



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

2021/22

**North
Lincolnshire
Council**

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Contents

Slide(s)	Content
3	Introduction
4	Our vision and strategy
5	Summary of investment in services
7	About our children and young people
8	Current context and key headlines
9	Progress against 2020/21 actions
13	Thematic practice developments
15	Quality and impact of leadership and management

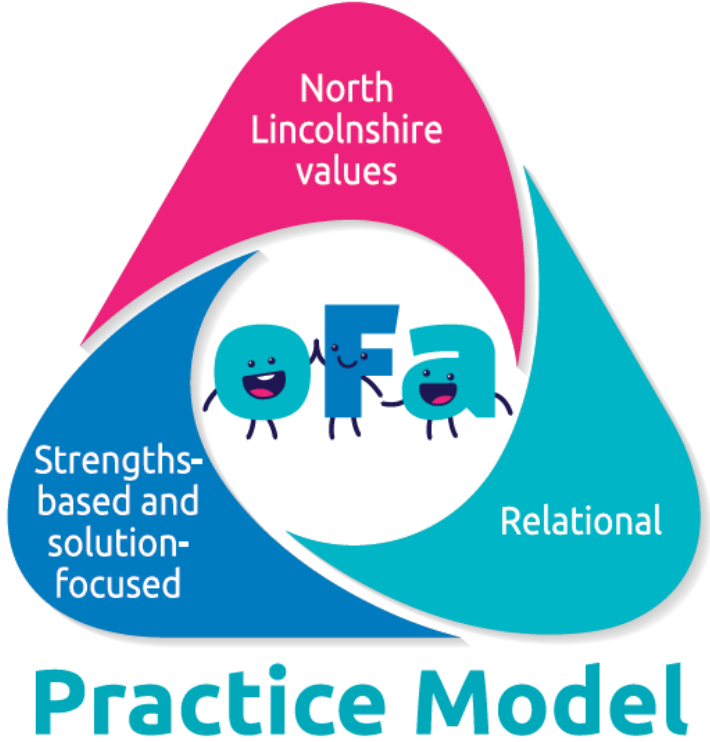
Slide(s)	Content
25	Voice and engagement
28	Help and protection populations and performance
29	Help and protection progress and developments
36	Children in care populations and performance
37	Children in care progress and developments
44	Care leavers populations and performance
44	Care leavers progress and developments
48	Ongoing areas of continued development
50	Follow Us

Introduction

Welcome to our North Lincolnshire Council Self-Evaluation Progress Update of the Experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection, and of Children Looked After and Care Leavers between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

We have high expectations of ourselves, our partners and for our children and families and through our One Family Approach we continue to build a system that works for all children and families through the fewest, best interventions, leading to whole family turnaround. Our shared ambition for children to remain in their families, in their schools and in their communities continues to be underpinned by our One Family Approach Practice Model.

This document sets out the local context and our ambition for children and families; provides an overview of our progress during 2021/2022 against the key areas for continued development; up to date performance data; and an updated position regarding areas of practice, impacts and outcomes for children and families in North Lincolnshire. It also articulates our continued commitment to listening, learning, reviewing and adapting and identifies our ongoing areas for further consideration and development.



Our Vision and Strategy

- Under the auspicious of the Council Plan, as a Council and working with partners, we are ambitious for North Lincolnshire and we want our area to be the **#BestPlace** for our residents. We have high expectations of ourselves and upon making sure our children, young people and families are **safe, well, prosperous and connected**
- Through our One Family Approach, we want to **create a system that works for all children, young people and families** so that children can be **in their families, in their schools and in their communities**
- We have articulated our ambition for children, young people and families in our multi agency [Children's Commissioning Strategy 2020/24](#) which is overseen by our Integrated Children's Trust, chaired by the Director of Children and Families and vice chaired by the Chief Operating Officer for the North Lincolnshire Commissioning Group
- The [Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire 2020/24](#) document sets out our local definitions of need, in line with our organisational model and the [Children's Challenge 2020/24](#) provides the basis for challenging and supporting partnership action
- These documents articulate the organisational model and how we should work to shape services for children and families. This message is consistent and embedded throughout key strategies and plans across North Lincolnshire e.g. in relation to early years, emotional wellbeing and mental health, special educational needs and disabilities and children in care and care leavers
- The council and its partners have continued to prioritise vulnerable children, young people, young adults and their families by investing sufficient capacity and resources which reinforces our ongoing commitment for children and families to be at the centre of all we do and our focus on improving outcomes



Summary of investment in services

Since 2017, we have maintained and enabled additional investment in:

Where	What	Impact
Early Help and Prevention	<p>Integrated family support services within the children's centre offer</p> <p>Established the One Family Approach Hub team</p>	<p>Upskilling of children's centre staff and greater capacity for leading multi agency plans for families to prevent escalation and for those stepping down</p> <p>Brought together staff with family support and residential care backgrounds with the aim to enabling families experiencing crisis to continue to care safely for their children</p>
Front Door	<p>Established the daily PIT Stop meeting</p> <p>The council received Home Office funding to be part of the NRM pilot</p> <p>Further strengthened leadership, scrutiny, assurance and oversight, including independent scrutiny</p> <p>Investment in the workforce and a range of opportunities for continual professional development</p>	<p>Opportunity for partners to meet to ensure the earliest intervention is provided to children and families and prevent escalation</p> <p>Training opportunities and information sharing to ensure robust and timely decision making for children where there are concerns of human trafficking and modern slavery</p> <p>Helped to ensure consistent identification of need and intervention and enabled impartial oversight of practice, identification of areas of excellence and areas of learning to ensure best practice is consistently achieved for children and families</p> <p>Staff have access to professional guest speakers, reflective forums, bespoke debrief sessions and teams days to further enhance their practice</p>
Leadership Capacity	<p>Built in Assistant Director roles within Children and Families Senior Leadership Team (for Children's Help and Protection, Children's Standards and Regulation and Education)</p>	<p>Provides additional system leadership within Children and Families and across the wider council and partnership in relation to children and families in the context of whole family working</p>
Workforce	<p>Upgraded LADO role to better reflect the accountabilities of the managing allegations functions</p>	<p>Helped to ensure retention of permanent high quality staff</p>

Summary of investment in services

Where	What	Impact
Fostering Capacity	<p>Enhanced management capacity across fostering and commissioning services</p> <p>Increased capacity to focus on fostering recruitment and marketing</p>	<p>Prioritised the sufficiency of local care provision and reflects our ambitions that children live in their families, schools and communities</p> <p>Specific focus on recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers; a speedy and effective response to all enquiries which has contributed to the increase in the proportion who progress from enquiry to assessment; and a strong presence in the local and wider communities that encourages people to consider fostering</p>
Corporate Parenting Support	Created capacity to build and develop our Corporate Parenting offer	Will co-ordinate and support the delivery of the Corporate Parenting promise
Development of the Youth Justice Partnership	Enhanced management capacity across the Youth Justice Partnership to provide enhanced oversight, leadership and quality within the service`	Further development of the wider partnership ensuring that prevention and holistic working via he fewest best interventions continue to be embedded and developed
Investment in a SPACE service	Through the creation of a SPACE service (Strategy, Policy / participation / performance / partnership, Assurance, Children and Evaluation), we have developed capacity to further enable the robust effectiveness, standards and regulatory framework relating to children and families	Lead, driven and developed a rage of functions under SPACE, for example the development of key strategic drivers; a project approach to the ongoing development and implementation of the OFA; maintaining and developing our ongoing focus on strategic voice; maintaining and developing partnership and governance arrangements; developing data, performance and analysis to underpin practice delivery contributing to demand management and service development; and maintaining and developing scrutiny and assurance processes leading to service and practice developments
Independent Scrutiny	Continued investment in the independent scrutiny of practice within Children’s Services and through our local Children’s MARS arrangements (over and above internal assurance framework).	<p>Enabled clarity regarding areas of strength and good practice and enabled a clearer focus on specific areas for improving practice.</p> <p>Overall, the independent scrutiny has demonstrated strong local practice and collaborative working from a flexible, skilled and knowledgeable workforce to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. For further impacts, see slide **</p>

About our children and young people

North Lincolnshire has a population of 172,005 (mid 2018 ONS population estimate). This has risen steadily since 2005 and projections indicate a continuing growth of 3.68% over the next 25 years. Based on the office of national statistics 2018 mid-year population estimates, it is anticipated that 47,492 young people under the age of 25 years are living in North Lincolnshire, of these 37,491 are aged 0-18.

As at January 2022, there are 24,774 children on a school roll. In March 2022, 90% of schools are currently judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. 100% of schools have been judged by Ofsted to have effective arrangements for safeguarding children. 99% of early years education and childcare settings that have been inspected by Ofsted have been judged as Good or Outstanding

As at January 2022 the proportion of children eligible for and claiming free school meals:

- In primary schools is 26.9% (national 21.6% - 2021)
- In secondary schools is 25.2% (national 18.9%- 2021)
- In special schools is 42.2% (national 43.2% - 2021)

Between 2016 and 2020 the North Lincolnshire primary school black and minority ethnic cohort has increased from 15.2% to 17.7%, and in secondary schools from 11.9% to 14.1%.

As at January 2022, 13.1% of the pupil population in North Lincolnshire were identified as having SEN support, with 3.1% having an EHCP. Nationally in 2021, 12.2% of pupils were identified with SEN Support, with 3.7% having an EHCP.

Between 2016 and 2022 the North Lincolnshire primary school black and minority ethnic cohort has increased from 15.2% to 19% and also increased in secondary schools from 11.9% to 14.9%.

Current context and key headlines

The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for children and families, and in the delivery of services to offer help, support and protection for the most vulnerable. It has also created opportunities for innovation and improvement, as seen in a number of developments for children in North Lincolnshire, reflecting the agility, responsiveness, and creativity of leaders and the workforce.

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, business continued across all functions, whilst simultaneously adapting and supporting the overall COVID-19 recovery response. In line with changing Government guidance, and as deemed appropriate, there continued to be face-to-face direct work and relationship-building with children and families in need of help and protection. This has been underpinned by local visiting guidance which has been regularly updated to reflect the current position.

Children, young people and families have shown tremendous resolve and resilience in these challenging circumstances leading to stability and positive outcomes, including our children in care and care leavers. Our staff and those who work closely with us, foster carers, carers and partners, have shown immense care and collaboration through this time, in their ongoing passion, drive and commitment to helping children, young people and families improve their outcomes.

We have continued to respond to the needs of individuals and diverse communities, prioritising the most in need, to help and protect children, young people and families. We have also supported and protected our workforce, in relation to capacity and in terms of their health and wellbeing. This enabled continued progress in achieving our ambition for children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities

The vast majority of performance and activity information relating to the early help and protection system continue to show sustained high performance and compliance with local practice standards and statutory timescales

Families benefit from an effective early help offer, delivered by agencies committed to intervening early, supporting the whole family, and preventing escalation of need through the fewest, best interventions. Numbers of early help assessments for the year continue to show an increase, the impact of this is seen in the low rates of referral and ultimately the comparatively low rates of child protection plans and children needing to become looked after

Front door enquiries, contacts, referrals, repeat referrals and assessments by children’s services have remained consistent overall evidencing the drive to ensure children and families are supported at the right level and at the earliest opportunity

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 children in care population is at its lowest level since before the end of 2015/16, which reinforces our ambition for children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities

We have further reduced the number of children in external foster care and residential provision enabling them to remain connected to their local support networks and community

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. There are fewer children in need cases demonstrating the successful work completed with the family

The number of children entering the youth justice system as ‘First Time Entrants’ continues to be low and a high proportion of cases are prevention and out of court disposals demonstrating the success and effectiveness of the preventative approach

Progress against 2020/2021 actions

Supporting Families Programme

The programme has been welcomed across the Integrated Children Trust (ICT) and Children’s Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) partnerships as an opportunity to strengthen the North Lincolnshire focus on whole-family working, building resilience and enabling early help, due to its close alignment with our One Family Approach.

A One Family Approach Supporting Families Steering Group has been established to draw together the delivery of our One Family Approach and the Supporting Families Programme.

The steering group has specific workstreams aimed at developing our integrated whole-family working, data maturity, and early help system - in line with our aspiration to ‘create a system that works for all children, young people and families’



In 2021/22, 220 families have been helped to achieve and sustain improved outcomes resulting in a successful claim (in line with the local target set)

Case Management System

A detailed procurement exercise has commenced with the aim of replacing the long-established CareFirst case management system.

The project aims to identify opportunities for integration across a range of systems in order to strengthen recording practice and data flow, improve the practitioner experience, and give greater access for children and families to access their plans and records.

Central to the developing specification is the requirement to maintain strong data functionality and there will also be continuous improvement and flexibility in the use of systems, records and data. Flexibility which will enable more streamlined access to data, reduced data entry and improved data quality



Intended benefits includes a greater scope to meet the needs of children and families; the delivery of seamless services to children and families; reduced duplication and better enabling for people to tell their story only once

Progress against 2020/2021 actions

One Family Approach Hub

This provides a strengthened offer to families with children on the edge of care and/or who are experiencing crisis that may result in family breakdown and harm.

The ethos of the service is to provide enabling, intensive, and flexible help that builds resilience, confidence, and motivation to change, using a strengths-based and relational approach in line with the One Family Approach Practice Model.

