



# Director of Children's Services Briefing

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025





# Welcome!

**Michael Jarrett**

Service Director for Education & Inclusion





# Education and Inclusion



# Service Director Updates

- **Finance and budgets:**
- **Small schools:**
- **SEND developments:**



# Gareth Drawmer

Head of Achievement and Learning



# Secondary Allocation 2025

SECONDARY INTAKE	*2025*	2024	2023	2022
<b>Number of Bucks resident applicants</b> (who made an application included in the first admission round)	6539	6574	6931	6917
<b>First preference</b> (excluding all through data, including where it was in an out county school)	5054 77.29%	4974 75.66%	5460 78.78%	5391 77.9%
<b>Second preference</b>	675 10.32%	696 10.58%	693 10%	730 10.5%
<b>Third preference</b>	257 3.93%	313 4.75%	296 4.27%	277 4%
<b>Any other preferences (e.g. 4th, 5th 6th)</b>	182 2.78%	206 3.13%	152 2.19%	198 2.86%
<b>None of their preferences (but allocated a school)</b>	377 5.73%	385 5.85%	330 4.76%	348 5.03%
<b>Has yet to be allocated a place</b> (Late applicants who did not include their local school amongst their preferences or expressed preferences for schools that could not offer to all timely applicants. Also applicants who did not express a preference for a school for which they were qualified for admission or families moving into the area where the local address has not yet been accepted for admissions purposes)	0	12 0.182%	50 0.721%	13 0.018%

