

# **Appendix - Children's Services Implementation Plan 2025-29**

## **Children's Services**

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# Strategic Objectives Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan has been developed to identify the activity that will be carried out to achieve the Strategic Objectives contained within the Service Plan 2025-29. Timescales are provided and principal risks have been considered and these along with mitigations are managed by the department in line with corporate risk management policy.

## Outcome 1: People: Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives

### Strategic Objective 1: Achieve sufficiency of accommodation to ensure children are cared for in the right home at the right time

Lead Director(s): Director Early Help and Safeguarding

Supporting Dept(s): CST, ASCH

Date(s): Apr 2025 -Apr 2027

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Review the children in care operating model	Aug 2025	ASCH CST - Finance	Continued departmental commitment and support for project lead  Clear financial reporting	Apr 2025- Aug 2025	Working within financial envelope	Recruitment and retention  Capacity for project lead

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Director Early Help and Safeguarding		Legal Portfolio Management Office (PMO) HR Property Digital/ Data Strategy and Policy	HR and Legal advice to ensure proposals are compliant  Support with staff structures and proposals in relation to any changes in contract  Support to understand and respond to property requirements		Clear and achievable Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)  New operating model achieving efficiencies and delivering good and better outcomes for our children in care, their carers and their families	Geographical implications  Implications of revised leadership structure  National legislative, practice and guidance changes
Develop and implement a placement sufficiency strategy  Head of Service – Commission and Partnership	Aug 2025	ASCH CST – Legal PMO Digital/ data Finance	Continued departmental commitment and support for project lead  Legal advice to ensure proposals are compliant  Effective budget monitoring and impact analysis  Linked adult services to ensure continuity of care and support	Apr 2025 – Aug 2025	Placement sufficiency strategy complete and informing commissioning decisions  A range of placement options that ensure children have the right home at the right time that ensures value for money	Current local and national market - lack of placement sufficiency, increasing costs in the private sector, reducing foster carer cohort

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
<p>Drive development and reform of our fostering service to maximise opportunities to locally care for our children</p> <p>Head of Service - Fostering</p>	Apr 2027	<p>CST - PMO</p> <p>HR</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Digital/ Data</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Legal services</p>	<p>Support from fostering East Midlands</p> <p>Continued departmental commitment and support for the project lead</p> <p>Effective budget monitoring and impact analysis</p> <p>Digital solutions</p> <p>HR support with staff structure and any changes to contract and foster care offer</p> <p>Legal to support with the embedding of social care legislation in relation the kinship care offer</p>	Apr 2025-Apr 2027	<p>Revised target operating model for the fostering service</p> <p>Increased number of foster carers to meet sufficiency needs</p> <p>Skilled and confident foster carers</p> <p>High foster care utilisation rate</p> <p>Clear foster carer offer</p>	<p>Foster carers aging cohort</p> <p>National shortage of foster carers</p> <p>Remuneration and competition with independent fostering agencies (private sector)</p>

# Strategic Objective 2: Deliver improved outcomes for those with special educational needs and disabilities through timely analysis of need and support services in collaboration with stakeholders

Lead Director(s): Director - Schools and Learning

Supporting Dept(s): CST and ASCH

Date(s): Apr 2025- Mar 2028

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Develop and embed a successful Improvement and Assurance Board <i>Director - Schools and Learning</i>	April 2026	ASCH - Public Health CST – PMO HR Legal Digital / Data	Broader children's services commitment Continued departmental commitment and support to the project lead Digital solutions Legal support in relation to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) code of practice	Apr 2025- Apr 2026	Appointed independent chair Functioning governance and reporting structures Clearly embedded Stakeholder engagement strategies Successful progression through the co-produced objectives set within the Improvement	Resource availability for internal and external stakeholders and organisations Identification and procuring of independent chair Rising numbers of education and health care plans Rising numbers of Local Government