The team is made up of staff with a range of skills including from a residential care background, offering intensive outreach support and interventions. There is the potential for the team to provide residential care for children who may need to be looked after for a short period within the One Family Approach Hub as part of a plan to prevent harm and effect change to enable reunification (pending registration as a children’s home)



As at end 2021/22, the OFA Hub are working with 61 children from 29 families, all of which are being supported to remain together. All of the families were identified during an assessment or following a contact referral, where a Hub worker was allocated alongside a social worker to undertake direct and immediate work to de-escalate crisis or restore children within their families and work to strengthen relationships within the home

National Referral Mechanism Pilot

North Lincolnshire Council were successful in the bid made for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) pilot. This has sharpened the response and timely decision making around the grounds for an NRM outcome for children who have experienced modern day slavery and human trafficking.

The Modern Day Slavery co-ordinator has developed a training package for the workforce to ensure high quality national referral mechanism referrals are submitted.

A multi-agency evening of action took place in July where workers from children services, police and safer neighbourhoods visited hot spot areas and properties to disrupt activity and raise awareness in the local community.

Submissions have been made and accepted by the Home Office and it is planned to embed this approach into mainstream practice following the pilot.



The NRM pilot and associated funding has been extended until March 2023, the impact of this devolved partnership decision making for children is that more timely decisions can be made in comparison to timescales within the SCA, with decisions being made under 45 days for conclusive grounds. There is also a strength to the decision making being undertaken by partners who understand the local picture and exert practice wisdom to the decision making for the children

Progress against 2020/2021 actions

Risk Outside the Home approach

There has been a continued focus on risk outside the home across the partnership, and following consultation with partners and families, the local approach has been reviewed and refreshed and is now based around three elements:

- 1.Practice Principles** – Empowering families, taking a One Family Approach
- 2. Identifying and Helping** – Using skills and resources to identify, assess, and intervene
- 3.Managing Risk** – Working together to reduce risk and improve outcomes

The approach builds upon the strong local foundations developed over several years in response to the challenges of exploitation, missing children, harmful sexual behaviour and county lines, using the One Family Approach as a framework for core principles and practices underpinning how we tackle extra-familial harms.

The North Lincolnshire approach to risks outside the home not only draws upon years of local learning and experience about ‘what works’, it has also been shaped heavily by the views of children, young people and families

Transforming Places

There are ongoing partner arrangements to transform the spaces and identified hotspot locations with risks linked to criminality and exploitation within North Lincolnshire to enhance community resilience and reduce risk. Transformations have included enhancing the overall aesthetics and accessibility in specific areas, building ‘community guardianship’ through awareness raising and education, additional CCTV, increased foot patrols by police and safer neighbourhoods, community engagement, additional ANPR cameras within hotspot areas



Risk has reduced for children identified as at risk of / experiencing exploitation

Community resilience and guardianship has been strengthened by equipping the public, local business and organisations with the skills to identify the signs

Children who have experienced risk outside the home have co-produced training on the signs to spot and the harm caused by exploitation. This has been delivered across the workforce and partnership, to neighbourhood watch groups, faith and community groups, low budget hotels, business in hotspot locations and the night-time economy to build community guardianship

The use of the child exploitation vulnerability tool (CEVT) and mapping of key themes within Partnership Integrated Triage (PIT) Stop and MACE has enabled new and emerging risks are identified earlier and target proactive early intervention work to prevent this

The National County Lines Coordination Centre and the Regional Organised Crime Unit have given credit to North Lincolnshire around the best practice and outcomes achieved

The children in custody protocol has been developed to ensure children are supported as victims, their needs are met early, their voices are heard and joint planning for children at these reachable moments

The complexities and crossover of the types of risk outside the home including online exploitation and serious self-harm are understood across the partnership and a sharpened focus has been given to children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health including the impact of trauma and recovery

There has been proactive partnership intervention and disruption using a range of disruption measures, civil powers and criminal offences such as Child Abduction Warning Notices, Sexual Harm Prevention Orders, Closure Orders and increased police presence in hotspot areas

Progress against 2020/2021 actions

Workforce Development

We continue to give the highest priority to maintaining the optimum environment and support for social work and social care practice to thrive. Key to this is continuing with our focus on recruitment and retention across our social care teams. This includes a commitment to work with Frontline as a central part of our strategy to recruit and develop social workers, and an ongoing commitment to a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing practice and the skills of our workforce. Examples of the continued progress on this include:

- **Social Work apprenticeships** as a means of continuing to increase the qualified social work workforce whilst developing career pathways and professional development opportunities for family support staff who wish to follow this route. Since April 2021 a further member of staff, from the youth justice partnership, has successfully commenced a Social Work apprenticeship
- We continue to **'grow our own' talent through** supporting a range of routes into social work through working in collaboration with partners, HEI's and other national social work education providers (such as Step up to Social Work) to maximise recruitment and retention of social work professionals. As part of this, we have had our first cohort of Frontline participants join us in September 2021 as we embark on our journey with the Frontline programme to support the recruitment of social workers. With this it has brought development opportunities for our existing staff with the Consultant Social Work role and Deputy Consultant Social Work role. We are now progressing with plans for a second year of engagement with Frontline
- We continue to work in collaboration with the **Step up to Social Work programme** and 4 students joined us in January 2022
- We have continued to offer blended and **extensive continuous professional development** opportunities including face to face and virtual training to enhance the skills and knowledge of our workforce to ensure we have a competent workforce. Adapting to using virtual platforms has proved invaluable during COVID-19 ensuring our workforce still have access to a wide range of training. Feedback from training has evidenced that staff have found the training calendar to be motivating, relevant to practice and has boosted confidence levels in ability and skills to apply to practice
- We have developed **practice themed months** for our workforce to cascade training opportunities in the form of smaller workshops with Bite Size learning. These have commenced in November 2021 and have complemented the training that we currently have in place. These workshops have been received well by the workforce and feedback has been provided on how accessible these have been for all

As part of our ongoing focus to create the conditions for social work and social care to thrive, we have also continued to engage with staff, monitor key workforce measures and performance indicators and prioritise workforce planning and support

Average caseloads have continued to be managed and have reduced from 19 on 31st March 2021 to 17.1 at the end of March 2022

The vast majority of social workers are permanent employees of North Lincolnshire Council. The use of agency social workers has been minimal and appropriate to maintain capacity where needed in the context of a wider focus on recruitment

A very large majority of children in care benefit from consistent social workers and in 2020/21 only 2.4% of children in care had more than 2 social workers

Thematic practice developments

One Family Approach Practice Model in action

The North Lincolnshire One Family Approach Practice Model has continued to be embedded within multi agency practice helping to frame all aspects of family help and protection around values-driven, strengths-based, solution-focused, and relational practice with families at the centre. Examples of the model in action are:

- **Extensive evidence of relational practice** as seen in audit work, where the stability of workers alongside tenacious and committed practice clearly helps achieve good outcomes for children
- The development of the **North Lincolnshire Centre for Relational Practice training offer**, delivered by in-house 'champions' – a network of committed practitioners
- The embedding of the **PIT Stop** to ensure a streamlined offer of early help provided by the most appropriate professional
- A strengthened focus **on family-led decision making** through the family solutions model and the risk outside the home meeting format
- A strengthened focus on **engagement with fathers** and wider family networks to ensure sustainable family solutions
- The development of an **integrated family support 'request for service' process**, with a range of interventions available to reflect preventative and targeted levels of need and supporting effective step-down transition from social work

0 to 2 pathway

Developed in 2020/21, the 0 to 2 pathway strengthens the offer, oversight, and response to this vulnerable group as part of the wider priority given to achieving the Best Start for children. The offer has strengthened during 2021/22 as follows:


- The **Multi Agency Pre-Birth Liaison and Consultation (MAPLAC)** process has been mainstreamed, acting as a key forum for identifying expectant parents who may have additional needs or vulnerabilities to ensure an effective offer of help
- The **virtual ante-natal programme** has continued as a blended approach in line with the wishes of parents. This offer is delivered in partnership between midwifery services, 0 to 19 health visiting and children's centres. The quality of early assessment has improved, with the vast majority of integrated assessments at 2 to 2 ½ being fully integrated and face to face
- **Children aged 0 to 2** referred to social work services benefit from additional oversight to ensure an early years offer as appropriate particularly for those with additional vulnerabilities. The systems and frameworks around this have been mainstreamed into practice
- The development of the **integrated and accessible children's offer**, with greater agility and flexibility to reflect the wishes and needs of families. This includes the provision of virtual support alongside face-to-face help, and a broader range of venues for when people want to meet, making use of the community hubs, adult community learning courses, and the cultural offer for children and families such as that taking place in the 20:21 Visual Arts Centre
- The development of the **Families Direct e-newsletter** which provides information to families about services, what's on in their local area, and how to access advice and support
- There has been **independent scrutiny of the 0 to 2 pathway** which highlighted a number of practice strengths, working to achieve best outcomes for children and families
- Improved assessment of children's communication and **0 to 3 SALT pathway**, and universal training across the sector into infant mental health, Solihull approaches and attachment means children needs are identified and met sooner

Thematic practice developments

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Reflecting national recognition of the emotional impact of COVID-19, locally there has been a strong response to this area over the period of the pandemic. In 2021/22, key developments are as follows:

- Developed a tracking tool for monitoring the numbers and progress of children open to children's services who are waiting for a CAMHS or Barnardo's service in relation to their mental health and emotional wellbeing. An emotional wellbeing meeting with key partners has been established to provide challenge and strengthened oversight of the responses to these children
- Improved the management information at the front door in relation to children experiencing acute distress and self-harm with the inclusion of a new classification criteria and additional oversight
- Maintained a strong focus on developing partnership data and oversight of outcomes in relation to children's emotional wellbeing and mental health. This focus can be seen in the challenge presented to key partners at the Children's Help and Protection Pathway lead officers meeting and Children's MARS Board
- Represented children's services across the region at the Humber Coast and Vale workstream meetings, aimed at improving services and access as Clinical Commissioning Groups transition to the Integrated Care System
- Taken part in the national Link programme, working with schools, colleges and mental health / emotional wellbeing services to strengthen relationships and local practice
- Ensured a strong emotional wellbeing offer to children and young people, co-ordinating communications with partners about services such as Kooth in order to maximise reach and engagement
- Planned for and initial roll out and implementation of Mental Health Support Teams (commencing early 2022)
- North Lincolnshire Council and CCG partners are rolling out an Infant Mental Health strategy through workforce development which builds a universal, targeted and specialist approach to attachment and childhood trauma in the early years



All children and young people awaiting a CAMHS or Barnardo's service are known and monitored to ensure they are in receipt of appropriate information, advice and support to support their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, pending receipt of formal therapeutic support

Corporate and political leadership

During 2021, there were some changes to the Council's senior leadership team. Our core values and strategic direction remains consistent, focussing on North Lincolnshire being the best place for our residents and where children, young people, families and communities are at the heart of all we do. The previous Director of Learning Skills and Culture took up the position of Chief Executive and the previous Head of Children's Social Care (Deputy Director) took up the post of Interim Director of Children and Community Resilience (DCS) in August 2021 before subsequently securing the position of Director of Children and Families (which formally commenced in January 2022). These longstanding senior leaders in the Council bring with them a wealth of experience and proven outcomes in system leadership in relation to children, families, schools and communities.

Work has progressed at pace to formalise the underpinning children and families structure, and the senior leadership team continues to be supported by a strong, consistent and experienced team of senior officers working to a strengths-based leadership model which promotes a collective commitment to improved outcomes for children.

The Leader of the Council (previous Lead Member for Children) and Lead Member for Children (locally the Cabinet Member for Children and Families) continue to provide high challenge and high support to ensure that there is an ongoing focus on improving practice leading to better outcomes for children and families. Examples of key decisions taken through democratic services to demonstrate this are:

- Extended the support to families through the Local Support Grant
- Agreed the One Family Approach Hub Statement of Purpose
- Supported the proposals for consultation to further develop the Children and Young People Family Support Offer
- Endorsed the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021/24 and Youth Justice Plan 2022-2024
- Supported an open door policy for all Care Leavers regardless of their age and refreshed the Care Leavers financial policy
- Continuing to ensure strong and inclusive education settings meet the needs of all children including the most vulnerable through investing into school improvement

A training and development session was held for Heads of Service, service leads and service managers across the Council to provide an opportunity to further raise awareness and enhance understanding of:

- the scope and functions of the Safeguarding Organisation Group
- the safeguarding assurance measures in relation to inputs and outcomes of safeguarding practices
- safeguarding statutory frameworks and associated pathways
- the roles and responsibilities of specific individuals and cross Council teams and services

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families continues to chair a number of key boards and partnerships including the Children and Young People's Partnership and the Corporate Parenting Board at which she provides high support and high challenge to Council officers and their partners.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families also continues to be a member of the Children's MARS Board, Schools' Forum and the Education and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Standards Board and will take up membership on the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board from the November meeting.

Senior leaders and managers across Children and Families have attended Places and Governance scrutiny panels as well as Children and Education scrutiny panel, which has demonstrated amplified assurance in relation to Children and Families and oversight across the breadth of the Council's democratic and scrutiny arrangements.

There has continued to be regular meetings between the DCS and the Cabinet Member for Children and Families through informal briefing meetings as well as formal democratic meetings and other partnerships, boards and events.

