

# Children and Family Services Workforce Development Plan

| 2020 - 2023



## Contents:

Introduction .....	3
Children and Family Services departmental vision .....	4
Children and Family Services departmental plan .....	5
Why do we need a workforce development plan? .....	5
National and local drivers .....	7
Who is the children's workforce .....	8
Our workforce development priorities .....	9
Governance, monitoring and review .....	12
Appendix A: Implementation plan .....	13

# Introduction

As a department, we recognise that the workforce is our most important resource. To deliver our departmental vision, that Leicestershire is the best place for children, young people and their families, we need a confident, competent and skilled Children and Family Services (CFS) workforce.

This Workforce Development Plan (the Plan) sets out the principles and priorities that will underpin our approach to developing and supporting our workforce over the next year.

The Plan is framed by a number of national and local drivers, including legislation, policy and guidance. The plan also reflects the findings and required improvements identified by Ofsted in November 2019 and the Local Area Inspection of SEND in May 2020.

The scope of this plan considers the development needs of staff working in our Social Care, Early Help and Education services.

The development of the Plan has been informed by a wide range of workforce data, feedback from staff surveys and consultation with senior managers and the Departmental Management Team.

The Plan links to and supports the department's strategic priorities by identifying what the workforce needs to look like and how it needs to operate to deliver the best outcomes for children and families across Leicestershire.

**The priorities expressed in this Workforce Plan are underpinned by Leicestershire's vision, mission, the values and behaviours of the Children and Families Service and the ambitions identified in our departmental plan.**

# Children and Family Services departmental vision

In Leicestershire we want to ensure that all children are given opportunities to be happy, healthy and to achieve their potential in life. We want children and young people to enjoy positive experiences in safe and supportive families, well connected to their local communities and if it becomes necessary to have good support from effective family support services – helping to build strong and resilient family relationships.

When children cannot safely live in their family or wider network our priority is to provide safe secure and caring homes where children are given all the opportunities they need to inspire them to have high aspirations and to support their success through their childhood and into adulthood.

## Our vision

**For Leicestershire to be the best place for all children, young people and their families**

## Our mission

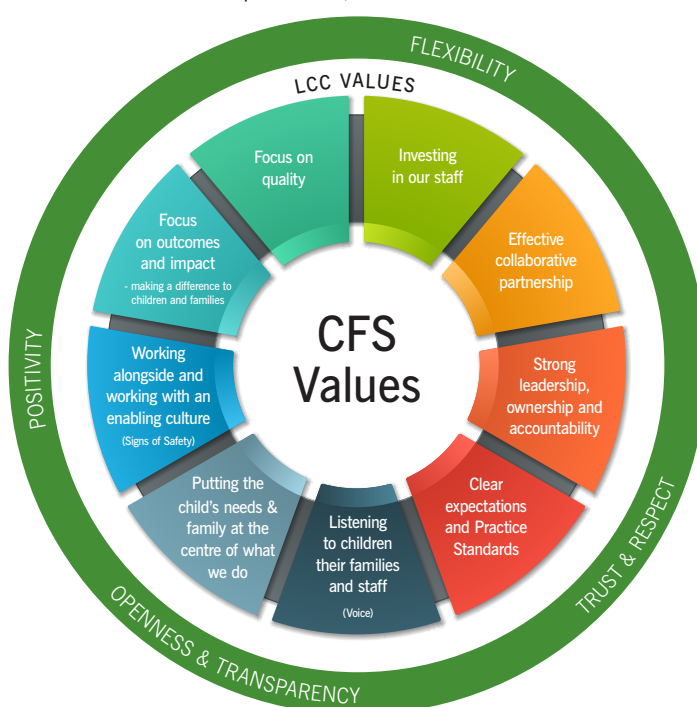
Children and young people in Leicestershire are safe and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, wellbeing and life chances improved within thriving communities.

