

Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

Brighton and Hove

Inspection dates: 21 March to 1 April 2011

Reporting inspector Gary Lamb

Age group: All

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About this inspection

1. The purpose of the inspection is to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection team consisted of three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) one Additional Inspector and one inspector from the Care Quality Commission. The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004.
2. The evidence evaluated by inspectors included:
 - discussions with 42 children and young people and 31 parents receiving services, front line managers, senior officers including the Strategic Director People and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, elected members and a range of community representatives
 - analysing and evaluating reports from a variety of sources including a review of the Children and Young People's Plan, performance data, information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision and the impact of lessons learned from serious case reviews undertaken by Ofsted in accordance *with 'Working Together To Safeguard Children', 2010*
 - a review of 25 case files for children and young people with a range of need. This provided a view of services provided over time and the quality of reporting, recording and decision making undertaken
 - the outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment services undertaken on 7 and 8 July 2010
 - interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, managers and senior staff from NHS Brighton and Hove City Primary Care Trust (PCT), Sussex Community Trust, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust and Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

3. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Outstanding (Grade 1) | A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements |
| Good (Grade 2) | A service that exceeds minimum |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| | requirements |
| Adequate (Grade 3) | A service that only meets minimum requirements |
| Inadequate (Grade 4) | A service that does not meet minimum requirements |

Service information

4. Brighton and Hove has 54,700 children and young people under the age of 19 years. This is 21.5% of the population. The proportion entitled to free school meals is 17%. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 26.3% of the 0–19 population, compared with 16% in the city as a whole. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is 9% compared to 13.8% in England. The city has a high proportion of students and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents. Brighton and Hove is a destination for migrants from other parts of Europe with 15% of the city's population born outside England, higher than the average for the region and for England. The city is the 79th most deprived local authority area as assessed by the index of multiple deprivation, with 22% of children classified as living in poverty. There are high levels of health inequality including life expectancy, cancer and circulatory disease, and smoking. There are also high rates of mental ill health, alcohol and substance misuse and domestic violence.
5. The level of demand for services varies across the city, broadly reflecting patterns of deprivation and inequality and variable concentrations of families living in the different neighbourhoods. Brighton and Hove's Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) is led by the Children and Young People's Trust Board (CYPTB) and an Executive Group known as the Chief Officers Group. A wide range of agencies are involved including the council's children's services, with cross party representation of elected members, the NHS Brighton and Hove City PCT, Sussex Community Trust (SCT), Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUHT), Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT), general practitioners (GPs), the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), four representatives from schools and colleges, the Sussex Police Constabulary, the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, and Job Centre Plus. The city's Youth Council and the Parent's Forum each have a representative on the Board.
6. The LCSB is independently chaired and brings together the main organisations working with children, young people and families to deliver safeguarding functions. There are separate commissioning and provider agreements between the council and the PCT and the SCT. These are well established, accounting for some £34 million of expenditure on children and young people across the city, and enable the joint commissioning and integrated provision of services to children and young people and their families. These include services provided by the council's fully integrated

Children and Families Delivery Unit which was created on 1 November 2010 and is made up of:

- the Sure Start Group, which consists of health visiting, children's centres, the Family Information Service, nurseries, and the Early Years Development and Childcare Service
- the Schools and Community Group, which includes Educational Psychology, the Education Welfare Service, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and school nursing
- the integrated Child Development and Disability Group which consists of occupational therapy, speech and language, social work, audiology, respite residential care, community paediatrics, physiotherapy, specialist health visitor and specialist school nursing services
- the Social Work Group which consists of child protection, fostering and adoption services, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and substance misuse specialist services
- the Youth Service Group which consists of Employability and Youth Work Services.

7. NHS governance is managed through the Head of Nursing and Governance. Hospital services, including accident and emergency (A&E) services for children and acute maternity services, are provided by the BSUHT. Children, young people and families access primary care through one of 47 GP practices and a walk-in centre. CAMHS in Brighton and Hove are commissioned and delivered through an integrated care pathway with a single point of referral. There are a number of organisations involved in service delivery across the tiers of provision:

- tier 2 community services are delivered by a partnership arrangement between the council's children's services primary mental health workers and family support workers employed by two voluntary and community sector organisations
- the tier 3 clinical CAMHS service provided by the SPFT includes input into a number of multi-agency teams e.g. substance misuse, youth offending, specialist child protection as well as clinic based provision
- tier 4 inpatient and urgent help service and a transitions service for 14–25 year olds are provided by the SPFT.

8. In addition to the SPFT provided specialist tier 2 and 3 input to the Child Development and Disability service, there is a specialist service for looked after children and young people and children and young people with

attachment difficulties, and voluntary and community sector providers deliver a range of counselling, advice, advocacy and participation services.

9. Children's social care services support 122 fostering households (excluding family and friends foster carers). There are two in-house residential facilities for children and young people with a disability and/or learning difficulty. Residential services and additional foster placements are commissioned from registered and approved independent providers through a joint preferred provider arrangement with West Sussex County Council.
10. There are 54 primary schools, nine secondary schools (including one academy and one school with confirmed academy status from September 2011), two nurseries, six special schools, two sixth form colleges and one further education college. At the time of the inspection there were 486 looked after children and young people. Of these, 30% are under five years of age, 78% are under 15 years of age and 22% are 16–17 years of age. The council and its partners support 186 care leavers.

Safeguarding services

Overall effectiveness

Grade 3 (Adequate)

11. The overall effectiveness of services in Brighton and Hove to safeguard children and young people is adequate.
12. The strategic leadership of the council and its partners give safeguarding the highest priority. Health and council services are fully integrated with pooled budgets and this provides a sound basis for effective multi-agency work. Services are improving and no services are deteriorating. The organisational structure does not ensure the Strategic Director People's duties and responsibilities are closely aligned with the lead officer responsible for safeguarding. Child protection Section 47 work is completed by qualified social workers and recruitment is underway to ensure there are sufficient staff to undertake all children in need Section 17 initial and core assessments to comply with national guidance.
13. The council has taken swift action since the unannounced inspection of the contact, referral and assessment arrangements to ensure all the areas for development are being tackled. Children and young people at immediate risk of significant harm are identified and responded to in a timely way to ensure they are protected. However, child protection responses are not consistent across the city and plans are in place to provide a single point of entry to the service. Although children and young people were not found to be at risk during the inspection, strategy discussions and child protection Section 47 enquiries are not always conducted in a timely manner. Also performance on the timely completion of initial child protection conferences is worse than the national average.
14. The management of the child protection service is at least adequate but the quality of child protection plans and core group action plans are insufficiently outcome focused. Equality and diversity is not always clearly identified by social workers as part of their assessments. The Police and some GPs do not receive timely invitations to attend conferences and there are examples of delays in arranging pre-birth conferences. Although independent reviewing officers ensure child protection reviews are completed on time and the capacity of the service has been increased recently, their role is underdeveloped.
15. The partnership has undertaken an extensive needs analysis and services are being targeted to meet local needs to tackle domestic violence, substance and alcohol misuse. Early intervention and prevention services are increasingly effective and there are examples of good work which is making a real difference to the lives of children and families. Capacity to meet the rising level of need for service is beginning to increase and more priority is being given to children in need work. Children in need processes are being strengthened to prevent children and young people's

circumstances deteriorating to the point where the threshold is triggered for a child protection Section 47 enquiry. However the quality of children in need plans is variable, some are insufficiently outcome focused, not always evident on case files, and meetings do not consistently take place.