The DCS continues to take up their statutory role on key boards at which there are opportunities for high support and high challenge. The DCS has the chairing role at the Integrated Children's Trust, Children's MARS Board and SEND Standards Board, as well as a membership role on the Health and Wellbeing Board, Corporate Parenting Board, Education Standards Board and Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The DCS also continues to have a systems leadership role on the Place Partnership as well as the strategic lead for the Children and Young People's Partnership.

There continues to be a focus on children being 'everyone's business' across the Council's senior leadership team, with a strong core (commissioning, finance, IT, HR etc) equally responsible as one team for improved outcomes. The 'One Council' approach enables Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and Principal Officers to work together to improve outcomes for 'all our children'.

The North Lincolnshire Council Chief Executive is the lead Chief Executive for Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, representing all Chief Executives across the areas and maintaining paramountcy of place.

Agile and responsive leadership

Across North Lincolnshire, there remains a collaborative leadership approach to providing and commissioning information, support and services. This is underpinned by a 'no walls' system leadership approach where leaders and managers have a clear accountability framework though there is a shared responsibility to achieve outcomes for our children and families.

System leaders across children's services take collective responsibility for outcomes, deploying staff flexibly in response to changes in need and demand. An example of this has been support across services to ensure robust staffing capacity and continued strong practice and decision making in line with practice standards and levels of need.

Working under the auspices of the Government's roadmap and local guidance, leaders and managers across Children and Families have responded to the needs of children, young people and families and utilised available settings and resources to encourage and support face to face meetings, group work and visits in line with specific needs and circumstances. Leaders and managers have also enabled the conditions for front line practitioners and managers to come together for reflective discussions and to contribute to positive emotional health and wellbeing



- This has meant continued service delivery and high-quality intervention with children and families
- Consistently high levels of manager oversight and assurance
- Continued practice developments to enhance the skills of the workforce and ensure a stable and resilient workforce

Wider influence

North Lincolnshire Council have represented regional children's services within the Humber Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership mental health and emotional wellbeing workstreams. The focus of these groups is on improving service delivery and consistency of outcomes, by sharing best practice across the region as Clinical Commissioning Groups transfer to the Integrated Care Systems.

The DCS has taken up membership on the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) including business meetings, which have recommenced alternately as face-to-face meetings. Relationships have also been maintained through informal 'keeping in touch' meetings and there have also been opportunities to engage in meetings and contacts with the Department for Education and Local Government Association to represent the North Lincolnshire and regional perspective.

North Lincolnshire Council has a regular presence at a number of ADCS policy committees and working groups, for example the Workforce Development committee, in which we have helped to shape policy responses to recent issues including regional agency social worker protocols and the Independent review of children's social care 'Case for Change' document.

North Lincolnshire was selected as one of ten local design areas to contribute in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. In October 2021, the review team visited North Lincolnshire and met with over 100 leaders, managers and practitioners across the workforce, as well as children, young people and family representatives. The visit was an opportunity to help shape and influence the findings and recommendations of this key national review. There was positive feedback from contributors regarding their engagement in the visit and from the Review team regarding the North Lincolnshire system. Members of the Review team specifically articulated that they felt there was 'a genuine desire to put families first threaded throughout', that 'it was exciting to see the value of relationships' and 'to see just how passionate people were in a really authentic way'. In addition, we have also contributed to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care 'call for ideas' in which we submitted two ideas focussed around 'deploying a local whole system approach' and 'developing meaningful controls for social work agencies'. The North Lincolnshire 'You Say Who' approach was selected for inclusion in the composite report from the local design area visits, as well as featuring in the main report from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care

‘Place’ system leadership and partnerships

Integrated Children’s Trust

The Integrated Children’s Trust (ICT) is an executive function of the North Lincolnshire Place Partnership (sub committee of the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board) and is the singular vehicle for developing our integrated approach and commissioning intent in relation to health, social care and education for children, young people and families. The ICT is chaired by the Director of Children and Families, who links into the Place Partnership, along with other ICT members including the Children and Families Cabinet Member and NHS Place Director.

The ICT endorsed the revised One Family Approach outcomes framework which clarifies the agreed system health measures, education and population profile and the specific impacts that will be experienced by families wherever they are in the system. The outcomes framework includes a range of ‘I’ statements that articulate how families will best experience the system. There has been progress against the ‘shine a light’ areas of focus and work is underway to refresh the Children’s Commissioning Strategy.

Community Safety Partnership Board

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Board has continued to endorse grant funding opportunities to extend the local offer of support and interventions. Work has progressed to develop the CSP - Partnership Plan, which has been further refreshed to take account of a change in Police and Crime Commissioner, and in which they have identified ‘safeguarding the vulnerable from exploitation’ as being one of the key outcomes for the partnership

Youth Justice Strategic Partnership Board

The board has endorsed the Youth Justice Plan which clarifies our local intent to deliver improved outcomes for some of the most vulnerable young people with a focus on reducing anti-social behaviour and offending. Statutory Board Members have lead areas on which they report progress to the board. Collaborative work has been undertaken to develop the Children in Custody joint protocol which clarifies the role and responsibilities of each agency in relation to the detention of children and young people (and vulnerable adults) at the police custody suite

Children’s MARS Board

The board has continued to meet, oversee and develop the Children’s MARS arrangements and seek assurance regarding the standard of local implementation across the early help and safeguarding system. In 2021/22, there have been recent changes to the safeguarding partner representatives on the board and, as these were planned, the transition has been seamless with a continued strong commitment across the partnership.

The board have been assured that the pending changes to the Humber Coast and Vale Integrated Care System will not impact on the ongoing focus on ‘place’ and there will continue to be a place-based representative on strategic boards.

There has been an amplified focus on seeking assurance regarding children in care and care leavers and the board noted that the reduction in the numbers of children in care through the relentless ambition for children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities.

The board has raised challenge relating to self-harm and emotional wellbeing and requested CCG colleagues provide more context about the challenges in developing multi agency oversight of children at risk of self-harm and/or suicide. The CCG have responded by confirming their support to re-establish the Multi Agency Suicide and Self Harm Reduction Group.

The board has endorsed the Children’s MARS Annual Report and the refreshed suite of documents, including the local arrangements, memorandum of understanding, scrutiny assurance framework and information sharing agreement

As required under the auspices of Working Together 2018, the Annual Report was submitted to the What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care and the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel and all refreshed documents are published on the Children’s MARS website. This key information was also disseminated to the Children’s MARS stakeholder communication virtual group consisting of more than 300 leaders, managers and staff across the partnership ensuring they are aware of the most current local arrangements and can access up to date information.

Having been invited to contribute, the Board have now received updates relating to the research findings from the Department for Education relating to partnership working following the multi agency reforms.

‘Place’ system leadership and partnerships

SEND Standards Board

There continues to be strong representation at the SEND Standards Board and a continued strong focus on and oversight of children and young people who have SEN/D and clear evidence of good practice and outcomes being achieved. Governance and accountability arrangements through the board are transparent, well-embedded and appropriately challenging (e.g. fixed term exclusion at secondary phase with a minority of schools and neuro-diversity pathway waiting times have been areas of specific focus which have received a positive response). The board has reflected on the outcomes of the SEND inspection report, in which there were no statements of written action, and which specifically referenced the strength of the board

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

We have worked collaboratively to respond to the new statutory duties incorporated within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 including the establishment of the board, for which the inaugural meeting took place in July 2021 and quarterly meetings thereafter. There is strong multi agency strategic representation on the board which reinforces our commitment to working towards our priority for individuals to be safe and well in their homes and in their communities. Overseen by the board, work has been undertaken to complete a domestic abuse needs assessment and strategy, both of which have now been endorsed by the board. The strategy was formally signed off through the Cabinet meeting at the end of September 2021 and the strategy was published on the Council website in October 2021, before the national deadline. A delivery plan has been developed and work is underway to drive forward partnership action to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, children and perpetrators

Education Standards Board

Our partnership approaches to transparent mutual accountability for education standards with education sector and statutory partners monitors maintains oversight of performance and standards for schools. This includes outcomes in their broadest sense for groups of children including SEND and ethnic minority achievement, children in care, and oversight of the Virtual Headteacher role and it's impact on improving outcomes for looked after children. Having previously focused on education recovery and renewal as a result of the pandemic, there is now a focus on developing a forward thinking Education Strategy

Corporate Parenting Board

Through the board, there remains a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. A self-evaluation undertaken in March 2021, demonstrated a positive local position regarding Corporate Parenting arrangements which is underpinned by the strength of Corporate Parenting across the partnership and positive outcomes for children in care and care leavers. There was also an opportunity to highlight areas for development and building on this, progress has been made to further strengthen our arrangements, for example:

- **membership being refined to take account of recent changes at system leadership level across the partnership and ensure appropriate representation**
- **collaborative work to facilitate Corporate Parenting Week 2021 at which partners formalised their recommitment to Corporate Parenting**
- **bespoke action plans are in place with champions to detail how their organisation continues to fulfil the promise**
- **there is an amplified focus on extending the offer to care leavers to enhance transitions and support into adulthood**

A board development session was held in March 2022 at which there was good LA and agency representation. The session focussed on four key areas including bringing corporate parenting to life across organisations and the workforce; engaging with the voice of children and young people; living the promise; and next steps. Discussions at the session identified key priority areas of focus for development and a development plan overseen by the board is underway.

Corporate parenting

Corporate parenting continues to be robust in North Lincolnshire with an effective and well-supported Corporate Parenting Board chaired by the Lead member for Children, strong political support and further engagement across the Council and partners.

Identified Corporate Parenting Champions across all partners are responsible for the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Promise to children in care and care leavers and report on their specific roles and actions to achieve the promise. Champions are supported this through the Corporate Parenting Champions Group

Examples of developments include:

- Working with partners on bespoke projects for our young people, including the Humber Outreach Programme funded Summer Aspirational Project. The success of this project has provided a springboard for future collaborative projects with colleagues from Learning, Skills and Culture. Summer aspirational events supported by colleagues in Participation and Achievement included:
 - 2 day 'industrial experience' at a local industrial site
 - an experience at a local airfield specifically around developing confidence, team building and communication skills
 - 1-day Personal Trainer experience taster session
- Emergency Services Event where children in care and care leavers spent an activity and information day with the Fire and Police services
- Corporate Parents within IT led on a project that has ensured that a local telecoms provider has committed to providing WIFI access to all care leaving accommodation in North Lincolnshire at no cost for 2 years, as part of their offer to our young people and the service
- A local College working with the CiCC to offer and develop a children friendly venue
- Employment and apprenticeship opportunities and support for young people to join the Police Cadets
- 'Take Over' event exclusively for children in care held at 20:21 Arts Centre which opened for Foster Families on a Sunday. The activities throughout the day included a range of musical instruments available to play with instruction from a music teacher, Karaoke, Band experience, Craft room and a local artist, Jason Wilsher-Mills, ran workshops teaching the children how he made his Changing Places art. The children were able to produce art which will remain on this App platform
 - 18 families attended the day. The children and carers spoke positively of the event and saw the children's confidence grow throughout the day. A large proportion of the families who registered care for children with additional needs demonstrating the inclusivity of the venue and the event
- The success of collaboration, as described above, has also directly contributed to more external agencies, business and organisations wanting to sign up to our Corporate Parenting pledge and be an active Corporate Parent, including local industrial training providers

Celebrating our children in care and care leavers

Children in care and care leavers achievements are celebrated, in a range of ways. Corporate Parents across the partnership all play an important role in ensuring these achievements are known and celebrated on an individual and group basis. An example of this includes the annual **Corporate Parenting Week** which took place in October 2021 and was supported across the Council, including political support, and the wider partnership. A range of activities were held for children in care and care leavers. It also included a formal signing of the Corporate Parenting Promise by Lead Members and Senior Leaders across the Council and partners, a round table professional's event, a number of activities and events for children and young people including the Awesome Autumn Factor Awards and talent show. The week was great success and included support from partners across all areas including:

- All partners signing up to the Corporate Parenting Promise at a live event including the commitment to provide an open door for help and advice to care leavers whatever their age
- Partners supporting and attending the Awesome Kidz Awards, presenting prizes and certificates and the Awesome Autumn Factor talent show
- Support with events including the Bake-off with facilities provided by North Lindsey College, support with venues including 20:21, leisure facilities and staff to provide and support activities, funding bespoke activities including the Arcades, street sports and 5-a-side

Lead contributions to the week from within the Council included:

- Coordination of planning, information and communication and Arcade trip for young people – NLC Democratic Services
- Information / materials / web pages etc - NLC Communications Team
- Street Dance / Street Sports - NLC Learning Skills and Culture
- 20:21 activities/events - NLC Learning Skills and Culture
- Employability Event - NLC Learning Skills and Culture
- Awesome Kidz Awards/Autumn Factor (venue and arrangements, lights/sound/décor) - NLC Business Development
- COVID-19 safe protocols throughout - NLC Public Health and Health and Safety

The robust and effective approach to Corporate Parenting contributes to the improved stability of children in care and care leavers. It has enabled children and young people to be connected, contributed to their feeling safe through work with the emergency services, helped build self-esteem and improve confidence and enabled children in care and care leavers to increase employability and understanding of the workplace through the employability events.

