Children in Care

Sufficiency Strategy

2023-2027

Ensuring Lincolnshire's Children in Care and care leavers are supported to thrive and reach their potential in high quality accommodation placements and have access to effective support services

Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL

Working for a better future

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1. Lincolnshire Sufficiency Statement

The vision for Children's Services in Lincolnshire is '*Putting Children First – working together for all children, young people and families to be happy, healthy, safe and the best they can be*.'



Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services aims to secure sufficient accommodation to support Children in Care (CiC) and care leavers to achieve the highest possible outcomes. Such accommodation should be:

- **safe and suitable**
- **meets young people's social and emotional needs**
- **supportive and caring**
- **enables an effective transition to independence and adulthood.**

We will work with internal and external stakeholders, including commissioned services and partner agencies to develop and maintain effective support for our CiC and care leavers, to enable them to thrive and succeed.

We will continuously evaluate our progress, holding ourselves and our partners to account, whilst challenging practice and the way we do things to ensure the needs of our children are prioritised through innovative practice, and always listening to our children's voices.

Lincolnshire County Council's Sufficiency Strategy aims to ensure we have the right placement, of the right quality, in the right place, at the right time and for the right price.

1.1. Key challenges

1.1.1. Lincolnshire County Council's Children's Services is rated **Outstanding** and provides a range of support services for our most vulnerable children and young people.

1.1.2. Children's Services work with partners and commission services to deliver support based on need, encouraging and empowering children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.

1.1.3. Nevertheless, Lincolnshire, like other areas, is facing significant challenges:

- The need to increase capacity in foster households both in-house and within the independent market is a national concern and focus for development. We want children to experience growing up in positive family environments wherever possible.
- Capacity within residential children's homes is similarly an issue, with many homes at capacity or experiencing difficulties with needs matching and recruiting and retaining high quality staff.
- Placing children who have very complex needs and challenging behaviours is demanding. Demand for placements nationally means suppliers are more inclined to accept placements for often younger and less challenging children. This is a national issue and can result in authorities paying incredibly high costs or having to fund whole settings to secure a single placement, which is reducing capacity further.
- Projected increases in CiC numbers is likely to impact on services including social care, Virtual School, and health services and may then impact on support to care leavers as numbers also increase.
- Market and relationship development of independent suppliers is critical to sourcing and supporting effective and value for money placements. There are children placed in Lincolnshire from other areas and Lincolnshire children that are placed outside of the county. Greater partnership working is needed with the independent market to ensure local sufficiency that can meet local needs.
- There is an increase in CiC needing mental health support as part of their placement offer and a noted growth in the number of education placements needed for children with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Mental Health services across the county are under pressure, particularly since the pandemic, with higher demand for services impacting waiting times. Local services are highly regarded, rated **Outstanding** by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and work closely with Children's Services but it is harder to secure the right support when a child is placed out of area. There is also a need for increased supply of education settings that can support children with SEMH needs.
- Providing placements for CiC with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be increasingly challenging over the next four years, especially if there is an education need that cannot be met within mainstream provision.
- Workforce recruitment and retention is a challenge across the placement sector, including in-house and independent provision, this sometimes impacts on market capacity with beds closed because of unsafe staffing ratios.
- The impact of OFSTED regulation and inspection on supported accommodation suppliers may mean some suppliers will exit the market if registration is incompatible with their business model.

- There is an increase in referrals through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).
- There are rising placement costs as a result of the increase in the cost of living, with costs passed back to the Council.

1.1.4. The ability to accurately forecast placement demand impacts on the way Local Authorities (LAs) can shape and develop their local independent placement market, offering further challenge to being able to procure the right placements for children and young people that meet their needs.

1.1.5. Demand for children's independent placements as of March 2021 increased by 25% since 2010.

1.2. Sufficiency Duty

1.2.1. **Section 22G** of the **Children Act 1989**, and the **Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2010)** places a clear duty on LAs to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the Sufficiency Duty.

1.2.2. The Sufficiency Duty requires each LA providing children's services to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of children that it is looking after and children whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation in the LA area.

1.2.3. The Duty not only applies to CiC but equally applies to children and young people who are on the edge of care, acknowledging the importance of taking earlier, preventive action to support children and families so that fewer young people enter care.

1.2.4. The **Children and Young Persons Act 2008** defines Sufficiency as '*a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, Local Authorities and their Children's Trust partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area*.'

1.3. Strategic priorities and strategies

1.3.1. Lincolnshire Children's Services is rated as **Outstanding** by OFSTED, who noted that '*Children and families have benefited from leaders prioritising and investing in services, strengthening the range and offer of support*'.

1.3.2. Lincolnshire Children's Services principles, which underpin how we will commission and deliver services to achieve our vision, are:

- **Early Help**: Strong protective universal services accessible to all with a range of early help available so children have the best start in life and families have extra help when they need it.

- **Safeguarding**: A shared responsibility to ensure children are safe at home, school and in their community.
- **Aspiration**: Children are able to thrive and cope with life challenges.
- **Learning and achievement**: All children being the best they can be with targeted interventions to close the gap so vulnerable children achieve as well as their peers.
- **Best use of resources**: Integrated commissioning with a focus on best value, improved outcomes and community engagement.

1.3.3. Lincolnshire's main principles are further supported by and are embedded in conjunction with:

- Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy (*see 1.4.1.*)
- **Care Leaver's Charter**
- Early Help Strategy (*see 3.8.1.2.*)
- **Early Childhood Strategy**
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) (*see 1.5.*)
- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**
- **Lincolnshire High Needs Strategy**
- **Lincolnshire SEMH Strategy**
- Participation Strategy (*see 1.6.4.*)
- **Lincolnshire Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health**
- **SEND High Needs Strategy**.

1.4. Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy 2022-2025

1.4.1. The **Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy 2022-2025** focuses on 6 key priority areas:

1. **Support to remain with family** - *We support families to improve their relationships and avoid preventable difficulties by providing them with the right support in their community, from the right person at the right time. We only bring children into care when it cannot be made safe for them to stay in their home, family network or community.*
2. **Stability and permanence** - *When children and young people need long term care outside of the family network, they will have stability and be safe from harm. All placements for children and young people will be targeted to support their needs, whether this is foster care or residential provision.*
3. **Build not break relationships** - *All children, young people and care leavers can build enduring relationships with consistent people and they have a trusted, stable relationship with an adult who is important to them.*
4. **Learning and aspirations** - *We want our children, young people and care leavers to succeed in their educational setting and continue with lifelong learning so that they can realise their aspirations.*
5. **Healthy and resilient** - *We promote good long term physical and emotional health and want to enable our children, young people and care leavers to have contented and healthy lives and be helped to evolve from what has happened in the past.*
6. **Safe and suitable accommodation** - *We support our children, young people and care leavers to access and sustain suitable accommodation which meets their needs, helps them feel safe and supports their growth to independence.*

1.4.2. Key priorities that the Sufficiency Strategy actively will support to achieve are (2) **stability and permanence**, and (6) **safe and suitable accommodation**.

