



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 July 2023
Subject:	Ofsted Inspection of Lincolnshire Children's Services - Outcome Report

Summary:

This report provides the Committee with the judgment outcome and findings from the recent Ofsted 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) Short Inspection of Children's Services in Lincolnshire, undertaken by Ofsted in April 2023.

Actions Required:

The Committee is invited to review the findings and the judgements from the inspection report and agree the next steps in respect of the areas for improvement contained within the inspection report.

1. Background

The 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) Framework is based on a 'Whole-System Approach'. Under this system, Ofsted use the intelligence and information they have collated from the Annual Self Evaluation of social work practice, the Annual Conversation, Focused Visits, and Standard and Short Inspections, where judgements are made using a four-point scale to inform decisions about how best to inspect each authority.

Local authorities judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection will usually receive a Short Inspection. The Short Inspection will usually take place about three years after the previous inspection. A Standard Inspection of Children's Services in Lincolnshire was undertaken in April 2019.

On Monday 17 April 2023, Lincolnshire was given notice by Ofsted of the intention to undertake a Short Inspection of Children's Services. As planned, the fieldwork element of the inspection commenced on 24 to 28 April 2023 and eight inspectors consisting of five Social Care Inspectors, and three Social Care Regulatory/Education Inspectors were on site for this week undertaking a wide range of activity to validate and evidence their judgements.

In addition to the onsite visit, the Inspection includes the submission of Additional Requested Evidence, Child Level Data Lists, information about Audits, and specific information about Children's Cases. The field work during the week consists of speaking with social workers' direct practice with families, discussions with strategic leads and young people, parents, and carers, which demonstrates a robust and intensive examination of all aspects of both strategic governance and operational practice.

The initial feedback on the inspection was provided to the Executive Director of Children's Services on 28 April 2023, grading the Overall Effectiveness in Lincolnshire as 'Outstanding'. The final inspection report was published on the Ofsted website along with a press release on 15 June 2023 and is provided as an appendix to this report.

The overall judgement by Ofsted was reached by grading against four Individual Judgement Areas. Lincolnshire was judged as follows:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families - **'Outstanding'**
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection - **'Outstanding'**
- The experiences and progress of children in care - **'Outstanding'**
- The experiences and progress of care leavers (**a new judgement area**) – **'Good'**

2. Conclusion

The judgement report concluded that Lincolnshire continues to provide outstanding services for vulnerable children and their families.

- Children and families continue to have access to local services that help to keep them safe and support them to make good progress.
- Outstanding social work practice ensures that risks to children are well managed within their families and communities.
- Council staff, schools and other adults involved in the children's lives worked to ensure that help was provided quickly when needed, before issues had a chance to escalate.
- Leaders have successfully focused on areas of development since the last full inspection (April 2019).

The report highlighted that Leaders recognise there is more work still to do with the care leaver offer to bring them to the same consistently high standard as children in other service areas receive. The report sets out two areas for improvement which are as follows:

- The quality and consistency of planning and case records for care leavers.
- The offer to care-experienced young people aged 21 and over.

Next steps and Actions:

- Immediate actions are underway in order to improve the quality of case work, with training planned and audit activity in place.
- A Service Review is being undertaken in preparation for the current contract coming to an end in 2024 to ensure the correct level of service is in place.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

No Risks and Impact Analysis identified.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Ofsted Inspection of Lincolnshire Local Authority Children’s Services Report - June 2023

5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Janet Armstrong, who can be contacted on janet.armstrong@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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