

Achieving for Children

IMPACT REPORT 2022/23



**achieving
for children**

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Welcome

We are Achieving for Children, and this is our impact report for 2022-23. It sets out what we have been doing over the past 12 months and highlights some of our proudest achievements.

Who we are

We are a not for profit organisation that is focused on supporting the children and young people of the Royal Borough of Kingston, the London Borough of Richmond and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives. We are unique and different because we are owned by three local authorities and we are an organisation of talented children's services professionals who are focused on working together and with partners to provide the best possible support to young people.

We deliver services to more than 120,000 children and young people in a range of areas including early help, children's social care, education, health, and special educational need and disability (SEND) services. Our vision is to provide children and their families with the support and services they need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

Over 1,200 people work for us in a wide variety of roles including social work, teaching, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and clinical psychology.



We are good at what we do, as demonstrated by a range of positive inspection outcomes

Our children's social care services are judged by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' in Kingston and as 'Good' in Richmond and in Windsor and Maidenhead.



Our independent fostering agency (IFA), which operates across all three boroughs, has been judged 'Good'.



We achieved a positive Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk in Windsor and Maidenhead in May 2022, which focused on our 'front door', including our Single Point of Access.



In Windsor and Maidenhead at the end of 2022-23, the Department for Education and NHS England reviewed our progress against our written statement of action and have made the decision that there is no need for it to be formally monitored any more because we have 'demonstrated clear and sustained progress'.



In October 2022, Ofsted revisited our SEND services in Kingston and confirmed we were making sufficient progress against our Written Statement of Action, and as a result, the formal quarterly support and challenge visits from the Department for Education and NHS England will come to an end.



We received a 'Good' rating across all areas following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of our Health Visiting and School Nursing Service in Windsor and Maidenhead in November 2022.



We achieved 'Good' inspection ratings of our Youth Offending Services in Kingston and Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead.



Although we are extremely pleased with what we have achieved, and the external recognition we have received as a result, we are not complacent and we remain committed to improving our services further.

Support for families and the children and young people in our care

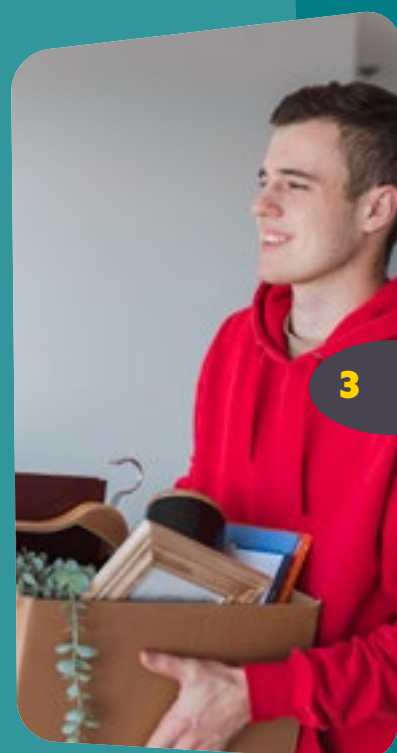
Early intervention and prevention is at the heart of our work with families so that we are able to meet the needs of children and young people as early as possible and well before statutory services are required. Our impact report sets out our excellent early help offer and highlights our children's centres, family hubs and our incredibly successful holiday activity and food programme.

Our support for children and young people in care, and on the edge of care, is always developing and improving. We have just started an early help and social care transformation programme across all three boroughs. This review will take place over the next few years and will look at how we deliver all of our social care services so we can focus on working in the ways that have the most impact and best meet the needs of our communities.

We are working hard to make sure that when we do need to support a child or young person in care they are placed in the best possible accommodation and receive the correct support. To help us to do this, we operate a number of in-house accommodations. This includes our children's home, Hope House, and our purpose-built overnight short break care centre, Rainbow House, which are both well established now and provide high quality care for our most vulnerable children and young people.

We are excited that we will be working with Kingston Council to develop a new children's home over the coming 18 to 24 months so we can support more of our children and young people locally.

Participation and engagement with children and young people is incredibly important to us. We have done lots of work over the last year to make sure we can hear the voices of our children and young people, such as establishing regular meetings between the Youth Council and the AfC Board of Directors and working with our children in care councils to support their peers who are being looked after by our social care services. Over the last year, they have contributed to the development of the care leavers' enhanced local offer, assisted in the launch of the HaveMySay app, which enables children in care to provide feedback whenever they want to, and created baby packs for care leavers who become parents for the first time.



Schools and special educational needs and disabilities

We are really proud of the excellent school standards in Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead, which are amongst the highest in the country. Over the past year we have supported 25 schools with their Ofsted inspections through our school improvement support, and now 95% of our schools across all three boroughs are judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Our Virtual School and Virtual College support the education of those children and young people who are in our care. Last year they continued to do brilliantly in their exams to outperform their national peers.

We know that we need to get even better with our support to children and young people with SEND in all three boroughs. We are working hard to address the areas that were identified as weaknesses in written statements of action (WSOA) in Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead, particularly in relation to strengthening our relationships with our parent carer forums so the voices of families more clearly influence our work. However we are pleased that it has been recognised that we are making good progress in our WSOAs, to the extent that there is reduced monitoring due to the increased confidence in our ability to deliver what is needed.



Our workforce

Undoubtedly, our greatest strength is our amazing workforce and we aim to create a supportive and encouraging environment for all our staff. During the year, we were delighted to re-launch our annual staff awards. The new scheme proved incredibly popular, with over 250 nominations across the whole organisation in 11 different categories, including champion for children, inspirational leader, rising star and outstanding contribution. We had 30 individuals or team winners, and we came together in person in both operational areas to celebrate their achievements.

We were also extremely proud to have two winners in the national Social Worker of the Year Awards announced in November 2022. Annmarie Nero, who works in our Adolescent Safeguarding Team won the Children's Social Worker of the Year Gold Award, and Mi-gyung Kim, who works in our Safeguarding Team, won the Newly Qualified Children's Social Worker of the Year Silver Award. This is a fantastic achievement, in recognition of their hard work and commitment in their roles.

We do recognise that we face a number of recruitment and retention challenges, driven by national shortages of qualified and experienced social workers. There is a lot of ongoing activity to address this, from refreshed staff benefits to provide staff with increased annual leave and new parking options, to new recruitment and retention incentives, including welcome payments and market supplements for social care teams. To support our recruitment and retention activity, we launched a digital marketing campaign targeted at social workers. So far, it has allowed us a reach of 186,000 people, has resulted in 54,000 clicks through to more information on our roles, and has led to 148 expressions of interest being submitted.

Smart working

As an organisation, we are always trying to find ways to work smarter. For example this year, significant progress has been made in terms of digital transformation:

- robotic process automation has been implemented in the Single Point of Access, resulting in the successful recording of over 3,500 contacts in the last year
- a new automated process has been developed for the verification of addresses on school place applications, which will streamline the admissions process for more than 11,000 applications received annually
- digital payment points have been deployed to nine children's centres
- a new digital customer platform has also been introduced, providing an online, self-service option for people who want to evaluate services, book appointments, send feedback, submit referrals, upload documents, complete questionnaires and request callbacks

During 2022-23, we have continued our focus on improving our interfaces with our workforce and our external stakeholders. We have experienced a fantastic response to and usage of our new intranet Connect - which was named by one of our staff. It provides a new digital workspace that enables staff to work more collaboratively and to access key information and documents more easily. In January 2023, we also launched our brand new company website with a fresh new look. The website makes it easier to find information such as fostering and apprenticeships or links to services by council area.

As you will see in this impact report, we have been very busy over the past 12 months and achieved a lot. However, we still want to do more. Based on the progress we have made in 2022-23, we are confident about the future of Achieving for Children and 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.

Sian Wicks, Chair of the Achieving for Children Board

Lucy Kourpas, Chief Operating and Finance Officer

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

Lin Ferguson, Director of Children's Services in Windsor and Maidenhead



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Key information about Achieving for Children



124,115

children and young people aged 0 to 19 across the three boroughs



4,577

children and young people

We support **4,577** children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities who have an education care and health plan.



9,074

additional school places

Since 2014, we have delivered **9,074** additional school places, including expanding SEND provision in mainstream schools and five new free schools.



91%

of schools 'Good' or 'Outstanding'

We support **165** schools to deliver high quality teaching and learning. **91%** of schools across our three boroughs are 'Good' or 'Outstanding' (Ofsted).



10,000

young people

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.



13,000

families

More than **13,000** families attend children's centres or family hubs for health appointments, to access local childcare, or for activities that help their children get ready for school.



1,074

families

We have completed early help assessments for **1,074** of our families to identify what support they may need from us.



2,944

children and young people supported by social care services

800 who are children in need
431 on child protection plans
376 who are children looked after

Our strategic priorities

We have six strategic priorities within Achieving for Children. These are the areas where we most want to make a difference and they help to decide what work we do. All the activity we undertake is rooted to these six strategic priorities.



Stronger families

We will work hard, alongside our key partners, to make sure the children and young people we support are safe from harm and that the families we work with are supported to help themselves so that any positive change is lasting.



Financial stability

Given the difficult financial circumstances, both nationally and locally, we will make sure we are delivering efficient, cost-effective and financially sustainable services so we are able to support those most in need.



Positive futures

We are focused on improving our local education, health and care offer so that our children and young people can attend school and get any support they may need, close to home. We want to help them to develop their independence and prepare for adulthood.



Successful organisation

We want Achieving for Children to be adaptable and flexible so we can meet the needs of the children and young people we support, even if these needs change.



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.



Smarter working

We will review and improve our internal processes and use more technology so that we can free up our staff to spend more time with the children, young people and families we support.

Examples of our impact



ACHIEVING a strong early help offer

Our children's centres and family hubs are a central part of our early help offer which helps to give children, young people and their families, the best start in life.

In Kingston and Richmond we have seen the number of people attending our children's centres increase over the past 12 months. We:

- delivered over 6,000 sessions for families either in person or online
- saw over 17,000 individuals in person or online
- had over 80,000 interactions with our families
- held an extremely successful event for National Play Day which saw almost 2,500 people come together for the first time since the pandemic to celebrate play
- supported health colleagues to deliver polio and flu vaccination clinics over the weekends in the autumn
- worked with local businesses to provide families with 75 hampers and over 100 presents at Christmas
- now have over 7,000 members on our Facebook groups

As part of our response to the cost of living crisis, our children's centres have provided warm spaces twice a week as part of an eight week pilot, with activities, quiet space for homework and support for families with children aged 0 to 11 years. We also ran a 'warm coats and shoes' project during winter and recycled and distributed 184 coats and 54 pairs of shoes to families.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, we established our family hubs approach, which brings together children's centres, youth centres and parenting services. Our family hubs are now fully staffed and demand for services has been high:

- we have provided one-to-one support to 823 children
- 3,400 children and young people have attended group sessions on topics such as digital safety, drug and alcohol awareness, and self-esteem

We provide a full menu of interventions to improve parents' skills and knowledge, such as the positive parenting programme and baby massage classes. Our family hub model includes our health visiting services, which offers all families with a new baby a health assessment within two weeks of birth. It was inspected this year and we were really pleased to receive a 'Good' Ofsted rating which demonstrates the positive impact we are having.

We receive lots of positive feedback from the families we have worked with.

This includes:

“ You have consistently supported my children and me. You have always made allocations and allowances for us, and you have done this with so much patience and understanding and respect. I am so, so, so thankful and so grateful for everything you do for my family. ”

“ Thank you to your amazing team. 100% truth - we would not be where we are today, without your support and trust and confidence. You have been an integral part of our journey here, and given me momentum. It absolutely has been a mutually organic relationship and continues to grow. The children's centre is without doubt our happy place. Thank you for being my safe space. Thank you for being a safe stable strong space for my children. We are incredibly lucky that you have been here when we too are here. ”



ACHIEVING fun and engaging holiday activities

We know that school holidays can be a difficult time for some families, with trying to juggle childcare with work.

To support our families during school holidays, we successfully delivered the FUEL (Feed Ur Everyday Lives) programme in Kingston, Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead in response to the Department for Education funding for the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme. This was our third year delivering the programme, which took place over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays and offered a range of fun and enjoyable activities and food to children and young people aged 5 to 16 years who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM).

Across all boroughs, the programme grew throughout each holiday period with increasing numbers of providers, locations and spaces on offer. In total, almost 40 different partners worked with us to deliver the programme; with over 3,500 children and young people attending a range of fun and exciting activities. Of these, over 200 of the children and young people had additional needs.



Our families love the programme. Some of the feedback we received includes:

“ They both loved it, they originally only planned to go for one day but enjoyed it so much they went back a second day. They came out enthused and it definitely built up their confidence as they loved chatting about the other kids they had met and taking part in the activities as they felt very supported by staff. ”

“ She had an amazing time and was very upset when it finished! She is excited to go again. The staff were amazing! ”

“ The club has been amazing for my autistic son. He has a lot of additional needs, however, the club have been able to manage his needs effortlessly. I only booked him for one week but he wanted to go back for the second week too. It was absolutely amazing and I will be booking this club again if it's available. ”

ACHIEVING with our families

We want to make sure we are giving good support to those of our families who may need some additional help. To do this, we have established a new Families First model.

In Kingston and Richmond, the Families First service commenced in April as a two year project. It aims to support social workers and the families they work with who present with a trio of vulnerabilities (domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse) through the key principles of co-location, joint working and group supervision. Over 140 families have been supported and the project has shown that for most families, where the Families First team provides support, they are less likely to need as much help going forward and are better equipped to help themselves. The feedback received from families has been excellent.

“ The relationship with my children has greatly improved, especially communication, confidence in parenting and ability to offer a stable environment. ”

“ I am more positive and confident and able to meet the needs of my children, especially emotionally. We talk more and we enjoy doing things together. ”

“ I am listening more and also helps me and the whole family cope better, which in turn has had a positive impact on our emotional and mental health. I also feel more confident in my parenting and ability to support my child and that we are doing the right thing for her. ”

Based on the success of this programme, we are now developing a similar service in Windsor and Maidenhead. The newly formed Families First team supports families in crisis who are at imminent risk of having their child or children taken into care. Families are fast-tracked to receive support, and are ultimately supported to keep their children at home or find a family network in order to care for their children. The team also supports children to return home from care, if this is the best option for them.

So far, we have supported 11 families and in all cases the children have remained in the family home.

ACHIEVING positive futures through apprenticeships

Way2Work is Achieving for Children's approved apprenticeship training provider listed on the Register of Approved Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP). It offers high quality apprenticeships and traineeships, and works with employers to provide relevant and meaningful training to anyone aged 16 plus. It offers apprenticeships in a range of sectors including early years, business support, customer services and teaching. And as well as working with local businesses and schools to provide opportunities, it provides apprenticeships within Achieving for Children.

Throughout their apprenticeships, learners receive information, advice and guidance, including CV development, interview skills and assistance with their job search. Way2Work is a specialist in supporting the most vulnerable learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, children who are looked after and care leavers.

We know that this is having a positive impact.

- 93% of our learners progress into a higher apprenticeship, employment, or further training
- 87% of our Way2Work apprentices rate the quality of teaching and learning as good or better
- 87% would refer Way2Work to a friend
- We are particularly proud that 100% of apprentices that complete their apprenticeships in Achieving for Children remain with the organisation

At the end 2022-23, Way2Work was supporting 58 apprentices. Of these, 20 are directly employed by Achieving for Children, 26 are aged 16 to 24 years old, 28% are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background, and 12% have special educational needs or disabilities, are children looked after, or are care leavers.

One of our former apprentices now manages Way2Work, Matt Burke, Business Manager at Achieving for Children, said:

“Way2Work apprenticeships gave me direction after leaving college and provided me with great opportunities to develop skills and gain work experience. Since completing my apprenticeship, which gave me the base to build from, I have created good working relationships with internal colleagues and external customers and now enjoy my role as manager of Twickenham Training Centre and leading on recruitment at Way2Work.”



ACHIEVING for our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

We are working hard to improve the inclusive services we provide to children and young people with SEND. This includes supporting our young people with SEND to transition to independence and adulthood through our supported internships.

Misha's story

Misha attended a local special school and when she finished her studies, we worked with her to secure a place on a year-long supported internship run by Mencap. While undertaking the internship, Misha was able to complete an extended work placement and develop other employability skills, such as communication, by participating in group discussions at Mencap, practising interviewing skills and researching the type of careers that might suit her.

She also had the opportunity to work towards completing her Functional Skills (which is offered to learners who have not already achieved a pass grade at school). She was delighted to be informed having sat the exam, that she had passed her Functional Skills in maths at Level 1.

When she completed the internship, she had not been offered paid employment, however within a very short time after leaving the programme, she independently applied to a local food shop and attended an interview and was offered a role with 20 contracted hours.

Misha told us:

“ I absolutely love my job, I get on really well with my manager and my colleagues and actually they have offered me more hours, so having the knowledge that I am going to get paid at the end of the month is such a nice feeling and I'm really pleased I completed the internship, because it gave me knowledge that I needed. ”



ACHIEVING a more diverse and inclusive organisation

Our strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has continued during 2022-23.

Our staff-led EDI Board has continued to be instrumental in driving forward EDI improvements across the organisation. Key activity has included:

- Launching our employee networks – we are delighted to have three fully established networks, led by staff, that focus on menopause, leaders of all colours and LGBTQI+ and allies.
- Successfully celebrated a number of cultural events, such as Black History Month (BHM) and LGBTQ History Month. We put on an extensive programme for BHM in 2022. This included special guest speakers, spotlights on staff from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, blogs from senior leaders relating to BHM topics, and a considerable bank of BHM resources for staff to access.
- Taking part in the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) pilot in social care, which was led by the Department for Health and Social Care, and reporting for the first time about the experiences of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff. The WRES aims to gather data and information about staff to identify any areas of best practice, or any areas for improvement in relation to race and ethnicity. Our WRES report is now included in our annual equalities reporting.



Jabed Hussain, our Associate Director for Business Efficiency and Digital Transformation, invited colleagues to take part in the Ramadan Challenge at the end of March 2023. Twelve staff members took part and fasted for a day alongside their Muslim colleagues with the aim of promoting understanding and awareness of the difficulties and rewards of observing Ramadan. After the event, those that took part shared their experiences with other colleagues including the challenges they faced during the day, what they learned about

“ Overall, the Ramadan Challenge provided participants with a greater understanding of the significance of fasting in Ramadan, fostered a sense of community, and encouraged dialogue and empathy among colleagues with different beliefs and backgrounds. I'm very proud of the organisation and my colleagues for supporting and taking part in this with me. Hopefully we will get even more participation next year. ”

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 having further positive impact over the coming year.

To find out more about Achieving for Children and the work we do, please visit [our website](#).