Our collaborative work alongside local partners in the local telecoms industry has meant that our supported accommodation provided to our young people is WIFI enabled at no cost to our young people. This is supporting our young people to remain socially connected, develop essential life skill using the internet, as well as support their studies and employment searching. The remaining accommodation was also WIFI enabled during the early stages of 2022 (in line with the refreshed Care Leavers financial policy)

Continued support of Corporate Parents in promoting and communicating messages in relation to Fostering Recruitment and support also contributes to ensuring there is choice and flexibility in provision leading to increased stability, children developing positive, sustained relationships, reduced numbers of children placed with external providers and better outcomes for children and young people

Assurance and oversight

Assurance Framework

The Children and Families Assurance Learning and Development Framework Resilience articulates the arrangements for assurance and oversight across Children and Families, the Council and the wider partnership; delivery against our statutory and regulatory functions and progress against key areas of focus set out within our key strategic planning documents.

It also outlines our learning and development mechanisms, which consist of three elements:

- **service user voice and engagement**
- **performance, activity, compliance data and analysis**
- **case audit, quality assurance and practice observations**

The assurance framework is also linked to and has a relationship with the Access and Inclusion assurance arrangements to encompass the breadth of assurance, learning and improvement across Children and Families and as an additional source of assurance pertaining DCS statutory responsibilities. Further work is pending to rationalise all assurance, learning and development arrangements across Children and Families.

DCS Assurance Events

There has been a continued commitment to undertaking DCS assurance events which provide a direct line of sight between the DCS, senior leadership team and front-line practice. Events during the period have focussed around child protection, the Single Point of Contact and Integrated Multi Agency Partnership, Children’s Disability Services, the Youth Justice Partnership, child exploitation, the experiences of children in care and care leavers and outcomes for ages 4 to 12. Overall, the events **demonstrated that we have maintained our practice standards and that the quality of practice is strong**, underpinned by a passionate, motivated workforce who work collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. Areas for development are monitored through the monthly Case Audit Meeting.



Specific examples of impacts from young people and parents include:

- Parents benefitting from a consistent social worker, feeling listened to and able to share their views in key meetings i.e. core groups and conferences
- One parent, having left an abusive relationship, being supported through nursery provision, thus giving her time to adapt to being a single parent and access support
- One parent became alcohol free during the child protection plan and is proud of his journey and what he has achieved
- The work with the team helped the parent to manage and deal with their child’s behaviour
- Group work for young people has successfully continued throughout COVID-19 (in line with restrictions) i.e. for young people at risk of and/or experiencing child exploitation and those in the youth justice system with strong testimonials from young people and families regarding the positive impacts of services and support

We have now amplified the focus on communicating messages from DCS Assurance Events to the wider workforce via a 7-minute briefing, for which there has been positive feedback

Assurance and oversight

Independent Scrutiny

As part of our ongoing commitment to listening, learning, reviewing and adapting, we continue to take opportunities for independent scrutiny of our local arrangements and practice, from a Children’s Services perspective as well as through our Children’s MARS arrangements.

Children’s Services independent scrutiny has included a review of six potential serious cases which did not meet the criteria for notification to the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. This concluded that decision making is robust, thorough and thoughtful. Over a series of independent scrutiny activities focusing on the front door there has been the **review of 186 case records including Single Point of Contact enquiries, contacts, referrals, re-referrals, strategy discussions and assessments**. This has highlighted consistent identification of need and proportionate intervention to meet this need and reduce risk, robust decision making and outcomes for children. Strong partnerships are well embedded and the key area of focus identified was regarding the further strengthening of strategy discussions to include live time recording, the analysis of partner information sharing and enhancing the specificity of safeguarding and investigation planning. Partnership training has been undertaken which included a workshop delivered by the independent scrutineer. Ongoing assurance frameworks have highlighted the impact of these developments in practice

Children’s MARS independent scrutiny has included a case specific multi agency audit and practice learning line of sight event on a baby; a multi agency audit and practice learning line of sight event on four babies and young children aged 0 – 2; **a thematic assurance event on the front door** (which included the review of eight case records by two groups of Children’s MARS Board representatives); a thematic assurance event to review the services in place for children where there is Harmful Sexual Behaviour that encompassed a multi agency audit and practice learning line of sight event on two cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) in the family environment. Four different independent scrutiny officers have been involved in leading these events.



Overall, the events (across Children’s Services and Children’s MARS) demonstrated strong local practice and collaborative working from a flexible, skilled and knowledgeable workforce to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.

Examples of key headlines from the latest Children’s MARS independent scrutiny activity (in relation to CSA) include:

- The strength and utilisation of tools, interventions and research
- **Evidence of the impact of training on practice and application of learning from practice**
- **Relational working within the parameters of managing risk** and focus on keeping families together
- **Good co-ordination of plans and communication** between professionals
- Reflection that we have it right ‘the right plan, the right people at the right time’
- Robust senior leadership oversight and assurance and reflection built into the system
- **Effective use of family solutions**

The Children’s MARS annual report 2021/22 contains further reference to learning outcomes and areas for further consideration. Learning outcomes from all events have been shared across the children’s services and wider partnership workforce as appropriate to raise awareness and shape and influence best practice. Any actions associated with areas for development are monitored through the Case Audit Meeting (Children’s Services) and Safeguarding Pathway Learning and Improvement Group (Children’s MARS) as required.

Assurance and oversight

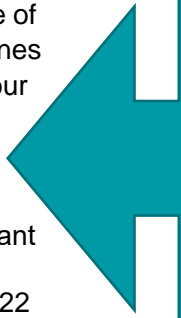
Independent Scrutiny

The national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel considered our local position regarding serious incident notifications. Our ongoing focus on quality assuring our local decision-making pertaining potential serious child safeguarding cases demonstrated that this level of scrutiny reinforces good practice whilst ensuring 'no complacency' and continuous learning. The same independent scrutiny will be undertaken in May 2022.

In addition, a **large scale review of the Children's MARS arrangements** has been undertaken in response to national cases. This extensive programme of independent scrutiny, led by four independent scrutiny officers from disciplines across social care, police and health, also served as our annual review of our local arrangements.

The review programme comprised of:

- review of agendas and papers for the Children's MARS Board and relevant sub groups
- viewing of a recording of the Children's MARS Board held in January 2022
- agency specific forums with practitioners and supervisors from safeguarding partner organisations, along with representatives from schools and settings
- **meeting with safeguarding partners and another with multi agency senior safeguarding leaders**
- **discussions with children, young people and families**
- desktop review of random sample of case records relating to referrals, re-referrals (including those from family members, friends, the public and anonymous), tracking of a selection of the aforementioned, and children in need, child protection and children in care cases that have been stepped down
- **multi agency practice learning event** focussing on case records of two children's cases



Overall, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive in terms of the robustness of the process and feedback also demonstrated strong practice and partnership working.

Independent scrutiny officers have led on developing a composite evaluative report, which will be shared with the Children's MARS Board and will ultimately serve as the independent scrutiny review of Children's MARS arrangements for 2021/22.

The report specifically referenced that:

- **multi agency safeguarding arrangements in North Lincolnshire are strong** and partnership working is valued at all levels
- statutory requirements are met and are regarded as a minimum
- the **key partners work well together and demonstrate respect and understanding** for the contribution their agencies make towards keeping children safe
- there is a culture of high challenge and high support which is evident throughout the partnership.
- the **One Family Approach is articulated with ease by practitioners** and the document assists with the process of achieving a shared awareness of risk and resilience across agencies
- the 'voice of the child' was evident throughout where meaningful engagement with children and young people influenced decisions made and actions taken
- the business of the Children's MARS Board is conducted with efficiency taking into account learning from local and national issues
- **effective mechanisms are in place for disseminating key messages to the front line**
- the importance of supporting practitioners in the difficult work they have to do is understood
- **a comprehensive training programme is in place and is well used**
- at no point has the pandemic been seen as a barrier to keeping children safe - there was a swift adaptation to the new environment and the benefits of technology to engage previously reluctant family members has been articulated
- independent scrutiny is one of a number of methods which the key partners use to maintain a clear line of sight to the multi-agency front line in their desire for continuous improvement

Eight recommendations were identified, some of which have already been commenced and an action plan will be developed and progress reported into the SPLIG and Children's MARS Board as appropriate.

Assurance and oversight

Internal Audit: There is a commitment to engaging in the Council's internal audit programme and recent audits include care leavers support; fostering and connected persons; section 17; children's direct payments; child protection conferences; youth justice; and regional adoption agency. In all cases, the residual risk was found to be low, and there has been substantial assurance on the effectiveness of the control environment and evidence of strong controls in place

Assurance systems and processes

A **Children's Services Systems and Leadership Confirm and Challenge** function has been established to provide an opportunity to bring together system leaders to provide peer to peer high challenge and high support.

This has been further strengthened during the period with **confirm and challenge meetings** established to focus on specific themes and functions across Children and Families, including pre-birth to 2, front door, child protection, permanence, and children in care. The meetings provide an opportunity to bring together key officers to provide additional, oversight, assessment and action as needed.

There has also been continued **Service Lead and Service Manager dip sampling, oversight and audit** of front door practice. Good practice is evident and areas of development have been shared and implemented.

There has also been **increased assurance in regard to children's services assessments** which include daily manager oversight, daily briefings, weekly senior management assurance meetings, implementation of updated reporting systems and increased supervision. This is to ensure responses to families are proportionate and timely and outcomes are robust including step out planning

Democratic Scrutiny

A services to children summary position and headlines update was presented to the **Children and Education Scrutiny Panel**. The panel acknowledged that our One Family Approach is permeating through conversations, behaviours, practice and outcomes for children; they were assured that performance and standards have been maintained across services to children; they also acknowledged key achievements; and were assured of progress in relation to education and renewal; all of which is contributing to improving outcomes for children and families.

The **Best Start Plan was also presented to the Children and Education Scrutiny Panel**. The panel acknowledged the plan which clarified the shared priorities and implementation plans, received an overview of the Early Years Outcome Framework and were assured regarding the arrangements for Imagination Library, staff training and development and multi agency working.

The **North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Plan was also presented to the North Lincolnshire Places Scrutiny Panel**. The panel was assured regarding the key partnership priorities, the shared vision and ambitions for children and that the North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Partnership is making good progress in achieving positive outcomes for children and the community

Oversight of unregulated provision

We have continued to strengthen our offer in relation to provision for older children in care, and children aged 16 / 17 presenting as homeless and requiring support. This has included updates to procedures for children in care and care leavers around expectations of practice, as well as dedicated practice standards that are tracked for all children who live in unregulated supported accommodation or other arrangements. This ensures there is: robust oversight on the cohort of young people, with a clear line of sight on their experiences whilst living in these arrangements; a focus on pre-placement procedures, which means that it is clearly evidenced that any young person moving into an unregulated provision is doing so when the plan has been robustly overseen and the decision making validated as in line with the needs of the young person; and a robust package of support in place prior to the young person moving to the accommodation and throughout whilst living there. We also continue to monitor the quality of accommodation through management inspections of accommodation, as well as weekly and monthly inspections by the dedicated property services team where required

We have embraced our One Family Approach which is based upon the fewest best interventions with our children, young people and families to build upon their strengths and resilience to find or be enabled to find solutions

Through workforce development and our ongoing commitment to working towards our ambition for children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities, the One Family Approach, underpinned by the One Family Approach Practice Model is permeating through systems, process, behaviour and practice

The voice of children and their families is central to everything we do. **The Children's Services Participation and Consultation Group** is being reconfigured to become the Children and Families Voice and Engagement Group to bring together managers across Children and Families to provide a strategic overview of voice and engagement activity. A Children and Families Voice and Engagement Operational Group, will bring together service managers, to plan and co-ordinate voice and engagement activity and consider emerging themes and areas for action.

A summary of voice and engagement activity and impacts in 2021/22 has been developed, the focus of which is on general participation and consultation activity, thematic consultations and child and family feedback.

Thematic consultation

In addition to individual, team and thematic collaboration, feedback and consultation, we also undertake service wide thematic consultation on key themes. During the period these included emotional well-being and support in education and training.

The first, concluding in June 2021, focused on emotional well-being and how this is supported including whether children feel they have someone to talk to about how they feel, both in their home and their schools/colleges; how they access support and information and whether they find it helpful; awareness of community-based groups and activities and preferences in how they receive and access information

407 children and adults provided their feedback to the consultation. Key themes and learning identified included:

- The very large majority of children and young people shared they have someone to talk to at home and wider networks
- The large majority also shared that they have someone to talk to in school/college
- Children identified additional social and physical activities that they accessed that were helpful and enjoyable, others said that they preferred to spend time with their friends or reading and playing games
- Children and young people preferred a variety of differing means of involvement with face-to-face being the significant preference. Children also said that they liked the use of social media/text and on-line tools with some examples where children said they liked letters and email
- The large majority of parents/carers responding to the question indicated that they feel able to talk to their child. A small minority of parents did not feel they had the skills or opportunity to talk to their child about their feelings. These were parents with children not in their care
- Overall, the majority of parents/carer responding said that they were aware of the resources available and also identified that they preferred a variety of communication methods

Learning from the consultation has been shared with managers, partners, teams and workers to inform and develop practice and learn from the feedback from the children and their families

Thematic consultation

The second thematic consultation concluded in October 2021 and focused on the help children received to achieve in their education, employment and training including whether they feel supported to achieve, any challenges, the impact of COVID-19 and suggestions to improve the support provided.

