

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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Combined Assurance Status Report

Introduction

This is the sixth 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 0-19 years public health nursing into the service which offers significant opportunity to integrate all services for children and 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. This has been challenged this year due to the implementation of Mosaic which has resulted in a lack of quality data so reporting of performance is not as robust as needed.

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. As a Partner in Practice, we are transforming our business processes, placing Signs of Safety at the heart of how we work with families. In addition, we continue to support other Local Authorities who are in need of improvement. Whilst this is an exciting opportunity, capacity is being carefully balanced through a peripatetic team of staff. Our sector led approach to school improvement has reduced costs and is recognised as best practice nationally.



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However it must be highlighted that the AGRESSO system as an enabler continues to impact negatively on service performance/ staff management. Significant staff time has been diverted from direct service delivery to address the ongoing challenges and there has been a lack of performance monitoring so 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 as staff do not have access to equipment which supports them to work flexibly.

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. A bid for additional resources in response to increased demand has been submitted. Recruitment of skilled qualified staff especially social workers is a key challenge with the service continuing to provide a focus on recruitment opportunities with significant success. This work will now be used as a model to apply to the ongoing recruitment and retention of qualified public health nurses.

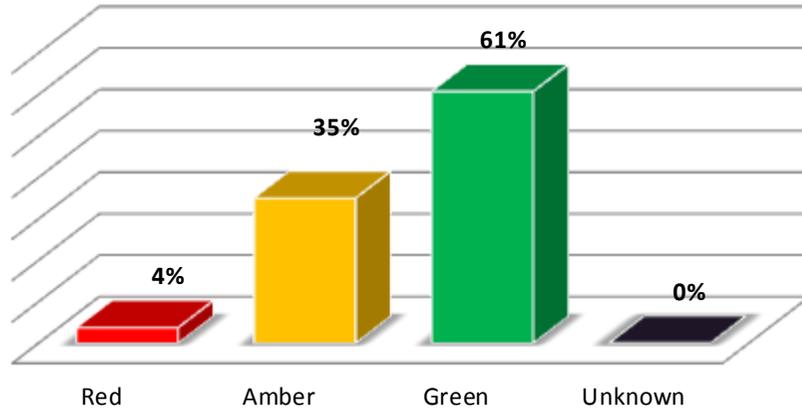
As the Executive Director with responsibility for the People Management function, (which supports all Director Areas of the Council), there has continued to be significant client side resources assigned to the governance of the Serco contract and in particular to the remediation of the HR and Payroll 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 address the historical payroll errors, to plan for the Agresso upgrade and modernise and improve the Recruitment Service. Unfortunately progress on these matters has not materialised as quick as planned. This places additional risks on the Council.

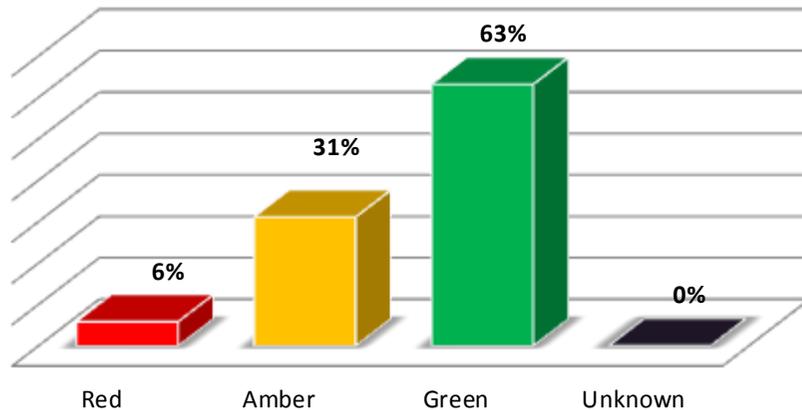


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Overall Assurance Status 2017/18



Overall Assurance Status 2016/17



Suggested next steps.....

Over the past 12 months we have worked hard to deliver the key projects outlined in last years' report. We have successfully insourced the 0-19 years public health nursing teams, transforming our school nursing offer. We have worked with Head Teachers of our special schools to develop a new strategy for the provision of specialist education and are consulting on the strategy. This will 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.

The partners in practice programme is moving from design to delivery. The service also planned to review housing options for our looked after children/ care leavers who are preparing for independence and adulthood and have plans to invest in alterative supported accommodation options to ensure we can meet their needs within Lincolnshire. This project remains in design stage due to a changing national picture with the Government's aspiration to extend the LA's role with care leavers. This project will be revised to accommodate this national expectation. Finally, we have responded to the national requirement for expanding apprenticeships into the workforce although this is challenging due to the delay in



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producing apprenticeship standards at a national level. However locally, we have undertaken significant procurements so we have a market for delivery and have apprenticeships across the council and in schools.

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 implement the planned changes to our business processes for safeguarding children:
- We will fully integrate the 0-19 years public health nursing service, 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 will consult and subject to formal decisions, we will implement our strategy for ensuring a localised system for specialist education provision
- 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

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,
- 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 emotional health and wellbeing to ensure that all young people, especially those who are most vulnerable, can quickly access services which meet their needs.



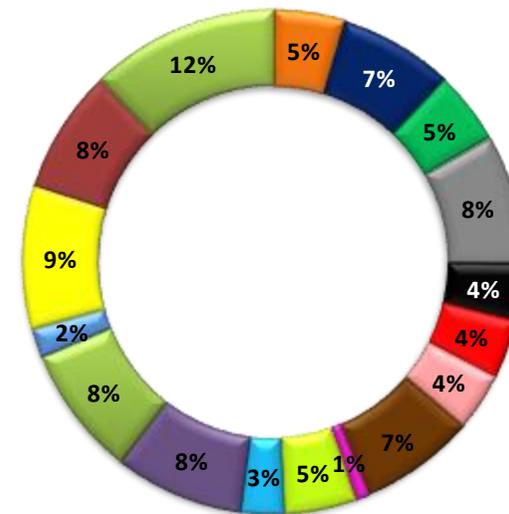
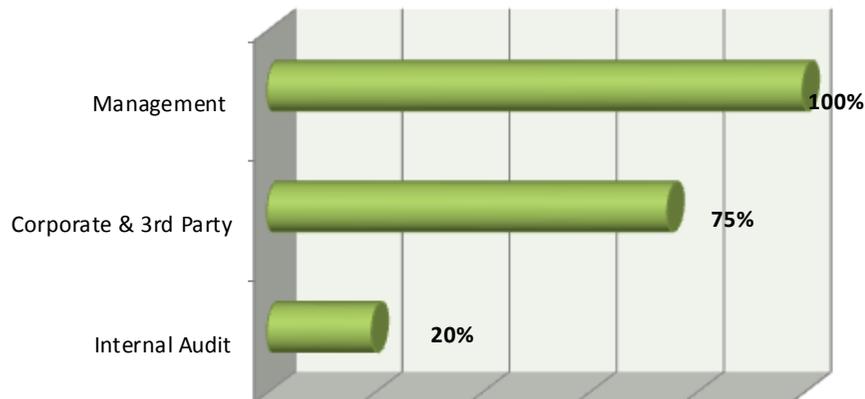
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Critical Systems

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.

