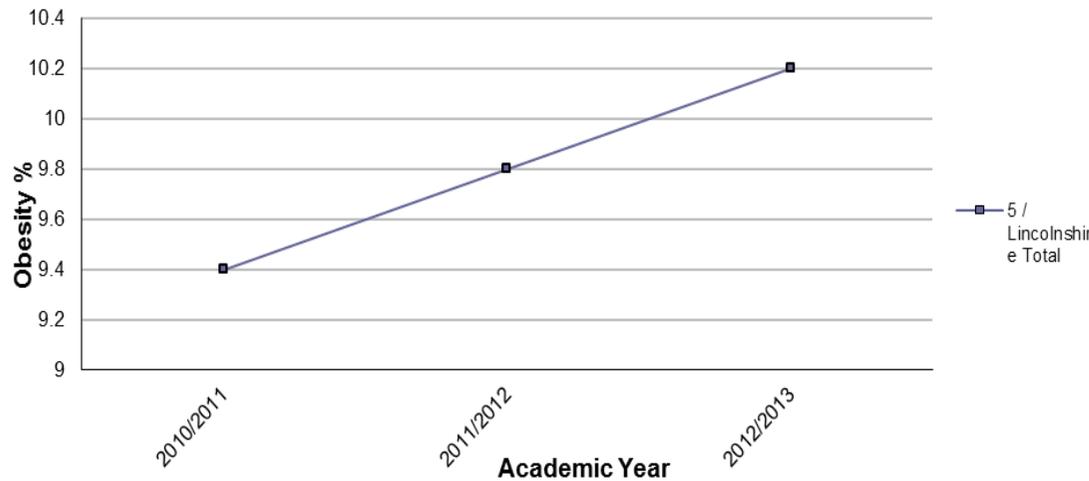
- Percentage of (breastfeeding prevalence) - higher rate is better
- Obesity rates in children at the end of Reception—lower rate is better



Breastfeeding:

The infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks- average for the county for 2013/14 is **38% of infants being breast fed**. The national average is 47.6% so this is a priority target in many of Lincolnshire's children's centres. Only 7 sites across the county match or exceed the national average.

Breastfeeding support groups are held across the county in some children's centres run by health staff and Le Leche volunteers.



Obesity Data –End of reception:

Lincolnshire is showing an **upward trend** for those children at the end of reception who are obese—**10.2%** for 2013/14 in data from the Public Health England.

This is a complex issue that requires co-ordinated actions and children centres have this as a target if their data shows the level is higher than the National Average of 9.3%. **The data shows high levels of obesity in Reception age children in West Lindsey and South Holland.**

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Score -

this is the measurement of children's progress at the end of Reception—higher score is better

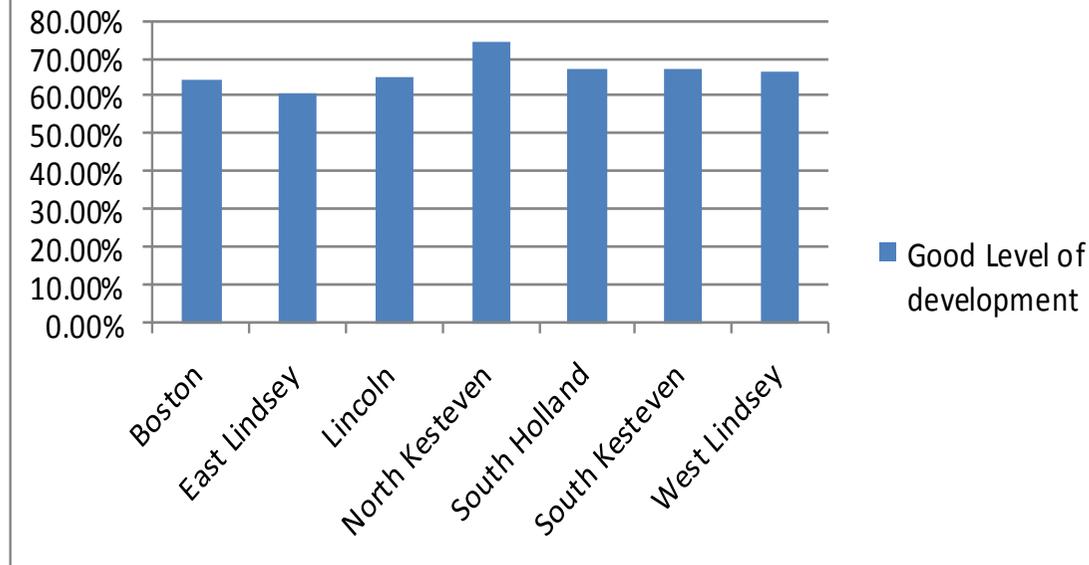
Early years sessions and targeted group work takes place in the children's centres to support school readiness.

IMPACT:

The majority of Lincolnshire children achieved a good level of development above the National Average of 56%. The majority of children living in the most deprived areas achieved above the National average of 44%. The average % of children achieved a Good Level of development of 65.4%.

The assessment system for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile changed in 2013, therefore this year's data cannot be compared to previous years.