1.5. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

1.5.1. The JSNA process aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of current and future local needs across a range of issues, utilising a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data, including user, patient, and community views. The requirement to produce a JSNA has been a statutory duty on LAs and local NHS since 2007. This duty has been further enhanced by the 2022 update to the **Health and Social Care Act 2012**.

1.5.2. Children and young people's Health and Wellbeing is one of the core themes of the JSNA, with a key priority being to improve health and reduce health inequalities for children and young people.

1.5.3. Lincolnshire's **JSNA** is on the **Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub**, along with a range of population and demographic data.

1.6. Listening to our children and young people

1.6.1. Lincolnshire County Council takes a child's rights approach to help ensure that children and young people's views are heard and acted on. The foundation of our work is Article 12 of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

1.6.2. Our priorities are working with the Lincolnshire Youth Cabinet, Voices for Choices (V4C), Young Inspectors, and Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council. Further information about these is at **www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/young-people**.

1.6.3. V4C events have been held in four quadrants of the county during half terms, with a mixture of virtual and face-to-face meetings. In addition, Big Conversation events are supported by Children in Care teams, care leavers, senior staff including Councillors. Notes, issues, concerns and proposed solutions are shared widely across the Council.

1.6.4. The **Participation Strategy 2023-26** for Children's Services provides a framework for the participation of children and young people in Lincolnshire and ensures that the voice of the child can be clearly heard and evidenced. Listening to and acting on the views of children is essential for the development and improvement of relevant and effective services. This applies to services provided uniquely to children and young people and those provided to the wider community.

1.6.5. Lincolnshire children and young people have co-produced a number of resources, including the **Skills for Adult Life booklet**, the Caring Promise, guidance for social workers and the Family Services Directory (FSD) and SEND Local Offer (*see 3.8.1.14.*), and have contributed to service design of both in-house and commissioned services.

1.7. Transformation programmes

1.7.1. Lincolnshire County Council continues to develop and enhance services, undertaking reviews with key stakeholders to consider how services and working and how they may be improved, especially as cohort needs and demand change over time.

1.7.2. The **Children in Care (CiC) transformation programme** seeks to develop and improve information and tracking of CiC to better understand their strengths and challenges, with the aim of stepping them down from residential placements to foster family environments and bringing them back into Lincolnshire wherever possible to better provide wraparound support by other services as a holistic outcomes-focused improvement approach.

1.7.3. The **Building Communities of Specialist Provision programme** is looking to transform Lincolnshire's special school landscape, through creating an integrated system where pupils attend the nearest school with investment in facilities, building a new school, expanding several others and increasing special school places.

1.7.4. The **SEND transformation programme** is similarly looking to transform the SEN support landscape, with a focus on supporting mainstreams schools to deliver robust early intervention through a meaningful graduated approach.

1.7.5. The **Children and Young People's Mental Health transformation programme** vision is that, together with children and young people in Lincolnshire, we will understand how we can best support their emotional wellbeing and mental health and transform and improve services enabling CYP to live independent, safe, well and fulfilled lives in their local communities.

2. National and local context

2.1. National and regional context

National context

2.1.1. Between 2016 and 2022 the number of CiC rose 16.7% in England[1] and the annual cost of children's social care in England is currently around £5.7 billion per annum.

2.1.2. In March 2022, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published its final report into the children's social care market. Taken directly from the report[2], the CMA found that:

- *a lack of placements of the right kind, in the right places, means that children are not consistently getting access to care and accommodation that meets their needs*
- *the largest private providers of placements are making materially higher profits, and charging materially higher prices, than we would expect if this market were functioning effectively*
- *some of the largest private providers are carrying very high levels of debt, creating a risk that disorderly failure of highly leveraged firms could disrupt the placements of children in care.*

2.1.3. The CMA also recognised that children and young people had increasing complex needs, highlighting the gap between the number of children and young people requiring placements and the number of placements available.

2.1.4. Further concerns highlighted in the report included the number of children and young people placed far from their home Local Authority and/or existing support networks, difficulties in accessing wraparound and support services, sector recruitment and retention (including foster carers and residential children's home staff) and regulation and inspection requirements.

2.1.5. Following the CMA report, in February 2023 the Government published their implementation and strategy document, **Stable Homes, Built on Love**, which sets out six key pillars that aim to reform children's social care:

Pillar 1: Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families
Pillar 2: A decisive multi-agency child protection system
Pillar 3: Unlocking the potential of family networks
Pillar 4: Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care
Pillar 5: A valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child who needs one
Pillar 6: A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data.

[1] Source: **Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT),** Number of Looked After Children
[2] Source: **Children's social care market study,** Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), March 2022

2.1.6. **Pillar 4** in particular will impact on placement sufficiency and quality, with a focus on foster care recruitment, leadership and management improvements in the children's homes sector, increased financial oversight of placements as well as two pathfinder Regional Care Co-Operatives (RCCs) to plan, commission and deliver care places.

2.1.7. In addition, **Pillar 4** focuses on: prioritising loving relationships; strengthening and widening the corporate parenting role; creating increased education, employment and training opportunities for CiC and care leavers; universal wraparound support and accommodation for care leavers; decrease mental health and physical health disparities and increase life expectancy for CiC and care leavers.

East Midlands context

2.1.8. The East Midlands region has similarly seen a rise in CiC numbers, increasing by 25.15% from 2016 to 2022[3], which is greater than both the rise across England (*see 2.2.4.*) and the 6.5% rise in Lincolnshire CiC numbers in the same period.

2.1.9. Placement capacity has been stretched across the region; whilst Lincolnshire, like many LAs, is a fostering first authority. Lincolnshire has a preference to place children and young people in-county, so they can be close to their important networks and receive outstanding support; as of 31st March 2023 22% of CiC were placed outside the county boundary.

2.2. Local context

2.2.1. Lincolnshire is the fourth largest county in England with diverse communities dispersed across a large and diverse landscape. The county is predominantly rural and home to approximately 761,224 residents (**Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-2020 population estimates**).

