

Hull Children's Services Self Evaluation

30th November 2025 (based on 30th September data)

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Introduction



1. Our Vision and Strategy

As a council and working with partners, we are ambitious for our residents and we have high expectations to ensure that children, young people and families are safe and their outcomes improved. Hull City Council's overall priorities and vision is articulated in the [Hull City Council Plan](#) and [Community Plan](#) and the [Children Young People's Plan \(CYPP\)](#).

Our vision:

“Secure a positive and sustainable future for the city, through decisive leadership and the development of inclusive partnerships and communities.”

Children and Young People of Hull

Compact and highly urbanised, Hull is the most densely populated local authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region. There are 61,075 children and young people aged 0 to 17 account for 22 per cent of the city's overall population (271,942) indicating that Hull's population is relatively young in comparison to the England average.

Social and economic conditions, such as poverty, poor quality housing and unstable low paid jobs impact on individuals and are contributing factors to inequalities relating to life expectancy of people in Hull.

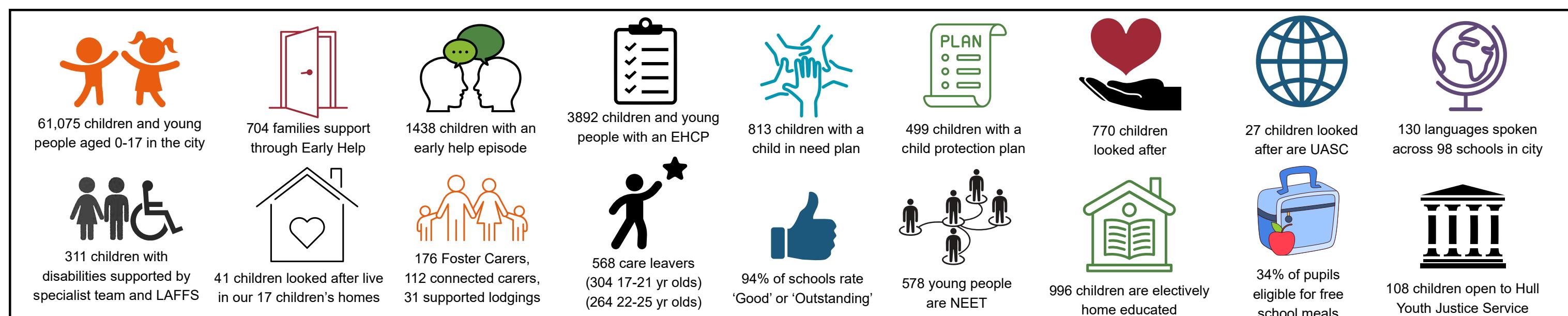
Children's health in the city is generally poorer than the England average. Despite these challenges, Hull is redefining its future through culture, resilience, and reinvention. Its transformation has earned Hull a place among the top 25 global destinations to visit.

During November 2024, 5,205 children between the age of 7-18 years, participated in the 'Shout about your life in Hull' survey and when asked to describe in three words how they feel about their future in Hull, 195% said;

'Hopeful, excited and happy.'

Safeguarding

Children's social care services are broadly structured by way of a front door, assessment teams, three locality safeguarding teams in the East, West and North of the city, and permanence and leaving care teams. Hull's practice model is Signs of Safety with a shared vision, across the partnership of providing '***the right support, at the right time and from the right place***'. As at 30 September 2025, there were 3,237 children and young people supported by children's social care.



The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families

2. Strategic leadership

As a service, council and partnership, we are proud of our sustained and continued progress and we are confident that children, young people and their families are now benefiting from quality support and intervention at the times they need it.

Whilst our improvement journey has taken time, we have steadily built on the foundations and priorities set out in 2020 when we recognised the nature and scale of the changes needed. We didn't just look for short term fixes, we focused on our longer term vision for children and young people, taking time to implement and properly embed the key elements of transformation. 'Sticking with our plan' has been at the heart of Hull's success, seeing through several key change programmes to realise their benefits for children, young people and families. Most importantly, we have prioritised and invested in building a stable and skilled workforce because this matters most to children and young people; a workforce we are extremely proud of and a workforce which goes that extra mile to achieve their very best.

Senior leaders are supportive, visible and continue to nurture a culture which promotes healthy challenge, curiosity and 'blue sky' thinking, and this has helped to create distributed leadership across our wider partnership system. We are proud that we know ourselves well; our strengths and the areas which require focus and we are proud that we have achieved the sort of change and improvement which lasts and will further stand the test of time. Our achievements are underpinned by strong partnerships, relationships and high aspirations for our children and young people, the City's next generation.



Permanent workforce across all service areas and roles

- Significant investment in 'Growing our Own' through Social Work Apprenticeships & Step Up to Social Work Programme.
- Retention offer which prioritises social worker and manager progression and appraisal based opportunities to work in different services.
- Dedicated Practice Lead and Practice Educator roles which are valued by the workforce.

Embedded Signs of Safety and Wellbeing approach

- Universal language and approach, understood by our partners and families.
- Focus on building and sustaining family networks.
- Successful Social Work Academy, building local expertise and confidence.

Robust Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework

- Real time dashboard, accessible across the workforce.
- Case audits which are learning tools, including direct feedback from families.
- Well established performance management cycle including all managers – strengths based, curious and responsive in identifying future areas of focus.

Children, young people and families will always be at the heart of what we do, and we are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the positive outcomes achieved and the strength of our partnership working. We will always be ambitious for the future and for our children and young people, having high expectations of ourselves and partners. Our work and our commitment to continuous improvement will never stop or slow down and we want children, young people and families to know that we will continue to build on the collective strengths of our people and place to continually innovate and change through integration and system redesign. We are excited that the culture we have built leaves us well placed to reshape our services in the future, under the Families First Partnership Programme.

Elected members are actively engaged in improving outcomes for children, offering active support and constructive challenge through Cabinet, Scrutiny, Corporate Parenting Panels, and Improvement Boards. Their triangulation of formal reports, presentations by children and young people and workshops is enhanced by worksite visits, which foster direct engagement with frontline staff and deeper insight into service strengths and culture.

The newly launched Children and Young People's Plan for 2025-2030 shares a strategic vision with the City's Community Plan and the Hull City Council Corporate Plan. The Plan captures the most important things that children and young people feel will support them to thrive, learn, grow, feel safe and reach their full potential. The plan was co-produced with children, young people and partners (internal and external to the council) and will ensure the required focus and accountability as it continues to drive improvements, maintain high aspirations for children - keeping children's needs and priorities at the centre of service delivery.

We are confident that senior leaders in Hull make a positive difference to practice, with increasing numbers of children experiencing better outcomes and a culture which embraces appreciation of the vital support the workforce provides. Senior leaders are visible, accessible and promote a culture of support and curious challenge. Senior leaders, including the DCS, complete regular case audits and moderations alongside practitioners, they undertake practice and supervision observation and prioritise routine planned site visits to stay in touch with both the quality of practice and experiences of the workforce.

Supportive and visible leadership means that, the service benefits from good levels of morale and team spirit, which is shared across the directorate and partnership, through staff engagement and celebration events.

Council leaders and elected members demonstrate strong corporate parenting roles, reflecting ambition and commitment to our children and young people. Their active role in 2025 Corporate Parenting Week, themed "Identity and Belonging," enabled youth-led sessions and Social Work Academy workshops, inspiring innovative ideas such as Hull's "Family Business Model" to improve outcomes. This commitment continues through active participation in steering groups, involving elected members and council staff. Accountability is further strengthened by quarterly "Reverse Scrutiny" meetings, where care leavers, supported by Room 42, challenge elected members and officers on those issues most important to them. These sessions empower young people to track progress on commitments made to them and shape service delivery, ensuring their voices remain central to any policy change or service redesign.



"The game these innovative young people in Hull have created will challenge social workers across the country to put themselves in the shoes of young people in care." (Councillor Linda Tock)

(Council leaders playing 'The Cards You're Dealt, Corporate Parenting Week 2025)

'Children's Social Care in Hull has continued to benefit from a stable and consistent team of senior leaders at a strategic and operational level. Strong political commitment to children's social care is demonstrated by the cross party support for investment and infrastructure.'

(Ofsted FV, July 2025)



'Children benefit from a culture of strong relational practice and collaborative support, where managers at all levels step in, to ensure that both children and practitioners are well supported.'

(Ofsted FV, July 2025)





(‘Together We Can’ Conference HSCP)

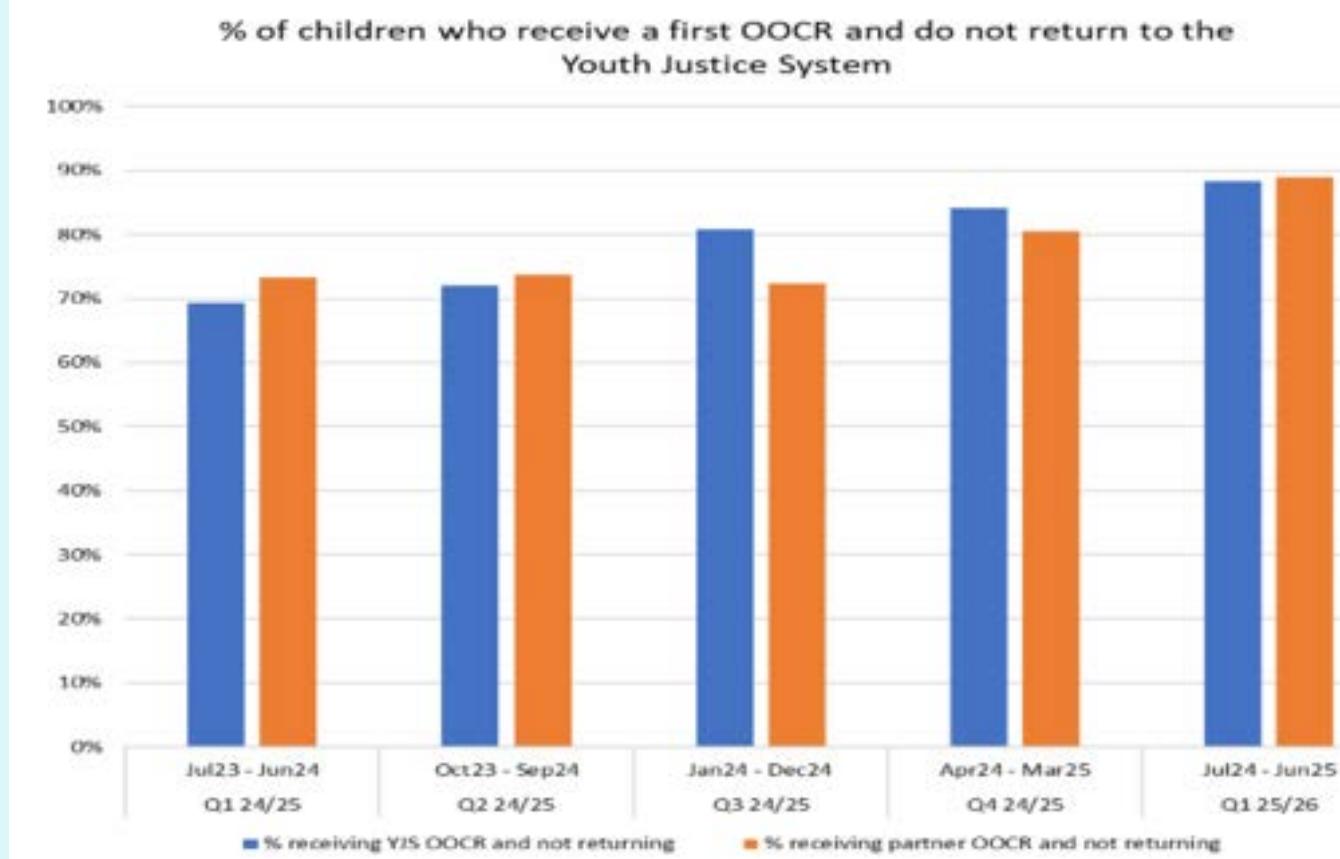
Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) continues to work collaboratively with our Better Together Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Integrated Care System (ICS) and voluntary and community sector engagement that has enabled over 9205 young people to share their views on the Children and Young People’s Plan.

HSCP Executive Board has continued to evolve and thrive. In January 2025, ‘HSCP Working Together: Together We Can’ Conference’. Over 170 colleagues from across the partnership attended, providing the opportunity to network and reflect on the strength of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Hull. The conference had guest speakers from several agencies, including Lorraine Parker, National Policing Co-ordinator for Child Safeguarding Arrangements who was instrumental in provoking insight into of all the opportunities for joint working on shared priorities, including forging ahead with consideration to Hull’s arrangements under the Families First Partnership Programme. The Designated Safeguarding Leads and Local Safeguarding Partnership meeting is well established with a high level of challenge and support to the executive board, with the most recent Executive Board endorsing the Annual report for the HSCP. Executive members from the three statutory partners, alongside an education lead, have been joined by a new strategic lead from the voluntary and community sector which was critical to our continued journey of ensuring inclusivity and engagement and has further strengthened Hull’s approach to safeguarding.

Hull’s response to Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) is led through our HSCP with a governance structure in place, strong leadership overseeing the programme activity, reporting through to lead safeguarding partners (including VCSE and education executive leads). A multi-agency programme management team (including the local authority senior responsible officer, HSCP lead and a local authority transformation lead; working alongside transformation leads from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Humberside Police has been established, with assurance and oversight feeding into Hull Safeguarding Partnership Executive Board and to lead safeguarding partners. In the early stages of development and planning, we have a shared vision, commitment and dedicated leaders who are clear on the opportunities and challenges ahead - we are place and strengths focused.

Importantly, our partnership and workforce are fully engaged with FFPP, bringing a high level of engagement to ‘get this right’ for children and families and workstreams progressing in all areas for the Reforms. We are both excited and cautious to ensure that we build on local strengths and priorities, and plan to implement a Family Help ‘test and learn’ team by the end of March 2026. The approach will be multi agency and start small, encouraging those practitioners closest to children and families to help shape future service design. Equally, this ‘test and learn’ phase will look to maximise community based support and extend co-location and integration with key partners.

Following the positive pilot inspection of Hull’s Youth Justice Service (HYJS) in June 2024, the Youth Justice Service have further developed the ‘Child First’ ethos across the partnership. The impact of this for children can be seen in our further development of Youth Prevention Panels and the partnership approach to ensuring we are reaching youth crime and anti-social behaviour at the least level of intervention. The reoffending rate for children referred to the Youth Justice Service compared to partner agencies is on par and very low at approximately 12%. The trajectory shows the out of court reoffending rate has been steadily declining.



We have continued to develop and strengthen our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) offer for children, young people and families, bringing together a range of partners and council services at Lil Bilocca House, our integrated Hub. The Hub, has provided a wide range of opportunities, bespoke services and equipment, which has benefitted children and families with disabilities and special educational needs. Most importantly, the Hub has been co designed with parents and is something families have been asking for. With a focus on co-production, we are confident that our Integrated Hub will go from strength to strength.

'This is amazing and the fact that it is central means we only have to get one bus now to get here. The rooms are brilliant with all the new toys and the sensory room will help my son when he is struggling.'
(Parents of L)

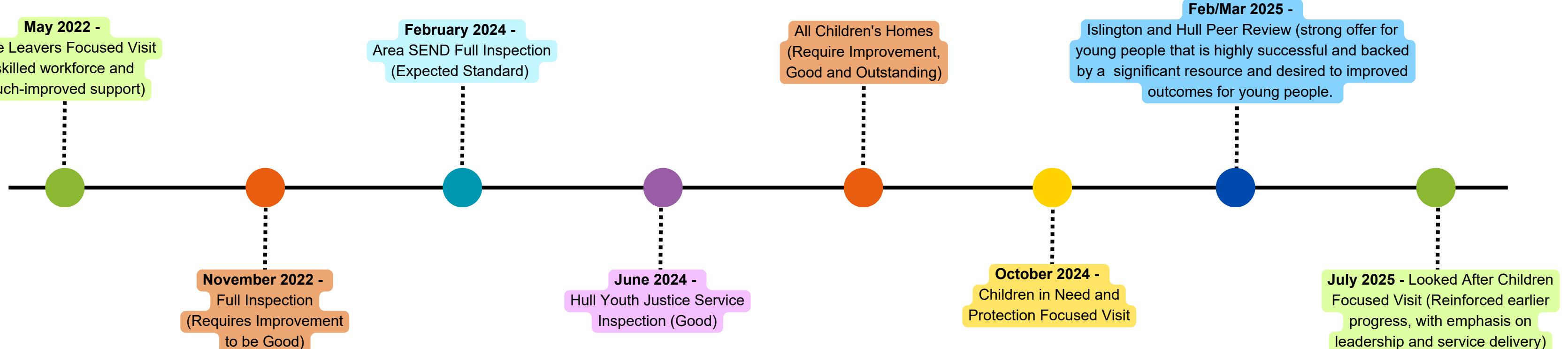


(Opening of Lil Bilocca House)



Leaders are ambitious for children in care and take corporate parenting seriously. Ofsted's focused visit in July 2025 found good progress in permanence planning and stability for children aged 14 and over. Regulatory inspections of children's homes throughout 2024/25 show increasingly positive outcomes. Additionally, we continue to be outward facing and benefit from learning from regional support and learning from other places, including the learning which comes from peer reviews. Examples of recent peer reviews for Hull services include a regional review of Hull's Care Leaver Service in November 2025 and a review by Islington in February 2025, which considered the effectiveness of arrangements for 16–17-year-olds at risk of homelessness. Hull's senior leaders also lead and contribute to regional peer reviews, such as front door health checks and review of care leaver services in 2025, driving sector-led improvement.

