[](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjKq_LWwqrZAhVDLVAKHb3sCjcQjRwIBw&url=https://jobs.theguardian.com/employer/202250/lincolnshire-county-council/&psig=AOvVaw3Mn9ZwfBiBTnuqPM7XnbA8&ust=1518873426604333)

**Lincolnshire County Council**

**Children Services**

**Children and Young People’s Accommodation Pathway 2025-26**

# [Image result for housing images](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjD65OfwKrZAhXGL1AKHcHzCJUQjRwIBw&url=https://classic.luu.org.uk/helpandadvice/housing/&psig=AOvVaw27Xz3t_y7RLiS4oDEZlJJS&ust=1518872004160941)

*Putting Children First: working with families to enhance the present and future lives of children*

**In Lincolnshire we fundamentally believe that, wherever possible, young people should continue to live at home until they are able to make a planned and sustainable move into independent living**

Our vision in Lincolnshire is to improve the life chances and support good life choices of young people who require support with accommodation or are experiencing homelessness. We will ensure that all young people have the opportunities they need to make a successful transition to adulthood and independence. We will do this by providing a range of support services that are most appropriate to their needs and circumstances.

This brief document reflects the accommodation and housing pathways for young people within Lincolnshire which are for those young people struggling with accommodation, and options for our Children in Care and care leavers. It identifies opportunities for improving the effectiveness of service delivery, from early intervention and prevention, through to preparation for independence and support to enable young people to succeed.

We recognise, within Lincolnshire, that we can only affect change through collaboration and partnership, so we will work with all relevant partners, especially families, to inform local responses to youth housing. To achieve our goal, we will continue to put young people at the center of the service development and delivery of policy.

We will ensure that politicians, commissioners, and accommodation providers listen to the needs of young people, especially those for whom we are Corporate Parent. We want all young people to be happy and make progress, by supporting their welfare and encouraging strong relationships. Ensuring the availability of safe and stable accommodation is a fundamental building block in supporting those goals.

Our strategic approach is based upon a need to:

* **Work collaboratively with families and their wider network so that where safe to do so, young people remain with their family and friends.** We believe that where it is safe to do so, it is beneficial and desirable for young people to remain with people who know them. Families should be supported to maintain family relationships with their children, even when they are finding this difficult.
* **Intervene as early as possible** to prevent housing instability and homelessness from occurring. We will be persistent with support to stabilise families and relationships to prevent homelessness with the Restoring Family Relationships team (RFR).
* **Ensure service pathways are planned and integrated** to better meet the needs of young people experiencing housing instability and homelessness.
* **Safeguard young people who are at risk** because of housing instability or homelessness.
* **Improve transitions to adulthood and independence** for young people at risk of becoming entrenched in a cycle of housing instability and homelessness.
* **Make better use of available resources** to maintain a sufficient range of accommodation-based services with support for young people experiencing housing instability and homelessness by negotiating better value for money with service providers and re-modeling existing service provision.

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**1) Existing arrangements**

Although Lincolnshire County Council is not a Housing Authority, it does have statutory responsibility for the provision of accommodation of all Children in Care (CiC) and care leavers until the age of 18 years.

For care leavers aged 21-25 years, the County Council remains responsible for providing advice and guidance to support them to be independent. The Council is not responsible for the provision of accommodation. This is the responsibility of the District Councils, who are also Corporate Parents and recognise their duty.

In addition, Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people under the age of 18 years, who may be considered to be in need as defined under [Section 17 of the Children Act 1989](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17). This includes undertaking an assessment and providing necessary support for that young person. This may include the provision of accommodation. It must be highlighted that Lincolnshire County Council strongly believes, that where it is safe to do so, young people benefit from remaining with family and friends who know them, rather than being isolated or living with strangers.

The following section describes current accommodation options for those at risk of being homeless, a Child in Care or a Care Leaver open to Lincolnshire County Council**:**