16. Partners show a strong commitment to using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and there has been a rapid increase in agencies completing these assessments. However not all schools are engaged with the CAF arrangements and schools' staff do not always have the dedicated time they need to spend with families. CAF assessments are being used increasingly to inform initial assessments when children and young people enter the child protection system but they are not always used routinely to identify support needs when statutory social care services are no longer required.

Capacity for improvement

Grade 2 (Good)

17. The capacity for improvement is good.
18. Partnership work is highly effective and supported by good joint commissioning arrangements and joined up work with the CYPT and the LSCB. Highly competent senior officers across the partnership provide clear strategic direction, respond effectively to the changing demands for the service and prioritise the allocation of resources to support safeguarding. There is a good level of transparency in the arrangements for reporting on performance and effective challenge across the partnership. Staff have good access to good quality training and effective supervision is embedded across agencies. There are some excellent pathways in place for referral to substance misuse services from A&E. Health care workers provide very good services that ensure the children and young people of hard to reach and vulnerable groups are protected. There is good take up of contraceptive and screening services which is making a difference. The council is rated excellent for its performance on the Equality Framework.
19. The front line child protection service is increasingly effective. The threshold for access to the child protection service is known and understood by partner agencies. Referrers who spoke with inspectors report that they have good access to qualified social workers to discuss their concerns. Performance on the timeliness of initial and core assessments has improved but performance is still worse than the England average. Although the quality of initial and core assessments is variable, recent assessments are good and well detailed including a clear analysis of risk and protective factors. More children and young people and their families are involved in the assessment process but advocacy services are not available early enough for parents who become involved with the child protection service and to support children and young people who use the complaints service. The integrated children's system is used effectively

and as a result case recording is generally up to date and of a satisfactory quality.

20. Outcomes for children and young people are good. There are some examples of highly effective under fives service provision delivered through health visitor led children's centres and teams around the family interventions. Schools perform particularly well in safeguarding. Staying safe outcomes are judged good or better. All schools have achieved the healthy school status and the delivery of the healthy schools programme is embedded. Many schools have well developed social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programmes which are helping to build resilience.
21. Opportunities for children and young people to influence the shape of services and have a voice are good. All schools have well established school councils and responses are effectively coordinated through the Youth Council and members sit on the Scrutiny Committee. Safeguarding arrangements within residential care provision which is provided or commissioned by the council is judged good or better. Fewer children and young people are putting themselves at risk through first time offending behaviour and more families are engaging early intervention and prevention services such as those experiencing domestic violence. More children and young people than in other areas who responded to the local authority survey report that they feel safe in their community and when travelling on public transport. According to the survey fewer children and young people than in other areas said they had experienced bullying.

Areas for improvement

22. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Brighton and Hove, the council and its partners should take the following action:

Immediately:

- improve performance on the timely completion of initial child protection conferences and ensure the police and GPs receive timely invitations to child protection conferences
- accelerate plans to ensure children in need Section 17 work is allocated to a qualified social worker.

Within three months:

- ensure pre-birth conferences are arranged in sufficient time for plans to be put in place before mothers give birth to their baby
- ensure child protection plans and core group action plans are outcome focused and independent reviewing officer's quality assure and monitor the progress of child protection plans closely
- ensure strategy discussions on child protection Section 47 enquiries and initial and core assessments are conducted timely in order to inform decisions and plans
- give increased priority to children in need work to prevent children's circumstances deteriorating to the point where the threshold is met to access the child protection service
- ensure equality and diversity issues are always identified by social workers in order to provide a holistic assessment of need
- review practice so parents can access the advocacy service earlier at the first point of entry to the child protection system
- review practice to ensure that, where they exist, CAF assessments are used to inform the need for an initial assessment and to shape services to meet the needs of children when statutory social care services are no longer required
- ensure robust arrangements are in place to support the full engagement of GPs in the safeguarding and child protection role
- improve the reporting arrangements to the LSCB for audits completed by children social care managers of the frontline contact, referral and assessment arrangements.

Within six months:

- improve the reporting and accountability arrangements for safeguarding to support the work of the Strategic Director People
- build the capacity of the LSCB to tackle the broad safeguarding agenda
- analyse why there are low numbers of children making formal complaints through the statutory complaints process and ensure systems support effective learning from complaints
- ensure school staff with CAF lead professional responsibility have the dedicated time that they need to spend with families.

Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

Children and young people are safe and feel safe

Grade 2 (Good)

23. The effectiveness of services to ensure that children and young people are safe and feel safe is good.
24. Schools perform particularly well on safeguarding, with staying safe outcomes of inspections being judged good or better. All schools have delivered the healthy schools programme and achieved healthy school status, and many have well developed SEAL programmes which are helping to build resilience. Good work has been carried out in schools around a range of safeguarding and safety issues including: bullying; cyber bullying; stranger danger; sexual health and drug and alcohol awareness. Actions taken to reduce permanent exclusions have been successful and numbers excluded have reduced. Although the number of fixed term exclusions is high the local authority in partnership with schools is working to reduce them.
25. Children and young people who completed the local authority survey report that they feel the council is good at helping young people feel and be safe at venues across the city. Also more children and young people than in other areas report that they feel safe in their community and when travelling on public transport and fewer children and young people said they had experienced bullying. Children and young people who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe in school and the local community and they demonstrated good awareness and knowledge of safeguarding issues and know when and where to seek support and help.
26. Children and young people at immediate risk of significant harm are identified and responded to in a timely way to ensure they are protected. There has been a rapid improvement in engaging children and young people as part of the CAF process and in child protection assessments. Practice ensures children and young people are spoken to and their views are captured. This is helping to inform decisions and risk assessments.
27. Safeguarding is judged as good or better in inspections of council fostering and adoption services, and the council's children's homes. The inspection of the private fostering service was judged adequate. There is good multi-agency working and information sharing in relation to children and young people missing from education and care, and policy and processes for the identification, tracking and support of children and young people are well established. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service operate a number of projects for children, young people and families regarding their cultural and language needs which impacts

positively on all aspects of their lives. There has been a reduction of first time entrants to the criminal justice system and while the number of repeat offenders is high, this is reducing.

28. All designated child protection posts across children's services are identified and in place. Three senior officers fulfil the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role. Procedures are applied consistently to ensure children and young people are properly safeguarded. Investigations are managed safely with appropriate involvement from the council's Human Resource service, Police and employers. Good relationships have been developed with senior staff across statutory, private and voluntary and community sector agencies regarding the management of allegations process. Good follow up work is completed with agencies including safeguarding audits and training with voluntary and community sector providers.
29. Safer recruitment arrangements meet minimum statutory requirements. Although there are clear arrangements in place for the screening and approval of criminal record bureau (CRB) checks a new procedure is being formalised to ensure that assessments and sign off decisions are recorded effectively.

