

**Derby Homes  
Children & Young People Strategy  
2021-2024**



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## 1. Foreword by the chair of Derby Homes

Derby Homes remains committed to including children and young people in all aspects of our work, ensuring that they have a voice and ‘a seat at our table’. We aim to involve children and young people from the planning phase of projects or ideas through to implementation and evaluation.



My experience in education has shown me that it is vital that all young people experience the right supportive environment if they are to make a success of their lives. We also know from experience that actively involving children and young people gives a vital insight into their lives. It is crucial in identifying the right services which will offer opportunities to make the most positive changes to their lives. The challenge is to provide an effective framework that enables a high-quality service to, wherever possible, ensure their safety, minimise risks and provide inclusive opportunities for them to engage in decision making.

This strategy replaces our previous Children and Young People Strategy. It reflects and aligns with our updated Customer Engagement and Community Development Strategy, Customer First Strategy and the wider priorities of Derby Homes and Derby City Council.

The year following the global Covid-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented changes to all our day-to-day lives. We are seeing a few changes in the way young people interact and engage with not only services, but each other. It is our responsibility to ensure that the way we plan and do things align with the reality of our customers and young people’s lived experiences.

We are supportive of the City’s risk approach to safeguarding, with the home and community being vital components to its success. In October 2021, our Capita Housing system showed we have 8,326 young people aged 18 years and below living in properties managed by Derby Homes. As individuals, these young people will face many different opportunities and challenges. However, collectively what they share is a journey from childhood to adulthood which, if negotiated successfully, will provide beneficial outcomes for both themselves and for society.

We acknowledge that young people living in the homes we manage may face more adversities due to current economic and social divisions. These challenges, if unrecognised and unsupported, can have long term impacts throughout their lives, such as poor mental health, low educational attainment, unemployment, and limited aspirations.

Through this strategy, Derby Homes continues to show its commitment to working with, supporting and improving the lives of the young people of Derby.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Mike Ainsley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

## 2. Why do we need a Children & Young People's strategy?

We need to and can do more:

- To play our part in keeping young people safe through prevention, awareness and intervention at the earliest opportunity
- To empower and develop young people living in our homes
- To involve young people in our strategies and policies
- To ask our young people about their concerns, their challenges and ideas for improvements in our communities
- To enable young people to shape homes and neighbourhoods to suit their needs and become a place where the next generation want to live

Our CYP Strategy seeks to create a seamless journey of engagement for children and young people that will raise their aspirations. Engaging with children & young people helps build trust, and encourages them to seek advice and utilise services to achieve a brighter future for themselves through:

- breaking the cycle of low educational attainment
- reducing youth violence and promoting safe neighbourhoods
- tackling worklessness
- promoting employment opportunities
- developing the skills and aspirational worth of the next generation of Derby citizens.



The obstacles faced by the young people of Derby today are complex, there are more than just individual adversities to overcome, there are also structural and societal issues we must address. This solidifies our need to have an up-to-date and comprehensive Children's and Young People's Strategy, which is reflective of the



challenges our young people face in the world today, ensuring our actions, and those of our partner agencies can be consistent and effective.

Poor mental health amongst children and young people has been increasing across the UK within recent years<sup>1</sup>, however the Covid-19 global pandemic has added to this increase, with more uncertainty across society, less access to health interventions and treatments, and of course missed education and prolonged isolation periods for our young people. Recent studies<sup>2</sup> show that children from families who are financially struggling, with rent arrears, low income, and debts, are more likely to experience poor mental health than families who are financially stable.

It is of little surprise with mental health statistics such as these, that this uncertainty and anxiety caused by the pandemic, coupled with the disruption to their educational access, had led to young people feeling uneasy about their future prospect. A recent study by the Princes Trust<sup>3</sup> found that almost half of young people have said they feel their future goals and aspirations have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, with some feeling their lost job, educational and training opportunities have now made their goals “impossible to achieve”. We will work with partner agencies, to provide a range of upskilling and training opportunities to bridge the aspirational gap caused by the pandemic, focusing on how we can get young people into employment and education.

We will work collaboratively with partners across the city to create housing opportunities and instil positive changes that enrich their lives.

It is our intention to move forwards with our children & young people leading the way to developing a brighter and more sustainable future.

### 3. Benefits of effective engagement with children & young people



Working with and listening to young people living in our properties and on our estates, we can influence their choices and build community capacity. We will give them access to opportunities, skills, and experiences that they may not be able to gain without our involvement. We will support young people to live well, build confidence and provide good signposting to other professional organisations if they are in troubled times through our strong partnership working.

