

Joint area review

North Lincolnshire Children's Services Authority Area

Review of services for children and young people

Audit Commission
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
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Contents

Introduction	2
Context	2
Main findings	3
Grades	5
Recommendations	5
Areas for investigation through fieldwork during the joint area review	
1. Safeguarding	6
2. Looked after children and young people	9
3. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	12
4. Additional investigations	15
5. Service management	21
6. Capacity to improve	21
Annex A: The annual performance assessment letter	26
Annex B: Summary of the Enhanced Youth Inspection Report	27
Annex C: Children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report	29
Annex D: Summary of joint area review and annual performance assessment arrangements	31

Introduction

1. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
 - at risk or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
2. The following investigations were also carried out:
 - the contribution of services to preventing substance misuse and support for those currently misusing
 - the quality and effectiveness of services to support young people into education, employment and training post-16.

Context

3. North Lincolnshire was established as a unitary local authority in 1996. It is situated on the south side of the Humber estuary and covers an area of 85,000 hectares, of which 89% is agricultural land. The pattern of settlement reflects its mainly rural nature, with market towns surrounded by many small villages. An important exception to this is the substantial urban area of Scunthorpe, with a population of over 60,000. It is most famous for the steelworks that dominates the town and remains a large employer.

4. The population of North Lincolnshire has remained generally stable over the last decade, although young families have been steadily moving out of the towns to the more rural settlements. From an overall population of 159,000, over 38,000 are children and young people. Ethnic minority communities make up 3.96% of the population overall, although some areas have a significantly higher proportion. The main Black and minority ethnic groups are of Asian or Asian British ethnicity, but there are increasing numbers in the local Iraqi Kurdish community. Since 2001, there has been an increasing proportion of Eastern European workers, mainly young men, residing in the area, particularly of Polish origin. Unemployment has generally been lower than the national average, although numbers seeking work are increasing.

5. The labour market is characterised by relatively low paid jobs, many of them in the manufacturing, processing and services sectors. Until recently, a lower proportion of young people than is the case nationally continued their education beyond the age of 16. There are significant inequalities in the life chances of many residents, with the most acute problems of low income and unemployment concentrated in areas close to Scunthorpe and the town itself.

6. Pre-16 education provision in North Lincolnshire comprises 52 private or voluntary early years settings, 11 children's centres, 66 primary schools, 13 secondary schools, two special schools and two pupil referral units.

7. Post-16 education and training provision includes two school sixth forms, one sixth form college and one further education/tertiary college. The council area is served by five local work-based learning providers. Additionally, North Lincolnshire adult education service offers a small number of educational courses to 16–18 year olds. Entry to Employment (E2E) provision is managed by a local consortium, including three of the work-based learning providers. North Lindsey College also delivers a pre-E2E programme comprising 60 places. The consortium controls around 2,800 places in total. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by North Lincolnshire adult education service.

8. Primary care is provided by North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust (PCT), which is coterminous with the local authority, whilst acute hospital services are provided by Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospital Trust. Mental health services are provided by Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

9. Children's social care services are provided through the children and family services and also the safeguarding and practice arms of the children and young people's service. Services are delivered by a workforce of 197 people directly engaged with children and families, including 37 qualified social workers. The 167 children looked after by the council are cared for by 88 foster carers. In addition, there are 13 family/friend and 10 short-break carers; there are four children's homes, one of which provides short-break care for disabled children, with another providing short-breaks and intensive support for children on the edge of care. Independent reviewing functions are provided via a dedicated team in the safeguarding and practice arm, where the child protection case conference and registration system is also located.

10. Services to children and young people who are at risk of offending, or who have offended, are provided through the North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Team. There are no young offender institutions in the area.

Main findings

11. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- Safeguarding of children and young people is good. Partnership working on safeguarding issues is strong and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) is working effectively. Referral and assessment services work well. Tight management systems ensure that children at risk of harm are responded to appropriately. Good investment in preventative services has resulted in falling numbers of

looked after children and of those subject to child protection arrangements.

- Services, and support, for looked after children are good. There are some outstanding features. The management of the service is outstanding and provides very clear direction, with very strong and effective support from the Corporate Parenting Group. Looked after children's health needs are well met. The educational achievement of looked after children is broadly in line with those in similar councils. Care planning for children is excellent, as are arrangements to enable looked after children to participate in their reviews and be consulted. Care leavers receive an excellent service.
- Support provided to children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as to their families, is good. Early intervention and prevention, and well co-ordinated, multi-agency working meet needs effectively and facilitate inclusion at every opportunity. Good support, and intervention, has ensured a generally upward trend in educational achievement, although there is recognition that this is an area for further improvement. Service provision has been altered in response to consultation with young people and their parents and more involvement is planned.
- Services to support those currently misusing drugs or alcohol or smoking are good, with good commitment of staff in the Drug Education Liaison and Treatment Agency (DELTA), in schools and across the integrated young people's substance misuse service to educate and support those in need. However, the impacts of individual service's contributions are not consistently measured.
- The impact of local services in supporting young people to access education, employment and training is good. The council, and the local Learning and Skills Council, provide strong leadership and partnership working for 14–16 education is well established, although the 14–19 strategy lacks clarity. Young people are prepared well for their future lives, and a high and increased proportion of Year 11 school leavers progressed into education, employment and training in 2007. Attainment continues to improve well, but the proportion of young people achieving five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, although also improving, remains lower than the national average.
- The management of services for children and young people is good, as is the service's capacity to improve further. The ambition of the council and its partners is good, with a strong and realistic vision set out in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and a clear timetable for progression towards becoming a Children's Trust. Some plans do not always identify baseline information and milestones.

Prioritisation is good, with good evidence of investment of resources to match priorities.

- Financial management and planning are sound. There is an appropriate focus on value for money and many examples of imaginative reinvestment of resources and an invest-to-save approach. Performance management arrangements are well embedded and effective. Senior managers provide good, strong and effective leadership and there is a good track record of improvement.

Grades

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	3
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Service management	3
Capacity to improve	3

Recommendations

For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found to successfully disseminate the findings of this report to children and young people in the area.

