

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

North Lincolnshire Council Self Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection, and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018/19

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 For Cabinet to note the North Lincolnshire Council Self-Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018/19, updated in September 2019;
- 1.2 For Cabinet to note the positive and improving practice, developments and performance and continue to support our work with children and families.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Ofsted framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspection of local authority children's services 2018 system includes "local authorities sharing an annual self-evaluation of the quality and impact of social work practice".
- 2.2 The self-evaluation is utilised by Ofsted to inform and identify areas for further exploration within the inspection framework including through focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children, full inspections (standard or short) where judgements are made and joint targeted area inspections (JTAI). It also forms the basis of their annual engagement meeting with the Director of Children's Services.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 This report is to inform Cabinet regarding the North Lincolnshire Council Self-Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018/19, updated in September 2019.
- 3.2 Building on a strong base, the self-evaluation highlights the continued good progress made by services to children in North Lincolnshire. Further external scrutiny through the Ofsted annual conversation, focused visit and reported performance information has also confirmed the continuing positive progress throughout the year.

3.3 Positive and improving practice, developments and performance identified include:

- North Lincolnshire are early adopters of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.
- The child's voice being firmly at the centre of practice.
- Children in North Lincolnshire who are in need of help and protection make good progress, and are supported to live safely within their family network.
- The number of children entering the youth justice system as 'First Time Entrants' continues to reduce demonstrating the success and effectiveness of the preventative approach.
- Children and families benefit from a stable, skilled and experienced workforce with manageable and well-supervised caseloads for Social Workers. North Lincolnshire were successful in the National Social Work Awards winning 'Team of the Year'. The service is participating in Phase 2 of the National Assessment and Accreditation System for Child and Family Social Work (NAAS).
- Development of new and innovative practice models including 'You Say Who', 'Holding On' and Enhanced Risk Assessment models which all focus on building resilience and supporting children to live within their families.
- Improvements in education outcomes for our children and young people with SEND both at SEN Support and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Established partnership working to effectively respond to children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum.
- A well-established and strong corporate parenting board provides robust challenge and support in relation to outcomes for children in care.
- A small (and reducing) minority of children and young people in care are placed at a distance in external provision.
- Attainment in schools for children in care at Key Stage 4, and progress for this cohort places North Lincolnshire above Statistical Neighbours and National figures.
- Care Leavers in education, employment and training show North Lincolnshire to be above Statistical Neighbour and England rates.
- Whilst the children in care population increased during 2018/19 compared to previous years, children in care numbers have been stabilised and are reducing.
- Improvement in stability for children in care in where they live, their education and with their workers.

3.4 Key areas that were identified to be progressed to continue the improvement and development of services were as follows:

- The Council and CCG are developing an Integrated Children's Trust in order to further strengthen local arrangements for commissioning and providing best quality services based upon local need.
- To further build upon the effectiveness of early help arrangements in light of the integration agenda.
- Further strengthen work to ensure older young people have support as they transition into young adults.
- As part of the Children's MARS arrangements, working with key partners to drive forward a vision for working with children, adolescents and families that seeks to 'change the narrative' of the safeguarding system to build upon children and family strengths.
- Build on existing provision to engage the young people in positive activities, education and sustainable programmes to reduce offending supported by partners across all agencies.
- Continue to focus upon further improving the stability of children in care.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 To publish the evaluation would present a positive picture in relation to our work in North Lincolnshire.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 None – this report for information only

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

- 6.1 None identified.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 8.1 The North Lincolnshire Council Self-Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018/19 outlines the impact and outcomes of voice and engagement activity with children, young people and families.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 For Cabinet to note the North Lincolnshire Council Self-Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018/19 and to continue to support our work with children and families.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Church Square House
30 – 40 High Street
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN15 6NL

Author: Ann-Marie Brierley, Head of Social Care, (Deputy DCS), Children and Community Resilience

Date: February 2020

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

North Lincolnshire Council Self Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018/19



North Lincolnshire Council

Self-Evaluation of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection and Children Looked After and Care Leavers

2018/2019

Updated September 2019

Headlines

Examples of strengths and key service and practice developments and successes.....

Longstanding, committed and highly experienced leaders and managers across the breadth of services to children.

Long term and continued political support for services for children and young people with evidence of investment over time to reflect this

Partnerships are strong, driven and founded on long standing relationships based on trust, high challenge/high support.

The outcome letter from the Ofsted Focused Visit in March 2019 reflects positively and provides an assurance that our ambition to provide the right help and protection at the right time, and at the right level of need, is well understood and evident in practice

A well established corporate parenting board provides robust challenge and support to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers

The number of children in care continues to be stable

North Lincolnshire was selected as an early adopter of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and the North Lincolnshire Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding arrangements were published in October 2018, launched at the 'Out of this World' conference in November 2018 and republished in June 2019

There is a child-focussed and learning orientated culture.

We have engaged in sector led improvement, scrutiny and challenge to help us to know ourselves better and drive further improvements

The voice of children, young people and families is at the centre of all we do and there is evidence of engagement at every level

Children in North Lincolnshire who are in need of help and protection:

- make good progress, and are supported to live safely within their family network
- receive help that is timely and effective
- have their voices heard, responded to, and drive practice
- experience practice that is timely, strengths-based, responsive to need, and family-focused

Management oversight and strategic line of sight on the front door has strengthened further our understanding of and support for, front line practice

Partner agencies have a consistent and strong understanding of thresholds and safeguarding issues are identified quickly and responded to robustly by agencies working together

Creative tools and direct work, including the use of child friendly plans, ensure that children and young people understand and contribute to their plans

Development of new and innovative practice models including 'You Say Who', 'Holding On' and an Enhanced Risk Assessment model which all focus on building resilience and supporting children to live within their families

Children in North Lincolnshire who are in care or care leavers benefit from:

- good quality, child friendly care planning
- placements that meet their specific and unique needs
- excellent relationships with social workers, personal advisors and other professionals and their voices are placed at the centre
- timely and focussed work to restore them home
- permanence that is properly considered and planned for at the earliest point

There is an experienced, stable, skilled workforce where social work practice continues to thrive – North Lincolnshire won 'Team of the Year' in the National Social Work Awards

Very few children in care in North Lincolnshire commit offences

Revised and strengthened Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care

Effective partnership response to children who are unaccompanied seeking asylum - evidenced through positive outcomes.

Children in care make good educational progress and care leavers in education, employment and training show North Lincolnshire to be above comparators

The voices of children in care and care leavers are heard clearly and listened to, supported by a dedicated children's advocacy service

Foreword

Welcome to our 2018/19 self evaluation report of the experiences of children in need of help and protection and children looked after and carer leaver.

In North Lincolnshire, we believe that the first step to evaluating the impact and effectiveness of our practice on children, young people and families is to understand and know ourselves. This means knowing our story, understanding our vision and reaffirming our values.

In North Lincolnshire, we focus on making sure that our children, young people and families are **safe, well, prosperous and connected** and where it is the **best place to live, visit and invest and for the Council to be the best it can be.**

Vulnerable people continue to be a priority, demonstrated by continuous investment in services to children who need help and protection or who are in our care.

In North Lincolnshire, leaders at every level work tirelessly to ensure that these ambitions are embedded into our work across the partnerships and reflected in the Children and Young People's Strategy 2020.

Working together, we continue to make a difference so that children, young people and families can live **ordinary lives** and have **extraordinary outcomes** and building on our successes, we are ambitious to move to beyond outstanding.



Cllr David Rose

Cabinet Member for
Children, Families and
Culture



Our Children, Young People and Families

- North Lincolnshire has a population of 171,294 (mid 2017 ONS population estimate). This has risen steadily since 2005 and projections indicate a continuing growth of approximately 9% over the next 25 years. Based on the office of national statistics 2017 mid-year population estimates, it is anticipated that 49,588 young people under the age of 25 years are living in North Lincolnshire, of these 35,679 are aged 0-18.
- As at January 2019, there are 24,660 on a school roll.
- As at January 2019 the proportion of children eligible for and claiming free school meals:
 - in primary schools is 16.7% (the national average is 15.8%)
 - in secondary schools is 15.7% (the national average is 14.1%)
 - in special schools is 36.9% (the national average is 37.5%)
- Between 2013 and 2019 the North Lincolnshire primary school black and minority ethnic (BME) cohort has increased from 11.97% to 16%, and in secondary schools 8.94% to 12.70%.
- During 2018, 13.6% of children in need in North Lincolnshire had a disability (129 children), compared to the England average of 12.3%.
- As at January 2019, 12.60% of the pupil population in North Lincolnshire received special educational needs (SEN) Support, with 3.10% having an education and health care (EHC) plan. Nationally 11.90% of pupils received SEN Support, with 3.10% having an EHC Plan
- At the end September 2019, there were 940 'open' cases identified as 'in need' with a further 112 cases open for assessment, of these 137 children were subject to a child protection plan, 441 were subject to a child in need plan, 33 children were open for private law matters, 242 children were in care in North Lincolnshire including 23 children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum.
- At the end of September 2019 90 young people were receiving support as a care leaver (including 21 former children who were unaccompanied and seeking asylum), and 77 were receiving a service from the Youth Offending Service.



Our Values



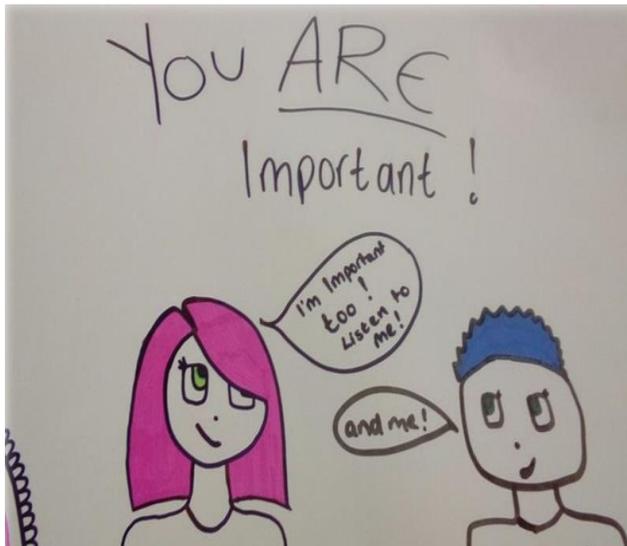
Underpinning services for children in North Lincolnshire is:

- an enabling culture and strong sense of belonging
- a shared vision and ambition
- commitment and pride in achieving ever-better outcomes for children
- a clear understanding of our communities, population and the prevalence of need
- strategies and plans that ensure that we deliver on our priorities
- an organisational model that aligns functions against levels of need
- a committed, skilled and adaptable workforce



In our daily practice, we will:

- be ambitious for all children and young people
- listen to children and take account of their views and feelings
- act swiftly to make a difference
- work to keep families together by building on their strengths and managing risks
- ensure children have stability in their home and in their education settings
- challenge constructively in the interests of achieving the best outcomes for children
- embrace diversity and strive for equality



Within services for children, we also believe:

- children should be at the heart of what we do
- children should live within their family network, within their community
- people can be empowered and enabled to change
- families should be helped early, at the lowest level
- everyone has strengths to build upon
- relationships matter
- language changes behaviour
- that we should aim for excellence in all that we do
- that we should constantly learn, and never stop challenging ourselves to improve and adapt

Key Service and Practice Developments

✓ There have been more key service and practice developments and successes.....

