

**Achieving
for Children**

**IMPACT
REPORT
2021/22**

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ABOUT ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN

OUR VISION

Our vision is to provide children and their families with the support and services they need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

WHO WE ARE

At Achieving for Children we champion children and families, putting their wellbeing and education first. As a social enterprise, we take the values of public service and combine them with a business approach to deliver our social aims. We have the independence and flexibility to tailor innovative solutions to the needs of children and their families, whilst maintaining our focus on delivering priorities for each of the councils that own the company.

OUR VALUES

Trust:

We are reliable, others can count on us to undertake tasks and deliver on what was agreed – we will do what we said we would do. We will encourage open and honest communication, and model clear and fair professional boundaries.

Respect:

We will listen to and value other people's perspectives and differences. We will show empathy and humility in the way we communicate.

Empower:

We help others to realise their ability and potential, and show emotional intelligence in our approach. We show appropriate and respectful use of the power given to us in our jobs or positions and we use this to encourage and enable others.



HOW WE WORK

We put children and young people first

We are passionate about ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people - this drives everything that we do.

We embrace diversity and champion inclusion

We are committed to valuing difference and diversity in our workforce and in the children and families we work with, so that their identities are promoted and their individual needs are met.

We nurture strong, responsive and caring relationships

We build strong and productive partnerships with children, young people, parents, carers and communities so that we can listen and learn from one another.

We lead and support partnerships to meet the needs of children and families

We build strong and effective partnerships with our owning councils, other statutory services, schools, education providers, local businesses, as well as organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

We are resourceful, adaptable and dependable

We find and create solutions that work well for children and their families. We build our reputation based on our professionalism, our dedication, our flexibility, and by always delivering what we promise.










We value and invest in our staff to deliver innovative and quality services

We know that our employees are our most important asset – they make our ambitions a reality. We recruit and retain the best people, value their experience and expertise, and support their professional development and personal growth.

We will work with our own councils to deliver the most effective solutions for them

We understand the requirements of each council that commissions us to deliver their children's services, and work closely with elected members and corporate leaders to help deliver their plans and priorities.

KEY FACTS

-  We are the biggest UK spin out of children's services into a community interest company which is owned by, and operates across, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. We deliver services to more than 120,000 children and young people.
-  Ofsted rates our children's social care services in Kingston as 'Outstanding' and as 'Good' in Richmond and in Windsor and Maidenhead.
-  We have a well-established and effective Board of Directors including non-executive independent directors and executive directors appointed from within Achieving for Children or from the owning councils.
-  We employ just over 1,200 professionals from a wide variety of disciplines, including social work, teaching, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and clinical psychology.
-  We deliver early help services, children's social care, education services, health services, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services, and business services.
-  We have developed our own local residential provision, including supported accommodation for care leavers, short break care for children and young people with disabilities, and a new residential children's home.
-  We are a part of The Department for Education's Sector Led Improvement Partners (SLIP) programme.
-  We have embedded the Signs of Safety model across all our services which has enabled practitioners to better work in partnership with children and families, building on their family strengths to promote their safety and wellbeing.
-  We have established an independent fostering agency (IFA) across all boroughs which has now been operating effectively for almost two years and has led to an increase in the number of approved fostering households.

WELCOME

We are pleased to present the Achieving for Children impact report for 2021/22. Our work over the past 12 months, has once again, been shaped by the ongoing impact of the global pandemic.

Our workforce have proven their continued resilience and adaptability by going above and beyond to ensure our children, young people and families have continued to receive high quality services. We have, in partnership with our owning councils, worked hard to support our most vulnerable children, young people and families to ensure they remain safe and supported.

We have built on the innovation and creativity harnessed in the early stages of the pandemic in response to the challenges we faced, and have continued to deliver our services, albeit in different and innovative ways.

Our service offer in Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead remains strong and we are committed to continual improvement.

We were extremely pleased that Richmond received a 'Good' rating from Ofsted following the inspection of children's social care and early help services in January 2022.

In each category, services were rated 'Good' and received high praise. Inspectors stated 'Practitioners show skill and resilience in engaging and supporting children and their families. They are supported well to provide safe and mostly strong services to children, despite the exceptional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.'

This is a huge achievement and testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff.

As we continue to adapt to the new normal, our impact report clearly demonstrates the significant achievements we have made and we know we will continue to provide children, young people and families with the support and services they need in the next year and beyond.

