

# **‘Beyond Outstanding: Our Journey Forward’. A Roadmap**

## **Forward**

Our Roadmap ‘Beyond Outstanding: Our Journey Forward’, sets a clear direction for how we will continue to enhance and develop our services. It serves as the guiding framework for the work we do within Families & Children’s Services, ensuring that everything we do is aligned with our vision and values. The Roadmap is not just a document of priorities; it represents the ambition, ethos, and commitment we have to every child and family in Wiltshire.

It brings together our goals, values, and principles that underpin all operational work, with a particular focus on:

- Ensuring that children are safe, supported, and able to reach their full potential
- Building strong, collaborative relationships with families and partners
- Continuing to strive for improvement in the quality of services we provide, with a focus on outcomes for children and families.

Together, the Roadmap, the Quality Assurance Framework, and the Service Plans ensure that we are aligned across all areas, with clarity about our long-term vision and immediate actions.

The Roadmap also provides a clear framework for:

- Consistency in our approach across all areas of Children’s Services.
- Collaboration between our various teams and with our external partners to deliver the best outcomes for children and their families.
- Aspirational Goals, ensuring that our work is always forward-looking, proactive, and focused on continuous improvement.

## **Our Vision:**

Working alongside our partners, we will ensure that every child and young person in Wiltshire receives the support they need to thrive, stay safe, and reach their full potential.

Children and families are at the very heart of everything we do. We believe in their unlimited potential and are dedicated to making sure they have every opportunity to succeed.

We are driven by strong relationships and the ambition to provide the best care and support for every child. Our passionate and skilled workforce is committed to making Wiltshire a place where every child can achieve their dreams.

We are focused on continuous improvement, creating a culture of learning and growth, so that we can give every child, young person, and their family the very best opportunities to succeed.

## **Our Response to Stable Homes Built on Love:**

Our plan is grounded in the belief that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. We are determined to make this a reality, working hand in hand with our safeguarding partners to build stronger, safer families.

The Government Strategy outlines six powerful goals, which align with our own ambition for Wiltshire:

1. **Family Help** – Empowering families from the very start to give every child the best chance in life.
2. **Keeping Children Safe** – Ensuring every child is protected and secure, at all times.
3. **Supporting Families to Help Children** – Giving families the tools, support, and resources they need to care for their children.
4. **Better Care for Children in Care and Care Leavers** – Providing exceptional care for children in care, and guiding care leavers towards successful futures.
5. **Children Have Great Social Workers** – Ensuring that every child is supported by a skilled, compassionate social worker.
6. **Improving the Whole System for Children and Families** – Strengthening the network of services to meet the needs of every child and family.

## **Our Values:**

These values guide everything we do to support children and families:

1. **Working Together** – We believe in building strong, respectful relationships with families and partners, creating an environment of collaboration for the children we serve.
2. **Compassionate Support** – We will always be there for families, offering care and understanding to help them overcome challenges.
3. **Strengths-Based Approach** – Every child and family have the power to succeed; we focus on their strengths and potential, ensuring they have every chance to thrive whilst acknowledging the need to protect and safeguard.
4. **Evidence-Based Practices** – We use the most effective approaches to ensure children's safety and support their growth, empowering them to achieve their best.

### Outcomes:

We are committed to making a lasting difference in the lives of children and young people in Wiltshire. Our mission is to ensure that children:

1. Are always **safe** and protected from harm.
2. **Excel** in their education and are motivated to learn.
3. Lead **healthy**, fulfilling lives.
4. Feel **happy**, confident, and **connected** to their community.
5. Have a **voice** and make a positive impact on the world around them.

### Our 9 Priorities:

To turn our vision into reality, we are focused on the following priorities:

1. **Children in Safe, Loving Homes** – Our ambition is for all children to grow up in homes filled with love, care, and security.
2. **Protecting the Most Vulnerable** – We will do everything in our power to protect the most vulnerable children from harm.
3. **Supporting Families Early** – Our focus is on preventing problems before they start, ensuring children have the best start in life.
4. **Improving Care for Children in Care** – We are committed to providing the highest quality care for children in care and ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed.
5. **Listening to Children and Families** – We will listen to the voices of children and families, making sure they are heard and their needs are met.