2.2.2. Approximately 21.5% of the total population is aged 0-19 years (163,550), of which 76% (124,565) is aged 5 to 19 years.

2.2.3. Based on the **Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019**, 6.7% of Lincolnshire's population (approximately 50,000 people) live within the 10% most deprived areas of England. This is highest within Lincoln (16.9%) and East Lindsey (16.8%). There are 29 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the 10% most deprived nationally.

2.2.4. In Lincolnshire at end of March 2023[4], there were 728 CiC, 391 children and young people with a 'Child Protection' (CP) plan, and 3,135 Children in Need (CiN) with an open episode of need. 6,968 children and young people had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and there were 63 UASC who made up 9% of all CiC. Lincolnshire CiC numbers have increased by 10.5% since 2018[5], versus c.16% increase nationally.

[3] Source: **Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)**, LA Level Data, Number of Looked After Children

[4] Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) March 2023

[5] 659 Lincolnshire CiC on 31st March 2018 (Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) March 2018)

2.2.5. As a snapshot rate, Lincolnshire CiC numbers represent 49 per 10,000 young people, versus 70 per 10,000 in England[6]

2.3. Impact of Covid-19

2.3.1. The Covid-19 pandemic which started in March 2020 has had a significant impact on social care teams across the country, and Lincolnshire was no exception.

2.3.2. Presenting behaviours and needs of young people were often exacerbated by not having the structure of education settings, parents and carers faced numerous difficulties, and the Council's Children's Services teams continue to see the effects of this with a rise of late entrants into care and an increase in young people accessing some of our support services, notably those around mental health (*see 3.8.1.5.*).

2.3.3. We worked closely with our in-house and independent placement suppliers to avoid placement breakdown and successfully maintained the majority of those placements.

[6] Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) March 2023

3. Lincolnshire's position

- **The population of Children in Care (CiC) has increased in Lincolnshire by 10.5% over the last 5 years.**
- **728 children were in care on 31st March 2023 – 42% of them were female while 15% were of mixed, Asian, Black or other ethnic origin.**
- **78% of CiC were placed within Lincolnshire on 31st March 2023.**
- **67% of children were placed in foster households while 5% were in residential settings.**
- **The CiC numbers are predicted to remain fairly stable over the coming few years at around 720-740.**



3.1. Challenges in providing placements and related services

3.1.1. Despite CiC numbers predicted to remain fairly stable, the Council want to ensure high-quality placements are available for those young people that need them, and it is critical to develop effective cross-functional mechanisms to support information sharing and process development.

3.1.2. Children's Services and relevant commissioned services work closely together to share intelligence and ensure young people are well supported. However, challenges in providing support can arise due to the scale and complexity of Children in Need (CiN), children and families open to Early Help, CiC and care leavers.

3.1.3. Social care teams have found positions difficult to recruit to, and some commissioned services have experience additional difficulties in staff retention, particularly as a result of the cost of living crisis which has driven people into higher paid employment. This is also reflected in children's placements, with in-house foster carer recruitment and retention being impacted and independent placements being similarly affected.

3.1.4. Similarly, the continued recruitment of **in-house foster carers** seeks to maintain, and ultimately increase, numbers of foster care households within Lincolnshire who are able to offer a variety of placement types including respite and short-term therapeutic placements, in addition to shorter-term and longer-term opportunities. There remains an ongoing need to source long-term and more permanent homes for CiC who are unable to return to their birth families.

3.1.5. The CiC Transformation Programme continues to review existing placements, both in-house and in the independent sector, through the monthly Placement Management Meetings in order to provide assurance of impact and value for money. The Valuing Care (VC) toolkit has been developed and is embedded into the Mosaic social care reporting platform as a means of highlighting children and young people's strengths and challenges.

3.1.6. One of the key aims of the transformation work is to place Lincolnshire CiC within county or as close as possible, as this will help the Council provide its range of effective support services to both young people and their carers.

3.2. Needs of Children in Care

3.2.1. Social care teams are working closely with Children's Strategic Commissioning and commissioned partners to consider the needs of young people, and where capacity is available or may be developed based on need, availability and cost.

3.2.2. Social care teams have seen an increase in complexity of need, alongside the rise of late entrants into care which became more evident around the start of the pandemic and has continued.

3.2.3. 4.6% of school age children in Lincolnshire had an EHC Plan or SEN Statement[7] which is higher than the 3.4% seen across the East Midlands; of this, 41.2% of Lincolnshire school age children with an EHCP were Children in Care (CiC)[8]. 4% of children and young people in **Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMS) placements** on 31st March 2023 were looked after[9], and social care and SEND teams are seeing an increase in young people with SEMH difficulties requiring specialist education placements.

3.2.4. The level of complex and high challenging behaviours is evident across **residential children's homes**, and Lincolnshire social care want to place CiC with carers skilled in effective therapeutic care and de-escalation techniques that minimise physical interventions and support placement stability, whilst supporting the transition of some young people into foster families or on to independence.

3.2.5. The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)** has impacted both capacity of placements and capacity of health and social care. Many UASC have additional support needs, having experienced trauma, separation and violence on their journey; many experience poor mental health and require significant support to access education and the wider community offer.

[7] Source: **Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)**, LA Level Data, Children with SEN, % of Pupils with Statement (of SEN) or EHC Plans (all schools), 31st March 2021

[8] Source: **Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)**, LA Level Data, Looked After Children, % of LAC with a SEN Statement/EHCP

[9] Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Strategic Commissioning - LCCPlacements INM workbook 2022-23

3.3. Supply of placements

3.3.1. Many LAs are experiencing challenges in securing placements for their CiC, as in-house provision is increasingly insufficient to cope with the numbers of children and young people that require our support.

3.3.2. The CiC Transformation Programme aims to develop and support in-house placement capacity through ongoing recruitment of staff and carers. Lincolnshire is increasing its' number of **in-house residential children's homes** to increase the number of spaces available – these will be smaller homes that aim to transition children and young people into a foster family environment where the majority of young people are best able to thrive.

3.3.3. Despite having a good level of in-house foster carer numbers compared to many other LAs, Lincolnshire has seen an increased reliance on **Independent Foster Agencies (IFAs)**, use of which has increased by 182% over the past 5 years. As of 31st March 2023, 65% of placements with IFAs were in Lincolnshire, and we have seen a significant decrease in the number of IFAs offering placements for older children and those with complex behaviours.

