

Combined Assurance Status Report

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What we do best...

Innovative assurance services

Specialists at internal audit

Comprehensive risk management

Experts in countering fraud

...and what sets us apart

Unrivalled best value to our customers

Existing strong regional public sector partnership

Auditors with the knowledge and expertise to get the job done

Already working extensively with the not-for-profit and third sector



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Introduction

This is the seventh combined assurance report for Children's Services within the Council.

By grouping the different sources of assurance in a single model we provide the basis for Senior Management and Audit Committees to gain a better understanding of their organisations assurance status and needs.

We do this by coordinating assurance arrangements – providing some structure – this is our Assurance Map.

We have well established Assurance Maps that help us to focus our work plans on the make or break risks that affect the successful delivery of services and strategic objectives. The Maps also recognise the importance of critical business systems that support successful delivery and 'protect the business' – the due diligence activities.

The Maps give an overview of assurance provided across the whole organisation – not just those from Internal Audit – making it possible to identify where assurances are present, their source, and where there are potential assurance 'unknowns or gaps'.

The Maps are an invaluable tool for senior managers, providing a snapshot of assurance at any point of time. This report explores those assurances in more detail.

We gathered and analysed assurance information in a control environment that:

- takes what we have been told on trust, and
- encourages accountability with those responsible for managing the service.

Scope

We gathered information on our:

- **Critical systems** – those areas identified by senior management as having a significant impact on the successful delivery of our priorities or whose failure could result in significant damage to our reputation, financial loss or impact on people.
- **Due diligence activities** – those that support the running of the Council and ensure compliance with policies.
- **Key risks** – found on our strategic risk register, operational risk registers or associated with major new business strategy / change.
- **Key projects** – supporting corporate priorities / activities.
- **Key partnerships** – partnerships that play a key role in successful delivery of services



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Methodology

To ensure our combined assurance model shows assurances across the entire Council, not just those from Internal Audit, we leverage assurance information from your 'business as usual' operations. Using the '3 lines of assurance' concept:



Our approach includes a critical review or assessment on the level of confidence the Board can have on its service delivery arrangements, management of risks, operation of controls and performance.

We did this by:

- Speaking to senior and operational managers who have the day to day responsibility for managing and controlling their service activities.
- Working with corporate functions and using other third party inspections to provide information on performance, successful delivery and organisational learning.
- Using the outcome of Internal Audit work to provide independent insight and assurance opinions.
- Considering other information and business intelligence that feed into and has potential to impact on assurance.

We used a Red (low), Amber (medium) and Green (high) rating to help us assess the level of assurance confidence in place.

The overall assurance opinion is based on the assessment and judgement of senior management. Internal audit has helped co-ordinate these and provided some challenge **but** as accountability rests with the Senior Manager we used their overall assurance opinion.



Key Messages

As a service area, we have high aspirations and a clear, shared vision for all of our children and young people. We are committed to Putting Children First: Working with families to enable them to enhance the current and future lives of their children.

There is strong political and managerial leadership of Children's Services with a stable, highly competent, and visible Leadership Team. Leaders have excellent relationships with partners and LCC staff as well as with schools, including academies. Integration best summarises our approach to the commissioning and delivery of good and outstanding services. We demonstrate true integration and focus on needs not silo working so families access joined up services.

The summary position is that the service continues to effectively identify, manage and mitigate risk through robust leadership and management, a strong performance led culture of accountability and the application of effective systems and processes across the whole service. This year has seen the service establish its own supported accommodation for young people, enabled us to continue on our improvement journey to integrate health services within our locality teams, as well as agreeing investment for pupils with special educational needs/disability, through the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy. Partners in Practice work continues to

make a positive difference to the way we do things. This year has seen us testing out the new child and progress plan and assessment, launching the interim Early Help front door, the continuation of restorative practice and Signs of Safety training, more schools and foster carers joining the Care2Learn project and finalising the new Future4Me service. Community Hubs are set up in some of our children's centres are integrating midwifery services with a range of services such as early years, health visiting and early help. We now have hubs in Lincoln Birchwood, Grantham Swingbridge, Skegness and Boston. Our focus on the recruitment of skilled qualified staff especially social workers has produced significant results, lowering our use of agency staff and although this remains a priority, we need to apply those strategies to other ongoing recruitment and retention challenges such as the recruitment of qualified public health nurses.

Partnership arrangements are robust and the local arrangements ensure a clear and collective determination and drive to engage agencies in delivering a coherent approach to safeguard children, promote their welfare and ensure that they reach their potential with a strong focus on educational aspirations, Strategic action plans are well considered and comprehensive, and are underpinned by a strong shared vision and ambition with clear governance across all partnership arrangements. We have introduced a new Children's Integrated Commissioning Team. This team is



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working across Lincolnshire's Public Health, Children's Services and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to look at integrated commissioning of children's health, care and education provision in Lincolnshire. Our partnership arrangements with health were considered to be strong at our local area inspection of services for children and young people with special educational needs/ disability.

The service constantly seeks new, innovative and most cost effective arrangements to improve practice across Children's Services and People Management. Our continued focus on prevention and early intervention is important and we hope that the new Future4Me team will help us to more effectively support young people engaging in risk taking behaviours. Managing demand across the service is recognised to be a national challenge with additional expectations placed on the Council. We have been fortunate to secure additional resources to meet this demand, but will ongoing budget challenges; we must find more innovative ways to manage demand

A further area of challenge is with the Agresso system and the Mosaic case management system which both impact negatively on service performance/ staff management. Significant staff time has been diverted from direct service delivery to address the ongoing challenges and we have more to do to enable Mosaic and Agresso to meet business needs. ICT as an enabler continues to be a challenge as staff do not

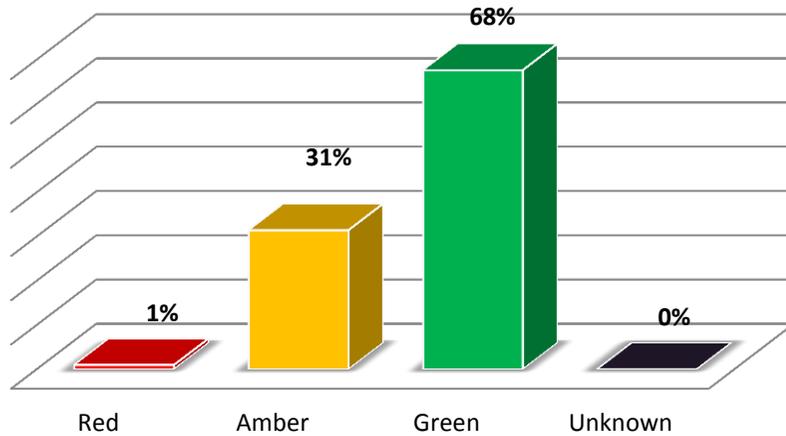
have access to equipment which supports them to work flexibly although the recent planned roll out of new ICT equipment will help to improve this issue. We must continue to focus on recruitment, and this year's priority areas are services for children with special educational needs/ disability and public health nursing.

As the Executive Director with responsibility for the People Management function, (which supports all Director Areas of the Council), there has been significant activity to review the current arrangements with a decision to insource the operational HR advisory services as well as the recruitment team. Moving forward we will review the structure to bring the teams together and review our policies to make sure they are effective and supportive.

