



CHILD FRIENDLY LEEDS

AWARDS 2026

Programme

10th
year

2 July 2026

We are

child
friendly
Leeds



WELCOME TO THE

CHILD FRIENDLY LEEDS



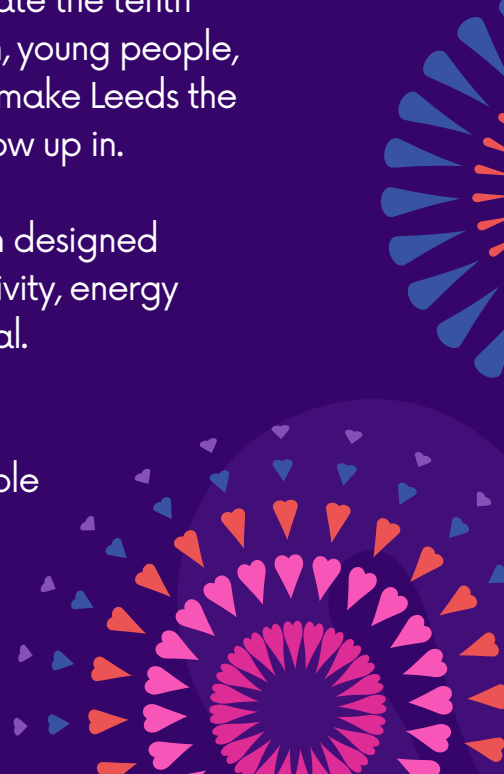
AWARDS 2026

Welcome to the 10th Child Friendly Leeds Awards.

Tonight marks a significant milestone as we celebrate the tenth Child Friendly Leeds Awards, recognising the children, young people, individuals, organisations and partnerships who help make Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in.

This year's carnival-themed celebration has been designed and shaped by young people, reflecting the creativity, energy and diversity that make our city so special.

From performances and hosting to the overall vision for the evening, young people have been at the heart of every aspect of tonight's event.





As we celebrate a decade of Child Friendly Leeds Awards, we also mark several important developments, including the introduction of the Sue Rumbold Award, the new Children's Choice Award, and an expanded Overall Contribution Award recognising achievements across the public, private and third sectors.

Thank you to our ambassadors, nominees and guests for your continued commitment to supporting children and young people across Leeds.

We hope you enjoy an evening filled with celebration, inspiration and pride as we recognise the remarkable people and organisations helping children and young people thrive.

Thank you!

A massive thank you to our award sponsors this year:



And thank you to City Varieties Music Hall for hosting us yet again in this iconic building and for all your support working with the young person's planning group to create this amazing event.

ENJOY THE SHOW!



PERFORMERS



RJC Dance



RJC Dance is proud to bring the spirit of Carnival to the Child Friendly Leeds Awards 2026. As ambassadors, we thank the Young People's Planning Group and organisers for inviting us. For over 30 years, supported by Arts Council England and Leeds City Council, and based at the Mandela Centre, we've delivered exciting youth programmes and created bold, joyful Carnival troupes, championing sustainability. Last year, we made history winning the Arthur France MBE Legacy Trophy. Tonight, enjoy a brand-new Soca piece by Nillanthie Morton. Please welcome the Shahck Out Boyz!


Alwoodley Primary School

Alwoodley Primary School is an inclusive, nurturing school where every child is encouraged to thrive. As a Leeds Champion music school and a music-rich school, it celebrates diversity, creativity and achievement. Pupils enjoy inspiring musical opportunities alongside high-quality learning, developing confidence, resilience and a lifelong love of learning together for all children.



Alwoodley Primary School
Learning Together, Growing Stronger.

Castleton Primary School



The 12 Child Friendly Wishes don't only make Leeds a better place for children. The drama club at Castleton Primary School deliver a performance exploring how the wishes can benefit anyone. How does a Clown seek support for their wellbeing? How would a ventriloquist dummy enjoy different cultural experiences across the city? Find out in this short performance!



YOUNG PERSONS PLANNING GROUP MEMBERS

Meet Team Thumbs Up!



Ciara

I'm Ciara and I am 13 years old. My hobbies include playing the bass and guitar, and spending time with friends. I'm most looking forward to presenting on stage and having a great time!

