



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 23 JANUARY 2024**

**DRAFT CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICE DEPARTMENTAL PLAN
2024 - 2026**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the draft Leicestershire Children and Family Service's Departmental Plan 2024 – 26, attached as an Appendix to the report, for comment and consideration.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The draft plan for 2024-26 has been developed to fulfil statutory duties and provide a basis for the Children and Family Service's vision, planning, commissioning, and delivery of services until 2026. The plan, and associated actions, provide a vehicle for the Children and Family Service's Department to work together on shared priorities, and to maximise resources and expertise.
3. The draft Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2024 – 26 is aligned to the County Council's Strategic Plan for 2022 - 26 and aims to set out how the Department will contribute to the delivery and achievement of the Council's five strategic outcomes.
4. It also aligns to Leicestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Children and Families Partnership Plan, and Food Plan, as well as partner plans including Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Infant Feeding and Infant Mortality Strategies.

Background

5. Children and Family Services Department has developed the new draft Departmental Plan for 2024 - 26, setting out a refreshed vision, priorities and ambitions for its Services. The Department has identified three ambitions and ten associated priorities to contribute towards improving outcomes for the children, young people and families of Leicestershire:
 - a) Support children and young people to Build Strong Foundations:

- Support parents and babies, before and after birth, to create the conditions where stress is reduced, positive bonds and attachments can be formed, and language and communications skills can be developed,
- Work in partnership to identify those children who would benefit from support and provide co-ordinated services at the earliest opportunity,
- Support children and families to build strength, resilience, confidence and the skills to find their own solutions wherever possible.

b) Support children and young people to Be Safe and Belong:

- Work in partnership to ensure risk is understood and reduced and targeted support is provided at the right time, in the right place and by the right service,
- Ensure children in care and care leavers feel they have a stable, safe, loving home where they belong,
- Ensure children and young people who are most vulnerable are protected, are safe from harm and supported.

c) Support children and young people to Enjoy and Achieve:

- Ensure every child has access within their community to good quality, inclusive education that enables them to achieve their full potential,
- Focus on learning and readiness for learning as a driver of wellbeing for all children and young people,
- Ensure that children who have additional needs and vulnerabilities are supported in the right place, at the right time in order to narrow the gap,
- Work with schools and educational settings to ensure there is a clear understanding of the impact of poverty and trauma to ensure that children are not disadvantaged from accessing education.

Consultation

6. Formal consultation has not been undertaken specifically on the draft Departmental Plan as the Children and Family Service actively and continually seeks feedback from children, young people and families across Leicestershire as part of any direct work and group work undertaken with children and families, through specific engagement activity, through transformation activity and through forums including the Children's Youth Council for Leicestershire (CYCLe), Children in Care Council and the SEND Parent Carer Forum. The plan has been informed by this feedback from children, young people and families on their needs and experiences.

Resource Implications

7. The Plan will provide the context within which Children and Family Service budgets are produced and the department will continue to ensure it makes the best possible use of its resources.

Timetable for Decisions

8. The draft Departmental Plan is due to be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 9 February 2024. Any comments raised by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be taken into consideration. It is intended to officially launch the Plan in April 2024.

Conclusion

9. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2024 – 26.

Equality Implications

10. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has identified no specific equality implications arising from this report. The refreshed Children and Family Service plan is for all children and young people living in Leicestershire and their families. The plan would not seek to discriminate against any child or young person but rather to ensure that the needs of all children and young people are met, therefore there is the potential for all children, young, their families to experience a positive impact as a result of the plan.

Human Rights Implications

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

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

12. Delivery of the plan will require the Department to maintain and develop effective working relationships with a range of partners, including but not limited to colleagues across all other County Council departments, District Councils, Health, Police, Leicester City and Rutland Councils and the voluntary and community sector.

Background papers

13. None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. None

Appendices

Children and Families Partnership Plan 2024 -26

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