



Meeting: **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 2 June 2026 at 2.00 pm**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Damien Buckley (Tel: 0116 305 0183)**

Email: **damien.buckley@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr M. Bools CC (Chairman)

Mr. J. Boam CC	Ms. A. Pendlebury CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Mr. B. Piper CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC	Mr. K. Robinson CC
Mrs. K. Knight CC	Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. J. McDonald CC	Canon. C. Shoyer
Dr. D. North CC	Mrs D. Taylor CC
Mr. D. Page CC	

AGENDA

- | <u>Item</u> | <u>Report by</u> |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Appointment of Chairman.

To note that Mr Mark Bools CC has been appointed Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Rule 6(a) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4E of the County Council's Constitution). | |
| 2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman. | |
| 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026. | (Pages 3 - 10) |
| 4. Question Time. | |
| 5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 32 (1). | |

Democratic Services ◦ Department of Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance
Leicestershire County Council ◦ County Hall

Glenfield ◦ Leicestershire ◦ LE3 8RA ◦ Tel: 0116 232 3232 ◦ Email: democracy@leics.gov.uk



6. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.
7. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.
8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.
9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 33.
10. Leicestershire School Term Dates Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032 Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 11 - 36)
11. Elective Home Education in Leicestershire Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 37 - 44)
12. Corporate Parenting Strategy Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 45 - 96)
13. Schools White Paper and SEND Reform Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 97 - 102)
14. Quarter 4 2025-26 Performance Report Director of Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance and Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 103 - 110)
15. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 1st September 2026 at 2.00pm.

16. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.



Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 3 March 2026.

PRESENT

Mr. M. Bools CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. Boam CC	Mr. D. Page CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Ms. A. Pendlebury CC
Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC	Mr. B. Piper CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC	Mr. K. Robinson CC
Mrs. K. Knight CC	Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. J. McDonald CC	Mrs D. Taylor CC

In Attendance

Mr. C. Pugsley CC – Lead Member for Children and Families
Canon. C. Shoyer – Church of England Representative (online)

13. Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

14. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that the following question had been received under Standing Order 35:

Question asked by Adam Stares:

“In the previous MTFS (2025) the Children & Family Services department was set to make savings of £5.6million across five areas (CF1 to CF5) for the 2025/26 financial year.

Given that there is little over a month left in the current fiscal year has the Department delivered these savings / is it on track to do so, and how does this break down across the five sections?”

Response by the Chairman:

Children & Family Services has delivered savings in line with the £5.6m target set out in the 2025 MTFS for 2025/26. While delivery across the programme has been broadly on track, there has been variation within CF5 (Smarter Commissioning, Procurement and Demand Management). In particular, Strand 4 (Increased Partner Income) has under achieved against its in year target; however, this has been offset by over achievement in other CF5 strands.

Area	MTFS Target	Year End Forecast
CF1	-750	-750
CF2	-390	-390

CF3	-250	-250
CF4	-150	-150
CF5	-4,060	-4,060
	-5,600	-5,600

15. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

16. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

17. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

18. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

19. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 33.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 33.

20. Consultation on Expanding Community Based Support for Early Years Children with Additional Needs.

The Committee was due to consider a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding proposals relating to SEND Early Years provision. The purpose of the report was to seek the views of the Committee as part of the consultation relating to the proposals. The feedback was then to be presented to the Cabinet for its consideration, at its meeting on 24 March 2026. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The original proposals aimed to create more accessible and inclusive SEND nursery places closer to home, reduce long journeys for young children and increase funding for specialist places within mainstream nurseries. Under the proposed plans, places at four specialist nurseries would no longer have been commissioned.

On 27 February 2026, the Leader of the County Council published a statement outlining that following the conclusion of the consultation, the Director of Children and Family Services, following discussion with the Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Families, had decided not to proceed with the proposals. As such, the Cabinet would no longer consider the proposals at its meeting in March.

Given that the proposals would no longer be considered by the Cabinet, there was, consequently, no matter for the Committee to provide comment on at this meeting. The report was therefore withdrawn and no debate on the matter took place.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman stated that he recognised the dissatisfaction and strong concern expressed by parents, carers, and professionals. Therefore, in consultation with the Committee Spokespersons and the Director, he had agreed, prior to the meeting, that a report relating to the consultation should be considered by the Committee at a future meeting in order to provide an opportunity for scrutiny on the matter. The Chairman went on to thank all of those who had shared their views over the consultation period.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report seeking views of the Committee relating to proposals regarding SEND Early Years provision, be withdrawn.
- (b) That a report relating to the consultation regarding SEND Early Years provision be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.

21. Building Education Services Together: Programme Plan.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an overview of the Building Education Services Together (BEST) programme plan and provided information relating to the development of a Belonging in Education Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

The Lead Member for Children and Families emphasised that the program plan presented a clear, well-structured approach to strengthening education services. In addition, that the Plan demonstrated strong partnership working which focussed on improved delivery for all children across the County.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) With regards to a statement within the report which outlined that children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school or college close to their home, a member asked whether the provision selected would be best suited to each child's needs. The Director provided assurances that whilst proximity was desirable, provision would always be appropriate for meeting a child's specific needs.
- (ii) A member asked how the Programme would aim to strengthen inclusive practice whilst at the same time improving performance. The Director stated that a Government White Paper relating to SEND was expected to place strong emphasis on mainstream inclusion, supported through improved outreach and access to the right professionals at the right time. The Service would aim to utilise initiatives such as the Oakfield outreach offer, a proposed "help at hand" model, alongside other approaches, which the Department had already begun to develop, in order to enable a broader range of needs to be met within mainstream provision.
- (iii) A question was asked regarding how long-term cost reductions would be achieved. The Director explained that savings would arise largely through cost avoidance, as independent specialist placements averaged nearly £70,000 per year, compared

with £20,000 to £30,000 for maintained mainstream specialist places. An expansion of local provision, together with growth in enhanced resource bases in mainstream schools, would reduce reliance on higher cost independent placements.

- (iv) A question was asked regarding the circumstances under which an EHCP would cease. The Director stated that EHCPs often ceased once the identified provision was no longer required nor appropriate, for example when a young person had moved into adulthood and no longer needed formal educational support, or when needs had changed significantly. Improvements had been made to the annual review process in order to ensure more timely identification of cases where provision should cease.
- (v) A question was asked regarding a review of the early years SEND support offer, which included evaluating national childcare developments and local responses. The Director stated that this work involved assessing how best to support an increasing number of early years children entering provision, reviewing commissioned services, and determining future models as part of an Early Years Service review.
- (vi) Concern was raised with regards to the process of advancing smarter commissioning procurement demand management. The Director provided assurances that the intention was not to reduce existing SEND provision, but to ensure that placements remained appropriate and cost effective. The Department would continue to work collaboratively with mainstream schools in order to avoid unnecessary transitions to independent specialist provision.
- (vii) Members were concerned that demand for specialist provision would continue to exceed capacity. The Director provided assurances that plans were already underway to expand special school places, including through a new special school and satellite provision. Members noted that existing funding and staffing capacity would be directed towards more effective models of support, particularly within mainstream settings, in order to improve inclusion and reduce pressure on the High Needs Block.
- (viii) Concern was also raised regarding the feasibility of meeting highly specialist needs within mainstream schools. The Director stated that SEND support was specific to individual children and that not all schools could accommodate highly specialist requirements. However, the Department was undertaking work to expand capability where appropriate, including capital adaptations, targeted support for specific needs, and outreach aimed at upskilling mainstream staff. Members noted that provision would continue to be arranged on a case-by-case basis.
- (ix) A question was asked regarding whether national reforms linked to deficit recovery could lead to service reductions. The Director provided assurances that there was currently no indication of required service reductions and that High Needs Block funding was not expected to decrease. The DfE had outlined that it would assess the reform plan before determining the contribution to historical deficit, but further details were awaited.
- (x) Members noted that the Programme would aim to ensure consistency across all settings, as inclusivity often varied between schools. The Director emphasised that services would focus on embedding high standards and ensuring alignment across

processes, decision-making and support pathways. Strengthened powers for Local Authorities within admissions processes would help to support this objective.

RESOLVED:

That the overview of the Building Education Services Together (BEST) programme plan and information relating to the development of a Belonging in Education Strategy, be noted.

22. Oakfield Short Stay School.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which outlined changes to the Oakfield Short Stay School, and how the Council would meet its statutory duties to ensure that there were sufficient high-quality places in Leicestershire for excluded pupils or pupils who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

The Lead Member for Children and Families stated the Oakfield Short Stay School was an incredibly valuable asset and placed on record his thanks to all staff within the school for their dedication to supporting pupils to succeed.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) A member asked whether the current number of places at Oakfield would be sufficient in order to meet future demand for excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion. The Director stated that the current number of places was not expected to be sufficient in future and explained that a review was underway with the intention of expanding available places. It was anticipated that increased reintegration rates would help reduce demand, but it would be important to adopt a flexible model that could adapt to falling exclusion numbers by redirecting capacity toward outreach support in mainstream settings. Members were informed that larger buildings and increased capacity were being sought.
- (ii) With regards to monitoring arrangements, the Director reported that a performance framework had been commissioned by the Department and an initial draft had been considered within a performance meeting. The Framework would aim to track indicators including numbers of excluded and reintegrated children, turnaround times, repeat exclusions, attendance rates, and other key measures. It was noted that maintaining the quality of alternative provision, including within Oakfield, was critical.
- (iii) A member asked whether supporting more children within mainstream schools would reduce demand on Oakfield. The Director outlined that early intervention within mainstream schools was a key objective and would reduce demand for places within Oakfield. The model was being designed to provide additional outreach support both in mainstream schools and other settings.
- (iv) With regards to satellite sites, a member asked whether these were intended to meet geographical need or were required because the original accommodation was insufficient. The Director explained that the previous centres had been located within limited geographic areas and had also lacked sufficient space. The new approach sought to disperse centres across the County to meet local demand while also increasing capacity where needed. It was noted that long travel distances for

pupils or staff were undesirable and that the Service aimed for children to be educated locally in order to support reintegration.

- (v) In response to a question asked, the Director stated that alternative-provision centres had historically become long-term placements, with pupils entering in Year 8 or 9 and remaining until the end of Key Stage 4. The new model instead defined these centres as short-term interventions, with the intention of moving pupils on to more suitable long-term settings. It was noted that educational outcomes for pupils in alternative provision remained significantly lower than for those educated in mainstream schools, and that improving long-term outcomes was a central aim.
- (vi) With regards to the short-stay model, a member asked what proportion of pupils who had returned to their mainstream school later re-entered the provision. The Director advised that it was too early to report on this, as the necessary data had not yet been established. The reintegration and return rate would, however, be a key indicator within the performance framework. It was noted that where a pupil did return to Oakfield after reintegration, this would also prompt consideration of whether the mainstream school remained the most appropriate setting. The Director agreed to provide the Committee with the data at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overview of changes to the Oakfield Short Stay School and how the Council would meet its statutory duties to ensure sufficient high-quality places in Leicestershire for excluded pupils or pupils at risk of exclusion from mainstream education, be noted.
- (b) That the Director of Children and Family Services be requested to provide the Committee with information relating to the number of pupils which had returned to Oakfield after reintegration in mainstream provision, at a future meeting.

23. Quarter 3 2025-26 Performance Report.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an update on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period October to December 2025 (Quarter 3). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

The Lead Member for Children and Families emphasised that despite ongoing pressures, the Department had continued to deliver strong outcomes for children and families. He placed on record his thanks to all of the staff in the Department for their continued hard work.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) A member asked a question regarding the number of young people (16-17) not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Director explained that the reasons varied considerably. Some young people had entered a new phase of education or training which had not suited them, or they had found that a course was not as expected. Others had experienced trauma or significant life events which had prevented them from continuing. It was noted that some young people became difficult to track because they were not required to report their activities to the local authority, although monitoring would usually continue until their 19th birthday. A

detailed NEET report had recently been commissioned by the Department in order to better understand the issue and to enable comparison against national data. The Director agreed to provide the Committee with a report relating to NEET children and young people, at a future meeting.

- (ii) Concern was raised that only 69.8% of children in care had received a dental check-up and 82.9% had an annual health assessment. The Director explained that achieving 100% performance in this area would never be possible because some young people chose not to attend health or dental appointments, despite encouragement. Members noted that challenges with access to dental services had arisen following COVID restrictions due to reduced availability, but significant work had been undertaken with dental practices in order to improve access. The Director outlined that the Department aimed to reach 80% performance in this area and that carers and young people were strongly encouraged to attend. A member then asked whether the data could be broken down by age group, as missed appointments for younger children would be of greater concern. The Director agreed to provide the data broken down by age-group, at a future meeting.
- (iii) A question was asked regarding the percentage of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months. The Director outlined that re-referral rates were expected, and were appropriate, and that some children would reasonably be re-referred within a 12-month period. The Director provided assurances that the service routinely audited cases in order to distinguish between re-referrals caused by new concerns and those resulting from earlier actions which had not fully addressed an issue. Members noted that some children were appropriately diverted to Early Help at the point of first referral but could later need to return to Social Care. Re-referrals were closely monitored through monthly performance meetings. Repeated plans did not always indicate persistent problems and could reflect the need to respond appropriately to any new or ongoing safeguarding risks. The Director explained that families experiencing issues such as domestic abuse, parental mental-health problems, or substance misuse often required renewed intervention. The ending of child protection plans were monitored carefully in order to ensure adequate support was in place. Members noted that some figures reflected large sibling groups affected by the same incident.
- (iv) A question was asked regarding a 12% increase in the number of children educated at home, particularly those aged 12–15. The Director stated that the reasons were mixed. In terms of the reasons behind home educating, some parents declined a school offered or preferred a different type of provision to that offered. Others felt that their child's needs were better met through home education, particularly where the child had social, emotional or mental-health difficulties. The Director outlined that work was being undertaken to commission additional provision for this cohort of children and to expand the inclusion service. Where parents wished for their children to return to school, places were available, and the Authority would work with them. Members noted that elective home education was an area of significant concern, with vulnerable children being at particular risk, and that stronger legislation and increased Local Authority powers would be welcomed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period October to December 2025 (Quarter 3), be noted.

- (b) That the Director of children and Family Services be requested to provide the Committee with a report relating to children and young people not in education, Employment or training (NEET), at a future meeting.
- (c) That the Director of Children and Family Services be requested to provide the Committee with age specific data relating to the percentage of children in care who had received a dental check-up and an annual health assessment, at a future meeting.

24. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 2 June 2026 at 14:00.

2.00 - 2.56 pm
03 March 2026

CHAIRMAN



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
2 JUNE 2026

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOL TERM DATES
AUTUMN 2027 TO SUMMER 2032

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's views on proposed Leicestershire school term and holiday dates covering the period from autumn 2027 to summer 2032 for schools maintained by the local authority.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Term dates are determined by school employers following public consultation, as is set out in the Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999.
3. As the local authority is the employer for community, voluntary controlled and community special schools, any changes to agreed term time dates proposed by such schools must be agreed in advance by the Director of Children and Family Services.
4. Leicestershire's term dates were last reviewed by the Cabinet in September 2021 when it was agreed that they would follow the traditional Leicestershire pattern for the period autumn 2022 to summer 2027.
5. The Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2026 considered a report regarding a proposed consultation on three potential models for Leicestershire school term and holiday dates. The Cabinet agreed that it did not support a model that would impact on the "*Leicestershire fortnight*" and asked that the other two models be reconsidered and presented to the Cabinet at its next meeting in April, prior to a consultation process being undertaken.
6. On 28 April 2026, the Cabinet approved a consultation to be undertaken on two proposed term date models for Leicestershire for the academic years 2027/28 to 2031/32. It was also agreed that a further report be taken to the Cabinet meeting on 8 September 2026 presenting the outcomes of the consultation and the recommended term date model.

