

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

**RESULTS OF THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the results of the Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in North Lincolnshire, published on 13 June 2012

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1. The purpose of the inspection was 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. The inspection field work took place between 23 April and 4 May 2012 and follows closely on the heels of an outstanding set of inspection results gained by the Youth Offending Service.

2.2 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, from a wide range of bodies, including NHS Trusts,

school heads, police officers, the voluntary sector, the council's Chief Executive and elected members.

2.3 Inspection judgements are made using a 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

2.4 The judgements are made on 22 aspects of the work involved in safeguarding children and looking after them in care. The following table sets out those aspects and the judgement that was made about them:

Safeguarding services	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people	
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
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Partnership working	Good
Equality and diversity	Good
Services for looked after children	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?	
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
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Performance management and quality assurance	Outstanding
Equality and diversity	Good

- 2.5 North Lincolnshire is one of only two local authorities in the country to receive a judgement of Outstanding for overall effectiveness with regard to services for looked after children, up to the end of May 2012.
- 2.6 The judgement of Good for overall effectiveness with regard to services to safeguard children puts North Lincolnshire firmly in the top half of authorities inspected thus far.
- 2.7 The report commented on the “excellent” LSCB Children’s Trust partnerships that coordinate “highly effective” multi-agency services, underpinned by the “outstanding” Children and Young People’s Plan. It noted the “outstanding” work done with children and young people to encourage their involvement and participation in decisions about themselves and about improving services. It also noted that outcomes for children and young people “in the vast majority of areas are improving and are mostly good.”
- 2.8 In both safeguarding and looked after children areas, the capacity for improvement was judged to be outstanding. , with services showing a “good understanding of the needs of the different communities within North Lincolnshire”. North Lincolnshire was judged to be “a good learning organisation, not frightened to seek out issues and robustly deal with them”.
- 2.9 Leadership and management was judged outstanding, with comments upon the leadership and commitment to children and young people shown by elected members as well as officers. Financial resources were judged to be effectively used and the investment in improving services was praised.
- 2.10 Overall, the standard of casework found by the inspectors was “uniformly high” and positive comments were made about the quality of assessments, plans and reviews, and the positive way in which children and young people are involved in the decisions that affect their lives.
- 2.11 Inspectors found that thresholds for access to services have been agreed across the partnerships and these are well-embedded and understood. were clearly understood. Children and young people at risk of significant harm are promptly identified and cases allocated to a suitable qualified, trained and experienced social worker.
- 2.12 Inspectors found good assessments, backed by evidence. They did have a concern that where a decision had been made to take ‘no further action’ the recording of these could improve and delays be reduced. The inspection team reassured themselves that local services had the capacity to rapidly respond to these concerns and demonstrate an immediate improvement in this area of practice. No children were seen to have been placed at risk by these delays

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 None – for information only

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 None - for information only

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 None – for information only

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 None – for information only

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 None required – for information only

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 To welcome the results of the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

8.2 To thank the staff involved for their hard work and commitment to achieving such a positive result.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Mike Biggs
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

‘Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services – North Lincolnshire’,
Ofsted, June 2012.
Available at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/north-lincolnshire>