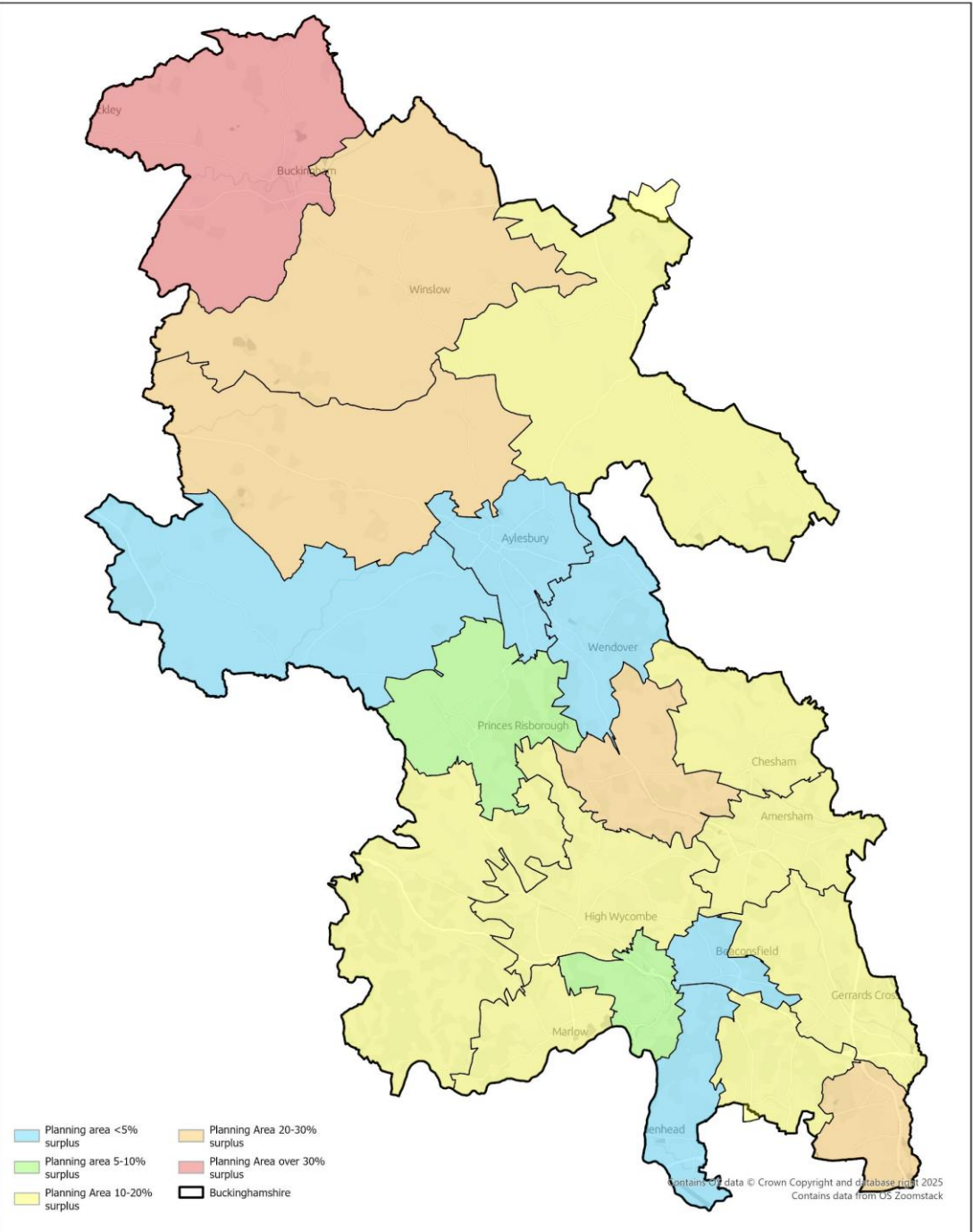
# Primary Allocation

## Historic compared with National

			First preference rate	Home LA offer rate	Number of applications received	Number of first preference offers	Number of preferences allowed	Number of preferred offers	Preferred offer rate	Top three preference rate
2022/23	England		92.2%	96.8%	576,147	531,179	z	567,097	98.4%	98.1%
	South East	Buckinghamshire (E06000060)	90.6%	97.6%	5,908	5,352	6	5,830	98.7%	97.9%
2023/24	England		92.5%	96.9%	568,560	525,917	z	560,666	98.6%	98.3%
	South East	Buckinghamshire (E06000060)	90.3%	96.8%	5,905	5,331	6	5,818	98.5%	98.1%
2024/25	England		93.2%	96.7%	555,643	517,620	z	548,926	98.8%	98.6%
	South East	Buckinghamshire (E06000060)	91.1%	97.3%	5,619	5,118	6	5,555	98.9%	98.5%

# Capacity - Reception Places

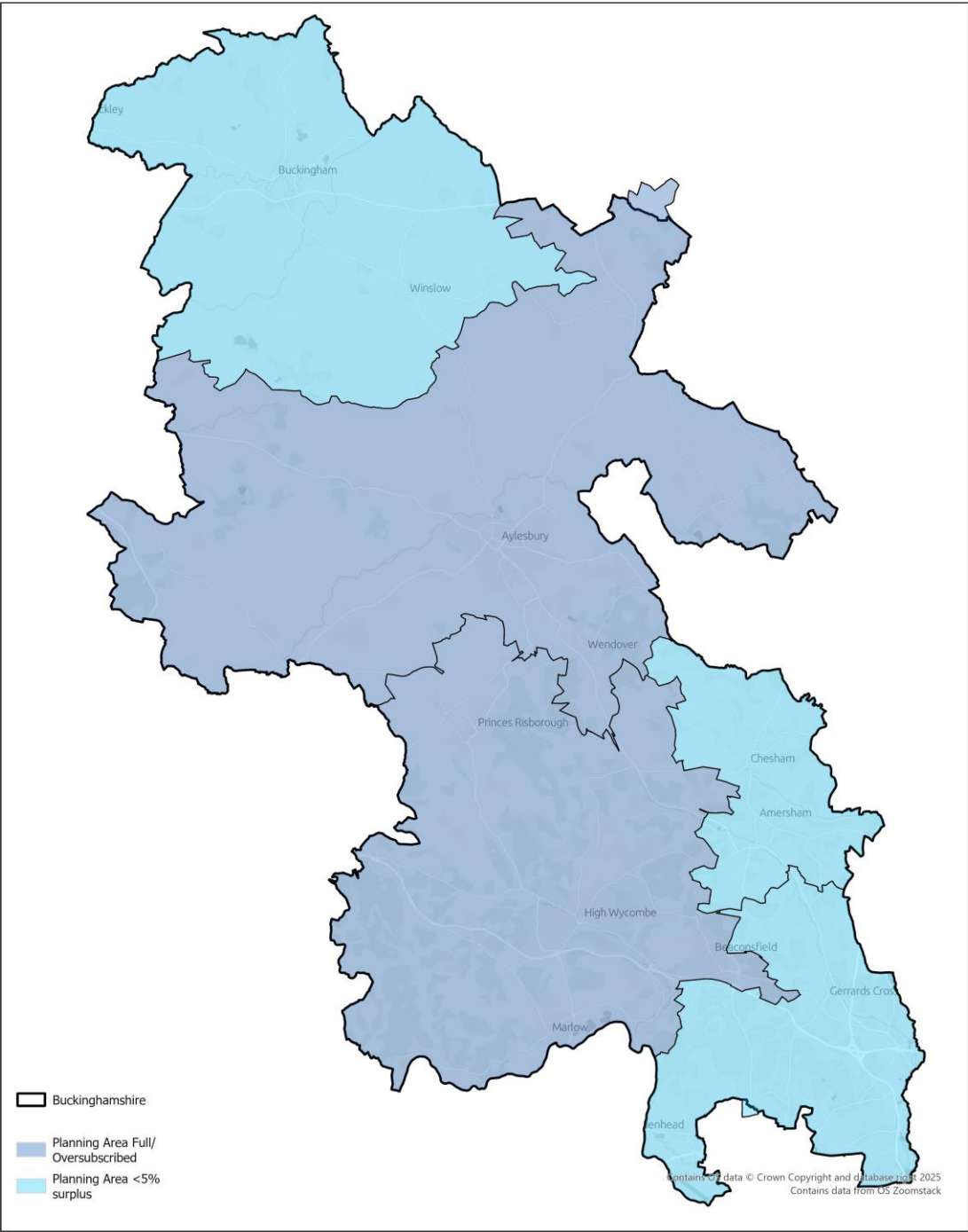
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL





# Capacity - Year 7 Places

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL



# Ofsted Update

- Ofsted are currently consulting on the changes they wish to implement in the academic year 2025 - 26.
  - It is planned that inspectors will produce a scorecard with a range of areas which they will judge in all schools.
- Currently school inspections involve inspectors making judgements across the following areas:
  - Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attendance, Personal Development and Leadership & Management plus where relevant Early Years and 6<sup>th</sup> Form. Safeguarding is still graded as either effective or not effective.
- The first half of the academic year saw 44 inspections take place of which 15 were academies.
  - All maintained schools were supported during their inspection with 3 out of the 15 academies accepting the offer of engagement from the Local Authority.
- The School Improvement Service, along with colleagues in Early Years, continue to support schools through our Side-by-Side Strategy, enabling schools to achieve the highest possible outcomes for children and young people.

# Breakdown of School Inspections 2024/25 – First half of academic year

Total Schools	Primary	Secondary	Special/PRU
Maintained	26	0	3
Academy	9	6	0

Opportunity Bucks	Primary	Secondary	Special/PRU
Opportunity Bucks Schools	4	2	1
Non-Opportunity Bucks	31	4	2

# Side by Side Update

## School Categorisation & Support

Categorisation	Primary	Secondary	Special/PRU
Enhancement	148	28	10
Prevention	5	5	1
Intervention	30	4	2

Current Side by Side Support	Primary	Secondary	Special/PRU
Prevention	5	1	1
Intervention	18	0	2

# Summary of School Balances

Schools	Deficits	Surpluses
Greater than £500,000	1	6
£100,000 - £500,000	8	55
£50,000 - £100,000	6	25
£20,000 - £50,000	7	15
£0 - £20,000	9	10
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>111</b>

# BESST

## School Improvement and Services & Governor Support Services Offer for Schools 2025/26

- Sent to all Headteachers and Chairs
- Available on the [BESST website](#)
- Email copy to be sent after half term



Buckinghamshire Education  
School Support & Training  
(BESST)



School Improvement Services  
& Governor Support Services  
Offer for Schools **2025/26**





*Supporting schools to get the best outcomes for every child*



# Upcoming Training & Events

## from the School Improvement Team



Date & Time	Event	Location	To book
04.06.25 9.30- 11.30am	<b>Adaptive Teaching for Primary EAL Learners</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
05.06.25 9.30 – 12.00am	<b>BASL Seminar: Ai with Al Kingsley</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
13.06.25 8.00 – 10.00am	<b>Friday Forum for all Headteachers</b>	The Gateway Aylesbury	Click <a href="#">here</a>
18.06.25 1.45 – 2.45pm	<b>English as an Additional Language Networking Session</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
19.06.25 4.00 – 5.30pm	<b>The Buckinghamshire Challenge Oral Language in the Classroom</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
20.06.25 4.00 – 5.30pm	<b>The Buckinghamshire Challenge Reading Fluency</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>

For **BESST** visit the Schoolsweb page [HERE](#)

For **BASL** visit the Schoolsweb page [HERE](#)

For any enquiries contact [sis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:sis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) or 01296 383030