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| **Fostering** |
| The Fostering Service in Lincolnshire provides safe, secure, and high-quality care in family settings for children who need to be looked after away from home. We provide a range of foster carers able to meet the emotional, physical, cultural, and religious and ethnicity needs of children. We place children and young people in local foster placements where relationships with family, friends and community are maintained and continuity of education, health and cultural links and activities is ensured.  As of 31st March 2025, Lincolnshire has more than **276 in-house foster carers** of which more than 60 are kinship carers/connected persons. A comprehensive assessment of need for every child is undertaken prior to accommodation.  Where it is possible, a safe family member or friend will be the preferred placement choice for children in Lincolnshire. Foster carers provide a safe and nurturing placement with every effort made to achieve the very best outcomes for children and young people.  The service seeks where possible to ensure sibling groups be placed together when this in their best interests, and respect and promote the child/ young person's heritage, culture, and identity. Fostering in Lincolnshire strives to achieve permanence for all children who are unable to return safely to their families and promote Staying Put for those children who are secure within their foster placement.  In the event in-house foster placements are unable to meet children’s needs or are lacking capacity, we will use our Open Select List to seek an independent Ofsted-registered foster placement, prioritising foster carers in Lincolnshire to enable children and young people to remain close to their established networks.  Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who are a Lincolnshire Child in Care and are under the age of 16 on arrival are usually placed in culturally appropriate foster care where they can thrive.  As of 31st March 2025, there were 79 Children in Care in independent foster placements plus 11 UASC young people. |

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| **Staying Put** |
| Within Lincolnshire, Staying Put will allow young people to remain with their foster family after they cease being 'Looked After' aged 18. These arrangements can remain in place until the young person reaches their 21st birthday, although those in further or higher education can remain until they have completed their education in that academic year.  All young people on 'Staying Put' will have a pathway plan completed within three months of their 16th birthday. This will consider their future needs and aspirations. Support to the carers is provided by the Fostering Service, and the young people will have their own designated Leaving Care Worker from the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service, provided by Barnardo's.  Young people in independent foster care placements are also supported to consider ‘Staying Put’ if it is in their interests to do so; as of 31st March 2025 there were 5 care leavers in independent Staying Put arrangements. |

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| **Residential Care** |
| Lincolnshire County Council operates five Ofsted-registered long-term residential care homes, based in Gainsborough, Lincoln, Louth, Sleaford, and Spalding, giving a capacity of **26 beds**.  In addition, there is a long-term home for Children with Disabilities (CWD) in Grantham, which has been extended to become an **11-bed unit** and two further CWD respite units based in Lincoln and Boston with a capacity of another **11 beds**. Strut House and Haven Cottage provide overnight breaks for children with profound disabilities.  All the homes are registered and are inspected under the Single Inspection framework by Ofsted. They provide a safe, nurturing, caring and homely environment for each child, where issues and concerns affecting both their past and their future can be positively addressed and supported.  In the event in-house residential placements are unable to meet children’s needs, we will use our Open Select List to seek an independent Ofsted-registered residential children’s home placement, prioritising providers in Lincolnshire to enable children and young people to remain close to their established networks.  Young people in in-house or independent residential care are supported by their social worker and Leaving Care Worker to transition to appropriate supported accommodation or to independent arrangements appropriate to their needs, and the DfE-funded Staying Close Staying Connected project supports young people in any form of residential accommodation to consider their connected networks to best support their choices around this transition.  As of 31st March 2025 there were 46 Children in Care in independent residential children’s homes including 3 Children in Care in residential care attached to an Independent Non-Maintained (Special) School), as well as 7 Children in Care resident in specialist independent residential accommodation for Children with Disabilities (CWD). |

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| **Secure residential accommodation** |
| In-county secure accommodation capacity varies as the Council’s Lincolnshire Secure Unit (LSU) currently has **1 welfare bed** which, though it is a national Ministry of Justice (MoJ) resource, Lincolnshire has first option to use if it is vacant.  Enabling works have started on the new the new 24-bed LSU which will have 16 welfare beds, increasing potential capacity for Lincolnshire secure placements; the new LSU is expected to be complete by 2026.  There is occasional need to source independent secure placements; as of 31st March 2025 there was 1 young person in independent secure accommodation. |

In Lincolnshire we recognise the importance of staying close and connected and having options around where to live. We also recognise the importance of offering supportive options to young people to help them towards independence and adulthood.

Supported Accommodation is commissioned, in the main, for Children in Care aged 16 years and over and care leavers. We also commission services for 16-17 year olds at risk of homelessness.

From 27th October 2023, all supported accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds must be registered with Ofsted under [The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations (2023)](file:///C:/Users/Bridie.Fletcher/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/CKTT5WU2/The%20Supported%20Accommodation%20(England)%20Regulations), with inspections starting from September 2024.

All supported accommodation listed below, including our in-house units and commissioned provision, is registered with Ofsted.