259 children and adults provided their feedback to the consultation. Key themes and learning identified included:

- Families were clear overall that they felt that **education/training settings have supported the children and their families well** and the majority of children consulted across services said that they enjoyed school
- Children and their parents felt that they had support to attend and valued the relational aspects to this saying that it helped them either stay engaged in their education or re-engage. The provision of resources, materials and bespoke support was also appreciated by many. There were some however who felt that they could have previously received more help in this area
- **The importance of friendship groups and relationships** was emphasised throughout with many expressing how they felt that this had been affected by the restrictions
- The emotional impact of COVID-19 and the restrictions was a feature. There were many examples of how children were supported with this, and also a small number of children and parents felt that this wasn't always fully considered
- Those **older young people who were employed felt generally well-supported** by their employers and had the support they needed to access their employment

Services shared the findings of the consultation with their staff and carers and across wider partnership meetings including with the Children and Young People's Partnership to disseminate the messages and learning and inform practice

Consultation of the children and family offer

A further consultation took place in December 2021, where 274 parents/carers provided their views on proposals for integrating the child and family offer, including the family hubs delivery model. Respondents expressed a wish for greater information about what is going on in their communities, and supported the proposals for family hubs, as well as plans to make use of a wider range of local places for accessing groups and learning opportunities.

The views obtained through the consultation have helped to shape the latest iteration of the **Family and Community Offer** which will form the basis of future plans to develop family hubs in North Lincolnshire.

Relational practice

Feedback from the mother of a young person who was previously on a child protection plan as a result of risk outside the home fed back to the Independent Reviewing Officer - eight months following de-registration:

Mum said her daughter is doing really well and she wanted to say thank you for the help and support they received. All the workers involved were 'like family' and she would love to help other parents who are experiencing and going through what she has as a parent. Mum spoke really fondly of the social worker, FaSST worker and others who helped them through the difficult and challenging journey and she was extremely proud to share about her daughter's progress, including going to college. She also talked about her own experiences as a parent and how she felt supported by everyone involved during the past few years

Following the initial representation, we have approached the parent to engage with her to co-produce a case study to demonstrate her journey and her experiences of services. It is anticipated that the case study will be utilised as part of our education and training programme

Strategic voice and engagement

In the North Lincolnshire Children's Commissioning Strategy, we have clearly articulated our commitment to listening to the views and experiences of stakeholders to contribute to a system that works for all children and families and to achieve our ambition for children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities.

Across the Children's MARS arrangements, there is a commitment to **listening, learning, reviewing and adapting** from views and experiences and ensuring people are involved in decisions that affect their lives. To contribute to this, there is a range of opportunities for children, young people, parents, families and communities to have their say at an individual, service and strategic level and evidence of engagement and co-production

Experts by experience

We are developing dedicated, paid roles for people with experiences of services to support and challenge us to make sure our information, support and services for children and families are co-produced, leading to better outcomes.

Funding has also been secured across the partnership to contribute to these roles and a job description has been developed for new **'Supporting Families in Partnership Assistant'** posts. Recruitment processes are underway and plans developed for the induction, support and infrastructure arrangements including the interface across wider Children and Families

Children and Young People's Partnership

The Children and Young People's Partnership continue to meet on a quarterly basis and there continues to be robust agency representation as well as young people's engagement. The changes in the government's roadmap and the easing of restrictions has enabled a reorientation of young voice activity and at recent meetings there have been a number of updates from young people's representatives regarding recent activity, impacts and areas of focus. Partners also led on inputs, facilitated discussions and identified opportunities for collaborative partnership action and support in relation to suicide prevention, mental health support teams, young Healthwatch, digital information advice and guidance project, holiday activity and food programme, education recovery and renewal, the best start plan and the SEND and inclusion workforce development plan

Children's Challenge

A 'one year on' document was presented to the Children and Young People's Partnership in November 2021, which summarises the progress made in relation to the identified challenges for partnership action and challenges for children, young people and families themselves. Specific consultation is underway to refresh the Children's Challenge, which will also take account of the outcomes of indirect consultation activity, i.e. Children and Young People Lives Survey (primary), Make Your Mark, positive activities consultation and children and families offer. This will be presented to the Children and Young People's Partnership and Integrated Children's Trust and will help to shape and influence the refresh of the Children's Commissioning Strategy

Participation functions

We are building and developing our dedicated children's participation team to further strengthen and support co-production, consultation and participation across the whole of children's social care services, maintaining a clear focus on the voice of our children in care and care leavers

Key highlights

- The overall repeat activity is reduced compared to last year. Re-contacts have-reduced this year from 20.6% to 14.8% this is lower than the previous years figure, this evidences the clear drive and focus to ensure families are supported at the lowest level and that step out planning is robust to meet need. A continued focus remains on repeat referrals as although this remains lower than statistical neighbours (SN) and England average (EA) at 16%, this is very slightly higher than last year
- The percentage of re-referrals during this period is 16%, this shows an increase of 2.8% on the 2020/21 year-end figure which was 13.2%. It remains lower than the latest EA at 21% and SN average at 22%
- During 2021/22, no child was deplaned that was subject of a child protection plan for more than 2 years. The figure for de-plans where there had been a plan for more than 2 years, was very low for 2020/21 at 1.7%. For 2020/21 SN and EA figures were 3.1% and 3.7% respectively
- Child Protection rates are low and have been sustained over the long term – 37.9 (per 10,000) at end of March 2022, and 25 (per 10,000) at end March 2021, compared to 41 (per 10,000) nationally and 49 (per 10,000) for SN averages. The rate of children on a child protection plan in 2019/20 was 21, a reduction from previous years
- A low number of child protection plans are second or subsequent plans – 10.3% for 2021/22, compared with 22% nationally and 22% SN(for 2020/21). This is an improvement from 2020/21 at 15%
- For 2021/22, 729 early help assessments have been completed. This is an increase from 2020/21 when there were 419 completed
- At the end of March 2022, 451 children were receiving targeted support from the Family Support Service (Targeted Intervention cases and Targeted Prevention cases). A further 150 children were open to targeted support alongside a specialist plan, reflecting the role played by Family Support Service when intensive help is needed to create change
- During 2021/22, 36% of public law proceedings have concluded within 26 weeks, compared to our 2020/21 year-end figure of 64%. The average weeks completion figure has increased to 35.7 weeks, compared to the 2020/21 figure of 25.3 weeks, and we are running above the latest national figure of 32 weeks
- At the end of the 2018/19 academic year 72% of children in North Lincolnshire had reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is in line with national and an improvement on 2018 data. Key outcomes at KS1, 2 and 4 are in line with or above national
- Identification of SEND – 2021/22 data shows that North Lincolnshire is in line with national data in relation to the % of all children with an EHCP (North Lincs – 3.1%, national 2020/21 – 3.7%) and those at SEN Support (North Lincs – 13.1%, national 2020/21 – 12.2%)
- As of January 2022 provisional figures show, children with an EHCP are slightly more likely to attend a mainstream setting in North Lincs than national (North Lincs – 40.0%, national 2020/21 – 39.9%)
- At the end of 2020/21, 211 families have been ‘turned around’ leading to successful The Family Initiative claims and contributing to positive outcomes for children within their families, taking the total number of claims to 852 for the second phase of the programme. For 2021/22 there have been 220 families identified for a claim under the programme where whole-family helped improved and sustained outcomes. This means the target for the year has been achieved

Targeted family support

During 2021/2022 progress has continued in strengthening the targeted family support offer of help, and in aligning it to need in accordance with the One Family Approach and the fewest, best interventions. As the children’s centres and FaSST family support team have worked to integrate over the pandemic period, the offer to children and families is now more clearly defined with preventative and targeted ‘pathways’ that enable more bespoke responses to different family circumstances and needs

As demand for family support services has increased during the pandemic, the integrated offer is continuing to ensure that children and family needs are responded to without delay and at a level proportionate to their needs. A key focus of the offer is to build resilience and strengthen people’s connections with their community offer and local services, and from a more preventative perspective work with partners to ensure ‘hidden’ children are identified and families benefit from the earliest help. This is evidenced in audit work and user feedback, and seen as part of the wider impact of early help in demand at the front door

PIT Stop

The PIT Stop was piloted in March 2021 and has now been mainstreamed into practice. It embeds the principles and values of the One Family Approach by ensuring the needs of children and families are met at the right level by the most appropriate person ensuring the fewest, best interventions. It was developed with a view to providing a more streamlined and robust offer of help to children and families as, previously, a high proportion (around 70%) of all information shared by the Police concluded with no further action being taken. The embedding of the PIT Stop has reduced this considerably. The PIT Stop jointly considers police information (that has already been through police decision making processes and determined that partnership triage is required) with a view to identification of potential levels of need and appropriate responses in line with North Lincolnshire’s Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire document (refreshed in December 2021). It does this by:

- Taking a One Family Approach to decision making, where the partnership works to identify early risks / needs, harm and vulnerability, and the most appropriate person to lead an offer of help
- Enhancing the partnership link between needs, vulnerability and locality-based problem solving
- Ensuring holistic information is shared to inform effective decision making without delay
- Strengthening the quality of information available, with consistent analysis of need
- Identifying themes and emerging trends within communities to build resilience enabling proactive targeting of resources
- Building intelligence that encourages a long-term approach to reduce future risk, needs and vulnerability which in turn builds resilience and reduces demand and cost
- Sharing the relevant information to identify how need can be met at the lowest possible level by the most appropriate person

The PIT Stop has recently been further developed to incorporate domestic abuse notifications which were previously considered in a separate DA Triage process. This has created an even more integrated forum for considering and responding quickly to emerging need

- PIT Stop has been effective in ensuring holistic partner information is shared to understand the lived experience of the child and ensure early intervention is provided by the most appropriate agency to prevent need from escalating
- The quality and analysis of partner information has been strengthened and there is a joint accountability for decisions made
- **Its effectiveness is evidenced in the low number of children entering into children’s services following initial discussion and very low number of repeat discussions**
- The number of contacts made by the police which concluded with No further action has reduced from 70% in March 2021 to around 30% currently
- The analysis of the CEVT to understand emerging risks has enabled proactive early intervention in key hotspot locations which has prevented escalation

Integrated Multi Agency Partnership (front door)

At the end 2021/22, populations in all areas have increased when compared to 2020/21 and 2019/20, with the exception of SPOC. The reduction upon last year is only 96 enquiries, though this would potentially be higher without the work of the PIT Stop. The number of contacts completed in 2021/22 is higher than the previous four years and the number of referrals is higher than the previous two years, largely due to the initial spike in Q1 and Q2. Recontacts have reduced and this is now lower than the previous two years. There have been more repeat referrals this year than last year, but this is lower than in 2019/20.

The rate of children’s services assessments has seen a corresponding increase, as has the rate of section 47 child protection investigations. This rise in demand led to a dip in performance of the timeliness of recording and authorising assessments within 45 days, due to the presence of unplanned changes in staffing levels at the front door. Action was taken quickly to address this, with capacity deployed flexibly from the wider service to help meet demand and quickly return to ‘normal’ high levels of performance. A review of children’s services assessments authorised at 45 + days has shown that there was no delay to the assessment and intervention work itself following referral meaning that help was offered at the right time and children continued to be safeguarded when needed.

In North Lincolnshire assessments are seen as interventions to effect change, drawing upon a range of tools and resources to build upon family strengths and enable family resilience. This means that fewer children require statutory plans following assessment and families continue to be supported at the lowest level. The impact of this is demonstrated in the low numbers of children who have repeated contact with the front door.

Responding to this challenge over summer 2021 was seen as an opportunity to build additional resilience into front door arrangements. Taking a One Family Approach, steps were taken to further strengthen the family support interface with the social work assessment team to maximise opportunities for early change work. In addition, management oversight was strengthened at decision making points to help support consistency in responses to family need, with family support managers providing additional challenge and support. As a result, as demand at the front door has stabilised, throughput of need has been managed as a system, not resulting in increases in child in need, child protection, or children in care populations. In fact, the strength of the system response and commitment to the One Family Approach Practice Model has led to a further reduction in rates of key statutory populations.

A further aspect of the response at the front door over this recent period has been the increased management focus given to audit and assurance activity to ensure consistently robust decision making, not just at the front door but throughout the help and protection pathway. A number of regular thematic ‘**Confirm and Challenge**’ meetings have been established to focus upon specific areas of practice, helping to strengthen the Assurance Framework which has been developed to replace the previous Learning and Improvement Framework. As ever though, the focus in North Lincolnshire continues to be on outcomes for children and families, and how learning from data, audit, and listening to users of services helps us to deliver the best help possible so that children are in their families, schools, and communities.

Our sustained focus upon and investment in early help has led to the number of referrals to children’s services being consistently lower than England and Statistical Neighbour comparators. The evidence from audit activity at the front door and via multi agency audit activity show that early help activity is consistently robust, and very often takes the form of informal interventions reflecting the permissions set out in the Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire document (refreshed in December 2021) to provide early help at the right point, when needed.



