



Achieving **more** for Children
Strategic Plan
2024-2029



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for children

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Let's start at the beginning

Since the creation of Achieving for Children (AfC) in 2014, our objective has been to support children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes and this drives everything that we do. We want children and young people to have the best start in life and to live safe and fulfilled lives.

We are owned by and commissioned to deliver children's services across three local authorities: the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK), the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBR), and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM).

We deliver services to more than 120,000 children and young people aged 0 to 25, including early help, social care, education, health, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and youth services, including youth offending.

We are an organisation of over 1,400 employees. We employ colleagues across a wide variety of professions, including social work, teaching, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and clinical psychology. Our support services work alongside our frontline teams and specialise in finance, IT and data, communications, commissioning, programme management and human resources.

We are a multi-disciplined organisation of talented professionals who are focused on working together, and with partners, to provide the best possible support to children, young people and their families.



Setting the scene

We aim to offer a mix of universal, targeted and statutory services that support and enrich the lives of children and young people who live and learn in our boroughs.

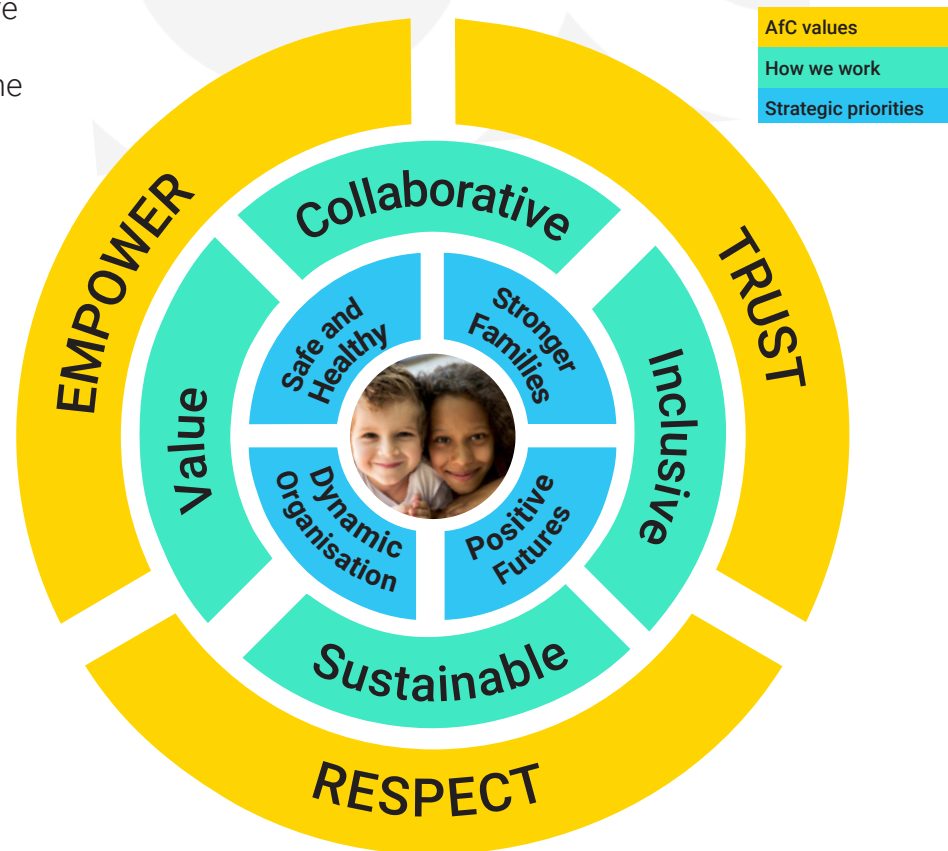
We regularly review our service offer to make sure that we are aligning the resources we have with what we know young people, families and partners want and need.

Planning our services has become more difficult in recent years, as money to fund essential children's services has become tighter. At the same time more children, young people and their families need our support. The complexity of their needs and the type of support they require is also changing.

Our Strategic Plan will shape how we work and prioritise resources over the next five years. In developing the plan and our strategic priorities, we have reflected on what we know about our communities, and what has worked well or not so well during the term of our previous plan. We have sought feedback from children, young people, parents, carers and the different professionals working within and alongside AfC, as well as from the three local authorities that own and commission us to deliver children's services.