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
			<p>Collaborative arrangements with public health for example the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</p> <p>Support with complaint responses and impact analysis of feedback</p>		<p>and Impact Board, including successful delivery of underpinning strategies</p> <p>Embedded workforce development strategy and participation strategy</p> <p>Increased number of special school places</p> <p>Increased places in enhanced resource schools</p> <p>Increased confidence within mainstream schools to support children with special educational needs and disabilities</p> <p>Reduction in Education Health Care Plan (EHP) assessments and plans</p>	<p>and Social Care Ombudsman complaints</p> <p>Space within provision</p> <p>School and partner engagement</p> <p>Resource allocation</p> <p>Increasing demand in social care</p> <p>Not meeting savings targets</p> <p>Inflation</p> <p>Increasing market prices</p>

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
					<p>Reduction in complaints and increase in customer satisfaction</p> <p>Increase in co-production</p> <p>Completed and embedded JSNA</p>	
<p>Strengthen the overall effectiveness of the joint area partnership for children with special educational needs and disabilities</p> <p><i>Director Schools and Learning</i></p>	April 2026	<p>ASCH - Public Health</p> <p>CST - PMO</p> <p>Digital/ Data</p>	<p>Broader children's services commitment</p> <p>Continued departmental commitment and support to the project lead</p> <p>Digital solutions</p> <p>Legal support in relation to the SEND code of practice</p> <p>Collaborative arrangements with public health for example the JSNA</p>	Apr 2025- Apr 2026	<p>Completed JSNA that informs service development</p> <p>Successful progression through the objectives set within the Improvement and Impact Board, including successful delivery of underpinning strategies</p> <p>Embedded workforce development strategy</p> <p>Embedded participation strategy</p>	<p>Rising numbers of EHCP assessments due to increase in identification and complex needs for children in need</p> <p>Rising numbers of LGSCO (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman) complaints</p> <p>space within provision,</p>

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
			Support with complaint responses and impact analysis of feedback		<p>Increased number of special school places</p> <p>Increased places in enhanced resource schools</p> <p>Increased confidence within mainstream schools to support children with special educational needs and disabilities</p> <p>Reduction in EHCP assessments and plans</p> <p>Reduction in complaints</p> <p>Increase in co-production, completed and embedded JSNA</p>	<p>School and partner engagement</p> <p>Increasing demand in social care</p> <p>Not meeting savings targets</p> <p>Inflation</p> <p>Increasing market prices</p>

# Outcome 3: The Council: A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

## Strategic Objective 14: Develop new operating models to provide enhanced services to children and families, strengthen workforce development and explore commercial opportunities

Lead Director(s): Director of Strategic, Commissioning, Quality and Performance Director of Schools and Learning

Supporting Dept(s): CST and Place

Date(s): Apr 2025 - Apr 2027

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Develop a new operating model to support the effective delivery of children's services  Director of Strategic, Commissioning,	Apr 2027	CST – Finance HR Legal Procurement PMO	Continued departmental commitment and support for project lead  Clear financial reporting  HR and Legal advice to ensure proposals are compliant	Apr 2025- Apr 2027	New target operating model embedded demonstrating efficiencies and delivering within budget	Uncertainty of capacity, recruitment skills gaps

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Quality and Performance			Support with staff structures and proposals in relation to any changes in contract  Support to understand and respond to property requirements			
Empower schools to deliver a consistent approach to inclusion and equitable access to education for all children and young people  Director of Schools and Learning	Apr 2027	CST – Legal Digital/ Data	Digital solution  Data analysis/ performance team	April 2025- April 2027	Reduced fixed-term and permanent exclusions, reduction in the use of alternative provision, increased number of children receiving education	Uncertainty of engagement and provision to meet need and increasing demand  Insufficient data for analysis across provision
Deliver an effective workforce and	Apr 2027	CST – HR	HR support and efficient data analysis, bringing strategic objectives such	Apr 2025- Apr 2027	Strategy embedded with a clear workforce	Insufficient data for analysis from the local safeguarding