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| **In-house supported accommodation** |
| Lincolnshire has also created two semi-independent housing options to support Children in Care to grow towards independence, offering **10 spaces**.  Rowston Close in Gainsborough and Denton Avenue in Grantham can be accessed for any Child in Care over the age of 16. Both sites are staffed 24/7 and offer up to 2 years tailored program of support to get young people ready for adult life or the NEST service. |

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| **Commissioned Youth Housing service** |
| The Nacro Education, Support and Transition Service (NEST) housing contract provides a dedicated 'youth housing' service which offers **72 units** of supported accommodation, with supported allocated on a needs basis. This offer also includes a young parent offer across parts of Lincolnshire. This accommodation is in a mixture of housing types (foyer style, dispersed housing etc.) across the county. The [Youth Homelessness Protocol](https://lincolnshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/pr_single_homeless.html) aims to define the working arrangements for all agencies involved in supporting 16 and 17 year olds who are in need of advice and assistance due to being homeless or at risk of homelessness.  A key priority within the protocol is ensuring that, wherever possible, young people remain within the family home and work is undertaken with young people and the families to resolve conflict and create longer term stability. Over 200 young people are supported each year via NEST, and around 70 at any one time, thus removing the risk of homelessness and helping all Councils within Lincolnshire to meet their statutory duties.  NEST also supports the Council with a care leaver Homelessness Prevention Service which is open 7 days per week to support care leavers. Nacro and NEST works collaboratively with the Council and jointly chair the housing operations group and the housing transitions meeting. Collaborative and strong working relationship come together to develop a well-managed list of housing options. NEST has a small number of intense support units offering solo placements for young people who may need a period of focused support before they are able to transition into one of the youth housing hubs or move to independent accommodation. |

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| **Independent supported accommodation** |
| Intense Needs Supported Accommodation is commissioned through our Open Select List for, in the main, Children in Care aged 16 years and over, or 16 plus year olds at risk of homelessness who would benefit from a period of focused support. his type of accommodation provision offers a tailored support package to meet the needs of young people. The commissioned accommodation mainly consists of a solo placement arrangement and provided in county and out of county, depending on the requirements of the young person.  The in-house provision will not be solo placement but minimum of dual occupancy and each young person will have a bespoke package of support. This type of accommodation should be seen as a short-term option to enable young people to gain those valuable independence skills before stepping forward onto another accommodation pathway.  As of 31st March 2025, there were 17 young people in independent supported accommodation. |

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| **Supported Lodgings** |
| Our Supported Lodgings services in Lincolnshire offers accommodation for young people leaving care or facing homelessness in a number of areas across Lincolnshire. With expert advice and vital emotional support, vulnerable young people can eventually move on and find safe housing of their own and begin living independently.  A Supported Lodgings provider offers a safe, supportive, and friendly home environment during this crucial time. We know this experience can quite simply transform the lives of young people, enabling them to look forward to a brighter future. Supported Lodgings are part of our Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service; they currently have 8 Supported Lodgings providers offering up to **10 placements** including some short-term respite availability. |

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| **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and former-UASC care leavers** |
| UASC aged 16 or 17 on arrival in Lincolnshire and who become Children in Care are usually placed in supported accommodation that has experience of working with UASC young people.  Whilst they wait for their asylum claim to be reviewed by the Home Office, UASC are supported by their social worker and the accommodation provider to enrol in education and develop key life skills. Lincolnshire County Council remains responsible for their accommodation needs until their claim is decided, including ensuring former-UASC care leavers aged 18-21 years (25 if in education) are suitably accommodated.  As of 31st March 2025, there were 67 UASC young people aged 16-17 in supported accommodation and 30 former-UASC care leavers who remain accommodated whilst their asylum claim is considered. |

**2) What's working well and what we are worried about**

In Lincolnshire, we have lower numbers of young people who require statutory services (this includes those who are in care) compared with other similar Local Authorities, and we believe that this is due to our strong, restorative, early help arrangements and our school system which seeks to engage young people in education as this is the single most important factor affecting their life chances.

For young people who are at risk of being homeless, our restorative services, including family group conferencing which seeks to mobilise family networks so young people can be supported to live with people who know and love them. The Restoring Family Relationship (RFR) team works longer-term with families where young people have presented as homeless. The aim of the team is to rebuild relationships, support young people to remain at home with their family, mediate, and find a solution to enable young people living elsewhere to return home to family.