An Ofsted Focused Visit to North Lincolnshire Services to Children took place on 6th and 7th March 2019. The outcome letter reflects positively and provides an assurance that our ambition to provide the right help and protection at the right time, and at the right level of need, is well understood and evident in practice

North Lincolnshire was selected as an early adopter of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The North Lincolnshire Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) arrangements were published on 31 Oct. 2018, and launched at the 'Out of this World' conference on 2 Nov. 2018

Established and embedded partnership pathways and networks to effectively respond to an increasing number of children who are unaccompanied seeking asylum. These are evidenced through positive outcomes.

Establishment of Early Help Strategic Leads Group, reporting to the Children's MARS Board

Continued strengthening of management oversight at the 'front door'

Continual co-production with children, young people and their families with SEND to ensure local provision continues to meet need, including commissioning intentions.

Development of child criminal exploitation (CCE) practice framework – including the strengthening of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) process to include CCE alongside CSE, and a bespoke risk analysis tool and operational definition.

Sustained focus on support and retention of Social Workers who continue to 'flourish' – since April 2018 all case holding social workers are permanent members of staff

Development of 'Holding On' offer to parents to help reduce the likelihood of repeat removals of children

Continued to further strengthen our multi-agency oversight and work with SEND overseen by the SEND Standards Board.

Extensive consultation and participation activity with children, young people and families, including with parents of children who have been subject to child protection plans, and with young people who have been or are at risk of being criminally exploited. An example of feedback from a parent whose children were subject to a child protection plan included "you've both opened my eyes big timeall I ever wanted is to be understood and not looked down on you've helped loads!"

Improved stability for children in care

Began a journey toward 'internal integration' and developing a new relationship with schools specifically around vulnerable children, education and inclusion, maintaining stability in school

Enhanced practice through a focus on the usage, terminology and impact of the language used in practice, including workshops for professionals supported by young people

Strengthening of management oversight of Public Law Outline (PLO) and court work

Revised and strengthened Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care

Development of the multi-agency 'You Say Who' practice framework to place sustainable relationships at the heart of planning for children

Continued focus on creating opportunities to celebrate effective social work practice

Leadership and Management

In North Lincolnshire, there is a long-standing and strongly held belief that services for children should be prioritised and invested in. The political and managerial leadership team have a vast experience in and commitment to children. This organisational and political focus, driven by a core of stable middle, senior, and strategic managers, has helped to provide the conditions within which social work and social care practice thrives. A culture of learning, supported by strong performance management, robust governance and assurance processes, within a context of mature partnerships, has created a coherent practice system that works for children. A consistently understood set of values that places children, young people and families at the heart of decisions and practice provides the foundations upon which outcomes are improved.

Long-standing, committed, and highly experienced leaders and managers across the breadth of Services for Children. The Chief Executive and Director of Children and Community Resilience come from a children's social care background and have worked for the Council since its creation in 1996. The leadership team works to a strengths-based leadership model which promotes a collective commitment to improved outcomes for children.

The Cabinet Member meets regularly with the Director of Children and Community Resilience (DCS)

The DCS is a statutory member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Place Partnership, the Children and Young People's Partnership, the SEND and Education Standards Boards and Corporate Parenting Board. The DCS also engages proactively with front line practice, including through listening and learning forums, DCS Assurance days and regular meetings and oversight.

The senior management structure has made children 'everyone's business' with a strong slim core (commissioning, finance, IT, HR etc) equally responsible as one team for improved outcomes.

The Leader of the Council (previous Lead Member for children) and Lead Member for Children (locally the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Culture) have significant experience in children services. The Lead Member for Children engages with front line practice and takes an active role in supporting and advocating for children and young people.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Culture chairs the Children and Young People's Partnership and the Corporate Parenting Board and is a member of the Schools' Forum and the Education and SEND Standards Boards. He is a committed supporter of key events and conferences (e.g. Children in Care (CiC) Celebration Events, Annual Parent/Carer SEND Conferences).

The 'One Council' approach as part of our transformation agenda enabled Directors and Heads of Service to work together to improve outcomes for 'all our children'. Our operating model encourages the whole team to work in an enabling, progressive, commercial and sustainable way to pursue our goals.



In North Lincolnshire, there is a child-focussed and learning orientated culture. Senior and strategic leaders give a priority to understanding the need and experiences of children and young people and a high priority to understanding and improving practice

Leadership and Management

The Children's Strategy 2020 outlines ambitions for children and alongside the Helping Children and Families (Threshold Document 2016-2020) which describes the organisational model and how we should work to shape services for children. This message is consistent and embedded throughout the suite of strategies and plans in North Lincolnshire (e.g., Education and Skills / SEND Inclusion Plan).

Partnerships are strong, driven and led by the local authority, and founded on long standing relationships based on trust, high challenge and high support. A range of peer reviews and inspections have provided evidence to support this, such as the Yorkshire and Humber peer review of the LSCB in 2016, and more recently the SEND peer review (2017) and the LGA Corporate review (2018).

North Lincolnshire has an enduring commitment to seeking and acting on the views of stakeholders, with recognised excellence in enabling the voice of children, young people and their families. This commitment is evident from high-level policy (e.g. the Health and Wellbeing Board's suite of documents), through co-production of services with the public (e.g. SEND local offer and commissioned services), to individual casework (e.g. Child and Family Feedback forms). At all levels, the recognition that the Council exists for the people of North Lincolnshire drives our commitment to engaging the public in shaping the services that affect their lives.

The Council has invested in WorkWell ensuring the workforce has a high quality, flexible and agile working environment to deliver services. This is led by the Director for Children and Community Resilience and fully embedded across the children's workforce and enables workers to think and act to do the right things at the right time to provide the best services to children and their families. The Council was awarded a Government Property Agency Judges Award for the best overall smarter workforce performance.

A follow up LGA peer review took place in June 2019. Examples of feedback from this review include:

The voices of children and young people underpin the services for children strategic framework, as captured in the Children and Young People's Plan and the Children's Challenge document.

As a Council, we have established a place based partnership which has an ambition to tackle key priorities identified in the Integrated Strategic Assessment. These will improve outcomes for our most vulnerable young adults/parents and in those geographical areas of highest need.

- *Managers and staff have a strong sense of purpose and are empowered and trusted and this is facilitating further redesign of services to enable the best outcomes for local communities*
- *The vision and ambition shared by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive has been pivotal in demonstrating what the Council was trying to achieve. As a result, leaders at all levels have driven the cultural transformation across the organisation at the same time as building and fostering alliances with partners to deliver better outcomes for the people of North Lincolnshire*
- *Leadership has been distributed across the organisation to great effect and has really nailed collaboration, both internally and externally*

A well embedded Child and Family Feedback framework ensures that parents and carers have regular opportunities to give their views about their involvement in services.

Caseloads in North Lincolnshire are manageable and continually reviewed. Senior managers receive regular caseload data to provide support and challenge.

Children in North Lincolnshire continue to benefit from a stable, skilled workforce where social work practice continues to thrive. There is an experienced, permanent social care workforce that is founded on high levels of retention and effective recruitment practices.

North Lincolnshire Council has committed to take part in phase 2 of the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS), which social workers are overwhelming positive about.

Corporate parenting is well-developed, effective and is taken seriously across partnerships, making a difference to children and young people in care and care leavers. As corporate parents, Children in Care in North Lincolnshire are our children – and it is deeply rooted in the culture of the Council and its partner organisations to care about them in this way. We are collectively ambitious for children in care and we expect their outcomes to be every bit as good as their peers – and better.

Supervision, audits and observations show that frontline practitioners and partners understand the North Lincolnshire practice model that is defined by being strengths-based, values-driven and child-focused. The model draws upon a range of theories and tools to ensure that our work is purposeful, evidence-informed, and effective.

This workforce stability means very few changes in worker for children in need of help, care and protection, the impact of which is routinely identified through audit work, manifesting in meaningful direct work and strong children's voices at all stages of involvement.

A further peer review of Early Years Social Mobility took place in October 2019. It identified that further work to target early help services at those most in need would add value.

Thriving social work practice

How do we know?

Social workers have said in the 2018 'health check' that they receive effective support and supervision.

Following the Ofsted Focused visit in March 2019, the process and format for the recording of personal supervision for case holding Social Workers has been revised to ensure consistency. This has been shared with Supervisors and supervision continues to be monitored through Manager's audits and overseen through the Case Audit Meeting (CAM) to ensure there is a line of sight by Senior Managers.

Student social workers and social workers in their ASYE year say that the induction, mentoring and support they receive helps prepare them for practice. Examples of feedback from student Social Workers includes:

- The whole team have welcomed and supported me from the very start.
- I have had so many opportunities to learn from the experience of the team
- I could not have had a better experience

At the end of March 2019, the majority of social workers within front line social work services had been qualified for over 3 years.

Social work turnover is low, and has been over a number of years, meaning that front line practice benefits from highly skilled and experienced staff who have remained in practice.

A 'whole team' approach to workforce development has been further developed in recent months, as a broader range of front line practitioners and managers have undertaken practice education training, engaged with local HEIs, and developed and delivered training to internal and multi-agency teams an example being the Graded Care Profile 2.

There has been a consistently high number of student social workers who have completed placements within the council who subsequently gained employment within services. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the support and learning opportunities provided to students during placements.

Feedback from the Courts, CAF/CASS, partner agencies, other Local Authorities, and from service users themselves provides examples of excellent practice. An example of feedback from a family judge noted that "he was impressed with "good old fashioned social work practice" on the discharge of the care orders on a recent court case".

North Lincolnshire Council is a partner of the Humber Social Work Teaching Partnership, which has helped strengthen joint working with local Higher Education providers, leading to a range of improvements such as the development of a values-based admissions process, a revised curriculum, and practitioner-led learning teams. North Lincolnshire Council Children's Services has a permanent, highly-skilled and experienced workforce.

