

Children's Strategic Commissioning

Children's Services Independent Placements

Market Position Statement 2023-24

Executive Summary

Lincolnshire County Council's Market Position Statement 2023-24 accompanies the Council's Sufficiency Strategy 2023-27 and will be updated annually to highlight changes in placement demand for Lincolnshire Children in Care (CiC) and children and young people requiring independent (special) school placements.

The Council hopes the Market Position Statement will serve as a tool for independent providers, detailing the placements and services we need for our children and young people.

The Council wants to work in partnership with independent placement providers, especially those in Lincolnshire or in directly adjacent counties, and wants to increase supply across all our independent placement strands.

One of the things we wish to explore during 2023-24 is the block commissioning of placements, and we would like to start a dialogue with providers who are interested in working more closely with us and provide high quality placements for Lincolnshire young people that are as close to home and existing communities as possible.

By working closely with providers in the independent sector, Lincolnshire County Council aims to unlock capacity and develop effective relationships that will be transformational for our children and young people, and we would very much like to hear from you if you would like to be part of the conversation.



Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services is keen to build relationships with independent providers of accommodation and education for children in care, care leavers and children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans.

Through this Market Position Statement we will set out the needs of our children and young people, our vision for the support we would like them to receive and how we plan to work in partnership with the independent market through the effective and appropriate use of independent placements.

In Lincolnshire, the Council's Children's Commissioning Team supports Children's social care and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) teams to broker placements in independent accommodation for Lincolnshire Children in Care (CiC) and independent education for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Placements are made when in-house provision cannot meet the specific needs of a child including where there may not be capacity.

Lincolnshire services

Lincolnshire County Council's Children's Services directorate is highly regarded and prides itself on being an innovative service with integrated health services that means we can wrap multi-disciplinary support around children and young people to meet their needs.

The Council has continued to invest in preventative and early intervention services and so there is a rich offer of early help.

The Council is also the lead commissioner of mental health services in Lincolnshire, on behalf of the local Integrated Care Board, and this enables us to wrap local mental health expertise into both in-house and commissioned provider services.

Lincolnshire children and young people at the end of March 2023:

391 children and young people with a 'Child Protection' (CP) plan

728 Children in Care (CiC)

6968 children and young people with an EHCP

418 care leavers

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services is rated **Outstanding** by OFSTED.

We take great pride in our innovative and highly skilled workforce who deliver excellent services to Lincolnshire children, young people and families.



Lincolnshire demographics

Lincolnshire is the fourth largest county in England with diverse communities dispersed across a large and diverse, predominantly rural landscape. Approximately 21.5% of the total population is aged 0-19 years (163,550), of which 16.4% (124,565) are school aged.

Area	Total Population	0-19 Population	5-19 Population	0-19 % Population	5-19 % Population
East Lindsey	141727	26496	20308	18.7%	14.3%
Boston	70173	16199	11949	23.1%	17.0%
South Holland	95019	20223	15091	21.3%	15.9%
Boston and South Holland	165192	36422	27040	22.0%	16.4%
Lincoln	99299	23596	18085	23.8%	18.2%
West Lindsey	95667	20194	15489	21.1%	16.2%
Lincoln and West Lindsey	194966	43790	33574	22.5%	17.2%
North Kesteven	116915	24907	19032	21.3%	16.3%
South Kesteven	142424	31935	24611	22.4%	17.3%
North and South Kesteven	259339	56842	43643	21.9%	16.8%
Total Lincolnshire	761224	163550	124565	21.5%	16.4%

Source:
Office of National
Statistics (ONS)
mid-2020
population
estimates

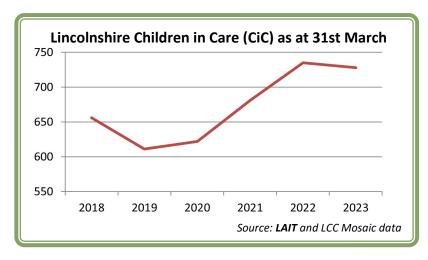
Based on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, 6.7% of Lincolnshire's population live in the 10% most deprived areas of England.

Lincolnshire Children in Care (CiC) numbers

As is the case nationally, the number of CiC has increased over the past 3-4 years and the support these children and young people require is more complex and intense.

The Council is seeing an increasing need for a strong and effective therapeutic approach in both our in-house and independent placements to support these children and young people in the best way possible.