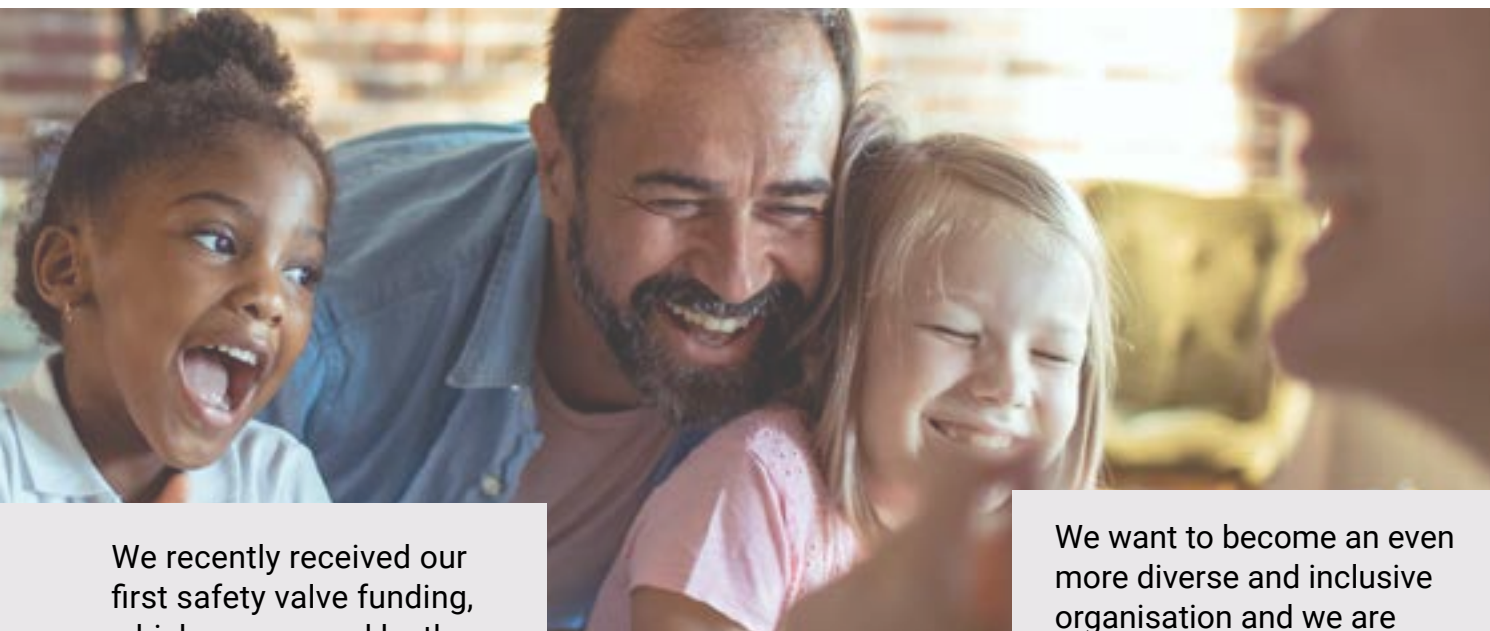


Early intervention and prevention remains at the heart of our work with families so that we are able to meet the needs of children and young people at the first opportunity and well before statutory services are required.

Our children's centres and family hubs have provided families with a first point of contact and the support they need as we have all begun to emerge from the pandemic.

For those families that need additional support, we are delighted at the success of our holiday activity and food programme (FUEL) and our provision of food vouchers to help those families most in need.

Funding of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services has been a significant challenge in recent years across all three of our boroughs and in particular, in Kingston and Richmond.



We recently received our first safety valve funding, which was agreed by the Department for Education, as the result of a concerted effort over recent years to get a fairer funding settlement from the government.

This effort has been led by our staff, councillors, and council staff along with support from current and previous local MPs and the leaders of Kingston and Richmond councils.

As a result of the safety valve funding, we have established a number of workstreams to focus on improving the quality of the services provided to children and young people with SEND, whilst ensuring that the service is more financially sustainable.

Our support for children and young people in care is constantly developing and improving. We are pleased that both our children's home, Hope House and our purpose-built overnight short break care centre, Rainbow House, are now open and providing high quality care for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be developing business cases, with the support of Kingston Council, for a potential new children's home and a new supported accommodation provision for care leavers.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, in response to feedback from our inspection in 2019, we have reviewed and redesigned our Children in Care and Care Leavers Service, and worked with our care leavers to co-produce a new pathway plan document that better supports their transition to adulthood.