Our strategy includes three interconnecting components:

Strategic priorities:	These four priorities will set out the main themes of what we do and how we seek to have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in our boroughs
Principles for how we work:	These four principles will guide how we approach and plan our work
AfC behavioural values:	These three values will shape how we interact with each other, services users and partners



Our strategic priorities

Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

Supporting young people to be safe and healthy is at the core of what we do. Our aspiration is that every child in our boroughs is supported to be safe, happy and access the care that they need, when they need it.

Working with partners, we will seek to facilitate a joined-up local offer that identifies needs early. We will support young people and families to help avoid their needs escalating, where possible, and will encourage partners to do the same.

We will champion the safety and wellbeing of children, nurture safe and caring family environments and, where needed, step in to support the safety and wellbeing of children living in our boroughs.

“The children’s centre is without doubt our happy place. Thank you for being my safe space. Thank you for being a safe, stable, strong place for my children.”

Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

Our aspiration is to have good quality and inclusive provision so that children and young people can live, learn and access the support they need locally. We want the majority of young people to be able to stay within their home community and close to established and familiar support networks.

We will invest in services, and work with partners, to support young people to prepare for adulthood, and work with our councils to ensure that our boroughs are places where young people have opportunities to go on to become successful adults.

We will continuously evaluate what provision is needed locally and work with partners to build a strong and attractive local offer. This will include education, employment, social care and health services.

“Excellent support from AfC organising work experience and discussing post-16 career options with my daughter.”

Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will work to equip families and young people with the tools, skills, knowledge and confidence they need to navigate challenges and lead independent and fulfilled lives at all ages and into adulthood.

Our services will consistently use reflective, collaborative and strengths-based approaches to work with the whole family. We will work with families to build on what works well in their lives, so that parents are able to make positive and lasting changes to the care they provide to their children.

"I feel prepared to be an adult and move into the next phase of my life."

"You have consistently supported my children and me. You have always made allocations and allowances for us, and you have done this with so much patience and understanding and respect."

Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We want AfC to be an adaptable, inspiring and inclusive organisation that is able to meet the changing needs of the children, young people and families living in our boroughs.

We will create an efficient and supportive work environment, underpinned by a stable and talented workforce, where teams have the support, technology and equipment they need to make a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.

"We need a support system that is not just limited to appointments - we can't put a time on when we will have a panic attack or a breakdown. A support system that cares."

How we work

In our approach to every aspect of our work, we will demonstrate four essential qualities:

Collaborative ~ Sustainable ~ Value for money ~ Inclusive

These qualities serve as our guiding principles, influencing how we work and make decisions.



Collaborative

Relationships, collaboration and partnership working are essential to our success as an organisation. We recognise the positive impact on the experience of children, young people and their families when we work

alongside them and join up our services with the other organisations that support them. We will support and promote strong, effective and respectful partnership working, not only with other agencies such as schools, the police, health, adult social care, the voluntary sector, but also with our children, young people and families.

It is our responsibility, when working collaboratively with other organisations, to respectfully hold them to account for their role in ensuring that decisions made are in the best interests of children and young people. We will champion the voices of children, young people and families in all forums.



Value for money

We will maximise the impact of the money and resources we have by being transparent about what money is available, how it is being spent and regularly review whether it is aligned to our priorities. We will seek to maximise the amount of money that is spent directly on supporting children and young people and ensure that spending decisions reflect the best use of funds.

We will agree budgets with our local authorities and take all reasonable steps to implement solutions that support the delivery of services within affordable financial envelopes. We will benchmark against comparable organisations and be open to developing ever more efficient delivery models based on best practice.

We will seek to maximise the amount of funding available to support children's services by seeking out income generation opportunities and by working collaboratively with partners to pool budgets.



Sustainable

As an organisation that works with children and young people every day, we feel that we have an important role to play in raising awareness of environmental issues, as well as leading by example in the way we deliver and commission services. We are committed

to ensuring that we are proactive in minimising the environmental footprint of our own activities, to promote a sustainable environment for future generations to enjoy.

Our commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 reflects a shared conviction with many of the young people we work with and with our owning councils.

