

Children and Young People's Plan 2025-2030

*Our plan for all children, young
people and their families living
in Sefton*



Safe, Happy, Healthy, Heard, Achieving, Prepared for Adulthood, and Supported Families

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction - About Our Plan	6
Background	7
The Challenges	9
Growing up in Sefton	11
Our Journey - Progress since the last plan	12
Our Consultation & Engagement.....	15
Our Strategic Vision for children, young people and families in Sefton	16
Partnership Working	24
Conclusion	25
With Thanks	26
Annexe - Our Top Supporting Priorities for 2025-2030	28

Foreword

We want to make a difference to the lives of children and young people who live in Sefton, improving outcomes for all children, whilst tackling deprivation and child poverty and protecting vulnerable children. The Council has agreed to put children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do as a Council, which is reflected in our Corporate Plan and transformation intentions.

Improving children's social care is our highest priority. We will continue to work to ensure the children we care for are safe and that we and they have the highest aspirations for their future. Every Councillor and member of staff in Sefton is committed to being a good Corporate Parent and we are now working with our partners to ensure they support the high aspirations we have for our children. However, our ambition is much bigger than that; our determination will ensure children, young people and their families will be at the heart of everything we do right across the organisation to make Sefton the best place for children and young people to grow up.

The impacts of poverty are a significant concern for the Council given that more than 21% of children and young people in the Borough live in relative low-income households, and poverty has detrimental impacts on their life chances, health and achievement. Almost 14% of all children and young people aged 0-25 in the Borough are known to have a SEN need, which represents approximately 21% of all school age children (5-16). Our children and young people tell us that they do not feel safe at times in parts of the Borough and on public transport, and that they are worried about crime and about safety online. Though complex, these are things that we must tackle together with our partners through this overarching strategic plan.



Cllr Marion Atkinson,
Leader Sefton Council



Cllr Diane Roscoe,
Cabinet Member
Children Schools &
Families

***Our plan for all children,
young people and their
families living in Sefton.***



This is a five-year plan for all children, young people and their families living in Sefton. Our plan has been developed with children, young people and the Sefton C&YP partnership. Key supporting priorities for Sefton are tackling child poverty, improving school attendance, providing mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children and young people, strengthening families and communities by supporting families to help themselves and intervening early when we need to, and supporting children to be ready to learn.

We have a strong foundation of multi-agency partnership working in Sefton, and the continued commitment to partnership working remains a focal point of our new plan, so that together we can realise the vision of all partners for our children and young people in Sefton to be safe, happy, healthy, herd, achieving, and preparing for adulthood, whilst ensuring that families receive good quality multi-agency help to support parents or carers so that risks to children are reduced, and reducing the need for high cost, statutory interventions.

We are ambitious for children and young people in Sefton, and this plan builds on improvements already underway and identifies our next steps. We have used the learning from our previous plan (2020-2025) and

extensive consultation with parents, carers, children, young people, and professionals from many sectors and agencies to inform our priorities, so that we can continue to make a real difference in the lives of children and young people in Sefton.

This plan is intended to provide the overarching strategic intention of our local partnership, and to stimulate and direct action across many agencies involved in the lives of children and young people in Sefton. It will drive conversations, coproduction, and new systemic ways of working across the partnership and with children, young people, families, and frontline professionals to help ensure that whatever we do genuinely makes a difference to children and young people's lives.

We recognise that supporting children and young people is the responsibility of everyone who works with and cares for children and young people. No one agency can do that alone. We work in partnership, so that children, young people and their families are heard and involved at home, at school, in their communities and particularly when they need additional information, advice, support or interventions to help them.

Together we will draw upon the skills and the determination of each partner, our

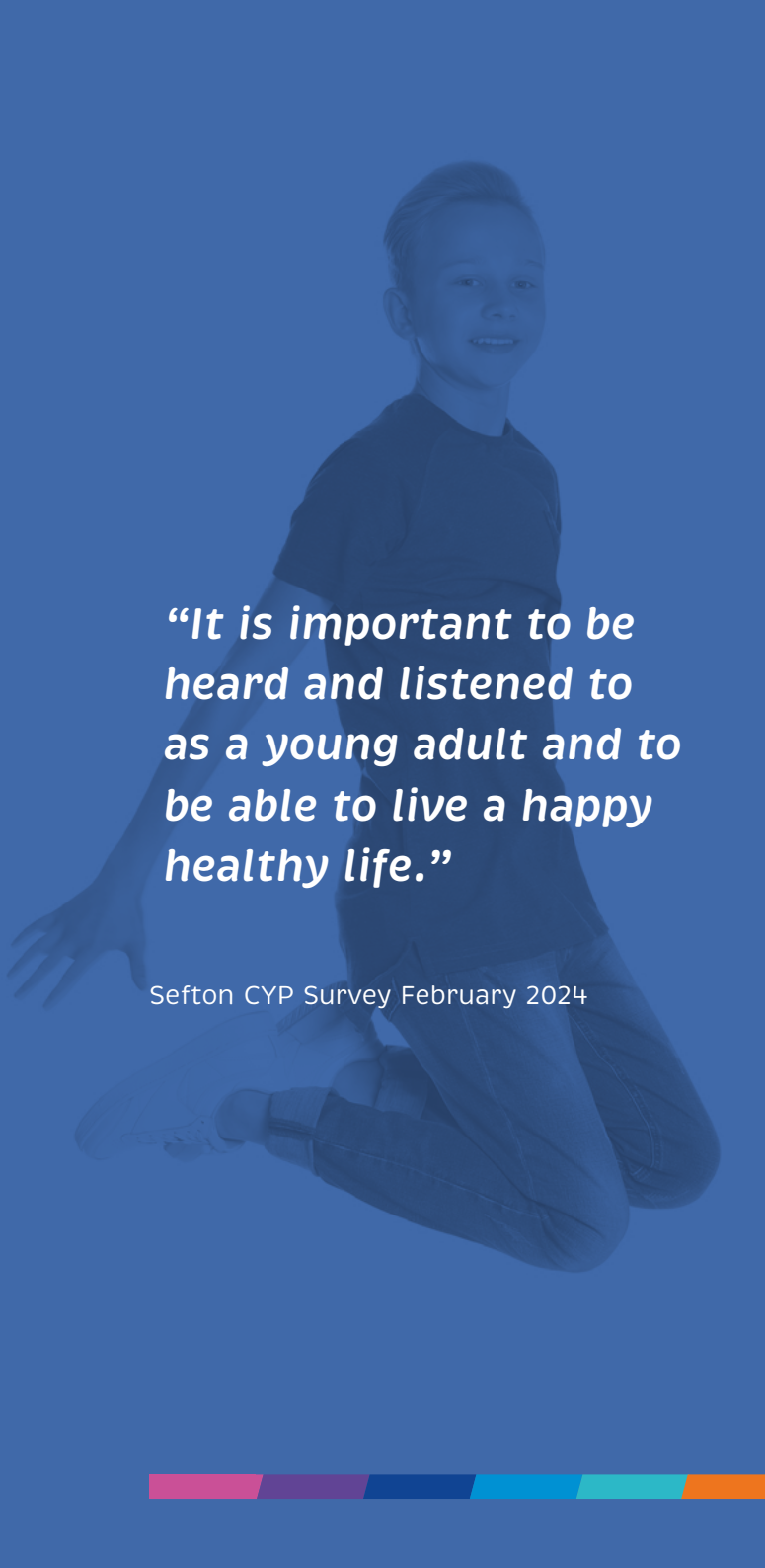
collective energy and enthusiasm for what we do, and our shared ambition to make sure that Sefton really is one of the greatest places for children and young people to live and to grow.



Phil Porter,
Chief Executive, Sefton Council,
Chair of Sefton's Children &
Young People Partnership Board

“We put children at the heart of what we do in Sefton. We recognise that each organisation in our partnership is just one part of a whole system and that by working together we can give the best support to children, young people and families in Sefton.”





“It is important to be heard and listened to as a young adult and to be able to live a happy healthy life.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Our children and young people have told us that they want Sefton to be a great place to live, learn, play and work. A place where all children and young people have a positive start in life, where strong family relationships, opportunities for play and exploration, and a sense of belonging make them feel safe and happy. A place where they feel healthy and are listened to when decisions that affect them are made by others. A place where they achieve in education and learning, and where they are excited about their future because they have realistically high aspirations. A place where they receive the help and support to equip them with the necessary skills to transition successfully into independent, responsible, and fulfilled adult lives. A place where families facing multiple challenges receive coordinated help, support and interventions to address family issues like unemployment, poor school attendance, health problems, and domestic challenges.