Leigh - Taylor

My name is Leigh, and I am 18 years old. I wanted to join the Child Friendly Leeds Awards planning group because I know first-hand how special the awards are. In 2024, I was honoured to receive an award for my charity work, which I have been involved in since I was five. I am passionate about giving young people a voice and celebrating those who make a positive difference. I love music, football, and community work, and I enjoy bringing people together. I'm excited to help celebrate inspiring individuals and be part of this special 10th anniversary event.



Marty

I am really pleased to be part of the Child Friendly Leeds production team and having just finished my GCSE's I am looking forward to starting CAPA college in September where I will be studying Theatre production level 3 on the technical pathway. My interests include theatre, lighting and video design and travel.





Mohammed

My name is Mohammed and I am 13 years old. I wanted to be part of the group to help bring the awards to life and be involved in something big. I enjoy boxing, MMA and a bit of football. I'm really looking forward to being on stage and speaking in front of a large audience.

Poppy

My name is Poppy, I'm 15 and currently in Year 10. I've always loved the idea of planning and presenting events like this, as I hope to become a set designer. I'm really excited to get involved and help bring the awards night to life. In my spare time, I enjoy creating art, playing netball and spending time with my rabbits. I'm especially looking forward to wearing beautiful, vibrant costumes and working on the set design. I feel proud and honoured to be part of this event and can't wait for the special night!



Queen

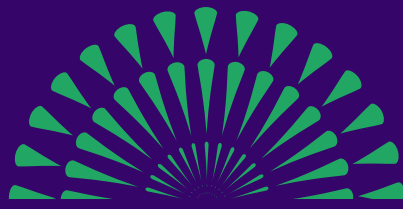
My name is Queen, I'm 17, and I feel honoured to help host and set up this event. I study Politics, History and Sociology, with Politics as my favourite subject. I strongly believe that young people's voices need to be heard and recognised, as we are the future. This awards show is a great opportunity to celebrate achievements and inspire one another to keep doing great things. I'm so grateful to be part of it and hope everyone enjoys the night as much as I've enjoyed helping to plan it.



Sirrah

I am 14 years old and wanted to be part of the CFL Awards planning group because I enjoy public speaking, performing and being involved in my community and this brings all of those together. My interests include theatre, listening to music, dancing, reading and public speaking. I'm most looking forward to being on stage presenting, and to enjoying being part of the hosting team.





ADULT MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Sue Rumbold award is for someone doing extraordinary things to improve the lives of children and young people in Leeds

Presented by the Lord Mayor and the Children's Mayor

Angie Thompson

Angie, Youth Engagement Curator at Leeds Art Gallery, leads creative programmes including Care Creatives and Youth Collective. She connects young people with artists, supports wellbeing, and creates inclusive spaces that build confidence, skills and community. Through personalised creative opportunities, she helps young people thrive, with several progressing into artistic careers.



Anna Hull

Anna, a dedicated Active Leeds swimming teacher, supports learners from babies to advanced levels, including SEND and the Special Olympics Leeds Squad. She tailors every lesson to ensure inclusion and belonging. Through empathy, creativity, and writing books, she inspires confidence, independence, and joy, transforming young lives in and beyond the water. A true inspiration to her learners.





Ed Downer

Ed Downer leads the Streets and Spaces for Children initiative, including a landmark design hack where highways and transport professionals worked with Child Friendly Leeds Ambassadors to turn children's "dream school streets" into practical designs. Pupils then reviewed and scored the proposals, ensuring their voices directly shaped safer, healthier streets across Leeds.



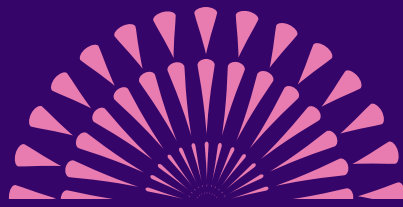
Gail Sayles

Gail, from the NSPCC, delivers safeguarding and online safety training across Leeds, equipping schools, organisations and families to protect children. She has led city wide campaigns, increased staff confidence in identifying abuse, and helps create safer, supportive environments where children can thrive through prevention, awareness and early action.

Meg Berry

Meg Berry is a volunteer U12 girls coach at West Park Leeds RUFC. She commits evenings and weekends to coaching and match travel, alongside playing for the club. Over 18 months she has built a positive, inclusive team culture, supporting girls' confidence, wellbeing, physical activity and life skills as a trusted mentor and role model.