To deliver our mission we recognise:

- that children and young people, their parents and their natural networks of support need to be at the centre of all aspects of our work
- that our practice needs a strong focus on building productive relationships and promoting the wellbeing and development of all children so that they can flourish
- that we must work in partnership with families, communities and other professionals
  - the importance of early identification of need and early support
  - the importance of access to educational opportunities

## Our values

The Leicestershire County Council (LCC) organisational values set out the attributes and approach to work that can be expected from council employees. CFS has devised a core set of values, based on the work within the department, which demonstrate how CFS will meet the LCC organisational values.



The Children's Social Care "Continuous Improvement Plan 2017/20 – The Road to Excellence" refines these values further and states four behaviours that underpin all social work within the department, and are also relevant and applicable across much of the CFS workforce:

- **Voice** - listening to and responding to what the child and family tell us
- **Signs of Safety** - 'doing with' and not 'doing for' or 'doing to'
- **Outcome focussed** - striving to improve children's and families' lives
- **Leadership** - everyone is responsible and accountable

# Children and Family Services departmental plan

The Children and Family Service Departmental Plan (2020-23) is for all the children and young people living in Leicestershire and their families and sets out high-level priorities for Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services Department for the next three years. The ambitions of the Departmental Plan are driven by our vision and mission and underpinned by our shared values:

- Ambition 1** - Help every child to get the best possible start in life: This is about helping families with babies and very young children to promote their health and development.
- Ambition 2** - Help children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence and capacity: This is about supporting children, young people and their families to tackle problems and helping them to feel more confident and capable of dealing with future problems.
- Ambition 3** - Help children in Leicestershire to live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments: This is about supporting children and young people to be safe and happy at home, and where this cannot happen to have good placements and carers.
- Ambition 4** - Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential: This is about supporting children and young people to get the best education and to have opportunities that help them reach their goals.

## Why do we need a workforce development plan?

The Children and Family Service recognises that our workforce is our greatest asset. We are committed to building the capacity of our workforce to ensure they have the skills, knowledge, confidence and experience to deliver services to children, young people and families that secure positive and sustainable outcomes. To develop as a forward-thinking, innovative service we will continue to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Our workforce has a shared commitment to improving the life chances of children in Leicestershire.

Across the workforce there are some significant differences in professional background, skills, experience, training, career pathway and terms and conditions of employment. In recognition of this we need a plan to address the broad challenges this creates which include:

- Continuing levels of vacancy in some roles
- Quality and consistency of leadership and management
- Clarity of purpose of some, more complex roles
- Maintaining a focus on impact within our available resources
- Quality of practice and adherence to standards
- Developing a suitably skilled and adaptable workforce able to meet emerging challenges, both at a local and national level



## Purpose

### **The broad aims of this plan are to:**

- Provide an understanding and overview of the Children and Family Services workforce
- Outline the principles underpinning the development and on-going support of our workforce
- To set out the priorities and key activities which we will focus on over the next year to develop and support our workforce

### **The success of this plan will depend on:**

- Strong and inspirational leadership and management
- Good quality of support to build a knowledgeable, highly skilled and confident workforce that can deliver the ambitions of the Departmental Plan
- Effective working within the department, Council and across professional boundaries
- Respectful and collaborative relationships with professionals, children and families
- Alignment to change and transformation across the department

## Scope

This plan is for all staff directly employed by, or within Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services department. We recognise that there is also a 'wider' workforce who are not directly employed by the department but who are integral to the delivery of our vision and mission. This includes staff in schools and other educational settings, and commissioned services. Recognising the contribution of this 'wider' workforce reflects the increasingly collaborative and partnership approach that the department is adopting to deliver the best outcomes to children, young people and families in Leicestershire. A partnership Workforce Development Plan is being developed by the SEND and Inclusion Board and will be consistent with the approach set out in this document.

