

# Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

North Lincolnshire

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**Reporting inspector:** Neil Penswick HMI

**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 four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) 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:
  - meetings with 53 children and young people receiving services and discussions with front line staff and managers, senior officers including the Director of Children's Services 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 evaluations of a serious case review undertaken by Ofsted in accordance with '*Working Together To Safeguard Children*', 2010
  - a review of 101 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 in November 2010
  - interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, managers and senior staff, executive officers from NHS North Lincolnshire, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS 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. North Lincolnshire was established as a unitary local authority in 1996. It is situated on the south side of the Humber estuary and covers an area of 85,000 hectares of which 89% is agricultural land. The pattern of settlement reflects its mainly rural nature with market towns surrounded by many small villages. An important exception to this is the substantial urban area of Scunthorpe, with a population of over 60,000. It is most famous for the steelworks that dominates the town and remains a large employer.
5. The area's population is around 161,345. It has risen steadily since the authority was established and is projected to continue to rise over the next 20 years. Nearly one quarter of the total population - 38,400 children and young people - are under 20. Nearly 50% of the population live in Scunthorpe and 21.3% of children under 16 years old live in low income families. Approximately 4% of the population is part of an ethnic minority. People of Bangladeshi origin form the biggest part of that population although the proportion of people from Poland, Lithuania and other EU accession states has risen of late.
6. All of the council's services to children, including education, social care, child and family support services, youth support services and Youth Offending Service, are provided by a single Children and Young People's Service.
7. Children's social services are delivered through a duty and assessment team, a safeguarding and child in need team, a children in care and courts team, a post-16 team and an integrated service for disabled children. There is an Independent Reviewing Service which chairs looked after children reviews and child protection conferences and also manages allegations against staff. A fostering service and adoption team provide the majority of placements for the authority.
8. Eighty one schools provide for 22,980 children. There are 66 primary schools, 13 secondary schools, two special schools and two pupil referral units. Additionally, there are two independent specialist providers. Post-16 education and training provision includes three school sixth forms, one sixth form college and one further education/tertiary college. The council area is served by five local work-based learning providers. North Lincolnshire uses a virtual school approach, supported by the looked after children education team which provides a range of services to children in care.

9. There are 12 children's centres and a comprehensive range of childcare provision comprising 151 child minders, 47 full day care providers, 14 sessional early years childcare providers and 16 dedicated out of school providers. All together these services provide 3400 childcare places.
10. At the time of the inspection 172 children and young people were being looked after and 72 had a child protection plan. North Lincolnshire also supports over 5000 children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and is providing services for 430 children in need.
11. The North Lincolnshire Children's Trust is well established and has full multi-agency support from North Lincolnshire Council, NHS North Lincolnshire, Humberside Police, Job Centre Plus, local colleges and schools, Humberside Probation Service, Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire Homes and the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service. Three young people's representatives are members of the Children's Trust Board.
12. The North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is independently chaired and is active in bringing together the main agencies to safeguard and protect children. It has representation from the range of agencies attending the Children's Trust Board, with the addition of lay members and the children and family court advisory and support service (Cafcass).
13. Health care is commissioned by NHS North Lincolnshire, which is coterminous with the local authority. The main provider of community and acute health services is Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospital Trust. Mental health services are provided by Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

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## Safeguarding services

### Overall effectiveness

**Grade 2 (good)**

14. The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is good. There is an excellent Local Safeguarding Children Board, providing an ambitious vision and highly effective coordination of safeguarding arrangements in North Lincolnshire. The Children's Trust arrangements are very good, coordinating well the wider vision of improving all of children's life chances in North Lincolnshire. Senior managers and designated and named professionals from the various health agencies contribute well to the Children's Trust and the LSCB, and their membership meets requirements. Designated and named health professionals fulfil their statutory roles on these boards with the designated doctor and designated nurse acting as professional advisors to the LSCB.
15. An outstanding element of the work done in North Lincolnshire is the consultation, involvement and participation of children and young people in feeding back on and driving forward the quality of their services. There are particularly impressive arrangements for young people to be involved in the Children's Trust, LSCB and focused children and young people's groups around safeguarding. This includes the 'Cool Club' and Feeling Safe consultative groups engaging primary, secondary and college pupils in discussions about their safety and well-being.
16. Weaknesses and resource deficits have been tackled robustly by the authority and good performance, and some outstanding performance, is now demonstrated. Outcomes in the vast majority of areas are improving and are mostly good. Recent improvements to the Youth Offending Service following a critical inspection have been excellent.
17. In the council's survey of children and young people, 93% said they feel safe. Of the 4800 respondents to the local Adolescent Lifestyle Survey, 95% said they feel safe in the community with 82% saying they feel safe on line. The majority of schools have been judged good or better for safety and safeguarding arrangements in recent inspections. Strategic and operational partnership arrangements to support locality work across the five areas of North Lincolnshire delivers good early intervention. A recent reorganisation to integrate preventative work needs further embedding although it is already expanding the support for the most vulnerable families.
18. Work to develop the children's sector workforce is excellent with strong links to the wider children's services partnerships and to the council. The composition of the social work teams broadly reflects the needs of the local communities. Financial resources are used effectively with a commitment to maintaining frontline services. Investments, for instance in the new supported accommodation for young parents, demonstrate the

significant commitment by the council to improving services for some of the most vulnerable children.

19. Multi-agency panels and groups are a key feature of the work being done to improve services and outcomes for children and young people and these are highly effective. Thresholds for access to services have been agreed across the partnerships and these are well embedded and understood across all agencies. Children and young people at risk of significant harm are promptly identified and cases allocated to a suitable qualified, trained and experienced social worker. Strategy discussions are held appropriately between social care, police and other agencies. This is enhanced by the co-location of the police in the duty and intake team.
20. In all cases scrutinised, inspectors saw a uniformly high standard of assessments. The views of children and young people are a strong feature of this work. There is good use of research to inform practice in most cases. The vast majority of assessments are completed within the required timescales. Audits and the excellent risk analysis tool provide a highly effective base to identify and take forward learning in the organisation. However at the time of the inspection, the front line duty team was not using these tools and where a decision had been made to take 'no further action' the quality of social work recording and the management oversight in the team did not always meet national standards. This included a small number of cases where there were delays in information being shared by the Humberside Police and in timely action being taken by the council. No children were seen to have been placed at risk by these delays and, when brought to the attention of the local authority and its partners, they immediately put in place a robust action plan with a timescale for all issues to be fully resolved by July 2012.

## **Capacity for improvement**

## **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

21. The capacity for improvement is outstanding. The Children and Young People's Plan is excellent and articulates well the vision, ambition and priorities to deliver sustained improvements across children's services. All children's performance indicators have ambitious local targets and are, in the main, showing continued improvements. The inspection judgments for the local schools, children's centres and children's homes have shown continual improvement overall.
22. The Children's Trust and the LSCB are excellent partnerships coordinating highly effective multi-agency services. Children, young people and families are significantly involved in strategic and operational planning through participation in partnership boards and meetings, making decisions over their own lives. All of the children and young people interviewed by inspectors as part of this inspection report high levels of satisfaction with the services received.



23. Management information collected by the local authority clearly demonstrates that for most indicators performance has significantly improved. There is an ambitious programme of developing children in need services in partnership with the community and voluntary sectors – and these are mostly of high quality. There is an excellent training and support network aimed at up-skilling the children’s services workforce. Workforce development is excellent and has increased the capacity of children’s services and made significant improvements to the safeguarding agenda. There are now a rising number of children and young people receiving support through the very good early intervention services. The partnership response to a critical inspection of the Youth Offending Service was also extremely positive and these services are now of a high quality. The prompt action taken when issues were identified during this inspection of front line duty services was excellent and a multi-agency plan is now in place to ensure all issues are fully resolved.
24. There is a good understanding of the needs of the different communities within North Lincolnshire. Partnership work with the ethnic minority communities has resulted in improvements in the safety of children in the local area for instance the excellent work undertaken by the local authority with local mosques to raise the awareness of child protection issues.

### **Areas for improvement**

25. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in North Lincolnshire Council, the local health providers and partners should take the following action.

#### **Within three months:**

- implement fully the multi-agency plan to improve the children’s social care duty services in order to -
  - ensure that information shared by Humberside Police is prompt and acted upon appropriately and without delay by the council
  - ensure the quality of recording and management oversight in the duty team consistently meets national standards, and
  - ensure that the highly effective North Lincolnshire risk analysis tool is used throughout all of children’s social care services.