There is significant governance regarding the contract management of Serco and we envisage that this will continue to be needed in 2018

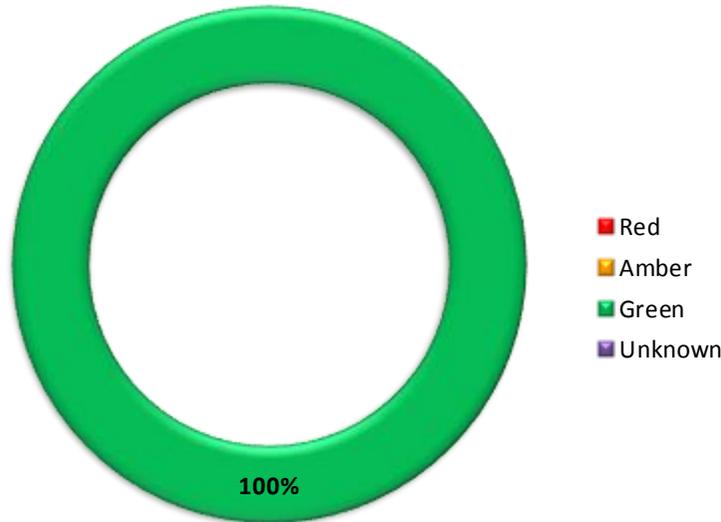
Who Provides Your Assurance



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



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. 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 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.

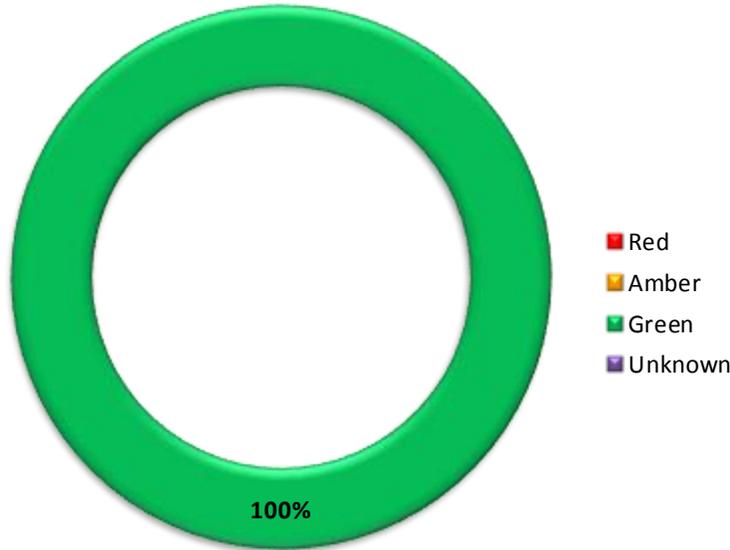
Overall Assurances

Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's EDT • Children In Need • Child Protection • Care Proceedings • Support Panels



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Safeguarding Regulated



Overall Assurances

Green

- 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

Overall Comments

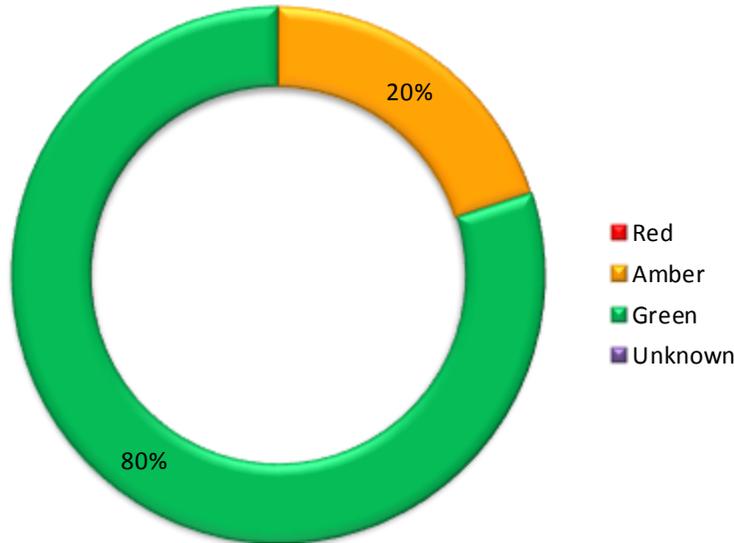
Regulated Services has continued to meet all targets in respect of key performance indicators, demonstrating that the services it delivers remain strong and ensures good outcomes for children and young people. The Corporate Parenting Panel, Safeguarding assurance days, rigorous auditing process and the 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 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.

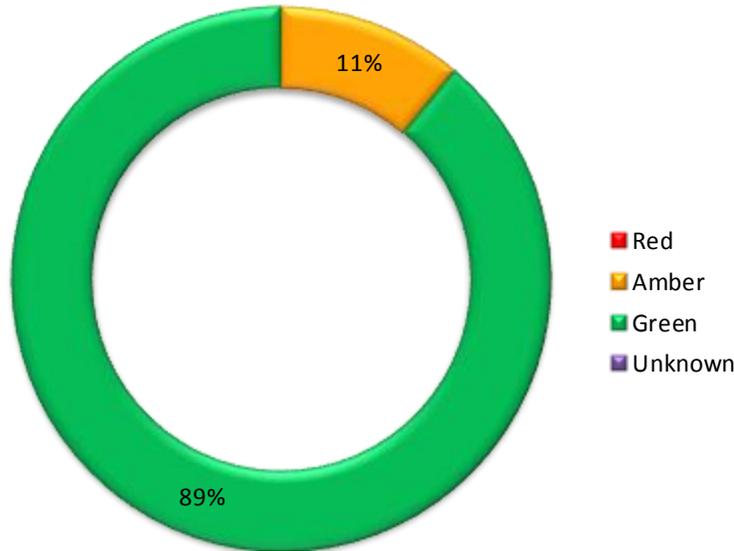
Lower assurance

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	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EY Educational Entitlement Funding (2 YO) Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Scores, Data Collection and Monitoring Early Intervention - Area Senco/Inclusion, advice and support Supported Childcare Allocations and Inclusion Funding Early Intervention Family Group Conferencing Children's Centres 	

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support, challenge and advice is available to all Early Years/Out of school providers and childminders (inc reception classes and EY/OOS provision in schools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EY Educational Entitlement Funding (3-4 YO)

Overall comments

There is an increase in the number of early years providers with an Ofsted rating of good or outstanding to 96%. The take up of Educational Entitlement Funding for 2 year olds is in line with the national average and a range of strategies have been put in place to increase the numbers of eligible families accessing this free entitlement.