The benefits to Derby Homes by engaging with and supporting children & young people are:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Targeted service delivery to meet established need
- Service design that is fit for purpose as it is created by the user
- Delivering services that are better value for money
- Improved communication between staff, customers, and the wider community
- Informed and knowledgeable customers who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Staff, customers, and the wider community being more aware of each other's perspectives, building understanding, respect and trust
- Increased levels of customer satisfaction.
- Development of sustainable communities

#### 4. Partnerships and working towards our strategic vision



We acknowledge that young people are our future, therefore, their voices and participation should be used to shape not only our services, but also our strategic vision. This mirrors our Customer First Strategy and ethos.

Given the significance of young people to us, and the current challenges faced by our young people, we have reviewed and reformed our Partnership Working to be reflective of the needs of Derby city's youth, and the corresponding strategies and initiatives of Derby City Council.

Our strategic aims align with and reflect Derby City Council's Priorities around addressing the following issues:

- Teenage Contraception and Sexual Health
- Hospital Admissions - Self Harm
- Hospital Admissions - Violence
- First Time Entrants
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Early Help
- Children in Need
- Child Protection

- Children in Care
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Youth Violence and Crime
- Priority Families
- Educational Exclusion
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)
- Coproduction of services
- Educational attainment

We are committed to working in partnership to place Children and Young People's safety and wellbeing as a priority within our day-to-day service delivery across all our workforce. From our Tenancy Sustainment team working with Social Care, Education, and specialist services such as Safe & Sound, to our Repairs Operatives receiving rolling comprehensive safeguarding training, we are engaged with working together to safeguard young people and promote the best outcomes for their wellbeing. Listed below are several partnerships which enable us to achieve our strategic vision.

### Helping vulnerable children and young people to access accommodation and support

It is right that we focus on the most vulnerable members of society, for example, our children and young people who have been Looked After Children (LAC) and our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). This cohort of children & young people will have unique and complex housing needs as they prepare for adulthood and independent living.

#### Looked After Children (LAC)

We are currently working in partnership with Children & Young Peoples Services on a trial project to identify properties suitable for transitional work. The properties will be targeted to those young people within the existing Children's House Residential Homes. LAC aged between 16 and 19 will be supported by Children's Services throughout their time in the transition property to develop the life skills needed to sustain a tenancy once they reach the age of 18 and where required beyond.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team will continue to work closely with Children's Services to provide additional help and support focussed around maintaining and sustaining the tenancy.

The project will be reviewed to assess its success, lessons learned, identify any changes required and to decipher whether there is value in continuing and/or expanding the work.

Young people leaving care have been identified as a group who find it hard to enter and sustain employment. To overcome this, we will continue to work towards Derby City Council's Commitment to the Children in Care Pledge by working with Derby City Council colleagues to identify how we can better engage with Children in Care and Care Leavers to capture their voices and use feedback to grow and develop our

support. One instance of such support is, for those that successfully complete the traineeship and wish to continue, Derby Homes would offer a guaranteed interview for an apprenticeship.

### Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)

We are also working in partnership with Children & Young Peoples Services on a trial project to identify properties that they can use to house 16- 18-year-old UASC placements. The placements will be offered alongside a package of inclusive support. The project is in its early stages but dependent on its success and the availability of housing stock, the pilot could be rolled out further.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team will work closely with Children's Services to provide additional help and support focussed around maintaining and sustaining the tenancy.

### Derby Youth Alliance

There have been significant and exciting changes to Youth Work across Derby City. As such, the Derby Youth Alliance (DYA) has emerged to create a response to the concerns of youth violence and youth crime, youth employment and contextualised safeguarding. These are some of their priorities, which align with Derby City Council's strategic vision alongside its partner organisations that form the Safer Communities Board. This vision for young people in Derby to have services available which can prevent and divert them away from antisocial behaviour, street conflict and violent crime so that they feel safe and can reach their full potential.

The DYA is a collaboration of partner agencies working across the city with a purpose of reducing risks and improving the opportunities and the wellbeing of young people. They do this through regular consultations with the youth of Derby city, alongside seamless reflection of city wide strategies and initiatives. Derby Homes is committed to supporting Derby Youth Alliance to carry out their work with young people. Their model of collaborating with existing specialist and grass-roots organisations, to deliver interventions across a multitude of intersections, of individual young people, families and hot-spot areas in the community.

One strand of the DYA which mirrors our strategic goals is the Serious Youth Violence project. This work follows ambitious and successful pilot scheme which offers a range of interventions for multi-level approaches including diverting and mentoring individuals, educating and supporting families, as well as reassuring and developing the community and significant hot-spot areas.