For action over the next six months

- Improve the 14–19 strategy, including joint planning and collaboration for post-16 students.
- Ensure key plans, and strategies, contain targets and outcomes that can be measured for impact; including the substance misuse strategy.

For action in the longer term

- Improve attainment of 16 year old students in English and mathematics.

- Improve the educational achievement of looked after children.
- Ensure the strategic evaluation of data and information in order to judge the impact of interventions, actions and resources on the overall progress and achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Equality and diversity

12. Equality and diversity issues are placed at the centre of ambitions and priorities for children and young people and articulated in the CYPP. Priorities are supported by the Corporate Diversity Steering Group which is chaired by the council's Chief Executive and attended by 'diversity champions' from across the council. Diversity impact assessments are embedded in almost all services and monitored closely by the 'champions' and managers. In the 2007 Audit Commission Survey of Schools, schools graded the effectiveness of the council's support for meeting the needs of pupils from minority ethnic groups, refugee families and Traveller communities above average. Support for combating discrimination and racism was graded in the top quartile of all councils nationally. Multi-agency working within the 'Disability Collaborative' is making a positive difference to the outcomes for children with learning disabilities and/or disabilities. Outcomes for children and young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are at least similar, and sometimes better, than their peers.

Safeguarding



13. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Strong, effective and well-established partnerships that work well together.</p> <p>The excellent work of the LSCB, which delivers a comprehensive and integrated approach to safeguarding.</p> <p>Weekly referral management meetings that are effective in ensuring consistency of service delivery and case direction.</p>	<p>Lack of data analysis with regard to the impact of the anti-bullying strategy.</p> <p>Insufficient assessment by the Youth Offending Team of the risks associated with the offending behaviour posed by a small number of young people.</p>

<p>Very good, tightly managed referral and assessment services that promote rapid and effective safeguarding arrangements.</p> <p>Investment in effective preventative services has reduced numbers on the child protection register and of those looked after.</p> <p>The effectiveness of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.</p>	
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14. Children indicate in surveys, and in discussions with inspectors, that they feel safe in their local communities. A range of good work is undertaken on a multi-agency basis to inform children, young people and their carers about their safety, and there is helpful public information available to them. The Fire and Rescue Service, the Police, and the Highways and Planning Department are very involved in safeguarding initiatives through membership of the LSCB and effective work in schools and communities. The good partnership work has resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of children and young people killed, or seriously injured, on the roads, from 16 in 2005 to seven in 2006. In the 2007 Audit Commission School Survey, schools judged the support from local services for road safety highly and the local authority is in the top quartile of all councils nationally. The number of children hurt in fires has also reduced significantly, from 14 in 2005 to two in 2007.

15. The LSCB has a public communication strategy and uses local media effectively to promote its safeguarding activity. Good work undertaken with the Race Equality Council has informed local Black and minority ethnic and new European communities about safeguarding children and, in particular, the council's role in relation to safe private fostering arrangements.

16. The needs analysis for the CYPP, the TellUs2 Survey and some older students who spoke to inspectors, indicated that bullying remains a concern for some young people. Effective work has been undertaken to develop and implement an overarching anti-bullying strategy. All schools have an anti-bullying policy. Peer mentors, buddies, positive parenting programmes and a pilot project for children in transition from primary to secondary school have all yielded positive responses from the children and young people involved. All children interviewed during the inspection affirmed that schools deal with bullying well. Good anti-bullying work is also being undertaken as part of a broader programme of behaviour support. However, there is not yet effective strategic evaluation of information and data to assess the impact of this good work. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme has been effective in primary schools and is now being rolled out to all secondary schools.

17. The council has invested well in a range of preventative services in recent years including, for example, reducing capacity in one children's home and re-using the resources for intensive support and short-break care for children at risk of becoming looked after. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of initial child protection case conferences, from 70 per 10,000 of the population in 2003/04 to 32.3 in 2006/07. This is better than the rate found in similar councils and nationally. The percentage of children and young people on the child protection register is 23.1%, which is comparable to that of similar councils and better than that found nationally

18. The domestic abuse strategy is well integrated with other initiatives, such as Safer Communities and the LSCB. This has contributed to the good reduction in the number of child protection case conferences featuring domestic abuse as the primary concern by 20% since 2005. However, there has been insufficiently rigorous risk assessment by the Youth Offending Team of the risks posed to the public by a small number of young people with whom they are working.

19. The work of the dedicated Contact Team, focusing on the needs of children in contact arrangements, is well regarded by the Court User Group. Where children and young people are the subject of child protection investigations but are not subsequently put on the register, or where their names are removed from the register, meetings are held very quickly to put in place support services. This is good practice. Child protection procedures and processes are effective and timely.

20. The council was a 'pilot area' for the development of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and its implementation is based on strong and well-established multi-agency partnerships. It is well used, and understood, by partners and has resulted in earlier delivery of targeted services to families and their children. The completion of CAF documentation contributes significantly to the good quality of initial and core assessments and child care planning. Currently, 86% of initial assessments are timely, significantly better than for similar councils and the national average. Threshold criteria for making, and responding to, referrals are also well understood and implemented.

21. Point of contact services, such as duty, intake, children in need and children with additional needs, are excellent. These are well organised, prompt and responsive and are available from nine o'clock in the morning to nine o'clock in the evening, seven days a week. The Extended Hours Team, available throughout the night, provides high-quality specialised advice and support. Weekly referral management meetings are effective in ensuring consistency of service delivery and case direction.

22. The work of the LSCB is excellent in engaging partner agencies, and it takes a strong lead on safeguarding across the local area. It has made significant progress in developing the capacity of other services, including the voluntary and community sector. The LSCB has also taken an effective lead on private fostering arrangements, the establishment of a Child Death Overview

Panel and promoting safe recruitment practices. Lessons learned from serious case reviews are well integrated into multi-agency training and form part of specific training for managers.

23. Good training opportunities are available to all staff and work commitments organised to allow attendance. All current social care staff working with children in need are suitably skilled and qualified; a situation better than that found in similar councils and nationally. A good ratio of team managers to social workers allows for effective oversight of cases and strong supervision of and support to staff. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements are strong locally and directed at early risk management. Inter-agency policies and procedures are up-to-date. Effective systems are in place to monitor children and young people who go missing from schools, health or children's services.