3.3.4. **Supported accommodation** placements for 16 and 17 year olds are well supported through the Council's commissioned Youth Housing service (known as NEST[10]) which is contracted to Nacro until 31st December 2025 and delivers 72 bed spaces for CiC, care leavers and young people at risk of homelessness in Lincoln, Boston and Grantham as well as a small number of intense support houses for the most complex young people. Lincolnshire also has two in-house supported accommodation homes for CiC, supported lodgings via the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (*see 3.7.*) and a range of more specialist commissioned placements for UASC. Long-term use of Supported Accommodation has decreased, with such placements more typically being short-term transitional placements to manage complex behaviours or low-need placements outside of Lincolnshire where a young person has established networks and/or education. OFSTED are due to commence registration of supported accommodation in 2023 in line with new regulatory requirements, which may impact on the number of suppliers offering placements.

3.3.5. Children's Strategic Commissioning and the LCCPlacements Team manage the sourcing of independent placements, procuring them via the Open Select List[11] and UASC Closed Ordered List[12] and undertaking ongoing contract management and quality assurance. Commissioning Officers seek to develop mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers to maximise outcomes for Lincolnshire children and young people.

3.4. Location of placements

3.4.1. Lincolnshire County Council works closely with colleagues from across the East Midlands region on a range of initiatives, action groups and projects to increase access to services across the

[10] Nacro Education, Support and Transition

[11] The Open Select List (OSL) is a procurement mechanism that manages referrals to suppliers for independent placements. Suppliers apply to join the OSL annually and are given first opportunity to respond to referrals.

[12] The UASC Closed Ordered List (UASC COL) is a procurement mechanism that manages placements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children aged 16-17 on arrival, who are referral via the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) or are spontaneous arrivals in Lincolnshire.

region, given many CiC, where not placed within their home Local Authority (LA), are placed in bordering LAs[13].

3.4.2. Lincolnshire places the majority of children and young people close to 'home' – as of 31st March 2023, 60% of independent foster placements (inc UASC), 86% of Independent Non-Maintained (Special) School (INMS) placements and 38% of independent supported accommodation placements for 16-17 year olds were in Lincolnshire or adjacent counties[14]. 53% of independent residential care placements were not in Lincolnshire or adjacent counties and this needs to be a real area of focus for market development.

3.4.3. Regional Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) meet weekly and there are various strategic groups that meet monthly to share best practice and explore solutions to emerging issues and improve intelligence about placement capacity and development. The region has worked together on a number of bids including *DfE Staying Closer Staying Connected* and the *UASC Foster Care Project*, both of which sought to develop service and support capacity for CiC and care leavers across the region.

3.5. Cost of placements

3.5.1. The nine East Midlands LAs have developed a regional approach to agreeing independent placement fee increase requests via the online portal which launched in 2022. The process supports LAs in reviewing placement fees, offering challenge to suppliers and sharing intelligence around contract and service quality, including any concerns.

3.5.2. Placement costs have steadily increased over the past 5 years; in 2017-18 the average residential cost for an independent residential children's home placement for a Lincolnshire young person was £4,038 per week and in 2022-23 this has risen to an average of £5,504 per week.

3.5.3. In the same period total costs for independent residential children's homes placements increased by almost 80% from £5,928,000 in 2017-18 to £8,701,219 in 2022-23; this is related to an increase in total placement numbers, which have increased over the same period (*see 3.6.4.*).

3.5.4. Suppliers have been additionally impacted due to the rising cost of utilities and other inflationary pressures, staff wages impacting on recruitment and retention and increasing complexities of behaviour and need of young people, all of which have driven up the placement cost.

3.6. Placement trends and projections

3.6.1. Lincolnshire is not alone in seeing a rise in late entrants into care, an increase in complex and challenging behaviours and high numbers of children and young people requiring specialist education provision.

[13] 22% of Lincolnshire CiC placed out of county on 31st March 2023 (Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT))

[14] Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Strategic Commissioning - LCCPlacements INM workbook 2021-22

3.6.2. The 2022 Commissioning and Markets Authority (CMA) report[15] stated:

The Institute for Government[16] projected in its 2021 Performance Tracker that demand for children's social care would grow by around 5% between 2019-20 and 2024-25, driven by increasing demand for foster and residential placements. The Social Market Foundation[17] projected that, in England, 'based on the growth seen in the last five years, we could expect that close to 77,000 children will be in foster care by 2030; an increase of more than 30% from now.'

3.6.3. Certainly over the past five years, Lincolnshire has seen a rise in numbers of CiC from 659 on 31st March 2018 to 728 on 31st March 2023, along with a rise in placement moves/breakdown[18].

3.6.4. Children's Strategic Commissioning have seen a rise in independent placements in place on 31st March 2018 to those in place on 31st March 2023:

- 126% increase in independent residential children's home placements (15 to 34)
- 182% increase in independent foster care placements inc UASC (33 to 60)
- 560% increase in Independent Non-Maintained (Special) School placements (63 to 353).

3.6.5. As a result of investment in successive commissioned Youth Housing contracts (*see 4.1.1.8.*) and Lincolnshire's two in-house supported accommodation sites, there has been a reduction in numbers of children and young people in Intense Needs Supported Accommodation (INSA), which has seen a decrease of 38% from those in place on 31st March 2018 to 31st March 2023 (13 to 8).

3.6.6. The NTS was mandated nationally in October 2021 in response to exceptionally high numbers of UASC being accommodated by Kent and LAs on the south coast. Since then, Lincolnshire has accommodated 66 referrals to 31st March 2023, 83% of whom have been accommodated via the UASC Closed Ordered List (the remaining 17% were aged under 16 years old at point of referral and were placed with foster carers). In comparison, pre-NTS spontaneous arrival numbers averaged 20 young people per year. NTS referrals are unlikely to slow in the short-term as the Home Office continues to try to move children and young people from temporary asylum hotels as quickly as possible to Local Authority care, and small-boat arrivals continue to be a factor.

3.7. Care leavers

3.7.1. Lincolnshire County Council has commissioned Barnardo's to deliver the statutory **Leaving Care Service** for a number of years, with the most recent 5 year contract starting in 2020. There were 418 Lincolnshire care leavers on 31st March 2023 that were supported by the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (LLCS).

3.7.2. LLCS work closely with social care and other partners to ensure effective transition, with allocations just after 16 years old ensuring young people get to know their Leaving Care Worker early and are supported to independence.