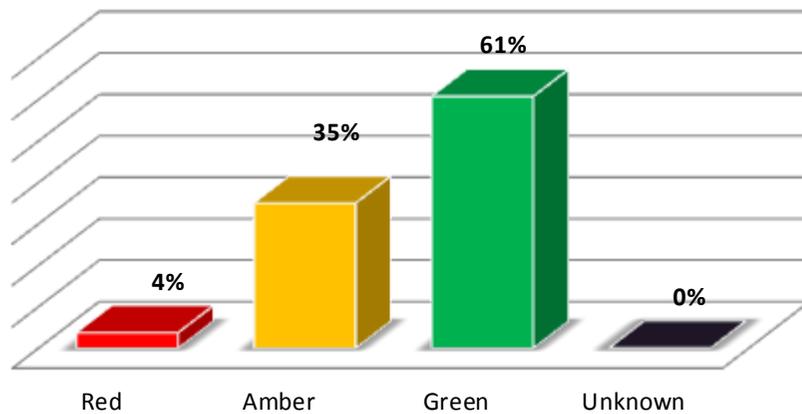


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Overall Assurance Status 2018/19



Overall Assurance Status 2017/18



Suggested next steps.....

Over the past 12 months we have worked hard to deliver the key projects outlined in last years' report. The Executive have agreed our £50m investment in Lincolnshire's special schools – plus improved links with mainstream schools – which will transform Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support for local children and young people. This exciting development will ensure children can attend their local school rather than having to travel huge distances for their education.

Students have once again risen to the challenge for GCSEs and A-levels. Provisional results from the vast majority of our schools show an improvement in the proportion of students attaining a good GCSE pass in English and maths. Overall, our schools have bucked the national trend by improving attainment, all the more impressive when you consider the sweeping changes to the grading system for GCSEs and coursework being scrapped. For A-levels, students have continued to achieve well with the provisional pass rate for A-level entries at 97.8% which is above the national average.

The launch of our Caring2Learn project has been a great success. This is about improving outcomes for our looked after children by establishing effective and sustainable support between education and foster care communities. The first Caring2Learn conference in Grantham recently, awarded 24 schools and 16 foster carers with certificates for their



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commitment to supporting vulnerable children in their education. We'll see many more come on board I'm sure.

A recent Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection confirmed our services for children and young people with SEND in Lincolnshire are strong and effective. Inspections have become much tougher, so I'm delighted the report highlights we are providing services to be proud of.

Our residential homes continue to provide high quality care and our new supported accommodation at Denton Avenue has been highly successful.

Earlier in the year following another inspection, Ofsted praised the support and services provided for our looked after children in Lincolnshire. They highlighted our stable and experienced teams who deliver high quality social work which improves outcomes for children in Lincolnshire.

Our Young Inspectors are going from strength to strength in providing added scrutiny support to our services from a young person's perspective. And the launch of Lincolnshire Young Voices, a newly formed group of young volunteers with SEND, is providing a voice for young people in the county to improve services.

Partners in Practice work continues to make a positive difference to the way we do things. This year has seen us testing out the new child and progress plan and assessment,

launching the interim Early Help front door, the continuation of restorative practice and Signs of Safety training, more schools and foster carers joining the Care2Learn project and finalising the new Future4Me service. Finally, we have responded to the national requirement for expanding apprenticeships into the workforce. We have undertaken significant procurements so we have a market for delivery and have apprenticeships across the council and in schools and our number of apprenticeships continue to increase although more work is needed if we are to meet the levy.

The next 12 months will see many of these projects fully implemented to enable us to realise the significant transformational opportunities:

- As a partner in practice we will complete the re-design of how we support families, embedding this new way of working into our systems and processes.
- We will embed the Future4Me service into our services to more effectively support young people engaging in risky behaviours
- We will fully integrate the 0-19 year's public health teams into our locality teams and drive up the performance for mandatory visits
- Meeting the needs of our looked after children who are preparing for independence and adulthood can be challenging for some of our most vulnerable. We will realise our ambitions for alternative supported



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accommodation options to ensure we can meet their needs within Lincolnshire

- We will work with Health to enhance our joint approach to commissioning for pupils with special educational needs / disability ensuring we have a clearly defined and integrated offer for families, especially for those with Autism / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- We will continue to respond to the national requirement for expanding apprenticeships into the workforce and continue to find new and creative ways to recruit into hard to recruit posts

We will build on our successful commissioning of services to improve young people's mental health and wellbeing to ensure that all young people, especially those who are most vulnerable, can quickly access services which meet their needs.

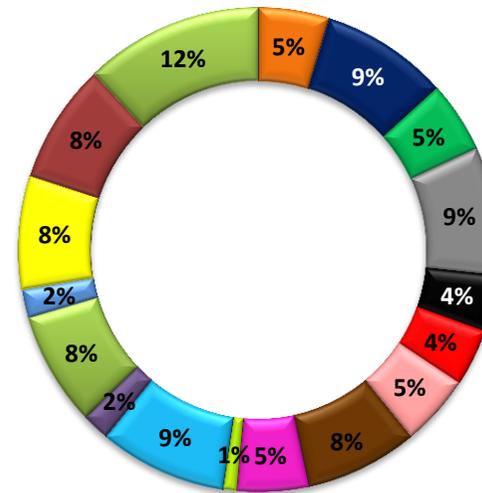
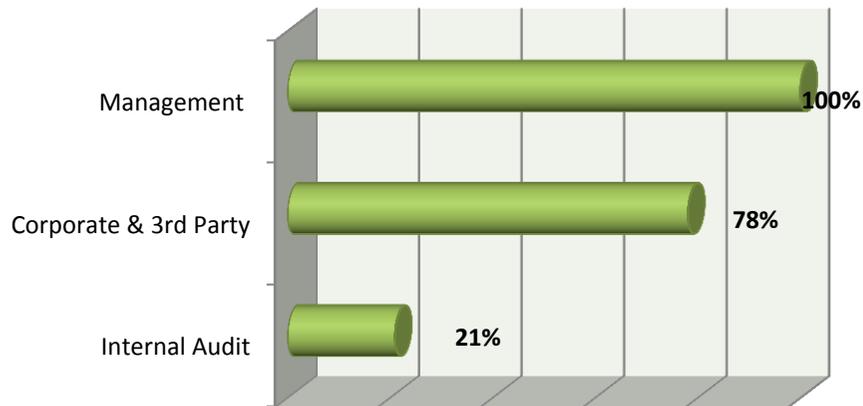


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Critical Systems

Children Services is heavily regulated through our inspectorate Ofsted so third party assurance on the vast majority of our services are provided through this arrangement. In addition, the service has a comprehensive and robust quality assurance framework which works collaboratively with the Council's audit department to offer complimentary audit arrangements. Collectively these systems provide assurance on the quality of provision.

Who Provides Your Assurance

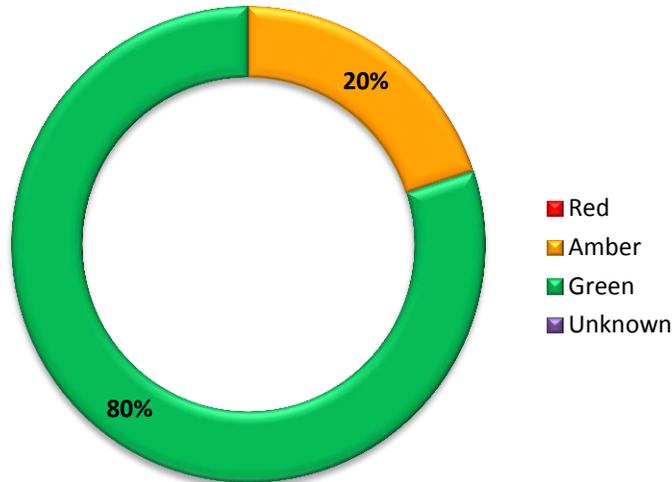


- Safeguarding Locality
- Safeguarding Regulated
- Children's Lead Early Help
- Early Years
- Quality and Standards
- Education of Children Looked After
- Youth Offending
- Commissioning and Performance
- Education Support
- Inclusion
- SEND
- School Improvement Service
- People Management
- Schools Finance
- Key Projects
- Key Partnerships
- Key Risks



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Safeguarding Locality



Overall Comments

All areas are closely monitored and regulated. Significant management oversight is in place. No major changes since last year. Further assurance can be gained from the Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) which did not highlight any concerns about safeguarding in localities. Further embedding in signs of safety has seen the voice of the child captured and implemented in safety planning. Recent independent scrutiny from an ex-Ofsted inspector has found that services remain of a good standard.