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Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes for Lincolnshire remain broadly in line with National averages and above the East Midlands performance. Lincolnshire allocate a named Early Years Specialist Teacher to support each setting that has a child with an inclusion need to offer support and advice from within the Early Help Locality Teams. Funding is allocated to support vulnerable children and children with special needs to support improving outcomes.

Management of risk

All risks are continually monitored by the team, with regular updates and reports to DMT and Children's Scrutiny.

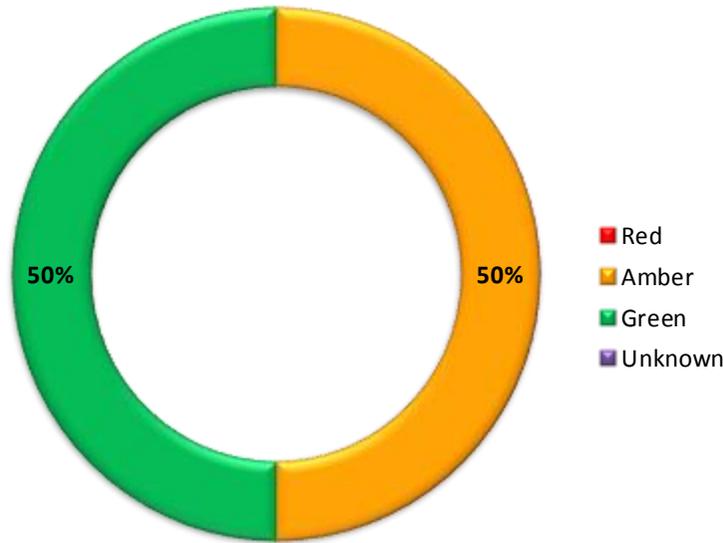
Lower Assurance

As anticipated the move in September 2017 to an increase to 30 hours entitlement for all 3 and 4 years olds presented some challenges for the Service. Currently 97% of all 3 and 4 year olds are accessing Early Education places. Take up of this will be closely monitored during the first year of implementation.



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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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Partnership Liaise Service, advice and support service Quality Assurance

Overall comments

The Independent Chairs and Reviewing Service has seen some changes of staffing over the last year. The team is expected to be fully staffed with permanent workers by February 2018. Additional 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. Two additional permanent posts have recently been recruited to in order to manage capacity and maintain the quality of service. There has been a renewed focus on escalations and challenge.

The independent advice and support service (Liaise) was subject to a restructuring which was completed in August 2016. As a consequence a new workforce has been recruited and all staff members have recently completed comprehensive inductions. The service specification has been reviewed and updated and plans are in place to increase the numbers of families supported by the service, but also to increase direct engagement with young people who are at the centre of the SEND process.

There have been some staffing changes to the Team Manager and Practice Supervisor roles in Learning and Development from last year. The service continues to be responsive to the training needs of workers within Children's Services.



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Quality and Assurance underwent a restructuring in 2016 which was completed in August 2016. The Practice Supervisor recruited in January 2017 has recently left the post, along with a Project Officer. An additional qualified Social Work post has been agreed to strengthen the audit team and all three posts are currently being recruited to. A new Quality Assurance framework has been developed, with analysis and outcomes of themed monthly audits being reported to DMT and recommendations being tracked more robustly.

The LADO service was reviewed last year and additional posts created. The Team comprises of two qualified LADOs and one Business Support post. All work is recorded on Mosaic and the backlog has been cleared. Cases are tracked more robustly. Performance reports and quality assurance process are being developed

Management of Risks

All risks are effectively managed within the service areas. Mosaic has caused some issues around reporting for the Independent Chair's Service but these are in the process of being resolved. The current vacancies in the Audit Team are being covered by two consultants who are experienced in auditing. This will remain in place until the vacancies are filled.

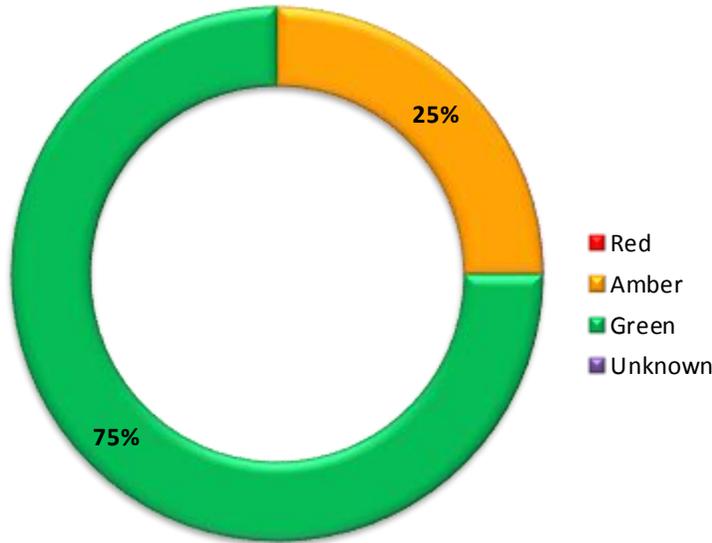
Lower Assurance

The increase in children looked after this year has contributed to a backlog of Chairs reports from LAC reviews but this is being addressed within the service.



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Education of Children Looked After



Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation of pupil premium to support education plan Supporting admission and inclusion of LAC into mainstream schools 	

Overall Comments

The PEP 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 98.5%. Pupil premium allocations are linked to EPEP 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 needs of Looked After Children and exclusions are significantly below those for children who are not looked after by the local authority.

Through Partners in Practice a Caring to Learn work stream will offer 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.

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging and supporting schools and academies to improve educational progress of LAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the education performance of looked after children through review of EPEP



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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 DMT, Corporate Parenting Board and Children's Scrutiny

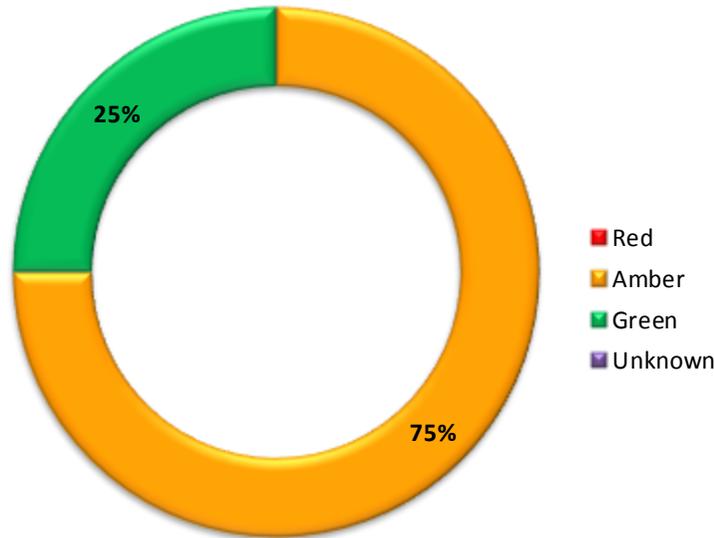
Lower Assurance

Monitoring the education performance of looked after children has moved to amber. This is as a result of a national consultation which proposes to increase the role of the Virtual School to a much larger and currently unknown group of former looked after children. This currently presents some risks and uncertainty around the increased resource requirements that would be needed to meet this additional need.



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Youth Offending



Overall Comments

The Youth Offending Service has since its move into Children's Service become integrated into the work of the Children's Locality Teams, with increased opportunities for joint work in relation with Early Help and Social Care colleagues. Feedback from internal and independent audits remain positive and recent safeguarding assurance and separate show casing practice days demonstrated evidence of strong case management and joined up working. Integration is being further strengthened through Partners in Practice which presents an opportunity for a more streamlined assessment process in line with Signs of Safety and work focusing on managing the risk presented by the most challenging group of adolescents who present both to the Youth Offending Service and Early Help for assistance with behaviour displayed at home.

There remain challenges in respect of both core funding through the uncertainty around secondments from partner agencies and remand management due to the unpredictability in managing this year on year against the small grant the local authority receives from the Youth Justice Board. This will be closely monitored as part of the budget monitoring and any issues highlighted through Children's DMT and Corporate Finance.

A Joint Diversion Panel has recently been established and early indications suggest this will have a positive impact on

Overall Assurances

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



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First Time Entrant performance as it is successfully diverting young people away from both cautions, conditional cautions and court. Not only is this improving the life chances of a significant number of young people is it ensuring that young people are receiving the right help from the right person at the right time, accessing Early Help Services when appropriate and having the opportunity to be part of a restorative intervention.

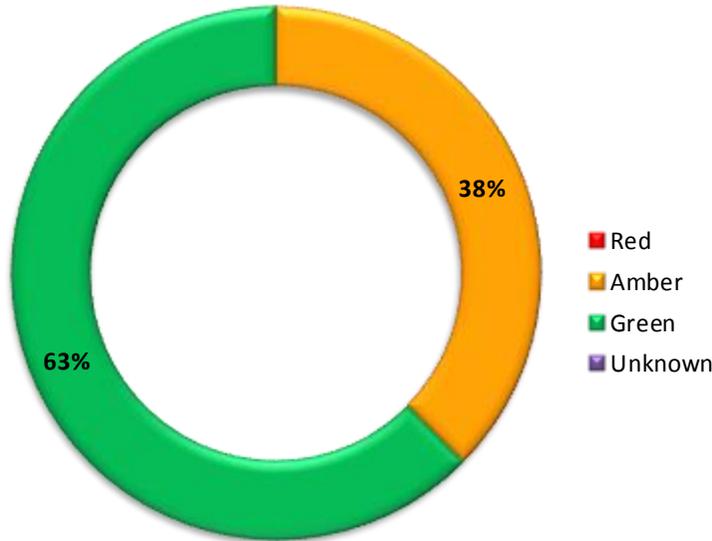
Management of risk

All performance will be closely monitored by the team. The Joint Diversion Panel is in its infancy and its impact will be evaluated and monitored via DMT, the YOS Management Board and Children's Scrutiny.



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Commissioning and Performance



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

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. Joint work with colleagues working within children's services results in regular recommendations to DMT on how contracts can be reviewed to improve outcomes.

Working as part of a single team has allowed performance colleagues to become more integrated into the wider team, enhancing their ability to provide a high level of support. The team can demonstrate effective joint commissioning with health and other partners for example the commissioning of child and adolescent mental health services which have been judged by the CQC as outstanding. The review work and the development of a robust commissioning strategy has underpinned the successful insourcing of the 0 – 19 public health nursing service.

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 Performance 0-19 Services



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The unpredictable nature of demand provides a challenge to effective budget management particularly with regard to home to school transport, but improved joint working with services and the corporate transport team has reduced the potential impact.

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 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 solutions as possible within policy

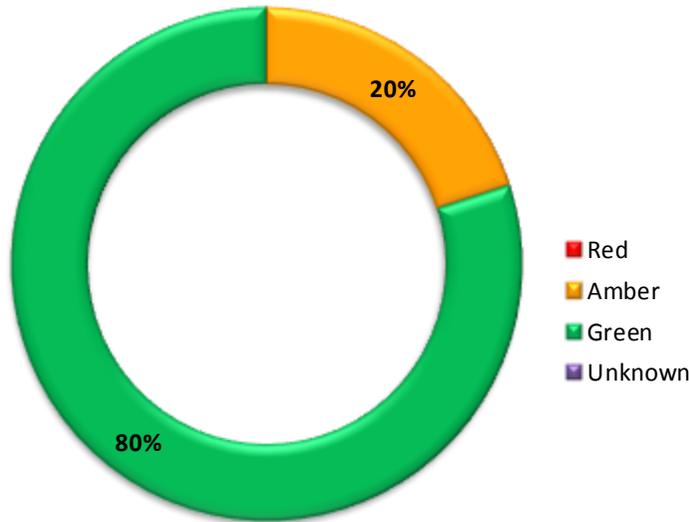
and statutory requirements. Joint reviews are regularly undertaken with the service area where demand is generated for example special educational needs. It is anticipated that the development of a more localised system for specialist education provision will have a positive impact on this budget.