In March 2019, social workers came together to celebrate the achievements and passion of the workforce and the outcomes secured for children. Social workers and practice supervisors delivered presentations on practice related subjects and developments.

Frontline practitioners are highly engaged in a range of development opportunities, such as providing input onto local university courses, taking on additional responsibilities such as being a restorative practice champion, and attending participation activities such as the Cool Kidz Club and Children in Care Council in the evenings.

Feedback received from children, parents and carers consistently shows that the vast majority of children and their families (between 98% and 100% across the services) feel listened to, understand the roles of their workers, the reasons for involvement and the outcomes that their plans are aiming to achieve.



The 2018 social work health check identified that the council's approach to supporting social workers to develop relationships and undertake direct work aimed at maintaining children with their families was an important factor in our successful social work retention rates

Child-focussed and learning-orientated culture

How do we know?

In the 2017 Ofsted Single Inspection Framework reflected back that '*children matter in North Lincolnshire*'. This was also reinforced at the Ofsted Focused visit in March 2019 where inspectors found 'effective information sharing, including consultation with families'.

Audit, oversight, and quality assurance work consistently reflects that practice is led by and based upon a focus on the stories, experiences, and voices of all children and young people.

There is a long history and culture of participation and service user engagement, with examples of innovation such as the development of the Cool Kidz Club for children and young people subject to a child protection plan and Teenage Kicks for children vulnerable to exploitation.

The voice of children and young people is evident via the commitment to the Youth Council, the Children in Care Council as well as children within SEND and in need of help and protection. The council executive team is highly visible across all aspects of this.

There is evidence of long term investment in training and learning, for example the social work library and reflective space in Church Square House.

Social workers report in the 'health check' that they feel supported, have access to effective learning opportunities and receive reflective supervision. Turnover and sickness rates of social workers are low.



Political and Corporate Support

How do we know?

The council shape is based on strengths in the senior leadership of the council for children. The Leader and Lead Member, The Chief Executive and Directors brings experience, longevity and depth to children's services in North Lincolnshire.

Scrutiny functions have been strengthened and, following the elections in May 2019, a new Children and Education Scrutiny Panel was created.

Long term investment in children and young people have helped North Lincolnshire maintain a range of early help, early years and targeted family support services.

The Child Exploitation Chief Officer Group is subsumed within the responsibilities of the Children's MARS Board consistently of the three safeguarding partners including the Director of Children and Community Resilience (DCS).

Strong leadership has resulted in a significant overall improvement in the percentage of settings, schools and colleges that are recognised as 'good' and 'outstanding' by Ofsted over the past four years. Consequently, the very large majority of children and young people now attend good or outstanding provision. Our endeavour to continue to improve outcomes is underpinned with robust self-evaluation which enables us to effectively identify our strengths and areas for further development (e.g. attainment at age 19).

The panel conducted a review into the 'emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people' in North Lincolnshire. The report, including its nine recommendations, were formally approved at a meeting of the panel in March 2019. The scrutiny panel learnt that nationally the situation in relation to emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people is challenging. However, it found ample evidence that the council, health colleagues, specialist services, teachers, champions and school staff, and others were working well and that children were being supported. There was a widespread understanding that our youngsters' preparation for progressing through life was ensuring each child goes into adulthood as mentally well-equipped as possible. The panel was assured that, at a strategic level, services are on the right track to increasingly deliver and support children and young people as effectively and efficiently as possible. The panel was also assured that a shared vision has been agreed in North Lincolnshire, built upon genuine integration, and that services were co-ordinated and accountable. The recommendations have been adopted in the revised Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation Plan.



Corporate Parenting

How do we know?

In North Lincolnshire, the council and key partners as corporate parents give the highest priority to children in care and care leavers. This prioritisation, given over a number of years, is based on shared core values and has led to a well-developed culture supported by systems and practice that enables positive experiences and good progress for those in care and who are care leavers.

Tailored provision for children in care and care leavers through effective partnerships includes integrated sexual health services, priorities substance misuse services, dedicated education, CAMHS and health services.

There is a longstanding and well supported Corporate Parenting Promise that is ambitious for children and promotes high aspirations. It is agreed by the Children in Care Council, overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board and supported across the council and its partners. Corporate Parenting champions from across agencies have their own action plan that details how they will deliver their promise.

Examples of successful outcomes for young people as a result of Corporate Parenting champions include:

- enabling young people to undertake work experience and apprenticeships
- supporting young people to achieve within college
- work placements
- supporting events and activities.

The achievements of children in care and care leavers are regularly reported to the Corporate Parenting Board who receive updates on the Children in Care Council and the progress of children in care and care leavers as a whole.

The Virtual Head Teacher, a current serving head teacher, has responsibility for challenging and supporting education providers regarding stability, achievement and wellbeing of children in care.



Understanding our children

How do we know?

Children and young people were instrumental in developing the ambitions for the 2018-20 Children and Young People's Plan and their priorities have informed and influenced wider strategic planning via a number of mechanisms including:

- ✓ the Youth Council and Positive Steps Working Group
- ✓ membership of young people on the Children and Young People's Partnership, Corporate Parenting Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board
- ✓ the Great Debate and the Make your Mark Ballot
- ✓ primary, adolescent and college lifestyle surveys
- ✓ a series of 'Square Table' discussions with young people regarding topical issues such as CSE, emotional wellbeing and most recently wider themes including community issues, knife crime, resilience, emotional wellbeing and mental health, positive activities, transitioning to adulthood, communication and engagement and the children's challenge
- ✓ Feedback from specific service user groups and from individual children, young people and families via a range of mechanisms including the Children in Care Council, focus groups of service users and individual consultation within case planning and review processes
- ✓ requirement for all Public Health commissioned services to commit to and evidence the strategic, systematic, systemic and sustained engagement with service users to inform service planning and delivery at organisational and individual levels
- ✓ co-production with children, young people and their families, including the design of service specifications and attendance on evaluation panels
- ✓ children and young people engagement in recruitment processes and scrutiny and assurance activity including across the Children's MARS arrangements
- ✓ the Children in Care Council provide challenge and share their experiences, including through the Corporate Parenting Board and 'Creative Conversations' with Senior Officers and Elected Members.



Improving practice

How do we know?

A comprehensive and robust council and Director of Children and Community Resilience (DCS) Assurance Framework builds upon the cross council commitment and hold the Senior Leadership Team and the whole council to account for their role in improving outcomes.

A robust practice and performance management framework is in place that provides data and intelligence to support effective analysis.

A strong case audit process, as part of the wider services for children and corporate learning and improvement framework, ensures comprehensive management oversight of quality and the rapid identification of learning and good practice.

Service and partnership response to new and emerging practice challenges, such as with child criminal exploitation, are swift, robust, and innovative.

A culture of 'leaders at every level' helps to ensure that everyone understands and takes responsibility for performance, practice, and outcomes.

DCS Practice Assurance Days provide an opportunity for the Director of Children and Community Resilience and senior leaders to observe and explore frontline practice from a thematic and/or service perspective. They include the DCS reviewing and challenging practice, observations of practice, line of sight on cases and overview of performance.

Through the Children's MARS Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, there are robust arrangements in place to ensure scrutiny and assurance (including independent scrutiny) of single and multi-agency practice across the safeguarding system. These include the section 11 process, agency 'call ins', agency specific and thematic assurance events, practice learning line of sight events, hub audits and young voice quality assurance processes. Other examples of oversight, audit and quality assurance processes include Senior Manager Oversight of Practice (SMOP) group, the Multi-Agency Audit Group (MAAG), the Safeguarding Pathway Lead Officer Group (SPLOG) and the Quality Assurance and Data Analysis Meeting (QADAM).

The three safeguarding partners have committed to jointly resourcing a Multi Agency Innovation Hub in which there are representatives from the three safeguarding partners organisations. The Hub focusses on ways to develop and support multi agency practice through innovating systems changes and driving up multi agency practice.

Commissioned Public Health Services have strong quality assurance processes in place which are managed through contract management meetings.

Managing demand and understanding our population

How do we know?

North Lincolnshire Council is adopting as its core organisational model the underlying principle of “enabling”, a direction shared by key partners. The need to enable individuals to have increased resilience, communities to be independent and the authority itself to be a sustainable Place Leader. The model is to provide better support through a continuum to an informed self-help, delivering targeted interventions where this meets need, with the emphasis throughout on enabling self-development and universal community capacity resulting in improved outcomes and reduced costs.

There are a number of key processes and systems in place in North Lincolnshire to manage the demand for services and prioritise capacity to meet the needs of the populations. These are supported by strong, place based partnerships that are driven and led by the local authority, founded on long-standing relationships based upon trust, high challenge and high support.

The key processes and systems that prioritise the needs of children whilst managing the demand for services include thorough well-established front door processes that ensure the help provided to children and their families promotes resilience at the earliest possible level and ensures that children who do require further support and services are prioritised. This includes the Single Access Point and Integrated Multi-Agency Partnership teams. These manage need by ensuring that decisions regarding service provision are effective, based on consistent thresholds and have consistent management oversight. Management oversight is maintained through decision making, supervision and audit to ensure this is consistent and effective practice

Decisions regarding allocation of cases to all services are undertaken in line with a well-embedded Case Allocation Framework and at appropriate management (Practice Supervisor) level. Case progress is monitored through supervision, audit and management oversight to ensure the effectiveness of the work and the outcomes achieved.

Decisions regarding entry to care are thorough and always a minimum of 3 Service Managers and the weekly Legal Decision Making and Tracking Meeting attended by Service Managers from across services is responsible for decision making, scrutiny and oversight of all entries to care.

To ensure effective oversight we focus upon specific populations of children. This includes oversight and challenge via the quarterly self-evaluation meeting and other cohort meetings.

As a result of the above the need for children's social care services in North Lincolnshire is managed well and continually reviewed. Senior managers receive regular caseload information to provide support and challenge. This ensures that workers capacity is carefully managed ensuring that casework is effective and children and young people receive the right services at the right time by the most appropriate professional.

Leadership and Management

Summary of Practice Improvements

North Lincolnshire has published its multi agency safeguarding arrangements

Building on an outstanding LSCB, (as judged by Ofsted in 2017), the Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Board was established in October 2018. Partners agreed joint funding and shared ownership, represented by the board members taking lead portfolio roles and committing resources to underpin the future development of safeguarding arrangements.

