

Kirklees Family Support and Child Protection Services

Helping all children to
reach their potential
in a safe and caring
environment

Foreword

Welcome to our new service plan which sets out our vision, ambition and expectations.

These are challenging times for local government, and like most local authorities, Kirklees is working within a context of unprecedented change.

Operationally we continue to deal with the complexities of casework, which includes child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and caring for vulnerable children who require additional support, against a backdrop of relentless frontline pressures. Financial pressures are adding to the need for us to drive change, whilst at the same time maintaining and improving the quality of what we do. The regionalisation agenda is also causing councils to rethink their functions and to explore new partnership and collaboration possibilities.

Whilst this context undoubtedly has its challenges, it also creates huge opportunities for us to rethink some of the ways in which we deliver our services. The challenge is to deliver change whilst maintaining quality.

In this document you will find many examples of innovative practice and achievements. These are to the great credit of the workforce, who continue to work diligently with their clients, whilst also contributing their ideas for the future.

Working within a changing environment is nothing new for children's social care. The future will be one of constant change and development. Underpinning much of our work over the coming months will be the establishment of increasing clarity about the interfaces between different services, including prevention, adult services, community support and other partners. Our developing role with the wider community and with local schools will also be a key feature of our work in the coming months. We need to work closely with our colleagues in our local schools, to ensure that, collectively, we provide services in a way which maximises our collective potential to impact positively on the lives of all children and young people in Kirklees.

This document sets out our aspirations, our vision for the future. Our aim is to work with partners to provide the most child-friendly and safe environment in which all the children and young people of Kirklees can achieve their full potential.

Finally, in commending this plan to you, we would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our colleagues within the service who continue to work in such a dedicated fashion to improve the welfare and well-being of vulnerable children and young people in Kirklees.



CLlr Erin Hill,
Kirklees Council, Cabinet Member
for Family Support and Child Protection



Paul Johnson,
Kirklees Council, Assistant Director –
Family Support and Child Protection



Carly Speechley,
Kirklees Council, Interim
Assistant Director - Family
Support and Child Protection

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The Kirklees vision

Kirklees Council has a clear vision for our residents and communities. We want Kirklees to be:

“a district which combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life – leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives.”

Kirklees Council Corporate Plan

This is a Kirklees which innovates and creates new solutions through creative collaboration locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, to maximise the welfare of all our residents. A Kirklees which is positive and ambitious, confident in what we can achieve by connecting all of our strengths and harnessing all of our energies.

To deliver this vision in challenging economic circumstances means locally gathered evidence and insight will be paramount. We will need to use all of the resources available in our communities and to build positive, resilient communities that are able to do more for themselves and each other.

The Kirklees Childrens Trust wants Kirklees to be great place to grow up where every child and young person:

“is safe and loved, healthy and happy and free from harm, and has the chance to make the most of their talents, skills and qualities to fulfil their potential.”

The Kirklees Childrens Trust



The vision for Family Support and Child Protection Services

The vision for our service is:

“Helping all children to reach their potential in a safe and caring environment.”

To achieve this we are committed to providing services that support children and their families early, we will develop interventions which encourage families to find their own solutions and to become self-reliant. Providing early help will prevent problems from escalating and strengthen resilience and reduce demand on more costly services.

As part of a council-wide approach, we will bring together staff in Early Intervention, Targeted Support and statutory social work as a continuum of intervention within a locality model.

Our focus is on good social care practice, ensuring our staff are able to describe what life is like for the children they work with and gives attention to, and understands what outcomes are required. Children are seen as individuals with the attention to the holistic needs of families.

“Helping families to become more resilient and to have the confidence and ability to deal with problems.”

Paul Johnson, Assistant Director – Family Support and Child Protection

Working in partnership

Delivering our vision will not be possible without working closely with our partners across all agencies. We understand that delivering our vision for children in Kirklees will only be possible if we share the skills and resources that the council and its partners possess for the benefit of local children and their families. This may mean, for example, better information sharing, the co-location of teams, the implementation of new “joined up” delivery models and the agreement of a clear strategic direction between partners via the Health and Wellbeing Board.

“Partnership is an action not a word, we need to build on this by working in the locality to develop relationships with each other.”

