

Equalities Report 2021-22



**achieving
for children**

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July 2022

1. Introduction

Background

Achieving for Children (AfC) was created as a community interest company in 2014 and is now owned and commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to deliver children's services.

We produce an equalities report each year to demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This report sets out:

- our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion
- what we know about equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to our workforce and to the children, young people and families we support
- what we have done about it in 2021/2022
- our equality objectives (what we plan to achieve by 2024)

The PSED came into force on 5 April 2011 with the aim of embedding equality considerations into the everyday work of public bodies to enable them to tackle inequality and discrimination more effectively. The PSED has three general duties that require public bodies to be aware of the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it



Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

Our approach to implementing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is set out in our Equality and Diversity (E&D) policy, which has been agreed by the Company Leadership Team. The E&D policy sets out the following implementation steps:

- ensuring the Achieving for Children Board of Directors and Achieving for Children Company Leadership Team oversee and scrutinise our progress against the Equality Duty
- ensuring our staff are aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and receive appropriate training
- monitoring all areas of employment, including recruitment, promotion, training opportunities, pay, grievances and disciplinary action, to ensure there is equal treatment for all employees and that action is taken where any disparity is found
- establishing specific equality and diversity policies wherever necessary and linking to the overarching Achieving for Children Equality and Diversity Policy
- supporting any equality and diversity groups established within Achieving for Children and linking them in with the annual equalities reporting process to highlight impact
- ensuring that all contractors and organisations providing services on our behalf have rigorous and appropriate equality policies covering employment and service delivery which meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- linking with performance improvement plans, external and internal inspections, and reviews that cover equality performance in services areas as part of wider improvement measures
- ensuring that equality objectives are regularly set, monitored and reviewed as part of the business planning process, and that our progress is reported against the Public Sector Duty in our annual equalities report
- ensuring that all service restructures or reorganisations, and all new services, policies or functions are subject to an equality impact assessment (EIA) to consider any potential equalities impact, and all services delivered by Achieving for Children carry out EIAs as appropriate on regular basis
- working with children, young people and their families to help develop, monitor and review our policies, practices, functions and services

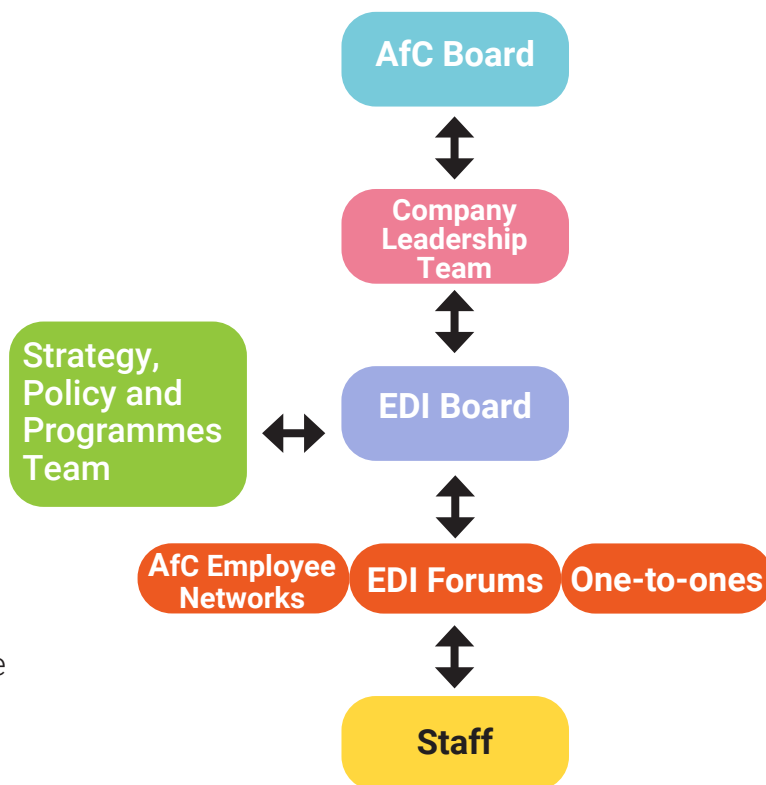
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Responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion

While the AfC Board of Directors and Company Leadership Team have ultimate responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion on an operational basis, the chief operating and finance officer takes the lead in this area. Support is provided by the AfC equalities lead, who is an officer in the Strategy, Policy and Programmes Team. Other members of the Strategy, Policy and Programmes Team also provide support when required.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board is responsible for implementing EDI work on an annual basis, in line with an action plan. They report into the AfC Board of Directors and Company Leadership Team. The EDI Board is made up of AfC staff members from key AfC services. All other staff at AfC can get involved in EDI, by taking part in AfC Employee Networks (AENs), attending monthly EDI Forums or one-to-ones with the chair or vice chair of the EDI Board.



Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board

The EDI Board was established in 2019. Its purpose is to drive AfC's EDI change agenda, in line with our organisational values. The EDI Board helps implement our action plan based on the E&D Action for Change pyramid which has been designed to promote, improve and sustain equality, diversity and inclusion across AfC. The action plan was created in response to a staff survey, who expressed their views of EDI at AfC.

The EDI Board is responsible to act on feedback from staff gathered via various channels such as the EDI Staff Forum, AfC Employee Networks (AENs) and one to one drop ins.

It is chaired by AfC staff members who self-nominate and then are elected by the AfC staff body. The EDI Board includes officers from our two Operational Areas and Business Services, including senior management representatives.

Challenge to our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

The EDI Board provides challenge to AfC's equality, diversity and inclusion practice. In addition, the equalities lead attends EDI meetings within each council as required. Achieving for Children attends the Richmond External Stakeholders Scrutiny Group (ESSG) twice a year to receive external challenge. ESSG is an independent equalities group made up of a range of people from across the protected characteristic groups and from the community and voluntary sector. It also includes four local residents who act as critical friends and who have professional backgrounds in the public sector and considerable experience of EDI.

Equality impact assessments

Achieving for Children requires managers to complete equality impact assessments (EIAs) to demonstrate that we are considering the equality implications of the decisions we are making. Actions from EIAs are monitored through team plans by service managers.

An EIA schedule is compiled annually as part of the business planning process. It includes key projects from our business plan (the completion of an EIA is mandatory for all key projects) and any ad hoc areas of work that require an assessment of the equality implications. Details of EIAs are published on our website:

<https://www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/equality-diversity-documents/>

Reporting and monitoring

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Achieving for Children produces this annual equalities report in the summer of each year in keeping with the business planning cycle which will enable us to demonstrate how we are meeting the PSED. Other equality reports are produced as and when requested by the owning councils.

Language and terminology

In 2021, we carried out an equality and diversity staff survey, for which 30% of the workforce responded. Generally, staff members identified with the protected characteristic categories set out in the survey. However, there were some categories which staff felt did not represent them well enough. In particular:

1. some respondents commented that the gender categories were not inclusive and representative enough. Non-binary and intersex were missing for instance
2. some respondents commented that the sexual orientation categories were not inclusive and representative enough. Respondents wanted the 'plus' category to be broken down into individual and stand alone categories
3. there is an ongoing debate about the acronym BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) and its inclusiveness across AfC. Some staff have raised concerns about different ethnicities being grouped together into one acronym



1 and 2) Gender categories and sexual orientation categories

We did research to find best practice for collecting data on protected characteristics. Based on this research and on the feedback the equality and diversity staff survey, we changed the categories we included in our 2022 annual staff survey, specifically for both gender and sexual orientation categories.

We included more inclusive and representative terms for both categories and added the option for staff to prefer not to say or self-describe.

3) Race and ethnicity categories

The terminology BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) is often used to refer to all ethnic minority groups. In March 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME for the reasons that it excluded other minoritised groups and that the term was not widely recognised.

In response to this and the feedback from our E&D staff survey, we sent out a poll to our workforce in October 2021, to establish an alternative to the term BAME. The poll was anonymous and did not capture any personally identifiable information.

The results of the poll proved to be inconclusive, as no respondent expressed the wish to keep using the acronym BAME and there was no consensus over which alternative to use. We followed up with an EDI Forum to analyse the poll results further and openly discuss what this meant to individuals.

At the EDI Forum, colleagues discussed at length that they did not want to be categorised. However, they also recognised the importance of data collection to reduce discrimination. There was also a clear understanding that language evolves and AfC should review this subject on an annual basis. As a result, the EDI Board recommends the internal use of the following top four suggestions from the poll for now.

- People of colour or person of colour
- Ethnic minorities - this includes white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups
- Multi-ethnic minorities
- Ethnically diverse communities

Moving forward, the EDI Board also commits to reviewing the collection of equalities data and being clear on why we are collecting specific data and what we will be doing with it. The EDI Board recommends that the government's ethnicity categories are used for data collection and where possible space is created for people to self-define.

For the purpose of this report, as there was no clear consensus on which term to replace BAME with, we will use the term Black Asian and Minority Ethnic, rather than the BAME acronym.



2. What do we know about equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to our workforce?

As of April 2021, Achieving for Children has 1,289 employees (equating to 1,112.2 full time equivalent employees), excluding casual and agency workers. Our employees come from a broad range of professional disciplines including social work, teaching, health services and public sector management.

Please note that the following information covers a snapshot of workforce data as of April 2021. Figures include all permanent and temporary staff, but excludes casuals and agency workers.

Percentages show the proportion of employees for which equalities data is known and recorded and therefore, percentages reflect the known numbers. The unknown numbers are excluded when calculating percentages (unknown = no information is held about an employee's protected characteristics and no assumptions have been made. This includes those who prefer not to say).

Age: The majority of employees are aged between 30 and 59. The smallest percentage of employees are aged 16 to 19.

- 10.6% are aged 60 and over
- 23.9% are aged 50 to 59
- 21.7% are aged 40 to 49
- 22.8% are aged 30 to 39
- 18.5% are aged 20 to 29
- 2.5% are aged 16 to 19

Locally, our workforce is largely representative of the general population. We have a number of apprenticeships and traineeships in place across the organisation to attract young people to work for Achieving for Children so we can increase the number of employees amongst the lower age brackets.

Disability: 5% of our employees reported that they had a disability, the same percentage as the previous year.

Although there are no directly comparable statistics available across the local government workforce regarding disability, it is thought that 19% of working age adults have a disability (Scope: Disability Facts and Figures). This suggests as an organisation we are not sufficiently representative of those with a disability. It should be noted however, not all employees have stated their disability status in the three boroughs, so the actual figure may be higher.

As an employer, we make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities and enable them to access flexible working arrangements as necessary. To strengthen the support we provide to staff members with a disability, we have created guidance for managers to provide advice on making reasonable adjustments.



Ethnicity: 20% of our employees are from ethnically diverse communities.

Our workforce has a slightly higher Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority representation than the general population in Richmond (16.2%) and Windsor and Maidenhead (13.9%), but is less representative than the general population in Kingston (33.1%). As our workforce is not fully representative of the local communities, we need to ensure they are trained and equipped to be knowledgeable and informed about the different ethnic backgrounds of the children, young people and families that we support. We are making efforts to improve this through our work on the Workforce Race Equality Standard (see below).

Gender: 80% of our employees are female.

The percentage of our workforce who is female is not representative of the general population, as national and local data indicates a male to female gender split which is approximately 50/50. However, this is in line with the workforce across local government and children's social care. A 2017 report by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), 'Does local government work for women', found that 78% of local government officers are female. Similarly, a Department for Education report in 2018, 'Children and Family Social Work Workforce in England', found that 85% of children and family social workers are female.

The high number of females amongst the workforce has an impact: for example, in terms of maternity leave and women being more likely to have caring responsibilities. Achieving for Children implements a flexible working policy and a menopause policy, which are reviewed every three years to support our female workforce and those with caring responsibilities.

Gender reassignment: we currently do not report on this and do not ask staff whether they are transitioning or have transitioned.

Religion or belief: the largest faith group within our workforce is Christian (52%). Employees with no faith or religion or who did not declare their religion account for 36% of the workforce.

The religious status of our workforce is reflected locally.

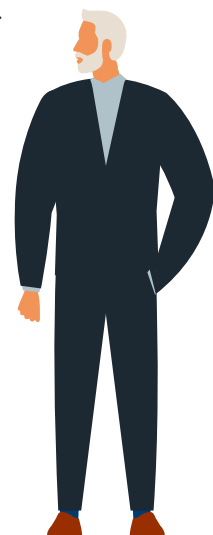
Marital status: 50% of our employees are married or in a civil partnership, 26% are single and 5% have a partner.

The figures relating to relationship status largely reflect local data. More work is required to increase the number of respondents so the figure for 'not known' reduces.

Pregnancy and maternity: we currently do not report on this, but data is collected at a team level when staff take maternity or paternity leave.

Sexuality: For the data we hold, over 4% of our employees identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or other.

Local statistics on sexual orientation are not available. Nationally however, in 2016, a report from the Office of National Statistics suggested that 2.0% of the UK population aged over 16 are lesbian, gay or bisexual. This would suggest our workforce is largely representative.



3. What have we done for our workforce?

Key EDI achievements for our workforce (April 2021-March 2022)

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board, which is described earlier in the report, has created a 12 month action plan. This plan is based on the EDI staff survey which we carried out in 2021 and the subsequent E&D Action for Change Pyramid which came out of the survey, to drive AfC's EDI agenda forward. The 12 month action plan's focus is to improve EDI for AfC's workforce. The EDI Board will then create a longer term vision of three years, which will have a stronger focus on improving EDI for children, young people and families.

Below, we outline the different areas of activity from the EDI Board's 12 month action plan and what we achieved so far. The different areas are as follows.

- Governance and communication
- EDI training
- Raising awareness
- Recruitment, retention and development
- Children, young people and families
- Performance

8 Governance and communication

We have established the EDI Board's governance by creating terms of reference created, scheduling monthly EDI Board meetings and embedding reporting processes.

The EDI Board has carried on the work started in the E&D Action for Change pyramid by creating a 12 month action plan.

EDI training

Continual work is taking place to promote and champion EDI within the workplace, encourage discussions and raise staff awareness on issues and topics.

In 2021-2022, 168 staff members, of which 53 were managers, attended 1,020 hours of EDI training. An additional 284 members of staff completed our equality and diversity eLearning.

Here is the list of EDI training courses we provided for staff in 2021-2022.

- eLearning: Equality and diversity
- Managing racism in the workplace
- Race and racism when working with diverse and ethnic clients (Emotional Health Service)
- Transgender awareness
- LGBTQ+ awareness
- Exploring gender and gender diversity



100% of staff who attended the following training courses felt that the course met its aims and objectives and that they would recommended it to a colleague.

- **Managing racism in the workplace** - "The instructor was great, he made it interesting and natural without feeling like you're on a training course. It was very reflective and thought provoking."
- **Race and racism when working with diverse and ethnic clients (Emotional Health Service)** - "It will help me explore a person's race and its impact in their life in our clinical work together in a more meaningful and purposeful manner."
- **LGBTQ+ awareness** - "The trainer was superb, the best training session that I have attended. They were professional, incredibly knowledgeable and inspiring. I thoroughly enjoyed the session and feel inspired to read more about this and really deepen my understanding of this issue."

Training needs are under constant review and various courses are commissioned as and when required. The EDI Board gives feedback and guidance on all EDI training.

Raising awareness

To better understand our workforce and their needs, the EDI Board runs lunchtime EDI Forums. EDI Forums are held once a month with the day changing to give the opportunity for all staff members to attend, covering a wide range of topics focused on protected characteristics.

The EDI Board raised awareness by organising events and communications for Black History Month 2021, Race Equality Week 2022, International Women's Day 2022. To build on this, the EDI Board has created an EDI calendar of events, which includes key celebrations for all protected characteristics.

The EDI Board has launched AfC Employee Networks (AENs), which are employee-led groups aiming to create a more inclusive workplace.

Recruitment, retention and development

The EDI Board has researched best practice in recruitment, retention and development and added actions in its 12 month action plan. This includes blind recruitment, leadership events for underrepresented staff, mentoring, diverse panels at interviews and reverse mentoring. The EDI Board is working on embedding these actions in 2022-2023.

Children, young people and families

The EDI Board has created a schedule of equality impact assessment (EIAs). We have also made the EIA process accessible in line with government requirements. An EIA workshop was organised and facilitated for AfC staff to make sure they know how to write an EIA when commencing a new project, developing a new policy or strategy, or making changes to an existing service.



Performance

The EDI Board led an equality and diversity staff survey, publishing its findings into a report. The report was presented to AfC's Senior Leadership Team and communicated to all AfC staff.

The EDI Board has researched best practice in equalities data monitoring, which informed changes to our 2022 staff survey. The EDI Board carried out a poll to find an alternative to the acronym BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic), based on feedback collected in the staff survey. We analysed the findings of the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic poll into a report and discussed these at an EDI Forum. We have communicated the outcome of the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic poll to all staff.

We have signed up to the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), developed and published our WRES action plan (see below for more information).

We have conducted an unacceptable behaviour poll and ran an EDI Forum on the same topic, in order to collect more data for the WRES.

We report on our gender pay gap on a yearly basis (see below for more information).

Workforce race equality standard

We are one of 18 local authorities taking part in the 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.

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Gender pay gap

Gender pay gap information regulations require organisations with 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap data annually on the snapshot date of 4 April.

As of 4 April 2021, AfC's mean pay gap is -2.82% (in favour of women). The mean gender pay gap has moved to favour women since the previous reporting period (4 April 2019). The percentage of women in the upper quartile is 80% which has also improved compared to the previous period.



4. What do we know about equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to the children, young people and families we support?

We collect and collate a range of information about the children and young people that we work with and support. This includes equalities information which is reported to Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead councils as part of our contract arrangements and to the corporate parenting groups in all three boroughs.

To provide context to our work and to show an understanding of the children and young people we work with, we have included a range of equalities data relating to groups such as children subject to a child protection plan, looked-after children and the school population. This information is used by services to ensure that we are effectively meeting the differing needs of our children and young people. This allows us to highlight any key issues or trends as they arise and take action to address them.

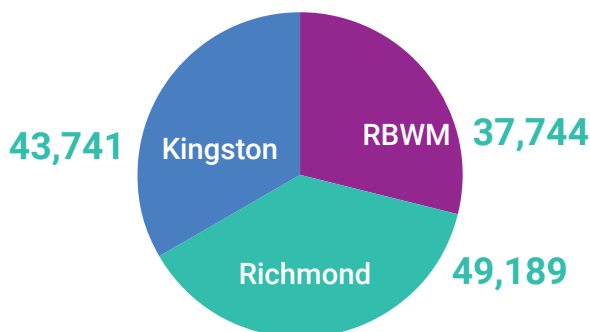
The data included below comes from a range of sources including: School Census Spring 2022, Kingston: Children and Young People Needs Assessments 2017 - latest data, Richmond: Children and Young People's Needs Assessment 2019, ONS Census 2011, Department for Work and Pensions - Children in Low Income Families: local area statistics report 2021, RBWM data from 2020/21 South London CCIS Service, Kingston and Richmond SEND dataset - June 2022, UK population estimates 2020-21.

General information about our children and young people

130,674

children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old

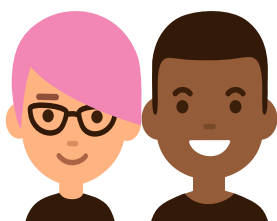
30.2% of children and young people are from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (including White other) background



4,250

children and young people with an education, health and care plan

9.3% of children in poverty



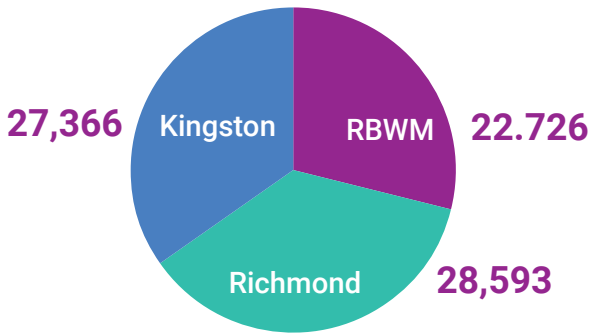
The gender breakdown of males and females aged 0 to 19 is almost **50/50** in all boroughs with a slightly higher proportion of males across all three

3.8% of young people not in education, employment or training (or not known)

School population

78,685 pupils

12.4% of pupils are eligible for free school meals

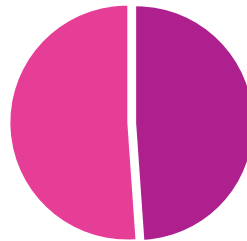


176 schools (not including independent settings)

14.4% of pupils have a disability (with an EHCP or receiving SEN support)



47.2% of pupils are from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (including White other) background

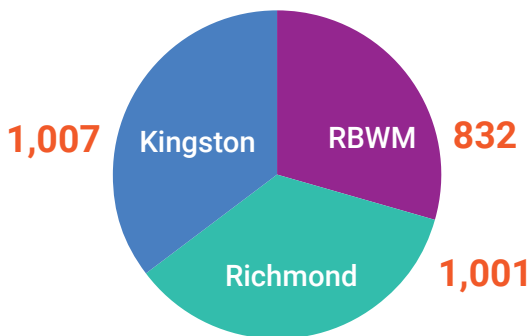


Of all pupils, **49.3%** are female and **50.7%** are male

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Children in need (CiN) (including those aged 18+ receiving a leaving care service)

2,840 children and young people supported by children's social care



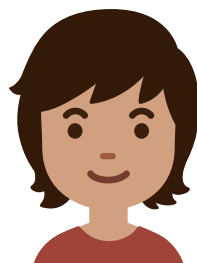
6.3% of CiN who are supported have an EHCP



5 to 9

The most common age group amongst the CiN cohort is 5 to 9 years old

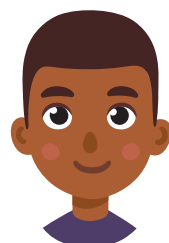
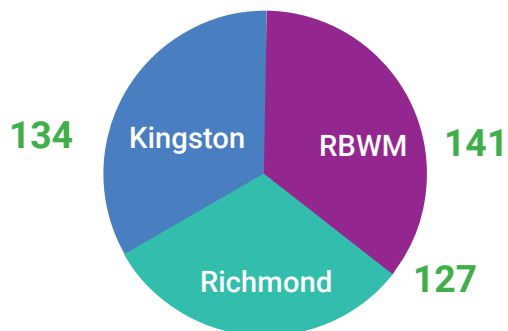
The most common belief in the CiN cohort is no religion



52.3% of CiN are from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (including White other) background

Children subject to a child protection plan (CPP)

402 children subject to a CPP

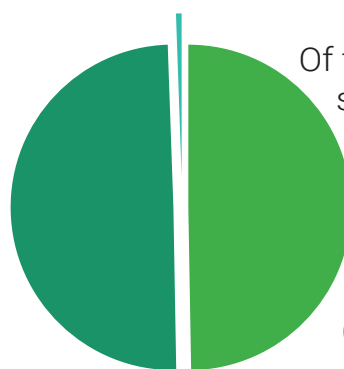


50.3% of children subject to a CPP are from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (including White other) background

5 to 9 | **13 to 15**

In **Kingston, and Windsor and Maidenhead** 5 to 9 is the most common age group for the CP cohort.

In **Richmond**, 13 to 15 is the most common age group for the CP cohort.



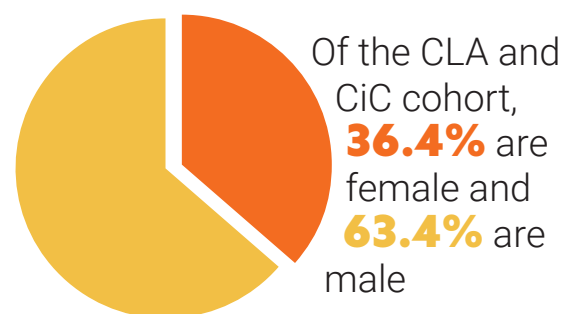
Of the children subject to a CPP, **49.75%** are female and **49.75%** are male (**0.5%** unborn)

Children looked after (CLA) and children in care (CiC)

385 Total of children looked after and children in care



27.3% of CLA have a disability (with an EHCP)



Of the CLA and CiC cohort, **36.4%** are female and **63.4%** are male

The most common age group for CLA is **16 years old plus**

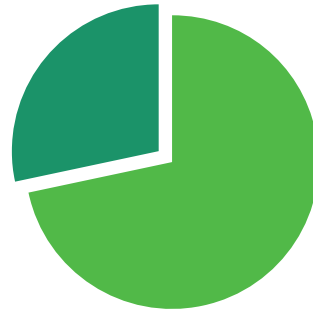


54% of CLA are from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (including White other) background

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)



3.2% of children and young people have a disability (with an EHCP)



Of those with SEND, **29%** are female and **71%** are male

Most common age group for children and young people with SEND



5. What have we done for the children, young people and families we support?

Key EDI achievements for our children and young people (April 2021-March 2022)

This section sets out our key achievements in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and demonstrates how we are implementing the PSED and working towards our equality objectives (set out in the following section). Furthermore, our [impact report](#) sets out the impact that we have had on the lives of children, young people and families during 2021/22 that does not directly relate to the protected characteristics.

Age

- In Windsor and Maidenhead we have implemented our new family hub model, following an extensive public consultation exercise. The new model sees our children's centres, youth centres, parenting service and our family resilience service transitioned into new hubs that focus on targeted and specialist support to families. 100% of families asked during case closing stated they would recommend family hub support to friends and family. 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), Black Asian and Minority Ethnic parenting groups, and baby massage groups
 - through a partnership with the Babybank, we have provided over 50 children with pyjama packs at Xmas and food bank support for over 101 families
- Our children's centres in Kingston and Richmond, which primarily provide support for children aged 0 to five, 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.
- More than 10,000 young people aged 11 to 19, or up to 25 if they have a disability, regularly use our youth services each year 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.



- Our holiday, activity and food programme, locally known as Feed Ur Everyday Lives (FUEL) 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 of our boroughs.
- Through the local and household support grant, we have given over 8,000 food vouchers for each school holiday period, to families with children who receive free school meals and three or four year olds who are accessing pupil premium grant or disadvantaged 2 year olds.
- In February 2022, in Kingston and Richmond, we coordinated the 'make your mark' ballot across schools and youth clubs which 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 became a Gateway for the Government's Kickstart scheme, which 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 AfC. Four of the 16 young people that were offered roles four were care leavers and four had an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

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Ten of the young people did not hold a full Level 2 qualification including maths and English and eight had never had any previous paid work. We also administered the scheme on behalf of local partner organisations such as schools, charities and the NHS to help them to create and advertise over 100 roles. This led to another 72 young people securing roles in local partner organisations. Within the AfC Virtual School, two Kickstart posts were created which were filled by two care leavers. Of those two, one young person completed the contract and successfully achieved an apprenticeship position within AfC.

Disability

- 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.

"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'."

feedback from an Xplained project worker

- 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.
- Our Achieving for Children Local Offer webpages, which provide information, advice and guidance about our services, particularly in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have been reviewed and refreshed. The website is now more accessible than ever with users now able to use a range of tools such as language translators, text-mode, audio files and changeable themes and fonts.
- Students on the register of AfC Virtual School and College have a high incidence of SEND. Over the past 12 months, attainment, attendance, exclusion rates and many other categories show significant improvement against benchmark national figures. Each young person has a personal education plan meeting every term and there is a 99.7% completion rate and 93.8% 'Good' or 'Outstanding' quality rate. Our team consists of educational psychologists who support early identification of students with SEND and work with schools to reduce exclusions.

Feedback included **"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."**

Through collaboration with the Educational Psychology Service, AfC Virtual School delivers an Attachment Aware Schools Award to 42 schools a year. This is a nine month training and coaching programme which supports schools to move to a relational approach to ensure all students and staff feel safe. This change in culture is supporting outcomes for vulnerable children.

- Our support for children and young people in care is constantly developing and improving. We are pleased that our children's home, Hope House and our purpose-built overnight short break care centre, Rainbow House, are both now open and providing high quality care for our most vulnerable children and young people.
- 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.
- To meet rising demand for school places, we made good progress on several key school place projects. In September 2021, we opened four specialist resource provisions, Coombe Boys and Alexandra School in Kingston (23 places), Capella House and Hampton High in Richmond (48 places). We also expanded specialist places at Malden Oaks (16 places).



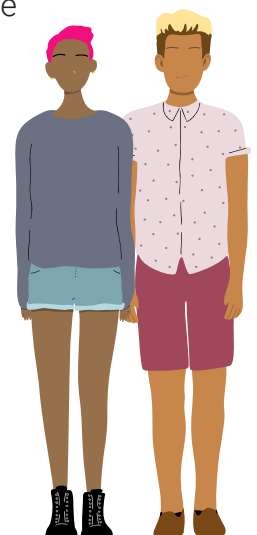
- A number of other key school expansion projects are also in the pipeline that will further enhance the SEND Local Offer by substantially increasing the number of special school and specialist resource provision (SRP) places. This includes the proposed 90-place special school for children and young people with social emotional and mental health needs in Richmond and a proposed school in Kingston that will provide 104 places for young people aged 4 to 19 who have autism spectrum condition (ASC).
- We have been working with Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHCAT) to open a post-16 SEND campus, which will create 80 new specialist places in Kingston.
- Progress continues with the SEND Futures Plan, which is closely aligned with the safety valve agreement. We have received the full year's funding in both Kingston and Richmond for 2021/2022, from the Department of Education, who are satisfied with the progress made against the conditions in the agreement. Kingston received £5 million and Richmond received £4 million. This funding reduces the deficit in both boroughs on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
The work within the SEND Futures plan improves the quality of SEND services across both boroughs for children and young people with SEND.
- 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 supported 111 apprentices in the academic year 2021-22 through our Way2Work apprenticeship scheme. Of these, 22 have education, health and care plans (EHCPs) or self-declared learning difficulties or disabilities, and two are care leavers. Progression rates remain very good with over 68% of employers offering advanced apprenticeships or permanent employment opportunities for their existing apprentices.
- AfC's Next Steps provides a specialist Information and Advice Guidance programme for children with SEND Years 9 to 11 to help them make informed decisions about their post-16 education. This information is also used to help identify young people with SEND who may be at risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEET) post 16. In the 2021/22 financial year, 269 young people were provided with a careers interview via the Next Steps programme.
- AfC is delivering four employability and re-engagement programmes to young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in education, employment or training. Over 60% of the young people supported via these programmes declared a learning difficulty or disability. Of the four programmes, one is focused specifically on young people with mental health needs and another is aimed at young people with physical disabilities and long term health conditions. All of the programme activities are aimed at supporting young people back into education, employment or training via a bespoke offer and one to one guidance.



- We have recruited two SEND parent and carer engagement officers who have led on increasing SEND parental engagement through outreach work in schools, youth groups and charity organisations. Their key achievement to date has been setting up a SEND parent champions scheme in partnership with Coram. The scheme will involve parent volunteers who will provide an informal peer to peer advice and signposting service. Parents will be trained and have regular meetings with each other - the first cohort is undergoing training in June 2022.
- 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 and increased our outreach provision so we are now also in four schools working with 40 young people aged 11 to 14. We have 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.
- Our Emotional Health Service (EHS) has established mental health support teams (MHST) in schools who provide preventative evidence-based interventions, support and advice for young people's mental health difficulties. Each MHST can work with up to 20 schools and colleges, serving an average population of 8,000 children and young people. AfC currently operates five MHSTs in total. All of our schools in Kingston access a MHSTs in Kingston and we have two MHSTs in Richmond.

Gender (sex)

- We run a youth club 'Good4Girls' for young women aged 10+ at Ham Youth Centre on a weekly basis. The aim is to offer a space for young women only, to try new activities, make friends and have fun. They engage in art, sports, cooking, discussions, fashion, media, trips and lots more. The project also offers emotional wellbeing support.
- The youth council in Kingston and Richmond has undertaken a survey on the incidence of sexual harassment on young women, to which 900 people responded. The Youth Council produced a report and presented it to a wide range of stakeholders: the Safer Neighbourhoods Board, headteachers, AfC's Safeguarding Board and to local elected members. As a result of the report, the youth council is developing an action plan to put in place with Safer Kingston Partnership. The data collected in the survey is informing key actions to create change.
- We have reviewed our domestic abuse and violence: employee policy to ensure our staff's safety. Although this guidance is to support AfC staff, it reinforces a culture of inclusion at AfC for victims of domestic abuse and violence, which will also benefit the children, young people and families we work with.
- The Strengthening Families Team has been running a domestic violence perpetrator programme. Think, Feel, Change is a behavioural change programme designed to discover and build upon personal strengths, and improve relationships. Parallel concurrent therapeutic support is also offered to the victims and children.



Sexual orientation

- 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.

'This place acted as a practice for me coming out. I've never been able to be myself before as no one else knew.' (Young person, aged 17)

Gender reassignment

- Our Education Psychology Service has created the AfC Gender Identity Working Group, to respond to various schools' requests for support in this area who have gender nonconforming students. The aims of the group are to:
 - support the inclusion of gender nonconforming children and young people by raising awareness and supporting schools to understand how best to support these students
 - share and signpost schools to tools and resources that will enable them to increase their awareness and knowledge of gender identity
 - share and signpost schools to tools and resources that they are able to share with parents and carers (as appropriate) to support them to increase their awareness
- understanding of gender identity
- identify the support available in the local community
- to identify gaps in support for this population of children and young people in the local community and consider how to fill or navigate these
- We have developed guidance for managers supporting staff who identify as trans that includes practical advice and resources. Although this guidance is to support AfC staff, it reinforces a culture of inclusion at AfC for people choosing gender reassignment, which will also benefit the children, young people and families we work with.

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Marriage and civil partnership

- We provide training to raise awareness on forced marriage through the Safeguarding Children Partnership in Kingston and Richmond, and through the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), run by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Home Office, for our Windsor and Maidenhead staff.

The course is designed to enable participants to recognise and know how to respond to children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing harmful practices. Staff have access to the Forced Marriage Unit's public helpline that provides advice and support to victims and potential victims of forced marriage, and to professionals dealing with cases.



Pregnancy and maternity

- Our School Nurse Service in Windsor and Maidenhead continues to be well received by children and parents, and the Safe Baby initiative has ensured that there has been an increased focus on the safety of our youngest and most vulnerable children.
- We have worked closely with the Growbaby project in Kingston and run a long established life-skills session for young parents up to the age of 25 in the Kingston area, in collaboration with midwives and health visitors. The group helps young parents to access support and establish long lasting friendships with other parents, where they have felt isolated from traditional parent groups.
- In partnership with the Children in Care Council, we have developed a Baby Packs project for care leavers who are new mums and dads. They include quilts from the Linus Project, self-care items, baby grows, and a book on parenthood.

Race and ethnicity

- Following our highly successful Racial Justice in Education conference in February 2021, we have launched a new seven part course over the year which features national experts delivering on key aspects of racial justice for schools. Twenty two schools have attended this year and we are rolling this out next year, with teachers from this year's course becoming mentors for the new cohort.

We have continued to focus on racial justice in networks and forums, and have seen a steady increase in schools appointing racial justice leads, accessing training for staff, engaging with parents and considering how to develop their curriculum. A closer look at data over three years has proven that the progress and attainment of Black Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean pupils is a key target for this work. Although numbers of these pupils in individual schools is small, when we look at the data across boroughs the needs are significant. Partnerships within AfC and externally with organisations such as Kingston Race Equality Council and the Pan London Collaboration on Black Caribbean achievement are supporting this work.

- We have focused on welcoming new communities into our boroughs, particularly from Hong Kong, Turkey and Ukraine. Welcoming new arrivals guidance has been shared widely with all schools and regular training for staff is supporting school practices, particularly for new refugee arrivals. Parental partnerships have led to presentations to headteachers, increasing understanding of needs and strengths of these communities. This has led to new initiatives such as celebrating festivals for these groups, setting up more English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision within schools and developing multilingual approaches.



Religion and belief (including no religion and belief)

- Our staff have attended the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership training around the impact of culture, faith and belief systems on safeguarding children. The course enables participants to increase their understanding of the influences of their own and their families race, culture, faith or beliefs on the parenting of children, gain confidence in talking about attitudes and beliefs and how these might affect judgement, and improve knowledge of practice skills in relation to culture, faith and beliefs systems when completing assessments or offering services.
- To celebrate cultural diversity at AfC, we have created an annual EDI calendar of events that includes key religious festivals and celebrations. Communications go out on our intranet from our directors, associate directors and staff who want to speak about their religion.
- Every local authority is required by law to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Kingston SACRE and Richmond SACRE are starting to develop links and work together to support our schools and provide joint training. Kingston SACRE has introduced a religious education (RE) award which our schools can apply for and Lovelace Primary School successfully achieved this during lockdown. Kingston SACRE also arranged for the Ofsted Lead for RE to talk to schools about his recent review of RE and Ofsted expectations.

Intersectionality

We understand that our workforce and the children, young people and families that we support, may be impacted by their experiences across a number of the protected characteristic groups. For example, a member of staff may be from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background and may also have a disability. Both these characteristics may impact on their life experience.

Our work over the last 12 months, has highlighted some areas of intersectionality, particularly where children and young people from more than one protected characteristic group are impacted or may be affected by disproportionality.

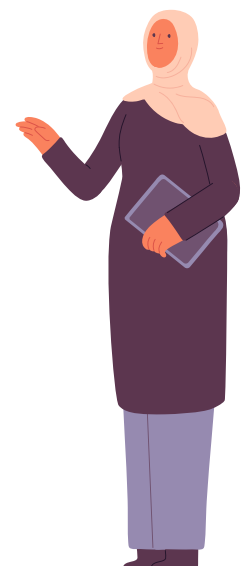
Children and young people in care

Research and data shows that nationally and locally, children and young people in care are more likely to:

- be male
- be of secondary school age
- have a disability
- be from ethnically diverse communities

What we have achieved

- 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 and better takes into account their culture and background.

- Our Children in Care Council (CiCC) has continued to work with children and young people in care to implement initiatives and shape the delivery of our services based on the feedback and priorities of young people that engage with the CiCC. The aim is to ensure services better meet the needs of the young people, including those needs that relate to protected characteristics.

Initiatives have included:

- 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
- 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
- In the autumn term 2019, AfC Virtual School was successful in being awarded a Youth Endowment Foundation bid to research the impact of a Transition Hub on new into care education stability. We recruited and trained five new members of staff and partnered Barnet Virtual School and St Mary's University in this exciting development. Our Transition Hub was established in The Richmond upon Thames School in March 2020 just as we went into lockdown.

Staff in the Transition Hub developed a parallel virtual offer to ensure that the provision could continue to support our children. Due to positive results showing reductions in absence and a rise in students achieving age expected attainment we have been given an extension of this research to December 2022 transitioning from the Feasibility Study to an Impact Study. The Transition Hub addresses criminality for care leavers through early education intensive support on entry to care.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

National data shows that young people with SEND are more likely to be male.

There is a complex relationship between ethnicity and SEND with many other variables such as socio-economic status, language and cultural barriers influencing children's outcomes. At an aggregate level, the national school census shows that Black pupils are slightly more likely to have education health and care plans (EHCPs) and Asian pupils are slightly less likely, on average. However, there is more variation within some of these ethnic groups than between them, so meaningful conclusions cannot be drawn at this aggregate level.

There is an established link between disability and poverty, with national research in 2016 indicating that half of people in poverty are disabled or live with a disabled person.

What we have achieved

- Since launching our SEND Register in March 2021, we have received 1,725 disability awareness card requests from across Kingston and Richmond, all of



which have also opted to be included on the register. This is helping families to better access services, and enabling us to better understand the needs of these children and young people.

- One school has carefully considered the intersection of race and ethnicity and SEND for their pupils. This has led to a consideration of how they welcome these pupils into the school, and the classroom strategies used from early years up to ensure equity. They have formed a partnership with another school in an inner city school to look at how they can learn from their good practice around racial justice.
- We have partnered with Mencap to introduce their employability programme through a new supported internship provision with 18 young people commencing either the one or two year programme in September 2021. We also commenced two new employability and re-engagement programmes (YES and Able2) that focus on supporting young people aged 16 to 24 not in education, employment or training 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.
- The intersectionality of English as an additional language (EAL) and SEND continues to be a focus for a small proportion of our pupils. Supporting special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and class teachers from two schools to use an assessment tool for proficiency in English alongside SEND strategies, together with strong partnerships with parents to support multilingualism, has helped to ensure good outcomes for these pupils.

Young offenders

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Research and data nationally show there are a number of specific characteristics of the young people who may be involved with the Youth Offending Service (YOS):

- aged 16 to 17 years
- more likely to have SEND than the general population
- male
- more likely to be from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic background than the general population
- more likely to have been a child in need, looked after child or on a child protection plan than the general population
- more likely to have substance misuse issues than the general population
- more likely to be NEET than the general 0 to 19 population

Available local data shows that the youth offending cohort is more diverse than the 0 to 19 population and the overall population. This is in line with national data which shows that young people from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic background are disproportionately represented throughout the youth justice system. For example, minority ethnic children make up a growing proportion of those offending for the first time, reoffending, and serving custodial sentences. Today 41% of under-18s in custody are from minority backgrounds, compared with 25% a decade ago. Young Black people are now nine times more likely to be in youth custody than young white people.

The Lammy Review, chaired by David Lammy MP, was an independent review of the treatment of, and outcomes for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in



the Criminal Justice System (CJS). It was published in September 2017. The review identified no single explanation for the disproportionate representation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and summarised that so many of the causes of, and answers to, the problem lie outside the criminal justice system: poverty, lone-parent families, school exclusions, and growing up in the care system. The report stated that a third of young people in custody have spent time in the care system, and a similar proportion have mental health issues. Nearly half arrive with substance misuse problems, but these problems are not being picked up as often for minority ethnic children as White children.

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic children in custody are less likely to be recorded as having substance misuse concerns, to be at risk of self-harm, to have learning difficulties, to have mental health concerns, to be disengaged from education, and to have problematic family relationships. Lammy concluded, 'the pattern is too consistent to ignore. It is hard not to conclude that minority youngsters face bias in our criminal justice system.'

What we have achieved

- We worked with 454 young people via our Family DynamiX initiative. Part of our Project X programme, Family DynamiX works with both 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.
- As part of Project X, the Emotional Health Service has been training staff to deliver cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) within current best practice in violence-reduction and related partnership approaches to effectively supporting children affected by extra-familial violence and related harms. This programme is called 'Your Choice' and is for 11 to 17 year olds who are assessed as medium or high risk of harm or vulnerability as a result of extra-familial harm and have been considered by a multi-agency panel. The aim of Your Choice is to help children to better understand themselves and to take better care of themselves by equipping them with tried and tested coping strategies.
- 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.
- We worked with Thames Valley Police, the DASH charity and a number of the partners from across Windsor and Maidenhead, who came together in October 2021 to deliver a borough-wide youth engagement project. The project, co-designed by local young people was named 'The S.A.F.E Youth Project'. 739 young people took part in the S.A.F.E Project which aims 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.

6. What we've set out to do by 2024



(our equality objectives) and our progress to date

Equality objective 1:

Providing support to the increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

National data shows that the number of UASC entering the UK has seen a 15% increase on the number prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last year, there were 4,081 applications from UASC, compared to 3,553 in the year ending March 2020. Increasing numbers of UASC has been attributed to the ongoing refugee crisis. In Kingston and Richmond, there are at least four new UASC coming into our looked after children and leaving care services each month.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, we weren't accommodating UASC as part of the voluntary transfer scheme unless we were sure that we could support them in the borough. The government's shift from a voluntary to a mandatory scheme has seen our UASC scheme increase dramatically in the last six months - from accepting nine UASC to 26.

Progress to date

We provide dedicated support to our UASC to help them to grow and develop. Our Leaving Care and UASC Team hold regular healthy relationship workshops, delivered by the teenage sexual health nurse, child sexual exploitation worker and AfC gangs worker that are tailored to meet the needs of our UASC. Topics include: trafficking, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, positive relationships, sexual health, British culture, female genital mutilation (FGM) and honour-based violence.

In Kingston and Richmond, our Leaving Care and UASC team is a multicultural team. Where possible, we match the UASC to a social worker and personal adviser who are from the same country or who speak the same language. UASC are supported to integrate into British society, by attending ESOL lessons. Our team provides interpreters to all appointments as necessary. We also support UASC in understanding the complex immigration process, including ensuring they understand all their options such as voluntary return home if they are considered 'appeal rights exhausted', meaning that their asylum support is stopped. The team has a rolling contract with Refugee Action Kingston to offer up to 10 sessions of counselling, focusing on loss and bereavement as well as supporting them with the uncertainty of their future in the UK.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, historically our number of UASC has been lower compared to other local authorities, however we have always provided a high standard when considering educational and employment opportunities. As of November 21, four UASCs have started university, studying medicine, dentistry, biomedical engineering and cyber security. We have one UASC aiming to start university next year who is currently doing their Level 3 diploma as a sports coach. Another young person is working as a key worker in a supported provision helping other new UASCs.

Since the significant increase in UASC numbers as part of the government's



mandated quotas, we have been proactive in responding to the 19% rise in our children in care numbers over a two month period. We have been able to work closely with two local semi-independent settings to keep as many of our young people together which in turn aids service delivery and allows the young people to build relationships and settle into their new environment. Close collaboration with Virtual School has allowed a welcome programme to be established whilst they wait to enrol in college in September.

We have also been able to provide them with laptops to aid their educational journey. One of our more recent UASCs is in trials for the Slough under-17's cricket team.

Some of the key achievements have been the following.

- In October 2022, the Children in Care Council organised a celebration of achievement awards ceremony where every UASC received a gold certificate highlighting one of their main achievements. One of our USAC was also supported to attend the Home Office Young People's Board to discuss and give their view on how issues related to them could be improved.
- We've successfully been running Culture 4 Keeps, an arts and leisure programme for children looked after and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Young people get free access to art and leisure centres (swimming and sports classes) in Richmond. They can bring a supportive buddy as part of the scheme. Activities include free ice skating, theatre tickets at Christmas and regular arts opportunities at local historical venues like Hampton Court Palace and Kew Gardens. Culture 4 Keeps provides opportunities for young people to meet and socially engage with their local community, including artists and experts from the different venues.
- As part of their placement with the Leaving Care and UASC Team, two of our Kingston University social work students organised a football tournament for young people. The purpose of this event was to give our young people, both care leavers and unaccompanied minors, a chance to get exercise, meet new friends, and interact with staff from the Leaving Care and UASC Team in a fun, positive, and safe environment. A total of 15 young people attended and the event was successful in meeting its aims. Due to its success, the Children In Care Council have agreed to take this forward and offer dates in Kingston and Richmond over summer 2022.
- UASC have access to AfC Virtual School's Transition Hub which provides intensive support for new into care. Impact demonstrates raised percentages of young people achieving age related expectations and improved attendance on leaving the programme. AfC Virtual College has established a 'Welcome Programme' to support UASC which is being trialled in Windsor and Maidenhead. The programme offers two hours a day, four days a week of English tuition from a qualified ESOL teacher who works in AfC Virtual College. This is supported by a programme of cultural capital educational visits such as to Windsor Castle.

What will we achieve by 2024?

We will ensure there is sufficient local supported accommodation for our UASC young people and that our staff are appropriately trained to provide effective support to meet their differing needs. We will deliver training, advice and guidance so they are provided with the information they need to thrive, including counselling and life skills workshops. We will celebrate the diversity amongst our UASC young people and support them to better understand their background.



Equality objective 2:

Integrating care and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities within their local communities, ensuring SEND provision is high quality, and supporting young people to transition to adulthood

The number of children and young people with an education, health and care plan is growing nationally and locally. This has been accompanied by an increase in the number of children with severe and complex needs.

In addition, there is a recognition that the support we provide to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is an area for improvement.

Funding of 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 a 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 work streams 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.

We know that we must make improvements to SEND provision, not just in AfC, but also in our schools, colleges, health services and social care. This is a partnership issue and we are working collectively (including with parents, carers and young people) to improve our local offer and the quality of services. To do this, we have put in place transformation plans, committed considerable resources, and we are working with parents to better learn from their experiences. Continuing to develop and improve provision in this area will continue to be a priority in the coming year.

Progress to date

A strategic plan is in place to ensure the quality of provision is improving across Kingston and Richmond - the SEND Futures Plan 2020-2026. Progress with the implementation of these plans is set out previously in this document under achievements in relation to disability.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, we have been developing our new SEND strategy, which was drafted 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 of this feedback, we have finalised our strategy which is due to launch shortly and set the direction for our SEND activity over the next five years. See pages 16 to 19 for updates on progress with this objective under the achievements in relation to disability.



What will we achieve by 2024?

We want to deliver high quality services for children and young people with SEND that are rated as 'good' or better by parents or carers and judged to be effective through the inspection of local area SEND services by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. We will be able to support more children and young people with SEND locally, close to their family and their friends, and we will have a strong therapy offer in place.

The timeliness and quality of education health and care plans will continue to improve and we will aim to meet the needs of younger children at the earliest stage in mainstream schools so that some children and young people will not need an EHCP.

We will have put in place effective transition arrangements for young people with SEND who are moving into adulthood which will plan for their independence and maximise their opportunities for a positive experience of early adulthood, including planning for their transition to adult social care services where needed.

Equality objective 3:

Contributing to the development of the i-thrive mental health strategy that outlines responsibilities for AfC, the Clinical Commissioning Group (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

A large and growing body of research shows that good mental health is essential for individual wellbeing, for a happy, healthy society, and for a prosperous economy.

Unfortunately, child mental health problems are on the increase nationally and locally, with a rising demand on services and increasing complexity of need. Research shows that:

- at least one in 10 children has a diagnosable mental health condition. This figure is likely to be higher and growing
- over half of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14, and 75% has developed by the age of 24
- demand is going up – over three years there has been a 14% rise in children admitted to hospital after harming themselves; specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are on average turning away 23% of the young people referred to them for treatment
- children from low income families are four times more likely to experience mental health problems than children from well off families
- amongst LGBTQI+ young people, seven out of ten girls and six out of 10 boys described experiencing suicidal thoughts

Concerns have also been raised about the quality of mental health services and the availability of access to this support, with unclear pathways and thresholds that are not understood by families.



Progress to date

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.

Dedicated project support has been put in place to develop a project plan with contributions from the CCG, AfC and other mental health service providers. As part of this, a detailed analysis of current service provision has been completed, bringing together information about the services, performance data and feedback from children, young people and families and the workforce.

The analysis will be used as part of the planning to implement a new model and framework for mental health services which should result in services being easier to access and more responsive to demand. Additionally, we have been attending i-thrive workshops to be part of the national mental health transformation, moving from a tiered model to the thrive model of treatment. We have successfully completed the i-thrive implementation assessment tool, which has allowed us to understand how thrive-like our children and young people's mental health services are. We are now working on identifying priorities going forward to start implementing the i-thrive model.

See pages 16-19 for updates on progress with this objective under the achievements in relation to disability.

What will we achieve by 2024?

Children and young people are easily able to access high quality mental health services that have a strong focus on early intervention and prevent issues escalating to higher levels of need. 75% of families will rate mental health services as 'good' or 'better'.

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Equality objective 4:

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

Research shows that promoting and supporting diversity in the workplace is an important aspect of good people management - it is about valuing everyone in the organisation as an individual. However, to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce it is vital to have an inclusive environment where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their potential.

Diversity is about recognising differences. It is acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision-making and the workforce being representative of who the organisation serves.

Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. An inclusive workplace has fair policies and practices in place and enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.



Greater inclusivity and diversity brings a number of benefits, including:

- recruiting from a diverse pool of candidates means a more qualified workforce
- a diverse and inclusive workforce helps avoid employee turnover costs
- diversity fostering a more creative and innovative workforce
- diversity and inclusion brings us all opportunities to learn from others and grow

Progress to date

We are proud to have established our staff led EDI Board which is driving forward our EDI 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.

See Key EDI achievements for our workforce (April 2021-March 2022) for more information on what our EDI Board has achieved to date.

What will we achieve by 2024?

Our workforce will be more reflective of the local community that it serves across all areas. Employee networks will be well-established and will work alongside the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum. We will have a longer term action plan to embed change across our workforce and for our children, young people and families. AfC will become a leader in EDI, promoting identities and meeting the individual needs of our workforce and the children, young people and families we work with.

Equality objective 5:

Tackling racial inequality

In October 2020, the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA), commissioned a data analysis of disproportionality across children's outcomes in London for education, social care, health and justice. This data included that of Kingston and Richmond.

A summary of analysis concludes that across all key datasets, pupils of Black heritage are disproportionately represented. In Kingston and Richmond this is particularly notable and above London and England averages in:

- children looked after data
- fixed term exclusion in Kingston - mixed heritage is also above average more than one fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion in Richmond (no data for Kingston)
- reading, writing and maths at key stage 2. There are concerns overall for Black and mixed heritage (White and Black) pupils.
- percentage difference in Attainment 8 scores
- Attainment 8 scores in Richmond - this is also lower for Asian and mixed heritage pupils
- strong pass in English and maths GCSE in Richmond - this also lower for Asian and mixed heritage pupils



- SEND without an education, health and care plan and in Richmond it is also high for mixed heritage pupils
- SEND with an ECHP but in line with London, there is an over representation of Black and Asian pupils in Richmond and Black and mixed heritage pupils in Kingston
- there being no data for youth offending but Black, mixed and other ethnicity groups are overrepresented in London and England

As a result of the findings, in 2020 we identified a new objective in relation to racial equality.

Progress to date

Students from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are excluded and this is generally at a higher percentage as compared to the percentage that demographic of child makes up of the total student population. We are focusing on universally improving the approach to being inclusive through our Inclusion Charter and Toolkit. We also have education representatives on the disproportionality sub group for the Youth Offending Service and we have also established a racial justice working group.

We are in the process of finalising our vision for education in Kingston and Richmond and EDI forms a major part of this, and as such so does the educational experience of young people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

In March 2022, the Kingston and Richmond Youth Council elections took place in secondary schools and youth clubs. 5,500 voted in the elections. As part of the voting system all young people took part in an online poll to identify the key issues for young people and racism was identified as an issue for young people in both boroughs. Our current youth council has made tackling racism one of their top priorities for their two year term of office. They will undertake a programme of racial literacy training in August 2022, learning from which they will use to develop an online survey for young people to learn more about the types of racism they experience as well as the numbers of young people involved. The results of the survey will be presented to headteachers and AfC.

We have been doing a lot of work supporting new arrivals to the UK - pupils from Ukraine, Hong Kong and Turkey in particular. This means the number of pupils who have EAL is rising and we are creating more EAL resources and embedding EAL pedagogy in mainstream provision to support them to integrate.

Our data shows us that we have a greater than national average proportion of Black African, Black Caribbean and mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils who are disadvantaged in the school system. Using an anti-racist lens in our school improvement work around disadvantage has helped to identify for schools where racial justice approaches are key for these pupils, looking at how they are positioned as learners and how they are included in the curriculum.



What will we achieve by 2024?

Much of our work tackling racial inequality is carried out in partnership with our schools. An action plan will be in place that sets out clearly how we are addressing the areas of disproportionality that have been identified. This will be overseen by a racial justice steering group.

The work we have undertaken to address racial equity will be having a demonstrable impact on our children and young people. Schools will be supported to have accountability measures in place to identify what strategies they are implementing and why, what impact these are having and how this is reported on. School staff will have access to quality training on racial literacy and schools will regularly share good practice and effective strategies in forums and networks. Schools will be supported to gather pupil and parent voices on their racial justice work and ensure that this is central to their plans. A racial justice charter will be developed by our schools and a partnership with Lambeth established to provide schools with opportunities for peer review and support.

Curriculum advisers will work with subject leads to support decolonising the curriculum, including sharing resources and ideas. A second racial justice conference in 2023 will provide a focus and challenge for this work.