Quality of provision

Grade 3 (Adequate)

30. The quality of provision, which includes service responsiveness, the quality of assessment and direct work with children, young people and families, and case planning, reviews and recording, is adequate.
31. The Children and Families senior management team is fully integrated resulting in more joined up front line services which are supported by pooled health and council budgets. Thresholds for access to children's social care services are known and understood by partner agencies and referrals are being made appropriately. The front line contact, referral and assessment service is effectively screening contacts and identifying where a referral to children's social care should be made or sign posting referrers to community based provision. This has resulted in all child protection cases being allocated promptly. There is an effective emergency duty service which is staffed by experienced, qualified social workers and some unqualified workers. There is good communication with area teams to ensure continuity of service. Referrers who spoke with inspectors report that they have good access to qualified social workers to discuss their concerns, however some indicate that they are not routinely informed of the outcome of their referral.
32. The council has taken swift action since the unannounced inspection of the contact, referral and assessment arrangements to ensure all the areas for development are being tackled. All cases are screened and prioritised by team managers and child protection work is carried out by qualified social workers. However, unqualified social work resource officers

complete a small proportion of initial and core assessments of children in need Section 17 cases and this is not compliant with national guidance. There has been a good improvement in the quality of supervision and management oversight. The council's integrated children's system is used effectively and as a result case recording is generally up to date and of a satisfactory quality. Timescales for the completion of initial and core assessments have improved from a low base, but performance is still worse than comparators. Although the quality of initial and core assessments is variable overall, recent assessments are good and detailed, including a clear analysis of risk and protective factors. There has been an improvement in the level of involvement of children and young people in their assessments and child protection conferences. Practice ensures children and young people are seen when initial and core assessments are conducted, however it is not always clear from case file records whether children and young people are seen alone.

33. Social work records increasingly show that children and young people's views and wishes are taken into account in their assessments and in decision making. Parents report that they are involved in assessments, that they receive copies and that they are engaged in the process to ensure records are accurate. Written agreements are being used increasingly with families where there are immediate child protection concerns to communicate expectations and requirements. The council's case file audit found that equality and diversity issues are not always clearly identified by social workers as part of their assessments.
34. Children in need of protection are clearly identified, however strategy discussions and child protection Section 47 enquiries are not always conducted in a timely way and this can lead to delays in the planning process. Performance on the timely completion of initial child protection conferences is worse than the national average.. Child protection conferences are well attended by most agencies, however some professionals such as the Police and GPs do not receive timely invitations which sometimes impacts on their ability to attend conferences or submit reports.
35. There is a high number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan. Actions to safely reduce the number of children on a plan for more than two years have been effective which has resulted in a low proportion of children and young people entering the child protection system for a second time. Further targeted work is being undertaken for services to intervene early to preventing children and young people's circumstances deteriorating to the point where the threshold is triggered for a child protection Section 47 enquiry. The quality of children in need plans is variable; some are insufficiently outcome focused, not always evident on case files, and meetings do not consistently take place. Although there has been a strong drive to improve advocacy support for children and young people subject to safeguarding procedures and

parents report that support is generally good this is not provided early enough at the first point of entry to the child protection system.

36. The quality of child protection plans and core group action plans are insufficiently outcome focused. This is leading to delays in case planning for some children and young people, although inspectors found no evidence from those files seen that children and young people had been placed at risk. Parents who spoke with inspectors report that child protection plans are not comprehensive, they do not specify clearly what needs to change from the outset and they are subject to further plans unnecessarily. Although independent reviewing officers ensure child protection reviews are completed on time they do not sufficiently quality assure or track child protection plans. Although core group meetings are well attended by agencies they are insufficiently outcome focused on the areas that need to change.
37. The council has identified that the capacity of the front line child protection service and independent reviewing officers is not sufficient to meet the demand for services. Additional investment has been secured to increase the social work establishment in the duty service by nine posts. Three additional independent reviewing officers have also been recently appointed but it is too early to measure their impact. Other efficiencies have been identified to improve economies of scale by reducing the duty points from three to one central duty point.
38. The council has been proactive in its response to domestic violence, alcohol and substance misuse. There is greater take up of early intervention and prevention services by families and the level of need for services has increased. Inspectors saw some examples of good quality team around the family interventions and good use of CAF assessments. The CAF assessments are increasingly effective and improving outcomes for children and young people, and in particular for children under five. The council and its partners have been building capacity to meet the increasing demand for early intervention and prevention services. The CAF assessments are not always being used to inform the need for an initial assessment and this is leading to duplication of assessments. The CAF is not yet used to routinely identify the support needs of children when statutory social care services are no longer required. Families who spoke with inspectors report that the CAF has made a difference but some said they have to tell their story to professionals more than once and that they stay on child protection plans because the support services they need are not available otherwise.
39. The council has a strong commitment to listen to and resolve disputes through the complaints process; however there are a low number of children and young people making formal complaints through the statutory complaints process. There are good examples of advocacy support for children and young people with special needs, such as those

provided by AMAZE, and parents are helping to shape services they want. Parents report that the council is empowering them through the commissioning process and this ensures that services meet their needs.

The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe **Grade 2 (Good)**

40. The contribution and impact of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe are good.
41. Partnership work is highly effective and supported by good joint commissioning arrangements and joined up work with the CYPT and the LSCB. NHS Brighton and Hove City PCT is fulfilling its statutory safeguarding requirements with designated professionals in post supported by named professionals in all provider trusts. This includes an independent Domestic Violence Advisor who works out of the A&E unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital which is effectively promoting the safety of children and young people. The new Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, named nurse and doctor have raised the focus of child protection across the trust.
42. The LSCB health representatives are at an appropriate level of seniority to ensure an effective contribution to strategic decision making within both the LSCB and their own organisations. Health care workers provide very good services that ensure the children and young people of hard to reach and vulnerable groups are protected, for example the travelling community. Innovative and accessible sexual health services for young people are provided by a range of partners across the city and there is good take up of contraceptive and screening services. Sexual health services have been reviewed by young 'mystery shoppers' and the findings used to drive improvements with providers. Interpreting services are readily available to ensure people who use English as an additional language have access to healthcare services that meet their needs and reduces isolation.
43. There are appropriate arrangements with all child deaths being notified to the designated nurse and doctor who consider whether there are any child protection concerns raised by the death. A named GP has been appointed by the PCT. There is an increasing level of attendance at safeguarding training by GPs and their practice staff with the majority of practices having received level three safeguarding training. However monitoring of safeguarding activity within general practice is at an early stage and GPs who spoke with inspectors report that they do not feel they have a key role or have a significant contribution to make in child protection. Some GPs and other healthcare professions report poor communication with children's social care services.

44. Children's centres are led by health visitors and provide a range of innovative and effective services with targeted provision for vulnerable and hard to reach families. Parents who spoke with inspectors report that this is improving access to services. Child protection case conferences are well attended by health professionals, including staff working with parents who have mental health problems. Staff who spoke with inspectors said they feel their contributions are valued and that they are helping to contribute to the decision making process. Information sharing is a strong feature of the emergency care settings with highly trained paediatric emergency nurse practitioners as the first point of contact. There are appropriately trained staff and clear procedures to recognise and assess children and young people at risk and a flagging system has been introduced to identify children and young people presenting who are the subject of a child protection plan.
45. Procedures to inform community health professionals of attendances by children and young people at A&E are excellent with pathways in place for referral to substance misuse services and this is a model of good practice. The casualty card of all children and young people under 18 years who attend the Children's Assessment Unit (CASU) or A&E department are subject to a triple scrutiny that negates the possibility of any child protection concerns being overlooked and ensures timely referrals are made to other agencies. Although children are not at risk pre-birth conferences are not always arranged in sufficient time for plans to be put in place before mothers give birth to their baby, leaving staff on the delivery suite and postnatal ward uncertain about whether to discharge the mother and baby.