Listening to the voices of our children and young people we want Sefton to be a place where children and young people are **Safe, Happy, Healthy, Heard, Achieving, Preparing for Adulthood, and where Families are Supported.** This plan sets out how the Council, our schools and our partners will work together for every child in Sefton, coming together to make sure that children,

young people and families receive the help and support that they need, and to ensure that their highest aspirations can be met. This means we will work together and prioritise those children and young people that have had the hardest start in life such as those with SEND, those that are looked after, children in need and those who live in poverty. We are proud of the work of our schools, our partner agencies and our Council Children’s Services, but we know that the challenges that many of our children and young people are facing continue to grow and we are also committed to working with our communities and our partners to respond to those challenges.

It’s a really exciting time here in Sefton and by working together as one we will make a positive difference to the lives of our children and young people in the Borough and support them to be the best that they can be. The children and young people of Sefton make up 20% of the population but they are 100% of our future, so we invite you to join us in placing children at the heart of everything we do.



Introduction – About Our Plan

Our strategic vision and top priorities for children, young people and their families:

Safe, Happy, Healthy, Heard, Achieving, Preparing for Adulthood, and Families are Supported.

We have looked at the previous Children and Young People's Plan (2020-2025) and carried forward the strategic themes and top priorities that we believe are still important and to our children, young people and their families, and still require a collective focus from the Children and Young People's Partnership Board to make change.

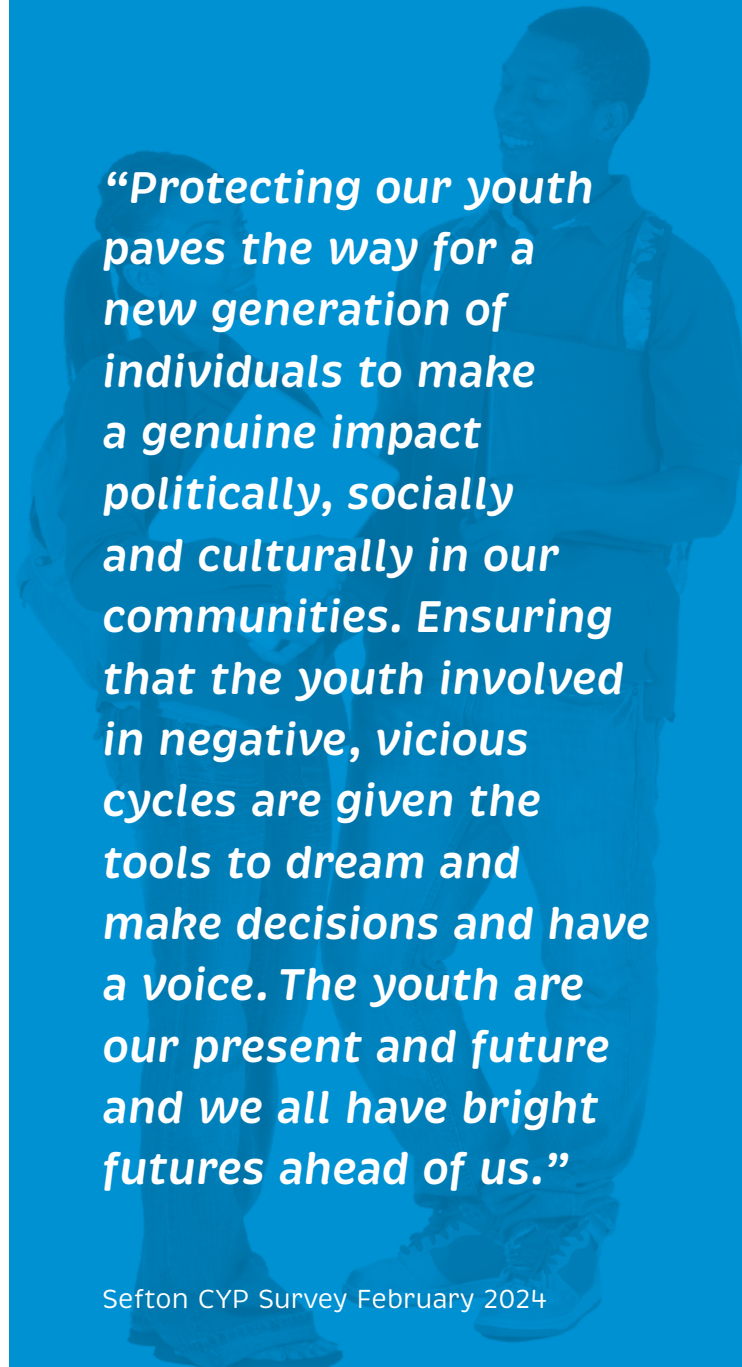
We have also looked at the wider social and economic factors affecting families in Sefton and the demand for the services provided by the Council, our schools, and our partners, analysing our performance and progress to date, alongside the trends identified in the Children's Chapter of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

This vision and the top priorities in our Children and Young People Plan have also been strongly shaped by the voices of Sefton's children and young people, youth groups, parents, carers and the professionals across

multiple agencies, including schools, the local authority, health, police, the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

We asked children and young people what matters to them, what support they feel that they need, and about their hopes and aspirations for the future.

Children and young people living in Sefton asked us to ensure that they can feel safe in school, at home and within their communities. They told us that they want the support 'to be the best that they can be,' to do well in school and be able to go on to college, vocational training or into work. They told us that they want equal accessibility to services and to understand how to support themselves and one another as they grow into adulthood. They told us how important it is to them that the most vulnerable children receive the help and support that they need irrespective of individual circumstance, environment, social or economic factors. They told us that they want to feel listened to and have a supportive network of family, friends and professionals who are involved in their lives. They told us that personal health and being happy is important to them, and that they want opportunities to have fun.



“Protecting our youth paves the way for a new generation of individuals to make a genuine impact politically, socially and culturally in our communities. Ensuring that the youth involved in negative, vicious cycles are given the tools to dream and make decisions and have a voice. The youth are our present and future and we all have bright futures ahead of us.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

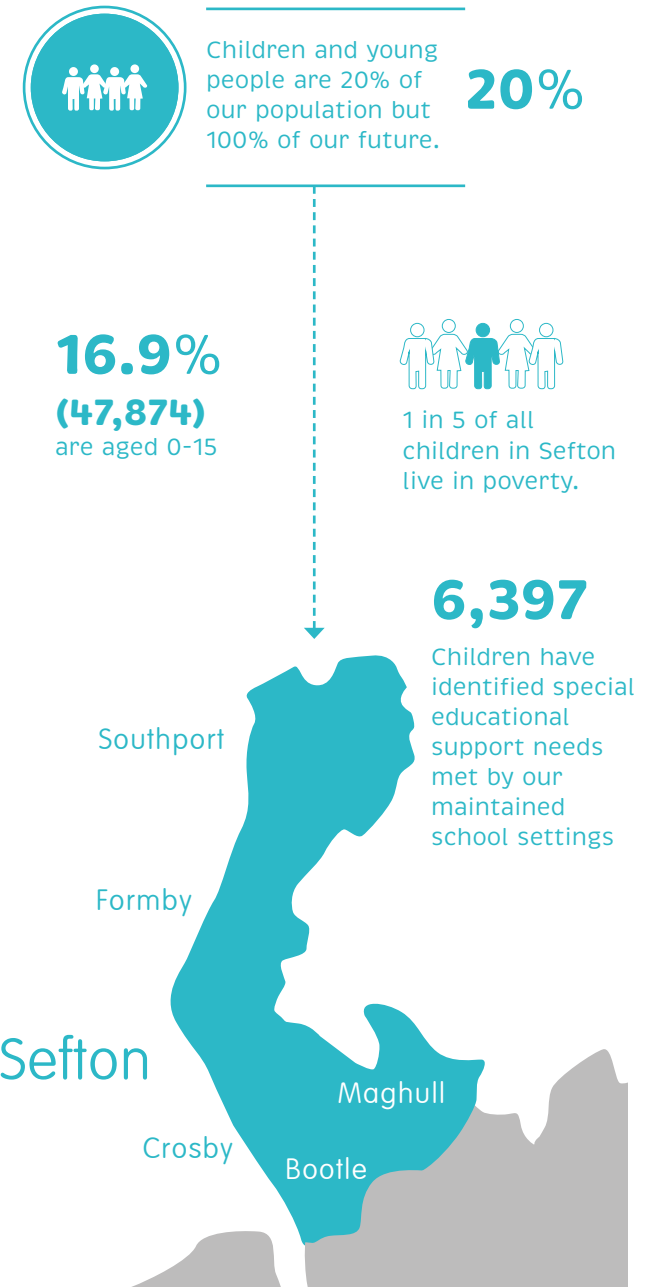
Background

Sefton Borough consists of a coastal strip of land on the Irish Sea and extends from the primarily industrial area of Bootle in the south to the traditional seaside resort of Southport in the north. In the south-east it extends inland to Maghull. Sefton has an approximate area of some 155km².

