

COUNCIL

DATE	25 th September 2025
REPORT OF	Councillor Margaret Cracknell Portfolio Holder for Children and Education
SUBJECT	Address of Children’s Commissioner: Post Ofsted Inspection
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIM

To hear from the Children’s Services Commissioner will contribute to the Council’s stated aim of Stronger Community by assuring and giving insight to Council of the recent positive Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a recent Ofsted ILACS review and unprecedented change in direction and positive result, to hear from Anthony Douglas CBE, Children’s Services Commissioner to the Council for a retrospect and forward looking view from his perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Receives and notes an address from the Children’s Services Commissioner

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Children’s Services Commissioner is an intrinsic part of the support to Children’s Services following an adverse Ofsted result. The Commissioner is able to give independent assurance and insight into the significant improvements in Children’s Services and comment on the likely future landscape and work still to be done.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 Following an Ofsted ILACS inspection in July 2025, with results being published on 3rd September 2025, the Council is rated “**Good**” overall with one area “**Outstanding**”.

The areas are broken down as follows:

Area of Inspection	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding

Area of Inspection	Grade
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

- 1.2 This marks an unprecedented shift in terms of improvement and transformation since a previous full inspection in October 2021 when the Council was rated Inadequate.
- 1.3 As a consequence of that result, Anthony Douglas CBE was appointed as the Children’s Services Commissioner for North East Lincolnshire by the Secretary of State for Education under powers granted by section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996. His appointment was formalised in a Statutory Direction issued on 17 May 2024.
- 1.4 The role of the Commissioner, as outlined in the direction, is to oversee and support improvements in the Council’s delivery of children’s social care functions, ensuring they meet the required standards.
- 1.5 This typically entails:
- Advising and supporting the council’s leadership (officers and elected members) to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in children’s services.
 - Monitoring progress against improvement plans and ensuring that the lived experiences of children and young people are improving.
 - Engaging with political leadership to maintain cross-party support and depoliticise children’s services.
 - Providing development opportunities for elected members, such as the 10-module Member Development Programme initiated by Mr. Douglas.
- 1.6 Mr Douglas has been an intrinsic part of the democratic landscape during his tenure and it is right that Council hears from him in a formal setting.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

There are no such issues in Council receiving an address from the Independent Children's Services Commissioner.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The Council, and more particularly Children and Family Services, has seen a sea change in approach and an unprecedented shift in terms of improvement on a national basis. It is right that the Council therefore celebrates this and hears from the appointed Children's Services Commissioner .

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no such considerations for this particular matter.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there are no direct implications from receiving an address, it would be remiss not to rehearse here, the reported implications for Children and Young People according to the recent Ofsted report:

Improved Access to Help and Protection

Children now receive help earlier and more consistently, especially through strengthened early help services and locality family hubs.

Multi-agency working has been prioritised, leading to better information-sharing and more effective safeguarding decisions.

Stronger Relationships and Trust

Social workers are now more stable and consistent, allowing children to build trusted relationships.

Children's voices are actively sought and valued, with direct work tailored to their age and needs.

Better Experiences for Children in Care

Children in care are more likely to live in stable, local placements, including kinship care and special guardianship arrangements.

Life-story work and identity-building are improving, although still developing.

Enhanced Support for Care Leavers

Care leavers benefit from earlier engagement, trusted personal advisers (PAs), and a "door is always open" ethos.

Access to education, employment, and training has improved, with more young people re-engaging in learning or work.

Cultural and Leadership Transformation

Children now benefit from a stable, well-supported workforce and visible, responsive leadership.

The service is described as "largely unrecognisable" from 2021, with a clear focus on improving children's lives.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no such implications.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no such implications.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no such implications.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no such implications.

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate ward implications but naturally the reach of Children's and Family Services is borough wide.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[50285393](#) Ofsted Inspection Report of North East Lincolnshire Children's Services 14th to 25th July 2025.

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Ann-Marie Matson Director Children's Services

COUNCILLOR MARGARET CRACKNELL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER CHILDREN AND EDUCATION