Looked after children and young people



24. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good with some outstanding features.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Outstanding management of the looked after service, with a strong and pervasive emphasis on safeguarding.</p> <p>Very strong and effective corporate parenting.</p> <p>Strong placement service resulting in stable placements and good care planning.</p> <p>Excellent participation and consultation arrangements for looked after children.</p>	<p>Adequate educational achievement of looked after children.</p>

25. The management of the looked after children service is outstanding, with a strong vision which is clearly communicated throughout the council and its partners. Realistic targets and very good performance management arrangements are in place, with a strong emphasis on the safeguarding of looked after children. Imaginative use and re-use of resources in a flexible way

supports the changing needs of the service well. For example, the Children in Care Support Centre was created out of a building that was previously a children's residential home.

26. The Corporate Parenting Group is an excellent, strong and inclusive group, including senior officers from across the council and key partner agencies, and foster carers, as well as elected members. Looked after children's views are effectively represented by the young person who chairs the Children in Care Council. The group is committed and energetic, and there is clear evidence that the views of young people are listened to and that they influence the development of services. As well as driving forward the corporate agenda for children and young people, members of the group play a very active role in creating opportunities for leisure and employment.

27. A good health service is provided to looked after children, and 88% of children had their health monitored in 2006/7; better than in similar councils and the national average. The looked after children's nurse is seen as accessible and helpful by children and young people, and is undertaking group work and supporting carers, as well as undertaking health assessments. The specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision for looked after children is also good, with a strong team of clinical psychologists who are accessible to children, staff and carers. A recent innovation is the excellent screening tool for looked after children. This is helping to identify those children most in need of CAMHS support and most at risk in terms of deteriorating mental health and placement disruption.

28. An excellent CAMHS-led therapeutic fostering service is in place, enabling some children with very challenging behaviour to be cared for in family placements and contributing well to the high rate of placement stability. Although no CAMHS psychiatrist from the Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Trust is based in North Lincolnshire, effective arrangements are in place for access to psychiatric advice, support and clinical care from a psychiatrist based in Rotherham. These arrangements meet the required standard for 24-hour access to psychiatric assessment for young people with acute mental health problems. An agreement is in place for Tier 4 in-patient facilities in neighbouring councils.

29. The council has an effective placement service for looked after children. The Family Placement Team is very well regarded by carers. The team provides excellent support for this group and this has engendered a strong loyalty to the council. Carers meet regularly with senior managers and this dialogue leads to positive changes to the service. The number of looked after children has decreased significantly in the last two years and is now below that of similar councils. Stability of placements is very good and longer term stability has now improved and is broadly in line with the national average. Care and permanence planning for children is excellent and relationships with the local courts and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) are good. Very few children are placed out of the area, and those who are are closely

monitored. The arrangements for annual review of foster carers are regulation compliant, but good practice would suggest that they are not sufficiently independent of the fostering service.

30. The support service for the education of looked after children is good, and every school has a designated teacher. Personal Education Plans are now rigorously reviewed on a termly basis, and actions are taken quickly when additional support for children is needed. The number of long-term absences from school by looked after children has reduced well, and at 10.6% in 2006/07 is better than that found in similar councils. The progress looked after children make overall is broadly average when compared to similar children in comparable councils. In 2007, the percentage of care leavers with at least one GCSE/GNVQ, at 58.8%, was higher than that found in comparable councils. The percentage achieving five good GCSEs, although low, is improving and is similar to the national average. The proportion of looked after children achieving expected levels at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 remains low, as is the case nationally. The trend is one of improvement. No looked after children have been permanently excluded from school for three years, and fixed-term exclusions are falling due to the good individual support provided. Extensive efforts are made to enable looked after children to engage in and enjoy a good and increasing range of sports, leisure and cultural activities. The youth service provides a good contribution to the opportunities available.

31. There are excellent arrangements for looked after children to be consulted on, and participate in decisions affecting their lives and on service development. For example, the Garage Patch Kidz played a key role in the development and implementation of the anti-bullying strategy and their view is that this work has helped them to feel safer. The timeliness of statutory reviews, and the rate of participation in reviews, is also excellent and the independent reviewing officer service provides robust challenge to the care planning process. The complaints and advocacy services, assisted by the children's participation officer, provide extra safeguards for looked after children and encourage the development of life skills to enable children to speak up for themselves. The new dedicated unit for contact arrangements is providing better quality contacts for children and improved evidence for court proceedings. Issues with the local police have been addressed, resulting in a fall in the numbers of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. Effective work with looked after children, including a restorative justice initiative, has reduced the number who offend. Currently, 2.4 times as many looked after children offend compared to all children in the local police area. This is below the proportion in similar councils and that found nationally.

32. Care leavers receive an excellent service from the Children in Care Team and the young people's support service. Every young person has a pathway plan and these are regularly reviewed. Transition arrangements are very good. All care leavers live in suitable accommodation, which is better than the situation found in similar councils and nationally. Young people report satisfaction with their accommodation, especially the supported lodgings

scheme. There is good welfare and emotional support and age-appropriate health and CAMHS provision for care leavers. The proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment is high and significantly better than in similar councils and the national average.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



33. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Strong commitment and action to meet the needs and improve outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Successful action to include more children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into mainstream education.</p> <p>Very good multi-agency early intervention and early years provision.</p> <p>Good engagement and support for parents, as well as children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Highly regarded family support provision for parents and children.</p>	<p>Insufficiently strategic evaluation of data and information in order to judge the overall impact of interventions, actions and resources on the progress and achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Lack of opportunities available for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to access work related learning and apprenticeships.</p>

34. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in North Lincolnshire are well supported and this is making a positive difference to the outcomes for them. The commitment to improving the life chances of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is strong across the council area. At the most senior level, this strategic vision is well understood and shared by schools and partners alike. Schools graded the quality of the council's strategy, intervention and assessment for this group of

children in the top quartile of all local councils nationally in the annual Audit Commission Survey of their views. The new structure, which has integrated services for inclusion together with school improvement, is sound, and good work is taking place to build capacity locally and raise the achievement of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

35. Provision and support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in their early years is very good. This is confirmed by parents in inspection reports and in responses to the annual survey of schools' views. Children are identified at an early stage and support needs are generally assessed promptly. The Portage Team works closely and very effectively with an area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) Team and parents. The North Lincolnshire Early Support Programme (a pathfinder) has also led the way in good integrated working and early intervention; consequently young children in their early years make a good start in their education and development.