Management of Risk

Risks are managed through a high level of management oversight and regulation. Senior managers are involved in assessing risk on individual cases through support panel. Children subject to a child protection plan are managed through the independent child protection process. Agreements for children to be placed in the care of the Local authority are made at senior management level.

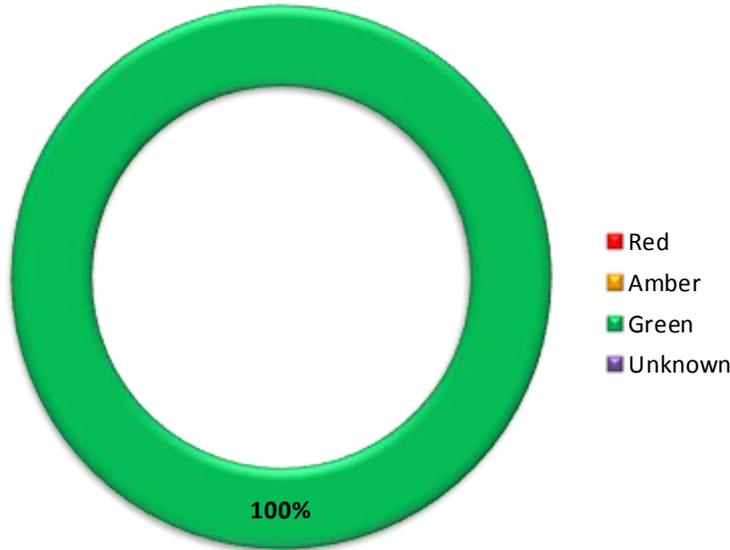
Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Emergency Duty Team Child Protection Care Proceedings Support Panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in Need



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Safeguarding Regulated



Overall Assurances

Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoptions (Including Special Guardianship Orders) • Fostering • Private Fostering • Looked After Children (including Out Of County) • Children's Homes • Secure Unit • Care Leavers • Short Break Homes • Intensive Needs Supported Accommodation

Overall Comments

Regulated Services has continued to meet all targets in respect of key performance indicators, demonstrating that the services it delivers remain strong and ensures good outcomes for children and young people. The Corporate Parenting Panel, Safeguarding assurance days, rigorous auditing process and the Independent Reviewing Officers provide internal scrutiny of the activity and performance of the services provided to Looked After Children. The introduction of Social Pedagogy and scrutiny through the Regulation 44 officer and Ofsted has ensured that outcomes for Children Looked After within children's homes remain good or outstanding. Regulated Services continually monitors and evaluates its service at every stage of the child's journey through care to ensure quality and effectiveness.

As is evidenced through the Adoption Scorecard, performance remains strong compared to the National average. The progression of a child's plan for adoption is robustly tracked throughout the adoption process from commencement of the adoption plan through to the adoption order being made. This ensures that every stage of the child's journey is effectively managed to ensure the best outcome with minimal delay. The numbers of children waiting for an adoptive family continues to remain low. Ofsted conducted a focused visit April 2018, examining permanence arrangements for children in care. This provided assurance of a strong, stable workforce who



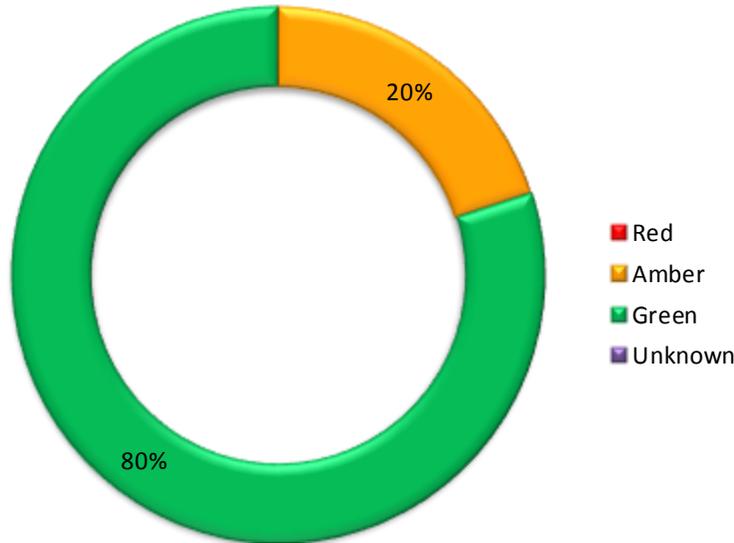
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deliver high quality social work, which improves outcomes for children.



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Early Help Locality



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Information Service Early Help Contact Service Safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Troubled Families Programme

Overall comments

Locality Early Help teams have been in place since November 2015. As part of our Partner in Practice work the service is being reviewed to ensure that it is in line with all our strategic priorities and to ensure that intervening early with the right children young people and their families ensures they do not need to access statutory services.

Further work is planned through Partners in Practice to strengthen the response to adolescents who come into contact with Early Help as a result of their challenging behaviour at home. Building on the positive work already completed it is hoped a multi -agency response will prevent young people having to access statutory services, having their needs met at the earliest opportunity.

Early Help consultants continue to provide supervision, support and guidance to schools and other professionals and training, workshops and development sessions continue to be offered. The response to the National Troubled Families Programme remains strong and whole family working is fully integrated into the locality teams. There remains a strong focus on ensuring young people attend school and adults are supported to gain employment. The payment by results element of the programme is challenging however very recent changes to this at a National Level should enable our performance to improve.



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Management of Risk

There is a need to review the capacity of the team, the priorities and to ensure families are able to access the right support from the right person and the right time. The review of Early Help will also ensure that staff are developing positive relationships with families to work with them restoratively, using interventions that work so families are able to sustain the changes in the future and not have a need for statutory services. Demand for services across all of Early Help requires us to continually review priorities ensuring our focus in on supporting families to find their own sustainable solutions.

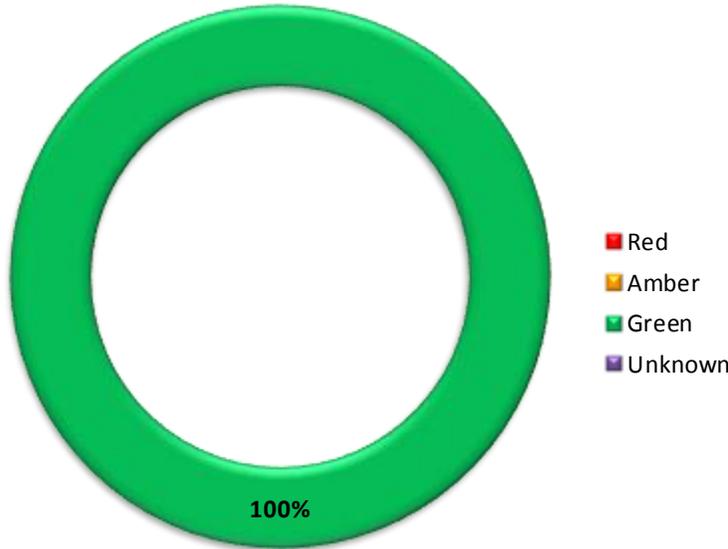
Lower assurance

The payment by result element of the Troubled Families Programme has presented a number of challenges. The change over from ICS to Mosaic had an impact on the ability to collect information. There has however been a change to the framework at a National Level which allows some local flexibility in the way progress in educational attendance is measured which should place us in a stronger position in the future to make the required number of claims and therefore maximise the income potential for Lincolnshire Children's Services.