We are seeing children entering care at an older age. We would like placements that can offer step down options which may include a return back home, move to a foster family or independence.



We are keen to grow capacity in Lincolnshire or as close to the county as possible because this means we can work together with providers to wrap other support services around children and young people. We can also look at building strong partnerships and benefit from sharing our resources such as joint matching, joint training and providing enhanced staffing if a young person is struggling.





Placement planning

Lincolnshire County Council's in-house provision for CiC includes residential children's homes, foster carers and unregulated supported accommodation for 16+ year olds.

We also commission our Youth Housing Service and our Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (who manage supported lodgings providers).

Lincolnshire County Council always tries to explore in-house options first as we want children to live in Lincolnshire as close to home and their support networks as possible. We also recognise that we need high quality independent providers to work with us to meet both demand and the needs of the child or young person.



Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services has embarked upon an ambitious CiC Transformation Programme.

Our key goals are to:

- reduce the need for statutory intervention in families lives, by providing the right help to the right children at the right time and for the right duration;
- support families to build on their existing support networks in order to implement their own solutions;
- improve outcomes for Lincolnshire children and young people, by providing care locally within the county rather than care at a distance, to keep them within their own communities where they can be close to their networks.

The Council wants to work more proactively in partnership with independent providers and we would like to continue to build and strengthen relationships with local providers and carers in Lincolnshire.

The Council appreciates there may be times where a placement outside of Lincolnshire is still the best match for a child, especially if it means they can live in a family.

Valuing Care has a number of live workstreams, all focused on different aspects of improving placements for CiC.



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transformation programme

Lincolnshire County Council's **SEND High Needs Strategy 2021-2023** sets out our aims and strategic direction to ensure that children and young people with SEND in Lincolnshire are supported to achieve the best possible outcomes in school and in life.

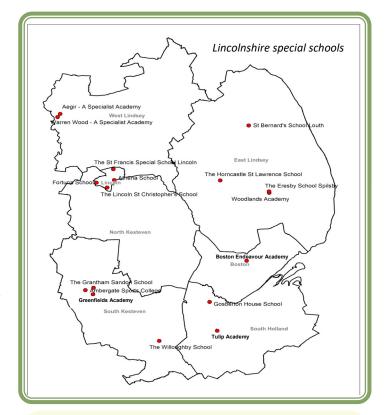
Partners in education, social care and health are committed to working together to establish an integrated school system where children and young people get the right health, care and education, in the right place, at the right time and are able to transition to adulthood and independence when they are ready to do so.

This includes embedding the graduated approach/Inclusion Toolkit and understanding of the support available in Lincolnshire; schools work with families to ensure the home environment reflects the support in school; services will wrap round a child in an inclusive way, reducing school exclusions in recognition that behaviour is a communication of need; and we will have high aspirations for our children and young people with additional needs (higher academic achievement, increased personal resilience, increased socialisation and more resilient adults after education).

Lincolnshire is also strengthening Lincolnshire's **SEND Local Offer**, investing in workforce development, strengthening key times of transitions and facilitating appropriate transitions from special to mainstream schools when access to specialist provision is no longer needed.

Lincolnshire special schools are being redesigned to be all-needs schools, with new special schools for Boston, Lincoln and Spalding. The changes will increase school numbers by 500 places, and should be complete by September 2023.

Nevertheless, there will continue to be a need for independent special school placements due to capacity or the particular needs of the child or young person.



Valuing SEND

The Valuing SEND tool is being utilised to map children and young people's educational strengths and needs in the five key domains of: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and physical; and independence.

The tool has been designed for use for any child/ young person with additional needs, from birth through to age 25. Consistent use of this tool will allow a clear picture of how needs change over time, both for the individual child or young person, and for the setting as a whole.



Independent Foster Care

Lincolnshire's aims

The Council want an increased choice of foster care placements based within Lincolnshire to be able to support children with complex needs, reducing the number of out-of-county placements made through necessity rather than choice.

The Council wants to plan foster care placements, identifying children we feel would thrive in a family environment and support both them and their carers with a well-planned transition, and work with Independent Foster Agencies (IFAs) to support resilient and effective placements that meet the needs of our children.





