

Children's Services Workforce Strategy 2026-2028

We have tremendous ambitions for our children and young people in Barnsley.

Our Great Childhoods Ambition outlines our commitment to improving the lives of our children in Barnsley. Better outcomes for children, young people and their families can only be achieved through a diverse, confident, high-performing, well-trained, supported and highly skilled workforce, who understand their responsibilities and work with partners to deliver consistent, responsive and high-quality services.

In Barnsley, we recognise that to achieve our ambitions for children and young people, our employees are our most valuable asset. We're committed to recruiting and retaining the very best talent through a culture of continuous professional development where practice is encouraged to flourish.

We celebrate and recognise good practice and support others to do the same, building and creating a strengths-based model that is shared across our organisation.

Our **Children's Services Workforce Strategy** has three key priorities, setting out what we will achieve over the next two years and how we will realise our ambition: for Barnsley to be the place of possibilities for children and young people, their families and our workforce.

Our Children's Services Workforce Strategy will help us deliver on Enabling Barnsley a core principle of our council plan encouraging employees to be bold, brave and innovative to achieve ambitious goals for children and families.

Healthy
Barnsley

Learning
Barnsley

Growing
Barnsley

Sustainable
Barnsley

Enabling
Barnsley

Barnsley Council's vision:
Barnsley - the place of possibilities.

Children's Services mission:
We are one service with one goal, working together to build a brighter Barnsley for every child.

Our service principles:

- Putting children and families first.
- Working together in partnership to deliver joined-up care.
- Delivered by a strong and valued workforce.

How will we know we've made a difference?

We'll monitor our progress and the difference we're making in a variety of ways, including:



Performance measures.



Outcomes and findings from Quality Assurance work.



Reviews, engagement and feedback from children and families.

We'll continuously seek the views of our practitioners through service-wide events, our Employee Surveys and our Practitioner Forum.



Stay updated on our progress through newsletters, service and team events and our Practice Hub.



We need your views!

We hold a number of service-wide events throughout the year where staff can contribute to and support our ambitions.



We have a Practitioner Forum, where you can actively help us in shaping and improving the work we do and how we support you.



Why work for us?

We're
a team

Here in Barnsley, we're a team with a friendly, supportive, welcoming and nurturing culture.

We're
proud

We take pride in our work, and we're dedicated to making Barnsley the place of possibilities.

We're
honest

We're clear, fair, and reliable, helping people to understand what we are doing and why.

We're
excellent

We will be excellent, relentlessly focused on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Barnsley Children's Services Stronger Together



Children's Services Workforce Strategy priorities:

Priority

1

Attract and retain a stable, skilled, diverse and confident workforce, which can keep people safe and promote the welfare of children and young people, enabling them to succeed and achieve their aspirations.

Barnsley is a great place to work with big ambitions for the future. We have the perfect balance of a friendly, nurturing environment coupled with opportunities to aspire and achieve.

Our offer to our workforce includes:

- A welcome payment and attractive remuneration packages.
- Manageable workloads, allowing you to work directly with children and families.
- A clear practice model that supports our work with children and families and embeds our culture of continuous learning.
- Welcoming and supportive teams.
- Excellent learning and development opportunities, providing you with the right tools to do the job.
- Regular and reflective supervision, with extra support for less experienced practitioners.
- A comprehensive induction programme for all employees and managers.
- Continuous professional development pathways.
- A robust Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and second year in practice offer with additional support.
- Regular communication through quarterly service-wide events and fortnightly newsletters.
- Strong links with South Yorkshire Teaching Partnerships.
- Payment of Social Work England fees.
- Our apprenticeship offer.
- Access to Research in Practice.

Priority

2

Make sure we have strong, effective leadership across our teams, responding to service demand and enabling us to deliver people-focused, high-quality and consistent practice in all our work.

We work together towards achieving our vision in line with our values. We have leaders at every level that contribute to delivering our priorities and outcomes, championing our ambitions to help all children and their families receive the right help at the right time.

We will do this with our workforce by:

- Reducing spans of control for frontline managers so you get the right support to make the right decisions for children and their families.
- Encouraging leaders to lead by example, embodying our values and creating a culture of openness and accountability
- A dedicated 'Managing for the Future', first line manager programme to support continuous professional improvement, building strong managers underpinned by our Enabling Barnsley strategy Future Leaders.
- Making sure our values are understood and shared as part of our induction programme for managers, ensuring expectations for all practitioners is consistent.
- Group supervision and peer support as part of the Stronger Together practice model framework, supporting joint working wherever possible to create shared learning opportunities across our teams.
- Creating opportunities to be involved in innovative practice development across our Children's Services workforce.
- Having a direct line between senior leadership and frontline practice.
- Encouraging strong partnerships, relationships and networks to help practitioners work together to provide families with the services they need when they need them. Having strong progression opportunities and a focus on your career pathway and aspirations.

Priority

3

Embed a culture of success and wellbeing, where employees feel empowered and supported to perform well in their role and learn, develop and progress while working for us.

Our workforce is our greatest asset and we thrive on celebrating wellbeing, uniqueness, and diversity, recognising that a healthy, diverse and inclusive workforce is a productive and motivated one.

We will support the workforce wellbeing by:

- Agile working and our flexible working scheme, helping to support your work-life balance.
- A range of employee benefits through our Just4YOU offer.
- Our Well@work scheme, supporting your health and wellbeing.
- Employee reward and recognition.
- Championing equality and diversity, being compassionate and treating each other with respect.
- Reduced parking fees and free parking in area offices.
- Our Practice Hub, which is there to support you throughout your professional career.
- Our continuous professional development offer.
- Bespoke training for all practitioners across Children's Services.
- Regular service-wide events to celebrate success and share good practice.
- A nurturing culture of support and continuous professional learning.
- Coaching and mentoring programmes.