The board is established and North Lincolnshire, as an early adopter, has shared learning at a national level as part of the early adopter commitment. An independent review of progress has been undertaken and confirmed the success of the first few months. The team is now at the next phase of development to redefine their job to analyse and improve multi-agency practice and systems, and how they move toward "innovative practice" in how we further improve our partnership with children and families, to make the safeguarding arrangements child and family centric. Since publishing in October 2018 as early adopters, there was a commitment to listen, learn adapt and review. The arrangements were reviewed and re-published in June 2019

National Assessment and Accreditation System for Children and Family Social Work

North Lincolnshire has agreed to participate in Phase 2 of the National Assessment and Accreditation System for Children and Family Social Work (NAAS). NAAS will be an important diagnostic tool for performance so that Local Authorities can identify the gaps in skills and knowledge within their workforce and implement training programmes to address these

Engaging in sector led improvement, scrutiny and challenge helps to know ourselves better and supports local and regional best practice

There have been a range of examples where officers have taken opportunities to undertake improvement work in other local authorities and engage and lead in the regional sector led improvement agenda, e.g.

- Senior managers and practice leaders have supported a local authority in developing their early help strategy, have undertaken peer reviews, and taken part in performance challenge sessions,
- a corporate review including children's services,
- a SEND peer review,
- agreed to contribute to a new 'front door' regional challenge process,
- a further corporate review took place in June 2019 which was a follow up to the peer review undertaken in January 2018
- North Lincolnshire offered to pilot the new LGA children services finance review, as a result we have led one of the first reviews post pilot.

Local scrutiny of practice and safeguarding arrangements has been further developed and there are other examples of local scrutiny and audit, e.g.:

- agreed Children's MARS Scrutiny and Assurance Framework including practice learning line of sight process and assurance events. This has already led to joined up scrutiny of the front door and child protection and independent scrutiny at an individual organisational level
- thematic review of children's emotional wellbeing by the Council's People Scrutiny and Overview Committee (now the Children and Education Scrutiny Panel)
- internal audit of DCS role to offer assurance across the full range of accountabilities
- contributed to the Yorkshire and Humber annual self assessment, a range of surveys and to a Department for Education (DfE)/Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government (DHCLG) review including proposals for the future of the Troubled Families Initiative – and we have agreed to become an improvement partners for the DfE and are currently submitting the necessary applications

Taking part in this scrutiny activity has been an opportunity for critical thinking, sharing learning and exposure to external challenge. Our strengths have been identified as multi agency culture of challenge and partnership working, quality assurance framework, vision/ambition/leadership, safeguarding/child protection, adoption and participation and engagement of young people. We have also identified areas for improvement including long term stability, school exclusions, health issues (childhood obesity) and improving educational outcomes (post 16). Most of these areas were showing improvement however the challenge event provided a further opportunity for exploration and joined up thinking.

We will continue to engage in sector led improvement, scrutiny and external challenge, alongside robust internal scrutiny, all of which helps to know ourselves better and supports local and regional best practice.

Continuing to build and develop effective adoption services

North Lincolnshire is committed to moving forward with the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by contributing to a system that can achieve good outcomes for children and families based on a strong track record of outstanding performance and innovation in relation to Adoption. North Lincolnshire is actively exploring two main options, the first being an arrangement with another Local Authority and the second being an arrangement with a registered adoption charity.

Leadership and Management – Forward Thinking

Key challenges and areas for improvement

Single Lead for Children

The Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group have already established aligned commissioning arrangements with payment by results for speech and language provision and the 0-19 (25 SEND) pathway. The Council/CCG have agreed that the Council will be the lead for children and young people, for the planning and commissioning intent and has established a newly formed Integrated Children's Trust chaired by the DCS and vice chaired by the Chief Operating Officer of the CCG. With direct input from children, young people and parents, the Integrated Children's Trust is co-producing the future commissioning intent for the services that impact on children's outcomes. These shared area-wide ambitions will be set out in the 2020/24 Community Plan for children.

The trust will oversee services to children and develop a new Community Plan for Children 2020/24 which will drive both provider led and commissioned services. Priority developments include Children Therapies, Emotional Health & Wellbeing, Early Intervention and Psychologist led "formulation" and service redesign. The board will oversee Health, Education and Care and develop a line of sight to other standard and statutory boards.

Integrated Children's Trust

The Council is developing plans for an Integrated Children's Trust in order to further strengthen local arrangements for commissioning and delivery of services based upon local need. Within this, opportunities are being explored alongside key partners to develop a system-wide practice model founded on a psychologist led formulation model, aimed at further building upon our effective early help offer to families and under the umbrella of 'step in, step out'.

Integrated Targeted Help

In order to build upon the effectiveness of early help arrangements, plans are underway to re imagine early help services within the context of the "formulation" model based upon "what works – who works" basis. The intent is to place formulation at the beginning of the early help and protection offer.

Children in need of help and protection

Within North Lincolnshire:

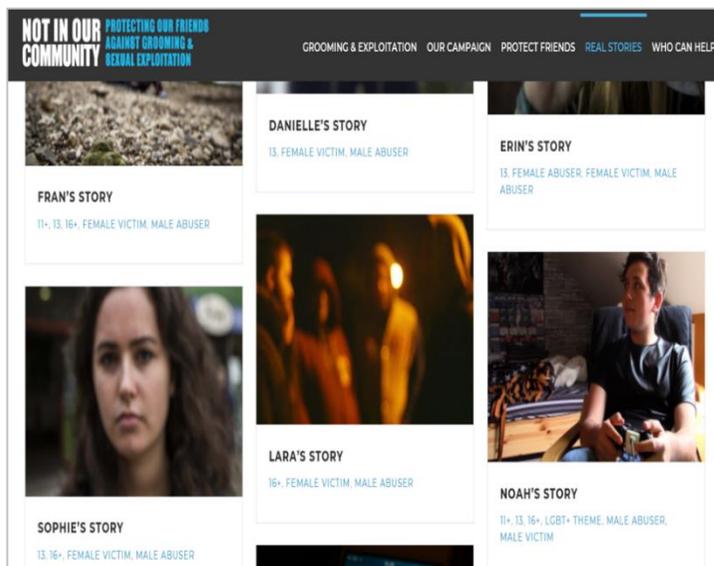
- There has been a sustained focus and commitment to 'early help' across the council and partnership
- There is a well embedded 'organisational model' and a shared vision and commitment to ensuring that help is offered at the earliest point, so that children and families receive the help and support they need to become independent of services as quickly as possible
- The Early Help Strategic Leadership Group (EHSLG) has been established to champion and lead early help activity at a universal and informal/formal targeted level, to oversee the revisions of the early help impact assessment and to ensure a senior officer line of sight on performance
- Take up of 2 year child care funding remains consistently above national comparators due to the proactive approach taken and the excellent partnership working in place
- The Helping Children and Families Threshold Document 2016-2020 sets out the strategic direction for early help services and describes the principles and ambitions of early help
- Risk is assessed and responded to consistently well, which supports effective decision-making meaning that protective action is proportionate and taken only when needed.
- Understanding of statutory thresholds across partnerships is consistently good and embedded, founded on a long-standing local culture of learning, trust and challenge. As a result, safeguarding issues are identified quickly and responded to robustly by agencies working together
- Decisions about children and young people are timely, evidence-based, and of good quality. Assessments are proportionate, evidence-informed and undertaken alongside the provision of help so that families do not wait to receive support. Where appropriate these assessments lead to effective multi-agency plans that are outcome focused, and clearly written
- Reduced re-referrals and re-contacts evidence effective decision making, assessment and practice is underpinned by a clear early help offer
- There are enhanced Risk Analysis Meetings provide an independent review of risk for children who have been subject to a CP plan for longer than 9 months and prevent drift
- Creative tools and direct work, including the use of child friendly plans, ensure that children and young people understand and contribute to their plans, that their voice is heard and central to assessment, planning and review
- Audits consistently demonstrate a whole-family approach, where assessments and multi-agency plans of help and protection appropriately consider the needs of parents, carers, and relevant others
- Robust arrangements are in place in relation to missing children driven by effective multi-agency working via the missing group and the provision of Independent Return Interviews
- Independent Return Interviews consider the "pull / push" factors in relation to children and young people whom go missing and share intelligence as part of the multi-agency plan around the child or young person.
- A Family Solutions approach with families is embedded across services to enable families to identify support within their own networks

Children in need of help and protection

- There is continued investment in early help services including Children's Centres and the direct provision of targeted family support services via the Families are Safe, Supported and Transformed service (FaSST)
- We have continued to strengthen the role of the Health Visiting and School Nursing 'Health and Wellbeing Service' offering support to children and young people aged -9 months to 25 years. Increasing the focus on families with additional needs and vulnerabilities by developing an intensive model of Health Visiting and broadening the School Nursing offer to young people up to the age of 25 years who have Special Educational Needs or Disability
- Long-term investment and focus upon learning and development, good quality and reflective supervision, carefully managed workloads, and the nurturing of a one-team culture that celebrates success for children and young people and that rewards skill and commitment
- The impact of this can be seen in the strength of the relationships developed with children and families, the extent to which children's needs are understood and voices heard, and the effectiveness of the interventions and help that make a difference to children's lives

Children in North Lincolnshire who are in need of help and protection:

- make good progress, and are supported to live safely within their family network
- receive help that is timely and effective
- have their voices heard, responded to, and drive practice
- experience practice that is timely, strengths-based, responsive to need, and family-focused. This means that help is provided quickly and in a way that seeks to improve circumstances for the whole family



Key facts:

- All open cases are allocated to a social worker, and caseloads are consistently manageable.
- The overwhelming majority of decisions about referrals to children's services are made within 24 hours.
- Partner agencies have a consistent and strong understanding of thresholds.
- Children and families receive timely and effective help.
- Assessments are robust, thorough, and timely.
- Plans are multi-agency, family-based, reviewed frequently, and support effective progress.
- Children and young people's experiences and outcomes are improved as a result of social work intervention, and where they do not, robust and timely action is taken.

Voices are heard, responded to, and drive practice

How do we know?

Front line practitioners regularly support children and young people to attend and contribute to engagement groups and activities including:

- Cool Kidz Group for children subject to a child protection plan
- Wacky Club for children of foster carers
- Take Part Thursday activities for children in care
- Superkidz Group for adopted children
- 'Sunday Drop in' lunch for care leavers



The Positive Steps working group brings together Youth Council members and Children in Care Council members with key officers to shape and influence local developments to help contribute to children's emotional health and wellbeing e.g. Life Central and the mental health passport.

The older young people's consultation group have given their views on the specific relationship features which promote the engagement of young people which has featured in multi-agency training to develop practice and change narratives.