In-house provision and capacity

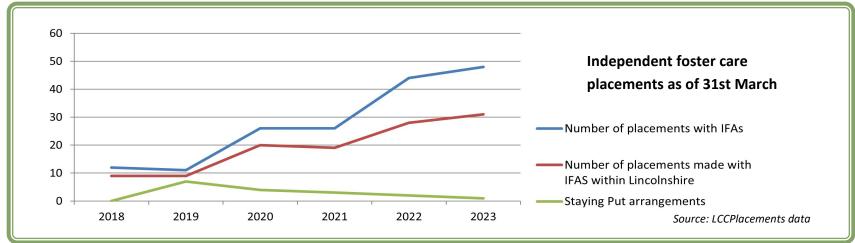
In comparison to other Local Authorities, Lincolnshire County Council have a very high proportion of in-house foster carers. They are highly trained, well supported and very well used.

The increase in both CiC numbers and children and young people coming into care with more complex needs has reduced our in-house foster care capacity, resulting in more children and young people being placed with IFAs.

Current issues

Due to the rise in older children coming into care, Lincolnshire, along with many other Local Authorities, have seen a decrease in foster carers willing or with the experience to take older children or those with more complex needs.

Some IFAs new to Lincolnshire may be developing their networks within our area and may be building the number of foster carers that they have available.





Independent Foster Car

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Building relationships

Lincolnshire County Council wants to build strong relationships with IFAs who are proactive and creative in working with us, finding solutions to maintain placement stability, including the development of programmes and care plans that, if appropriate, will support the individual child to achieve permanence.

The Council wants to work closely with IFA's that provide appropriate support to their foster carers, including a wide range of training and support, a peer network of other carers and access to respite when required.

The Council wants to develop our awareness of Lincolnshire foster carers as, by placing more young people in-county, we can offer wraparound services and targeted support to the whole family and support placement stability.

Parent and Child

The Council has occasional need for independent foster carers able to offer a Parent and Child assessment placement for up to 12 weeks.

These foster carers need to provide a homely environment, effective support and guide the parent to independently care for themselves and their child and provide assurance of safe parenting post-placement.

Staying Put

Lincolnshire County Council wants to offer our children and young people the opportunity to remain with their foster carers under Staying Put arrangements. As such, we want to place our children and young people with foster carers who are willing to support the child placed with them, as they would their own, beyond 18.

What we need...

Lincolnshire County Council believes children and young people thrive best in a family environment; sadly older or children with more complex needs are often harder to place in foster care.

Lincolnshire children and young people need independent foster carers who are resilient when faced with challenging behaviour issues and who are skilled in de-escalation techniques.

The Council want to place with independent foster carers who are trained to understand childhood trauma, risks of absconding, risk of CSE, criminal exploitation, challenging behaviours and learning disability and autism.

The Council wants our children and young people to maintain contact with family and friends wherever possible, including reunification with families when safe and appropriate, so whilst Lincolnshire believe long-term, planned placements are best and most effective for the majority of our children and young people, for others foster care is just one part of their care journey.

Lincolnshire County Council therefore also values independent foster carers who are able to offer short-term, respite or emergency placements, as well as those that can take sibling groups and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children under 16 years old.

Lincolnshire County Council needs independent foster carers that have the flexibility and understanding to be able to support children who have reduced school timetables/attendance and who may be excluded from school.

In-house provision and capacity

Lincolnshire has four in-house residential children's homes spread across the county, supporting a total of twenty-nine children and young people aged 5 to 18 years, plus two residential respite homes for children with disabilities. Two new homes will open in 2023 and 2024 for a further ten young people.

Most are for children with a mix of ages and abilities, apart from The Beacon in Grantham which specialises in supporting children and young people with disabilities. Lincolnshire are currently developing two new children's homes which are due to open in 2023 and early 2024.

Lincolnshire seeks to broker independent residential placements where in-house provision cannot meet the specific needs of a child including where there may not be capacity.

Secure placements

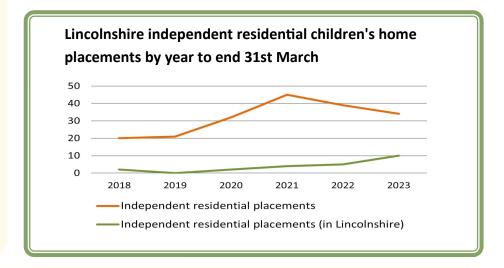
Lincolnshire Secure Unit (LSU) has one welfare bed which, subject to Court approval, can be used for very complex young people exhibiting high risk behaviours, though secure placements can be made across the UK where there are vacancies. The DfE has approved funding for a new purpose-build 28-bed secure children's home and planning is now underway.