Another project within the DYA is the Youth Employment Scheme (YES). The YES sets to challenge the barriers of youth unemployment by creating diverse and innovative pathways into employment. This scheme aims to target the age gap of young people who are NEET, but not yet eligible for existing support systems such as Kickstart Programmes.

With Operational Board approval, we will continue to work with and provide funding to our delivery partner, DYA, as we see the importance of having access to the



programmes they operate. We are committed to significantly fund DYA ensuring their work aligns to our strategic vision.

### Better Together Project

Responding to the impacts of Coronavirus represents one of the biggest challenges the Local Authority has ever faced. The response to the pandemic has given a unique insight into what we can achieve when partners work together towards the same goals. This has given Derby Homes and Derby City Council the opportunity to reset how we think about our communities, and how we work together on things that really matter to the people of Derby.

It is recognised that we must work more closely with our communities to tackle inequality. Using and developing the assets, we have to ensure our children and young people have access to 'the right support, at the right time'.

Working on intelligence, place-based intervention allows the opportunity for partners to observe community-based influences and help to identify the appropriate level of intervention required to address the issue and meet the young people's needs.

The development of the project will involve understanding community dynamics, building relationships, problem-solving, building on existing strengths, creating community resilience and agreeing longer-term solutions that are sustainable for Derby.

### Linking young people with jobs and training

Through our Tenancy Sustainment and Complex Needs Teams, we link with several partners to facilitate young people into job and training opportunities. Some of the projects are listed below.

'Work Pays' provide support to young people and adults to help them move towards employment. They support people into apprenticeships, provide training opportunities, help to source and apply for jobs, work specifically with target groups who have barriers to employment and work with employers to source opportunities for people. They frequently meet our teams to review opportunities and update them on any new information.

'Way2Work' is carried out through our partnership with Community Action Derby. This is a four-year programme which focuses on a one-to-one approach working with anyone who is unemployed or on a zero-hour contract. They help people to become work ready through linking with voluntary organisations to gain experience and self-confidence.

'Building Better Opportunities' is a project across the midlands which is designed to get people into employment. This is done by offering training and advice around employment as well as support to gain employment such as financial help with travel and childcare costs. They specifically target hard to reach groups such as people with Mental Health issues, those with criminal records, over 50's and NEET. Our

teams hold workshops with the partners and meet to discuss individual cases for referral.

'Connexions' provides guidance to help young people to make positive decisions about their pathway options and supports them with practical activities such as applications, CVs and interview preparation. They work with young people in Derby between the ages of 16 - 19. The service is delivered over the phone or on a one-to-one basis.

### 13 – 19yrs | Derby Homes Youth Panel: Ignite & Connect

We have a dedicated role of Customer Engagement Officer (youth) to support engagement with our youth panel Ignite and Connect. They are a group of young people that live in Derby Homes properties who aim to create opportunities for young people and strengthen communities. They meet once a month to work on projects, review our policies and processes, provide feedback, and discuss other matters that are important to them.

They receive training and take part in debates at significantly high levels within the organisation, sometimes attending Derby Homes Board's to present on issues affecting the young people living in Derby. The panel can choose projects that matter to them. This provides capacity building for the young people involved; enabling them to gain new skills, build their self-confidence and assists in getting them job ready. All Ignite and Connect members get an automatic interview for apprenticeships with Derby Homes.

### 16 -18yrs | Apprenticeship schemes and Work Experience

We have an established Apprenticeship Scheme in place, aligned to its own strategy. The aim of the Apprenticeship Strategy is to optimise use of Derby Homes' levy contributions whilst providing a high-quality Apprenticeship Scheme.



Providing training and employment opportunities is a priority within our delivery plan. Our current target is to support up to 40 positions for apprentices across the organisation in a range of service areas. Running this scheme demonstrates the commitment of Derby Homes to enhancing young people's lives. Making employment and training opportunities available for them within our communities aligning with our vision of working with young people.

We agree our apprenticeship requirements annually and advertise our opportunities through the Find An Apprenticeship website in partnership with training providers. The schemes vision is to offer apprenticeship opportunities and qualifications for local people of Derby.

For many years we offered opportunities in the areas of customer service and business administration but in 2013 expanded to provide apprenticeships in our repairs and maintenance teams. Our current Apprenticeship Scheme is broad ranging across all our service areas and we now employ apprentices in a variety of occupational routes, such as plumbing, joinery, electrical, business administration, housing and surveying.