36. Preventative action to support children with emotional difficulties and their families is good. The Education Preparation Unit focuses on early intervention, successfully enabling children's positive transition into mainstream schooling. Parents report that classes have helped to build their self-esteem and confidence in joining in with others.

37. The assessment of support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and is reviewed effectively, including the small proportion of young people who are educated out of the area. In the majority of cases, provision is timely and appropriate, although waiting lists for some health services can be too long. An increasing number of children with statements attend mainstream schools as a result of good work done on training staff and developing packages that fulfil support requirements. This good work has also led to high and increasing numbers of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities being educated effectively in mainstream schools without statements. Devolving the equivalent funding on a three-yearly basis means that schools can be more confident when convincing parents that the needs of their child will be met and sustained. Statutory assessment procedures are effective and timely. To improve the participation of, and communication with young people, a system called Maketon is being used across all partners in early years and a potentially very effective Personal Efficacy Guidance System (PEGS) is being developed with the secondary special school.

38. Good multi-agency working is evident in all schools and settings. The small numbers of young people with very specific, or complex, needs are well supported through specialist teams, such as the Hearing Impaired Team and Autism Team, and through joint arrangements with neighbouring councils for those who experience visual and physical difficulties. Generally, schools value specialist provision highly and they are well supported by it. Some schools report that waiting lists for access to CAMHS can be too long. The two special schools provide high quality education and care as well as good outreach

programmes to the wider school community. They work collaboratively with the local council and provide good strategic support.

39. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make educational progress that is broadly comparable to those in similar councils as a result of the effective support and positive opportunities provided for them. The trend is generally one of annual improvement. Ofsted school inspections report positively on how pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress. However, the council has rightly identified variable rates of progress of some young people across the range of identified difficulties and/or disabilities, and the need to improve the progress they make in their learning. It has set appropriate milestones, including closer monitoring of learning and disability issues in schools, a sharper focus by School Improvement Partners (SIPs), and a better sharing of information about achievement across services. SIPs are increasingly using data at individual pupil level to challenge schools to ensure that appropriate targets for improvement are set and monitored. However, there is not yet a sufficiently strategic evaluation of data and information to judge the impact of interventions, actions and resources on the overall progress and achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

40. Good links across a variety of providers, including special schools and pupil referral units, facilitate a satisfactory and increasing range of out-of-hours and summer school provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good collaborative support is provided through the youth service to encourage independence, and the Youth Offending Team links with organisations such as the Fire and Rescue Service to offer outdoor pursuits. After school activities for the small proportion of severely disabled young people are limited in some parents' view but improving; although a small number of parents say they are sometimes put on too late in the day for their children. Consultation with parents has led to a change in policy so that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can participate in summer schools alongside their peers. The Disability Collaborative is a useful forum, bringing parents, and partners, together to ensure that disabled children have easy access to services. Its role is developing well.

41. The commitment to involving young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in influencing policy and practice, as well as their own individual provision, is strong. School inspections show listening to young people, and acting on their views, as excellent or good in secondary schools, pupil referral units and special schools, although satisfactory in primary schools. The X-press Forum includes their voice, and individual provision has been altered in response to feedback, for example at the Cygnet Centre through use of a Grumbles Book. A trip to Beamish Heritage Museum and a residential break in Edale, funded by the youth service, were organised in response to requests from siblings of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The CYPP includes this as an area for further action.

42. Parents and carers of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally well supported. Children's centres provide a good range of advice and develop parents' confidence to bring children to the centre. Parents are unanimous that Kaleidoscope is an outstanding drop-in centre, and both the Cygnet Centre and short-break foster carers offer very good short-break provision. Excellent use is made of direct payments, for example to provide activities and help in the home so parents can spend time with their other children. A small number of parents, however, report that access to provision is being hindered for some children because of transportation difficulties, particularly for those living in more rural locations.

43. Educational provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good for 11 to 16 year olds and for those post-16. Good specialist resources are available at the special school, and provision is inclusive in both schools and colleges. As a result, few young people are placed out of the council area; and only those with very specific and complex needs. The transition process into adult services has recently been reviewed and is working effectively through a well-defined multi-agency approach. Almost all young people have a transition plan, and these are highly personalised and capture their holistic needs. For example, plans also identify those young people with additional safeguarding needs for early referral to the coordinator for vulnerable adults. At 19-plus, the emphasis has appropriately changed from social care to work skills and employability. However, insufficient opportunities are currently available for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to access work-related learning and apprenticeships.

Other issues identified for further investigation

The contribution of services in preventing substance misuse and support for those currently misusing

44. **The contribution of services in preventing substance misuse and support for those currently misusing is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good multi-agency and partnership working.</p> <p>Well-structured substance misuse strategy as a key driver for improvement.</p> <p>Good impact of the Healthy Schools programme.</p> <p>Effectiveness of individual one-to-one support.</p>	<p>Lack of strategic evaluation of the overall impact of interventions.</p> <p>Identification of the specific substance misuse needs of those aged 16 and above.</p>

The well regarded work of the Drug Education Liaison and Treatment Agency (DELTA).	
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45. The 2006 annual performance assessment highlighted smoking and substance misuse in children and young people as an area for improvement. Children's services had already identified the issue as a result of feedback from young people in the 2005 Adolescent Lifestyle Survey, where higher than average levels of drinking and smoking amongst teenagers were identified. Partnership between the council and the PCT is strong and, together with other agencies, they have developed a more coordinated approach to reducing the use, and effects, of substance misuse through a recently commissioned, integrated young people's substance misuse service.

46. This area is reflected as a key priority in the CYPP and its one-year review. The review has taken account of feedback from young people to re-inform priorities and support the direction of future initiatives. Young people have also worked with the service to support their peers. For example, they have been involved in developing stark posters on the dangers of alcohol abuse. Although the involvement of some young people is good, the service has not yet utilised the views of families in the shaping of the service. However, plans are in place to develop this.