# Upcoming Training & Events

## from the Governance Team



Date & Time	Event	Location	To book
05.06.25 18.30 – 19.30	<b>The Role of the Safeguarding Governor in an Ofsted Inspection</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
10.06.25 18.30 – 19.30	<b>New Governor Networking Drop-in</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
17.06.25 18.30 – 19.30	<b>Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Schools</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>
24.06.25 18.30 – 19.30	<b>Headteacher Performance Management</b>	Teams	Click <a href="#">here</a>

For **BESST** visit the Schoolsweb page [HERE](#)

For **BASL** visit the Schoolsweb page [HERE](#)

For **Governance** visit the Governor web page [HERE](#)

For **Corporate Directors Briefings, Buckinghamshire Challenge and Friday Forums** visit the Schoolsweb page [HERE](#)

For any enquiries contact [sis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:sis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) or 01296 383030





# Children's Social Care

Alison Munt

Service Director, Children's Social Care



# Ofsted ILACS Overview

- One of many inspections for Children's Services – SEND, Youth Justice, Children's Homes, Adult Learning.
- Inspection held between 27 January 2025 and 7 February 2025.
- Report published 14 May 2025.
- Overall, the inspection broadly reflects our own self-assessment and acknowledges improvements since 2021, including a strengthened response to the previous recommendations and a consolidation of practice across the majority of areas.
- We have sustained our judgement of 'requires improvement' with support for children in care found to be 'good'.
- The service is currently in the process of developing an Improvement Plan to address the inspection findings.



## Inspection of Buckinghamshire Council local authority children's services

**Inspection dates:** 27 January to 7 February 2025

**Lead inspector:** Nick Bennison, His Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good

The last full inspection of children's services in Buckinghamshire was in 2021 when all services were judged to require improvement to be good. Although some progress has been made since that inspection, including in assessments and private fostering, there remain areas of practice which still require more focused improvement, including for care leavers. More recent changes and increased capacity within the leadership team have brought new ideas and raised the pace of change. Leaders have provided an environment in which social workers have increased positivity and pride in their work and created a stronger child-centred culture. A transformation programme for services providing help and protection for children is showing promising signs of success. Workforce stability is improving. Most children in care are now receiving reliably good care and leaders have ambitious plans to enhance placement sufficiency. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children receive sensitive and consistent support. Support for care leavers remains inconsistent, particularly for those aged over 21. Leaders are aware of the need to now prioritise the improvement of this service. Workers are well supported by their managers but do not consistently receive the reflective supervision they need.

Leaders are supported by an accurate and honest self-evaluation and an evolving quality assurance process. They also rightly recognise the need to strengthen the

# Areas of Strength



- We know ourselves well.
- Inspectors complimentary about our positive and open approach and were particularly impressed by the passion and dedication of our workforce.
- The transformation programme for services providing help and protection for children is showing promising signs of success.
- Children in need of early help support receive a timely, well-targeted service that is proportionate to their needs.
- The response to contacts and referrals through the MASH is timely with appropriate responses to presenting need. Children at risk of harm receive a swift response.
- The response to children's needs and risks out of hours is effective.

# Areas of Strength

- Inspectors saw a step change in the quality of assessments and a more responsive approach to the child's needs.
- The local authority designated officer (LADO) service offers an effective response to referrals of allegations of harm from people who are working with children.
- Disabled children in need of help and protection benefit from social workers who have a thorough understanding of their needs.
- Effective arrangements are in place to identify children missing full-time education.
- Children who are electively home educated receive a service that is supportive of both children and parental decision-making.
- Children experiencing exploitation receive an effective multi-faceted service.
- Children who live in private fostering placements receive an effective service.
- Most children come into care appropriately and at the right time to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Most children experience stable and positive relationships with their social workers.
- When children are living in unregistered children's homes, these arrangements receive strong oversight at all levels of the organisation.
- The virtual school offers strong support. High-quality and detailed PEPs demonstrated the local authority providing support beyond statutory requirements.
- Foster carers benefit from effective support, supervision and training.
- When children live with their adoptive parents, they receive timely and effective support.

# Areas Of Strength



- Ambitious sufficiency plans in place that have led to an upturn in the number of foster carers recruited and an increase in residential capacity.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children receive sensitive and consistent support.
- Most young people live in suitable, safe accommodation that meets their needs.
- Care leavers are well supported to ensure that they access education or employment. PAs are proactive in supporting care leavers to access employment, education and training.
- Care leavers who are in custody are well supported.
- Young people who are parents have their risks and vulnerabilities responded to.
- Children are involved in a range of participation groups from the We Do Care group to Young Ambassadors.



# Further work is required to improve...

The quality and robustness of management oversight and supervision.

The quality and effectiveness of the service to children who are at risk from neglect.

