



2025 ANNUAL REPORT





Introducing the team

'Child Friendly Leeds' is our citywide approach to working in partnership to improve outcomes for children, young people and families, this report focuses on the work led by the Child Friendly Leeds team:



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Children's Strategy & Influence Lead



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Introduction to CFL



The work of Child Friendly Leeds (CFL) is central to the Children and Young People Plan and is driven by the question “What is it like to be a child in Leeds, and how can we make it better?” CFL’s network of 800 ambassadors are crucial in driving forwards change and work with us to help make Leeds the best city to grow up in.

As part of the Children and Families Directorate (LCC), our work and CFL Wishes align with the Children and Young People’s Plan and its 5 outcomes, that all children and young people...

1. are safe from harm
2. do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life
3. enjoy healthy lives
4. have fun growing up
5. are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence

Communications



Facebook



followers **14.2k**
up 1.3k (10%) from 2024

views **1.4M**
up 656K (88%) from 2024

interactions **6.9k**
down 3.9k (36%) from 2024

link clicks **2.9K**
(new measure)

Instagram



followers **5.7k**
up 1.2K (26%) from 2024

views **281.7k**
(new measure)

content interactions
2.8K
(new measure)

Twitter / X

followers **12.8k**
Less active on platform
down 600 (4%)

LinkedIn



followers **1,426**
up 580 (68%) from 2024

impressions
50,878
up 22.6k (80%) from 2024

members reactions
1,832
up 1005 (121%) from 2024

Logo Update

The team have developed Child Friendly Leeds logos in new colourways, to ensure they are in line with updated web-accessibility guidelines



34.1k
total followers



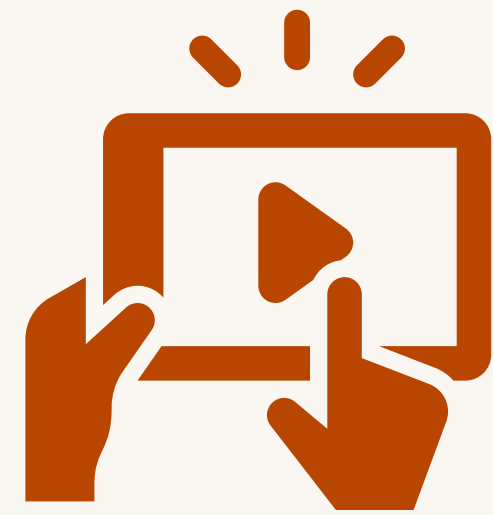
1.7M
total reach

CFL blog



In addition to our main website aimed at partners, we have a blog aimed at children young people and families in Leeds.

<https://wearechildfriendlyleeds.com>



52.2K
views
+ 16.9k (48%)
from 2024



12.8k
visits from
search engines
+ 6k (88%)
from 2024



26.5k
visitors
+ 8.4k (46%)
from 2024



57
blog posts
written
+ 6 (11%)
from 2024

The top blog on CFL's wordpress site was the summer guide to free/low-cost things to do, viewed 10.7K times.

Child Friendly Leeds
SUMMER GUIDE
to free and low-cost* things to do

Like a place you visited? Nominate them to win the Child Friendly Leeds 'Best Place' award here:
<https://surveys.leeds.gov.uk/s/cfchildrenschoice/>

ALL SUMMER

23 Jul - 21 Aug Breeze in the Park!
Breeze is back, visiting 26 parks across the city, including 12 relaxed sessions for children with SEND!
From giant inflatables to amazing entertainment, arts, crafts, games, sports, library buses and more, Breeze in the Park is the ultimate day out for children in Leeds for just £!
21 of the events will have a school uniform exchange stand!

26 Jul - 31 Aug Wonderland Awaits
Mondays to Saturday 10:00 to 16:00; Sundays 11:00 to 16:00
This summer, the city will be taken over with characters and scenes from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland! Maps can be picked up in the city centre, and there are 7 locations to visit! Along the way, you can also stop at...

Summer of Whimsical Crafts!
Brand new craft activities each week in Trinity Leeds, LS1, 11:00 to 17:00 daily.

Summer colouring!
John Lewis Community Hub on the 4th floor, LS2, colouring available from 13:00 to 15:00

You can sign-up for the Summer Reading challenge from 5th July!

Sign up to Healthy Holidays - free activities and meals for children on Free School Meals

Kids eat FREE in the John Lewis dining area this summer!

Free shoe fittings for children at John Lewis throughout

As always, full details and booking links can be found on the Child Friendly Leeds blog.

FULL DETAILS

July

- The Thing about Happiness**
Leeds Playhouse, LS2, 18:00 start, booking required, pay what you can
- Gledhow Valley Green Fair**
11:00 to 16:00, drop-in
- Facepainting**
Kirkgate Markets, LS2, 11:00 to 15:00, free, drop-in.
- Kirkstall Valley Explorers***
24 Kirkstall Valley Farm, LS5, 10:30 to 13:30, £4 to £7, booking online
- Thor's Let's Create Tables**
31 Thor's Tipi City Square, LS1, 13:00 to 15:00, drop-in
- Miffy Storytime**
Leeds City Museum, LS2, 30-min slots at 10, 11:30 and 13:30, pay what you can from £0, drop-in
- Lego, Duplo, colouring**
Kirkgate Markets, LS2, 11:00 to 15:00, drop-in
- Kitty + Custard Club Nursery Rhyme**
Kirkgate Markets, LS2, 13:00 to 13:30, drop-in
- We ART Seacroft Festival**
Seacroft Village Green LS14, 12:00 to 15:00 free, drop-in
- Story Gardens - Summer Reading challenge begins!**
Sign-up at your nearest Community Library!
- The Wizard of Oz (U)**
17 Hyde Park Picture House, LS5, 11/11:30 check times, pay what you can, autism friendly screening
- Balloon modelling**
Kirkgate Markets, LS2, 11:00 to 15:00,

28 - 1 RJC Summer Dance Camp
Mandela Centre, LS7, 10:30 to 12:30, must attend each day

28 Mini mixology @ Festival of Fun!
White Rose Shopping Centre, LS11, sessions at 12, 13:00, 14:00 & 15:00, £4

28 - 5 Wrongsemble: Breadcrumbs*
Multiple libraries, LS2, 10:30 & 13:30, pay what you can, booking required

29 - 31 Circus School
Kirkgate Markets, LS2, 11:00 to 15:00, free, drop-in

29 - 30 North Leeds Music Summer Club*
North Leeds Music Centre, LS17, 10:00 to 12:30, £10 for 2 days, booking online

29 & 30 Make a Miffy Wand
Leeds City Museum, LS2, 10:00 to 15:00, pay what you can from £0

29 - 1 4 Day Orchestra Beginner Club*
Kirkstall Valley Music Centre, LS17 & Horsforth Music Centre, LS18, 10:00 to 12:30, £20 for 4 days, booking online

29 - 31 Kirkstall Valley Explorers*
Kirkstall Valley Farm, LS5, 10:30 to 13:30, £4 to £7, booking online

30 Tooth & Claw workshop
Leeds Discovery Centre, LS10, 10:00 to 12:00, pay what you can from £0, booking online

30 Pot a Plant*
Temple Newsam Walled Gardens, LS15, 13:00 to 15:00, £3, booking required.

31 Magic Shows & Bunny Balloons
Leeds City Museum, LS2, 40-min slots at 11, 13:00 and 14:30, pay what you can

Birds, Bees & B...
Kirkstall Abbey, LS17, 15:00, pay what you can from £0, check opening times

Stories in the S...
Abbey House Mu... LS17, 11:00 to 17:00, pay what you can from £0, check opening times

Poo, Glorious P...
Thackray Museum, LS2, 6s free, £9-12, check opening times

Live Music in Le...
Multiple Leeds pa...

Down the R...

£1 Family Cinema White Rose
25 July

Ambassador Network



800 Ambassadors on the Child Friendly Leeds Network
68 recruited in 2025

Private sector

Two Ambassador workshops primarily targeted at businesses.

250

ambassadors in our network

Public sector

This year we connected with over 150 schools.

280

ambassadors in our network

Third sector

This year, our partnership event had a third sector focus

130

ambassadors in our network

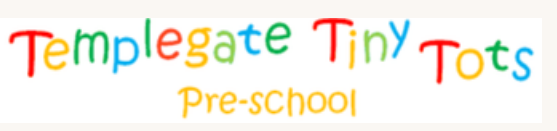
Best practice

The team facilitate the **National Child Friendly Leeds Community of Practice**, sharing learning and good practice with a network of 15 other local authorities who are basing their approach on the Leeds model.

2025 ambassador sign-ups



(not all sign-ups are brand new - some are new individuals signing up from an organisation that we have previously worked with!)



Our 2025 ambassador events



JANUARY

CFL Tree Planting & Networking

Planned a CSR day to volunteer with LCC with ambassadors to plant trees in Leeds.

MARCH

Ambassador Workshop 1

Hosted with WEST SILC Powerhouse bringing 40 ambassadors and partners together to support young people with SEND.

MAY

Give it a Go - School Event

The SEND Sports Day for schools held by Leeds Trinity University bringing partners together and attended by over 80 students.

Be Curious - Family Event

Be Curious - CFL & Buro Happold attended the event with over 2000 at University of Leeds.

JUNE

Ambassador Workshop 2

Focussed on International Day of Play, we brought leaders and community play partners together.