47. A well structured substance misuse strategy describes the multi-agency approach to the delivery of a 'universal', 'targeted' and 'specialist' service, through a clear pathway from early identification and referral, information and advice, education and intervention, into specialist treatment. Good, direct and individual support is provided through the specialist service, and young people accessing this support say they appreciate it. Help is provided wherever the young person feels most comfortable.

48. The service has been effective in engaging partners across the community to raise the profile of preventative work and coordinate the delivery of education, information and advice as part of 'universal provision'. The service has trained significant numbers of front line workers, including Connexions personal advisers, children's centre staff, teachers, youth workers, community police staff, school nurses, education welfare staff, parents and a significant number of foster carers. Training also included the use of a good, straightforward screening tool and recording through the CAF, which is being used by all partners.

49. Effective partnership working between the substance misuse service and schools has enabled the Healthy Schools and Personal, Social and Health Education programmes to become key conduits to educate young people in, and reduce the use of drugs, smoking and alcohol. All schools are involved in the Healthy Schools programme and targets for the number of schools achieving the award have been exceeded. In interviews during the inspection, young people said that schools deal with issues effectively; they feel well

supported by Connexions personal advisers and appreciative of the privacy afforded to them. Young people who responded to the TellUs2 survey in 2007 said they were well informed about the dangers of alcohol abuse and fewer young people than nationally felt they needed more information. A satisfactory and average proportion believed they needed more information on drugs and smoking issues.

50. Of those primary and secondary schools inspected by Ofsted, the majority have been judged good or better for the extent to which they enable young people to adopt healthy lifestyles. In the 2007 Audit Commission Schools Survey, schools judged the effectiveness of services supporting children and young people seeking to cease smoking and substance abuse as above satisfactory. Schools work effectively with organisations such as DELTA, which provides a good specialist service up to the age of 19 years, treating and supporting young people with drugs and alcohol issues into adulthood when necessary. As well as working with DELTA, school nurses liaise closely with community-based agencies such as Connexions and Choices. Frank, interactive, awareness-raising sessions are conducted with groups in schools. Students say they appreciate the support provided by these arrangements.

51. Outreach into the community is developing well. Community police officers have developed a Respect Patrol initiative, which engages and works with the anti-social behaviour of young people, often due to alcohol abuse, in targeted areas of the community. As a result of these initiatives, the number of complaints by neighbours in these areas has been substantially reduced. The voluntary sector Street Talk Team supports agencies working with those at risk. They have contacted over 870 young people in their outreach work since May 2007, providing advice that includes how to make healthy choices.

52. Targeted and specialist work supports some vulnerable groups well. For example, young people in pupil referral units are screened and supported. Effective support is provided to looked after children in terms of the risks of smoking, although numbers smoking remain high. The Drug Intervention Project and ADDACTION provide good support to young people where substance misuse is a problem for their parents and carers. The Child Protection Team has identified that this good work enables many more young people to remain living successfully with their families, rather than becoming looked after.

53. Secondary (hospital) healthcare provides appropriate interventions for young people with substance misuse problems. Nursing staff are trained and understand clearly the referral pathways to specialist support, including CAMHS. The Accident and Emergency (A&E) and paediatric departments of the local hospital work closely together and there are effective links with the DELTA Team. A dedicated area of the hospital is available for young people with substance misuse problems. In community healthcare, the PCT is directly involved in initiatives to reduce substance misuse such as smoking. The number of admissions into hospital of under 20 year olds with poisoning by narcotics fell by 161.1 to 130.2, from 2002–05 to 2003–06. This fall was better than in

similar PCT areas and the situation found nationally. However, the proportion of young people presenting themselves to the A&E department with mental and behavioural disorders due to substance misuse is higher than average. The hospital provides appropriate interventions for young people once they arrive. Staff often go above, and beyond, what is sometimes required to ensure that young people are safe by enabling them to remain in hospital overnight whilst they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The hospital also provides some very good, innovative outreach work that extends into the community, for example the substance misuse midwife.

54. Despite good actions taken to reduce the impact of substance misuse, multi-agency working to identify, and act upon, the specific substance misuse needs of all young people, particularly those aged 16 and above, is not always clear. This is because there is currently no systematic data collection or evaluation at a strategic level to measure accurately the overall impact of these good interventions. Partners have placed this as a priority for improvement in this year's plans.

The quality and effectiveness of services to support young people into education, employment or training post-16

55. **The quality and effectiveness of services to support young people into education, employment or training post-16 is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Strong strategic leadership and effective 14–19 partnership working.</p> <p>The inclusive range of 14–16 collaborative provision.</p> <p>The broad range of provision for young people who are aged over 16.</p> <p>Effective programmes that support those at risk of being disaffected with learning.</p> <p>Very good challenge and support provided by the school improvement service.</p>	<p>Lack of a thorough needs analysis and insufficient monitoring of progress of the 14–19 strategy, including: joint planning and collaboration at post-16.</p> <p>Attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4.</p>

56. The local authority, together with the Learning and Skills Council, provide strong leadership to support the development of 14–19 provision in North Lincolnshire and to improve the achievements made by young people. Partnership working across the area is well established and effective. Good progress has been made in raising achievement at Key Stage 4, and an increasing number of young people at age 16 continue with their learning. Clear lines of learning from entry to higher education are in place, and there has

been close alignment of capital developments for schools and FE colleges to effectively complement plans for a 14–19 learning campus. Despite these strengths, the 14–19 strategy lacks a thorough needs analysis and monitoring of progress has been infrequent.

57. A strong, and effective, emphasis has been placed on the development of vocational education. All students now have the opportunity to develop relevant work skills through planned work experience with an employer during Years 10 or 11. Many students benefit from a good, and increasing, range of vocational qualifications in schools, and pass rates are good. Capacity issues had prevented the introduction of young apprenticeships but they are now in place. A number of effective projects are well targeted on literacy and numeracy and the needs of vulnerable groups. Examples include the bespoke programmes provided at Study United in conjunction with the local professional football club, Scunthorpe United. A wide range of activities support many young people well. Those supported include children in need, teenage mothers and a number of young people who have offended. These opportunities are highly regarded by those who attend and the strong focus on personal development helps to build their confidence and self-esteem. The Mandani Youth organisation's homework club for ethnic minority students in Years 10 and 11 provides a good range of activities for students identified as being at risk of underachieving. This organisation not only supports young people's learning but also provides a range of outdoor pursuits to enrich their lives and enable them to develop their team working and personal skills.

