

# Joint area review

North East Lincolnshire Children's Services Authority Area

---

## Review of services for children and young people

Adult Learning Inspectorate  
Audit Commission  
Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Healthcare Commission  
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
Ofsted

**Age group:** All

---

**Published:** 15 May 2007

---

**Reference no:** 812



---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

---

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary Report</b>	<b>5</b>
Grades	11
Recommendations	11
<b>Main Report</b>	<b>12</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	12
The impact of local services	15
Being healthy	15
Staying safe	18
Enjoying and achieving	20
Making a positive contribution	22
Achieving economic well-being	24
Service management	26
<b>Annex: The children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report</b>	<b>30</b>

---

## Introduction

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 eight inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Healthcare Commission (HCC), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) 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 its findings 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 the North East Lincolnshire area and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. 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.
4. The review evaluates the collective contribution made to each outcome for children and young people by relevant services in the area. It also judges the contributions made by the council's services overall and, specifically, its education and children's social care services. Particular attention is given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. Two such groups are covered in detail: children and young people who are looked after by the council; and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
5. The review took place in two stages consisting in total of three weeks over a seven-week period between December 2006 and February 2007. The first stage reviewed all existing evidence including:
  - self-assessment undertaken by local public service providers
  - a survey of children and young people (the Tellus survey)
  - performance data
  - the findings of the contemporaneous inspection of the youth service (the Young People's Service)
  - planning documents
  - information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision
  - evidence gathered during the Youth Offending Team inspection
  - briefings from staff within inspectorates, commissions and other public bodies in contact with local providers.

6. The second stage included inspection fieldwork. This included studies of how far local services have improved outcomes for a small sample of children and young people, some of whom have the most complex needs, and a study of provision in one neighbourhood in East Marsh. It also included gathering evidence on nine key judgements, selected because of their critical importance to improving outcomes for children and young people in the local area. This included discussions with elected members of the local authority and their equivalents in other public agencies, officers from these agencies, service users, and community representatives. A review of case files for children and young people receiving support from a number of local agencies was also included.

## Context

7. North East Lincolnshire is an area of great contrast, combining urban areas with a popular seaside resort and a number of smaller rural settlements. The population of 157,500 is becoming increasingly diverse, and 37,095 (24%) are aged under 18. The most recent statistics in the State of the Borough report show a black and ethnic minority population of 3.6%, up from 1.8% in the previous report. The 2006 pupil survey identified Black and minority ethnic populations of 3.4% in primary schools and 2.5% in secondary schools. Over the last 10 years there has been a reduction in the birth rate for the area. There are 59 primary, 12 secondary and two special schools in the area, with two pupil referral units.

8. North East Lincolnshire faces significant challenges: it ranks 52<sup>nd</sup> most deprived out of 354 local authorities in England, with some neighbourhoods in the 1% most deprived areas in the country. Overall, education levels are low with 37% (2001 Census) of adults having gained no recognised qualifications. Only 10.5% of adults have qualifications at levels 4 or 5, compared with 20% nationally.

9. Formal intervention followed the highly critical Ofsted inspection of the local education authority in 2004. The intervention took the form of a strategic partnership with *ChildrenFirst*. The council is now in the second year of the *ChildrenFirst* Strategic Partnership. This partnership is monitored by a multi-agency Strategic Partnership Board with an independent chair. The SPB comprises a range of partners, including the Department for Education and Skills and young people from the Council for Young People.

10. North East Lincolnshire Council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) have jointly funded two posts, including a Deputy Director post within Children's Services, which oversees and commissions health, partnership, community initiatives and services. A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has been established in which the council is the lead partner and the Executive Director of Children's Services is a board member. The LSP is responsible for delivering the Community Strategy through four Strategic Boards, of which the Change for Children Board (CfCB) is one. Through effective joint working, the council's strategic priorities form part of the Community Strategy. The five Every Child

Matters outcomes for children now constitute major indicators of the impact of the Community Strategy.

11. The CfCB, chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services, has established a number of multi-agency partnerships and work streams to drive forward the change for children agenda. It is constituted through membership of executive and senior officers of partner services, agencies and organisations including the police, PCT, Connexions, voluntary sector, general practitioners (GPs) and the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals Trust. The CfCB has also agreed a joint performance management approach and is overseeing the transition to a Children's Trust, with new shadow arrangements planned from April 2007.

12. The council and its partners launched the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in February 2006. The LSCB is chaired by the Divisional Commander Chief Superintendent. In order to promote joint working at local level, five Local Area Partnerships have been constituted, based on Extended Schools Partnerships and multi-agency services for children and young people.

13. Humberside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are partners with the local authority, colleges, training providers and schools, including two special schools, in addressing the 14–19 strategy. Post-16 education and training is provided by one further education college, three schools with sixth forms, one sixth form college, six work-based training providers, one independent specialist college and two special schools for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are four providers managing and delivering Education to Employment (E2E) provision. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by the council and the further education college.

14. Primary care for children in North East Lincolnshire is provided by the North East Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust. The Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust is the main provider of acute health services. Children's hospital services and Accident and Emergency (A&E) services are provided by the Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital which also provides services to surrounding areas. The Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Trust provides children's and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Tertiary services are provided by Sheffield Children's Hospital. Ambulance services are provided by the East Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust, which extended its area in July 2006 to include the Lincolnshire authorities. The NHS trusts providing health services for the children of North East Lincolnshire fall within the Yorkshire and Humberside Strategic Health Authority.

15. There are no young offender institutions in the area.

## Summary Report

### Outcomes for children and young people

16. Outcomes for children and young people in North East Lincolnshire are improving and are now adequate overall. Many children feel healthy and overall health indicators are similar to other areas. Immunisation rates are higher than elsewhere in England. There has been a recent reduction in the numbers of new mothers who smoke, although the figure remains higher than elsewhere. More children are admitted to hospital as a result of substance misuse. Some vulnerable children and young people do not have their mental health needs met. Rates of teenage pregnancy are higher than national averages.

17. Children and young people appear safe. Formal child protection work is good and has improved significantly over the last three years. Looked after children are supported very well. Casework for a few children at lower levels of need is not as effective in identifying and meeting their needs promptly. There has been a good reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents. There are higher numbers of children living in homes where domestic violence and the parental misuse of drugs and alcohol are significant factors.

18. Children in primary schools are achieving at similar levels to other areas. Secondary education is improving from a low base but results are still below those nationally or in similar areas. Fewer children are now being excluded and improvements have been achieved in the attendance and achievement of looked after children. Achievements at levels 1, 2 and 3 for young people over 16 are broadly in line with national averages, but there are significant variations across the range of provision. More young people who are looked after by the council are in education, employment or training than elsewhere.

19. Some children are making a good contribution to their community and the youth council is a good example of consultation with young people. Young carers' needs are not adequately met. Most young people have adequate access to suitable housing although some of this is in areas where young people do not feel safe.