Fostering Workshop

Bringing community partners together to look at how to support fostering recruitment, hosted by Hamara.

700

Ambassadors, Children & Young People attended CFL workshops & partnership events in 2025.

DECEMBER

UoL partnership event

Power of Partnerships event and networking for over 60 attendees with a third sector focus.

Christmas gifting

CFL run the annual Christmas gifting initiative supporting care-experienced families and families experiencing hardship.

NOVEMBER

CFL & Anchors Event

Working with Leeds Anchors and Lloyds, ran event focused on supporting care exp YP futures

Baby Week

CFL support the Baby Week Leeds programme of events with 130 events and the main partner as Thackray Museum.

SEPTEMBER

Partnership Event - Play

CFL partnered Buro Happold to host a Yorkshire wide conference following their work with 500 pupils focussed on transport and design of school streets.

Partnership Youth Event

In October, NSPCC, CFL & Leeds Youth Voice led a red carpet event with WYCA to mark the online safety campaign.



Social Value Impact



Child Friendly Leeds brings together ambassadors from across sectors to support children and young people. We connect businesses, community organisations, and public services with schools and learning settings, enabling them to share skills, resources, and opportunities that enrich education and improve wellbeing. communities, ensuring Leeds is a place where every child can thrive.

In 2025, 810 hours of dedicated ambassador time at workshops, events, and collaborations that raised awareness of key priorities. Focuses included children in care and preparing young people with SEND for adulthood. This work expanded cross-sector connections and brought Leeds closer to its vision of a playful, inclusive city, where children's voices shape real change.

810
hours of staff time

In 2025, ambassadors contributed over £65,000 money-in-kind support from donated resources, free tickets, free venue hire, and skills-based projects to professional expertise that strengthened work across schools and community settings. These contributions enabled wider participation, enhanced learning experiences, and helped Leeds move closer to its vision of an inclusive, playful city where every child feels valued.

£65,000
In-kind from over 30 ambassadors

In 2025, 2300 children and young people directly benefited from ambassador time, workshops, and donated opportunities, giving them access to new experiences, skills, and support. This collective effort strengthened cross-sector partnerships and ensured children's voices continued to shape meaningful change across Leeds.

2300
Children & Young People in Leeds

Child Friendly Leeds Awards



The 10th Child Friendly Leeds Awards will take place in July 2026 recognising the people places, organisations and groups that make a difference and is sponsored by our CFL Ambassadors

Key Highlights:

Youth voice at the heart

In 2025, we recruited 10 young people to plan the awards
They will help plan and host the CFL Awards 2026 at City Varieties

New award categories:

Children's Choice Award for Best Place (formerly Best Place)
The Sue Rumbold Award (formerly Adult Making a Difference):
Pays tribute to Sue Rumbold, Former Lead of Child Friendly Leeds,
Chief Officer for Partnership Development at Leeds City Council

Nominations

836 nominations from children and young people

A total of 1013 nominations received – a 237% increase from 2024!



University of Leeds



CFL Ambassador The University of Leeds Power of Partnerships & Festive Social

We partnered with with CFL Ambassador **University of Leeds** at Nexus, to host two events: Third Sector Workshop and Festive Social networking.

Key highlights:

- 9 Ambassadors recognised for their significant contribution and awarded with CFL Golden Thumb pin by Youth Parliament Member,
- Presentation of current research projects linked to CFL wishes
- Third sector and University colleagues explored partnership working opportunities and pledged their support to work together and strengthen engagement throughout 2026



In 2025, 9 ambassadors were recognised for going above and beyond in making Leeds a Child Friendly City:

Buro Happold, Harewood House, John Lewis, King Pins, Leeds Baby Bank, Northern Rail, NSPCC, Trinity Leeds, and Yorkshire Contemporary

81

Cross Sector
Attendees

£1.7K

In-kind Event
Support

8

New Ambassadors

Buro Happold and CIHT



Buro Happold & Chartered Institution of Highways and Transport (CIHT)

Partnership: CIHT led an initiative with Child Friendly Leeds and STEM Ambassadors from Buro Happold, Systra, PJA, Mott Macdonald, and other highways and transport partners which involved over **500 pupils** from Leeds schools in designing safer, more playful streets.

Their ideas, were gathered during the summer term and shaped discussions at the regional EDI conference and a design hack and final concepts were taken back to schools for students to mark the work.

Outcomes: CIHT and partners are drafting a White Paper to share best practice and develop streets and places for children as well as look at funding opportunities.

Leeds is looking to share these plans to embed the approach in highways and school projects and support schools with quick wins. A summer celebration will showcase designs and bring partners together to commit to improvements.