Background

7. The local authority is responsible for setting school term dates for all maintained schools, which includes all community and voluntary controlled schools and community special schools, under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
8. There are 285 state-funded schools in Leicestershire. Of these, 24% are maintained, including 65 primary schools and 2 special schools. All other state-funded schools within the County, including all secondary schools, are academies.
9. Following the Deregulation Act 2015, academies are responsible for setting their own term dates. In practice, the majority of schools in Leicestershire tend to follow the pattern set by the County Council, although some schools have moved away from the traditional Leicestershire term date pattern.
10. Schools in England must be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year and 195 days for teachers.
11. The County Council sets term date patterns for 190 days, providing all schools in the County, including those maintained by the Council, with the flexibility to identify five staff training days (often known as inset days) outside of the 190 days the school is open to pupils each academic year. While this approach is in contrast to neighbouring authorities which include suggested inset days in their term date patterns, it enables maintained schools to, where possible, align their inset days with other schools in their local area.
12. Home to school transport is provided on the days that schools are open to pupils.
13. The County Council has previously worked with Leicester City Council to set proposed dates for future academic years. This approach has been in place for a number of years to ensure that school term dates are aligned where possible to minimise the impact on families and school transport providers working across both areas.
14. The traditional term date pattern for Leicester and Leicestershire reflected the County's industrial heritage and included the Leicestershire Workers' July Fortnight, a county-wide holiday period introduced in 1965 where factories and businesses closed for the first two weeks of July to enable workers to avoid peak holiday periods. The July fortnight shutdown period is no longer widely observed as a result of the changing nature of employment and industry in the County.
15. Following the most recent term date consultation in 2021, Leicestershire maintained schools retained an early July finish to the school year, which is around two weeks earlier than some adjoining local authorities. Previous term dates for 2022/23 to 2026/27 are set out in Appendix A attached to this report.

Proposed Term Date Models for Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032

16. Leicestershire County Council, in collaboration with Leicester City Council, has developed two potential term date models for the five academic years between autumn 2027 and summer 2032. The proposed dates are set out in Appendix B

attached to this report. All proposed models provide for 190 school days. The proposed dates have also been shared with Rutland Council.

17. Many families like Leicestershire's traditional approach, which includes a very early summer break which can mean potentially cheaper family holidays.
18. Taking into account the ongoing popularity of the existing term date model, both proposed term date models for the County Council retain the existing early July finish to the school year which is around 2 weeks earlier than neighbouring local authorities.
19. It should be noted that, while the County Council has worked closely with Leicester City Council on proposed term date patterns for autumn 2027 to summer 2032, the models developed for consultation are slightly different across both local authority areas. All proposed dates for October half-term, Christmas break, February half-term, Easter break and May half-term are aligned to those proposed by Leicester City Council. However, the City Council has proposed a slightly later start to the summer school holidays than patterns proposed by the County Council.
20. As part of their consultation, the City Council has proposed to start the summer holidays 1 week later than the County Council in July 2028, and 2 days later in each subsequent school year. Leicestershire County Council patterns ensure that the school year finishes around 2 weeks earlier than neighbouring local authorities.
21. The proposed models for consultation detailed in Appendix A to this report are as follows:
 - **Model 1:** retains the historic term date pattern with a very early summer break and a one-week autumn half-term.
 - **Model 2:** retains the same very early summer break as Model 1, with an earlier return to school in August proposed to accommodate a two-week autumn half-term.
22. The current 6-week summer break means schools in the County see a rise in child protection referrals; it also results in a loss of learning, and some families also struggle with the cost of childcare. The existing pattern includes terms of significantly different lengths, with a longer autumn term which children can struggle to manage, impacting their attendance, and shorter spring and summer terms.
23. The consultation asks for views as to whether Leicestershire should keep the historic pattern or move to the alternative model which would introduce a 2-week October half-term to help to address some of these concerns while retaining the same early summer break previously favoured by Leicestershire families.
24. Both options aim to ensure a similar number of days for the spring and summer terms. This means that while the Good Friday and Easter Monday bank holidays will be maintained and will be incorporated into the Easter holiday period, the two-week break may not always follow the traditional Easter pattern of the bank holidays being on the middle weekend of the two-week break. Depending on the timing of Easter, the Easter bank holidays may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the holiday period.

Consultation

25. A public consultation is seeking feedback on the two potential term date models to inform a recommended model for implementation. The consultation began on 5 May and will run up to 15 June 2026 and is being carried out primarily using an online survey, which is also available in accessible print versions on request. An online survey is being used to maximise the number of responses, with the survey link shared with schools and parents as well as through social media to ensure a wide range of views.
26. The consultation is aligned with a consultation on term dates for Leicester City Council, although each council will be consulting on slightly different term date models. The consultations are running independently to the same time scales.
27. Consultation feedback will be jointly reviewed by officers from both the County Council and Leicester City Council following the closure of the consultation period to consider opportunities to align dates where this is practical. Recommendations will be presented to the respective decision-making bodies of both Councils, with ultimate decision-making remaining the responsibility of each local authority.

Resource Implications

28. There are no resource implications arising from this report. The cost of implementing the agreed term time pattern following approval by the Cabinet forms part of the existing Children and Family Services budget allocation.

Timetable for Decisions

29. A 6-week consultation on the potential term date models commenced on 5 May and will run until 15 June 2026.
30. It is intended that the Cabinet will receive a further report at its meeting on 8 September 2026 summarising consultation feedback and presenting a recommended term date model for approval.

Background papers

Report to the Cabinet on 17 September 2021 "Leicestershire School Term-Time Patterns from Autumn 2022 to Summer 2027"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s163631/Term%20Dates%20Consultation.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet on 24 March 2026 "Leicestershire School Term Dates Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8305>

Report to the Cabinet on 28 April 2026 "Leicestershire School Term Dates Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8306&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

31. This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Equality Implications

32. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed to consider the impact of the proposed term date patterns on individuals with protected characteristics which is attached as Appendix C to this report. There are no adverse equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

33. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Partnership Implications

34. The proposed school term date patterns have been developed in collaboration with Leicester City Council to align dates where possible across both areas.

Appendices

Appendix A - Previous school term dates for 2022/23 to 2026/27

Appendix B - Proposed school term dates for autumn 2027 to summer 2032

Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment

Officer(s) to Contact

Tim Browne – Interim Director of Education, Inclusion & Additional Needs
Children and Family Services
Telephone: 0116 305 0546
Email: tim.browne@leics.gov.uk

Renata Chantrill – Head of Service, Education Sufficiency
Children and Family Services
Telephone: 0116 305 0356
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Leicestershire Term Time Dates for Community Schools 2022-2027

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
Autumn term	Aug Sep Oct	Schools open Tuesday 30 August until Friday 14 October 2022 (Bank Holiday Monday 29 August)	Schools open Tuesday 29 August until Friday 13 October 2023 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Schools open Tuesday 27 August until Friday 18 October 2024 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Schools open Tuesday 26 August until Friday 17 October 2025 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	Schools open Monday 24 August until Friday 16 October 2026 (Bank Holiday Monday 31 August)
		Half-term: 17 – 21 Oct 2022	Half-term: 16 – 20 Oct 2023	Half-term: 21 – 25 Oct 2024	Half-term: 20 – 24 Oct 2025	Half-term: 19 – 23 Oct 2026
	Nov Dec	Schools open Monday 24 October until Friday 16 December 2022	Schools open Monday 23 October until Friday 22 December 2023	Schools open Monday 28 October until Friday 20 December 2024	Schools open Monday 27 October until Friday 19 December 2025	Schools open Monday 26 October until Friday 18 December 2026
	Jan	Christmas holiday				
Spring term	Feb	Schools open Tuesday 3 January until Friday 17 February 2023 (Bank Holiday Monday 2 January)	Schools open Monday 8 January until Friday 16 February 2024	Schools open Monday 6 January until Friday 14 February 2025	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2026	Schools open Monday 4 January until Friday 12 February 2026
		Half-term: 20 – 24 Feb 2023	Half-term: 19 – 23 Feb 2024	Half-term: 17 – 21 Feb 2025	Half-term: 16 – 20 Feb 2026	Half-term: 15 – 19 Feb 2027
	Mar Apr	Schools open Monday 27 February until Friday 31 March 2023	Schools open Monday 26 February until Friday 22 March 2024	Schools open Monday 24 February until Friday 11 April 2025	Schools open Monday 23 February until Friday 27 March 2026	Schools open Monday 22 February until Friday 19 March 2027
		Easter holiday: Mon 3 – Fri 14 April 2023	Easter holiday: Mon 25 March – Fri 5 April 2024	Easter holiday: Mon 14 – Fri 25 April 2025	Easter holiday: Mon 30 Mar – Fri 10 April 2026	Easter holiday: Mon 22 Mar – Fri 2 Apr 2027
Summer term	May	Schools open Monday 17 April until Friday 26 May 2023 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 May)	Schools open Monday 8 April until Friday 24 May 2024 (Bank Holiday Monday 6 May)	Schools open Monday 28 April until Friday 23 May 2025 (Bank Holiday Monday 5 May)	Schools open Monday 13 April until Friday 22 May 2026 (Bank Holiday Monday 4 May)	Schools open Monday 5 April until Friday 28 May 2027 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 May)
		Half-term: 29 May – 2 June 2023	Half-term: 27 – 31 May 2024	Half-term: 26 – 30 May 2025	Half-term: 25 – 29 May 2026	Half-term: 31 May – 4 June 2027
	Jun July	Schools open Monday 5 June until Wednesday 12 July 2023	Schools open Monday 3 June until Tuesday 9 July 2024	Schools open Monday 2 June until Tuesday 8 July 2025	Schools open Monday 1 June until Tuesday 7 July 2026	Schools open Monday 7 June until Tuesday 6 July 2027
	Aug	Summer holiday: Thursday 13 July – Monday 28 August 2023 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Summer holiday: Wednesday 10 July – Monday 26 August 2024 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Summer holiday: Wednesday 9 July – Monday 25 August 2025 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	Summer holiday: Wednesday 8 July – Friday 21 August 2026	Summer holiday: Wednesday 7 July 2027 – End of current pattern

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

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Have
your
say on

Proposed School term and holiday dates from Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032

We want to hear your thoughts
on our proposed term dates

Online: leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation

For general enquiries or comments about this consultation
please phone **0116 305 6324** or e-mail admissions@leics.gov.uk

Public consultation: We will be consulting on proposals for a
six week period from **5th May 2026 to midnight 15th June 2026**.

This consultation aims to seek your views on two potential options for school term and holiday dates for Leicestershire schools (from Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032).

Why does Leicestershire County Council get involved with this?

School term and holiday dates are determined by school employers. As Leicestershire County Council is the employer for community, voluntary-controlled, and community special schools in Leicestershire, it determines the term dates for these settings. Following the Deregulation Act 2015 academies have the power to set their own term time dates.

Leicestershire County Council's school term dates are currently set until the end of the 2026-27 academic year.

Do all community, voluntary-controlled, and community special schools in Leicestershire have to adopt the school term & holiday dates set by Leicestershire County Council?

In principle yes, but there is some flexibility to allow schools to amend term time patterns in-line with academies that have moved away from our patterns. In Leicestershire several secondary academies have partially moved away from our model. This can result in siblings in different schools having different term time patterns which causes difficulties with organising care arrangements and planning time off together as a family.

With this in mind, Leicestershire County Council has a recommended process that allows community schools to amend their term time patterns to fall in-line with the local secondary academy. The community school must request permission from Leicestershire County Council's Director of Children and Families to amend their term patterns to align with the local academy's.

Who determines the INSET days?

INSET (In-Service Education and Training) days are now responsibility of the Headteacher to set. Leicestershire County Council no longer proposes or sets these days. The term time patterns we are consulting on allow for 190 school days each year, however headteachers may choose to set inset days during the school year which would impact the individual term date pattern for their school.

What is Leicestershire's current school term pattern?

Traditionally, Leicestershire has always had a different school term pattern compared to surrounding areas and most other parts of the country. Compared to other areas, Leicestershire currently has:

- An early autumn break (October half term holiday)
- An early spring break (February half term holiday)
- An early start to the summer holidays that is around 2 weeks earlier than surrounding local authorities.

Why consult?

To ensure schools and parents have sufficient notice about future school term dates, we now need to consult on term dates for the following five academic years (from Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032).

Previous consultations that included opportunities to align school terms with surrounding areas have confirmed Leicestershire's unique pattern is popular with the majority of parents. We are therefore proposing to retain the traditional Leicestershire holiday and term date pattern.

Leicestershire County Council wants to consult parents, teachers and local residents on proposed term dates for 2027 to 2032 to provide an opportunity to shape proposals before they are confirmed.

Working in collaboration with us, Leicester City Council will also be running a consultation on the City term patterns over the same time period as the County Council. This collaboration aims to improve outcomes for all those affected by the school term dates in the area and will seek to align dates across both Council areas where possible. Dates for October half term, Christmas break, February half term, Easter break and May half term are aligned on proposed dates for both Council areas. However, proposed summer holiday dates differ slightly across both Councils. In addition, the City Council does propose inset days as part of their term date pattern and in some cases these may not entirely align with the decisions taken by individual headteachers in Leicestershire on the timing of inset days.

Proposed term dates

We have developed term time proposals for 2027 – 2032 that we welcome your feedback on.

The proposed dates in this consultation are based on the following key principles and aims.

Principles:

- The requirement to have 380 sessions (190 school days) during a school year;
- To ensure school holidays take into consideration Christian religious dates to allow families to observe religious occasions such as Christmas and Easter;
- Where possible, national bank holidays have been incorporated into school holidays;
- Where possible to try and aim for a summer break of more than a minimum of five weeks;
- Where practical, offer a more balanced term length throughout the year compared to the current pattern;
- To consider Leicestershire term times alongside neighbouring local authorities.

Proposal for academic year 2027/28

	Option 1	Option 2
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Wednesday 18 August until Friday 15 October 2027 (Bank Holiday Monday 30 August)
	Sep	Schools open Wednesday 25 August until Friday 22 October 2027 (Bank Holiday Monday 30 August)
	Oct	Half-term: Monday 25 – Friday 29 October 2027
	Nov	Half-term: Monday 18 – Friday 29 October 2027
Spring term	Dec	Schools open Monday 1 November until Friday 17 December 2027
	Jan	Christmas holiday: Monday 20 December 2027 – Monday 3 January 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 January)
	Feb	Schools open Tuesday 4 January until Friday 18 February 2028
	Mar	Half-term: Monday 21 – Friday 25 February 2028
Summer term	Apr	Schools open Monday 28 February until Friday 7 April 2028
	May	Easter holiday: Monday 10 – Friday 21 April 2028
	Jun	Schools open Monday 24 April until Friday 26 May 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 May)
	Jul	Half-term: Monday 29 May – Friday 2 June 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 29 May)
	Schools open Monday 5 June until Friday 7 July 2028	
	Summer holiday: Monday 10 July – 29 August 2028	
	Summer holiday: Monday 10 July – 18 August 2028	

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Summer holiday comparison

July														August						
10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24	25	26	27	28	31	1	2	3	4	7
Leicestershire Summer Holiday start 10 July																				
											Lincolnshire Summer holiday starts 24 July									
											Warwickshire Summer holiday starts 24 July									
											North Northants Summer holiday starts 24 July									
											Derbyshire Summer holiday starts 25 July									
											Nottinghamshire Summer holiday starts 27 July									

Proposals for academic year 2028/29

	Option 1	Option 2	
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Tuesday 29 August until Friday 20 October 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Schools open Monday 21 August until Friday 13 October 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)
	Sep		
	Oct	Half-term: Monday 23 – Friday 27 October 2028	Half-term: Monday 16 – Friday 27 October 2028
	Nov	Schools open Monday 30 October until Friday 15 December 2028	Schools open Monday 30 October until Friday 15 December 2028
Spring term	Dec		
	Christmas holiday: Monday 18 December 2028 – Monday 1 January 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 January)		
	Jan	Schools open Tuesday 2 January until Friday 9 February 2029	Schools open Tuesday 2 January until Friday 9 February 2029
	Feb		
	Half-term: Monday 12 – Friday 16 February 2029		
	Mar	Schools open Monday 19 February until Friday 23 March 2029	Schools open Monday 19 February until Friday 23 March 2029
	Apr		
Easter holiday: Monday 26 – Friday 6 April 2029			
Summer term	May	Schools open Monday 9 April until Friday 25 May 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 7 May)	Schools open Monday 9 April until Friday 25 May 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 7 May)
	Jun	Half-term: Monday 28 May – Friday 1 June 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 May)	
	Jul	Schools open Monday 4 June until Wednesday 11 July 2029	Schools open Monday 4 June until Wednesday 11 July 2029
	Summer holiday: Thursday 12 July – 27 August 2029		Summer holiday: Thursday 12 July – 17 August 2029

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Summer holiday comparison

July											August									
12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	27	30	31	1	2	3	6	7	8	9
Leicestershire Summer Holiday start 12 July																				
											Derbyshire Summer holiday starts 26 July									
												Nottinghamshire Summer holiday starts 30 July								

