

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children's Social Care Overview Report

Summary

This report gives an overview of the key achievements and challenges in 2025/26 Children's Social Care.

Key Achievements -

- 1. The Family Help point is now embedded into the service and is demonstrating improved outcomes for children and families.**

Following Stockton's disaggregation from the shared Front Door arrangement, we resumed direct control of Front Door service, known as the Family Help Point on 1 April 2026 and redesigned the model around a relational strength based, approach.

Key changes included:

- Establishing a dedicated Early Help Team within the Front Door, comprising six practitioners and a Team Manager.
- Positioning the Front Door as an intervention through advice, guidance, safety planning and signposting.
- Strengthening threshold decision-making and professional consultation.
- Increasing referrals and signposting to Early Help, community services and partner agencies.
- Improving practitioner knowledge and confidence in the Early Help offer.
- Introducing enhanced quality assurance and auditing of threshold decisions.

The redesigned Front Door has created a more proportionate and responsive system that ensures families receive support from the right service at the earliest opportunity.

Key outcomes include:

- 29% increase in Early Help activity.
- 94% of relevant contacts now signposted or referred to appropriate support services.
- Tripling of families remaining within Early Help support, reducing unnecessary transitions between services.
- 61% reduction in children progressing to statutory assessment between 1 April and 9 June 2026, equating to 754 fewer children entering statutory assessment processes.
- Improved alignment with regional and statistical neighbour performance levels.
- Quality assurance evidence confirming that children requiring statutory intervention continue to receive appropriate services.

Overall, the changes have improved outcomes and experiences for children and families, strengthened partnership working, reduced unnecessary statutory intervention, and enabled Children's Services to focus resources on those children most in need of protection and support.

2. Workforce stability and reduced use of agency staff

Despite national and local recruitment challenges, the Children's Senior Leadership Team have implemented a robust recruitment and retention strategy. Workforce stability is a key enabler of high-quality, consistent social work practice and as of August 2026, 93% of our social workers are permanent, with 7% employed via agency arrangements. This is significantly lower than most local authorities within the region.

Workforce stability has been strengthened by several agency social workers converting to permanent employees.

We continue to adopt our 'grow our own' expanding social work apprenticeships, investing in student placements and Newly Qualified Social Workers. We have strengthened our relationships with local Higher Education Institutions to ensure that we have a steady flow of student social workers on placement at Stockton Borough Council.

22% of our permanent workforce currently are in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment. To maintain service capacity and quality, we have retained a small number of experienced agency workers who also assist in supporting and mentoring less experienced practitioners.

The data shows that Stockton on Tees Children's service is increasingly becoming an employer of choice for many social workers, and is supported by a positive workplace culture, good staff morale, and an attractive training and support offer.

3. Family Help Pilot

In April 2026, Stockton launched a place-based Family Help Pilot in Billingham Family Hub, bringing together Social Workers and Senior Family Workers within a single locality team. The pilot strengthens integration between Early Help and Children's Social Care, reducing handovers, supporting effective communication and joint problem-solving, improving continuity of support and promoting a more relational, strengths-based approach with families.

Early learning and feedback from partners indicate improved collaboration between practitioners and partners, stronger relationships with families, and greater continuity of support. Families experience fewer transitions between services and benefit from earlier intervention, coordinated planning and more consistent professional relationships. Schools and partner agencies report stronger local partnerships and improved communication, supporting earlier identification of need and more effective responses. The geographical model has enabled more consistent professional relationships to develop between Family

Help practitioners, schools and partner agencies, creating a stronger local network around children and families

The pilot has also introduced a co-produced Family Help Assessment, which supports whole-family, strengths-based practice and a shared understanding of need. This approach means families experience consistent support from a team around the family, with professionals maintaining involvement throughout the journey and reducing the need for families to repeatedly tell their story. Practitioner feedback has been positive, with staff reporting that it better reflects relational practice and enables more joined-up support.

The success of the pilot is informing plans to develop a borough-wide, place-based Family Help model through Stockton's Family Hubs. Discovery work is underway to understand the workforce, partnership and operational changes required to support implementation and align with the Families First reforms from April 2027.

Challenges

4. Complexity of the national reform policies.

Over the next 6 to 12 months, the Council will need to respond to and implement a significant programme of complex national reforms across children's services, early help, and youth justice. These reforms present important opportunities to strengthen outcomes for children, young people and families; however, they will require substantial corporate, workforce and partnership planning and development.