Continuous improvement is integral to our work in Hull, good progress has been made on recommendations from previous inspections or Independent Scrutiny.



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Bright Spots



**(Group Managers,
Acceleration Course)**

'Hull's relational approach remains firmly rooted in a 'family first' ethos, prioritising safe and supportive family environments wherever possible.'

(July 2025, FV)

'My carers are really kind to me. I have a really positive experience of being in care and I like it. I work with parallel parents and we do fun stuff together and celebrations. It helps me be with other kids that are in care. It makes me feel the same as everyone else when I go there.'
(Bright Spots Survey 2025)

3. Learning culture

Hull's ethos is to 'Grow and Thrive together' creating a system that continuously learns and grows.

Senior leadership support for ongoing organisational learning and the development of confident and experienced staff who are ambitious for children has been central to the sustained improvements we have achieved. Staff and managers are committed to ongoing learning through a range of training and development opportunities. Senior leaders and operational managers have continued to take opportunities from the Staff College and Frontline Leadership programmes with attendance at specific leadership training, including SEND and Black and Asian Leadership (BALI). During 2025, a further six Group Managers completed Social Care Leadership Coaching Accelerator Course with the University of Hull and 19 advanced practitioners and managers have attended the CYPFS leadership and management training. Learning Plans are reviewed every year to ensure that training stays relevant and this means that training and learning opportunities are wide ranging:

- HSCP partnership training.
- Council Learning & Development training offer.
- Social Work Academy led bitesize learning and targeted workshops including 'Stop the Clock'
- Regional and national training and conferences.

We are proud that Hull's growing reputation has led to national recognition of social work in Hull, with articles published by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Coram Voice. On 3rd February 2025, we were invited to 'Coram Voice: 50 Years of the Voice for Children in Care' in the House of Lords, in recognition of our commitment to hear and act on what our children tell us to continue to improve service delivery. Furthermore, Fatima Whitbread featured 'Dream On' during the 2025 One Voice Summit in April. Hull was one of only three local authorities to be part of the Coram Voice 'Staying Connected Change Project' across England.

You Said, We Did...

Between 10 February and 17 March 2025, Hull's Bright Spots survey engaged 344 of 594 eligible children and young people (58% response rate) across three age groups. The survey compared findings with 2020/21 to measure the impact of improvement plans. Results show significant progress: Hull achieved 12 'Bright Spots' areas where children in Hull are doing better than peers in other local authorities; up from 6 in the previous survey. This is a clear indicator that improvement efforts are making a real difference. A headline from children was: Life is getting better.

344 children's voices amplified & coproduction of future improvement activity informed by children.

Age group	Number of responses	Response rate
4-7yrs	54	56%
8-11yrs (primary)	90	59%
11-17yrs (secondary)	200	58%

344 children in care responded to the survey from a total eligible population of 594: a response rate of **58%**

Life is getting better.
8-17yrs

85%

As a result of Bright Spots 2021, more children are benefitting from family time that is their choice and feels natural to them. If family time is supervised, social workers are using words and pictures to explain why and looking to solutions, such as connected carers supporting. Bright Spots survey 2025 highlights that children aged 4–18 describe continued progress on family time, with 56% of the youngest cohort and 50% of the eldest cohort sharing it feels “just right.” This reflects a strong family first culture and practitioners who are commitment to upholding children’s right to family life. The results have been shared with all practitioners and the policy and guidance on family time updated, to set the standards expected in relation to building life long connections and promoting family identity.

‘I love to see my family and I enjoy it very much.’
(Child, Bright Spots Survey 2025)

‘I see my sister, every 8 week.’
(Child Bright Spots Survey 2025)



(Hull's Young Mayor, sharing the Youth Reps Manifestos at World Social Work Conference in Hull with Gemma Oaten, CEO of the SEED Charity)



Following engagement with Hull’s global majority population, work has taken place in collaboration with Forum CIO and HSCP to establish the Safeguarding Our Communities Network Group. This group has been created alongside community and faith leaders to strengthen our relational safeguarding approach, successfully improving inclusivity.

The continually expanding network now unites 27 dedicated community leaders, each bringing unique insights and strengths to drive meaningful change and foster collaboration across communities. Work has already had a positive impact on children and families and has included building knowledge and confidence about safeguarding legislation and upskilling the workforce to always be culturally sensitive. A recent community event held at HANA Charity was widely attended with community leaders and partner agencies providing feedback that our current partnership approach is building on the foundation of stronger relationships, improved cultural humility, and a more inclusive safeguarding system in Hull.

Teenagers from minority communities have been empowered to share their stories, with the most recent webinar ‘See Me too’ focusing on helping practitioners to understand the interface between racism and mental health; this has been shared with leaders and operational practitioners. There is a clear vision of expected practice to achieve the national outcomes for children and families.



117 new staff completed 2-day SofS training during 2025	66 partners attended SofS Partnership Briefing during 2025	35 leaders participated in bespoke SofS sessions designed specifically for managers linked to plans
31 Foster Carers attended SofS Partnership Briefing during 2025	73% of staff indicated that they receive regular, reflective supervision linked to SofS tools	35 leaders participated in bespoke SofS sessions designed specifically for managers linked to assessments

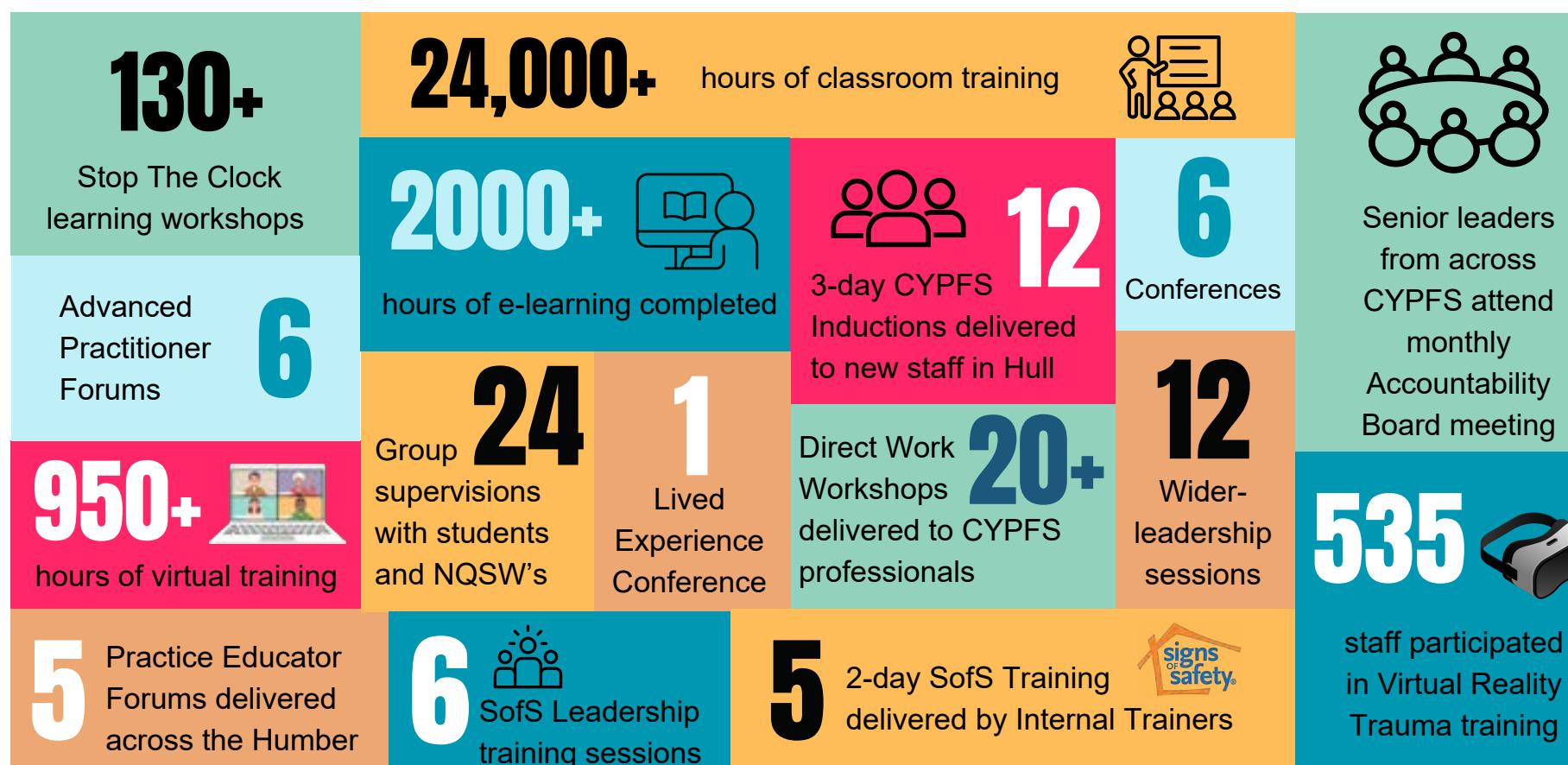
‘Having a dedicated hour to reflect on the amendments of Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Children’s National Framework has allowed me to gain a greater insight in terms of the reforms. It helped to focus on our visions, purpose and the principles of the work we do so that so that children can grow, thrive and their outcomes improve. I loved the children’s version and have been able to implement this in practice. The newly revised threshold of needs workshop includes a fictional family, the case scenarios really helped me to link the guidance in practice and has strengthened my understanding and confidence.’

(Practitioner who attended a bespoke workshop Working Together and the National Framework)

We are proud that a dynamic, blended and flexible approach to learning and development is well embedded, with a much greater emphasis on experiential learning, via stop-the-clock sessions, workshops, co-working assessments, bite-size learning, coaching and modelling. To ensure that learning and practice improvements are embedded across the whole system, all first line managers attend a wider leadership team morning each month, facilitated by the PSW and Assistant Director for Safeguarding. Sessions bring a blended focus to wider leadership development, Signs of Safety and improvement plan activity. In March 2025, the Principal Social Worker delivered bespoke workshops aligned to the 'Children's Social Care National Framework' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. These sessions were repeated to reach over 500 practitioners, reinforcing values and principles embedded within our Social Work Practice Standards.

The national review in intrafamilial child sexual abuse has resulted in 2 cohorts of experienced social workers and leaders attending a bespoke practice lead training session, spanning over 10 months, which will provide greater understanding and direction via supervision and peer reflection.

Our workforce value the importance of a 'growth mindset' with thousands of hours invested in training during the last 12 month, from practitioners across Hull.



The Families First Partnership Programme in Hull has achieved a high level of participation and engagement from across our safeguarding partnership to 'get this right for children and families'. During November 2025, three engagement events, with representatives from a range of agencies and Department of Education were held.



A culture of continuous learning, reflection and development is further enhanced by the collaborative learning activity which takes place between HSCP, the Hull Health and Wellbeing Board, Hull Safeguarding Adults Partnership and the Hull Community Safety Partnership. Examples of this work include supporting practitioners across Hull to be professionally curious when working with children and families. In response, a number of joint learning events, webinars and resources have been cascaded and shared across Hull.

Arrangements for local learning about multi-agency practice is driven through HSCP, including 'Line of Sight' meetings, now a regular feature of quality assurance activity. Practitioners and managers come together to reflect on each others practice when there have been missed opportunities or poor outcomes for children. This learning process is agile, responsive and directly involving practitioners in detailed and reflective learning events. Key themes are disseminated across the partnership through seven-minute guides and short briefings. The impact of these reviews has strengthened agency responses by highlighting key learning themes and providing accessible research and resources to support changes in practice. In response to the SEND Inspection Hull have developed an e-learning offer, available to all practitioners who support children. The package launched in October 2025.

"Not only has the Line-of-Sight meeting provided a great opportunity for multi-agency reflection, facilitated in a supportive and engaging way, it has also resulted in rich learning and actions which will help to improve practice in the future".
(Consultant Paediatrician, Hull Royal Infirmary)



(Stop the Clock)



(Stop the Clock)



(Stop the Clock)

4. Performance

Safeguarding Performance and Quality Assurance are embedded as standard, providing live data reporting across safeguarding services, increased reporting and analytical activity across the directorate, feeding into partnership forums. This enables services to better understand how they are performing in relation to key measures. Our well established performance cycle includes regular performance meetings at all levels to interrogate and analyse data and identify action and learning plans. Once the work has been completed, we close the learning cycle by reviewing the data again to ensure that progress has been made. Key themes are taken forward through bespoke Stop-the-Clock sessions and further case sampling.

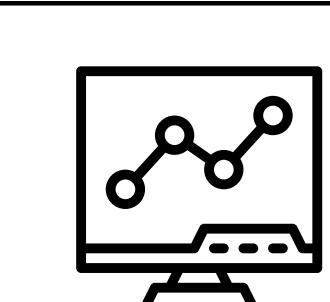
Further development of the early help and children's services data dashboard during 2025/26 has increased the information available to workers and their teams, helping to support evidenced improvements in the quality of practice. Dedicated dashboard training sessions for staff takes place throughout the year. The recent move to Liquid Logic services being hosted in the provider's cloud environment provided the opportunity for all dashboard reports to be systematically reviewed to ensure continued accuracy and provision of meaningful information to support decision-making for children.

Stronger audit outcomes are reviewed monthly with key actions identified and a focus on closing the learning loop on information gathered through the audit process. Learning strengthens practice and development activity that takes place via team-level 'Stop-the-Clock' sessions, updates to practice guidance and policy, direct support to team managers and social workers and revisions to induction and mandatory training for staff. Learning is then triangulated into the annual learning plan. Good practice and good audit examples are shared in audit training.



The management oversight of actions identified through audits is tracked for completion by Senior Leaders. Re-auditing of audits tells us that actions to improve outcomes for children are completed and impactful. This is evidenced in subsequent improved audit ratings.

"An audit I completed was moderated by a Head of Service, the moderation was discussed with me and provided space and time to strengthen my practice relating to the recordings of audits, which has developed my confidence and improved subsequent audit activities that i have undertaken."



550 accessible reports on the CYPFS dashboard
All refreshed daily



Most recent themed audit of CLA: 53% were graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and 100% were graded as 'Requires Improvement' or above



weekly and monthly performance reporting across CYPFS supports professional curiosity and improvement opportunities



53% of Audits over the past 12 months have been graded 'Good' or better for relationships and direct work



52% of Audits over the past 12 months have been graded 'Good' or better for protection from abuse and neglect



61% of Audits over the past 12 months have been graded 'Good' or better for legal proceedings and PLO



54% of Audits over the past 12 months have been graded 'Good' or better for children's records

Re-auditing, by heads of service, together with the broadening of monthly moderations to include all audit gradings, provides increased assurance of the quality and consistency of audits. In addition to completing a higher number of audit moderations each month, moderations now include reflective discussions with auditors which focus on the quality of the audit and any identified learning points for auditors. In addition, changes of audit grades are now an exception and in recent months almost all moderations have agreed with the audit outcome, demonstrating a significant improvement in audit consistency. Analysis of audits demonstrates that children are benefiting by receiving support from practitioners who know them well, share strong relationships with them and their families and capture their voices through purposeful direct work. Leaders have participated in audit development sessions via our monthly Wider Leadership Meeting, to continually strengthen all audit related activity.



The early help case management system will be rolled out to partners in a phased approach ahead of the system changes which will be implemented as part of the Families First Partnership Programme. This, along with enhanced information sharing and a revised approach to data collation will enable the accurate evidencing of the proactive, effective targeted and universal early help work taking place across the partnership. Whilst the Supporting Families programme has now ceased, maximum claims were identified for 2024/25, thereby evidencing the impact of Hull's Early Help System and the positive difference families have experienced, which can be explored here: [Hull Early Help Service Guide](#).

A dedicated and knowledgeable CYPFS commissioning function, provides routine opportunity for managers to explore how commissioning activity can be enhanced. For example, an increased oversight has been provided to placement commissioning. Recent effective commissioning is supporting enriching experiences for children and young people as they reach adulthood and beyond through the initiation of the historic file digitisation project. The historic paper files are being preserved and digitised in a way that means they can easily be accessed at any point in the future. Part of this project has seen former children and young people known to services reunited with cards and personal items which have been stored alongside paper files.

Across services, commissioned resources are well thought out to ensure that spending is led by the needs for children in Hull and is proportionate; there is regular review of commissioned services in evaluating the impact for children to ensure that resources continue to be effective in improving the quality of lived experiences for children.

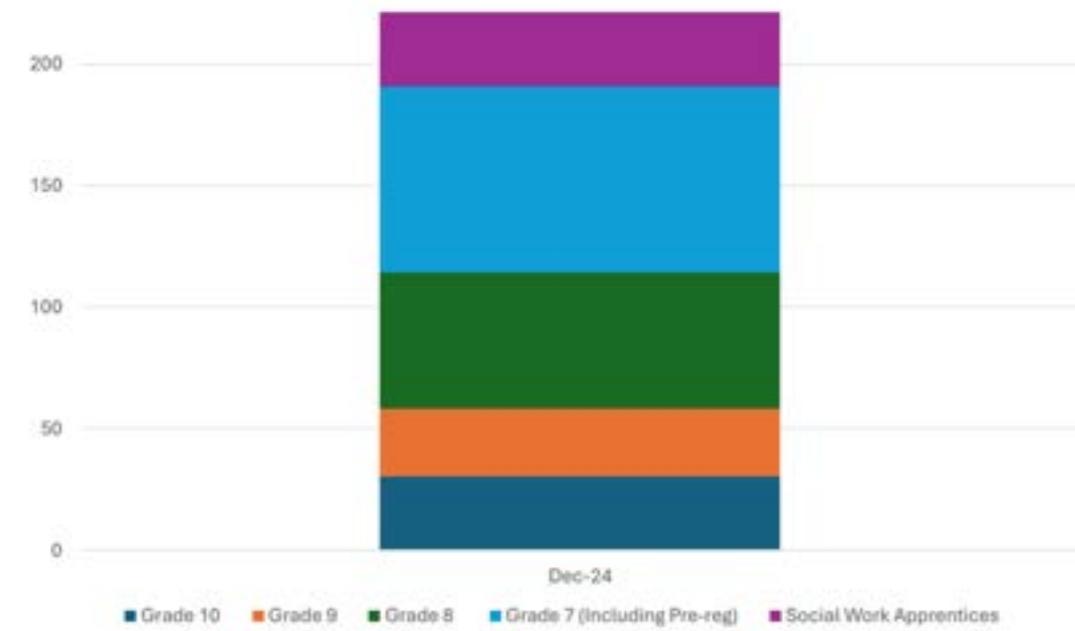
'I would like to say a massive thank you to you all, you have gone above and beyond for my son, not just his relationship with cannabis but his life's choices also.'
(Parent)

5. Workforce

We are proud to have achieved a stable and experienced workforce of social workers, practitioners, managers and leaders who are working hard to do the best for children in Hull. Social workers in Hull have an established sense of pride about their work and have high levels of confidence in carrying out their roles. They frequently report positively about the advice and support which they receive from senior leaders; their satisfaction with their job; and their ability to work autonomously and exercise their own professional judgement.