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# Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

## Children and young people are safe and feel safe

### Grade 2 (good)

26. The effectiveness of services to ensure that children are safe and feel safe is good. Cases are monitored and tracked well by senior managers via the 'Outcomes Panel.'
27. All casework is of a consistently high standard. Where there are child protection concerns, there is always a prompt response. All plans to support children and young people identify the risk to the child or young person with interventions appropriately focused on reducing the risk of harm and improving outcomes. Good direct work and work with the family by support workers provides additional safeguards for children and young people subject to a plan. The safeguarding needs of children with disabilities are also identified well and effective action taken to protect them through the coordinated work of the integrated disabled children service, education services and police.
28. There are a number of excellent groups who are consulted on a range of safeguarding topics and these involve children and young people of all ages. This includes the outstanding 'Cool Club' focusing on improving the experience of children subject to a child protection plan. There are also outstanding Feeling Safe consultative groups engaging primary, secondary and college pupils in discussions about their safety and well-being. Members of these groups become 'Feeling Safe ambassadors' and reflect their learning on safeguarding back to their schools.
29. The vast majority of children and young people report that they feel safe in North Lincolnshire. In a council survey of children, 93% said they feel safe. Of the 4800 respondents to the local Adolescent Lifestyle Survey, 95% also report they feel safe in their communities with 82% saying they feel safe when using their computers. All the children and young people seen by inspectors said they feel safe where they live, in school and at home and they knew where to go if they felt unsafe and who they would contact. Children also reported that where incidents of bullying had occurred at school this had been managed and the bullying stopped.
30. Parents, seen at a children's centre, reported that they and their children feel extremely safe in the centre and receive good advice and support to keep their homes and children safe. However, they state that there are some areas within Scunthorpe where they feel anxious about their safety. The partnership is taking good action to provide positive activities and promote safety in the community, particularly in known 'hotspots'. Areas

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where concerns about safety have been identified by their residents have been prioritised for focused community support.

31. Young people engaged in low level offending or anti-social behaviour are effectively engaged in diversionary activities with support from the excellent Youth Offending Service and community police. These include positive leisure activities, the development of life and work related skills and restorative justice work with victims. Such initiatives are successfully reducing the incidence of reported anti-social behaviour and reducing the numbers of young people entering the Youth Justice system for the first time. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) arrangements are clear and investigations timely. Robust tracking of reported incidents is also used to improve practice. For example, as a result of a concerning case, changes have been made to improve the training provided to child minders and nursery staff. The LSCB is kept informed of the outcomes of investigation to identify lessons to be learnt and assist in shaping future training. There is a well developed complaint system and most complaints are dealt with and resolved at an early stage. Children and young people report that they are aware of how to make a complaint. Lessons learnt as a result of complaints have been used to improve practice and service delivery. Systems to ensure safe recruitment meet national requirements and are adequate. Appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out and criminal record bureau checks are up dated every two to three years. Systems to ensure safe recruitment meet all requirements. Staff files though are in the process of being transferred to electronic storage systems and are not currently easy to understand.
32. Education services make a good contribution to safeguarding children and young people. The majority of children's centres have been inspected and all have been judged good overall. The majority of schools have been judged good or better for safety and safeguarding arrangements in recent inspections. Educational and safeguarding provision for the most vulnerable, in the pupil referral units (PRUs) and special schools, has been judged mostly good and outstanding. Schools have engaged well in a number of initiatives to promote positive relationships, develop pupils' self esteem and social skills, and promote their health and emotional well-being.
33. Initiatives such as Restorative Justice, SEAL and Healthy Schools awards have had a positive impact on reducing disaffection and improving behaviour and safety. The success of such initiatives, together with strong partnership working, has promoted above average attendance of all pupils and reductions in persistent absenteeism to levels that are now much lower than average. Fixed term exclusion has reduced and is now below the national average and no pupils were permanently excluded last year. The overall proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training has steadily reduced and is currently below the national average.

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34. Schools promote respect for different cultures, abilities and orientation through a range of initiatives and within the taught curriculum. This promotes harmonious relations and safety in school, with very few incidents of racist, homophobic or disability related bullying. Attainment by ethnic minority groups is generally in line with similar groups nationally at Key Stage 2 but below similar group averages at Key Stage 4, which reflects the below average attainment of all pupils in the area. Those speaking English as an additional language attain below similar groups at both Key Stages.
  35. Anti-bullying and behaviour support services effectively support schools in countering bullying and promoting positive behaviour. Peer mentors in schools provide appropriate support for victims of bullying. The local authority monitors incidents of racial or homophobic bullying and ensures that training meets needs of schools and young people. Cyber bullying and keeping safe in the wider community are high priorities and have been the subject of recent training and support. Young people who spoke with inspectors reported that they feel extremely safe in school and are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
  36. Children and young people with disabilities and those with special educational needs are well supported through the 'virtual schools' established for pupils with disabilities, special needs and medical needs. Their achievement, personal development and well-being are monitored so that services can provide effective support and challenge to schools. Children with disabilities are well supported to understand dangers and maintain their own safety in schools and through the 'Thumbs Up' participation group. They have undertaken various projects, for example on bullying, health and safety, fire safety and road safety, which are shared with all young people. They know who they contact if they have any concerns about their health and safety.
  37. Provision for pupils whose families choose to home educate meets all requirements. They are subject to annual monitoring visits and more frequent visits if concerns arise. Safeguarding is a key component of annual assessments undertaken for children and young people educated at home.
  38. Good arrangements between the police and social care are in place to address concerns about children going missing. Few children are recorded as missing from home, care and education. Missing person's coordinators are based in the local authority areas and 'safe and well' return interviews are carried out. The LSCB is kept informed of any wider safeguarding concerns relating to children going missing including any children at risk of sexual exploitation.

39. Young carers receive good support. They do not feel isolated and have the chance to be active in the community due to the support they receive from the Young Carers Project. They reported to inspectors that they value the opportunity to meet as a group and were complimentary about the staff. Good work is also taking place to alert partner agencies about young carers to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are escalated.
40. Good work identified at the unannounced inspection of the engagement of children and parents has continued and expanded. Feedback from children and parents involved in social work services is helping to shape service delivery, for example their involvement in the design and build of the Parents Accommodation Support Training Understanding Relationships Easier (PASTURE) community based accommodation to help young parents gain the skills to provide for and safeguard their babies.
41. The most recent inspections of the local authority children's homes judged them to be at least satisfactory with the majority being good. The local authority adoption and fostering services are judged good for safeguarding children. Arrangements to promote and support private fostering arrangements are good with recent initiatives including presentations to the Eastern European community about these issues

## **Quality of provision**

## **Grade 2 (good)**

42. The quality of provision of safeguarding services for children and young people is good.
43. Thresholds for making referrals to social care and for access to services for children in need and in need of protection are well established and understood across the partnership. The development of the early intervention and prevention strategy is coherent, well thought out and involves all the necessary agencies. The varied approaches to early intervention and prevention have recently been reviewed and integrated into one children and family support service (CFSS). Although at early stages, this has streamlined processes so that support can be targeted more effectively.
44. Children in need plans focus effectively on improving the outcomes for children and young people. Individual needs of children and young people are well addressed with direct work taking place to address risk behaviours and keep them safe. The review of children in need plans is robust and focuses on progress, outcomes and impact.
45. The work to raise awareness and support children and young people in private fostering arrangements is very good. There has resulted in 29 notifications of such arrangements in the last three years with four currently supported through these placements by the local authority.

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46. All domestic abuse referrals are screened through the Humberside Police local public protection desk. High risk incidents are dealt with promptly. In those cases where there are three or more incidents of domestic abuse within a year a referral is made to children's social care. There is a good range of multi-agency services to support victims and their families experiencing domestic abuse, including independent domestic violence advocates who ensure they contact victims at the earliest stage and proactively seek to support victims. An example of the good work is the 'It's MY RIGHT' project and therapeutic services for children provided through Action for Children. The need for courses for perpetrators has been recognised and is been addressed through the '360 degree' project.
  47. Children and young people at risk of significant harm are promptly identified and cases allocated to a suitable qualified, trained and experienced social worker. Strategy discussions are held appropriately between social care, police and other agencies. This is enhanced by the co-location of the police in the duty and intake team. Most case records indicate that interventions have been effective.
  48. The numbers of initial assessments completed within timescale is 84% and higher than the national average. Performance on core assessments completed within timescales is also good at 89% and this is also above the national average. The quality of initial and core assessments is good with some of a high standard. Core assessments are repeated when there has been a significant change in circumstances and this is good practice. All assessments show a high level of involvement by children and young people who are well supported by advocates when needed. The use of research to inform practice is also evident in assessments.
  49. Initial and core assessments evidence well parental involvement. Assessments take account of the part fathers play in their child's life and issues raised by fathers are dealt with sensitively by social workers. The management oversight of assessments is good. The manager's briefings to social workers prior to commencing an assessment are excellent and comprehensive and detail what actions need to be taken. Arrangements for the transfer of cases between social work teams are effective and are supported by the co-location of teams. Extended hours arrangements are good and ensure specialist children's staff are on duty at identified busy times, supported by appropriate back-up support. The quality of case recording is mostly good, appropriately detailed and up to date.
  50. Supervision is regular; although the recording of it is of varying quality. There is good support for newly qualified workers. Managers provide good support and challenge. Senior managers also play an active role in casework decision making and have a good knowledge of individual cases. The provision of a Head of Safeguarding and Practice role in the local authority is excellent. This senior level post focuses on challenge, guidance and support around casework to social workers and managers.

Where there are concerns about the understanding, direction or momentum about individual cases, the Head of Safeguarding carries out visits, assists in making assessments and facilitates multi-agency meetings.