Voice and co-production continue to go from strength to strength e.g. relationship with Parents' Involvement and Participation (PIP) forum, strong and supportive with good evidence of voice at all levels (individual, planning, strategic input); children supported to be actively involved in the Youth Council; and current re-commissioning of the SaLT contract

A young people's group has been established which brings together children at risk of child criminal exploitation, who shape and influence local services and training materials based upon the local picture in line with their experiences.

Children and young people have access to a dedicated advocacy offer and direct support across the child's journey from child in need through to children in care and care leavers.

The child and family feedback form (CFFF) is a well-established feature of practice. The vast majority of feedback shows that children, young people and parents understood why they were receiving a service and their plan and what it seeks to achieve.

Children and young people routinely describe positive relationships with their social worker and understand this in terms of providing help for them and their family.

Complaints received in relation to Children in Need have decreased by half. The overall message was that feedback in relation to the involvement of services showed continued improvement with communication being the primary issue raised.

The Children's MARS Practice Learning Line of Sight events consistently highlights evidence of child-focused practice undertaken by practitioners showing high levels of commitment and persistence in developing relationships with children and young people.



Children and young people overwhelmingly report within the CFFF that the work of the social worker helps them to stay safe.

Audit work presented at the monthly Case Audit Meeting (CAM) regularly reflects strong evidence of practice and decision making across social work services being led by voices and lived experiences of children and young people.

Examples of feedback from children and their families include:

- 'I am grateful to the Local Authority for the opportunity they have given me and the children'
- 'I am grateful for all the support the Social Worker has given us'
- 'How amazing are you? You have been my rock'

Children receive help that is timely, effective and strengths based

How do we know?

The RAF (Risk Analysis Framework) is a North Lincolnshire Council framework for analysing risk, which is embedded within practice at key points of the child's journey. It is an embedded tool that supports risk-sensitive and strengths-based conclusions. All children's services assessments utilise the RAF.

The multi-agency Harmful Sexual Behaviour project is a well-established innovation that brings together a virtual team of HSB practitioners from across services to children. The HSB panel is chaired by a senior psychologist and work is overseen, monitored and reviewed by the partnership panel. Work with the young people utilises effective models of practice and all practitioners are trained and supported to deliver the programme. It has achieved successful outcomes in reducing the risks and incidences of harmful sexual behaviour. The latest review of HSB (June 2019) evidences successful outcomes including diversion from custody, reduced offending, and positive feedback from young people and their carers – an example being a young person who said that the HSB work **"changed his life"**.

Children, young people and families regularly tell us that the interventions they receive help them and make a positive difference to their lives.

Fixed exclusion rates in North Lincolnshire primary schools have fallen and are in line with the national average, whilst the rate of permanent exclusions is below the national rate.

The case management cohort meeting tracks the children in need cohort to promote effective progress.

There have been significant improvements in education outcomes for our children and young people with SEND both at SEN Support and those with EHCP's. This is a testament to the engagement and aspiration of all North Lincolnshire education settings to improve outcomes for 'all our children'.

Children are seen quickly following a decision to accept a referral under Section 17 or Section 47.

Almost all registered child care providers in the private and voluntary sector are now rated as Good or Outstanding, giving the best start to our children's education

Through lifestyle surveys, most children and young people report that they have people they can talk to in their lives about things that are worrying them

In 2019, 24% of pupils with a EHCP met the expected standard of Phonics Decoding in Year 1 – this is 4 percentage point above the national average of 20%.

Dedicated CAMHS and Education Psychology support within the Youth Offending Service (YOS) enhances the effectiveness of the work with children who are involved with the YOS focusing on their emotional and mental health and well-being.

During 2018/19, the 100% children and young people were offered an independent return interview following a period of missing.

The vast majority of our children and young people with SEND are educated in our mainstream early years settings, schools or colleges, the vast majority of which are judged good or better by Ofsted

Successful completion and compliance with SEND reforms, including the refreshed Local Offer and conversions of Statements to EHCPs.

Educational outcomes remain in line with the national average for many of the key performance measures in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and above national average in Key Stage 4. Achievement for the combined measure at Key Stage 2 in North Lincs. is the 4th most improved in the country between 2016 and 2019.

In Key Stage 2, the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined has equalled the previous year for CIC, increased by 5 percentage points for EAL, increased by 3 percentage points for FSM, increased by 2 percentage points for SEN support and decreased by 1 percentage point for EHCP.

We have:

- Transformed the approach to group based short breaks for children with disabilities by North Lincolnshire Council directly providing the service, providing more personalised support and a wider range of opportunities
- Agreed to transform the delivery of individualised short breaks from an externally commissioned model to an internal one
- Re-commissioned and embedded Health Visiting and School Nursing to create one service delivering the Healthy Child Programme for children and young people aged 0-19 (0-25 SEND)
- Commissioned an All Age Carers Service for Adult Carers and Parent/Carers of Disabled Children.
- Increased capacity and the range of provision for independent living and supported housing options for young adults with more complex needs
- Extended the contract for the provision of the Complex Needs Play Scheme, with the service delivering positive outcomes and enabling children with very complex health needs to access and enjoy positive activities
- Reviewed alternative provision and Fair Access and Inclusion processes

Children receive help that is timely, effective and strengths based

How do we know?

Since the implementation of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation Plan, schools have demonstrated an inspirational commitment to supporting young people's emotional health and wellbeing e.g.

- 100% schools have at least one mental health champion, who are supported by a Mental Health Champion Leader, Education Psychology and CAMHS
- Over 90 champions were engaged in the recent schools conference, which has a mental health focus

Nearly 8,000 (90%) 0-5 children in North Lincolnshire are currently registered with the North Lincolnshire Imagination Library of whom 27% live within the 30% most deprived areas – where traditionally lower take up may be expected. Every child receives a book in the post from birth to stimulate a love of books and reading, as well as supporting parental attachment. A wide range of supplementary activities ensure reach into deprived areas and linkage to the wider early years offer. e.g. through shared registration with children's centres



Partnership working between ONGO and North Lincolnshire Council resulted in a purpose built, newly commissioned nursery to provide quality childcare places in Westcliffe, an area of social deprivation and high need, and as a result the new provider is full. Welfare Rights advice and support is delivered by ONGO via Children's Centres, reducing poverty by helping families access to their full benefit entitlements.

Intensive Family Support (IST) provides support during pregnancy, infancy and toddlerhood (up to 2½) to the most vulnerable parents and those with complex needs including social care involvement, mental health issues, domestic abuse, substance misuse, and Learning Disabilities. Through IST, 35 adults and 40 children (as at 31 March 2019) are being supported, with 14 of the children having formal targeted support through early help assessment led by practitioners in the 0 to 19 (25 SEND) service.

Portage and ASET, with Speech and Language Therapy colleagues, have run the first joint six-week 'Transition into school programme' at the Early Learning Development Centre for pre-school children with ASD going into reception over the Summer term. Over the 6 weeks, parents and school staff observed the children in a learning environment at the Early Learning Development Centre and discussed together how their needs would be met in school in the first few weeks in the new academic year. This has been very successful with very positive outcomes. Portage also works with parents to build on their child's strengths using a positive approach. The 'Stay and Play' group is an informal, fun play session that offers families an opportunity to meet on a regular basis and share experiences. Pre-school children with additional needs make measurable progress.

Practice is of high quality, timely and effective

How do we know?

Outcome data across a range of measures shows that children's lives and experiences improve following social work intervention e.g. the vast majority of children referred to children's services are supported to remain safely within their family.

Audit activity demonstrates:

- Children's needs are identified and responded to early and referred to Children's Services at the right point.
- Practice and decision-making reflect the Helping Children and Families threshold document.
- Referrals, including those received 'out of hours', demonstrate a consistent application of thresholds, and a consistently timely provision of help
- Contacts/referrals, NFA assessments, and CIN closures demonstrate effective step-out processes to ensure that families receive the help they need at the right level
- Consistent application of threshold in relation to S.17 and S.47 enquiries.
- Developing understanding of criminal exploitation and adolescent neglect, and that risk and resilience are clearly identified for these young people with a focus on managing adolescent risk in the most appropriate way.
- Interventions for Children in Need are provided without delay, once needs are identified. The timeliness of multi-agency CIN planning meetings are subject to monitoring.
- The vast majority of No Further Action (NFA) referrals result in help being provided when there is a need.
- Families receive help during assessments, which reduces the need for further statutory intervention.
- Children's services assessments consistently meet high quality standards.
- Children's MARS Practice Learning Line of Sight events evidence practice that supports the whole family, and that is founded on strong relationships. This helps to build resilience and maintain children safely within families.
- Strategy discussions and s47 enquires demonstrate effective and timely information sharing, leading to decisions and interventions that reduce risk for children and young people.

Manager oversight and quality assurance activity demonstrates:

- Effective management of the allegations management system and robust, child focused decision-making (as a result of LADO activity)
- Step-outs to CIN are appropriate and well-managed
- Decisions regarding Child Protection Plans are made in a timely manner, all within 15 working days of a strategy discussion
- Children's MARS Practice Learning Line of Sight processes identifies that teams around children are multi-agency in nature and consider the whole family
- Children and young people are made safer during the interventions that take place within assessments, and families are helped to identify and work with sources of help and support
- During the first six months of 2019/20, 81% of strategy discussions include contribution from health and 81% from education. Those without health and education attendance take place out-of-hours, and audits show that relevant partner information is gained the next working day.
- Child Protection Case Conferences are well-attended. A new multi-agency forum has been established to support the fullest attendance and contributions at review conferences.
- All initial Child Protection Case Conferences are attended by the police
- All initial and 98% review Child Protection Case Conferences were convened within timescales during the first six months of 2019/20
- The regularity and timeliness of CIN review meetings are tracked as part of the performance management framework. Robust management oversight of cohorts of children, including the monthly Cohorts Meeting, supports first line managers in ensuring that plans for children are regularly reviewed and support timely change.
- Services across partnership are prioritised for those children identified as vulnerable to or experiencing both sexual and criminal exploitation. The effectiveness of the multi-agency MACE process and practice that has helped to target perpetrators and helped reduce risk for young people.

Children should live within their family network

How do we know?

The Families are Safe, Supported, Transformed (FaSST) service:

- continues to provide targeted help to families, successfully maintaining children and young people safely within their families
- has dedicated intensive provision to ensure that children and young people identified as being able to be reunified with their family members can go home in a timely manner and continue to receive support pre and post restoration home
- are represented at legal tracking meetings and discussions regarding Public Law Outline to ensure that targeted support and intervention can be offered to maintain children and young people with their families

The quality assurance process around SGO reports and support plans is having a positive impact on the quality of reports and support plans.