# National and local drivers

**The Workforce Development Plan does not exist in isolation. It has been developed within the context of national and local documents and drivers including:**

## **National drivers:**

- The transition to the new regulator - Social Work England
- National accreditation of Social Workers
- Children Act SEND Reforms (2014)
- Forgotten Children report (2018)
- OFSTED Education Inspection Framework
- World Class Education and Care Strategy (DFE, 2015-2020)
- Academies Act 2010 and on-going policy around academisation
- The emerging role of Local Authorities in the education system
- Covid-19 Recovery

## **Local drivers:**

- Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership Plan 2018-21
- LCC Strategic Plan 2018-22
- CFS Departmental Plan 2020 – 23
- CFS Continuous Improvement Plan – The Road to Excellence
- CFS Growing Quality in Social Care
- Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Children's Social Care)
- Signs of Safety – unifying practice framework across CFS
- The introduction of an integrated Children and Family Wellbeing Service
- Learning from inspections, audits and reviews
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
- SEND sufficiency
- High Needs Block Development Plan
- School Place Planning Strategy and statutory requirement for sufficient school places
- Re-designing our approach to provision for SEND Academisation and the emerging role of Local Authorities in the education system
- LCC Equality Strategy 2020-24

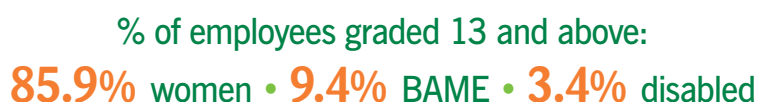
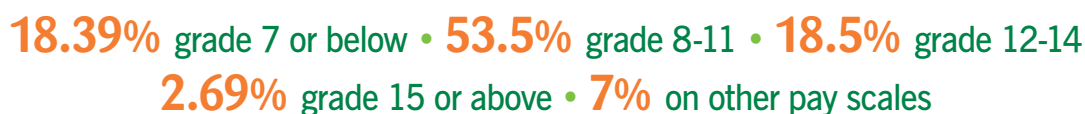
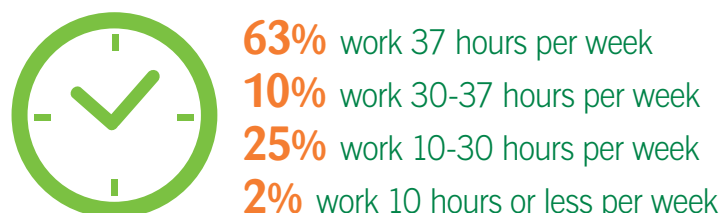
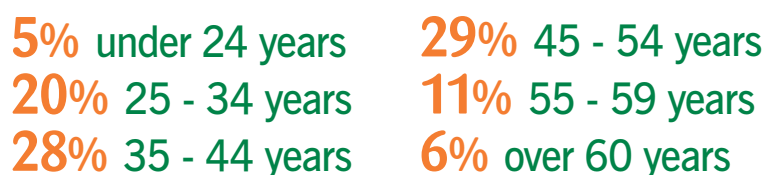
# Who is the children's workforce?

Workforce profile mapping has been undertaken to identify size, scope and makeup of the workforce. This data will be reviewed and analysed to identify gaps in workforce capacity, identify recruitment and retention challenges and address findings.

CFS is committed to promoting equality and diversity across the workforce and creating an environment where all staff are able to flourish.

It is clear from initial analysis that the CFS workforce:

- is predominately female. This is typical of children's workforces nationally;
- has a level of Black and Minority Ethnic employees which reflects the County residents' profile;
- has an increasing level of part-time employees - there may be some implications for management capacity already which will increase over time should this trend continue;
- is an ageing workforce - this means we will need a stronger approach to succession planning which will involve creative approaches to recruitment in an increasingly competitive market.



Data June 2020



# Our workforce development priorities

**Priority 1 - Ensuring we are best positioned to meet current and future needs of children and young people in Leicestershire**

**Priority 2 - Creating the culture of a learning organisation**

**Priority 3 - Retaining and enhancing the key skills of our workforce so they are equipped to perform well**

**Priority 4 - Effective and inspirational leadership**

**Priority 5 - A workforce that is positive, solution focused and feels valued**

We believe a focus on these priorities will support continuous improvement across all our services and help us to achieve our vision for children, young people and families in Leicestershire.