6. **Supporting Mental and Emotional Wellbeing** – We will ensure every child has the emotional support they need to succeed, fostering resilience and confidence.
7. **Protecting from Exploitation** – We will provide safe spaces for children and protect them from harm, including exploitation and abuse.
8. **A Skilled and Compassionate Workforce** – Our workforce will be skilled, compassionate, and committed to supporting every child and family to achieve their best.
9. **Quality Services for All** – We will make sure that every child and family receives the highest quality support, every time.

## **How We Will Achieve Our Priorities:**

To achieve these priorities, we will:

- **Listen and Learn** – We will take the time to understand the unique experiences of each child and family, ensuring they feel heard and valued.
- **Provide early Family Help** – We will intervene early to give children and families the support they need to thrive, preventing problems before they arise.
- **Work Together** – We will collaborate with partners to ensure families get the right support at the right time.
- **Act Quickly** – When a child or family needs help, we will step in immediately, with clear plans and regular reviews to ensure the best possible outcomes.
- **Provide Stable, Loving Homes** – We will ensure that children who cannot stay with their birth family will quickly find a safe, loving home.
- **Offer Close Support to Care Leavers** – Young people leaving care will receive the same level of care and support we would give our own children, setting them on the path to success.
- **Celebrate Diversity** – We will celebrate the diversity of every family, ensuring that our services meet the unique needs of each child and their family.
- **Support Our Workforce** – We will provide our staff with the tools, training, and support they need to deliver the best services to children and families.
- **Continuously Improve** – We will constantly review and improve our services, ensuring that we are always learning from children, families, and staff.
- **Be Transparent** – We will be honest, clear, and fair in how we deliver our services, ensuring that families always know where they stand.

## **How We'll Know We've Made a Difference:**

We'll know we've made a difference when:

1. Children are living in stable, loving homes.
2. Families feel supported and heard throughout their journey.
3. Children are excelling in school and enjoying learning.
4. Children have easy access to healthcare and mental health services.
5. Fewer young people are involved in crime, and more feel safer in their communities.
6. More children and young people are in education, training, or employment, on track to reach their full potential.

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## **PRIORITY 1: Children in Safe, Loving Homes**

*We believe that children thrive best within their family and community. Our approach is to empower families, ensuring they have the support they need to nurture their children in safe, stable, and loving environments.*

### **We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Recognising that family is the most effective place for children to thrive and embedding this value into our approach.

### **Our actions will include:**

- Developing a revised Kinship Care Strategy that strengthens family and community-based options for children in need of support.
- Expanding family-based care and support options through innovative kinship and foster placements.
- Utilising and strengthening our reunification activity to ensure that, where it is appropriate to do so, children can return to their family networks.

## **PRIORITY 2: Protecting the Most Vulnerable**

*Every child deserves to be protected from harm. We are committed to a system of responsive, child-centred interventions that actively safeguard those most at risk.*

### **We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Maintaining consistently high-quality chronologies, assessments, and SMART plans that link clearly to assessed risks and needs.
- Engaging children directly in planning to ensure their views are central to safeguarding strategies.
- Ensuring that strategy meetings involve all appropriate partners to assess and respond to significant harm risks.
- Providing clear contingency plans for all children's care plans to outline alternative actions if needed.

- Using reflective and task-focused supervision to set clear actions, review progress, and ensure timely case progression.
- Guaranteeing that senior managers review children's plans to provide timely, authoritative action where necessary.

**Our actions will include:**

- Continuing manageable caseloads through a caseload challenge process.
- Improving consistency in the quality in strategy meetings, Section 47 investigations, and single assessments.
- Routinely updating case summaries and chronologies so that the child's journey is clear.
- Delivering the Family Led Child Protection Conferencing approach, embedding it across multi-agency practices.
- Implementing family-friendly SMART plans for Child in Need and Child Protection cases.
- Ensuring independent reviews for Children in Need plans by Independent Reviewing Officers to apply consistent thresholds.
- Addressing delays in assessments to ensure timely action.

**PRIORITY 3: Supporting Families Early**

*Early Family help builds stronger families. By intervening early, we empower families and prevent the need for more intensive interventions.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Collaborating with families, schools, and community partners to provide proactive support.
- Building local networks that offer accessible, timely resources to families.

