

Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services: full evaluation schedules

This framework and guidance sets out the new arrangements for inspecting safeguarding and looked after children from June 2009. It should be read alongside the framework for the new unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children who are in need or who may be in need of protection.

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Evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection

Summary evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection

Section 1: Overall effectiveness

- Capacity to improve
- Recommendations and required actions

Section 2: Meeting the need to safeguard and promote the welfare, development and life chances of children and young people

- Leadership and management
 - Ambition and prioritisation
 - Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development
 - User engagement
 - Partnerships
 - Equality and diversity
 - Value for money
- Quality of provision
 - Service responsiveness, including complaints
 - Assessment and direct work with children and families
 - Case planning, reviews and recording
- Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people
 - Children and young people are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe
 - Children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel safe

Overall effectiveness

1. Inspectors will consider evidence and judgements from across the evaluation schedule before arriving at the overall effectiveness judgement, taking into account the:

- extent to which the council and its partners are meeting their statutory responsibilities set out in *Working together to safeguard children*¹ and in subsequent revisions, relevant statute and guidance
- extent to which the council and its partners are contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people in all aspects of their safeguarding and child protection work
- extent to which the leadership and management of those responsible for safeguarding and protecting children and young people deliver effective services which provide value for money, are efficient and effective in their use of resources
- application of the two limiting judgements:
 - overall effectiveness must be inadequate if either of the two safeguarding outcomes is judged as inadequate
 - overall effectiveness cannot be good or better if either of the two safeguarding outcomes is not judged as good.

Capacity to improve

2. The capacity to make further improvements is a judgement about the ability of the local authority and its partners to continue improving standards and progress based on what it has accomplished so far or to maintain exceptionally high standards.
3. All judgements on leadership and management, quality of provision and outcomes for children and young people contribute to the inspection of capacity to improve. All judgements are based on evidence of the impact of improvements implemented by the local authority and its partners as shown in its track record and performance since the previous inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services.
4. Judgements about capacity to improve consider how safeguarding and child protection services are planned and managed and the effectiveness of arrangements for delivering improvement. The basis for making this judgement includes the extent to which:
 - the local authority and its partners have a consistent track record of sustained improvement and/or are able to maintain high-quality services
 - improvements in outcomes are linked to improvements in the quality of services

¹ *Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, HM Government, 2006; <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060>.

- the local authority and its partners have a clear vision, ambition and articulate appropriate priorities that will sustain improvement
- planning is of a high quality
- workforce planning and development are effective
- there is effective service user engagement.

Meeting the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people to improve their life chances

Leadership and management

Ambition and prioritisation

5. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- the council and the partnership provide strong, visible leadership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children across all services
 - all key partners, including the voluntary and community sectors, are well engaged
 - safeguarding strategies and policies are effectively used to deliver a high quality of service which is fully compliant with statutory requirements and guidance
 - there is competent, ambitious and determined leadership by senior officers
 - elected members champion the needs of children and young people and respond proactively and effectively to their needs
 - information-sharing protocols are established across the partnership with regular open and appropriate exchange
 - local priorities are identified and acted on so that safeguarding outcomes improve
 - reviewing risks of harm to all children and young people is a fundamental part of all planning, delivery and review
 - resource deficits are understood and risk assessed
 - ContactPoint is well established and demonstrably supports and facilitates effective safeguarding services across the partnership
 - senior officers make sure that there is effective staff contribution to safeguarding services, both within the organisation and across partnerships, to plan and deliver key priorities and achieve ambitious outcomes
 - there is extensive, ambitious and realistic target setting in relation to safeguarding

- all plans for safeguarding services including local area agreements (LAAs) are comprehensive, linked strategically and address key areas for improvement in line with national and local priorities
- local commissioning, including joint commissioning of safeguarding services, is established across the council and its partners
- self-evaluation of progress leads to continuous improvement
- working arrangements with external partnerships are well coordinated and reflected in strategic planning
- there is clear evidence that partnership working is improving outcomes.

Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development

6. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- performance, financial management and evaluation are established across the partnership and lead to systemic and sustained improvements in safeguarding outcomes
 - the services identify weaknesses early and take effective action to address them
 - effective use is made of internal evaluation and external challenge to identify and address pressure points and improve safeguarding services and outcomes for children and young people
 - partners have good performance management systems which enable them to identify changing needs or areas for development
 - the council and its partners are routinely professionally challenging and collaborative, and focused at all times on the needs of the local child population
 - timely and robust action is taken to improve safeguarding services where necessary
 - there is a well-established complaints and representations process which is valued by children and young people
 - the views of children and young people routinely inform service improvement
 - targets are met or exceeded and performance is better than that found nationally
 - workforce planning ensures that there are sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced social workers in place alongside other staff to deliver service priorities and to maintain high-quality safeguarding services

- relevant professional and occupational standards for integrated services, whether commissioned or provided by the local authority, are secured and monitored regularly
- staffing and resource capacity are used effectively to respond to new demands
- senior managers in all agencies exercise robust management oversight and offer focused support to staff at all levels
- staff have confidence in leaders and managers
- processes to ensure safe recruitment exceed statutory minimum requirements.

User engagement

7. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- children and young people, and their parents and carers, are active participants in the planning processes for universal and targeted safeguarding services and there is consistent evidence that their contributions lead to sustained improvement in outcomes
 - the partnership has regular and good opportunities for children, young people and their parents and carers to have an independent voice on key strategic processes in relation to safeguarding and child protection
 - there is regular and systematic participation of service users in all child protection planning processes, including those who are most vulnerable, that has led to some improved outcomes
 - service users report a consistently high level of satisfaction with the quality of services.

Partnerships

8. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Children's Trust fulfils statutory duties and provides highly effective community and professional leadership in relation to universal, targeted and specialist safeguarding services and demonstrates high levels of influence across all areas where the safety and welfare of children and young people need to be considered
 - serious case reviews undertaken by the LSCB have been judged to be good or better and none have been judged to be inadequate
 - action plans following serious case reviews have been implemented and are reflected in practice and service delivery

- partnerships with stakeholders, relevant community groups and commissioned services have led to improvements in service design and the quality of delivery
- the council monitors commissioned services effectively, in line with policy and procedure, and ensures delivery to service and quality standards.

Equality and diversity

9. **Leadership and management are not likely to be adequate if equality and diversity are judged inadequate.**
10. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- outcomes for children and young people from minority groups are good overall and at least consistent with those of all other children and young people in the area
 - the profile of children and young people, and their parents and carers, is known and used to inform service planning and delivery
 - user feedback is analysed differentially for equality and diversity
 - management information is used effectively to deliver continuous improvement and to sustain high-quality safeguarding and child protection services that are sensitive to the diverse needs of local communities
 - effective action is taken to tackle inequalities
 - children and young people, and their parents and carers, report that their needs are understood in the context of their culture, religion and identity
 - children and young people, and their parents and carers, report that they are treated with dignity and respect
 - the workforce plan addresses staffing requirements to meet the needs of the local community and to reflect its diversity.

Value for money

11. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- the partnership and the LSCB actively consider how safeguarding and child protection objectives can be achieved effectively, efficiently and economically
 - local commissioning, including joint commissioning of safeguarding services, is established across the service and is flexible, responsive and effective
 - systems to evaluate value for money have been developed and embedded across the partnership
 - informed choices are made about the balance of cost and quality in, for example, planning, commissioning and decommissioning services

- assessment data is aggregated to inform effective commissioning of services
- services can demonstrate consistently good or better value for money
- there is evidence of some efficiency savings having been made
- unplanned spending and/or high unit costs are identified and addressed effectively
- safeguarding and child protection services can demonstrate that they are cost-effective and are delivered efficiently and effectively
- unit costs are benchmarked.