Lincolnshire's aims

We want to build strong relationships with independent residential providers who are able to offer positive outcomes for our children and young people who require complex care packages at the highest end of the continuum of need.

Working together, we strive to achieve the outcomes for our children and young people to enable them to return home or transition to either foster families or to independence.

We want to develop our links to Lincolnshire independent residential children's homes as, by placing more young people in-county and reducing the recent increase in out-of-county placements, we can offer wraparound services and targeted support to enhance placement stability.



Placement costs

Lincolnshire County Council needs to work with providers whose costs are fair, with sustainable profit margins, whereby we only pay for the support that is required and delivered and which is reduced as the child or young person becomes more stable and grows in independence.

Some children and young people in independent residential placements have complex needs; Lincolnshire want to work with providers who understand these young people and who will work with us to help them transition into a less intense support package that reflects their changing needs.



Residential Children's

cont.

Regulation & inspection

In line with our high aspirations for our children and young people, Lincolnshire County Council seeks to place with residential providers who are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted and who are registered in line with Care Standards Act 2000 and operates in accordance with the Children's Home (England) Regulations 2015 and the nine Quality Standards.

Lincolnshire does not use unregulated independent placements for children and young people under the age of 16 years old.



Older children in care

Lincolnshire County Council, in line with the national trend, is seeing a rise in older young people entering care i.e. 13+ years.

This older cohort presents some challenges in terms of behaviours and as a result may experience more placement instability and breakdown than younger children.

We want appropriate and innovative support solutions for these young people, given their time in a residential setting may be short before they move into the next stage of their time in care or on to independence.

What we need...

Lincolnshire children and young people need resilient providers and carers with experience of working with childhood trauma, are resilient when faced with challenging behaviour issues and who are skilled in de-escalation techniques. Lincolnshire wants to build effective working relationships with providers, working together to overcome any challenges in placement to avoid breakdown.

Lincolnshire children and young people need carers who are skilled in de-escalation techniques that minimise physical interventions, as well as carers who are able to provide children and young people with clinical therapy, mental health and behavioural support as determined within their care plan.

Ideally, we feel our children will thrive better in smaller homes that can provide a realistic homely environment, with the excellent intensive support programme the children and young people require, and we are increasingly focused on placing our young people within, or as close to, Lincolnshire as possible so they can access Lincolnshire social care and Leaving Care support as well as other Lincolnshire services such as CAMHS and Virtual School.

Above all, Lincolnshire County Council wants to work with independent residential providers that are able to care for our children for the longer term, and who are able to work with our social care and Leaving Care teams to make a real difference in terms of behaviours, outcomes and stability, as well as work with us to step young people down into less intensive accommodation and support.



Independent (Special)

Lincolnshire Special Schools

Lincolnshire has seventeen maintained/academy Special Schools spread throughout the county supporting children and young people with a range of complex SEND.

However, due to either a child or young person's specific need and/ or lack of available appropriate school placements within our own maintained/academy (special) school settings, Lincolnshire County Council does place with the independent sector for day and residential (special) school places.

Use of Independent (Special) School placements

All placements that Lincolnshire County Council commissions are expected to meet the outcomes and needs as outlined in the child and young person's EHC Plan.

These placements seek to meet and exceed identified needs through innovative care a robust curriculum, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement through the school's, and where applicable the home's, internal quality assurance procedures.

The delivery of the service will be consistent with the school's function, as approved by the Regulatory Body.

All providers will need to comply, where appropriate, with the SEND Code of Practice, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 including the Quality Standards 2015 and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014.



As of 31st March 2023, Lincolnshire County Council has 353 children and young people with an EHC Plan placed in Independent day and residential (Special) Schools throughout the UK:

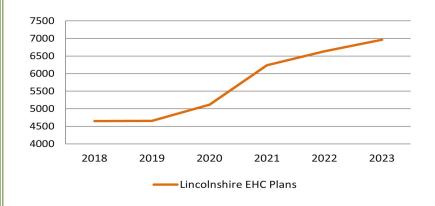
Placement type							
52 weeks	38 week	38 week	Day placement				
	'weekly'	'termly'					
Education &	Education &	Education &	Education only				
Residential	Residential	Residential					
12	17	9	315				

Source: LCCPlacements data

Lincolnshire's SEN data

Similar to the regional and national picture, the number of children and young people for whom Lincolnshire maintains an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan under the Children and Families Act 2014 has been rising, with an increase of 2408 EHC plans between 2018 and 2023.