51. The risk analysis tool used through most of children's social care is of an extremely high standard and provides a firm foundation for recording, managing and taking action to ensure that children are protected. At the time of the inspection, however, this risk analysis tool was not being fully utilised. by the front line duty team and where a decision had been made to take 'no further action' the quality of social work recording and the management oversight in the team did not always meet national standards. In a small number of cases, inspectors noted some significant delays in Humberside Police sharing information and in timely action being taken by the team. No children were seen to have been placed at risk by these practices and these issues were immediately addressed by the local authority and its partners.
52. Reports to child protection case conferences are good with risk and protective factors explicitly considered. Following feedback from children and young people and additional work carried out as a response, there has been an increase in the numbers of children and young people attending conferences with 31 recently supported to attend. Child protection plans are comprehensive and very extensively detailed, actions specified and set within clear timescales. Contingency plans are routinely identified. The council has responded well to feedback from children and young people to have copies of their plans, presented in a way that makes sense to them and young people have been involved in designing a child friendly plan. All child protection plans are reviewed within timescales. Actions are specified and set within clear timescales. Core groups are timely with good multi-agency and family attendance.
53. Good quality legal support is available to managers and social workers. Legal advisors confirmed that the quality of work produced by the social workers is high and that this has reduced delays in court decisions once the case is progressed. They also highly valued the risk analysis tool utilised throughout children's social care.

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

54. The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe is good. Primary care services, health visiting, school nursing, midwifery, paediatric and accident and emergency services are effective across the local authority area. Health service involvement in strategic partnerships and the LSCB are also good.

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55. North Lincolnshire has appropriate arrangements in place to review child deaths. The child death overview panel is chaired by the Director of Public Health. The designated doctor is a key member of this panel. Rapid response arrangements are in place including sudden unexpected death of a child paediatricians and nurses. The team approach works well and includes bereavement support for parents. The panel has highlighted and communicated well on common themes identified, such as concerns on co-sleeping and water safety.
  56. NHS North Lincolnshire, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust have robust governance systems in place to help assure relevant management boards that safeguarding children practice is delivered to statutory requirements and national standards. Annual reports are produced by all trusts and all are involved in local safeguarding children board led audits of safeguarding practice, and safer recruitment, which show good compliance.
  57. Senior managers and designated and named professionals from the various health agencies contribute well to the Children's Trust and the LSCB, and their membership meets requirements. Designated and named health professionals fulfil their statutory roles on these boards with the designated doctor and designated nurse acting as professional advisors to the LSCB. Action groups ensure that services for children and young people are monitored, developed and reviewed.
  58. There have been no recent serious case reviews in North Lincolnshire, however health staff have supervision processes in place where lessons from national serious case reviews and initial management reviews are incorporated.
  59. The arrangements for named and designated professionals across NHS Trusts are appropriate. The designated doctor is a paediatric medical practitioner and is also fulfilling the role of named doctor for Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust until the post is filled in August 2012. All other named professionals for each of the trusts are in place. Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have also appointed a lead anaesthetist for safeguarding based at the hospital in Scunthorpe.
  60. There is high quality work by health professionals across the range of child protection work including strategy meetings, child protection conferences and core groups. In the main there is good attendance and good reports are produced promptly for meetings. Health staff are appropriately involved in assessments of children and earlier intervention to ensure vulnerable children have any additional needs addressed when these are identified.



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61. Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in North Lincolnshire are outstanding with very good access for children, young people and their families. Performance is maintained with no delays in accessing services and there are effective arrangements for transition into adult mental health services. Children have access to a range of provision including brief intervention (primary mental health workers) and early intervention psychosis teams. Young people have access to age appropriate beds and staff work to avoid admissions by creating intensive care packages around the child or young person. Mental health provision provided by the Youth Offending Service has significantly improved since the last published inspection. The service is working with the 'You're Welcome' criteria and has enlisted the help of the 'Hit Squad' (a group of young children) in revamping the waiting area for their service and this is good.
  62. Well thought out arrangements have recently been put in place to ensure children who harm others are assessed and receive appropriate intervention. Arrangements are multi-agency and provide a very good example of health working with a range of other agencies to improve outcomes for children. Referrals have been received for this service but it is too early to assess impact.
  63. Health support for children and young people with complex care needs and disabilities is good. Agreed pathways are in place such as the one for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and there is good access to services with no waits reported. Staff reported that teams worked very well together, which is helped by staff being co-located. The integrated disability children's team is an example of this. Paediatric services and the specialist dental service for children with complex needs are held in high regard by parents. However parents expressed concern in relation to continence support and awareness of disabled children and their needs within adult specialist services. Waiting times in adult clinics was raised as a specific issue. Parents have an opportunity to work with health to discuss and address these issues through the link that has now been established between the Parent's Forum and Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Parents said they could access short break provision, which was generally of a good standard.
  64. Named professionals work effectively in support of practitioners which includes advice through supervision. The paediatric liaison health visitor and paediatric liaison school nurse provide exceptional support to ensure children and young people are safeguarded. All attendances are screened and information is shared quickly with other professionals through 'SystemOne' and the accident and emergency follow up form. All paediatric areas, the neonatal intensive care unit and accident and emergency department receive daily visits to pick up any concerns and provide staff with support.

65. Young people have access to outstanding substance misuse services. The Drug Education Liaison Treatment Agency (DELTA) provides information, advice and support to all children and young people under the age of 19 years, although the service is flexible in relation to this. Harm reduction and motivational interviewing is provided. The service is community based and a worker is also co-located within the Youth Offending Service. The service has a positive relationship with secondary schools and provides drop-in sessions for young people with the aim of building resilience. Innovative practice is in place such as 'cell sweeps' carried out in police custody suites to identify young people and raise awareness of the service. The effectiveness of the service is reflected in performance information which is very good. Also in relation to the youth offending service DELTA supports the 'Respect' programme and carries out pre-work on prevention which ensures young people are picked up early so avoid conviction. Transition arrangements into adult substance misuse services are staged over a three to six month period to ensure the handover is well managed and young people are supported.
66. The impact of domestic violence in families on children and young people is well understood by health practitioners. Health agencies are appropriately represented on the local multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC).
67. There is good delivery of the Healthy Child programme. Partnership working between health and children's social care services has improved and staff reported that there is good use of the common assessment framework (CAF) for targeted intervention. Health visitors and school nurses reported involvement in child protection review processes and attendance at child protection conferences is monitored. Over 95% of health visitors and school nurses attend and there is full compliance in relation to reports to conferences. Transition handovers between health visitors and school nurses is working well. School nurses work effectively in supporting education staff in the delivery of sexual health and relationship education.
68. There is good access to sexual health and contraception services that have improved the teenage conception rate and diagnosis rate for Chlamydia. The teenage conception rate has dropped 20% since the baseline in 1998, which is slightly better than that achieved nationally (18%), although the rate is still higher than the national average.
69. Good arrangements are in place for midwifery staff to identify vulnerable females throughout pregnancy. Clear processes to identify vulnerabilities are in place including a substance misuse pregnancy pathway. Specialist midwives are in place for teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.
70. Overall access and take up of good quality training and supervision for safeguarding children and young people across NHS trusts meets national

guidance and is improving. General Practitioner (GP) involvement in safeguarding arrangements is also improving, with all GP practices across North Lincolnshire having a safeguarding lead. All are trained to Level 2 child protection and although many are trained to Level 3 this is not yet fully compliant with intercollegiate guidelines. NHS North Lincolnshire is adopting a modular approach to the delivery of training so that GPs find it easier to attend. There is minimal attendance of GPs at child protection conferences with time pressures cited as a main issue. However, they do provide reports and support is provided to GPs via the designated nurse for safeguarding and the medical director and named doctor for primary care.

71. Good arrangements are in place to safeguard children and young people who attend urgent care and accident and emergency at Scunthorpe Hospital. There is good awareness by care staff of the need to safeguard children and young people where there is evidence of domestic abuse, mental health or substance misuse in their families. Pathways are in place to ensure there is good access to both CAMHS and DELTA. All urgent referrals into the CAMHS are seen either the same or next day and this is good.
72. There is no specific sexual assault and referral centre that North Lincolnshire can access for children and young people under the age of 16 years. However, effective arrangements have been agreed with the police to ensure that child protection medicals and examinations following alleged sexual abuse are carried out by suitably trained staff. Paediatricians also have access to forensic medical examiners if required.

## **Ambition and prioritisation**

## **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

73. Ambition for the safety of children and young people in North Lincolnshire is outstanding. Services for children are a key priority for the local authority and the Children's Trust.
74. Leadership by the Children's Trust is strong. All elected members are strongly supportive of the needs and aspirations of children and young people. The local authority's People Scrutiny Committee takes a regular interest in children's issues and monitors action plans that result from scrutiny. The Chair or another member of the Scrutiny Committee attends the LSCB challenge and information days.
75. Good performance management arrangements by the local authority, and its partners, is improving performance across all of the key indicators for its children's services. There is an excellent Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) identifying the key priorities in North Lincolnshire. These have been developed through a very good consultation with the residents of the borough which identified safeguarding as a key issue.