Proposals for academic year 2029/30

		Option 1	Option 2
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Tuesday 28 August until Friday 19 October 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)	Schools open Monday 20 August until Friday 12 October 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)
	Sep		
	Oct		
	Nov	Half-term: Monday 22 – Friday 26 October 2029	Half-term: Monday 15 – Friday 26 October 2029
	Dec	Schools open Monday 29 October until Friday 21 December 2029	Schools open Monday 29 October until Friday 21 December 2029
	Jan	Christmas holiday: Monday 24 December 2029 – Friday 4 January 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 January)	
Spring term	Feb	Schools open Monday 7 January until Friday 15 February 2030	Schools open Monday 7 January until Friday 15 February 2030
	Mar	Half-term: Monday 18 – Friday 22 February 2030	
	Apr	Schools open Monday 25 February until Friday 5 April 2030	Schools open Monday 25 February until Friday 5 April 2030
	May	Easter holiday: Monday 8 – Monday 22 April 2030	
Summer term	May	Schools open Tuesday 23 April until Friday 24 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 6 May)	Schools open Tuesday 23 April until Friday 24 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 6 May)
	Jun	Half-term: Monday 27 – Friday 31 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 May)	
	Jul	Schools open Monday 3 June until Wednesday 10 July 2030	Schools open Monday 3 June until Wednesday 10 July 2030
		Summer holiday: Thursday 11 July – 26 August 2030	Summer holiday: Thursday 11 July – 16 August 2030

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Summer holiday comparison

July												August									
11	12	15	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26	29	30	31	1	2	5	6	7	8	9
Leicestershire Summer Holiday start 11 July																					
												Derbyshire Summer holiday starts 26 July									
												Nottinghamshire Summer holiday starts 29 July									

Proposals for academic year 2030/31

		Option 1	Option 2
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Tuesday 27 August until Friday 18 October 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Schools open Monday 19 August until Friday 11 October 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)
	Sep		
	Oct	Half-term: Monday 21 – Friday 25 October 2030	Half-term: Monday 14 – Friday 25 October 2030
	Nov	Schools open Monday 28 October until Friday 20 December 2030	Schools open Monday 28 October until Friday 20 December 2030
Dec			
Spring term	Jan	Christmas holiday: Monday 23 December 2030 – Friday 3 January 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 January)	
	Feb	Schools open Monday 6 January until Friday 14 February 2031	Schools open Monday 6 January until Friday 14 February 2031
	Mar	Half-term: Monday 17 – Friday 21 February 2031	
	Apr	Schools open Monday 24 February until Friday 4 April 2031	Schools open Monday 24 February until Friday 4 April 2031
Summer term	May	Schools open Monday 21 April until Friday 23 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 5 May)	Schools open Monday 21 April until Friday 23 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 5 May)
	Jun	Half-term: Monday 26 – Friday 30 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 May)	
	Jul	Schools open Monday 2 June until Tuesday 8 July 2031	Schools open Monday 2 June until Tuesday 8 July 2031
		Summer holiday: Wednesday 9 July – 25 August 2031	Summer holiday: Wednesday 9 July – 15 August 2031

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Proposals for academic year 2031/32

		Option 1	Option 2
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Tuesday 26 August until Friday 17 October 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	Schools open Monday 18 August until Friday 10 October 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)
	Sep		
	Oct	Half-term: Monday 20 – Friday 24 October 2031	Half-term: Monday 13 – Friday 24 October 2031
	Nov	Schools open Monday 27 October until Friday 19 December 2031	Schools open Monday 27 October until Friday 19 December 2031
Dec			
Spring term	Jan	Christmas holiday: Monday 22 December 2031– Friday 2 January 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 January)	
	Feb	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2032	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2032
	Mar	Half-term: Monday 16 – Friday 20 February 2032	
	Mar	Schools open Monday 23 February until Thursday 25 March 2032	Schools open Monday 23 February until Thursday 25 March 2032
	Apr	Easter holiday: Friday 26 March – Friday 9 April 2032	
	May	Schools open Monday 12 April until Friday 28 May 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 May)	Schools open Monday 12 April until Friday 28 May 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 May)
Summer term	Jun	Half-term: Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 31 May)	
	Jun	Schools open Monday 7 June until Wednesday 7 July 2032	Schools open Monday 7 June until Wednesday 7 July 2032
	Jul	Summer holiday: Thursday 8 July 2032	

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Days per term Summary

		Number of School Days	
		HALF TERM	FULL TERM
Autumn 2027 to Summer 2028	1	42 days	Autumn
	2	35 days	77 days
	3	34 days	Spring
	4	30 days	64 days
	5	24 days	Summer
	6	25 days	49 days
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190

		Number of School Days	
		HALF TERM	FULL TERM
Autumn 2028 to Summer 2029	1	42 days	Autumn
	2	35 days	77 days
	3	29 days	Spring
	4	25 days	54 days
	5	34 days	Summer
	6	25 days	59 days
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190

		Number of School Days	
		HALF TERM	FULL TERM
Autumn 2029 to Summer 2030	1	42 days	Autumn
	2	40 days	82 days
	3	30 days	Spring
	4	30 days	60 days
	5	23 days	Summer
	6	25 days	48 days
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190

		Number of School Days	
		HALF TERM	FULL TERM
Autumn 2030 to Summer 2031	1	41 days	Autumn
	2	40 days	81 days
	3	30 days	Spring
	4	30 days	60 days
	5	24 days	Summer
	6	25 days	49 days
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190

		Number of School Days	
		HALF TERM	FULL TERM
Autumn 2031 to Summer 2032	1	42 days	Autumn
	2	40 days	82 days
	3	30 days	Spring
	4	24 days	54 days
	5	34 days	Summer
	6	20 days	54 days
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190

How the consultation will work

The consultation will run from **Tuesday 5th May to midnight on 15th June 2026**.

To submit your views, please fill out the consultation survey and make sure it reaches us by **midnight on 15th June** at the latest. The survey is available online at **www.leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation**.

Paper copies of the survey are available on request by calling **0116 305 6324**.

What happens next?

Following the consultation, we will consider all the responses received and a report, including a recommendation for a final proposed school term & holiday pattern will be taken to the council's Cabinet for their consideration in September 2026.

The pattern that is decided upon by the Cabinet will come into effect from Autumn 2027.

The decision will be published on our school admissions pages

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-admissions and on our consultation pages www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/previous-consultations

The Cabinet report will also be publicly available.

You can view the latest information in a number of ways

Visit us online at leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation
Our web pages will be kept up-to-date with the latest information and developments. You'll also be able to access the survey here.

Send an email to admissions@leics.gov.uk to register for the latest news and updates.

Follow us [@leicscountyhall](https://twitter.com/leicscountyhall) for general updates from the council, including the developments on the budget.

Alternatively, you can telephone **0116 305 6324** to ask for information in printed or alternative formats.

ਜੇ ਆਪ ਆ ਮਾਊਨੀ ਆਪਨੀ ਆਖਾਮਾਂ ਸਮਝਵਾਮਾਂ ਥੋੜੀ ਮਦਦ
ਓਝਰਨਾਂ ਡੋ ਤੋ 0116 305 6324 ਨੰਬਰ ਪਰ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ
ਅਸੇ ਆਪਨੇ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਆਵਰਥਾ ਕਰੀਓ.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ
ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0116 305 6324 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ
ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਦਵਾਂਗੇ।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন
সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে 0116 305 6324 এই নম্বরে
ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر کال کریں
0116 305 6324 اور ہم آپ کی مدد کے لئے کسی کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，
請致電 0116 305 6324，我們會安排有關人員為你
提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji
w Twoim języku, zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 6324,
a my Ci dopomożemy.

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Equality Impact Assessment Form

Before completing this form, please refer to [the supporting guidance document](#)

The purpose of this form is to aid the Council in meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Council to have “due regard” of the impact of its actions on the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The assessment is used to identify and record any concerns and potential risks. The following actions can then be taken to address these issues.

- Remove risks: abandon the proposed policy or practice
- Mitigate risks – amend the proposed policy or practice so that risks are reduced
- Justify policy or practice in terms of other objectives

Once the EIA has been approved by the Senior Responsible Officer, please ensure that a copy is placed on the SharePoint folder: “Equalities Board, EIAs”

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Leicestershire County Council School Term Time Patterns (2027 to 2032)
Department and service	Children and Families Department
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Gurjit Singh Bahra, Service Manager of School Admissions and Pupil Services Renata Chantrill, Head of Service, Education Sufficiency
Contact numbers	0116 305 6324
Date of completion	14 April 2026

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change	
What is the proposal?	New term-time patterns from autumn 2027 to summer 2032
What change and impact is intended by the proposal?	To establish a suitable term-time pattern that meets the needs of Leicestershire residents, schools and partners.
What is the rationale for this proposal?	Current term-time patterns end summer 2027, and therefore the LA needs to propose and set following consultation a new five-year pattern.

3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement
--

<p>What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?</p> <p>What does it show?</p>	<p>Consultation will be launched to understand which term-time pattern Leicestershire residents and key stakeholders prefer which will inform the recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p>The previous two consultations both were heavily in favour of the traditional Leicestershire pattern. It is therefore anticipated the historic pattern is likely to continue to be popular.</p>
<p>What engagement has been undertaken so far?</p> <p>What does it show?</p>	<p>A six-week consultation will be run to gather responses.</p> <p>Previous response rates have been high in favour of the traditional pattern.</p>

4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action

Please specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the '[protected characteristics](#)' may **potentially** be affected by the policy and describe any benefits and concerns including any barriers. Use this section to demonstrate how risks would be mitigated for each affected group. If a group will not be affected by the proposal please state so.

Group	What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?	How will the known concerns be mitigated?
Age	For families of compulsory school aged children it will ensure time off together.	If action is not taken there is a likelihood schools may be in breach of the School Admissions Code.	A consultation on proposed term date models will be undertaken as part of setting new dates for 2027 to 2032.

Disability	The changes will not negatively impact children with disabilities.	Children with a disability will share the same patterns as mainstream children therefore it will ensure all children are off together to ensure family time	N/A
Race	There will be no negative impact for protected characteristics.	None	N/A
Sex			
Gender Reassignment			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	There will be no negative impact for protected characteristics.	None	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	There will be no negative impact for protected characteristics.	None	N/A
Armed Forces (including veterans)	There will be no negative impact for armed forces children.	N/A	N/A
People with lived care experience	There will be no negative impact for lived care experience.	None	N/A
Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality,	The changes will help to support most vulnerable to have time off together		



carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	The early summer break allows Leicestershire families to benefit from potentially cheaper holidays	N/A	N/A
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5- Action Plan

Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns identified in section 4 will be mitigated.

What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale	Expected outcome
To launch public consultation and take views which will be reported back to Cabinet to support them in taking a decision.	The School Admissions Service	6 weeks from May to June 2026	Ensure Compliance

6- Approval Process

Departmental Equalities Group	(please post any comments from the Departmental Equalities Group here) Set out the date when the EIA was considered N/A	
Corporate Policy Team	Please set out comments from the Corporate Policy Team N/A	
Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.	 Gurjit Singh Bahra	 Renata Chantrill

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
2 JUNE 2026

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION IN LEICESTERSHIRE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of elective home education in Leicestershire, the County Council's statutory duties in this area and how these are discharged by the Inclusion Service.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. A report regarding Inclusion in Leicestershire Schools was presented to the Committee on 4 November 2025. Part of the report focused upon elective home education and the Leicestershire picture.
3. In December 2024, the Government announced the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The Bill contains key proposals affecting children who are educated at home. These proposals include a compulsory Children Not in School (CNIS) register, parents losing the automatic right to home education where a child protection order is in place, giving local authorities greater ability to track children, and identify those missing out on education or suffering from neglect. The Bill will strengthen Ofsted's power to investigate illegal independent schools that operate to provide education to children not in formal education.

Background

4. Whilst home education in its modern form has been in place since the 1970s, there has been a rapid rise in the number of children and young people being educated at home since the 2010s. This was exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic in 2019. Nationally there were 126,000 children being home educated by late 2025. The government has identified potential safeguarding risks when children are not seen by professionals in an education setting.
5. In 2019, Ofsted conducted a research study within the East Midlands, 'Moving to Home Education in Secondary School' which raised concerns that the decision for parents to home-educate was not always a positive one for all involved and suggested there was an increasing evidence-base that home education can be a last resort for some families when relationships have broken down between schools and

children or parents. The findings arising from this report strongly recommended that local authorities and schools should develop clear processes for working together as soon as there are indications that a family may be considering home education. The report highlighted the importance of children being visible in order to ensure they are safeguarded from potential harm and receiving an adequate education.

Statutory Duties of the Local Authority

6. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that children educated at home are receiving a full-time, efficient and suitable education.
7. The County Council must identify children who are, or appear to be, home educated and consider whether their education is suitable. The County Council may make informal enquiries to determine whether the education being provided meets the requirements of Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, requesting information that helps them understand the nature and suitability of the provision. The County Council must then form a view on suitability based on the child's age, ability and aptitude, any special educational needs, and whether the education appears efficient and full-time, using only the information that parents choose to provide.
8. The County Council has a duty to take action when it appears that the education in place is not suitable for the child. If education appears unsuitable or the County Council cannot form a view, a preliminary notice should be issued, informing parents that the education appears unsuitable and giving them time to address the concerns. If the concerns remain unresolved, the authority must then issue a School Attendance Order (SAO) requiring the child to attend a named school, and where parents do not comply, the local authority may pursue enforcement measures available in legislation. 69 SAOs were issued in the 25/26 academic year.
9. Whilst elective home education is not a safeguarding issue in itself, the County Council must still fulfil all safeguarding duties, and if any concerns about a child's safety or welfare arise, they must act in line with standard safeguarding frameworks.
10. Local authorities must also consider a child's special educational needs when assessing whether the education provided at home is suitable, and for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan they must continue to review the plan annually and determine whether the required special educational provision can reasonably be delivered in the home environment.
11. In addition, County Council is expected to maintain accurate records for all children known to be home educated, including responding to school deregistration notifications, and must apply the 2024 DfE attendance coding requirements.

Parental Requirements

12. Parents have a duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child receives an education that is efficient, full-time, and suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they might have. The DfE defines a suitable education as one that prepares the child for life in modern society and enables them to progress.

13. Parents have a duty to make a carefully considered decision to home educate; they must think carefully about the commitment involved, including the time, resources, and the ability to provide a full educational programme, before withdrawing a child from school.
14. If a child is enrolled at a school when the decision is taken, parents must formally notify the school, in writing, that they are choosing to home educate. The school must then inform the local authority.
15. Parents must take full responsibility for planning, providing, and funding education but they do not need to follow the national curriculum, use qualified teachers, or adopt school-style timetables.
16. Parents must ensure that the education continues throughout the year. The education must be regular and appropriate to their child's needs, including any identified SEN.
17. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), parents can still opt to home educate, but the Local authority has to review the plan in order to check whether the provision can be delivered at home. Where a child with an EHCP attends a special school, the County Council has to agree to the child's removal from the school roll.
18. Parents are not legally required to meet with local authorities, allow home visits, or provide written samples in any particular format; however, DfE guidance makes clear that it is in the parent's interest to share information that enables the local authority to be satisfied that the education being provided is suitable, as a lack of information may prompt the authority to take further action.
19. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child's wellbeing and safety during home education, including providing appropriate supervision and maintaining an environment that supports effective learning, even though safeguarding duties formally rest with the local authority.
20. Parents are not required to enter their child for examinations but if they choose to do so, they must independently arrange and fund exam entries through private exam centres.

Leicestershire Inclusion Service

21. The County Council's Inclusion Service fulfils statutory duties with regard to elective home education.
22. The Service employs a full-time member of staff as an Elective Home Education Coordinator and the equivalent of 1.8 FTE Education Officers.
23. The Service accepts referrals from schools who must inform the County Council when a parent has decided to deregister their child from school.