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Early Years



- Green**
- Supported Childcare Allocations and Inclusion Funding
 - Early Intervention - Area Senco/Inclusion, advice and support
 - Early Intervention
 - Family Group Conferencing
 - Children's Centres

Overall comments

The latest statistics show that as at August 31st 2018, 96% of all providers in early years were rated as Good or Outstanding at inspection. Take up of the 2 year old entitlement is above regional and national average, at 76% (Summer 2018) with 95% of all 3 and 4 years old are accessing Early Education places. With the extended offer available to families from 2017 Lincolnshire have exceeded expectations with take up levels by summer term 2018 with 5322 children accessing the 30 hours entitlement which is above the Department for Education (DfE) estimate of 5010 eligible families in the county. We are also pleased with the way the Lincolnshire sector has responded to the challenge of delivering the extended offer with 90% of all Early Years Entitlement registered providers offering access to the 30 hours. Lincolnshire has 69.1%% of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the foundation stage which is broadly in line with national.

Overall Assurances

- Green**
- Support, challenge and advice is available to all Early Years (EY)/Out of school (OOS) providers and childminders (inc reception classes and EY/OOS provision in schools)
 - EY Educational Entitlement Funding (2 Year Olds)
 - EY Educational Entitlement Funding (3-4 Year Olds)
 - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Scores, Data Collection and Monitoring



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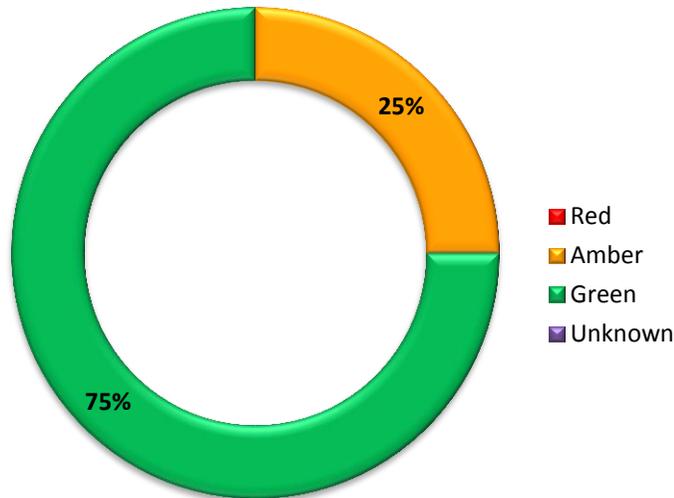
Management of risk

The team closely monitor the market place for sufficiency of provision and to ensure providers who are less than good are offered timely effective support. The school readiness hub reviews the self-evaluation documents which are updated on a quarterly basis by each locality, the hub provides feedback on each to inform action plans to ensure there is a focus on quality and consistency of delivery across the county.



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Quality and Standards



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers Learning and Development Parent Partnership Liaise Service, advice and support service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance

Overall comments

The Independent Chairs and Reviewing Service are fully staffed, the majority are permanent workers with a couple of temporary backfilling of secondments. The Service has continued to focus on quality and a significant number of reviews are more child friendly with good feedback from the young people involved in these. In addition the Chair's report is written to the child and this has been well received and commented positively upon by Ofsted. The decrease in numbers of children on child protection plans and in care has led to a reduction in overdue reports and overall performance on Mosaic is being maintained at a high level. The majority of escalations and concerns are addressed at an informal level and formal escalations remain low. Challenge is well received and addressed in a timely manner.

The Independent Advise and Support Service has been fully staffed this year. Their role was scrutinised in the recent SEND inspection and feedback was very positive. The Service are focusing on increasing participation by young people and additional funding has been provided by the DfE to support this work by recruiting a participation worker. In addition they are focusing on raising their profile across the county.

Learning and Development staffing has remained stable and an additional temporary post was funded by the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership. This has provided additional capacity around the Assessed and Supported Year in



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Employment (ASYEs) and also supports the Practice Supervisors. It will run until July 2019.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Service has been subject to a further review. The decision was taken not to recruit to the Practice Supervisor post and the Qualified Auditor post whilst the review was completed. The review involved a peer review by Camden and a visit to North Yorkshire to learn from their experience. The revised QA Framework and structure will come into effect in the New Year. In the interim, audits continue to be undertaken by some consultants who have an extensive experience of Social Care related work. A new Quality Assurance Board has been established as part of the framework to ensure learning from audits and quality assurance work occurs across Children's Services and can be evidenced from top to bottom of the organisation. Quality assurance via complaints, Young Inspectors, peer reviews, clinical governance and any quality assurance work also come to the Board.

Young Inspectors had a new Project Officer join earlier in the year. Two new apprentices have been appointed and will commence in role in January. The Participation Team has recently seamlessly moved over to the Quality and Standards Team as part of a restructure in the Youth Hub. Their priorities continue in line with the Participation Strategy.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Service has had a change of worker to backfill the secondment of one of

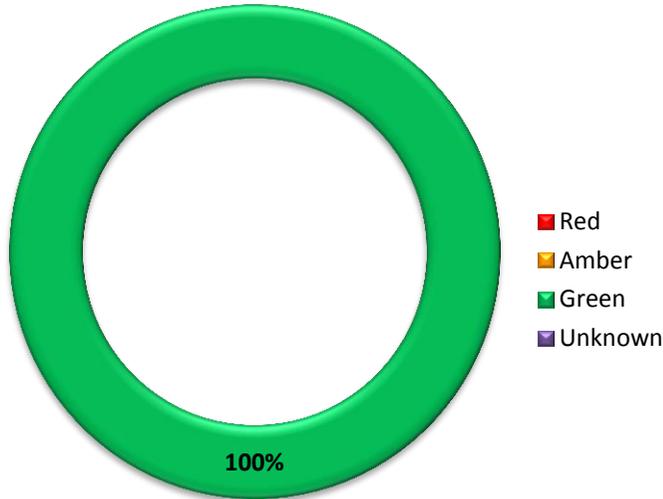
the LADOs. Additional capacity has been sought due to an increase in demand in recent weeks. The Service is to be reviewed in the New Year. Performance reports are available and some independent auditing is currently underway.

Management of Risks

All risks are effectively managed within the service areas.



Education of Children Looked After



Overall Assurances

- Green**
- Challenging and supporting schools and academies to improve educational progress of Looked After Children (LAC)
 - Supporting admission and inclusion of LAC into mainstream schools
 - Allocation of pupil premium to support education plan
 - Monitoring the education performance of looked after children through review of Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP)

Overall Comments

The Personal Education Plan system has been upgraded and this has expanded to include early years and post 16. The target is currently 100% competition with current performance at 98.0%. Pupil premium allocations are linked to Electronic Personal Education Plan progress targets with a coordinator in place to ensure funding is allocated to schools in line with this. Support is in place to ensure schools, social workers and teachers are best placed to support the educational needs of Looked After Children and exclusions are below those for Looked after Children regionally.

Through Partners in Practice the Caring 2 Learn work stream offers opportunities to ensure schools are focused on the care needs of this particular cohort and foster carers are supported to focus on the learning needs of the children and young people in their care.