The quality of practice continues to be strong. Levels of need are consistently applied and intervention effects change for children and families

Children’s needs are identified and responded to appropriately without delay. Families in North Lincolnshire have continued to receive the help they need at the earliest stage and the lowest level to prevent needs from escalating. The values and principles of the one family approach are embedded within practice and ensure that children remain within their families, their schools and communities

There are strong partnership arrangements to ensure information is shared timely to inform holistic decisions for children and the best outcomes are achieved

Children in need and child protection

At the end of March 2022, there were 824 children identified as 'in need' with a further 132 children open for a children's services assessment

Of the open cases, 135 children were subject to a child protection plan (which includes 2 children in care), 358 were subject to a child in need plan, 9 children were open for private law matters, 190 children were in care (which includes 6 who are unaccompanied children and seeking asylum) and 115 were care leavers (which includes 44 former unaccompanied children and seeking asylum) plus 2 care leavers with a qualifying status

At the end of March 2021, 15% of children in need in North Lincolnshire had a disability compared to 2020/21 statistical neighbours 13% and England average 13%

Children's help and protection pathway

Led through the **Children's Help and Protection Pathway (CHaPP)** group, the leadership and oversight of the help and protection pathway is robust and effective, from the interface of early help to children in care and those requiring specialist provision. There is good multi agency attendance at the CHaPP and evidence of high support and high challenge. In 2021/22, the CHaPP has continued the focus upon 'hidden harms', seeking specific assurances on the partnership responses to babies pre-birth to 2, and in relation to emotional wellbeing, and mental health.

The group has noted the extensive evidence of effective multi agency practice and decision making, as seen within performance and populations data and the feedback from children and families. The group has provided challenge in relation to specific areas of the system, including in relation to arrangements for preventing serious self-harm and suicide.

There have been enhancements to the performance framework which provides a richer picture of the local populations and prevalence. The framework now includes CSA data, CAMHS inpatient data and hospital data where a child presents at A&E with mental health issues. There has also been an agreement for attendance at CP conferences to be built into the report for routine reporting.



The work and focus of the CHaPP group in relation to the hidden emotional harms associated with COVID-19 can be seen in the development of health-led activity to undertake 'deep dive' audits of children presenting at A+E with mental health concerns, and resulting commitments to establish ongoing forums for reviewing multi-agency responses to these children. As a result of the data, other opportunities for deep dives have been identified i.e. child protection medicals (ongoing)

Oversight and decision making

There continues to be **regular case supervision and manager authorisation of all records within the front door**. The morning briefings provide strong direction and reflection with staff and ensure prioritisation and progress. This oversight and decision making has been enhanced to ensure the rationale for decisions is clear and to consider how this decision has been achieved. Data whiteboards continue to be reviewed daily by workers, practice supervisors, service managers and the service lead - these whiteboards also inform discussion within the daily briefings.

The Decision Making and Allocation Meeting continues to ensure that children and families are receiving support at the right level and are only have a statutory intervention where needed and get help at the earliest point. Caseload management within the meeting ensures that social worker's caseloads are manageable in accordance with level of experience and complexity.

Enhanced management oversight of child in need and child protection cohorts aimed at identifying early increasing risk has been established through a weekly populations meeting. The meeting membership includes service managers from social work, family support and the independent reviewing service as well as practice supervisors and IRO's (CP/CIC). Increasing risk is identified through child in need/child protection planning/supervision where there are concerns that there is limited progress or escalating risk, which could lead to a child protection plan or entry under the Public Law Outline (PLO)/Care. The purpose is to identify additional support/wrap around planning that would prevent children being at risk of significant harm or entering public law/care. There is also oversight of children who have a child in need plan or child protection plan where there are private law proceedings and children in care with a care plan of restoration to ensure there is no drift and delay

The manager and assurance frameworks ensure that statutory requirements are met and the quality of practice is high

The weekly assurance meeting has ensured a continued focus on assessment timescales and progressed these to be aligned to the needs of children

Daily oversight drives forward practice developments such and ensures live reflection in action

Children and families receive help at the earliest point to support need and risk. There is continued weekly oversight of the populations to ensure that any escalating/increasing risk is identified quickly with support tailored round the family



Multi agency learning and development

The Children's MARS education and training programme was published at the beginning of April 2021 and core training has been successfully delivered via worksheets, e-learning, MS teams training and face to face training (in line with restrictions and where required). The development and delivery of training is responsive to emerging need and the training offer has been enhanced throughout the year as appropriate. Examples of additional training (over and above the core programme) held since April include; Working with young women and girls affected by gangs and county lines; Child Sexual Abuse; Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage; Brook Traffic Light tool; Female Genital Mutilation; and Prevent.

For all training, multi-agency attendees fed back an increase in confidence in the subject matter, that the course contributed to their understanding on the topic and that it would be helpful to their professional development and subsequent practice. Through the Children's MARS Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group, we have endorsed the Yorkshire and Humber Multi Agency Safeguarding Trainers Multi Agency Safeguarding Children Training standards, which provide a minimum standard in relation to the delivery of our local training programme

Youth Justice Partnership

- 77 young people were receiving a service from the Youth Justice Partnership at 31/03/22, compared to 60 at the end of 2020/21
- During 2021/22, 232 programmes have started, indicating an increase of 53 programmes from the total of 179 for the previous year. 88% of the programmes started since the end of March have been for prevention, diversion and out of court. Just 17 of the programmes have been court outcomes such as Referral Orders or Youth Rehabilitation Orders
- 81% of these programmes have been for males, and 4% in relation to children from a black or minority ethnic background. 9% of programmes have been for children in care The North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Plan has been reviewed, updated and approved by the North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Strategic Partnership Board and submitted to the Youth Justice Board.

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The plan is set in the context of the broader strategic framework, and our ambition for children to be in their family, in their school and in their community. It is underpinned by and embeds our integrated One Family Approach. The voice of children is central to the plan and it is informed by the Children’s Challenge 2020/24.

The **Youth Justice Partnership** have further enhanced their integration of services streamlining the referral pathway into Youth Justice Services, the Children’s Exploitation Intervention Team (CEIT) and substance use service (Delta). In line with to the One Family Approach the new pathway builds on a joint approach that ensures the right service is involved with the child/family at the right time whilst minimising changes in the professionals involved. Robust Management oversight is built into this process and feeds into the targeted early help profile across the authority.

A Speech and Language pilot has successfully completed within the Youth Justice Partnership and has further enhanced the skills of workers in the service in ensuring children’s needs are met as well as case support and direct work with children by a dedicated Speech and Language Worker. This will be built on and embedded within the service.

The success of the Youth Justice Plan can be seen in the improved outcomes it continues to achieve including:

- The number of children who are enter the youth justice system for the first time remains low, demonstrating our commitment to diverting children away from the criminal justice system where possible
- **The number of custodial sentences in North Lincolnshire remains very low with no custodial sentences starting during 2021/22 and no children in custody on 31/03/22**
- The percentage of children in care who have been involved in offending behaviour remains very low
- Partnership commitment is strong and evidenced through effective contributions at the Youth Justice Strategic Partnership Board
- Young people living in suitable accommodation at the end of an order has remained strong and above the national average
- Prevention and out of court disposals continue to be a high and increasing proportion of the work of the partnership demonstrating the effectiveness of early help and interventions



Reducing parental conflict

Reducing parental conflict continues to be given strong strategic and operational focus in North Lincolnshire. A £22,000 grant has been successfully applied for to develop a series of training packages for the children’s workforce, including ‘Arguing Better’ and ‘Getting it right for children’, focusing upon separated parents

Council targeted family support teams now deliver a strong reducing parental conflict offer, from one of the number of trained practitioners

Contest (Prevent and Protect)

We have a robust and comprehensive approach to reducing the risks around radicalisation through a combination of clear processes for assessment, referral and support for young people who are at risk of radicalisation, a strong Channel Panel approach and wide-ranging staff training. This is complimented by our approach to public and staff safety through a series of initiatives for both the children’s workforce and the wider council and partner staff. Chaired by the Head of Early Help and Protection, the Chanel Panel continues to meet on a monthly basis and is compliant with guidance.

A programme of independent scrutiny of local arrangements was undertaken as an opportunity for senior leaders to seek assurance as to the quality and effectiveness of the Channel Panel arrangements and interventions, and the quality of evidence that is in place in relation to policies, procedures, systems, and processes and to understand the current position regarding any areas of improvement identified in the assurance statement. The programme included desktop research to take account of relevant national and local documentation, attendance at December 2021 Channel Panel as participatory observer, review of systems and processes pertaining a specific case. The outcomes of the independent scrutiny of the Channel Panel arrangements identified that there is close partnership working; evidence of trust and respect; that panel members appear to be well informed and conscious of the boundaries of their respective roles. A subsequent development session considered the independent scrutiny report and an action plan has been developed which also highlights progress made to date.

Focus on vulnerable children in education

Strong leadership has resulted in sustained improvements in the percentage of settings, schools and colleges that are recognised as ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted.

School improvement functions, including school to school support, includes a sharp focus on vulnerable children in the annual quality of performance review which is undertaken with all participating schools and academies (69 out of 79).

Where concerns are revealed in the joint self evaluation, follow up work takes place at whole school and leadership level to ensure schools are effectively delivering an inclusive curriculum which meets children’s individual needs, as well as specialist challenge and support to drive improvements

There have been a range of discussions with across children’s services and education inclusion to develop our response to the survey pertaining the **Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges**. A statement has been published on the Children’s MARS website regarding our local response and current offer, with much information and guidance for schools and collages already available on the website including training that has additionally been developed and/or disseminated by education leads.

The **daily tasking meetings**, which were established in May 2020 in response to COVID-19, continue to be embedded into practice and they are continually reviewed to reflect the changing context maintaining a One Family Approach to supporting more vulnerable children to access education as appropriate.

The meetings help provide an **opportunity to enable the workforce to think creatively, respond quickly, seek advice, and support from partners, and implement effective plans to improve the circumstances and increase aspirations for children**. We have supported and empowered families through multi-disciplinary direct work to raise awareness of the importance of education, raising aspirations and building confidence and resourcefulness in finding solutions to promote attendance and achievement.

The team of professionals have supported children in accessing uniform, creating individual timetables allowing children to attend school, supporting families to take their child to school, and being part of the team around the child for continued support, wherever necessary. Practitioners involved with the daily tasking meeting share that the meetings has:

- **Built on and emphasised the collective responsibility to ensure vulnerable children are in education**
- **Increased connectivity and fostered stronger relations between staff.**
- **Improved confidence and upskilled professionals to challenge on behalf of children and their families**

Learning from the voice of children and families has also informed this meeting.

Focus on vulnerable children in education

In order to demonstrate the impact of the Daily Tasking Meeting two case examples have been identified with an analysis provided the children’s lead professionals.



KW was referred to the daily tasking meeting in April 2021, he was 17 at the time. KW was identified as not in Employment, Education or Training. KW was also on the MACE agenda due to concerns he was at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation and being exploited by an Organised Crime Group.

*The impact of the daily tasking meeting has been that there has been a **clear line of sight on KW’s opportunities in relation to Education, Employment and Training** with the social worker and key professionals being re-directed and encouraged on a regular basis to continue to build a relationship with KW, discuss his future aspirations and engage him in relevant work and agencies. The Daily Tasking Meeting ensured on emphasis on education, employment, and training so momentum was not lost.*

After 7 months, this resulted in him accepting a referral to Empower and KW attended a telephone appointment in November 2021 and then two face-to-face appointments in December 2021, where he updated his CV and secured employment. KW was supported to gain employment at Rocal in Brigg as a manufacturer of high quality door panels.

*With the Daily Tasking Meeting encouraging persistence, the multi-agency group has supported KW and **he has now been diverted away from risks associated with Child Criminal Exploitation and is now in employment.***



JB is a 12 year old male child. He became known to the Youth Justice Partnership due to a public order offence at his home address which consisted of conflict with his mother and partner.

School concerns were identified when he first became open to the YJP on the 10/11/2020. JB’s attendance was 64.29% with 22 authorised absences and 8 unauthorised absences with this continuing to decrease. This resulted in his attendance dropping to 6.95% between 2/11/2020 to 23/7/2021.

It had also been identified by professionals that JB’s emotional well-being had been impacted upon, including his sleeping and eating patterns.