With our largest 'Grow our Own' cohort qualifying and taking up posts during August and September 2025, it is expected that agency numbers will be reduced again to 15 by January 2026. Our apprentices continue to be supported through their studies with a further 8 due to complete between 2026-2027. Positively, as at September 2025, 10 existing agency social workers have submitted applications to transfer into permanent posts. Agency workers consistently share positive experiences about working in Hull with increasing numbers choosing to stay.

In March 2025, 8 step-up students completed their studies and have all gained employment in Hull and are currently employed in social work posts. Hull have committed to supporting a further seven step-up students in January 2026.



Caseloads continue to be monitored closely, recognising that need and associated workload can fluctuate. ASYE caseloads remain well protected and in line with our 'caseload promise.' A key priority in the workforce strategy is to continue to focus on our wellbeing and support offer, recognising the complexity of needs which our practitioners and managers support each and every day.

Social workers during the 2025 Local Government Agency standards for employers, with 6 of the 8 standards scores being good and no area scored as poor. This evidenced good job satisfaction.

Agency social workers have reduced from 44 FTE to 27 FTE between September 2024 and September 2025.

6% social work turnover rate, reduced from 8.2% in 2024.

A range of initiatives, including active transfer and progression policies, a 'return to social work' package and a strong social media presence, all assist in making Hull a destination of choice. Children benefit from greater consistency of worker; teams are stable and the quality of practice further improves.

The success of recruitment means we have retained experienced practitioners across the service, to support the growing number of learners.

The vacancy number as of 31 March 2025 was 43.89 FTE however once those currently at offer stage are in post this will reduce to 2 FTE. The vacancy rate has now reduced from 6.3% to 4.7% from September 2024 to September 2025.

Average caseloads at the end of September 2025 have decreased to 15.8 in comparison to 16.4 the previous year.

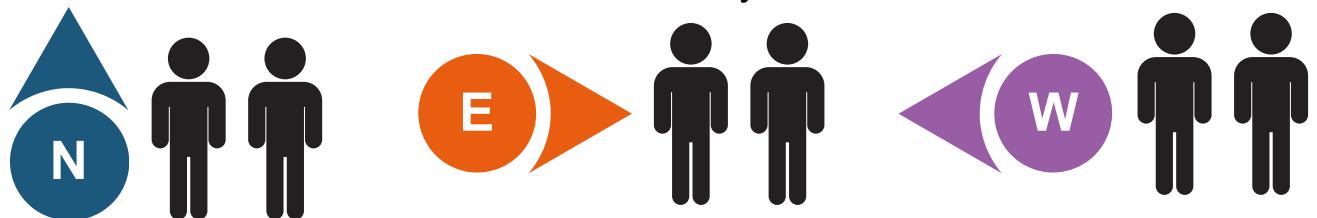
The achievements of ASYEs are recognised and celebrated, ensuring that every ASYE pass is acknowledged in the directorate newsletter and with a personal letter of congratulation from the DCS. ASYEs feel valued and develop a strong connection with place, most describing a desire to stay.



(ASYE Celebration Event 2025)

The recruitment and retention strategy is resulting in more social workers gaining experience, progressing and staying in Hull. Mindfulness sessions are available to individual social workers at their request and staff wellbeing continues to be prioritised by the leadership team. There has been an increased focus on staff wellbeing inclusive of revised wellbeing and risk assessments. During 2024 and 2025 the Health and Well-being Manager and SWA Mental Health Champion facilitated mental health awareness and wellbeing sessions, supported by drop-in sessions for the workforce, which continue to be well attended.

Recognising the high expectations on team managers in safeguarding teams, during August 2025 additional investment was secured to fund 6 additional advanced social workers. These roles are non case holding and will be based in the three locality teams. The role will support the learners and team managers and leave the service well resourced for the introduction of Multi Agency Child Protection Teams during 2026/27. All 6 posts have been successfully appointed to and will individuals will commence in roles between November 2025 and January 2026.



Data shows that frequency of case supervision has consistently been above 83% over the past 12 months with an average of 86% of supervisions recorded in time. Staff feedback remains important and the outcome of the most recent Social Work Employee Survey (Spring 2025) shows that social workers and team managers continue to feel supported, supervised and appraised and that their wellbeing is prioritised. This survey demonstrated further improved outcomes from the previous survey.

Impact:

57 Practice Educators completed Practice Assessors training with Hull University and 39 with a level 2 qualification. Overall, there are five more Practice Educators in the service since 31 August 2024.

24 mentors supporting newly appointed Practice Educators.



Annual sickness absence rate reduced to 4.4% below the previous year of 5.1%, with higher FTE workforce.

Audit outcomes evidence impact of supervision on interventions with families and children.

Audits completed since April 2025 show that 93% were graded Requires Improvement or better with 50% graded Good or Outstanding.

Consultation undertaken linked to the workforce strategy - 96% of participants sharing that they receive clear direction by way of supervision and 82% sharing that their supervision is reflective (2025).

'Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in Hull and spoke highly of the support they received from managers, consistently referencing the accessibility and responsiveness at all levels of leadership.'
(Ofsted Focused Visit, July 2025)

'Workforce stability and morale have improved, supported by a 'Grow your Own' approach and the development of the social work academy.'
(Ofsted Focused Visit, July 2025)



SIGNS OF BELONGING – MAPPING AND PATHWAY PLANNING

1. PURPOSE

- J has been a looked after child for eight years cared for in foster care placement since 2017. As part of being a looked after child Pathway planning, Mapping and Signs of Belonging has been completed.
- A case file Audit was completed in May 2025 with an **outstanding** outcome.



2. BACKGROUND

J has been looked after by the Local Authority since 2017. J is of Polish heritage. J has lived in the same Foster Care placement for eight years where she is happy and settled. J's children's file has recently been audited to identify areas of good practice.



Show, Share & Shine

3. OUTCOME

J is aware of her culture and identity and feels she has redeveloped her relationship with her mother. Rich analysis of J's lived experiences, cultural consideration throughout assessment. The young person is well cared for by foster carers and is well protected from abuse and neglect. The young person's emotional wellbeing and mental health is well considered throughout.

4. WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

- Excellent Signs of Belonging mapping and consideration for meeting identity needs.
- Richness in capturing the child's voice.
- Direct work undertaken with a focus around identity.
- Work undertaken with mum and J to reestablish family time.
- Independent visitor regular visits and positive relationship built.
- SDQ completed with analysis.



We continue to celebrate our workforce by actively nominating them for awards, showcasing their dedication and achievements. Our staff rightly feel proud of the difference they make, 'together we can'.

'One reason that I came back to Hull City Council is because I saw some serious and sustainable responses. Since joining permanently I have been supported to fulfill my ambitions to become a practice educator and was progressed to a advanced practitioner.'

(Social Worker, Stay Put interview)

Hull work closely with Children's Social Work Matters and BASW, to portray social work in a positive light.

The Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES) is a data-informed improvement programme which ensures action planning is locally relevant and that impact is evidenced over time. The project has commenced with Adults Services, with a representative from the Social Work Academy during 2025. We are committed to the project during 2026 and have the benefit from shared learning across adults and children's services, to commence with confidence.

6. Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Drive and implement the priorities and commitments made in Hull's newly launched Children and Young People's Plan.
- Further recruit and retain high levels of experienced Social Workers by extending the Advanced Social Worker role, in key safeguarding teams.
- Continue to invest in our learning culture and distributed leadership through external training such as Frontline Pathway Leadership Programme and internal forms such as Leadership Network, Accountability Board, coaching and mentoring.
- Develop and implement our local partnership response to Families First Partnership Programme through a 'test and learn' approach and commitment to strengths and place based design.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection

Between April and September 2025

7. Early Help

Children, young people, and families in Hull increasingly benefit from coordinated early help services, including co-located support through Family Hubs. As the Early Help and Prevention Strategy concluded in early 2025, the new Hull Children and the CYPP sets out partnership-wide priorities for children and young people.

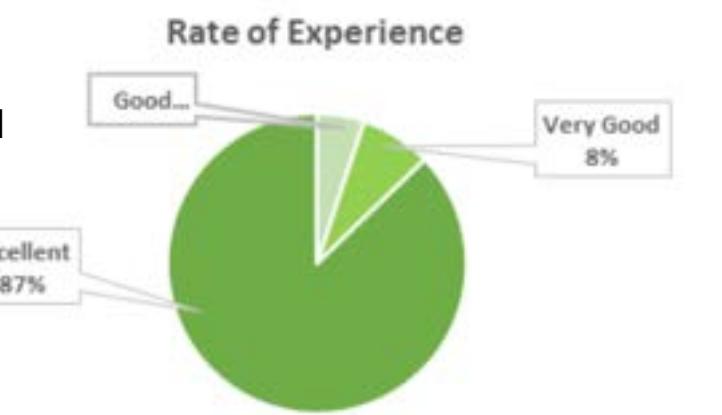


'We want all of your voices to be heard, across all communities, including under-represented groups. Your lived experiences will shape how we design and deliver services. To do this we will listen and reflect your voices, representing all of you in all of our work.'

(CYPP, 2025-2030)

Feedback from families highlights that targeted family support teams are responsive, understanding, and effective. Most importantly, families advise they know how to access support in the future.

Children and young people have multiple avenues to share their voices, influencing service delivery. The Voice and Influence Annual Report 2024/25 evidences the positive impact of this engagement. Thrive Hull, a city-wide initiative promoting emotional wellbeing, exemplifies co-production through youth-led videos and the development of website.



Family Support services offer a range of specialist support, including, SEND Family Support Team; examples from this service demonstrate the positive impact of multi-agency support, such as the 'Team Around the Family' meetings which supported education support, access to activities and needs of children being met;



Mum T, and child L were supported by a range of agencies including educational support and access to activities like art clubs.

Targeted Family Support Services deliver timely, multi-agency interventions using Signs of Wellbeing assessments. Staff are community-based and work closely with schools, health services, police, and voluntary organisations to ensure a robust team around the family approach. This has resulted in 93% of Early Help episodes ending with improved outcome star scores.



Step-ups from Level 3 Targeted Support to Children's Social Care (CSC) remain low.

Weekly joint panels, led by CSC Group Managers, review potential step-ups to maintain support within early help, where it is safe to do so. Complex circumstances receive intensive

support with broad partner involvement. Universal services such as health visiting and youth services underpin this targeted offer. This integrated approach forms the foundation of Hull's evolving Family First Partnership Family Help model. Families have an agile offer of parenting support in-terms of the SoliHull Guide which is strengthening confidence, understanding of child development and parenting.

Family Support Workers also work proactively alongside social workers to support delivery of plans at Level 4, using their expertise to deliver targeted interventions such as parenting support, Grow Brain, and substance misuse support for young people. Again, this provides some of the Foundation for the new Family Help model in Hull.

'The youth club's focus on inclusiveness, teamwork and creativity has also positively influenced H. Thank you again to all the staff for creating such a welcoming and supportive environment for our young people. We are truly grateful for the positive impact your youth club has had on H's life.'

(R, mum of young person)

95% of

respondents to the Early Help Feedback Survey rated their experience as

'outstanding' or

'very good'

Young Carers in Hull benefit from a range of support delivered across the partnership, including a project funded by the Council and NHS Hull Health and Care Partnership. Delivered via the youth service, the project works closely with schools, colleges, Hull University, health partners, family support services, and local VCS organisations. Targeted Youth Workers connect young carers to city-wide provision and specialist social groups, which also help us understand their challenges. Referrals can be made by schools, social workers, health professionals, or families.

Support includes:

- Needs assessment and tailored support plan
- One-to-one advice and guidance
- Weekly peer support groups
- Advocacy from a trusted youth worker
- Opportunities to join the Young Carer Forum and influence future services
- Telephone support
- Applications for the Young Carers Card and Wellbeing Grant



"We get to have a break from what we do at home and then we also get to meet up with our friends that we don't really see"

(young carer aged 14 who participates in the weekly young carers support session)

" If you need help they (the staff) will be there for you... which is good... so like sometimes if you need help with any homework or any studying they'll be there for you... or whether it be like mental health... like if you have a panic attack or just like... you're stressed... or worried about something they will be there to help you out with that"

(young carer aged 16 who accessed 121 support)



'Young Carers is everybody's business workshop'

A development session shared at...

- Accountability meeting
- Wider Leadership Meeting
- Stop the Clock sessions across services.

Resulting in revising the Practice Standards and the development of practice guidance.

Further support and advice is available to practitioners in terms of the identification of young carers during assessment work via the Social Work Academy. A working group has been established via Hull Carer's Partnership to strengthen the current offer and there are plans to develop a 'Young Carers' tool kit.

8. Identifying and responding to children's needs and appropriate thresholds

Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHASH)

*'Those children who required an immediate response to the presenting concerns; where they had been harmed and were at risk of continued significant harm which required immediate safety planning, this was progressed according to their needs for safety.
(OMG Audit presentation, June 2025)*

EHASH operates as a robust multi-agency hub, supported by co-location with key partners including police, health, adult substance misuse (Renew), adult safeguarding, the Domestic Abuse Partnership (DAP), Probation, and Contact Point. This integrated model enables swift information sharing and timely decision-making. The impact of strong partnership front door arrangements are:



The addition of Contact Point strengthened daily consultations for children with emerging emotional wellbeing needs, ensuring quicker access to appropriate support. A formal review is scheduled for January 2026, with early indications showing improved outcomes and service delivery. The revised threshold guidance fosters a 'whole family' approach and aligns to Children's Social Care National Framework.

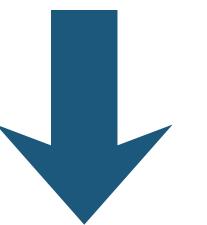


In the 12 months to September 2025, EHASH received 7% more contacts (1,319 additional) than the previous year. Despite this increase, referral rates to Children's Social Care decreased from 800.0 to 766. 77% of contacts and 73% of referrals had decisions made within one working day. Enhancements at the front door have improved the ability to provide proportionate and timely support. Risks are identified early, and children receive prompt responses. Team Managers monitor cases via dashboards to ensure timely action, with delays being rare and swiftly addressed.

Timely, Efficient and Accountability



77% of Contacts
73% of Referrals



- Conversational consultation offer: Personalised and relational. 81% consults did not progress to a contact June-Sept 25.
- Children who require immediate support to reduce risk get the right response to keep them safe.
- Education social worker provides direct support to schools - helping families stay with trusted services.
- Regular internal and multi-agency quality assurance work to keep standards sharp.
- EDT provide effective immediate help to reduce risk for children out of hours.
- Efficient day/night handovers.
- Partnership work to reduce contacts is 'getting children the right support, first time'.

Partnership Progress: Children in Custody

Police Vulnerability Hub (Pitstop), operational since January 2022, Pitstop holds daily partnership meetings to triage low/medium risk and domestic abuse incidents. This has led to earlier support from universal services and reduced escalation. Sub-regional data comparisons now provide deeper insights and understanding into need and demand.

The partnership approach to the request for a PACE bed when a young person needs accommodation prior to their court hearing the following morning or at the earliest possible court date, has made significant enhancements to that offer, with the majority of joint conversations taking place between Youth Justice service, Emergency Duty team and the police, to ensure where a placement is needed that this is provided. Wherever possible, conditions are imposed with family to ensure bail pending presentation at court.



Zero Non-secure PACE Bed Requests (Sept 2024-Sept 2025):
A direct result of strengthened multi-agency collaboration through the Children in Custody group, which promotes conditional bail with family as a safe alternative to custody.



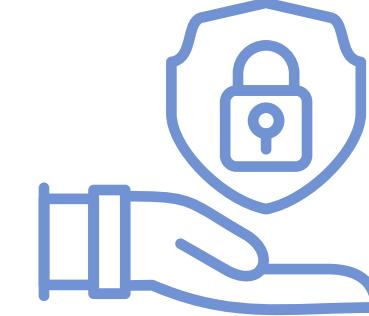
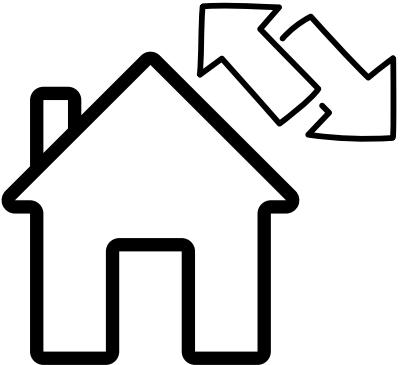
Improved Emergency Placement Sufficiency:
Joint efforts between the Emergency Duty Team and Police have ensured children are safely returned to their families or alternate care arrangement, reducing reliance of emergency placements.