Key priorities include:

- the implementation of the Families First Partnership reforms, which will reshape local safeguarding and family help arrangements through a more integrated and preventative model. This will include a Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) as well as the Family Help Teams;
- the rollout of the Best Start in Life (BSIL) programme across four Family Hub locations to improve support for babies, young children and their families;
- the delivery of Kinship Care reforms to enhance support for children living with extended family and friends;
- the continued development of fostering services through the North East Regional Fostering Hub, aimed at increasing regional sufficiency and placement choice;
- implementation of Youth Justice Board reforms, which seek to strengthen prevention, diversion and whole-system approaches to reducing offending and improving outcomes for young people.

Collectively, these reforms need to be delivered at pace, will require careful planning, partnership working and oversight to ensure successful delivery and sustainable service improvement. The development of these reforms runs alongside 'business as usual' operational delivery and ambitious plans for the continual improvement of practice.

5. Sufficiency and complexity of need.

Sufficiency of local, appropriate and cost-effective care arrangements continues to pose a significant challenge for the council.

Our local provision is broadly sufficient for younger children but currently not sufficient for adolescents. Around two-thirds of our children in care are aged 10 and above. Pressure is concentrated in the adolescent cohort, who are most likely to require residential, supported accommodation, and specialist provision, due to the complexity of their needs. Although we operate several internal children's homes, the demand outstrips capacity and we have more children placed in private provision, which is usually significantly more expensive and for which we have less choice and control over.

The majority of private children's homes locally are also available to children from other local authorities and not prioritized for Stockton-on-Tees children. This leaves us with reduced control over availability, matching, and price, alongside increased out-of-area placements and market dependency.

Evidence shows that most children who move into residential care do so following the breakdown of their foster care arrangement, including fostering with connected carers. This is often associated with increasing challenging needs that foster carers cannot meet, despite efforts to stabilize these arrangements and offer additional support.

This evidence underlines the need for strengthened forecasting within our Sufficiency Strategy and Market Position Statement, ensuring that decision-makers and providers can clearly see how increasing demand, market constraints, and regulatory pressures intersect with our service priorities to improve placement stability and sufficiency and reduce the overall number of children in our care.

Transformation deep dive analysis has provided a clearer picture of demand pressures and provided direction for the next stages of transformation work, aimed at finding solutions to provide better value, emergency and local provision for children with high and complex needs, who cannot safely live with their families.

6. Serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.

The Youth Justice Management Board has led the development of both the Youth Justice Plan 2026-27 and the Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031. Together, these documents establish a shared framework for preventing offending, reducing serious youth violence, safeguarding vulnerable children and creating safer communities.

The Youth Justice Plan reflects continued positive performance in preventing children entering the criminal justice system. First Time Entrants (FTE) have reduced from 33 to 21 children, with the FTE rate decreasing from 154 to 96, significantly below regional and national comparators. This has been supported through effective use of Out of Court Disposals, Turnaround interventions and partnership-led diversionary approaches.

Despite these successes, Stockton on Tees continues to face challenges associated with serious youth violence, exploitation, school exclusions and a small cohort of children presenting with increasingly complex needs. Reoffending and custody rates remain areas requiring continued focus, particularly amongst children involved in serious violence and organised criminal activity.

Emerging Issues

7. Regional care cooperative and Fostering with North East development.

The Department for Education's reforms to establish Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs) and strengthen regional fostering hubs represent a significant shift toward coordinated, end-to-end regional delivery models.

The development of the North East Regional Care Cooperative is in the early stages, with key senior leadership posts being recruited to. As a partnership of all 12 Local Authorities, the plan is operate at sufficient scale to achieve system efficiencies and improve sufficiency planning. This will hopefully add capacity and improve the choice for children's care provision across the North East.

The North East regional fostering agency, Fostering with North East, has been successful in securing Department for Education (DfE) funding through a competitive bidding process. The funding will support the implementation of regional fostering reforms, aimed at increasing the recruitment and retention of foster carers, strengthening support services for fostering families, and improving placement sufficiency across the region.

The proposed End-to-End Fostering Hub model will require Stockton, alongside the other 12 North East local authorities, to move from delivering fostering services largely within individual councils to a more regional approach. Recruitment, enquiry handling, assessment and approval of foster carers will be undertaken through a single regional hub, with staff, budgets, expertise and processes increasingly aligned across the region. Stockton will retain its statutory responsibilities for children in care, including care planning, matching children to foster carers), but will work within a shared regional governance structure and contribute to a unified recruitment, training, support and performance framework.