Staff development event November 2015



The national policy landscape

Our vision has been shaped by and takes account of the large amount of national policy changes that affect the delivery of social care for children's services. These include:

- Early intervention – the Allen Review – early intervention is at the heart of New Council and, in a social work context is recognised as the way to prevent the escalation of family problems
- The Munro Review of Child Protection
- Changes to the regulation of social work and the requirement for all social workers to register with the Health and Care Professions Council
- The establishment of the role of chief social worker and network of principal social workers to reform and improve frontline practice
- A Professional Capabilities Framework developed by the Social Work Reform Board to help social workers plan their career path and professional development, now overseen by the British Association of Social Workers
- The Ofsted Inspection Framework which emphasises outcome rather than process
- The Family Justice Review – to speed up the legal process and focus on the voice of the child and professionals working together
- Working Together 2015 – clarifying the responsibilities of professionals towards safeguarding children and moving from a focus on process on to the needs of the child
- Adoption – proposals to speed up the process of children being adopted into a loving home
- HM Treasury Public Sector Productivity Plan – service redesign: shifting delivery to the local level, to put the public at the heart of service delivery; integrating front line services; and promoting early intervention to unlock savings



A snapshot of Kirklees

In addition to the national context, the immediate area and local factors have influenced our vision and the thinking behind it. Our priorities are driven by an understanding of local need.

Kirklees is one of five local authorities in West Yorkshire. It has a population of around 431,000 of which 22.9% are aged 0-17 (nationally 21.3%).

Kirklees has a mix of urban and rural populations including both relatively affluent and poor areas. Household income levels in the poorest communities are only 57% of the district average and in some parts of Kirklees, up to 48% of children live in out of work families. The Kirklees population is generally less qualified than the national average, particularly at degree level.

The area benefits from its cultural diversity. Post war immigration, largely from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, means that minority ethnic communities make up 21% of the population. Since 2004, there has been a significant influx of people from EU accession states. There are also refugees and asylum seekers from Africa, the Middle East and parts of the former Yugoslavia.

On 30 November 2015 there were 630 looked after children in Kirklees, and 382 subject to a Child Protection Plan. There were nearly 11,000 initial contacts made with the service and 4,093 referrals. The number of looked after children in Kirklees is lower than average when compared with statistical nearest neighbours. The costs of provision for looked after children is also lower than statistical nearest neighbours. A higher than average proportion of children are placed with parents, but a lower than average number are placed in 'own fostering' placements, both with kinship and non-kinship groups. This is being addressed through the development of a revised Accommodation Strategy.

Our Early Intervention & Targeted Support Service (EITS) currently manages 15 Children's Centre groupings in 31 buildings. In the past 12 months the service has engaged with 16,486 adults and 20,012 children in Children's Centres. Integrated Youth Support (IYSS) work from six Youth Hubs, three mobile units and use a further 25 locations. IYSS prevention teams have worked with around 14,000 children and young people; a further 2,500 are engaged in specialised targeted youth support, which reduces the demand on more costly social care.

630

looked after children in Kirklees
which is below average compared
with statistical nearest neighbours