24. The Service then process the referral, requesting any additional information from the school as needed. Children and young people's individual cases are RAG rated according to the child's vulnerability. The most vulnerable children and young people's education are prioritised for assessment.
25. Parents are sent a request to accept a visit from an education officer to enable an assessment of the home education in place. Where a home visit is not agreed, parents are offered a conversation either online or telephone call. There is no obligation on the parents to engage with either of these options. They can, instead send in an education plan to the Inclusion Service which will be used by education officers to assess the quality of the education in place.
26. Internal deadlines are set by the Service to ensure that any parents who do not send in their plan are alerted to its importance and the possible outcomes if this is not received. If a plan is not received despite three requests, the parents are issued with a School Attendance Order, and the child is recorded as missing education (CME). A School Attendance Order is a legal document that requires parents to apply for a school place for their child or to face prosecution.
27. Where the plan of education that a parent presents (either in written form, during a home visit or an online/telephone conversation) is found to be unsatisfactory, support is offered by an education officer. The parents are given a period of two weeks to present a plan for a suitable and efficient education. In the event that this does not happen, the parents are issued with a School Attendance Order.
28. Once a plan has been assessed as satisfactory, the child is added to the Inclusion Service's register of electively home educated children. Each year the assessment process begins again, with the possibility of a School Attendance Order being issued if a suitable plan is not forthcoming.
29. Due to limited capacity within the Inclusion Service, children who are known to Children's Social Care (CSC) or those newly referred whose schools have raised concerns about family's ability to home educate are prioritised for assessment. Parents have an automatic right to home education, regardless of whether concerns have been raised.
30. To support the safeguarding of vulnerable children, the Inclusion Service and Children's Social Care (CSC) operate agreed information-sharing and escalation arrangements. These enable both services to identify where a child who is electively home educated is also known to CSC, to keep records appropriately aligned, and to ensure that the relevant education officer is involved in multi-agency safeguarding discussions where required.
31. For children with an EHCP, the Inclusion Education Officer will work closely with the child's SENA caseworker to assess the quality of education in place.

Breakdown of Leicestershire Data

Electively Home Educated Children (EHE)

32. The annual figures covering the last four years of EHE children are:

Year	Annual Total
2022/23	1050
2023/24	1272
2024/25	1424
2025/26	1402 (to date)

33. Trend of new referrals coming into the Service for EHE:

Year	Annual Total
2022/23	437
2023/24	578
2024/25	608
2025/26	540 (to date)

34. The Service continues to see a rise in the number of referrals for EHE in line with the rest of the Country. The DfE reported a national rise from Autumn 2023 when there were an estimated 92,000 children in elective home education to Autumn 2024 when there were 111,700 children in elective home education as reported by local authorities. Autumn 2025 figures from the DFE show there are 126,000 children where parents have chosen to electively home educate their children.
35. The referral forms used by the Inclusion Service require schools to confirm that they hold robust conversations with families looking to home educate. The Service then triangulates this when making contact with families who are new to EHE. Webinars are still offered to all parents who are new to elective home education and a termly newsletter is sent directly to all home educating parents in an attempt to make sure that all offers for other agencies, for example Health, are made available to children who are not educated through school.
36. The autumn term webinar for parents and carers of Year 11 young people continues to run where advice and support on entering and sitting examinations as well as post 16 options are shared.
37. Over the past twelve months, the principal reason cited by families for electively home educating has been that education provision has not been able to meet a child's needs, particularly in relation to SEND and mental health, which has often contributed to subsequent attendance difficulties. Referral forms from schools often reflect that they feel that they can meet the child's needs, but the families have a different view on this. The data below provides a snapshot as at April 2026 and reflects all children who were, at that point, being electively educated at home; they show that the most frequently recorded reasons were cultural/life choice (234), mental health (231) and provision not meeting need (113), together with cases recorded as no reason given (243) or other (261).

Total number of Children	1402
Attendance Difficulties	112
*Awaiting a school place	17
Breakdown in relationship	86
Bullying	5
Medical/SEND needs	81
Cultural/Life choice	234
Provision not meeting need	113
Did not receive school preference	5
Mental Health	231
No reason given	243
**Other	261
Emotional/Behavioural	5
***No school place	9

*EHE as a temporary measure awaiting a start date for a school.

**other refers to all categories not covered by the DfE's list. Often referrals reflect similar reasons that are expressed in different language.

*** child new to the area (from out of county/country).

Conclusion

38. As set out in the tables at paragraphs 32 and 33 (with 2025/26 figures shown as of April 2026), local EHE volumes and related referrals have increased year on year. Leicestershire's EHE cohort has increased over the last three full academic years: 1,050 children in 2022/23, 1,272 in 2023/24 and 1,424 in 2024/25.
39. For the current year, there were 1,402 children recorded as EHE as of April 2026 (2025/26 to date). This increase is also reflected in the number of new referrals received by the Inclusion Service: 437 in 2022/23, 578 in 2023/24 and 608 in 2024/25, with 540 referrals received so far in 2025/26 (as of April 2026), mirroring the wider national trend reported by the DfE.
40. In response, the Inclusion Service continues to strengthen early conversations with schools and families (including checking that schools have held robust discussions prior to deregistration) and to provide information and support through webinars, newsletters and targeted Year 11 guidance, whilst managing demand through prioritisation of the most vulnerable children. Overall, the data reinforces the need for sustained, multi-agency work to ensure children remain visible, safeguarded and in receipt of a suitable education, and to support schools to meet needs so that EHE is chosen as a positive option rather than a last resort.

41. The reasons recorded in April 2026 indicate a mixed picture of positive choice and system pressures. Whilst cultural/life choice remains a prominent driver (234), a substantial number of families cite mental health (231) and education provision not meeting need (113), alongside attendance difficulties (112) and relationship breakdown (86).
42. The snapshot also shows 81 children recorded under medical/SEND needs, and smaller numbers recorded as awaiting a school place (17) or no school place (9). Taken together, these categories indicate that many parents of children with SEND and other additional needs are choosing EHE because they are not satisfied that current school provision is able to meet their child's needs, and in some cases are doing so while awaiting alternative education provision to be secured. This could be interpreted as a way of delaying the escalation of formal attendance processes where a child's additional needs are contributing to persistent absence.
43. 'Other' (261 children; 18.6%) and 'No reason given' (243 children; 17.3%) account for 504 of the 1,402 children recorded as EHE in April 2026 (36.0%). In practical terms, this means that for over a third of the cohort the local authority does not have a clear, consistently recorded reason for why EHE was chosen.
44. This makes it harder to identify the main drivers behind EHE locally (for example, the extent to which decisions are linked to unmet additional needs, mental health, attendance, or relationship breakdown) and reduces how precisely support can be targeted. It can also limit the ability to prioritise engagement where there may be additional vulnerability factors, and it weakens trend analysis and evaluation because changes over time may reflect recording practice rather than real shifts in families' reasons.
45. This reinforces the importance of strengthening and standardising how reasons are captured through early conversations with schools and families.
46. Joint work with colleagues from other services strives to support schools to meet the needs of all children and our goal is that families choosing to electively home educate should only be doing this as the result of a positive choice rather than as a last resort. We want to enable schools to meet the complex learning needs of their pupils by ensuring that they can access support services in a timely way, whether that be to prevent exclusions or to adapt curriculum and teaching to enable pupils with specific learning needs to engage fully with mainstream education.

Background papers

47. Inclusion in Leicestershire Schools, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 November 2025:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=7893&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

48. None

Equality Implications

49. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Human Rights Implications

50. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
2 JUNE 2026

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with detail and context to the updated Corporate Parenting Strategy, to be in place until 2029 and to seek the views of the Committee, as part of the approval process.
2. The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out how the County Council will meet its statutory duties and responsibilities for children in care and care leavers.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is the framework for the role of local authorities and their relevant partners (as defined in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004) in the application of the corporate parenting principles as set out in Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Local authorities must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers, which includes relevant children and former relevant children. It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
4. The updated Corporate Parenting Strategy builds on the previous strategy with relevant updates for changes over the past few years, rather than proposing any significant or substantial changes to the content.
5. The updated Strategy clearly sets out the County Council's continued commitment to meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities to children in care and care leavers.
6. This is underpinned by the core statutory framework set out in The Children Act, and additionally seven specific Corporate Parenting responsibility principles set out in The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
7. The new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act (2026) further builds on the corporate parenting responsibilities of the 2017 act and expands these, placing responsibilities on central government departments and national bodies, stating that those bodies must be alert to how their decisions, policies and services may affect the wellbeing of

care experienced young people. This act also includes a focus on local authorities collaborating with each other and working together, so far as reasonably practicable, including information sharing, providing advice or assistance and coordinating activities and avoiding duplication.

8. There are no specific impacts on other policies or frameworks. This Strategy is in line with the wider Children's and Family Departmental Plan.

Background

9. The previous Strategy was due for renewal at the end of 2025. Key stakeholders have been involved and consulted in the process of updating the Strategy including children in care via the Youth Voice Council, care leavers via the After Care Council, and partner organisations via the Corporate Parenting Board.

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026–2029 Summary

10. The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026–2029 sets out Leicestershire County Council's commitment to act as an ambitious, caring and effective corporate parent for Children in Care and Care Leavers, guided by the co-produced "Our Promise". "Our Promise" sets out Leicestershire County Council and partners' commitments to children in care and care leavers, describing what they should expect from their "corporate parents". It emphasises being listened to and respected, placing children at the heart of decisions, and supporting their identity, culture and important relationships. The Promise commits to providing safe, stable homes, emotional and practical support, and clear information about rights, entitlements and services. It also highlights support to help children overcome difficulties, achieve their goals, prepare for independence, and access advocacy and complaints processes when needed, reflecting a lifelong, relational approach rather than time-limited care. "Our Promise" is written specifically to children and young people and is shared with them when they come into care.
11. Key aims are to ensure children are safe, stable and feel they belong; raise aspirations, achievement and self-belief; support young people to achieve positive health, education and employment outcomes; prepare Care Leavers for independent adulthood up to age 25.
12. Core principles are that the Strategy is strongly aligned and follows the Children and Social Work Act 2017 corporate parenting principles; children's voice and choice are central ("You said, we did"); there is a commitment to recognising children's individual identity needs and fostering a sense of belonging, including recognising care experience as a protected characteristic locally, and there is a focus on stability, permanence and long-term relationships.
13. The Strategy covers a clear definition of who Children in Care and Care Leavers are, with a local profile of need; roles of councillors, officers, partners and the virtual School in fulfilling corporate parenting responsibilities; a strong participation offer through Youth Voice Council, After Care Council, and Support Young People After Care group and other forums; expectations of all Local councillors, staff and practitioners to ask: "Would this be good enough for my own child?".
14. For measuring success, the Strategy defines success across five outcomes:

- Improved physical health;
 - Improved mental health and emotional wellbeing;
 - Placement stability and safe homes;
 - Educational attainment and aspiration;
 - Strong outcomes for Care Leavers (housing, Education, Employment and Training (EET), independence).
15. Governance and accountability includes oversight through the Corporate Parenting Board, co-chaired by the Lead Member and young people. Regular scrutiny and clear accountability across council services and partners. There is ongoing performance monitoring against agreed outcomes including an annual report on progress of the strategies implementation.
 16. The Corporate Parenting Board is a key vehicle to hold internal services, alongside external partner agencies to account for their corporate parenting responsibilities. This board runs quarterly and is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services alongside a co-Chair from the Youth Voice Council. This Board is attended by agencies including police, health, housing and adult social care. The Board works to deliver the ambitions of the Strategy and hold partners to account.
 17. Overall, the Strategy positions corporate parenting as everyone's responsibility, with a clear focus on listening to children, tackling inequality, and ensuring every care-experienced young person in Leicestershire is supported to thrive now and into adulthood.

Impact assessments

18. Health Implications – the strategy continues to recognise the importance of the health and wellbeing needs of children in care and care leavers.
19. Partnership Working and Associated Issues – the updated strategy has been reviewed by key partners via the corporate parenting board and positive feedback received. Any suggestions for change were considered and amendments made.
20. Risk Assessment – there are no specific risks to identify in the updating of this strategy.

Consultation

21. The updated Strategy has been shaped and developed by the views and voice of young people, their experiences of care, and what they considered to be important. It has been reviewed by the Youth Voice Council, which is group of young people who are currently in care. It has also been reviewed by the After Care Council, which is a group of care experienced adults. All feedback and views were considered and relevant changes and updates. The Strategy was also presented at the Corporate Parenting Board in March 2026 for partner agencies to review and give comments, this including representatives from health, police, district council and education.

Resource Implications

22. There are no specific resource implications identified as part of the updated strategy.

Timetable for Decisions

23. The outcome of the engagement and the final revised draft Strategy has been presented to the Corporate Parenting Board. As the changes made to the Strategy are only minor, in accordance with the Council's Constitution these will be approved by the Director of Children and Family Services.

Conclusions

24. This report highlights the considerations given to the updating of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Now complete, this provides us with a clear strategy to support the County Council, and specifically children's services, in meeting corporate parenting responsibilities as set out in government and statutory framework.
25. The Committee is asked to comment on the revised draft Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Background papers

Children and Families Departmental Plan 2026-2029:

<https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/llrcs-leicestershire/fc97cbc5-4a7f-498b-b074-92323c480277/cfs-departmental-plan-2025-2029.pdf>

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 24 January 2023:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MID=7190#AI74051>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

26. None required.

Equality Implications

27. It is considered that the updated strategy continues to uphold local authority responsibilities in terms of the nine protected characteristics and there is no negative impact (age, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation). The strategy recognised that children in care and care leavers have varied identities and those should be supported and recognised within our corporate parenting responsibilities. It is also relevant to note that Leicestershire County Council has agreed that being Care Experience will be treated as a protected characteristic, this is noted within the strategy.
28. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Human Rights Implications

29. It is considered that there is no negative impact on Human Rights; this strategy is supportive of the recognition of the needs of children in care and care leavers, and how they are supported by the County Council as Corporate Parents.
30. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

31. None.

Appendices

Appendix A - Corporate Parenting Strategy

Appendix B - Corporate Parenting Strategy – Children’s version

Appendix C - Our Promise

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Corporate Parenting Strategy

| 2026 - 2029



Our Children, Our Future

Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable
Children in Care and Care Leavers to be ambitious and successful

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Foreword

Sharon Cooke - Interim Director of Children and Family Services

In Leicestershire, we believe every child and young person deserves the very best. We are proud to be ambitious for our children and young people, and we're committed to delivering high-quality services that make a real difference to your lives and futures. I feel extremely privileged to lead the services that support our children in care and care experienced young people. I promise that we will keep you at the heart of all we do and at the centre of your plans. We will listen and hear your voice making sure that we measure ourselves against Our Promise, making sure that we work together to create stability and security for you and a sense of belonging.

Across our organisation and among political leaders, there is a shared drive to improve outcomes for children. Our Lead Member is a passionate advocate for you - challenging us, supporting us, and ensuring accountability at every level to ensure that we do the very best for you.

As the Senior Leadership Team, we place safeguarding, protection, and advocacy for children at the centre of everything we do. We set clear expectations that children's wellbeing must guide our decisions and our practice. We stay connected to children, young people, and staff through regular forums, listening carefully and learning from frontline experiences to shape and strengthen our services. Our focus remain firmly on you our children.

In 2024, we launched our updated Continuous Improvement Plan 2024–2027: Achieving Excellence through Purposeful Practice. This ambitious plan provides a clear roadmap for everyone from senior managers to frontline practitioners, to deliver outstanding support for children and families.

We are aspirational, we are curious, and we deeply value relationships. These core values and behaviours are the foundation of everything we do. They guide our actions, shape our culture, and ensure that children remain at the heart of our work.

Cllr Charles Pugsley

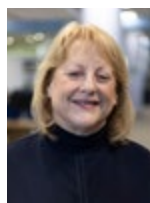
As a councillor in Leicestershire, I'm proud to stand behind our unwavering commitment to children and young people. I am immensely proud of the achievements of our young people and of the staff and carers who support them.

Children's Services are a priority across our council. From elected members to officers, there is a shared determination to make a lasting difference. As your Lead Member for Children and Families I promise to ensure that I will advocate for you and ensure that your voices are heard in every decision we make.

Our Senior Leadership Team is deeply committed to safeguarding and championing children. They lead with purpose, placing children's wellbeing at the heart of every policy and practice. They stay connected to frontline staff and young people, listening, learning, and shaping services that respond to real needs.



Cllr Charles Pugsley
Lead Member for
Children and Family Services



Sharon Cooke
Interim Director for
Children and Family Services

Why Our Promise Is Important

Our Promise is here to make sure you feel safe, listened to, and supported while you're in care or leaving care. It reminds you and us, that you deserve respect, a stable home, and people who believe in you.

The Promise is important because it helps you know:

- **You're not alone** - there are adults who will stand by you, even when things are tough.
- **Your voice counts** - your thoughts, feelings, and choices matter.
- **You should feel proud of who you are** - your identity and relationships are respected.
- **You have rights** - and we will help you understand them.
- **You can reach your goals** - we'll support your hopes, skills, and future plans.