The new model is due to go live from 30 September 2026, with the initial focus on the transfer of recruitment, assessment and approval functions into the regional hub. The programme will then be implemented in phases, with the regional training and support offer for foster carers developing over time and full delivery of the full end-to-end model including the supervision and support of Mainstream foster carers expected by April 2028. The anticipated benefits include increased foster carer recruitment and retention, more consistent support for foster families, reduced duplication, greater efficiency, and improved placement sufficiency for children across the region.

For Stockton, these changes represent a significant service transformation rather than a change in statutory responsibility. The council will need to support regional workforce, governance and budget arrangements while benefiting from shared expertise, economies of

scale and a stronger collective approach to recruiting and supporting foster carers across the North East

The hub has also been successful in a DfE Innovation Fund bid for Weekenders. Weekenders is a programme focused on recruiting Weekender Foster Carers who welcome a child into their home for only one weekend a month, to build a lasting relationship and provide additional support.

Cabinet Member Approval

The Cabinet Member has been briefed on the contents of this report.

Stockton-on-Tees Plan – Progress 2026

Children's Social Care

Summary

Following Council agreement of the Stockton-on-Tees Plan in 2024, it was agreed that the Children and Young People's Select Committee would receive annual performance updates of the Tier 2 outcomes.

The indicators attached (Appendix 1) provide Children and Young People's Select Committee with an update on the Council's progress against the high-level outcomes identified in the Stockton-on-Tees Plan.

Recommendations

Children and Young People's Select Committee is recommended to note and comment on the update attached at Appendix 1.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To Ensure Transparency and Accountability:

Regular reporting against the Stockton-on-Tees Plan enables Members to monitor progress, assess the effectiveness of service delivery, and ensure that the Council remains accountable to residents and partners.

2. To Support Evidence-Based Decision Making:

The report provides an overview of outcomes, highlighting both achievements and areas requiring improvement. This evidence base supports informed decision-making and prioritisation of resources.

3. To Drive Continuous Improvement:

Identifying areas for improvement allows for timely intervention and the implementation of corrective actions. This promotes a culture of continuous improvement across services and contributes to better outcomes for communities.

4. To Align with Strategic Priorities:

Monitoring progress against the Stockton-on-Tees Plan ensure that the organisation remains focused on delivering its strategic objectives and that progress is aligned with the Council's vision and long-term goals.

5. To Inform Future Planning and Budgeting:

Insights from the report can inform future service planning, policy development, and budget setting, ensuring that resources are targeted effectively to meet community needs.

6. To Highlight and Celebrate Success:

Recognising areas of strong progression helps to motivate staff, share best practice, and reinforce the Council's commitment to delivering high-quality services.

Detail

1. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan (2024) set a Vision for the future of the Borough, developed with communities, for communities:
 - a. Our Vision: Stockton-on-Tees is home. It's a warm and friendly place where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of the Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place where everyone can grow and succeed. We will continue to work together to reduce inequalities and barriers to opportunity.
2. The wider plan was developed to reflect the drivers and priorities that can turn our Vision into reality, and included a picture of success, underpinned by key outcome measures (What success looks like – Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council).
3. Outcomes centre around our priority areas of:
 - The Best Start in Life to Achieve Big Ambitions
 - Healthy and Resilient Communities
 - A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit
 - An Inclusive Economy
 - A Sustainable Council
4. Appendix 1 provides the first year's progress report against key outcome measures, it includes:
 - a. The vision and priorities
 - b. Key indicators (current position and direction of travel)
 - c. Activity to date
 - d. Planned activity
 - e. Key metrics

5. This includes:

- a. Areas where the Council performs above the national average, and demonstrates strong performance trends aligned to our ambitions:
 - % of persistent absentees among children looked after
 - % of children protection plans which are a second or subsequent plan
 - Workforce vacancy rates
 - % of looked after children placed more than 20 miles from home
 - % of child protection plans lasting longer than 2 years
 - % of care leavers aged 19-21 who are NEET
- b. Areas where the Council shows strong performance relative to national averages, however there is a need to manage local trends to improve outcomes:
 - % of persistent absentees among Children in Need using children's social care
 - Rate of Children In Need per 10,000
 - % of CIOC with 3 or more placements during the year
 - Average Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score for children looked after
 - % of children looked after at 31 March who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)
 - % of care leavers aged 17-18 who are NEET
- c. Areas where the Council demonstrates strong performance trends aligned to our ambitions:
 - First time entrants to the Youth Justice system
 - Rate of Section 47 enquiries per 10,000
- d. Known areas of challenge, which form the basis of targeted activity to improve outcomes:
 - % of youth offenders reoffending (aged 10-17)
 - % of persistent absentees among children on a Child Protection plan (latest year only - previous years perform better than England)
 - % of referrals which were within 12 months of a previous referral
 - % of CIOC with a least one missing incident during the year
 - % of care leavers aged 17-18 who are in suitable accommodation
 - % of care leavers aged 19-21 who are in suitable accommodation
 - % care leavers aged 17-18 who are in custody
- e. Indicators that are specific to SBC with a positive trend:
 - N/A