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
<p>organisational development strategy</p> <p>Director of Strategic, Commissioning, Quality and Performance</p>			<p>as equality, diversity and inclusion to the local workforce development strategy</p> <p>HR support to identify and deliver on suitable creative initiatives to support staff development such as mentoring schemes</p> <p>HR support with Performance Development Review (PDR) reporting</p>		<p>offer across all divisions</p> <p>Build the capacity of staff to own, innovate and deliver change</p> <p>Clear training and skills needs identified through PDR process and in partnership with Learning and Development</p>	<p>partnership on training attendance</p> <p>Financial pressures</p>
<p>Transform home to school transport provision</p> <p>Director of Schools and Learning</p>	Apr 2027	<p>Place</p> <p>CST –</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Procurement</p> <p>Legal</p> <p>Digital/Data</p>	<p>Collaborative cross departmental approaches to ensure effective information sharing, clear financial reporting and jointly agreed objectives</p> <p>Legal lens on any proposed changes to policy and pathways</p> <p>Digital solutions</p>	Apr 2025-Apr 2027	<p>Home to school transport responsibility sits wholly within Children's Services</p> <p>Sufficient provision for children entitled to home to school transport</p>	<p>Increased identification and complexity of children in need leading to increased demand, large geographical footprint of Derbyshire, increasing costs with providers, lack of provision</p>

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
					Reduction in costs ensuring best value for money	
<p>Drive strategic and commercial development of schools and learning</p> <p>Director of Schools and Learning</p>	Apr 2027	<p>CST – Finance</p> <p>Legal</p> <p>Digital/Data</p>	<p>Clarity of overheads, fees and charges</p> <p>Marketing support</p>	April 2025-April 2027	<p>Clear legal basis for trading</p> <p>all traded services meeting the cost of delivering services</p> <p>Clear financial analysis</p>	<p>Lack of engagement, lack of robust data and financial analysis across traded services, commercialisation doesn't meet the cost of delivering services, legal basis for trading services</p>

# Strategic Objective 15: Strengthen the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to drive improved outcomes for children

Lead Director(s): Executive Director – Children’s Services

Supporting Dept(s): CST

Date(s): Apr 2025 - Apr 2028

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Support the partnership to deliver effective early intervention and prevention  Executive Director – Children’s Services	Apr 2028	CST – PMO HR Digital/ Data Legal/ Information Governance Strategy and Policy	Digital solutions  Legal support to ensure robust information sharing protocols  Project lead	Apr 2025- Apr 2028	Stronger partnership working, co-designed and aligned strategic priorities  Increased early intervention reducing demand later in the system at higher cost  Clear priorities across DDSCP (Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership) with measurable	Lack of partner engagement  Competing priorities across the partnership  Financial pressures internally and externally  Lack of investment making short term savings but creating long term pressures,

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
					<p>performance data to demonstrate improved outcomes for children</p> <p>Strong performance tested through multi-agency quality assurance</p> <p>Effective local partnerships arrangements that support outcomes identified in the strategy</p>	Lack of early help partnership performance data
<p>Strengthen the Council and Partnership approach to corporate parenting</p> <p>Assistant Director – Specialist Services</p>	Apr 2027	All departments	<p>Each department to consider and implement a corporate parenting objective with their service plan</p> <p>HR support in relation to any workforce development implications across departments.</p>	Apr 2025-Apr 2027	<p>Comprehensive 'offer' to children in care and care experienced young people from the Council and partners</p> <p>Significantly raised awareness amongst staff at all levels</p>	Lack of partner and council department engagement, competing priorities across the partnership, financial pressures internally and externally, lack of investment making short term savings but creating long term

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
					Joined up approach to corporate parenting across the county and where applicable wider region	pressures, partnership performance data
Build and establish an effective education partnership <i>Director of Schools and Learning</i>	Apr 2028	Finance HR	Data analysis Support in response to schools	Apr 2025 – Apr 2028	Robust local partnership, effective oversight from the partnership board, collaboration to meet local needs	Lack of engagement Lack of provision to meet need Increasing demand Lack of robust data analysis across provision
Build and establish an effective early years strategic partnership <i>Director of Schools and Learning</i>	Apr 2028	Finance HR	Data analysis Support in response to schools	Apr 2025- Apr 2028	Robust local partnership, effective oversight from the partnership board, collaboration to meet local needs	Lack of engagement Lack of provision Financial pressures internally and externally

