



Induction Handbook

Children and Family Services



Contents

The vision	3
The mission	3
How to use this booklet	4
A brief introduction to Leicestershire	5
Structure of the council	6
Children and Family Services	8
Department plans	11
Children and Family Services structure	12
Our values	14
Confidentiality	15
Our practice framework	15
Listening and hearing	16
Working with us	17
Useful things to know	18
Final word	19

An electronic version of this booklet and a number of useful resources and links can be found on the [Learning Hub](#).

Welcome to new colleagues

Welcome to Leicestershire County Council and congratulations on your appointment to the Children and Family Services Department.



We are delighted that you are joining our experienced and committed workforce. You are now a member of a workforce that has a strong ethos of collaborative work both with each other and with children, young people and families. We strongly believe that listening to the voice of those we work with is pivotal to creating sustained, positive change and improving children's future life chances.

As you start out here in Leicestershire you are signing up to a shared vision and mission for local children and families:

The vision

Leicestershire is the best place for all children, young people and their families.

The mission

Children and young people in Leicestershire are safe and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health wellbeing and life chances improved within thriving communities.

To deliver our mission - whatever our role within the department, we believe that children and young people, their parents and their natural networks of support including schools and other settings, need to be at the centre of all aspects of our work.

We do this by having a strong focus on practice that builds productive relationships across the board. We must do this if we are to truly promote the wellbeing and development of all children so that they can flourish with their families, and wider networks.

Whilst our vision is clear and we have made some good progress – we know we are not where we want to be yet. If we are to do our best for children, we must always question how things could be better. So our improvement journey is challenging but necessary. There are some great services and some excellent practice in Leicestershire and these are strong foundations which will help us grow. However we are not complacent in our ambition to be the best we can be.

As a member of our team, your contribution to excellence is key. Our 'bottom line' for behaviour and the quality of work we expect to see on a daily basis is set out in this plan. Safe and effective services depends on a healthy culture of support and challenge – we believe we need both aspects if we are to make progress.

Director, Children and Family Services



A brief introduction to Leicestershire

Leicestershire is a large county covering an area of approximately 2,000 square kms and with more than 135,000 children living in the county council area.

If you are new to Leicestershire as a place to live – we hope you settle quickly. We're proud of Leicestershire, and we think it has much to offer.

- It's centrally located, easily reached by road or rail, and only an hour from London by train
- It's a hugely diverse and inclusive place to be, reflected by our diverse workforce
- The biggest Diwali celebrations outside India take place in the city
- There's stunning countryside right on our doorstep
- Our universities are world class
- We're home to pork pies, Stilton cheese and a battlefield where history was made.

How to use this booklet

This document is designed to orientate you to the department and to the wider council – we hope you find it useful.

A good induction is essential and your manager will develop a local service and team introduction for you. This is just to get you started! Take time to find out what you need in order to settle well in your chosen role. Your manager and your colleagues are vital sources of both information and support – make good use of them.

We hope that the guidance contained in this document will help create the kind of culture we all want to be part of. Remember too that induction is a process – not an event. You know how best you learn. Take the steps you need to – so that you can feel settled and comfortable in your new role.

We invite all new starters to:

- Use this handbook to orientate to you in your early days of working in Leicestershire
- Log on to the learning hub and book onto the induction programme
- Talk to your manager about your localised induction
- Read the Induction Procedure and Guidance for more in-depth information

We hope that you enjoy your new role and we look forward to meeting you and working with you.

The Senior Management Team

Leicestershire County Council also has a short document called '[Working at Leicestershire County Council](#)' that contains information for employees and people who may be thinking of joining us.





Structure of the council

Our Constitution sets out how we operate. It includes how we make decisions and the procedures we follow to make sure that these are efficient, clear and accountable to local people.

The council political structure is based on a Leader and Cabinet model.

County Councillors

The council is made up of 55 councillors who are elected every four years. Their main duty is to represent the views of their community and constituents.

You can view the current makeup of the council on our website.

All councillors meet six times a year at the full County Council meetings; which are normally open to the public.

The role of the full Council is to:

- agree the budget
- agree the major plans (Policy Framework) and any changes to them
- approve changes to the Constitution
- appoint the Cabinet, Scrutiny Commission and all main bodies
- receive reports from the Cabinet and Scrutiny bodies
- give councillors a chance to direct questions toward the Cabinet, Chairmen of boards and committees.
- deal with Notices of Motion – where members can raise any issue for debate

Leader and Cabinet

The council appoints the Leader, who is usually the head of the largest political group. He or she then appoints the Cabinet. The Cabinet is responsible for all major decisions, and for making recommendations to the Council on the budget and the major plans.