Community Impaction and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

6. The Council Plan drew from a wide range of data and intelligence. But overall, it represents the voice of the Borough. It has been developed with communities, for communities. Intelligence has been gathered from:
 - Our Residents Survey
 - Conversations with Community Groups
 - Face-to-face interviews
 - Out Viewpoint Panel
7. Key themes from our conversation with communities, and which are reflected in the Council Plan are:
 - Creating a Borough to be proud of that encourages more young people to stay here
 - Creating employment opportunities and raising aspirations
 - Creating safe communities and reducing anti-social behaviour in town centres
 - Good Schools and Colleges
 - Good transport links – including cycleways & pathways
 - Joint working with communities and creating an inclusive Borough
8. Working closely with our communities and partners will help us meet the needs of our residents and make Stockton-on-Tees a place we can all be proud of. Some examples of how we will measure success include:
 - The number of children in poverty
 - Educational attainment
 - Feelings of belonging in communities
 - Crime rates & perceptions of crime
 - Satisfaction with employment & accommodation
 - Employment rates & productivity

Corporate Parenting Implications

9. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan's strategic priorities will support the Local Authority to deliver its statutory functions and enable it to be an effective Corporate Parent.

Financial Implications

10. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan is aligned with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. Financial Implications will be considered through any proposed action to deliver and approval sought at that point.

Legal Implications

11. Any and all legal implications will be identified through careful action planning throughout the delivery of the Stockton-on-Tees Plan noting, in particular, that growing pressures on communities and public services will require effective management of all Council's resources, and that, any decisions made pursuant to the Council Plan are also made in accordance with the law to minimise any risk of legal challenge.

Risk Assessment

12. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan provides the vision or the future of the Borough. The greatest risk associated with the Stockton-on-Tees Plan is that the development has not been sufficiently robust and that the wrong priorities have been identified. This risk has been mitigated by a detailed development process including considerable consultation with our communities, partners and internally with Members and officers.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward Councillors

All Stockton-on-Tees Wards are affected.

Background Papers

Council Plan (Council Report, November 2024)

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Appendix 1 – Measuring Progress

a) The vision, priorities and key indicators



OUR VISION

Stockton-on-Tees is home. It's a warm and friendly place where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of the Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place where everyone can grow and succeed. We will continue to work together to reduce inequalities and barriers to opportunity. We are Team Stockton-on-Tees.

Read the full plan



1

THE BEST START IN LIFE TO ACHIEVE BIG AMBITIONS

A safe and inclusive community where everyone can thrive. Working hard to prevent the impact of poverty, creating a bright and healthy future with a shared sense of belonging. Supporting children in our care and creating equality of opportunity

2

HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Building happy and healthy lives, supporting those who are experiencing poverty. Ensuring that our residents are resilient, independent

3

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT

A vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy that residents can be proud of

4

AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Growing the local economy and cementing our role as the well-connected, economic heart of Tees Valley. Ensuring that all residents can benefit from secure and sustainable jobs

5

SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL

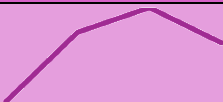
A well-run financially sustainable Council that improves outcomes for communities

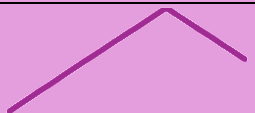
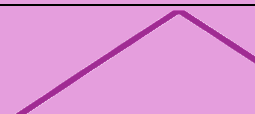
Progress Quadrant				
EXAMPLE	PRIORITIES	- List of priorities that the specific service is currently working on: - Priority 1 - Priority 2 - Etc.	- List of indicators (outcomes) that measures the progress of all the PRIORITIES: - Indicator 1 - Indicator 2 - Etc.	INDICATORS
		WHAT'S BEEN DONE	- List of actions that have been undertaken to try and improve the INDICATORS - Action 1 - Action 2 - Etc.	