This Promise is our way of showing that you matter, and we'll be here to help you now and as you grow.

our promise

to children in care and care leavers



by Leicestershire County Council and Partners

 <p>We will support you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emotional support • Whatever you do we will be there • Ensure all your needs are met • Provide advice, information, practical and financial support • We will make sure that you know what your rights are • Will not judge you if things go wrong. We all make mistakes! 	 <p>We believe in you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will value your strengths and talents • Support you to overcome any stumbling blocks you face • Support you to achieve your goals • Embrace your individuality • Encourage your aspirations • Support you to succeed in life 	 <p>We will respect your identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will respect your unique identity • Support you to develop your own personal beliefs and values • Accept, respect and celebrate your identity, culture and heritage • Value, respect and support important relationships • Encourage you to express your identity positively 	 <p>We will listen to you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will listen and respect you • Strive to understand your point of view • Place you at the heart of all decisions • Support you to talk about your worries and happy times • Support you to seek independent advocacy 	 <p>We will support you to find a place you can call home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will do our best to find you a home near to people who are important to you • Ensure you feel safe and secure • As you grow we will support you to learn new skills to support your independence • We are here to support if things go wrong 	 <p>We will inform you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal entitlements and services • Up to date and accurate information • Support you to access your care records • Provide information throughout your journey • We will support you if you need to make a complaint 	 <p>We will be a lifelong champion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support you break down barriers to other agencies • Work together with other services to better meet your needs • Encourage and support you to make positive life choices • Will make sure you know how to get support when you need it • Trust and respect you.
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Produced by Leicestershire County Council as part of the Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership

Our Pledges To Children and Young People:

Sharon Cooke:

“I will ensure that your voice is heard and that the workforce that support you are in turn supported in an environment that allows them and their practice to flourish”

James Thurston – Head of Service Children in Care, Fostering, Adoption and Virtual School:

“You are at the heart of everything we do. We will listen carefully to your experiences and act on what you tell us. We will create the conditions for you to feel safe, seen, and a strong sense of belonging, and we will value what belonging means for each of you, as an individual.”

Nicola Madgett – Team Leader for Corporate Parenting:

“I will make sure you are supported to have your voice heard, respected, and acted on. Ensuring that your wishes, feelings, and experiences shape the decisions that affect your life. I will create safe, respectful spaces for you to speak openly. When you share your views, I will ensure you get clear feedback about how your input influenced the outcome. I will champion your access to opportunities, education, health support, relationships, and all the things you need to thrive.”

Rebecca Peters – Safeguarding and Improvement Manager:

“We pledge that you will be happy with the people who are present at your meeting, that your views and wishes are taken into account when planning the meetings and those people who do not attend provide updates. We will always do our best to make sure that your voice is heard, and we talk about the things that are important to you.”

Kay Fletcher – Interim Assistant Director Targeted Early Help and Children’s Social Care:

“We will put your voice at the centre of our work, build relationships with you and your family network and collaborate with partner agencies so that we build strong partnerships”

Angie Lymer-Cox – Service Manager for Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children:

“My drive is always to develop workers and managers to ensure they deliver outstanding support to you and your families. My aim is to ensure you have the best chances in life, and if you are not ready to take those chances yet for any reason, they are there for you in the future when you are in the right place. I have never given up on young people I am aspirational for you all, and this will continue to be my Pledge going forward.”

Helen Middleton – Service Manager for Children with Disability Service:

“We promise to help you feel safe, cared for, and understood as you grow and get ready for adult life. We will listen to what is important to you, where you want to live, what you enjoy, what you find hard, and what your hopes are for the future.”

Heather Hughes – Assistant Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption:

“Our promise to you is that we will endeavour to find you a foster home with foster carers who are able to care for you with nurture and kindness, and able to meet all of your needs alongside the other professionals that work with you.”

Donna Chapman – Virtual School Head:

“The Virtual school pledges to work together with you and your school/college to access the best opportunities and support for your education.”

Carly Turner – Head of Youth Justice:

“We are here to support you and help you do well. We will get to know you, listen to what matters to you, and work alongside you in a positive and respectful way. Through youth work and early support, we will help you build confidence, learn new skills and make choices that open up opportunities for your future.”

Dr Shaun McGill – Public Health Consultant:

“We promise to work to protect and improve your health and wellbeing, now and as you grow into adulthood. Using our knowledge about health, prevention, and inequalities we will work with the NHS to make sure that services understand and meet your health and wellbeing needs. We will listen to what matters to you, and work with the people who plan and deliver health services to make sure you have the support you need to lead healthy lives.”

Julia Smith – Chief Executive of Blaby District Council:

“As the district councils of Leicestershire, we commit to championing, supporting, and empowering children and young people who are care experienced, through the services we deliver. We pledge to recognise children and young people with care experience as a protected and valued group within our communities, ensuring their needs, experiences, and voices are placed at the heart of our decision making.”

Core Values and Behaviours – the foundation for practice

Core Values

Aspirational

Achieving the best outcomes for children and families

Being Curious

Digging for detail using purposeful practice

Collaboration

Building relationships built on the Signs of Safety approach

Behaviours

Professional Kindness

Understanding trauma for children, parents and colleagues

Active Listening

Listening to build robust solutions

Outcome Focused

Creating measurable improvements for children and families

Being Accountable

Everyone is responsible for high quality practice

Introduction

We want all children and young people in Leicestershire to have safe, stable and positive lives. Our hope is that you can grow up in your family, stay connected to your community, and get support whenever you need it.

If you can't live with your family, our priority is to make sure you live somewhere safe, stable and secure. We want to find you a long-term home as quickly as possible. We also want you to have chances to aim high, believe in yourself and have a happy childhood that sets you up well for your future.

In Leicestershire, we are fully committed to Children in Care and Care Leavers. We take our Corporate Parenting responsibilities seriously and aim to act with real care, passion and ambition. Everything we do is guided by Our Promise, which sets out what you can expect from us.

We know every young person is different, with their own needs, goals and identity. Your care plan and the support you receive should always reflect you. We value diversity and make sure our services are inclusive and respectful of who you are.

We are also committed to listening to your voice in all decisions. We follow a “You Said, We Did” approach so you can see how your feedback leads to real changes. Participation is a big part of how we work, and you can get involved through groups like:

- The Youth Voice Council (was Children in Care Council)
- Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC)
- The Corporate Parenting Board
- And many other events and forums led by children and young people

This Corporate Parenting Strategy explains how we will continue to provide high-quality support for Children in Care and Care Leavers. It sets out where we are now, where we want to be, and how we plan to keep improving. Our aim is to support you to reach your goals, follow your ambitions, and succeed now and in the future.

1. Leicestershire as a Corporate Parent

OUR VISION

Leicestershire is a place where children can build strong foundations; be safe and belong, enjoy and achieve.

Corporate Parenting is a shared responsibility, first established in the Children Act 1989. The Act places a duty not only on Local Authorities but also on partner agencies, including health, education, and housing services, to support children's services in fulfilling their responsibilities. This collective effort ensures that you receive the help, support, and services you need.

As of January 2026, Leicestershire County Council is the corporate parent to approximately 777 children and young people. This role carries a collective responsibility to act as any good parent would, ensuring that children in care grow up happy, achieve well, and lead successful lives.

A responsible parent cares deeply about their child's safety, health, education, friendships, leisure interests, and future. They understand their child's development, talents, and challenges, and they provide support, listen attentively, and respond to their needs and concerns.

Leicestershire has a strong Corporate Parenting ethos that goes beyond safety. It focuses on promoting recovery, resilience, and well-being. Central to this is the importance of stability, which is reflected in our Permanence Policy. This policy outlines our commitment to securing emotional attachment, physical stability, and long-term support for the children in our care.

We recognise that improving outcomes for you requires close, coordinated working relationships with our partners. Leicestershire is committed to working collaboratively with wider services and with children and young people. We ensure that our looked-after children and Care Leavers have a strong voice in shaping services. We listen, take action based on their feedback, and make sure they know how their input has influenced service delivery.

Education plays a vital role in transforming life chances. Our aim is for all Children in Care to have prompt access to stable, appropriate education placements and enriching educational experiences.

The Leicestershire Virtual School actively promotes the education of Children in Care. It works with schools, alternative settings, and wider services both within and beyond Leicestershire to ensure timely access to quality education tailored to each child's needs, while minimising disruption to their learning.

The importance of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities in driving these ambitions is illustrated in the following diagram:

Raising Aspirations



2. Who are ‘Children in Care and Care Leavers?’

A child (under 18 years) is legally ‘looked after’ by a Local Authority if he or she:

“Is provided with accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 from the Local Authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours; is subject to a care order; or is subject to a placement order. This also includes disabled children who are provided with accommodation under Section 20. Looked after Children in Care can be placed with foster carers, in residential homes, with parents or other relatives (under certain circumstances)”

Definition of a care leaver:

“A care leaver is broadly defined as a person aged between 16 and 25, who has been looked after by a Local Authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 is either currently in care or has left care and has been looked after for a period of time after their 16th birthday”

3.

Leicestershire's Children in Care and Care Leavers

777
Children
Looked After

702
Care Leavers

Children in Care
72%
White, White British
7.4% Mixed
5.2%
Asian, British Asian
2%
Black, Black British
13.4% Other

Care Leavers
49.3%
White, White British
27% Other
10%
Asian, British Asian
5% Mixed
8.5%
Black, Black British

41.2%
of children are
living with foster
carers
of which **18%**
of children are in a
foster placement
with a connected
person / kinship
carer

16.1%
of children are
living in residential
children's homes

3%
of children
are placed for
adoption

14%
of Children
in Care are
unaccompanied
asylum seeking
children

100%
of Care Leavers
are in touch with
their PA and
95%
are in suitable
accommodation

7%
of children looked
after have a
missing incident

54%
of 18+ Care
Leavers are
in education,
employment or
training

35
Care Leavers at
university

all data as of 14/12/2025

4.

What do our children say?

As outlined at the start of this strategy, the voices of our Children in Care and Care Leavers are central to everything we do. This commitment is further reinforced through our Voice Strategy and Influence Strategy 2026-2029.

As Corporate Parents, Leicestershire is dedicated to ensuring that you have the right to express your views on matters affecting you. Where needed, they are supported by a Children's Rights Officer to help you do so. We believe that meaningful participation empowers you to achieve better outcomes.

We are fully committed to promoting meaningful participation, encouraging you to share your needs, experiences, and views so that these can shape practice and service delivery. Our approach is driven by passion, commitment, ambition, and care.

We value and respect the voices of our looked after children and Care Leavers. Together, we have developed 'Our Promise', which informs this strategy. Through this, our children have shared what they believe makes a good Corporate Parent, and we are listening.



Listen to our views and opinions and let us make decisions about our lives. Explains decisions to us and recognises the impact of their decisions.

Keep us protected and safe

Recognise our potential, believe in us, and celebrate our achievements

Understand when we are struggling and having a bad day and know when to give us space

Be friendly and build good relationships and gets to know you

Help us to still see and be friends with our family.

Have experience of working with young people and know what to do

Support us without judgement

Understand the issues we face

Be consistent, will stand by us as our advocate

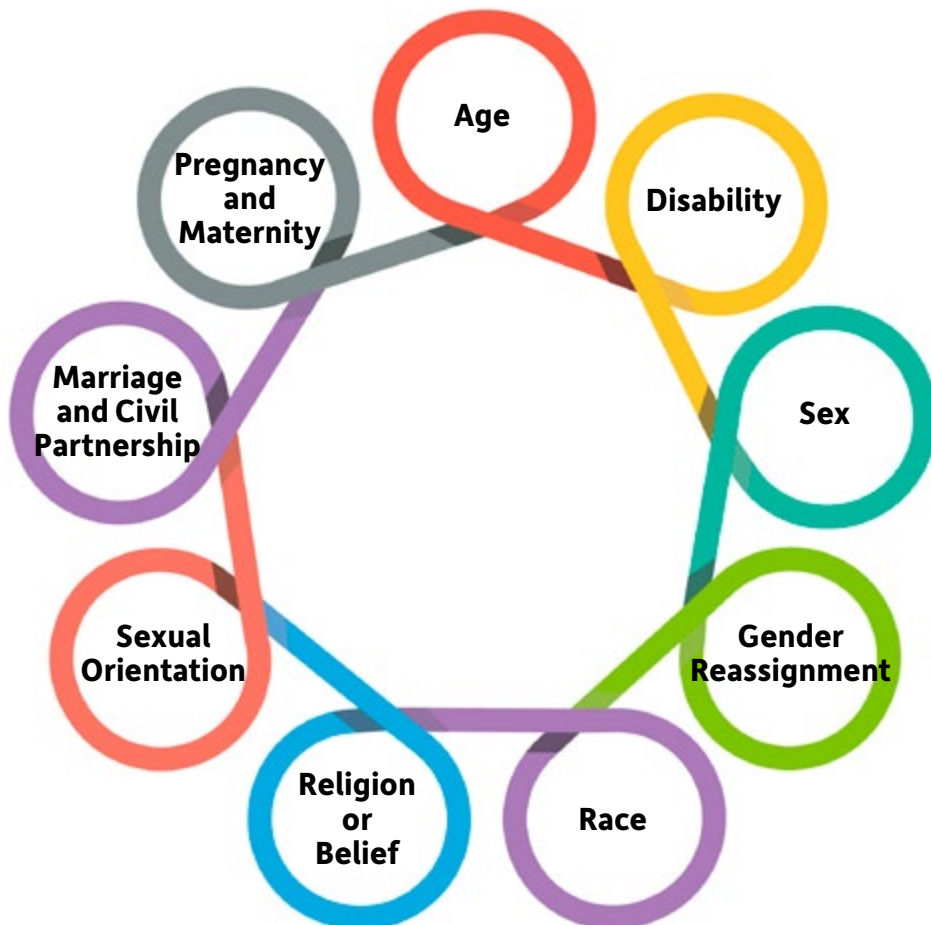
Provide opportunities like support with education, finances and getting into work.

Build our confidence and self-esteem. Support us to get skills for the future, achieve and be the best person you can be.

Make things better

Shows us respect

5. Equality, Diversity and Belonging



You are entitled to equal access to services, free from discrimination based on age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, or maternity.

Leicestershire County Council wants everyone to be treated fairly. We do not accept any kind of discrimination. We work hard to make sure no one is treated differently or unfairly because of who they are or the group they belong to.

We want everyone to have equal chances, to feel respected, and to get the support that's right for them. The council has now decided that being a care leaver should be treated as a protected characteristic. This means we recognise that young people who have been in care may need extra help. For example, if you are a care leaver and applying for social housing, you will now be placed in the highest priority group. This gives you a much better chance of getting a home, which is a really positive step for supporting vulnerable young people.

The Children Act 1989 says that a child's culture, religion and language must always be considered when supporting them. The Equality Act (which started in 2010) says that public organisations must:

- Make sure there is no discrimination, bullying or unfair treatment
- Give everyone equal opportunities
- Help different groups get along and understand each other

We want everyone who works with you to understand these responsibilities and to make sure our services are inclusive. Our Equality and Diversity Guidance explains how our core values: being aspirational, curious and working together should shape everything we do to support children and families.

Being fair and treating people equally is not only the law; it's the right thing to do. Everyone who works for the council, whether in social care, education, health, transport or any other service, has a responsibility to meet the needs of all people across the county.

Equality also means removing barriers that might stop some people, especially those with protected characteristics, from having the same chances as others. As your Corporate Parents, we want to make sure every child in our care gets the right support, guidance and opportunities to aim high and reach their goals.

Feeling like you belong is especially important for children in care. You may have experienced changes, loss, or times where things felt uncertain. Belonging is not just about where you live, it's about feeling seen, heard and accepted for who you are. It means having adults around you who support your identity, protect your rights, and make you feel safe and included.

As your Corporate Parents, it is our job to make sure you have relationships and opportunities that help you feel stable, valued and confident. We want every child in our care to feel part of a community that believes in them, supports their dreams and stands with them as they grow into adulthood.

Belonging doesn't just happen, we work hard to make it real for every young person.

6.

Corporate Parenting Principles – Children and Social Work Act 2017

Leicestershire's commitment as Corporate Parents is to inspire, support, and enable Children in Care and Care Leavers to be ambitious and successful. We do this by being committed to providing our children and young people with stability, security, nurturing and empowering care.

The 7 principles within the act describe the behaviours and attitudes expected of councils when they are acting as any good parent would do by supporting, encouraging, and guiding their children to lead healthy, rounded and fulfilled lives.

Our role and commitment as Corporate Parents under the 7 principles:

- We will act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of our children and young people.
- We will encourage our children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- We will take into account the views, wishes and feelings of our children and young people.
- We will help our children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the Local Authority and its relevant partners.
- We will promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for our children and young people.
- For our children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
- We will prepare our children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

7. Who is involved and responsible?

A strong Corporate Parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about our Children in Care and Care Leavers as if they were their own. In Leicestershire, Corporate Parenting is promoted as the responsibility of all. The actions, ambitions and belief in our children of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Lead Member set the tone for us all to be effective corporate parents.