### The impact of local services

20. **The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is adequate.** Progress is being made in improving strategic management and multi-agency working and there is political commitment to maintaining improvements. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve is good. Targeted work has resulted in better outcomes for children at higher levels of risk and those looked after by the council. School attendance has improved and educational standards generally are rising. There is a strong commitment to consultation and engagement with children and young people in developing services, although the involvement of parents and

carers is less clear. Partners are working well together to develop the post-16 curriculum to meet a wider range of needs.

### **Being healthy**

21. **The impact of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is adequate.** Partners are working well together to begin to address gaps in services. Despite targeted interventions, teenage pregnancy rates and the number of expectant mothers who smoke remain high. Maternity services and support for new parents are generally good and valued by users. Sure Start children's centres are developing as important sources of information and advice for parents of young children. All but two secondary schools are involved in the Healthy Schools programme. There is a lack of capacity in the CAMHS services and long waiting lists mean that some children and young people do not have their mental health needs met promptly. An action plan has been drawn up and additional funding made available to work towards developing a comprehensive CAMHS service. Looked after children benefit from good services from a specialist health team. The pilot Pathfinder service for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are under three years old has been judged as successful and is being extended to children under five, but slow progress is being made in meeting the National Standards Framework requirements for disabled children. While children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have sound services to meet their general health needs, they have inadequate access to CAMHS and transition planning is not consistent.

### **Staying safe**

22. **The impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Considerable success is being achieved to improve the work of agencies from a historically low base. Fewer children are subject to formal child protection registration and, for many of these children, the impact of services is good. Lower numbers of children are looked after and arrangements, including health and support from CAMHS, are good for this group. There are good working relationships between professionals. Referrals of children at risk of significant harm are responded to promptly but the recording of actions taken is not always consistent. Local agencies have invested considerable resources in training and developing child in need arrangements that formalise and structure interagency working.

23. Some good work around children in need has resulted in good outcomes for them and their families. In a few cases, there has been a delay in providing services because assessments are not well coordinated or sufficiently focused on meeting needs. There are high levels of domestic violence and substance misuse which have an impact on children's lives. Responses to immediate danger are generally effective but strategies for identifying and responding to the emotional impact on children are less well developed. Thresholds on matters such as physical neglect and emotional difficulties are not consistently applied between different agencies. Procedures for reporting missing children



are in place and police arrangements for tracking children are effective. A local strategy for tackling bullying has been developed but has not yet been fully implemented.

24. The LSCB has developed clear protocols and procedures and is prompt in considering cases that may require a serious case review. Most schools attend and value the training courses provided. The local authority is very proactive in completing and updating Criminal Record Bureau checks on staff employed directly in their services.

25. Multi-agency public protection arrangements are good. The LSCB has recently produced a number of procedures including those for safe recruitment and children who go missing. Arrangements for monitoring the implementation and impact of these procedures need further development. A domestic violence strategy has been developed but is at an early stage of implementation.

26. Looked after children are provided with safe environments and are well protected. Effective support is resulting in improvements in attendance and educational achievements for these pupils. Respite services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have improved. This recently increased capacity has enabled the numbers accessing respite to be increased and has expanded services for children with more complex needs and challenging behaviour. The authority has received a good practice recommendation from CSCI in respect of overnight respite. Carers' assessments are not routinely carried out. A new framework for transition planning between child and adult services has been introduced but it is too recent to see consistent improvement in this process.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

27. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is adequate.** There is sufficient and accessible early years education and day care provision and its quality is similar to, or slightly better than, that in other areas. Good progress is being made in opening a network of children's centres across the area. Monitoring, challenge and support for schools has recently improved significantly. As a consequence, some improvements in the achievements of children are apparent with performance at ages 7 and 11 close to the national average. Despite recent marked improvement in results for 16 year olds, these remain below those in similar authorities and nationally and pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 do not make sufficient progress. Support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate with recent changes in resource delegation resulting in a reduction in the number of new statements being issued. Effective local authority support for the management of behaviour and attendance in schools has led to improvements in both attendance and permanent exclusions. There is suitable provision for most young people not attending school although greater flexibility is required in order to meet individual needs. There is good support for looked after children.

There is a good range of recreational and voluntary learning opportunities across the area with the Young People's Service making a good contribution to these. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have limited access to these opportunities.

### **Making a positive contribution**

**28. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is adequate. There are some good features.** There is a strong commitment to listen to the views of and consult with children and young people, including those from vulnerable groups. The Council for Young People provides a good forum for consultation and is well supported by the Young People's service. Children and young people from the East Marsh area were engaged well in preparing and managing the neighbourhood tour carried out as part of the joint area review. A range of other consultative groups has been established but these lack strategic co-ordination and do not yet reach the wider population of children and young people in the area. Steps are being taken to address this.

29. A range of multi-agency programmes and projects successfully support most vulnerable groups in managing change and responding to challenges in their lives. There is good support for the development of social and emotional skills. Support for young carers is inadequate and does not enable them to lead full and active lives.

30. The needs of some young offenders are met well but there are limited structured programmes for those who are convicted. Despite good support and planning during the custodial period, accommodation provision for children and young people leaving custody are not satisfactory. The mental health needs of this group are not being addressed although the health needs of these children and young people generally are.

31. All children and young people who are looked after contribute to their reviews and have their views taken into account. A Lead Member for Children has been appointed and plans are in place for a corporate parenting board to be established in early 2007. However, further work is required to develop fully the structural framework for corporate parenting to ensure that good progress for looked after children is maintained and that councillors are collectively aware of their full responsibilities towards these and other vulnerable children.

32. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their parents/carers report good consultation over respite services, resulting in reduced waiting lists. However, a number of parents, carers and young people are concerned that they are not sufficiently involved in decisions about services provided for them.

## Achieving economic well-being

33. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is adequate.** The partnership work between the council, the local LSC, the Connexions service, schools, further education and training providers is good and is having a positive impact. Most schools now have the capacity to offer vocational learning pre-16 and the range of vocational learning options is adequate and improving. There is a limited curriculum choice for young people in the smaller sixth forms and insufficient opportunity to access other post-16 providers to broaden their choice. The council and the local LSC have recognised this and are working collaboratively with schools and colleges to address this issue.

34. Good initiatives are improving progression into employment, training and further education and the rates are now just above national averages. Rates of participation post-16 are improving, but remain below the national average. Connexions staff are improving their tracking of young people and providing a range of intensive activities over the summer to support those at risk of not entering education, training or employment post-16. There are limited learning opportunities for those young people not ready for the E2E programme and those progressing from E2E to level 1 qualifications. Families have good access to locally-based family learning opportunities and the Family Information Service. Appropriate housing is found for most vulnerable young people, including care leavers, although there is limited provision for those young people who offend, in particular those returning from custodial sentences. Transition planning for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate but there is a delay in carrying out community care assessments. New transition arrangements have been put in place to address this. Outcomes for children and young people in achieving economic well being in North East Lincolnshire are improving and are now adequate for many and good for some.