Sefton's 22-mile-long coastline boasts some of Merseyside's best beaches characterised by a wide sandy foreshore backed by dunes, along with significant areas of docks, estuary, shore, dune, and woodland. The significant dune system extends some 4km inland at Formby. Overall, the coastal frontage supports several large urban settlements including Crosby, Hightown, Formby, and Southport. Sefton attracts a strong visitor economy and hosts many annual events such as Aintree Races, Southport's Flower Show, Air Show and British Musical Fireworks Championship to name a few.

Sefton is one of six Councils that make up the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Since 1st April 2014 some of the Borough's responsibilities have been pooled with neighbouring authorities within the metropolitan area and subsumed into the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The Combined Authority has effectively become the top-tier administrative body for the local governance of the city region, with the leader of Sefton Council alongside the five other leaders from neighbouring local government districts, making strategic decisions over economic development, transport, employment and skills, tourism, culture, housing, and physical infrastructure.

Sefton's heritage is important to its identity. Southport's cast iron verandas, the shrimper's cottages in Churchtown, Formby's pinewoods, and Bootle's industrial areas and docks are integral to the character of its towns and villages. Sefton has 25 conservation areas, approximately 560 listed buildings, 5 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, and 13 Scheduled Monuments. These are important on a national scale as examples of their type. Famous architects and landscape designers such as E. W. Pugin and Edward Kemp have designed some of Sefton's historic buildings, parks and gardens. Others are the best surviving examples of the local vernacular architecture.



Sefton is a confident, connected borough because of its people, and has a unique socio-economic geography. In its entirety it is in the most deprived fifth of English local authorities, with 27 of the 189 Sefton Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) being in the top 5% nationally (17 of these being in South Sefton), of which 7 LSOAs are in the top 1% most deprived nationally. Yet other parts of the Borough, particularly in the middle and North, are some of the least deprived areas, with 7 LSOAs in the least deprived 5% of areas nationally. Despite this stark contrast, between March 2013 and March 2025, the Council has processed over 110,000 applications for emergency crisis support for the most vulnerable members of our communities, and those experiencing severe financial hardship.

We have a population of approximately 283,000 residents living in Sefton (ONS mid-year estimates 2024), an increase of 3% when compared to a decade ago (2014 mid-year estimates). 16.9% (47,874) are aged 0-15; 59.4% (168,071) are aged 16-64; 20.1% (56,970) are aged 65-84, and 3.5% (9,830) are aged 85+. The number of residents aged 65 and over has increased by over 9% in the last 10 years with those aged 85 and over increasing by 20%.

Sefton is in the highest 20% of local authorities for the proportion of residents stating their health was either bad or very bad, or they have a disability, and we receive around 25,000 contacts through the front door per year for Adult Social Care, of which 75% relate to requests for support.

One in 20 people living in Sefton is a veteran of the UK Armed Forces, with almost 11,000 people in Sefton confirming that they were a veteran at the time of the 2021 census, which is 5% of our usual residents aged 16 and over, compared to 3.8% nationally.

We have 248 'eligible' households in temporary accommodation, 167 are single person households, 59 are families with children under the age of 18. We have 165 children in temporary accommodation, and the average time spent in temporary accommodation is 114 days. We also have 409 asylum seekers residing in Sefton.

In Children's Services we have over 2,600 children identified as a child in need of some form of support. 6,397 children have identified special educational support needs met by our maintained school settings, and the Council is responsible for 3,860 children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan.



283,000

Sefton population (approximately)



53,970

CYP under 18 in Sefton (19.1% total Borough population)



16.9%

(47,874) are aged 0-15



6,397

Children have an identified special educational support need met by our maintained school settings



3,860

Children and young people (0-25) with an Education, Health and Care Plan maintained by the LA



2,600

Children identified as a child in need of some form of support



489

children who are looked after by the LA or are being supported into independent living

The Challenges

Keeping our Children & Young People Safe

Sefton Council along with our partners have a statutory responsibility to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. The Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board challenge all activity relating to the safety of children and young people living in Sefton. But beyond our statutory responsibilities the partnership has a shared moral obligation to ensure that our children and young people can feel safe in school, at home, within their communities, on public transport and online.

Neglect

Is still one of the most common reasons for taking child protection action in Sefton. On average 36% of all child protection cases are due to neglect. When a parent or carer(s) cannot meet a child's needs it is often because they do not have the support or skills needed, and sometimes it is due to other issues, such as mental health, addiction, poverty, or ill health.

Contextual safeguarding

Increasingly children are becoming more vulnerable to exploitation or abuse from outside their families from issues such as trafficking, sexual exploitation, county lines (organised criminal gangs using vulnerable children and young people to transport or sell drugs across counties), extremism or on-line exploitation (more recently highlighted through on-line targeted social media and the spread of misinformation). Routinely we see an average of 46 episodes/open cases related to children being at risk of exploitation.

Poverty

Sefton Council declared a poverty emergency in March 2021, when presented with challenging findings of a review of child poverty in Sefton, leading to the development of our Child Poverty Strategy (2022). The facts reported in this strategy are sobering, and we know that too many of our children continue to live on the breadline, exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. We are acutely aware that poverty influences children's education, health and overall opportunities,

Our plan for all children, young people and their families living in Sefton.

and although many of the fundamental causes of poverty are out of Sefton Council's and partners' direct control, we are collectively committed to using our influence and leadership to affect change wherever we can. We are committed to strong leadership around tackling poverty, and we will put tackling poverty at the heart of our role as a partnership.

Improving education outcomes for all children

We need to close the gap in the percentage of children with a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Y1 phonics screening checks, the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2, and the average Attainment 8 & Progress 8 scores of all pupils at Key Stage 4 compared to national and Northwest comparators. We also need to close the gap in attainment between disadvantaged learners and their peers at Key Stage 4; our data shows a performance gap of 27% achievement in English and Maths.

Children and Young People's Health

Ensuring that children and young people have a healthy, positive start in life so they can develop and reach their full potential is a challenge. There are some measures which stand out and highlight obvious areas for action. Rates of obesity in both reception and year 6 children in Sefton are more than both the regional and national average (at 11 and 25% respectively) and less than half of children eat 5 portions of fruit and veg a day. Rates of obesity are almost double in Y6 children living in the most deprived areas in Sefton compared with those in the least. Sefton is below the national average for breastfeeding rates, and we know that this can be significant for children's future health. Despite a reduction, hospital admissions due to self-harm for 10-14yr olds are double the national average at a rate of over 500/100k. Around a third of children in Sefton have visually obvious dental decay, 50% higher than the national average. Broad indicators around health in Sefton often don't tell the whole story. In many cases, figures for the whole borough mask challenges being experienced by large parts of the population. Underpinning this is the stark difference in incomes and rates of people experiencing

poverty. In parts of the Borough the rate of children in low-income families is more than double the national average (40%). Children born in Sefton experience almost the highest inequality in life expectancy between richest and poorest in England. Boys in the poorest areas can expect to live an average of 14 fewer years and girls 12 fewer years.

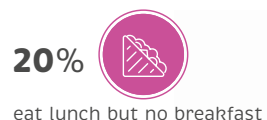
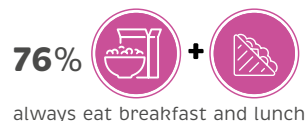
We need to continue to work to reduce these unfair and unjust gaps in health through our universal and targeted services and through our joint work on child poverty.

Workforce Issues

Like many other local authorities, Sefton is facing significant workforce challenges, including recruitment and retention difficulties, funding constraints and increasing service demands, leading to staffing shortages across various departments, especially in education and children's social care. The lack of understanding and misconceptions of the breadth of opportunities a career in local government offers is a key barrier to recruiting new entries into the sector and increases dependency on agency workers.

Growing Up in Sefton

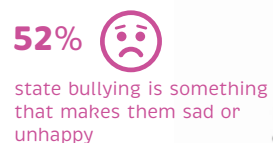
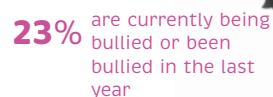
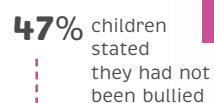
On a school day



How do you feel about the future?



Bullying

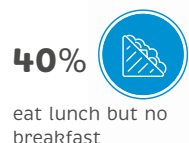
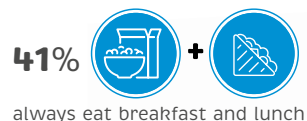


8 – 11 years old
Primary School

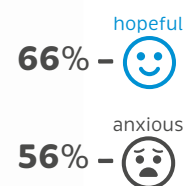
This cohort ranked as most important

- No1** Supportive family and friends
- No2** being safe
- No3** having fun

On a school day



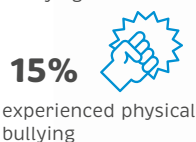
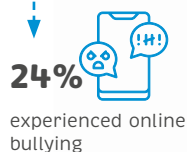
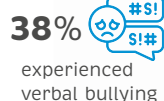
How do you feel about the future?