Overview and Scrutiny

There are a number of permanent Overview and Scrutiny committees. Their membership comprises of councillors who are not on the Cabinet. They give advice to the Cabinet and Council as a whole. They also monitor the decisions made by the Cabinet. Members of the public can attend these meetings, ask questions or present petitions.

Regulatory

The councillors who are not members of the Cabinet are instead involved in committees (sometimes known as boards) in the Regulatory area.

These boards and committees take decisions on non-executive areas. This includes tasks like licensing, planning and elections.

Scrutiny Review Panels

County councillors are also involved in developing and reviewing policies through review panels. The panels are not formal committees, but their final reports are usually made public once their findings are presented.

Departments within the council

The council has six departmental teams.

Adults and Communities

The Adults and Communities department is made up of two areas: Adult Social Care and Communities and Wellbeing.

Social care helps people do everyday things, participate in their community, and safeguards people from significant harm. Their focus is to promote, maintain and enhance people's independence so that they are healthier, stronger, more resilient and less

reliant on formal care.

Chief Executive's

The Chief Executive leads a range of services which provide leadership for the council and work with partners to achieve our aims. The work of the Chief Executive's department involves: legal services, democratic services, strategy and business intelligence; planning and the historic and natural environment as well as a range of regulatory functions such as trading standards and weddings and ceremonies.

Children and Family Services

Our priority is to ensure that children in Leicestershire are safe, achieve their potential and receive the right help at the right time. Supporting vulnerable young people is paramount and our focus is on ensuring children can live safely with their families and close to their own communities if at all possible.

We work closely with the police, health and other partners to protect and support children. 'Early intervention help' is at the heart of all our services,

Environment & Transport

The Environment and Transport team runs a range of services including sustainable transport, traffic and safety, design and maintenance of highways.

It is home to the pioneering Midlands Highway Alliance (MHA) – a partnership of highways authorities.

It also leads on a range of environment and waste services – including waste prevention, recycling and

composting, disposal contracts and liaison with district and borough councils.

Public Health

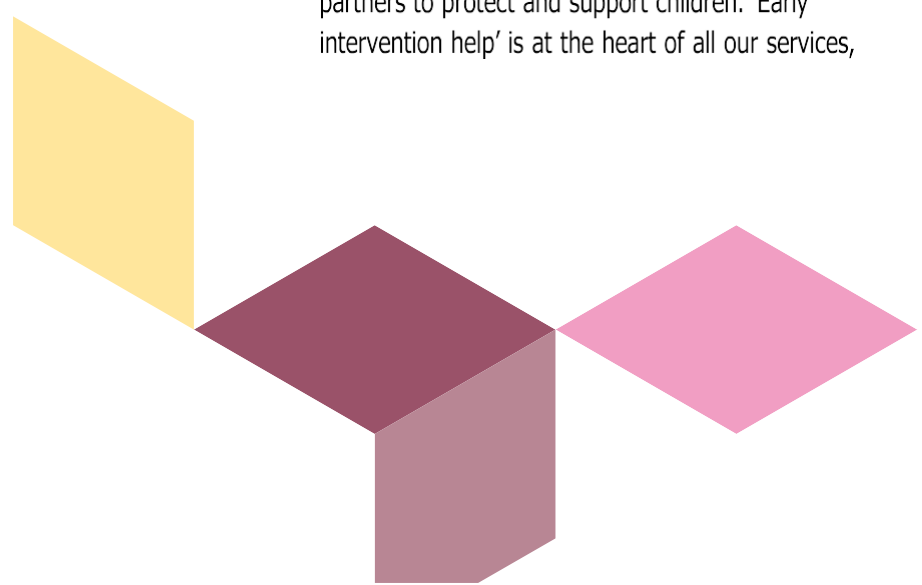
Public Health runs and commissions a range of services to improve the health of Leicestershire residents. We work closely with other council departments, NHS partners and other agencies.

Public Health services for Leicestershire include smoking cessation, weight management and sexual health and substance misuse treatment. We also run First Contact Plus – information and advice on many aspects of life including health, money and relationships.

Corporate Resources

Corporate Resources run many of the council's essential support services.

Their work includes a range of corporate services: transformation, commissioning and procurement support, HR, health and safety, organisation development and IT.