**Our actions will include:**

- Expanding early help Family hubs to meet families where they are and simplify access to support.
- Offering consistent outreach to families to ensure they receive support before crises escalate.

**PRIORITY 4: Improving Care for our Children in Care**

*Children in care deserve timely, thoughtful placements that meet their holistic needs.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Placing children into care only when necessary and with careful consideration of legal grounds.
- Supporting timely pathways to permanency, ensuring stable family settings.
- Listening to children's needs and considering their views in placement decisions, prioritising their long-term well-being.

**Our actions will include:**

- Implementing a Children in Care Strategy that prioritises reunification and placement stability.
- Reviewing our sufficiency strategy and fostering recruitment efforts to increase placement options.
- Ensuring independent advocates are available to children in our care who need them.
- Building Independent Reviewing Officer capacity and quality assurance activity to reinforce oversight and scrutiny of Children Looked After Plans.

**PRIORITY 5: Listening to Children and Families**

*Every child deserves a voice. Their experiences, wishes, and aspirations are central to everything we do.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Ensuring that children's views are documented in all plans and processes.
- Providing independent advocates for children who need one to support their voice in decisions.

**Our actions will include:**

- Building an in-house advocacy team to foster independent voices for children and families.
- Developing Voice in a variety of forms for Parents, Carers, and Young Carers to strengthen family engagement.

**PRIORITY 6: Supporting Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Wellbeing**



*A healthy mind supports a healthy future. We aim to support children's wellbeing, enabling them to grow into confident and resilient young adults.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Providing a range of therapeutic supports that meet children's social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- Ensuring a trauma informed and shame sensitive approach is embedded in a practice approach when working with children and their families and carers.

**Our actions will include:**

- Partnering with mental health services to ensure timely support and interventions.
- Embedding emotional literacy, systemic practice ideas and trauma informed awareness in our work with children and families.

**PRIORITY 7: Protecting from Exploitation Risks**

*Children and young people should feel safe and empowered in their communities, free from exploitation and harm.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Overseeing Child Exploitation, missing children, and gang involvement through dedicated leadership, data analysis, strategic oversight and operational resource within our Emerald Team.
- Collaborating with local partners to address risks of exploitation, ensuring timely, effective responses.
- Maintaining a thorough assessment for children at risk of Child Exploitation, trafficking, or gang involvement, and using these to inform responsive care plans.
- Working with external partners and researchers to further develop our contextual safeguarding approaches to create safety in the places and spaces

**Our actions will include:**

- Consolidating thorough Risk Outside the Home and context based assessments and care plans for children at risk of exploitation, criminalisation or trafficking
- Strengthening partnership collaboration and oversight on exploitation to inform responsive commissioning and support.

**PRIORITY 8: Skilled and Compassionate Workforce**

*Our workforce is our foundation. By supporting a skilled, reflective staff, we deliver compassionate, evidence-based support to children and families.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Supporting social workers and social care workers with reflective, outcome-focused supervision.
- Embedding a culture of continuous learning through a robust learning and development offer.
- Engagement and collaboration with colleagues to enhance skills and wellbeing.
- Regularly reviewing practice standards to ensure high expectations and effective support for the workforce.

**Our actions will include:**

- Revising the Quality Assurance Framework to inform performance improvements.
- Strengthening expectations of reflective supervision in our staff supervision policy and delivery.
- Conducting regular audits and wider quality assurance activity of casework to improve consistency.
- Developing retention and well-being strategies to support and develop workforce health and well-being.
- Reviewing all policies and procedures to keep practice standards current and effective.

**PRIORITY 9: Quality Outcomes for all.**

*Consistency in care ensures that all children, regardless of circumstance, experience outstanding service.*

**We will ensure outstanding practice by:**

- Reviewing all cases through regular audits to prevent drift and delay.
- Using performance data and system developments to guide proactive improvements.

- Collaborating with partners through the Families and Children's Systems Assurance and Partnership Practice Review Groups to promote innovation.

**Our actions will include:**

- Strengthening our Quality Assurance Framework and team Performance Review mechanisms
- Leveraging sector-led improvement programs and activities to stay at the forefront of best practices.
- Enhancing the use of our electronic Audit Tool to close the loop on learning and drive continuous improvement.
- Strengthening the use of information technology, data sets, systems support and AI to support practice efficiency and capacity