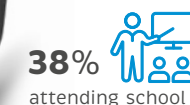
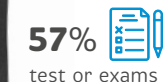
20% said the cost-of-living crisis is affecting their mental health & emotional wellbeing

12 – 16 years old
Secondary School

Bullying



Worries

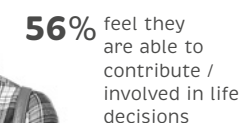
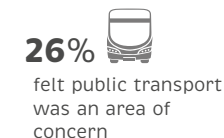


This cohort ranked as most important

- No1** being happy
- No2** having fun
- No3** being listened to
- No4** being safe

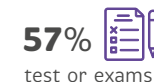
Safety in local area

most respondents said they 'feel safe everywhere'

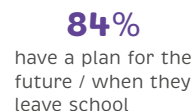


16+ years old
Further Education

Worries



The future



Our Journey – Progress Since The Last Plan

Reflecting on the partnership journey to date preceding this new Children and Young People's Plan allows us to share the successes and progress that has been made. More importantly, it has helped us to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges that we face moving forward and shaped our top priorities.

We have a well-established strategic Children and Young People's Partnership Board that shares a common goal of working together to improve the lives of all children across Sefton. The partnership recognises that not one organisation can achieve our vision and priorities, and to deliver real change all the organisations and key stakeholders must continue to work together to improve services that have a positive impact on children and young people's lives.

Over the course of the last Children & Young Peoples plan we have:

- Guaranteed that children and young people's voices are heard, consulting and engaging with a wide range of groups and networks (including Young

Carers and Young Advisers) to inform service design so that children, young people and families will get the right support and help at the right time.

- Driven a programme of continuous improvement in Children's Services following the inadequate OFSTED rating in March 2022. Our children's services are now rated as 'Good' overall, and we continue to drive change through innovative approaches such as Team Around a School, Team Around a baby, and strengthened relationships with partner agencies.
- Ensured that children and young people are supported by competent multi-agency professionals that they trust and who listen to them, and made to feel their opinion is valued and take actions to meet their needs and tackle the concerns they raise. We have improved our social care workforce stability by reducing our dependency on agency workers from 65% to 28% and reducing average caseload for social workers down to 15 children.

- Promoted healthy eating, reviewed mental health support services, and reduced hospital admissions for alcohol use, to improve the lives of young people through the North Mersey Prevention Programme.

- Supported children and young people to be able to leave school with the appropriate skills and qualifications they need to increased access to training, apprenticeships and employment, working closely with skills and employment resources and local colleges.

- Continued to deliver improvement in the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) system by strengthening communication, providing accessible information, improving local provision and implementing a graduated approach for supporting children and young people with SEND, improve the timeliness of Education, Health and Care needs assessments, and develop the transitions and preparation for adulthood.

- Begun to tackle child poverty by developing the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy (CPS) and creating the policy and practice conditions for delivery across the Council and its partners in schools, the NHS, voluntary sector and business.
- Continued to improve school attendance and reducing overall absence across all primary, secondary and special schools through initiatives such as the roll-out of a designated Single Point of Contact responsible for overseeing the identification and support for severely absent pupils, a revised Penalty Notice Framework to align with national guidance, ensuring a more consistent and transparent approach to school attendance enforcement, weekly attendance data scrutiny and robust monitoring of illness-related absences.
- Re-established the Sefton Children and Young Peoples Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board, refreshed the Sefton Children and Young Peoples Mental Health JSNA, established a Mental Health Schools Team, integrated CAMHS into our Team around the School programme, increased access to crisis support services, commissioned the 'Kooth' online emotional and wellbeing support for young people, and embedded the 'THRIVE' model of service delivery to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children and young people.
- Maximised the well-established Early Help Partnership arrangements to strengthen partnership working between family members and professionals, helping families with multiple problems, like worklessness, crime, and educational engagement through improved communication and engagement, making increasing use of data to inform prioritisation, and integrating multi-agency collaborative practice demonstrated by initiatives such as Team Around the School (TAS).

“Early access to low intensity mental health support.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024



“Mental health issues are increasing; families are struggling financially and socially which impacts on their children. As a service we do a lot of participation work to include children, young people and their families to encourage them to voice anything they feel would improve our services in Sefton.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Progress Since The Last Plan



92.2%

of Secondary and Primary Schools rated as Good or Outstanding

School Attendance



93.3%

Academic year 24/25
Cumulative from 01 September 2024 to 02 May 2025
(Reception to Y11)

What we are proud to have achieved i the last plan

6,376

SEND support

(maintained/ academy nursery, primary, secondary, special and PRUs) 6,376 (Jan 2025) up from 5,663 in Jan 2024 (12.6% increase)



Public Health
-57% reduction in hospital admissions for self-harm (10-24 years) since 2019/20



71%

YOIT 174 out of 244 of all YJS Interventions had a Successfully Completed outcome.

Social Care Workforce stability

reduction in agency workers from

41% to 26%

LAC

decrease 596 to 490 since 2022

LAC Placement Stability

67% of cared for children in care for over 2.5 years in the same placement for more than 2 years as at 31 Mar 25



114 more children subject to child protection plan compared to previous financial year end (392 vs 278).

55.7%
increase

SEND EHCPs

EHCPs- 3,992 (May 2025) up from 2,563 January 2024
SEND (55.7% increase)



1,754

incidents of ASB reported

Where we haven't quite made the difference we want to yet

Pupil Attainment 2024

KS4 GCSE

English & Maths 9-5

37.2%

an increase of 0.7pps from 36.5% in 2023

KS4 GCSE Ebacc 9-4

18.4%

an increase of 1.2pps from 17.2% in 2023

KS5

A levels APS

30.15

up 2.02 from 28.13 in 2023



average grade remains at Merit+

Pupil Attainment 2024

EYFSP

62.7%

down 1.1pps from 63.8% in 2023

KS2 RWM

expected standard

57.4%

down 1.1pps from 63.8% in 2023

KS4

Attainment 8 average score

41.7%

KS5

Applied general qualifications APS

28.23

Our Consultation and Engagement

We undertook a series of consultation and engagement activities between February and July 2024 to gather insight from children, young people, families, young carers, carers, and professional working across many agencies who support children and young people, including our schools.

We communicated our intentions ‘far and wide’ using stakeholder briefings, newsletters, presentations to partnership boards, a dedicated social media campaign and a video promoting the consultation, involving children and young people, Children and Young People Plan- Have Your Say and we used a range of methods to engage and consult, including a survey for children and young people aged 8 - 19 years (25 years for those with SEND), an online public consultation, engagement workbooks for face-to-face consultation with targeted groups of children and young people, and observations in numerous settings, including early years nursery and childcare settings.

We asked children and young people from the Sefton Strategic Youth Voice Steering Group to help us develop the ‘SHOUT’ survey, which was tailored to target 8-11yr and 12-16yr olds and those 16+ to ask age-appropriate

questions and designed to gather quantitative information about children and young people’s behaviours, perceptions and feelings. We asked them ‘What is it like growing up in Sefton?’ We also asked them about their aspirations for education, post-school options such as gaining qualifications, work experience and achieving financial security, about health, family, leisure, and transitions to adulthood. Finally, we gave them the opportunity to express their views on what the priorities should be for our multi-agency partnership to ensure their needs are better met.

In total, 3,385 children and young people and 239 members of the public and people who work with and support children and young people took part in the consultation. In addition, there were 712 wellbeing and involvement observations of babies and pre-school children carried out by the Early Years providers. This included the children and young people with experiences of care who had taken part in previous, relevant consultation.

Despite some differences about what’s more important for each age group that we consulted with, the general feedback from all of groups was that children, young people and

families in Sefton want:

To be safe, to be happy, to be healthy, to have fun, to be listened to, to do well in school, and having the opportunity to go on to college, vocational training or into work, to receive appropriate help and support (especially for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or cared for), to prepare for higher education, employment, independent living, to participate in society, and to have supportive family and friends to help them on their journey.