58. A very wide range of 14–16 collaborative provision effectively engages young people across the ability range. This has been helped by the establishment of common timetabling across most schools and the two colleges. Provision includes an excellent purpose designed 14–16 skill centre at North Lindsey College, which prepares students well for entry into the world of work. Participation, success and progression rates for programmes offered through the centre are high. Partners are aware that joint planning and collaboration is less well established for students post-16, particularly in the development, and delivery, of the AS and A2 provision in some school sixth forms. A collaborative framework has been agreed by schools, the further education and sixth form colleges in order to improve this.

59. A 14–16 student engagement programme, run by work-based learning providers, effectively re-engages disaffected young people, and a good proportion progress into education and training post-16. Students at risk of exclusion are identified early and receive good support from the pupil referral unit. A Key Stage 3 programme is very effective in re-engaging pupils through vocational applications, which build their self-confidence, enabling a good proportion to progress back into mainstream education. Connexions personal advisors also provide effective support for vulnerable young people, enabling them to make good progress and widen their opportunities.

60. Teaching and learning have been judged good in colleges and most secondary schools that have been inspected by Ofsted. Success rates are improving at all levels in the colleges and most are good. For example, pass rates and value added on AS and A2 courses are well above national averages at John Leggott College. There is more variability in the small sixth forms in rural areas. A number of Aimhigher projects have been effective in raising students' aspirations and attainment. Attainment of upper ability students is very good, particularly for girls, and progression into university is good and increasing each year. Progression from the newly established pre-E2E programme is also good. Progression rates for E2E programmes are satisfactory and improving steadily. Good improvements have been made to overall and timely apprenticeship success rates, which are well above national averages.

61. The school improvement service and school improvement partners provide robust challenge and effective support to secondary schools. The school improvement service is very well led and managed; comprehensive and accessible data are used effectively to drive up achievement. An appropriate emphasis has been given to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, over the last two years there has been good improvement in the percentage of 16 year old pupils achieving five or more A*–C grades in GCSE examinations. This has been over and above the national rate of improvement, and provisional 2007 data show a 6% increase, indicating North Lincolnshire's results are now line with the national average. Excellent progress has been made by some of the urban schools. The percentage of pupils attaining five or more A*–C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics is also improving. Although provisional 2007 results remain below the national average, the gap is narrowing well. Whilst there is evidence of some underperformance for a small proportion of Black and minority ethnic pupils at Key Stage 3, by Key Stage 4 their performance is better than the national average, particularly in terms of the percentage achieving five or more A*–C grade GCSEs.

62. Young people in North Lincolnshire are able to access to a broad and appropriate range of post-16 education and training provision. The government's September Guarantee, that all young people should be made an 'offer of learning' by the end of the September after they complete Year 11, has been achieved and there has been a good improvement in take-up. The proportion of Year 11 leavers in education, employment and training, at 93% in September 2007, represents a significant increase from the previous year. An increasing number of young people have joined college courses and the number unemployed or in employment without training has been effectively reduced. Similarly, the proportion of Black and minority ethnic young people in employment, education or training is high. The proportion of 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training is reducing well, although it remains above the national average; the most recent information indicates the current proportion to be 8.1%. Concerted action by Connexions is also reducing the number of 16–18 year olds whose situation is unknown. Although the number remains higher than that found nationally, the service has met its target to reduce the proportion for 2007.

63. Good work takes place to support participation by targeted groups. For example, the proportion of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities not in education, employment or training is low; the proportion of teenage mothers involved in education, employment and training has significantly improved; and a very high number of care leavers enter the world of education, employment or training. However, some schools are slow to provide background educational information to support the initial assessment of young people who offend.

Service management



Capacity to improve



64. **The management of services for children and young people is good. Capacity to improve further is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Strong ambitions and priorities based on a clear analysis of need and the views of children and young people.</p> <p>Effective partnership arrangements.</p> <p>Strong leadership, particularly in relation to safeguarding and looked after children.</p> <p>Good engagement of children and young people in development of services.</p> <p>Strong approach to equality and diversity issues.</p>	<p>Not all action plans identify clear baselines and milestones to measure impact on outcomes.</p> <p>Joint commissioning is at an early stage.</p>

65. The council and its partners share a good, clear and realistic vision and common ambitions with respect to raising aspirations, safeguarding the welfare and improving the well-being of children and young people of North Lincolnshire. This is making a positive difference to their outcomes and life chances. There is also a clear vision and timetable for the move from the well established multi-agency Children's Board to a Children's Trust by April 2008. The ambitions, clearly described in the CYPP, are reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Strategic Plan and in the Local Area Agreement for North Lincolnshire.

66. Prioritisation is good. The council and partners have agreed 15 clear key priorities for improvement across the five areas of the Every Child Matters agenda within the CYPP. These cascade into underpinning plans. The views of the voluntary sector, schools, parents, carers and young people have been taken into account in the determination of these priorities. In the 2007 Audit Commission Survey, schools judged the effectiveness of consultation, and their ability to influence the development of the CYPP as above average when compared to responses nationally. Priorities have been based on the findings of a comprehensive needs analysis. The council identifies children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children from Black and minority ethnic communities and looked after children amongst its priorities, and objectives for these groups are articulated in key plans. It also identifies the need to close the gap between children from disadvantaged groups and children in general in North Lincolnshire; and is being successful in this endeavour.

67. The Children and Young People's Plan One Year On review identifies progress made and ongoing and future priorities. It indicates how partners intend to address these priorities in order to continue to improve outcomes for children and young people. There has been very strong leadership in driving forward the improvements and this has been effective. Although the CYPP, and its review, demonstrate the contribution of most partners, they do not clearly set out high level resource implications. It is at the level of service planning that underpinning plans are effectively linked to the medium-term financial strategy, and these support the achievement of the priorities within the overarching CYPP. These underpinning plans are thorough and detailed. They include the names of those who have lead responsibility for priorities and actions for improvement, but they do not always identify clear milestones and baseline information from which to measure the impact of actions on outcomes.