*The YJP Education inclusion officer identified that they **felt empowered by the Daily Tasking meeting to challenge the school.** SENDIASS and Education Inclusion Officer were involved with a challenge to the Secondary School. This included submitting an EHCP referral and to consider a nurturing alternative provision to phase JB back into and engage with his education.*

***JB has since returned to full time education** into a provision in line with his assessed needs. JB is thriving and he has improved emotional wellbeing and has had no further offending.*

Key highlights

- There were 190 children in care as at 31/03/22, this compares to 207 as at 31/03/21. Our latest figure equates to a rate of 53 compared to 67 national and 77 statistical neighbour comparators
- During 2021/22, the children entering care figures have reduced with 63 episodes (62 children) entering care, This is a small decrease on last years performance where there were 64 episodes of children entering care
- 11% of the children in care population are placed in connected people placements, compared to 14% at the end of 2020/21. This is slightly lower than the latest national average for 2020/21 of 15%
- During 2021/22, 44% of children leaving care have done so to achieve permanence (Adoption, Residence Order/Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order), this is a significant increase compared to our 2020/21 figure of 28% and compares well to the latest national published figure for 2020/21 also 28%. In addition to this 28% of the 2021/22 cohort, so far, have returned to live with their parent/other person with parental responsibility
- The 2021/22 position for the number of children in care experiencing 3 or more placements is 8%. This has maintained the performance achieved in 2020/21. Our figures compare well to the latest national figure of 9% for 2020/21
- There has been an improvement for the 2021/22 period for the long-term stability of children in care with a year-end figure of 74% compared to our 2020/21 result of 69%. This is above the latest national average of 70% for 2020/21
- During 2021/22 3% (3 children) of children in care for a year or more and aged 10 or over have been convicted/youth cautioned for an offence. This compares to 2% (3 children) for 2021/22 and 2% nationally for 2020/21
- Children continue to be placed in-house with a further increase in the percentage of children placed with North Lincolnshire approved foster carers. As of March 2022, 80% of children in care are living with North Lincolnshire approved foster carer. Appropriate matches are identified for all children entering foster care
- During 2021/22, 24 children in care have been missing for a total of 93 occasions. This is an improvement on 2020/21 performance of 26 children with 147 missing episodes

Reducing children in care and reunification

In 2021/22, there has been a continuing focus on helping children to remain in their families, schools, and communities. Overall numbers of children in care have continued to reduce, continuing a longer-term downward trend and reflecting our changing cohort and the focus on early help and achieving reunification and permanence for those who do enter care.

We have continued to support children remaining at / or returning home with their parents / family with a sustained focus on early help and support packages in place. The values and vision enshrined in our One Family Approach Practice Model, are at the heart of our practice for children in care. We have remained committed to ensure that all children entering care have bespoke care plans capturing their holistic needs and that care planning is swiftly explored, with timely decisions made for permanence.

We strongly believe that children need to remain connected to their local community and the **You Say Who model is well embedded into daily practice** and children's connections and relationships are paramount in this. By using the You Say Who model children have made reconnections with family members and people that are important to them. During this summer months we have seen children have positive holidays with extended family, as a result of such work. We have developed working toolkits to use with children and young people to explain this model and are continuing to develop the range of direct work.

Our value base is entrenched in our continued work with parents, and the use of assessment tools such as the NSPCC reunification is considered for all children in care on a minimum of a yearly basis. Our positive regard for parents is captured in the assessments with a strength-based model of practice whilst assessing the parental changes and signposting for support where needed.

Our ability to offer stability of care placements is a key focus. We have continued with a monthly oversight of children in care placements to ensure any issues are worked through using a family solutions model with carers



Children are supported to remain connected with people that matter to them and are supported to feel valued, loved and supported. We hold on to our parents and continue to offer support and intervention to equip them in their abilities, ideally restoring children home to their care or helping them work through individual issues to be able to parent subsequent children

Since the 1st April 2021, following successful interventions and outcomes, 33 children have returned home to their parents/ or family members care, with 30 children continuing to have the opportunity to live with their parents/ or family members

Fostering recruitment and stability

The Fostering Service and partners work closely to deliver the **North Lincolnshire Sufficiency Strategy** and associated Fostering Recruitment Strategy. Building on the success in recruitment of new carers during 2020/21, the Fostering Service have worked closely with Corporate Parents and local companies to expand awareness and many local businesses have offered promotions to foster families in support of the service.

Whilst there was a dip in enquiries over the summer period following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, investment in further advertising space, social media expansion and review of the application process through feedback from prospective carers **has seen this significantly improve**. This has been supported by a number of radio, social media and roadshow events that have continued to take place including a targeted radio campaign over December and new fostering banners placed at Supermarkets across the area.

Training has continued to be offered to foster carers. Topics have included child sexual exploitation/child criminal exploitation/online grooming, 'lying and shame', 'delegated authority', 'attachment', 'therapeutic parenting-based training' and 'safer care'. This is in addition to a suite of e-learning training courses, TSD workshops and first aid training

The service has allocated a dedicated short breaks Fostering Social Worker who drives forward development, working closely with partners such as the disability social work services and the Cygnets

Face to face engagement groups resumed during the period. This includes 'Take Part Thursday' throughout the summer providing activities, engagement and breaks to support children in foster care and their carers

A **virtual fostering celebration event** also took place during Fostering fortnight. Households who registered for the event were sent treats and cakes to eat. Videos were made by Corporate Parents to say 'thank you' and children gave feedback about why fostering is such a positive in their lives. Feedback from the event was very positive, and many saying it was emotional and made them feel proud

The impact on children's lives has included:

- continued improvement in stability within foster care helping children have meaningful relationships
- children being part of their own communities through better choice and matching with carers
- all children entering care over the last 2 years being placed with North Lincolnshire Foster Carers enabling them to remain in their schools, engage with their families and be a part of the community of North Lincolnshire
- **no children have been placed within external foster carer or residential provision for over 2 years**
- the number of children in externally commissioned placements has continued to fall with only 4 children currently living in independent fostering agencies and 4 in residential provision

This demonstrates both the success in providing the help families need leading to a reduced care population and the availability, flexibility and choice of North Lincolnshire approved foster carers.

This enables children to have a sense of belonging, feel more valued by their community within North Lincolnshire.

Voice of children in care and families

We have strengthened our transitional work for our young people aged 15 and above to capture the drive for high quality initial Pathway Planning. Our young person's self-assessment tool for the initial Pathway Plan has been revised, with input from our young people. The toolkit for post 16 needs assessments has been strengthened in 2021/22, with bespoke workshops held with the social workers to capture our commitment of support for our children moving to adulthood

We have reviewed our transitions work for our young people and during the period have developed a group work programme where young people are invited to sessions to learn life skills in a relaxed, fun setting. These sessions are led by social workers and personal advisers in the Leaving Care Team whereby young people can gain valuable life skills together for their move to adulthood. The groupwork consists of budget skills, cooking, learning basic first aid and exploring local training initiatives

The fostering service has further enhanced the voice of children and carers within the Annual Reviews through performance monitoring process development and adapting ways feedback is gathered. A virtual feedback form for children in care regarding their foster family was developed, offering additional routes for children to share their views.

Children and families continue to have a key role in the development and training of foster carers. Throughout the period children have interviewed prospective carers and their views used within the assessment process. Young people and carers have also played key roles in the skills to foster training representing their experiences and needs.

Following case sampling and feedback towards the end of 2021 from our children in care, we are about to embarked upon consultation work on the design of the child friendly care plan. We have sought views from our workforce and used the quarterly questionnaire (The Big Q) in January-March 2022 to explore our children's views. We will be redesigning the child friendly care plans with our Children in Care Council and co-producing the new forms



Children's voice is fundamental to evidence-based practice and at the heart of North Lincolnshire social work practice. Our children are their own experts in their lives and using co-produced work strengthens the One Family Approach practice model of being relational in our practice. We believe in the empowering of our children not just to be listened to but feel valued and a part of changes for our practice

Children in care are safe and well

The Children's Help and Protection Pathway group as a sub-group of the Children's MARS Board has strengthened its oversight of vulnerable children to include a line of sight on children in care and care leaver in 2021/22.

In 2021/22, we have further developed our Emotional Well Being oversight for our children in care. As part of this drive to ensure that all children have supported to be emotionally well, the SDQ's that are completed each month receive oversight from CAMHS, Barnardo's therapeutic service, designated looked after nurse, Education Psychologist, Service Manager for Children in Care and the Service Manager for Fostering. The group has ensured that children's SDQ scores are reflected upon and assured of the need for any additional support for each child



The Independent Visitor scheme has continued to strengthen in 2021/22, with the recruitment of new volunteers and a stronger focus in children in care reviews. There are currently 14 volunteers in place, of which 10 are actively undertaking befriending activities with children and a further two are awaiting an introduction.

Children in care are in education, employment or training

Through the daily tasking meetings for vulnerable children an in education we ensure that children in care have weekly oversight. The weekly tasking meeting has multi agency attendees with a peer reflection on the needs of all children in care aligned to their educational plans. Any child in care who has below 90% attendance or NEET is explored, and a solution focused intervention is implemented to support full attendance

We continue to support our children to access opportunities to develop interests and excel in all endeavours. Over the last six months we have seen children gain work experiences in chosen fields of interests such as a local nursery, local café, shops to gain valuable work experience as they prepare for life choices

Family time

We have developed a **lead role for our family time support officers to engage parents and to be the point of contact for the family, child and carer**. These lead roles are based on our value base of relationships. Family Time is an opportunity to actively engage, observe, and coach parents with the goal of strengthening parental capacities. We have moved into using a model of Family Time coaching that involves active engagement by the support officers with the parent that sets clear, achievable goals, making the sessions both more enjoyable and more effective for the parent and child.

For our parents that do not have children returned to their care, following the court proceedings concluding, the **offer of Holding On is made for each parent**. Where possible the lead officer will be a part of the referral discussions and be the Holding On practitioner for the parents. At present we have 4 support officers from the team that can take on this role.

In December 2021, we have designed a feedback form for our families to consult over the coaching sessions, and to aid our evaluation of the service that we offer

Family time has several benefits for children including enabling them to maintain relationships with their parents and return home, and addressing issues of loss and separation, and identity for children, which in turn can have a positive effect on children’s well-being. The practice model of North Lincolnshire has been embedded into the family time service where children and their families can meet and have fun and safe time together

Adoption recruitment and assessment

A key area of focus continues to be the recruitment and assessment of adopters. Our local recruitment strategy is underpinned by both the Regional Recruitment Strategy and the National Adoption Recruitment Strategy for adoption. We continue to be in a robust position with regards to adopter recruitment. Since April 2021 we have approved 17 adopter households and on 31/3/22 have 7 assessments ongoing. This has exceeded last year’s approvals.

We currently have 4 North Lincolnshire children placed for adoption and all are placed with North Lincolnshire approved adopters

- 2017/18 of the 14 children placed 13 were with North Lincolnshire (NL) families (93%)
- 2018/19 of the 6 children placed 6 were with NL families (100%)
- 2019/20 of the 16 children placed 12 were with NL families (75%)
- 2020/21 of the 8 children placed 8 were with NL families (100%)
- 2021/22 of the 5 children placed 5 were with NL families (100%)

Adoption timeliness for children

Timescales from entering care to placement have risen but remain below the England average. The 3-year average for 2017-20 was 274 days, compared to the England average of 367 days. This increased to 328 days in 2018-21 and has risen further in 2019-22 to 406 days.

Timescales from placement order to match have risen but remain below the England average. The 3-year average for 2017-20 was 90 days, compared to the England average of 175 days. This increased to 122 days in 2018-21 and has risen further in 2019-22 to 156 days.

Whilst it is acknowledged that these timescales have slightly increased, this is something that was predicted due to the focus on ensuring that all children have the opportunity to achieve permanence through adoption where it is in their best interests and their plan, including those who are older or have more complex needs. An increased proportion of children with a plan of adoption have been older, with more complex needs meaning it has taken longer to identify the appropriate match for these children. There has been a positive impact on those children as permanency has been achieved for them.

Timescales from entering care to placement order are predicted to remain stable. This is a new indicator on the scorecard. Our 3-year average for 2017-20 was 223 days, compared to the England average of 256 days. This increased to 262 days in 2018-21 and is 258 days in 2019-22

Of the 12 children adopted over 2021/22 thus far, 9 of those children have more complex needs due to their age, being in a sibling group or health needs.

This is evidence of our success in identifying adopters for all children where it is the best plan to meet their needs

Family Adoption Links – Regional Adoption Agency

In October 2020 we formally joined Family Adoption Links Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). The RAA is accountable to the Family Adoption Links Management Board which is aligned to the agreed vision and will enable partners to have a continuing demonstrable focus on achieving permanence through adoption for children in care.

The RAA is achieving good outcomes for children and families and we are able to evidence significant achievement as a service. Through working in partnership, we are benefiting from the regional sharing of best practice, pooling of resources and developing a strategic approach to the development of a range of services from the marketing of adoption across the region through to the commissioning of post adoption support services.

There is a single RAA website developed and a regional marketing strategy that sits above the local plan. These have been updated and refreshed. Managers have access to a wide range of performance information that has developed further during the period to assist them in running the service on a day-to-day basis. Pooling that data enables managers and the board to fully understand the wider regional picture and plan effectively

Adopter voice

In the development of the adoption service we ensure that voice of those we are working with is strong. We have a number of local face to face groups that have been established to ensure this is the case, as follows;

- Young person's group for adopted young people
- Young Persons group for young people living in Special Guardianship arrangements
- Adopters Support Group
- Group for Special Guardians
- Support group for those caring for a child of different ethnicity to themselves
- Group for the pilot group of those taking part in the Education Passport
- Holding On Group for birth parents

From listening to adopters and special guardians, education is an area of challenge for them and in consultation with families we have devised the 'Education Passport'. The Education Passport is a communication tool designed to facilitate communication between home and school but with specific focus on the following:

- Ensuring that there is a focus on children / young people's needs, based on a sound understanding, of how their life experiences may have impacted on their development and functioning
- To give children / young people and their parents / guardians a tool they can use in school to ensure that there is a clear plan around any support needs
- All children in adoptive and special guardianship households to receive the additional support they require in order to achieve in education
- For school and home to have a tool that promotes partnership working with the shared goal being to help the child / young person to see education as something that is a positive environment and can be something to enjoy
- To promote the right learning environment in order for the child to achieve and succeed

Populations and performance: key highlights

- There has been a 6% increase in the number of eligible care leavers during 2021/22 so far from 109 as at 31/03/21 to 115 as at 31/03/22
- The 2021/22 year-end figure for those in education, employment or training (EET) aged 19-21 years is 75%, which would be an increase on our 2020/21 year-end result of 66% and compares well to the latest national result for 2020/21 of 52%. The year-end predictions for the 17 & 18-year-olds is 79% in EET, which is a decrease from our 2020/21 result of 94%. This compares to the latest national figure for 2020/21 of 65%
- The 2021/22 year-end predictions for those in suitable accommodation aged 19-21 years is 96%. This maintains our 20/21 performance and compares well to the latest national result for 2020/21 of 88%. The year-end predictions for the 17 & 18-year-olds is 100% in suitable accommodation, an increase from our 2020/21 figure of 94%. This would be above the latest national figure for 2020/21 of 91%

The introduction of experienced social work practitioners into the service has been invaluable. This addition, in line with the revised structure, has enabled the implementation of a system in which these social workers directly supervise and support small pods of personal advisors, in order to continue to promote relational and aspirational practice.