Unresolved issues with Agresso and Mosaic impacts negatively on workload and hence morale and has provided some challenges to delivering effective management reporting.



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Education Support



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Admissions Attendance Children Missing Education Tracking Status of 16-17 year olds in Education, Employment or Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-18 Sufficiency

Overall Comments

Many of the functions within the education support service are statutory and regulated by either legislation or statutory guidance. Compliance with current legislation/guidance will change depending upon when new guidance is issued: an example of this is the new children missing education guidance published in September 2016. Working with schools over the last academic year resulted in a new set of processes that were audited and judged as 'Substantial Assurance' in April 2017.

The majority of families continue to enjoy high preference rates for their first choice of primary or secondary school when applying for a school place.

Schools with low rates of pupil attendance are challenged over the actions they are taking to improve and are monitored, a revised process of support for schools was introduced in Autumn term 2017.

Management of risk

The service now produces an annual report on the situation of children that are not at school which is presented and scrutinised by children's directorate management team. The key risk facing the service is the software used to process the parental applications, this is no longer supported by the provider. The service has commissioned a new software



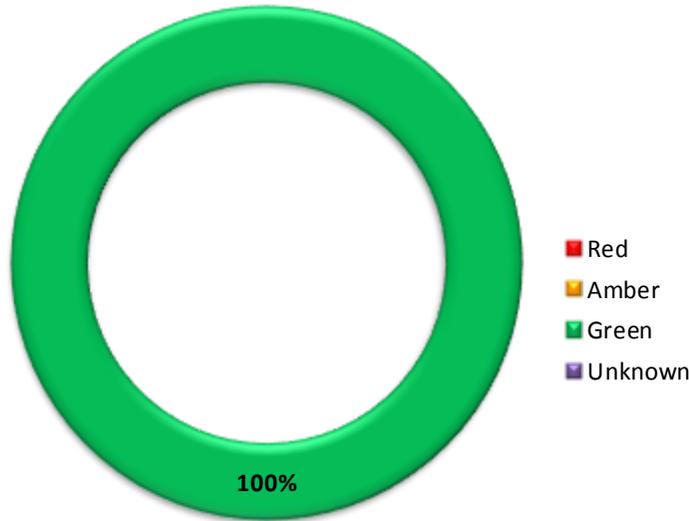
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provider and is in the process of implementing the new solution for September 2018.



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Inclusion



monitoring by Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee, Children’s Service’s Directorate Management Team and Children’s commissioning.

The Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy was introduced to address the problem of a rising and unsustainable rate of permanent exclusion from Lincolnshire schools. Over the last year the Lincolnshire Ladder of Behavioural Intervention has supported schools in focussing on the underlying drivers of challenging behaviour, rather than merely its outward presentation. Permanent Exclusions in Lincolnshire have seen a 15% reduction in 2016/17 and a 26% 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 DMT or Scrutiny. The Department for Education has indicted that exclusions will 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

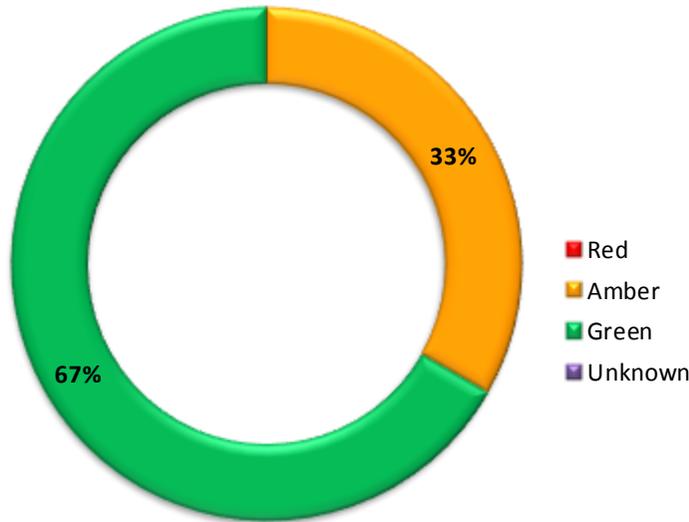
Overall Comments

Inclusion data and the performance of the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) are subject to close scrutiny and



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School Improvement Service



Overall Assurances

Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Performance of Schools and Academies Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing the Attainment Gap

Overall Comments

At the 30th November 2017, 87.3% of Lincolnshire schools and academies were graded "Good or Outstanding" by Ofsted compared with 85.2% nationally and 83.8% across our statistical neighbours. This means that 86% of pupils in Lincolnshire are educated in Good or Outstanding provision with only 3% of Lincolnshire's schools graded as Inadequate.

Schools are increasingly connected with Teaching Schools, partnership arrangements and engaging with local and national initiatives to make use of funding opportunities and implement evidenced based practice. As a Local Authority, we are seeing increase in contact with all schools and academies, with greater number of leaders and governors attending briefing opportunities.

The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership has, and continues, to develop an adaptive strategic approach to working across the sector within the County and there have been examples across the system of supporting one another, peer review and school improvement activity. The Sector-Led School Improvement model is established in Lincolnshire and evolving in response to the changing national educational context. The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership has used data to inform the focus of commissioned offers of support to impact on vulnerable groups. This will become more refined in partnership with the Teaching Schools and Local Authority plans for supporting focused groups. Multi-academy trusts,



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standalone academies, and maintained schools are utilising opportunities to connect and developing a variety of partnerships, formally and informally, to support what they would like to sustain themselves and their school improvement journey.