We are proud to have established our staff led Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board which is driving forward our equality, diversity and inclusion work.



We want to become an even more diverse and inclusive organisation and we are committed to listening to our staff and children and families that we support to better understand their experiences and shape our activity based on this feedback.

As a recognition of our equality, diversity and inclusion work, we were pleased to be asked to be part of the Workforce Race Equality Scheme pilot alongside colleagues from Richmond and Wandsworth and will be applying the learning from our participation in the programme over the coming year.

We are also in the process of analysing the results from our recent staff survey. We are looking forward to seeing what our staff think of working for Achieving for Children and will use the information to plan our workforce related activity and to address any issues that may be raised.



Looking further ahead, the picture regarding funding for the public sector remains challenging. Achieving financial sustainability, while continuing to deliver high quality services to our children and young people is central to our business plan which will guide our work over the coming year.

Based on the progress we have made in 2021-22, we are confident about the future of Achieving for Children and our ambition to reach every child and young person out there who needs us, so that they are able to live safe, happy, healthier and successful lives.



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Lucy Kourpas
Chief Operating
and Finance
Officer



Ian Dodds
Director of Children's
Services in Kingston
and Richmond



Kevin McDaniel
Director of Children's
Services in Windsor
and Maidenhead

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES to 2024

We identified six strategic priorities for Achieving for Children over 2020-2024

STRONGER FAMILIES

We will have a relentless focus on safeguarding children and young people across all our services. The services we deliver will be high quality and will protect and promote the wellbeing of children and young people by promoting family resilience. We will work collaboratively with our key partners to ensure we are able to realise the benefits of joint working to support our children, young people and families.

“ Ensuring children and young people are safe from harm is our core business. We want to build resilience in our families and communities so that they are better able to help, support and protect children without the need for statutory intervention. As part of this we want to ensure our relationships with key partners are strong and that our families really benefit from collaboration and joined-up working. ”

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POSITIVE FUTURES

We will invest and work collaboratively to improve our local education, health and care offer to children and young people so that they have access to high quality services, are able to stay close to their families and friends, achieve well, and develop their skills for independence.

“ It is crucial that we provide the right support at the right time. This will enable us to help children and young people to develop their independence and prepare for adulthood. Putting in place local provision means children and young people can stay close to their families and essential support networks and they can benefit from our integrated services giving them the best chance for a positive future. ”

EXCELLENT WORKFORCE

Our workforce will be experienced, talented, empowered and motivated to deliver the best possible services and outcomes for children and young people. We will invest in the recruitment, retention and development of our workforce and reward their achievements.

“ Feedback from children, young people and families always emphasises the importance of a consistent, skilled and motivated workforce. We want to make Achieving for Children a place where people want to come and work and a company that they are proud to tell their family and friends that they work for. ”

FINANCIAL STABILITY

8 The services we deliver will provide excellent value for money and we are trusted by our commissioning councils to deliver the best possible services within the agreed contract price, including the efficient delivery of our financial savings plans.

“ Given the financial context, nationally and locally, it is essential that we are focused on delivering efficient, cost-effective and financially sustainable services so we are able to support those most in need. ”

SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATION

We will secure the sustainability of the community interest company through contract renewal, business development, fundraising and good growth, so that we are able to reinvest in the services we deliver directly to children and their families.

“ Greater commercial success will enable us to generate a profit to reinvest in our services thereby benefiting the children and young people that we support. ”

SMARTER WORKING

Our business processes will be efficient, cost-effective and supportive to frontline practitioners so that they are able to spend as much time as possible working directly with children, young people and their families to improve outcomes for them.

“ Better business processes, and effective use of new digital technologies, will allow our workforce to reduce the amount of time they spend on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy, freeing them up to spend more time with the children, young people and families we support. ”

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVING STRONGER FAMILIES

We will have a relentless focus on safeguarding children and young people across all our services. The services we deliver will be high quality and will protect and promote the wellbeing of children and young people by promoting family resilience. We will work collaboratively with our key partners to ensure we are able to realise the benefits of joint working to support our children, young people and families.



Our holiday, activity and food programme, locally known as FUEL (Feed Ur Everyday Lives) was a great success last year with an estimated **3,000** children and young people taking part. We worked with over **25** local organisations, including our youth service, to provide **22,000** spaces on a range of fun activities and food to children and young people aged 5 to 16 years who are eligible for free school meals, over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays across all three boroughs.