We will embed environmental considerations into our policies, practice and commissioning intentions and proactively support the voice of children and young people in this area.



Inclusive

We will continue to develop and invest in a culture where everyone feels valued and included. Our commitment to inclusion ensures that every member of our staff has an equal opportunity to thrive and use their diverse perspectives and experiences, to enrich the work we do with children, young people and families.

We will seek to understand and always respect the unique backgrounds and needs of our children, young people and families and tailor our support and advice to their individual needs.

Embracing inclusion and diversity is not just a checkbox exercise for us: it's a conscious effort to create an inclusive space that celebrates differences, promotes innovation and empowers people to reach their full potential.



Our values

Our organisational values aim to express our shared understanding of what we believe are our most important ways of working, how we aim to behave and what we aspire to be as an organisation.

	Trust	Empower	Respect
How we work with you (children, young people and families)	<p>We build strong and consistent relationships with you.</p> <p>We are honest with you so that you understand our worries, the things that are working well and our next steps.</p>	<p>We help you to realise your potential.</p> <p>We recognise the strengths that are present in every family and help you to develop your own solutions.</p> <p>We encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings.</p>	<p>We listen to you in a non-judgemental way and take into account your wishes and feelings.</p>
How we work together (our partners)	<p>We are reliable: you can count on us to undertake tasks and deliver on what was agreed – we will do what we say we will do.</p>	<p>We work with you to ensure services are accessible, equitable and inclusive.</p> <p>We are responsive when issues are raised.</p>	<p>We listen to and value your priorities and perspectives and work with you to find solutions.</p>
How we work with each other (our AfC colleagues)	<p>We encourage open and honest communication, and model clear and fair professional boundaries.</p>	<p>We show appropriate and respectful use of the power given to us in our jobs or positions.</p>	<p>We use respectful language and tones.</p>

Achieving **more** for Children

Priority Programmes



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Introduction

Our refreshed Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to reflect on what we have learnt over the past five years and refocus our energy on what is most important to the children and young people we serve, as well as the changing landscape in which we are working. Over the next five years we will continue our work to support young people to live safe and fulfilled lives.

We have made significant progress in improving outcomes for children and young people since we were established in 2014 and we maintain our commitment to continuous learning and progress.

Most programmes of work will cover the three boroughs we work in, because they meet a common need. Some programmes are also required to meet specific local circumstances or to reflect the priorities of an individual local authority.

Our priority programmes support the four main strategic priorities, set out in our Strategic Plan.

- **Safe and healthy:** Supporting children and families to live safe and healthy lives.
- **Positive futures:** Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally.
- **Stronger families:** Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.
- **Dynamic workforce:** Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

Abbreviations:


RBK - Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

LBR - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

RBWM - Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Strategic priority: Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
<p>Have a universal early help offer in our family hubs and youth centres so that families and young people can seek information advice and help at an early stage and in a welcoming environment. In practice, this offer will look different between Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead.</p>	<p>We will publish our local offers for Kingston, Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead so that children, young people, families and professionals know where and how to seek help.</p>	<p>Problems for children, young people and families are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>Director of Children's Social Care and Associate Director Family and Adolescents (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help and Associate Director for Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>Provide targeted support to those children and young people who are vulnerable to protect them from harm.</p> 	<p>In Windsor and Maidenhead, Family Hubs are already in place. They will be developed further including the development of the Families Together Team. This team will work with vulnerable young people and families to support them to build resilience and, wherever possible, to stay together.</p> <p>In Kingston and Richmond to develop multi-disciplinary teams, built on the needs of each borough, to support children likely to suffer significant harm at the earliest possible opportunity so that they do not need child protection interventions or to come into care.</p>	<p>There are fewer children subject to child protection plans and entering care because they and their families are getting the early help and support they need.</p>	<p>Director of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director of Social and Early Help (RBWM)</p>	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Provide targeted support to those children and young people who are vulnerable to protect them from harm (continued).	Develop a local model for parent and baby assessments that is understood and trusted by the family court, available when needed, high quality and value for money.	There is an affordable local model for assessing the capacity of new parents in a supportive and timely way, enabling better and faster decisions to be made about the permanent care of babies and very young children.	Associate Directors for Safeguarding (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director of Children's Social Care (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
	Develop targeted outreach support for adolescents and their families so that young people's needs can be safely met at home or in their communities rather than needing residential care.	Fewer adolescents aged 16 to 18 are in care because their needs are being met in a coordinated way by local services, and they are safe at home and living in their local communities.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
Support mental health and wellbeing, and champion its importance in our communities.	Contribute to an independent review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to strengthen the local delivery model, streamline pathways into and out of services and ensure financial resources are sufficient to meet children's and young people's identified needs.	Children and young people receive the mental health assessments, treatment and support they need from the most appropriate service when they need it.	Associate Director for Emotional Health (RBK and LBR) Associate Director for Educational Psychology and Wellbeing (RBWM)			✓
	Families with children experiencing difficulty with their mental health can access early help.	Fewer families require crisis intervention.	Associate Director for Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
	Improve the timeliness of initial and annual health assessments for children in care and care leavers so that they have the support they need to maintain good physical and emotional health and to help manage any health conditions.	More children in care and care leavers have a regular assessment of their health needs and report better physical and emotional health as a result of the support they receive.	Associate Directors for Corporate Parenting	✓	✓	✓
Encourage and facilitate joined-up thinking and working across education, social care and health services to provide better coordinated support to children and young people with multiple and/or complex needs.	Embed a lived experience model across education, social care and health services to better plan and coordinate early help and support to children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and who are supported by children's social care services.	Children and young people receive the coordinated support they need from an integrated team of professionals at the earliest opportunity, reducing the need for higher-cost and more specialist education and care placements.	Associate Directors for SEND	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Develop local and good quality accommodation and support options for those children and young people who cannot continue to live with their birth families. These will be both independent and in-house options and include a mix of foster care, residential children's homes, supported accommodation and independent housing.	Participate in the Department for Education's Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme to develop a regional approach to foster carer recruitment.	More children in care will benefit from family-based care because an increased number of mainstream foster carers have been recruited and approved.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Participate in the Department for Education's Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme to implement the Mockingbird programme to provide peer support, training, mentoring and short breaks to foster carers.	There are high levels of foster carer retention and fewer placement disruptions or breakdowns because foster carers are better able and supported to manage challenging behaviour and situations.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Develop more in-house registered children's home provision and supported accommodation for care leavers to meet the care needs of children and young people safely and locally.	More children and young people who need residential care or supported accommodation are able to live in or closer to their home borough, their families and support networks and the professionals who work with them.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Strengthen our approach to family network meetings and family group conferences to identify and approve kinship and connected carers for children and young people as a viable alternative to foster and residential care; improve the support available to kinship and connected carers.	More children will benefit from stable, long-term care from a family member or connected person, reducing the need for external foster care and residential care placements.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Develop a care leavers' guarantor scheme and improve the range of support available to care leavers to enable them to move into their own housing with appropriate support.	More care leavers will achieve independence by moving into their own housing and maintaining their own tenancies.	Associate Director of Strategic Commissioning and Business Development	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Implement a clear plan to work with partners to support inclusive and good quality education provision across our boroughs and to create and encourage supported internship, apprenticeship and employment opportunities.	Transform the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that local, high-quality education, health and social care provision meets children's assessed needs.	Independence for children and young people with SEND will be maximised, whilst also delivering value for money.	Director for Education Services (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
	Develop alternative education provision to better support the educational progress, achievement and wellbeing of children and young people with challenging behaviours who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from school.	Children and young people with challenging behaviours have access to appropriate provision which meets their needs, and improved educational progress, attainment and outcomes.	Director for Education Services and Associate Director for Pupil Support (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Work with schools to support inclusion and invest in educational models that support children and young people to learn in mainstream settings where this is appropriate.	Develop resources to support assessment and early intervention in mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges.	Early years, schools and colleges feel confident and competent to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who are below the threshold for an education, health and care plan.	Director of Education, Associate Director for School Standards and Improvement Associate Director for Pupil Support (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM) Associate Directors SEND	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Reduce attainment gaps to enable children and young people to reach their full potential.	Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers to provide the foundation for all children to achieve well and have positive choices for their future learning.	The attainment for reading, writing and mathematics (combined) at the end of key stage 2 for pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant is better than the results of the statistical neighbour peer group.	Associate Director School Standards and Improvement (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Prepare children and young people for life transitions and support them to take opportunities to be more independent.	Work with adult social care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND so that services and support are in place to meet their needs, promote independence and enable a positive experience of early adulthood.	All young people with SEND have an agreed transition plan in place by the age of 15.	Director of Education and Head of Education Business Partnerships and Vocational Pathways (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM) Associate Directors for SEND	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Work with children, young people and families in a strength-based way, using our practice framework to build resilience and overcome obstacles.	Continue to build on the Signs of Safety model by developing a consistent practice framework across the organisation.	Children, young people and families consistently experience effective strengths-based assessments and interventions from all social care services.	Director of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Ask children and young people what is important and what is good in their life and work with them to build strong support networks that promote their resilience.	Develop a participation strategy for Achieving for Children that sets out how services will proactively engage children and young people and ensure their views are heard and included in decisions that impact on their lives.	More children and young people have the opportunity to build their skills and confidence to share their views and participate in decision-making and in their local communities.	Associate Director Family and Adolescents (RBK and LBR) Director of Children's Social Care (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
	Empower and support children and young people to hold decision-makers to account for the commitments they have made to deliver or improve services in the children's and young people's plans.	Children and young people report that good progress has been made in delivering the priorities in the children's and young people's plans and that the support they receive has improved as a result of this.	Directors of Children's Services	✓	✓	✓
Invest in services that support young people and families to develop the skills and confidence to live, learn and grow independently.	Continue to seek out new sources of funding and partnerships that will enhance our local early help offers and enable us to support families through challenges, eg cost of living crisis.	The early help offer is enhanced with targeted services delivered through partnerships, so that more families receive the support they need.	Associate Directors Family and Adolescents Associate Director of Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
	Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support, led by social workers and supported by non-qualified practitioners.	Children, young people and families receive the holistic support and interventions they need at an earlier stage, reducing the number of children escalating to child protection interventions.	Director of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Work closely with our partners to make sure our services are joined-up and more accessible to children, young people and their families, and that our local offer is better understood especially by those families who are least engaged.	Develop Family Hubs to bring together the support that children, young people and families need from different services into a single accessible location in their local communities, so that families only need to explain their stories and the support they need once, rather than having to tell many different practitioners.	Children, young people and families receive the joined-up support they need when they need it from an integrated team of practitioners so that they can overcome any difficulties they are facing, become more resilient, and do not need further support from more specialist social care services.	Associate Director Family and Adolescents (RBK and LBR)	✓	✓	Family Hubs are already in place
	Improve information sharing between those agencies providing early help to families by delivering the Early Help Systems Guide and RBWM threshold document.	The needs of families are identified at the earliest opportunity so that the support they need can be offered and provided at the earliest opportunity and prevent issues becoming more serious and requiring support from more specialist social care services.	Associate Director Families and Adolescents (RBK and LBR) Associate Director of Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Provide families with the information, advice and guidance they need to make choices about childcare and early education.	Implement the national reforms to childcare so that all eligible working parents have choices about affordable childcare and early education for their children.	From September 2024, 15 hours of childcare support a week is available to the eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3 years. From September 2025, eligible working parents of children aged under 5 years have access to 30 hours of childcare a week.	Director for Education Services (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓



Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Listen to our workforce and work together to shape our workplace.	Ask our workforce what is working and what is not working for them. Develop and implement a plan to improve satisfaction rates over time. Publication of a 'You Said, We Did' document sharing progress.	AfC colleagues know that their voice matters and that their feedback leads to change. We have good staff satisfaction and retention rates.	Associate Director Workforce	✓	✓	✓
	Improve the standard of accommodation for Kingston-based staff by working with the council to plan what investment would be the most impactful and clearly communicate timescales and work undertaken.	All AfC employees have a safe and well maintained working environment. Accommodation issues are resolved in a timely way and staff feel they have a pleasant space to work individually and in teams.	Associate Director Strategy and Transformation (RBK)	✓		
Recruit and retain talented workers, value their expertise and support their professional development and wellbeing.	Strengthen recruitment and retention, including regular review of the benefits package and workforce development offer. Review the organisation's approach to staff recruitment which will include refreshing approaches to attraction, selection and onboarding. Ensure the approach is understood and monitor impact. Clear attraction and recruitment strategy including targets.	AfC is an attractive employer and we are able to recruit and retain talented children's services professionals. A strong and stable workforce with an acceptable turnover and agency staff rate. Managers understand and engage in recruitment and retention activity. Approach changes with the needs of the organisation.	Associate Director Workforce	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Recruit and retain talented workers, value their expertise and support their professional development and wellbeing (continued).	Review the staffing model in children's social care to create a multi-skilled team that enables social workers and other specialist practitioners to focus on their core professional roles.	There is a highly skilled social care workforce with more permanent social workers and other specialist practitioners, resulting in greater stability for children and young people.	Directors of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Invest in a modern infrastructure of systems, processes and resources that support efficient, compliant and high quality services.	Implement the new case management system in RBWM to replace the existing PARIS system, and align systems across children's services.	Consistency of practice is improved; reducing the administrative burden on staff; automating much of the standard reporting needs; and enabling more effective collaboration with partners, families and children. Production of performance datasets is more automated, enabling improved focus on analysis and solutions.	Associate Director for Strategy and Transformation (RBWM)			✓
	Improve the reliability of ICT and ICT user experience for staff by proactively working with our two ICT providers to feed back areas for improvement, agree action plans and hold them to account.	Staff are able to access the applications they need and have access to suitable ICT equipment when working from an AfC place of work.	Associate Director for Strategy and Transformation	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
<p>Maximise funding available to the services that work directly with children and young people and regularly re-evaluate how best to prioritise funding to be most impactful.</p>	<p>Annual budget review and engagement in budget challenge processes.</p> <p>Annual benchmarking of financial performance.</p> <p>Accurate reporting during the year on financial performance to inform decision making.</p>	<p>We set affordable budgets and benchmark as a low cost service relative to other local authority children's services.</p> <p>Positive feedback from councils on budget engagement.</p> <p>Funding is appropriately prioritised towards services that have a real impact on the outcomes of children and young people.</p>	<p>Chief Operating and Finance Officer Directors of Children's Services</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>



Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Maximise funding available to the services that work directly with children and young people and regularly re-evaluate how best to prioritise funding to be most impactful (continued).	<p>Review and strengthen capacity and arrangements for commissioning, procurement and contract management, including the joint commissioning of services with the Integrated Care Board, to achieve good quality, good value and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.</p> <p>Up-to-date published Procurement Code of Practice with key staff trained</p> <p>Up-to-date contracts register and clear pipeline of work that is agreed by senior leaders</p>	<p>Comprehensive commissioning arrangements will be in place, including effective partnership agreements with Integrated Care Boards and lead health providers.</p> <p>Staff understand their role in the procurement process and feel confident in undertaking procurement work.</p> <p>Spending decisions and procurement activity happens in a timely and compliant way.</p>	<p>Associate Director of Business Development and Strategic Commissioning</p> <p>Associate Director for Educational Services and Resources (RBWM)</p>	✓	✓	✓
	<p>We will review our approach to placement brokerage and develop a proactive strategy that outlines how we will develop local placements and manage the placement market.</p>	<p>The best and most cost-effective placements for children are commissioned.</p>		✓	✓	✓

Monitoring and reporting progress

Achieving for Children's Board of Directors and senior leaders will review progress against this plan on a quarterly basis. We will report publicly on progress as part of our suite of annual reports, as well as through priority programme updates to our owning councils.

A set of key performance indicators and quality measures are reported as part of our commissioned arrangements with each local authority. These have been set by the councils as part of our contract with them and by our Board of Directors to ensure the continual development of the organisation and the services we deliver.

Annual review

Each year the priority programmes will be reviewed and updated, capturing any new work which is planned. The annual review will provide a self-assessment of our progress at implementing our priorities in the previous year, as well as refreshing our priorities and activities for the year ahead.



Achieving **more** for Children **Who we are**



A little bit about us and what we do

Achieving for Children (AfC) is a not for profit, community interest company, originally established in 2014. We are owned and commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to deliver their children's services.