Quality of provision

Service responsiveness, including complaints

12. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- suitably appropriate, clear and agreed thresholds for access to services for children in need are well embedded, understood and implemented across the partnership, which reviews and updates them regularly
 - partnership working and communication, at all levels, is well established and promotes safeguarding
 - the outcomes of complaints, including those made by children and young people about staff, and concerns raised about services are systematically used to inform service development
 - statutory guidelines in relation to complaints made against staff working with children are consistently followed
 - the role and function of the local authority designated officer is effectively utilised to ensure that children are properly safeguarded and the service learns from complaints.

Assessment and direct work with children and families

13. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- referrals are responded to promptly and in accordance with statutory timescales
 - cases are allocated promptly, where required to qualified and experienced social workers
 - assessments are timely and involve other professionals appropriately
 - children and families are involved in assessments or planning to meet the child's needs, and the views and feelings of children and the views of family members are taken into account in decisions and plans

- assessments include a robust analysis, and plans include clear and appropriate objectives. Risk and protective factors impacting on children's safety and welfare are identified well.

Case planning, reviews and recording

14. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- plans are clear, robust and identify the intended outcomes for children and young people
- rigorous and timely reviews and monitoring of cases ensures that the service responds to changing needs of the child and family and reassesses risk of harm accordingly
- partners contribute well to achieving good outcomes for children
- management oversight is strong and effective
- record-keeping is routinely up to date and supports high-quality practice. It demonstrates sound assessment, decision-making, including decisions made in supervision, and effective planning. Recording demonstrates good work to show that the plan is being fully implemented. All decisions and actions are recorded.

Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

Children and young people are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe

15. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the LSCB and partnerships provide good leadership and contribute significantly to the development of services, which are regularly audited for effectiveness
- the safeguarding and child protection needs of children and young people are identified and responded to effectively and in a timely way
- there is a track record of good outcomes for children and young people
- safeguarding provision is judged good or better in service, setting and institutional inspections.

Children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel safe

16. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- effective and ongoing work engages children and young people and their parents or carers; their views are sought on a wide range of safeguarding

issues and action is taken to tackle issues that children and young people may have

- children and young people report that their views and feelings are taken into account and inform nearly all assessments and planning undertaken through common assessment, child in need and child protection arrangements
- where safeguarding concerns about a child are identified, highly effective and coordinated work is undertaken and children and young people fully understand what is happening to them according to their age and understanding
- surveys undertaken indicate that children largely feel safe and that almost all know where to access help and advice if they need it.

Evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection

Summary evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection

Section 1: Overall effectiveness

- Capacity to improve
- Recommendations and required actions

Section 2: Meeting the needs of looked after children and young people

- Leadership and management
 - Ambition and prioritisation
 - Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development
 - User engagement
 - Partnerships
 - Equality and diversity
 - Value for money
 - Effectiveness in promoting safeguarding
- Quality of provision
 - Service responsiveness including complaints
 - Assessment and direct work with children and families
 - Case planning, reviews and recording
- Every Child Matters outcomes for looked after children and young people
 - Being healthy
 - Staying safe
 - Enjoying and achieving
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Achieving economic well-being

Overall effectiveness

17. Inspectors will consider the evidence and judgements from across the evaluation schedule before arriving at the overall effectiveness judgement, taking into account:
- the extent to which the council and its partners meet statutory responsibilities
 - the extent to which the council and its partners are contributing to improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in relation to:
 - being healthy
 - staying safe
 - enjoying and achieving
 - making a positive contribution
 - achieving economic well-being
 - the extent to which the leadership and management of the council and its partners delivers effective services that provide value for money and efficient and effective use of resources
 - the application of the two limiting judgements:
 - overall effectiveness may be inadequate where one or more inadequate grades have been awarded
 - overall effectiveness cannot be better than inadequate if either of the staying safe or enjoying and achieving outcomes is judged inadequate.

