

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 fourth 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



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 transfer of Youth Offending into the service which offers significant opportunity to integrate all services for young people.

The service has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and works proactively to be a learning

organisation. There is a significant focus on quality assurance processes which enables the service to assess the impact of practice on outcomes for children, young people, families and the Council's workforce.

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 Serco is improving.

The service constantly seeks new, innovative and most cost effective arrangements to improve practice across Children's Services and People Management. However it must be highlighted that the experience of the implementation of the AGRESSO system as an enabler continues to impact negatively on service performance, although there has been some improvement recently. Significant staff time has been diverted from direct service delivery to address implementation challenges and there has been a lack of performance monitoring as managers don't have access to the tools they need to enable them to be highly effective. ICT as an enabler continues to be a challenge although the recent implementation of MOSAIC, our new case management



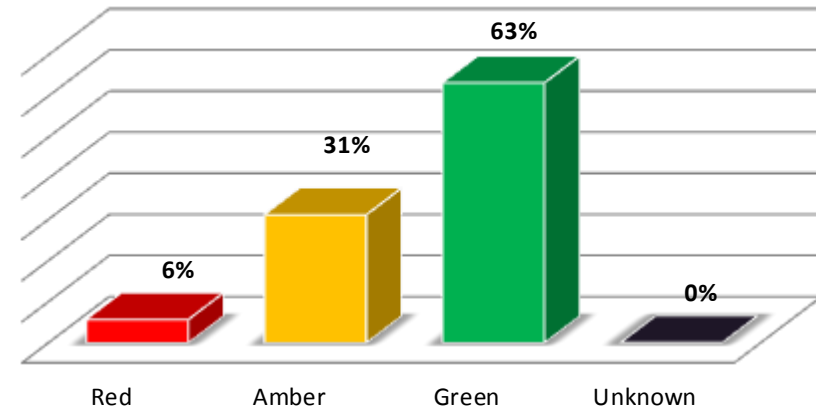
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system, will now start to assist front line staff, once the quality of the ICT hardware improves.

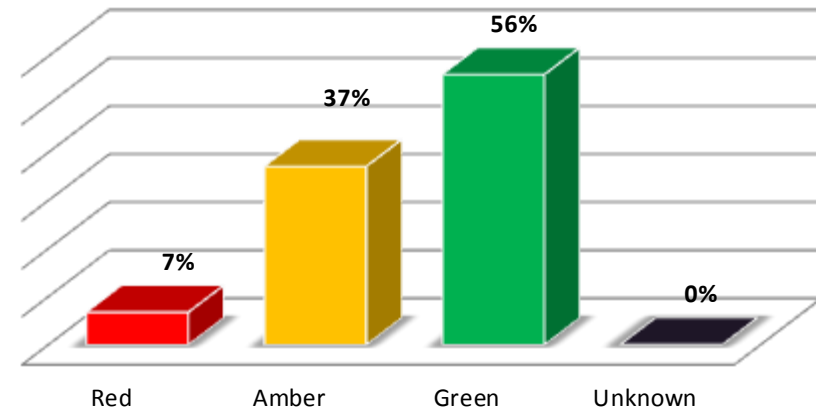
In addition to the challenges outlined above, there remain some critical issues for the service: demand on resources continues to increase in line with other Local Authorities so budgets remain under pressure. Recruitment of skilled qualified staff especially social workers is a key challenge with the service continuing to provide a focus on recruitment opportunities. Human Resource pressures focus on supporting Serco to create a responsive HR service which is seen as a centre of excellence.

As the Executive Director with responsibility for the People Management function, (which supports all Director Areas of the Council), there has continued to be significant client side resources assigned to the governance of the Serco contract and in particular to the remediation of the HR and Payroll aspects of the Agresso system. This also includes oversight of transformation projects designed to improve the delivery of the People Management service. The priority area has been to review, modernise and improve the Recruitment Service by April 2017. The outcome will be to deliver a more candidate focussed, pro-active, modern recruitment service, including the development and delivery of recruitment strategies and targeted campaigns for critical posts across the Council.

Overall Assurance Status 2016/17



Overall Assurance Status 2015/16





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Suggested next steps.....

The next 12 months offers the service significant transformational opportunities:

- As we are judged to be good by Ofsted with some elements of our services judged outstanding, we have been confirmed as a partner in practice which is part of the Government's programme of reform to improve frontline children's social work. There are significant programmes of work associated with this which will also involve in us continuing to support other Local Authorities who are in need of improvement. Whilst this is an exciting opportunity, capacity will need to be carefully balanced
- We are excited about the decision to transform and insource public health nursing which will further integrate health and social care services for families. The model of public health nursing for children and young people will be modernised to more appropriately reflect the way children live their lives and the associated challenges.
- We are working with our Head Teachers of our special schools to be able to offer more opportunities for inclusion so that children in need of an alternative curriculum can have their needs met closer to home. This will reduce long travel distances and ensure children can have access to a curriculum which meets their needs within their locality

- 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 invest in alternative supported accommodation options to ensure we can meet their needs within Lincolnshire
- We must 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

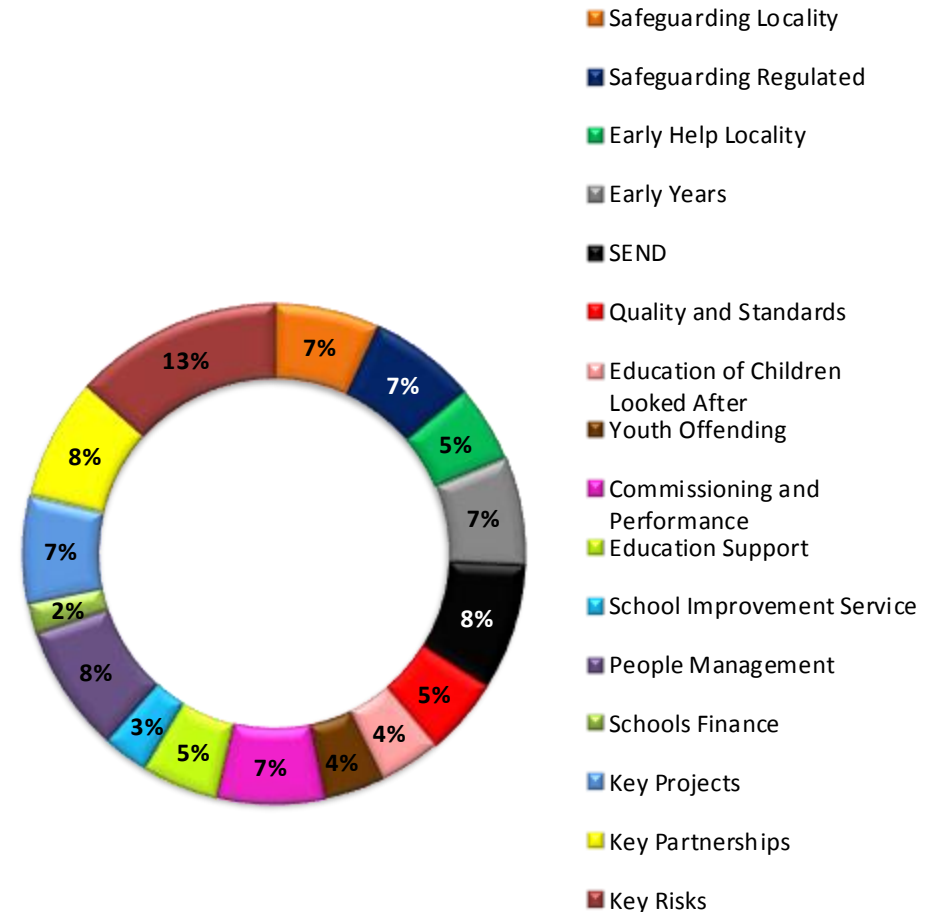
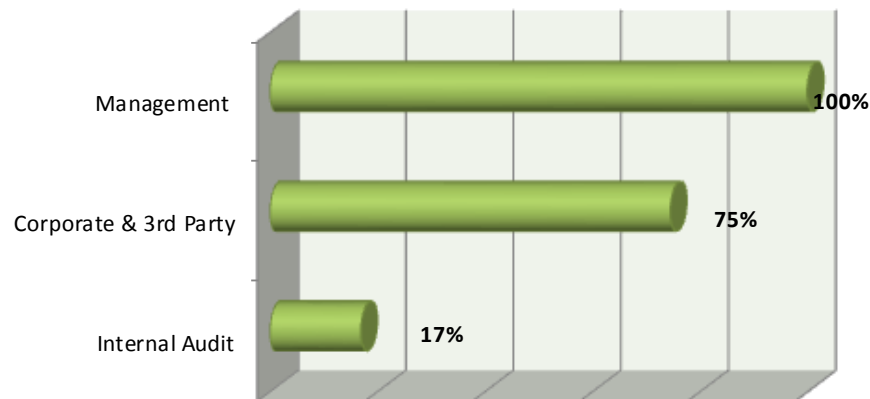