More than **10,000** young people each year regularly use our youth services to take part in positive activities that develop their interests and talents. More than **1,500** young people complete their Duke of Edinburgh's award each year delivering over **45,000** hours of volunteering to their local communities, with a social value of more than **£475,000**.

We have been working with **11** secondary schools, in partnership with Hammersmith and Fulham Council and What Works for Children's Social Care, to support designated safeguarding leads in our schools to make sure referrals into our single point of access are robust and detailed so that effective safeguarding decisions can be made.

We worked with **454** young people via our Family DynamiX initiative. Part of our Project X programme, Family DynamiX works with parents and their children where there is a risk of criminal exploitation. We provide a range of activities and a safe space to discuss the impact of exploitation and how we can develop our services to provide the correct support. So far, since January 2022, we have worked with **11** parents as part of the parent offer.

Our Parent Champion Network supports parents whose children are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system or being involved with statutory services, via coaching and mentoring. We have trained **32** parent champions and have run **10** parent cafe sessions across our children's and youth centres for drop-in support and networking.

Our children's centres in Kingston and Richmond have provided **4,856** sessions for our families, seen **11,171** individuals either online or in person, and interacted with adults and children on **27,685** occasions. We have further developed our outreach offer so that we are now offering sessions in a range of borough locations and online, including: Growbaby; Neonatal BCG immunisation clinics; and Good Food Co-op.

We worked with Thames Valley Police, the DASH charity and partners across Windsor and Maidenhead, to deliver a borough-wide youth engagement project 'The S.A.F.E Youth Project'.

The project, co-designed by local young people, aimed to identify what young people are concerned about locally, how they feel about their community, facilitate their involvement in problem solving local issues and inform our future work. **739** young people took part.

Our Children in Care Council (CiCC) works with children and young people in care to implement initiatives and shape the delivery of services based on feedback and priorities of young people, including:

- designing and launching My Mind, in partnership with our Emotional Wellbeing Service. This is a peer support group for 15 to 21 year olds who are in, or have been in care
- organising and hosting the Achieving for Children Celebration of Achievement Awards at Twickenham Stadium, over **150** children and care leavers attended
- co-producing prison care packs, for care leavers who are in prison. The packs have been so successful, other councils have adopted them and the initiative has now been picked up by the National Care Leavers Benchmarking Forum

Through the local and household support grant, **8,000** food vouchers were given, to families with children who receive free school meals and 3 or 4 year olds who are accessing pupil premium grant or disadvantaged 2 year olds for each school holiday period.

SNAPSHOT: Family Hubs

Achieving with Hannah and Jack

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In Windsor and Maidenhead, following an extensive public consultation, we implemented our new family hub model that sees our children's centres, youth centres, parenting service and our family resilience service transitioned into new hubs which focus on targeted and specialist support to families. So far we have:

- supported 903 children on a one-to-one basis
- provided educational workshops to **2,860** young people in schools
- delivered a range of parent groups: Incredible Years, Freedom Programme, Supporting Parents And Carers Emotions (SPACE), Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), minority ethnic parenting groups, and baby massage groups
- through a partnership with the Babybank, over 50 children received pyjama packs at Xmas and we provided food bank support for over **101** families

We started working with Hannah in December to provide one-to-one and group support to her and her son Jack. Hannah told us:

"The family hub worker has been absolutely outstanding in helping our family. We were in a very tough place before they came on board and our family was at breaking point. I am sad that they will be leaving us but thank them from the bottom of my heart that they brought our family back together and made life for all of us a lot easier with what we have learnt from them. The worker has made a huge difference to Jack in his self belief and worth, she has helped him become more confident and understanding, we as a family will be eternally grateful for what she has done. The worker has helped me too, I was at the lowest point I had ever been and didn't know what the end was looking like but we now have a very bright, happy family unit and that is all down to the family hub.'

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVING POSITIVE FUTURES

We will invest and work collaboratively to improve our local education, health and care offer to children and young people so that they have access to high quality services, are able to stay close to their families and friends, achieve well, and develop their skills for independence.

We partnered with Mencap to introduce their employability programme through a new supported internship. **18** young people started the programme in September 2021.

We also started two new employability and re-engagement programmes (YES and Able2) focusing on young people aged 16 to 24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) with barriers to engagement due to mental health needs, long term health conditions or physical disabilities. These projects will support up to **78** young people up to July 2023.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, we developed our new SEND strategy based on feedback from key stakeholders, including young people and parents and carers.