Ambition and prioritisation

Grade 2 (Good)

46. Ambition and prioritisation are good.
47. The strategic leadership of the council and its partners give safeguarding the highest priority. There is very good cross party commitment to the safeguarding agenda and elected members champion the needs of children, young people and families. The council is rated excellent for its performance on the Equality Framework and there are good examples of service improvement through impact assessments. Safeguarding priorities are clearly identified in the CYPP and other strategic documents. Areas of strength and weakness are clearly identified and targets for service improvement are supported well by increased funding and efficiency savings.
48. The council and its partners face considerable challenges to tackle worklessness, domestic violence and substance and alcohol misuse, and while there are examples of good impact there is insufficient capacity in the council's children's social care and early intervention and preventative services to meet the increased demand for service. Progress on the

achievement of targets for improvement for safeguarding services is good overall. Robust arrangements are in place for the collation of performance data and decisions are based on a rigorous needs analysis. Priorities are effectively actioned and progress closely monitored.

49. Highly competent senior officers across the partnership provide clear strategic direction, respond effectively to the changing demands for the service and prioritise the allocation of resources to support safeguarding. There is a good level of transparency in the arrangements for reporting on performance and effective challenge across the partnership by the council through its Scrutiny Committee and Child Review Board, the LSCB and the Children's Youth Trust Board to ensure responses are joined up and focused on meeting local needs. The council has taken swift action to tackle areas for development identified in the unannounced inspection of its front line child protection service. Robust action planning has ensured a good rate of improvement. Service responses ensure work is prioritised effectively and actions ensure the most vulnerable children and young people who need to be protected are safe. Strategies provide a strong focus on narrowing the gap for vulnerable children, young people and families and communities including health needs.

Leadership and management

Grade 3 (Adequate)

50. The leadership and management of safeguarding services are adequate.
51. There are effective joint commissioning arrangements between health and the council which provides a sound basis for multi-agency work. Shared budgets and the joint commissioning of services are fully established and are used well to reduce cost and determine quality for money. For example, health visitor led children's centres are making a real difference to the lives of children and families.
52. The LSCB has developed a comprehensive training programme which is closely aligned to its business plan. The roll out of training and improvement in the quality of supervision across the partnership has made a big difference to the quality of safeguarding practice. There is good use of e-learning and targeted priorities such as thresholds for accessing services. This is increasingly effective and multi-agency 'Think Family' and 'team around the family' approaches are having an impact by engaging some families earlier and where there is domestic violence. These programmes are helping to build capacity to deal with families across the partnership early to prevent them from entering the child protection system. Although there have been no recent local serious case reviews, lessons learned from national and regional cases have been disseminated across the work force and these have helped to shape improvements in services. Staff from partner agencies including the voluntary and community sector report that access and quality of training is good.

53. The recruitment and retention strategy is good. The council knows its workforce well and this is supported by a comprehensive needs analysis and the core skills and knowledge programme. The council has a strong commitment to support staff who wish to undertake social work training such as through the bursary scheme. There is a well established development programme for newly qualified social workers, however a small number of newly qualified social workers are taking on complex child protection cases too early.
54. The council has taken swift action since the unannounced inspection of the contact, referral and assessment arrangements to ensure all the areas for development are being tackled. All cases are screened and prioritised by team managers and child protection work is carried out by qualified social workers. However, unqualified social work resource officers complete a small proportion of initial and core assessments of children in need Section 17 cases and this is not compliant with national guidance.
55. Actions to increase the capacity of front line early intervention and prevention service are having an impact, such as in the support given to children and young people who are no longer subject to a child protection plan. There are some good and outstanding examples of team around the family interventions. However, not all services such as some schools have taken the lead role for the CAF assessment process and it is too early yet to see any reductions in the high rate of children and young people subject to a child protection plan. Social worker caseloads are manageable, however there is an inequitable distribution of work across the workforce. Although the capacity of the independent reviewing officers has been increased, their work does not ensure child protection plans are tracked effectively and child protection plans are not sufficiently outcome focused. Although the number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan for longer than two years was significantly higher than similar councils this rate has reduced and is now good.
56. The Strategic Director People does not have direct line management responsibility for the operational manager responsible for safeguarding so he is unable to have full accountability for safeguarding service responses. Overall there is a stable workforce and although the council recognises that the social care workforce does not fully represent the ethnic and cultural demography of Brighton and Hove, there is a long term plan to address this.
57. There are many good examples of user engagement and consultation including children and young people influencing the priorities set out in the CYPP and their contribution to the domestic violence intelligence pilot. Schools perform very well in safeguarding. All schools have well established school councils with representatives elected by their peers. Responses are effectively coordinated through the Youth Council and members of the Youth Council are represented on the Scrutiny

Committee. Young people who spoke with inspectors report that they are taking forward a comprehensive agenda through specific portfolio groups, such as those with responsibility for environment, safety and transport. An annual 'safe and well' survey undertaken in primary and secondary schools has helped schools understand the views of children and young people on important issues such as bullying and racist and religiously motivated incidents. This has supported more focused interventions in schools for most vulnerable groups and the tackling of bullying.

58. There has been good progress recently to improve engagement with children and young people as part of children's social care assessments. Case file reading identified children and young people are increasingly attending child protection conferences and there is good use of written agreements with families. This work is supported by good access to a wide range of interpreters to support the engagement of parents whose first language is not English. The recently introduced quality assurance framework ensures user views are captured but it is too early to measure impact.
59. There are some good examples of children and young people influencing the strategic planning and delivery of health services and in particular for sexual health and contraceptive services. This is contributing to improved outcomes such as a lower rate of teenage pregnancy. Children and young people also have opportunity to express their views about the CAMHS service and about the Aiming High programme for children and young people who have a disability and/or learning difficulty. Parents of children in primary schools report that there are very good arrangements for them to have a voice for how services are shaped through the Family and Support Team (FAST) programme.
60. Statutory guidelines in relation to complaints are consistently applied. Robust processes are in place for collating and analysing statutory complaints with quarterly reports detailing numbers, outcomes and trends. However, the council is not measuring whether lessons arising from complaints are leading to service improvements. Service users seen by inspectors including parents and carers of some of the most vulnerable children and young people report that they are generally satisfied with services. Parents involved in the child protection service who met inspector's said that initial contacts with front line social workers are very stressful and this could be helped through earlier access to advocacy support. Once engaged in the child protection system they are treated with sensitivity and respect.
61. The council and its partners effectively prioritise the use of financial resources to ensure the most vulnerable children and young people who need protection are safe. Service weaknesses are well known and recent improvements in data and needs analysis are helping to shape service improvements such as increased financial resources for the front line child

protection service. Robust auditing of the front line contact, referral and assessment service is having an impact and performance on the timely completion and quality of initial and core assessments is improving. However the individual audits completed by children's social care managers of the contact, referral and assessment service are not provided to the LSCB for scrutiny. Efficiencies have been made to maximise the use of qualified social worker time such as the inventive use of administrative support to release qualified social work staff to do more work with families.