2025 Strategic Priorities



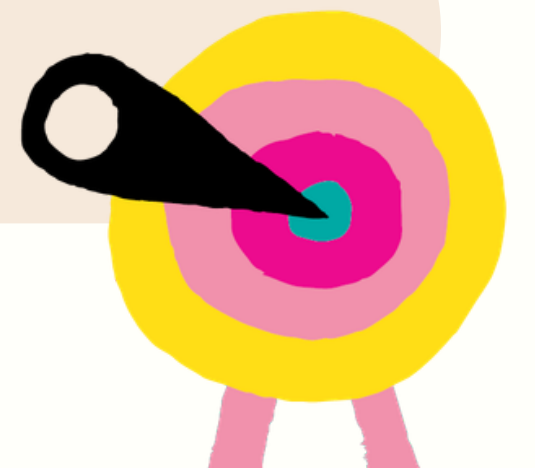
This year, the team focused on working collaboratively to address four strategic priority areas of work

01. The Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes

03. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

02. Play Sufficiency

04. Fostering & Enrichment



1 - The CFL wishes



The 12 wishes represent the voices of 80,000 children/young people ([find out more about the 12 wishes and how they were formed](#)). The team continues to use the wishes as a framework to drive positive change and, in 2025, the CFL team has...

Developed a page per wish on our [blog site](#), with up to 3 blogs per wish each month **viewed 30,542 times**, 20k more than 2024.

51
blogs
posts

30k
views
on
blogs

Added a category to the CFL awards for 'exceptional contribution to the CFL 12 wishes' and received 36 nominations in this category.

36
nominations

Delivered a 12-month communications campaign to raise awareness of the wishes.

116k
reach

Promoted the official **12 Wishes film** made with children and young people viewed by over 500 times.

510
views

The Child Friendly Leeds 12 Wishes

The 12 Wishes represent the voices and priorities of children and young people in Leeds, first created in 2012 and refreshed in 2022 using updated consultation data, consultations and feedback from over 80,000 children and young people.

1. 

Children and young people know how and where to get support for their mental health and wellbeing if they need it.

2. 

Children and young people have safe spaces to play, hang out and have fun.

3. 

Children and young people express their views, feel heard and are involved in decisions that affect their lives.

4. 

Differences are celebrated in Leeds so children and young people feel accepted for who they are. They do not experience bullying and discrimination.

5. 

Everyone takes more action to protect the environment from climate change.

6. 

Children and young people can travel around the city safely and easily.

7. 

Children and young people know about different things to do and places to go across the city. They enjoy different cultural experiences including art, music, sport and film.

8. 

Leeds is a city that reduces the impact of poverty and helps families who need it.

9. 

Children and young people have the support and information needed to make healthy choices. They have opportunities for regular physical activity.

10. 

All children and young people are in learning settings that meet their needs.

11. 

Young people have access to a wide range of work experience, employment and volunteering opportunities.

12. 

Leeds is an inclusive city for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Leeds Ambitions



Healthy: Health and wellbeing

Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for everyone.



Growing: Inclusive growth

Leeds will be a place where we reduce poverty and inequality by creating growth in our economy that works for all.



Thriving: Strong communities

Leeds will be a welcoming, safe and clean city where people have the power to make the changes that are important to them.



Resilient: Sustainable city

Leeds will be the UK's first net zero and nature positive city, rapidly reducing carbon emissions and restoring nature.

The Leeds ambitions aim to tackle poverty and inequality through a 'Team Leeds' approach uniting businesses, communities and partners, with Child Friendly Leeds recognised as one of its four key partnerships. Our work here, aligns with the Leeds Ambitions with a particular focus on the Health and Wellbeing Ambition.

"Ensuring children have the best start in life in a child-friendly city, where they can enjoy a healthy, happy, friendly and safe childhood, and their right to play, have fun and enjoy nature is championed"

Strategic Mapping



The outcomes and wishes of children and young people align with the Leeds Ambitions are mapped below with city-wide work happening to address the priorities.

5 Outcomes Children and Young Peoples Plan 23-28	Child Friendly Leeds Wishes	Leeds Ambitions
1. Safe from harm	2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 3,1	Thriving, Healthy
2. Do well in learning & skills for life	10, 11, 3, 12, 8, 7, 1,9	Growing, Healthy
3. Enjoy healthy lives	1, 9, 5, 6, 8, 12,7	Healthy, Resilient, Thriving
4. Have fun growing up	2, 7, 6, 12, 8, 9	Thriving, Healthy
5. Active citizens with voice & influence	3, 5, 7, 11, 4,	Thriving, Resilient, Growing

In 2025, the Child Friendly Leeds connected with over 30 teams across Leeds City Council on cross-council projects, 12 wishes and campaigns.



Wishes Action Plan



To ensure the wishes lead to action, Child Friendly Leeds also coordinate an internal working group of council officers “wish leads” for each wish who set goals and implement actions to address each wish. Cllr Scopes (CFL portfolio holder) chairs the working group and wish leads are supported by the CFL Team.