Emerging Practice: Voluntary Home Interviews:
Early-stage work is exploring increased use of voluntary interviews conducted in the home, aiming to reduce custodial interventions and enhance trauma-informed approaches.



Only three children were held on remand, one of whom has since turned 18. The remaining two are awaiting trial in December 2025. All remands were deemed appropriate due to the severity of alleged offences, including violent and sexual crimes.



9. Making good decisions and providing effective help

Social work practice for children and young people needing statutory help and protection under Section 17 and/or Section 47 is effective and relational, with a focus on ensuring that we approach the concerns or support needed with a 'whole family solutions approach', including family network meetings. Resulting in positive feedback from families:

'The meeting all seemed to happen really quickly, we told Helen who was in our lives and we pulled together a meeting. She explained to my mother in law about what was happening for us and the situation, she was really understanding of everything. This was good for my child, the quicker the support, the family being around us the better things will be for him.'

(Signs of Safety Family Survey 2025)

'I have a good understanding of who can help me and what my sister can do to support me. She helps me with things like getting out to places, getting to my assessments and to see my daughter and checks in to make sure I am ok.'

(Signs of Safety Family Survey 2025)

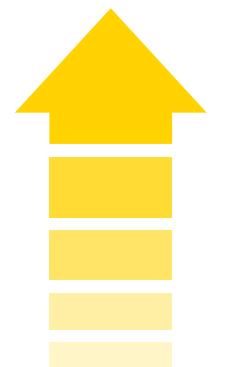
'My social worker would speak to my family as well as us. Other social workers before haven't done this. The difference G made with this was that she seemed to want to know, she asked questions and cared. She was interested in our life and she wasn't nosey. There was no confusion, everyone was still on the same page. We continue to do this now.'

(Signs of Safety Family Survey 2025)

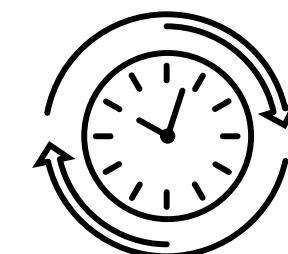
Practitioners and social workers are utilising the assessment and plans guidance, to inform their interventions and improve the quality of their work. Impact of this has been noted within the direct observations, undertaken by managers and the social work academy. Practice has been strengths based, and solution focussed. Many of the direct observations have evidenced ecomap completion and quality preparation for child in need and child protection review meetings.

(Direct observations 2025)

Families appreciate the consistency of the help they receive, which can be seen in the timeliness of assessments and visits, and the stability of the workforce.



79% of initial assessments completed within 45 working days over the last 12 months, increasing to 81% in the last 3 months



Strong emphasis on ensuring that referral decisions for the most at-risk children are proportionate, appropriate, and made without delay.



Referral timeliness has significantly improved in the last quarter with an average of 79% and a trajectory of increased performance in the next quarter. More children and families are benefiting from timely support.



A growing number of children benefit from high-quality assessments and these are shaped by children's voices and lived experiences, leading to more meaningful and effective interventions.

The assessment service, continues to drive swift decision-making and interventions to improve outcomes for children.



Hull's multi-agency Pre-Birth Panel ensures early, proportionate decisions for families before birth. It supports parents to demonstrate safe care or enables early permanence planning where risks are too high. Robust pre-birth plans allow preventative work and give families time to demonstrate change.

Key features include:

- Immediate assessments when concerns arise.
- Clear guidance to support practice.
- Adoption service input for early permanence.
- Dedicated management oversight to support decision-making and share learning.
- Increased use of family-led planning under Child in Need.

10. Children in Need (CiN)

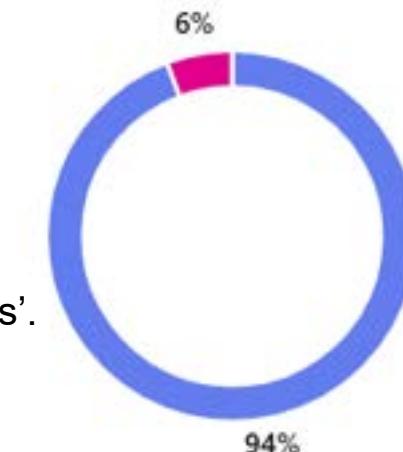
Hull's Child in Need work reflects a mature safeguarding system, underpinned by a family-led ethos.

Key strengths and outcomes include:

- Stable numbers of children subject to CiN planning, consistent with previous years.
- Timely, targeted interventions aligned with need.
- Increased use of family network meetings and sustainable safety planning.

Our family led approach empowers, creates opportunities and enables families to access the support in their networks and communities, preventing unnecessary escalation and intervention. In the future, this approach will underpin the reforms needed under the Families First Partnership Programme ensuring the right intervention with the right person, at the right time.

Robust oversight of children in need continues to be prioritised. For all child in need over twelve months in duration, monthly supervision is progressed to ensure that planning and activity is child centred and meaningful. 37 families have recently undertaken the Signs of Safety survey about family network meetings. The feedback has demonstrated a strong culture of finding out who are the most important people in children's lives. One of the questions being, 'did they explain to you the importance of bringing together the people important to you in a meeting?', of which 94% said 'yes'.



11. Child Protection

Child protection work is delivered through meaningful intervention and consistent use of our Signs of Safety practice model. Joint oversight from team managers, child protection chairs, and group managers ensures effective planning. Hull's safeguarding partnership system is reflective and learning-driven. Feedback and audit findings are used to improve practice, with oversight embedded in daily practice. Joint working and auditing between teams and the Child Protection Chair Service promotes shared responsibility and coordinated support.

Children benefit from a relational and strength-based approach in line with our practice model and inclusion of family networks. Child Protection Chairs complete mid-point reviews and where there is an opportunity for an early review due to significant progress, then takes this place.



Equally where there are continuing concerns, Child Protection Chair oversight includes escalation to Team Managers and Group Managers to consider the required intervention. Child Protection Conferences seek to ensure fathers are represented as well as children's mothers. Where Domestic Abuse has occurred, conferences are split to ensure that each respective parent has an opportunity to participate in the conference. The Section 47 leaflet for families has recently been revised, to incorporate the rights of all families.

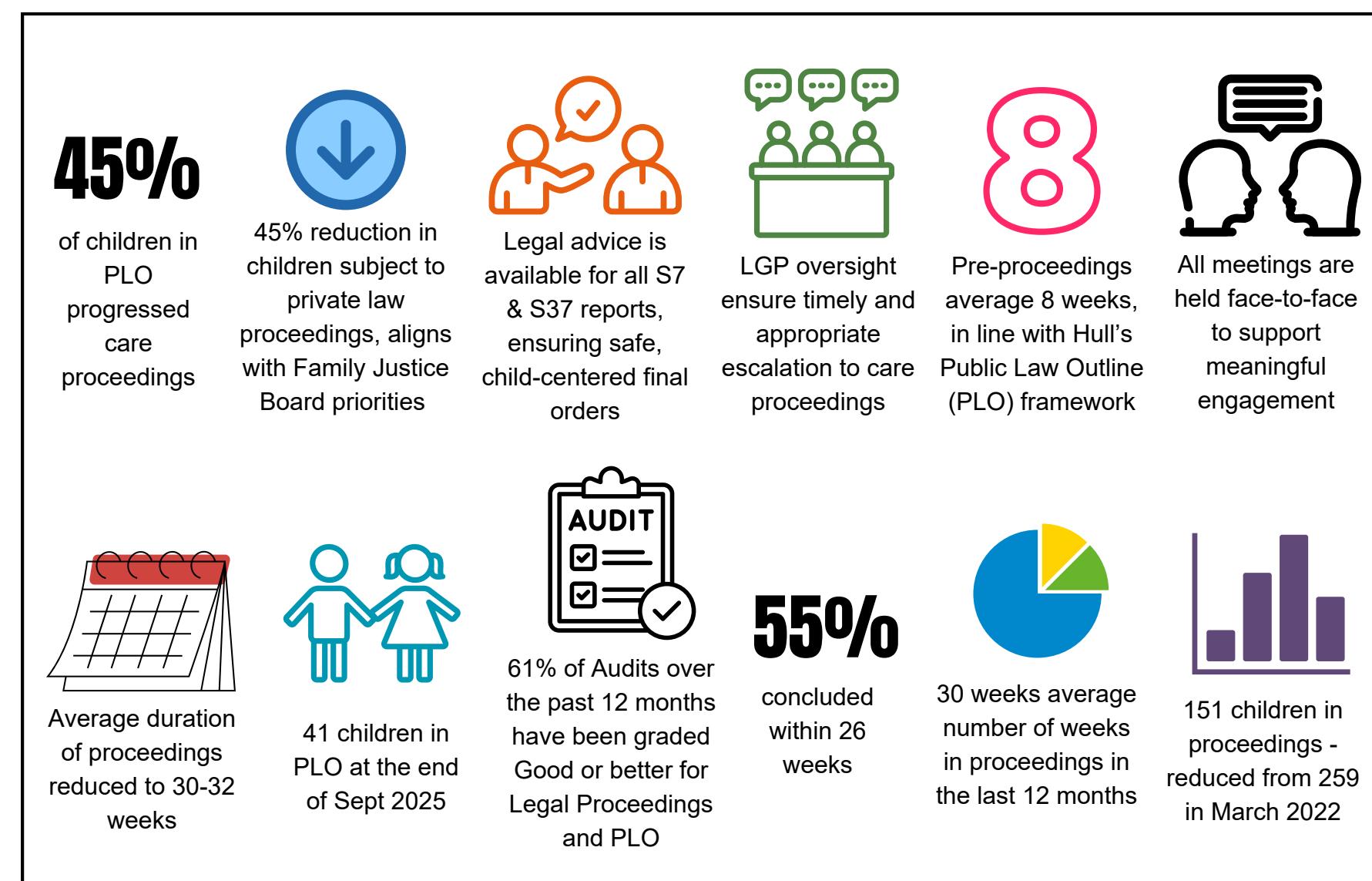
There is strong supervision and decision-making regarding child protection activity which we know is timely and of high quality. Child Protection Conferences actively identify and reduce risks, guided by highly skilled and experienced chairs who foster constructive engagement with families and professionals. Chairs create a collaborative environment, offering challenge when needed to promote safety and positive outcomes for children. Child Protection Conferences identify and mitigate risks, being led by very experienced chairs who engage and challenge families and professionals when needed.

'The conference was painful for me because there were hard truths but the chair, social worker and professionals were honest. This helped me to be clear. It was true what was said and better than pretending everything is okay. So much has changed and things are getting better for my family.'
(Parent)

'I have no worries in regards to the social care intervention and feel the social worker is available when needed and I have a positive relationship with them.'
(Father)

12. Private Law and Legal Gateway

Audit findings show 68% of Legal Gateway Panel (LGP) audits are rated Good or Outstanding since January 2025, evidencing improved safety planning and reduced delay. Strategic investment in legal staffing and strong multi-agency collaboration, through the Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) have enhanced outcomes. Children benefit from timely responses, purposeful direct work, and clearly evidenced plans, shaped by their voices and experiences. Strategic investment in legal officers and strengthened partnerships have further enhanced outcomes. The LFJB is recognised for its strong leadership and effective multi-agency collaboration, which has helped drive improvements and reduce delays in proceedings in the region. Children are benefitting from timely responses to risk, strong relationships with practitioners, purposeful direct work, and clearly evidenced plans that reflect their voices and lived experiences. Strong and focused supervision and oversight continue to ensure that interventions are purposeful. Hull's commitment to strong relational practice and collaborative working is delivering better experiences and outcomes for children and families involved in court proceedings.



13. Priorities for the next 12 months

- Build on success and further develop Hull's partnership 'conversational front door' offer, ensuring that professional consultation is easily accessible and at the heart of decision making.
- Reduce transfer points (targeted early help and assessment teams) for children, young people and families through the design and implementation of Family Help teams, including social workers and differently qualified practitioners, under the Families First Partnership Programme.
- Review VEMT core functions and consider how a Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) pathway could further increase safety and support for children at risk of exploitation. Continue via HSCP arrangements, to ensure that partners are identifying contextualised safeguarding concerns early to allow intervention and risk reduction.
- Build on existing dedicated support arrangements, by developing and implementing a bespoke toolkit to support practitioners and social workers in their assessment and direct work with young carers.
- Continue our focus and commitment to supporting and strengthening Family Networks for children and young people and implement an enhanced Family Group Decision Making pathway, based on local practice and strengths. Develop a single Family Help assessment and plan.



(Locality and Assessment Stop the Clock, considering the Children's Social Care National Framework and Hull City Council's transfer principles)



(Our ambitions for families - staying connected)

The experiences and progress of children in care



770

children looked after

14. Making good decisions for children

Social workers know their children well and this is reflected in the consistent relationship-based practice observed across the service. Stable teams mean that children benefit from reliable relationships with their social workers, with children and young people knowing they can ask to speak to their social worker on their own. A significant improvement has been made in terms of children being supported to understand their journey and identity.

We are proud of the journey we have been on as a service and as a children looked after partnership. The support we receive from elected members and the corporate leadership of the council has been instrumental in our progress. There is a clear commitment from senior political leaders to corporate parenting responsibilities, and this is evident in the investment they have made in our workforce, our sufficiency strategy and our practice model.

Good and consistent decision making is evident with only the children that need to become looked after, doing so. More children are safely supported to stay with or return to their families, while early permanence planning has increased timely adoptions, including Early Permanence Placements. Consistently, we see good social work practice during pre-proceedings activity. This means that family support networks are proactively in place for children so that, when parents are unable to provide safe care, family members are already considered and assessed as potential connected carers for children. This focus on connected care is helping to ensure that more children are being permanently cared for by family members, subject to Special Guardianship or Child arrangement Orders. In addition, there is a renewed network focus in dynamic safety planning.

An established Best Practice (Permanency) Forum is held with senior manager oversight for those children who have been looked after post proceedings. Forum considers plans for permanent orders, maintaining connections with birth family and extended family, driving plans for children to return to family where it is considered safe to do so.

The number of children ceasing care by adoption is a strength and planning is consistently timely, thorough and in children's best interests. Pre-birth processes for unborn babies, mean that greater use is being made of Early Permanence Placements (EPP) and more children experience stability and less experience multiple carers before permanency.

Larger proportions of children (8-11yrs) and young people (11-17yrs) knew they could ask to speak to their social worker on their own compared with children and young people in care nationally. (Bright Spots 2025)

**90% (8-11)
96% (11-17)**

Children in care in Hull were more likely to feel that an adult had explained to them why they were in care than their peers in other local authorities. (Bright Spots 2025)

**61% (4-7)
69% (8-11)
79% (11-17)**

The workforce is far more stable than in previous years, with significantly reduced agency use and a stronger permanent base. As a result children in Hull are more likely to have kept the same social worker in the last 12 months than young people in care nationally.

54% vs 40%

'Children benefit from a strong culture of relational practice and collaborative support, where managers at all levels step in to ensure that both children and practitioners are well supported.' (Ofsted Focused Visit, July 2025)

'Just wanted to say massive well done in all the hard work in this situation, it's not been the easiest or most straightforward of situations but we have got the right Orders in place for xx to move forward and have the opportunities that he deserves.' (February 2025)

Over the last 3 months we have seen an upturn in the number of children and young people achieving permanence with a Discharge of Care order (DOCO) October 2025.

41 children adopted from care in the last 12 months

Hull's approach to reunification from care is increasingly guided by its practice model, using tools like timelines, safety goals, and family networks to ensure safe and lasting returns home. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) play a key role by promoting family involvement and ensuring care plans are well-informed through updated assessments. This strengthens support around families and helps maintain safety and stability beyond reunification. Child Arrangement Orders and Supervision Orders, where reunification with parents is appropriate and in children's best interests, continue to be progressed in a timely way.

Of the 289 children whose proceedings concluded in the year October 2024 to September 2025, 63% were living with someone already known to them such as a relative, connected person or parent under a care order or some type of permanent order or no order at all.

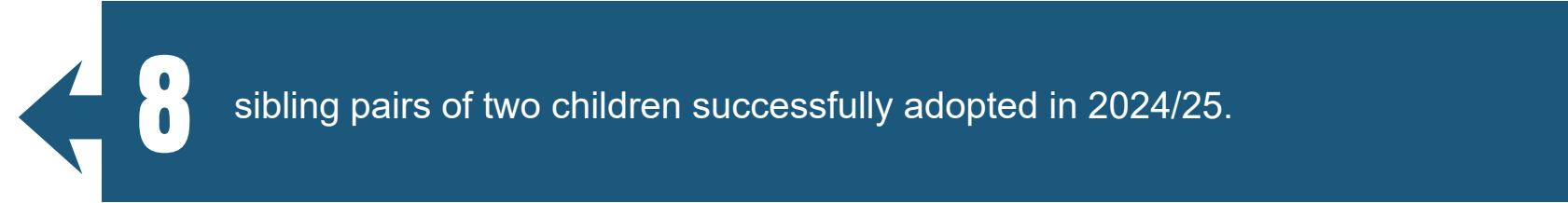
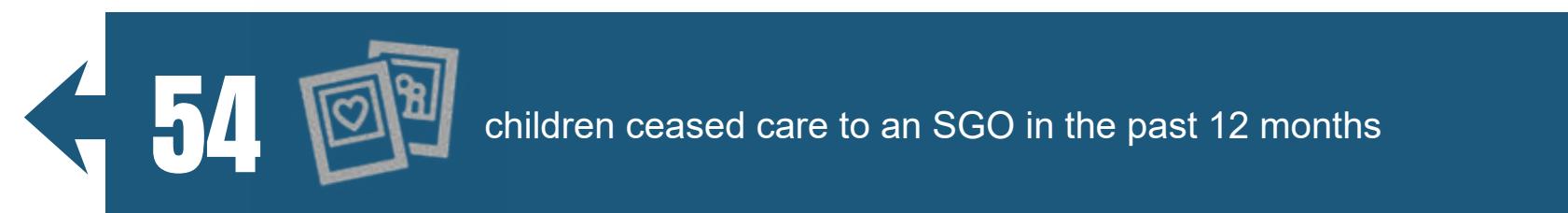
This improvement has been supported by a continued investment in Hull's 'No Detriment Policy' to ensure that all family-based carers receive an equitable financial allowance for children in their care.