76. The local authority commissioning arrangements are excellent. Commissioning priorities are based around a strategic children's needs assessment. Contracts focus on the expected quality of services and outcomes to be delivered. Children and young people sit on the commissioning panel and this is outstanding. An example of the success of this approach to commissioning is the coordination of the new earlier intervention services around the five areas of North Lincolnshire which is already demonstrating improved access and take up of these services.

## **Leadership and management** **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

77. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is impressive leadership from the Lead Member for children's services who chairs the Children's Trust and ensures a strong focus and buy-in across agencies. Senior representatives from partner agencies form the main board. There are no formal pooled budgets but agreements are in place to share financial responsibilities and planning. The LSCB provides excellent leadership on the coordination and delivery of services to ensure children are safe in North Lincolnshire. A shadow Health and Well-being Board is already in place and this is also chaired by the lead member for children's services.
78. The CYPP is outstanding, developed through a thorough and high quality needs analysis within North Lincolnshire. The plan focuses exceptionally well around improving outcomes for all children and young people in North Lincolnshire and includes an honest and detailed analysis of the impact achieved and the further work needing to be undertaken. Priorities and individual service plans for the single agencies link closely in to this vision.
79. Financial resources are used effectively with a commitment to maintaining front line services. Strategic and operational partnership arrangements have resulted in the expansion of earlier support based around a localities model for those most vulnerable families. Agencies focus on their joint responsibilities, of carrying out analysis together and then investing in redesigned services. This has allowed a sharper focus on improving outcomes for service users. Robust performance management and quality assurance arrangements identify good practice and areas that need further development. This information is disseminated to strategic and operational groups and inter-agency priorities identified.
80. Staff morale across all of the children's services is high. Training is of high quality with career progression considered well. There is also very good support to all newly qualified staff, including frequent supervision, protected caseloads, access to training and opportunities to shadow complex work. Staff commented to inspectors that the organisation took health and safety considerations seriously in terms of prioritising co-working and that it felt a safe organisation to belong to in terms of

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exposure to new and challenging situations. The composition of the social work teams broadly reflects the needs of the local communities. There is an excellent level of corporate and service management communication ensuring that staff feel included in decision making and aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation.

81. Weaknesses and resource deficits are tackled robustly and good performance and some outstanding performance is now demonstrated. There have been significant improvements in the performance of all of the national indicators.
82. Work to develop the children's sector workforce is excellent with strong links to the wider children's services partnerships and to the council. There is a low (1.8%) vacancy rate in social work services provision and no agency social worker staff. Through its work it has ensured an up-skilling of the workforce through a range of training, e-learning and mentorship. In addition to the training for children's services staff, there have also been courses for a range of workers across the council, such as for leisure attendants at the public swimming facilities who may identify issues about vulnerable people in their contact with the public. All council staff receive a foundation level course in safeguarding. More specialist training from the LSCB includes honour based violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Social workers spoke positively about the training and its impact on their practice: for example around health and safety issues when working alone or dealing with difficult parents.
83. The level of engagement by children and young people in North Lincolnshire in strategic consultation, planning and the development of new initiatives is outstanding. Groups of children and young people contribute to the development of safeguarding services. This includes the 'Cool Club' focusing on improvements within the child protection service and Feeling Safe consultative groups engaging primary, secondary and college pupils on improvements within the wider safeguarding agenda.
84. Children with disabilities have good opportunities to share their experiences and contribute their views through the 'Thumbs Up' participation group. Children meet regularly, supported by the disabilities team. They are actively involved in the commissioning of services, for example short break services. Specialist service professionals act as advocates for vulnerable children and young people, to ensure their views are taken into account. For example, the Autistic Spectrum education team have undertaken effective work to raise awareness of needs and develop peer support and mentoring for children and young people with autism.

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## Performance management and quality assurance

### Grade 2 (good)

85. Performance management and quality assurance arrangements are good.
86. The Children's Trust and the LSCB performance management frameworks are comprehensive. Priorities are clearly stated, underpinned by challenging performance targets and measurable outcomes. Performance management is given a high priority across the partnerships and this has included the LSCB's outstanding 'Challenge Days' scrutinizing all of the partner agencies compliance to safeguarding standards.
87. Corporate reporting arrangements are excellent. Senior managers across the council, the Children's Trust Board and the LSCB receive regular information about the performance of children's services on the key priorities set out in the Children's Trust Strategic Plan and the LSCB action plan. This provides senior managers and board members with the opportunity to assess on an ongoing basis performance against the key priorities. Through monthly and quarterly performance reports, progress towards targets is monitored to make sure that any areas of underperformance are tackled robustly. Education performance data is also used effectively to monitor educational attainment and the engagement of vulnerable children and young people.
88. Within children's social care, supervision of staff is good, regularly held and in the main offering good opportunities for reflective learning. Supervision records are produced promptly. Personal and career development, support and training needs are addressed well. Staff performance is appraised annually. Support to newly qualified social workers including protected caseloads and mentorship is excellent. All of the staff report that their line management is 'excellent' with accessible, high quality senior management support. Team managers have access to service wide performance information and this is utilised well. There are regular service wide team managers performance meetings.
89. Multi-agency quarterly performance reports are submitted to the Children's Trust and LSCB which are closely scrutinised and trends identified. Comparators, complaints, compliments and 'perception levels' are also utilised to drive up performance. The LSCB had been working on how to represent the information on 'the child's journey' and has used well the Adolescent Lifestyle Survey to baseline local data and identify geographical areas in North Lincolnshire where additional support is needed to raise children's life chances. Local schools have reported that they have used this data to refocus lessons to address particular social and emotional needs in their area and this is excellent.

90. Evaluation is well developed. Case file audits are undertaken by managers at all levels. Reports produced as a result of the audits highlight areas of good practice, common themes and areas requiring further development: the impact of outcomes of services on children is always reported on. Case file audits undertaken for this inspection were comprehensive and analytical and the audit form is an excellent tool. A self assessment report produced by the authority for this inspection showed a good learning organisation, not frightened to seek out issues and robustly deal with them.
91. The excellent risk analysis tool used in the vast majority of areas in children's social care provides a highly effective base to identify and take forward learning in the organisation. However at the time of the inspection, the front line duty service was not using these tools, and where a decision had been made to take 'no further action' the quality of the recording and the management oversight did not always meet national standards. The otherwise robust quality assurance systems had not covered this area of work and this was a weakness in the arrangements. This has now been addressed and an action plan is being implemented with tasks to be completed by the end of July 2012.
92. Multi-agency 'practice discussions' regularly occur to ensure progress in complex cases. Wider lessons learned from these practice discussions are passed to the LSCB for dissemination. The independent reviewing officer (IRO) service has a discrete role within the quality assurance framework and reports regularly to senior managers on any themes and patterns to drive forward improvements in practice and the quality of service delivery. For example, over the last year IROs had identified the need to improve contributions by GPs to conferences and as a result of focused work this has now risen from 40% in the previous quarter to over 60% in the last quarter.
93. Consultation with children and young people is wide-ranging and their views are used to shape and change safeguarding services. There are a number of high quality children and young people's focus groups used to evaluate work undertaken and regular surveys undertaken to gather service user views specifically in relation to safeguarding.

## **Partnership working**

## **Grade 2 (good)**

94. Safeguarding partnership arrangements are good.
95. The LSCB fulfils its statutory functions well and provides effective leadership for the targeted and wider safeguarding agenda. Good arrangements are in place for leadership of the LSCB with an independent chair and a broad multi-agency representation from local agencies. The inclusion of lay members brings valuable additional challenge and scrutiny.

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An effective Business Plan is in place which sets out the LSCB's vision and its key priorities. The LSCB sub-committees focus well on delivering the priorities and demonstrate robust challenge. There are good links with the Children's Trust through joint membership of some members and mutual challenge and accountability. For instance performance management information from the LSCB is scrutinised and challenged by the Children's Trust.

96. MAPPA and MARAC are well established and effective with good partnership representation at meetings. The domestic abuse forum meets regularly and is well attended by a wide range of relevant statutory and non statutory agencies. The forum has good links with the LSCB. Good communication and information sharing is supporting effective partnership working in this area of work in North Lincolnshire.
97. Front line child protection and children in need partnership work is strong including involvement in assessments, developing plans and carrying out activities to ensure children are protected. However there were delays in a small number of cases responded to by Humberside Police and passed over to children's social care for potential action. Health visitors and school nurses are involved well in child protection review processes and attendance at child protection conferences is monitored. Over 95% of health visitors and school nurses attend and there is full compliance in producing reports to conference.
98. High quality work has been undertaken with the local minority ethnic communities, for instance training delivered to mosques to increase community awareness of the impact of domestic abuse and safeguarding issues on children and young people.
99. The voluntary sector is engaged at both strategic and operational level and these organisations benefit from training in safeguarding. Effective partnership arrangements support, for example, the Kaleidoscope service for children with a disability, and the Children and Family Project providing support to children and young people who have suffered trauma.
100. Leisure services, police and youth services, and the Youth Offending Service work effectively together to provide positive activities which is helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and offending. Schools and children's social care collaborate well to keep vulnerable children and young people engaged with education or training. This is supported by a good range of alternative provision and managed moves between schools.