YOUNG PERSON / CHILD OF THE YEAR

This award recognises an amazing child/young person (aged 0-21 or up to 25 with additional needs) who has made a difference in Leeds

Presented by White Rose Centre & members
of Leeds Youth Councils

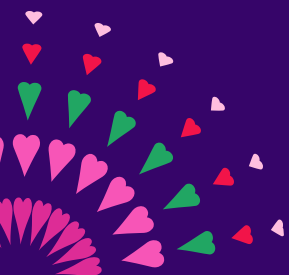


Chloe Smith

After experiencing homelessness and sofa-surfing as a care leaver, Chloe has turned her lived experience into action, using social media and workshops to help other young people prepare for independent living. Through Archway Hub, she now runs practical workshops for care leavers, supporting councils to replicate her model and peer-led resources for housing.

Imogen Thursfield

Imogen has been a passionate campaigner for home-educated children, helping secure their inclusion in opportunities such as the Children's Mayor programme while also championing safer cycling and greener streets. Through meetings with councillors, MPs and the media, she has shown impressive leadership and commitment to making young people's voices heard.



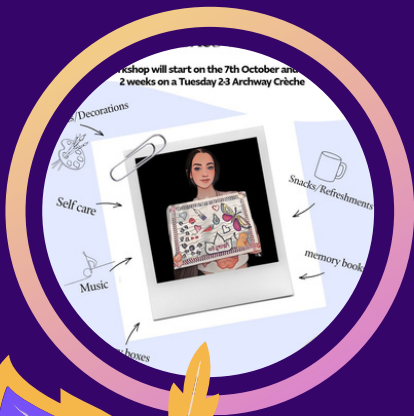


Katie Thirling

At nine, Katie's transforming awareness of life with a stoma through national TV appearances, school advocacy, lived experience and her instagram platform. She challenges stigma, campaigns for accessible bathrooms, and empowers children with medical needs by amplifying their voices nationwide and beyond, inspiring families, educators, healthcare staff, and communities.

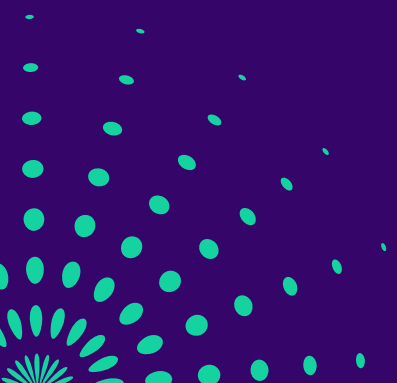
Sophie Poole

Sophie is a dedicated young volunteer supporting a long standing community charity. She helps run weekly groups, a community café and food pantry serving over 100 families, leads youth activities, organised her first community event, and encourages other young people to volunteer while promoting inclusion, anti bullying and safe spaces for children.



Sophie Reed

Sophie has transformed immense personal challenges into a powerful story of resilience, creativity and hope, becoming a role model for other care-experienced young people. Through her poetry, art and mentoring, she is using her voice to inspire others and build community.





YOUTH GROUP OF THE YEAR

This award recognises an inspirational youth group whose members are up to the age of 25 years who have made a difference in Leeds

Presented by King Pins & members of Leeds Youth Councils



Green Futures Youth Group

Green Futures Youth Group brings together young people from a wide range of backgrounds to lead environmental action, community campaigns and educational projects in south Leeds. Their commitment to climate action, healthy living and social inclusion is helping to create a better future for their local area.

Moortown West Community Association

MWCA champions youth voice in a highly deprived area, delivering free and low cost activities, youth groups, sports, safe spaces and mental health support. Largely volunteer led, it supports diverse young people, including those with SEN, tackles food poverty, promotes inclusion, and provides safe, bullying free spaces where children feel secure and heard.





Pyramid of Arts & Leeds Art Gallery Youth Collective

This inspiring partnership has brought communities and young adults together through creativity, collaboration and inclusion, producing powerful arrangement of exhibitions, workshops and experiences at Leeds Art Gallery. Their work has opened up cultural spaces, celebrated difference and helped young adults grow in confidence and ambition.