Monthly adoption tracking meetings monitor progress for children with a plan of adoption. These arrangements help to ensure successful and timely matching is made and less of a delay in applications for Adoption Orders. The increasing number of children with significant disabilities or undiagnosed health needs awaiting adoption, presents a challenge in identifying suitable adoptive families. As of 30 September 2025, there are 25 children with Placement Orders who have been waiting longer than six months to be linked or matched with a family. Additionally, finding families for sibling groups remains a challenge. Hull has successfully placed eight sibling pairs of two children in 2024/25.

A strong multi-agency response ensures that the needs of children in care are well met, with plans that are focused, proportionate, and responsive to risk. This is supported by regular risk management meetings, the majority of which have contributed to reducing risks and enabling children to remain in safe living and care arrangements.

IRO oversight of progress for children and young people continues to be a strength in Hull. IROs visit and speak to children between statutory review meetings, meaning that IROs know their children well and can ensure that their voice is heard and considered. IROs challenge, informally and formally, on behalf of children when there is a potential risk of delay in progressing their plans and this most frequently leads to prompt action. IROs continue to review the progress of children at regular intervals between reviews. Formal review meetings are held on time for the very large majority of children, with additional reviews scheduled on a routine basis to ensure that children's permanency plans are progressed.

The IRO Service has strong links with social work teams to promote positive working relationships and identify good practice and practice requiring improvement through regular attendance at team meetings via the IRO service area links and wider senior leadership channels.



'This is such a life changing process that at times it can feel overwhelming and daunting. J has been amazing throughout this whole process. From the moment we met her in the preparation session to the 'at home visits', J has an incredible gift of making people feel at ease and comfortable. We feel encouraged knowing that we have J with us... should we be successfully approved.' (Prospective Adopters)

In September 2024, the IRO service launched child-friendly practice standards, co-produced with children and young people. Children's participation in reviews has increased, with 1,878 contacts recorded between children and their IROs in the last reporting period and an increase in children and young people attending their reviews. IROs use a variety of engagement methods, including smaller, focused meetings, to ensure children's views shape decisions and care planning.

'The IRO is very supportive of me and my children, I could not ask for anything more. They can't improve, they're perfect.' (Parent)

'The key strengths... the relationships with his SW, Family Practitioner and IRO. It is good to see that the SW has a longstanding and consistent relationship with X.' (Auditor)

'The work of the IRO team is significantly strengthened since the previous inspection. A trauma-informed approach, strong leadership and a focus on participation are key drivers in improving children's experiences. Most reviews are taking place within timescales, and children have strong relationships with their IROs. Children are encouraged to attend all or part of their review or talk to their IRO before meetings to ensure their voice is included.' (Ofsted, FV 2025)

15. Participation and direct work with children in care



Alex Brock

[View Memory Box](#)

[View Profile](#)

Children in Hull value strong, trusting relationships with social workers. YVIC feedback, highlighted in a widely circulated podcast, stresses how important it is to minimise social worker changes; this podcast is now used in new social worker inductions, demonstrating our commitment to relational continuity.

Our practice standards are built on children's feedback and set clear expectations for transfer and change of social worker. Recent audits indicate strengthened practice for children, and lessons learned are regularly shared across the service.

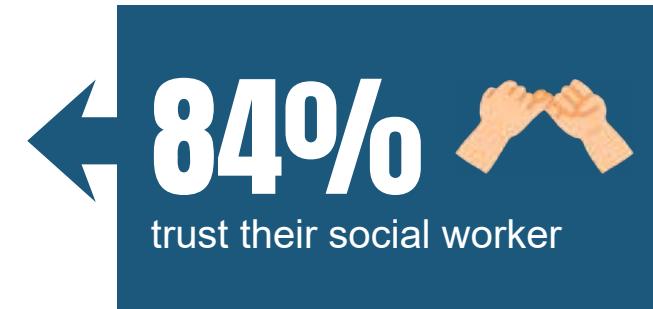
Children are regularly seen, both alone and with others. Social workers deliver purposeful, ambitious work, focusing on improved relationships and impactful direct work, supported by a stable and committed workforce.

Children are helped by their carers, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to understand their rights and entitlements. They know how to complain when they are unhappy about how they are being looked after, or about the plans for their future, and they have access to an advocate when they need someone to help them express their views or to make representation. IROs are strong and consistent advocates on behalf of children looked after.

Previous investment in 'Mind of My Own' provided an additional tool for children and young people to use. However, use of this application by children and young people had reduced over the last few years and following consultation with children they fed back that they prefer to share their feelings with practitioners directly through visits and direct work opportunities. As a result, the funding has been invested in a Virtual Memory Box (VMB) for children looked after.

Children and care leavers complaints are always taken seriously.

We champion ongoing relationships with trusted adults through our Advocacy offer and Independent Visitor scheme.



'My social worker is wonderful, he has changed my life. I have nothing to change.'

(11-17yrs, Bright Spots Survey 2025)

Good-quality life story work is routinely completed, helping children understand their journeys through care. To further strengthen this, commissioning of the Virtual Memory Box has been agreed. This is a new digital tool designed to help children in care and care leavers safely store and revisit their most precious memories, it was launched in Hull on 18th November and the platform will be live on 15th December 2025.

Mind of My Own ceased in April 2025 and the VMB will be an alternate approach to strengthen information provided for Children and Young People in care. The VMB, will be invaluable for brothers and sisters, who can access each other's information with the support of the allocated social worker.

In 2024/25, nine complaints were received from children in care and care leavers.

In comparison, the previous year 2023/24, there were 16 complaints in total.

This is a sustained trend and a significant reduction from 2022/23 when there were 46 complaints from our children looked after and care leavers.

All children and young people are supported to have their voices heard, with prompt access to NYAS advocates or Independent Visitors, helping each feel valued and secure in their care journey. We embed advocacy and participation and encourage all children to build lasting relationships with trusted adults, recognising that this creates a foundation of safety, aspiration, and belonging. We place children firmly at the centre of everything we do, making sure they influence their own plans and wider service development. The newly renewed NYAS advocacy contract also highlighted growing demand for parental advocacy. Cloverleaf now provide this and the impact is still being evaluated.

The Hull Independent Visitor Service was brought in-house in November 2024, after 25 years commissioned out, resulting in much closer links and better recruitment of new volunteers.



Service supports children aged 6+ and continues until age 21 years. In 2024/25, 99 young people were supported by 88 volunteers, with 21 matches over five years old.



"I met my young person when she was 12 and with a blink of an eye, she was an adult, how time goes so quick. I've seen her experience her first love, her first heartbreak, getting her first job and moving from foster care to living back home with her parents. When I asked her about my support, she said that I have been the only consistent person in her life and the one person that has never left. I am so proud of the young woman she has become, not allowing any of the adversity she has experienced to set her back. I'm looking forward to still being part of her life as she transitions into adulthood as we build a friendship after moving on from the service". (Independent Visitor)

Children's voices shape Hull's Corporate Parenting Strategy. YVIC influences senior leaders through regular engagement events, helping to co-produce service developments. The monthly Voice and Influence Steering Group ensures that participation feedback informs policy and practice, and city-wide initiatives such as Pop-Up Parliaments broaden engagement. Flexible, locally focused events allow more children and young people to share their views on issues that matter to them. By extending reach into communities, Pop-Up Parliaments ensure diverse voices are captured and reflected in service development.



We are re-launching our Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025–2028 which sets out six key priorities focused on improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. These include strengthening council-wide collaboration, embedding youth voice in decision-making, enhancing emotional wellbeing, expanding education and employment opportunities, improving placement sufficiency, and building trust with social workers. Each priority is backed by clear actions, timelines, and accountability measures to ensure meaningful progress and lasting impact.

Participation is further strengthened by YVIC's training resource, The Cards You're Dealt, and the song 'Shine Bright', both widely recognised and used across Hull to promote connectedness and aspiration.

Hull: A card game to help professionals engage with what matters most to children in care - Coram Voice



In late 2024, YVIC released 'Shine Bright' a song they wrote about positivity and connectedness in response to the theme of bullying and this was named the Song for Hull 2025.



The song has been adopted as the music on hold for the Council as a corporate parenting response and pride in our children and young people. Furthermore, it has been played to hundreds of pupils at the Bonus Arena as part of a campaign linked to Bullying and was awarded third place in Coram National Voice Awards 2025.



16. Helping and protecting

The majority of our children looked after consistently feel safe where they live, as demonstrated by our most recent Bright Spots survey. Results are strong:

91%

always' felt safe. Above local and national averages

All of our youngest children aged 4–7 always feel settled, and positive relationships with carers and social workers remain a significant strength.



**Feel
safe and
settled**

Our relationships support emotional wellbeing, with a focus on friendships, belonging and connections. More children report having the same social worker as last year, showing real improvement in workforce stability.



94%

have a good friend



93%

**feel they can speak privately
with their social worker.**



Outdoor engagement is also high, this reflects our commitment to neighbourhood safety and community access.



89%

spent time outdoors in the last week



92%

adults show interest in their learning



We see our children regularly, both alone and with others. If a scheduled visit can't take place, we reschedule as soon as possible. Social workers are creative in spending time with children, to build meaningful relationships and giving children time to express themselves.

Every child has access to the Attachment Psychological Service (APS), and we actively oversee and minimise waiting times. Children experiencing trauma get timely help and emotional support. Management oversight is robust, including well attended strategy meetings through to IRO involvement for those over 18 with more complex needs. Our transition planning is purposeful and consistent and we have a working group across children, adult services and the wider partnership to further strengthen transitional safeguarding. Risks are identified weekly in group manager meetings and reviewed regularly at multi-agency meetings with our key partners. Information from Youth Justice Service, VEMT, and others is well-shared, to help children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes.

17. Health

We continue to make significant progress in meeting the health needs of our children looked after. When concerns arise, social workers and health partners act swiftly and collaboratively to improve the physical, emotional, and mental health of children, ensuring timely access to support and minimising barriers. We work closely with health colleagues to monitor and enhance performance with initial and review health assessments and dental checks.

Most of our children receive regular dental checks, thanks to flexible commissioning with NHS England. Our ongoing challenge is to encourage older children, care leavers, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to attend dental checks, and we're now working with NHS partners to extend flexible arrangements to care leavers.

Our City Health Care Partnership (CHCP) works seamlessly with the 0–19 Public Health Nursing Service to provide continuity, share information, and reduce duplication. The team also supports children in our homes who experience complex developmental trauma or attachment difficulties.

Children continue to benefit from CAMHS intervention, with a high level of consultation offered for direct intervention. In addition, our CAMHS team offers convenient consultation clinics to social workers and foster carers, providing advice for support and intervention when the child isn't ready for direct intervention. The service has expanded to meet growing demand, with fostering social workers now able to refer directly. This dynamic response reflects our commitment to resilience and strengthening relationships with health colleagues.

Children with SEND needs who are eligible for Continuing Care are offered a package of care through direct payments known as Personal Health Budgets (PHBs). Some of these children are looked after and uptake of PHBs in Hull is high, indicating a high level of autonomy for children and their families in meeting individual needs.

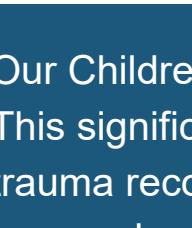
Additional specialist support is commissioned for children mental health needs who transition to leaving care. There is an established joint funded Complex Emotional Needs Service (CENS) that was enhanced in 2023 to provide increased assessment capacity to ensure that the emotional and mental health needs of care leavers are identified, and support is accessed at the earliest opportunity. This is enhanced by the attendance of the CENS Psychologist at the 'Leaving Care Drop-In' at Room 42 each week.



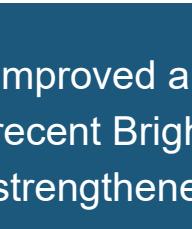
75% of children under 5 and 73% of children over 5, health assessments are completed within timescale. We keep our focus and know that we can and will do better for children here.



Health assessments are increasingly completed at home or in settings chosen by the child, reducing anxiety and stigma



Our Children's Homes benefit from weekly input from a dedicated CAMHS clinician. This significant investment in emotional wellbeing has had a measurable impact on trauma recovery and outcomes. Regulatory inspections consistently highlight this approach as a strength.



Improved and expanded interventions from CAMHS directly correlates to the findings in recent Bright Spots survey around enhanced children and carer coping strategies and strengthened relationships between children, their carers and social worker.

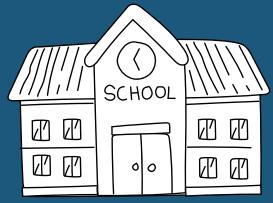
18. Learning and education

Most children and young people make good educational progress at school or other provision whilst in care. They receive the same support from their carers as they would from a good parent, as well as oversight and support from their corporate parents. Children and young people who do not attend school have prompt access to suitable good-quality registered alternative provision and there is regular review of their progress. Urgent action is taken if children are missing from education or if their attendance reduces. Children and young people have access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities. Most adult carers have suitable delegated authority to make prompt decisions about children's day-to-day lives.



87%

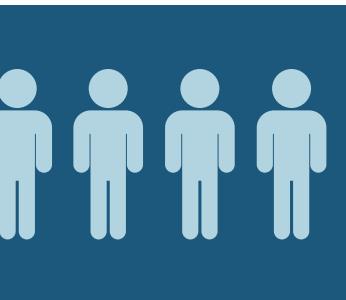
of children aged 8-11 felt they were given the chance to help the teacher at school



70%

of young people in Hull were less likely to have low positivity about their future

The Virtual School uses an 'under 25' daily tracker for any child looked after who is accessing fewer than 25 hours of education per week. These students may be accessing fewer hours due to emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), home and placement changes, a reduced provision timetable at school, accessing one-to-one tuition or are on a medical break from education. The needs of these children are well understood with robust oversight and weekly meetings held to ensure that plans are progressed to increase education wherever possible. All children looked after are closely monitored to ensure they are accessing the right curriculum, with a particular focus on the 31% in receipt of SEN Support and 30% with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).



Four experienced SENDCOs who work within the Virtual School who monitor if children's SEND needs are being met and offer training and support to new SENDCOs when setting Personal Education Plan (PEP) targets.

Through rigorous monitoring and targeted support, all children looked after are ensured access to an appropriate curriculum that meets their individual needs. The dedicated focus on our young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those receiving SEN Support means that barriers to learning are identified and addressed promptly. The involvement of the Virtual School SENDCOs ensures that SEND provision is consistently high-quality, with expert guidance provided to new SENDCOs at PEP meetings. As a result, children experience:



- ✓ Improved educational stability
- ✓ Tailored learning opportunities
- ✓ Enhanced progress

- ✓ Better academic outcomes
- ✓ Increased confidence in their ability to succeed

PEP meetings are attended by carers, social workers and the designated teacher with support and input from the Virtual School. The child's voice is also captured in the PEP. Each PEP includes attendance records as well as contributions from carers, social workers, and the designated teacher, alongside input from the Virtual School. The child's views are recorded in a dedicated section of the PEP, and through the 'Sqiddle' app, often through direct statements, drawings, or age-appropriate questionnaires. Quality assurance checks by the Virtual School ensure that these elements are consistently present and meaningful. Additionally, PEP audits and feedback from professionals confirm that meetings are collaborative and that the child's perspective informs target-setting and decision-making.

The consistent and timely completion of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) ensures that each child looked after has a clear, individualised plan to support their learning and development.

Should a setting be judged to be inadequate, a multi-agency meeting is promptly convened to discuss any child looked after within the setting. As part of our corporate parenting duties, we ensure that the child looked after is safe and their educational needs are being met despite the setting's judgment. It is important to discuss whether the current provision can still deliver quality education and safeguarding. A multi-agency meeting will evaluate the situation, mitigate risks, and establish a meaningful action plan which could include relocation if necessary.

The Virtual School works closely with the Children's University supporting children with their reading. Our Letterbox aim at HEYCU is for all children to be ACE readers. This means improving accuracy, developing comprehension skills and encouraging a love of reading. All Letterbox sessions are delivered in school on a fortnightly basis and last for 45 minutes to an hour. Every month, each child receives a free parcel of books, games and other resources which are theirs to keep and take home. If a child moves school or carers but stays within the area, sessions move to their new school. There are currently 5 Letterbox Coordinators in Hull and the East Riding, with 78 Hull children accessing the programme.

Creative Mindfulness sessions blend traditional mindfulness practices (such as meditation or breathing exercises) with creative outlets like art, movement, music, writing, or dance. These sessions encourage presence and self-awareness by engaging participants both inwardly (through reflection) and outwardly (through creative expression), fostering emotional regulation, stress reduction, enhanced focus, and resilience. The sessions are aimed at children in primary settings to boost confidence, help manage emotions, and build resilience. The sessions are delivered by early years practitioners who are certified mindfulness instructors with training in mindfulness-based approaches and creative arts.

The sessions were delivered for children in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 in 2024/5. Group sizes varied from 3 to 6 children per session depending on age, stage and support needed.