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## Services for looked after children

### Overall effectiveness

### Grade 1 (outstanding)

101. The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is outstanding
102. There is impressive leadership from the Director of Children's Services, her management team and partnership organisations, and support from members is outstanding. The role of the Lead Member in chairing the Corporate Parenting Board is excellent, and demonstrates significant personal commitment on his part to improving children's lives.
103. Weaknesses and resource deficits have been tackled robustly and much outstanding performance is now demonstrated. Performance management is established across the partnership and this is rigorous. In many cases targets are ambitious and exceed national performance. Audits and the excellent risk analysis tool used throughout looked after children's services are outstanding and provide a highly effective base to identify and take forward learning in the organisation. Managers at all levels have regular performance challenge meetings. Financial resources are used effectively with a commitment to maintaining frontline services. Investments, for instance in the new 'Children's Campus' for looked after children, demonstrates the significant commitment by the council to improving services for some of the most vulnerable children.
104. The number of looked after children in North Lincolnshire has been below the national average for four years and this is the result of the highly effective early intervention and preventative strategy. Permanency planning for looked after children is good and is supported by very early consideration of permanency at the point that a child is accommodated, with appropriate consideration of placement with family and/or friends. In addition there is evidence of increasing use of adoption and Special Guardianship Orders.
105. All of the casework seen by inspectors was of a uniformly high standard. Care plans for looked after children are comprehensive and underpinned by a thorough needs assessment and analysis. Social workers' assessments and casework practice recognise the cultural needs of children and young people well however work needed to address issues is not always considered in depth. All records are up to date. Most recording is of very good quality however this is not consistent. All reviews of looked after children are held within timescale and plans are reviewed and updated to ensure progress against outcomes. The post-16 team provide a wide range of services to young people older than 16 and to those who have left care. The work of this team is good.

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106. Health outcomes for children and young people who are looked after in North Lincolnshire are consistently better than national averages. The designated doctor and named nurse for looked after children and young people provide good and improving support to ensure health assessments and plans are up to date. Children and young people who are looked after receive outstanding support for their emotional health and well-being through a dedicated comprehensive CAMHS. There is exceptional support for all children in care and care leavers from substance misuse services. Children and young people including care leavers, spoken to by inspectors, reported how well they are supported to lead healthy lives.
107. Excellent systems are in place to track, monitor and evaluate cases to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded in their placements. Of the looked after children who responded to a survey, undertaken as part of this inspection, 87% reported that they felt safe or very safe and 94% said that they had at least one adult that they could talk to about their safety. All looked after children have a qualified social worker and their caseloads are manageable. Arrangements for managing and monitoring children missing from care are extremely good. Outstanding commissioning arrangements are in place for the monitoring of safeguarding in out of area placements. All external placements used are judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding. Performance in relation to placement stability in the short term has been very good over the last three years with further improved performance in the last year resulting from investment in the fostering service and improved procedures for matching.
108. Looked after children are supported well to access education that best meets their needs. Every effort is made to keep them in stable school placements unless a move is beneficial. Local data show that the majority of looked after children make good progress from their starting points, across Key Stage 2. Progress at Key Stage 4 is mostly satisfactory (with some that is good) and showing signs of improvement, with effective support and challenge from the virtual school.
109. The involvement of children and young people is outstanding and embedded throughout all strategic planning and individual planning. The views of looked after children are collected through quarterly questionnaires conducted by social workers. There are regular 'Creative Conversations' with the corporate parenting group and these provide a highly effective means to consult with children and young people on a range of key issues and receive feedback on the quality of services. Complaint procedures are clear and well understood by children. Children have good access to advocacy services and speak highly of the service they have received. There is an excellent range of positive activities for looked after children and young people, including good access to leisure facilities and outdoor activities. These are successfully engaging them in positive behaviour and developing life skills. Offending by children in care

has fallen from a peak of 16.8% in 2006 to 5.7% in 2011 and is now better than comparators.

110. There is a good range of integrated services, to support care leavers into further education and employment and secure suitable housing. The post-16 team is in touch with all care leavers and all have a pathway plan which is regularly reviewed. All pathway plans are good and some high quality.
111. Most young people leaving care progress into further education or training at the end of their statutory schooling and the majority are in good quality provision, although this is not consistent. The proportion of 19-year-old care leavers engaged in education, training or employment has been above the national average for most years up to 2011. The virtual school leaders work closely with disabilities teams and social workers, to ensure appropriate placements and a smooth transition for those who have additional needs. They work well to ensure that young people with additional needs realise their ambitions.

## **Capacity for improvement**

## **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

112. The capacity to improve is outstanding.
113. Services for looked after children are effectively managed and financial management is robust. The CYPP is excellent and articulates well the vision, ambition and priorities to deliver sustained improvements across children's services, including for the looked after children population. Previous weaknesses in service delivery and performance have been effectively targeted in a number of areas. For example the fostering service was not making sufficient progress following the Ofsted inspection in 2009, the council therefore made a significant investment in the service and this has resulted in improved performance with a significant increase in the number of foster carers being recruited. There has also been a significant investment by the council in the 'Children's Campus' a new purpose built residential accommodation for looked after children.
114. The looked after children strategy is excellent and sets out clearly the priorities for the service, the key challenges faced and how improvements will be delivered. The commissioning of placements is effective resulting in all looked after children and young people being placed in settings which are judged as at least good. Most outcomes for looked after children are above the national average. Multi-agency workforce development is very good, enhancing the skills of children's workers across the sector.
115. Children and young people interviewed as part of this inspection report positively about the support they are receiving from social workers and how they feel involved in the decision making made about their lives. The Corporate Parenting Panel is excellent and is mainly composed of looked

after children and care leavers. They robustly hold the authority and individual managers to account for performance in this area.

116. Elected members have an excellent understanding of the needs of looked after children. The Lead Member effectively chairs the corporate parenting panel. Members also undertake inspection and monitoring visits to the children's homes and are members of the fostering and adoption panel. They receive information on the performance of looked after children and challenge officers where they believe that progress may not be as good as it should be and take appropriate action.

### **Areas for improvement**

117. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for looked after children and young people in North Lincolnshire, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

#### **Within three months:**

- ensure casework recording is of a consistently high quality
- ensure that, work to address identified cultural needs is considered consistently to a high standard in making plans for looked after children.

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

### Being healthy

### Grade 1 (outstanding)

118. The arrangements to ensure good health outcomes for looked after children and young people are outstanding.
119. The designated doctor and named nurse for looked after children and young people provide good and improving support to ensure health assessments and plans are up to date. This provision has resulted in 95% of children having up to date immunisations, 94.4% having annual health assessments, with more recent local data showing that this has increased to 100%. It has also resulted in 91% of looked after children having their teeth checked, and the response rate for emotional health of looked after children is very high at 98%. This performance has been strong and consistent for a number of years.
120. Initial health needs assessments and corresponding health plans, carried out by the designated doctor who is a paediatric trained medical practitioner are being delivered within 20 working days. There are good systems in place to monitor the health reviews with the named nurse quality assuring all of them to ensure that they are of a consistently good quality.
121. Good arrangements are in place to monitor the initial health assessments and health reviews of the small number of children and young people placed out of the area. The named nurse maintains good relations with out of area looked after children health teams to ensure health assessments and plans are of a good quality. If a child or young person is placed nearby the named nurse for looked after children will continue to provide the health review assessments, and this is very good practice.
122. There is good representation from health on key strategic and operational groups, which is supporting very effective partnership working to ensure the excellent outcomes for children and young people are maintained. Health is represented on the corporate parenting group. Health organisations are active members of the Children's Trust and the designated doctor sits on the adoption panel. Health also links with the children in care partnership group and contributes to both the pre-complex care panel, which looks at keeping a child at home, and the complex care panel, which identifies the holistic needs of a child that may need to be accommodated, including how best their health and education needs can be met during this time.
123. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that all looked after young people and care leavers take responsibility for their health and they are

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always offered a choice of venue for their annual health reviews. Regular health information days are held for all looked after children and care leavers. The information days provide an opportunity for one to one consultations with a variety of health professionals. Feedback from children and young people is very positive.

124. There is good information sharing between the looked after children health team, primary and community care and social workers. The named nurse for looked after children links with the looked after children case management team and has co-located facilities with that team to run weekly drop-in sessions and consultations for children and young people (including care leavers), their carers and staff. All health assessments and plans are copied to the foster carer and social workers, and community staff including health visitors, school nurses and general practitioners. Primary and community care staff have access to this information via 'SystemOne'. To ensure GPs are aware and can incorporate the information into their primary care record a task is sent via the system to alert them.
125. Arrangements are in place to ensure that the health needs of young people leaving care are identified and met. Care leavers receive a copy of their health plan which details their immunisations and contact with other professionals such as dentists.
126. Children and young people who are looked after receive outstanding support for their emotional health and well-being through a dedicated comprehensive CAMHS. The service uses a Tiered Fostering CAMHS approach which they developed some years ago. The model is used to ensure the child or young person receives assessment and appropriate intervention, in consultation with the child or young person, social care and carers. Complex and high needs cases are recognised and a long term service is provided if required. There are no issues regarding access as all referrals to first contact are seen within national timescales. The services will follow children and young people out of the area and continue to provide the service if placed close by. Children and young people placed in the area by other authorities receive the same standard of CAMHS as North Lincolnshire children. This approach has received national recognition as best practice. Transition to adult services works very well and the service will remain in contact with a young person if required until they are settled.
127. Use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is strong and is ensuring that children and young people receive appropriate early support. All SDQs are reviewed by qualified psychologists within the CAMHS who meet regularly with children's social care and the health looked after children team to ensure that services are appropriately targeted. North Lincolnshire has achieved high numbers of SDQs with 98% completed for eligible children and young people.