In 2025, we collaborated with wish leads to deliver **four ambassador workshops** focused on Wishes 2, 3, 4, 10 11, and 12. A total of 231 ambassadors from diverse sectors attended, pledging to work in partnership to help bring these wishes to life.

231
partners
attended
wishes
workshops

Reporting back on the 2024 to 2025 12 wishes action plan, which wish lead’s updated on progress with their short and long-term goals. [Read the full 2025 action plan here.](#)

33
goals
achieved

CFL wishes presented at Children and Families all staff engagement events, extended leadership events. Wishes workshops with communities team and local partnership meetings and Young Lives Leeds, team sessions with school wellbeing service, learning improvement and virtual school.

Schools & Learning Settings



Leeds for Learning

This year, CFL wrote 17 news articles aimed at educational settings, through the Leeds for Learning channel. They were viewed 14,515 times, (8k more than 2024), with the Summer Guide downloaded 100+ times by schools.

Leeds 12 Wishes Schools Badge

The 'Exceptional Contribution to the Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes' was awarded to 18 schools by a healthy schools assessor during their assessments in 2025 for wish 1, 4 & 10.

17
articles

14k
views

18
schools

3
WISHES

This year we engaged with over 150 schools/ learning settings in Leeds, from visits, projects, competitions and meetings, to signing up as ambassadors.



Early Years - Baby Week



Baby Week marked its 10th anniversary since launching in Leeds and has now expanded to 20 locations across the UK. Across the week, **167 free or low-cost events** were promoted, **attracting around 1,800 attendees**. The national conference brought together 160 delegates at the Leeds Met Hotel, alongside partners such as NSPCC, BookTrust, Boromi, BBC Parenting and the PANDAS Foundation, and featured the launch of the **Leeds Best Start and Beyond Plan** with cross-sector partners working together.

Leeds Libraries

Child Friendly Leeds promoted 34 sessions and showcased Leeds Libraries' free, family-friendly Story & Rhyme sessions and playful spaces for under-fives with 3.4k views on social.

34
sessions
during Baby
Week

Children Centres & Family Hubs

30 free/ low-cost activities were promoted with over 8k views on social media. Events ranged from stay and play, wellbeing, learning and play activities attended by hundreds.

30
sessions
during Baby
Week

Ambassadors from all sectors

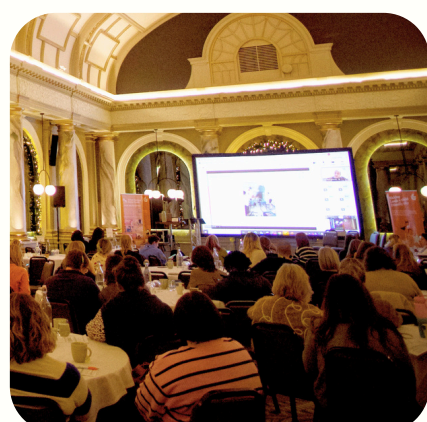
On the website, 76 events in Leeds were added by 70 different partners featuring sensory, play, wellbeing, parental support, fitness classes, arts and culture events, webinars, including a child-friendly takeover of Thackray Museum.

76
events in 70
different
locations

Active Leeds Leisure Centres

27 free and 50p sessions with many attending for the first time. Ranged from baby massage, active sessions, soft play, water sensory and first-aid workshops. Over 14k views on social media and most fully booked.

27
sessions in
Leisure
Centres



"Participating in Baby Week definitely helps us promote our organisation and raise our profile among families, especially in relation to our Early Years services. While our attendance is consistently strong, we always see an increase in numbers during Baby Week. The event also provides a valuable opportunity to collaborate more closely with our external partners and to offer families unique, one-off free sessions."

-Headingley, Horsforth and Ireland Wood Children's Centre Family Services

Leeds Youth Service



Leeds Youth Service - embedding the wishes

The Leeds City Council Youth Service provide playful safe spaces weekly across the city and have embraced the 12 wishes..

In 2025, 3317 youth work sessions focused on a CFL wish with the most sessions focused on Wish 2, 9 and 1.

- All staff now record youth work sessions on Core Plus and link activity to the relevant wish
- Youth workers plan sessions every month based on a different wish- raising awareness of the wishes to thousands of CYP and sharing campaigns and inviting services in to speak to young people.



2 - Play Sufficiency



Play Sufficiency is the ongoing process of research and action to assess, improve and protect children's time, space and permissions for play. Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds lead on this work to bring together policy makers, lead practitioners and strategic partners working within and across professional domains that (directly or indirectly) impact on children's ability to play.