## Service management

35. **The management of services for children and young people is now adequate.** The way in which key partners set ambitions is adequate. The council, the post-2004 inspection intervention board (Children *First* Strategic Partnership) and the CfCB are providing effective strategic leadership in the development of integrated services. There is a strong commitment to consultation and engagement with children and young people in developing services, although the involvement of parents and carers is less well developed.

36. Prioritisation is adequate. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) makes a clear strategic priority of the Every Child Matters outcomes. Outcome plans provide more detail on how these and other priorities will be delivered. The council and partners undertake needs analysis to inform the development of priorities, but the quality and use of this to inform action planning is variable. The overall record of partners on delivering better outcomes is mixed. A range

of preventative initiatives is in place but these lack coordination through a joint planning and commissioning framework.

37. Capacity is adequate. Service remodelling, in line with plans for the future delivery of services through the Children's Trust, has started but is at a very early stage. The council and partners have a realistic view of the short and long term implications for the changes envisaged, but much remains to be done in a very short time and the September 2007 deadline for Trust implementation appears optimistic. Staffing capacity continues to be a high priority within North East Lincolnshire and overall significant progress is being made. Discussions have begun in relation to planning for the future, but this is not yet fully developed. Services for children and young people represent adequate value for money. Council and managerial leadership is good.

38. The overall approach to performance management is adequate. The use of the corporate framework for managing performance provides a consistent approach and the reporting and challenge of performance is improving. There are some examples of good outcomes for children and young people as a result of improved scrutiny arrangements for children's services.

39. The capacity for further improvement is good. The council and partners have made significant improvements since 2004 when the inspection of the local education authority highlighted serious failings. The Director of Children's Services and other managers are providing a strong sense of direction, based on a realistic view about what needs to be done, well supported by the strategic partner. Managers and partners have the ability to take succession planning forward. Action is being taken to strengthen the approach to developing the children's services workforce.

## Grades

Grades awarded:

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

	Local services overall	Council services	Health services
Being healthy	2		
Staying safe	3		
Enjoying and achieving	2		
Making a positive contribution	2		
Achieving economic well-being	2		
Service management	2		
Capacity to improve	3	3	
Children's services		2	
The education service		2	
The social care services for children		3	
The health service for children			2

## Recommendations

For immediate action:

- managers should ensure that all contacts and referrals concerning children are handled within clear systems for logging receipt, allocation of tasks and completion of work

- clarify threshold arrangements for children's social care, support and intervention, including thresholds for accommodation
- continue to address the deficiencies in the CAMHS service to ensure timely access to appropriate services for all vulnerable children and young people
- ensure the accommodation needs of young offenders, especially those returning from custodial sentences, are met
- ensure the full implementation of the anti-bullying strategy and that it is subject to monitoring and evaluation.

**For action over the next six months:**

- ensure that needs analysis leads to actions that will improve outcomes for children and young people rather than processes
- hasten the improvement in standards for all pupils, but especially those in secondary schools and post-16 provision
- strengthen support for young carers so they are able to access education, social and leisure opportunities
- improve provision and outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by ensuring relevant services are fully engaged in: supporting transition planning; extending post-16 educational and training opportunities; providing greater access to leisure and recreational opportunities; and carrying out carer's assessments
- strengthen the strategic coordination of consultative groups and extend consultation and participation opportunities to the wider population of children and young people in the area.

## **Main Report**

### **Outcomes for children and young people**

**40. Outcomes for children and young people in North East Lincolnshire are adequate.**

**41. Children and young people are generally healthy.** In the Tellus survey that was carried out for this review, 95% of children and young people who completed it said that they were very, or quite, healthy, a figure similar to the national average. The percentage of babies of low birth weight and perinatal and infant mortality rates are also in line with national averages, but immunisation rates exceed those for England as a whole. Rates for teenage pregnancy and smoking during pregnancy are comparatively high while

breastfeeding rates are low but improving. A new dedicated smoking cessation programme for pregnant women is reporting a greater reduction in smoking for new mothers that is faster than the national rate.

42. Admissions to hospital of young people under 20 with mental or behavioural disorders related to substance misuse are in line with the England average. However, admissions of young people with poisoning by drugs such as cocaine and cannabis are higher than average rates for similar councils or for England.

43. **Children and young people appear safe.** Good inter-agency work promotes physical safety at home and in the community. Good advice and guidance is provided to all new parents on keeping their children safe. By 2005, the authority had reduced the numbers of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents by 48%, against a government target of 50% by 2010. Children generally report feeling safe although concerns remain for a minority about bullying in their neighbourhood or at school. More children than nationally or in similar authorities live in households where domestic violence and parental use of drugs and alcohol are significant factors.

44. The referral and assessment service is well resourced and from January 2007 offers extended hours of service seven days a week. The Common Assessment Framework has been piloted since 2005 in two areas. This, together with work through other services such as children's centres, has contributed to fewer children becoming looked after or being placed on the child protection register. Referrals of children most at risk of harm receive a prompt response and agencies work effectively to develop plans for the child's protection. Good casework for children in need has resulted in improved outcomes for some children and their families. However, management of a few cases has not been as effective because of a lack of focus on addressing identified needs. Reviews of children on the child protection register or who are looked after are held within time-scale requirements. Most looked after children live in stable placements and a higher proportion of looked after children are found adoptive parents compared to other areas. Good support is provided to young people leaving care, which includes access to services at weekends.

45. **Children and young people generally achieve adequately although there remain some weaknesses in the secondary phase.** Standards in the Foundation Stage, and at ages 7 and 11 are all generally in line with statistical neighbours and the position nationally except for English at Key Stage 2, which declined to below the national average in summer 2006. Children in primary schools make adequate progress. Results in national tests for pupils aged 14 have been improving, with the exception of English in 2006. However, despite these improvements, the results in mathematics and science remain below those in similar authorities, and in English are well below. There is a similar pattern at GCSE where the increase in the percentage of young people attaining five or more good GCSEs, particularly in 2006, has been marked. Despite these increases, overall standards in secondary education

remain below those of statistical neighbours and well below the national average. Too many young people make insufficient progress between the ages of 11 and 16. Achievement within the Young People's Service is generally good.

46. Very small numbers of ethnic minority pupils make statistical comparisons problematic. However, there have been good outcomes for 11 year old Bangladeshi origin pupils, 90% of whom achieved at or above the expected level in English.

47. Permanent exclusions have dropped sharply over the last two years. Since April 2006, only three pupils have been permanently excluded, all from the secondary sector. Attendance overall is increasing and is in line with both statistical neighbours and national levels, although authorised absences are higher than in similar authorities.

48. There was a sharp rise in the number of looked after children attaining five good GCSE grades in 2006 and this performance is now better than the national position. The attendance of looked after children has improved from 84% in 2004 to 90% in 2006. Almost all looked after children have personal education plans.

