

**By the time she
was 6, everyone
was ready to
give up on Chloe.**

Except us.



Children, Young People and Families

There are a higher proportion of children and young people in Birmingham than in any other major European city. That's a big responsibility – and exactly why we created a directorate that's dedicated solely to the needs of our youngest citizens.

Children, Young People and Families came into operation in April 2006. We're a directorate with one vision: to create a child and family-friendly city in which all children and young people feel secure and enjoy living, learning, developing and achieving together. We've broken this vision down into six specific outcomes:

- Children and young people in Birmingham are healthier.
- Children and young people in Birmingham are safer.
- Children and young people in Birmingham enjoy and achieve.
- Children and young people in Birmingham make a positive contribution.
- Children and young people in Birmingham achieve economic well-being.
- Integration and localisation of services.

These six outcomes underpin all services across Children, Young People and Families; services that include Youth Offending; Drugs Action Team; Fostering and Adoption; Looked After Children; and CAMHS to name just a few. You can read more about our work and the opportunities in all these areas over the next few pages, alongside personal stories of the children and young people we've worked with.

Message from Tony Howell

Welcome to the new Children, Young People and Families directorate and thank you for your interest in working with us. This year has been an exciting one for everyone involved in providing services for children, young people and families in Birmingham. But we have more to do – which is where you come in.

Join us and you'll play an important part in ensuring we deliver the key outcomes to children and young people across the city namely:

- Be Healthy.
- Stay Safe.
- Enjoy and Achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic well-being.

By engaging with all children and young people in Birmingham, we will help them to reach their full potential, both academically and socially. Having our full range of services available to children and young people under one directorate will also help to strengthen the partnership working that already exists.

Birmingham can already be extremely proud of its children and young people, and also those who play a vital part in shaping their future, from teachers to school support staff; early years staff to children's social workers. Join us and you can play a part in creating brighter futures for Birmingham's next generation.

Tony Howell, Strategic Director
Children, Young People and Families

Children and Families

Youth Offending

The largest Youth Offending Service in the UK, we aim to be responsive to local needs whilst addressing national targets. With over 112,000 10 - 17 year olds in Birmingham, addressing youth crime across the city requires a multi-agency approach, so we have approximately 270 full-time and part-time staff drawn from Children, Young People and Families, Probation, Police, Education, Health, Connexions and other voluntary and statutory organisations.

Looked After Children Education Service

The Looked After Children Education Service (LACES) is a team of teachers, learning mentors and support staff working together to ensure that every looked after child and young person receives the best possible education. As well as running three education centres, LACES provides intensive support for individual children in schools, foster care settings and residential homes across the city and beyond.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Children from Abroad

Birmingham City Council looks after over 130 unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Most of these children and young people are placed in foster care or, if they're 16 and over, looked after in our specialist supported hostel accommodation Principal House. But the support doesn't stop there. In fact the Asylum Seekers team continue to support a further 63 care leavers who are aged 18 and over.

Specialist Assessment Centres

We have three specialist assessment centres in Birmingham: Appledore Residential Parenting Assessment Centre is a citywide service that offers comprehensive risk assessment and rehabilitation outreach services; Lea Hall Community Based Parenting Assessment Centre offers community-based assessments; and Heart Community Based Parenting Assessment Centre that provides specialist community-based assessments in the Heart of Birmingham.

Duty & Assessment/Safeguarding Service

Duty & Assessment teams are responsible for responding to new referrals where children are at risk or where they may need to be accommodated. From there, we undertake appropriate assessments and develop safeguarding plans.

It's round the clock work – often unpredictable, so it suits social workers who enjoy variety in their work. If you can cope with the uncertainty of not knowing in advance what a day (or night) will bring, you'll thrive. You see so much here: a role with us will certainly hone your assessment skills - particularly in relation to child protection.

Care Management

When the frontline Assessment and Protection Social work Teams have established that children and their families need ongoing social care, it's one of our 34 Care Management teams that steps into action. This could involve putting a Child Protection Plan in place, setting care proceedings in motion or in some cases making arrangements for the placements of the child with adopters or foster carers. In every case, the process begins with the child and ends with the child.

Targeted Family Support

This service supports families with young children aged 10-15 years when there is a risk of family breakdown. We help ensure that young people can remain safely at home whilst offering support to find a solution to the difficulties.

16 Plus Care Leavers Scheme

Because we believe care shouldn't end when a child reaches the age of 16, our 16+ Care Leavers Service provides advice, assistance and befriending services to young people aged 16 or over who are either leaving care or who already live independently. A team of social workers and aftercare advisors work directly with young people to help them make the right decision about their future. Whether that's going back into full-time education or getting back in contact with their family, this dedicated team help young people find their own way in a world outside of their care home.

Fostering and Adoption

Our Adoption and Fostering Service currently has over 150 children that need adopting and many more in need of foster parents. We're making sure that everyone of them has a home in which they feel comfortable and cared for. The size and diversity of Adoption and Fostering in Birmingham puts our teams at the forefront of their profession. Central to the service is the Adoption & Fostering Recruitment Centre - a drop-in centre where would-be adoptive or foster parents can speak to professionals and discuss the options available to them.

Fostering

Our Fostering service provides placements for around 850 looked-after children - children who are unable to live with their families for a variety of reasons, either for a short period of time or permanently.

You could join one of two teams supporting 230 carers providing temporary care for children away from their families. A long-term team supports 175 carers who offer a permanent home to children and young people unable to return home. A separate Family and Friends team supports almost 180 carers where children are living with relatives or people with whom they have a significant and lengthy relationship.

Adoption Services

Our objective is to provide a service consistent with best practice, National Standards, Regulations and Every Child Matters five outcomes. The Adoption Service in Birmingham is the UK's largest so we're split into the following functional teams.