Capacity to improve

18. The capacity to make further improvements is a judgement about the ability of the local authority and its partners to continue improving standards and progress based on what it has accomplished so far or to maintain exceptionally high standards.
19. All judgements on leadership and management, quality of provision and outcomes for children and young people contribute to the inspection of capacity to improve. All judgements are based in evidence of the impact of improvements implemented by the local authority and its partners as shown in its track record and performance since the previous inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services.
20. Judgements about capacity to improve consider how looked after children services are planned and managed, and the effectiveness of arrangements for delivering improvement. The basis for making these judgements includes the extent to which:
- the local authority and its partners have a consistent track record of sustained improvement and/or are able to maintain high-quality services

- improvements in outcomes are linked to improvements in the quality of services
- the local authority and its partners have a clear vision, ambition and articulate appropriate priorities that will sustain improvement
- planning is of high quality
- workforce planning and development is effective
- there is effective service user engagement.

Meeting the needs of looked after children and young people

Leadership and management

Ambition and prioritisation

21. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- looked after children strategies, policies and procedures are used to deliver a high quality of service which is fully compliant with statutory requirements and guidance
 - highly competent, ambitious and determined leadership of senior officers and elected members champions the needs of children and responds proactively and effectively to needs
 - senior officers make sure there is effective staff contribution to looked after children services, both within the organisation and across partnerships, in order to plan and deliver key priorities and meet suitably ambitious outcomes
 - extensive, ambitious and realistic targets are set and achieved including for the educational outcomes of looked after children
 - coordinated working arrangements with external partnerships are reflected in strategic planning, where appropriate, across looked after children services
 - a culture of continuous improvement in the council and its partners is leading to improvements in practice and sustained high performance
 - plans for looked after children services, including in LAAs, are comprehensive, linked strategically and address key areas for improvement in line with national and local priorities
 - self-evaluation of progress leads to continuous improvement
 - working arrangements with external partnerships are well coordinated, reflected in strategic planning and contributing to improved outcomes
 - senior officers ensure staff from across the council and its partners contribute to the planning and delivery of key priorities and to the achievement of sustainable and high-quality outcomes

- local commissioning, including joint commissioning of looked after placements, has been developed and is contributing positively to improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers
- resource deficits are understood and risk assessed.

Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development

22. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- performance and financial management and evaluation are well established across the partnership and very effective and lead to systemic and sustained improvements in outcomes for looked after children and care leavers
- performance targets are mostly met and achievement is in line with similar areas and/or nationally
- effective use is made of internal evaluation and external challenge to identify and address pressure points and weaknesses in looked after children services and improve outcomes
- the views of looked after children, care leavers and carers routinely inform service improvement
- workforce planning has led to the people, skills and capability being in place to deliver service priorities and to maintain high-quality looked after children services
- staffing and resource capacity are used dynamically to respond to new demands
- staff have confidence in leaders and managers
- processes to ensure safe recruitment exceed statutory minimum requirements.

User engagement

23. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- looked after children, care leavers and their carers, including those from different age groups and with diverse needs and backgrounds, have participated in the review and development of provision. Procedures are embedded in practice and result in numerous improvements that have had significant positive impact on outcomes
- the partnership has regular and good opportunities for children, young people, and their parents and carers, to have an independent voice on key strategic processes in relation to services for looked after children and care leavers

- service users report a consistently high level of satisfaction with the quality of services.

Partnerships

In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the council and its partners, including Children's Trusts, provide competent and effective leadership of services for looked after children and care leavers
- productive partnerships with key stakeholders contribute to improvements in all outcome areas
- cross-agency partnerships for looked after children and care leavers with high levels of need are highly effective and improve outcomes
- partnerships with stakeholders, relevant community groups and commissioned services have led to improvements in service design and delivery and outcomes.

Equality and diversity

24. **Leadership and management are not likely to be adequate if equality and diversity are judged inadequate.**

25. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- outcomes for looked after children and care leavers from minority groups, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are good overall and at least consistent with those of all other children and young people in the area and the attainment gap is being significantly closed
- management information is used effectively to sustain high-quality services or to deliver continuous improvement that is sensitive to the diverse needs of looked after children and care leavers
- a diversity and equality strategy has led to better outcomes for looked after children, care leavers, children from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- effective action is taken to tackle inequalities
- children and young people, and their parents and carers, report that their needs are understood in the context of their culture, religion and identity
- where necessary, specific services are provided to service users from minority ethnic groups
- the workforce reflects the diversity of the population.