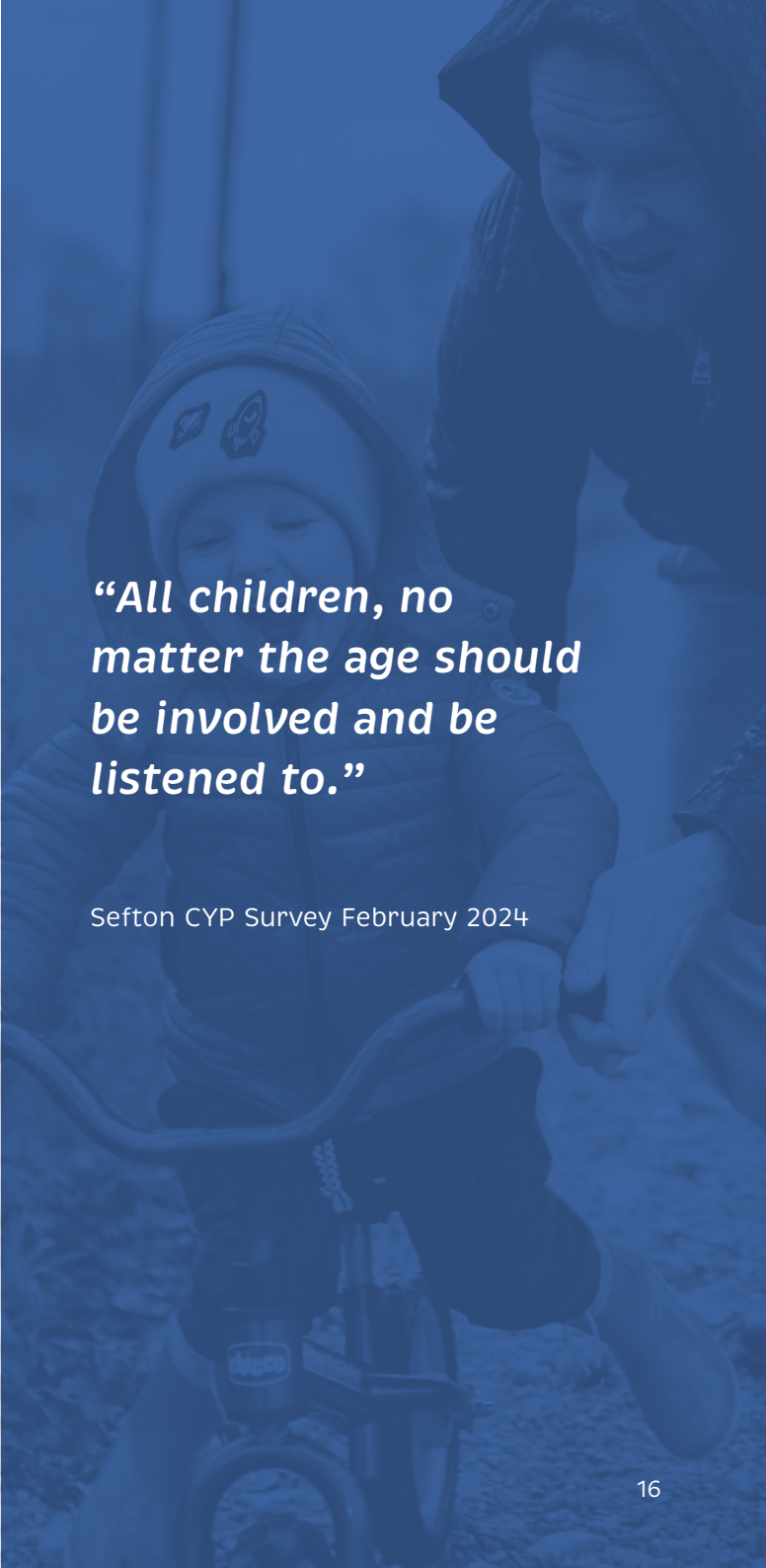


Our Strategic Vision for Children, Young People and Families in Sefton

Our strategic vision is the long-term, forward-looking statement that describes what our Children and Young Peoples' Partnership Board wants to achieve for children, young people and families in Sefton, and how it plans to get there. It acts as our roadmap, guiding strategic planning, resource allocation, and decision-making, and is essentially a picture of the future that inspires and motivates all stakeholders involved in the lives of children and young people in Sefton.

Having listened to the voices of our children, young people, families and those professionals who provide support, we have set a clear strategic vision:

We want Sefton to be a place where children and young people are **Safe, Happy, Healthy, Heard, Achieving, Preparing for Adulthood, and Families are Supported.**



“All children, no matter the age should be involved and be listened to.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

***“I am in a safe place and
I am near people I love”***

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024



Safe

Ensure that all children are safe, and that we protect those at risk of harm or abuse.

In Sefton we want all our children and young people to live in a safe and supportive environment. We want them to feel and be safe at home, in school and in our community, free from violence and harm.

Our Children's Services have been rated 'Good' overall in the most recent inspection by Ofsted and improving outcomes for children and families is a clear priority for the Council and its partners.

- We will safeguard children and young people from exploitation, and support those who are identified as at risk, and those living in households who experience parental substance use, domestic abuse or neglect by wrapping around the family a range of services and support.
- We will work to prevent children from being affected by violence and criminality and provide support to child victims.
- We will continue to develop our local offer for cared for and care experienced young people.
- We will continue to make ongoing improvements to Children's Services, with a focus on sustaining momentum, enhancing workforce development and ensuring that the voices of children and families shape future service, hearing their views and building their experiences into the next phase of our journey.
- We will build on our existing partnership network and voluntary organisations to learn from shared experiences and to provide activities around risk awareness, internet safety, bullying and sexual health.



Paul Holden,
Superintendent
LP Command - Sefton



Becky Bibby,
Executive Director
Children Services (DCS)

Happy

Supporting all children and young people to get the most out of life through play, leisure, culture and sporting activities, promote inclusion to reduce inequality and protecting them from discrimination. We will ensure that all our children have a safe, stable home environment and actively work together to champion the needs of disadvantaged children and challenge every organisation and profession across the borough to do the same.

Sefton is a great place to live and grow up, there is a wealth of resources and assets in our community, complimented by miles of beautiful coastline and green spaces that are used for pleasure, sports and various leisure activities. We want children and young people in Sefton to both be and feel happy, to be able to thrive and enjoy a happy childhood and grow into healthy, resilient adults.

- We will support parents and carers to provide a stable and nurturing home environment, which is fundamental for a child's development.
- We will promote social inclusion by ensuring that all children and young people, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to support and opportunities.
- We will continue to tackle poverty and inequality, which is essential for ensuring that all children, young people and families can thrive.
- We will build on our established multi-agency networks to influence the development of new initiatives and provision that will meet the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children, young people and families in Sefton.



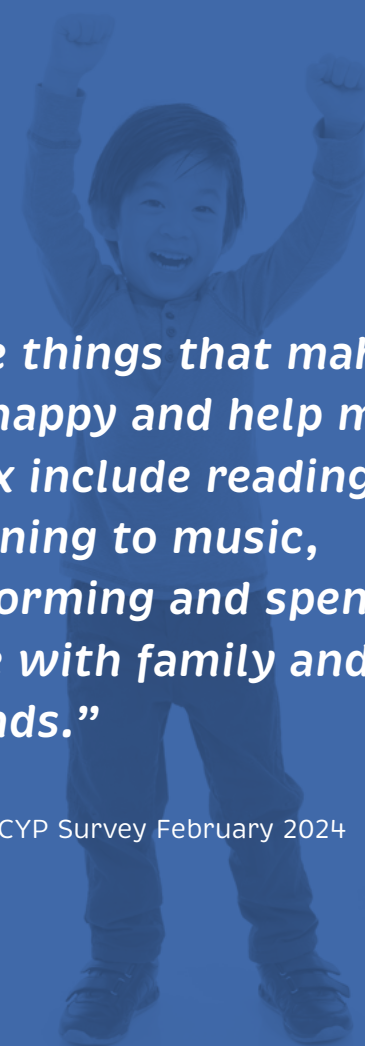
Dr Rory McGill,
Director of Public Health/
Head of Health & Wellbeing



Rachel Jones,
Assistant Chief Executive
SeftonCVS

“The things that make me happy and help me relax include reading, listening to music, performing and spending time with family and friends.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024



“I try to eat healthy, and I go to the gym. I do lots of exercises, stretches and do running clubs, football and other sports clubs.”

“Children’s mental health and physical health should be the number one priority.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Healthy

Reducing physical and emotional health inequalities and supporting families to live as healthy as possible.

We want all our children and young people in Sefton, and their families, to have the healthiest start in life and live long and increasingly healthy lives. We want parents to have the skills and knowledge to support their children at every stage and to help them make good lifestyle choices to reduce the risk of poor health in the future.

- We will support mothers and families during pregnancy with advice around nutrition, infant feeding, safe sleep and mental wellbeing.
- We will support all children, young people and families in key areas such as nutrition, healthy weight, fitness, vaccination take-up, dental hygiene, teenage pregnancy and social, emotional, and mental health.
- We will support older children and families in areas which can affect them through to adulthood, such as smoking, healthy diet, mental wellbeing, physical activity and provide advice and support around risky behaviours such as substance use and safe sex.
- We will continue to support children and families experiencing disadvantage to help alleviate the worst effects where we are able to.
- We will ensure a smooth transition to adult support services when a young person turns 18 and needs continued support.
- We will ensure that the needs of children and young people are represented in the development of the Local Neighbourhood Health Programme.