Our Recruitment Team deals with both Adoption & Fostering initial enquiries, runs media campaigns, holds information sessions. The team has a city centre shop front and social workers work closely with staff in promotions, customer service and administration.

Our Adoption Assessment Team undertake all adoption pre-approval training, Form F competency assessments plus stepparent and inter-country assessments.

The Panel Team manages Birmingham's four Adoption Panels and three Fostering Panels alongside the Central Resource Exchange: a database for recording Panel statistics and matching.

At any one time there are between 100 – 150 children requiring adoption so our Family Finding Adoption Team works with many other agencies to find placements. The Team are involved in 'Families for Us' evenings and producing and managing our 'Children's Profile book'.

Our Support Towards Adoption Team provides support to approved adopters through matching, placement and the court process until an adoption order is granted. The team is developing a post-approval training programme and hold support events for adopters.

The Support After Adoption Team provides post-adoption support to families in line with Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005. It also provides birth record counselling, access to adoption files and coordinates the Directorates letterbox contact scheme. It also administers the Council's scheme for financial support to adopters.

All in all, the Adoption Service offers many opportunities for social workers. We are a diverse team who meet regularly. We have policy for continuing professional development of social workers and are presently examining ways to ensure staff have a wide range of experiences and tasks.

Children's Homes

We operate a number of Residential Resources, both mainstream and specialist and homes for children with disabilities, which cater for the city's children. There are a variety of homes providing quality care. We look for staff who are confident caring, committed and innovative when it comes to achieving the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, working hand in hand with our partner agencies to best meet children and young peoples' needs.

Three of the roles we frequently look to recruit to are Senior Residential Child Care Officers, Assistant Care Managers and Care Managers, who assist our Registered Managers with the overall management of the home. They're responsible for ensuring professional standards of work in all aspects of the care and control of the children and in creating and maintaining a caring environment, which respects and affirms the racial, cultural and religious identity of the children.

Mental Health Services

CAMHS

Looked After Children CAMHS is a specialist service within Birmingham's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), working with Birmingham's Looked After Children, those at risk of being Looked After and those who have been placed for adoption.

The Service consists of Social Workers, Clinical Psychologists, Psychotherapists and Clinical Nurse Specialists, trained and experienced in working with children, young people and their families/carers who are experiencing complex severe and enduring mental health difficulties. Services provided include direct therapeutic interventions with children and their carers, consultation to other professionals working with Looked After Children and training to promote mental well-being and prevent mental health problems.

The role of the Social Worker in the Looked After Children CAMHS is mainly to provide a therapeutic service. We'll add to your skills with training in models of practice appropriate to children's mental health e.g. cognitive behavioural, play and family therapy. You'll be encouraged to promote a psycho-social view of mental health and to offer an understanding of children's emotional, behavioural, relationship and developmental difficulties from the perspective of the child in the context of their family, community and culture.

Specialist Services for Disabled Children, Young People and Families

For children with disabilities and their families we offer an integrated service, which includes Care Management, Assessment and Protection, Community Support and a Resources team. We also operate a Register, Information and Referral Point – a voluntary service where parents or carers can register their child as being disabled and receive information on the support that is available to them.

The Social Model of Disability informs assessments and intervention with the purpose of minimising the impact of the disability and promoting the child's inclusion in their family and community wherever possible. All services are dependant upon child/young person centred, holistic, multi-agency and carer planning to ensure the outcomes for disabled children and young people and their families in line with Every Child Matters.

Our teams, in brief:

Registers, Information and Referral Point

This service provides voluntary access for parents/carers to register their disabled child/young person on the Disabled Children's Register.

Assessment and Protection Team

This team serves those disabled children, young people and their families with severe, profound and complex issues in relation to their disability and current and future welfare in line with the Outcomes for Children in Every Child Matters.

Care Management Team

This team implements the long-term planning for disabled children, young people and their families as outlined above following transfer from the above team and other Specialist Teams.

Community Support Team

This team has recently been established to maintain disabled children and young people within their families and local community through effective co-ordination of universal, targeted and specialist services.



Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

Our Emergency Duty Team is the first point of call for people referred to us from across the city: people who are at risk and unable to support themselves, or people who are unable to remain in the community without immediate assistance.

The variety is staggering. You name it, we see it: family incidents; adults in crisis; child protection cases. For many people who choose to join the team, that's part of the appeal of working here.

You'll need an appetite for the unexpected and the confidence and all-round knowledge to make decisions fast.

It brings a new meaning to multi-agency working too; you'll often find yourself called to incidents with other professionals from the emergency services, especially the police and healthcare. It's up to you to work with them, sometimes in stressful situations, and to ensure the best outcome for the children, adults and families involved.

Although there's a lot of independence in the role, you'll still find plenty of support and supervision when you need it. You'll work closely to hand cases on to the Area Service Teams too, so you won't feel at all isolated or be left wondering how a case worked out.

We're a close-knit and diverse team, with a lot of experience between us. Others see it as a way to experience a lot more quickly – a chance to step outside their specialism or even a stepping stone in their career.

Lots of people enjoy the flexibility the hours afford them through the different shift patterns. During the week there are two shifts, from Monday to Thursday either 4.45pm to 1.45am or 8.45pm to 9.15am, while on Friday from 3.45pm to 8.15am. At the weekend the two shifts run from 8am to 8.30pm or 8pm to 8.30am. Typically there are 2 Senior Social Workers and one Shift Leader on duty at any one time, but you'll need to be prepared to respond to incidents on your own. And, as you soon learn when you join, flexibility is essential.

We'll leave the last word to our manager, Dennis Davey. "It's an exciting way to work – you get in, make a real difference and move on!"