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[15] Source: **Children's social care market study**, Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), March 2022

[16] Source: Institute for Government, **Performance Tracker 2021**

[17] Source: **Fostering the Future**, Social Market Foundation, June 2021

[18] 5% of CiC experienced 3 or more placement moves in 2017-18 versus 9% of CiC in 2022-23 (Source: Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT))

3.7.3. As of 31st March 2023, 93% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in safe and suitable accommodation, with clear understanding of the reasons for those living in unsuitable accommodation. LLCS has a clear focus on this measure, which includes support to former-UASC care leavers requiring accommodation during their asylum process, young parents, and supported lodgings suppliers. LLCS administer the New Homes Grant on behalf of the Council, adding value to young people through care packages and practical tenancy and benefit support.

3.7.4. As of 31st March 2023, 50% of care leavers aged 19-21[19] were in Education, Employment and Training (EET). The service supports are leavers to access EET and also supports the Care Leaver Apprenticeship Service (CLAS).

3.8. Support services

3.8.1. The previous Sufficiency Strategy 2018-22 identified a range of support services that were central to integrated support to CiC and care leavers, ensuring Lincolnshire children, their carers and involved professionals are able to access appropriate and high quality services:

3.8.1.1. Whilst some other Councils have reduced their **Children's Centres**, Lincolnshire recognises the importance and value of this key part of early years support to all families and has retained all 48 **Children's Centres,** which continue to be integral to offering preventative services for early years and deliver wide range of services and support to families across the county. They are open to anyone who has or cares for a child under the age of 5 years old. Lincolnshire has also been selected as one of 75 LAs to benefit from the Government's **Family Hubs and Start for Life** programme; the programme stems from clear evidence that identifying risks early and preventing problems from escalating means better long-term outcomes for children and their families. Family Hubs provide high-quality, joined-up, whole-family support services from conception, through a child's early years until they reach the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with SEND).

3.8.1.2. Through the Council's **Early Help Strategy**, the early help front door is embedded into social care practice, resulting in consistency in decision making, allocations and use of resources. Children and young people and their families are offered targeted clear support as early as possible, successfully preventing the need for statutory interventions and diverting many young people away from entering the care system, as well as providing the support they and their families need to thrive. On 31st March 2023, there were 4821 cases open to Early Help which is an increase of almost 300% (1615) from March 2022. There were also 704 incoming requests[20] in the same month; trend data highlights that requests for support increase during the longer school holidays in December, April and August.

3.8.1.3. The Council has commissioned **Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS)** and the **Autism Learning Difficulties Service** (*known as the **Working Together Team***) on behalf

[19] Based on a cohort of 210 care leavers

[20] Source: LCC March 2023 Summary Performance Report, Early Help Request Data, MOSAIC

of Lincolnshire schools and academies since 2016 as part of the Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy. A commissioning review of both services commenced in February 2020 prior to the previous agreements for the services coming to an end in August 2022. The new re-commissioned services offer robust training and workshops primarily to Lincolnshire mainstream schools and academies, and parents/carers. Both services also have a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, building resilience across Lincolnshire mainstream schools and academies, increasing inclusion and promoting a collective responsibility to improving Lincolnshire pupils' social, emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns.

3.8.1.4. **Safe Families for Children** have been commissioned to provide support to families whose children are on the edge of care, utilising approved volunteers to help stabilise the family dynamic through befriending, mentoring and positive role-modelling, aiming to lower the risk of abuse and neglect and reduce the number of children and young people taken into care.

3.8.1.5. Following a successful pilot, **Future 4 Me (F4Me)** was established as a permanent service in 2018. The F4Me service supports adolescents on the edge of care through a recognised profile of need linked to support around emotional wellbeing, missing and exploitation, substance misuse, and criminal behaviour. A strong focus on early intervention and timely support to avoid children entering the criminal justice system is provided by the **Joint Diversionary Panel (JDP)**[21]. F4Me includes social workers, police and probation officers, and education mentors. In addition, a dedicated complex needs health team is embedded in the service and is funded through NHS England (Health and Justice) to develop individualised support packages and provide psychology-based trauma-informed consultation to the wider staff team. F4Me work with partners from the Police, Probation, Courts, District Councils, and Health to support young people more holistically. The **Restoring Family Relationships Team** focus on working with families in times of conflict or family breakdown to ensure, where possible, relationships are restored, and young people remain within their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so. In April 2023, an inspection of Future4Me by the youth justice Inspectorate His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) rated the service as **Outstanding**.

3.8.1.6. Children and young people who are experiencing difficulties or concerns with their **mental health and wellbeing**, their families and the professionals working with them are able to access information about the support available from a variety of universally available local services via the online **Emotional Health and Wellbeing Pathway**. Lincolnshire commissions Children and Young People's Mental Health (CYPMH) services that span the spectrum of emotional wellbeing and mental health needs from prevention and early intervention to specialist and crisis mental health services. To ensure that young people and their families get the right support at the right time, by the right team, all routine referrals are triaged and/or screened by practitioners in the

[21] First time entrants in Lincolnshire for the period January 2022 to December 2022 were 107 per 100,000 10-17 year olds; this compares to 171 per 100,000 in the East Midlands and 149 in England in the same period.

Children and Young People Access Team. The **Here4You Line** provides the opportunity to speak directly to a mental health practitioner who can discuss how a young person is feeling or presenting and explore which services are best suited to help. Young people and parents can also self-refer via the Here4You Line. **Healthy Minds Lincolnshire** provides emotional wellbeing support to children and young people up to 19 years old (25 if special educational needs/disability or care leavers). **Mental Health Support Teams** are being rolled out across the most deprived areas of the county to work in education settings, and **CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service)** supports those young people with moderate to severe mental health needs. There is also a community crisis service with on call support available 24/7. Lincolnshire Children's Services, health services and key partner agencies have a trauma-informed approach to working with young people.

3.8.1.7. Lincolnshire's commissioned **Domestic Abuse Support Service** delivers outreach support for adults who have experienced domestic abuse, therapeutic sessions for children and young people who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse, professional resources and refuge support. The new **Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse website** launched in January 2023 with a range of resources and information for adults, children and young people who are either being abused or are using abusive behaviour, to offer support and advice, and signpost them to services locally and nationally.

3.8.1.8. Work is ongoing with the Lincolnshire's Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Family Adoption Links, which was launched in October 2020 with regional partners to determine which services could be jointly developed or commissioned to offer pre- and post-adoption support to birth and adoptive parents. Lincolnshire now delivers post-adoption support to adoptive parents in-house and has commissioned **Pac-UK** to deliver statutory **Birth Counselling** services to birth parents and families whose children have been placed for adoption.