Our children our future - Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable Children in Care and Care Leavers to be ambitious and successful.



8.

Councillors as Corporate Parents

Back in 1998, the government reminded councillors (the people elected to make decisions for the county) that they are responsible for making sure children in care are looked after properly. They were told they must lead this work and check that the support being offered is actually working.

Since then, guides published in 2003 and 2013 have explained that all councillors should be ready to speak up for children in care and care leavers. They should make sure young people in care are treated fairly and given the same chances as anyone else.

Councillors have a special role because they have influence in the community. They know people in schools, health services, local businesses and other organisations. By using these connections, they can help create better opportunities for children in care, like work experience, training, education and support. They are also supported by council officers (staff) to meet with children in care and care leavers so they can listen to their views and understand what young people need.

In Leicestershire, we explain what we expect from councillors as Corporate Parents through seven key principles. Corporate Parenting means treating children in care as if they were part of your own family. Councillors must:

- Understand who the children in care are and what they need
- Think about how every council decision might affect children in care
- Ask themselves, “Would this be good enough for my own child?”
- Focus on improving outcomes for children in care
- Stand up for young people in their area and champion their needs
- Support the councillors who act as Member Champions
- Know about the work of the Corporate Parenting Board

Councillors play a really important role in making sure young people in care and care leavers get the support they need. This includes:

- Speaking up for children in care
- Making sure the corporate parenting principles are followed
- Checking that services are doing a good job
- Creating chances for young people to achieve and succeed
- Offering emotional and practical support
- Being a positive voice for young people in the community
- Asking important questions to make sure things improve



The most important question councillors should always ask is:

“Would this be good enough for my own child?”

This helps make sure services are fair, inclusive and built around what each young person needs.

8.1 Officers within Children and Family Services

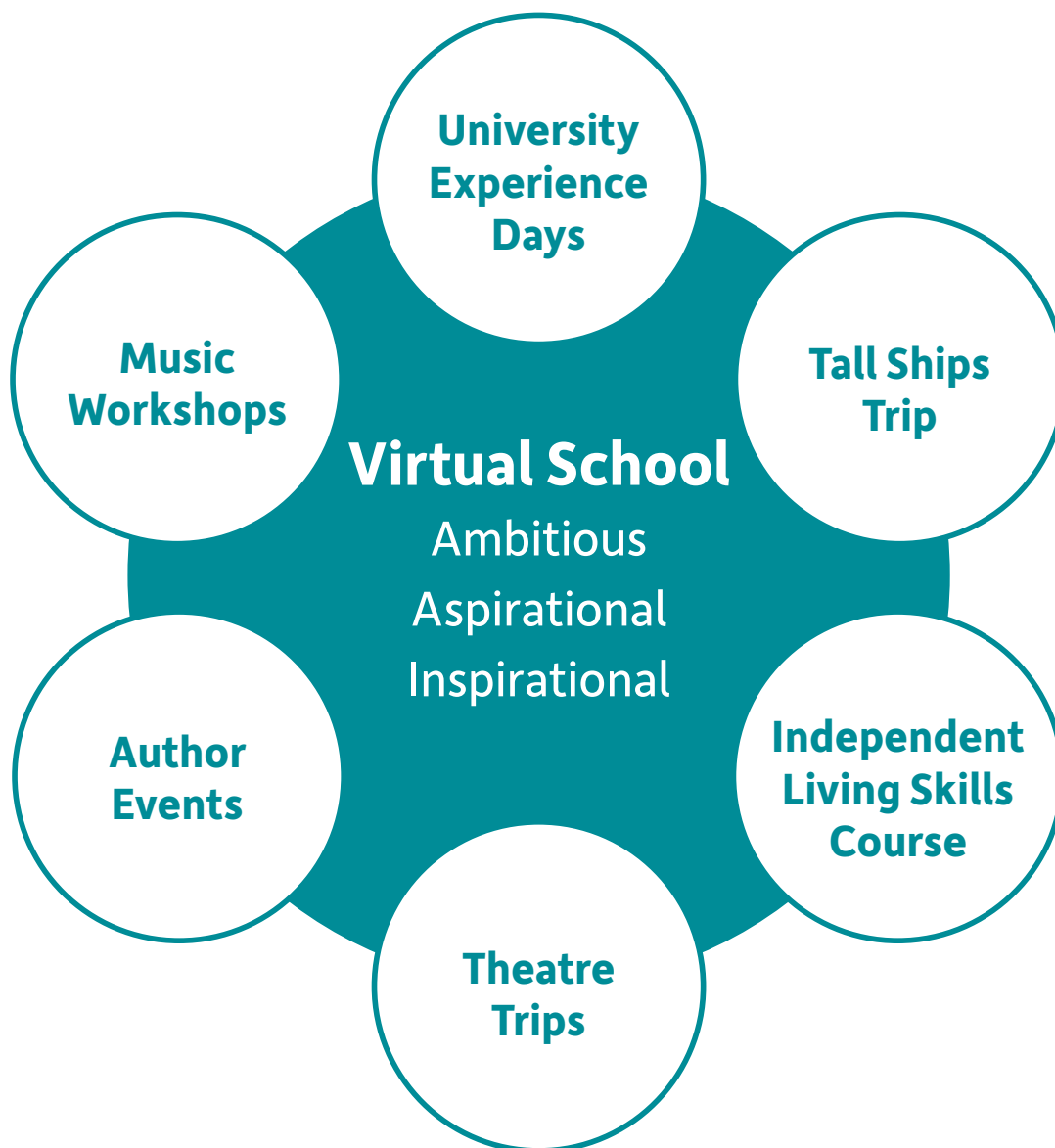
Officers in Children and Family Services have additional responsibilities to support and provide services for looked after children and young people, and Care Leavers. They will ensure that their care planning and transition planning is effective, meaningful and influenced by their voice and choice.

The Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care has direct responsibility for Corporate Parenting, as do the wide range of roles that work directly with our children, such as: Independent Reviewing Officers, Social Workers, Participation Workers, Children’s Rights Officers, Youth Offending Workers, Personal Advisors and the Virtual School.

8.2 Virtual School

In Leicestershire our Virtual School is committed to creating and supporting high aspirations for our Children in Care and those leaving care. The dedication and support offered is in place to help our children achieve their best. Our children attend a range of schools both geographically and in terms of specialism, however the virtual school is central to ensuring that all of our children receive a high standard of education to enable them to successfully achieve good outcomes and successful futures. Leicestershire Virtual School are successful by working in partnership with schools and social workers towards shared visions and goals. The Virtual School support this through monitoring, supporting and challenging where necessary through the review of the Personal Education Plans (PEP) and monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium Plus. The voice of our children is fundamental to effective planning and the Virtual School is committed to ensuring that the voice of our children is not only sought but valued and incorporated into any planning.

Additionally, the Virtual School lead a broad spectrum of engagement activities and learning opportunities including but not exhaustive of the following:



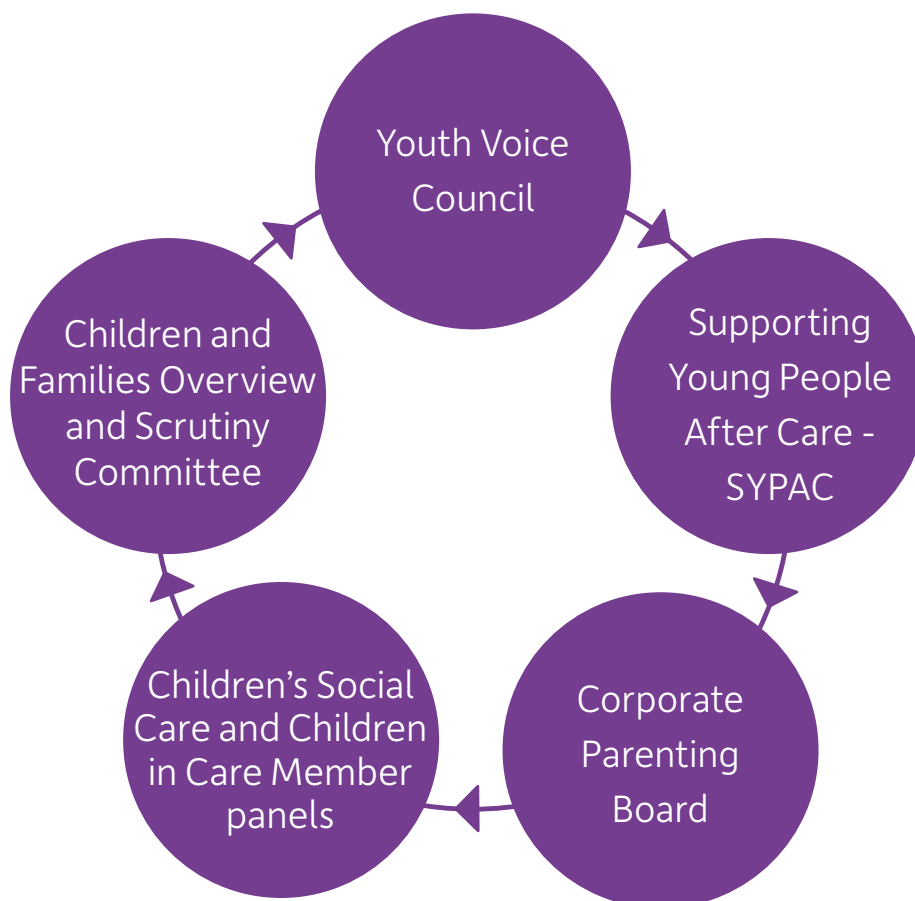
8.3 What else do we do to show that we care?

We are dedicated and committed to ensuring that our Children in Care and Care Leavers feel very much thought of and cared for by Leicestershire. This is achieved by not only ensuring that the 7 Corporate Parenting principles are fully embedded. But also providing a broader offer of engagement and contact that we consider essential to being good Corporate Parents.



9. Governance Arrangements for Corporate Parenting

Strong Corporate Parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. The governance arrangements that underpin our Corporate Parenting approach focus on the importance of the voice of our children and how they experience the support they receive, feel listened to and taken seriously. Our governance arrangements enable challenge and reflection on how effectively we are applying the Corporate Parenting principles and ensuring the high level of care that we strive to provide.



9.1 Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board's purpose is to ensure that the whole Council and partner agencies have a joint commitment to Corporate Parenting. The Corporate Parenting Board is held four times a year and includes a membership of children and young people, the Director and Assistant Director of Children and Family Services, elected members, professionals from a range of partner agencies including Social Care, Health, Education and Police. The board is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families and a member of the Youth Voice Council. There is strong representation from our Youth Voice Council and Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC) groups, which enables our children to have the platform to challenge, influence and celebrate.

The aim of this is to achieve continuing improvements in the lives and outcomes for looked after children and young people and those who are Care Leavers. The Board ensures that the Council members and partner agencies fulfil their statutory duty as Corporate Parents and are held to account for identified actions from the board, in order to achieve continuing improvements in outcomes for children and young people. We want the agenda and focus to be led by the young people ensuring that clear lines of communication between young people and the board can be illustrated with clear and young person friendly feedback. In addition to the prioritisation and acting in the best interests of all our children and young people keeping them at the centre of decision making. Please see Appendix A for more detail.

9.2 Where you can share your voice and it be heard

In our work, your voice isn't an add on, it's central to everything we do. Your views shape every plan we create, ensuring that decisions are made with you, not for you. We place your voice at the heart of our assessments, recognising that the best outcomes come from truly listening, understanding, and acting on what matters most to you.

Leicestershire's Youth Voice Council (formally Children in Care Council) is a group of young people in care aged between 7-18 who represent children and young people in care in Leicestershire. The group acts as the voice of their peers and meet monthly to discuss and consider the issues faced by Children in Care; things that are important to them; look at ways of making a difference for Children in Care and how they can influence this locally in Leicestershire as well as nationally through such forums as the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Our Care Leavers are vital in shaping the services going forward and improve our offer to all our children.

SYPAC is the forum for our Care Leavers 18 -25 years old and offers a monthly meeting to socialise, discuss and influence decisions regarding Children in Care and Care Leavers and to highlight their views and opinions. There is also attendance from virtual school, children's rights and welfare rights to support and enhance independence skills of our Care Leavers.

Other key participation groups include our Children in Care Choir – Beacon Voices and Out in Care our support group for LGBT+ young people.

Both our Youth Voice council and SYPAC are regularly involved in decision making at various levels and bring robust challenge to hold decision makers to account both internally, regionally and nationally. Both groups have had an effective impact on the support that our children receive and decisions within Leicestershire. Some examples of these are outlined below:

Youth Voice Council and SYPAC activities	Impact
Consulted and influenced the development of 'Our Promise'.	Ensuring the vision of Leicestershire is led by the needs of our children.
Development of a children and young person's version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, in the form of a video.	To ensure children and young people understand the principles of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and members are held accountable for their role.
Development of a Coming into Care Pack.	To provide our children and young people with a useful information leaflet of all the key things they need to know when they come into care.
Updating the Terms of Reference and Structure for the Corporate Parenting Board.	To ensure the children and young people who attend the board have an inclusive role in the aims and objectives, as well as the themes for meetings and delivery of these.
Involvement with fostering training.	Improvement in understanding of Prospective Foster Carers of the impact of being in care. Their role in supporting this and an improved experience for our children.
Creation of a Contact Expectations document to support expectations for both children and their families about the time that they will spend with each other.	Our children are able to be clear about the expectations at the beginning and there is consistency with workers in exploring different options for family time.
Young person's interview panel for all relevant posts within Children and Family Services.	Most recently direct influence on the appointment of our Director, Assistant Director and Field work Head of Service.
Care Leaver Representative on Member Panel Meetings for housing and member champion meetings	True representation of voice within member meetings, advocating for the views of our Care Leavers.
Development and facilitation of our Out in Care Group by Care Leavers	A LGBT+ support group for children and young people, where they can socialise and have themed discussions and access support services.
Consultation in Life story Work expectations and guidance	To ensure Life Story Work practice is underpinned by the views and experiences of our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

10.

What success will look like

As corporate parents we need to know what success will look like to ensure that we are challenging ourselves to continually strive for the best for our children and achieve our ambitions regarding the care they receive. The table below sets out how we will measure our success in the delivery of outcomes for our looked after children and Care Leavers.

Outcome 1 Improved Physical Health	Outcome 2 Improved Mental Health	Outcome 3 Placement stability and safe homes	Outcome 4 Attainment	Outcome 5 Care Leavers
<p>Children will:</p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p> <p>Be registered with a GP</p> <p>Be registered with a dentist</p> <p>Be up to date with all their immunisations</p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p>	<p>Children will:</p> <p>Be supported through evidence-based interventions to maximise their emotional and mental well being</p> <p>Have improved Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire results.</p> <p>Be referred to specialise mental health services and receive treatment in a timely manner where appropriate</p> <p>Benefit from joined up multi agency working to drive relationship-based approaches</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within 20 miles of their home address</p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within long term, in house provision</p> <p>Ensure children have improved placement stability</p> <p>Our discharge planning will secure improved outcomes for Care Leavers</p> <p>Make timely decisions regarding permanence and the use of SGO's and Child Arrangement Order to be used where appropriate</p> <p>To support children in care to reunify back into the care of birth parents or wider family where this is safe and in child's best interests.</p>	<p>Children will:</p> <p>Be supported to achieve their full potential</p> <p>Have a Personal education plan which will be aspirational and ambitious</p> <p>Have their progress at school monitored and every child will receive tailored support from a specialist advisor</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Support Care Leavers to find safe, stable and suitable places to live, making sure they are as well prepared as they can be</p> <p>Will give opportunities to keep in touch with them until they are 25 and have high aspirations for them</p> <p>Support Care Leavers to remain with their longterm foster families after they have left the care of Leicestershire if that is in the best interests of the young person</p> <p>Support Care Leavers to become independent adults by helping to secure high quality education, training or employment opportunities</p>
Best possible outcome for our children				

Appendix A

Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference

The Corporate Parenting Board will be held four times a year and will include a membership of children and young people, the Director and Assistant Director of Children and Family Services, elected members, professionals from a range of partner agencies including Social Care, Health, Education and Police. The board will be co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families and a member of the Youth Voice Council representative.

What we want to achieve:

- To ensure that the Council members and partner agencies fulfil their statutory duty as Corporate Parents and are held to account for identified actions from the board, in order to achieve continuing improvements in outcomes for children and young people.
- To prioritise and act in the best interests of all our children and young people keeping them at the centre of decision making.