We are an organisation of 1,400 children's services practitioners and are dedicated to putting children and young people at the heart of everything that we do. Our delivery model supports integrated services across education, health and social care to achieve positive outcomes for the families that we work with. We actively seek the views of children and young people when shaping services and believe that we have a responsibility to make sure that their voices are heard, not only in AfC, but also with partners and across our communities too.

We work closely with local partners including our local authorities, schools, colleges, early years providers, health, adult social care, the police and the voluntary sector to support and champion a joined-up experience for children, young people and families who live and learn in our boroughs.



Key information about **Achieving for Children** and the children and families we help

General



165

Schools across three boroughs



114,547

Children and young people aged 1 to 17



28,220

Children and young people from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds

SEND



4,813

Children with education, health and care plans

Education



Kingston
100%

Richmond
100%

RBWM
92%

of schools 'Good' or 'Outstanding'



78,869

Children attending school

Children's Social Care



61

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Children's Social Care



885

Children and families receiving early help support



428

Children subject to child protection plans



371

Children in care



498

Young people leaving care (18 to 25)

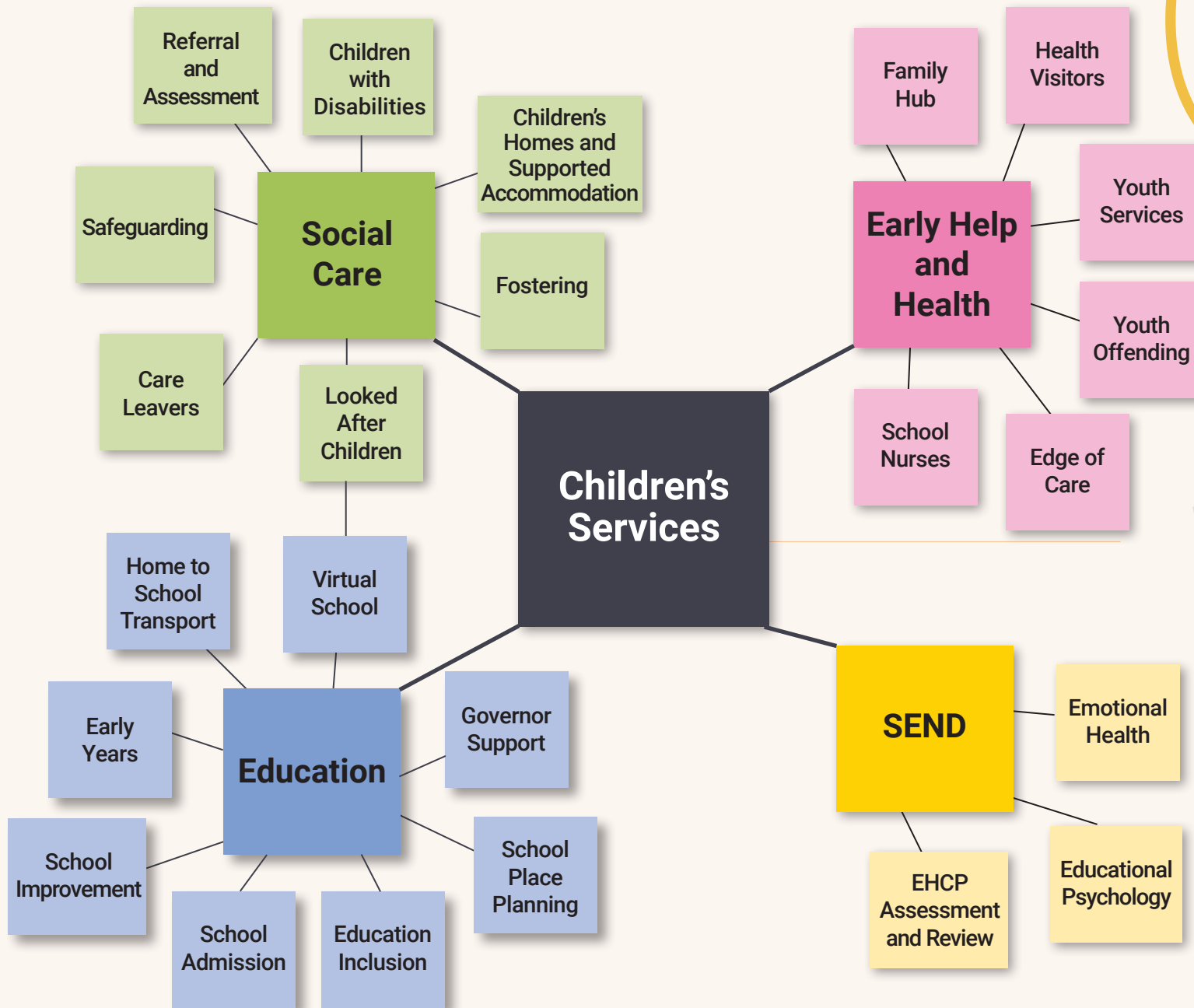
Data included was correct at end of December 2023