128. There is good access to universal services for contraception and sexual health advice and support for looked after young people and care leavers. Uptake of the HPV vaccination is very good and the immunisation coordinator ensures all vaccines are up to date. If required by any looked after child, there is access to the consultant midwife with responsibility for teenage pregnancies. Any looked after young person or care leaver who becomes pregnant can also be referred to the family nurse partnership or supported within universal midwifery services.
129. There is exceptional support for all children in care and care leavers from substance misuse services. Together with the Drug Education Liaison Treatment Agency (DELTA) dedicated referral pathways have been developed to reduce the use of substance misuse. Arrangements are in place to ensure tailored packages of intervention are managed via regular meetings involving the children in care nurse, children in care case management and DELTA staff. A DELTA worker is based in the YOS team which has been recognised as best practice in a recent inspection of these services.
130. Foster carers and council residential staff are well supported by the looked after children health team. The named nurse for looked after children provides health promotion support to help foster carers keep children and young people healthy. Children and young people, including care leavers, spoke to inspectors about how well they are supported to lead healthy lives. Children and young people are provided with opportunities to become involved in service design and delivery, and were involved in the appointment of the named nurse for looked after children.

### **Staying safe**

### **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

131. Safeguarding arrangements for looked after children are outstanding.
132. All looked after children have a qualified social worker and their caseloads are manageable. Children are seen and seen alone during statutory visits and this is monitored in supervision. Children and young people know how to contact their social worker and all had a range of adults they could speak to and services they can access if they are worried about anything or felt unsafe. Of the looked after children who responded to a survey undertaken as part of this inspection, 87% reported that they felt safe or very safe and 94% said that they had at least one adult that they could talk to if they felt unsafe. Children also reported that they were aware of the advocacy service and how to contact an advocacy worker. Many reported that they had used the service and spoke very highly of the quality and effectiveness of the service they receive.
133. Excellent commissioning arrangements are in place for the monitoring of safeguarding in out of area placements with examples of placements being decommissioned when they fail to meet appropriate standards. All external placements used are judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding. In

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2011 Action for Children were commissioned to consult all children in external placements with regard to their safety. This consultation raised no safeguarding concerns. All children placed externally have, as a minimum, a quarterly visit from an advocacy worker and all are offered an independent visitor. The local authority has four children's homes within its boundary and these have been all been inspected recently and received an overall judgement of good or better.

134. Highly effective systems are in place to track, monitor and evaluate cases to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded in their placements. Examples include the placement panel which agrees, matches and monitors admissions into placements and monitors care plans. The most recent children entering care have a completed 'risk analysis form' which is reviewed by the placement panel to ensure the placement will meet the child's safeguarding needs. In addition to the Regulation 33 visits, elected members undertake monthly visits to children's homes where they have the opportunity to speak directly to young people.
135. Safety planning for children and young people is very well managed. Children and young people are actively involved in preparing safety plans in the form of an age appropriate booklet when they are first accommodated. The plan covers all aspects of safety from the safe use of bathrooms to ensure privacy to safety on the streets and any specific issues in relation to the child. This approach enables social workers to assess children and young people's understanding of safeguarding and undertake further work where necessary.
136. Performance in relation to placement stability in the short term has been very good over the last three years with further improved performance in the last year resulting from investment in the fostering service and improved procedures for matching. The local authority's record on achieving permanency for children and young people is very good, with 43% of children achieving legal permanence in 2011/12. The local authority has increased investment in the fostering team which has resulted in almost doubling the number of local authority foster carers recruited in the last year, and social workers reporting more choice when placing children. The fostering team has been restructured so that workers specialise in assessments and this has improved the timeliness of assessments of potential foster carers. There have been improved levels of support to foster carers to prevent placement breakdown and investment in the adoption team has resulted in increased numbers of adoptions this year.
137. A new and excellent purpose-built facility provides six semi-independent units for teenage mothers and all places are currently occupied by looked after young women. The unit provides very good intensive support to young mothers and their children, promoting their safety and well-being and providing parenting support to enhance the mother's ability to care



for their children in the long term. Substantial investment has been made in accommodation for older looked after young people to increase the availability of residential accommodation and this has resulted in the development of the 'Children's Campus' and also in the significant expansion of the post-16 team.

138. Arrangements for managing and monitoring children missing from care are extremely good. In response to concerns raised by children and young people the missing from care procedures have been rewritten. Children in care produced a guide for young people around 'missing from care' including what this means, the risks inherent in going missing and the support available to them to prevent them feeling the need to run away. Young people spoken to during the inspection report that they have found this guidance very helpful and it has encouraged them to remain in contact with their carers when they stay out late.
139. The most recent inspections of local authority children's homes judged them overall to be at least satisfactory with the majority good. None of the children's homes had a less than satisfactory judgement for the staying safe component of the inspection. The adoption service was inspected in June 2009 and was judged good and safeguarding good. The fostering service was inspected in June 2009 and found to be overall satisfactory with safeguarding satisfactory. All recommendations resulting from these inspections have been effectively addressed.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

### **Grade 2 (good)**

140. Educational outcomes for looked after children and care leavers are good.
141. There is a clear focus on raising the achievement of children and young people in strategic plans, and a strong commitment from professionals working directly with children. Improvements are driven through the multi-service 'Better Education for Children in Care Group' and supported by strong partnership working between services, schools, and alternative education providers. The virtual school leaders rigorously monitor the achievement of each looked after child and provide robust challenge and support to ensure that barriers to learning are removed. All looked after children have access to additional personal tuition and can receive further resources to enrich their education, such as laptops, and Kindle electronic books.
142. Looked after children are well supported to access education that best meets their needs. Every effort is made to keep them in stable school placements unless a move is beneficial. All children get their first choice of school on transition from primary to secondary school. A relatively high proportion of looked after children and young people have statements of special educational needs or are supported by school action plus. Most are in main stream schools and supported by good quality specialist provision from educational psychology services, the Autistic Spectrum education

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team, medical need team, physical disabilities team, hearing impaired and visually impaired services. Those in special schools receive good support and make good gains in their learning. The local authority ensures that any children placed out of the authority are placed in good schools and residential placements and monitors their progress.

143. The educational attainment of looked after children and care leavers is subject to year on year swings due to very small cohorts. Comparison with national benchmarks is therefore not statistically reliable. It is similarly difficult to discern trends over time, for example in closing the gap in attainment between looked after children in North Lincolnshire and the national average for all children and young people. However, the virtual school keeps comprehensive records of progress and sets ambitious targets for each child. The data show that the majority make good progress from their starting points, across Key Stage 2. Progress at Key Stage 4 is at least satisfactory and showing signs of improvement with good support and challenge from the virtual school. Young people who struggle with an academic curriculum are supported with an alternative curriculum suited to their needs and aspirations, so that the vast majority achieve at least one GCSE or equivalent. Children with disabilities and those with special educational needs mostly make good progress and benefit from a curriculum adapted to their specific needs. Those from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers and receive good support to develop their knowledge of the English language where appropriate.
144. Schools in North Lincolnshire are highly inclusive and fully committed to improving the life chances of the most vulnerable young people. Effective early intervention and good collaboration between schools and alternative providers helps to keep looked after children engaged with education or training. Fixed-term exclusions have reduced significantly from above average in 2010 to below average in 2011 following concerted efforts on the part of schools and the local authority. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last four years. The percentage of looked after children missing 25 or more days of schooling has reduced as a result of careful tracking and positive action to encourage attendance. Attendance is above average for comparable groups and in line with all pupils nationally.
145. All looked after children now have an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) and these are updated every term which is excellent. However not all new entrants had a PEP within specified time scales and this is currently being actioned. The quality of PEPs is checked regularly and any issues are rigorously followed up by the virtual school team. Designated teachers and learning mentors receive good support and training and regular network meetings keep them well informed of protocols and developments. Ambitious academic targets are set and regularly reviewed and there is good joint working between relevant professionals. Where appropriate, specialist support services attend PEP meetings. The local

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authority have identified that PEPs do not always detail how the Pupil Premium is used to support the learning of looked after children and are supporting teachers to do so.