We undertook a public consultation exercise to gather views on our proposed strategy and received almost **250** responses to an online survey and events held with children and young people and parents and carers. As a result, we have finalised our strategy due to launch shortly and set the direction for our SEND activity over the next five years.

Our Emotional Health Service (EHS) received **1,622** referrals during the year - an increase of **39%** from the previous year. The service has delivered a range of online groups on topics such as low moods and anxiety over the year, which were attended by almost **120** children, young people or parents and carers.

Since Achieving for Children was created in 2014, we have delivered **9,074** additional school places: expanding SEND provision in mainstream schools and co-developing five new free schools. Every child and young person was offered a school place this year.

Over **94%** of schools across all three boroughs are currently judged as 'Good' or better by Ofsted.

Our 'Onwards and Upwards' programme ran three days of activities for **12** Year 6 pupils, to deliver a practical and creative approach to the transition to secondary school to help reduce anxieties, establish coping strategies and build confidence and resilience.

“ When I started Onwards and Upwards, I was nervous, but now I feel happy as Onwards and Upwards felt like a family. I think I have got better at being patient and facing my fears. ”

Anstee Bridge is our alternative learning programme for young people aged 14 to 16 facing emotional challenges that cause them to struggle and disengage from education.

During the last 12 months we have worked with **90** young people, increased our outreach provision so we are now also in four schools working with **40** young people aged 11 to 14, been selected as the Mayor of Kingston charitable Trust Organisation of the year, welcomed Dame Jacqueline Wilson as our patron, and our young people have written and designed a children's book called HOPE.

AfC Virtual School, in partnership with Groundwork, has supported **20** young people as part of a Greater London Authority contract to support young people into positive destinations such as work or further education.

In February 2022, in Kingston and Richmond, we co-ordinated the make your mark ballot across schools and youth clubs that saw **5,400** young people aged 11 to 18 have their say on the biggest issues facing young people.

In March 2022, over **5,000** young people also voted in our Youth Council and Youth Parliament elections. In Windsor and Maidenhead, the new Youth Council has been established to give a stronger voice to children and young people, with **30** young people applying to be representatives.

We have worked with **206** young people and delivered **56** group work sessions across schools as part of our Xplained initiative. The programme runs substance misuse workshops aimed at educating 15 to 17 year olds, identified as involved in, or at risk of substance misuse, on the risks of substance misuse on mental and physical health.

An Xplained project worker fed back that:

“ X said the workshops really helped him understand the risks and science and put into perspective why he should stop using drugs and consider his family. He said had he not participated in the workshops he doesn't know what may have happened and is grateful for the opportunity. ”

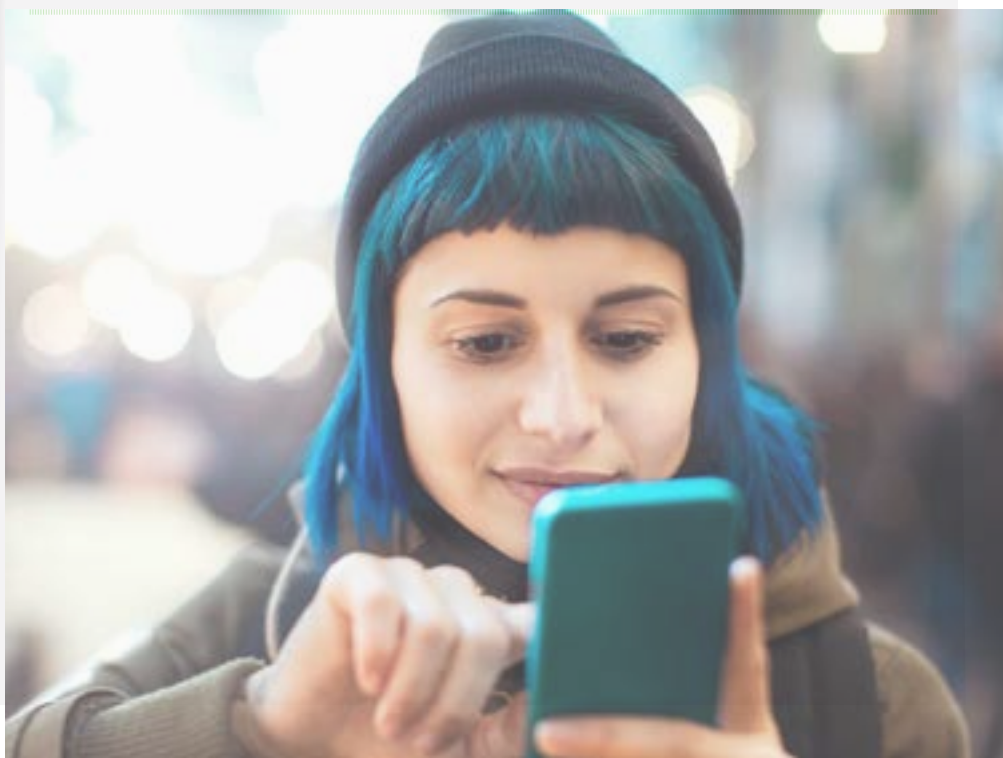
Our independent fostering agency (IFA) was successfully inspected as good by Ofsted. During the year we had **24** households join across our boroughs.

Our social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) programme has successfully supported **23** pupils who were at risk of exclusion during the year to stay in school. Given the success of the programme, it has now evolved to include a secondary model for the new academic year.

We welcomed **92** young people to our No Straight Answer (NSA) youth club for young people aged 11 to 25 who are or feel they may be a part of the LGBTQ+ community. We deliver a range of activities to promote emotional wellbeing.

Young people also have the opportunity to speak with a qualified counsellor from Free2B, a London based community organisation, supporting LGBTQ+ young people and their parents. A young person aged 17 told us:

“ This place acted as a practice for me coming out. I've never been able to be myself before as no one else knew. ”



SNAPSHOT:

Kickstart

Achieving with George

We are a gateway for the Government's Kickstart scheme that was created to provide six month, paid employment opportunities for unemployed young people aged 16 to 24, who were claiming universal credit and struggling to gain employment due to the effects of COVID-19 on the local job market.

- As part of our involvement, we created **16** paid roles within Achieving for Children for young people, including care leavers and those with special educational needs and disabilities, to apply for. We also administered the scheme on behalf of local partner organisations such as schools, charities and the NHS to help them to create over 100 roles.
- This led to another **72** young people securing roles in partner organisations. George joined the Kickstart programme last year and now works with our Youth Service.

“ Before Kickstart, I was working in a restaurant. Due to COVID-19 I got made redundant and it's been difficult to find new employment ever since. Luckily, my work coach from the Job Centre told me about a Kickstart scheme, and when I looked into it and saw an opportunity to get experience in youth work. I've always wanted to work with young people so I couldn't miss that opportunity. The most enjoyable part of youth work is being part of young people's lives and being there to support them through anything they are going through, because when I was younger I did not have this sort of support from anyone and now being the one that can make a big impact on a young person's life makes me happy. I really enjoy this career and I feel like this is something I would want to be doing long term. ”



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVING AN EXCELLENT WORKFORCE

Our workforce will be experienced, talented, empowered and motivated to deliver the best possible services and outcomes for children and young people. We will invest in the recruitment, retention and development of our workforce and reward their achievements.

During the last 12 months, through strong partnership working with our owning councils, we have undertaken a significant transformation project to bring our HR services in-house.

As part of this, we have commissioned new providers to deliver elements of our HR offer such as people management systems and payroll.

This also includes a new recruitment system which has enabled us to advertise **131** roles, offer **77** jobs to external candidates and **16** roles to internal candidates, and start **38** people in their posts.

As part of our future workspace activity, which has seen us move to a new hybrid model of working, we have provided over **250** headsets, over **150** new chromebooks and over **800** new phones, to support our staff to enable them to work smartly and flexibly.

Our Workforce Development Service has delivered **1,157** events during the year, with **20,922** attendees, which equates to an increase of **39%** from the previous 12 months. Feedback across our training programmes has been extremely positive.

Signs of Safety (SoS), which is a strength-based approach to working with families, is well established as our model of practice, with over **1,600** practitioners in Achieving for Children and our partner organisations trained in the key principles and over **80** staff trained as SoS practice leads.

To strengthen our practice further, we have appointed a new SoS transformation lead who has led on the development of a new SoS training offer and who has set up a new STARS (safety, transparency, aspirational, relationships) programme, as a way of further embedding and developing the framework to ensure it is bespoke for each of our service areas.

We are one of **18** local authorities taking part in a pilot programme to create a workforce race equality standard (WRES) within social care.

The programme is led by the Department for Health and Social Care and aims to gather data and information about staff to identify areas of best practice and areas for improvement in relation to race and ethnicity.