Alongside this, the social workers, in collaboration with the Practice Supervisor, have been supporting the ongoing development of **outcome focused, high quality pathway plans**. Through case sampling, quality assurance through authorisation of plans, and through regular audit activity, we can see a clear progression in relation to the quality of planning in place for our young people

Progress and developments

As a result of our ongoing practice developments, we remain well positioned to continue our journey of developing our services for our care leavers, to ensure that we drive forward our ambitious practice, and ensure that our young people achieve their goals and aspirations and become outstanding assets to our communities.

In line with our One Family Approach Practice Model, relational practice is at the heart of our approach to improving outcomes for care leavers. During the first half of this year, we have undertaken a **full-service review of the Care Leaving Service**. This is now complete and has enabled us to redesign our structure to ensure that our service has the capacity and resources to deliver outstanding relational practice.

The **number of Personal Advisors in the service has increased by 60%**, ensuring that our Personal Advisors have smaller caseloads which enable them to spend more time with young people, developing strong and trusting relationships.

Alongside this, we have **invested in two social worker positions** within the service, to oversee, guide and direct the practice of our Personal Advisors, utilising the experience, expertise and knowledge of current social work practice in our area. These key roles will continue our constant drive towards delivering outstanding strengths-based and relational practice, in line with the One Family Approach Practice Model.

We have also invested in a **dedicated Practice Supervisor** for the Care Leaving Service, bringing expert social work advice, knowledge and wisdom to the day-to-day management of practice within the service

Care leavers are safe and well

The service review and redesign ensures that we have more personal advisors, and therefore each worker has greater capacity to spend time with our young people.

All our care leavers continued to be contacted regularly and in line with their plan, and regularly visited in their homes.

Alongside the above, we have continued to provide MIFI devices for young people to ensure they remain digitally connected during the pandemic and beyond, which is actively supporting emotional wellbeing and reducing social isolation for our young people.

We have also consulted directly with the Rees Foundation to consider the support that our young people can benefit from through accessing services that they provide. This has led to our service exploring the Ask Jan Membership that is offered, which we are now beginning to provide to Care Leavers on a needs-led basis



Following the review of our service, the average case load of our personal advisors is now 12.9 young people. Due to this, workers have more time and capacity to support young people directly. The regular contact with young people is evidenced through our regular case sampling and audit activity.

Our MIFI and WIFI offer to young people, as well as general financial support provided during COVID-19, has ensured that young people have remained connected to their networks. Young people regularly feedback their thanks at the internet provision, and how useful this has been for them.

We have progressed our collaborative work with the Rees' foundation and procured our initial batch of 'Ask Jan' memberships, and these are being distributed to the young people who are identified as requiring this additional support and advice in the early part of 2022. We will review the impact of this provision into 2022/23

Care leavers are in education, employment or training

We have continued to support and promote the aspirations of our young people, which is reflected within our performance data.

In 2021/22, we reached a performance figure of 75% of our care leavers aged 19-21 years old that were actively engaged in education, employment and training (EET). We have also continued to consistently achieve over 60% of all care leavers aged 18-21 that are engaged in EET. This has been achieved through a continual drive towards high quality Pathway Planning that is actively considering the ambitions and aspirations of our young people.

Alongside the developments regarding Pathway Planning, we have also worked alongside our colleagues within the wider Council to successfully acquire external funding to deliver aspirational events and activities for our young people that supports aspirational thinking and promotes engagement with EET.

We have also continued to build strong relationships with the newly developed **Education Inclusion Officer dedicated for Care Leavers**. As part of this partnership, we have ensured that specific performance related information is shared amongst the services, so that the dedicated Education Inclusion Officer is aware of and can reach all those young people who are currently not accessing education, employment or training. The impact of this role has been significant, with there being some excellent case examples of how this officer has directly supported young people back into fulfilling opportunities

- Our performance in relation to EET age 19 to 21 has improved in 2021/22 and continues to be above comparators
- We have also seen an **increase in the number of young people accessing higher education and attending University**, further demonstrating our commitment to supporting young people to achieve their aspiration
- We have seen increased access to incentives available through the financial policy, with several young people regularly accessing our financial rewards for achieving 95% or greater attendance each term
- We continue to work closely with our colleagues in Learning, Skills and Culture, and the dedicated Education Inclusion Officer to specifically support those young people who are not currently engaged in EET opportunities

Care leavers accommodation

We have continued to develop our accommodation provision. This includes an ongoing drive to improve the quality of accommodation through robust application of our integrated Accommodation Standards Policy. Alongside this, we have continued to develop our integrated offer to care leavers. A key part of the Care Leaving Service review involved the transition of our **Property Maintenance Service to Environmental and Housing Services within the Council**. This ensures that the maintenance and management of our accommodation offer to care leavers is now supported and overseen by a service with expert knowledge and experience, this will increase the quality of accommodation utilised by our young people

- Our service review has finalised and has ensured that the oversight and day to day management of our housing offer is overseen by relevant managers within Housing and Environmental Health. This has brought key benefits such as access to other resources and staffing within the Housing section, as well as key knowledge, advice and expertise from the Home Assistance Manager who has a wealth of experience in managing housing and maintenance related services
- Recent management inspections of randomly selected accommodation demonstrated that the accommodation standards are being maintained within our accommodation and provide high quality homes for our young people
- Our ongoing collaboration with Housing Related Support (HRS) has supported our practices around young people moving on to independent living from our supported accommodation. During 2021/22, we have supported around 20 young people to move to their own accommodation in the community. This is following the implementation of the pathway that enables our personal advisors to refer young people to HRS for dedicated support around moving to independence, when they are ready for this next stage

Transitioning to adulthood

A key area of service development in relation to care leavers during 2021/22 has been the development of practice around transition to adulthood for young people. To support service development, we have designed and held bespoke workshops with front line staff to refocus practice in relation to Pathway Plan and how this should be used as a tool to support transition to adulthood.

Furthermore, we have developed a bespoke **Think Ahead Group (TAG)**, which is a face-to-face support group for young people aged 14+, whereby young people can attend a relaxed environment with other young people. During these sessions, the young people work with personal advisors, social workers and other professionals to learn some key life skills in an engaging and fun way.



- Following the launch of the TAG, we are currently reviewing this offer and reflecting upon the impact of our initial group, to consider how we can further improve this offer to young people. We are therefore looking to launch our revised group work offer in the early part of 2022, to continue the positive work in this area
- We continue to review the quality of Pathway Planning across the service, following bespoke workshops held and the sharing of best practice. This case sampling identifies that the quality of pathway planning continues to improve and demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that young people are well prepared for adulthood, through co-produced pathway plans which focus on the individual needs of young people specifically in relation to adulthood
- We have supported around 20 young people who have left care to move to their own independent accommodation in the community, through collaborative work with Housing Related Support services. This is excellent progress, and considered alongside the performance in relation to education, training and employment, this demonstrates how our practice is being effective in giving young people effective transitions to adulthood
- **Corporate Parents across the partnership have committed to providing an open door for help and advice for all care leavers whatever their age**

Open Door Care Leaver Offer

Following approval through the Corporate Parenting Board and cabinet member, work is progressing to develop and implement the all age offer to care leavers. This will enable the council and its partners to continue to be effective and proactive corporate parents beyond the age of 25. Consultation is ongoing regarding the specific offer, which will look to support our care leavers throughout their lives to build upon their resilience, empowering them with support and advice, and giving them the skills and confidence to live independent, successful lives.

Ongoing areas of continued development

As a learning organisation, we are committed to listening, learning, reviewing and adapting in order to continue to further improve outcomes for children, young people and families. We have made progress against the identified areas of continued development for 2021/22, though there will remain an amplified focus on these areas in 2022/23 as follows:

Supporting Families programme

- We will continue to work with key partners to strengthen whole-family key working across the system, and develop further relationships with adult-focused services and the voluntary and community sector
- We aim to seek to embed the new outcomes framework across systems and practice, to strengthen how we collectively measure progress for children and families across early help and targeted services
- We will challenge and support the strategic partnership to continue developing data sharing agreements and information systems that assist in the earliest identification of need, and which help practitioners when undertaking early help
- A further area of development is to scope out the specification and explore options for procuring an integrated early help recording system
- We will also progress the development and implementation of the experts by experience framework

Carefirst case management system

- As part of a Council procurement exercise, we will continue to develop the specification and test for a replacement social care case management system and consider options for integration alongside education and adult services in order to maximise user efficiency and support best outcomes for children. The procurement and planning process will be thorough, consultative, and based upon national implementation learning with the aim of securing optimum flexibility for North Lincolnshire to achieve best practice

One Family Approach Hub

- The One Family Approach Hub will continue to develop throughout 2022/23, as the team becomes fully staffed and practices and processes become embedded, with relationships and interfaces developing in the partnership context.
- The model of family support offered by the team will be strengthened with the application of a consultation-formulation approach, working alongside key partners such as CAMHS, the Youth Justice Partnership, and Humberside Police to ensure an integrated response based upon a clear understanding of the issues behind the presenting factors
- The One Family Approach Hub team will develop its use of the Hub building as a base for family intervention. When required, as part of a plan to build resilience and strengthen relationships to prevent breakdown or to help reunification, the One Family Approach Hub may be used to accommodate a child (pending registration as a children's home)

Ongoing areas of continued development

Risk Outside the Home Approach

- Developed alongside key partners, following child and family consultation, the North Lincolnshire Risk Outside the Home Approach will continue to be developed and implemented across systems and practice throughout 2022/23
- Following endorsement via the Children's MARS Board, the approach will be formally launched and rolled out across the wider partnership
- Overseen by the Risk Outside the Home Strategy Group, work will include strengthened peer mapping and a focus on continuing to strengthen the approach to places and spaces
- Building on the successful bid to the Home Office pilot 'Devolved Decision Making for Child Victims of Modern-Day Slavery', we will continue to utilise the learning and development from the pilot to further improve decisions about whether a child is a victim of modern slavery by those involved in their care and embed learning into practice
- We are committed to ensuring children vulnerable to exploitation are recognised as victims and treated as such. Most pertinently in relation to any criminal proceedings, safeguarding and modern-day slavery. Through the pilot we will further improve local understanding of modern slavery and the needs of child victims to deliver a more holistic approach to identification and support and reduce the impact of unnecessary delays within criminal proceedings

Workforce development

- Through the Integrated Children's Trust we will help to lead system transformation and workforce development across the children's system, with a focus on the One Family Approach Practice Model. A workforce plan will be developed, with opportunities for integrated commissioning of training across the partnership to be explored, to consider relevant strengths-based and relational practice skills
- We will develop a composite Workforce Development Strategy across Children and Families and we review and refresh the governance and reporting arrangements for the Workforce Board and Steering Group, with an even stronger focus on recruitment and retention
- We continue to give the highest priority to maintaining the optimum environment and support for social work and social care practice to thrive. Key to this is continuing with our focus on recruitment and retention across our social care teams. These include traditional University routes into Social Work, Step up to Social Work, Front Line and Apprenticeships
- We will continue to participate within the Humber Social Work Teaching Partnership, a professional forum for those involved in the development of the Social Care Workforce
- We are continuously reviewing different platforms to attract experienced practitioners thinking strategically about how we advertise and promote working for North Lincolnshire. We continue to utilise Children's Social Work Matters to advertise along with the council website with our own social care landing page. Service areas have provided information about their teams to contribute to a new web page and we are currently collating blogs and are producing short films to advertise our social care workforce
- As a result of the positive progress made in regards to recruiting newly qualified social workers we continue to ensure that social workers are supported throughout their first Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
- Whilst it has been key to ensure we drive forward and support new starters joining us it has also been imperative to ensure we promote the continuous professional development of our existing workforce. In regards to continuous professional development, we continue to offer blended and extensive training opportunities including face to face and virtual training to enhance the skills and knowledge of our workforce. We have supported a number of our Practice Supervisors and Service Managers to undertake the Practice Supervisor Development Programme (PSDP) through Research in Practice which aims to provide high-quality continuous professional development (CPD)

Open door policy for Care Leavers

- Further develop and embed the open door policy for Care Leavers whatever their age across the Council and wider partnership

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