

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director for Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	16 January 2015
Subject:	Ofsted Inspection of children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

Summary:

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI (Ofsted) are required to carry out inspections under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA). Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has the power to carry out inspections of certain local authority children's services functions as listed in section 135 of the EIA if he deems it appropriate. The inspection this report refers to is an inspection of the local authority functions with regard to the help, care and protection of children and young people.

All local authorities are required to be inspected under this framework within a three-year period.

Lincolnshire Children's Services was subject to an inspection of their services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers during October / November 2014 and the outcomes are attached in the attached paper. A review of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was conducted at the same time and this report is also attached.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the attached report and make comment.

1. Background

During October and November 2014 Lincolnshire Children's Services was subject to a 4 week inspection of their services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. A review of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was conducted at the same time.

The scope of the inspection of the Local Authority included:

- Those children and young people at risk of harm (but who have not yet reached the 'significant harm' threshold) and for whom a preventative service would provide the help that they and their family need to reduce the likelihood of that risk of harm escalating and reduce the need for statutory intervention
- Those children and young people referred to the local authority, including those for whom urgent action has to be taken to protect them; those subject to further assessment and those subject to child protection enquiries
- Those who become the subject of a multi-agency child protection plan setting out the help that will be provided for them and their families to keep them safe and to promote their welfare
- Those children and young people who have been assessed as no longer needing a child protection plan, but who may have continuing needs for help and support
- Those children and young people who are receiving (or whose families are receiving) social work services where there are significant levels of concern about children's safety and welfare, but these have not reached the significant harm threshold or the threshold to become looked after
- Those children and young people who are missing from education or being offered alternative provision
- Those children and young people looked after either by being accommodated under section 20 or those 'in care' during or as a result of proceedings under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 and those accommodated through the police powers of protection and emergency protection orders
- Those children aged 16 or 17 who are preparing to leave care and qualify as 'eligible'; those aged 16 or 17 who have left care and qualify as 'relevant'; those young people aged 18 and above and qualify as 'former relevant'; and those young people aged 18 to 25 who qualify as 'former relevant children pursuing further education or training' including those children living in homes of multiple occupation
- Those children and young people who have left care to return home, or are living with families under a special guardianship order, residence order or adoption order.

During the 4 week inspection, the inspection activities included:

- Sampling of children's cases in order to judge the quality of front-line practice and management and the difference this makes to the lives of children, young people, their families and carers – this included discussions with social work staff, including their managers and other professionals working with the child or young person
- Testing the decision-making at all stages of a child's journey: early help; referral and assessment; children in need; child protection planning; continuing support; the decision to remove a child from home; permanence

planning; placement decisions, including work to support return home; leaving care

- Meeting with children, young people, parents and carers
- Shadowing staff in their day-to-day work, for example observing practice in the duty team, the work of social workers with children and families and the work of independent reviewing officers
- Observing practice in multi-agency meetings such as child protection strategy meetings, child protection conferences, looked after children reviews and resource panels.

Reviewing evidence collected during the inspection, the inspectors make judgements on the **overall effectiveness** of services and arrangements for children looked after, care leavers and children who need help and protection.

The overall effectiveness judgement is a cumulative judgement derived from:

- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence including graded judgements on:
 - Adoption performance
 - The experiences and progress of care leavers
 - Leadership management and governance

Inspectors make their judgements on a four-point scale:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Inadequate

2. Conclusion

The attached report outlines the Ofsted judgement on the inspection of children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers as well as Ofsted's review of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Ofsted Inspection Report of Children's Services and LSCB

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Debbie Barnes who can be contacted on 01522 553210 or at Debbie.barnes@lincolnshire.gov.uk.