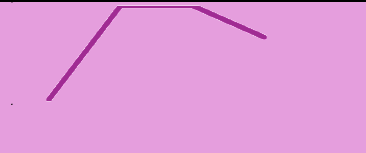
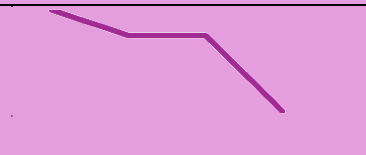
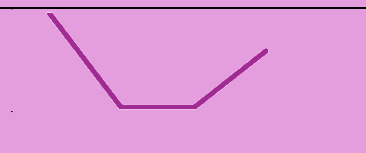
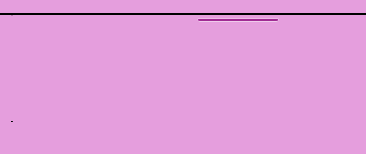
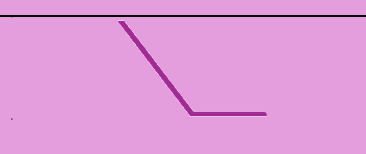
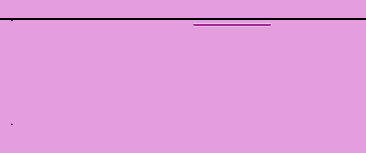
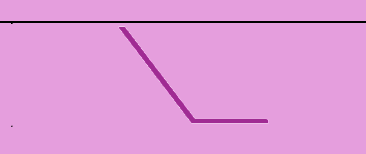
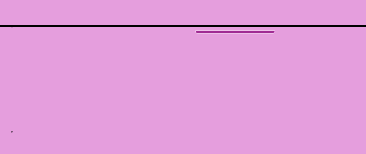
a) Service Priorities

Children's Social Care		Service Priorities				
		THE BEST START IN LIFE TO ACHIEVE BIG AMBITIONS	HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES	A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT	AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY	SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL
						
Unique Indicator Code	Priority	Linked to above priority				
SPCSC001	Strengthen Early Help: ensuring families receive help at the earliest opportunity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPCSC002	Ensure children are safe, supported, and protected from abuse and harm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPCSC003	Ensure that children are in the most appropriate care arrangement to meet their needs and are well cared for	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPCSC004	Reduce the number of Children in Our Care	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPCSC005	Improve outcomes for care leavers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

b) Key indicators

Ref.	Indicator	Latest data	Trend
1	Referral rate per 10,000	883.3	
2	First time entrants to the Youth Justice system	19	
3	% of youth offenders reoffending (aged 10-17)	59.1%	
4	Share of Children's Services spend not on children looked after	25%	n/a
5	% of persistent absentees among Children in Need using children's social care	47.3%	
6	% of persistent absentees among children on a Child Protection plan	63%	
7	% of persistent absentees among children looked after	16.7%	
8	% of referrals which were within 12 months of a previous referral	28.8%	n/a
9	% of CIOC with a least one missing incident during the year	14%	n/a
10	Rate of Section 47 enquiries per 10,000	218.9	
11	Rate of Children In Need per 10,000	520.2	
12	Rate of Child Protection per 10,000	80	

13	% of children protection plans which are a second or subsequent plan	20%	
14	% of child protection plans lasting longer than 2 years	1%	n/a
15	Workforce vacancy rates	7.5	
16	% of looked after children placed more than 20 miles from home	7%	
17	% of CIOC with 3 or more placements during the year	11%	
18	% of children who cease being looked after due to moving into a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Residence Order (RO), or Care Arrangement Order (CAO)	8%	
19	% of children living in foster care	70%	
20	% of children living in residential care	13%	
21	% of children living in secure children's homes	13%	
22	% of children looked after living in different placement types	1%	n/a
23	Average Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score for children looked after	14.5	n/a

24	% of children looked after at 31 March who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)	4%	
25	Rate of children in our care per 10,000 – non-UASC	125	
26	Rate of children leaving care per 10,000	40	
27	% of care leavers aged 17-18 who are NEET	40%	
28	% of care leavers aged 19-21 who are NEET	35%	
29	% of care leavers aged 17-18 who are in suitable accommodation	80%	
30	% of care leavers aged 19-21 who are in suitable accommodation	79%	
31	% of care leavers aged 17-18 who are in custody	7%	