49. The council is taking appropriate action to remove around 2000 surplus places in the primary phase by merging 22 infant and junior schools into 11 primary schools.

50. **Most children and young people have an adequate range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility.** The North East Lincolnshire Council for Young People provides opportunities for young people to develop new skills and contribute to the decision making process. Children and young people from the Children's Participation Group and the Council for Young People have been actively involved in the development of the CYPP. Almost all schools have school councils, although these vary in their effectiveness.

51. Provision of services meets the needs of most children and young people. Some parents attending parenting classes report improvement in the ability to manage their children's behaviour. However, young carers do not receive adequate support to help them lead full and active lives and the mental health needs of young offenders are not met.

52. A well-established programme of early intervention is successful in reducing anti social behaviour across the authority and in identified localities. Those attending the Youth Inclusion Support Panel Young Girls' Project understand how attending the programme has helped them to make sense of their own behaviour and reduced the risk of them offending.

53. Children and young people who are looked after have access to a good range of services that ensure they are listened to and involved in decisions that affect their lives. All children and young people who are looked after contribute



to their review meetings. A corporate parenting board is yet to be established, with plans to implement this in early 2007.

54. A Parent Partnership Service provided by Barnardo's offers helpful information and advice to parents and carers of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is no independent advocacy service specifically for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to enable them to raise concerns or complaints.

55. **Most children and young people are able to achieve economic well being and are prepared adequately for working life.** Improving collaboration and good partnership working between the council, local LSC, Connexions service and other partners is beginning to provide young people with a broader curriculum choice. Young people at risk of not progressing into post-16 education or training are well supported. Achievements at levels 1, 2 and 3 vary significantly across the range of provision but overall are broadly in line with national averages. Success rates in the area overall at GCE and VCE are improving and are broadly in line with national data.

56. The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training has declined significantly in the last year and is now just above national averages. The number of care leavers and teenage mothers who are not in education, employment or training is low and significantly better than national averages. Participation in education and training post-16 is improving, but remains low and below national averages. There is good support for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in transition from school to college but other aspects of planning for transition between services are not as effective.

57. Appropriate housing and support arrangements are in place for care leavers and other vulnerable young people, although some of this is in areas where young people do not feel safe. There is insufficient independent accommodation for young people who offend or return from custodial sentences.

## **The impact of local services**

### **Being healthy**

58. **The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is adequate.** North East Lincolnshire Council and the North East Lincolnshire PCT are working well together to begin to address gaps in health provision.

59. Maternity services and support for new parents and their young children are adequate. Health and social care partners are aware that additional work needs to be carried out to reduce the rate of smoking by women expecting children and to increase the breastfeeding rate. Sure Start Children's Centres provide services on a sound multi-agency and inter-disciplinary basis and are

developing as important sources of information and advice for parents of young children. The recently revamped Family Information Service is seeking to become a significant source of information for parents, carers and children of all ages. The impact of the information and support services in helping parents and carers to keep their children healthy has not been evaluated.

60. Healthy lifestyles for children and young people are promoted well. All but two secondary schools are involved in the Healthy Schools Initiative and over half are on target to gain the new Healthy School status by the end of 2007. The promotion of healthy lifestyles was judged as generally good in schools inspected recently by Ofsted. Smoking cessation clinics are being introduced into schools but it is too soon to evaluate their impact. There are good local links on an individual and agency basis for promoting healthy eating. School lunch take-up has been maintained following the introduction of healthier food choices. School nurses are actively involved in the school healthy eating programmes and schools note that breakfast clubs are having a positive impact on children's classroom behaviour. Part-time dietician and nutrition staff promote healthy diet and eating in Sure Start areas well. The schools' sports partnership exceeds the local public service agreement target in terms of pupils' access to two hours of high quality physical education and school sport a week.

61. The council and the PCT recognise that the reduction of the high rate of teenage pregnancies in the area is a priority and have allocated additional funding, including neighbourhood renewal funding, to support new initiatives. A Multi-Agency Sexual Health Team delivers programmes to schools and in the community, complemented by Choices, teenage sexual health clinics which are well linked to the Young People's Service. Nevertheless, the teenage pregnancy rate remains high, some 50% above the national average.

62. The inter-disciplinary North East Substance Team (NEST) provides a comprehensive information, advice and support service for young people up to the age of 18. This includes four days a fortnight input from the CAMHS team. NEST was very recently successful in a Pathfinder bid to develop a new Open Door service in an area of high need and relative deprivation in Grimsby. However, there is a waiting list for NEST services and a triage protocol is being developed. Good work is undertaken with children of substance-misusing parents through an NSPCC project which provides support groups for these children and young people.

63. Adequate steps are taken to promote children and young people's physical health. The Healthcare Commission's National Standards Framework review of hospital services for children and young people in 2006 found that inpatient care was excellent but weaknesses were identified in the acute and A&E wards at the Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital. As a result, the hospital is implementing an improvement programme to include the relocation of paediatric emergency care and outpatient clinics and additional play staff. Some services are provided in locations which are easily accessible for parents, for

example the nurse practitioner drop-in clinic based in East Marsh Sure Start Centre.

64. CAMHS services are inadequate and deficiencies are longstanding. The 2006 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health noted the lack of capacity across all tiers of the CAMHS service. The lack of a local psychiatrist and extensive CAMHS waiting lists are particular issues. Steps are being taken to develop tier 1 and 2 services as part of the overall CAMHS network and the PCT has submitted a CAMHS recovery plan to the Strategic Health Authority to meet March 2007 deadlines. In the absence of CAMHS provision, other services have been developed to serve particular needs. For example the Family Action Support Team provides an effective and focused service to work particularly with children and young people with attention deficit disorders, and with their parents. Similarly, the Young People's Service has developed a counselling service providing the equivalent of a CAMHS Tier 2 service, with a specialism in autism. Such services make up only a little for CAMHS shortfalls, in particular in relation to timely access to services for children in need and those on the child protection register.

65. The work of the specialist health team for looked after children is good. Over recent years, it has addressed North East Lincolnshire's previously poor annual health check records so that now almost 100% of looked after children have a current health assessment; this is one of the best rates in the country. Arrangements have recently been introduced to ensure that, when looked after children are moved to new accommodation, GP registration takes place. Support and outreach are positively promoted through children getting their own physical 'Health FAX' record and through annual health days. Looked after children also benefit from rapid access to CAMHS and from the allocation of ring-fenced CAMHS clinical psychology services. However, initial mental health assessments and CAMHS provision for older looked after children and for those in transition are inadequate and recognised as such.

66. Provision of services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate. Barnardo's, working in partnership with other agencies, particularly the Diana Princess of Wales Child Development Centre, provides a range of disability services. The multi-agency Pathfinder services for the under-3s have been judged as successful and the resource implications are being considered for extending the services to include the under-5s. Children in special schools have their specialist health needs well monitored through the attachment of children's nurses to the two schools. Nevertheless, progress on reaching the National Standards Framework standard for children with disabilities is acknowledged to be slow. Areas needing improvement include referral, assessment and transition to adulthood: plans exist to address these deficiencies. CAMHS provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is recognised as inadequate, but plans to improve the service are being implemented.