The legal decision-making and tracking meeting is well embedded. Its purpose is to ensure that all other options have been utilised so that the child's needs are met and that children remain within their family networks wherever possible. This includes detailed exploration of extended family members utilising a 'family solutions' approach, the allocation and flexible use of resources and appropriate signposting to targeted and universal services.

A low number of children are subject to a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan which reflects effective practice in achieving sustainable change within families.

A permanency tracker has been developed to support effective management oversight of cohorts achieving permanence.

Children and their families have effective SGO support plans that ensure they have support when needed. This is effective in the stability of SGO's and helping children to achieve permanency in their family networks.

Short break services in North Lincolnshire range from caring in the child's own home to the Butterflies short break fostering scheme. The Cygnets short breaks children's home enables young people with complex disability and health needs to access overnight short breaks close to home.

There is an increase in special guardianship orders (SGO) and permanency being secured with many children remaining in their family links.



Feedback from a child's carer regarding the SGO process includes:

"thank you for believing in us and helping us to keep xx from entering the social services system, you have given us a chance to give xx the best upbringing we can offer her and to keep her safe from harm".

Children are kept safe in professional and organisational settings

How do we know?

The Lead Review and Conference Officers continues to oversee and quality assure the LADO function, reporting into the Quality Performance Review framework via exception.

Managing allegations training is undertaken by agencies across the safeguarding system and overseen by the Children's MARS Board as part of the Section 11 self assessment process.

Senior leaders have a line of sight on LADO activity, timescales, outcomes and learning via the annual report which is reported into Children's MARS arrangements, senior leaders and the cabinet member.

Governance arrangements for CSE/CCE are robust and have ensured that appropriate training has been delivered to taxi drivers, hoteliers and staff from the night time economy.

The Complex Care Panel and External Placement processes have a line of sight on Children in Care in External Placements. Extensive processes are in place to ensure that the placement is able to meet the needs of the child, and that the provision is providing high standards of care.

Regular monitoring meetings and visits are undertaken by the Child in Care Commissioning Team to enhance the level of oversight and to contribute to children and young people being in high quality placements.

Where provisions are judged to be less than good, action planning meetings are undertaken, including other agencies and other local authorities where appropriate, in order to support and challenge the provider on the care afforded to children and young people in order to drive improvements.

All education providers complete the annual safeguarding audit that has to be approved by the governance of each provider. Model child protecting and safeguarding policies to ensure settings are up to date with Keeping Children Safe in Education. All non qualifying complaints received from Ofsted are followed up and responded to be a dedicated Safe Schools and Settings Officer.

The SEND monitoring officer completes robust contact monitoring of external education provisions attended by North Lincolnshire pupils.

Children in need of help and protection

Summary of Practice Improvements

Management oversight at the front door has strengthened further our understanding of, and support for, front line practice - The self evaluation of social work practice sets out the range of mechanisms that help ensure a high level of management oversight, strategic line of sight and assurance and challenge, which together forms a framework for collectively ensuring sustained excellence at the front door in terms of timeliness, decision making and outcomes for children and families.

Vulnerable adolescents and those at risk of criminal exploitation are protected - Work has continued to strengthen practice and 'change the narrative' in order to refocus the multi-agency response to adolescents and the emerging challenge of criminal exploitation. As the scope of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) has expanded to incorporate CCE, sharing information and intervening to disrupt perpetrators and criminal gangs has created opportunities to improve outcomes for victims. A persistent focus upon CCE and the 'contextual' safeguarding risks for children and adolescents has led to the development and delivery of training to frontline staff and managers, now being rolled out across the partnership. As a result, the identification of young people at risk of and being criminally exploited has improved. Children are assessed to be at high risk of CCE, overseen by the MACE which co-ordinates multi-agency responses. The CCE practice framework and the development of the Enhanced Risk and Resilience Meeting (ERRM), which aims to help multi-professional teams refocus their approaches to reducing risk faced by young people, have been built upon the voices of children and families. Consultation with local young people, and the use of contemporary research, both underpin developing practice in North Lincolnshire.

There is an active approach to reducing the use of and risks associated with knife crime - The use of and incidents involving knives and other weapons continues to be low and at a recent consultation event, young people emphasised their perspective that 'the reality is not as common as the perception'. However, taking into account the national increase in knife crime and potential links to vulnerabilities through child exploitation, a proactive approach has been taken to reduce both the use of knives and other weapons and the fear of these e.g. joint initiatives such as Box Clever, #nomoreknives campaign and the Immersive Summer Programme.

The developing plans to integrate targeted services are focusing upon improving the offer to children and young people in families who need early help

The Council Plan makes clear the role played by the council in prioritising the most vulnerable, by adopting an enabling approach to achieve the council priorities. The status and importance of early help has been strengthened by the Children's MARS Board's clear priority of promoting resilience through early help which is overseen and driven by the Early Help Strategic Leads Group. The vision for targeted services, underpinned by core values and principles, is taking shape and continues to be monitored through the assurance framework.

During 2018/19, the number of children reported missing had been reducing, and for those that do go missing, the multi agency response continues to be timely and reduces risk - Arrangements for responding to missing children have been strong for some time, however further steps have been taken to build upon this effective system and practice. Overseen by the Child Exploitation and Missing Strategy Group, the revised child exploitation strategy and partnership/governance framework provides a strong strategic line of sight to missing children and connectivity across CSE, CCE and missing supports effective information sharing and targeted interventions/disruption. The Changing Lives through Changing Minds therapeutic offer has helped to reduce the number of repeat missing incidents for a number of children. There has been a short term increase in children reported missing in the first 6 months of 2019/20 compared to 2018/19, partly due to a very small number of children who have been missing on several occasions, whilst the majority have been missing on one occasion. Almost all were offered an Independent Return Interview.

Strong oversight of Public Law Outline and court work has raised practice standards further - Performance within the local family court arena is excellent and has improved further in recent months. Practice quality has been recognised by judges and it has also led to North Lincolnshire taking an increasingly significant role at the local Family Justice Board. The process of decision making and quality assurance upon entry to care and legal proceedings is subject to significant management oversight and challenge and this is being applied to the PLO process.

Children in need of help and protection – Forward Thinking

Key Areas of Continued Development

Children vulnerable to and experiencing exploitation – Transition to adulthood is a key focus and it is recognised that these children have continued vulnerabilities as adults. North Lincolnshire is committed to reducing the risk of exploitation and will building on ongoing work, will ensure plans and safety nets are appropriate to meet the individual needs of these children s they make transitions to adulthood.

Changing the narrative on adolescents – As part of the new Children’s MARS arrangements, work is taking place to drive forward a vision for working with children, adolescents and families that seeks to change the narrative of the safeguarding system, that builds upon a range of practice and services innovations to promote self efficacy, resilience and empower children, young people, families and communities.

Enhanced Risk Resilience Evaluation meetings – During 2018/19, there was an increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan – this includes an increase in the number of large sibling groups and older young people. In light of this and to compliment the work of the MACE, the Independent Reviewing Service have developed a model for supporting teams of professionals working with adolescents. Through the Enhanced Risk Resilience Evaluation meetings, there is an opportunity to reflect on professional behaviour, language, pre conceived ideas and judgements and the extend to which we are working in ways that reflect what we know about adolescent risk and how to help. So far in a 2019/20, there has been a reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan.

Graded Care Profile – Work is ongoing with partners to embed the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 neglect tool across the system to support consistently high quality assessment, early help when families need support and effective intervention when children may be experiencing neglect.

Reducing repeat offenders/children in custody – The number of children who commit offences is low and the number of first time entrants remains low. However the proportion of these children who go on to reoffend has increased and the number who subsequently receive custodial sentences has also shown a small increase (by 1). Working with partners, thematic reviews have taken place of these children to identify the key issues and learning and both individual and wider action plans have been implemented to build on existing provision to engage the young people in positive activities, education and sustainable programmes to reduce offending.

Partners contributions to strategy discussion – Performance is strong and senior officers continually work to sustain and improve wider partner agency contributions. Additional resource has been made available via the police to access live data.

The experiences of children in care and care leavers

Within North Lincolnshire:

- the council and key partners as corporate parents give the highest priority to children in care and care leavers
- there is a well-developed system and practice that supports and enables positive experiences and good progress for children and young people
- there is robust management oversight alongside effective quality assurance and audit systems
- children only enter care when it is right to do so, benefiting from the timely provision of health, education, and support services
- child friendly care planning is embedded in practice and is flexible and creative to ensure that children understand and contribute to their plans and decisions and that their voice is at the centre
- there has been a determined and successful focus over a number of years to invest in and support local foster carers and as a result, the large majority of children in care live with local authority foster carers
- placement matching is prioritised and rigorous
- every effort is made to ensure the very small number of children in care that are in external provision are placed in neighbouring authorities

Whilst the children in care population increased compared to previous years, children in care numbers have been stabilised and are reducing. This reflects a continuing emphasis upon decision making and an expressed view that children are best placed at home, the implementation of different practice models to prevent children entering and or restoring children home to their parents/ carers of wider family ('You Say Who' and 'Holding On') as well as recent reduction in children entering care who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum.

The number of care leavers has increased, largely due to the increase in children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum. It is predicted that it will continue to rise given the number of children leaving care who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum and who are likely to be granted leave to remain and given the number of young people due to turn 18.

Children in North Lincolnshire who are in care or care leavers benefit from:

- good quality, child friendly care planning
- placements that meet their specific and unique needs
- excellent relationships with social workers, personal advisors and other professionals and their voices are placed at the centre
- timely and focussed work to restore them home
- permanence that is properly considered and planned for at the earliest point



The experiences of children in care and care leavers

A well-established and strong Corporate Parenting Board provides robust challenge and support in relation to outcomes for children in care, and oversees the work of the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership

The voices of children in care and care leavers are heard clearly and listened to, supported by a dedicated children's advocacy service

Children and young people are supported to remain in their families and do not come into care unnecessarily. If a child enters care, it is at the right point for the child to maximise opportunity for permanence and good outcomes including the protection to return home

The Independent Review Officer dispute and resolution process has been developed to better capture informal challenge and support

The weekly Legal Tracking Meeting has a focus on supporting children to remain within their family networks through creative and flexible packages and provides service manager decision making and oversight of all entries to care. It includes peer challenge to support effective and consistent decision making and ongoing tracking for care entrants.

The purpose built mainstream children's home, Kingfisher Lodge, also offers lodge type semi independent living areas for young people to 'stay close'.

Through the multi agency missing group, children in care are subject to additional oversight of any episodes of children reporting missing. The group focuses on those most at risk and new and emerging patterns of children in care who go missing.