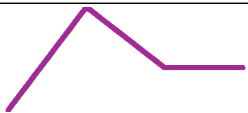
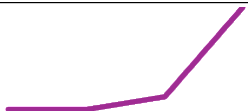
b) Activity to date

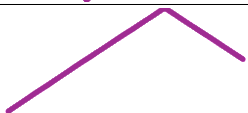
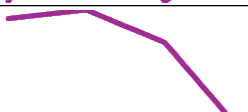
Ref.	Activity
1,2,3,4,8, 10,11,12	Family Help Point launched - April
1,2,3,4,8, 10,11,12	Family Help Pilot - May
5,6,7,10,11, 12,13,14,18, 22,23	MACPT Pilot – June
1,2,3,4,8	BSIL Family Hub launched – August
7,9, 16-31	Virtual Memory box launched – April, 13398 uploads to date

c) Planned activity

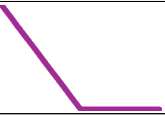
Ref.	Planned activity
1-25	Phase 2 of the Family First reform programme
1,2,3,4,8	Further roll out of BSIL hubs
26 to 31	Roll of care leavers app to meet the requirements of the care leavers reforms
7,8,9,16,17, 18,19,20,21, 22,23,26	Development of kinship local offer
2,3,5- 14,16,17, 21-23,26	Development of 3 inhouse children's homes
1 to 31	Planning for ILACS

d) Key Metrics

Indicator	Polarity	Previous 2 years		Previous year	Latest data	Latest data date	Direction of travel	Trend
Referral rate per 10,000		839.4	890.6	909.2	883.3	2025	↓	
First time entrants to the Youth Justice system	Low is good			19	19	2026	→	
% of youth offenders reoffending (aged 10-17)	Low is good			59.1%	59.1%	2026	→	
Share of Children's Services spend not on children looked after					25%	2025		
% of persistent absentees among Children in Need using children's social care	Low is good	45.1%	50.4%	47.3%	47.3%	2025	→	
% of persistent absentees among children on a Child Protection plan	Low is good	50%	50%	51.6%	63%	2025	↑	
% of persistent absentees among children looked after	Low is good	18.1%	18.2%	21.4%	16.7%	2025	↓	
% of referrals which were within 12 months of a previous referral	Low is good				28.8	2025		
% of CIOC with a least one missing incident during the year	Low is good				14.0%	2025		

Rate of Section 47 enquiries per 10,000	Low is good	304.6	280.4	232.1	218.9	2025	↓	
Rate of Children In Need per 10,000	Low is good	549.6	517.9	538.6	520.2	2025	↓	
Rate of Child Protection per 10,000	Low is good	93	69	79	80	2025	↑	
% of children protection plans which are a second or subsequent plan	Low is good	23.5%	18.4%	24.6%	20.0%	2025	↓	
% of child protection plans lasting longer than 2 years	Low is good		4.7%		1.0%	2025	↓	
Workforce vacancy rates	Low is good	12.5	3.7	9.8	7.5	2025	↓	
% of looked after children placed more than 20 miles from home	Low is good	5.0%	7.0%	9.0%	7.0%	2025	↓	
% of CIOC with 3 or more placements during the year	Low is good	10.0%	12.0%	10.0%	11.0%	2025	↑	
% of children who cease being looked after due to moving into a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Residence Order (RO), or Care Arrangement Order (CAO)	High is good	22.0%	23.0%	19.0%	8.0%	2025	↓	
% of children living in foster care		66.0%	65.0%	66.0%	70.0%	2025	↑	

% of children living in residential care		12.0%	13.0%	14.0%	13.0%	2025	↓	
% of children living in secure children's homes		12.0%	13.0%	14.0%	13.0%	2025	↓	
% of children looked after living in different placement types					1.0%	2025		
Average Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score for children looked after	High is good				14.5	2025		
% of children looked after at 31 March who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)		2%	5%	5%	4%	2025	↓	
Rate of children in our care per 10,000 – non-UASC		133	131	131	125	2025	↓	
Rate of children leaving care per 10,000		42	37	37	40	2025	↑	
% of care leavers aged 17-18 who are NEET	Low is good			40%	40%	2026	→	
% of care leavers aged 19-21 who are NEET	Low is good		44%	35%	35%	2026	→	
% of care leavers aged 17-18 who are in suitable accommodation	High is good			80%	80%	2026	→	

% of care leavers aged 19-21 who are in suitable accommodation	High is good		88%	79%	79%	2026	➡	
% of care leavers aged 17-18 who are in custody	Low is good			7%	7%	2026	➡	