Children and Family Services

The department has more than 1,100 staff. It consists of two directorates, Children's Social Care and Education & Early Help Services.

During your induction you will hear directly from managers about services but here is a brief overview.

Children's Social Care - Fieldwork

Teams in this part of the business are working with children, young people and their families in crisis, and provide statutory intervention to children at risk of abuse and neglect. They work to try as far as possible to keep families together and do this by working with the families' wider network of support to build safety plans and change the day to day living arrangements for children. If this does not work they must take steps to keep children safe from further harm.

Services for Children in Care and Care Leavers

When a child cannot return home, the local authority has a legal responsibility to ensure that the child is well cared for and all their needs are met. Teams in this area of the business work to ensure this happens for all children where the plan is that they remain permanently in our care. When young people leave our care we continue to provide support and guidance as they move into adulthood; making sure they get the right advice about things like their health, housing and employment.

Fostering and Adoption & the Virtual School

Sometimes when children cannot live safely in their own families, we need to find alternative permanent families for them. These services recruit carers and adoptive parents for children, making sure there is a good match and that these new carers can help children flourish in all aspects of their lives. The Virtual School works with schools and colleagues to make sure that all children in care do well in their education and have the same opportunities as their peers.

Safeguarding improvement and quality assurance service

Safeguarding involves the protection of children and young people from risk or harm. The unit has a number of strands to its work all with a key focus on listening and advocating for the child in all aspects of the statutory work we deliver to children.

Practice Excellence

This team helps supports improvements in practice. It provides leadership and guidance about practice issues to those teams who are working directly with children and families.

Business Support

Provides a wide range of administrative support to all teams across the department

Education Sufficiency

Develops, plans and organises school places for children in Leicestershire overseeing the admissions arrangements to ensure every child can access high quality education

Education quality and Inclusion

Supports all education and early years settings to provide high quality education and works to ensure that vulnerable learners can achieve their potential and thrive where ever they attend school or college.

Special Educational Needs & Disability

SEND Services provide support to children, families and schools where a child or young person (up to 25 years of age where

they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan) has special educational needs or a disability. SEND Services include the following teams:

- SEN Assessment Service
- Specialist Teaching Services
- Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service
- Disabled Children's Social Work Service

Children and Families Wellbeing Service

The Children and families Wellbeing Service provides a variety of support to families with children aged between 0 and 19 years. The focus of the service is on providing early help and assistance to families with children whose challenges or problems would likely lead to the family requiring more specialist services primarily from social care or education related services at a critical time in their lives if their needs went unsupported.

Our departmental priorities

Our priorities as a department are set out in a plan. You should know what these are.

Everyone in the department makes a contribution to delivering these priorities. Our priorities as a department are set out in a plan. This is refreshed every three years.

Until 2020 these are:

- Every child gets the best possible start in life.
- Provide early intervention through working with families to build strength, resilience and confidence.
- All children in Leicestershire are living in stable environments and have secure attachments.
- Every child should have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their potential.
- We focus on improving children's emotional health and wellbeing.