Rachel Greer,
Associate Chief Operating
Officer Alder Hey
Children’s NHS Foundation



Anne Tattersall,
Associated Director,
Children & Young People’s
Services Mersey Care

Heard

Ensuring all our children and young people have the appropriate channels to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

We believe that it is important to listen to and involve children in decisions that affect their lives, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. We understand the importance of engaging with and including children and young people in decisions about themselves, and we feel that listening to our children and young people will empower them to be more confident to express themselves, and will enable them to strengthen relationships, show emotional security and grow into healthy respectful adults.

- We will ensure that children and young people are at the heart of what we do, working with them to understand what is important to them.
- We will take time to listen and promote the importance of two-way communication, valuing their opinions, concerns and needs.
- We will be respectful of difference and celebrate diversity.
- We will promote participation, by providing opportunities for children and young people to be involved in activities that empower them, such as youth forums and community initiatives.
- We will recognize and value their contributions, acknowledge their skills, talents, and celebrate their achievements.



Georgia Ribbens,
Young Advisors Team Lead
SeftonCVS



Suzanne Meylan,
Independent Living Manager
OVH

“If you are making decisions about a young person they should be involved in the decisions that are being made about them.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

“It’s important for people like me to be recognised. Without equality, people miss out on things that they might enjoy, like sports, cheerleading etc. Achievements help people to be recognised, and feel like they have a place in the world specially for them.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Achieving

Supporting all our children and young people to achieve in education and learning, are encouraged to make the most of their potential to be the best they can be, are excited about their future because they have realistically high aspirations and ensuring the best opportunities for them all.

We want to support children and young people to achieve their full potential and ‘to be the best they can be.’ It is crucial that we create environments that foster learning, development, and well-being, including providing access to quality education, safe and supportive homes, and opportunities for children and young people to develop skills and pursue their passions.

- We will be ambitious for our children and young people, ensuring the best opportunities for them all and supporting them to achieve in education and learning, encouraging them to make the most of their potential, and to have realistically high aspirations.
- We will ensure that children and young people have access to high-quality education, including opportunities for accredited training so they can develop new skills and build their futures.
- We will provide opportunities to help children develop a wide range of skills, working with schools and partners to offer access to diverse learning experiences, including extracurricular activities, sports, and arts programs.
- We will help children believe they can improve their abilities through effort and learning by encouraging a growth mindset in all our engagement with them.
- We will promote physical literacy and encourage children and young people to be active and to develop a positive relationship with physical activity to benefit both their physical and mental health.



Suzanne Payne,
Chair of Sefton Association
of Primary Schools



Gil Bourgade,
Chair of Sefton Association
of Secondary Schools

Prepared for Adulthood

Helping children and young people to build skills for life and to navigate key life transitions, including education, employment, independent living, and overall well-being.

We believe in helping all children and young people to build skills for life and to navigate key life transitions, including education, employment, independent living, and overall well-being, including those who may need more support than others.

- We will support children and young people by ensuring the transition into adulthood is a smooth one, providing information and advice about employment, education, training, housing options and resources for independent living, to empower them to make informed decisions about their future.
- We will continue to offer support that focuses on practical life skills like cooking, shopping, and travel and independent living.
- We will help to connect young people with peer support networks and mentors to foster a sense of belonging.
- We will continue to develop learners' skills for life, preparing them for future vocational study and employment, with opportunities for work experience and enrichment, and equipping young people with the skills needed for paid employment through workplace learning.
- We will provide support for parents and carers in guiding students' educational journey and future plans.
- We will provide transitional support for students with EHCPs, bridging the gap between specialist schooling and further education or employment.



Michelle Brabner,
Principal and Chief
Executive Southport
College & KGV Sixth Form



Rachel Hennigan,
Principal and Chief
Executive Hugh Baird
College

“Helping children, young people and their families to develop strong relationships is really important to create an environment where all Sefton children have high hopes for themselves and each other, have meaningful opportunities open to them to allow them to achieve their full potential.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

“My friends make me happy because when I’m upset they make me laugh.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Supported Families

A place where families facing multiple challenges receive coordinated help, support and interventions to address family issues like unemployment, poor school attendance, health problems, and domestic challenges, strengthening families and building resilient communities.

Most families will need some help to bring up their children. This may come from family and friends. However, some families may need support from local agencies, including education (schools, nurseries), housing, and health services. In Sefton we believe that every family should have somewhere to turn to for support in both the good times and when family life is challenging.

- We will ensure Sefton is a place where families facing multiple challenges receive coordinated help, support and interventions to address family issues such as unemployment, poor school attendance, health problems, and domestic challenges.
- We will ensure that families have access to a detailed list of services that are available in their community, including local services and community groups, so that they can get the advice they need.
- We will build digital confidence by providing support to access online digital platform for parents, children, young people and professionals which will provide a front door to families offering a digital one stop shop.
- We will support agencies to work together to provide early help and support as soon as problems in families emerge, and to tackle such problems early to stop them getting worse, irrespective if the child is a baby, toddler, at primary school or a teenager.



Nadine Carroll,
Assistant Director
Children's Services
(Education)



Chris Whelan,
Headteacher Newfield Special
School (Sefton LA's Special
Provision for pupils aged 7-16
yrs old)

Partnership Working

We recognise that organisations and agencies have a legal and professional obligation to work together constructively when delivering services and support for children, young people and their families. However, in Sefton our Children & Young Peoples Partnership is committed further to cooperation and to systemic ways of working that focus on people, families and communities, not individual organisations or services. This ensures that we are applying a methodical, joined-up and child-centred approach to discovering and exploring problems and to developing, testing and delivering solutions, with the fundamental aim of improving outcomes for all children, young people and their families.

While a well-structured plan is crucial, our ability to effectively implement and execute it will rely heavily on the strong relationships that have been established in our Children and Young People's Partnership Board and with other local stakeholders involved in the delivery of services to children and young people in Sefton. We will continue to build on our existing partnership and relationships to deliver this plan so that we can make a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families in Sefton. We

will continue to work together to provide the necessary support, communication, and collaboration needed to overcome challenges and to deliver against the intentions that we have set-out in this plan, holding one another to account for delivering on our agreed priorities and ultimately improving outcomes for children, young people and their families in Sefton.

Moving forward, our Children and Young People's Partnership Board will lead the delivery of this plan and our agreed top priorities. We will support each other to make timely and meaningful changes, sharing ideas and pooling together the collective skills and knowledge available across the partnership to make Sefton an even better place for our children and young people to live and to grow up. Partners will hold one another to account for delivery, monitoring and scrutinising performance. We will report activity and progress regularly, using both quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate lasting, impactful change for children, young people and their families, and we will continue to consult with children, young people, families and professionals, maintaining a strong emphasis on the 'voice of the child' to influence our decisions and actions.



“Together we are stronger. We are committed to children, young people and families being at the heart of everything that we do as individual agencies and working together as a Children and Young People’s Partnership to make a lasting impact for people in Sefton.”



“I like to listen to music, drawing, designing, writing, performing songs and socialising with friends. These are the things that I enjoy doing with my life, especially when I am able to express my creativity along with enjoying quality time with friends.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Conclusion

Our plan has focused on listening to the voices of children, young people, families, carers and professionals to ensure that their experiences, needs and insights shape our continuous improvement.

We have a strong foundation of multi-agency partnership working in Sefton and we understand the importance and value of true partnership working. We will continue to build upon the positive relationships between our agencies and with our communities to enable positive change and achieve our ambitions for all our children and young people in Sefton.

In a time of significant financial constraints and increasing demand, we will explore every opportunity to find efficiencies in the way we deliver improvements, and transform our services to ensure that children and young people in Sefton have the best start in life, have a positive transition into adulthood and take up every opportunity available to them to ensure they live positive and healthy lives.

As a partnership we will be ambitious for all our children and young people, we will challenge and hold each other to account

on our progress and when necessary, take action to ensure we are fulfilling the priorities we have set out. We will be open and transparent on our journey and be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

This plan provides the overarching strategic intention of our local partnership and will direct action across many agencies involved in the lives of children and young people in Sefton. It will drive conversations, coproduction, and new systemic ways of working across the partnership and with children, young people, families, and frontline professionals to help ensure that whatever we do genuinely makes a difference to children and young people's lives.

Together we will draw upon the skills and the determination of each partner agency, the strength and dedication of the respective workforce, our collective energy and enthusiasm for what we do, and our shared ambition to make sure that Sefton really is one of the greatest places for children and young people to live and to grow and to deliver the best possible service and outcomes for our children, young people and families in Sefton.

With Thanks

We would like to thank all of the children, young people, their families, professionals who work with children and members of the general public who participated in our consultation. Your engagement was essential in the development of this plan for you.

Thank you also to all our partner organisation for their continued commitment to all our young people and their families and those who have reviewed this plan and provided comments on its content.

Early Years settings.

Sefton Young Advisors and partners from the Sefton Youth Voice Strategic Steering Group.

Preparation for Adulthood Partnership Group.