SEND Youth Council

The SEND Youth Council is a volunteer group of young people aged 11–25 with SEND who influence education, health and care services in Leeds. Through campaigns, accessibility reviews and partnerships, they amplify lived experience, improve services, promote disability pride and inclusion, and ensure SEND voices shape decision-making across the city.



St Luke's Cares – Rise and Shine Youth Project

For more than a decade, Rise and Shine has delivered outstanding youth work in south Leeds, creating safe, supportive and inspiring opportunities for young people to thrive. Through mentoring, detached youth work, sports, life skills and youth leadership, they continue to transform lives and open doors.



INSPIRING CREATIVITY THROUGH PLAY, ARTS & CULTURE

This award recognises the fantastic opportunities and invaluable support that children and young people receive through play and from the arts and culture

Presented by Mott McDonald and members of
Leeds Youth Councils



Craftea

Craftea Leeds, founded by Laura, is an inclusive creative café and play space supporting children's wellbeing, communication and imagination through arts, crafts and play. It offers accessible activities, community groups and family friendly events, creating a safe, welcoming environment where children of all ages and abilities can explore creativity, build confidence and connect with others.

CreARTives

CreARTives is an inclusive, inspiring art class for children and young people in Leeds. Through playful, creative sessions, it provides a safe, welcoming space where every child can explore imagination, build confidence, learn, express themselves, connect with others, and celebrate culture through experimentation in the visual arts.





Photo:Voice

Photo:Voice has empowered children and young people to share their experiences of safety through photography and storytelling, creating a powerful public exhibition that is influencing change across West Yorkshire. The project is a standout example of creative engagement that puts young people's voices at the heart of decision-making.

stage@leeds

stage@Leeds Young Company offers young performers a unique mix of high-quality training, professional experience and a strong sense of belonging. Its inclusive and supportive environment helps young people grow in confidence, skill and friendship through the performing arts.



Yorkshire Contemporary & Rowland Road Working Men's Club

Yorkshire Contemporary & Rowland Road Working Men's Club have transformed outdoor play in Beeston Hill by partnering with local residents and club members to create Leeds' first adventure playground, The Rowland Road Play Patch. Co designed and shaped by local artists, children and families, it promotes inclusive, adventurous, and nature based play, supports community ownership, and consistently champions children's right to safe, creative play in their neighbourhood.





EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHILD FRIENDLY LEEDS 12 WISHES



This award recognises the remarkable work of individuals, projects and organisations who have championed children's voice through contributions to one of the Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes



Presented by Trinity Leeds and members of Leeds Youth Councils

Family Action's Leeds Young Carers Support Service

Family Action's Leeds Young Carers Support Service identifies and supports young carers, ensuring their needs are recognised in schools. Through tools, staff training and emotional support, they help learning settings adapt, reduce pressure on pupils with caring responsibilities, and ensure young carers feel seen, understood and supported to succeed.



Young Carers
Leeds



Grimes Dyke Primary School

Grimes Dyke Primary School has shown an exceptional commitment to play, inclusion and the natural environment, creating a school experience where children can explore, take risks and thrive outdoors. Their creative use of green space and deeply inclusive ethos make them a standout example of Child Friendly Leeds in action.





North & South Leeds Mumbler and Wharfedale & Craven Mumbler

Through their trusted local platforms, Rachel and Sarah have helped thousands of families find activities, support and inclusive opportunities across Leeds and beyond. Their work has built stronger community connections and made family life easier, more informed and more connected.

Park Square Barristers

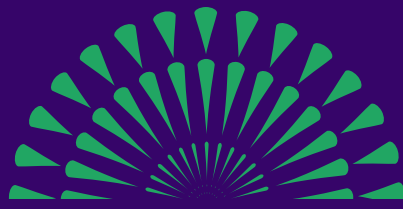
For seven years, Park Square Barristers have gone above and beyond to support children and young people through thoughtful, personalised gifts and acts of kindness that bring real joy and comfort. Their culturally sensitive and consistent support helps children feel seen, valued and remembered.



Shakespeare School

Shakespeare Primary School demonstrates a strong commitment to reducing the impact of poverty and widening opportunities. Working closely with families and community partners in Harehills, the school provides food support, practical workshops and enrichment activities. Extensive sports provision and extracurricular programmes ensure all pupils can access physical, cultural and creative opportunities regardless of background.