It is recognised that not all the priorities within the Plan will be relevant to the entire workforce. Some may only be relevant to certain cohorts within the workforce, such as managers or staff working in a specific service area or team. The following framework will therefore be applied to workforce development in the context of the Plan:



In addition, we are committed to the Children and Family Services workforce being able to meet the needs of the local population and reflect the diversity of local communities. The Plan is therefore framed by a continuing focus on the promotion of equalities, diversity and inclusive practice.

The current financial climate demands that new and innovative ways of delivering training and development are established. The need to work with a range of partners to offer common training is essential, not only to maximise the use of limited resources but so that the workforce can benefit from working with a range of different stakeholders.

## **Priority 1: Ensuring we are best positioned to meet current and future needs of children and young people in Leicestershire**

### **What does this mean?**

This priority is about reflecting on what we are doing well and how we could improve to respond to current and future service needs, expectations and demands of children and young people in Leicestershire.

### **Key actions:**

- Identify opportunities for learning, improvement and new ways of working in relation to workforce development emerging from the Defining Children's Services project.
- Review the impact of Covid-19 on working arrangements across the business and identify where there have been positive impacts/improvements which can now be incorporated into business as usual.
- Review the overall impact of lockdown on the emotional wellbeing of the workforce and identify the key lessons for future support needs which can be feasibly addressed by March 2021 by DMT.
- Create learning opportunities across Children's Services to support frontline practitioners to identify and advocate inclusive practice within educational settings, developing the workforce to better support schools and settings to meet demand and inclusive practice.
- Deliver awareness-raising on disadvantage and how it impacts on families and communities to enable professionals from all teams and services to identify early those potentially at risk of vulnerability, educational underachievement and/or in need of support in relation to parenting and the home learning environment.
- Deliver training on the Leicestershire Local Offer and Leicestershire approach to SEND and Inclusion as part of all the induction of all new staff.

## **Priority 2: Creating the culture of a learning organisation**

### **What does this mean?**

This priority is about creating an environment that encourages and enables reflection on professional practice and promotes learning, creativity and innovation that leads to improved services for children, young people and families.

### **Key actions:**

- DMT to nominate officers to explore extent to which all teams have access to training and development opportunities currently including understanding all budgets.
- Nominate an officer to work directly with Learning & Development to ensure that the Learning Offer to staff in Children & Families remains applicable to all grades and roles.
- DMT to create a 'bottom line' expectation that all team managers provide time each month to promote shared learning within teams.
- DMT to ensure staff working with families have access to the most up to date information and research via subscription to Research in Practice.
- DMT to explore with ICT colleagues use of digital platforms to develop increased range of opportunities to share expertise and across and within the department, for example 'teams' or similar.

### **Priority 3: Retaining and enhancing the key skills of our workforce so they are equipped to perform well**

#### **What does this mean?**

This priority is about being perceived as an employer of choice and equipping our workforce with the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

#### **Key actions:**

- Continue to monitor our workforce profile to ensure we understand changes and trends and take action as needed.
- Children's Social Care SMT to continue to deliver the dedicated recruitment and retention strategy for social workers to address the specific and persistent workforce challenges for this professional group.
- All service managers to ensure that listening to families is a key feature of all work and informs how we shape and develop our services – i.e. integrated into all quality assurance work including audit, observations etc.
- PET to work with People Services to build a micro-site to better attract potential candidates into Leicestershire jobs.
- DMT to identify where IT can be utilised to support smarter and more flexible ways of working and professional development – using the experience of Covid-19 lockdown to inform decision making.

### **Priority 4: Effective and inspirational leadership**

#### **What does this mean?**

This priority is about developing visionary, empowering leaders at all levels of the children and family workforce to meet the current and future needs of children, young people and their families.

#### **Key actions:**

- PET to commission a leadership and development programme for existing managers.
- All CFS managers to identify aspiring managers through APR processes and support their professional development.
- DMT to highlight progression pathways and development opportunities available across the department and to identify and address any blockages to progression faced by particular groups of employees, for example our BAME workforce.

## Priority 5: A workforce that is positive, solution focused and feels valued

### What does this mean?

This priority is about developing relationships in both leadership and practice that are based on mutual respect, support and collaboration.