Early Help Partnership Group.

Sefton Youth Service.

SEN & Inclusion Policy Development Officer (Sefton).

Royal Air Force.

Sefton Adult Social Care (Transitions Team).

Mersey Care.

Sefton's Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Team.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

Children's Social Care Participation Officer.

Sefton's Make a Difference Group.

Cheshire & Merseyside's Integrated Care Board (Mental Health Consultation).

Sefton Cared Experience and Cared for Children.

People First Merseyside.

Sefton Carers Centre and Young Carers.

Thank You!

All our Sefton Schools and Further & Higher Education settings who participated in the SHOUT Survey

Primary schools.

Bedford Primary School.

Birkdale Primary School.

Christ Church C/E Controlled Primary School.

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School.

Farnborough Road Junior School.

Forefield Junior School.

Great Crosby Catholic Primary School.

Green Park Primary School.

Hatton Hill Primary School.

Holy Family Catholic Primary School.

Holy Trinity C/E Primary School.

Marshside Primary School.

Newfield School.

Northway Primary School.

Norwood Primary School.

Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School.

Rowan Park School.

Shoreside Primary School.

St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School.

St. Philips C/E Primary School (Southport).

St. William of York Catholic Primary School.

Summerhill Primary School.

The Grange Primary School.

Thomas Gray Primary School.

Ursuline Catholic Primary School.

Waterloo Primary School.

Woodlands Primary School.

Secondary Schools, FE Colleges and Universities

Birkdale High School.

Chesterfield High School.

Christ the King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre.

Crosby High.

Deyes High School.

Formby High School.

Greenbank High School.

Hillside High School.

Hugh Baird College.

Southport College.

Edge Hill University.



Annexe

Our Top Supporting Priorities (2025 to 2030)

We appreciate that our strategic vision set out in this plan for Children and Young People is a long-term forward-looking statement of what our multi-agency Children and Young People Partnership Board want to do to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Sefton. However, in the short to medium term we have agreed several priorities that will drive change and continuous improvement.

To deliver this vision we will focus on the following top priorities over the next five years (2025-2030):

Tackling child poverty in Partnership

■ ***We will work together to tackle the impact and prevalence of deprivation and poverty.***

In Sefton we feel that child poverty is unacceptable, but it is not inevitable; with the right support and opportunities families can escape poverty. In Sefton we recognised that tackling child poverty requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses both the immediate needs of children and the underlying factors that contribute to poverty. We will continue to work together to tackle the impact and prevalence of deprivation and poverty by raising awareness about the negative impact on wellbeing and damaging effects on future life chances of children and young people. We will continue to intervene and provide a portfolio of household welfare support for those experiencing severe financial crisis. Furthermore, through our economic development strategy we will take action to improve the region's economic well-being and overall quality of life for residents by creating a thriving economy, attracting businesses, fostering job growth, improving access to quality education and healthcare, and strengthening social support networks.

Children, young people and their families at the heart of everything we do



**“If I put my mind to it
and doing good, nothing
can stop me.”**

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Improving school attendance

- **All learners of all ages have the right to the best quality of education.** In Sefton we believe that learners of all ages have the right to the best quality of education, and we will work together to continue to improve and maintain high levels of school attendance. Building on the progress that we have already made, we will continue to improve consistency in parental fines for parents whose children are persistently absent without valid reason. We will establish a dedicated Anxiety-Related Absence Panel to review and support cases where children cite anxiety as the primary reason for school absence and ensure that - Inclusion Consultants are engaging with schools to ensure that attendance is a standing item when they meet with school staff. Furthermore, we will ensure that school attendance is embedded as a core element in all multi-agency planning processes for vulnerable children.

Providing mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children and young people

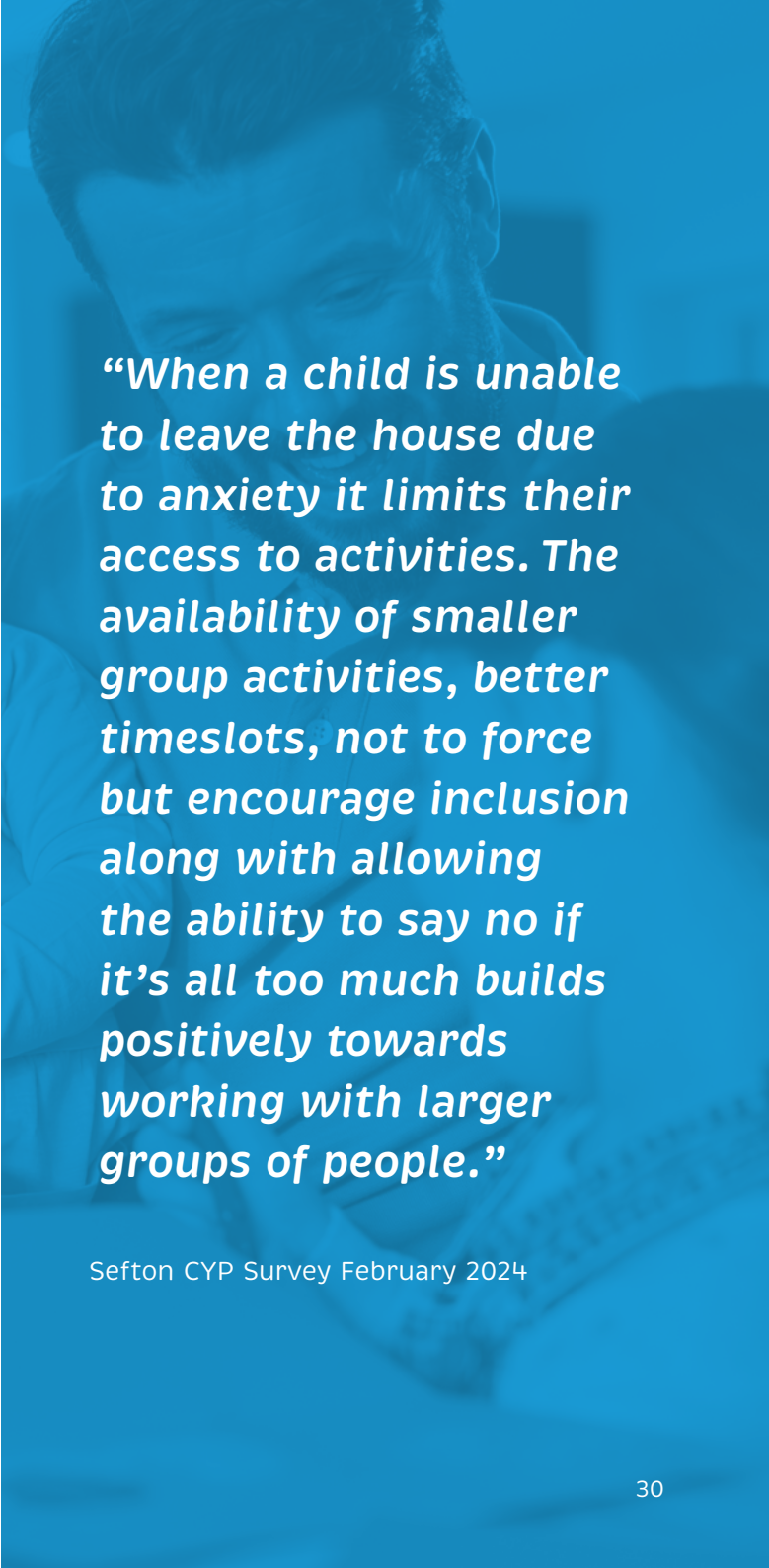
- **We will take a multi-faceted approach to creating supportive environments, offering various forms of therapy, and connecting individuals with relevant services.** In Sefton we recognised that providing mental health and emotional well-being support for children and young people involves a range of resources and services to help them cope with mental health challenges and to build resilience. This support can be provided by parents, caregivers and school. Targeted Mental Health Support is provided by a number of services that offer a range of interventions that support mental health including parent led interventions and evidence based groups as well as brief interventions for young people provided by Sefton’s thriving voluntary sector as well as being commissioned as part of the Sefton Council Early Help Teams. Mental Health Support Teams offer whole school approaches and early mental health interventions. For children who experience significant mental health difficulties they can access specialist support from the Alder Hey Mental Health Services provided in Sefton locality including specialist eating disorder team and for children in crisis a crisis service is available 24/7 and includes same and urgent support as well as home based treatment. *These services have been rated as outstanding in 2025 by the CQC.*

Supporting families to help themselves and intervening early when we need to

- **Our aim is to strengthen community services and early support in Sefton by empowering families to manage challenges at the earliest opportunity, reducing escalation of need, and improving long term outcomes through coordinated, accessible, and locally informed support.** We will develop a community services/early support strategy (as part of FFP implementation). We will ensure that universal community services in Sefton are well connected and that all families know about and can access, universal services and early support through ‘community services’ whenever they need them and they are greeted by staff who can point families towards targeted or specialist support if required, reducing the need for more intensive or statutory services wherever possible. We will pilot Neighbourhood Multi-disciplinary teams to provide early and universal support and education to children and young people, families, and professionals for childhood respiratory conditions.