The quality of the plans for children in need of help and protection.

The availability and contribution of partner agencies to strategy meetings.

The timeliness of work to engage a child's wider family network.

Transition planning for disabled children, older children in care and young people leaving care.

The quality and effectiveness of pathway plans for care leavers.

The quality of service and support to care leavers aged 21+.

The engagement and participation of children and young people in the corporate parenting board.

Support for children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless.

The quality of audit work and the impact it has on learning for workers and the organisation.



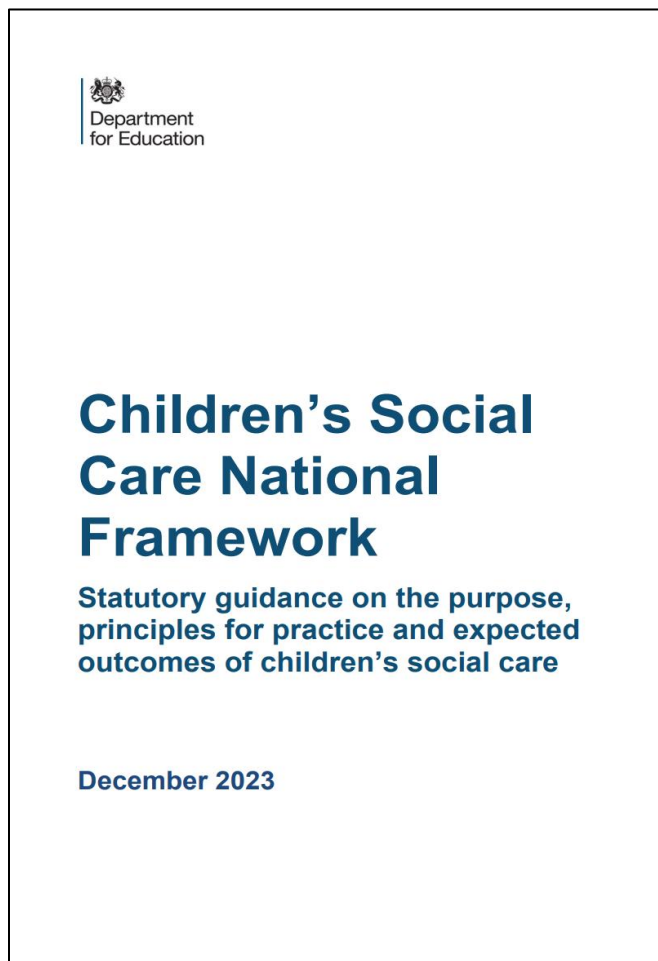
# Transformation

Errol Albert

Service Director, Transformation



# National Framework



## [Children's social care national framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love)

The National Framework published in December 2023 is statutory guidance from the DfE and is central to setting direction for practice in children's social care as part of the reforms set out in Stable Homes, Built on Love.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>

The National Framework brings together the purpose of local authority children's social care, the principles by which children, young people and families should be supported, the enablers that should be in place so the system is effective, and the outcomes that should be achieved so that children and young people can grow up to thrive.

The National Framework puts the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of practice, so they can have a say in how they are supported.



# Children's social care reforms



[Home](#) > [Education, training and skills](#)

News story

## Legislation breaks down barriers to opportunity for all children

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill introduced to Parliament today, putting children's interests at the heart of government policy.

From: [Department for Education](#) and [The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP](#)

Published 17 December 2024



- The [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) was introduced in Parliament on 17 December 2024 and is central to delivering on the government's Plan for change to the social care and education system.
- The bill aims to improve both the welfare of children and raise educational standards in England.
- Signifies the most significant change in children's social care and education policy in over twenty years.
- Will give local authorities new powers to ensure children are protected and receive a good education.
- It is far reaching and comprehensive and puts in place the legislative framework in which local authorities along with their children's services partners reconfigure their current family help, safeguarding and educational arrangements.
- Roll out of new reforms via [Families First Partnership programme - GOV.UK](#)