How we will do this:

- Ensure that the Corporate Parenting role is understood and fulfilled by all elected members and senior officers working across all directorates in the Council and by our partners.
- Listening to the voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers by meeting and talking with them and acting upon their expressed views, ensuring they are able to participate in decisions about their care and the shaping of future services.
- Monitoring and overseeing plans, strategies, or policies for looked after children, young people, and Care Leavers to ensure performance is maintained.
- Members of the Board meeting being accountable for and championing the Leicestershire Children in Care Pledge and Promise.
- Members of the Board meeting being accountable for identified actions, completing these in a timely way and providing feedback to the children and young people via the Children in Care Council, SYPAC or the Board meeting.
- Members of the Board taking issues raised forward with Senior Officers, partner agencies and those whom all have a responsibility to the role of Corporate Parenting.
- To promote and advocate for the views of all our children and young people to ensure their views are represented within the Board.
- Board members to work collectively with the children and young people members to develop a range of strategies seeking to engage our harder to reach and underrepresented group of children and young people in care.
- Monitoring and reviewing key performance data which is specific to the discussions taking place, to review the impact for our children and young people in achieving their outcomes.



Membership:

- Lead Member for Children and Families (co-chair)
- Representative from Youth Voice Council (co-chair) to be agreed at the Youth Voice Council.
- Children in Care nominated by the Children in Care Council
- Director of Children and Family Services
- Cross party Elected members nominated by the Party Groups
- Children and Family Services Lead Officers: Assistant Director Children Social Care and Targeted Early Help, Head of Service Children in Care, Fostering, Adoption and the Virtual School, Head of Service Safeguarding, Improvement and Quality Assurance, Service Manager Fostering and Adoption, Service Manager Children in Care, Service Manager Safeguarding and Performance Service, Service Manager Youth Offending Service, Service Manager for Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Virtual School Head
- Representative from Public Health
- Divisional Director of Families Children and Young People (FYPC) LPT.
- Designated Nurse for Looked after Children from CCG and LPT representative
- Assistant Chief Constable or Police Superintendent with lead for Safeguarding
- District Council representative e.g.: Housing
- Adults & Communities Lead Officer
- LSCB Chair
- Employment and Training Lead
- Voluntary sector and charity sector representatives who are identified as playing a role within the Board meeting.

If the nominated representative is unable to attend the Board meeting, it is an expectation that they send apologies, including an updated report which can be shared, or ensure a colleague attends on their behalf.

If it is identified that members are routinely not attending the meeting, the Service Manager for Safeguarding and Performance will follow this up, to remind members of their roles and responsibilities as well as commitment to the Board as a Corporate Parent.

Plan for Board meeting structure:

The primary venue will be County Hall committee rooms, however, if virtual meetings are required these will be facilitated via Microsoft Teams.



Standing agenda items:

- Introductions and Apologies
- Accuracy of last minutes
- Review of previous actions
- Assistant Director update
- Youth Voice Council update
- SYPAC update
- Health data summary
- Education data summary

Respect and Expectations Statement

- We will arrive at meetings on time and not leave early unless previously agreed.
- Other than for an emergency, all mobile devices will be switched off. They will only be looked at and any phone calls made during breaks.
- Laptops will only be used in meetings for reference by the person giving a presentation and NOT to reply to emails etc.
- All staff will ensure they use young people friendly language.
- Our meetings will be led by the Chair & Co-Chair. All questions, comments and discussion will be directed by them. They will ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak and make a positive contribution.
- Discussion and collective decision making can sometimes prove challenging. We will ensure all points of view are valued, listened too, and debated respectfully.
- Challenge and debate will always be directed at the point and not the person.
- Each agenda item will have an agreed time allocation and meetings will strictly run to time.
- All young people and staff will attend meetings with an open mind and ensure they are committed to making a full and positive contribution.
- Our meetings must be prioritised but if we can't attend, we will always send apologies and try to send someone in our place.

If the meeting is held virtually or as a hybrid meeting, it is expected all members will have their cameras on and will keep their microphone on mute, unless they are speaking, using the hand icon when you wish to speak.



Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026 – 2029

| Children and young people version



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Section 2: What it means to be in care

Section 3: Your voice your future

Section 1

Our Promise to You



our promise

to children in care and care leavers



by Leicestershire County Council and Partners

<p>We will support you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emotional support • Whatever you do we will be there • Ensure all your needs are met • Provide advice, practical information, practical and financial support • We will make sure that you know what your rights are • Will not judge you if things go wrong. We all make mistakes! 	<p>We believe in you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will value your strengths and talents • Support you to overcome any stumbling blocks you face • Support you to achieve your goals • Embrace your individuality • Encourage your aspirations • Support you to succeed in life 	<p>We will respect your identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will respect your unique identity • Support you to develop your own personal beliefs and values • Accept, respect and celebrate your identity, culture and heritage • Value, respect and support important relationships • Encourage you to express your identity positively 	<p>We will listen to you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will listen and respect you • Strive to understand your point of view • Place you at the heart of all decisions • Support you to talk about your worries and happy times • Support you to seek independent advocacy 	<p>We will support you to find a place you can call home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will do our best to find you a home near to people who are important to you • Ensure you feel safe and secure • As you grow we will support you to learn new skills to support your independence • We are here to support if things go wrong 	<p>We will inform you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal entitlements and services • Up to date and accurate information • Support you to access your care records • Provide information throughout your journey • We will support you if you need to make a complaint 	<p>We will be a lifelong champion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support you break down barriers to other agencies • Work together with other services to better meet your needs • Encourage and support you to make positive life choices • Will make sure you know how to get support when you need it • Trust and respect you
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Produced by Leicestershire County Council as part of the Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership

Our Children, Our Future

In Leicestershire, we believe you matter.

Some children live with their families, and some children are in care or have left care. If you are one of these children or young people, the council is your Corporate Parent.

That means the council has a big job: to care for you like good parents should.

Being a good parent means:

- Keeping you safe
- Listening to you
- Helping you learn and grow
- Supporting your dreams
- Standing up for you when things feel hard



Our Promise

We promise to:

- Help you feel safe and cared for
- Listen to what you say and take it seriously
- Respect who you are, your culture, your beliefs, and your identity
- Help you stay connected to people who are important to you
- Support you at school, with your health, and as you plan your future

You are not alone

There are lots of adults whose job it is to look out for you and make sure you get what you need, now and as you grow up.

Section 2

What it Means to be in Care

Who is this for?

This is for:

- **Children in Care** – children who the council looks after
- **Care Leavers** – young people who have grown up in care

Every child's story is different
- and that's okay.



A safe place to live

If you can't live with your family, we will do our best to make sure you:

- Live somewhere safe and stable
- Are cared for by people who are kind and supportive
- Stay in one place if possible, so life feels less worrying

School, learning and fun

We want you to:

- Enjoy learning
- Get extra help if you need it
- Take part in fun activities like trips, music, sports and celebrations
- Believe in yourself and your abilities

There is a team called the Virtual School that helps make sure children in care get the right support with school, college, or training.

Health and feelings

Your health matters. This includes:

- Your body
- Your feelings
- Your mental wellbeing

We will help you:

- See doctors and dentists
- Talk to someone if you're feeling sad, worried or angry
- Learn ways to feel stronger and happier



Section 3

Your Voice, Your Future



Your voice matters

You have the right to be heard.

This means:

- Adults should listen to what you think and feel
- You should help make decisions about your life
- Things should be explained to you in a way you understand

When you tell us what works and what doesn't, we try to make things better.

This is called
"You Said, We Did."

Getting involved

You can share your views by:

- Talking to your social worker or personal adviser
- Joining groups like the Youth Voice Council or SYPAC (Supporting Young People After Care)
- Getting help from a Children's Rights Officer

Some young people help make big decisions and tell adults how services should change — and that makes a real difference.

Belonging and being yourself

We want you to:

- Feel proud of who you are
- Be treated fairly and kindly
- Feel like you belong

Belonging means feeling:

- Accepted
- Supported
- Valued
- Cared about

We know life hasn't always been easy for children in care. That's why we promise to:

- Stand by you
- Believe in you
- Help you grow into a confident adult

Looking ahead

Success means:

- You feel safe
- You are healthy
- You do your best at school or work
- You have plans for your future
- You know there are people who care about you



“ You are important.
Your future matters.
And we are here for you. ”

our **pr**  **mise**
to children in care and care leavers



We will support you



- Provide emotional support
- Whatever you do we will be there
- Ensure all your needs are met
- Provide advice, information, practical and financial support
- We will make sure that you know what your rights are
- Will not judge you if things go wrong. We all make mistakes!

We will **respect** your identity



- We will respect your unique identity
- Support you to develop your own personal beliefs and values
- Accept, respect and celebrate your identity, culture and heritage
- Value, respect and support important relationships
- Encourage you to express your identity positively

We will **listen** to you

- We will listen and respect you
- Strive to understand your point of view
- Place you at the heart of all decisions
- Support you to talk about your worries and happy times
- Support you to seek independent advocacy

We believe in you



- We will value your strengths and talents
- Support you to overcome any stumbling blocks you face
- Support you to achieve your goals
- Embrace your individuality
- Encourage your aspirations
- Support you to succeed in life

We will support you to find a place you can call home



- We will do our best to find you a home near to people who are important to you
- Ensure you feel safe and secure
- As you grow we will support you to learn new skills to support your independence
- We are here to support if things go wrong

We will inform you



- Legal entitlements and services
- Up to date and accurate information
- Support you to access your care records
- Provide information throughout your journey
- We will support you if you need to make a complaint

We will be a lifelong champion



- Support you break down barriers to other agencies
- Work together with other services to better meet your needs
- Encourage and support you to make positive life choices
- Will make sure you know how to get support when you need it
- Trust and respect you

Useful contact details

Your worker Phone and email

Complaints department phone and email

children s rights officer phone and email

Children in Care Duty phone and email

Out of hours phone and email

Who cares trust

Child line

Urgent Care 111

Police and emergency services 999

Princes trust 0116 255 0400

Out of hours service 0116 305 0005

our **promise**
to children in care and care leavers



**Leicestershire
County Council**

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 2 JUNE 2026**

SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER AND SEND REFORM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Government's Schools White Paper Every Child Achieving and Thriving and the associated SEND Reform proposals. The report summarises the national policy direction, outlines the implications for the County Council and its partners and highlights key risks and opportunities.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Schools White Paper and SEND Reform proposals form part of a national 10-year programme of education reform led by the Department for Education. Locally, the proposals align with:
 - a. The County Council's Strategic Plan priorities relating to children's outcomes, inclusion and early intervention.
 - b. Existing SEND improvement and inclusion strategies.
 - c. Work undertaken through the Department for Education Change Partnership Programme.
3. The reforms do not currently require changes to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, though future financial and governance considerations will arise as national legislation and funding arrangements are confirmed.
4. The Committee has previously received updates relating to SEND pressures, High Needs funding and inclusion.

Background

5. The SEND system nationally is under significant pressure. Since 2019, the number of active Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has almost doubled, leading to large assessment backlogs and increasing parental appeals. Local Authorities continue to face substantial financial pressure, particularly within the High Needs Block, with SEND transport costs alone nearing £2bn nationally. Nationally, the accumulated deficit in 2024/25 was £12.2 billion and is estimated to rise to £16.8 billion by 2028/29.

6. The Government has published a Schools White Paper and a parallel SEND Reform consultation setting out the most significant changes to education and SEND since 2014. Together, they aim to raise standards, strengthen inclusion and rebalance investment towards prevention, early intervention and family support.
7. The Schools White Paper is structured as a phased programme:
 - a. Phase 1 (2025/26–2026/27): Attendance, behaviour, workforce and system improvement.
 - b. Phase 2 (2026/27–2027/28): Preparation for SEND and curriculum reforms.
 - c. Phase 3 (from 2028/29): Full implementation of new SEND and curriculum frameworks.
8. SEND Reform proposals introduce a redesigned 0–25 framework with a stronger universal offer in mainstream education, meeting commonly occurring needs without reliance on diagnosis. As part of the proposal, there are three tiers of support, Targeted, Targeted Plus and Specialist. Individual Support Plans will replace EHCPs for most children, with EHCPs reserved for those accessing nationally defined Specialist Provision Packages.
9. Local authorities are positioned as system leaders and convenors, with responsibility for inclusive mainstream practice, place sufficiency, joint commissioning and partnership governance across education, health and social care.
10. A key requirement is the submission of a Local SEND Reform Plan by mid-June 2026, supported by data and demand analysis and a Partnership Maturity Assessment.
11. The Partnership Maturity Assessment is underpinned by seven nationally defined pillars:
 - a. Co-production with parents, carers and young people
 - b. System leadership and governance
 - c. Understanding needs through robust data
 - d. Quality of inclusion at universal, targeted and specialist levels
 - e. Effective partnership working
 - f. A skilled and sustainable workforce
 - g. Strategic and targeted use of resources, including sufficiency planning
12. Approval of the Plan is a pre-condition for access to High Needs Stability Grant funding, covering up to 90% of historic dedicated school grant (DSG) deficits accrued to March 2026.
13. The SEND Reform plan will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future date, to outline the detail of the approved plan for Leicestershire.

SEND Reform Plan

14. The Local SEND Reform Plan will be the primary mechanism through which national reforms are implemented locally. This includes proposals relating to:

- a. Governance and partnership arrangements
 - b. Experts-at-Hand and early intervention models
 - c. SEND sufficiency and place planning
 - d. Financial sustainability of the High Needs system
15. **Governance** - Officers are delivering planning through identified workstreams to ensure all stakeholder views are represented and proposing a SEND Reform Implementation Board as the primary governance route.
 16. **The Experts at Hand** model aims to implement a new offer of expert advice and support from education, health and social care for educational providers (0-25). The model brings together education specialists, clinical health professionals and specialist outreach as well as whole-setting support and training. Working groups have been set up to identify specific needs across the children's partnership to ensure local areas are able to provide the right support, in the right place, at the right time.
 17. The Experts at Hand model will be developed to align with existing plans from across the partnership, including the Education Belonging and SEND and Inclusion Strategies, the Families First Partnership Programme, Leicestershire's Best Start in Life plan and the NHS 10-year plan, including the Neighborhood Health Framework.
 18. It is proposed that the Experts at Hand model will be delivered using a localities model, supporting early years settings, schools and post-16 provisions within defined locality areas across Leicestershire.
 19. Leicestershire has received £3.8m funding for the direct delivery of the Experts at Hand initiative for the 2026-27 financial year. The indicative funding for years two and three is due to rise to £6.8m and £7.6m respectively.
 20. **The SEND sufficiency and place planning** aims to ensure sufficient, high-quality SEND places in mainstream and specialist settings, and that physical environments are accessible. The workstream is utilising data to understand trends and needs to plan SEND Sufficiency. This will support the Department for Education's ambition for the delivery of Inclusion Bases across all local areas. These will be identified as Support Bases and Specialist Bases.
 - a. Support Bases are school or trust funded, whereby schools or trusts are responsible for placing children and young people within the provision, who are most likely to be supported through an Individual Support Plan rather than an Education, Health and Care Plan.
 - b. Specialist Bases are Local Authority commissioned places. Local Authorities will place children and young people within these provisions, and this cohort is likely to have an Education Health and Care Plan.
 21. The Department for Education has outlined their expectation that every secondary school and an appropriate number of primary schools will have access to Inclusion Bases.

Consultation

22. Nationally, the Department for Education's consultation on SEND Reform closed in May. Leicestershire provided feedback on the SEND Reforms through formal consultation and focus groups with the Department for Education.
23. There is a requirement for all plans to be co-produced and represent the local area, with a key focus over the developmental phase being to engage with partners and stakeholders.

Resource Implications

24. Approval of the Local SEND Reform Plan is critical to securing High Needs Stability Grant funding to address historic DSG deficits. For Leicestershire this represents up to circa £100m.
25. Financial, legal and workforce implications will continue to be assessed as national funding and legislative detail is confirmed.

Timetable for Decisions

26. The below details the timetable for key decisions and submissions that have been released by the Department for Education thus far:
 - a. May 2026: Closure of national SEND Reform consultation
 - b. Mid-June 2026: Submission of Local SEND Reform Plan to the Department for Education
 - c. 2026–27: Preparatory implementation and partnership readiness activity
 - d. From 2028/29: Anticipated phased legislative implementation

This is a 10-year implementation plan, and the Department for Education expect numbers of Education Health and Care Plans to continue to rise and be at the figures of today by the end of the 10-year plan.