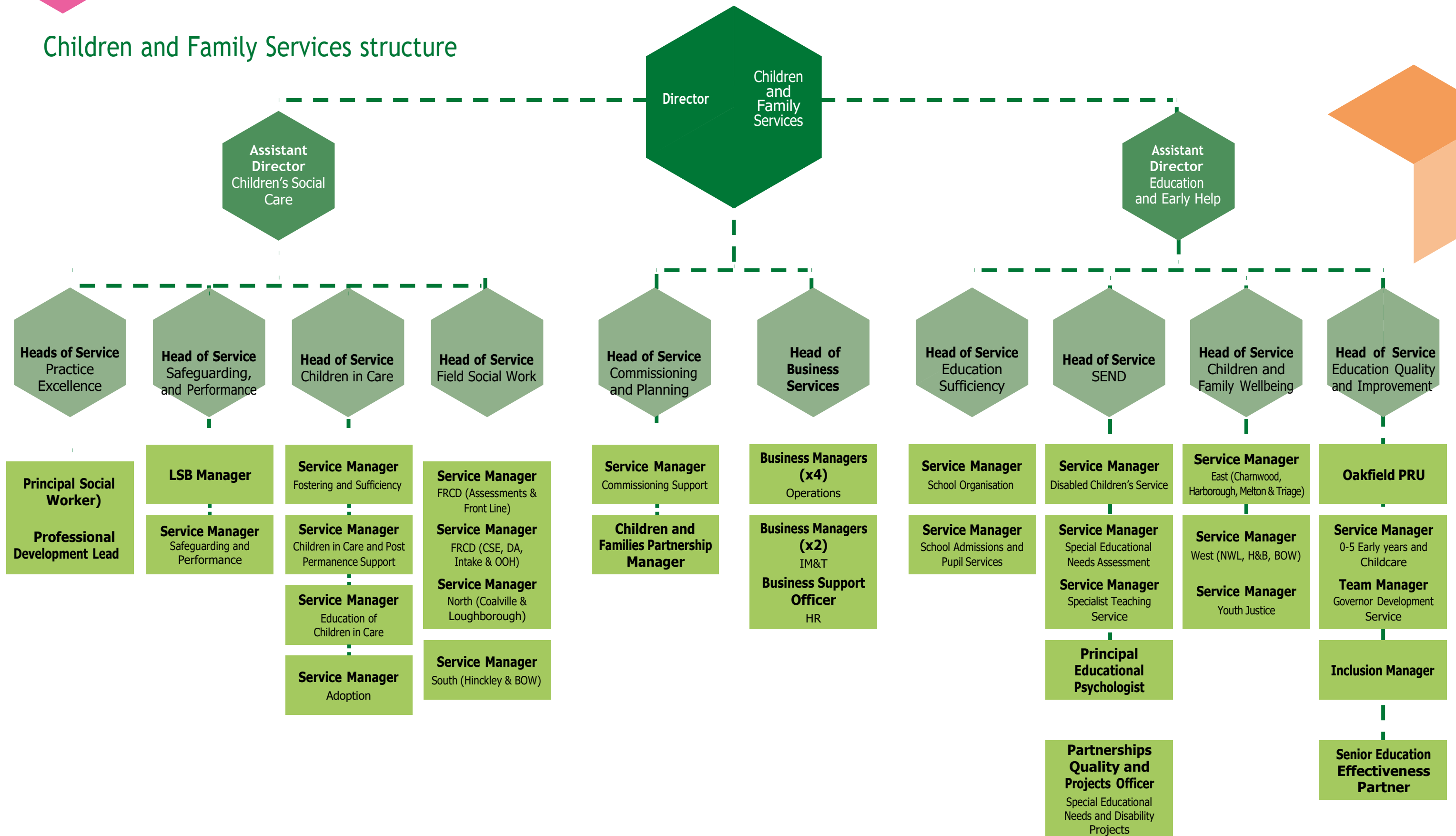
Department plans

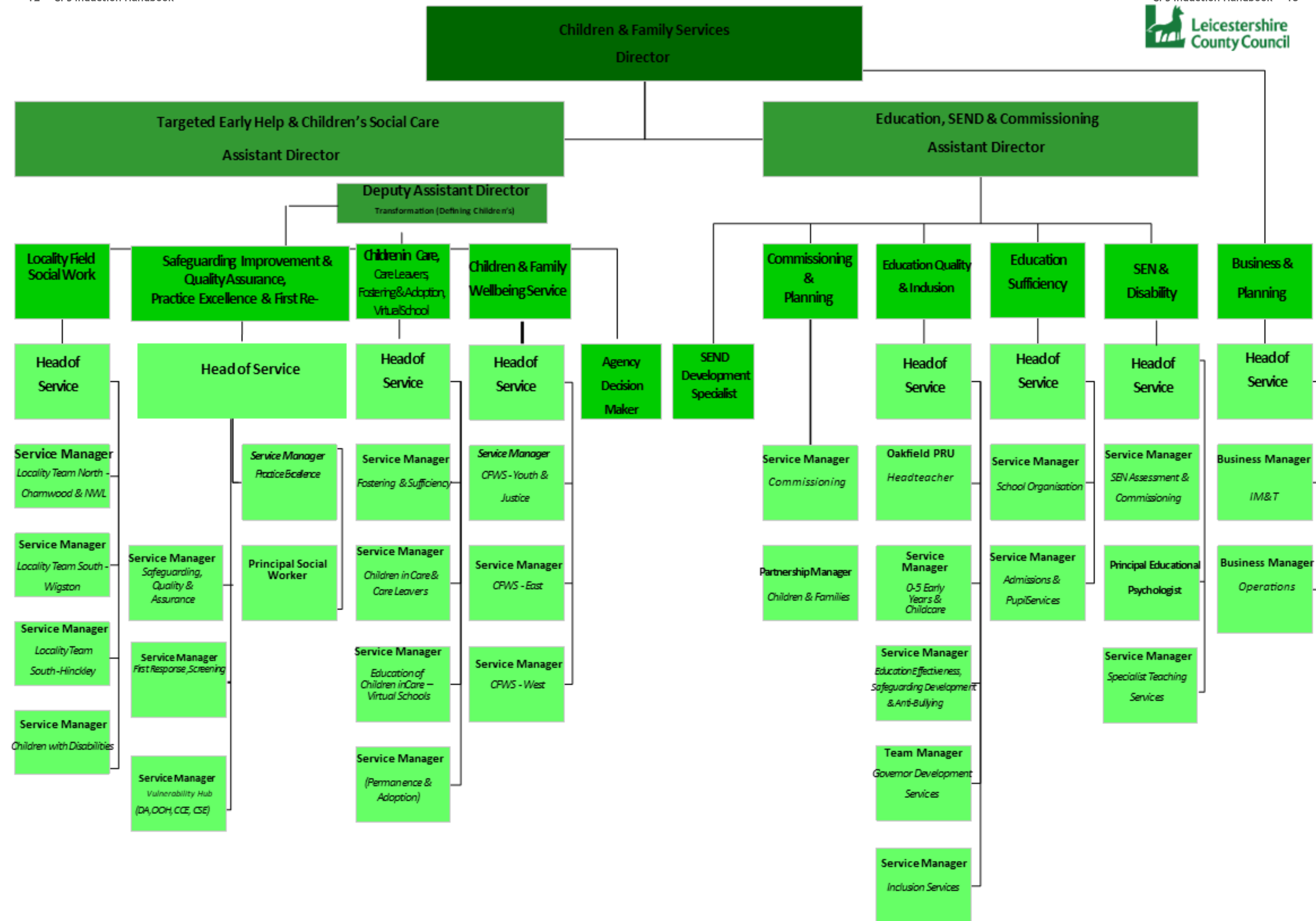
If Leicestershire is truly going to be 'the best place for all children, young people and their families' then it is vital that we have a good appreciation of what we are good at but also areas that require improvement.

There are some key documents that help us keep track of our progress:

- We have in place a departmental plan – this sets out in simple terms what we intend to do over the next period.
- Every year we develop a self-evaluation. This helps to give us a really clear picture of how well our services are doing against the priorities we have agreed. It sets out what difference we are making and most importantly it helps us to understand where we need to focus our attention so that we constantly improve the quality of services.
- In the department we are proud of our ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other local agencies – our partners. The partnership plan (link) sets out the shared priorities we have and how we will work together to achieve our goals.







Our values

Like any public sector organisation, we have policies, procedures and a code of conduct.

To achieve our aims and get the results we need to really make a difference, we must pay attention to our environment.

Our Values are:



Positivity

We find the best way to get things done, and aspire to be the best we can. We deliver quality services and inspire others to deliver results.



Trust and respect

We take ownership and accountability for our actions. We value diversity. We're inclusive and listen to the views of others.



Flexibility

We adapt to support the needs of the business. We work creatively, collaboratively and support our colleagues.



Openness and transparency

We are honest with the people we work with and serve. We share information and communicate clearly.

Confidentiality