Value for money

- in order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
 - local commissioning, including joint commissioning of looked after children services, is established across the service and is flexible, responsive and effective
 - systems to evaluate value for money have been developed and embedded across the partnership
 - informed choices are made about the balance of cost and quality in, for example, planning, commissioning and decommissioning services
 - assessment data is aggregated to inform effective commissioning of services
 - services can demonstrate consistently good or better value for money
 - there is evidence of some efficiency savings having been made
 - most unintended high spending is identified and addressed effectively
 - looked after children services can demonstrate that they are cost effective and are delivered efficiently and effectively
 - unit costs are benchmarked.

Effectiveness in promoting safeguarding

26. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- the safeguarding and child protection needs of all looked after children and young people and care leavers are identified and responded to effectively and in a timely way
 - the council and its partners contribute effectively to safeguarding and protecting all looked after children and care leavers that they are responsible for
 - the council and its partners are effective in working with other areas where looked after children may be placed in order to secure the best outcomes for those children and care leavers
 - the Children's Trust, LSCB and corporate parenting group provide effective leadership and contribute significantly to the development of services, which are regularly audited for effectiveness
 - safeguarding provision for looked after children and care leavers is judged good or better in service and settings inspection
 - there is a sustained upward trend in safeguarding performance or sustained high-level performance against ambitious targets.

Quality of provision

Service responsiveness including complaints

27. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the changing needs of looked after children and care leavers are routinely monitored to ensure that the services provided meet these needs effectively
- partners develop services in a timely way to adapt and meet changing needs
- outcomes demonstrate good-quality care and education which includes comprehensive and highly effective direct work to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers
- partners contribute well to meeting the needs of looked after children and care leavers
- resources are managed very effectively to ensure that the needs of looked after children and care leavers are met
- arrangements are in place to commission good-quality placements and services which result in positive outcomes for children
- there is a well-established complaints and representations process which is valued by looked after children and care leavers
- the outcomes of complaints, including those made by children and young people about staff, and concerns raised about services, are systematically used to inform service development
- the complaints system is regularly reviewed involving children and young people and information of effectiveness is part of the work of the corporate parenting panel
- looked after children and care leavers are aware of how to complain and make representations and are appropriately encouraged and enabled to do so, supported where necessary by specialist advocacy services
- looked after children and care leavers express satisfaction with, and confidence in, the complaints processes and there is demonstrable evidence that concerns are addressed
- statutory guidelines in relation to complaints made against staff working with children are consistently followed
- the role and function of the local authority designated officer is effectively utilised to ensure that children are properly safeguarded and the service learns from complaints.

Assessment and direct work with children and families

28. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- decisions and action are timely and ensure that children and young people who need to be looked after are accommodated appropriately
- children and young people have sustained relationships with professionals who know them well and care about them
- support to those on the edge of care results in good decisions to only look after those with needs that can be best met through care provision
- there are clear and agreed processes for assessing risk and decision-making regarding whether a child needs to be admitted to, and remain in, care, and these are well embedded, understood and implemented consistently across the partnership
- assessments result in a comprehensive understanding of the needs of looked after children and routinely include the views of children and their parents/carers
- looked after children and care leavers experience direct work which leads to improved outcomes.

Case planning, reviews and recording

29. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- all plans for looked after children and care leavers are comprehensive and underpinned by thorough needs assessment and analysis and are implemented, monitored and evaluated
 - plans effectively address consideration of permanent alternative placement or return home where appropriate
 - planning ensures that there is no drift in care for a looked after child
 - plans are regularly reviewed to ensure timely interventions and progress against outcome goals
 - unplanned changes of placement are avoided
 - records are up to date and support high-quality practice
 - plans reflect available evidence, sound assessment and decision-making, including those decisions taken in supervision
 - systematic quality assurance and auditing procedures improve practice and develop services.

Every Child Matters outcomes for looked after children

30. Based on all the evidence, how well does the contribution made by the council and its partners improve outcomes for looked after children and young people?