68. There is evidence that resources have been shifted to meet some of the priorities within the CYPP. Examples include, piloting the redirection of resources to a number of schools rather than funding statements for identified children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in order to support inclusion; council funding for the set-up costs for Building Schools for the Future; and the alignment of staffing resources to successfully reduce deaths on the road and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and their families.

69. There is very good evidence that the council and partners give priority to a range of preventative services for children and young people, particularly within the use of the CAF. They have, for example, reinvested resources into preventative services for children and families, which have led to a fall in the number of, looked after children and the number on the child protection register. Additionally, investment of significant management time in ensuring consistent adherence to appropriate thresholds for entry to services, through the weekly referral management meetings, has enabled a clear focus on targeted vulnerable groups and kept children safe from harm.

70. The capacity of the council and its partners to deliver better outcomes for children and young people is good. The decision making processes within the Children's Board, and forthcoming Trust, are transparent and anticipate local need. The Director of Children's Services discharges his statutory duties well and provides effective leadership. He, the lead member for children and young people, the senior leadership team, managers and staff have a strong commitment to improving the outcomes for children and young people. The service has a clear and accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses; it knows what it is doing well, what it needs to do to improve and is targeting these areas appropriately. For example, focused challenge, support and intervention by school improvement services have ensured that few schools become a cause for concern following their Ofsted inspections. At the time of the joint area review, only one school was judged to require significant improvement following its inspection; well below the national average.

71. Partnership working is a strength; it builds the capacity of the council and adds value to the work undertaken to improve outcomes. For example, good working with the Fire and Rescue Service has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children hurt in fires. Partnership working with North Lincolnshire Homes ensures all care leavers are provided with decent accommodation. Good relationships extend to schools, the PCT, the voluntary and community sector, and these groups and organisations also enhance the capacity of the council to deliver services that will improve outcomes for children and young people. For example, the voluntary sector, National Children's Homes provides Kaleidoscope, an outstanding family support service to parents of, and children with, learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Governance arrangements within the partnership are generally well developed.

72. Children's services strategies are linked well to the council's financial strategy. The council's financial position is robust and good financial management means that it has the resources to implement its priorities. Some budgets are aligned and a few are 'pooled', for example the multi-agency funding arrangements that support the infrastructure of the LSCB, which also includes schools as full financial contributors. However, overall the approach to joint commissioning is in the early stages of development. The recent appointment of a senior manager for performance and commissioning is supporting development in this area.

73. The council, through its managers and councillors, has a clear commitment to delivering and improving value for money. Overall performance in many aspects of children's services work is improving. Costs are low when compared to regional averages, and use is made of benchmarking to compare costs of key services such as the school improvement service. The recently developed multi-agency Turning the Curve groups, which plan and monitor progress of shared priorities, and the corporate introduction of the Value for Money Unit, are examples of processes developed to focus strategic attention on value for money. There are very few examples of unintended high spending and where this has occurred, they are addressed effectively.

74. Children's services and their partners have the people and skills to deliver most of their priorities. The recent restructuring within children's services has gone well and has ensured most key posts are filled, and there is evidence of proactive and successful work to recruit and retain key staff. The council's 2006/07 Points of View staff survey showed high levels of satisfaction amongst children's services staff. Sound progress is being made on workforce development. A draft strategy is in place, overseen by the Children's Board. Schools graded the effectiveness of the council's strategic approach to developing the children's service workforce as above average in the 2007 Audit Commission School Survey.

75. Performance management is good. The council reviews the performance of children's services effectively. The performance management process is very clearly focused on the need to improve outcomes for children and young people as evidenced, for example, by the trend improvement in educational attainment at ages 11 and 16, and by the Audit and Review and Child Protection Teams in children's services, which play an important performance management role as well as auditing quality of practice. The well developed process of quarterly reviews of performance includes financial information that is shared with its partners. Monthly management information reports are clear and comprehensive, and action is taken quickly where performance deficits or difficulties are identified. Members' scrutiny function is less well developed in terms of regular scrutiny of the performance of children's services, but effective in terms of reviewing key aspects of its work. This includes the review of the youth service, where scrutiny reported important and urgent recommendations on the future development of the service. The new scrutiny chair is developing an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of children's services and is working to assure a focus on 'overview' as well as scrutiny.

76. Partners participate effectively in annual reviews of the service. The recently developed Turning the Curve groups offer a more regular forum for challenge and debate among partners and the council about strengths and weaknesses of children's services. These groups, based on the Every Child Matters five outcome areas, also use comparative information from other council areas to help them understand and improve performance. Children and young people are increasingly contributing to the reviews of services, for

example through involvement in the review of the CYPP, the Disability Collaborative, the Children in Care Group and the Great Youth Debate.

77. Senior managers provide very strong and appropriate leadership and support; they have good capacity to challenge and improve the service further. Although leadership and management of the youth service are satisfactory, action is being taken to reconfigure the service and improve its quality. Children's services have a good track record of achievement and have delivered good services to children and young people over a number of years. Examples include the good work to improve the percentage of looked after children in family placements to 85%, with very few needing to be placed out of the area; the year-on-year improvement in the proportion of 16 year-olds achieving five A*-C grades in GCSEs; the very low proportion of schools in an Ofsted category of concern; and the good improvement in the percentage of care leavers engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19.