BEST PLACE IN LEEDS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

This children's choice award recognises a fantastic place for children and young people in Leeds voted by them as their favourite place to go

Presented by Shine Leeds and members of Leeds Youth Councils



Herd Farm

Herd Farm is loved for its wide range of outdoor activities, welcoming atmosphere and supportive staff who encourage young people to try new things and grow in confidence. It is a place where adventure, inclusion and great food come together to create memorable experiences for all ages.

Holbeck Together

Holbeck Together is a trusted, welcoming organisation offering affordable activities, trips and support that bring joy, routine and belonging to children and families. With warm, reliable staff and inclusive programmes, it provides safe spaces where young people feel supported, connected and able to grow in confidence.





Hollywood Bowl

This is a fun, joyful place with friendly, welcoming staff and lots to do with friends and family. The arcade offers unique games, and the bowling is autism friendly and comfortable, with mini-golf, food and drinks. Young people say it makes them feel strong, happy and excited to spend time at Hollywood Bowl.

Hunslet Club

The Hunslet Club is one of the UK's largest youth organisations, supporting over 4,000 young people across Leeds. Helping young people reach their full potential through sport, arts, education and community programmes, providing a safe, supportive space to build confidence, develop skills and access new opportunities.



Roundhay Park

Roundhay Park was nominated for its beautiful green space, calm atmosphere and sense of safety for children and young people. It is a much-loved place to play, relax, meet friends and enjoy the outdoors.





OVERALL CONTRIBUTION TO MAKING LEEDS A CHILD FRIENDLY CITY

This award is to recognise a private, public and third sector organisation that is making a significant contribution to our child friendly city ambitions

Presented by Parklane Foundation and members of Leeds Youth Councils

Afrikindness

Afrikindness supports children and families facing poverty, inequality and cultural barriers across Leeds. Through leadership programmes, mentoring, safeguarding training and family support, it empowers young people to build confidence, skills and voice. Working closely with communities and Child Friendly Leeds, Afrikindness creates safe, inclusive spaces that support wellbeing, aspiration and positive transitions for children and families.



the British Library

Through sustained partnership with children's social care, the British Library delivers high quality creative programmes for care experienced young people that leave a permanent legacy. By professionally publishing their work, acquiring it into the national collection, and supporting public showcases, the British Library ensures young people's voices are preserved, recognised and valued long beyond the projects themselves.





Harewood House Trust

Harewood House Trust demonstrates outstanding commitment to young people and families across Leeds through inclusive, accessible experiences. From delivering creative community workshops to offering reduced cost access via its Access+ ticket and Community Access Membership scheme, Harewood ensures children from all backgrounds can learn, play and enjoy meaningful cultural experiences.

John Lewis

John Lewis Partnership demonstrates a sustained commitment to Child Friendly Leeds through inclusive city centre activities, school holiday events, and Baby Week engagement. Nationally, its Building Happier Futures programme supports care experienced young people to break down barriers and empower talented individuals to shape their own futures.



King Pins

King Pins White Rose is a Child Friendly Leeds Ambassador supporting children in care and foster families through free bowling sessions that remove financial barriers and create inclusive, fun experiences. The organisation also contributes to citywide Child Friendly Leeds events, opening its space to support play, connection and positive family experiences across Leeds.

Kirstall Valley

KVDT and Kirkstall Valley Farm provide outstanding, affordable outdoor provision for children and families. Through farm based play, learning and holiday activities, they support healthy lifestyles, risk taking and connection with nature. Alongside a community hub and pantry, they strengthen community wellbeing, tackle food poverty and create welcoming, inclusive spaces where children and families thrive together.



Leeds Baby Bank

Leeds Baby Bank, led by Ambassadors Faye Freeman and Chantal Nogbou, provides vital support to families with children aged 0–5, reaching those most affected by poverty, domestic violence, and hardship. Their work strongly aligns with Child Friendly Leeds wishes, reducing child poverty and strengthening family support through sustained, compassionate action



Leeds Childrens Hospital

Leeds Children's Hospital has transformed care by introducing a 7-day play service, supported by £500,000 investment from Leeds Hospitals Charity. This ensures all children access therapeutic play, reducing inequalities and improving outcomes. The service enhances wellbeing, reduces anxiety and anaesthetic need, and creates a more equitable, child-centred hospital experience tailored to individual needs.