Management of Risk

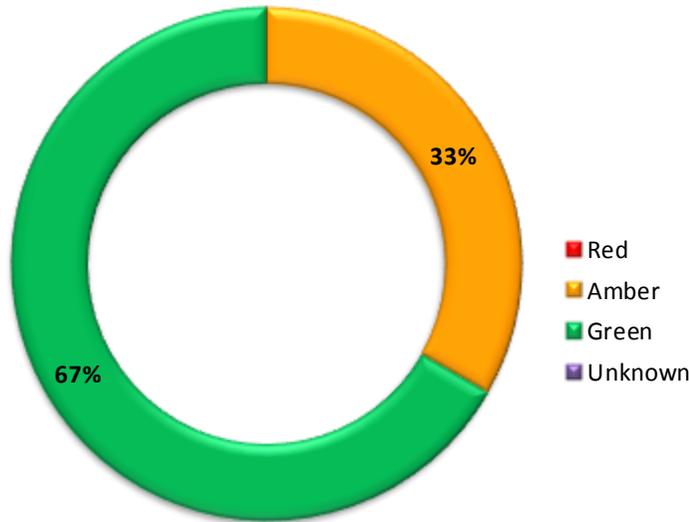
The key mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the service is Ofsted ratings. The percentage of Good or outstanding schools and the percentage of children in good or outstanding schools are key indicators used to monitor effectiveness. These are also benchmarked against the national average, statistical neighbours and our statistical neighbours. At a Local level, all Schools (maintained and academies) are risk assessed by Education Locality Leads around a variety of performance indicators as per the Strategy for School Improvement and engagement directly then occurs regularly – escalating the remit of work where appropriate.

'Closing the Attainment Gap' is rated at amber and requires a multi-disciplinary approach from all agencies that impact on the ability to engage to learn, school readiness and supporting disadvantaged learning. 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 at a local and national level.



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SEND



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

Overall Comments

The Joint Ofsted and CQC Framework for the Inspection of Local Areas (SEND) was implemented in May 2016. Processes and procedures to manage the legal requirements introduced in September 2014 are now well embedded and the service met timescales in 92% of cases in 2016/17. 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 two other Local Authorities. 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. From September 2017 the service has provided Home Tuition to pupils with SEND that are out of school; to date young people are making positive transitions back into education.

Overall Assurances

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



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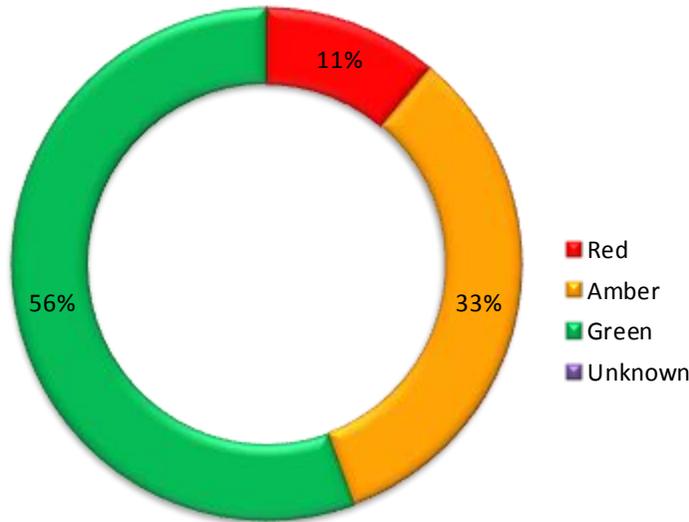
Management of Risk:

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



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People Management



Green	Amber	Red
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay and Performance Culture Serco People Management - OD and L&D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Workforce Planning - Apprenticeships 	

Overall Comments

The Council's Workforce Plan 2016 and beyond, identifies the Council's people management commitments to support delivery of the Council Business Plan and is overseen by the LCC People Management Service, working in partnership with the Serco People Management Service, the Workforce Planning and Development leads in Director Areas, and Director Area Management Teams (DMTs)

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 Workforce Plan Projects and solutions, are also monitored through the Strategic Risk Register assurance process.

The effective use of HR metrics and other organisational information is important for ensuring that we can assess whether the Workforce Plan projects are supporting business objectives. Progress has been made, over the last 12 months,

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber	Red
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Workforce Plan Leadership Employee relations cases and settlement agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serco HR - Service Delivery Strategic Workforce Planning – General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serco HR, Admin and Payroll Transactional Services



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including defining and mapping the benefits that the Workforce Plan projects should deliver, when, and how success will be measured. The benefits are measured throughout the lifecycle of the Workforce Plan. It will be possible to measure some benefits through the year, whilst others require more long term monitoring and will not be fully realised until 2018/19. All Workforce Projects link directly or indirectly to the 4 strategic performance indicators:

- effective targeting of our resources to benefit communities;
- council commitment to be a good employer;
- sickness absence;
- employee turnover.

Realisation of the benefits once a project has been implemented are also evaluated through audits including those carried out by the Internal Audit Team, of people management practices across all Director Areas.

Additionally, there have been minor improvements of the inputting of data on Agresso by managers as well as an increase in managers running HR Management information reports direct from Agresso so they can monitor people related performance, for example, sickness absence and appraisal completion. However some managers' reports from Agresso continue to have issues which relate to either

incorrect data being input by users or known shortcomings in the build of the existing structure. The structure and inputting issues are being addressed as a priority, so that managers can be better supported. However there is assurance that the reporting capability within the Agresso system itself is accurate.

Management of Risk

The PM Service generally has a good reputation for supporting the business to manage its 'people' risks working closely in partnership with colleagues in Legal Services Lincolnshire. There are also well established governance arrangements in place for all the critical people management processes. Strategic oversight of risk management activity is achieved through quarterly monitoring and review of the delivery of the People Management Service Plan against Service Objectives by the Service Manager - People. (The Service Plan also incorporates the delivery programme for the Council Workforce Plan.)

The established governance arrangements cover both operational and strategic risks which are reported to the Service Manager – People on a monthly basis, ensuring management oversight. In turn the high risks are reported monthly on an exception basis to the Director for People Management as part of the Service Plan review. There are risk owners in the People Management Team assigned to each of the 9 critical processes in the table above.



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A key priority is to further develop the appropriate metrics so that not only can the PM function ensure that the implementation of the Workforce Plan supports the business, but at the same time, the metrics should enable the PM function to measure its own effectiveness and demonstrate its value to the business.

Lower Assurance

The delivery of the Serco HR Administration and Payroll Transactional Service has low assurance (red), although monthly payroll administration performance continues to be improved compared with the previous year with a generally reduced number of reported errors. Performance is monitored through the KPIs for People Management at the monthly Serco/LCC Operations Board.

There are however a number of Agresso configuration and system improvement issues which still need to be addressed. The Council have agreed to prioritise Serco resources onto the Agresso Upgrade Project; therefore there are delays to the Agresso system improvement phases until completion of the Upgrade at the end February 2018. This means that manual workarounds for a number of payroll processes remain in place which will require resolution and changes to the way the system is configured so these processes can be automated.