# Strategic Objective 20: Deliver our four-year budget savings programme to achieve financial sustainability with a focus on delivering £37.5m savings in 2025-26 (year 1- to be refreshed annually)

Lead Director(s): Executive Director – CS Director of Finance

Supporting Dept(s): ASCH, CS and Place

Date(s): Apr 2025 - Mar 2026

Action & Lead Officer	End Date	Supporting Dept	Details of Support Required	Timescale for Support Required	Success Measure e.g. how will we know it's been delivered	Key Risks
Delivery of agreed Children's Services departmental savings in 2025-26  Executive Director – CS	Mar 2026	CST – Finance HR Legal Digital Property	Focus on delivery of their savings as a priority	Apr 2025 – Mar 2026	Delivery of savings proposals in line with plan and financial envelope  Savings proposals to be delivered in 2025-26: £3.258m  Deliver on plans 2025-26 re: cost mitigation in light of increased demand	Capacity to deliver plans

# Key Performance Measures

Key Performance Measures	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Latest 2024-25	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26
% of good or better outcomes in Reflective Practice Reviews for foster carer			62%	83.6%	80%	80%
% good or better outcomes in Reflective Practice Reviews for children in care	74.7%	82.9%	72.6%	77.8%	75%	80%
Number of DCC fostering households	278	271	262		TBC	Increasing trend
Number of DCC fostering places	482	466	443			
Number of children in care living with council foster carers	354	356	388	33 (November 2024)	Increasing trend	Increasing trend
Number of children returning home from care as part of their care planning process.	(n)55	(n)63	77 (Dec 23)	63 (November 2024)	Increasing trend	Increasing trend
Number of children leaving care through a special guardianship order.	(n)62	(n)77	72 (Dec 23)	64 (November 2024)	Increasing trend	Increasing trend

Key Performance Measures	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Latest 2024-25	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26
The percentage of children in care with a placement step down.	-	-	-	First year of data (monthly snapshots) 7 (November 2024)		Increasing trend
% of good or better outcomes in Reflective Practice Reviews for foster carer						
% good or better outcomes in Reflective Practice Reviews for children in care	74.7%	82.9%	72.6%	77.8%	75%	80%
Number of DCC fostering households	278	271	262		TBC	Increasing trend
Number of DCC fostering places	482	466	443			
Number of children in care living with council foster carers	354	356	388		Increasing trend	Increasing trend
Number of children returning home from care as part of their care planning process.	(n)55	(n)63	77 (Dec 23)		Increasing trend	Increasing trend
Number of children leaving care through a special guardianship order.	(n)62	(n)77	72 (Dec 23)		Increasing trend	Increasing trend

Key Performance Measures	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Latest 2024-25	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26
The percentage of children in care with a placement step down.	-	-	-			Increasing trend
The percentage of children being supported to remain at home rather being admitted to care.	-	-	-			Increasing trend
The percentage of DCC children's residential homes graded 'good' or 'better'	100%	91%	91%		90%	100%
Utilisation rate within DCC residential provision						Increasing trend
Number of complaints relating to SEND services	86	270	600			Decreasing trend
Escalation rates for complaints relating to SEND services	-	-	35%			Decreasing trend
Proportion of all new Education Health and Care Plans issued within 20 weeks (including exceptions)	31.3%	23.1%	26.5%		To exceed the national average (49.1% 2023)	Increasing trend

Key Performance Measures	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Latest 2024-25	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26
Proportion of all new Education Health and Care Plans issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)	32.1%	17.8%	28.6%		To exceed the national average (50.3% 2023)	Increasing trend
Percentage of children's services staff completed mandatory training				Performance is currently recorded for each individual course	TBC	TBC
Percentage of workforce completed core learning pathways				Performance is currently recorded for each individual service area	TBC	TBC