146. Looked after children and care leavers have good access to a range of activities that enhance their enjoyment and promote achievement. The council has funded access to a range of enrichment activities such as swimming, gym membership, outdoor activities, angling and cycling. Such activities help to build confidence and self esteem as well as develop skills, for example in animal care. There are a number of specific activities for looked after children and care leavers that similarly develop confidence and promote skills for independent living and employment. These cover a range of interests and aptitudes, including sports, outdoor pursuits, art and drama. An excellent example is a care leaver who is currently training for a sponsored cycle trip from Lands End to John O'Groats, with others riding alongside for part of the journey, visiting looked after children who are placed out of area on the route. Any remaining sponsorship money is going to fund care leavers to take up further challenges.

### **Making a positive contribution, including user engagement** **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

147. Arrangements for children and young people to make a positive contribution are outstanding. Looked after children and care leavers have excellent opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives and contribute to service improvement. Their views, reflections and concerns are gathered through a wide range of consultations and events, such as children's homes meetings, activity based consultations, 'Foster Fun' days and regular access to senior decision makers. Their contributions have helped to shape key policies and protocols. For example, they have been involved in developing the Foster Care Charter and an anti-bullying charter for children's homes. They have undertaken excellent work to help keep children missing from care safe, by developing protocols for professionals and producing guidance for young people that clearly explains the rationale for keeping in touch with their carers.
148. The views of all looked after children are systematically collated through quarterly questionnaires conducted by social workers, and exit interviews with those leaving care. The findings inform training and facilitate sustained improvement in service provision. In addition, all looked after children are able to participate in quarterly 'Creative Conversations' with the corporate parenting panel. These meetings provide a very effective means for the corporate parenting panel to consult with children and young people on a range of key issues and receive feedback on the quality of services. Young people say the meetings are friendly and fun to attend.

149. The Children in Care Council is very well established and active in involving children of all ages. It makes an excellent contribution to planned events, such as the re-launch of the corporate parenting Pledge, and activity based consultations. There are two groups – the GPK for children and young people aged eight years upwards who are in foster care or children of foster carers, and the Bizz group which organises and attends consultation events and take issues to the Corporate Parenting Board. The local authority ensures children placed externally are kept in touch and included through a newsletter and invitations to all events and consultations. The local authority expertly represents the views of looked after children directly to those responsible for corporate parenting and strategic decision making, including the Director, elected members, Chief Executive and senior managers. Their views are taken seriously and services have improved significantly as a result. For example young people requested advice on seeking employment and there is now a weekly drop-in where they can get advice on writing their job applications and interview skills. Young people also requested a range of leisure activities including drama. A film company was commissioned to undertake some work with young people resulting in a short film produced by the children which has won a national award. There are good links with external organisations, for example three young people attended the recent National Children’s Rights Conference.
150. The views of children, young people and their parents and carers are collated after reviews to inform service improvement. Feedback shows a very high level of satisfaction with the management and content of recent reviews. Children feel able to give their views and the vast majority were happy with what had been planned. The Service Manager oversees the collation of feedback from children, young people and their parents from reviews and completes a quarterly evaluation of all views from the array of participation methods such as the work of the Children in Care Council, children’s homes children’s meetings, and exit interviews (for children/young people changing placements or leaving care). A child and young person friendly newsletter called the Upd8 Newsletter feeds back key service improvements.
151. Complaint procedures are clear and well understood by children. The local authority takes complaints seriously and details the lessons learned and action taken to improve services. Children have good access to advocacy services and speak highly of the service they have received. There are strong links between the LADO, the Complaints Manager and advocacy workers so that issues presented through the complaints and advocacy route are picked up by the IROs. The local authority has commissioned an independent visitor scheme, giving children choice and further access to activities. However, there is little take up with feedback being given to the local authority and the inspectors, by children and young people, that they already have an excellent range of social workers, IROs and advocacy workers.

152. There is a wide range of positive activities for looked after children and young people, including good access to leisure facilities and outdoor activities. They have access to wide variety of work experience, for example in the libraries and environmental services. These are successfully engaging them in positive behaviour and developing life skills. Offending by children in care has fallen from a peak of 16.8% in 2006 to 5.7% in 2011 and is now better than the national performance. The social worker based in the Youth Offending Service works successfully with young people in care, to prevent re-offending and improve their life chances.

### **Economic well-being**

### **Grade 2 (good)**

153. The impact of services to promote the economic well-being of looked after children and care leavers is good. The local authority is investing in the post-16 team to ensure that care leaving services have the capacity to meet demand due to the projected increasing number of young people leaving care in the near future. There is a clear strategy, and a range of integrated services, to support care leavers into further education and employment and secure suitable housing.
154. Post-16 provision offers a wide and varied curriculum to meet the needs of young people. They have good access to vocational qualifications, apprenticeships and training as well as advanced levels. The local authority provides 40 annual apprenticeship places leading to qualifications and care leavers are supported with their applications. Students transferring to local further education colleges receive good support on transition, through flexible starts, personal tuition and mentoring. Children's homes and supported accommodation provide good support to help young people in applying for jobs and all care leavers have access to an information, advice and guidance adviser.
155. The virtual school leaders work closely with disabilities teams and social workers, to ensure appropriate placements and a smooth transition into post-16 and post-18 provision for those who have additional needs. They do their utmost to help the young people with additional needs realise their ambitions and recent placements have included, for example, a scholarship to Hull Kingston Rovers rugby team.
156. Cohorts of care leavers are small and educational attainment varies according to the specific characteristics of the cohort. Most young people leaving care progress into further education or training at the end of their statutory schooling. The majority are in good quality provision although a few attend a sixth form college that has recently been deemed to require special measures. Their progress, and the progress of all care leavers, is closely monitored through the virtual school. Leaders provide additional challenge to the provider and support to the young people if they are not

making expected progress. The vast majority gain relevant qualifications suited to their aptitudes and aspirations. There are currently four young people in higher education and four more starting soon. All care leavers receive good financial support to help them further their education or training; for example through a higher education bursary, the provision of laptops, resources, meal vouchers and support with learning to drive.

157. Care leaving services provide good support to care leavers to help them remain engaged in education and employment and a positive lifestyle. They are in touch with all care leavers and all have a pathway plan which is regularly reviewed. The plans effectively support young people toward independence. Individual needs are very well documented and effective, multi-agency personalised support promotes good outcomes. Health, social, emotional and leisure needs are given good attention alongside education, employment and housing needs. Ethnicity and cultural needs are well integrated into their support package. Care leavers' views are recorded throughout and their needs and aspirations clearly inform actions arising from review.
158. The proportion of 19 year old care leavers engaged in education, training or employment has been above the national average for most years up to 2011. However four of the 11 care leavers in the current cohort are not in education, employment or training, including two who are in custody. Young people engaged with the Youth Offending Service receive good support to develop positive behaviours, independent living and work related skills.
159. There is a good coordinated response to the accommodation needs of young people leaving care. The council has identified a need to increase the amount of supported accommodation, due to increasing numbers of older looked after children. They have taken good action to increase the range of housing in order to ensure choice and flexibility. This includes supported housing, supported lodging and independent accommodation, commissioned through various providers. Supported lodgings providers give good support for independent living, including financial management, health and safety and promotion of work related skills. A purpose built facility for young mothers is currently supporting six care leavers and includes support from a nursery nurse to promote good parenting skills. Bed and breakfast is rarely used and no young people are currently in bed and breakfast. All care leavers are currently in accommodation deemed suitable.

## **Quality of provision**

## **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

160. The overall quality of provision of services for looked after children and young people is outstanding.

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161. The council has reviewed and redesigned children and family support services and the co-location of teams is leading to good information sharing and timely decision making. There are very good arrangements to meet the needs of children on the edge of care, including effective mediation services and packages of support to enable children and young people to remain living at home. Good practice in relation to multi-agency working is leading to good outcomes and this is evidenced in the low numbers of children and young people in care. For example multi-agency locality allocation meetings for families needing support enable appropriate and timely signposting of families to services to meet identified need. Effective multi-agency working, such as the joint supervision of social workers and health visitors for children in need cases, ensures clear mapping of progress of cases and timely decision making and the avoidance of drift.
162. Decision making on whether children need to be looked after is highly effective. A placement panel makes decisions about whether a child should enter care, whether legal proceedings need to be initiated and the panel quality assure all processes. The use of the risk analysis model together with close management oversight across services in children's social care, including services for children and young people on the edge of care, ensures effective decision making so that only those that need to be looked after are accommodated.
163. Permanency planning for looked after children is good and is supported by very early consideration of permanency at the point that a child is accommodated, with appropriate consideration of placement with family and/or friends. In addition there is evidence of increasing use of adoption and Special Guardianship Orders and the number of children who ceased to be looked after in 2010/11 increased by 25% from 2009/10.
164. The quality of assessments is good overall with some outstanding examples. Assessments are comprehensive, detailed and analytical. They identify risk and protective factors and use theory to effectively inform assessments and planning. Assessments result in a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the looked after child and the views, wishes and feelings of children are well represented. There is good access to interpreters and social workers' assessments and casework practice recognise and address the cultural needs of children, young people and families, however a child's identity and work needed to address issues are not always considered in depth. The risk analysis tool is used at critical stages in the child's life to identify risk and protective factors and informs planning appropriately to ensure children are safe. The legal services report that the assessment tool is used in legal gateway meetings and provides robust evidence of risks and protective factors which promotes timely decision making.

