



Made in Bolton

Children's Directorate Plan 2022-24

Bolton
2030
Active, Connected & Prosperous



Contents

1. Foreword – Introduction to the Directorate	3
Context for this plan	4
The reset and refocus of Vision	5
The role of the Council	6
Internal change programmes	7
2. Change to People - Children’s Directorate Delivery Plan on a Page	9
Adopting the One Borough and One Council approach within the Directorate	10
3. Wider Council Plans	11
Service plan contribution	11
Ensuring that Insight Exchange (staff appraisal/development) is linked	11
4. Appendix A – Directorate priorities breakdown	12

1.

Foreword

Introduction to the Directorate

In Bolton our shared vision is to ensure the “Best start in life for all”. Our key ambition is to live and work in a town that works for all children.

We want Bolton to be a place that all children have the best possible start in life so they begin school ready to learn, thrive and be healthy and happy. We want our children to be educated in good schools and early years provision and ensure they feel a sense of belonging in their journey throughout education, helping them to achieve their maximum potential in life, having access to further education, training and work.

We want to improve outcomes for all children and young people and ensure that those that are in need of extra help and support receive it in a way that keeps them safe and listens to and understands their individual needs. We want Bolton’s children to see themselves as part of a thriving town in the future where they can live and work.

This Directorate Plan sets out our priorities for the years ahead for Bolton’s local services for children and young people, explaining what we aim to achieve and how we will improve outcomes for children and young people, in line with our vision.

The department works closely with our partners and education providers to provide the best start in life for children and achieve their potential

This work has led to;

- Implementation of the Integrated Front Door and Early Help Access Point
- Successful implementation of the Demand Management Strategy, which has started to impact on reduced average caseloads , thus supporting better quality of social work interventions
- Launch of the Belonging in Bolton strategy to ensure our schools are inclusive in their practice and committed to keeping children within mainstream settings with support
- Provision of school improvement support, joint professional development, sharing and developing best and next practice, and leadership capacity. This has been in partnership with primary and secondary schools
- The launch of SEND Local Offer, co-produced with parents and young people



Context for this plan

Recovery from pandemic

During the pandemic, there was and continues to be a joint and integrated approach by all services within the Directorate to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and to provide support to families, carers and providers, and ensuring that all duties are met. This is despite Bolton being one of a small number of local authorities in the North-West of England that had been categorised as high risk throughout the pandemic and subject to the tightest lockdown restrictions.

The workforce adapted to different ways of working during the pandemic, some of which have opened up innovative working practices which have now been embedded into new working models.

The care, expertise and determination shown by all our staff and partners in children's services, particularly during the pandemic, is incredible. The focus remained to keep children safe and ensure that children and young people get the best start in life.

As we move forward this plan aims to address the adverse impact that the pandemic has brought to Bolton's children and young people.



The Reset and refocus of Vision 2030

Through the shared experience of the pandemic, the partnership has recognised and responded to the opportunity to refocus on the right things, working in the right ways to support the people of Bolton as best we can. There is a need to develop a clear focus of the specific issues that need partnership focus.

This includes taking stock of the unique experience and impacts of the last two years of Covid-19 pandemic and of our operating environment and resource position. During the vision reset work, the partnership reconfirmed their commitment to the six vision outcomes:



In addition, the reset has also identified a small number of crucial issues that are seen to be urgent, that can only be delivered by the whole partnership working together, impact on our communities and require reform and new capabilities.

Four priorities emerged which will be delivered alongside the existing six outcomes. These are:



To this end, alignment and coherence of our activity across the Council and with our partners will be crucial.



The role of the Council

Maintaining stability and developing collaborative place leadership

The Corporate Plan will have an emphasis on how we develop our role in the Council as an enabler and facilitator of the whole partnership effort to deliver on the Bolton Vision – by adopting our place leadership role.

First, we have to ensure we are maintaining stability and delivering on the minimum expectations and legal requirements of the Council. We cannot achieve anything without these. From that stable base we can pursue our bolder ambitions for Bolton and support them in a place leadership role.

To do this, we will:

»» Ensure the Council is financially stable, managing effectively with the resources it has.

»» Work alongside Bolton's residents to support and enable them to deliver in their communities.

»» Our methods of working and infrastructure will be fit for the future, meeting residents expectations.

»» Working Together – we will work as one team across the Council and with partners to achieve our goals.