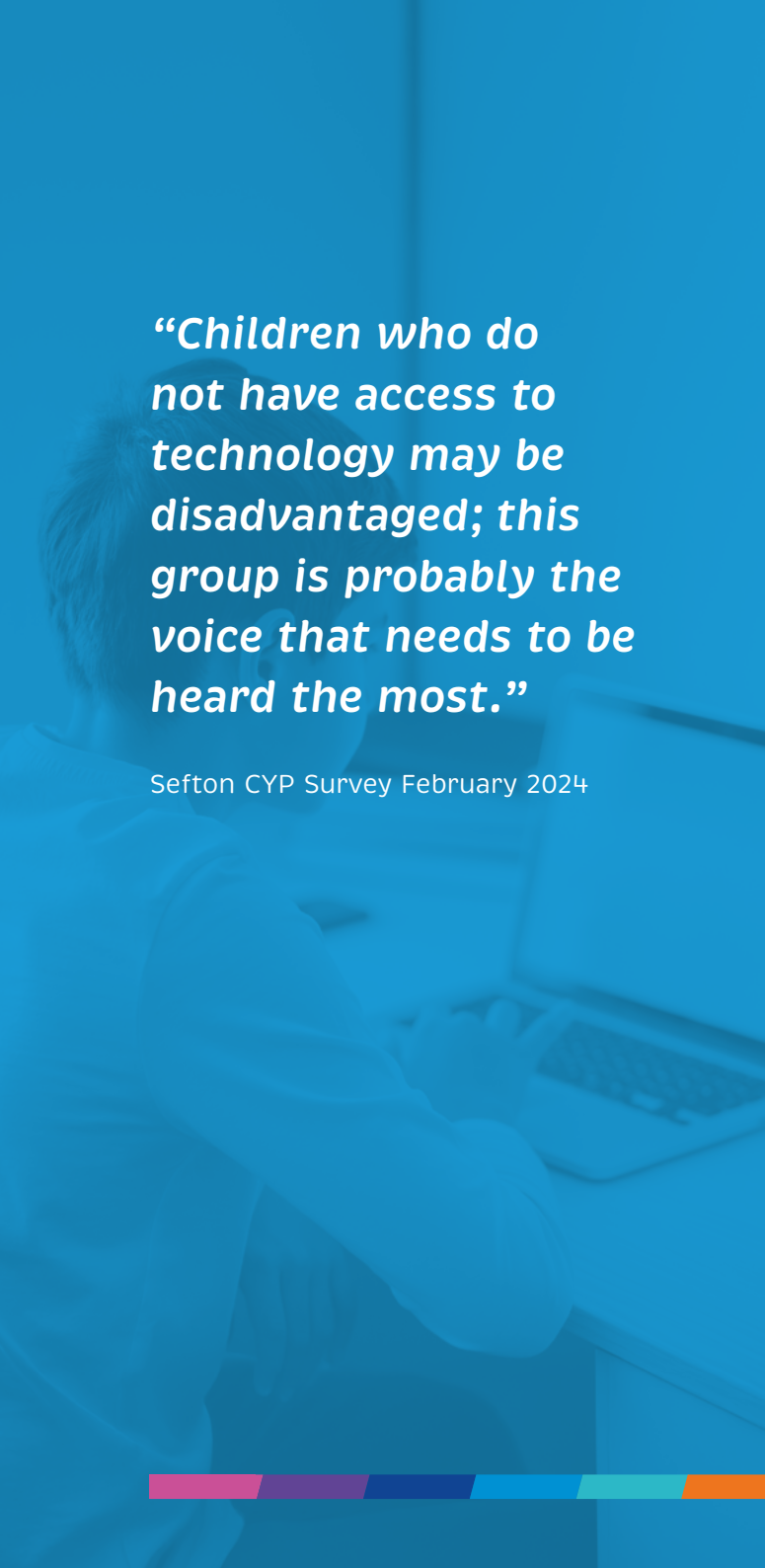
Tackling Domestic Abuse in Partnership

- **A key part of our early help approaches to strengthening family resilience and stability includes tackling the impacts of domestic abuse (DA).** Together with our partners the Council provides a range of support to those experiencing domestic abuse, as well as for their children, wider family and friends. We will continue to work together to develop our support services for adult and child victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. We will identify children living with domestic abuse and take multi-agency action to protect and support them, keeping children and young people safe. We will continue to develop our whole family early help (WFEH) approach. This includes perpetrators, victims, survivors and relevant people within a family composition through a central point of contact, support in safe accommodation for adult and child victims in an emergency or crisis, community based support for victims (children and adult), which will also include support from specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), and community based support for perpetrators and those who are concerned about their own behaviours.

A young boy with dark hair is looking down, his expression is thoughtful or perhaps a bit sad. He is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

“When a child is unable to leave the house due to anxiety it limits their access to activities. The availability of smaller group activities, better timeslots, not to force but encourage inclusion along with allowing the ability to say no if it’s all too much builds positively towards working with larger groups of people.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024



“Children who do not have access to technology may be disadvantaged; this group is probably the voice that needs to be heard the most.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024

Supporting children to be ready for school and ready to learn

- ***In Sefton we recognise that starting school is an exciting time for parents and their children and a time of big change for all the family.*** A little help from parents to nurture their children’s emotional and social well-being, to develop their language and communication skills, and to help their physical and cognitive development through play and meaningful activities can prepare and encourage children to be ready for school, enjoy learning and making new friends. However, post-pandemic, several challenges have presented for children’s readiness, including developmental delays, reduced practical self-care skills, reduced social and emotional skills, and gaps in language and numeracy. We will take a holistic approach to exploring the systemic problems that are currently experienced and to develop a multi-agency “ready for school and ready to learn” strategy to prepare children for the structured environment and academic demands of school, and ensure that they have the best possible start in life, growing up happy, healthy and safe with the opportunity to reach their full potential, with no one left behind. This will include delivering on the key actions needed to support babies, young children and their parents to ensure that their earliest years provide the opportunity for them to develop and thrive both before and when they start school and move into the next stages of their education.

Supporting Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities in Sefton

- ***We are committed to working stronger together within a culture of collaboration, integrity, and transparency.*** Sefton is committed corporately and across its partners to supporting Children and Young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families to have inclusive opportunities. This includes having their needs met at the right place, at the right time and ensuring they are happy, healthy, and safe. Sefton is committed to improve outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities through collaboration, community engagement, and a focus on inclusion.
- We are working to ensure Children and Young people in Sefton with SEND feel included, listened to, and supported in reaching their potential. This will be achieved through integrated services across education, health, and social care to meet individual needs effectively. Ensuring everyone involved in a child and young person’s life is working

together to enhance their experiences and outcomes. This collaborative approach will provide the frame work for parents, carers, and young people to shape their vision and priorities for their future.

- Across the borough there is a focus on expanding access to high-quality, community-based services that cater to diverse needs, with smooth transitions and improved communication. Ensuring the empowerment of children and young people with SEND, allowing them to thrive in their local communities, and achieving their aspirations, hopes or ambitions for the future.

Family First Partnership

- ***Designing and implementing the Families First Partnership in Sefton involves creating a coordinated and responsive system of support that brings agencies together around the needs of children, young people and families.*** Through Families First we will strengthen multi-agency collaboration by embedding shared pathways, consistent planning processes and integrated teams that work collectively to provide timely, proportionate and effective help. This includes aligning our approach with Neighbourhood Health developments and Best Start in Life principles, ensuring support is neighbourhood-based, preventative and grounded in strong early relationships. Families First will deliver key outcomes through the development of Family Help, creating clearer and more accessible support for families at an earlier point; the introduction of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) to improve consistency, shared decision-making and the quality of statutory safeguarding responses; and the implementation of a single assessment and threshold framework to ensure families experience a unified and transparent process across the partnership. In addition, we will strengthen Family Group Decision Making so that families are supported to lead their own planning wherever safe and appropriate. Co-production with children and parents will remain central to the design and continuous improvement of the model. Through this integrated and place-based approach, the Families First Partnership will build a more coherent, accessible and effective system that helps families to thrive and improves outcomes across the whole borough.

These identified top priorities will be delivered collectively, and collaboratively by the partnership, with shared ownership, responsibility and accountability.

“I found that Early Help listened to me, and I was able to talk about my worries, and receive help for all the family.”

“My experience of Early Help is that my voice is important, and it will contribute to shaping the service going forward.”

Sefton CYP Survey February 2024



Our plan for all children, young people and their families living in Sefton.

Safe, Happy, Healthy, Heard, Achieving, Prepared for Adulthood, and Supported Families