3.8.1.9. It is important that we listen to the views of children and young people but recognise sometimes they may benefit from an independent advocate who can help them to articulate what they want and how they may feel about things. Following a service review, **Voiceability** were commissioned to deliver a range of **advocacy services** including for CiC and child protection advocacy.

3.8.1.10. **Caring2Learn (C2L)** has been embedded into Children's Services delivery and sits within the Fostering Service and the Virtual School. **Caring2Learn** continues to develop effective networks with schools and foster carers, delivering evidence-based good practice models and a highly valued training programme for schools, carers and Children's Services staff. The Fostering Service and the Virtual School continue to promote the Caring2Learn Award for Caring Schools and Learning Homes and is further developing the Foster Care Champions network which provides peer support to fostering households. The Virtual School has developed a bespoke training package to support schools and designated teachers to nurture and promote wellbeing and attachment and improve educational outcomes for CiC.

3.8.1.11. CiC and care leavers are more likely to have lower educational attainment than other young people and, whilst Lincolnshire young people have performed comparably well, there are indications that the impact of the pandemic and disruption to almost two years of school has had an adverse effect over the entire school age cohort. The **Virtual School** and **SEND** colleagues work closely with the Education team to enhance provision and develop strong relationships with individual school settings to overcome some of these attainment barriers and increase educational resilience and aspiration.

3.8.1.12. The commissioned **We Are With You** service for young people under 18 years old who are worried about their or someone else's drug or alcohol use offers a free online chat and telephone service, with a comprehensive website offering a range of advice and information. The We Are With You service has a strong **social media presence** to deliver their safety messages and attend a variety of outreach events. In the 2022-23 academic year they delivered to approximately 19,500 students in Lincolnshire secondary schools and alternative education provisions, as well as 'What's In The Box?' sessions on substance misuse to 3688 children in Year 6 at primary school. Online learning modules are available on request for students not attending school, including those who are home-schooled. Substance misuse services for adults (18 year old and over) are located in Lincoln, Boston, Grantham, Spalding and Skegness, as well as at HMP Lincoln.

3.8.1.13. **Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP)** is a statutory multi-agency partnership that has identified a number of strategic priorities for 2022-2025 which cover a range of safeguarding and welfare issues that face children and young people in Lincolnshire. They include exploitation, neglect, emotional wellbeing, healthy relationships, and sexual and physical harm. Through the work of the sub-groups, partners collaborate on multi-agency audits, design campaigns and develop and review training, policies and procedures to support practitioners in their work. **LSCP**'s comprehensive 6-year training pathway is available for all statutory and non-statutory partners, including Children's Services staff. On a three year cycle, the LSCP seeks assurance from all partners, and any services they commission, on their compliance with section 11 of the Children's Act 2004.

3.8.1.14. **Workforce development** for social care and SEND staff development and progression is highly valued in Lincolnshire, with clear training and learning pathways to develop good practice, explore new thinking and build confidence. Supplier development is similarly critical; through strong relational commissioning, the Children's Strategic Commissioning Team is proactive in supporting suppliers to develop their skills and knowledge as a way of promoting the Council's aspirations and priority outcomes for CiC and care leavers.

3.8.1.15. Information on available services and general advice and support for Lincolnshire families and young people have been enhanced through the on-line **Family Services Directory (FSD)**, which incorporates the **Care Leaver Local Offer** and an extensive section on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (*see 3.8.1.15.*). In addition the **SEND Local Offer** has a wide range of information to support families with children with disabilities and SEND.

3.8.1.16. The previously commissioned **Return Interview Service** was brought in-house from 1st April 2018. Subsequent review of protocols and processes with all stakeholders have seen an increase in return interviews following a missing episode, with an average of 98% of young people accepting the offer of a return interview throughout 2022-23. Young people, their families or placement suppliers are subsequently offered appropriate advice, including referrals to support services.

4. Lincolnshire priorities for 2023-27

4.1. Operational improvements identified in the previous Sufficiency Strategy 2018-22

4.1.1. The previous Sufficiency Strategy 2018-22 identified a number of improvements to delivery and practice that would positively impact on wider social care support for Lincolnshire children and young people, including the commissioning of key support services:

4.1.1.1. The DfE **Partners in Practice (PiP)** programme was an initiative that aimed to develop effective partnerships between local and central governments. Lincolnshire's PiP work resulted in 5 main projects: embedding the Signs of Safety model including Restorative Practice; review and redesign of Early Help support; sector-led improvement; the development of the Future 4 Me (F4Me) and Caring2Learn (C2L) service; and the development of the children's social care workforce. The 2020 evaluation[22] of the programme found '*largely encouraging findings and areas of added value*'; much of the work of PiP has now been embedded into day-to-day delivery and practice, overseen by the Quality and Standards Team, and has further led into the CiC Transformation programme (*see 1.7.*). The DfE Sector-Led Improvement Partnership (SLIP) is continuing, with Lincolnshire a key partner in providing high-intensity support to other LAs.

4.1.1.2. The value and role of **Kinship Carers** is recognised and these carers receive the same level of supervision, support and training as all other approved foster carers. Exploring and capitalising on the family network can be hugely beneficial for children whose carers are supported to understand the challenges these children face, with a range of financial, practical and emotional support available to manage the difficult feelings and relationships that are unique to kinship care. Support from social care teams continues to be vital in unlocking the potential of family networks, including Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) which continue to be a significant permanence option for CiC.

4.1.1.3. Due to increasing local and national demand, existing arrangements regarding the **Lincolnshire Secure Unit (LSU)** were reviewed with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The review resulted in the recommissioning of a 5-year contract in 2019. Work is ongoing with the DfE on a new purpose-built 24-bed secure children's home, with an additional 4-bed step-down bed spaces. Funding has been approved to take this project through to planning which is due in mid-July 2023 with a view to work starting on site in early 2024. The home is expected to open in early 2026.

4.1.1.4. A full service review of the statutory **Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service** was carried out in 2018-19; extensive service user and stakeholder engagement resulted in a service redesign which included earlier allocation at 16, twin tracking with social care and enhancement of specific service elements. Barnardo's were awarded 5-year contract in 2020 to deliver the service, and have continued to add significant value, including accommodation and Education, Employment and Training (EET) workers, specialist

[22] **Lincolnshire Partners in Practice Programme Evaluation**, March 2020

support to former-UASC care leavers, an embedded Mental Health Worker post through LPFT, emotional wellbeing workers and management of Supported Lodgings suppliers. The service will again be reviewed in 2023 to consider the model from April 2025.