Good Level of development



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Breaking the link between disadvantage and low achievement in the early years - A good start in life is important for all children, particularly for those at risk of falling behind.

Pupils **eligible for free school meals perform less well than other pupils** (those who are not eligible for free school meals and unclassified). In 2013, in Lincolnshire 47% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieved a good level of development compared with 69% of other pupils, an attainment gap of 22 percentage points. The attainment gap is wider than in the previous year (19 percentage points) whilst for the statutory neighbours and England the gap remained the same (19 for England and 21 for Statutory neighbours).

Improving the outcomes for all young children is critical to narrowing the gap and Children's Centres deliver activities with particular focus on those children at risk of falling behind.

Chop, chop! I like doing thing by myself! I am developing independence skills and need less help to do some things at home. I am getting ready



Prime Time- Children's Centre Teachers working with children who need more support

Context- Children's Centre Teachers worked with local providers who deliver 2 year old funded places, to identify children who would benefit from extra support in the Early Years Foundation Stage Prime areas of Learning. Priority was given to children subject to Social Care involvement or those attaining below developmental age and stages. Parents and Carers were invited to a Launch and Celebration event to involve them in the programme and the home learning follow-up tasks.

IMPACT—All children showed improved attainment in the prime areas of learning by the end of the programme

"Our children were excited to come to Prime Time every week.

We enjoyed playing together with the activities provided for us to do at home."



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Breaking the link between disadvantage and low achievement in the early years- *Evidence shows that high quality early education at age two brings benefits to children's development.*

Lincolnshire has been offering free early education to the least advantaged two year olds since the government introduced the 2 year old funding pilot, which consists of free early education entitlement for 15 hours a week over 38 weeks a year for the least advantaged 20% of two year olds nationally in September 2013. As from September 2014, 40% of all two year olds in the country will be offered secure funded early education, and the funding or 2015/16 will be based upon participation. It is crucial that eligible families access their child's place so children are able to start the first phase of their education earlier, which is considered to be critical for preparing them for school and future success.

The Local Authority has commissioned further outreach support to raise awareness of and to increase the number of children accessing two year old places across Lincolnshire.



"I practised my mark-making skills holding my pen in a tripod grip. My mum says I am getting better at drawing using my white board at home."

IMPACT:

The pilot phase included 25 early years providers delivering childcare places to the least advantaged 2 year olds. This increased to 274 early years providers delivering the two year old entitlement in Lincolnshire by January 2014. This includes private, voluntary, independent, maintained and childminder settings.

The number of children accessing this provision has increased from 171 in December 2009 to 1457 by January 2014.

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Leadership and Management

Each Children's Centre group is led and managed by a Children's Centre Leader and is part of our Targeted Locality teams, ensuring that children's centres are a key component of our Early Help offer.

Children's Centre Hub:

In October 2013, a Children's Centre Hub was established to provide support for children's centres across the county - to share good practice, improve the quality of delivery and support with Ofsted inspection.

The Hub is a multi-disciplinary group of staff and consists of an LCC Team Manager and Early Intervention Officer, two part time Children's Centre teachers and a part time Health Visitor.

Commissioning:

The majority of children centre services are commissioned to external providers, under the direction and leadership of the locality teams. Some of the contracts are commissioned and managed on a county wide basis – for example CfBT contracted to deliver early years activities in centres. Other services are commissioned at locality level depending on the needs of that local community and feedback from parents.

For all contracts there is a rigorous contract management process in place, with quarterly meetings taking place and a monthly risk rating to identify any concerns in service delivery.

There are **61** contracts relating to children's centres, 26 of these are managed at a locality level and the other 35 are managed centrally owing to their higher value.

IMPACT:

As of March 2014 - 91% were rated as good or outstanding via the contract management process.

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Challenge to the Leadership of Children's Centres

Annual Conversation:

Each year in the Autumn every locality has an Annual Conversation with their Head of Service, supported by the Children's Centre Hub. The purpose of this is to identify what has gone well during the year and to measure progress against targets set the previous year. This is the opportunity for teams to celebrate success and also a forum for Heads of Service to challenge teams to ensure that the best possible outcomes for children and families are being delivered.

A common theme target set in 2013 was for centres to continue to increase attendance and to ensure that they set smarter targets for the coming year.

Advisory Boards:

Each children's centre group has an Advisory Board which is made up of partner agencies, parents and community groups. In some cases elected members also choose to attend Advisory Board meetings and this has been very appreciated by Children' Centre Leaders. The purpose of the Board is to provide support and challenge to leadership teams to ensure that the best possible service is delivered in that community. Lincolnshire's aim is to have 50% representation by parents on the Board – this has been achieved in some areas although not all. In some areas, parents have been more comfortable attending a parents only forum to feed their views into the Board via this mechanism. Teams are working with the parent forums to build confidence amongst the parents to empower them to make their views heard. Parents are also being supported to take on the role of Chair where possible as Advisory Boards should not be chaired by a member of staff as this would break statutory guidance. Advisory Board training has been organised for parents and there needs to be an on-going commitment to delivering this.