As of 31st March 2023, there were 6968 EHC plans, an increase of 334 in 12 months.



Source: Children's Services performance data



Independent (Special) Schools

Lincolnshire Kouncil Working for a better future

Lincolnshire Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

Lincolnshire children and young people with an EHCP, by age group and % of cohort:

SEN2 Return	2020		2021		2022		2023	
Year	Total	% of population						
Under age 5	228	4%	217	3%	191	3%	187	3%
Aged 5 to 10	1652	32%	2250	36%	2318	35%	2440	35%
Aged 11 to 15	1821	36%	2195	35%	2430	37%	2712	39%
Aged 16 to 19	1170	23%	1261	20%	1394	21%	1380	20%
Aged 20 to 25	248	5%	305	5%	301	5%	249	4%
Total		5119	6228		6634		6968	

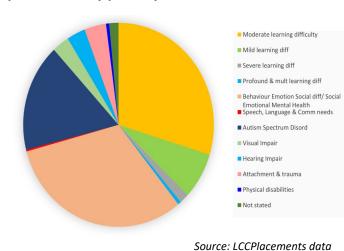
Source: LCC SEN2 SFR data

Lincolnshire children and young people with an EHC Plan, by age group and locality at end March 2023:

SEND Locality Team	Under Age 5	Aged 5 to 10	Aged 11 to 15	Aged 16 to 19	Aged 20 to 25	Total
Boston/South Holland	52	575	622	296	49	1594
East Lindsey	26	407	544	288	51	1316
Lincoln/West Lindsey	54	681	737	369	56	1897
North/South Kesteven	55	777	809	427	93	2161
Total	187	2440	2712	1380	249	6968

Source: LCC Mosaic data

Lincolnshire independent (special) school placements by primary need at 31st March 2023



What we need...

Lincolnshire County Council wants to ensure we have access to effective and holistic specialist provision that supports the diverse needs of our children and young people with SEND aged from 5 to 25 years.

We have seen an increase in placements for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) over the past few years, though the cohort is ever changing.

Lincolnshire's SEND team continue to work with mainstream schools in Lincolnshire to support our children and young people to remain in (or return to) mainstream schools wherever possible, but we recognise that this is not always practical or the best environment, so we want to develop strong relationships with Lincolnshire providers that offer value for money.

Other SEND placements and support services

Post-16 education placements

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) provide core funding (Element 1) and additional needs funding (Element 2) for High Needs learners aged 16 years and above with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) who are attending a Further Education establishment, more commonly referred to internally as Post-16.

Lincolnshire County Council provides additional 'top up' funding to learners (known as Element 3) where the costs to support the learner's needs are higher than the amount provided by the ESFA. The choice of Further Education establishment is determined by the learner.

Open Select List for SEND support services

Lincolnshire County Council commissions the following SEND support services:

- **Domiciliary Care:** supporting children and young people with disabilities, most usually in their own homes, with personal and intimate care, leisure and community activities, life skills, transition support, social and communication skills, and low-level nursing not requiring a qualification.

 Providers of Domiciliary Care must be **CQC-registered**. Independent domiciliary care services will be sought through the OSL when there is insufficient capacity through the block commissioned contract to deliver domiciliary care to 0-18 year olds living in Lincolnshire with profound and significant learning and/or physical disabilities or life-threatening illnesses.
- **Short Breaks:** offering children and young people with disabilities an enjoyable experience away from their primary carers to enhance their personal and social development, whilst parents and families are provided either with a valuable break from their caring responsibilities or with help accessing the community with the young person.
 - Short breaks can occur at different times during the day or evening, overnight or on weekends, and can span a few hours or a number of days.
- Alternative Provision: supporting pupils in schools years Reception to Year 13 (or up to age 25 years where applicable) who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The aim is to engage pupils who may be disengaged from education through a broad and flexible curriculum offer.

The OSL for SEND services re-opens annually to allow new suppliers to apply.