Extra-curricular activities are encouraged and supported by the Virtual School including close links with the Hull Music Service. Twenty-four children looked after are receiving regular small group/individual weekly music lessons in their school or setting. Up to three places per year are also funded by the Virtual School on the 'Furthering Talent' programme (originally funded by Awards for Young Musicians). This enables children to access a free lesson per week and receive additional resources, support and workshop opportunities based on showing real talent and commitment.

'Having the opportunity to participate in group guitar lessons really boosted my confidence and helped me socialise and make new friends.' (Young Person)

97% PEPs completed in the summer term 2025 COMPLETED

89% of children had attended settings rated as good or outstanding, with **6%** attending schools that require improvement to be good and a further **5%** not yet assessed.

Children looked after made solid progress in the city's schools.

Percentage of children looked after in Key Stage 2, achieved the expected standard in all of reading, writing and mathematics and remains above the countries average

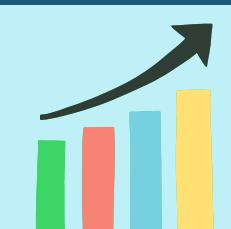
12% of Hull's looked after cohort received a pass in both GCSE English and Mathematics, this was an improvement from the previous year



All children made atleast 8 months progress in the 6-month period between assessments



21 children scored at age-related expectations



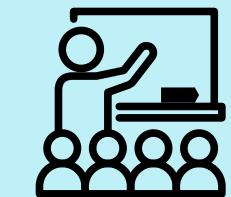
100% of carers agreed that their child's reading has improved due to the Letterbox sessions



100% of the carers agreed that their child now reads a range of books



100% of carers agreed that their child's reading enjoyment had improved due to the Letterbox sessions



100% felt that the Letterbox sessions had helped improve their child's classroom engagement

Feedback from staff highlighted improvements in engagement and emotional wellbeing, particularly for pupils with additional needs. The flexible group sizes allowed for tailored support, ensuring that each child could participate meaningfully.

Based on young people's feedback, a 'DJ-ing for Girls' programme has continued throughout the academic year in 2024/25, to enable girls to develop DJ skills in a safe environment. This project is attended by children looked after and is set to expand significantly based on outreach and partnership work with Kingston Youth Centre and the Goodwin Trust.



As well as the Virtual School investing in DJ-ing equipment, there has also been an investment in 'Albemarle Saturdays' based at the Freedom Road Creative Arts; these are weekly Saturday sessions for up to twenty young people (normally referred through social care) focusing on song writing and performance skills. Saturdays also include DJ-ing, and Hip-Hop Sessions delivered by Beats Bus. Furthermore, since January 2023 a Young Voices Influencing Care (YVIC) choir has been established and performs at events throughout the year.

Achievements of children are continually celebrated throughout the year, including sending out 'well done' cards and vouchers to those who have overcome barriers. These are very well received by children and their carers. Other rewards include where children have shown leadership.

Children looked after played an important role in the development of the new PEP, working with the Virtual School to look at the children's voice section to help set age-appropriate questions. It is recognised how important the child's voice is for the completion of the PEP and this section is now the first part of the PEP. The Virtual School, working in collaboration with the Hull and East Yorkshire Children's University, again hosted the annual celebration event for our children looked after. Schools, social care, carers and other partners, nominate our young people for their education achievement, including progress and attendance during the academic year.



300

children and carers in attendance



180

awards and certificates presented to our children and young people

The Virtual School provides advice and guidance to all partner agencies working with children who are subject to Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection Plans (CPP). As part of our commitment to early identification of needs, all Early Years and Primary-aged children newly placed on a CPP or new into care are screened for speech, language and communication (SLCN) needs. Where concerns are identified, a full assessment is carried out by a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) within six weeks of the referral being received.



730

children have been screened

46.7%

identified as having an SLCN issue

In September 2025, the Virtual School invested in an attendance and suspension tracker for all children with a Child Protection Plan, enhancing the robust and targeted intervention strategy aimed at reducing suspensions and improving attendance. For all children with a social worker, schools are offered access to Educational Psychology (EP) support.



The introduction of the tracker for over 300 children with a Child Protection Plan ensures early identification of issues and timely, targeted interventions. This helps children remain engaged in education and reduces the risk of exclusion. Where attendance is below 90%, support will be discussed with the Designated Teacher and appropriate interventions implemented. Multi-agency discussions will also be held as part of the ATTEND framework. The Virtual School provide support and advice when a young person is subject to a suspension and early signs show that due to the tracker, we are supporting children and young people at an earlier stage.

For Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and those in Kinship care, the Virtual School provides advice, guidance and training to both parents and schools, alongside access to SLCN screening and EP support.

19. Stability and permanence

Most children are experiencing increasingly stable homes due to an improved family finding and placement search process, alongside a focused approach to recruiting and supporting foster carers. Over two-thirds of children looked after live with foster carers, a similar rate to the national average and 56% are living in Hull's own provision. This rate is 45% for our statutory neighbours.

For an increased number of children who have experienced more than three placements, the level of moves is worrying and reflects the increasing difficulties in finding foster homes nationally, particularly for those children with more complex needs. In September 2025, 15.1% of children have experienced three or more moves. While still an area of focus, this figure represents the lowest rate in the past year and reflects a steady improvement over the last three months. This positive trend demonstrates the impact of ongoing efforts to enhance stability for children.

A comprehensive, directorate-wide action plan is in place to further reduce changes of homes, with a strong emphasis on supporting children with more complex needs. Despite recent challenges in securing long-term foster homes, the placement team has responded to ensure children are cared for in short term placements while suitable long-term matches are identified.

The service continues to prioritise high-quality matching, supported by robust processes such as same-day contact support calls and four-week stability meetings, which are helping to strengthen placement success. Monthly in-depth performance analysis of children experiencing multiple moves is providing valuable insights, enabling the service to better understand the reasons behind changes and to implement targeted improvements.

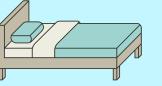
To provide further capacity and support, additional management resource was introduced to the Placement Team at the end of September 2025. Looking ahead, the development of a new comprehensive Family Solutions Hub will build on this momentum. This exciting development marks a significant step forward in enhancing support for children and families on the 'edge of care', identifying extended family networks, and securing the right foster care arrangements for children at the earliest opportunity. The phased rollout starting with a multi-skilled team working flexible hours and additional capacity for the out of hours service will expand to include the emergency children's home provision, Limetree Short Breaks children's home for children with a disabilities and a flexible residential 'pop up' team to respond when needs require additional planning and support.

The development of the Family Solutions Hub reflects a deep commitment to keeping children safe and connected to their families. The positive feedback received, so far, highlights the shared belief in the potential of this initiative to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children.

A steady and encouraging level of interest from individuals wanting to become foster carers for Hull City Council, with 106 enquiries received since April 2025. This positive response reflects the success of targeted community engagement, reconnecting with families who previously weren't ready to foster, and refreshed social media outreach. As a result, more people are stepping forward to make a difference in children's lives.....

21 households are in the assessment process the highest number seen in the past three years demonstrating growing confidence in the service.

14 mainstream foster carers have been approved

25 additional placements 

12 carers scheduled for panel through to the end of January 2026.

3 supported lodgings providers have been approved, with 2 more assessments underway

17 kinship carers approved 

141 viability assessments completed over the past three months

463 viability assessment completed during 2024-25.

46 assessments currently in progress

 A new unaccompanied asylum-seeking accommodation role now embedded within the fostering team.

This strong performance reflects the fostering team's commitment to timely and thorough assessments, contributing to the growing number of children being successfully placed with family and friends. Over the last three months the number of children (198) living with mainstream local authority foster carers has increased and children living in a kinship arrangement have remained constant at 107 children.

Since 1st August, the introduction of the new Form K assessment has strengthened the service's focus on achieving permanence. This tool helps assess whether families can offer long-term care or be approved as foster carers, and its impact is being closely monitored to ensure it supports better outcomes for children. Work is also well underway to develop a comprehensive local offer and strategy for Kinship Care, aimed at enabling more children to live with relatives or within their local communities.

A dedicated training programme on enhanced Family Group Decision Making is being rolled out to staff, further supporting this goal. The first meeting of the new Kinship Working Group was held in October 2025, marking an exciting step forward in this important area.

There has been a slight but encouraging reduction in the number of children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), with 192 children currently in IFA placements. While the service continues to work towards increasing local placement options, this progress reflects ongoing efforts to improve sufficiency and keep children closer to their families and communities.

A key factor in supporting this shift has been the enhanced package of support for in-house foster carers, which has led to carers reporting that they feel more valued and supported. Since April, 12 carers have explored the possibility of transferring to an IFA, primarily due to financial considerations. However, thanks to the proactive engagement and support provided by the fostering team, 11 of these carers have chosen to remain with Hull Fostering, demonstrating the positive impact of the team's efforts and the value carers place on the relationships and support they receive.

In addition, the fostering service has continued to strengthen its focus on retaining and celebrating foster carers. A full calendar of engagement events is planned for the coming year, building on the success of this summer's inaugural Fosterfest. The event was a fantastic celebration, with over 200 children attending and overwhelmingly positive feedback from carers, highlighting the value of community and recognition. Work is focusing on recruiting more local businesses to become foster friendly, and the service has recently launched its own foster friendly scheme. This is a simpler scheme which is targeting smaller Hull based organisations. The fostering team has been actively involved in regional discussions with colleagues from other local authorities, the Department for Education, and Mutual Ventures around the development of Fostering Hubs. While the region has collectively decided not to implement the hub model currently, the collaboration has strengthened a shared commitment to working more closely on recruitment and sharing best practice across the region.

The service recently welcomed a visit from the national organisation 'Kinship', who were highly impressed by Hull's current offer. They praised the financial support available, the proactive approach of the viability team, and the quality of post-order support.

'Many months ago we started a journey that we didn't fully know what we was letting ourselves into and along came two very special people the first was named Sarah she listened and listened and spoke to us like we were people didn't get fed up or frustrated about the many emails, calls or questions she just took it all in her stride. I made a promise to her that one day I would send her a picture of us taking this beautiful baby that we was doing it all for.' (Connected Carer)

The proportion of children living in placements lasting more than two years has remained steady at **65.4%** over the past three months, reflecting a strong foundation of stability for many children in care. To build on this, the Fostering Service is enhancing its therapeutic training offer for foster carers, aimed at further improving the quality and consistency of care. In April, the service launched its own bespoke therapeutic model, replacing TCIF, and has since introduced a compact version of the training for childcare social workers. Over **100** staff have already completed the training, with overwhelmingly positive feedback highlighting how it has strengthened their practice. This shared approach is helping to embed a consistent therapeutic ethos across the service, supporting better outcomes for children.

The innovative Mockingbird programme continues to go from strength to strength. Following the success of Hull's first constellation, which supports 13 children, a second constellation was launched in January 2024 and is now supporting six families. Foster carers have shared powerful feedback, with many stating that the support from Mockingbird has been instrumental in their decision to continue fostering.

Example: Maintaining Familiar Connections
A solo carer joined the mocking bird constellation specifically to support a child who had previously lived with the hub carers. For several months the plan for this child was residential care however due to mockingbird she was able to safely stay within the constellation. This thoughtful decision allowed the child to remain within her familiar Mockingbird family, preserving important relationships and providing a sense of continuity and belonging.

41

children were adopted

54exited care with Special
Guardianship Orders**31**through Child Arrangement
Orders**17**

registered children's homes

We are very proud of our strong internal children's home offer. Each home operates under a trauma-informed care model and adheres strictly to the Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards. Care is tailored to meet the individual needs of each child. We currently operate 17 registered children's homes, supporting 41 children, and one additional registered home offering short breaks for children with disabilities. Of these:

- 14 homes are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted
- 2 homes are rated Requires Improvement to be Good
- 1 newly opened home is awaiting its first inspection



This means that **90%** of children in our registered homes receive care rated as Good or better.

Our short break provision is rated Outstanding, delivering an average of **99** overnight breaks per month. This service provides essential respite for families and high-quality care that supports children's development and wellbeing.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of children placed in external agency homes:

- November 2020: 44 children
- September 2025: 26 children

This achievement reflects the success of our spend-to-save initiative aimed at expanding in-house provision.

Our ambition is to always care for children locally, when this is in their best interest.

The Refugee and Asylum Seeking Team (RAST) works closely with the placement team and there is a strong offer of accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and older young people. Supported lodgings providers provide a large proportion of homes for our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The providers are skilled, and this is seen in the constant positive feedback they receive from both from young people and their social workers.

The local authority has developed an effective commissioning relationship with private providers within the city delivering supported accommodation for young people aged 16+. All private providers are now either registered or in the registration process with Ofsted. There are currently 10 local providers and there are good quality assurance processes in place. At the end of September 2025, the number of young people living in commissioned supported accommodation was at 33 and 11 of these young people are UASC.

The Children's Home Placement Panel meets weekly and provides oversight for all internal and external placements. Each child is reviewed on a three-month cycle, with a focus on how well their home is meeting needs, in line with care plans.

In exceptional circumstances, bespoke 'pop up' homes have been used to provide immediate care.

Although not regulated, these homes:

- Are staffed by experienced care professionals
- Operate to the same standards as regulated homes
- Receive weekly management oversight
- Remain operational for the shortest time necessary to support positive transitions.

16+

A stronger offer of 16+ supported living providers which is providing better quality accommodation for young people. Hull has worked hard in providing a menu of support accommodation for our older young people.

A well-established supported lodgings offer, which is based within the fostering service. At the end of September 2025, there were 31 supported lodgings households.

Seven new providers joined the team during 2024/25 - three approved so far this year and two assessments in progress. This increase is linked to the work of the new unaccompanied asylum-seeking accommodation post which is now based with the fostering team. Hull has submitted its application for supported lodgings to become a registered provider and it is hoped that its registration visit will occur at the beginning of December 2025.

Young people aged 16+ benefit from the Shared Tenancy and Gateway Project which are run by our Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS). Both services are fully registered with Ofsted. The Shared Tenancy Scheme provides furnished accommodation usually for two to three young people with floating support. This level of support responds to the needs of the young people. At present the schemes offer places for up to 70 young people and offers a fantastic first introduction into independent living.

The Gateway Project provides accommodation for young people with a higher level of complex needs on a solo basis. In October 2024, acknowledging the success of the Shared Tenancy Scheme, an investment to save business case was approved to extend the Shared Tenancy Scheme. As a result, since January 2025 the scheme has been working to provide an additional 30 places. Going forward, the scheme will provide over 100 places in total. Both schemes help young people understand the complexities of running a home from budget management to keeping a tenancy.

As part of the shared tenancy scheme, young people benefit from a 'taster flat'. This is a great part of the service allowing young people living in a children's homes or other types of supported accommodation, to experience and try living in their own accommodation before they move permanently. Each Thursday the 16-18 panel meets chaired by a Head of Service. This reviews all children living in supported accommodation and considers their accommodation needs as they approach adulthood.



The expansion of the Shared Tenancy Scheme has already seen huge benefits with the number of young people living in private supported accommodation reducing from 39 to 33 young people.

Where children cannot be safely cared for by their family or friends, and adoption is identified as the only option to provide the stable, secure, and loving care they need, planning is timely, thorough, and firmly rooted in the child's best interests. The number of children ceasing care through adoption remains a notable strength within the service.

Pre-birth processes for unborn babies are robust and include comprehensive exploration of potential kinship carers. This proactive approach enables greater use of Early Permanence Placements (EPP), ensuring that more children experience living with their permanent family at the earliest opportunity and these arrangements significantly reduce the likelihood of multiple moves.

- Fourteen children were placed through EPP last year (2024/25), and five have been placed so far this year.

Monthly adoption tracking meetings are in place to monitor progress for all children with a plan of adoption.



Arrangements ensure that matching decisions are made promptly and that applications for adoption orders are not subject to unnecessary delay.

We remain ambitious in finding adoptive families for all children where adoption is the plan, however, as is the case nationally, children with significant disabilities or undiagnosed health needs are waiting longer. As of 30 September 2025, there are 25 children with Placement Orders who have been waiting longer than six months to be linked or matched with a family. The plans for these children are regularly monitored to ensure that adoption remains in their best interest.

The commitment to keeping brothers and sisters together remains strong, with eight brothers and sisters placed with their adoptive family last year and this year, four sets of brothers and sisters have been either linked, matched or placed for adoption. There has been a notable increase in adoption orders this year. While last year saw a reduction to 24 orders due to delays relating to the introduction of the new court portal system, the first six months of this year have already seen 31 adoption orders granted, reflecting improved processes and strong collaboration with the judiciary to embed the new system.



31 adoption orders granted during the first 6 months of 2025/26

Hull has been part of the One Adoption North and Humber Regional Adoption Agency for seven years, and this established partnership continues to bring significant benefits for our children. It enables more timely and effective matching of children with local families, which ensures children remain at the heart of all decision-making. The shared resources and joint commissioning arrangements across the region lead to greater cost efficiencies, while regional recruitment campaigns attract a wider pool of prospective adopters. This partnership model allows adoption family finders to stay connected across the wider service area, fostering consistency which ultimately supports better outcomes for children.



All children placed for adoption last year were successfully matched within the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), highlighting the strength of this partnership. In addition, the RAA's strategic partnership with four Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) provides exclusive access to prospective adopters from Stage Two of the assessment process. This collaboration enables children to be placed locally when external placements are required.

Regional fun days are held quarterly to support family finding for children who cannot be matched through internal resources, further enhancing the effectiveness of the matching process. We are proud that we continue to outperform national averages on key adoption indicators. A2 indicator which means the time from court authority to match stands at 143 days for Hull, compared with the national average of 218 days.



The A10 indicator, which tracks the time from care entry to placement, is 336 days for Hull, better than the national average of 495 days.