4 **50**
meetings members

- Child Friendly Leeds and Active Leeds lead on the Play Sufficiency Partnership.
- This is a city-wide strategic board consisting of Council cross-directorate.
- Representation, Playful Anywhere CIC, LS14 Trust, Leeds Beckett University, University of Leeds, OPAL and many more.

UK Wide Events

Child Friendly Leeds has shared their trailblazing work on play at a number of national conferences, including:

- National Playwork Conference
- Champions of Childhood, Leeds Trinity University
- Play Sufficiency Webinar Series, Play Wales
- How to Develop Child Friendly Places, Child First Approach, WYCA
- Making Streets Work for Children, Playing Out (Newcastle)
- CFL and CIHT Conference - Streets and Spaces for Children

Publications

- Everything to Play For - Raising the Nation Commission
- House of Commons Library Research Briefing Children, young people and the built environment
- International Play Association Magazine PLAYRIGHTS 2025 Issue
- Enabling play streets in Leeds' priority neighbourhoods: questions of social, spatial and environmental justice - International Journal of Play exploring success of our Play Streets initiative, led by Kidz Klub and LS14 Trust.

National impact



The Raising the National Play Commission

The Commission - Chaired by social entrepreneur and author Paul Lindley in partnership with Baroness Anne Longfield CBE, who leads the Centre for Young Lives - is an inquiry into why play is so critical to children's wellbeing and how a national play strategy can be established.

The inquiry invited organisations from all over the country to submit evidence. Leeds submitted written case studies and also hosted Paul Lindley OBE, Baroness Anne Longfield CBE and Mark Mon Williams (a commissioner for the inquiry) in Leeds to showcase best practice and to highlight specific areas of focus for the Commission's final report.

This involved a visit to the Compton Centre to look at the NESTA partnership project: Play Together, Talk Together and a site visit to Lincoln Green to showcase plans for the new urban play trail.

Leeds Beckett University, Leeds University, Leeds Children's Hospitals and LCC Planning department also shared learning and good practice - highlighting the importance of raising these at a national government level.

Leeds attended the House of Commons parliamentary event to launch the Raising the Nation Interim Report and featured in and influenced the final report.



Play Strategy and Campaigns

We are
**child
friendly
Leeds**



Our Leeds Ambition is for children to have the best start in life in a child-friendly city where they can enjoy a healthy, happy childhood and that their right to play, have fun and enjoy nature, is supported and championed.

Playful Neighbourhoods

- Decision driven by the PSP to remove all 'No Ball Games' signage on Council land. Signage has been removed in three pilot areas of the city.
- Lincoln Green partnership working with Playful Anywhere and Mafwa Theatre to deliver Playbox sessions on the doorstep of high rise accommodation.
- Development of Burmatofts Play Trail

Designing for Play

- Play prioritised as a goal underpinning the city's Health and Well Being Ambition
- Play Sufficiency embedded within Leeds Local Plan 2040. Leeds Local Plan consultation on 'Child Friendly Planning' and 'Play & Recreation' for the first time.
- Provided support and guidance for new play spaces and comments on proposals.

Schools

- Engaged 20+ schools for the International Day of Play and Just One Day Lord Mayor's campaign, providing free 'Day of Play' resources
- Development of resources to help schools prioritise play, including local geography units of work; school council framework and assembly pack here.

100 play streets
400 hours of play

- Led on the Play Streets programme.
- Play Street Enablement partners - Kidz Klub and LS14 Trust
- Delivered over 20 play streets in priority wards

John Jamieson School



- John Jamieson school (East Specialist Inclusion Learning Centre) celebrated the opening of a newly-renovated outdoor space designed to revolutionise play and learning for pupils.
- The Child Friendly Leeds team partnered with the school to support fundraising and in the summer of 2024, the school was successful in securing £3,000 from the Sir George Martin Trust.
- The new additions include an outside café and shop, gardening patch, messy play table, mud kitchen, flower wall, sensory area and sports and gym equipment including light-up scooters.
- New play resources have also been added inside the school, including trampolines in
- breakout spaces for each classroom.



“It’s very exciting to have these new spaces for all our pupils to enjoy. We hope it will encourage the older students to develop work skills and also support them in taking on a mentoring role to younger students who come to use the space too. One of the most exciting purchases has been the trampolines. Every staff member has spoken very highly of the benefits of having trampolines as a very effective regulation tool for the young people.”

Jamie Darby, Head of East SILC school

3 - SEND



The CFL team are supporting the Council in improving outcomes for CYP with SEND. In 2024, they co-led a project called 'Raising Awareness of Hidden Disabilities...What young people want you to know'.

Worked with the Voice Influence and Change team to analyse the words and ideas of 50 young people from 5 different settings. From this analysis, themes and direct quotes from young people were used to create 3 posters.