Annex A

MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

North Lincolnshire Council's contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people is good. The quality of provision makes a notable difference to their lives, especially for the most vulnerable children and young people. There is a strong commitment to narrowing the gap between the outcomes for these children and those for most children, while continuing to improve provision and outcomes for all. Many outcomes in the five Every Child Matters areas are better than those in similar local authorities and those that are not are improving well year on year. The views of children and young people, including those who are looked after, are regularly sought and contribute widely to planning and decision making. The council's commitment to further improvement is set out clearly in its plans and is reflected in the positive working relationships that exist between its partners and other agencies.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=283868&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2007_813.pdf

Annex B: Summary of the Enhanced Youth Inspection Report

Main findings

1. The overall quality of youth work provision in North Lincolnshire is adequate and the local authority sufficiently secures the provision of youth work. The role of the youth service as a major component of the new integrated youth support services has been confirmed, following the acceptance of the recommendations of a recent service review. The standard of young people's achievements is adequate overall. Young people are making good progress in personal development, especially those in vulnerable groups and those who participate in targeted programmes. Youth work practice is adequate. Teams of experienced youth workers work well together and enjoy very good relationships with young people. However, the quality of practice is too variable in open-access work, where, in the less effective sessions, practice, planning and evaluation are inadequate and lacking in purpose and challenge. There is no adequate curriculum framework and needs analysis is often informal and incoherent at locality level.

2. Young people's involvement in planning, monitoring and evaluating provision is developing well at local authority level but is inconsistent and sparse in the localities. Youth service provision is within easy reach for the majority of young people, but there is insufficient detached and outreach work to cater for those who choose not to access it. The quality of accommodation is good but it is not efficiently used. Partnerships with statutory bodies are strong, especially with Connexions, and partners value the ability of youth workers to engage young people and work in multi-disciplinary teams. A new quality assurance system has begun to assess the quality of youth work practice, but its capability to address all aspects of service performance has yet to be fully exploited.

Key aspect inspection grades

Key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	2
	Quality of youth work practice	2
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	2
3	Leadership and management	2

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale
4: excellent/outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate/satisfactory; 1: inadequate*

Strengths

- Young people demonstrate good progress in personal development.
- Specialist and targeted work is very effective.
- Workers are suitably experienced and well motivated.
- Partnerships, in particular with Connexions, are strong and extensive.

Areas for development

- Achievement is too variable in open-access work.
- The curriculum framework is inadequate as a basis for coherent planning.
- Needs analysis is underdeveloped.
- The quality assurance system does not adequately identify outcomes and unsatisfactory practice.

Annex C

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Outcomes for children and young people in North Lincolnshire are good. Actions taken by the council and its partners to ensure their health and well-being are also good. Arrangements for safeguarding are good, with effective multi-agency working and very strong leadership from senior managers and the LSCB. Good support enables the majority of children to enjoy and achieve, and there has been particularly good improvement in the attainment of 11 and 16 year-old pupils in 2007. Very good partnership working ensures that children and young people who are looked after or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support, and outcomes for them are improving. The council has a good understanding of its corporate parenting role and undertakes this duty to an excellent standard. A clear focus on equality and diversity issues ensures the needs of the majority of children and young people are identified in plans and strategies.

2. The management of services for children and young people is good. The ambition of the service and its partners is good, with a strong and realistic vision set out in the CYPP, and a clear timetable for progression towards a Children's Trust. However, some plans do not always identify baseline information and milestones. Prioritisation is good, with evidence of successful investment of resources to match priorities.

3. The combined work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good. Health promotion is actively targeted at vulnerable groups. The national Healthy Schools programme is a key conduit in promoting good health. All schools actively participate in the programme, and 2007 targets for the numbers achieving the standard have been exceeded. Significant multi-agency actions have been taken through the substance misuse strategy to intervene and support young people at risk of or substance misusing. However, the partnership is aware that it needs to develop systematic processes to measure overall impact and has set this as a priority. The partnership has also identified the need to continue to reduce the higher than average rates of teenage pregnancy and has developed a ten-point action plan for improvement. CAMHS have been redesigned and improved. This has resulted in some improvements in the speed of access to services. Although improving, not all young people access CAMHS in good time.

4. Children and young people appear safe and arrangements to ensure this are good. The very effective LSCB has appropriate representation and is working well. Tightly managed assessment services ensure that children at risk of harm are identified quickly and responded to appropriately. A good range of preventative services and child care planning have resulted in low numbers of looked after children. Children and young people who are looked after are well

supported and most live in stable family placements. Services and support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also good.

5. The impact of local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and to achieve well is good. Children get a good start to their education and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The progress they make by the age of seven has been slower, but is improving, narrowing the gap between North Lincolnshire and the national average well. There has been steady improvement in the attainment of 11 year-olds and particularly good improvement in the number of 16 year-olds achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A*–C. However, the proportion of young people achieving this threshold including English and mathematics, although also improving, remains lower than the national average. The school improvement service provides outstanding challenge and support to schools; it is well regarded by them. At the time of the joint area review there was only one school in a category of concern following its Ofsted inspection; this is good. The service is aware of the need to ensure more strategic evaluation of data and information in order to judge more effectively the impact of interventions on the overall progress and achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

6. The impact of services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good. There is a good and strong culture of seeking the views of, and involving young people in decision making. Their views have also informed the work on the CYPP and its ongoing review. Effective work by the youth service, schools, voluntary sector partners and others helps build opportunities to make a positive contribution. School inspections show listening to young people and acting on their views as excellent or good in secondary schools, pupil referral units and special schools, although only satisfactory in primary schools. Vulnerable young people, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children, contribute to their reviews effectively and are increasingly involved in informing service and higher level planning that affects them.

7. Senior managers within children's services provide strong, appropriate leadership and support; they have good capacity to challenge and improve the service further. Although leadership and management of the Youth Service are satisfactory, action is being taken to reconfigure the service and improve its quality. Children's services generally have the people and skills to deliver their priorities. There is evidence of proactive work to recruit and retain key staff. Capacity to improve further is good. Children's services have a good track record of achievement and have delivered good quality services to children and young people over time. There is an appropriate focus on value for money with many examples of imaginative re-investment of resources and an invest-to-save approach. Performance management arrangements are well embedded and effective.

Annex D

SUMMARY OF JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors from Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the inspection of children's services*.
2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and these findings, plus aspects of the most recent Annual Performance Assessment, are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.
3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in North Lincolnshire and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the annual performance assessment of children's services, joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being. This review explores these issues by focusing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after, children at risk or requiring safeguarding, and a few additional investigations. It evaluates the collective contribution made by all relevant children's services to outcomes for these children and young people.
4. The review took place in two stages consisting of an analysis stage (where recorded evidence was scrutinised) and a two-week fieldwork stage (where inspectors met children and young people and those who deliver services for them).