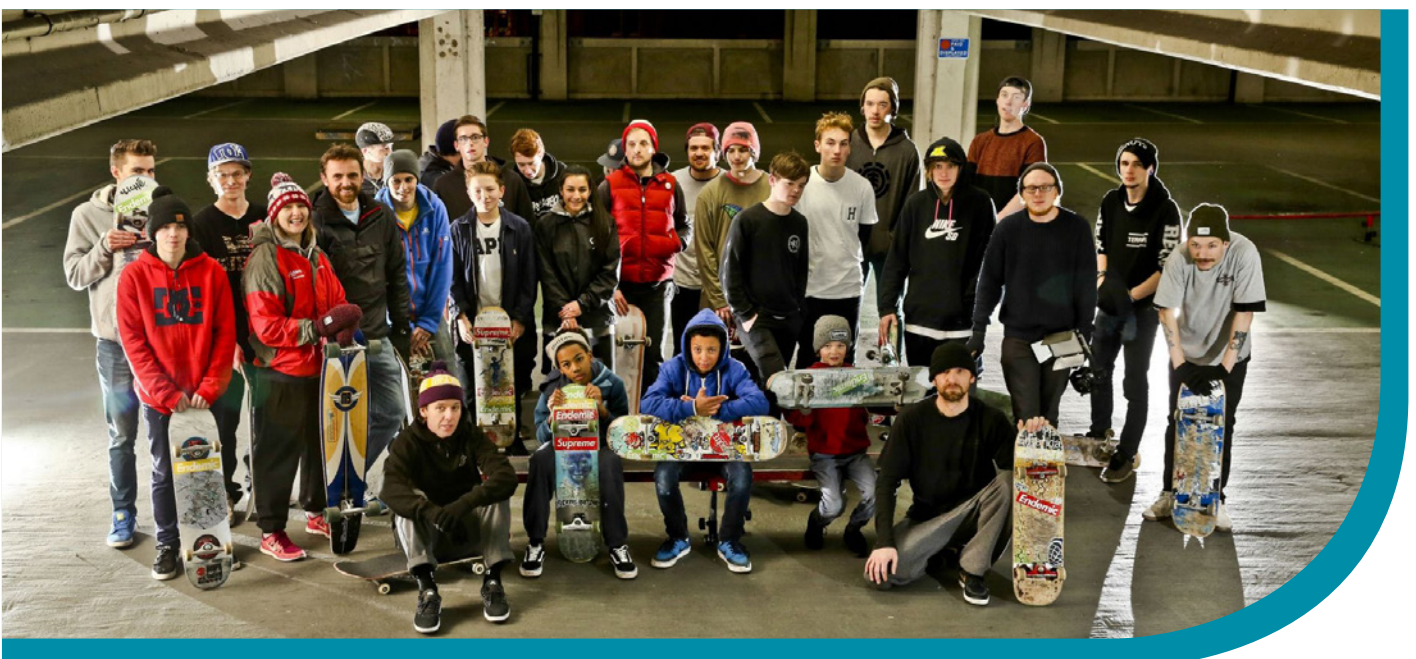


11,000

**initial contacts
last year**

4,093

**referrals
last year**



Delivering our vision

We recognise that delivering our vision in this local and national context will require us to work differently.

To support the delivery of our vision, and help all children to reach their potential in a safe and caring environment, we will:

- Make timely decisions and intervene in a timely way
- Have simpler, user friendly processes, which are easy to understand, and which focus upon the needs of people who use our services
- Maintain strong relationships with people who use our services, partners and the public by communicating honestly, and by being clear about our role
- Recognise the strengths of others, particularly the wider family and community networks
- Learn from the Stronger Families model and look to implement ways of working which have a proven evidence-base
- Work with partners and people who use our services towards shared goals wherever possible
- Provide reassurance and expert advice to partners, people who use our services, and the community
- Protect the vulnerable and provide a safety net
- Be creative and innovative
- Measure and evidence the difference we make
- Manage risk but not be risk averse
- Challenge ourselves to continually improve
- Have a positive workplace culture

“A service that empowers people to make changes to their own lives.”

Staff development event November 2015



Our priorities for the next three years

We know we still have work to do to achieve this. Through consultation events with staff and feedback from children and families, we have prioritised key actions, which we believe will have the most significant impact on shaping how we work and provide the very highest quality services, at the same time as supporting the council and its partners to manage within a reduced budget. Our priorities are to:

- Implement relationship based working that reduces the number of times workers change in the child's journey

The following is a response which was made to a written complaint from a young person who had expressed concerns about changes of social worker:

“Thank you so much for filling in the pledge form. I am really sorry that you have had so many social workers, and I have been talking to my managers about how we can maybe change the way we do some things so that this doesn't happen quite as much. Everyone has seen the form that you filled in, and your comments have really helped us to think hard about how we can improve things for you and for other children and young people.”

Paul Johnson's response to a child who is looked after

- Implement integrated local care teams and a locality working model to enable a seamless journey for the child
- Ensure staff at all levels within the service are adept at solution focused approaches, building on strengths and enabling families to arrive at their own solutions
- Develop an Accommodation Strategy and provide good quality local placements in the most cost effective way
- Ensure our services for care leavers improves
- Extend the Pillars of Parenting approach, which has driven service improvements within residential services, to foster carers
- Develop proactive response to children on the edge of care
- Modernise the disabled children's offer as part of an All Age Disability Service
- Develop and implement a robust data, intelligence and performance framework
- Embed a robust quality assurance approach that challenges us to improve and learn from what works well
- Undertake a workforce and management development programme
- Implement a new IT system which will help social care staff to record their work more effectively and efficiently
- Improve our analysis of young people who re-offend to better target the Youth Offending Teams resources, improve outcomes for young people and make Kirklees a safer place for all



What we have done so far

The following actions have already been put in place to support the outcomes required to achieve our vision:

- We have created a single 0-19 years Prevention, Early Intervention and Targeted Support Service and simplified referral and assessment processes
 - We have introduced a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) based within the social work service, providing a secure environment to share information and improve assessments
 - We have introduced the Single Assessment which replaced the early help assessment, initial assessment and core assessment within the children and young person's assessment framework
 - We are working in partnership towards a multi - disciplinary, four district model, across the borough as means of delivering early intervention and prevention, where schools can be at the heart of this model as "community hubs"
 - We have been successful in securing a Transformation Challenge Award to develop a Peer Mentoring Scheme for care leavers
- We are part of a national initiative to improve services for care leavers called New Belongings
 - We have introduced a strengths based model of intervention in our childrens homes called Pillars of Parenting. This is to make sure that the colleagues who work with our most vulnerable children and young people have the right skills and knowledge to help them help the young people
 - We have reorganised our Children in Care and Care Leavers Service so that a young person does not have to have a new social worker at 16, this is in response to what children and young people told us was important to them

"Keep the same social worker until 18 plus. I need to be able talk to them and this will help me."