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165. There is high quality practice in the vast majority of cases. Children are visited regularly by their social worker and those children spoken to by inspectors knew when their worker would be visiting and how to contact them. All records are up to date. Although the quality of recording is mostly very good in a small number of cases it was of a lesser standard
166. Care plans for looked after children are comprehensive and underpinned by a thorough needs assessment and analysis. Plans effectively give consideration to a permanent alternative placement or return home where appropriate. All reviews of looked after children are held within timescale and plans are reviewed and updated to ensure progress against outcomes. There is good continuity of IROs and children and young people spoken to by inspectors knew their IRO well.
167. Social workers report that managers are visible and accessible. Senior managers hold 'communication events' where they meet regularly with front line staff to discuss issues and identify areas for development. Staff report that when they discuss cases with senior managers that 'know' the cases this is a result of regular auditing and activity of the 'outcome panel'. Staff talked of a 'shared ownership of cases' so that they did not feel that they were managing cases alone.
168. The views of parents and carers as well as children is evaluated following each review. This demonstrates extremely positive outcomes with over 98% of children young people reporting that they understood what had been agreed in terms of care planning for them and 96% happy with what was planned in 2011/12. Children and young people report that their needs are understood in the context of culture, religion and identity, including disability. Children report a high level of understanding of their care plans and this is facilitated by the use of age appropriate forms to elicit the views of children and young people as well as care plans produced in different formats depending on the age of the child: this is extremely good.
169. The proportion of children placed in foster care in has increased over the last three years in line with the North Lincolnshire Children in Care Strategy 2011-13, whilst the number placed in external residential provision has reduced. The largest proportion of children looked after in North Lincolnshire are in foster care placements and the rate is higher than the national average.
170. Arrangements for transfer to the post-16 team are managed very well with evidence of early planning with young people to prepare them for transition. The importance of consistent relationships with professionals is recognised and understood and in those cases where it is considered to be appropriate young people maintain the same social worker after the age of 16.



171. The post-16 team has recently been established following a recent service review. The team provide an excellent range of services to young people post-16 years and to those who have left care. Services include information and advice and a range of drop in services which are well used and which young people report as beneficial in helping them address issues of housing, employment and meeting health needs. The council is planning to create three further social work posts in this team to ensure sufficient capacity and to further develop areas of expertise. Social workers have access to a range of high quality training including access to external training opportunities. Social workers gave examples to inspectors of training that had a direct impact on practice, such as life story work and training on the impact of trauma on child development.

### **Ambition and prioritisation**

### **Grade 1 (outstanding)**

172. Ambition and prioritisation are outstanding.

173. The Children's Trust is an excellent and robust multi-agency partnership working to provide support to all children in North Lincolnshire and ensure that those who are most vulnerable, including looked after children, receive significant additional support. The work plan is underpinned by the excellent CYPP. These local authority and partnership plans have resulted in significant improvements in these services.

174. Performance indicators have been improving and these reflect the high quality outcomes experienced by looked after children. For instance, as a result of the combined work across agencies, health outcomes are better for looked after children than for the general population of children and young people in North Lincolnshire. Benchmarking is used by the service to identify other high performing authorities.

175. The looked after children strategy sets out a clear vision for looked after children in North Lincolnshire and this is monitored through a robust action plan. The strategy shared with key partners indicates that North Lincolnshire has good awareness of the needs of and demographics of the looked after children population and the key challenges it faces in improving overall outcomes for children. The corporate parenting group is composed mainly of looked after children and care leavers and is excellent at holding the authority to account for its performance. It is well established and plays a central role in consultation on the planning and evaluation of services. It meets regularly with the Director of Children's Services, senior staff from North Lincolnshire and council members. The Pledge was developed by children and young people with officers and members. It holds the council and its partners responsible for delivering high quality services.

176. Workforce management is outstanding. Training is well resourced and highly appreciated by staff. Morale is high and staff turnover and sickness absence is low.
177. Elected members are dedicated to improving the lives of looked after children and this is demonstrated through their attendance at corporate parenting group and regular consultation events held in a variety of settings. Members scrutinise effectively the performance of looked after children and challenge officers to ensure the best possible services for this population. There has been significant investment by the local authority in the new Children's Campus, the fostering service and the post-16 team.

## **Leadership and management                      Grade 1 (outstanding)**

178. Leadership and management are outstanding.
179. There is impressive leadership from the Director of Children's Services in the council and across the partnership organisations. The CYPP is excellent, focusing exceptionally well around improving outcomes for all children and young people in North Lincolnshire including looked after children. There is a clear picture, a 'golden thread', across the workforce of how services for children are structured and how individual's roles contribute to the delivery of the wider vision. There is a good understanding of the journey taken, where the services have been, what improvements have taken place and what will be delivered in the future. Weaknesses and resource deficits are tackled and excellent performance is now demonstrated. The outcomes for looked after children are judged as outstanding for health, staying safe and making a positive contribution.
180. Managers and staff reported to inspectors that they are supported by visible senior managers who are always available and know their cases. All social workers have regular supervision which are, in the main, suitably challenging and demonstrate good management oversight. The vast majority of workers have up to date annual appraisals. Work to develop the children's sector workforce through a range of training, e-learning and mentorship is excellent. All looked after children are allocated to a qualified social worker and most also receive additional assistance through family support workers and this is excellent.
181. The looked after children sufficiency strategy is based on a good understanding of patterns and trends within the looked after population. There is a focus on value for money and improving outcomes for children and young people and the council's ambition to provide a 'new relationship and range of choice across all areas of our provision'. The strategy aims to increase the number of local authority foster carers and reducing reliability on external placements in recognition that the majority of children do best in family placements that are close to their family home. Individual children and young people are known to members and officers. This

results in the corporate parenting board having a comprehensive understanding of young people's needs and priorities

182. Partnership arrangements have also resulted in the expansion of earlier support for those most vulnerable families including those children on the edge of care. North Lincolnshire has significantly less looked after children than similar authorities and this is achieved through a good preventative strategy, robust decision making and resourcing of alternative to care services.

## **Performance management and quality assurance Grade 1 (outstanding)**

183. Performance management and quality assurance arrangements are outstanding.
184. Performance management and quality assurance at a strategic level is very good. Key stakeholders such as the Children's Trust, the LSCB, corporate parenting group, the Chief Executive and Lead Member for Children's Services all receive and scrutinise management information on the service and hold officers to account.
185. Highly effective practice in relation to quality assurance and performance management takes place at key points in the child's journey and this is driving improvement in services and outcomes for children and young people. The council benchmarks itself against similar areas and nationally to help determine and understand its overall performance.
186. The excellent corporate parenting group, which is mainly composed of looked after children and care leavers, also challenges performance through scrutiny of the data. Senior children's managers have also been subject to challenging interviews by this group to hold them to book for their performance.
187. Elected members are provided with a range of performance information about looked after children. Performance management information is also shared across the strategic partnerships enabling the LSCB and the Children's Trust to utilise evidence based contextual information to improve services.
188. The comprehensive approach to the collation of performance management information from audit and other activity ensures that the authority has a very clear understanding of areas in need of improvement and the future needs of the looked after children population. This facilitates effective targeting of areas of poor performance and forward planning to ensure that services can meet the future needs of looked after children. There has been effective and timely responses to areas of practice that need further developments, for example the increased support to foster carers

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and increased capacity in the post-16 team to improve the long term stability of placements.

189. Case work and thematic auditing is very well embedded at single and multi-agency level and is valued by front line staff. Random case file audits are undertaken each month by all of the managers including the Director of Children's Services and this has led to sustained improvement in service provision, for example in the work which has improved the quality of the work undertaken around personal education plans to enhance children and young people's involvement in, and understanding of, the planning process.
190. There are an excellent range of meetings used by the children's services, and its partners, to drive up performance and improve the quality of work. The progress of children in care is monitored via a weekly 'placement panel' that examines decision making and monitors the progress of the plans for each child in care. Outcomes meetings are attended by service managers and practitioners, from a range of agencies, where they examine and analyse cohorts of children and young people at different stages of their journey through care. A recent cohort that has been considered is children placed for adoption and the outcome of this has resulted in improving performance on the timeliness within which children are placed for adoption, so that in 2011/12 almost all children were placed within the 12 month timescale.
191. The workforce is aware of performance targets and managers receive weekly updates and systems in place to 'flag' when work is required imminently to meet a performance target. Managers uniformly state the overwhelming importance of knowing each individual child and they have a range of events, including regular six-weekly meetings, where any looked after child can come and discuss any issues.
192. Social workers receive regular supervision and there is evidence of rigorous management oversight of cases that is challenging practice and providing good guidance to social workers. A form is used to record supervision which includes a check list to ensure that statutory visits have taken place and that the child has been seen alone. This good practice ensures consistent management oversight of social work contact with children and the quality of the work.
193. IRO's case loads are manageable and this enables them to provide robust monitoring and tracking of cases. The quality of case reviews seen by inspectors was extremely high. Social workers report that challenge from IRO's is welcome and appropriate and is improving practice for example in relation to the planning and the management of contacts.

## Record of main findings:

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