## Staying safe

67. **The work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Formal child protection work is good and has improved significantly over the last three years.

68. Fewer children are on the child protection register or looked after in North East Lincolnshire than in similar areas. This is being achieved in an area that has high levels of social and economic deprivation. All children and young people on the register are allocated to a qualified social worker. Fewer children from black or minority ethnic minorities receive services as children in need. For most children who are on the child protection register or who are looked after, the arrangements are good in respect of the impact of the services received and the outcomes achieved. Personal plans are in place and reviews of them are conducted in a timely manner, involving the children and young people themselves appropriately.

69. The development of children's centres and extended schools is being integrated well with other services including health. Clear procedural arrangements are in place in the centres for managing children in need work and services. There is good compliance by agencies in holding monthly meetings and producing written plans that are subject of review.

70. Arrangements for the referrals of children in need are good, although the recording of action taken following referral is not always consistent. More children have initial and core assessments compared with other areas and these are completed within the required timescales, more often than other areas.

71. The response and management of referrals concerning children who have, or could be, experiencing sexual and physical abuse are generally good. The handling of severe domestic violence involves good agency responses to protect the immediate safety of the family. There is good work with other agencies that includes the women's refuge that has extended its services. There is good work and support to families where drug misuse is a problem. However, for children who have experienced lower levels of violence, the response is sometimes less clear in respect of action and organising support.

72. In a few instances, casework is not as effective because assessments are not well co-ordinated and fail to identify children's needs accurately. When this occurs, the subsequent work is not sufficiently focussed on addressing identified needs. This becomes a significant issue when the presenting concerns relate to neglect or emotional difficulties. Some assessments fail to secure a factual account of key events and do not explore the impact of factors such as chaotic parenting or fear of violence on children's emotional well-being. This results in less effective multi-agency working and lack of agreement about planning intervention strategies for children in spite of continuing needs. The definition and response to neglect are not clearly agreed between agencies. A neglect tool has been developed to inform assessment.

73. There is high reliance underpinning the plans for children in need on gaining the trust and co-operation of parents. Inevitably, there are families where parents are reluctant to engage with professionals. Where co-operation or motivation is low, and therefore requires a more assertive approach, the effectiveness in securing better outcomes for children is less clear. Some meetings with families do not always demonstrate forward momentum for children and instead are a review of what has happened over previous weeks. Written agreements with some families lack explicit clarity.

74. There are good services provided by CAMHS to younger children who are looked after but significant delays for other children in need. CAMHS recruitment difficulties contribute to this but access is further delayed because there is no well-defined and consistent pathway into services when a child in need requires them.

75. The LSCB has developed clear protocols and procedures in line with national regulations and guidance and has been prompt in making decisions to carry out serious case reviews where necessary. At the time of the joint area review, two separate serious case reviews were being conducted but these had not been completed before the end of the inspection.

76. The LSCB has been proactive in developing guidance for the recruitment of people working with children and young people. This has been only recently launched and therefore it is too early to evaluate compliance. The council is very proactive in completing and updating Criminal Records Bureau checks on staff and is fully compliant with the recommendations from the Climbié enquiry. Arrangements for reporting children who are missing are in place. These have recently been introduced in education but police processes are more established, are closely monitored and are effective in tracking children. The arrangements for tracking missing children need better integration to ensure that, when required, a clear referral is initiated under the LSCB procedures.

77. Action is taken to avoid children and young people having to be looked after through a range of family support services such as the Family Resource Service. Placement of children within the family is actively promoted though there is no formal kinship care policy. The number of children accommodated has reduced rapidly in the last two years.

78. Looked after children are provided with safe environments and are well protected. There is a good range of placements for them as the reduction in the number of children looked after has eased the pressure on placement availability. Fee-based contract payment schemes have reduced the turnover of foster carers and this has resulted in improved placement stability for children and young people in foster care. Foster carers receive child protection training and, in the recent fostering inspection, all of the standards were fully met. There is strong performance in placing children for adoption. The adoption and fostering services are both well supported by CAMHS.

79. The provision of short breaks for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been expanded. Carers' assessments, including the needs of young carers, are not routinely completed and there is insufficient emphasis on working in partnership with parents and carers. Generally, interagency responses to address the needs of disabled children are not sufficiently well co-ordinated and there is no overarching commissioning framework for services. The social care thresholds for services are perceived by some parents as unclear and inconsistent. There is now a disability resource panel in place to try and resolve these concerns. There is an overall disability strategy but this is only just in the process of being implemented. Services for children on the autistic spectrum and those with attention deficit and hyperactive disorders are underdeveloped.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

80. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is adequate.** The provision of early years' education and care is good. Effective partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors has secured a sufficient supply of places with reasonable local access. Inspection judgements indicate that the quality of service is slightly better than the national picture; the quality of teaching in funded nursery education is in line with national averages, with inspectors judging no aspects to be inadequate. Monitoring and support from the local authority are effective and appreciated. Good progress has also been made in opening a network of children's centres across the area. Choices of location for these centres are well informed by health and social needs data.

81. Monitoring, challenge and support for schools has recently improved significantly and is now adequate overall. The local authority has responded decisively to make improvements following the identification of inadequacies in the education service inspection in October 2004. New staff appointments, strong leadership and an effective partnership with *ChildrenFirst*, have all begun to have an impact, with some outcomes showing improvement since that time. Standards in primary schools are in line with other areas, with children making adequate progress. This is not the case, however, in secondary schools. Despite generally improving standards, notably in GCSE in 2006, too many young people make inadequate progress.

82. Over the last three years, more schools have been placed in a category of concern by Ofsted than in similar authorities or nationally. The work of the authority is now much better targeted in relation to risk and effective use is being made of data analysis to challenge and support schools. Schools are now well supported in evaluating the effectiveness of their own work, which the local authority rightly sees as an essential part of the overall improvement strategy. Governing bodies are also given adequate support in offering constructive challenge to head teachers. The local authority has managed this substantial shift in its approach well and without alienating schools.

83. Support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate. The authority has responded to an historical high percentage of children with statements of special need and introduced new delegation arrangements and criteria. Despite some schools losing financially as a result of these measures, and some concern at the transitional arrangements, there is a marked degree of support for the underlying principles of these moves. It is too early to see a significant change in the percentage of children with statements but the number of new statements issued is declining appropriately. The progress of children with special needs is well monitored.