# Since January



Transformation programme continued



ILACS Inspection



New DCS



Local Elections



Release of DfE guidance and grant funding settlements - April 25



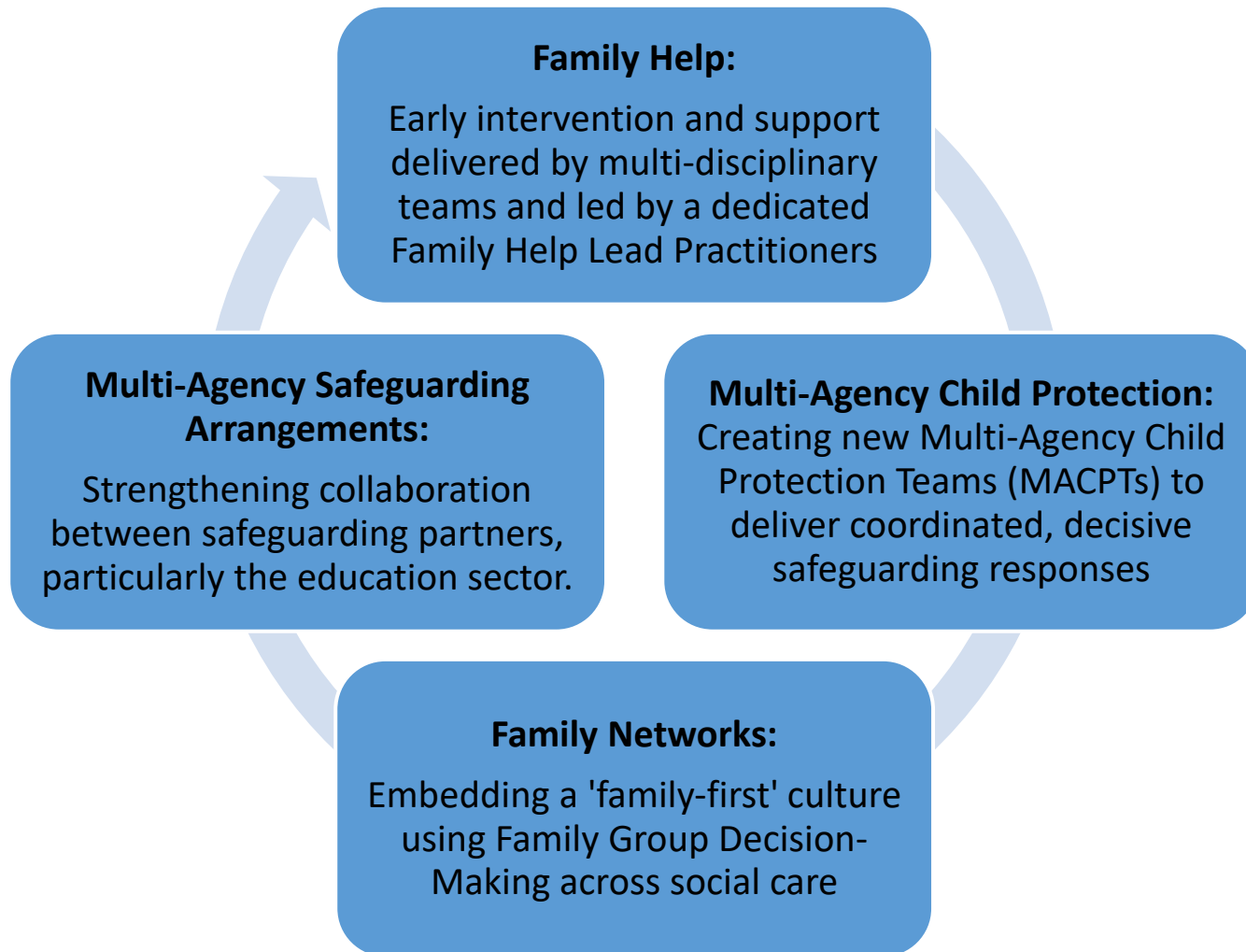
Learning from Pathfinder authorities

# Background to Reforms

- The Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) is the new national programme set up in the Department for Education, backed by over half a billion pounds of investment (£523.5m).
- The programme will work in partnership with local areas (local authorities, police, health, education and other relevant agencies) to improve their local services and systems that help and protect children and families.