62. Although the increase in the use of the CAF process and team around the family is beginning to have an impact on reducing the need for children and young people to enter the child protection system, not all providers are engaged in supporting this work. School staff report that they do not always have the dedicated time that they need to spend with families. There are effective systems across the partnership to evaluate value for money and the council and its partners are increasingly effective at working together to find solutions to meet local need. The operation of the LSCB is well managed and the business operation is closely aligned to the legal framework and tackling priorities such as the improvement of front line contact, referral and assessment arrangements. Most member organisations have a named senior officer for the management of allegations against staff and the LSCB is in the process of ensuring that this is compliant across the partnership.
63. There is a strong focus on commissioning, decommissioning and recommissioning of services to meet changing needs and joint commissioning of services is used well to avoid duplication and reduce cost. There are examples of efficiency savings across the sector to avoid duplication and the voluntary and community sector is used well to provide specialist services which are sharply focused on meeting local needs. Records kept by children's social care do not always capture the ethnicity and culture of children, young people and families to provide a sound basis for the assessment of need or provide the basis to differentially evaluate user feedback.

Performance management and quality assurance

Grade 2 (Good)

64. Performance management and quality assurance are good.
65. The LSCB is delivering its core business effectively and the annual report 2009/10 is good. It has rolled out some important programmes including needs analysis and thematic audits which have addressed domestic violence, substance misuse and neglect. There is a strong focus on performance management measured against its business plan but although the LSCB is keen to improve front line child protection services,

individual case file audits completed by children's social care managers are not reported directly to the LSCB.

66. The quality of the multi-agency case file audits undertaken for this inspection provides an accurate evaluation of practice and this is helping to inform the improvement of practice across the service. There has been extensive work to improve the quality of performance data. Systems are in place to disseminate this across the workforce and this is being used by strategic and operational managers and front line staff to shape and improve how services are delivered. This is already leading to service improvements in some areas of performance. There are robust multi-agency arrangements in place to audit the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection services across partner agencies as required by Section 11 of the 2004 Children Act and action plans are helping to consolidate practice.
67. There are robust conflict resolution arrangements which operate across the partnership and these are set out in procedures that have been agreed by the LSCB and are known and understood by staff. There is a rapid improvement in the frequency and quality of supervision of staff, particularly in schools and front line social work. This is delivered through the effective work of the LSCB and has been implemented consistently. Staff report that they receive good quality, reflective supervision. This includes essential elements such as equality and diversity which is effectively linked with individual staff performance and development.
68. The practice of peer and group supervision is being used increasingly across the partnership including the voluntary and community sector to harness the knowledge of professionals to effect change with families. This is supported through training and service away days to improve practice. Management systems promote a good level of challenge and support for front line workers and managers are held to account for their performance. There is a positive culture of managers at all levels being approachable and supportive to front line staff. Social work staff report that their managers are accessible and their leadership is valued and respected.

Partnership working

Grade 2 (Good)

69. Partnership working is good.
70. There is effective joint commissioning between health services and the council which provides a sound basis for multi-agency work across the city. Partners have contributed to a thorough needs analysis which has set the agenda to improve services further. There are a range of initiatives and projects to support children and young people made vulnerable due to their challenging circumstances, such as joint work with health and the police to tackle domestic violence, the impact of drugs and alcohol misuse.

71. There is a good level of multi-agency representation on the CYPTB. The CYPT demonstrates a strong drive and determination to deliver the best possible service for children and families, and there are effective links with the LSCB and the council. The LSCB is well established with strong multi-agency participation from agencies including voluntary and community sector organisations, however lay members have not yet been appointed. The LSCB priorities are clear and the business plan is supported by a robust action plan such as embedding the practice of multi-agency strategy meetings to ensure the most vulnerable babies and children and young people are protected. An appropriate range of sub groups are in place and they report regularly on their progress to the LSCB. This ensures the core business of the LSCB is conducted very well. However the LSCB has insufficient capacity to develop approaches to impact on the broader safeguarding agenda.
72. Issues of equality and diversity are managed through all the LSCB groups. There has been recent rapid improvement in the use of the CAF including by the Police, with high numbers being completed by health visitors and youth and community professionals, and where they are completed outcomes for children are improving. This is supported by a high volume of high quality training. However, not all schools are completing CAF assessments. Agencies have good access to front line social workers for information and advice. Staff report that social workers respond promptly to their request for information.
73. Robust multi-agency public protection arrangements and multi-agency risk assessment conference processes are in place with good attendance by participating agencies. The Police and council's legal services play a pivotal role in ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded. The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) arrangements are well established. Regular meetings take place to review all child deaths across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove on behalf of the two LSCBs. Child deaths are all reviewed within six months, and specialist panel processes have been developed to review neonatal deaths comprehensively.
74. The LSCB has been proactive in ensuring that lessons learnt from serious case reviews nationally are disseminated across the workforce. Although there has not been a serious case review in Brighton and Hove since 2008, learning events have taken place, procedures have been revised and staff can articulate the learning from national reviews. The LSCB has taken opportunities to instigate management reviews into serious incidents that do not meet the criteria for a serious case review to ensure any lessons learnt are identified and disseminated.

Services for looked after children

Overall effectiveness

Grade 3 (Adequate)

75. The overall effectiveness of looked after children services is adequate.
76. Although the quality of assessments is variable, children and young people are appropriately assessed when they become looked after. Not all looked after children and young people, however, are allocated to a qualified social worker. A quarter of looked after children and young people are allocated to social work resource officers which is not compliant with statutory requirements. Leadership and management is adequate and use of resources increasingly effective. The council has worked hard to effectively reduce the number of placements that are out of city and of placements for children and young people with learning difficulties and those that are disabled. This has led to costs being substantially reduced.
77. The provision of service to ensure that the health needs of looked after children and young people are met is excellent. Decision making and intervention is timely to ensure that those children and young people who need to be looked after are provided with good quality, safe placements that meet their needs. However looked after children reviews and pathway plans do not always identify cultural and identity needs or focus on how these needs are met. Over the last year short term placement stability has improved and is in line with similar councils; long term stability is improving but still below national average. School attendance is good and improving. No looked after child or young person is permanently excluded and those looked after children and young people on fixed term exclusions receive good alternative provision through the virtual school team and the alternative centre for education.
78. The meaningful engagement of children and young people in planning services at both strategic and operational level is underdeveloped and the recent implementation of the Pledge of the Strategic Director People has yet to impact on their lives in a positive way. Although there are some good examples of the views of looked after children and young people being sought, they are not always followed up, an example being the lessons learned from the recent complaints survey. Young people are well prepared for independent living and have a choice about when they leave care which they value. They are supported well financially, contribute to their pathway plans and attend meetings and they are positive about their transition to adulthood. However, the arrangements for pre- and post-16 education provision lack continuity and the rate of young people not in education, employment and training is not improving. The Corporate Parenting Board is not sufficiently rigorous in prioritising the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers and is ineffective in championing the work opportunities for children and young people leaving

school. There is a good range of housing provision for care leavers, and some bed and breakfast accommodation is used appropriately for a small number of looked after young people temporarily to meet their immediate needs. The housing protocol is good and good use is made of supported lodging arrangements.