4.1.1.5. Children's Strategic Commissioning successfully implemented the **Open Select List (OSL)** procurement process in 2017, which facilitates the compliant procurement of placements for CYP in independent residential care, independent foster care, supported accommodation and Independent Non-Maintained (Special) Schools[23]. The OSL re-opens annually to allow new suppliers to join and has been effective in the management of placement referrals to the independent market. Subsequent OSLs were created in 2020 for Domiciliary Care, Alternative Provision (to support Interim Home Tuition) and CWD Short Breaks and were incorporated into the new 5-year OSL cycle which opened in 2022 with updated service specifications and Terms and Conditions for each of the seven strands.

4.1.1.6. Ongoing placement and contract management is one of the key priorities of the Children in Care (CiC) Transformation Programme (*see 1.7.*) and has resulted in the Valuing Care (VC) toolkit for mapping strengths and needs of Lincolnshire CiC to better support placement matching, along with the Placements Management Meeting (PMM) and strengthened protocols with the in-house Foster Duty Desk.

4.1.1.7. The **Closed Ordered List for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC COL)** was commissioned in 2018 to facilitate the timely accommodation of spontaneous arrivals of unaccompanied 16-17 year olds. Suppliers have close working relationships with both social care and Leaving Care teams, and young people are well supported to access health and community services, education and legal representation. The UASC COL was reviewed in 2021-22 and a new 5-year contract was recommissioned in 2022 with updated service specification and Terms and Conditions. Additional capacity created through the new contract is essential to manage the increase in UASC referred to Lincolnshire through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS).

4.1.1.8. Lincolnshire's commissioned **Youth Housing service** was redesigned in 2019 and a 5-year contract was awarded to Nacro. The start of the contract was delayed to 1st January 2021 due to the impact of Covid on accommodation readiness, government guidance that young people should not needlessly move placement, and recruitment difficulties. The service has continued to evolve and now incorporates the Care Leaver Homelessness Prevention Project, via grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

4.1.1.9. The Corporate Parenting Manager (CPM) has worked with key partners including District Councils and Adult accommodation suppliers to develop effective pathways, including a county-wide housing protocol and agreement to local connection for Lincolnshire care

[23] When it opened in 2017, the OSL included 4 strands: independent residential children's homes, independent foster care (IFAs), Independent Non-Maintained (Special) Schools (INMS) and Intense Needs Supported Accommodation (INSA, now Supported Accommodation).

leavers in any part of the Local Authority (LA) area. The CPM has also developed onward housing options for former-UASC care leavers leaving supported accommodation.

4.2. Strategic priorities for 2023-27

4.2.1. Lincolnshire children and young people that may need support, be they CiC, care leavers, young people at risk of homelessness or young people on the edge of care, deserve strong, outcomes-focused and enabling services that offer appropriate challenge and nurture to support our young people to develop the skills and resilience for adult life and independence.

4.2.2. These aims are reflected nationally in the emerging children's social care reforms detailed in the **Stable Homes, Built on Love** implementation strategy and consultation report, and within Lincolnshire's Children's Services transformation programmes (*see 2.1.5.*)

4.2.3. Following the review of the 2018-22 Sufficiency Strategy, including where services and support have been embedded into current delivery (*see 3.8.*) and where identified aims have been completed (*see 4.1.*), the Council have identified **five key priority areas** for the 2023-27 Sufficiency Strategy:

- **In-house regulated placements**
- **Independent regulated placements**
- **Supported accommodation**
- **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)**
- **Care leavers**

4.2.4. Each of the priorities has a number of current issues and targeted actions which are detailed in the **Children in Care Sufficiency Action Plan** (see *Appendix A1*); these will be reported on annually and will inform the review and update of the Council's **Market Position Statement** (*see Appendix A2*).

Appendix A

A1 Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan

Progress against the identified **Strategic Priorities for 2023-27** will be reported annually to the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel in July of each year from 2024 and will inform the development of the annual **Market Position Statement** (*see Appendix A2*) which will be published on the Council website.

	Category/service	Priorities		What needs to happen	Progress
1	In-house regulated placements	i	Increase the number of foster families to meet demand	• Review of foster care support and benefits to support retention • Programme of foster carer recruitment including succession planning as older foster carers retire • Foster carer training package including digital offer and Caring2Learn (C2L) • Recruitment of carers for particular groups of young people e.g. UASC, parent and child, teenagers with challenging behaviour • Consistent, high quality support to foster carers by social workers	*To be reported annually*
		ii	Information sharing across teams to support placement planning is effective and reflects the needs of children and young people	• Develop information sharing protocols between service areas • Information shared at Placement Management Meeting (PMM) to support placement decisions • Continue to support information sharing with in-house Foster Duty Desk and LCCPlacements	*To be reported annually*
		iii	Capacity and occupancy of in-house residential homes is effective and meets CYP needs	• Review of CYP placed in-house to consider if a move to foster placements would be suitable (in-house or independent) • Review of in-house residential children's homes to ensure they meet the needs of our CiC cohort • Opening of two new residential children's homes in 2023 • Recruitment of high-quality staff including bank and relief staff to ensure workforce is flexible and has sufficient capacity • Monitor occupancy levels to ensure in-house placements are utilised effectively to maximise outcomes	*To be reported annually*

		iv	Capacity within the secure estate is sufficient to meet CYP needs	• Review and renegotiate the Lincolnshire Secure Unit (LSU) contract with Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in 2026 • Commence building the new 24-bed secure children's home • Lincolnshire CYP are able to access in-county secure accommodation when needed • CYP in secure estate are supported effectively to return to 'mainstream' placements • CYP with Deprivation of Liberty orders (DoLS) are accommodated in safe and suitable placements	*To be reported annually*
2	**Independent regulated placements**	i	Independent regulated placements are effective and meet CYP needs	• Annual re-opening of the Open Select List to increase numbers of pre-approved suppliers • LCCPlacements team are well-resourced to support service areas with referrals and contract arrangements • Develop relationships with suppliers to negotiate block contracts and block commissioning arrangements, and enhance knowledge of vacancies and new local provision • Children's Services placement management oversight (in-house and independent) to seek to bring most Lincolnshire CYP back into Lincolnshire-based placements	*To be reported annually*
		ii	Independent regulated placements offer Value for Money (VfM)	• Sustainable fee increases are agreed with suppliers through the regional panel • Full-cohort oversight of placements in line with the aims of the Children in Care (CiC) transformation programme • Review INMS placements with SEND team to ensure suitability and management of referrals, and look to develop a placements overview forum to consider placement demand, capacity and needs trends • Appropriate challenge to placement packages including support and cost reduction, and effective step-down or transition	*To be reported annually*
		iii	Placements for late entrants into care with complex behaviours deliver high outcomes	• Ongoing development of placement referral form to ensure young people are represented clearly and positively • Suppliers are upskilled in a range of de-escalation techniques and management of complex behaviours	*To be reported annually*