# Approved Controllable Budget 2025-26

Division	Employee Related £'000	Premises Related £'000	Transport Related £'000	Supplies & Services £'000	Agency & Contract Services £'000	Unallocated Budgets £'000	Growth £'000	Savings £'000	Controllable Recharges £'000	Gross Budget £'000	Income £'000	Net Budget £'000
Strategic Services	7,028,758	25,208	4,500	116,797	-	-	242,433	-3,430,195	3,987,501	-101,040	-110,000	3,776,461
Early Help & Safeguarding	32,808,261	19,738	1,418,383	1,366,609	85,222,946	3,865,974	-	-2,059,838	122,642,073	-357,794	-6,477,162	115,807,117
Schools & Learning	30,633,378	873,239	30,070,189	12,894,487	102,548	-	-	-17,198,662	57,375,180	-17,948,131	-7,481,292	31,945,757
Strategic Commissioning, Quality and Performance	22,552,037	-6,926	158,319	2,700,955	6,585,076	33,124	-	-4,105,765	27,916,821	-3,674,390	-	24,242,431
Total controllable budget	93,022,434	911,260	31,651,392	17,078,848	91,910,570	3,899,098	242,433	-26,794,460	211,921,575	-22,081,355	-14,068,454	175,771,766
Total												

# Commercial Pipeline of Procurement – up to 31 March 2027

In line with the Council’s Financial Regulations, the forward plan of procurement projects for the department, set out below, details procurement projects above £50,000 which are planned to commence over the next 24-month period in support of delivering the departmental Service Plan.

Procurements due to commence between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2027.

Statutory Service Y/N	Title of Procurement	Estimated Procurement Start Date DD/MM/YY	Estimated Advert Date DD/MM/YY	Length of Contract Including Extensions (XX months)	Estimated Contract Start Date DD/MM/YY	Total Value of Contract Including Permissible Extensions
Y	Framework of Providers – Specialist Services for disabled Children, Young People and their Families	19/02/2025	27/10/2025	120	01/05/2026	£15,000,000
Y	Delivery and Support for the Educational Psychology Services	01/04/2025	29/07/2025	96	01/02/2026	£20,000,000
Y	Framework for Education other than School or College (EOTISC)	23/06/2025	24/02/2026	120	01/09/2026	£100,000,000

Statutory Service Y/N	Title of Procurement	Estimated Procurement Start Date DD/MM/YY	Estimated Advert Date DD/MM/YY	Length of Contract Including Extensions (XX months)	Estimated Contract Start Date DD/MM/YY	Total Value of Contract Including Permissible Extensions
Y	Framework for alternative provision (Education)	23/06/2025	24/02/2026	120	01/09/2026	£100,000,000
N	Provision and Management of Creative Mentoring Service	01/09/2025	26/02/2026	78	01/09/2026	£4,000,000
Y	Forward to Foster	01/04/2025	25/11/2025	84	01/06/2026	£8,000,000
N	Supply and Delivery of Catering Light Equipment	08/04/2026	10/12/2026	48	15/06/2027	£240,000
N	Maintenance and Repairs of Heavy Catering Equipment	01/04/2025	26/09/2025	72	01/04/2026	£2,100,000
Y	Provision of Derbyshire Holiday activities and food programme	01/06/2025	27/09/2025	48	01/04/2026	£12,000,000
Y	D2N2 Children in Care Provision	01/04/2025	13/08/2025	120	01/02/2026	£450,000,000

Statutory Service Y/N	Title of Procurement	Estimated Procurement Start Date DD/MM/YY	Estimated Advert Date DD/MM/YY	Length of Contract Including Extensions (XX months)	Estimated Contract Start Date DD/MM/YY	Total Value of Contract Including Permissible Extensions
N	Provision for the supply of Workwear for Catering services	01/04/2025	31/05/2026	48	01/06/2027	£120,000
N	Emotional Health and Wellbeing for Children in Care	01/09/2025	01/02/2026	5 (3+2)	01/09/2026	£3,200,000