Capacity for improvement

Grade 2 (Good)

79. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve services for looked after children and young people is good.
80. The council demonstrates good ambition and has prioritised services well to meet the needs of looked after children and young people. The council fostering service is judged outstanding, the council adoption service is judged good and all children, including children with learning difficulties and those that are disabled, are placed in children's homes which are judged good or better. Partnership working is of a high standard and embedded. Agencies and organisations demonstrate clear commitment to ensure they provide services of a consistently good quality to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people. Performance management and quality assurance systems have been strengthened and are improving services overall. A range of audit work has been undertaken and this provides a sound basis for service improvement and development, however, evaluation of services does not always link to outcomes.
81. The council has an effective workforce strategy. There is good supervision and a comprehensive staff development programme, however there are some staff capacity issues. For example, independent reviewing officers have high case loads and limited capacity to follow up on review recommendations and some children and young people do not have qualified social workers allocated to them. Contracting and monitoring arrangements for commissioned services are excellent and provide good quality for money. There is strong attention to performance and swift action is taken against poorly performing provision. The work of the virtual school team and the recent recruitment of a new virtual head teacher is driving the progress and achievement agenda for looked after children and young people. This is beginning to improve after disappointing outcomes for some 16 year olds in 2010.

Areas for improvement

82. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Brighton and Hove, the local authority and its partners should take the following action:

Immediately:

- ensure all looked after children and young people are allocated to a qualified social worker
- review the high caseloads of independent reviewing officer's so that direct contact with children between reviews is maintained, recommendations are outcome focused and they have the capacity to audit work undertaken

Within three months:

- ensure all looked after children reviews and pathway plans identify cultural and identity needs and plan how these needs are met
- improve the Corporate Parenting Board performance to be more robust in its challenge in prioritising the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers including championing their access to work opportunities when they leave school
- ensure the level of attainment achieved by looked after children and young people in secondary schools is prioritised to consolidate the good progress they make at Key Stage 2
- ensure an action plan is developed to respond to recommendations in the recent complaints survey
- establish more effective and coherent systems for the involvement of looked after children and young people in strategic decision making to influence services improvement
- ensure the Pledge of the Strategic Director People and other information provided for looked after children and young people when they enter the care system is disseminated in a meaningful way

Within six months:

- establish a more coherent pre- and post-16 education provision to provide a seamless service including specialist support with regard to information, advice and guidance about employment, education and training opportunities.

How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?

Being healthy

Grade 1 (Outstanding)

83. Services to promote the health and well being of looked after children are outstanding. There is highly effective joint working and information sharing across agencies and targeted support. Rigorous monitoring and targeted work ensures that the health outcomes for children living in the city and those placed in other areas are consistently good. This is primarily due to the proactive and highly effective designated looked after children's health team.
84. Health outcomes for looked after children are better than similar areas. Performance on the proportion of looked after children and young people who receive their immunisations and receive a routine health assessment is very good at 94.2%. There is also excellent performance on dental health with over 90% of looked after children and young people receiving a dental health examination each year. There is excellent performance in the take up of health assessments by 16+ young people with 90% completion. All looked after children and young people are registered with a GP. Initial health assessments are of good quality, comprehensive and are used effectively to inform health care plans for each child or young person. There has been a sustained approach to improve the quality of health records over time and the quality of assessments sampled for this inspection are at least good.
85. There are examples of highly effective, targeted health promotion activity which takes place on a one-to-one basis during health reviews. This is making a real difference to young people's lives. Examples are the excellent sexual health and contraceptive advice services provided at numerous outlets across the city, particularly from the 16–18 nurse specialist. There is good take up of these services which has contributed to the low conception rate by looked after young people. Also the 16+ nurse has a good understanding of the diverse needs of young people including specific needs of young asylum seekers which is ensuring their needs are met very well.
86. There are highly effective services to support looked after young people who misuse substances through the RU-OK team. This ensures access to services is timely and responses are sharply focused to meet the individual needs of young people. The substance misuse team also provides training and support to foster carers which is well received and is helping to sustain young people in their placements. There are also specific specialist programmes to target hard to reach looked after young people who misuse substances through the Therapeutic and Psychological Access Services to tackle persistent and serious substances misuse. There is good

provision for detoxification assessment and treatment programmes for looked after mothers of babies born with narcotic addiction or withdrawal symptoms. Young people in receipt of substance misuse services who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the support they receive.

87. The designated doctor for looked after children and young people is an appropriately senior community paediatrician. This ensures looked after children and young people are prioritised and often fast tracked to services from this single point of referral. The arrangements for referrals to CAMHS for looked after children and young people including those adopted or placed for adoption is very good. Every child and young person has a generic assessment within four weeks and there is 100% compliance with this timescale, with treatment promptly provided. The CAMHS learning disabilities team provide good direct support to services through pathway plans, providing good advice to schools and carers. They also form an integral part of the multi disciplinary team for looked after children and young people with disabilities and mental health problems.
88. Looked after children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with outstanding 'wrap around' care from the disabled children's team. This is supported by an effective and very well received key worker system that provides families, including foster families, with advice and support and co-ordinates the care package for individual children and young people. The AMAZE project is an exemplar of good practice for families with children with special needs. Parents who spoke with inspectors at the project reported that there is good take-up of services early, including respite care, by parents who are experiencing isolation, stress and anxiety to prevent family breakdown and the need for children with special needs to enter the care system.

Staying safe

Grade 2 (Good)

89. Safeguarding arrangements for looked after children and young people are good.
90. Looked after children and young people are placed in safe placements. Children and young people who spoke with inspectors report that they feel safe and have someone that they trust with whom they can share concerns. Decision making and intervention is timely to ensure that those children and young people who need to be looked after are provided with placements that meet their immediate needs for protection. The agency placement team robustly quality assure all commissioned placements. All children are placed in provision that is judged good or better and accredited providers must maintain provision that is judged good or outstanding. There is a missing from care policy and procedure that sets out the responsibilities and expectations for both police and children social care practitioners in Brighton and Hove. The Brighton and Hove missing children and young people's liaison forum has run successfully for 15

months and all children and young people identified as vulnerable are monitored and tracked. However information on becoming looked after is not consistently disseminated and discussed in a meaningful way with children and young people.

91. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people are provided with a high standard of support by a specialist social work team. The team has a stable and experienced staff group that provide immediate and targeted support to meet the initial need for safeguarding and ongoing needs.
92. Long term placement stability is improving although performance continues to be worse than similar councils and the England average at 64.6%. Short term placement stability for looked after children and young people is improving and is better than similar councils and the England average at 10.1%. There is good support for looked after children placed with family and friends supported by a good use of Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders as permanency options for children in family and friends placements.

Enjoying and achieving

Grade 3 (Adequate)

93. The impact of services on enabling looked after children and young people to enjoy and achieve is adequate.
94. The education attainment achieved by some 16 year old looked after young people who sat their GCSE's examinations in 2010 was disappointing. The council is concerned about the educational achievements for looked after children and young people and has prioritised this as a key area for improvement. New management arrangements are already showing progress over a short period of time. Partnership working is effective and the virtual school team works diligently to ensure that a multi-agency approach improves outcomes. There is a well established designated teacher network who meet regularly for training and share information. The new virtual head teacher demonstrates clear vision and ambition for the virtual school. She provides good leadership of the virtual school team and ensures strong advocacy for encouraging better outcomes for looked after children and young people. Tracking systems rigorously monitor progress and achievement using good data systems. Close working relationships with schools and the alternative education centre ensure systems are robust.
95. Most looked after children and young people do well in their early years and in primary school and more achieve the appropriate level for their age at 11 years old than their peers in similar councils and nationally. This continues a consistent and gradual upward trend of the last three years. Weak academic performance of 16 year olds last year was affected disproportionately by the high numbers of children with special educational needs, 60% against the national average of 27%. Rigorous analysis of

data, however, shows that in the same year a significant number, 26 out of 35 (74%) achieved a range of other qualifications which matched their potential, while 80.6% of this group achieved at least 1 GCSE A*–G grade. The projected outcomes for years 9, 10 and 11 in 2011 are greatly improved and more 16 year olds are predicted to achieve a higher number of good GCSEs.