				• Develop effective step-down referral route into in-house supported accommodation and commissioned Youth Housing service	
		iv	Children with Disabilities (CWD) are supported to access appropriate SEND services	• Development of supplier relationships to increase access to high-quality and effective SEND services • Commissioning of CWD Support Services including Early Support and Learning Provision, Targeted Positive Activities, and Domiciliary Care • Commissioning of Alternative Provision, Domiciliary Care and CWD Short Breaks through the Open Select List provides VfM • Open Select List for SEND services re-opens annually to develop supplier numbers	*To be reported annually*
3	**Supported accommodation**	i	Numbers of young people in Supported Accommodation are low	• Commissioned Youth Housing contract continues to deliver VfM and high outcomes through their intensive support placements • Young people are accommodated in-house where appropriate	*To be reported annually*
		ii	Care leavers and young people aged 16-17 at risk of homelessness are supported to access suitable accommodation	• Effective contract management and appropriate challenge to supported accommodation suppliers to are effective in reducing placement packages • Deliver a well-resourced Youth Housing service • Review existing commissioned Youth Housing service to determine delivery from January 2026 • Young people are supported to access education, employment or training (EET) to increase future opportunities and independence • Joined-up access to move-on options e.g. adult accommodation, Intense Housing Management (IHM) accommodation, specialist accommodation • Maintain and develop links with District Councils and other housing suppliers	*To be reported annually*
		iii	Supported accommodation suppliers are registered with OFSTED	• Supported accommodation suppliers register with OFSTED in good time to ensure placements are made in line with regulations • In-house supported accommodation is registered with OFSTED • Supported accommodation contract is reviewed to ensure new regulations are reflected in our service specification and Terms and Conditions	*To be reported annually*
4	**Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)**	i	UASC are placed in high quality, culturally appropriate placements that meet their specific support needs	• UASC Closed Ordered List and the Open Select List continue to deliver capacity and timely response to UASC arrivals • Other suppliers are upskilled to be able to offer support to UASC • UASC are supported to access EET soon after they become CiC	*To be reported annually*

				• Targeted use of Home Office Annex A grant to support service capacity • Ongoing development of in-house, commissioned and community support to the UASC cohort	
		ii	Former-UASC care leavers are supported effectively and are accommodated in high quality suitable accommodation	• Effective links with the Home Office and legal representatives result in timely asylum decisions • Former-UASC care leavers are supported to remain in EET whilst they await their asylum claim outcome • Maintain and develop suitable accommodation options for former-UASC care leavers awaiting a decision on their asylum claim • Establish clear and affordable move-on options for the cohort	*To be reported annually*
5	**Care leavers**	i	Deliver an effective and appropriately resourced Leaving Care Service	• Review existing commissioned Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service to determine delivery from April 2025 • Consistently high numbers of care leavers in suitable and safe accommodation • Care leavers are supported to access education, employment or training (EET) to increase future opportunities and independence • Work with local and regional partners to embed care leaver local connection entitlement • Supported Lodgings are developed and supported • Targeted use of Rent Gap agreements to support care leavers experiencing short-term financial difficulties • District Councils offering priority for housing for care leavers including Council Tax relief • Ongoing development of the Care Leaver Local Offer and social media communications/platforms	*To be reported annually*
		ii	Care leavers are well equipped for independence by the age of 21 as they step down from full service	• Care leavers have the resources and skills to manage their own accommodation needs, have good mental health, have supportive networks and relationships and are financially secure • Develop mechanisms to enable care leavers to remain close to, or in contact with, networks and areas of their choosing • Links with other LAs re: Local Connection and reciprocal support for care leavers	*To be reported annually*

A2 Market Position Statement 2023-24

The Market Position Statement 2023-24 can be considered a starting point for the Sufficiency Strategy 2023-27, providing a baseline for future updates.

The Market Position Statement 2023-24 is available on the **Lincolnshire County Council website** and will be refreshed annually following the annual review of progress against the Key Priorities (*see section 4*) using the Action Plan template (*Appendix A1*).

Appendix B

B1 Glossary of Acronyms

C2L	Caring to Learn / Caring2Learn
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group – *now Integrated Commissioning Board*
ChAT	Children's Services Analysis Tool
CiC	Children in Care - *formerly referred to as Looked After Children (LAC)*
CiN	Child(ren) in Need
CLAS	Care Leaver Apprenticeship Scheme
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
COL	Closed Ordered List
CPM	Corporate Parenting Manager
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CWD	Child(ren) with a Disability
CYP	Children and Young People
DCS	Director(s) of Children's Services
DfE	Department for Education
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DOLs	Deprivation of Liberty Order(s)
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
F4Me	Future4Me
FSD	Family Services Directory
HMIP	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HML	Healthy Minds Lincolnshire
ICB	Integrated Care Board
IFA(s)	Independent Fostering Agency(ies)
IHM	Intense Housing Management
INMS	Independent Non-Maintained (Special) Schools
INSA	Intense Needs Supported Accommodation
JDP	Joint Diversionary Panel
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LA(s)	Local Authority(ies)

LAC	Looked After Child(ren) – *now referred to as Children in Care (CiC)*
LAIT	Local Authority Interactive Tool
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
LLCS	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service
LPFT	Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (NHS)
LSCP	Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
LSU	Lincolnshire Secure Unit
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NEST	Nacro Education Support and Transition (commissioned Youth Housing contact)
NTS	National Transfer Scheme for UASC
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OSL	Open Select List
PiP	Partners in Practice
PMM	Placement Management Meeting
RAA	Regional Adoption Agency
RCC	Regional Care Co-Operative(s)
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SGO	Special Guardianship Order
SLIP	Sector-Led Improvement Partnership
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child(ren)
UASC COL	UASC Closed Ordered List
V4C	Voices for Choices
VC	Valuing Care
VfM	Value for Money