



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 20 JANUARY 2026

DRAFT CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2026 - 2029

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the draft Leicestershire Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2026 - 29, which is appended to this report, for comment and consideration.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The draft plan for 2026-29 has been developed in order to fulfil statutory duties and to 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 to work together on shared priorities and to maximise resources and expertise.
3. The draft Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2026 – 29 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 strategic outcomes.
4. It also aligns to Leicestershire's relevant partnership plans including Leicestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Children and Families Partnership Plan.

Background

5. The Children and Family Services Department has developed a new draft Departmental Plan for 2026 - 29, setting out a refreshed vision, priorities and ambitions for its services. The Department has identified three ambitions and nine 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':
 - Focus on development, readiness for learning and learning as a driver of wellbeing for all children and young people.
 - Work in partnership to offer support and opportunities to children in their own communities, to help them reach their full potential, and transition well into adulthood.

- Work in partnership to identify those children and young people who would benefit from support and provide a shared response to them.
- b) Support children and young people to 'Be Safe and Belong':
 - Work with families to ensure risk is understood and reduced, and targeted support is provided at the right time, in the right place by the right service and agency.
 - Develop and use partnerships to prioritise safety for children and young people and to ensure it is understood that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
 - Create an understanding of belonging across partnerships so that children feel they matter and can maximise positive opportunities and links in their families, early learning and education settings and communities.
 - Empower families to build positive relationships and support systems to create safety for children to live within their family or family network.
- c) Support children and young people to 'Enjoy and Achieve':
 - Ensure children and young people have access within their communities to good quality early learning and education that enables them to achieve their full potential.
 - Develop a shared understanding of the impact of inequalities and trauma across partnerships, and a shared approach to supporting vulnerable children.

Consultation

6. The Children and Family Service Department continually seeks feedback from children, young people and families across Leicestershire, through direct work and group work undertaken with children and families, through specific engagement activity, transformation activity and through children and young people's forums. The draft Plan has been informed by this feedback from children, young people and families on their needs and experiences and input has also been sought from the Children's Youth Council for Leicestershire (CYCLE), SEND CYCLE, Young Carers CYCLE, Children in Care Council and Family Hub parent/carer groups.

Resource Implications

7. The Plan aims to provide the context within which Children and Family Services' budgets are produced, and the Department will continue to ensure it makes the best possible use of its resources.
8. 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.

Timetable for Decisions

9. The draft Departmental Plan is due to be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 3 February 2026. Any comments raised by the Children and Families Overview and

Scrutiny Committee will be taken into consideration. It is intended that the Plan will be officially launched in April 2026.

Conclusions

10. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft Children and Family Service Departmental Plan.

Background papers

11. None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

12. None

Equality Implications

13. An EIA screening is being undertaken and will be published alongside this report once completed. 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

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

Appendices

Children and Families Departmental Plan 2026 -29

Officer(s) to Contact

Sharon Cooke
Interim Director of Children and Family Services
Tel: 0116 305
Email: sharon.cooke@leics.gov.uk

Mala Razak
Children and Families Partnership Manager
Tel: 0116 305 8055
Email: mala.razak@leics.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank