

Equalities Report 2020/21



achieving
for children

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June 2021 (v1)

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: what we know about equality and diversity in relation to the children, young people and families we support and our workforce and what it tells us, what we have achieved during 2020/21, and our plans for the next 12 months. Given the previous 12 months have been dominated by COVID-19, we have included a specific section in the report in relation to the impact of the pandemic on minority groups.

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

The terminology Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) 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. At the time of writing this report, we are consulting with our workforce as to how we should reference minoritised groups. For the purpose of this report, where possible we have refrained from using the term BAME and use the phrase 'Black and other minoritised groups' but recognise that as the report is a reflection on the previous 12 months work, BAME may be referenced when providing examples of work undertaken.



Our approach to equality and diversity

Our approach to managing equality and diversity is set out in an equality and diversity policy which has been agreed by the Company Leadership Team. An equality and diversity framework has been put in place to sit alongside the policy, and the key elements of the framework can be found below.

Responsibility for equality and diversity

While the AfC Board of Directors and Company Leadership Team have ultimate responsibility for equality and diversity 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.

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/>

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Our commitment to equality and diversity

An Equality and Diversity Board (formerly known as Equality and Diversity Forum) was established in 2019. The purpose of the group is to lead cultural change across Achieving for Children so that as an organisation we embrace and celebrate diversity. Its aim is to support staff to understand differences and behave respectfully to each other so that people want to work and stay working in the company and that we can respond to the different needs of service users.

In December 2020, Melody Chiramba, AfC Fostering Panel Adviser and Elise Kitson, Educational Psychologist, were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair of the Equality and Diversity Board after a company-wide election process, whereby staff representatives expressed an interest, were shortlisted and voted in by over 200 staff.

The role of the Chair and Vice Chair is to work alongside senior managers to help implement AfC's Equality and Diversity Board Action Plan which has been designed to promote, improve and sustain equality, diversity and inclusion.

Melody Chiramba

Chair, Equality and Diversity Forum

Elise Kitson

Vice Chair, Equality and Diversity Forum

Quote from Melody and Elise

“We wanted to be Chair and Vice Chair for Equality and Diversity (E&D) because we are passionate about social justice. We want to make and be a part of the positive change for people who have been marginalised and unheard. We want to see E&D being prioritised and consistently on the agenda for our organisation to promote inclusivity.

As these are new roles in AfC, we are creating the roles and trying to put the systems and structures in place to embed E&D practice through our organisation. This requires a lot of background work behind the scenes so please be assured that we are proactively driving this agenda.

As equality and diversity is an important and huge topic to cover, we have made the decision that our initial remit will be focused on improving staff experiences and diversity within our workforce.”



Challenge to our approach to equality and diversity

Challenge will be provided to AfC's equality and diversity practice by the Equalities and Diversity Board. In addition, the equalities lead will attend equality and diversity meetings within each council as required. Achieving for Children will also attend 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 equality and diversity.

Reporting and monitoring

Achieving for Children will produce an annual equalities summary 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.



2. What do we know and what does it tell us?

Our workforce

What we know

As at 31 March 2021, Achieving for Children has 1,261 employees (equating to 1,068 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. We work hard to ensure that our workforce represents the diversity of the children and young people we work with. We are also committed to the recruitment, training, development and promotion of people with disabilities.

Please note that the following information covers a snapshot of workforce data as at 31 March 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).

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Age: The majority of employees are aged between 30 and 50:

25.5% are aged 50 to 59

25.1% are aged 30 to 39

22.6% are aged 40 to 49

15.5% are aged 20 to 29

10.1% are aged 60 and over

1.4% are aged 16 to 19

Gender: 82.0% of our employees are female.

Disability: 5.0% of our employees reported that they had a disability.

Religion: The largest faith group within our workforce is Christian (54.0%). Employees with no faith or religion or who did not declare their religion account for 37.0% of the workforce.

Marital status: 49.0% of our employees are married or in a civil partnership, 26.0% are single, and 6.0% have a partner.

Ethnicity: 19.0% of our employees are from Black or other minoritised groups. Black or other minoritised groups refers to all ethnic groups except the White British group. Other minority groups include White minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

Sexuality: For the data we hold, 4.0% of our employees are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or other.



How we compare nationally

To encourage a diverse workforce, we ensure that the recruitment of staff across Achieving for Children is consistent, fair and safe through policies and processes.

Our workforce age profile aligns nationally: a report by the DfE (Children and Family Social Work Workforce in England) showed that 30.0% of children and family social workers are aged 30 to 39.

Locally, our workforce is largely representative of the general population:

- in Kingston, those aged 30 to 44 make up 24.0% of the population
- in Richmond, those aged 30 to 44 make up 23.9% of the population
- in Windsor and Maidenhead, those aged 30 to 44 make up 22.1% of the 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.

Although there are no directly comparable statistics available across the local government workforce regarding disability, it is thought that 19.0% 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, guidance is being developed for managers to provide advice on making reasonable adjustments.

The percentage of our workforce who are 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 78.0% of local government officers are female. Similarly, a Department for Education report in 2018, 'Children and Family Social Work Workforce in England', found that 85.0% 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 is reviewed every two years to support our female workforce and those with caring responsibilities.

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.



Our workforce has a slightly higher Black or other minority group representation than the general population in Richmond (15.9%), but is less representative than the general population in Kingston (31.0%) and Windsor and Maidenhead (22.5%). 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.

The religious status of our workforce is reflected locally.

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.

Gender pay gap

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, public sector employers with 250 or more employees are required to publish a snapshot of their workforce data. Due to the continuing impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have announced that employers will have an additional six months after the current deadline to report their gender pay gap information (by October 2021).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gender-pay-gap-reporting-changes-to-enforcement>

The 2020-21 data will be published on the AfC website when it becomes available.

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Our ongoing work

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

We provide a wide range of training course for staff including the following.

- eLearning: equality and diversity
- Racial justice conference
- Introduction to gender identity and trans awareness
- Understanding Islam and challenging Islamophobia
- eLearning: unconscious bias (this is being reviewed in light of research that has questioned the impact of this training)
- Culture, diversity and identity for foster carers

Training needs are under constant review and various courses are commissioned as and when required.

To better understand our workforce and their needs, the Equality and Diversity Board runs lunchtime equality and diversity forums. These 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. The forum has launched a staff survey which will be analysed to understand staff experiences around race, disability and LGBTQIA+ - which were the key areas identified from the survey. In addition, the Equality and Diversity Board are planning to establish regular one-to-one equality and diversity sessions with the chair and vice chair of the board for staff to come and share their issues or concerns in a safe space.



Our children and young people

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: Children's Social Care Performance Reporting - April 2021, the Kingston and Richmond SEND Dataset - April 2021, the Kingston Children and Young People's Needs Assessment - September 2017, the Richmond Children and Young People's Needs Assessment - 2019, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Self-Evaluation - January 2018, Achieving for Children Annual Equalities Report 2020/21, Schools Spring Census- 2021, ONS Mid-year population estimates 2019.

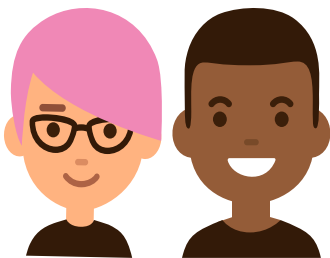
We have combined the data across Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead to provide a picture across the whole of Achieving for Children.

General information about our children and young people

125,899
children and young people
aged 0 to 19 years old



37.0% of
children and young
people are Black or
other minoritised
backgrounds (including
White other)



The gender breakdown of
males and females aged
0 to 19 is almost **50/50**
in all boroughs

8.3%
of children
in poverty

3.4% of young people
not in education, employment
or training (or not known)

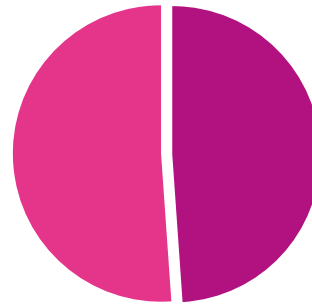
3,990 children and young people with an
education, health and care plan

School population

78,045
pupils



177
schools
(not including
independent settings)



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

14.3% of pupils have
a disability (with an EHCP or
receiving SEN support)



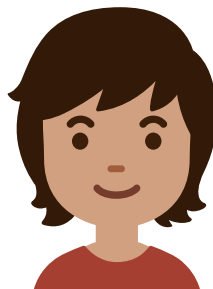
46.7% of
pupils are BAME
(including White
other)

11.2% of pupils are
eligible for Free School Meals

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

2,765
children and
young people
supported
by children's
social care



51.3% of
CiN are Black and
other minoritised
(including
White other)

12.9% 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

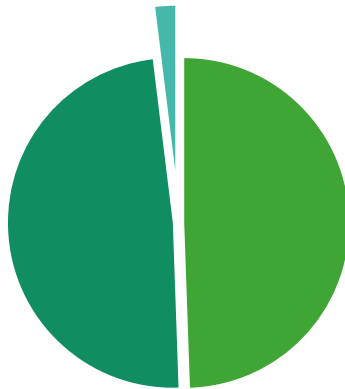
The most common belief in the
CiN cohort is **no religion**

Children subject to a child protection plan (CPP)

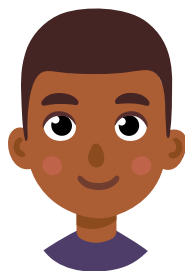


5 to 9

The most common age group for children subject to a CPP is 5 to 9 years old

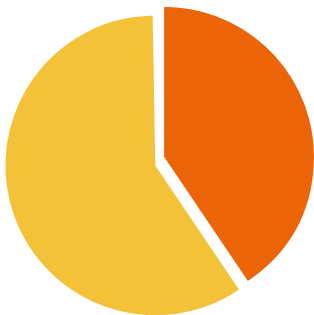


Of the children subject to a CPP, **49.5%** are female and **48.6%** are male (**1.9%** unborn)

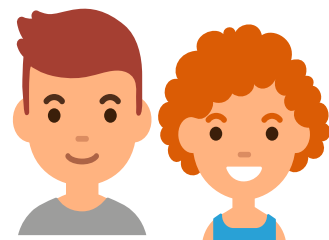


49.1% of children subject to a CPP are BAME (including White other)

Children looked after



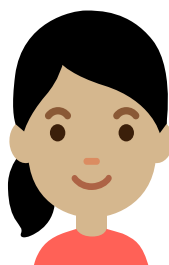
Of the CLA cohort, **40.7%** are female and **59.36%** are male



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



24.2% of CLA have a disability (with an EHCP)



51.4% of CLA are Black and other minoritised backgrounds, and white other

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



Of those with SEND, **28.6%** are female and **71.4%** are male

11 to 15

The most common age group for children and young people with SEND is 11 to 15 years old



2.5% of children and young people have a disability (with an EHCP)

3. What do we need to do by 2024 (Our equality objectives)

To ensure we are able to meet our public sector equality duty, we have identified five key equality objectives that focus on those areas of equality and diversity most needing action across Achieving for Children. They have been developed based on a review of key equality and diversity data and information and through focus groups with service managers.

These are new objectives developed for 2020 to 2024. We will report on progress against these objectives in the annual equalities report each year.

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 risen by more than 50% in a single year, with increasing numbers having their claims for asylum refused. 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.

Progress to date:

We provide dedicated support to our UASC to help them to grow and develop. Our Leaving Care 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.

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 EHCP 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 (SEND) is an area for improvement.

The report published in January 2020 by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, highlighting failings by Richmond Council and Achieving for Children in relation to historic support provided to three young people with SEND and their families, shows that we still have a way to go until we can be confident that these families are receiving the quality provision that they deserve. The findings have reinforced the importance of the transformation work that we began two years ago and have and will continue to improve the experience of the young people we support.

We know that we must make improvements to SEND provision, not just in Achieving for Children, but also in our schools, colleges and health services. 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.

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Progress to date:

See pages 23-25 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 EHCPs 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:

Developing and implementing a mental health strategy that outlines responsibilities for Achieving for Children, 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 both 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:

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 is underway. This will bring 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.

See pages 23-25 for other 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'.



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:

The Equality and Diversity Board (see above for more details) has taken a lead on equality and diversity activity within Achieving for Children. Terms of reference for the group have been established and an action plan is being developed to set out the work programme for the coming year. Dedicated project management support has been put in place to support the Equality and Diversity Board.

Achieving for Children also confirmed in April 2021, that we will be one of around 18 local authorities who will be part of the Workforce Race Equality Standard. This is an approach to improving the diversity and inclusiveness of an organisation that will be implemented across the whole organisation.

What will we achieve by 2024?

The workforce will be more reflective of the local community that it services across all areas. Staff equality groups will be well-established and will work alongside the equality and diversity forum to ensure that Achieving for Children is known for embracing diversity and championing inclusions for our workforce and the children and families that we work with, so that their identities are promoted and their individual needs are met.



Equality objective 5:

Tackling racial equality

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 in Richmond for all groups, and for black pupils it is the worst in London. In Kingston, black pupils perform the same as white 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
- SEN without an EHCP and in Richmond it is also high for mixed heritage pupils
- SEN with an EHCP 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

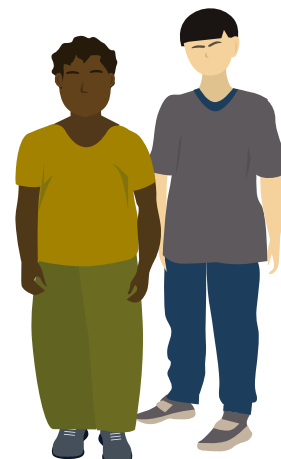
As a result of the findings, we have identified a new objective for Achieving for Children to take forward.

Progress to date:

As this is a new objective, work has only recently commenced. The aim will be to establish a working group to consider the data and what this means for the children and young people in our boroughs and what we can do as an organisation to address these inequalities and what decisions must we take to do it.

What will we achieve by 2024?

An action plan will be in place that sets out clearly how we are addressing the areas of disproportionality that have been identified. The work we have undertaken to address racial equality will be having a demonstrable impact on our children and young people.



4. What we have achieved (April 2020 to March 2021)

This section sets out our key achievements in relation to equality and diversity and demonstrates how we are implementing the PSED and meeting our equality objectives. Furthermore, our Impact Report sets out the impact that we have had on the lives of children, young people and families during 2020/21 that does not directly relate to the protected characteristics. This can be found on our website:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/about-us/reports-and-documents/impact-report>

Age

- We are an official partner in the Government's KickStart scheme which involves fully funding and support to 16 to 24 year olds to complete six months of paid work to gain valuable work skills, knowledge and experience. We have offered nine of our 16 internal Kickstart roles so far, with five offered to care leavers or young people with EHCPs. We have been approved to recruit up to 121 across 31 organisations in Kingston and Richmond. So far, 11 young people have already started jobs with partner employers and a further 37 are currently in the recruitment stage
- We launched the AfC Virtual College to improve the experience of our older looked after young people, by creating clearer pathways and opportunities for students from 16 to 25 with the aim of reducing the incidence of those not in education employment and training (NEET). The college is part of our wider Virtual School offer, which has been rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and which seeks to support the education of all of our looked after children.
- We successfully secured an extension to our Transition Hub project which will run until December 2021. We originally bid to the Youth Endowment Fund, for funding to set up Transition Hubs, in partnership with St Mary's University in Twickenham and Barnet Council. The Transition Hubs have, so far, supported 40 future students in care aged 11 to 14 years old, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children, to improve their long-term outcomes using an evidence-informed and tailored programme of support.
- 'Onwards and Upwards', is a Windsor and Maidenhead summer transition programme for Year 6 pupils who need additional social and emotional support when moving to secondary school.
- We have transformed our early help services in Windsor and Maidenhead into a Family Hub model following an extensive 20 week public consultation exercise which received almost 700 responses. The consultation highlighted how important early help services are to our families and demonstrated support for the new proposed model and the principles that underpin it.

As a result, we have now remodelled our children's centres, youth centres, parenting service and our family resilience service into new hubs that are largely focused on a targeted and specialist offer to enable us to deliver services to families that need the support the most, in addition to maintaining our universal health provision.



- Through a range of initiatives, we have supported over 400 young people who are currently receiving support from our early help and social care services and who are engaged in risky behaviour, on the edge of care or who are at risk of social isolation. In Windsor and Maidenhead, this included the VALU project which is a free, fun, educational, diversionary project for young people aged 13 to 16 at risk of exploitation, which aims to promote self-value in young people and the Esteem project which provides positive activities for young people who are at risk of social isolation for reasons including; low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, long term medical conditions, bullying or family circumstances.

Disability

- A new language translation functionality was implemented on the SEND Local Offer website to improve accessibility.
- We have supported 85 apprentices via virtual learning platforms and remote teaching mechanisms during the pandemic. Of these, 11 have education, health and care plans or self-declared learning difficulties or disabilities, and two are care leavers. Progression rates remain very good with over 80% of employers offering advanced apprenticeships or permanent employment opportunities for their existing apprentices.
- Our Educational Psychology Service worked with 44 schools to deliver the Attachment Aware Schools Award which aims to provide a framework of support and understanding for schools and other educational establishments within which children and young people who have experienced adversity, can heal, thrive, play, and learn.
- Eight young people with SEND were supported to start independent travel training with five successfully completing the training in 2020/21. The training supports children and young people to become more independent by learning the skills and building the confidence to use public transport safely.
- Our new purpose-built short break centre for children and young people with disabilities, Rainbow House, is due to open in July 2021. The seven-bed centre will provide overnight short break care for children and young people aged from 8 to 18 years who may have multiple disabilities, complex medical needs or challenging behaviours. The design, planning and even naming of the centre, has been heavily informed by the views and experiences of children, young people and families.
- To meet rising demand for school places, we made good progress on several key school place projects including: the expansion of Burlington Junior School, a proposed six-form entry 11 to 16 Church of England secondary school, a proposed 90-place special school for children and young people with ASD, another satellite provision of Dysart Special School, a 20 place specialist resource provision (SRP) which will open at Hampton High in September 2021, and an ambitious proposal to create a 16 to 25 SEND campus with Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust.
- A number of other key school expansion projects are also in the pipeline, which will further enhance the SEND Local Offer by substantially increasing the number of special school and 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 two new specialist bases in mainstream schools for 20 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in Windsor and Maidenhead which are due to open in September 2021.



- We created an online group for parents of children experiencing anxiety, which follows a cognitive behavioural therapy model, but provides the additional benefit of receiving support and being able to learn from parents in the same situation. Since September 2020, the Emotional Health Service has run nine of these groups for 51 parents. 90% of the children open to the Emotional Health Service, whose parents attended the group, have been discharged following the end of this intervention. The outcomes of the group have been very positive.
- 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 have worked closely with our councils and the Department for Education this year to agree additional safety valve funding for the coming five years. The funding will be aligned to successful delivery of the SEND Futures Plans and will lead to a more sustainable financial footing for the delivery of SEND services moving forward. The agreement is 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.
- The Lighthouse Project, run by AfC's Youth Service, is a provision for young people aged 11 to 24 years with ASD or ADHD. The sessions provide a support network for all members to be able to discuss any concerns and provide a range of activities within a safe environment.

Gender

- To celebrate International Women's Day, staff were asked to nominate a woman in Achieving for Children who inspires them and all nominations were collated and presented into a celebratory video which was shared in staff news. There was an overwhelming response.
- Due to multiple requests, the Kingston and Richmond Youth Service launched its TikTok account on international women's day (8 March 2021) with staff and young people sharing the women who inspire them. At time of writing, there were 17 videos uploaded with over 3,500 views.

Sexual orientation

- Dr Jamie Wilo, LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training Lead and Transgender Training Pathway Lead at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation, provided dedicated training to Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Service Team.
- 'No Straight Answer' provides support, guidance and a safe space for young people aged 11 to 19, identifying as LGBTQI+ to make new friends, socialise and take part in a wide range of activities. It also promotes young people's understanding of LGBTQI+ identity, relationships and mental health.

"I didn't have any experience, but the Kickstart scheme has allowed me to experience many things, which can mean in the future I will be employable and will have the necessary skills and experience to go further in the sector."

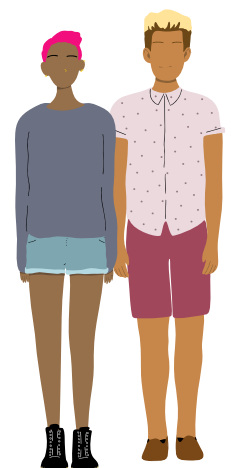
Feedback from a young person employed as an apprentice through the KickStart scheme.

"Onwards and Upwards has given my son confidence. My son had his first day at school and he actually wasn't that bothered about going in and he said he had a good day. Thank you for accepting my son into the group. In just three days it has shown that he can do new things and that he doesn't have to worry."

feedback from a parent.

"Onwards and Upwards brought my child together with like-minded children in a small, safe environment to share and learn. My child was able to meet other children going to the same school. A wonderful team, welcoming, friendly and knowledgeable - much appreciated."

feedback from a parent.



- Since October 2017 we have delivered lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and others (LGBTQ+) training across the company. The training is designed to enable delegates to understand what steps they can take to be inclusive to the young LGBTQ+ people in their care and also how they can challenge their own understanding, to be a greater support to these young people. Public Health England's study, 'Producing modelled estimates of the size of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population of England' (2017), estimates that 2.5% of England's population identifies as LGB or 'other', with the largest concentration, 5.5% in Greater London. This demonstrates the importance of ensuring our employees are able to meet the needs of young people who are LGBTQ+.

Gender reassignment

- Since December 2016, we have delivered an introduction to gender identity and trans awareness training course to a number of our frontline staff. The course introduces the key information employees need to know to support trans colleagues or to work with trans clients or pupils. The proportion of people falling somewhere on the broad trans spectrum is estimated at around 1%. Of those, the number seeking a medically supported transition is growing rapidly. Any organisation now needs to be ready to encounter real-life situations involving trans people. The training encourages participants to get involved in thinking through what trans means and ways to achieve equality and inclusivity in practice.
- We are currently developing workplace guidance for managers to help support staff who identify as trans, by providing some practical advice and resources.

"I have benefited immensely and the support couldn't have come in at any better time. With the lockdown on and families struggling to cope with everyday challenges of life, the programme showed how we can make some very small changes to the way we live and the profound impact that it could make and help us cope with the situation a bit better. So for that, I sincerely thank the team."

A parent who accessed a programme of support from the Family Resilience Service in Windsor and Maidenhead.



Marriage and civil partnership

- The Safeguarding Children Partnership provides training to staff to raise awareness on forced marriage. 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.

Pregnancy and maternity

- The school nurse enuresis service continues to be well evaluated by the 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 delivered tailored support for expectant mothers amongst our children in care cohort. For example, the Young People's Supported Accommodation Service in Kingston and Richmond has established a weekly life-skills session for our care leavers who are young parents, in collaboration with midwives and a local faith group. Based on the success of the initial group, we have set up a second session. The young people attending have been extremely positive about the group as they have said they previously found it difficult to access traditional parent groups. We have also established a play session called Busy Babies for other young mums up to 24 years of age and their children to come together and meet new friends. The group has been well received and has brought together a number of young parents who would otherwise be socially isolated.

Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)

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- We successfully held our first ever 'Racial justice in education' conference online in February 2021. Eighty delegates from schools across Kingston and Richmond attended. This has been followed up through presentations at school improvement forums, in networks and through bespoke training and support for schools. Our CPD offer for schools is being developed to support schools to design and implement antiracist approaches and the education team are working in partnership with local organisations to further develop our offer.
- Achieving for Children has worked closely with schools to develop a multilingual staff register where staff across schools volunteer for others to support communication with multilingual families. Supporting schools to plan and deliver quality first teaching for all pupils has been a key focus in networks and training with schools.
- We deliver a range of training courses across all our children's centre provision aimed at parents who have English as a second language. We hold well attended 'Learning English at home' classes at the Barnes Children's Centre to help improve English reading and writing in small and friendly sessions, and hold 'English as a second language' (ESOL) classes at our children's centres. We liaise closely with local community organisations Refugee Action Kingston and Learn English at Home.



- Since November 2016, we have delivered a cultural awareness training course across Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead. The training is designed for professionals working with children and families to increase their awareness of how the cultural background of service users and themselves will affect their work. The training supports our employees to be better placed to consider how sensitivity, awareness, responsiveness and confidence can enable them to better meet the needs of service users. It is based on learning from serious case reviews (SCRs) around 'cultural relativism' and the need to be sensitive and curious, but not lose sight of children's voices in safeguarding practice. Research over the last six years has highlighted that a lack of trust and understanding between the family and the professional hindered the correct support.
- Throughout Black History Month, the Kingston and Richmond Leaving Care Team and the Allioukana Singers sent three barrels of school equipment to the Montserrat Children's Society in preparation to celebrate the Universal Children's Day on 20 November 2020.

Religion and belief (includes lack of 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 judgment, 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 Achieving for Children we have hosted a number of events for our staff, including a monthly film club and have an annual celebration calendar with messages of support from our Directors of Children's Services.



5. Intersectionality

Our work over the last 12 months, particularly through the completion of equality assessments, has highlighted some areas of intersectionality, 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 Black and other minoritised groups

What we have achieved

A variety of training and support groups have taken place with a particular focus on BAME and parenting.

BAME community support: family links parenting programme

Family links parenting programme incorporating Islamic values alongside stress management and personal development groups within the BAME community is held on a rolling programme in the local community.

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The programme aims to promote family wellbeing and a healthy society by:

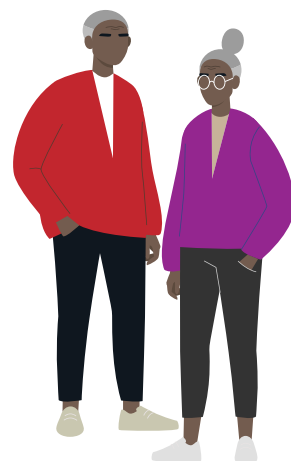
- targeting the root causes of poor mental health and emotional health
- breaking the cycle of ineffective, neglectful or abusive parenting
- transforming children's and parent's life chances by trumping class background and parental income
- promoting parental resilience
- providing opportunities for volunteering for the service
- supporting parents to enter training and/or employment

BAME community support: stress management group

A 10 week programme to support parents to understand and recognise stress, increasing awareness of the adverse effects of stress and the impact that stress may have on the role of being a parent. The aim of the programme is to support participants to develop techniques and coping strategies to manage stress effectively in their day-to-day lives.

BAME community support: personal development group

A 12 week programme to improve parental self-awareness and support participants to identify their talents and aspirations whilst providing advice and guidance on how to progress towards identified personal goals.



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 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

- In March 2021, we launched the new SEND Register in Kingston and Richmond to capture the details of more children and young people with SEND to encourage greater engagement with families, more two way communication, and a means of sharing information about local support services. The register collects information about the young person, including equality and diversity so more analysis can be drawn from. This will enable us to have a greater understanding of the community we serve and enable Achieving for Children to provide the right service delivery. Since the launch of the new register in mid-March 2021, there have been over 1,000 families sign up to the register with new registrations coming in every day. Windsor and Maidenhead are currently reviewing and refreshing their register for the same purpose.
- The Kingston Parent Carer Forum in partnership with Achieving for Children, conducted a piece of work to improve accessibility for different groups (such as, Black, Asian and minority ethnic and wider socio economic groups) within SEND communities. The feedback received will influence our communication methods with different groups going forward.

Foster carers

Foster carers are more likely to be in the middle-aged to older age bracket (45 years old +) and female.

What we have achieved

- The Fostering Team launched a brand new recruitment campaign to encourage a variety of foster carers to come forward, with a focus on attracting younger couples and individuals.



Young offenders

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):

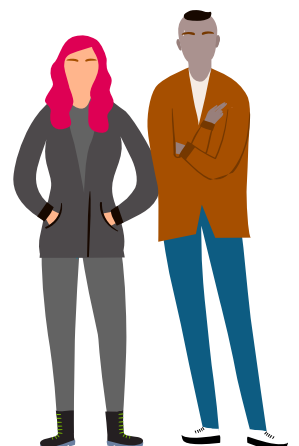
- aged 16 to 17 years
- more likely to have SEND than the general population
- male
- more likely to be from a BAME background than the general population
- more likely to have been a child in need, looked after child or on a child protection plan than the general population
- more likely to have substance 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 BAME 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.

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The Lammy Review, chaired by David Lammy MP, was an independent review of the treatment of, and outcomes for BAME individuals in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). It was published in September 2017. The review identified no single explanation for the disproportionate representation of BAME 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.

BAME 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

- As part of Project X, which is funded by the Violence Reduction Unit, we supported 161 young people to engage in structured positive activities as a means of reducing serious youth violence and knife crime. Activities offered include X-ercise, with a focus on fitness through one-on-one and group sessions, Gourmet X - a virtual online cooking project, X-press yourself - a creative music course, and X-cast, a podcast project.
- The Youth Justice Management Board sub-group (Kingston and Richmond) is dedicated to tackling disproportionality. The Youth Justice Service (YJS) Management Board has operational sub-groups to lead on areas of priority and report to the board on progress against action plans. In acknowledgement of the overrepresentation of Black and other minoritised groups of children in the youth justice system, particularly on court orders and in custody, the YJS Management Board have included a subgroup that is focused on tackling disproportionality. This also ensures the other sub-groups (Diversion, Desistance and Participation) have actions to address disproportionality. The sub-group has responsibility for ensuring that the Youth Justice Team is responding to the recommendations from the Lammy Review (2017), an independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system.



6. COVID and the effects on minoritised groups

COVID-19 has been a dominant part of all of our lives for the past 12 months and despite the unpredictability and uncertainty presented by the pandemic, we have continued to deliver services throughout. It is still quite premature to understand the real impact of COVID on marginalised groups, however throughout the past 12 months there have been some emerging themes.

According to a report commissioned by the UK Parliament:

- during the first six months of the pandemic, people from ethnic minority groups were more likely to have COVID-19 and also more likely to experience severe outcomes from infection, including death. Evidence suggests this is largely due to social inequalities such as housing, occupational risk and access to healthcare
- lockdown measures disproportionately affected some communities more than others. Those from Bangladeshi and Black African communities were more likely to have experienced financial insecurity or mental health issues than their White counterparts

The charity Mind concluded that pre-existing inequalities have been worsened by the pandemic, and published a report highlighting how the pandemic's effects on mental health have been disproportionate. They identified that the following groups of people are more likely to report that their mental health has declined.

- Women
- People with disabilities
- Those living in social housing
- People with eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, or personality disorders
- Frontline workers

This has been reflected within our service, being evidenced through staff sickness absence, increased referral rates to our services and via feedback from both staff and service users as to how they are managing through lockdown.

What we have achieved

Minority groups and the risk of COVID

- The safety of staff and our families has been paramount throughout COVID-19. Our Workforce Development Team developed a range of risk assessments to support staff and families who were required to come into one of our buildings. The risk assessment was just one of the measures put in place to support managers and staff in ensuring there was minimised disruption to services.
- The risk assessments were a tool to help identify where additional measures were required if a service needed to be carried out face-to-face, recognising individuals who may be more susceptible to Coronavirus, including:
 - those who were pregnant
 - the clinically vulnerable
 - Black and other minoritised groups



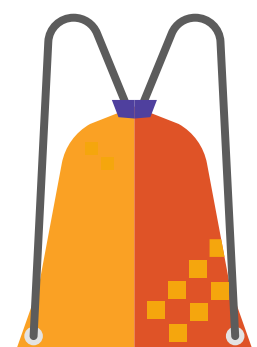
- The Equality and Diversity Board has provided support and information to our workforce to raise awareness on the COVID vaccine, to enable staff to make an informed choice about receiving the vaccination. A dedicated session was held for staff from an ethnic minority, to alleviate some of the anxieties and mistrust that particular minority groups had about the vaccine.
- In Kingston and Richmond, schools were provided with information on supporting Black and other minoritised groups through COVID.

Social inequality and access to services

- FUEL: Feed Ur Everyday Lives has been established in response to the Department for Education funding to provide a range of fun and enjoyable activities and food to children and young people aged 5 to 16 years who are eligible for free school meals. We are expecting over 1,000 children and young people to engage with the programme over the year which will support them to eat healthily and understand nutrition, to be more active, to be safe and not to be socially isolated, and to learn more about the different services we offer in the local area.
- We supported over 20,000 families through the COVID Winter Support Grant across all three boroughs. The purpose of the grant was to help vulnerable households and families with children who were particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period, where alternative sources of assistance were not available.
- To support our children and young people, Achieving for Children, in partnership with the DfE scheme and the charity 'Keeping Kids Connected' have provided devices and Wi-Fi connections to our most vulnerable children and young people, across Kingston, Richmond, Windsor and Maidenhead. This has enabled young people to access remote learning throughout lockdown and stay engaged with their social work.
- We secured funding in Richmond from a local charity to create and deliver 130 'kit bags' for children aged 2 to 13 years who are supported by our social care services. The kit bags helped support virtual visiting and direct work with younger children and sibling groups by providing creative material and activities which helped our practitioners to engage with the children and capture their voices.

"I delivered my kit bags yesterday and all the children were over the moon. Parents have told me how invaluable this has been to them. This is a wonderful initiative!"

Feedback from a social worker who has used kit bags with the family they support.



The impact on mental health

- To support the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people during COVID, the Emotional Health Service launched its new online resource hub for professionals, families and young people to 'help families help themselves'. The resource hub contains links to online therapy providers such as Kooth, advice pages, information leaflets for young people, an online video library for parents with presentations on a range of topics from helping with sleep, supporting your child's anxiety to being ready to start primary school.
- Our Pupil Support Service, Emotional Health Service, Education Psychology Service and Education Inclusion Support Service have provided significant support to our school colleagues to help them continue to educate children and young people whether in school or at home, for example, supporting primary and secondary leaders on their return to school and providing a range of interventions to address poor pupil engagement as a result of the pandemic.
- In Windsor and Maidenhead, we rolled out the national 'Wellbeing for education return department for education programme which provided training and resources to schools to support staff, pupils and parents or carers with the impact of the pandemic on their mental health and wellbeing. The programme was delivered to 95% of schools across the region over a period of five weeks to 121 staff, including staff from nurseries and colleges, with nominated education leads from each setting attending two 1.5 hour twilight online training sessions.
- Our Workforce Development Team has provided a wealth of resources for staff to help them manage their wellbeing, including information on how to manage stress and feelings, stay positive whilst working from home and how to get a good night's sleep. Other initiatives which are routinely run, are wellbeing week which provides staff the opportunity in taking part in events and seminars, focusing on mental health.
- Kingston's and Richmond's Leaving Care Team supported The Gardening Project which was inspired by Start the Week, BBC Radio 4 Program with Sue Stuart-Smith, psychiatrist, author and keen gardener. The project started in June 2020 and finished in December 2020. Each household was given £30 to purchase gardening equipment and seeds. A visual diary was kept. The purpose of the competition was to not only make a change outdoors, but to help reduce stress, improve feeling of wellbeing and reduce symptoms in anxiety and depression. The competition was judged by the Children in Care Council. This project was very well received with high participation and as a result the Children in Care Council are expanding this project to each younger children with gardening opportunities during school holidays.

"Thank you for the help of the Education Psychology Service, as it immensely supported our students to deal with their emotional health and mental state of mind following the return to school after lockdown."

Feedback from a school who were provided with additional support for the return to school.



Appendix 1 - Action for Change pyramid