We have used this data to develop an action plan to improve the way we work.

The SEND Recruits Crew, made up of children and young people from our SEND service, have been involved in the recruitment of **37** posts across Achieving for Children.

For the first time young people also joined with peers from the Children in Care Council, Youth Council and Girl's Group to interview Non-Executive Directors for the Achieving for Children Board.

We have set up and delivered training to school leaders attended by **22** schools and led by national speakers on different areas of racial justice for schools.

Sessions have developed our understanding, deepened our conversations, challenged our assumptions and given us ways forward in developing an understanding of what a whole school anti racist approach looks like and the tools needed to support this, including audits of policies and practice, peer support and sharing of good practice.



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SNAPSHOT: Social Worker of the Year

Achieving with John

We were delighted when John Leavy, an adult mental health social worker in our Families First team, was crowned mental health social worker of the year at the Social Worker of the Year Awards in 2021.



John's role primarily involves him offering support to parents who are experiencing mental distress - whether diagnosed as a mental health problem or not. John also provides advice and guidance to his colleagues, and he has been praised for his ability to build strong relationships with families and supporting them to be part of the process, which aligns with our Signs of Safety practice.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board meets monthly, to drive forward our equality, diversity and inclusion improvement work and includes representatives from across AfC, including senior managers.

During the year, the EDI Board has undertaken a number of surveys to better understand the experiences of staff, has set up equality, diversity and inclusion forums to provide staff with a safe space to discuss EDI issues.

It has commissioned a range of new training to address gaps in our current training programme including managing racism in the workplace, LGBTQI+ awareness, and gender and identity. We have also led activities to celebrate key EDI events such as Black History Month, Race Equality Week and International Women's Day.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVING FINANCIAL STABILITY

The services we deliver will provide excellent value for money and we are trusted by our commissioning councils to deliver the best possible services within the agreed contract price, including the efficient delivery of our financial savings plans.

We aim to deliver services that provide excellent value for money and we are trusted by our commissioning councils to deliver the best possible services.

This has been an exceptional year and Achieving for Children has worked closely with the councils to discuss financial pressures and agree the correct balance between affordability and impact on services.

During the last year, we have delivered **£5.78m** in savings and cost mitigations and as part of the owning councils' budget setting processes we have planned **£5.1m** of future efficiencies and cost mitigations in 2022-23. We continue to benchmark as average or low cost when compared to comparative boroughs. We continue to explore new ways of improving value for money.

Over the medium term, we aim to improve our value for money and control costs by developing our procurement approach as well as by moving to a more mixed model of commissioned and directly delivered provision.

The opening of Hope House Children's Home and Rainbow House overnight short break care centre is helping us in managing costs in the medium term and reducing our reliance on the costly external placements. Given the success of this approach, we are currently working with Kingston Council to assess the viability of a new supported accommodation provision. This would be based on Green Leas, our in-house provision for care leavers which has delivered a number of benefits, not least a saving of approximately **£150,000** on placement costs each year. We will also be developing a business case to assess the potential for the development of a further children's home to sit alongside Hope House.

A new Commissioning and Procurement Team has been created in Achieving for Children led by a newly created Associate Director for Strategic Commissioning and Business Development post. This is in addition to a new post for Head of Strategic Commissioning and a new post for a Strategic Commissioning Manager.

The new team is working hard to establish clearer commissioning and procurement processes in Achieving for Children and to undertake a full review of contracts with the aim of having a comprehensive published contracts register. This will, in time, enable us to ensure we are achieving value for money in our commissioning activity, as well as supporting our joint commissioning with partners.

The Social Work Teaching Partnership, of which Achieving for Children is a member, was successful in four out of five bids submitted to the Department for Education for practice improvement. The partnership received a total grant award of **£125,370**, which represents **14%** of the total funding available to all **24** national teaching partnerships.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATION

We are focused on securing our sustainability through contract renewal, business development, fundraising and good growth, so that we are able to reinvest in the services we deliver directly to children and their families.

We are now a sector led improvement partner (SLIP). In this role, we provide support to other local authorities through collaborative working, by sharing good practice and by providing constructive challenge.

During 2021-22, we have supported The City of Leicester and Leicestershire in their Ofsted improvement journey. We are particularly pleased that we have seen the City of Leicester improve from requires improvement to good following our support.

We have delivered more than **80** hours of support through the SLIP programme so far and worked with over **20** external colleagues within children's services.