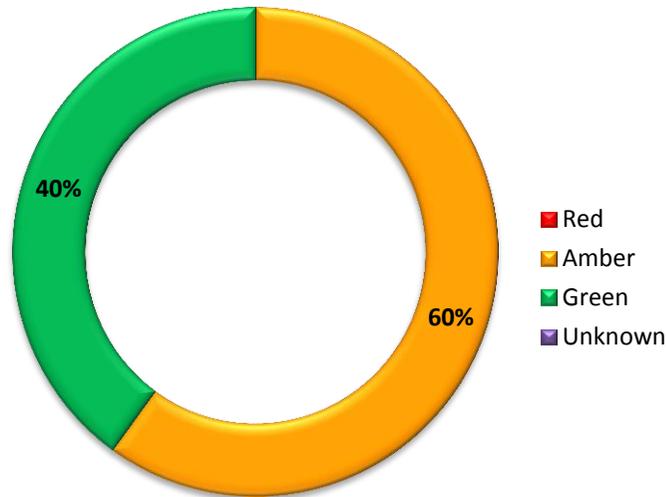
Management of Risk

Pupil progress is regularly reviewed and challenge and support is in place to address any concerns with schools. Performance and risks are regularly monitored by the team with regular updates and reports to Directorate Management Team, Corporate Parenting Board and Children's Scrutiny



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Youth Offending



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Offending Service (YOS) Delivery YOS Prevention and diversion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS Funding Remand Management Future4Me

Overall Comments

The Youth Offending Service has maintained positive levels of performance in key areas around re-offending, custody and first time entrants. This has been supported by stability in staffing, minimal vacancies and a consistent management team.

The service undertakes internal quality assurance and is also monitored around compliance with National Standards and benchmarking against national performance measures by the Youth Justice Board. At the present time the service is rated 'green' and is the top quartile of national services. The service was audited in respect it's quality assurance framework and received full assurance.

Previous inspections have taken place in January 2016 and a joint targeted inspection November 2017 which was positive. A new inspection framework was launched recently by HM Inspectorate of Probation and inspection readiness has commenced including work with the strategic partnership.

The introduction of the joint diversionary panel has resulted in significant change in practice and to date has resulted in a 66% reduction in first time entrants. During 2018 a consultation was undertaken with staff around the establishment of a new structure to work with those most challenging and complex adolescents.



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The new Future4Me team goes live in January 2019 and represents a multi-agency approach founded on significant evidence and learning to enable effective practice with young people to maximise the likelihood of positive change. It represents a substantial change in service delivery and has the potential to generate savings by minimising the likelihood of children entering care or being placed in high cost residential units by maintaining stability and providing crisis intervention.

The service remains reliant on significant funding from external sources including the Ministry of Justice and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Whilst these budgets have remained stable over the last two years there is a concern that pressures with central government funding and upon Police resources indicate an on-going risk. The service is also supported by staffing resources and it is positive that there is partnership commitment to sustain this.

Remand management remains a key financial risk due to the volatility and potential significant financial burden upon the local authority. The risks associated with this are well known and practice is directed towards mitigating this where possible.

Management of Risk

Budget monitoring is robust and any key pressures are highlighted. The strategic board is well supported and areas

around resources and finance are reviewed and reflected within annual service planning.

The Joint Diversionary Panel is overseen by a scrutiny board and also through a steering group. An in depth evaluation has been commissioned in conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.

Lower Assurance

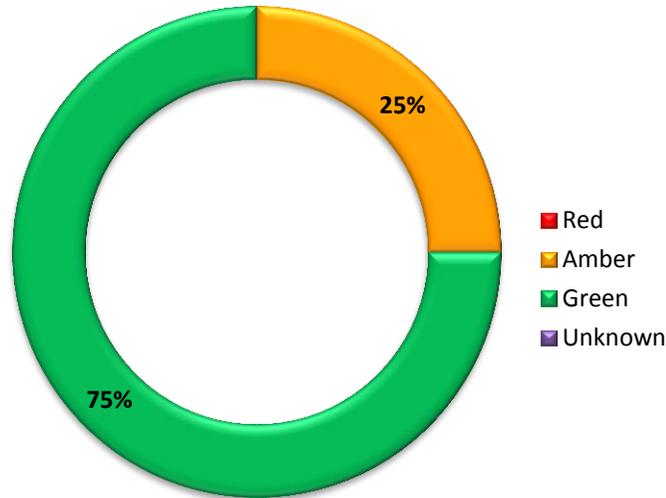
In respect of remand management, work with key partners including Police and court is active to offer non-custodial alternatives where appropriate. This clearly reduces the potential for significant long term costs for detention within secure units.

Future4ME becomes operational in January 2019 and is supported by external funding through Partner in Practice and also time limited grants from NHS England. There is a clear outcome framework and the impact of the service will be evaluated by an independently commissioned team and report their findings to the Department for Education.



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Commissioning and Performance



Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning of Health Services Performance 	

Overall Comments

Commissioning and Performance provide highly effective support to the range of teams within children's services and with a number of partners and colleagues within and external to the Council. The recently developed Children's Integrated Commissioning Team are now jointly commissioning a number of services on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Groups, public health and children's services. Joint commissioning was highlighted in the recent SEND inspections as an area of strength and the work on commissioning Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) continues to be highly effective with the service rated as Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.

Robust systems for reviewing, commissioning and performance managing services provides assurance and identifies opportunities for improving outcomes and service improvement. The involvement of service leads results in joint recommendations to Directorate Management Team on how contracts can be changed to improve outcomes.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement/Contract Provision Management of Grants Contract Management Decommissioning of Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home to School/College Transport 0-19 Service



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Through greater integration of the performance team into the commissioning team and children's services more widely, performance monitoring and data is becoming increasingly central to improving our processes for assuring quality and effectiveness.

Commissioning and performance responds effectively to changes in demand, for example for individual placements for vulnerable children and the numbers of looked after children. However changes in demand for school transport remains a challenge to effective budget management due to its unpredictability. Joint planning with services and the corporate transport team is helping to mitigate this risk.

Management of Risk

Robust and consistent processes for monitoring and reporting on contracts assist with the early identification of risks and allows for timely actions in mitigation. Regular reporting of, and direct engagement in, monitoring of key performance indicators allows service managers to make decisions based on timely and accurate data. Any significant concerns are raised directly with service leads and escalated to Directorate Management Team and Scrutiny as appropriate.

The recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced staff is crucial to the delivery of an effective service but remains a challenge when competing in a limited market with other public and private sector organisations. This is an area where

the service is constantly trying new ways of attracting and retaining staff.

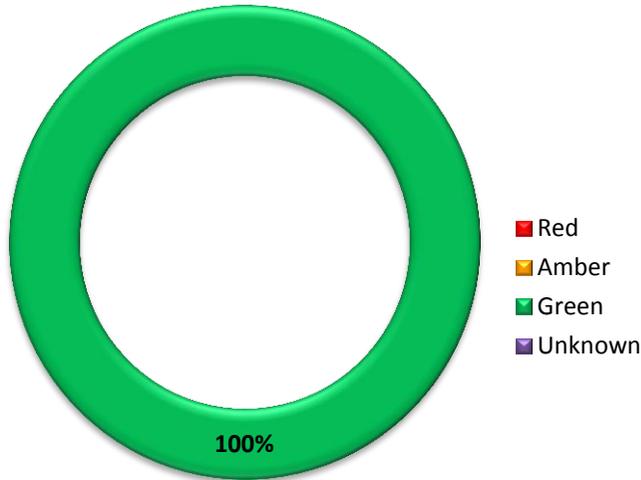
Lower Assurance

Providing home to school transport within budget remains a challenge due mainly to unpredictable demand and changing needs of young people. The service constantly reviews both eligibility and provision to meet need as defined by policy. Joint reviews are undertaken with services and to inform policy decisions by elected members. It is anticipated that the new model of provision for children with special educational needs will have a positive impact on the budget over time and the service are fully engaged in this development.



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Education Support



Overall Assurances

Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Admissions • Attendance • Children Missing Education • Tracking Status of 16-17 year olds in Education, Employment or Training • 5-16 Sufficiency

Overall Comments

Much of this service area is regulated by either legislation or statutory guidance and as such a high degree of assurance should be expected. A significant change for one area of work this year was the replacement of the main education system that was used to process school admission applications by parents, this new system was introduced in September 2018 along with free school meals eligibility checking and governor support in December 2018. The project management of the implementation of this new system was audited along the implementation journey and received 'substantial assurance' with no recommendations suggested for change. This has allowed the service to substantially mitigate the previous risk associated with unsupported software around a critical function.

The majority of families continue to enjoy high preference rates for their first choices of schools due to careful management of school places and the creative use of capital basic need funding. The tracking of the situation of 16 and 17 year olds was audited in the spring and received 'high assurance' in April 2018.

Management of risk

An annual report of the situation of children who are not on roll at a school is presented and scrutinised by children's directorate management team each year along with service



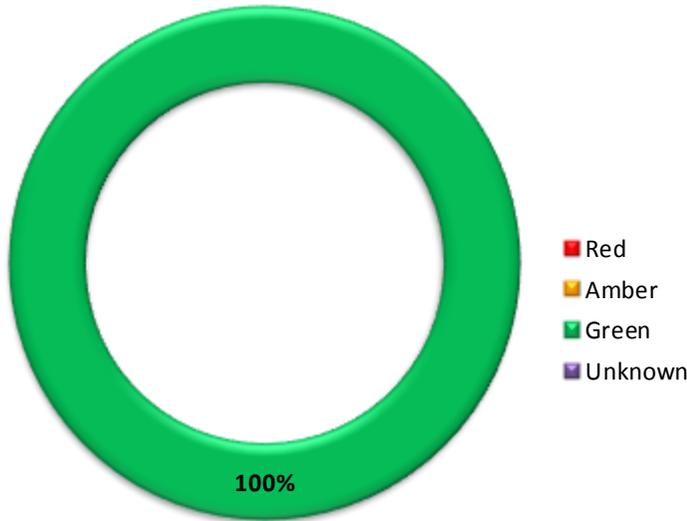
Combined Assurance Status Report

performance targets each quarter. The service is linked in to several local authority peer groups that share practice and information to achieve best practice in performance.



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Inclusion



Committee, Children’s Service’s Directorate Management Team and Children’s commissioning.

The Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy continues to address the problem of a previously rising and unsustainable rate of permanent exclusion from Lincolnshire schools. The Lincolnshire Ladder of Behavioural Intervention has supported schools in focusing on the underlying drivers of challenging behaviour, rather than merely its outward presentation. Permanent Exclusions in Lincolnshire have seen a 13% reduction in 2017/18 and a 37% reduction since the Ladder was launched. This progress is against a national picture of increased exclusion.

Management of Risk

Robust processes for monitoring and reporting on the BOSS contract allows early identification of risks and timely mitigation. Any significant concerns are appropriately escalated through to Directorate Management Team or Scrutiny. The Department for Education has indicated that exclusions continue to be an area of focus over the next year and the Local Authority will seek to influence this in the interests of children and young people. It will also be necessary to respond to changes in legislation and ensure schools are supported to meet any new expectations placed on them.

Overall Assurances

Green
• Inclusion

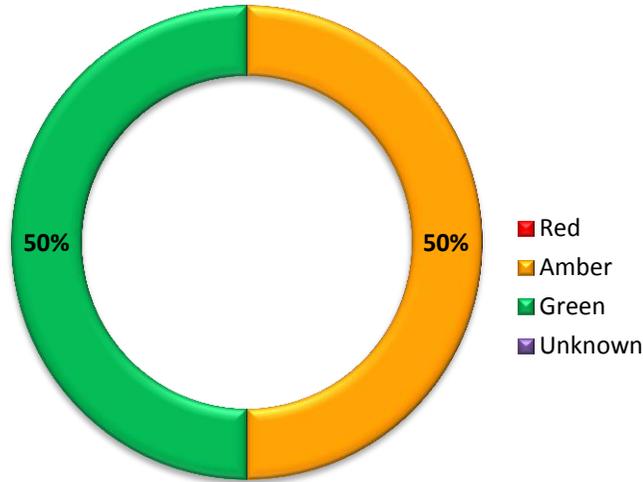
Overall Comments

Inclusion data and the performance of the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) are subject to close scrutiny and monitoring by Children and Young People’s Scrutiny



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School Improvement Service



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Performance of Schools and Academies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing the Attainment Gap

Overall comments

The main validation of effectiveness of school improvement is OfSTED Inspection of Schools and Academies. Lincolnshire has remained slightly above its statistical neighbours and national for the number of schools rated as good and outstanding. The Local Authority is effectively identifying concerns in terms of standards and engaging early to prevent further decline more effectively within the remit of maintained schools and academies. There have been a significant number of achievements over the last year in terms of securing school improvement activity and funding. The Local Authority, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and the Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together group are continually strengthening links, provision and responsiveness to emerging needs.

Although some improvements have been seen, the performance gap between Lincolnshire and National measures persists to be adrift through all phases. Data for this performance has been scrutinised internally, externally and appropriate support packages implemented for Key Stage 2 pupils through the Strategic School Improvement Fund. This will be closely monitored in terms of impact by Education Locality Leads and Department for Education monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.



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Management of risk

For monitoring performance, an annual report of school improvement activity, OFSTED performance and standards are reported to the Children's Services Directorate Management Team, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board and communicated to the school sector via Head teacher Briefings.

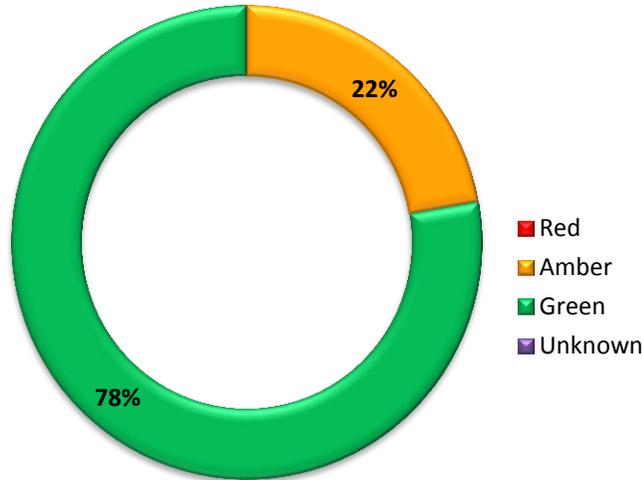
The Local Authority has strong working relationships with the Regional School Commissioner and a number of Multi-Academy Trusts and this enables to manage risk proactively. We work well with the East Midland School Improvement Group for the purposes partnership scrutiny, review, support and challenge.

Regarding closing the attainment gap, an annual report of school improvement activity and standards is reported to the Children's Services Directorate Management Team, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board and communicated to the school sector via Head teacher Briefings. Priorities from data analysis are discussed with relevant schools and appropriate support or intervention is indicated from the Teaching Schools. Education Locality Leads support, monitor and challenge maintained schools and seek assurance from Academies were possible.



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SEND



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sensory Education Support Service Early Support and Co-ordination Services Children With Disabilities Social Care Team Occupational Therapy Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied Psychology Service SEND Home Tuition

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young People's Learning Partnership Specialist Teaching Team and Eclips Team 	

Overall Comments

Lincolnshire was subject to a Joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission SEND inspection of the local area in October 2018 and the outcomes provided re-assurance that children and young people in Lincolnshire, who have additional needs, are identified and supported well. Processes and procedures to manage the legal requirements introduced in September 2014 are now well embedded and the SEND service meets expected timescales in 95% of cases. All transfers of Statements of SEN to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans were completed by the 31.03.18 deadline.

The Specialist Teaching Team continues to receive very positive feedback from over 80% of schools that buy back the service and the Sensory Education Support Team is recognised for the significant contribution it makes to the early identification of children with sensory impairment. The Children with Disabilities Team continues to perform within best practice standards and 100% of 17 year olds that will require Adult Social Care have a completed Passport to Adulthood to support effective transition. Young Peoples Learning Provision (YPLP) is preparing young people for



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adulthood well with 67% of those undertaking supported internships going into paid employment and a further 28% going on to further education or voluntary work. The Home Tuition service provides interim education for pupils awaiting specialist provision and has been particularly successful in supporting young people at Key Stage 4 to make positive transitions back into education with 100% going on to Further Education.

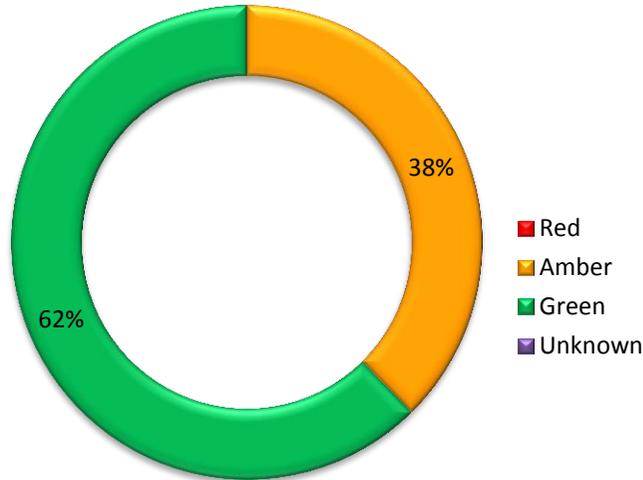
Management of Risk

The SEND Service continues to provide regular progress reports to Directorate Management Team, Children's Scrutiny and the Schools' Forum. Detailed weekly performance monitoring is in place by the service.



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People Management



Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee relations cases and settlement agreements 	

Overall Comments

The Council People Management (PM) and Workforce Plan includes the co-ordinated programme of projects and activities, informed by HR and workforce data and other organisational intelligence, which are designed to address:

- a) the longer term workforce planning challenges to mitigate the corporate risk of recruiting and retaining key skills
- b) any immediate HR or workforce challenges impacting on the Council

The corporate projects support specific Director Area workforce planning and development strategies.

The ability to recruit and retain staff in high risk areas remains a corporate strategic risk and the impact of the controls, which are predominantly the PM & Workforce Plan projects and activities, are also monitored through the Strategic Risk Register assurance process.

Effective HR metrics and other organisational information are important for ensuring that the Council can assess whether

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council People Management and Workforce Plan (PMWP) 2018 PWMP Performance Driven Outcome PMWP Employer of Choice Outcome PMWP Engagement Outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship reforms Serco HR, Admin, and Payroll and Transactional Services Serco People Management Service Delivery



Combined Assurance Status Report

the PM Workforce Plan projects and activities are supporting business objectives; that their impact/benefits can be understood; and for confirming whether critical processes are operating effectively.

Significant progress has been made over the last 12 months as a result of improvements of the inputting of data on Agresso by managers for example, sickness absence and appraisal completion. Focused effort will continue to support accurate and timely inputting, prior to the planned programme of Agresso system improvements sponsored by the Chief Executive. These improvements are wide ranging and will support back office Payroll delivery as well as assist managers with their input and access to real time information. The system improvements will also be supported by a programme of data cleansing that will further improve data quality.

Recent engagement with Corporate Management Board (CMB), Informal Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board shows good governance and reporting mechanisms are in place in relation to the projects and activities which underpin the Council PM and Workforce Plan. A report will go to CMB in December 2018 in respect of priorities for 2019/2020 based on strategic workforce data and broader organisational intelligence.

We have had a number of audits completed in 2018 receiving High Assurance from Internal Audit for Social Work Recruitment, and Substantial Assurance for Sickness Absence Follow-up and Payroll. IR35, Strategic Workforce Planning, Apprenticeship Reform, and Recruitment and Resourcing are all planned.

Management of Risk

The PM Service has a good reputation for supporting the business to manage its' people risks working in partnership with colleagues in Legal Services Lincolnshire on high risk cases. A robust framework aligned to good employer principles is in place for ensuring the management of HR policy review and updates.

There are well established governance arrangements in place for all the critical people management processes. There remains a number of improvements required relating to the management of payroll processes, which are detailed in the Internal Audit report for Payroll (October 2018.)

Strategic oversight of risk management activity is achieved through monthly monitoring and review of the People Management Service Partnership Risks and Issues Log through the Partnership Operational Delivery Meeting. The high risks are reported monthly on an exception basis to the Director for People Management as part of the monthly



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Service Plan review. There are risk owners in the People Management Team assigned to each of the processes.

The delivery of the Serco HR Administration and Payroll Transactional Service has received substantial assurance. This compares with the previous year where assurance was in the low category. Performance is also monitored through the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for People Management at the monthly Serco/LCC Operations Board, and for the last 10 months, all KPIs have been continually met.

Additionally the Pay Statements Project, which aims to identify payment errors since April 2015 and provide assurance that these have been corrected, is being progressed. It is anticipated that this project will conclude by the end of December.

It is proposed that the status of the Apprenticeship Reform project moves from Red to Amber (to be confirmed by Project Board on 27th November) due to the following rationale:

- There has been a healthy increase in apprenticeship training at the end of September. This has been due to the take up of higher level apprenticeships within the existing workforce for the September intake at universities and colleges.
- The engagement with the Senior Leadership Group which commenced in May is having positive benefits with take

up of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Local Government apprenticeship.

- The biggest opportunity for delivering the apprenticeship strategy remains with the existing workforce. Publicity of apprenticeship opportunities will focus on appraisals and personal development plans, showcasing the available standards in the apprenticeship course catalogues for generic training (Commissioning and commercial, Digital, Finance and Audit, Highways and Planning, Management) and Children's Adults and Public Health director areas. The aim is to capture the January – February timescales for appraisals and maximise this opportunity in the run up to the implementation of the performance related pay scheme which comes into effect in April 2019.

In the immediate future, the impact of organisational change in the Serco HR Advisory service together with the more recent decision taken to insource a range of People Management services from April 2019 may affect assurance levels overall. From January 2019 capacity will be reduced and remaining resources will need to be aligned to key priorities in the short – term and a balance found between operational demand and strategic demand. It is possible that focus may be diverted from strategic developments.

It is anticipated that the supporting infrastructure and IT systems to support new ways of working for HR Advisory Services will be delayed.



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The population of younger people in Lincolnshire is increasing at a significantly slower rate than for those over 65. This suggests that the Council needs to work harder to invest in younger people who reach working age to be able to replace the older workforce as they retire.

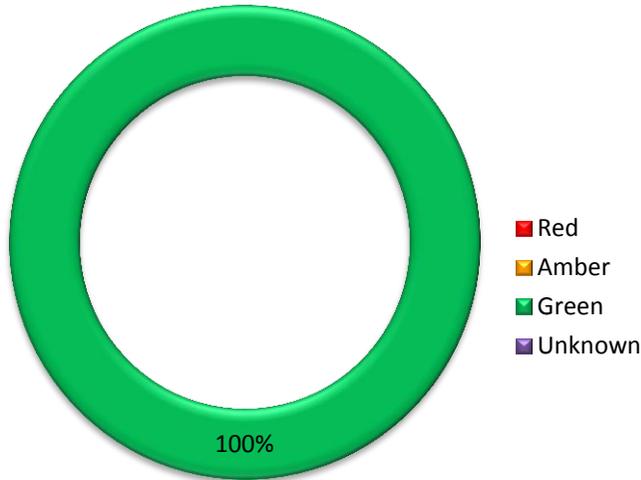
The Council needs to continue to develop proactive approaches to ensure that it remains attractive to potential employees, building opportunities for the students of Lincolnshire and making links with colleges to ensure they are developing the workforce required for the future.