Critical Systems

The service 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.

There is significant governance regarding the contract management of Serco and we envisage that this will continue to be needed in 2017.

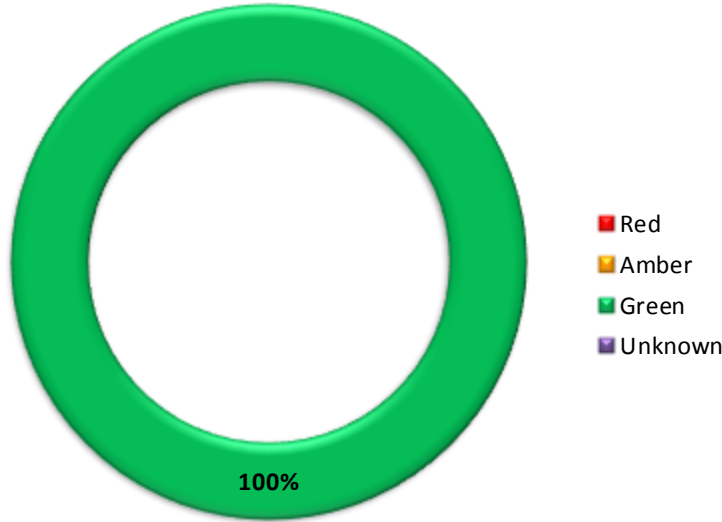
Who Provides Your Assurance





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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 JTAI which did not highlight any concerns about safeguarding in localities

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 though 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.

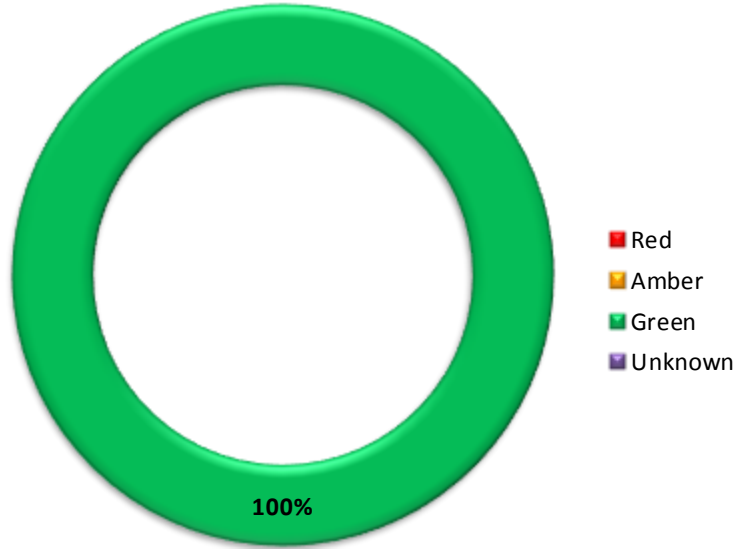
Overall Assurances

Green
Children's EDT
Children in Need
Child Protection
Care Proceeding
Support Panels
Family Group Conferencing
Early Help



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Safeguarding Regulated



Overall Assurances

Green
Adoptions
Fostering
Looked After Children
Children's Homes
Secure Unit
Care Leavers
Short Break Homes

Overall Comments

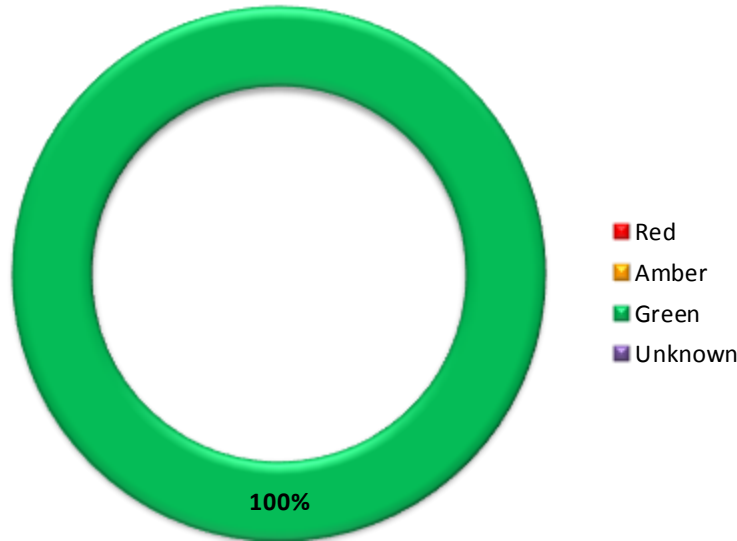
Regulated Services has continued to meet all targets in respect of key performance indicators, demonstrating that the services it delivers remain strong and ensures good outcomes for children and young people. The Corporate Parenting Panel, Safeguarding assurance days, rigorous auditing process and the 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. Performance of Regulated Services is also monitored externally, through Ofsted, with all services being judged as Good or Outstanding.



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Early Help Locality



Overall Comments

Locality Early help is continuously improving; the service has continued to develop in line with needs identified available resources and feedback from families and professionals. There have been restructures so that the service is more efficient and this has enabled some savings at the same time. New structure has been in place since 1st November 2015 and this helps in terms of resources and the effectiveness of services.

Early Help consultants have been introduced to provide professional guidance to schools and other professionals for robust approach to cases and this has improved the quality of the arrangements. Training, workshops and development sessions have been offered to professionals and this has assisted internal staff and partners with the skills and confidence in improving outcomes for vulnerable children. TAC Forums have been established in localities to enable professionals to share information and celebrate good practice.