At all times you must be aware of the need for certain information obtained in the course of your duties to remain confidential in relation to your work and you must not use or disclose to any person, either during or at any time after your employment any confidential information about the business or affairs of the County Council or about any other matters which may come to your knowledge in the course of your employment. For the purposes of this clause Confidential Information means any information or matter which is not in the public domain and which relates to the affairs of the County Council.

For the avoidance of doubt, the restriction in this clause does not apply to:

- prevent you from making a protected disclosure within the meaning of section 43A of the Employment Rights Act 1996; or
- use or disclosure that has been authorised by the County Council is required by law or by your employment.

If you have any doubt about being asked to supply information to another employee or a representative of an outside body, you should refer the matter to your line manager.

Our practice framework

In Leicestershire we have a practice framework which underpins our work to improve the lives of children and families living in Leicestershire. The framework is relevant for all those practitioners who work directly with children young people and their families and with their wider networks of support. It helps us ensure that all teams and services – across the department – are working coherently and more consistently as families move between teams and services.

The framework sets out our departmental philosophy, our principles for excellence in practice and describes our adopted practice methodology. Although originally an approach used in child protection work 'Signs of Safety' has been adapted very successfully into other parts of our system for example Early Help – 'Signs of Wellbeing'; Fostering & Adoption – 'Signs of Stability and Success' and Children in Care – 'Signs of Stability and Success'/'Signs of Wellbeing'. This model has a very strong focus on trust based relationships and an ethos of working with not 'doing to' or 'doing for'.