These figures highlight Hull's effectiveness in securing timely adoptive placements despite the national challenges.

Despite the national context of sufficiency challenges for adopters, the recruitment and assessment of adopters remain highly successful.



Sixty-four families were approved across the RAA in 2024–25, with Hull assessing 23 of these. Hull has already approved 12 adopters this year. Impressively, 93% of RAA adopters offered homes for children from within the five RAA authorities, ensuring families receive localised support.

Assessing and approving adoptive families is vital to ensure children are placed in safe, stable, and nurturing homes. The process also prepares families for adoption and identifies support needs. Hull continually reviews its offer to adoptive parents to ensure it reflects emerging research, policy developments, and the lived experiences of children and families.



Preparation training has been strengthened to incorporate the principles of the 'Agenda for Change', with a particular focus on promoting connections for children. Key enhancements include a fourth training day co-delivered by a PAUSE practitioner, bringing in the voice of birth parents to deepen understanding and empathy and an additional session focused on the emotional wellbeing of children, supporting adopters to better understand and respond to the relational needs of their child. These changes reflect Hull's commitment to preparing adopters not just for the legal and practical aspects of adoption, but for the lifelong journey of building and sustaining meaningful relationships.

Hull has an experienced adoption support team, and fifty-five children are currently receiving support, with 74.5% of families accessing therapeutic interventions through the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF). A newly introduced assessment process is enhancing the timeliness and appropriateness of support, with clear information available to adopters via the One Adoption North and Humber website.

Peer support services continue to thrive. The Transitions Service, delivered in collaboration with Adoption UK, is supported by 20 trained peer mentors. There has been an increase in families receiving support from peer mentors compared to last year, reflecting the growing strength and reach of this initiative.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for adopted young people, we've engaged with several regional initiatives that offer targeted support and promote youth voice. The Bridge Project, in collaboration with Adoption UK and the John Lewis Partnership Foundation, has supported young people at risk of becoming NEET through mentoring, workshops, and creative activities, including the development of a game to help prospective adopters during their assessment.

One Adoption has secured funding to deliver the therapeutic parenting programme 'Stogner Foundations' for adopters of children aged 5–12, while continued promotion of Adoptees, a peer-led service by PAC-UK, ensures young people have access to forums, events, and a Youth Council. With new National Lottery funding, Adoptees is expanding to reach up to 500 young people across the region, further strengthening our collective offer.



The work of Pause Hull over the past decade has made a profound and lasting impact on the lives of women and children in the city. Through its evidence-based programme, the team has supported over 100 women completing the full programme on transformative journeys, helping to break cycles of repeat pregnancy and child removal. Pause receives referrals from children's social workers, external partner agencies and self-referrals from women themselves.

The DfE evaluation of Pause estimated that the programme reduces more than 14 children entering care each year. This indicates that Pause Hull is likely to have prevented a total of 129 children becoming looked after up until March 2025.



- 28 women have signed up to the 'Helping Pause learn' process which is the longer-term national tracking of outcomes 3 years post Pause programme.
- 27 of these women have not gone on to have a further pregnancy. This is an indicator that for these women the cycle of repeat pregnancy and removal has been broken.
- 1 woman has had a baby who remained in her care.

The data speaks volumes not only in terms of reduced care entries, but also in the personal progress women have made in their mental health, acquiring housing, and employment and improving relationships with their personal and professional networks. Overwhelmingly, women talk about the impact on their connection with their children and this is always their 'Top Goal'.

- 74% report improvements in managing loss through their Pause journey.

Women feel a loss of connection with their maternal identity when they have been separated from their children. They often describe being confused by child protection systems and struggle to process the reasons that children have been removed from their care. Working through this with a trusted practitioner is fundamental to the work of Pause. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants highlights the programme's unique ability to restore hope, rebuild identity, and reconnect families - making Pause Hull a cornerstone of preventative practice.

Acknowledging the increase in care experienced young women becoming pregnant, the service has extended its offer through the Pause REACH programme which focuses on working with young women under 18 years of age who are care experienced and have had a baby removed. There are currently two young people signed up to the programme. Further work is planned with children's homes staff and social workers to promote the service and its benefits.

'Pause has helped me with everything! Pause is important. At the beginning The Practice lead helped me to find a safe place, a home. There is not just one thing, as I had many issues and my problems piled up. My practitioner helped me all the way. I can look back and I have hope. I would not change Pause. They cannot do better.' (Mother supported by PAUSE)

'Now there is a plan for me to meet [my child's] adopters. I couldn't have got to that point if it wasn't for my practitioner. I wouldn't deal with things but now I can talk about things. I now see my practitioner less often too, that works for me, I wish I'd accepted support sooner but I just wanted to ignore what was going on.'
(Mother supported by PAUSE)



20. Priorities for the next 12 months

- Through additional investment, implement and embed our Family Solutions Hub in order to strengthen edge of care family-based support and provide enhanced support and quality assurance for private supported accommodation providers.
- Deliver a programme of converting 4 of our 6 solo children's homes to duo homes. This will enhance local sufficiency and provide opportunities for more children to live with other children when they are ready.
- Extend shared tenancies to increase capacity to 100 placements through additional investment. Implement phase two of the programme, by developing internally delivered supported accommodation for young people with more complex needs, including solo placements.
- Build on the local success of Mockingbird and develop an extended offer for complex foster care, considering enhanced training, allowances and out of hours support.
- Develop and publish with our partners, Hull's local offer for Kinship Care.
- Continue to prioritise our strengths-based approach, aligned with the 'You Said, We Did' Bright Spots campaigns, to embed co-production at the core of service delivery.



The experiences and progress of care leavers

21. Relationships and Participation

We are ambitious for our care leavers. We are proud to act as corporate parents, and we take this responsibility seriously. Our approach is grounded in relationships, accessibility, joint working and a belief in the strengths and potential of our young people. Through consistent support, inclusive practice and a commitment to staying alongside our young people, we ensure they have every opportunity to thrive as they build their adult lives.

We recognise that not all care leavers are immediately able to access education, training or employment due to personal circumstances such as parenting, illness, or disability. That's why our Personal Advisors (PA) work closely with young people and partners to explore tailored opportunities.

We offer a broad support package, including salaried Care Leaver Champion posts and the Room 42 initiative, which provide advice, social connection, and activities like go-karting and rock climbing to help build confidence, relationships, and practical life skills.

Care leavers are at the heart of celebrations and planning. They play a key role in Corporate Parenting Week and are honoured annually at the Blue Diamond Awards, showcasing their achievements and contributions.

We're especially proud that a good proportion of care leavers who wish to study are enrolled in higher education across the UK, with rates that exceed regional and national comparator groups. "Graduating is something I never thought was possible; now I'm doing it," shared one young adult, reflecting our commitment to raising aspiration for all. Personal Advisors know their young people well. They are co-workers for young people from the age of 17 years to build positive, trusting and stable relationships before transition, providing effective practical and emotional support.

The majority of care leavers aged 17–21 keep in touch with us, and almost three-quarters are visited within timescale. Some may opt for visiting patterns that reflect their lives, such as those in the armed services. These individual preferences are fully supported and respected by Personal Advisors and endorsed in supervision. All care leavers aged 21+ who don't want or need an allocated Personal Advisor are contacted every 12 weeks with a simple question:

"Is there anything you need, or would you like more support?"



"My PA always makes time to listen and help, even if I don't know what to ask for." (Care Leaver)
"Room 42 helped me get my first job and made me feel part of something." (Care Leaver)
Our Action4Us group meets monthly to review and shape the Local Offer, and they actively participate in the Reverse Scrutiny Panel. Recent successes include securing the Freedom Pass for free bus travel "We asked, and the council listened, now I can get to college more easily" and working with housing teams to improve the speed and quality of accommodation offered.

93% of care leavers are 'keeping in touch'



55% in education, training or employment



95% trust their leaving care worker



94% of our young people are in suitable accommodation



18% higher education



Bright Spots 'Your Life Beyond Care' launched on 27th October, during care leavers week, to gain an understanding of key priorities from experts by experience. The survey closes in December 2025. Week commencing 24th November 2025, 59% of care leavers under the age of 21 had already completed the survey and 27% of care leavers who keep in touch over the age of 21 have shared their views. We are confident that engagement will increase further.

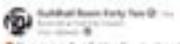
Link Up



Room 42 visited the team at Creating Future Opportunities to find out what they offer their participants. They offer wrap around support for anyone who has a probation worker and offer support such as art groups, a cooking group, mental health support, employment support and so much more. It was great to meet the team and chat to them about all they offer!

hullcvs

We met with Jenny Preston from Hull CVS. To talk about all things Volunteering. We have invited Hull CVS to be part of the Community Link up to develop links for young people to get into Volunteering.



HULL KR FOUNDATION



Paris and Ellie visited Hull KR Foundation to check out their programs.



For more information and to sign up to our activities/projects contact: 01733 212963 or email: Room42@hullcc.gov.uk



Our trauma-informed and relationship-based approach which means we focus on building trust, tackling stigma and loneliness, and prioritising long-lasting personal links, not just practical services.

Young people say, *“Sometimes you just need to know that someone is thinking of you.”*

Our care leavers benefit from a service built on strong, trusting and enduring relationships.

The connection our Personal Advisors have with young people is one of our greatest strengths.

They know their young people well: their histories, their identities, their worries and their hopes.

We actively encourage care leavers to stay connected with family, friends, and dedicated adults; we offer peer support, group activities, and access to projects that build confidence and participation. Advocacy is widely promoted and all complaints are seriously addressed, with learning shared at senior levels.

Personal Advisors remain present and available even at times when young people find it hard to stay in touch. They understand the patterns of young people's lives and maintain steady, compassionate contact. This relational commitment means young people return to us, knowing the door is always open.

For young people with additional needs, our joint work with SEND services and Connections has strengthened significantly. Hull's commitment extends to older care leavers aged 21–25. We take a proactive approach, not waiting for young people to request help but initiating needs led conversations that explore emotional wellbeing, housing stability, financial security, education, employment and personal goals. When ongoing support is appropriate, older care leavers receive the same quality of relationship and support as their younger peers.

Our Care Leaver Forum and Action4Us ensure care leavers co-design all major offers and that every change is directly linked to what they say makes a difference.

Young people describe their Personal Advisors as “someone who sticks with me” and “someone who gets me,” and this is reflected in the consistency of our model.

Through Room 42, social prescribing, creative projects, volunteering, and our “Staying Close” offer, we help care leavers build independent lives with a network of support.

“It should be a gradual process, where you stay close to each other, help each other, sharing insights and points of view...It should be a long-lasting path.”
(Care Leaver)

Young people describe their Personal Advisors as people who “listen properly,” “don’t give up,” and “stay with me even when it’s hard.” This is reflected in the way we structure our service: once a young person becomes known to us, they are not passed between different workers. Personal Advisors remains with them throughout their journey, ensuring continuity, stability and space for a safe, consistent relationship.

EHCPs remain active and purposeful beyond age 18, supported by regular meetings that ensure continuity in education, health and care. This improves young people's access to specialist provision and provides clearer pathways into adulthood.

Since April 2025, 44 Care Leaver audits completed:
75% were grade good or above (33) & 100% were rated Requires Improvement or better.

Young people's voices shape how we work. Feedback about delays in GP registration led to active discussions with health partners to improve processes. We are committed to listening carefully and responding quickly to the issues young people raise.



We are proud of our developing Transitional Safeguarding approach. We work closely with adult social care and are developing an increasingly aligned, relational pathway for young people whose risks and vulnerabilities continue beyond 18.

Monthly multi-agency custody meetings, bringing together Youth Justice, Targeted Youth Support Service and leaving care to ensure that young people leaving custody receive a coordinated, well-planned response. Joint visits support early engagement and create continuity at critical moments.



These arrangements help prevent young people from falling between systems and ensure that safeguarding remains robust and relational as they enter adulthood.



Leadership oversight is strong.

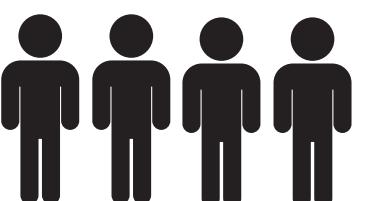


Managers maintain a clear line of sight through auditing, supervision and review of pathway plans and visiting timescales.

Reinforcing our commitment to manageable caseloads and high-quality relational practice.



During October 2025, through additional investment we expanded the team with four additional Personal Advisers in recognition of increased demand from 21–25-year-olds.



We are ambitious for every young person, caring about their happiness, health, and ongoing sense of belonging. Our aim is not just successful transition, but that every care leaver leaves feeling empowered, hopeful, and truly part of our community.



"My personal advisor has gone above and beyond, and I could not thank her enough for her support. I have a trusting relationship with my personal advisor and she is AMAZING! I could not ask for a better personal advisor.' (Care Leaver)

22. Health and emotional wellbeing

We are proud of our strengthened our health and emotional wellbeing offer for care leavers, supported by dedicated partners and a strong corporate parenting approach shaped by young people's experiences.

In response to previous challenges in accessing mental health support, both the Health and Wellbeing Board and Corporate Parenting Panel have made emotional wellbeing a clear priority. Our Integrated Care Board (ICB) now recognises care leavers as a priority group, ensuring their needs are central to planning and delivery.

Our Personal Advisors also provide the core emotional support within the service. They notice changes early, respond with sensitivity and ensure young people feel heard and understood. When a young person needs specialist emotional or mental health support, Personal Advisors work closely with social care, mental health colleagues, and other professionals to secure the right intervention.

Since 2023, young people have benefited from a jointly funded and dedicated Social Prescriber who works directly with care leavers to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing, including support for anxiety, low mood, and confidence-building. They attend activities alongside young people to provide informal, accessible support and help reduce stigma around mental health. The Social Prescriber also runs a fortnightly drop-in at Room 42, offering a safe space for wellbeing conversations, signposting to local services, and creating personalised plans to build resilience and independence. This integrated approach strengthens our trauma-informed model by embedding proactive emotional support into everyday life, helping young people feel connected and empowered.

Care Leaver Forum



Opportunities
The Care Leaver Forum was held on Wednesday 10th September and was a chance to look at all the opportunities available in our local community. Organisations such as Tiger Trust, Hull KR, Hull Training and Adult Education, Cat Zero, Vulcan Centre, Recruitables and The Achieve Project, Hull College, MESMAC, Connexions and many more all attended to show our Care Leavers what they offer. It was a chance to find out about different programmes and sign up. It was a great event attended by many young people!



Cuppa with Pauline

The Champions host Pauline Turner (Director of Children, Young People & Families Services) at Room 42 every quarter. It is a chance to update Pauline on everything we are doing at Room 42 and see if there is any support Pauline can offer to help us make positive change for young people in Hull. This session we spoke about Apprenticeships and the Housing trap. Pauline is taking forward some of our ideas. We will keep you posted on progress.



For more information and to sign up to our activities/projects contact 07730129463 or email: Room42@hulcc.gov.uk



To support life transitions, every care leaver receives a health passport, helping them stay informed and confident about their health journey.

We've worked closely with the ICB to implement the Complex Emotional Needs Service (CENS), reducing assessment waiting times and ensuring our leaving care team is better equipped through regular CENS consultation and training.

Care leavers describe their wellbeing needs as multi-faceted, sometimes involving isolation, trauma, or lack of family support.

Our multi-agency Children Looked After and Care Leavers Health Forum, chaired quarterly by the designated nurse, continues to focus on improving access to services like dental care and free prescriptions.

A newly established dedicated transitional worker in our Refresh drug and alcohol service has helped young people aged 18–25 make confident moves into adult services.

Feedback from care leavers highlights the importance of continuity, flexibility and emotional safety in services.

Care leavers appreciate local therapy and wellbeing options but say empathy and understanding are fundamental: *“There’s a level of understanding you need to have inside you to work with care leavers and their experience. I want someone familiar with the care system who gets what I’m talking about.”*

We continue to support care leavers through peer support, creative group activities, and accessible professional help, recognising that compassionate relationships and flexibility are key to lasting wellbeing.

“It’s good knowing I have all my health info in one place. It reminds me that my health matters.” (Care Leaver)


“I just took like a decline in my mental health once I lived by myself... I had to learn how to ask for help.” (Care Leaver)


“Whenever I needed her, my PA was always there to support me and listen. I didn’t feel alone in my battles.” (Care Leaver)


“I didn’t want anybody to pity me or ask me about my past. I wanted to be seen for me, not just as a care leaver.” (Care Leaver)


Our trauma-informed approach ensures care leavers feel unjudged, respected, and listened to as people, not cases.


Health and emotional wellbeing remain standing items at our Corporate Parenting Panel, ensuring ongoing oversight and improvement. Panel members are committed to listening and acting on young people’s views to make Hull a place where care leavers feel safe, supported, and able to thrive.