We hope to work with a further two local authorities during 2022-23 to help to support them in their journey to good and outstanding.

In partnership with North Tyneside, we have been working on a digital maturity programme that will support all other children's services.

This was commissioned as a part of the Department for Education's recovery fund.

The project consists of a digital maturity framework, a peer support model and procurement guidance to commissioning digital solutions within children's social care.

Our work in this area is built upon our reputation as a leading digital innovator in children's service, as evidenced by the award of our Certificate of Excellence at Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021 for voice recording in child protection conferences.

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OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVING SMARTER WORKING

Our business processes will be efficient, cost effective and supportive to frontline practitioners so that they are able to spend as much time as possible working directly with children, young people and their families to improve outcomes for them.

We launched our new intranet, Connect, which provides a new digital workspace that enables staff to work more collaboratively and to access key information and documents more easily.

Our Local Offer webpages which provide information, advice and guidance about our services, particularly SEND have also been refreshed. The website is now more accessible than ever with users now able to use a range of tools.

As part of a data sharing project led by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities to increase joined up working between social care, health and the police, we are working as part of a pan-London programme to join up data so our service users do not have to tell their story twice.

In Kingston and Richmond, we implemented a new early help module on our main social care case management system. Feedback has been positive on the impact of inputting and managing the data as we can ensure information about a family's journey can be more easily accessed and understood by all our teams.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, we are implementing a new case management system to improve consistency of practice and enable more effective collaboration with partners, families and children.

Our Intelligence team has developed new ways for us to explore and interact with our data. We now have a wide range of intelligent and interactive dashboards which are helping managers to find key information at the right time and drill down to analyse information and trends.


Our environment task force has led on the implementation of our environment strategy which was developed in 2020-21 based on feedback from children and young people.

It sets out our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and to identify more ways that we can be environmentally aware.


During the last 12 months, we have undertaken a number of initiatives such as our 'think as you print' campaign which has contributed to a significant reduction in printing across the organisation. We have recycled over **100** old mobile phones to prevent them being sent to landfill, and we supported the Youth Council to commission **eight** projects to increase awareness of climate change in secondary schools.

PRIORITY PROJECTS 2022/23


Our key strategic projects are captured in our Business Plan: Achieving More for Children 2020-24, which can be found on our website. We have reviewed and refreshed the plan for 2022-23 to reflect what we have already achieved and how changes to how we work and our priorities have changed in the last two years. In the next year, some of our key priorities across our operational areas are set out below.




Through the implementation of our sufficiency strategy, continue to increase the capacity of residential support for children and young people in care and of supported accommodation for young people leaving care, either as a provider or a commissioner, so that more young people are able to stay local and closer to their support networks. This will include providing additional placement capacity to the market with any income generated reinvested into local services for children in care and on the edge of care.




Strengthen the approach to recruitment and retention to attract experienced and well-qualified practitioners and managers, retain a permanent workforce, and reduce employee turnover and reliance on a higher-cost agency workforce.




Ensure Achieving for Children is an inclusive and diverse organisation that celebrates differences and that represents the local communities it serves.



Review and strengthen capacity and arrangements for commissioning, procurement and contract management, including the joint commissioning of services with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), to achieve quality, value and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.



Develop and implement an Achieving for Children environment strategy that sets out our commitment to taking proactive steps to minimise the environmental impact of our activities, which will enable us to support our owning councils in their efforts to address the climate change emergency.



Using the safety valve funding, and through the delivery of the SEND Futures Plan and the implementation of the written statement of action, transform the experience of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that local, high-quality education, health and social care provision meets needs and promotes independence for all children and young people with SEND whilst also delivering good value for money.



Improve the provision of occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and physiotherapy through the implementation of recommendations identified in the review of therapies across Achieving for Children, the CCG and key partners.

Develop and implement a mental health strategy that outlines responsibilities for Achieving for Children, CCG and partner organisations with clear pathways and thresholds that are easily understood by families and that effectively meet the mental health needs of children and young people in universal and more targeted provision.

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.

Specify, procure and implement a new case management system to replace the existing PARIS system that is used across children's services with the aim of improving consistency of practice, reducing the administrative burden on staff, automating much of the standard reporting needs, and enabling more effective collaboration with partners, families and children.



Thank you:

Collaboration and partnership working are instrumental to our success as an organisation.

Thank you to all our staff, service users and partners for helping us achieve our ambition to reach every child and young person who needs us, so that they are able to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

We look forward to creating further impacts over the coming year.