Overall Assurances

Green
Family Information Service
Families Working Together
Early Help
Contact Service
Safeguarding

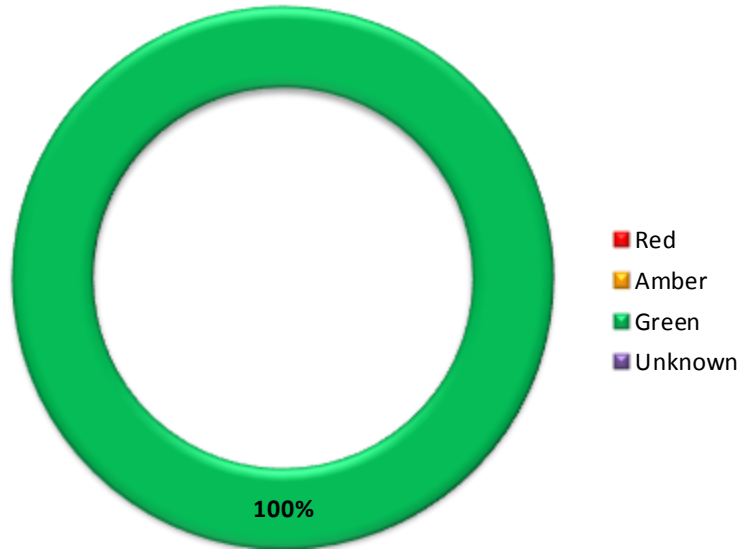
Management of Risk

On a journey for continual improvement there is commitment to quality assurance and ongoing work on identifying key themes, areas of good practice and areas for development. The restructure and service needs require a redefining of the Early Help offer and service priorities. Quantity and quality of TACs have continued to increase; this is a demonstration of identifying and addressing the needs of Lincolnshire children earlier, which is a positive, however, the continuing rise in numbers of TACs and the demand for the service have created capacity issues and potential risk to quality which need to be addressed.



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Early Years



Overall Comments:

Early Years continues to exceed National and Local Authority targets across all aspects, which the internally and externally evaluated performance indicators confirm that the Early Years Services continues to achieve a high degree of compliance. Both customer feedback and that from statutory bodies is very positive.

The Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes for Lincolnshire have remained above national average, in 2016, the monitoring and Quality Assurances of Lincolnshire's processes are undertaken by the Testing Agency (STA). The take up of 2 Year Old Free Entitlement is good based on a higher than national average participation level. A key focus for the coming year will be the introduction of the 30 hour free early years entitlement from September 2017, Lincolnshire will be offered support and challenge by the DfE's commissioned partner, Childcare Works in relation to their level of take up. All areas of responsibility will continue to be reviewed periodically against agreed action plans and actions updated throughout 2017 as necessary.

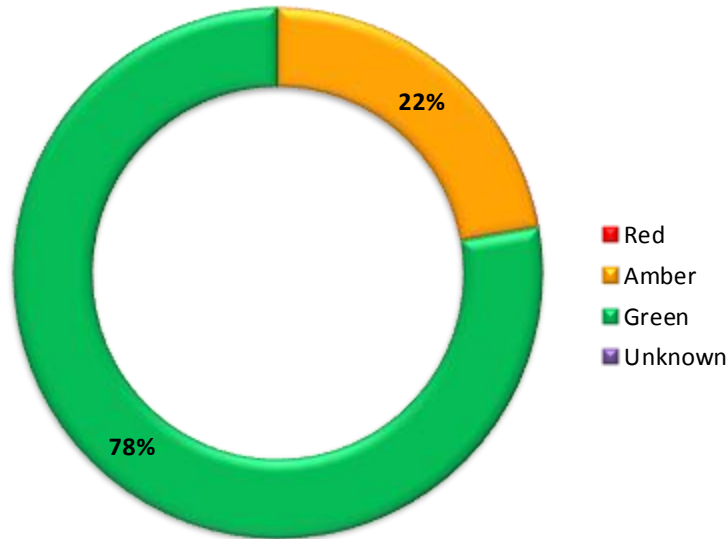
Overall Assurances

Green
Support and Advice to Early Years Providers
EY Educational Entitlement Funding (2yo)
EY Educational Entitlement Funding (3-4yo)
Profile Scores
Early intervention
Supported Childcare Allocations and Inclusion Funding
Children's Centres



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SEND



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Post 16 learners	Special Educational Needs (Education, Health and Care Planning process)
Sensory Education Support Service	Applied Psychology Service
Early Support and Co-ordination Services	
Children with Disabilities Social Care Team	

Green	Amber
Occupational Therapy Team	
Young Peoples Learning Partnership and Promoting Employment Team	
Specialist Teaching Team	

Overall Comment:

The Joint Ofsted and CQC Framework for the Inspection of Local Areas (SEND) was implemented in May 2016. Processes and procedures to manage the new legal requirements are now well embedded and the service is meeting timescales in 95% of cases. The service is on track to complete all transfers of Statements of SEN to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans by the 31.03.2018.

85% of schools in Lincolnshire buy back the support provided by the Specialist Teaching Team and the Sensory Education Support Team is successfully trading its service to another Local Authority with discussions in place to trade to a second neighbouring area.

The YPLP Team was subject to Ofsted inspection in 2016 and graded *Good*, and the Children with Disabilities Team continues to perform within best practice standards.

Management of Risk:

The SEND Service continues to provide regular progress reports to DMT, Children's Scrutiny and the Schools' Forum. Detailed weekly performance monitoring by the service



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management group is ensuring that there is a good understanding of the range of activity within the service and is supporting the early identification of any difficulties so that there is a prompt response when there are potential risks to statutory compliance.

Lower Assurance:

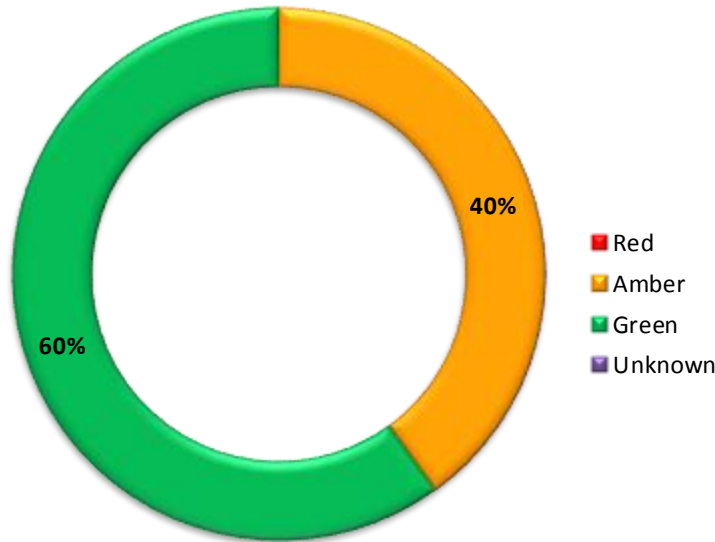
There is still work to be done to ensure that the broad range of activities covered by the inspection are where the local area needs them to be e.g. involvement of health services in the strategic arrangements for SEND and in moving forward the joint commissioning requirements. Progress is reported to the SEND Steering Group as well as DMT.

Following an independent review of the Educational Psychology function in 2016 the development and implementation of a new part-traded delivery model is reported regularly to DMT. The new model will commence in September 2017.



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Quality and Standards



Overall comments

The Independent Chairs and Reviewing Service has seen little change over the last year. The changes which have taken place have been focused on improving the quality of service which is offered to children and young people with a higher level of direct engagement from workers.

The independent advice and support service (Liaise) has been subject to a restructuring which was completed in August 2016. The work force is in the process of undergoing training programmes which will increase their confidence and skills in communicating directly with children and young people. There are plan in place to increase the number of families the service is able to engage with, though the use of community groups.

There have been no significant changes in Learning and Development from last year and the service continues to be responsive to the training needs of workers within Children's Services.

Quality and Assurance underwent a restructuring in 2016 which was completed in August 2016. There has been some difficulty in recruiting to the newly established Practice Supervisor post however this post has now been filled with the new worker commencing in January 2017.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) moved under the management of the Quality and Standards Manager in April 2016. The move resulted in a review of all active work being undertaken by the LADO. Following discussion with DMT a number of cases were closed in the spring of 2016.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Independent Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
Learning and Development	Quality Assurance
Parent Partnership Liaise Service, Advice and Support Service	



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There has been a greater focus on ensuring that tracking of cases takes place at regular intervals, which has led to prompt case closures. There is a need to develop quality assurance processes for the service.

Management of Risks

All risks are effectively managed within the service areas. There has been some delay in undertaking the work within the quality assurance service which due to challenges in recruitment. It is anticipated that once the new practice supervisor is in post this will be resolved. The LADO service has experienced some changes in staffing. There is a need to review the service area as a whole. A paper will be presented to DMT in January 2017 setting out how the service might become more efficient.

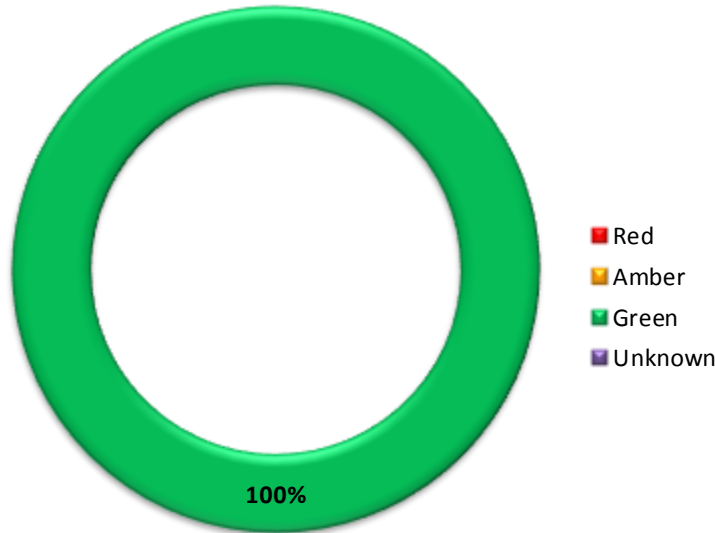
Lower Assurance

As previously stated there has been some delay in the quality assurance service being effective which has been due to recruitment issues. Now that new worker is recruited it is anticipated that the service will be in a position to ensure that there are good quality assurance processes in place for children services. The role of the LADO has been developed to include them also undertaking the role of the Independent Chair. All other service areas continue to develop their internal quality assurance processes through audit and direct feedback from customers.

It is a point of note that the implementation of the new IT system, Mosaic, has resulted in some performance data not being accurate but this is being addressed as a matter of urgency.



Education of Children Looked After



Overall Assurances

Green
Monitoring the education performance of looked after children through review of EPEP
Allocation of pupil premium to support education plan
Challenging and supporting schools and academies to improve educational progress of LAC
Supporting admission and inclusion of LAC into mainstream schools

Overall Comments

The Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP) is completed three times a year. The EPEP system has been upgraded and this process has now been expanded to cover all non-statutory school aged LAC on roll of the Virtual School. Completion rates have been on target up to September 2016 and Pupil Premium for Looked After Children is allocated against the targets set in the plan.

Management of Risks

The Virtual School provides comprehensive training to schools and individual teachers on effective ways to support their Looked After Children (LAC). Pupil progress is regularly reviewed through a 6 weekly virtual school survey which is completed by the schools. This data provides the Virtual School with the ability to identify areas of underperformance and offer challenge and support to schools as appropriate.

The Virtual School Team works with schools and LCC colleagues within the School Admissions Team and Social Care to ensure that LAC can access the appropriate mainstream school in a timely manner. Rates of Fixed Term Exclusions for LAC are in line with those nationally. The Virtual School offers advice, support and training to schools to ensure the emotional needs of LAC are met and exclusion is avoided wherever possible.

However, despite the progress above, there is still a need to maximise the impact of these developments in terms of providing support and challenge to schools in improving the rate of academic progress for key groups of LAC and



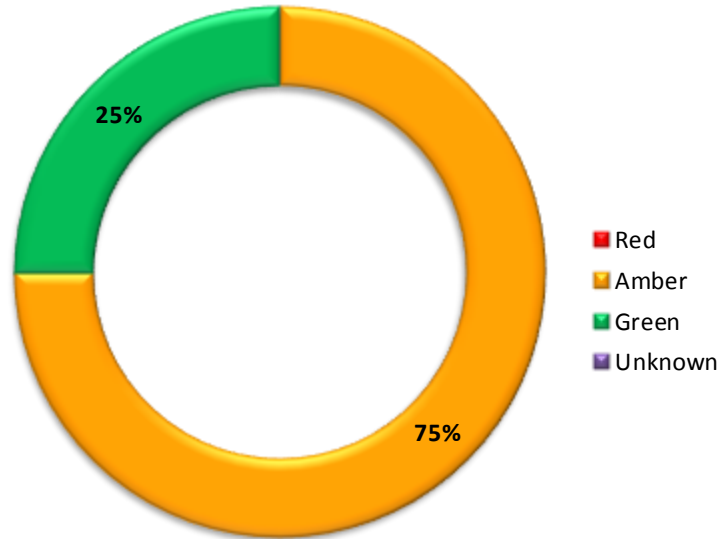
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particularly for the proportion of our young people making good or better progress in Maths and English at Key Stage 4.



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Youth Offending



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Youth Offending Service Delivery	YOS Funding
	Remand Management
	YOS Prevention

Overall Comments

In October 2016 the Youth Offending Service moved within the wider Children Services Directorate to drive forward innovative integrated working founded upon a restorative approach. In respect of assurance of service delivery the findings from the HMIP SQS inspection were addressed within a dedicated improvement plan and continue to be monitored. In addition this was supported by a Safeguarding Assurance Day visit and a further positive multi-agency inspection undertaken in late 2016 with a specific focus upon the impact of domestic abuse upon children and young people.

One of the key issues facing youth offending services nationally was the uncertainty relating to a future framework for youth justice delivery and funding linked to this which have been explored within the Taylor Report. The risks related to funding remain precarious due to the reliance upon a reducing Youth Justice Board grant and the funding received from the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner. The vast majority of the current budget is directed towards staffing; therefore any future reductions will inevitably prompt discussion around structure and service delivery.

Remand management continues to represent a significant financial risk for the wider organisation. The cost of young people being remanded to youth detention accommodation can be as much as £700.00 per person each night. This cost is passed back in full to the local authority with young people on remand also acquiring Looked after Children (LAC) status - placing both a financial and resources burden upon the local



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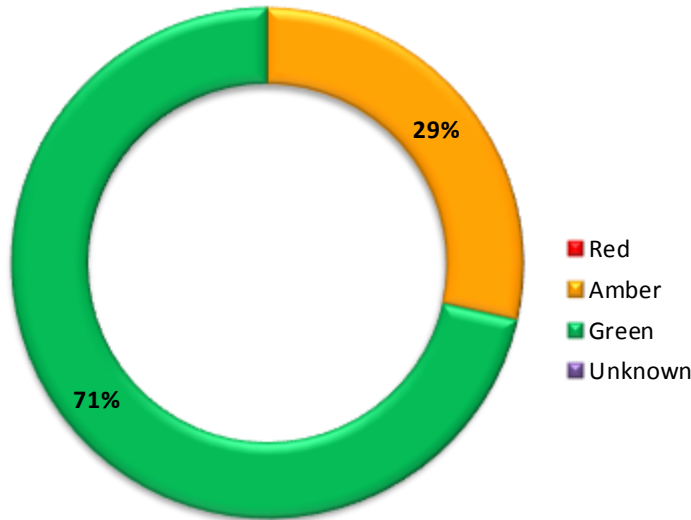
authority. During 2016 a number of high profile serious cases have generated a significant overspend within this area. The risks in this area can be mitigated by joint working, court engagement, robust non-custodial proposals and early identifications of credible accommodation options.

A recent increase in children entering the youth justice system as first time entrants within Lincolnshire necessitates a review of preventative activity. However this also requires the development of an effective diversionary and restorative model which minimises the potential for criminalisation. Work around this risk is progressing by strategic engagement with Lincolnshire Police, protocols for children in residential care and joint decision making panels which prioritise restorative non-criminal alternatives.



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Commissioning and Performance



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Procurement/Contract Provision	Home to School/College Transport
Management of Grants	Commissioning of Health Services
Contract Management	
Decommissioning of Services	
Performance	

Overall Comments

Commissioning and performance provide highly effective support to the range of teams within Children's Services and also with a number of partners and colleagues in the wider Council. Through robust systems for reviewing, commissioning and performance managing services they provide assurance and identify areas for improvement and opportunities for improving outcomes. Since working as a single team they have become more efficient and streamlined a number of processes. The team can demonstrate effective joint commissioning with health and other partners for example the commissioning of child and adolescent mental health services. The unpredictable nature of demand provides a challenge to effective budget management particularly with regard to home to school transport.

Management of Risk

Robust processes for monitoring and reporting on contracts assist with the early identification of risks and allows for timely mitigation of any risks. Regular reporting of key performance indicators allows staff in the department at both an operational and strategic level to make decisions based on timely and accurate data. Any significant concerns are appropriately escalated through to DMT and Scrutiny as appropriate. The recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced staff is a constant challenge in what is a very competitive local market for these specialist skills especially in relation to managing information and performance reporting. Specific



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commissioning risks tend to relate to those areas of service where demand is unpredictable or where there is a limited range of suppliers e.g. transport, meeting intensive needs.

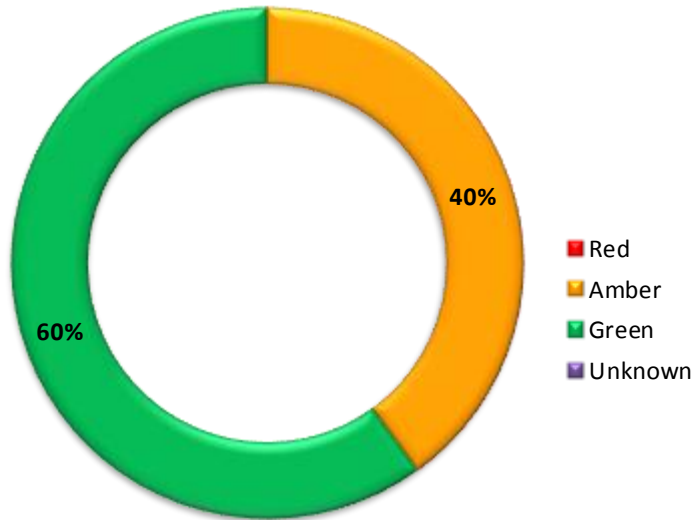
Lower Assurances

Providing home to school transport within budget remains a challenge. The service constantly reviews provision to try and achieve as cost effective solution as possible within policy and statutory requirements. Joint reviews are regularly undertaken with the service area where demand is generated for example special educational needs. The commissioning of 0 -19 public health nursing presents a risk with regard to the timescales needed to achieve the level of change required. Contingency plans are in place to ensure that the service will meet statutory requirements at the point of transfer to the Local Authority from the existing provider.



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Education Support



Overall Comments

Many of the functions within the education support service are statutory and regulated by either legislation or statutory guidance. There will always be some functions rated as amber as policy or process has to be changed to meet legislative revisions, these changes then take a while before assurances can be tested. The majority of families enjoy high preference rates (over 92%) of their first preference for a school place due to the combined work in planning for school places and the admission process. Much work has been undertaken with schools over the exclusion of pupils and a new behaviour outreach service has recently been commissioned. School attendance has been recently strengthened to work with schools that have high rates of unauthorised absence.

Management of Risk

The key risk facing the service is the software that has been used to manage several key functions. This is being managed through a commissioned replacement of the software which will mitigate the risk of system failure and support. A new process and system set up to monitor children missing education has been implemented and schools are significant contributors to its success with compliance monitored monthly. The success of the newly commissioned behaviour outreach service is monitored through contract performance monitoring.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
School Admissions	Attendance
2-18 Sufficiency	Inclusion
Tracking Status of 16-17 Year olds in Education, Employment or Training	



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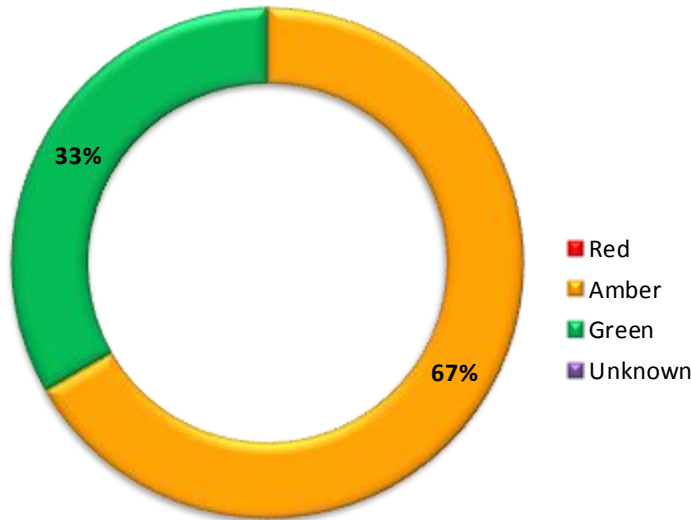
Lower Assurances

For school attendance, the new legislative changes around children missing education and the statutory reporting to the local authority of pupils who leave or join a school are now in place and schools compliance with this function is being monitored monthly. The number of pupils excluded from school has significantly decreased following the new 'inclusion strategy' and is monitored monthly along with the performance of the behaviour outreach support service contract.



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School Improvement Service



Overall Comments

At 31 October 2016, 87% of Lincolnshire schools and academies were graded "Good or Outstanding" by Ofsted compared with 84% nationally and 83% across the East Midlands. This means that 90% of pupils in Lincolnshire are educated in Good or Outstanding provision with only 1% of Lincolnshire's schools graded as Inadequate. The movement towards a Sector-Led model of school improvement has been successfully introduced and the role of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership continues to grow and be supported by schools. Future developments will see the Learning Partnership respond to schools performance data through the introduction of further county-wide school improvement initiatives. Schools are working well in a range of partnerships and the Local Authorities Education Team has clear protocols for effectively monitoring school performance and intervening where schools are deemed vulnerable or high risk.

Management of Risk

The key mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the service is Ofsted ratings. The percentage of Good or outstanding schools and the percentage of children in good or outstanding schools are key indicators used to monitor effectiveness. These are also benchmarked against the national average, statistical neighbours and the East Midlands.

Key risks around amber rated areas "Closing the Gap" and

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Monitoring Performance of Schools and Academies	Closing the Attainment Gap
	Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvements



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"LASSI" are that these are multi-agency and require effective delivery from all partners. The Local Authority endeavours to work cohesively with Teaching Schools, Multi-Academy trusts, clusters of schools, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership as well as the DfE, Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted to mitigate risks to school performance and improve outcomes for children and young people.

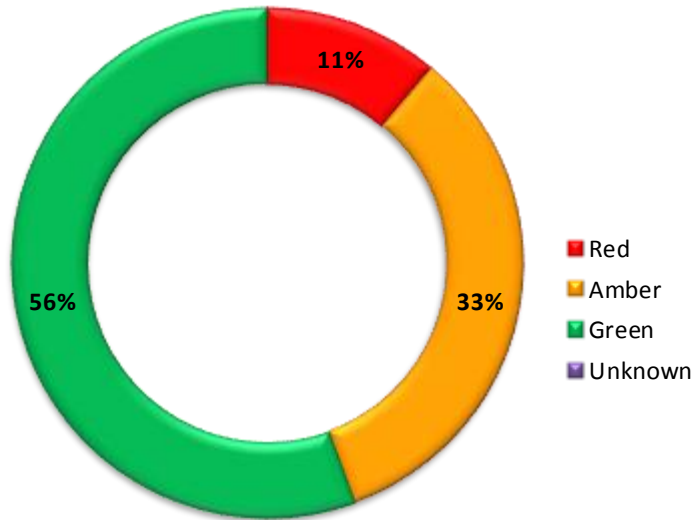
Lower Assurances

As the new Sector-Led model becomes further embedded and the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership refines its response to the needs of schools the risks around "Closing the Gap" will be increasingly reduced as the sector responds more effectively to performance data. The Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement will be further assured as relationships with partners such as the Teaching schools mature and become even more effective at meeting the needs of the most vulnerable schools.



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People Management



Green	Amber	Red
Serco People Management Service Delivery		
Compromise Agreements		

Overall Comments

The Council's Workforce Plan 2016 and beyond, (previously the People Strategy) 2015-2016 identifies the Council's people management commitments to support delivery of the Council Business Plan. Whilst the Workforce Plan Implementation Programme has remained on plan, the impact on its strategic benefits, including improved staff retention of key groups, reduced levels of sickness, increased staff motivation, will continue to be closely monitored. The Council's ability to access HR management information over 2015-16 and 2016-17 has been seriously impacted, due to the development of Agresso reporting not being prioritised compared with resolving payroll and pensions related issues. The Workforce Plan is currently managed through six work streams:

The following areas have good assurance

- Corporate Workforce Plan where corporate priorities are agreed by Corporate Management Board with quarterly reviews of progress built in, as well as periodic review by the VFM Scrutiny Committee to ensure effective governance.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber	Red
Corporate Workforce Plan	Strategic Workforce Planning	Serco HR, Payroll and Transactional Service Delivery
Organisational change/change management	Workforce Performance and Reward	
Leadership and Management Development	Engagement and Wellbeing	



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There is ongoing feedback from Service Area Workforce Leads and Serco HR colleagues through the quarterly Organisation Development Group where all service areas are represented, as well as regular feedback on plans through DMT's via their Strategic People Management Advisers

- Organisation Change and Development where there is a well-established and well understood process for managing restructures including potential redundancies and/or changes to terms and conditions. The Serco OD Service also support Managers by providing advisory tools to support changes to ways of working, for example, pre and post a formal restructure. Quality of delivery is monitored through the Serco contract.

- Leadership and Management Development where, following reductions to this budget, the Corporate Management Board agreed a revised strategy from 2016 onwards, entailing more of a 'self – learning' approach using on line tools, supported through the Serco OD Service. Measures are in place to enable evaluation of this Strategy after one year of operation.

The following areas have amber assurance

- Strategic Workforce Planning where through analysis of workforce data, there are trends emerging where the council is experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining posts across the Council, many of which are as a result of national

skill shortages, such as social workers. This results in destabilisation of teams and can lead to increased agency spend to cover vacancies. A programme of recruitment and retention measures have been implemented in Children's Social Work during 2016 as a pilot area which is being closely monitored with significant management oversight in place. The learning from this pilot is currently being shared with other service areas facing similar challenges. Improvements are also being developed in the delivery of the Serco Recruitment Service to deliver a more candidate focussed, proactive and modern recruitment service including the development and delivery of recruitment strategies and targeted campaigns for critical posts. The outcomes of these changes will be closely monitored by Corporate Management Board through the Council Workforce Plan governance arrangements

- Workforce Performance and Reward where the original timescales to roll out the of the 'Incremental Pay Progression through Performance' project were revised to enable the necessary engagement with trade unions and line managers, as well as the compulsory training/briefing of employees and Managers. The launch of the pilot at the beginning of 2017 will enable a full evaluation of processes ensuring a fair and consistent process is being applied by Managers, using new performance assessment ratings that consider both the achievement of objectives and the behaviours required by the Council, prior to final roll out in 2018/19. Additionally, an audit



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is planned to be undertaken by the Internal Audit Team, during the pilot year 2017/18

- Engagement and Wellbeing where there were a number of initiatives, such as body MOT's and Global Corporate Challenge which were ceased at the beginning of 2016 due to budget reductions. There have been a number of proactive initiatives delivered during 2016-17 including the Mental Health Awareness Training for Managers as well as audits carried out in a limited number of sickness hotspot areas. Additionally, due to the Council being unable to fully access strategic reports on days lost due to sickness absence over 2015-16 and 2016-17, it has not been possible to evaluate the impact of this workstream. Additionally an audit was completed by Internal Audit Team of the Council's absence management policy and procedures during 2016 to seek assurance they are being consistently applied when employees are absent due to sickness. However the outcome was Limited Assurance. A comprehensive action plan has been put in place which is being monitored closely by CMB, DMT's, and the Serco Absence Management Team on behalf of the Service Manager – People.