Being healthy

31. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- innovative and accessible multi-agency targeting, planning, reviewing and monitoring of health services for all looked after children and care leavers have led to a sustained upward trend or high performance in outcomes for physical, emotional and sexual health
- joint agency commissioning has been effective in improving health outcomes for looked after children and care leavers with complex needs
- effective information-sharing across agencies ensures consistency in meeting the health needs of looked after children and care leavers
- looked after children and care leavers have access to a comprehensive health needs assessments which they are encouraged to attend
- targeted health promotion services are in place for looked after children and care leavers
- arrangements are in place to ensure that looked after children and care leavers can achieve timely access health services, including specialist services, when required
- an annual report identifies the health needs of looked after children and this contributes to service improvement
- health outcomes for looked after children and care leavers are better than in similar areas/authorities
- looked after children in external placements have access to a full range of health provision
- clear and effective systems are in place to ensure that looked after children placed out of authority receive healthcare that addresses their physical and emotional needs.

Staying safe

32. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- risk is managed to ensure that all children and young people who need to be in care are admitted
- thorough arrangements for monitoring care placements, including those outside of the local area, have an impact on improving safeguarding outcomes for all looked after children
- multi-agency care planning ensures outcomes are regularly reviewed
- all agencies are actively engaged and held to account for their responsibilities in delivering quality services
- information, support and guidance are well targeted to need

- looked after children, families and professionals report referral and assessment workers as highly effective in identifying children in need of services and offer timely intervention
- there is sufficient choice to meet local need, with regulatory inspections showing good and outstanding provision
- looked after children live in stable placements which provide very high-quality care and support.

Enjoying and achieving

33. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- looked after children and care leavers have very good support to access the best possible education to meet their particular needs and are fully included in school life
- attendance is above average and fixed-term and permanent exclusion rates are low compared to other looked after children and are comparable with rates for all children
- looked after children make good progress in relation to their starting point, underpinned by effective and up-to-date personal education plans that have been agreed with the child's full involvement
- looked after children and care leavers' achievement is above that of similar areas
- the performance gap in attainment between looked after children and the national average for all children and young people has narrowed significantly
- monitoring arrangements for looked after children and care leavers educated outside the area ensure that they are supported well and achieve well
- partners have very high aspirations for looked after children and care leavers
- looked after children and care leavers have access to good leisure activities of their choice
- promoting access to leisure and recreation is high priority
- positive action overcomes barriers to participation.

Making a positive contribution

34. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- consultation with looked after children and care leavers is formalised at strategic level and well embedded in practice, ensuring that their voice is heard
- the views of looked after children and care leavers routinely inform strategic planning and provision
- a strong and active looked after children council (or equivalent) has developed a pledge for children in care and actively monitors its progress and relevance
- the views of looked after children and care leavers routinely inform quality assurance, training and evaluation. Their involvement has led to a sustained and significant improvement in service provision
- looked after children and care leavers are willing and able to take on lead roles
- looked after children and care leavers are supported to develop effective communication skills and speak out on issues that matter to them
- multi-agency action to prevent offending and re-offending is well embedded, has led to significant reductions and improved life chances for those at risk.

Achieving economic well-being

35. In order to make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- outcomes for economic well-being are above those in similar areas
- the performance gap between looked after children and the national average for all pupils post-16 has closed dramatically or been eradicated
- care leavers receive strong support to access high-quality provision that enables them to continue their education or training post-16
- care leavers are assessed and are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training
- the 14–19 curriculum for care leavers offers a wide range of well-matched vocational options
- transition planning for looked after children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receiving services is thorough, timely and regularly evaluated to ensure smooth transition to adult services and further education, employment or training
- care leavers have high aspirations and a high proportion are achieving well in further and higher education
- care leavers, including older care leavers, contribute routinely to their pathway plan reviews
- pathway plans are of high quality and comprehensive

- care leavers are very positive about the plans in place to support their transition to adulthood
- care leavers have access to a range of high-quality permanent and affordable accommodation which meets their needs.