Member of Children in Care Council



- We have set up a new Fostering Steering Group, which includes representatives from long and vshort term foster carers, and foster carers who offer short breaks. The steering group helps us make sure that we develop the service in conjunction with foster carers
- We have been part of a successful bid to be an early adopter of a regional approach to adoption
- We have introduced the Strengthening Families Approach to child protection conferences

“90% of professionals felt this was a better way to run conferences. From a parents perspective 99% felt involved and able to participate in the meeting.”

Review Chief Execs Office

“I felt as though it was pictured out properly and I knew what the main problem was and how to protect me and my son.”

Mothers comment

- We have an active Children in Care Council and have recently launched a Care Leavers Forum
- We have run a successful workshop to encourage other council departments to offer work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships to young people in care and care leavers

- We have set up a new Corporate Parenting Board, with representation from all the political parties and from the directorates across the council. This will help us keep the profile of children and young people in care in view across the council and with partners
- We have increased children’s involvement in child protection conferences through the use of advocates
- We have enhanced our Child Sexual Exploitation team to provide specialist support from a multi skilled team working across the whole service, to provide the ‘right support at the right time’ to children and their families
- We have continued to support the Kirklees Fostering Network, which continues to offer important peer support to its members, through a helpline
- Over the past three years we have significantly reduced the number of young people from Kirklees who are sentenced to custody



Developing the skills we need

Achieving our vision relies heavily on our staff having the right skills and support to do their jobs. Our staff are the most important resource we have to make a positive difference to children and their families. We will earn the public's respect and confidence by ensuring that all our staff are properly supported to do the job that is required of them. We will provide absolute clarity about what our staff need to know and what they need to be able to do.

To achieve the very best social care practice we will concentrate on ensuring the basics are done well, that children are seen and heard with their story and journey clearly followed and understood. We will see good quality assessments that are analytical and have SMART plans that describe and focus on the outcomes to be achieved. We will make good use of chronologies to ensure the history of the child and family are well understood. We will provide good management oversight, knowledge and involvement that is reflective and thoughtful.

We will have in place practice standards that are clear and have been influenced and designed by staff. These standards are informed by the council's published behaviours, and provide important guidance for all staff about organisational expectation.

We are committed to creating the right environment for our staff to thrive and deliver the service vision by:

- Having clear goals and objectives (at a service, team and individual level)
- Being outward looking and accountable
- Celebrating success and achievements
- Supporting technical skills and personal development
- Providing high quality technical assistance and business support
- Providing approachable and visible leadership
- Holding regular service events to bring people together
- Having effective management oversight
- Having an established reflective and learning service
- Allocating manageable and realistic caseloads
- Helping and supporting staff en route to New Council
- Breaking down silos so that teams are multi- skilled, co-located and can effectively communicate with one another



Our workforce priorities

- Focus our work relentlessly on early intervention and prevention and influence how prevention is designed and shaped in the future, thereby ensuring that our work is integral to this approach
- Develop our workforce development strategy so that it defines pathways for all staff and enables experienced staff to use their skills to enable a learning culture
- Provide a framework for management oversight, focusing on reflection, learning and exploring peer discussion and supervision
- Effectively oversee and manage the caseloads of all relevant staff, including early intervention staff, social workers and team managers, thereby using the skills and experience within the workforce to its best advantage
- Consult with staff in the development of the new IT system to ensure it is user friendly and provides a family narrative. Review unnecessary paper work and duplication

'An excessive amount of IT bureaucracy which is using my time to be a very poor administrator to little effect.'

Social worker annual health check 2015

- Make the most of new technologies including mobile working and flexible arrangements that suit children, families and our staff

We want a service that is based on positive relationships that are shared with children, families, other colleagues and partners.

We want a service where staff know what we want to achieve, what is expected of them, what they can expect from us, are signed up to it and are proud of their profession and to work in Kirklees.



Over to you

We are committed to providing the highest quality services to the children, young people and families of Kirklees. We know that this can only be achieved if we value and support our staff in the very challenging work they do. This document sets out our promise to do all we can to lead, support and provide the best possible working environment.

We will continue to support our staff through one-to-one meetings, appraisals, workload management, training and professional development.

If you have any feedback on this publication please don't hesitate to get in touch by contacting Communications on 01484 221000.



It's you that will
make the difference



A teal speech bubble with a white outline and a drop shadow, pointing towards the top-left corner of the page. It contains the website address and production information.

www.kirklees.gov.uk

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