'Our partnership working I feel is second to none and this is evidenced by our linking with neighbourhood action plans, our recent integration of the advisory boards in the north has gone extremely well and our parents are becoming even more involved and empowered.

The centres are reaching those families that truly need the services and obtaining the right support, the range and quality of what is being provided is continually improving and we are tracking the children to ensure best outcomes. '

Quote from Noel Tobin, Chair of the Advisory Board, Lincoln at Annual Conversation

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Partnership Working

A wide range of partner agencies work with or from the children's centres. This ensures that a joined up service is delivered to children and families and strengthens communication between services. Health visitors, social workers, midwives and community partners work out of many centres and requests for hot-desking is steadily increasing as the benefits of joint working becomes more apparent.

IMPACT: As a result of successful partnership working a number of specific projects have been possible, for example:

- To support ethnic minority families — the Afghan Women's Project in Lincoln, Project with ethnic minority families in Boston and volunteer development project in South Kesteven
- To support school readiness — dual delivery of sessions with schools and settings and implementation of transition cluster meetings across the county
- To support healthy eating — The Grow project in Gainsborough

The Grow Project

A project funded by West Lindsey District Council to support local communities to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The project which is supported by Garden Organic means that local children, their families and community volunteers will benefit from the advice and guidance of a Master Gardener. Master Gardeners support individuals to grow food in their gardens, allotments, windowsills, workplaces and other community growing spaces. This brings a wide variety of health benefits as individuals get more exercise, eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, and food miles are reduced. The children's centres will work with WLDC Cook Connect to give local families ideas of recipes to try.



I like play with my baby and sing song with my baby because I learned English with English play. Very helpful for my to play with my baby. Special thanks of your time.

The Afghan Women's Project

The Children's Centre Leader worked in partnership with EMTET (Ethnic Minority and Travellers Education Team) to discuss the needs of the Afghan families in order to support them to access services in the Lincoln Children's Centres. It had been identified that the Afghan families had felt excluded in the local community. The children's Learning and Development had also been identified as an area in need of support.

The programme content was planned in consultation with the parents themselves, to ensure topics were relevant and of interest to them. The Pre School Learning Alliance and health partners supported the project.

KIDS CRECHE—is a commissioned service to support children with additional needs.



Since January 2012 KIDS have been commissioned to deliver extended KIDS' crèches to enable parent/carers to participate in the Early Support Parent /Carer Workshops at their local Children's Centre. Parents are being trained to deliver the workshops with Kids staff. Feedback from parents who

attended the Spalding and Birchwood workshops was very positive:



'I have found these workshops very informing. Delivered well and a warm and friendly atmosphere with it.'

Woo hoo I'm not losing my mind! There are others in same situation. Lovely, caring, friendly group and so helpful.'

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PARENT FORUM—most centres have a Parents Forum where parents come together to have their say on what is provided in the centre. Many raise money for families at their centre and provide trips and activities that would otherwise be unaffordable to disadvantaged children.

IMPACT: Case Study

“Out of the blue one day I had a knock on the door and it was Social Services, they explained the reason they were at my house was because someone had put a complaint in about my parenting. At first I was upset as I thought I was doing ok. Then realised actually I could do with some support as my son was quite challenging and I didn't really know how to deal with it.

We had a few TAC meetings at the Surestart Centre and I learnt more about the activities at the Centre

Eventually I was talked into joining the Parent Forum, I was very nervous at first but S assured me she would be at the group most weeks and would 'look after me'. On my first visit to the group it was an open coffee morning so there were a couple of other new people who were there finding out a little more about the group. I actually really enjoyed it, S introduced me to the members and everyone made me feel very comfortable. I left that day feeling like I had achieved something and looked forward to the next session.

I myself noticed how much my confidence was growing as a person, not just with my parenting as I was learning different ways of dealing with things that my son was doing, I realised the group doesn't just meet for the meetings and even planning but is also a great group for friendships, advice and general support.

I became a volunteer for ABC and Secretary for the group and took part in many activities in the Centre.

Next Steps

Priorities and actions for Children's Centres to be considered by Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

- To ensure each centre uses local and national data, as well as feedback from families and partners to effectively ensure it is offering the most appropriate services for its local community. This will be challenged at Annual Conversations and during Peer Review
- To continue to build on the success of centres in registering and engaging with children and families to ensure that as many families as possible are benefitting from services— particularly those families most in need.
- To build on early engagement with families by working more closely in partnership with midwifery and health colleagues
- To work with our Health Visiting colleagues to improve % of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks
- To work with Public Health colleagues to deliver the new Healthy Weight project to target support as early as possible
- To implement effective universal and targeted approaches that will make a sustained difference to young children's outcomes and ensure that no child is left behind.
- To improve the processes that we use to track the impact of services on children
- To build on our successful track record in engaging volunteers, particularly parents of young children, to support their employability prospects and to build capacity in Children's Centres
- To improve the life chances of children by raising the incomes of poor children's families by helping them to move into work, moving from welfare dependant to financially independent
- To continue with our Quality Improvement programme by implementing Peer Reviews, Mock Inspections and Mystery Visits

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