The vast majority of young people will return to live in their family network where they are safest and best supported. If they cannot return home then they are supported to make planned moves to more independent accommodation, normally with friends or extended family.

When we do need to provide accommodation for young people, we have a strong network of supported accommodation provision delivered through a range of partners across the Council so no young person is ever accommodated in Bed and Breakfast. The Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service works tirelessly with care leavers meaning that approximately 93% live in suitable accommodation and nearly 50% are engaged in employment, training, or education.

However, the numbers of young people over the age of 14 years who come into care has increased, and we are committed to developing more responsive services to enable more families to continue to support their child. We recognise that adolescence can be a challenging time. Some young people can find this period of their lives confusing where they want independence, making more independent decisions, but are not always ready to cope with it or the consequences.

This can result in behaviors which adults and parents may refer to as ‘pushing boundaries’. Some parents find these behaviors hard to cope with and we want to ensure that we have highly trained staff available to support parents in their role whilst, at the same time, working with young people to help them to understand the impact of their behavior.

Our restorative, relationship-based practice model supports young people who are challenging, and the Future4Me team and Early Help teams work tirelessly to keep children connected to family. It is critical that these young people have stability and security within their accommodation and receive the appropriate support in a timely way that responds to crisis and challenging situations which can often emerge in the lives of these young people.

We understand that some young people may transition between both statutory and non-statutory systems, often leading to duplication in work as these children may be open to a number of services and workers. We also acknowledge that many of the young people we work with have multiple complex needs which require specialist psychological, speech, language and communication or substance misuse support. If not properly addressed all these factors have the potential to jeopardise their existing accommodation which creates instability and uncertainty. The support for these needs is within the Future4Me service.

Our approach will enable practitioners to pro-actively plan to ensure assessment and intervention is more outcome focused and joined up and this must include matters related to the young person's accommodation. Our aim is to avoid duplication and work towards the best possible plan for the young person at that time. In Lincolnshire we want all practitioners to work in a strength based, relationship focused way that puts young people at the heart of the assessment and future plans. We want to value the voice of the young person and support them to find their own solutions with our support.

Our accommodation pathways provide for those young people who are at risk from or pose a risk to others. Both our commissioned NEST service and in-house services at Denton and Rowston respond in an effective way and are of higher quality than previous arrangements prior to 2020.

Across Lincolnshire all care leavers are considered to have local connection to every District Council and every Council has a housing lead with a focus and awareness of the needs of care leavers. All 7 District Councils have agreed that no care leaver will be considered intentionally homeless without a formal housing review and personal housing plan meeting, always to be held with the young person with an invitation for their Leaving Care worker to attend if the young person wishes.

Our Youth Housing model (NEST) has been commissioned in Lincolnshire since 2021. The following diagram helps identify where the accommodation is, and what the local Nacro move on options are so that young people can plan for their future across the county.

**Move on Units** are our Step Forward Units, where priority is given to Young People leaving the contract.

We have 61 Units in 4 districts: Lincoln, Boston, North Kesteven (Sleaford) and South Kesteven (Grantham).

**Support Units** are our contracted bed spaces.

We have 72 Units in 3 districts: Lincoln, Boston and South Kesteven (Grantham).

**3) Housing options and accommodation pathway**

**4) Conclusion**

Our vision in Lincolnshire is to improve the life chances and life choices of young people who require support with accommodation and those who are experiencing homelessness.

We will ensure all young people have the opportunities they need to make a successful transition to adulthood and independence, and we will do this by providing a range of support services at the right time which are most appropriate to their needs and circumstances. Across the county we recognise our responsibilities to all young people, and most importantly the significance of our role as the Corporate Parents to Children in Care and care leavers and how providing safe, secure, and supported options will give children the best life chances.

The housing options for young people within Lincolnshire are varied and comprehensive. We will continue to identify opportunities for improving the effectiveness of service delivery early family intervention through to offers of accommodation and support which enables young people to succeed.

To achieve this vision, we are committed to working collaboratively with families and their wider network so that, where safe to do so, young people remain with their family and friends as we believe that it is beneficial for young people to remain with people who know them wherever possible to do so. Where we do need to intervene, we will do so as early as possible to prevent instability and homelessness from occurring or persisting.

Our aspiration is that the use of our housing options is always done in a planned way, and that our services deployed to meet the needs of young people experiencing housing instability and homelessness. We do this with wrap-around support, improving transitions to adulthood and prevent young people being entrenched in a cycle of housing instability or homelessness.