Key facts:

- All children in care have an allocated Social Worker and all care leavers have a Personal Advisor
- The proportion of children in care living outside of the area continues to be very low and compares favourably with England and statistical neighbours.
- A very small minority of children and young people are placed at a distance in external provision.
- Very few children in care in North Lincolnshire commit offences and this indicator continues to be lower than the England average.
- Children in care make good educational progress and all children in care have an allocated worker from the Education and Inclusion Service.
- Whilst children in care attendance at school continues to be good, with few missed days of school and very little persistent absence, there was a year on year dip, though analysis of attendance at child level is overseen by the Virtual Head for children in care to ensure that support is in place to raise attendance.
- Attainment in schools for children in care at Key Stage 4, and progress for this cohort places North Lincolnshire in quartile B and above statistical neighbours and the national average.
- Care leavers in education, employment and training show North Lincolnshire to be in quartile B and above statistical neighbours and the national average.

Children are supported to remain with their families where possible

How do we know?

At end September 2019, the child in care population was 242, showing a decrease from the end 2018/19 figure. The number of entries to care has stabilised following the increase that occurred in 2018/19 which was driven by a rise in spontaneous presentations of children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum and three large sibling groups.

Within this context the number of children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum has increased significantly during 2018/19, to 29 at the end March 2019, (but reaching 34 in Nov. 2018). In addition to this, there are a further 21 former children who were unaccompanied and seeking asylum who are now care leavers.

The Families are Safe, Support and Transformed (FaSST) service offer has been built upon in order to further develop the 7-day service that focuses on restoration work and strengthening parenting and the family's resilience where children are on 'the edge' of care and supporting children and young people to be reunited with their families.

At the end of September 2019 there were 28 children and young people placed with connected people, reflecting a strong emphasis upon supporting children to remain with or return to family or friends.

Audit work is conducted within a range of forums, including monthly routine auditing as presented at the Case Audit Meeting (CAM). Audits consistently find that decision making is effective with children entering care at appropriate points and that planning supports continuity of education and ensures the child's health needs are met.

The development of the 'You Say Who' model and utilisation of the reunification framework has built on and further improved the framework for ensuring children and young people at all stages in their journey have the opportunity to identify and build relationships with people who are important to them and return to their family networks wherever possible.



Care plans are of timely and of good quality

How do we know?

Audit work and routine management oversight demonstrates:

- that plans are of good quality, are outcome focussed with the child at the centre and focus on achieving permanence in a timely manner
- consistently strong care planning practice
- that children's voices and the wishes and feelings of parents/carers/family members are strong within assessments, plans and reviews
- all children in care reviews are consistently undertaken in timescales
- evidence on children's case files of regular independent review officer (IRO) monitoring and tracking between reviews with children being seen alone by IROs
- contingency planning has been strengthened



The care plan format ensures regular re-assessment of risk through the embedded risk analysis framework tool.

The annual Independent Review Service (IRO) annual report describes the make up of the team and evaluates the practice and impact of the service, including the extent of the use of the dispute process.

In all cases of issues raised through the care planning dispute resolution policy, IRO's have agreed remedial timescales and monitored actions for resolution (and without the need for referral to CAFCASS)

Independent Reviewing Officers have established collaborative, reflective and challenging working relationships with Social Workers and their managers

The voice of children in care and care leavers is strong

How do we know?

Children in care and care leavers consistently say that they feel listened to and are able to articulate any issues or concerns, e.g.

- ✓ they understand their plans, feel that they are listened to and understand the reasons they are in care
- ✓ they have a trusted adult with whom they can discuss any worries or concerns

Children in care are also consulted regularly through 'Quarterly Questions' which focus on key issues and are utilised to develop services, seek feedback from children and ascertain views of key areas.



The Children in Care Council is long-standing and well-established, providing an opportunity for children in care and care leavers across a wide age range to contribute to strategic and service planning and prioritisation

Independent Reviewing Officers consistently consult with children prior to their reviews to ensure that they have the opportunity to talk about what they would like to happen, share their views and discuss any concerns. Children are encouraged and supported to attend their reviews.

All children in care are offered the opportunity for the Children's Advocate to support them in expressing their views and wishes with regards to any aspect of their care or planning. The children's advocate regularly makes contact with, communicates with and visits all children placed with external providers and those placed at a distance and children highly value this service.

Oversight of return form missing interviews demonstrates that voices of children in care are heard and considered within the analysis and decision making.

All children in care participated in their reviews in 2018/19 through direct attendance, using an advocate and creative methods i.e. Chatter Bags or the 'My IRO and Me' tool

There has been a decrease in complaints to children in care services. Themes from complaints included communication and contact with family, though all complaints were resolved. The 'You Say Who' model has been introduced with a specific focus on relationships and reviewing family time for children in care.

Children in care are offered an independent visitor when appropriate

Audit activity consistently demonstrates that children in care benefit from consistently strong care planning practice, that children's voices and the wishes and feelings of parents/carers/family members are strong within assessments, plans and review, that children benefit from strong and meaningful relationships with social workers, that practice places their voices at the heart of decision making and that child in care reviews are child centred and employ a range of ways to ensure the child's voice can be heard.

There is high ambition, opportunity and recognition for children in care and care leavers

How do we know?

Corporate parents are active in encouraging and celebrating achievements and successes by children in care and care leavers. Examples of celebration events and activities include:

- The annual Awesome Kidz awards that recognises the achievements of children in care and care leavers and is supported by corporate parents
- Regular Art shows
- Children in Care Council events and activities
- The annual Corporate Parenting Week includes:
 - Round Table events for corporate parents from across the council and its partners led by young people
 - Talent show with excellent attendance and support by corporate parents
 - Activities and competitions supported by corporate parents
 - Feedback to the Corporate Parenting Board by young people
 - The Corporate Parenting Board recognising achievement and presenting awards to young people

Plans for children in care include detail on how the child will be supported to achieve their aspirations. Case audits consistently find that plans are aspirational and focus on achieving positive outcomes for the child.

Corporate parenting champions provide a range of support and opportunities for children in care and care leavers including work based opportunities, prioritisation for services, activities and encouragement



Children in care and care leavers are kept safe

How do we know?

All children in care:

- ✓ are allocated to a qualified social worker
- ✓ are seen by their social worker regularly and seen alone which provides them with the opportunity to discuss their plans, progress, relationships and any issues or concerns
- ✓ whom are reported as missing are offered an Independent Return Interview
- ✓ have a care plan that gives consideration to the embedded risk assessment framework
- ✓ are a priority group in relation to risk of and vulnerability to exploitation

All care leavers:

- ✓ have a named allocated personal advisor
- ✓ have a pathway plan that gives consideration to the embedded risk assessment framework
- ✓ are a priority group in relation to risk of and vulnerability to exploitation

Visits to children in care are closely monitored by responsible managers and overseen at a senior management levels

Safer recruitment processes are followed when recruiting staff and foster carers

A high proportion of children in care lived in local authority foster families

The Multi Agency Looked After Partnership ensures partnership oversight of safeguarding practice relating to children in care and care leavers

Audit work consistently demonstrate there is an effective approach to safeguarding and the assessment and management of risk is a key feature in assessments, planning, review and direct work with children and their families.

There have been low numbers of children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum who have gone missing and of these in most cases, they have been returned to the area. They have suitable accommodation, their health needs are met and they are able to access education and training.

There is a well-established and robust framework to safeguard the small number of children who are placed with external providers. This includes:

- checks with the local agencies and visits to external providers prior to placements being made
- consideration of all aspects of providers processes, risk assessments, policies and Ofsted inspection findings, prior to and post placement
- senior management approval prior to any placement being made for any placements outside neighbouring authorities.
- regular visits to any child placed with an external provider by key officers
- review, decision making and oversight by the multi-agency Complex Care and External Placement panel
- action planning meetings and mechanisms to challenge and support providers whom are judged less than Good

Child and family feedback identifies that children in care and care leavers consistently feel safe, though if a child reports otherwise, steps are taken quickly to explore and resolve any issues.

At the end March 2019, 99% children in care in external provision were in provisions that were judged to be Good or better by Ofsted

Independent Return Interviews (IRI) consider the “pull / push” factors in relation to children and young people whom go missing and share intelligence as part of the multi- agency plan around the child or young person.

Children in care and care leavers are healthy

How do we know?

There is a dedicated children in care health team including a dedicated doctor, designated nurse and dedicated specialist nurses

All children in care have an strengths and difficulties assessment that is reviewed by the multi-agency Emotional Well-Being Group as part of reviewing and prioritising support

There is a dedicated Children in Care Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service who oversee, assess and provide appropriate emotional and mental health support to children and young people – this includes a ‘team around the child model’ to support children and their carers in their care placements

The % of children in care for more than one year who have an annual health assessment and teeth check was 95% at the end of 2018/19 which is higher than statistical neighbours and the England average.

Every year for the last 5 years 100% of children in care for more than one year, who are under 4, have an up-to-date health check.

Children in care and care leavers are prioritised for services to prevent and reduce substance use. There is a very small minority of children in care who are identified as using substances and during 2017/18 and 2018/19 this was 1% of the care population – significantly lower than national and statistical neighbour comparators.

Case audits demonstrate that the health of children in care and care leavers is considered in all cases and that children and young people are supported to take part in activities that promote their health and live healthy lifestyles.

Care leavers have a ‘Health Passport’ that summarises their health needs and provides information for the young person.

All children in care have an up-to-date health assessment and health plan



Children in care and care leavers make good educational progress

How do we know?

The educational progress and achievements of children in care and care leavers are recognised through the partnership approach led by the Virtual Head Teacher for children in care. The Head ensures that improving educational attainment of children in care is overseen by the well established virtual school.

The virtual school closely monitors attendance and attainment and ensures that services are in place to provide the support that children require to enable them to reach their full potential. The virtual school also oversees the quality of and impact of PEP's (which includes the use of pupil premium) to ensure they are aspirational and ambitious.

All children in care:

- ✓ have an assigned education inclusion officer who supports and challenges the school to ensure needs are identified and provision is appropriate
- ✓ and (including those in early years provision and further education) have a Personal Education Plan that is supported by the virtual school

Corporate parents support, encourage and inspire children in care and care leavers to have high aspirations and encourage their education and training including opportunities to enable young people to develop understanding and awareness of potential careers within actual work settings.

5 care leavers were attending university in 2018/19.

The provisional outcomes for those children in care for one year or more meeting age related expectations at key stage 2 in 2018/19 are: reading 67% (national 49%), writing 83% (national 50%) and maths 50% (national 51%)



Children in care placements are caring, supportive and stable

How do we know?