# The four key areas of reform are:



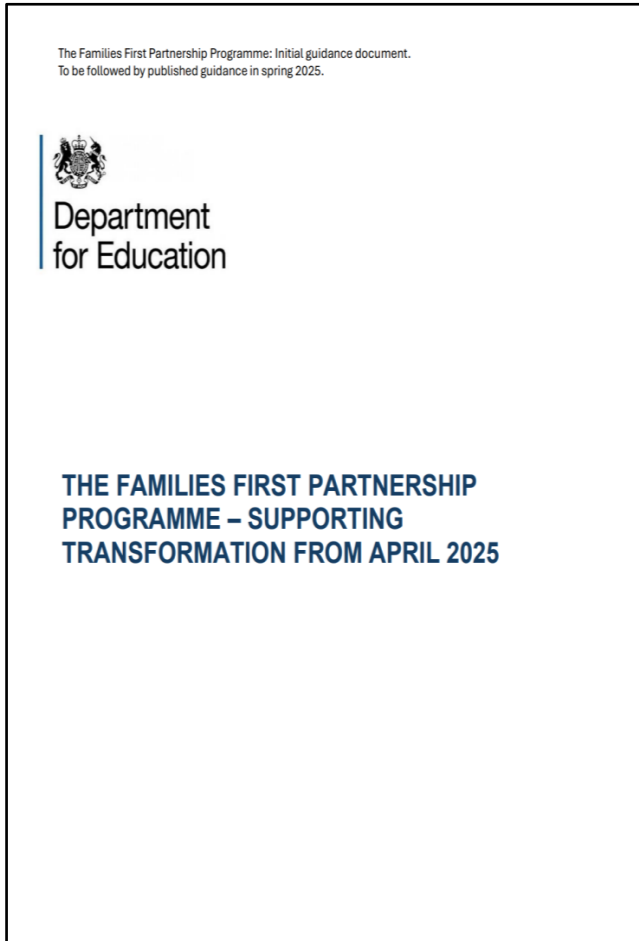
# Buckinghamshire Families First:

## The next phase in our Transformation journey

### Key Principles:

- ✓ To build on the successful implementation of **Locality Based, multi-disciplinary Teams**.  
How do we go further in line with reforms, i.e. multi-agency, co location, partner leads, secondments?
- ✓ To build on the **focus on prevention** to empower families and communities to identify and respond to their need earlier.
- ✓ To build on **closer working relationships with our partners** in Locality areas and Family Hubs.
- ✓ Develop **better information sharing** between and within agencies to safeguard.
- ✓ Develop **Family-led decision making** through expansion of the Family Group Conferencing model and expansion of skillset of staff around Family Network approach
- ✓ To build **on relationship-based practice** brought about by our Practice Methodology Training to understand family context to make informed decisions.
- ✓ To build on the principle of **fewer handoffs** as families move up and down the continuum of need.

# Suggested reading



## Sections:

Lessons from FFC Pathfinders co-designing new systems

- System transformation
- Family Help
- Multi-agency child protection
- Family Networks
- Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

[Families First Partnership programme - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/families-first-partnership-programme)



# Governance

Emma Gregory

Chair of the Governor Consultative Board



# School Governance Consultative Board: Members and Purpose

The Board comprises of 21 members

<b>Governor/Director/Trustee Secondary</b>	3	<b>Other Representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Director Education, BC</li> <li>- Cabinet Member for Education and Skills</li> <li>- Cabinet Member for Children's Services</li> <li>- Buckinghamshire Association of School Governors</li> <li>- Church of England Diocese</li> <li>- Roman Catholic Diocese</li> <li>- Children's Select Committee</li> <li>- Chair of the Buckinghamshire Association of School Governors</li> <li>- Buckinghamshire Council School Governance Support Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Governor/Director/Trustee Primary</b>	3		
<b>Special school or alternative provision</b>	1		
<b>Governor/Director/Trustee Academy School</b>	1		
<b>Governor/Director/Trustee Maintained School</b>	1		
<b>Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher Representatives</b>	From each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary Schools</li> <li>- Secondary Schools</li> <li>- Special Schools</li> </ul>		



# Spring Term Matters and Discussions

- Governor Recruitment campaign update
- Safeguarding & local authority support
- Ofsted
- Shared issues across county-wide school governance and leadership groups
  - Critical incidents: prevention and response
  - A new SEND Taskforce for Bucks
  - Financial challenges
  - Recruitment and retention of staff
- Education matters / policy – national and local

# Summer Term agenda

- Ofsted experiences
- New Ofsted gradings
- BC Procurement – experiences amongst the board, invite to meeting to listen and provide an overview of their services.
- SEND and Safeguarding

## School Emergency - Contacting Buckinghamshire Council

Emergencies are rare but do occasionally occur.