»» Continue to meet our statutory responsibilities.



Underpinning this place leadership approach, and to enable this shift in role and culture, six internal Council change programmes have been identified and we all have a part to play in their successful delivery.

The Corporate Plan is part of our new approach to Corporate Planning and Directorates will play a crucial role in recognising this place leadership role within their own practice, ensuring this plan speaks to them, whilst also fostering the six internal change programmes.

Internal change programmes

Supporting these five key strands of focus are six internal change programmes which have been designed to drive and improve capability.

Organisation Development Change Programme

- Enabling meaningful development opportunities
- Embracing new ways of working that supports strong delivery and the health and wellbeing of staff
- Engaging with our workforce better
- Attracting and retaining staff at all levels and ensuring we reflect the communities we serve
- Developing a modern progressive suite of HR and OD policies that support our staff to deliver their best



Strategic Intelligence/ Performance and Delivery Management Change Programme

- We will make best use of the available data and information to support insights and inform decisions
- Understand how intelligence can play a core role in designing, delivering and transforming public services
- Ensure we use intelligence to deliver our outcomes for residents of Bolton and improve efficiencies / value
- Embracing new ways of working - across teams organisations and sectors
- Make decisions based on what data is showing us that will improve the performance of the organisation

Empowering Communities Change Programme

- We will ensure our residents have greater control in the planning, design and delivery of health, social care and public services
- Improving how we identify and understand the assets our communities have and can be used to improve quality of life
- Ensuring our workforce better reflects the communities we serve in Bolton – how do we use the programme to better empower our residents
- Join the dots and make sure that work to develop community alliances, community champions and any other locally focused approaches remain aligned and complimentary



Digital Transformation Change Programme

- Embedding a culture into the organisation that promotes the use of digital
- Organising ourselves to deliver the best digital outcomes
- Making best use of the data available to improve our decision making
- Identifying and actively managing potential risks that may arise from embracing and deepening a digital way of life
- Embracing new ways of working - teams, across organisations and sectors
- Developing Council processes to help with quality, ease and efficiencies of service
- Ensuring better use of resources we have at our disposal to meet the needs of residents, businesses and staff



Start for Life Change Programme

- Developing a start for life offer across all agencies, working with Bolton children and families
- Further develop our inclusive education approach to ensure all children feel they belong in their local school or setting and are prepared for life and independence
- Ensuring support for children and young people is seamless throughout their journey
- Creating a network of family hubs, incorporating Early Help and SEND Services

Economic Growth and Resilience Change Programme

- Creating jobs and supporting residents into sustainable employment and healthy resilience
- Match skills and training to employer future demand, including green jobs
- Increasing investment into the town, maximising the strengths of Bolton
- Supporting scale ups and business growth and innovation in the borough



2. Children's Directorate Delivery Plan on a Page

Directorate theme	Directorate Priority	One Borough				One Council																
		Vision outcomes		Strategic delivery programmes		Place Leadership role of the Council			Internal change programmes													
		Start Well	Live Well	Age Well	Prosperous	Clean & Green	Safe, Strong & Distinctive	The Carbon Reduction Strategy	Adverse Childhood Experiences	Neighbourhoods	Aspirations and Skills	Stable and Responsible	Getting the basics right	Empowering	Working together	Modern	Digital Transformation	Empowering Communities	Strategic Intelligence, Performance and Delivery	Organisational Development	Start for Life	Economic Growth and Resilience
The best start in life for all	All children are ready for school	●	●				●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	
The best start in life for all	Keep children learning successfully in our schools	●	●				●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	
The best start in life for all	Keep children safe and help them achieve permanence	●	●				●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	
The best start in life for all	All children will achieve their potential	●	●				●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	
Market Shaping and Sustainability	Develop and embed a sufficient and sustainable provider market, which reflects the strategic priorities of the Council, supports service users, families and carers and is person centred and outcomes focused	●	●	●			●			●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
The best start in life for all	Operating effectively and efficiently to enable current and future delivery	●	●				●				●	●	●	●	●	●				●		●

Adopting the one Borough and one Council approach within the Directorate

The Directorate of Children's Services has key leadership responsibility for the Start Well and vision outcomes. The priorities outlined support the One Borough and One Council approach, working across all services whilst engaging our communities, we can ensure our children are getting the best start in life. Working as a system not a silo!