84. Measures taken to improve school attendance have been effective. The programme for managing more difficult behaviour by offering a six-week withdrawal from school with a placement in the pupil referral unit followed by a managed move to another school has contributed to the recent sharp reduction in permanent exclusions. However, the physical capacity of the pupil referral units limits opportunities for more flexible programmes linked to the needs of individual pupils. Overall, provision for children not in school is adequate. Where pupils are permanently excluded, there are effective systems to ensure that they receive appropriate full-time education within the required time-scale. However, not all young people known to the youth offending service receive appropriate, full-time provision. There is good provision for the education of pregnant schoolgirls, young mothers and children unable to attend school for medical reasons. Provision by parents who choose to educate their children at home is well monitored.

85. Support for the specific learning needs of other potentially vulnerable groups is adequate overall. Almost all children looked after by the local authority have a personal education plan in place. The looked after children education team makes appropriate additional learning opportunities available, which have contributed to recent improvements in attendance and educational achievement for these young people. Parents and carers are given adequate support to help their children succeed at school. The new children's centres are becoming increasingly effective in supporting the most vulnerable groups. It is notable that these centres have been able to engage fathers as well as mothers. The progress of pupils from black and minority ethnic groups is well monitored and additional support made available where appropriate.

86. There is a good range of recreational and voluntary learning opportunities across the area. The Young People's Service makes a good contribution to this, although some activities are limited by resource and accommodation issues. There is a good range of outdoor parks and play areas, the Passport for Leisure scheme provides for family discounted admission to leisure centres, and looked after children and carers have free leisure centre access. It is accepted that more activities need to be made available for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Access to appropriate transport to and from activities presents a particular difficulty for these children and young people.

## **Making a positive contribution**

87. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is adequate. There are some good features.** There is a strong commitment from the Children and Young People's Service to listen to the views of children and young people. The Council for Young People, The Children's Participation group and the Youth Bank provide good opportunities for some young people to contribute to service design and the development of neighbourhood initiatives. Children and young people involved in these groups feel listened to and valued; they enjoy good working relationships with those who work with them and senior members of the council. The Council for Young People, the main consultation group, is supported well by the Young People's Service. Adults play a facilitating role allowing the young people to manage and develop the work themselves. A number of participation groups and twice yearly conferences ensure good succession planning for the Council for Young People. The neighbourhood tour for the joint area review was planned and managed by children and young people from the East Marsh area, who demonstrated a good understanding of the social issues in their neighbourhood and the democratic processes used to improve local services.

88. Systems to ensure consultation with the wider population of children and young people and co-ordination of participation groups require further development. Children and young people report a mixed picture on the effectiveness of school councils, and further work is required to strengthen the engagement of children and young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. These areas for development are recognised by the council and good plans are in place to address them through the appointment of a Participation Co-ordinator and the agreed implementation of The Children and Young Peoples Participation Strategy.

89. A range of programmes and activities support emotional and social development well. The introduction of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning in most primary schools and breakfast clubs in some schools help to raise the attendance and self esteem of children and young people. The Young People's Service offers a range of activities and programmes that enable young people to socialise and engage in community projects. Vulnerable children and young people benefit from the range of projects delivered through the Sure Start and Children's Fund Programmes. This includes a cookery club where parents increase their knowledge on nutrition, healthy eating and managing their children's eating habits. Parents value this opportunity to socialise and develop support systems.

90. Support for young carers is inadequate. Only a very small number of young carers are known to the service. The Young Carers' Support Service offers a weekly group activity session for over 11s. These sessions are valued by the young people and are well managed. Those under 11 do not have access to this group, although the project worker offers individual support to all



young carers known to the service. Young carers reported that they did not get additional support in schools such as study support, extended deadlines or access to their mobile phones, although the young carers' worker would go into school and act as an advocate if necessary. This work lacks strategic co-ordination and young carers do not therefore have access to a full range of support services that enable them to participate in educational, social and leisure activities.

91. Good partnership arrangements ensure targeted support for children and young people who are at risk of anti-social behaviour or offending. This has resulted in a downward trend in the number of anti-social behaviour orders being issued. A successful bid for neighbourhood renewal funding will further support development in prevention work. Some good interventions address the needs of young offenders on an individual basis but there are limited structured programmes for those who have been convicted. Despite good support and planning during the custodial period, the education and accommodation needs of children and young people leaving custody are not currently being met. There are significant problems in meeting the mental health needs of this group.

92. Children and young people responding to the Tellus survey, or participating in focus groups and the neighbourhood tour as part of the joint area review, described a mixed picture on the effectiveness of anti-bullying work in schools. Many young people feel quite safe at school and can describe effective strategies to tackle bullying whilst others feel unsafe both in school and their local area. Much work has taken place to develop a strategic approach to anti-bullying in schools including the development of an anti-bullying policy. Children and young people have been involved in this work and plans are in place for them to be involved in training to implement the policy when it is complete. This is late in being developed. Children and young people on the anti-bullying focus group have expressed concern about the length of time it has taken to develop and implement this policy.

93. A number of good initiatives ensure that children and young people who are looked after are listened to and can contribute to the wider agenda for children and young people, including regular meetings with the looked after children's officers and a Looked After Children and Young Persons Participation Group which links directly with the Council for Young People. An independent advocacy service for looked after children is in place and a new website has just been set up for foster children, young people and carers. There is a regular newsletter for foster children and carers and also one for those who are being adopted which include contributions from the children. Support groups and workshops for adopted children are held regularly. A Lead Member for Children has been appointed and plans are in place for a corporate parenting board to be established in early 2007. However, further work is required to develop fully the structural framework for corporate parenting to ensure that the good progress for looked after children is maintained and that all councillors are

collectively aware of their full responsibilities towards these and other vulnerable children.

94. Children, young people and their parents/carers report good consultation on the development of the respite service. Recent improvements have reduced waiting lists and the service now meets the needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their families more effectively. A range of communication tools are used to ensure that children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can share their views and contribute to the wider agenda for children and young people through the Council for Young People. However, a number of parents, carers and young people are concerned that they are not sufficiently involved in decisions about services provided for them. Some parents feel that professionals do not share information and that they have to find out things for themselves.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

95. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is adequate.** Partnership working between the council, the local LSC and the Connexions service has improved significantly since the 14–19 area wide inspection in 2004 and is now good. This much improved collaborative working is driving forward the 14-19 agenda and is beginning to increase the curriculum opportunities for young people. Collaboration amongst most schools and the two colleges has been effective in beginning to extend choice across the 14–19 curriculum. Most schools are collaborating on the introduction of the new vocational diplomas. However, this collaborative working is recent and the full impact is yet to be seen. Ambitious plans to locate the further education college, sixth-form college and one school on a single campus have been agreed and new learning pathways are being identified. Currently, opportunities for learners to access courses run by other providers to broaden their curriculum choice are limited. This particularly impacts on those 17 and 18 year old learners who are in small sixth-forms. The council and the local LSC are working together in addressing this issue by already closing one sixth form and agreeing the closure of another.