96. New strategies have been introduced to close the gap in achievement between all pupils and those who are looked after and include targeted one-to-one support and approaches for personalised learning. Close monitoring and recording of individual progress and attainment is already providing important tracking information to ensure looked after children and young people have the best chance to achieve their potential. In addition, a range of additional teaching methods are used effectively to support those looked after children and young people with individual learning needs. In-house evaluation shows children are making significant progress against their assessed starting point at primary age. There are strong educational outcomes for children and young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers.
97. The virtual head teacher and her team have undertaken a full audit of personal education plans; 97% are completed and the quality of target setting is improving. Looked after children and young people's school attendance has improved significantly and is currently 97% across all school years in the current term. The looked after children education psychologist provides excellent support to children and young people within Brighton and Hove and those placed externally. There are currently no permanent exclusions from education of looked after children and young people. Those children and young people who are on fixed term exclusions have well managed programmes delivered by the school team and the alternative centre for education to support reintegration back into school.
98. The personal education allowance is used effectively to purchase equipment to assist children and young people with their learning and personal or social development, such as lap tops, musical instruments or to develop hobbies and interests. There are good transition arrangements in place at each stage of looked after children and young people's education, particularly between primary and secondary school. Looked after young people are encouraged to remain in school at 16 years old and 11 looked after young people currently attend university. However, coordination and communication between the virtual school team and post-16 education is underdeveloped.
99. All looked after children and young people receive free access to swimming and leisure facilities managed by the council and enjoy free music lessons through the school music service. They are encouraged to take part in extended and after school activities, trips and excursions and

residential. The take up of these opportunities is good particularly for primary age and younger secondary age pupils.

Making a positive contribution, including user engagement Grade 3 (Adequate)

100. Opportunities for looked after children and young people to make a positive contribution are adequate.
101. The active participation of looked after children and young people at a strategic level is variable in its impact and effectiveness. A Children in Care Council is established but does not have a high profile amongst all looked after children and young people. A 16+ advisory group of young people is well established and it contributes effectively to service planning and review. Asylum seeking young people are also well represented within this group. Individually good efforts are made to ensure that children and young people contribute and understand a range of plans that affect their lives. They are encouraged to attend and share their wishes and feelings at looked after children reviews and children and young people who met with inspectors spoke positively about their allocated worker.
102. The Corporate Parenting Board is not sufficiently promoting positive outcomes for looked after children and young people. Elected members have received appropriate training and demonstrate commitment to improving outcomes for looked after children, young people and care leavers, however only three board meetings have been held and it is too early to measure impact. Representatives from the 16+ advisory group attend the corporate parenting board. The Pledge of the Strategic Director People to children and young people who are looked after and care leavers, was launched in 2010, however the way it was disseminated to children and young people did not assist their understanding and children and young people report that it has limited meaning to their lives.
103. The children and young people who spoke to inspectors had limited knowledge about the complaints procedures, however a recently commissioned survey indicates that a high proportion of children and young people do know how to complain. No action plan has been developed to progress the recommendations made by the survey.
104. Council data indicates that although there has been recent improvement, more looked after children and young people are given custodial sentences or are likely to reoffend than the non looked after population. However, the proportion of looked after children who receive a custodial sentence in Brighton and Hove is lower than similar councils. There is a pan-Sussex plan targeted at preventing first time entrants to the criminal justice system and to reduce reoffending by looked after children and young people but planning is at an early stage and there is no evidence of impact yet. The council celebrates the success of children and young

people through an annual awards ceremony where talents and achievements are acknowledged for looked after children and young people aged 7–18 and includes those placed outside the city.

Economic well-being

Grade 3 (Adequate)

105. The impact of services to enable looked after children and young people and care leavers to achieve economic well being is adequate.
106. Young people are well prepared for independent living, have a real choice about when they leave care and are supported well financially. Care leavers are positive about their transition to adulthood and those young people who spoke with inspector's report they contribute to their pathway plans. Performance for 16–19 year old looked after young people not in education, employment or training is improving slowly, though is still high. The council has identified that there is insufficient foundation, Level 1 and Level 2 provision for those young people who are less academic and specifically for looked after young people. Apprenticeships and training opportunities are also insufficient to meet the needs of looked after young people. There is a strong and well established 14–19 partnership board which has reviewed current provision and future demand.
107. Raising the aspirations of looked after children and young people has been identified by the virtual school team as an important area for development. For example, the Aim Higher programme visits by looked after children and young people to higher education institutions will be continued. Eleven young people are currently at university. Young people report that they feel well supported by the 16+ team; however there has been insufficient specialist support with regard to information, advice and guidance about employment, education and training opportunities.
108. The housing protocol is good and this leads to the timely allocation of housing provision for care leavers. There is good use of supported lodging arrangements for 18+ young people who remain with their foster carer. There have been very significant efforts made relating to the provision of supported housing for 16–17 looked after young people and 18–21 care leavers. However, some looked after young people are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation while waiting for supported housing, including young people leaving custody. Provision for asylum seeking young people is good. All are in education, training or employment, are well supported and have stable tenancies.

Quality of provision

Grade 3 (Adequate)

109. The quality of provision overall in services for looked after children and young people is adequate.
110. Although being healthy outcomes are judged outstanding and staying safe outcomes are judged good targeted work to improve the impact of

services for enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well being outcomes are only judged adequate. The impact of the virtual school is increasingly effective. Although attainment for looked after children at key stage two is good this performance is not maintained as looked after children progress through secondary school. Opportunities for looked after children to influence the shape of services are not yet having sufficient impact. The rate of looked after young people involved in the criminal justice system is low when compared with the national average, however looked after children are more likely to offend than the non lack population in Brighton and Hove. Although accommodation support for care leavers is good advice and support for looked after young people to gain employment, education and training is not sufficiently well supported.

111. The council has a strong commitment to making sure children and young people are safe. Those children and young people that become looked after are appropriately assessed as needing looked after services. There is clear management oversight in decision making and decisions are timely, however, not all looked after children and young people are allocated to a qualified social worker which is not compliant with statutory requirements. The quality of residential care is of a consistently good standard and is only used in order to meet the best interests of the child or young person. High numbers of children and young people are appropriately placed with families in good foster care placements. The council fostering service is outstanding and children are placed in good or outstanding fostering provision. Placements with family and friends are supported very well and there is a well established culture of placing children and young people with kinship carers.
112. Over the last year short term placement stability has improved and is in line with similar councils; long term stability is improving but still below national average. There are effective arrangements for services to prevent children and young people becoming looked after including family functional therapy, which is helping to support some of the most vulnerable children and young people who are at risk of family breakdown. The intensive placement team provides high level and intensive support to carers who care for children and young people with more challenging behaviour and this promotes placement stability. Transition arrangements for looked after children and young people including those with disabilities are excellent as are the very good partnership arrangements between children and adult services.
113. The adoption service is judged good and is well used with 8.6% of looked after children and young people placed with adopters in 2010/11. Adoption support provision is good and adopters report that they are well supported by their social worker and that the child or young person's social worker has a good understanding of their needs. This is leading to improved permanency planning arrangements for children and young

people. For example, there have been no adoption breakdowns in the last two years.