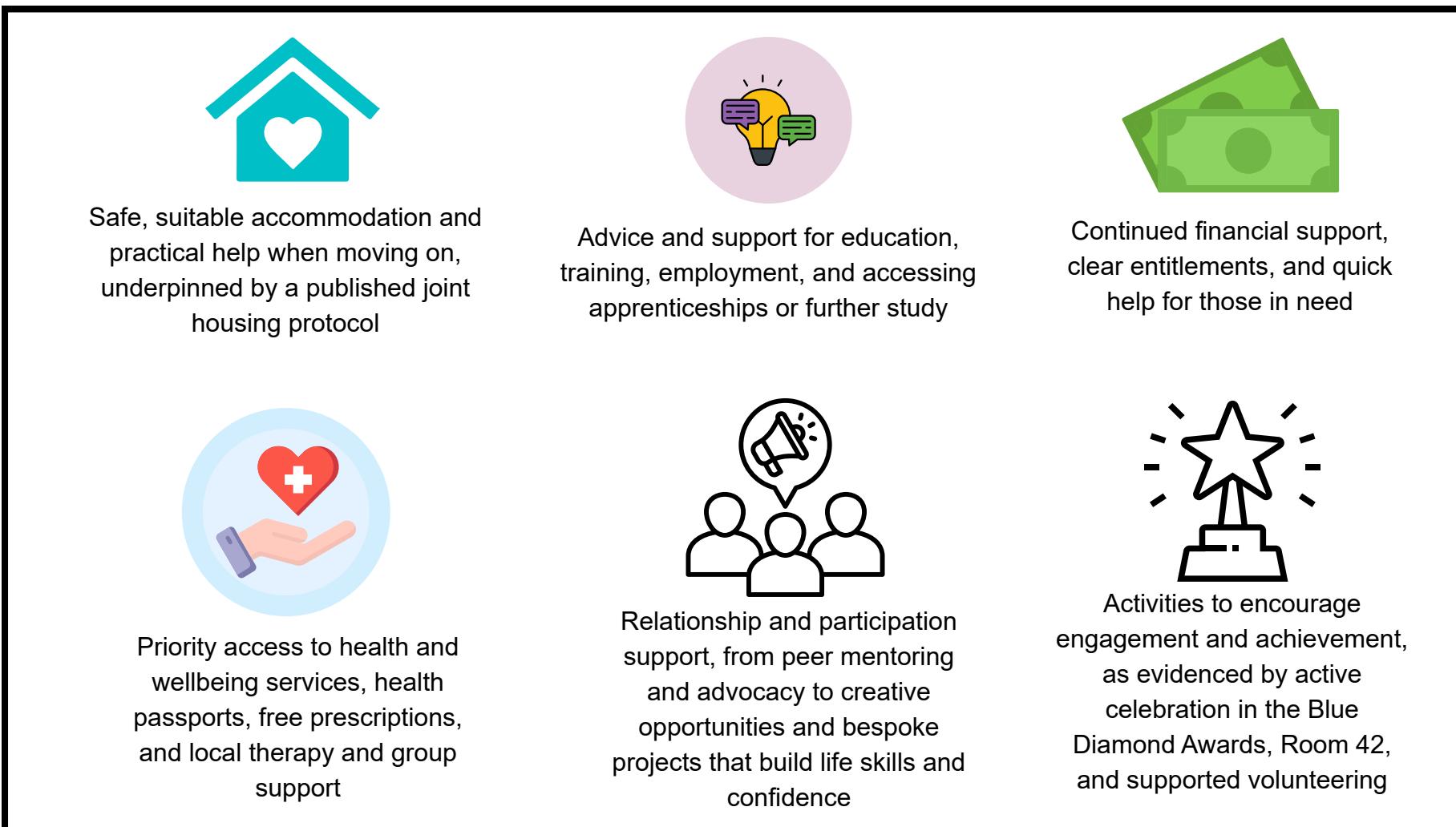

Introduction of roles like Social Prescriber and Care Experienced Champions broadens support. Room 42 and other dedicated spaces/resources provide accessible, youth-friendly environments.’

23. Local offer for care leavers

In recent years, we have significantly strengthened our Local Offer and are fully committed to achieving the best outcomes. Our approach is whole-system and inclusive: all corporate parents and key partners, including senior leaders and elected members, are engaged with the Care Leavers' Forum and make a point of celebrating care leaver successes at events like our annual Blue Diamond Awards. Now in its fourth year, this event captures the pride we have in our young people, reinforcing how much they matter to us.



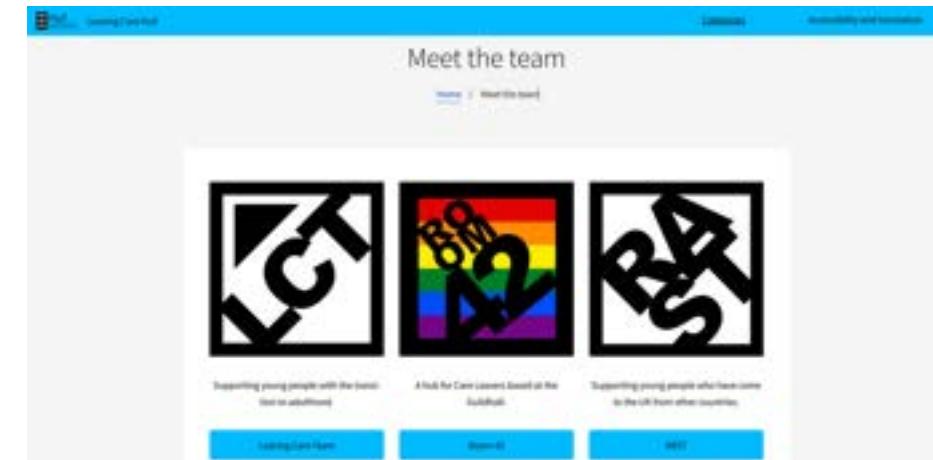
Our Local Offer sets out in one place everything care leavers can expect from us, statutory entitlements and discretionary support. As required under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, it covers accommodation, health, finances, education, aspirations, activities, relationships, and participation in society. We address all government guidance and go further:



Accessibility is a core priority for us. Our Local Offer is available online, in multiple languages, and in paper format for those who prefer it. We have introduced a QR code so young people can access the offer instantly via their phone. The Offer can be read aloud, translated or explained by a Personal Advisor, ensuring that it is meaningful and accessible for all care leavers.

We see our Local Offer as a key part of our social responsibility as corporate parents - an active commitment to fairness, inclusion and opportunity.

We have launched a dedicated care leavers' webpage with a "meet the team" section, regular event updates, and links to support, ensuring young people stay connected, informed, and empowered..



"The website makes it easier to find help, rather than having to ask lots of people." (Care Leaver)

Our Local Offer is co-produced with care leavers, shaped by feedback and evolving needs. Action4Us and the Forum routinely review the offer and shape its content, helping us *"make better, more responsive decisions for care leavers, shaped directly by their voices and experiences."* For example, they've triggered the creation of groups like our young parents' group at Family Hubs and 'Cooking on a Budget,' and provided feedback on the need for accessible, timely financial help.

We are proud that most of our care leavers live in suitable accommodation, with those in custody still receiving ongoing support from their Personal Advisors alongside prison and probation services.

'When I was inside, my personal advisor kept in touch. It meant I felt someone cared.' (Care Leaver)

We remain committed to ensuring every care leaver has a safe, stable place to live and the right support to prepare for independence.

24. Listening, Participation and Direct Influence

Targeted Youth Support (TYS) service works closely with the Leaving Care team to provide proactive housing support, ensuring that care leavers always have safe and suitable accommodation.



TYSS partnership means we act quickly to prevent homelessness, with robust contingency plans and access to emergency housing when needed. Weekly accommodation panels review move-on plans, and TYSS offer practical help with tenancy management, budgeting, and independent living skills. By combining housing expertise with relational support, we create stability and security for young people, enabling them to focus on education, employment, and wellbeing without the fear of losing their home.

We've extended our reach to our young people by introducing new support measures during 2025: all care leavers up to the age of 21 receive a Keeping in Touch (KIT) contact every 12 weeks, every 17-year-old has an allocated Personal Advisor to ensure readiness for adulthood, and all young people under 21 benefit from a dedicated Personal Advisor and tailored support. *"Whenever I have a problem, I can drop in, call or message – and someone helps straight away."*

Our 21–24 care leaver offer has been strengthened, with scheduled drop-ins, hub support, and a greater focus on “good endings” and personal, welcoming transition planning.

Employment, education, and training opportunities continue to be reviewed and expanded across the council, with external partners, and via Corporate Parenting Champions in ICT and other sectors, so care leavers can access a diversity of jobs, roles, and skills development at a pace and in a way that suits their needs, interests and ambitions.



The quality of our support, including for former UASC, is a recognised strength, with care leavers reporting good contact, consistent help, and trust in their Personal Advisors: *"They're like my family, always checking in, helping me when I need it."*

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy and all thematic partnerships are shaped directly by care leavers' voices, a living example of inclusive, compassionate corporate parenting. We make our Local Offer accessible in digital and paper formats and always explain entitlements in clear language.



We don't just meet statutory minimum standards, we strive to be proactive and personal. *"Just knowing the offer is there makes me feel more secure about the future."* Through consultation, quick response, and ongoing review, we ensure the Local Offer is meaningful, visible, and supports our care leavers to thrive.

We're proud to make responsive decisions for care leavers, shaped directly by their voices and experiences.



Action4Us, our care leaver consultation and participation group, meets monthly and is central to reviewing and shaping local services. Their insight has led to real change, including the launch of support groups such as the young parents' group at Family Hubs and the popular “Cooking on a Budget.”

We have responded proactively to cost-of-living pressures, reviewing our financial support so young people most affected receive timely, targeted help. We have increased the frequency of financial assessments and now work closely with Welfare Rights to ensure more care leavers can access extra assistance.



“Extra support from the council took some pressure off,” said one care leaver.

25. Helping and protecting

Effective, collaborative pathway planning is at the heart of our support. We work with care leavers and partners to ensure practical, emotional, cultural, and safeguarding needs are anticipated and met. When risks escalate, multi-agency teams respond rapidly to keep young people safe and supported.



Our response is practical as well as caring: one care leaver said, *“Learning to drive with my Personal Advisor’s support made a massive difference in my life.”*

Another was helped to successfully challenge an unjust eviction.

Personal Advisors tackle difficult transitions, resolve housing challenges, and help young people “stay put” with carers beyond age 18 wherever possible.

Care leavers under 21 get full council tax exemption (with discretionary extension to 25), and every year 25+ care leavers benefit from enhanced band B properties with rent-free periods and start-up support. All of this is underpinned by robust protocols, monthly multi-agency meetings, and a clear Leaving Care and Housing Joint Protocol—ensuring continuity, security, and dignity.



26. Employment, Education and Training

Targeted initiatives help care leavers develop and achieve their ambitions. We continue to implement innovative ways to prepare care leavers for the workforce, including casual ‘step up’ roles, creative work tasters, and pathways into public service roles, including internships and shadowing with our children’s services.



Room 42 is at the centre of our offer, providing tailored advice, peer mentoring, and access to motivational and skills-building events.



Our three Care Leaver Champions support 45+ young people through apprenticeships, college, training, and volunteering. *“My Champion gave me the confidence to try things I’d never thought possible,”* one care leaver reported.

We have in-house apprenticeships for care leavers and are working with local business partners to expand flexible, responsive paid opportunities and a wider “Family Business Model.” DWP system flagging ensures that young people receive increased support from their job coaches and fewer benefit penalties.

27. Support for UASC and all into adulthood

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and young people formerly UASC are supported with a fully integrated, responsive, and culturally sensitive service. The Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Team (RAST) works alongside our children looked after and leaving care teams to create a seamless pathway from first arrival, through care, and into adulthood. We recognise that our UASC and formerly UASC are a particularly vulnerable group, often carrying complex trauma and uncertainty over their future. Every young person is assigned an experienced key worker upon arrival who uses a trauma-informed approach aligned with the RAST model. Staff work in a culturally competent way, drawing on knowledge of cultural and religious practices to provide tailored support. Young people value this approach.

“Staff always try to understand where I come from and what I need, not just what I should do next.”
(UASC Care Leaver)

The RAST team specialises in issues such as trauma, exploitation, and trafficking, working closely with the Modern Day Slavery Unit to ensure risks are assessed and managed consistently into adulthood.



Strong partnerships with immigration solicitors mean asylum applications start early, giving young people clarity about their status before adulthood. When claims are refused, appeals are lodged promptly, maintaining continuity of support.

Age disputes are resolved quickly by a dedicated age assessment specialist, ensuring no young person reaches adulthood with unresolved issues. Mental health support is available through specialist services and mainstream pathways, and young people are linked to refugee organisations for community integration. Hull offers culturally sensitive placements through specialist foster carers and supported lodgings providers.

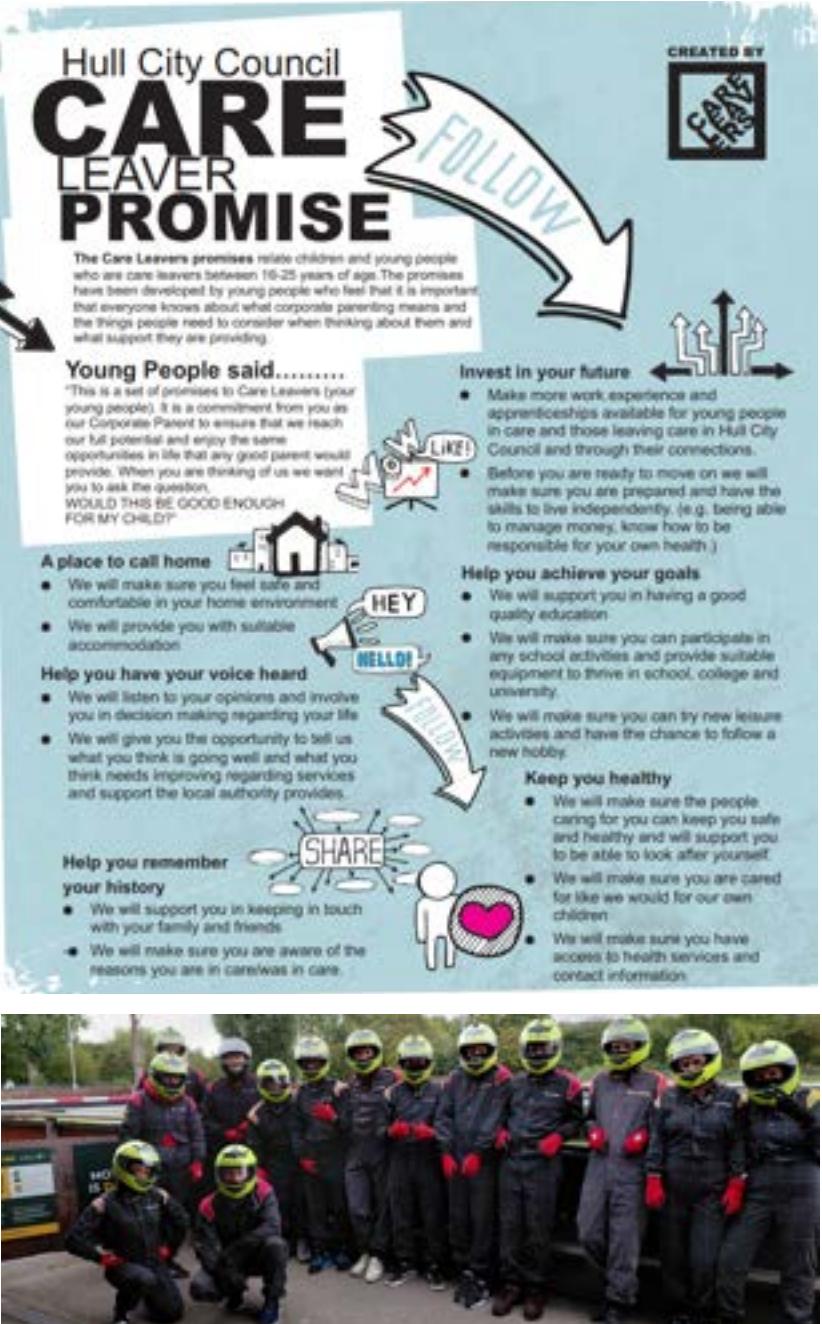
In 2023, an Accommodation Recruitment Officer was appointed to engage hard-to-reach communities and faith groups, enabling culturally matched placements.

RAST also benefits from our shared tenancy scheme with ongoing outreach from Targeted Youth Support Service.

70 young people supported to manage tenancies and prepare for independence.

30 additional shared tenancies created during 2025.

The RAST model, recognised nationally as best practice, ensures continuity by keeping the same worker through transition, avoiding unnecessary changes and building trust. Formal transfer to a Personal Advisor happens only when appropriate, and the team-based approach means young people know and trust multiple staff members in the team, preventing “cliff edges” at 18 years. This seamless support helps young feel secure and supported as they move into adulthood.



'Accommodation and Support offer is fantastic – innovative and inspiring. There is evidence of impact and how this is supporting excellent outcomes for some of the most vulnerable young people. Excellent partnerships with TYS.' (Regional Peer Review, November 2025)

'Introduction of roles like Social Prescriber and Care Experienced Champions broadens support. Room 42 and other dedicated spaces/resources provide accessible, youth-friendly environments.' (Regional Peer Review, November 2025)



'The strength and commitment of the corporate parenting offer really stands out and is something to truly celebrate.' (Regional Peer Review, November 2025)

'RAST structure promotes smooth transitions into leaving care post 18 for UASC and earlier introduction at 17 enables longer handover period with Social Worker to support better transition for young person.' (Regional Peer Review, November 2025)



28. Priorities for the next 12 months

- Further extend our reach and offer of support to older young people up to the age of 25 years, through our 'Keeping in Touch Hub', Room42 and Care Leaver Newsletter & activities.
- Build on our commitment to early co working for all young people aged 17 years, by reviewing the offer and extending to 16 years, when in the best interests of young people.
- Further strengthen transitional safeguarding arrangements, building on strong examples such as CENS, extension of IRO & VEMT for all care leavers up to 25 years.
- Continue to learn from and prioritise young people's voice, experiences and co-production opportunities, through Room42 and initiatives such as 'The Recruitables', a project designed to co-create solutions to employment and housing barriers with therapeutic support.
- Analyse and respond to our Care Leaver Bright Spots Survey 2025.
- Retain a focus on the importance of young people's identity and life story work by building on work supporting young people to access their records, with support - including vulnerable groups such as young people in custody.