96. Young people are generally well prepared for working life. The Connexions service provides good and impartial information, advice and guidance to all young people. It also provides valuable additional support to those with particular needs. Connexions personal advisers maintain contact over the summer and provide targeted support for those young people who are identified as needing support to progress on to post-16 education or training. The service works effectively with schools to support teachers in increasing their knowledge and understanding of options and routes post-16. School staff are being provided with better opportunities to keep updated on business, industry and the local and national labour market through Connexions events, breakfast meetings and industrial placements. There is an appropriate and increasing range of work-related learning. Most young people undertake relevant work experience during Key Stage 4.

97. Most young people have sufficient access to learning post-16 and there is a good range of GCE, VCE and vocational learning opportunities at levels 2 and 3. Opportunities for work-based learning are adequate and the proportion of young people in apprenticeships is in line with national averages. However, there are limited opportunities in certain vocational areas for young people to be employed as apprentices. A few young people are therefore undergoing training but without payment through an apprenticeship or the education maintenance allowance. This issue has been identified as an area for action and there are plans in place for the council to offer apprenticeships from September 2007. Opportunities for learners who are not yet ready for the E2E programme and for those learners progressing from E2E to level 1 are limited. Currently, some provision is in place for learners not yet ready for the E2E programme through the Connexions service, using European social funding; however, this runs out in March 2008. The local LSC has identified this area as a priority for action and is currently working with providers to look at the curriculum offer and to broaden provision.

98. Outcomes for young people post-16 are generally adequate, although there are significant variations in educational outcomes across the range of provision. In work-based learning, overall success rates are improving, are showing a sustained trend of improvement and are now broadly in line with national data. The numbers of young people progressing at the age of 16 to education, training or employment are improving, but remain below the national average. Targeted action to reduce the number of young people not in education, training or employment has been effective and most recent data shows that the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training is just above national comparators. The number of care leavers and teenage mothers who are not in education, training or employment is low and significantly better than national comparators, but is higher than the national average with regard to young offenders.

99. There is an appropriate range of housing for most young people. This includes supported lodgings, hostel places and self-catered accommodation. Effective early interventions and support help some young people to avoid homelessness and manage tenancies. There has been a reduction in the length of stays in temporary and hostel accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation is only used in extreme emergencies. Some young people report that they feel vulnerable because much of the available accommodation is in areas of high crime. The accommodation service within the youth offending service is underdeveloped and there is insufficient independent accommodation for children and young people who offend, particularly for those returning from custody.

100. The newly-developed regeneration programme has a strong focus on increasing the capacity of local communities by encouraging local people to participate in decision making. It has already had an impact on improving play areas and creating additional recreation places. Regular meetings take place between councillors, the community and service providers to help develop priorities. Whilst the regeneration plans identify the need to address the issue of low skills levels in the area, there are no clear plans and outcomes identified for young people aged 16 and over.

101. All young care leavers participate in their reviews and have appropriate pathway plans to which they have contributed. However, there is a lack of coherence between care plans, pathway plans and transition plans and Connexions and health services have not been routinely involved. The new transition framework is now clarifying this. The 16+ service provides an extended service to young people on Sundays. Most care leavers and other vulnerable young people live in appropriate accommodation and receive good support.

102. Transition arrangements for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are improving and are now adequate. Schools and Connexions work well together in education transition planning. However, there are difficulties at transition between children's and adults' services and there is delay in the assessment process for young people as community care assessments are not undertaken until a young person is seventeen and a half years old. The new transitions framework is designed to improve the service provided. Plans are in place to reduce the reliance on out-of-authority placements and to invest more money in ensuring that young people with more complex needs can return to their own communities for their further education. It is recognised that there is a shortage of post-16 educational and training provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

103. Families, particularly those living in disadvantaged areas, receive good advice and guidance from local agencies and have good access to local learning opportunities. Childcare has been reviewed and the number of full day care places increased to meet the needs of parents wishing to return to education or employment. However, a few families report that they are unaware of the Family Information Service.

### **Service management**

104. **The management of services for children and young people has improved significantly and is adequate.** The way in which key partners set ambitions is adequate. The council, the Children *First* Strategic Partnership and the CfCB are providing effective strategic leadership in the development of integrated services. Partners, including the community and voluntary sector, have worked together to produce a shared vision which was recently re-affirmed at a series of joint workshops. Schools and colleges are being actively involved in exploring the possibility of establishing a local university. Progress is

being made in developing a children's trust, with the council, PCT, police and voluntary sector in the process of signing up to a partnership agreement.

105. There is a strong commitment to consultation and engagement with children and young people in developing services, although the involvement of parents and carers and the impact of consultation on the shape of services is less clear. The Council for Young People has been prominent in working with the CfCB to give a realistic and challenging perspective to the ambitions within the CYPP. Ambitions set within the CYPP link well to the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. While ambitions reflect diversity and equality issues, there are gaps in the approach, particularly in relation to engagement and consultation with young people from Black and minority ethnic groups. The CfCB has produced a relatively short CYPP that is written to make it accessible to children and young people and this approach has gained national recognition.

106. Prioritisation is adequate but the use and quality of needs analysis to inform action planning is variable. The CYPP makes a clear statement about what partner agencies and local children and young people see as their top five priorities, one for each Every Child Matters outcome. The plan gives little detail about other priorities, actions, targets and resources, which, on balance, is reasonable given the target audience of the plan. This detail is provided in a series of outcome plans, which offer more on how priorities will be met and also give a clear allocation of responsibility for delivery. However, lying between the CYPP and the outcome and team plans is a directorate business plan; in attempting to meet corporate business planning requirements, the directorate plan serves only to bring a degree of confusion into service planning and delivery. The quality of target setting is generally adequate but gaps and inconsistencies exist in a number of plans.

107. The overall record of partners on delivering better outcomes is mixed. A range of preventative initiatives is in place, but these lack co-ordination through a joint planning and commissioning framework. There are areas of demonstrable improvement, such as the 40% reduction in exclusions, the fall in the number of those not in education, training or employment, the removal of surplus places and improvements in the educational achievement of looked after children. Schools have a more positive view of the quality of services they receive. However, there are areas where services have not improved: CAMHS provision is inadequate and work on reducing teenage pregnancy is having limited impact. Achievements and the rate of progress for too many pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 are inadequate.

108. Capacity is adequate. Service remodelling, in line with plans for the future delivery of services through the children's trust, has started but is at a very early stage. This includes progress in relation to Local Area Partnerships, the use of the Common Assessment Framework, integrated working of frontline staff and alignment of budgets. The council and partners have a realistic view of the short and long-term implications for the changes envisaged, but much

remains to be done in a very short time and the September 2007 deadline for trust implementation appears optimistic.

109. The financial stability of the children's service has improved in line with overall improvements across the council. The PCT is also financially sound. Financial management within children services is adequate and there are no significant areas of overspending. Some progress is being made on the introduction of a claw back scheme and more robust challenge to schools with surplus balances is planned. Adequate progress is being made on the introduction of Standards for Financial Management in Schools.