114. The agency placement team has robust quality assurance systems and identifies appropriate placements for children and young people both within the city and externally. Good arrangements exist to place children and young people locally with 89% of all placements within 20 miles of Brighton and Hove. There are flexible and comprehensive packages of support in place to support children and young people with learning difficulties in their own home or on the edge of care through a range of in-house and partner agency resources. These are helping to prevent family breakdown.
115. Although the quality of core assessments is variable, they are sharply focused on risk and appropriate decisions are made to safeguard children and young people who need to be looked after. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people spoke very positively about the commitment and invaluable support provided by the service and their workers. However, other looked after children and young people's assessments and pathway plans are weak in ensuring identity and cultural needs are identified and met.
116. Nearly all case records are up to date and looked after children and young people are being seen on a regular basis. Statutory visiting is timely and children and young people report that they have the opportunity to speak to their social worker alone. Children and young people who spoke with inspectors report that in between visits they can contact their social worker by text, telephone and email and most have a timely response. Statutory reviews are completed in timescale and there is good effort made to ensure that children and young people attend their reviews and are given the opportunity to contribute. However recommendations arising from looked after children reviews are task focused rather than outcome focused. Independent reviewing officer's have high caseloads which affects their ability to maintain their direct contact with children and young people between reviews and their capacity for audit work. Of the 31 children that responded to the Care4Me survey, 23 said they were not sure or did not know how to contact their independent reviewing officer.

Ambition and prioritisation

Grade 2 (Good)

117. Ambition and prioritisation are good.
118. Senior officers, elected members and partners effectively prioritise and provide for the assessed needs of looked after children. The CYPP 2009-2012 identifies clear and ambitious targets to ensure the city's looked after children and young people receive the best services available. The Plan reports honestly about some areas where outcomes are not good enough, for example educational achievement, and identifies strategies to address weaker performance. Strategic decisions have been made to ensure that

resources are targeted at the most vulnerable children and young people and that the level of service provision where looked after children and young people are placed is of a high quality.

119. Key partners are engaged very well and are focused on improving outcomes for looked after children, young people and care leavers. The contribution of health service provision to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people is excellent. There is very good commitment by senior officers and elected members to corporate parenting responsibilities and ensuring looked after children and young people are safe. Highly competent senior officers across the partnership provide clear strategic direction, respond effectively to the changing demands for the service and prioritise the allocation of resources to support looked after children and young people.

Leadership and management **Grade 3 (Adequate)**

120. The leadership and management of services for looked after children and young people are adequate.
121. The majority of children and young people report that they receive good support from their allocated worker; however not all looked after children and young people are allocated to a qualified social worker. At the time of the inspection 117 looked after children were allocated to social work resource officers and this is not compliant with national guidance. However, these cases are risk assessed and workers receive regular supervision to ensure that looked after children and young people are safe. Workforce development for all social workers is robust including a strong newly qualified social work programme and there are easily accessible bursaries to encourage local people and unqualified staff to undertake professional training. There are clear milestones and targets set within staff member's individual personal development plans which effectively link staff performance and outcomes of looked after children and young people.
122. Staff and managers have good access to good quality training that is relevant to their specific role and improves service delivery. Training has been provided to support key areas of practice development such as analysis in assessment and peer mentoring. Learning is being effectively supported by peer supervision for less experienced staff. There is good access to training and development for the voluntary and community sector which is building its capacity to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people. Attention to equality and diversity in training provision is prioritised and is robust. Managers provide a good level of support to workers and ensure compliance to statutory requirements through regular and effective supervision. Records show some good reflective practice takes place within supervision.

123. Partnership arrangements are well established and strong. A wide range of statutory and voluntary and community sector agencies demonstrate sound commitment to prioritising and implementing work with looked after children. There is a coherent and coordinated approach across all agencies to ensure looked after children and young people receive timely and effective support. The high rate of looked after children and young people who are also subject to a child protection plan has been reduced recently but this remains a challenge for the council. Joint commissioning arrangements are effective and provide good value for money. The engagement of parents of children and young people with disabilities at a strategic level is good. A joint protocol with housing effectively ensures that care leavers are able to access good quality accommodation.
124. Commissioning and contracting arrangements by the Agency Placement Team for foster placements and residential children's homes is excellent with a clear focus on good quality placements. Robust quality assurance processes include feedback from care leavers who visit placements and obtain the views of children and young people. However, children and young people who spoke to inspectors had limited knowledge about the complaints procedure and no action has been taken yet to follow up and implement the findings of a recent survey of children and young people's views about the service. There is a strong focus on placing children and young people in the local area, 89% of all looked after children are placed within 20 miles of Brighton and Hove and, although many are placed within the boundaries of neighbouring authorities, the provision of services is good and there are good interagency working relationships.
125. Clear and effective communication and senior management oversight ensures that commissioning of placements acknowledges complex needs and risk management. Strategic planning to reduce placements beyond 20 miles of the city and make efficiency savings has been undertaken with full consideration of needs identified within looked after children and young peoples care plans.

Performance management and quality assurance

Grade 3 (Adequate)

126. Performance management and quality assurance are adequate.
127. There has been extensive work to improve the quality of performance data and managers are now using data more effectively to inform plans and make decisions. There is variable performance in meeting the standards set nationally for looked after children and young people and this is impacting on outcomes for looked after children. The council is taking action to address areas of weakness such as the variable quality of core assessments. Routine and rigorous arrangements are in place for the auditing of and reporting on the quality of looked after children and young

people's case files. This has recently been implemented and it is too early to judge impact.

128. There is strong attention given to the performance of commissioned services and action is taken against poorly performing providers. The looked after children health team provides regular quarterly performance information to a wide audience within the council including the Corporate Parenting Board, looked after children commissioning, CAMHS commissioning and a range of senior manager meetings. The virtual school team ensure that good performance management information is available corporately.
129. The level of challenge provided by independent reviewing officers is effective and there is good use of the dispute resolution protocol. Although performance on the timely completion of looked after children reviews is good, independent reviewing officer's have high case loads. This affects the quality and depth of their work such as their ability to maintain direct contact with children and young people between reviews and their capacity to audit work. The fostering, adoption and permanence panel chair provides a good level of independent scrutiny and challenge to the council which is helping to secure better consistency leading to improved outcomes for looked after children and young people.

Record of main findings:

| Safeguarding services | |
|---|-------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Adequate |
| Capacity for improvement | Good |
| Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people | |
| Children and young people are safe and feel safe | Good |
| Quality of provision | Adequate |
| The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe | Good |
| Services for looked after children | |
| Ambition and prioritisation | Good |
| Leadership and management | Adequate |
| Performance management and quality assurance | Good |
| Partnership working | Good |
| Equality and diversity | Adequate |
| Services for looked after children | |
| Overall effectiveness | Adequate |
| Capacity for improvement | Good |
| How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers? | |
| Being healthy | Outstanding |
| Staying safe | Good |
| Enjoying and achieving | Adequate |
| Making a positive contribution, including user engagement | Adequate |
| Economic well-being | Adequate |
| Quality of provision | Adequate |
| Services for looked after children | |
| Ambition and prioritisation | Good |
| Leadership and management | Adequate |
| Performance management and quality assurance | Adequate |
| Equality and diversity | Adequate |