In depth reviews have taken place of all children who have moved placement with a focus on the reasons for the move, learning and development to achieve permanency with identified actions

New frameworks are in place to track permanency plans for all children in care which involves weekly management oversight of family finding, placement support and the progression of permanence plans.

A robust and ambitious sufficiency strategy has been reviewed and developed to respond to the changing and predicted needs of the children in care population

Line of sight and audit activity demonstrate robust and effective liaison with education and health providers in other areas to ensure that our children in care receive timely and effective support

Key facts:

- The number of children in care in agency placements has been reducing year-on-year from 2012/13, to a very low 17 at the end of September 2019
- The number of children in care placed out of the area remains low (at the end September 2019, it was 51)
- The number of foster care households approved increased to 108 at the end September 2019, including 6 short break carers.
- The number of foster carers who have completed the Training Support and Development Standards was 94 (97%) 2017/8 and currently at 99% as at end September 2019, demonstrating a strong commitment and access to training
- All children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum live locally and are in house or PHASE provision

All children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum live locally and are in house of PHASE provision.



Care leavers benefit from timely and effective pathway planning

How do we know?

The format of pathway plans has been reviewed with Care Leavers and updated to make the plans young person friendly and outcomes focussed

All care leavers:

- have a named allocated Social Worker and/or Personal Advisor
- have a pathway plan that is regularly reviewed based on an assessment of their needs
- say that they understand their plans and that they feel safe and that they are listened to – this is reflected in the child and family feedback forms and in feedback in their pathway plan reviews.

Case audits reflect that pathway plans are comprehensive, have the young person at the centre, include the views of the young person and outcome focused.

Care leavers are an integral part of the children in care council and take part in interviews of staff, prospective carers and at all corporate parenting events



Care leavers live well and are well supported

How do we know?

Housing and accommodation

- All care leavers who progress to their own accommodation live in suitable accommodation and support through a dedicated care leaver's accommodation and support social enterprise (PHASE).
- All care leavers who live independently are provided with agreed levels of support based on their assessed needs and they are seen regularly in their accommodation by their Personal Advisor.
- There is additional support and oversight for older children in care who live in independent supported accommodation, which includes regular visits by the social worker, additional support provided by PHASE and regular management monitoring processes that oversee the commissioning of the placements. The accommodation has been checked and overseen by a social work manager and manager of the accommodation provider (PHASE) and up-to-date plans that are agreed with the young person and include details of the package of accommodation and support. Young people are also contacted and seen by the independent children's advocate.
- Regular discussions and contact between the commissioned accommodation provider (PHASE), the young person's Personal Advisor and managers ensures that risk is considered when accommodation is identified, action is taken promptly to address any issues or concerns.
- During 2018/19, 97% of care leavers age 17-18 were recorded as living in suitable accommodation. This data is in line with or better than statistical neighbours and the England average and includes young people who have been closed to the service for some time following successfully returning to their families.
- Young people aged 18 years of age leaving care are encouraged and supported to 'stay put' with their former foster carers or 'stay close' at Kingfisher House (a suite of independent living studios). Any young person aged 16/17 who presents as homeless is provided with help and support to remain within their family and wider networks. Where this is not possible, they are provided with appropriate accommodation based on their assessed needs.

Education, employment and training

All care leavers have plans and support to promote engagement with education, employment and training. This includes assessment of the young person's needs, plans to support their aspirations and facilitate attendance and bespoke packages of support. Additional support is provided by corporate parents including the colleges, the council and its partners and PHASE that is flexible and responsive. It includes individual support in college, flexible work based opportunities and dedicated apprenticeships.

Health and social care

Audits, feedback from young people and management oversight shows that Pathway Planning is used effectively to assess, plan and take actions appropriately to help young people achieve positive outcomes in relation to their health, identity and social care needs. All young people have an up-to-date plan that has been reviewed in a timely manner and overseen by a manager.

Care leavers are supported to be prosperous and connected

How do we know?

Skills and aspirations

- Corporate Parents support young people to take part in activities, to share their experiences and help them to achieve their aspirations
- There are close links with the local colleges to ensure that young people receive the support and encouragement they need. The colleges have committed to the corporate parenting promise and they are active corporate parenting champions which includes attending and supporting events, providing facilities and ensuring all children in care and care leavers have individual support and plans
- Young people in care and care leavers are prioritised for the Council's apprenticeship scheme and staff from the virtual school provide support through the application process and during the placement
- Support to care leavers to achieve the aspirations and outcomes as detailed within their pathway plan is provided through a multi-agency partnership approach reflected in the published Local Offer to care leavers
- Case audits report that pathway planning is ambitious and supports young people to have high aspirations and achieve their ambitions

Skills and support

- Care Leavers are supported to undertake interviews of staff, to share their views and experiences and to contribute to decision making and planning. Care leavers say that this helps their confidence and self-esteem.
- Care leavers benefit from relationships with a stable and consistent team of Personal Advisors who remain with the young person for as long as is need up to 25 and over

Community inclusion

- Young people are encouraged to take part in community based activities and be active citizens. The annual Awesome Kidz awards recognise achievements in this area.



Children in care and care leavers

Summary of Practice Improvements

As the numbers of children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum have increased, the support of offer has strengthened leading to good outcomes - At the end September 2019, there were 23 children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum and 21 who were previous unaccompanied and seeking asylum who are now care leavers. All of these young people have received an immediate response where their diverse needs were assessed in line with guidance. They all have an allocated worked and benefit from robust multi agency care, pathway, health and personal education plans that ensure access to services and support to aid integration. Practice skills and standards have continued to develop as a consequence of this sustained focus and through a cross partnership commitment, the 'children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum pathway' overseen by a partnership forum, has been developed to promote consistent and timely responses to young people as they present. As a result, all children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum live locally in suitable in-house or PHASE accommodation. Direct work takes place on a range of topics including; cultural issues; healthy relationships; understanding of CSE and emotional health and care needs. Work continues to promote opportunities for unaccompanied young people, including drop-ins at college, involvement with the 'Welcome Project' aimed at recruiting specialist Foster Carers, and health-led workshops for carers in relation to understanding the health needs of children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum. The young people also have access to Independent Visitors, advocacy and an identified 'trusted person'.

The 'Holding On' multi agency practice approach is developing - The 'Holding On' approach is a voluntary offer of support for mothers and fathers who have experienced children being removed from their care and or who are at risk of repeat removals of children from their care. The approach provides an opportunity for the adults to refocus on their own need and learn new ways to adapt to challenges and stresses. The model, which has been developed following consultation with parents of children no longer in their care, is based on the premise that resilience is something that can be learned and developed if the adult is given the opportunity to discover their strengths and abilities. The North Lincolnshire model has been developed following consultation with parents of children no longer in their care, and with extended family members. It aims to be an inclusive and sustainable model, whereby a 'support offer' can be made to both Mothers and Fathers, resourced through the collaborative efforts of existing agencies and services working together. From April 2019, we have been embedding the tracking system we have developed whereby we can be confident that every birth parent who has had a child removed to achieve permanency through adoption, SGO or CAO, will receive information about the Holding On approach and the support that can be accessed. Subsequent follow ups by a Holding On Practitioner will work with them to identify their support needs before the multi-agency panel considers the 'offer'. The immediate impact of this is that an increased number of birth parents are being considered at the Holding On Panel and a more proactive approach is taking place in making birth parents aware of Holding On.

Children in care are benefitting from increasing stability - There continues to be an improving picture of stability for children in care. In North Lincolnshire, 78% of children living in care live with approved foster carer and 96% of all children with a foster family are placed with a local authority carer. Underpinning this improving picture is a sustained focus upon placement sufficiency and a belief that children should be with their families. Foster carer recruitment has accelerated as part of a revised strategy aiming to meet the current and future needs of the children in care population. It is expected that approvals to date in and prospective foster carers in assessment will result in an increase in approvals during 2019/20. The FaSST 'edge of care' offer has continued to be strengthened and practice aims to build family resilience and empower parents to change. The Children's Commissioner Stability index shows that more children in care are experiencing no moves of placement, school mid year or social worker.

Sufficiency of placements – Foster Carer recruitment and retention – Further activities to recruit and retain foster carers have been updated and refreshed. This includes planned local events across the area, increased the frequency of open evenings, developed a revised media strategy including targeted promotions in media outlets and posters and banners. Fostering recruitment works closely with the area representative from Migration Yorkshire in relation to recruitment of foster carers for children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum. Plans are in place to commence recruitment 'Star Parties' where current foster carers are rewarded for introducing friends to foster care. Skills the Foster training has been reviewed and refreshed in line with the Fostering Network guidelines, the benefit being that carers are now better informed regarding the fostering tasks and able to discuss potential issues/concerns with their assessing social workers prior to completion. There has also been a review of the Delegated Authority Tool to ensure it is more thorough and user friendly.

Children in care are benefitting from the 'You Say Who' practice approach - The 'You Say Who' practice approach was launched in Corporate Parenting Week 2018 and is aimed at promoting and maintaining key relationships for children and young people. This child led decision making approach connects closely with the broader practice framework in North Lincolnshire. The framework encourages workers to think further about the relationships that young people have that are important to them with a view to building resilience and managing risks. Early indications are that Social Workers are considering changes and re-evaluating risks to consider which family members our children spend time with, how often they spend this time with them, and on what basis the family time occurs (supervised vs unsupervised etc). This has further encouraged practice that is strengths-based and recognises the importance of the child's relationships with family and those who are important to them with a view to building resilience to manage risks. The model is designed to run parallel to the children in care review process and is being implemented in a phased approach.

"My Social Worker has listened to my concerns and has met with my birth family to help them understand my feelings and help me feel part of the family".

"I was so happy to have my children back living with me....to have the chance to be their Father again has been brilliant".

"The children's Social Worker has helped me to build relationships with the children's extended family and improve the relationship between myself and their Mother"

Children in care and care leavers – Forward Thinking

Key challenges and areas of improvement

Continued focus on improving stability

Whilst the placement stability of children in care has improved, there is a continued focus on ensuring that children achieve stability where they are able to form meaningful and permanent relationships with carers. To continue to do this, services will:

- Embed and build on the ‘You Say Who...’ model to enable and support children to identify and build relationships with those who are important to them
- Continue to focus on building and supporting relationships within family networks at all stages in the child’s journey with a view to enabling children to remain within and return to their family networks where this is possible
- Build on the revised Sufficiency Strategy to ensure sufficient suitable care placements for Children in Care and care leavers
- Continue to develop and build on the ‘Holding On’ model
- Continue to prioritise stability within educational settings that minimises changes in educational provision and ensures children have the support they need to be successful.

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