110. Staffing capacity continues to be a high priority within North East Lincolnshire and overall significant progress is being made. The number of teachers has improved, although shortages remain in some key education posts. The number of children's social work staff has increased and all vacancies have been filled, but many of these staff lack experience and are likely to require further training and development. The workforce development strategy is at a very early stage of development. Arrangements for Criminal Records Bureau checks across the council are secure. The council is actively managing the use of consultants through the strategic partner, *ChildrenFirst*. This partnership is due to end in July 2008: although discussions have begun, a robust exit strategy is not yet in place.

111. The council is able to make difficult decisions, for example in relation to reducing surplus places in the primary sector. There is a good record of the council and partners responding to external evaluation and recommendations, which gives senior managers a realistic view of their strengths and weaknesses.

112. Services for children and young people represent adequate value for money. Spending on children's services is in line with similar councils and the national average, to provide adequate outcomes overall. Work is underway to reduce the cost of external placements. Funding to the Young People's Service has been increased to replace earlier reductions and this is beginning to improve the quality of youth work. The approach to improving value for money is being developed, with closer monitoring of strategic partner costs and performance, as well as evidence of shifting resources to priorities, for example in relation to tackling high teenage pregnancy rates. The approach to commissioning generally is under-developed.

113. The director of children's services is providing strong leadership. Political leadership is good. Statutory responsibilities are being discharged effectively, although the development of the approach to corporate parenting has been slow. A new senior management team is in place and with appropriate support from the strategic partner is managing services effectively. Staff are committed and enthusiastic about the direction of change.

114. The overall approach to performance management is adequate. The use of the corporate framework for managing performance provides a consistent approach and the reporting and challenge of performance is improving.

However, analysis of data is not always clearly linked to improved outcomes for children and young people. Performance clinics contribute to the level of challenge. Progress is being made in reporting performance to the LSP and CfCB.

115. There are examples of good outcomes for children and young people from the scrutiny arrangements for children's services. These are improving, although the agendas for regular meetings still contain too many reports presented for note. An annual work programme is agreed and reports have been submitted to cabinet on both primary and secondary surplus places. Some joint working with health scrutiny has looked at issues of diet and nutrition, teenage pregnancy and breast-feeding. The scrutiny committee receives all inspection reports and its impact is growing, with good leadership provided from the chair. Scrutiny arrangements for the CfCB are not developed.

116. The capacity for further improvement is good. The council and partners have made significant improvements since 2004. Children's services in North East Lincolnshire have been subject to a number of external evaluations and inspections and there is a clear desire to learn from these. The Director of Children's Services and other managers, although a relatively new team, are providing a strong sense of direction based on a realistic view about what needs to be done. The work of the strategic partner has contributed to improvement and it is clear that working relationships are good. Succession planning is at an early stage, as are plans for the Children's Trust. Managers and partners have the ability to take this forward. Action is being taken to strengthen the approach to developing the Children's Services workforce. The self-assessment was largely accurate and represented an honest appraisal of strengths and weaknesses.

## **Annex: The children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report**

1. Outcomes for children and young people in North East Lincolnshire are improving and are now adequate. The capacity of the council and partners to improve is good. Progress is being achieved in improving strategic management and multi-agency working and there is political commitment to maintaining improvements. There is a strong commitment to consultation and engagement with children and young people in developing services.

2. The management of services for children and young people has improved significantly and is now adequate. Prioritisation is adequate but the quality of needs analysis to inform action planning is variable. The financial stability of the children's service has improved in line with overall improvements across the council. Staffing capacity continues to be a high priority within North East Lincolnshire and overall significant progress is being made. The Director of Children's Services is providing strong leadership and political leadership is good. Statutory responsibilities are being discharged effectively, although the development of the approach to corporate parenting has been slow. The use of the corporate framework for managing performance provides a consistent approach and the reporting and challenge of performance is improving. There is a commitment to involve children and young people in the evaluation and scrutiny of services but these arrangements are at an early stage.

3. Overall, children are generally healthy. The council and its partners are working well together to begin to address gaps in services. Sure Start children's centres are developing as important sources of information and advice for parents of young children. All but two secondary schools are involved in the Healthy Schools programme. Looked after children benefit from good services from a specialist health team. Whilst health services to children and young people are generally adequate, mental health services are not and do not meet the needs of some vulnerable groups, in particular those who offend and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

4. The impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good. Considerable success is being achieved to improve the work of agencies from a historically low base. Fewer children are subject to formal child protection registration and, for many of these children, the impact of services is good. Referrals of children at risk of significant harm are responded to promptly but the recording of actions following referral is not always consistent. Good work around children in need has resulted in improved outcomes for them and their families. In a few cases, there has been a delay in providing services because assessments are not well coordinated or sufficiently focused on meeting identified needs. Looked after children are provided with safe environments and are well protected. Respite services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have improved, but carers' assessments are not routinely carried out.



5. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and to achieve well is adequate. Monitoring, challenge and support for schools has recently improved significantly and some improvements in the achievements of children are apparent with performance at ages 7 and 11 close to the national average. Despite recent marked improvement in results for 16 year olds, these remain below those in similar authorities and nationally and pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 do not make adequate progress. Sufficient early years education and day care provision is made and its quality is similar to, or slightly better than, that in other areas. Local authority support for the management of behaviour and attendance in schools has led to improvements in attendance and permanent exclusions. There is suitable provision for young people not attending school, although greater flexibility is needed and a small number of young people do not receive full-time provision. There is good support for looked after children and support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate. There is a good range of recreational and voluntary learning opportunities across the area but access to these is limited for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

6. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is adequate with some good features. There is a strong commitment to consult with children and young people, and a range of consultative groups has been established. However, these lack strategic co-ordination. There is good support for personal, social and emotional development. Some good interventions address offending-related needs on an individual basis, but there are limited structured programmes post-conviction. The education and accommodation needs of children and young people leaving custody are not currently being met. All children and young people who are looked after contribute to their reviews and have the opportunity to meet with looked after children's officers on a regular basis. Young carers do not receive sufficient support to enable them to lead a full and active life. Children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and their parent/carers report good consultation over respite services, resulting in an improved service. However, a number of parents, carers and young people are concerned that they are not sufficiently involved in decisions about services provided for them.

7. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is adequate. The partnership work between the council and other services is good and is having a positive impact. Most schools now have the capacity to offer vocational learning pre-16 and the range of vocational learning options is adequate and improving. Rates of participation post-16 are improving, but remain below the national average. There are limited learning opportunities for those young people not ready for E2E programme and those progressing from E2E to level 1 qualifications. Appropriate housing is found for most vulnerable young people, including care leavers, although some of this is in areas where young people do not feel safe. There is limited provision for those young people who offend, in particular those returning from custodial sentences. Transition planning for young people

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate but there is a delay in carrying out community care assessments. It is recognised that there is a shortage of post-16 educational and training provision for these young people.