We work in partnership with accredited training providers to deliver our apprenticeships. We provide our apprentices with a national recognised qualification that is transportable and along with work experience this enables them to achieve a future career with us or with another employer.

We train all apprentices to at least level 3. During their level 3 training, apprentices are encouraged and supported to secure employment beyond their apprenticeship. Extending an apprenticeship to at least level 3 helps increase the apprentices' skill levels, assisting them to become the best candidate at interview.

We acknowledge the importance of work-experience to students and young people. Work experience is an important way for young people to gain an insight into

the working world. Time spent with an employer can broaden a young person's knowledge and help to inform and shape their career aspirations. As a local employer, Derby Homes accepts a responsibility to provide meaningful work-experience as an opportunity for young people to gain an understanding of the requirements of the occupational area in which they are placed.

### 18yrs+ | Volunteering Schemes

Many young people have gone through these programmes of youth engagement benefiting greatly, with some returning as Volunteers and Mentors. This vision aligns with the Derby Homes Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2024 where we aim to have young adults in volunteering positions within the areas of their engagement journey. By supporting Derby's Volunteer Centre, delivered through Community Action Derby, Derby Homes offers a variety of volunteer networks and opportunities for people to develop.





## 5. Contextualised safeguarding and place-based risk

Contextualised Safeguarding is a term which has emerged from research and analysis of existing safeguarding data. Contextualised Safeguarding is a model which goes beyond limiting safeguarding to be an issue with individuals, it aims to broaden awareness of risk and vulnerabilities, towards a more comprehensive approach to creating safer communities for our young people.

Working with the DYA and Derby City Council, we will utilise the knowledge of Contextual Safeguarding to better inform our staff when working within tenants home, our community rooms and the wider community. Contextual safeguarding provides a framework to advance child protection and safeguarding responses to a range of extra-familial risks that compromise the safety and welfare of young people.

We acknowledge our responsibility to protect children from harm and promote their welfare. Through incorporating knowledge of Contextualised Safeguarding, we can ensure that our staff and partner organisations are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities when interacting with children and young people in the extra-familial environments. We will ensure should any member of staff or partner raise concerns, our safeguarding referral and monitoring are effective and efficient, as they reflect current strategic intent, and align with the goals and aims of Derby City Council's safeguarding policies also. We are dedicated to maintaining these policies as current and effective, by evaluating and reviewing every three years.

Partners and staff have many opportunities to identify potential cases of neglect and abuse whilst undertaking their everyday duties, this requires not only vigilance, but also rigorous training and reflection. We are aware that effective safeguarding must be a continuous process, not only for staff learning, but also for types of risks our young people may be exposed to, and more tangible factors such as Place Based Risk locations in the local community. We will ensure that the partners that we work with are aware of what constitutes abuse or neglect and are sufficiently trained to report any concerns they have, we have dedicated Safeguarding Champions throughout our organisation. These champions have further training, meeting as a group quarterly to continuously develop their knowledge and practice around safeguarding.

Through our goal of ensuring our policies and strategies around Contextualised Safeguarding and Place Base Risk are reflective of the lived experiences of our young people, we are invested in current research models and theories to promote best practice within children and families safeguarding.

The established Think Family approach is an example of such a model we have incorporated into our ways of working, to allow a systemic view of the wider familial unit. For example, when dealing with tenancy issues we can consider how this may impact on children a young people within that unit and offer support and referrals for not just the issues which arise with the tenancy, but also for the children and young people involved.

We have identified our safeguarding campaign for 2022 to focus on exploitation. This aligns with our CYP strategy. Young people will have a voice within the campaign.

Contextual Safeguarding is the same for adults as it is for Children in regard to minimising the risk of both, and how we can engage them and keep them safe. This could be working together with internal teams, working with external agencies to safeguard and protect the adult or individual from abuse.

## 6. Maintaining momentum

We must constantly challenge ourselves to improve our services, ensure that Children & Young People living in our properties and on the estates that we manage have appropriate opportunities to be involved in ways that suit their interests.

We have developed service specifications which will enable performance management are at the forefront of service delivery. We will robustly test the ability of our partners and the specialist providers we chose to deliver Children & Young People services for Derby Homes. We will ensure that chosen delivery partners are communicating with each other, to allow a seamless journey of engagement for all our young people involved.

Communication is key at all stages through our work to support this strategy. It has to be a living document.

It's important that we use different methods to communicate with children & young people. In addition to attending events and working with partners, we will utilise our Social Media skills, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube account and other platforms to increase awareness and get young people to engaged and interacting with us. We will track our progress through timely reports to our Operational Board on how we are delivering on this strategy.