Additionally the Pay Statements Project, which aims to identify payment errors since April 2015 and to provide assurance that

these have been corrected, is behind schedule. This is a complex project and it is anticipated that the validation work will be completed by March 2018.

There remains significant work to do to improve the control environment of the payroll system and validate the completeness and accuracy of the historic payroll payments. In light of this, it has been necessary to establish more stringent LCC governance by LCC Finance, People Management, Internal Audit and the LCC Commercial Team with additional professional expert resources allocated to and accountable for governing that these risks are being managed effectively by Serco. The Audit Committee is updated regularly on how these risks are being managed with the next report due in March 2018. A follow up Payroll Audit by LCC Internal Audit Team is being planned.

As previously mentioned, the recruitment and retention of hard to recruit staff areas is a corporate strategic risk. Progress continues to be made, in terms of improved access to workforce information, the use of recruitment and retention initiatives and improvements in the recruitment and resourcing service. Progress has been hampered by high demands on Serco's resourcing team as well as high turnover within the team itself. Some improvements are still to be implemented including the launch of self-service for Managers. Managers self-serving will release capacity in the Serco resourcing team



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to continue focussing and delivering the service improvements required.

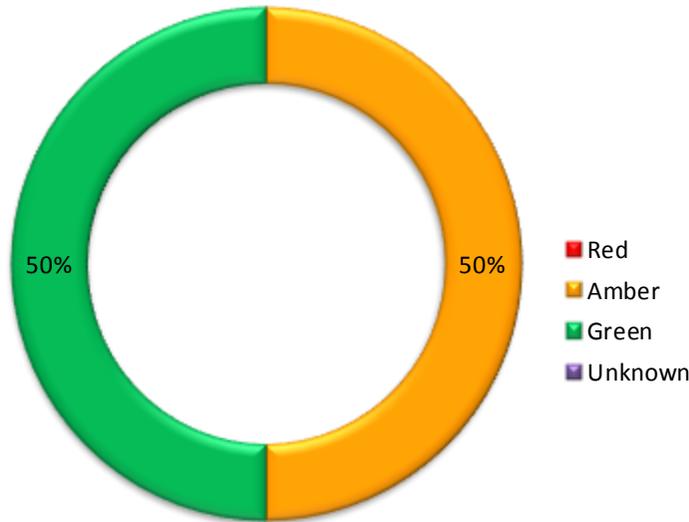
The Apprenticeship Project has been extended until March 2019. Issues are affecting progress for many public and private sector organisations around certain elements including lack of provider market readiness and Apprenticeship standards not yet being available.

The PM Service is actively working with Serco colleagues to manage risks associated with Serco HR- Service Delivery issues and improvements are being made. First line assurances are in place to monitor and manage risks.



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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 enable key functions to be carried out effectively and on time. Where resourcing capacity is stretched unexpectedly, 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 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 £531m Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is achieved, particularly in light of the national funding formula changes across the 4 blocks of the DSG. 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Share Calculation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Budget Monitoring



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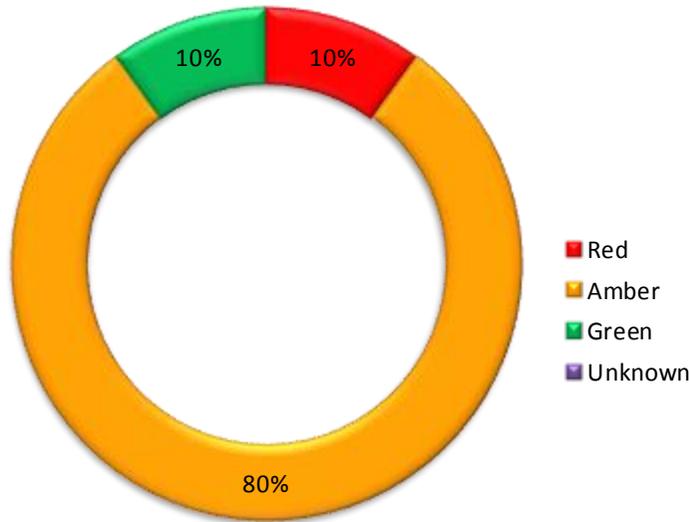
Lower Assurances

The schools budget monitoring process has been determined as an amber rating due to the Finance team being stretched to fulfil its proactive role in targeting schools before they go into financial difficulties in all cases. Caused by the legacy issues of Agresso, it has led the team to be partly re-active in the approach to supporting schools with financial challenges. Efforts have been made in 2017/18 to carry out the monitoring and intervention tasks, and the team will continue its work on providing targeted support for those schools meeting the intervention criteria, and provide guidance and advice to schools, with a view of becoming more proactive in the coming years. The Local Authority's role in monitoring maintained schools budgets is important to securing sustainable budgets and aid schools financial planning. The policy has been reviewed and is in operation.



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Key Projects



Green	Amber	Red
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent Risk Taking Behaviour • Joint Commissioning of SEND • Asset Plus • Inclusion for all: Review of special educational needs offer • Special Schools Project 	

Overall Comments

We continue our change programme through a number of aspirational projects which have and will continue to require significant resources. However these projects will transform provision to ensure that we reduce spend, but continue to deliver high quality effective services. Robust governance arrangements of these projects is in place 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

Overall Assurances

Green	Amber	Red
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners in Practice • Transfer of 0-19 Public Health Nurses • Integrated Health and Social Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Accommodation



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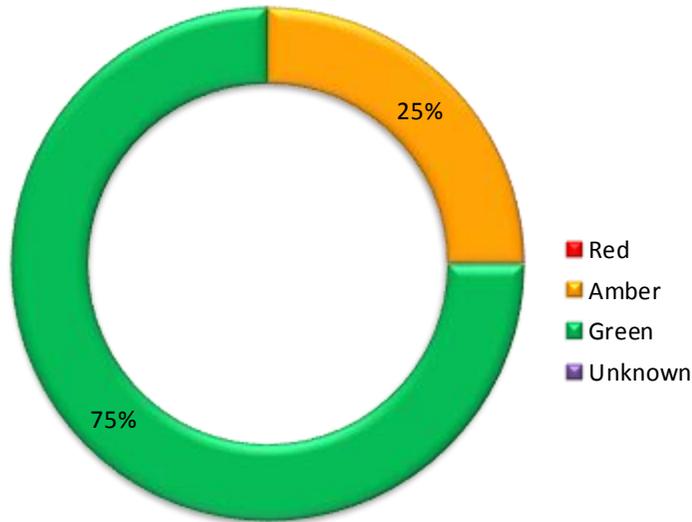
Management of Risk

Most of the key projects have moved into delivery from design (accommodation 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.