Conclusions

27. Whilst Leicestershire is well positioned due to strong partnership working developed through the national Change Partnership Programme, successful delivery will depend on sustained co-production and robust locality-based delivery.
28. The Schools White Paper and SEND Reform present a significant opportunity to reshape inclusion, outcomes and financial sustainability. They also carry material delivery and partnership risks during the transition period.

Background papers

[Schools White Paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving](#)

[SEND Reform consultation: Putting Children and Young People First](#)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

29. None

Equality Implications

30. The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The Schools White Paper and SEND Reform proposals are intended to improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.
31. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as proposals and implementation plans are developed locally. At this stage, the direction of travel is expected to have a positive impact through stronger mainstream inclusion, earlier intervention and reduced reliance on statutory processes. No adverse equality impacts are identified at this stage, but further work will be undertaken.

Human Rights Implications

32. Consideration has been given to the potential human rights implications, particularly the rights of children to education and support. There are no identified human rights implications arising from the matters set out in this report at this stage.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

33. Health implications: addressed through partnership working with health and early intervention models described in the background section.
34. Partnership working, outlined in sections on governance and consultation.
35. Risk assessment: key risks are summarised in the background and resource implications sections.

Officer(s) to Contact

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 2 JUNE 2026**

QUARTER 4 2025/26 PERFORMANCE REPORT

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH,
COMMUNITIES, LAW AND GOVERNANCE AND THE DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with an update on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period January to March 2026 (Quarter 4).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children and Family Services Department's performance is reported to the Committee in accordance with the Council's corporate performance management arrangements.

Background and Overview

3. The following report and accompanying data aim to report on the priority areas identified by the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan. The Plan identifies ambitions and measures to monitor progress. The current performance data is appended and has been refreshed to concentrate on indicators where updated data is available for Quarter 4.
4. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.
5. From nine measures reported that have a national benchmark, two are in the top quartile, four are in the second quartile, two are in the third quartile and one is in the bottom quartile.

Tableau Dashboard Usage

6. Across the Children and Family Services department in quarter 4 2025/26 there were 548 active Tableau Server users, an increase from quarter 3 (532). Across the department there were 41,511 views, up from 39,683 views in the previous quarter, at a rate of 75.8 views per user, up from the previous quarter (74.6).

7. Across the two main service areas, in quarter 4 2025/26 there were 273 users and 20,567 views in Targeted Early Help and Social Care at a rate of 75.3 views per user, compared with 170 users and 8,420 views in Education and SEND at a rate of 49.5 views per user.

Helping children in Leicestershire live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments

8. Local Authority comparisons used in this section are most recent figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking of performance in 2024/25.
9. The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time in the year to date increased to 25.4% at the end of Quarter 4 compared to 22.6% at the end of Quarter 3. In the most recent quarter 72 children began a second or subsequent child protection plan. Leicestershire is now placed in the third quartile of local authorities compared to most recent national results published for 2024/25. This continues to be an area of focus for the service and regular audits are completed by Child Protection managers to understand any themes around the circumstances leading to repeat periods of child protection planning. Whilst the majority of repeat plans are beyond 12 months from the previous end date a deep dive is currently taking place to further understand increases in the last quarter
10. The percentage of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months was 24.7% at the end of Quarter 4 which is an increase compared to 23.2% at the end of the previous quarter; 532 children were 're-referred' within Quarter 4. Leicestershire continues to be placed in the fourth quartile of local authorities. A specific piece of audit work has been undertaken in the First response Duty service which is currently being analysed. A key element of work in Family First programme is to look at strengthening the front door responses with more integration across early help, CSC and partner agencies. A pilot is currently being developed. In April a new Combined Contact form within the Mosaic electronic recording system is being implemented as the first part of the integration process, aiming to improve the processes of screening incoming contacts.
11. The percentage of assessments completed within 45 days to the end of Quarter 4 was 87.5%, similar performance compared to the end Quarter 3 (88.1%). Within Quarter 4, 1,841 assessments were completed, with 1,586 within timescale. Leicestershire continues to be placed in the second quartile of local authorities using most recent comparisons.
12. The percentage of Care Leavers aged up to 21 in Suitable Accommodation was 95.8% at the end of Quarter 4 (503 out of 525 young people), similar to the end of the previous Quarter (96.2%). Leicestershire continues to be in the top quartile of local authorities using available comparisons.
13. The percentage of Care Leavers aged up to 21 in Education, Employment or Training was 63.2% at the end of Quarter 4 (332 out of 525 young people),

similar to the end of the previous Quarter (63.3%). Leicestershire continues to be placed in the first quartile using available comparisons. The Service continues to provide careful oversight to the care leaver indicators and is driven by a corporate commitment for creating mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.

14. The percentage of Children in Care at the end of Quarter 4 who had a dental check in the preceding 12 months was 72.1% (549 children), a small increase from 69.8% reported for the previous quarter. For Children in Care aged up to 13 years, the percentage with a dental check is higher at 79.2% compared to 63.2% for young people in care aged 14 years or more.
15. The percentage of Children in Care at the end of Quarter 4 who had an annual health assessment within the preceding 12 months was 86.5% (658 children). This is an increase from 82.9% reported for the previous quarter. For Children in Care aged up to 13 years, the percentage with an annual health check is higher at 88.8% compared to 83.7% for young people in care aged 14 years or more.

Helping children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence, and capacity

16. The Children and Families Services Departmental Plan states the intention to ensure that the needs of young people are identified as early as possible so that timely and appropriate support is provided in the right setting, therefore reducing the risk of needs escalating at the same time as ensuring children and young people's best outcomes are achieved.
17. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 4,039 at the Spring term 2026 school census. This is 352 children higher than at the Autumn term 2025 school census (3,687). 92% of the additional EHCP children in mainstream schools at Spring 2026 were on roll at the same school in the previous term. The Spring term 2026 school census EHCP numbers, and the proportion of the pupil population it represents, are the highest recorded for any school census term since the phasing in of the 2014 SEN Code of Practice changes were completed. 4.07% of all pupils on roll now in Leicestershire mainstream schools have an EHCP. The Service is awaiting the national SEN2 survey results release in June/July which will show EHCP numbers against the national figures.
18. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire without an EHCP but in receipt of SEN Support was 13,108 at the Spring term 2026 school census. This is 194 higher than the Autumn term 2025 school census (12,914). The Spring term 2026 school census SEN support numbers continues the trend first established in the Autumn term 2025 data, which was the numbers recorded are now lower than the same period of the previous academic year. In Spring 2025 the number of SEN Support pupils was 13,429, which was 321 higher than in Spring 2026.

People are safe in their daily lives

19. Local Youth Justice statistics are regularly reported to the Youth and Justice Partnership Board. The latest report was presented at the March 2026 board.
20. The number of First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System in Q3 2025/26 (latest data) was 13. This is a decrease of 4 compared to the previous quarter (Q2 2025/26). Local data is currently unavailable for Use of Custody and Re-offending, although Ministry of Justice figures are available in the report.

Help every child to get the best possible start in life

Early Years

21. In the Autumn term 2025, 69.9% of eligible two-year-olds took up their Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE). This is an increase from the Summer term 2025 (64.5%). For three-year-olds, the figure was 91.7%, a decrease over the Summer term 2025 (94.6%). Overall, 98.6% of eligible two-year and three-year-olds took up their FEEE in high-quality provision in the Autumn term 2025, compared with 98.5% in the Summer term 2025.
22. Due to issues reporting FEEE, there may be slight inaccuracies in the above figures. This is due to children receiving both working families and Early Learning funding for two-year-olds. Work is ongoing to resolve any issues and figures will be amended accordingly in future reports as needed.
23. Monthly reporting will enable more frequent reporting of take up of cohorts of children accessing their funding entitlements.

Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential

24. The Department for Education (DfE) released in February 2026 revised assessment outcomes for Secondary schools in 2025. This is the earliest opportunity to provide these details.
25. At Key Stage 4 (16-year-olds) due to the cancellation of formal Key Stage 2 assessments in 2020 Progress 8 scores are not available, the replacement main accountability measure is the Attainment 8 score. The revised average Attainment 8 score for all pupils (7,862 pupils) was 46.2, which was an increase of 0.3 on the previous year. Nationally the performance has shown an improvement to 46.0 from 45.9. This has resulted in Leicestershire's performance representing only for the second time since the performance measure was introduced in 2016 being higher than the National average. The performance remains within the second quartile of Local Authorities nationally. Leicestershire's performance was 0.1 higher than the average for its new set of Statistical Neighbours.
26. For Free School Meal (FSM) eligible pupils (1,369 pupils) the average Attainment 8 score was 32.2, this performance is within the third quartile nationally. This performance represents a 0.1 increase on the previous year, and is 2.8 lower than the National average, 35.0, which increased by 0.4 from the previous year. Leicestershire's performance was 0.1 lower than the average for its new set of

Statistical Neighbours. The FSM cohort now represents 17.4% of pupils in Leicestershire at the end of Key Stage 4, the highest pre 2022 cohort proportion size was 8.2% in 2019.

27. The Attainment 8 score for SEN support pupils was 33.6 (1,119 pupils), an increase of 1.9 on the previous year. Compared to the National average this performance is now 0.2 lower, nationally a 0.7 improvement was seen to 33.8. Leicestershire's performance was 0.5 higher than the average for its new set of Statistical Neighbours. The Attainment 8 score for Education, Health and Care Plan pupils (EHCP) was 16.7 (386 pupils). This represents an increase of 1.0 on the previous year, and is now 1.9 higher than the national average, which increased by 0.6 to 14.8. Leicestershire's performance was 0.8 higher than the average for its new set of Statistical Neighbours. In comparison to the performance of other local authorities nationally both cohort's performances are within the second quartile. This is the first time the SEN Support performance for Leicestershire has been higher than the third quartile since the performance measure was introduced in 2016, for the EHCP cohort it presents no change in quartile positioning.
28. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 1,404 at the end of Q4 2025/26. This is an increase of 84 students since the end of Q3 2025/26 (1,320 students), and an increase of 141 students (12%) compared to the end of Q4 2024/25 (1,263 students),
29. Between August 2025 and March 2026 there have been 394 young people join the EHE cohort for some time period, 212 of these young people (54%) were aged between 12 and 15 years of age, 217 (55%) were female, 127 (32%) had identified Special Educational Needs (either SEN Support or an Education, Health and Care Plan), and 169 were eligible for a Free School Meal (43%). Each of these groups are overrepresented compared to the general population profile of Leicestershire residents attending Leicestershire state funded schools, which at the Spring Term 2026 recorded 34% aged between 12 and 15, 49% as female, 20% with Special Educational Needs, and 18% as Free School Meal eligible. During this period there have also been 212 young people that left the EHE cohort, with 159 (75%) of these young people returning to school or an alternative provision.
30. The main reasons for young people joining the EHE cohort between 1st August 2025 and 31st March 2026 (394 young people) were:

Reason	Total Young People	% of Total
Mental health	85	21.6%
Other	80	20.3%
No reason given	75	19.0%
Difficulty in accessing a school place	57	14.5%
School provision not meeting need	56	14.2%
Cultural/Life choice	39	9.9%

31. Following the submission of the Spring School Census by Schools to the Department for Education in March 2026, the validated permanent exclusions and suspensions data for the 2024/25 academic year is now available for Leicestershire, national data for benchmarking is not available yet.
32. The number of permanent exclusions from Leicestershire schools as a percentage of the school population in the 2024/25 academic year was 0.09%. This rate is 30% higher than last year, 0.07% in 2023/24, and almost 400% higher than in 2018/19, which was a rate of 0.02%. The number of permanent exclusions increased to 94 in 2024/25, from 72 in 2023/24, and 19 in 2018/19. 2024/25 saw the highest number of permanent exclusions from Leicestershire schools since 2006/07, when there were 108. Unvalidated data up to the end of December 2025 for the 2025/26 academic year is showing permanent exclusion numbers to be higher than for the same period last year, 32 compared to 26.
33. The number of children receiving at least one fixed term suspension from Leicestershire schools as a percentage of the school population in the 2024/25 academic year was 3.41% (3,431 children). This rate is 6% lower than for the last academic year (3.62% and 3,654 children), and 79% higher than the rate for 2018/19 academic year (1.9% and 1,860 children). The 2024/25 performance represents the first academic year after 2019/20 to see a fall in the number and rate of pupils suspended from the previous academic year, although the performance remains the second highest since collection of this data began by the Department of Education (DfE) in 2005/06. Unvalidated data up to the end of December 2025 for the 2025/26 academic year is showing the number of children suspended to have continued to reduce, 1,622 compared to 1,884 for the same period in last year. This is the lowest number for this time period since 2022/23, when the number was 1,485.
34. The percentage of young people (16-17) in Leicestershire not in education, employment, or training (NEET) at the end of Q4 2025/26 was 1.3%. This rate was 0.1% higher than at the end of Q3 2025/26 but remains below the target of less than 2.1%.

Conclusion

35. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 4 2025/26, covering the period January to March 2026.
36. Details of all metrics will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year, and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

Background Papers

Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67375fe5ed0fc07b53499a42/Keeping_Children_Safe_Helping_Families_Thrive_.pdf

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Appendix

Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard Quarter 4, 2025/26

Officers to Contact

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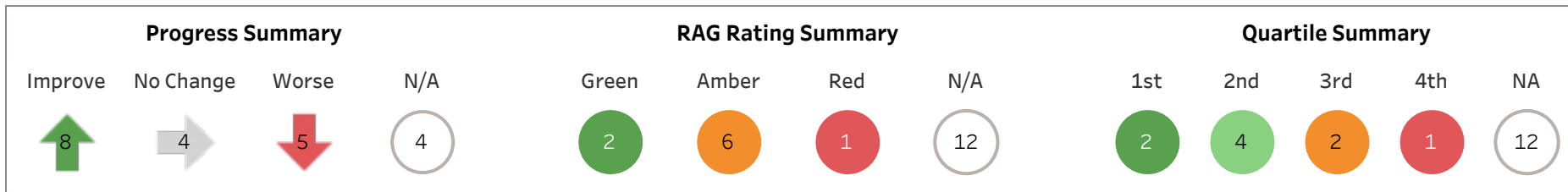
Alex Lea – Business Partner, Business Intelligence Service

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CFS Overview & Scrutiny Dashboard Q4 2025/26



Strategic Plan Outcome

All

Area

All

Search Indicator

All

Area	Indicator	Latest Data	Period	Previous Data	Perform. DOT	Target	RAG	Quartiles
Early Years	Eligible 2 and 3-year olds taking up their FEEE in a high-quality provision	98.6%	Autumn Term 2025	98.5%		NA	N/A	NA
	Eligible 2 year olds taking up their FEEE	69.9%	Autumn Term 2025	64.5%		NA	N/A	NA
	Eligible 3 year olds taking up their FEEE	91.7%	Autumn Term 2025	94.6%		NA	N/A	NA
Education	Children Electively Educated at Home	1404	Q4 2025/26	1320		NA	N/A	NA
	Children receiving at least one fixed term suspension as a % of School population	3.41	2024/25	3.6		NA	N/A	NA
	KS4 - Attainment 8	46.2	2024/25	45.9		NA	A	2nd
	KS4 - Attainment 8 (EHCP)	16.7	2024/25	15.7		NA	A	2nd
	KS4 - Attainment 8 (FSM)	32.2	2024/25	32.1		NA	A	3rd

SEND	KS4 - Attainment 8 (SEN Support)	33.6	2024/25	31.7		NA		2nd
	NEET young people aged 16-17	1.3%	Q4 2025/26	1.2%		<2.1%		NA
	Permanent exclusions as a % of School population	0.09	2024/25	0.07		NA		NA
	Children in mainstream schools in receipt of SEN Support (without EHCP)	13108	Spring Term 2026	12914		NA		NA
	Children in mainstream schools with EHCP	4039	Spring Term 2026	3687		NA		NA
Social Care	Assessments completed within 45 days	87.5%	Q4 2025/26	88.1%		>90.3%		2nd
	Care leavers EET	63.2%	Q4 2025/26	63.3%		>54.0%		1st
	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	95.8%	Q4 2025/26	96.2%		>92.0%		1st
	Children becoming subject to a CPP for second or subsequent time	25.4%	Q4 2025/26	22.6%		<20.8%		3rd
	Children in care who have had dental checks within last 12 months (at end of period)	72.1%	Q4 2025/26	69.8%		NA		NA
Youth Justice	Children in care who have their annual health assessment within last 12 months (..	86.5%	Q4 2025/26	82.9%		NA		NA
	Re-referrals to CSC within 12 mths	24.7%	Q4 2025/26	23.2%		<18.7%		4th
	No. of first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17 (year to date)	13	Q3 2025/26	17		NA		NA

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