Leeds Trinity University

Leeds Trinity University, led by Amanda Jefferson and her team, partnered with Child Friendly Leeds to deliver the 'Give it a Go' SEND event free of charge. Hosting and staffing the event, and engaging university students, they enabled over 100 SEND pupils and staff from across Leeds to explore accessible sports and activities shaped directly by young people's voices.



Little Owls Hunslet Rylestone

Little Owls Hunslet Rylestone is an inclusive early years setting that creates a safe, nurturing environment where every child feels valued. Through child centred practice, creative play and strong family partnerships, the team supports wellbeing, inclusion and development, helping children thrive emotionally, socially and physically while strengthening families and the wider community.



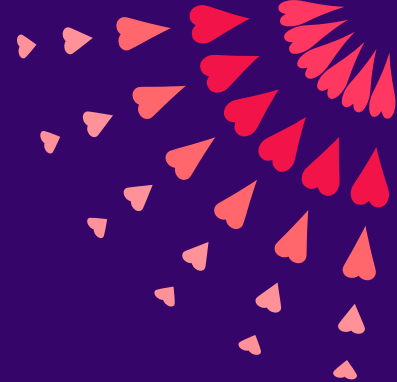
MyLahore

MyLahore restaurant group is a family run restaurant chain that actively supports Child Friendly Leeds through generous community involvement. Partnering with Leeds City Council, they sponsored and hosted a special Eid celebration for care experienced young people, providing food, activities and a welcoming space that promoted inclusion, cultural celebration and positive social connection for children and young people.

Trinity Leeds Shopping Centre

Trinity Leeds shows sustained commitment to Child Friendly Leeds through inclusive city centre activities, school holiday programmes and Baby Week engagement. Nationally, its Landsec Futures programme supports care experienced young people with employability opportunities, including work experience, interview preparation and apprenticeships, helping widen access to education, employment and long term opportunities for underrepresented young people.



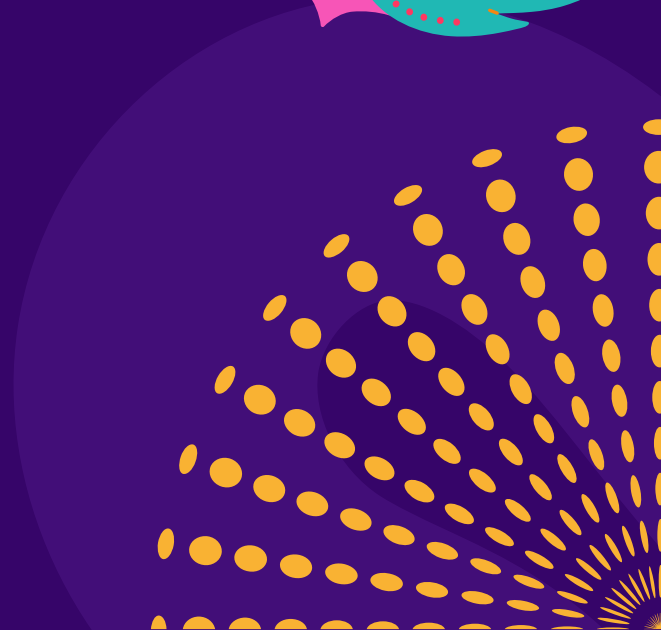


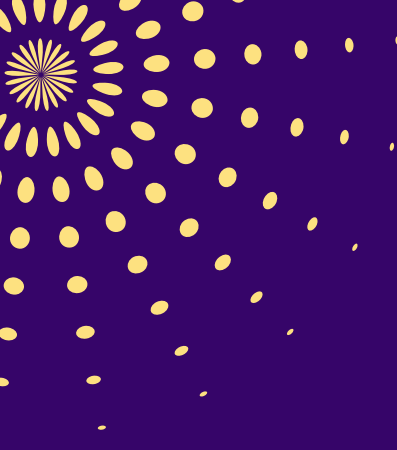
We invite individuals and businesses alike to join us in our mission to create a city where children and young people can thrive.

Whether through sponsorship, facilitating enrichment opportunities, attending events, or promoting Child Friendly Leeds through your channels, every contribution makes a difference.

THANK YOU

for being part of our journey to make Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in.





 www.wearechildfriendlyleeds.com

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