Supported accommodation

or 16+ vear olds

In-house provision

Lincolnshire County Council has two in-house accommodation based Grantham and Gainsborough, accommodating up to 10 16-17 year old CiC or care leavers who are usually in transition from residential and foster care placements.

Young people can stay in these projects for up to 9 months to develop their independent living skills.

Commissioned services

Lincolnshire County Council currently commissions seventy-two bed spaces in Lincoln, Boston and Grantham as part of the Youth Housing Service designed to accommodate 16-17 year olds (including CiC) and Care Leavers up to 21 years old who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This contract is in place for up to five years to the end of 2026. Young people are supported to live independently or to return home to family wherever it is safe and possible to do so.

There are also around 18 Supported Lodgings providers offering nearly 30 family-based placements for 18+ year olds care leavers; these are managed by Barnardo's who deliver our commissioned Leaving Care Service which is contracted for up to five years to March 2025.

Lincolnshire also commissions placements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) aged 16-17 years old through our Closed Ordered List arrangements which are designed to respond quickly to spontaneous arrivals. The current UASC Closed Ordered List is in place to October 2027.

Number of new supported accommodation placements made from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 10 8 2 Number of INSA placements Number of Youth Housing placements The chart demonstrates that demand for supported accommodation is sporadic but the Youth Housing Service receives the majority of referrals.





Supported accommodation 16+ vear

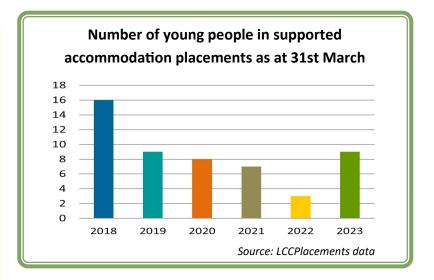
Additional Supported Accommodation

Lincolnshire County Council does have occasional need to place young people aged 16-17 years old in Supported Accommodation (SA) when suitable placements in Youth Housing are unavailable.

This may be as a result of short-term capacity challenges or due to the need to undertake some specialist work with young people before they can move into other accommodation.

SA placements are usually individual units of accommodation with high level support packages due to the nature of the cohort, including young people with significant emotional, social or behavioural needs.

Demand for SA fluctuates and is often unpredictable or is on an emergency basis; requirements have steadily declined over the past five years in line with the introduction of the Youth Housing commissioned service and in-house supported accommodation options, alongside a focus on working with young people to either support them to remain at or return home.



Regulatory changes

OFSTED have confirmed that supported and semi-independent accommodation will be regulated i.e. inspected and meet minimum standards. More detail can be found at www.gov.uk. Suppliers are able to submit applications from April 2023, and will be inspected from April 2024 onwards.

What we need...

Lincolnshire County Council needs access to affordable accommodation offering flexible support hours on occasions where Youth Housing is unavailable. Young people need tailored support to suit them, and not 24-hour surveillance which limits a young person's ability to become independent.

Most young people in supported accommodation are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), so accommodation needs to be available in areas which offer good transports links with opportunities for education, employment and training.

Supported accommodation should aid young people to step forward to more independent living. Lastly, it is important that all young people within supported accommodation have a clear exit plan in place to either transition into our in-house or commissioned contracts, or to move to an independent tenancy.



Placement Commissioning

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Strategic Commissioning Team operate an Open Select List (OSL) procurement process to broker placements with independent providers.

New OSL arrangements started in September 2022 and new suppliers can join the list annually.

Providers are asked to submit business-level information such as accounts and/or evidence of financial standing along with a self-declaration application form. Subject to approval, the provider joins the relevant strand of the OSL; there are regulated (independent fostering agencies, independent residential children's homes and independent (Special) Schools as well as Supported Accommodation (soon to be subject to regulation) and SEND Services (domiciliary care, alternative provision and CWD short breaks) strands.

Providers on the OSL are notified of a suitable referral before other providers not on the OSL, and have the opportunity to make an offer regarding the placement.

The LCCPlacements team who administer the OSL process, issue contracts and Individual Placement Agreements (IPAs) and oversee payments.

Commissioning Officers then monitor contract performance and undertake meetings/visits to providers periodically.

If there are any concerns, Commissioning Officers liaise with social care and SEND, in regard to either placement stability or the support package being delivered, and work with placement providers to develop strong relationships that are mutually beneficial.

All placements will operate, where applicable, within the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Protection Guidelines including compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

Contact us:

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