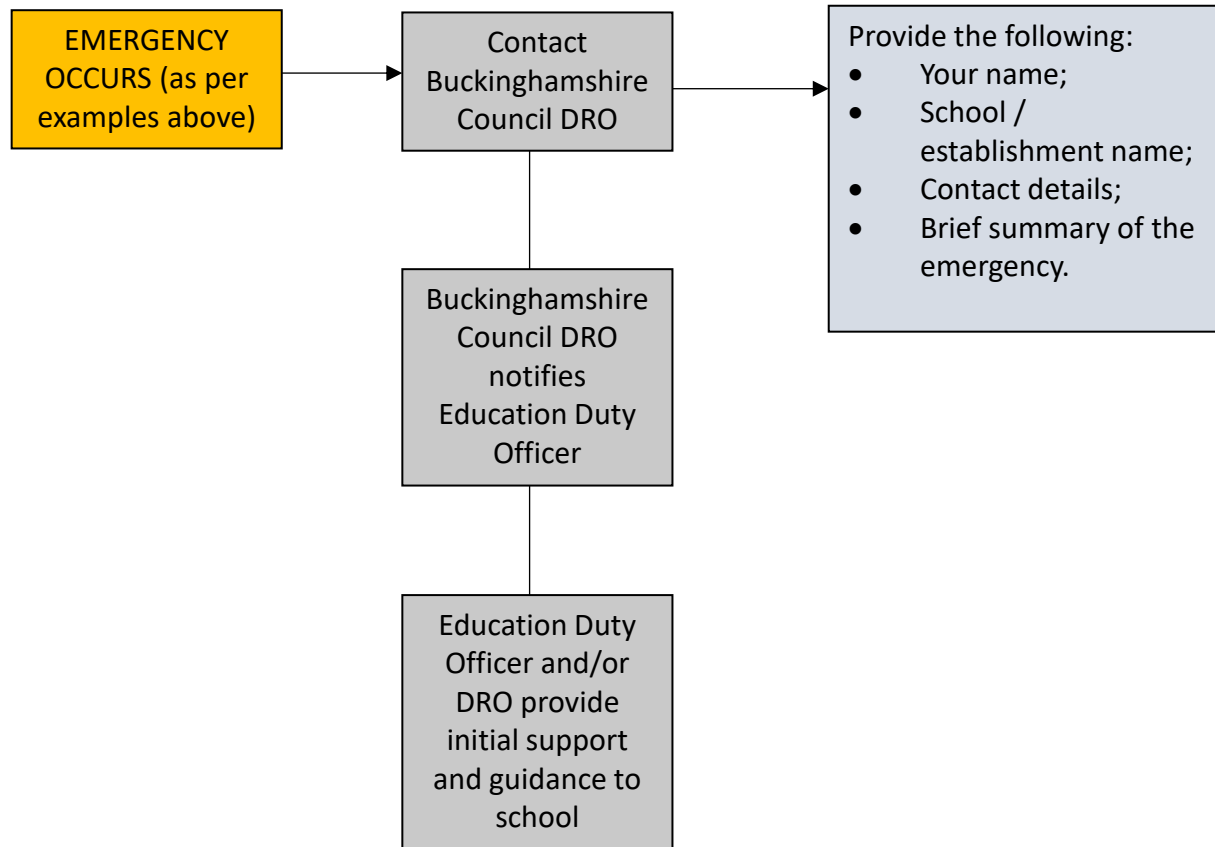
Examples of an emergency situation include:

- An incident involving the emergency services (e.g., road traffic collision, death or serious injury of member of school community).
- An incident that might necessitate the closure of the school where the fabric of the school has been significantly damaged, threatening life and limb. This **does not** include weather related closure.
- An incident that is likely to attract adverse media attention.
- Significant injury to member of school on a trip.

Buckinghamshire Council provide a Duty Resilience Officer (DRO) who is a 24hr point of contact for emergency responders and schools. In the event of an emergency the school should contact:

**Duty Resilience Officer 07738 501318**

The Duty Resilience Officer will be able to provide some basic support and guidance on the emergency and be able to contact the Education Duty Officer. The following flow chart explains the process:



## Other Useful phone numbers / information sources.

Function	Contact details	Comments
Council Duty Resilience Officer – <b><i>EMERGENCIES ONLY</i></b>	07738 501318	
Buckinghamshire Council Property Service Desk ( <i>also out of hours</i> )	01296 383 238	Further information can be found under ‘Premises and Property’ on Schoolsweb
Buckinghamshire Council Contact Centre	0845 370 8090	For reporting of accidents, incidents, near misses that are not an emergency
<a href="#">SchoolsWeb</a> ( <i>also school closure information / mechanism</i> )		Passwords held by individuals. Site maintained by Digital Team and Customer
<a href="#">EVOLVE</a> website		Passwords held by individuals. Maintained by Buckinghamshire Council Educational Visits Adviser



Thank you, have a great half-term break!



Date for next term  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
9.30 – 11am  
On Teams