Through the Aspirations and Skills Strategic Programme we can seek to maximise partner resource, keeping our children in school and providing high quality education to them to enable them to achieve their potential.

The Directorate also recognises the importance of early intervention, and our work will be underpinned by the Adverse Childhood Experiences work programme and seek to mitigate against the impact of Early Childhood trauma in later life. We want to ensure our children are safe and where they come into the care of the local authority their need for permanence is seen as a priority by those working with them, as part of a Safe, Strong and Distinctive Bolton.

We also need to ensure we are getting the basics right, by developing and embedding a sufficient and sustainable provider market which is person centred, we can ensure the services we deliver reflect the needs of our residents.

Our workforce plays a key part to delivery, we will invest in our staff to ensure that they have the skills and training to deliver improved outcomes. Front line teams will work with support services to ensure that delivery is efficient and effective, working closely with our partners across the sector with a clear emphasis on co-producing with parents, carers, children and families. We will explore opportunities to co-locate teams and consider integrated leadership where it will improve outcomes for children and families.

Our ambitious plan will link to the borough's broader economic recovery which will be essential to improving outcomes and opportunities for all children. This document is underpinned by the Assistant Director plans which set out our detailed intended actions with associated timescales and outcome measures.



3.

Wider Council Plans

Service Plan contribution

We recognise that each of our services operate differently within the organisation and there would be no logical way of capturing all these in standardised service plan/format, despite us all working towards similar goals,

our overall Vision outcomes. It's through these service activities that we are able to deliver the priorities identified within this Plan and by adopting the Place Leadership approach set out within the Corporate Plan we can

ensure we do this effectively and efficiently as possible.

To assist in development of service plans, each Directorate's Policy and Performance team are able to offer support in this.

Ensuring that Insight Exchange (staff appraisal/development) is linked

Employees are fundamental to the success of the Directorate Plan, playing a key operational role, from front line staff to strategic leaders, through the Values and Behaviours framework

employees will perform their jobs effectively to enable the delivery of our priorities and these should emerge as part of individual Insight Exchanges.

Detailed guidance for conducting Insight Exchanges is available on the Council's Intranet.



Appendix A

Directorate priorities breakdown

Directorate theme	What we want to achieve	Who will be accountable	How will we achieve this	How will we measure this
The best start in life for all	All children are ready for school	Assistant Director Inclusive Education and Learning	Develop a start for life offer across all agencies working with children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % pupils achieving a good level of development at EYFS
The best start in life for all	Keep children learning successfully in our schools	Assistant Director Inclusive Education and Learning	Maintain and improve quality of education provision in Bolton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Primary Schools Good or Better • % Secondary Schools Good or Better • % pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 • % pupils achieving 9-4 pass in English and Maths • Average Progress 8 score per pupil
The best start in life for all	Keep children learning successfully in our schools	Assistant Director Inclusive Education and Learning	Further develop belonging in Bolton inclusive education strategy and align to developing national legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total of school children persistently absent from school
The best start in life for all	Keep children safe and help them achieve permanence – support children and young people to remain with their parents or carers when it is safe to do so by providing effective services and support and reducing the need for children to become or remain looked after.	Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help	<p>Further develop approach to Early Help demand management with the voluntary sector</p> <p>Deliver the expectations of the care review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate (per 10,000) subject to a Child Protection Plan • Rate (per 10,000) of Looked After Children
The best start in life for all	Operating effectively and efficiently to enable current and future delivery	Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help	Create a network of family hubs incorporating Early Help and SEND services, which will be informed by the upcoming national program.	
The best start in life for all	Operating effectively and efficiently to enable current and future delivery	Deputy Director of Children's Services	Create a network of family hubs incorporating Early Help and SEND services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % YP academic age 16 and 17 NEET
The best start in life for all	All children will achieve their potential	Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help and Assistant Director Inclusive Education and Learning	Develop and implement a transition strategy to ensure support for children and young people is seamless throughout their journey	
The best start in life for all	Operating effectively and efficiently to enable current and future delivery	Assistant Director Inclusive Education and Learning	Reform SEND and deliver a balanced High Needs budget	
Market Shaping and Sustainability	Supporting service users, families and carers through person centred services that deliver their desired outcomes	Assistant Director for Commissioning	Develop and embed a sufficient and sustainable provider market, which reflects the strategic priorities of the Council	