50
young
people

3
posters

Worked with the Public Health Resource Centre to distribute over 100 posters. The posters are shown in locations such as schools and doctors waiting rooms.

100
posters
distributed

Created and delivered an assembly aimed at Primary age-phase. Offered to deliver it in schools during October and visited 4 schools in this time.

4
assemblies

Developed and launched a campaign page for the project on the CFL blog to tell the story and host the posters.

1.6k
visits

Leeds Trinity University



Give it a Go and Leeds Trinity University

Around 100 children and young people from five schools across Leeds attended a sports day held to widen participation opportunities for school pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at Leeds Trinity University.

- The event was created in response to feedback from students in Leeds' specialist schools, who shared that they wanted more opportunities to explore different activities and discover what they enjoy.
- Participants were able to try cricket, cycling and ping pong, while gym-based sessions and inflatable games were offered too.
- Coaches from Ambassadors Leeds Rhinos Foundation and Leeds United Foundation and PE Partner lent their support by leading on rugby league and football specific activities.



Amanda Jefferson, Senior Teacher and Education, Mental Health and SEND Programme Leader at Leeds Trinity University, said: "We were delighted to host the 'Give it a Go' Sports Day and provide school pupils with an opportunity to get active in a safe and supported environment. Seeing so many children and young people enjoy taking part in sports and physical activities highlighted the positive impact such opportunities can have on their lives."

4 - Fostering & Enrichment



With 1,500 children in care in Leeds, Child Friendly Leeds works alongside Foster4Leeds and our ambassadors to champion fostering and deliver enriching experiences for children, young people, and care leavers across the city.

**Foster
4
Leeds**

We teamed up with CFL ambassadors to create unforgettable experiences from theatre nights to thrilling sporting events, as well as spreading festive cheer through our gifting initiative for care-experienced children, young people, and foster families.

1101
tickets

1953
gifts

1600+
families

Lead quarterly steering group with teams across the council to share learning and maximise reach of CFL enrichment offer.

31
members

After 2024's successful 'Making a Difference to the Lives of Children in Care' workshop, we engaged third-sector ambassadors to drive collaboration, look at ways to recruit foster carers and grow our enrichment offer.

28
attendees

During National Care Leavers Month, we worked in partnership with Lloyds Banking Group and Madlug, to host our "Care Experienced Futures Employer Workshop" bringing together businesses across the city to support work experience, career progression and pledge opportunities for care leavers.

40
attendees

19
pledges

50
Madlug bags
gifted for Care
Leavers Xmas
Dinner

Foster Family offers



In 2025 we recruited **68** new CFL ambassadors.

A key objective was to work with partners to support children and young people in care.

This is a snapshot from **three** of our new ambassadors.



Harewood House hosted a magical festive day out for foster families, many of who had never attended before. Providing a unique experience to see the decorations, play and a chance for foster families to come together.

70
foster families
attended

King Pins committed to deliver 4 complimentary sessions for children in care and their foster carers providing a fun day out of bowling, pizza and laughter.

£1,000
worth of in-kind support

Arcade Club provided a free pass to a young person in care who is a passionate gamer and hosted an after school gaming session for foster families with a view to discuss longer term partnership.

13
children
attended

Tickets and Gifting



Child Friendly Leeds Christmas 2025!

- **An incredible 1,953 gifts worth £28,492.80 were donated in 2025—more than double the previous year's total of 792 gifts worth £14,982.**
- 411 free tickets to festive events were provided by ambassadors including Leeds Rhinos, Leeds Central Library, Northern Lights at Temple Newsam, first direct bank, and Heritage Theatres—saving families £7,843 and giving children access to pantomimes, light trails, shows, and sports.
- All gifts and tickets were distributed through Leeds City Council and Child Friendly Leeds partners to reach those who needed them most, including school clusters, social care, youth justice, foster carers, care leavers, and Gypsy Roma and refugee families.



Thank you for making my kids, Christmas. This year has been so hard - any spare money has gone towards paying bills. I was scared about Christmas, but this has restored my faith - my babies have all got something that they LOVE and I cannot thank you enough. So, from one mum, thank you for making Christmas easier. I'm actually looking forward to them opening their presents now and that's because of you." - **Parent**

Eid Party - MyLahore



MyLahore Leeds British Asian Kitchen

- CFL Ambassador MyLahore partnered with Leeds City Council to host a special Eid celebration for care-experienced young people, sponsoring over £1,000 and supporting on the night.
- The event brought together 65 young people and 13 staff for an evening of games, a four-course meal, and cultural celebration, with gifts and prizes provided by Park Square Barristers and Scent Salim.
- Cllr Helen Hayden and MP Alex Sobel attended to speak with the young people, highlighting the importance of inclusion and community during religious festivals.