The following areas have red assurance

- Serco HR Administration and Payroll and Transactional Service Delivery which has been adversely impacted mainly due to issues regarding Agresso implementation. Payroll performance has been improving over the last 8-10 months,

with the number of reported errors reducing. Performance is monitored through the KPI's for People Management through the monthly Serco/LCC Operations Board. In respect of payroll and pensions service improvements, there has been regular reporting to the Audit Committee, whereby increased levels of assurance have been reported on the Serco management improvement actions which have been implemented, following the Internal Audit recommendations made as a result of the audit work during the period 9th July to 12th September 2016. Progress against the Payroll and Pension Audit Action Log is monitored by LCC People Management on a twice monthly basis, with evidence requested from Serco to provide the required assurance. There are a number of Audit Actions due dates that have moved to either end of January 2017 or end of March 2017. These actions all relate to the completion of the Price Waterhouse Cooper's Review of Payroll and Pensions and the production of Employee Pay Statements. A commitment was originally given by Serco to send out pay statements for 2015/16 to all staff by end of October 2016, however this has been delayed in agreement with the Council. The progress of this Project is being closely monitored by the Corporate Management Board. A further audit of the Serco Pensions and Payroll is to be undertaken starting in February 2017 to provide independent assurance that:

1. Appropriate controls are in place and operating in payroll systems and processes



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2. Payroll payments are bona fide and correct
3. Postings to the ledger are complete and accurate
4. Payments comply with statutory and local regulations (HMRC, pensions, Conditions of Service)

Over the last 8-10 months, there has also been progress made with key People Management projects delivered in partnership with Serco through the HR Portfolio Board. There are significant People Management resources in Serco and the Council who continue to be allocated to improving HR administration and payroll services, and to work towards the delivery of the benefits of increased self-service for key HR processes. Serco are planning to deliver key improvements in the Council's recruitment process, as well as the starter, mover and leaver processes which will enable improvements leading up to data arriving in the payroll system. These are key projects which underpin the Workforce Plan and are essential for modernising how the Council manages its recruitment, performance management, resourcing and learning management processes.

Progress has been made in enabling Managers to run a suite of HR Management information reports direct from Agresso, so they can monitor people related performance, for example, in relation to the management of sickness absence. However there have been challenges with the production of the more complex corporate HR reports, such as, days lost per FTE due to sickness absence and employee turnover. There have

also been key challenges for Managers in using Agresso. This has meant that the data recording the completion of appraisals over the period since Agresso was launched is not comprehensive. This issue is being addressed through both system improvements as well as arranging refresher training and guidance for Managers and employees in using the system. In light of the ongoing work on Agresso and related processes to deliver improvements, reporting of performance information for the areas outlined above, to inform the Workforce Plan, will be at the end of quarter 1, 2017-18.

A key priority is to ensure the momentum of the Council Workforce Plan is maintained through the work streams towards realising the benefits of the strategy, and ultimately to ensure it supports the required organisation capacity and resilience to deliver the Council's strategic objectives. In light of ongoing organisational and workforce change across the public sector, the Council will particularly need to ensure that the corporate priorities for the People Management Service will be to focus on:

- Ensuring improved outcomes for the recruitment and retention of key staff through the effective implementation of key initiatives
- Ensuring improved outcomes to the delivery of the Serco HR Administration and Payroll and Transactional Service



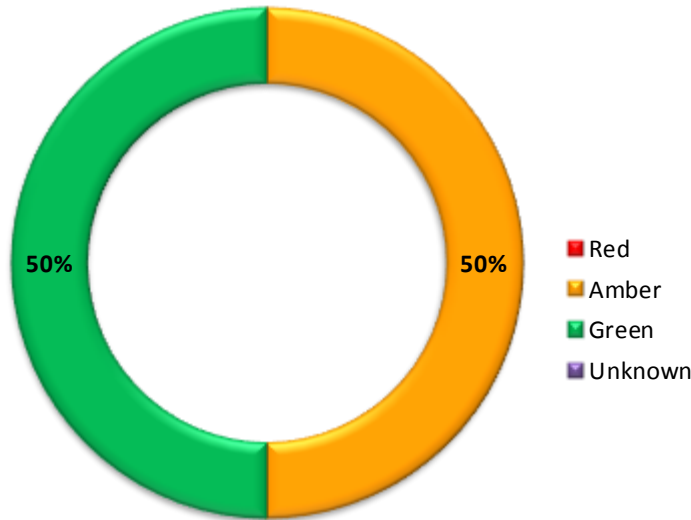
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The employee survey which will be run in late 2017 will also assist the Council in fully evaluating whether the expected benefits of the People Strategy are being sustained, and will further inform the Council's People Strategy priorities, 2016 and beyond.



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Schools Finance



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 enables key functions to be carried out effectively and on time. Where resourcing capacity is stretched unexpectedly (i.e. foreseeing the Agresso challenges), the team has had to prioritise, and the work targeted, particularly in respect of monitoring of schools budgets, with the greatest focus being on those schools that require the intervention in the short term. Overall, effective good assurance levels are maintained with the position being monitored continually to manage any emerging risks.

Management of Risk

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 £515m Dedicated Schools Grant is achieved. 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.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Budget Share Calculation	School Budget Monitoring



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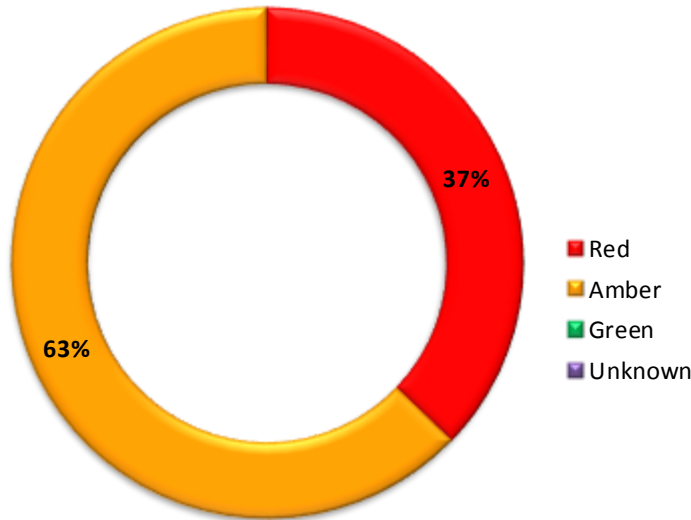
Lower Assurances

The schools budget monitoring process has been determined as an amber rating due to the Finance team being unable to fulfil its proactive and targeted role fully in supporting schools before they go into financial difficulties in all cases. The resourcing challenges caused by Agresso and developing solutions has led the team to be partly re-active in the approach to supporting schools with financial challenges. Although the Helpdesk and school visits are being delivered and support provided to schools in deficit or flagged as a concern, the functions within the school budget monitoring protocol were not fulfilled in its entirety as intended. The Local Authority's role in monitoring maintained schools budgets is important to securing sustainable budgets and aid schools financial planning. The policy is being reviewed presently, which will have greater links with other services, (such as school improvement changes, HR matters), which is intended to be implemented in 2017/18, and with the material Agresso matters overcome, the team will have greater capacity to support this work stream.



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Key Projects



Amber	Red
Asset Plus	
Transformation Project	

Overall Comments

We have a number of aspirational projects which will require significant resources to transform provision to ensure that we reduce spend, but continue to deliver high quality effective services. Robust governance arrangements of these projects is important and we must ensure that we have adequate capacity to effectively manage them, that we can provide effective decision making and escalation routes, as well as detailed transition plans to ensure the new arrangements can be implemented with minimal adverse impact

Management of Risk

All of the key projects are at an early stage so the risk rating reflects this. Governance arrangements are developing and not all resources to enable effective management of the projects have been secured. However this is mainly due to the projects being in their infancy and we are confident that the risks will reduce as governance is confirmed and resources are secured.