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Key Partnerships



Green	Amber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court User Group YOS 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 Serco is improving, although there remains significant risk especially with regard to payroll management. Through the Lincolnshire Learning partnership, relationships with schools and academies including Multi Academy Trusts are effective and improved. We have agreed to establish a joint commissioning team with the Clinical Commissioning Groups help deliver a more integrated approach to meeting needs of children and families.

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. We must review the

Overall Assurances

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

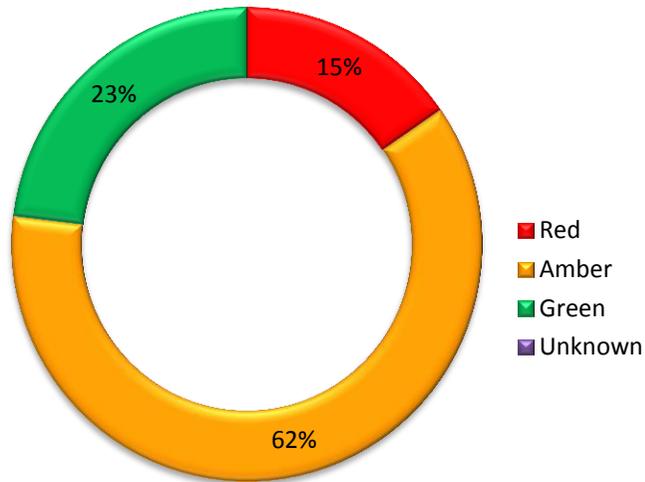


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governance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in response to the Wood review and will confirm these by April 2018.



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
- Recruitment process



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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.

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
- Roll out new ICT hardware for front line staff

The other key risk is managing the increasing demand on services, especially early help, child protection and services to support pupils with special educational needs

Examples of mitigating actions include:

- Review customer services centre to ensure appropriate signposting to other services



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- Request for additional investment for additional staff to manage demand
- Implement the partners in practice transformation including establishing a dedicated service for young people who are engaging in high risk behaviours.
- Develop increased self- help tools



Corporate Governance

Our Combined Assurance model focuses on assurance against critical systems, projects, risks and partnerships. This helps the organisation to understand corporately where it's performing well and where improvements are required. Many of the Council's critical services and systems underpin a sound corporate governance framework. In this section we set out how the Council has approached corporate governance, complied with guidance and obtained assurance on its significant governance issues.

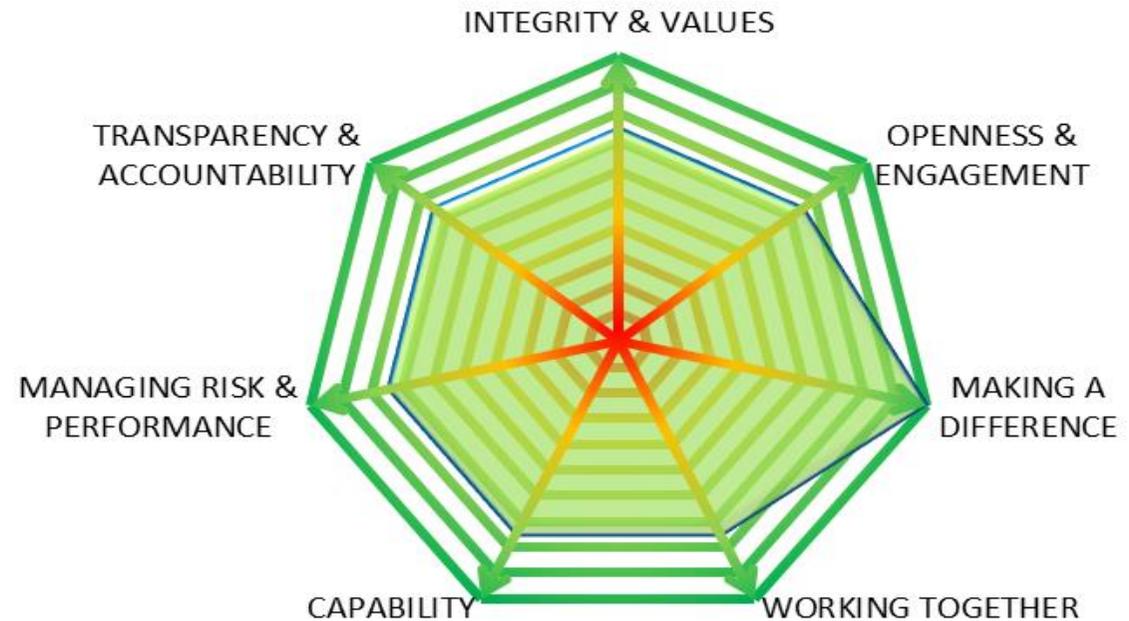
The Council must ensure that it meets the highest standards and that governance arrangements are not only sound but are seen to be sound. It is crucial that leaders and chief executives keep their governance arrangements up to date and relevant. Council's should develop a local Governance Code which reflects the "delivering good governance in local government framework (CIPFA/SOLACE 2016)" (the framework).

The framework defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government organisation. It provides a structure to help individual authorities with their approach to governance. Whatever form of arrangements are in place, authorities should therefore test their governance structures and partnerships against the principles contained in the Framework.

At Lincolnshire County Council this was independently assessed during November 2016 and assurance given over

the evidence supporting good governance arrangements for each of the 7 Principles. All assurances were high or substantial.

Evidence demonstrating good governance



The assessment identified some areas for improvement in relation to governance arrangements for collaborative working (partnerships) and ethical governance. Audit work is underway to support improvements and provide further assurance in both of these key areas.



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Annual Governance Statement

The assessment against the code, among other things, helped to inform the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2016/17. Overall this confirmed that the Council has the appropriate systems and processes in place to ensure good governance is maintained. The review did identify a number of areas for improvement.

Council's Corporate Management Board and the Executive. The Audit Committee are also helping with independent assurance during the year.

Key Improvement Area
IT Governance
Financial Sustainability
Financial Control Environment
Market Supply (Adult Social Care)
SERCO Contract – Lessons Learnt
Delivery of Support Services and Improvement – SERCO
Collaborative Working – Governance Arrangements

During 2017/18 the Council is working to address the matters identified and is monitoring implementation and operation as part of performance management – which is reported to the