Looking further to the future, data indicates that we are likely to see a continued increase in the age people start having children, the age they are able to buy their first property. Mortgage terms available are longer than ever and the age people retire from working is getting later. These trends increase the challenges for the Council as an employer. Employees are more likely to have caring responsibilities for older relatives and may be looking for ways to maintain employment while winding down their career, such as stepping down from higher levels of responsibility, seeking flexible retirement options as well as greater flexibility in their working pattern.



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Schools Finance



Overall Assurances

Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Share Calculation School Budget Monitoring

Overall Comments

The Local Authority's role in determining schools funding and the monitoring of maintained schools budget are crucial to the effective financial management of the schools sector. Skilled staff within the Finance team and associated teams enable key functions to be carried out effectively and on time. Where resourcing capacity becomes stretched, the team will prioritise, and the work targeted, with the greatest focus being on those schools that require the intervention in the short term. Overall, effective assurance levels are maintained with the position being monitored continually to manage any emerging risks.

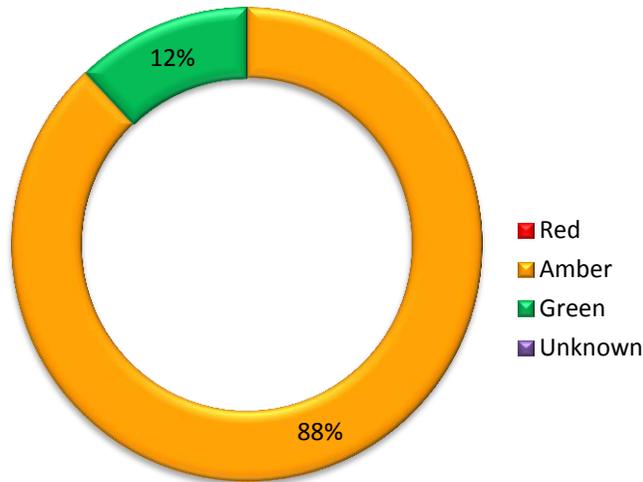
Management of Risks

The schools budget share process involves a number of areas and staff, therefore processes and systems are required to ensure that all information published is accurately and timely, and that the affordability of the £539m Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is achieved, particularly in light of the national funding formula changes across the four blocks of the DSG, and their parameters. The detailed timetable, staff training and support with clear lines of accountability and sign off at each stage in the process allow the complex process to be managed and the risks controlled. Timescales and accuracy of calculating and publishing of schools budgets have been fulfilled in all prior years. Lower Assurances



Combined Assurance Status Report

Key Projects



Green	Amber
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion for all: Review of special educational needs offer Special Schools Project Supported accommodation

Overall Comments

We continue our change programme through a number of aspirational projects which have and will continue to require significant resources. Many of these projects are near completion, although the special school project remains in the planning phase. We anticipate that these projects will transform provision and will deliver high quality responsive services which are even better value for money.

Management of Risk

Most of the key projects have moved into delivery from design (special school project is expected to move into delivery imminently). Governance arrangements are in place and resources to enable effective management of the projects secured. Some projects require commitment from partners and due to partner's competing priorities, this commitment has not been secured in all instances.

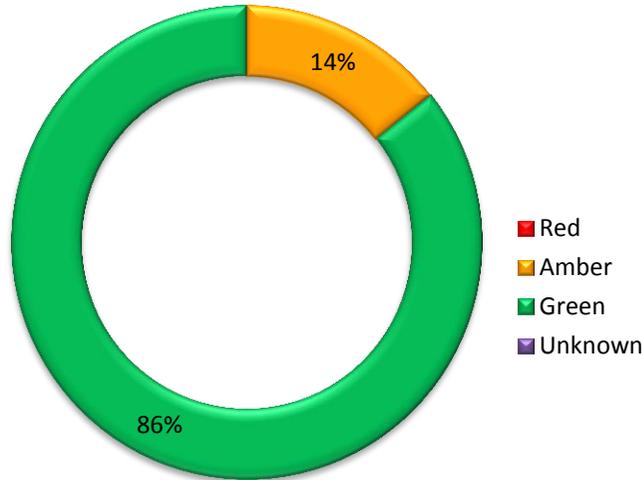
Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs of Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners in Practice Integrated Health and Social Care Joint Commissioning of SEND Asset Plus Managing children and young people exploitation



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Key Partnerships



Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court User Group Youth Offending Service Management Board 	

Partnership arrangements are robust and the local arrangements ensure a clear and collective determination and drive to engage agencies in delivering a coherent approach to safeguard children, promote their welfare and ensure that they reach their potential with a strong focus on educational aspirations, Strategic action plans are well considered and comprehensive, and are underpinned by a strong shared vision and ambition with clear governance across all partnership arrangements.

Partnership working with health is strong, although there remains commitment to further integrate our health and care system across the County. We have established a joint commissioning team with the Clinical Commissioning Groups help deliver a more integrated approach to meeting needs of children and families. Through the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership, relationships with schools and academies including Multi Academy Trusts are effective and improved

Partnership working can always improve and although we have strong foundations, we believe that reviewing our partnership arrangements to safeguard young people engaging in high risk taking behaviours are starting to improve and the introduction of the Future4Me service will assist.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board Youth Justice Board Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Regional Framework Commissioning Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together

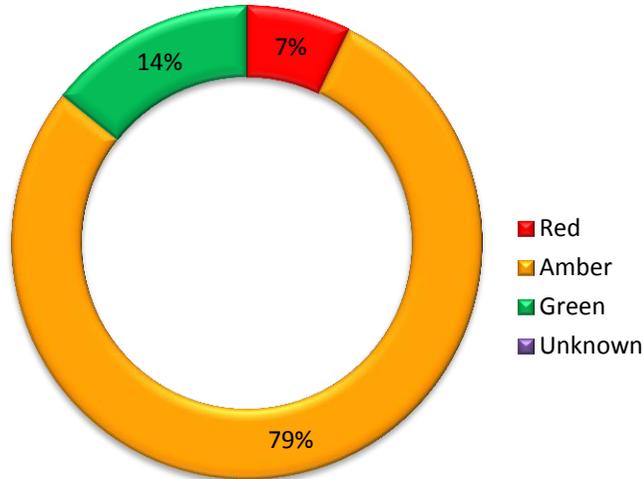


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Our relationship with Serco has improved significantly and we are pleased that the assurance on payroll have improved to substantial.



Key Risks



Red Operational Risks

- **Agresso Re-engagement**

Strategic Risks

Council's highest rated Strategic Risks for this area of the business

Safeguarding Children

Recruitment/Staffing

A key strategic risk for service continues to be any potential failure to safeguard children. Linked to this is a strategic risk regarding recruitment of staff especially qualified Social Workers. These risks are related as without qualified, capable, well trained Social Workers are employed and retained, then safeguarding quality will be affected.

Work is ongoing to ensure that these risks are mitigated and children in Lincolnshire continue to have a good and effective support services.



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Examples of mitigating actions include:

- Audit of Section 11 (being conducted by People Management - Induction, Recruitment, Contract)
- Audit & Performance information to Directorate Management Team for scrutiny
- Safeguarding Assurance days
- Independent Chairs - and Independent Reviewing Officers who quality assure the care plans of looked after children and children subject to child protection plans
- Team Manager Audits
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Reviews and Significant Incident Reviews
- Practitioner Supervision & Appraisal
- Additional recruitment strategies above and beyond business as usual whilst reviewing and improving existing arrangements to create recruitment centre of excellence.

Another key risk is that our systems do not act as effective enablers to support the business. This risk relates mainly to Agresso/ Mosaic / ICT.

Examples of mitigating actions include:

- Upgrade of the agresso system
- Adapting the people management service delivery model
- Continued staff training on all systems
- Retaining capacity in support for Mosaic to enable system change
- Future4Me established to provide dedicated service for young people who are engaging in high risk behaviours.