In joining our team here in Leicestershire you are signing up to working in this way – we expect you to adhere to our Practice Framework in you day to day practice. An introduction to Signs of Safety, Stability & Success) is provided to everyone in the department. Practitioners are expected to attend the two day training and managers and selected groups the five day advanced training.

Listening and hearing

Meaningful participation and active involvement of parents, carers, young people and children is central to our practice in the department.

Our values mean we must work openly and collaboratively with families – treating them with dignity and respect. We must give equal value to the assets and resources within families as it is these strengths and resources that will increase autonomy, increase families' skill, competence and readiness to deal with life's challenges.

We want the voice of children, young people and their parents and carers to be influencing and shaping everything we do and how we do it. We know that involving families who have experienced our care, in the design, development and evaluation of services, helps us do better.

Every single point of contact families and carers have with us matters and has the potential to make a positive difference.

Every worker and manager, no matter where you work, needs to take account of user feedback – what children, young people and their families and carers tell us matters.



Working with us

Where do people work?

Currently our staff are based in several different offices across the county.

Our main office is at County Hall, Glenfield. County Hall is a hard place to navigate when you are new – make sure you get a guided tour from your manager and colleagues.

We also have some social care and early help centres across the county. These are located in the main towns including Loughborough, Coalville, Hinckley and Melton Mowbray. Again managers and colleagues should help orientate you to these.

Whilst you will be given a base we encourage flexible working so you will sometimes be able to work from various locations across the county including our 'touch down' centres if this supports your working day.

Health & Wellbeing

We want to take a pro-active approach to support wellbeing of all our staff. The way that we treat each other at work can have a significant impact on individuals' sense of wellbeing and our collective morale.

Mental health first aiders

There is free access to a wellbeing service including professional counselling and mental health first aiders throughout the council.

Being part of a learning organisation

We take the development of our workforce seriously and expect you to be committed to your own learning and development.

Our ambition is to be a learning organisation – a place where people feel both supported and challenged to learn and grow.

Some learning is formal – on training courses – you will need to understand how our Learning Hub works so that you can book on to relevant courses.

Some learning is self directed and you may watch films or be asked to complete the mandatory e-learning. This is a requirement of all staff and it's a good idea to do this quickly after you start.

All our workers are expected to take part in personal supervision and have an annual performance review. Ask your manager about these during your induction.

Each year the department runs a 'health check' for all staff. This is your opportunity to use your voice and contribute to wider learning.

Useful things to know

Working hours

Our working hours are 37 hours per week
Core hours are 08:30-17:00 these can be worked flexibly to meet service needs.
Find out what time your base opens and closes and any entry codes you need.

Dress code

Broadly this is 'business casual' – we want you to be comfortable at work whilst maintaining an appropriate professional image – specifically for those workers who are meeting the public or are based in areas which may have external visitors

Trade Unions

All staff have the option to join a union.
For more information please go to

Unison - www.unison.org.uk

Communities of support

There are a range of groups that meet regularly offering support and connectivity across the council.

We know that people perform better when they can be themselves, so we have created a work place where people can be open with colleagues.

We value our workers' groups – for BME, disabled, LGBT+ staff and those who are carers outside of work – and encourage staff to be involved.

You can find more about these groups on our intranet.

Food

There is a canteen and a restaurant at county hall where you can buy food to eat in or take away.

There are no microwaves at county hall or cooking facilities. There are small kitchen areas where you can make a drink and store food.

Communication

Look out for Staff Matters and the messages sent from the Director but ask your manager about other sources of information for your area of the business such as newsletters or blogs.

Worship

There is a quiet room reserved for private worship in room G55 in the Pen Lloyd building

Pay day sales

Lunchtime sales by external traders that are held in the Sports Pavillion at County Hall over three days following pay day.



Finally

If you leave... (and we hope you don't)

Obviously we hope that you will remain within Leicestershire for a very long time! However, if you do decide to move on we think good endings are very important. So enjoy a 'bit of a do' with your colleagues but please complete the exit questionnaire which you will be sent automatically.

As part of our strategy on retention we ask social care staff (as these roles are more challenging to recruit) to attend an exit interview with the Principle Social Worker so that we can hear first-hand your experiences of working with us and learn how we can improve our offer.



