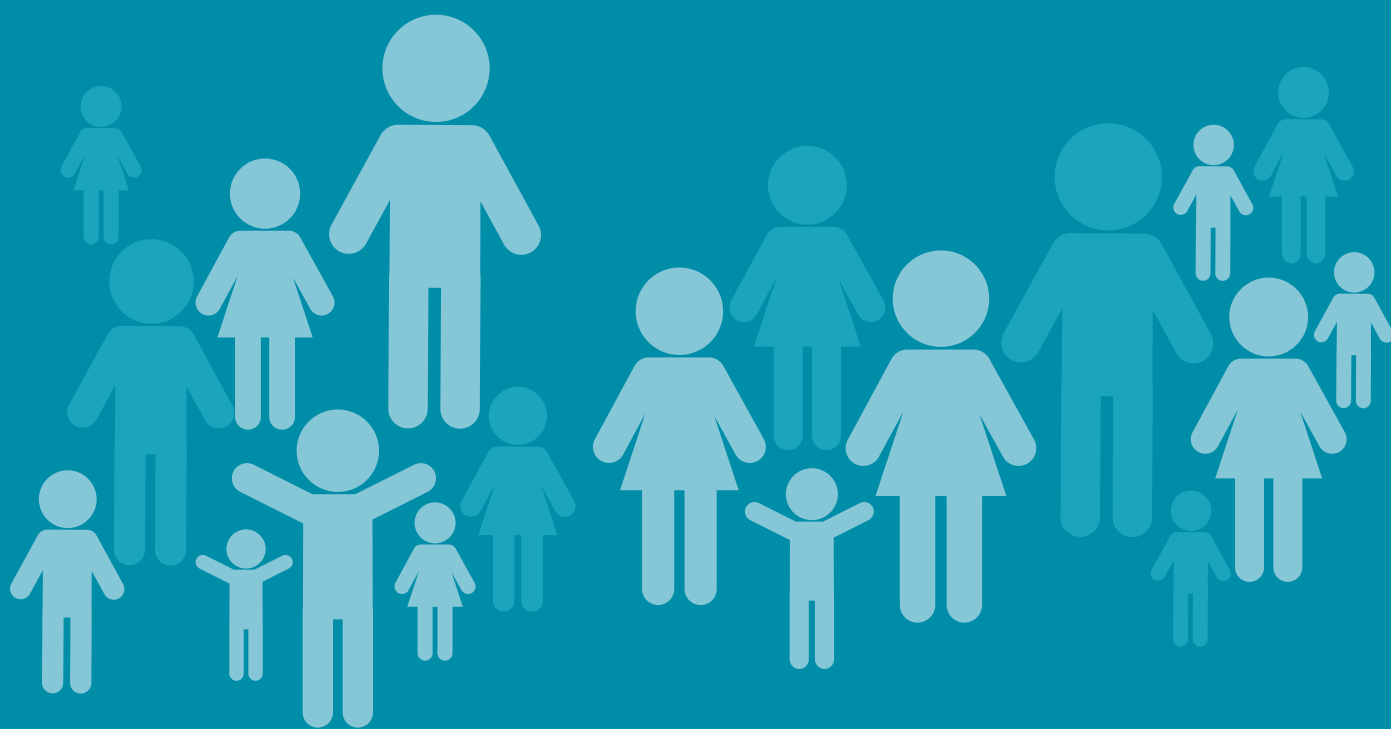


Kirklees Children and Young People Services



This bulletin has been produced by Kirklees Council – and shared with partners - to keep you updated on the work of Family Support and Child Protection.

Improvement Plan

We are currently working on our Improvement Plan, which we will be able to share in a few weeks' time.

It goes into detail about the ways we are developing our services and what we intend to do in future. It's essential that the plan is an honest assessment of the problems we've overcome, the progress we are continuing to make and the work that still lies ahead. It's about putting children at the heart of what we do.

We are continuing to work with Eleanor Brazil, the Commissioner appointed by the Secretary of State after our Ofsted inspection in 2016. Eleanor has been joined by a fellow DfE representative in Mark Gurrey, who has worked with several councils and will be providing additional support for us here in Kirklees.

Eleanor and Mark are meeting various teams in the process of carrying out their duties. They want to know about local services and they are interested in the views and experiences of our workforce, who have a really important role in this process.

Eleanor has been talking about her role in Kirklees. You can find the video [here](#).

Welcome to Merlin Joseph

Merlin Joseph has been appointed to drive the improvement journey in Kirklees children's services.

Merlin, who is joining the council with immediate effect, has many years of experience in leading services to support children and young people. She has previously worked as a director and assistant director in the London boroughs of Hillingdon and Bromley.

The council agreed with Eleanor Brazil, the Secretary of State's Commissioner who is currently supporting our work, that an 'Improvement Director' should be recruited in Kirklees for a period of six months. As a result, Merlin will help to lead our ongoing improvement work and drive forward our Improvement Plan.

Merlin's interim appointment is one part of the council's wider drive to increase management capacity and develop strategic leadership. She will ultimately report to the chief executive and will work very closely with Gill Ellis (Director for Children's Services) and Carly Speechley (Assistant Director for Family Support and Child Protection), as well as many other colleagues.

Merlin's role includes

- Overseeing and managing the Improvement Plan, ensuring key milestones are met
- Addressing current operational issues and delivering improvements
- Identifying and removing any barriers to our progress
- Working closely with key partners and the Children's Services Improvement Board, to ensure a co-ordinated approach
- Providing updates to the Commissioner, Department for Education, Ofsted and Improvement Board
- Helping the council to prepare for, and respond to, Ofsted monitoring visits
- Working with Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board to develop and strengthen its role and effectiveness

This is a key post in helping the council and its partners to respond to current challenges and deliver long-term change. The improvement work is our number-one priority as we aim to achieve the highest possible standards for children, young people and families across Kirklees.

Independent Visitors

We are pleased to report that a recent drive to recruit more Independent Visitors has proved very successful.

A Kirklees-wide campaign generated lots of interest and, as a result, 17 new IVs have already been trained. We are continuing to recruit and train volunteers on a rolling basis, which is really positive news for our children and young people.

Changes to Early Help

The members of Cabinet (the council's main decision making body) have agreed new ways of supporting children, young people and families across the district.

The changes will allow us to focus on the things that make the biggest difference in local communities and ensure the most vulnerable people receive the support they need. You can read full details [here](#).

Travel Plan

We are continuing to develop an effective and efficient Travel Plan.

As part of the research phase, a survey was distributed to learn more about how people travel to work. This received over 60 responses, which were valuable in painting a clearer picture of the current situation.

Pool car usage has been monitored and analysed on a regular basis and we know that the usage of pool cars has increased at Riverbank Court and Vine Street. There are currently five pool cars based at Riverbank Court, five based at Vine Street and one based at George Street in Dewsbury. Work on the Travel Plan is continuing to take place.

Children's Homes Procedures Manual

The Kirklees Children's Homes Procedures Manual has been updated and can be accessed [here](#).