### Key actions:

- DMT to ensure that the values and principles of the departmental Practice Framework are continually promoted and made explicit through the attitudes, behaviours and language of senior leaders.
- DMT to ensure staff receive regular, good quality personal supervision which complies with the CFS Supervision Policy.
- DMT to recognise success and achievement across all areas and levels of the department.
- DMT to commission the annual workforce wellbeing survey and take positive action to address the issues identified ensuring that staff know what was done.

## Governance, monitoring and review

The success of this Plan will require commitment from the whole workforce and senior management support to succeed. It must be adopted by and embedded at all levels of the department, both strategically and operationally.

An implementation plan detailing specific tasks, responsibilities and timescales is included in Appendix A. The implementation plan will be overseen by the Commissioning and Planning Service working in conjunction with identified action leads.

The Departmental Management Team will receive quarterly progress reports to ensure that the workforce development priorities and recommended actions are being appropriately addressed and implemented across the department.

Regular meetings will also be held with People Services and Learning and Development to consider workforce issues including staff recruitment and turnover, staff health and wellbeing, feedback from training and APR processes and links to wider learning and development opportunities.

Many of the priorities within the Plan will also be monitored as part of our Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework (QAIF) activity and by the Practice Excellence Team.

A review of the Workforce Development Plan and the action plans will be undertaken in March 2021. This review will be informed by:

- Feedback from managers and staff via staff surveys
- Data reporting on staff turnover, sickness and recruitment
- Quality Assurance activity

# Appendix A: Implementation plan

Priority	What do we want to achieve?	How will we do this? (SMART actions)	Who will do this? (Lead)
<b>1. Ensuring we are best positioned to meet current and future needs of children and young people in Leicestershire</b>	A children and families department that is designed to effectively deliver and manage services within the current political and economic backdrop	Identify opportunities for learning, improvement and new ways of working in relation to workforce development emerging from the Defining Children's Services project	DMT
	Responsive and agile services who understand Leicestershire children and families well	Review the impact of Covid-19 on working arrangements across the business and identify where there have been positive impact/improvements which can now be incorporated into business as usual	All Heads of Service
	A supportive and healthy work environment for all staff	Review the overall impact of lockdown on the emotional wellbeing of the workforce and identify the key lessons for future support needs which can be feasibly addressed by March 2021 by DMT	DMT
	Leicestershire has in place a shared understanding of disadvantage and how it impacts on families and communities	Deliver awareness-raising on disadvantage and how it impacts on families and communities to enable professionals from all teams and services to identify early those potentially at risk of vulnerability, educational underachievement and/or in need of support in relation to parenting and the home learning environment	Service Managers - Early Years Inclusion and Childcare/ Children and Family Wellbeing
	A strong message at induction regarding SEND	Deliver training on the Leicestershire Local Offer and Leicestershire approach to SEND and Inclusion as part of all the induction of all new staff	Head of Service - SEND

Priority	What do we want to achieve?	How will we do this? (SMART actions)	Who will do this? (Lead)
	A network of support which will promote and improve inclusive practice within educational settings and help to address demand and raise standards of care.	Develop and deliver Education Inclusion Awareness Workshops within Children and Family Wellbeing Services/Social Care to roll out from autumn 2020	Heads of Service - Education Quality and Inclusion / Children and family Wellbeing  Service Managers - Children and Family Wellbeing / Inclusion
		Develop and deliver Inclusion SEN/EHCP induction training for new starters within Inclusion/ SENA/ STS/ Early Years	Heads of Service - Education Quality and Inclusion / SEND  Service Managers - Inclusion / Specialist Teaching Service / SENA
	Health Education and Care plans are underpinned by a visible/"Team around the Family"/Lead Professional approach	Develop and deliver a directorate-wide workforce training on Team around the Family and Lead Professional role	Assistant Director - Education and SEND
	Processes for EHCP Needs Assessment are fully compliant with the SEND Code of Practice, with all professionals confident about their role in supporting inclusive provision and how to contribute professional advice, placing the child's views and welfare at the centre	All procedures around Social Care and Early Help contributions to EHCP Needs Assessment, Decision Making and Annual Reviews to be refreshed.  Comprehensive programme within the Directorate for all relevant front-line staff	Head of Service - SEND