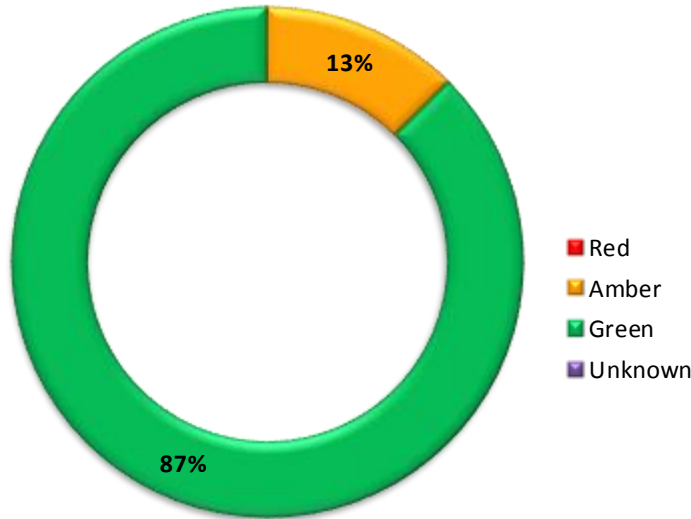
Overall Assurances

Amber	Red
Transfer of 0-19 Public Health Nurses	Inclusion for all : Review of special educational needs offer
Integrated Health and Social Care	Partners in Practice
Joint Commissioning of SEND	Supported Accommodation



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Key Partnerships



Green	Amber
YOS Management Board	
Court User Group	

Overall Comments

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 Serco is improving, although there remains significant risk especially with regard to payroll management.

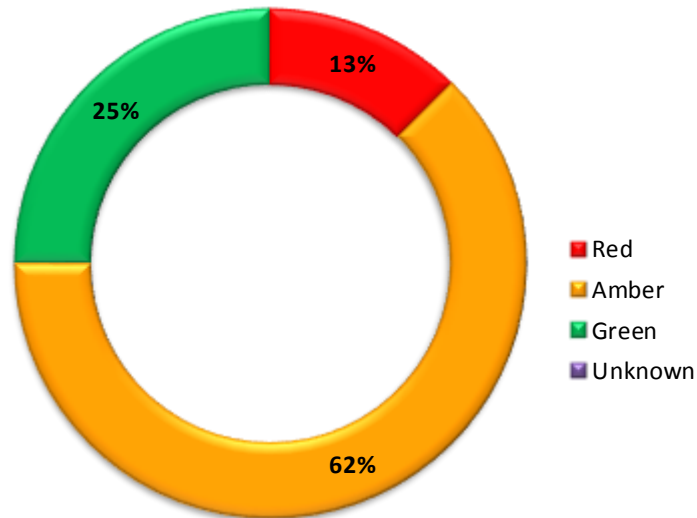
Partnership working can always improve and although we have strong foundations, we believe that reviewing our partnership arrangements to safeguard young people engaging in high risk taking behaviours will result in improved outcomes and greater integration.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board	Joint Commissioning
Youth Justice Board	
Lincolnshire Learning Partnership	
Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together	
Regional Framework Commissioning Groups	



Key Risks



Strategic Risks

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

Safeguarding Children

Recruitment/Staffing

Operational Risks

- Agresso Re-engagement

Emerging Risks

- Apprenticeship Levy



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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.

Examples of mitigating actions include:

- Audit of Section 11 (being conducted by People Management - Induction, Recruitment, Contract)
- Audit & Performance information to DMT 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.



Strategic Risk Register as at January 2017

Commissioning Strategy - Our communities are safe and protected from harm								
No of Risk	Risk Owner	Risk description	Risk Appetite (How much risk are we prepared to take & the total impact of risk we are prepared to accept)	Current risk score	Target risk score	Assurance Status (Full, Substantial, Limited, No)	Assurance - Direction of Travel (Improving, Static, Declining)	Actions
1	Debbie Barnes	Safeguarding Safeguarding children	Cautious (Regulatory standing & legal compliance - recognised may need to change the ways we do things are done but will be tightly controlled)			Substantial	Improving	Existing Controls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit & Performance information to DMT for scrutiny • Safeguarding Assurance days • Independent Chairs - review care plans & quality - act as eyes & ears for DMT • Peer Challenge (East Midlands Group) • Quality Team Manager Audits • Management & investigation of complaints at local level • Children's Safeguarding Board • Performance Framework for Quality Assurance mechanisms • Practitioner Supervision & Appraisal • Implementation of recommendations from serious case review • Member scrutiny of Social Care • Ofsted Inspection • Signs of Safety • Adoption reform • Partners in practice



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Strategic Risk Register as at January 2017

Commissioning Strategy - We effectively target our resources so that individuals and communities experience the desired benefits and results								
No of Risk	Risk Owner	Risk description	(How much risk are we prepared to take & the total impact of risk we are prepared to accept)	Current risk score	Target risk score	Status (Full, Substantial, Limited, No)	Direction of Travel (Improving, Static,)	Actions
8	Debbie Barnes	Recruitment / Staffing Ability to recruit & retain staff in high risk areas	Averse (People - Recognise that our staff are a valuable resource that requires investment by us to help sustain their health & wellbeing - low risk options taken to minimise exposure)			Limited	Improving	<p>Existing controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-active work to embed the 'Mindful Employer Charter' being one of the key activities/outcomes of the Health and the Wellbeing Plan Information provided for managers and staff on increasing resilience through change as well as Organisational development practice applied to all key change related projects Employee feedback through the development of staff surveys to reinforce the Council's commitment to be a good employer (staff surveys in November 2015) Audits & action plans in areas of sickness absence hotspots Recruitment and retention action plans for addressing hard to recruit and retain staff groups Additional temporary resources to promote employment opportunities for young people in the Council and support development of future workforce including apprentices. CX briefings and newsletters support internal staff engagement A central source of internal and external market data which can be used by specific managers to source resources effectively to meet their requirements (for hard to recruit and retain areas) Use of current sourcing channels to increase the use of social media and other platforms like 'linked in' Use of SHL system (OPQ/MQ) with hard to recruit and hard to retain posts to evaluate strengths required to perform well in roles Use of SHL system to ascertain what drives tenure and performance in hard to recruit and hard to retain posts in order to determine appropriate recruitment strategy <p>New / Developing controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the Health and the wellbeing strategy, the Council will review its approach for raising awareness & developing skills in managing mental health issues and building resilience, due to I-Count funding having ceased Audits and action plans. During 2017-18, randomly selected audits will be undertaken by the Serco Absence Management Team for 10% of sickness absence cases in 2016-17. In addition to audits in sickness hot spot areas. Communication plan to reinforce managers that they should be carrying out appraisals & recording them Full recruitment service review through Serco contract Employment & apprentice opportunities currently offered to young people aged 16-24 within LCC - apprenticeship ensuring we invest in priority areas to address key shortage areas through 'grow your own' schemes Project in place to ensure the delivery of the governance apprenticeship reforms so that the levy can be maximised for the benefit of the Council including; development of the workforce to address key shortage areas through 'grow your own' schemes; and to offer employment and apprenticeship opportunities to young people aged 16-24 within the Council Re procurement of Agency contract to meet diverse needs in particular to address areas of hard to recruit & retain groups Evaluate the use of other social media for recruitment Reviewing of key processes & employment policies relating to recruitment & retention Council Workforce Plan 2017 & beyond. Options paper to be taken to CMB in January 2017 Regular updates to VFM to show linkages between workforce priorities & reduction in worker spend Strategic review of employee benefits