65
young people
attended

£1000
In-kind
contribution

“So actually, my Eid was boring last week. I didn't even get to wear my makeup on my dress, but today, it's a good event. Oh, thank you as well for organizing this, this is so nice. I get to meet my friends and other people who haven't seen for long, so it was such a nice time. Thank you all and the food was so good. It was delicious.” - Young person attending Eid Party 2025

Care Leaver offers



Supporting Care Leavers

Child Friendly Leeds Ambassadors supported care leavers throughout 2025 with a range of opportunities and resources.

Highlights include:

- Care Leavers Celebration: Donations of vouchers and prizes.
- Archway Summer Boxing Camp: Supported by donated vouchers. 27 young people registered, with 15 attending all sessions and 5 taking part in activities for the first time.
- Gifts for young families: Practical support for care leavers with children.
- Free event tickets: Including the Gracie Abrams concert at First Direct Arena.
- Piano donation: From the Leeds International Piano Competition to expand musical opportunities.
- Poetry workshop pilot: Delivered at Archway to inspire creativity and youth voice.



Ambassadors donated over £1500 in vouchers, prizes and practical gifts for care leavers.

British Library



The British Library

- In November 2025, CFL Ambassador the British Library worked with Childrens Social care and care experienced young people to develop and launch The Comic Book Thing: Our Story, a vibrant digital comic anthology created by care-experienced young people aged 15–25, exploring identity, resilience, and personal journeys.
- The project reflects Child Friendly Leeds' commitment to Wish 3—ensuring children and young people express their views, feel heard, and influence decisions—by giving them a platform to share their own stories creatively.
- A free digital version of the anthology is available on the We Are Child Friendly Leeds blog, making these powerful voices accessible to everyone.



“The Comic Book Thing is more than a book — it’s a platform for young voices that are often unheard,” said one young contributor. “We hope it makes you happy and gives you clarity on the care experience.”

Participant

Strategic Priorities 2026



- **Help tackle social exclusion and inequality of opportunity** by promoting our Wish 8 supporting families guide and free/low cost activity guides and **expand our enrichment partnership offer** to care experienced CYP and families facing disadvantage.
- **Prioritising CYP and family voice in reforms**, implementation of young futures and children and families transformation priority work – SEND and alternative provision, family help and early support and stable and sustainable care.
- **Continue embedding CFL wishes and play sufficiency principles** in practice policy and strategy across Leeds City Council Directorates.
- **Increase engagement and number of families reached** via our communication channels, raising awareness of services, activities and opportunities for families.
- Targeting new CFL Ambassadors and developing community partnerships to support **Fostering Recruitment and Retention** and **placement stability**.
- Recruit Ambassadors to **support care leavers with setting up home**.
- **Increase reach of the 'raising awareness of disabilities' campaign developed with CYP**
- **Demonstrating impact** through case studies, blogs and social media posts aligned with CFL Wishes, Children and Young People's Plan and Leeds Ambitions.

Partnership Plans 2026



- Strengthening Team Leeds Partnerships by working with **Age Friendly Leeds** and Ambassadors to deliver a citywide neighbourhood play campaign.
- Working with the **Anchor network** on promoting fostering and work experience and employment opportunities for care experienced young people
- Coordinating and promoting **Leeds 400** learning activities with schools and communities.
- Growing the **national Child Friendly Community of Practice** and developing an offer to support local authorities adopting the Leeds approach.
- Increase **third-sector ambassadors** benefiting from the annual gifting drive & enrichment opportunities.



Ambassadors receiving a Gold Pin in 2025

Key activities 2026



Children, families & communities

- Just One Day - Lord Mayor and CFL campaign for schools
- Give it a Go Event for students with SEND
- Child Friendly Leeds Awards
- Leeds 400 - time capsule campaign / calendar activities
- Trivial Pursuit takeover
- Babyweek
- Implement plans to increase number of foster carers from diverse backgrounds
- Use feedback from care experienced CYP and foster carer insight group to develop Ambassador offers

Play & Neighbourhoods

- Facilitate 100 resident-led Play Streets, focusing on priority wards
- Launch designing for play guidance with flagship pilot
- Deliver play streets & play sufficiency training for elected members
- Deliver a citywide neighbourhood play campaign with young people and Ambassadors
- Secure funding for play programmes and projects
- Report on the impact and learning of the 3-year play street enablement project

Ambassadors & Networks

- Refresh Ambassador database and launch a new engagement dashboard
- Award Golden thumbs
- Promote Leeds University 12 wishes research report
- Grow Ambassador network by +100 and deliver programme of partnership events linked to the wishes
- Map LCC directorate engagement with CFL Wishes
- Promote the communications toolkit to increase use of the CFL branding
- 12 wishes ambassador workshops and campaigns

A big thank you

from Child Friendly Leeds

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