Priority	What do we want to achieve?	How will we do this? (SMART actions)	Who will do this? (Lead)
<b>2. Creating the culture of a learning organisation</b>	DMT has a vision for its workforce over the next five years (as a whole and the different component parts) and identifies resources to achieve this vision	DMT to nominate officers to explore extent to which all teams have access to training and development opportunities currently, including understanding all budgets	DMT
	The workforce has the skills and knowledge they need now, and we are equipping them for the future	DMT to ensure good links are maintained with L&D to ensure learning offer remains relevant to all roles and grades	DMT
	The expectations of the department are clear and explicit everyone working here knows 'the bottom lines'	DMT to create a 'bottom line' expectation that all team managers provide time each month to promote shared learning within teams	DMT
	The importance of research-informed practice is understood as the expectation in Leicestershire	Team managers across the department to ensure staff working with families have access to Research in Practice, the SOS Knowledge Bank and the Learning Hub for information and research	Service Managers
	The department is an agile, digitally competent organisation willing to trial new ways of practice	DMT to explore with ICT colleagues use of digital platforms to develop increased range of opportunities to share expertise and across and within the department, for example 'Teams' or similar	DMT
	Department harnesses ICT support to ensure business is as SMART and flexible as possible	DMT to identify where IT can be utilised to support smarter and more flexible ways of working – using the experience of Covid-19 lockdown to inform decision making	Business Partner - Corporate Resources

Priority	What do we want to achieve?	How will we do this? (SMART actions)	Who will do this? (Lead)
<b>3. Retaining and enhancing the key skills of our workforce so they are equipped to perform well</b>	DMT uses workforce profiling to shape the workforce strategy	Continue to monitor our workforce profile to ensure we understand changes and trends and take action as needed	DMT
	A stable social worker workforce in place with low annual turnover with low use of agency workers	Continue to deliver the implementation plan linked to the dedicated recruitment and retention strategy for social workers to address the specific and persistent workforce challenges for this professional group	Head of Service - Practice Excellence
	Listening to families is a visible and standout feature of work in Leicestershire practice. It is integrated into every aspect including into how services are shaped and developed	All service managers to ensure that listening to families is a key feature of all work – from developing plans, sharing plans, involving networks, safety planning etc	Service Managers / QAIT
<b>4. Effective and inspirational leadership</b>	Departmental managers are highly competent, leading high performing teams	To commission a leadership and development programme for existing managers starting with Social Care	Head of Service - Practice Excellence
	CFS are proactive in spotting talent, nurturing and encouraging those with both skill and ambition	Service managers to identify aspiring managers through APR processes	Service Managers
	The diversity of the workforce is reflected at all levels of the department	DMT to highlight progression pathways and development opportunities available across the department and to identify and address any blockages to progression faced by our BAME workforce	DMT / Head of Service - Practice Excellence
		Diversity is taken into account through recruitment and selection processes and reflected in the make-up of interview panels	

Priority	What do we want to achieve?	How will we do this? (SMART actions)	Who will do this? (Lead)
<b>5. A workforce that is positive, solution focused and feels valued</b>	The values and principles of the departmental Practice Framework are continually promoted and made explicit through the attitudes, behaviours and language of senior leaders	All staff, including new starters, understand the key documents which inform good practice and how we do our business	Service Managers
	All staff across the department receive regular, good quality personal supervision which complies with the CFS Supervision Policy	DMT to review the extent to which the current supervision policy is in use across the department	DMT
	DMT recognises success and achievement across all areas and levels of the department	DMT to develop an awards scheme this year (in lieu of SW awards and Pride in Practice) in recognition of work done with families during Covid-19 pandemic	Head of Service - Practice Excellence
	DMT has good understanding of departmental wellbeing in wake of Covid-19	DMT to commission the annual workforce wellbeing survey and take positive action to address the issues identified ensuring that staff know what was done	Principal Social Worker