Our services

We support young people from birth up to the age of 25 years. Our service offer is rooted in strong universal and targeted early help provision. We aim to support families and young people at the earliest opportunity to prevent needs escalating and to support independence and resilience.

Services are delivered in person and digitally and we regularly review them to ensure they can be accessed in a way that is convenient and engaging. We host services online and in community-based buildings, including youth centres, family hubs, children's centres, family contact centres and offices across all three of our boroughs. We encourage partner agencies to co-locate services in our buildings, or on our web platforms, to support an integrated experience.





The way we work in practice with children, young people and families

Our practitioners use the strengths-based Signs of Safety approach, which is supplemented by a range of complementary interventions and tools. This means that when working with families and young people, we agree what we are worried about, what is working well and what needs to happen to support safety and wellbeing.

We listen to what families, children and young people tell us and work together to agree how we can support them. We keep the best interests of children at the heart of our decision-making and create safe spaces where they are heard. Our aim is to equip families and young people with the skills and knowledge they need to lead safe and fulfilled lives.

Our eight core and cross-cutting practice standards are:

Standard 1:	Children and young people's best interests will be of primary consideration in all areas affecting them
Standard 2:	Work is carried out in partnership with a child or young person through meaningful engagement
Standard 3:	Work is carried out in partnership with parents and carers to enable them to meet their responsibilities and to achieve optimum outcomes for children and young people
Standard 4:	Work with children, young people and their family is carried out within community networks and between agencies to achieve the best outcomes
Standard 5:	Work with children and young people is undertaken within the legislative framework and follows best practice guidance
Standard 6:	Work with children, young people, parents and carers consistently promotes social inclusion
Standard 7:	Records and reports are accurate, complete, accessible and up-to-date, and demonstrate the decision making process
Standard 8:	Work with children, young people and their families is managed and supervised to achieve the best possible outcomes

Listening to children, young people and families

Listening to the voices of children, young people, parents and carers actively shapes who we are as an organisation. Their input informs our strategic decisions, policy development and service design so that we are able to continually develop and improve our services.

We have a variety of methods to capture the voices and opinions of children, young people, parents and carers. These include the following.

Participation groups

We facilitate diverse participation groups such as the children in care councils, care leavers forums, youth councils, girls forum, parents and carers consortiums. These groups provide a platform for open dialogue and collaboration, where individuals can share their experiences and ideas.

Feedback mechanisms

We maintain accessible and user friendly feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and suggestions boxes, to ensure that our user groups can easily express their views. We have also developed a 'My Say' app that uses digital technology to collect the views of children and young people in an easy way.

Consultations and engagement events

We organise regular consultation and engagement events, workshops and focus groups across the year to gather insights and ideas directly from children, young people and families.



Come and join us

We are always looking for talented professionals who want to make a difference to the lives of children and young people. We employ staff across a range of professions from frontline practitioners in social care, health and education to colleagues in back office support functions.

All our colleagues have access to a comprehensive package of support, including a supportive working environment, professional development opportunities and a fair benefits package. We have an embedded flexible working policy to support people in different circumstances and at all stages of life to come and work with us.

Find out more about what it's like to work at Achieving for Children and view our current vacancies at www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/work-for-us.



Useful information

Achieving for Children website

www.achievingforchildren.org.uk

Achieving for Children information for young people and families

[Kingston and Richmond](https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/)

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/>

[Windsor and Maidenhead](https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/)

<https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/>

Achieving for Children Local Offer for children and young with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

[Kingston and Richmond](https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer)

https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer

[Windsor and Maidenhead](https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer)

https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer