



**Children's Court
Guardian Agency**
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Business Plan 2026-27

Business Plan 2026-27

This Business Plan sets out objectives for the Agency for 2026-27, aligned to its Strategic Plan.

The Board of the Children's Court Guardian Agency has agreed a 5-year Strategic Plan for the years 2023-28.

Each year the Agency produces a Business Plan to explain what it will do to deliver on its Strategic Plan over the next 12 months. The following Business Plan is for year 4 of its Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan 2023-28 can be found at the link below:

[Publications | Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland](#)



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Business Plan Objectives for 2026-27

The Board of the Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland has agreed the objectives set out below for the coming financial year. The objectives are set out under the strategic themes agreed by the Board.

Strategic Theme	Strategic Objectives	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Timescale for completion
1. Children and Young People	We will develop and implement an engagement strategy for children and young people.	By March 2027, reduce the number of unallocated cases by 25% and implement a case management system that ensures that no child or young person waits over 150 days for allocation.	March 2027
	We will ensure that children and young peoples voices are fully represented in the Court.	By March 2027 100% of year 1 implementation of the Children and Young People Engagement Strategy Action Plan.	March 2027
	We will use a co-production methodology to include children and young people’s views in improving our practice and service.	By March 2027 complete review and refresh of Children and Young people feedback tools with learning implemented.	March 2027



Strategic Theme	Strategic Objectives	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Timescale for completion	
2.	We will support the health and wellbeing of our staff.	By March 2027, review staff well-being supports and continue to monitor impact.	March 2027	
	Support to Staff	We will support staff through learning and development opportunities to provide a quality service to children and young people.	By January 2027, implement the revised case grading system to enhance equity, efficiency and transparency of workflow.	January 2027
		We will embed the HSC collective leadership model to support collaborative working and team culture.	By March 2027, develop and implement an agency communication strategy.	March 2027
		By March 2027, complete scoping of staff development needs to inform a Learning and Improvement Strategy.	March 2027	
		By March 2027, implement learning from 25/26 staff surveys in regards to Continuous Improvement.	March 2027	
		Through collective leadership, by March 2027, develop an operational team meeting culture.	March 2027	

Strategic Theme	Strategic Objectives	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Timescale for completion
<p>3.</p> <p>Systems and Processes</p>	<p>We will continually review and improve our systems and processes to ensure they are efficient and effective to support the delivery of a high-quality service to children and young people</p>	<p>By January 2027 complete discovery phase of a new case management system.</p>	<p>January 2027</p>
	<p>We will continue to improve the collection, collation and evaluation of our data to influence better outcomes for children and young people</p>	<p>By March 2027, implement actions and recommendations arising from agency audit of core processes to deliver a quality service.</p>	<p>March 2027</p>
		<p>By date agreed with BSO internal audit implement actions and recommendations arising from their audits.</p>	<p>Date to be agreed with BSO</p>
		<p>By October 2026 critically review findings and implement accepted recommendations arising from the 25/26 corporate and administrative workforce planning review.</p>	<p>October 2026</p>



Strategic Theme	Strategic Objectives	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Timescale for completion of objective
<p>4.</p> <p>Influencing</p>	<p>We will use opportunities to promote the role of the agency and to influence policy and practice to improve the lives of children and young people.</p>	<p>By March 2027 enhance collaboration with stakeholders through regular structured engagement and measurable improvements in annual stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of joint working.</p> <p>By December 2026 improved data-informed decision-making culture across the organisation.</p> <p>By March 2027 aligned to the new communication strategy, harness social media to engage new and existing stakeholders.</p>	<p>March 2027</p> <p>December 2026</p> <p>March 2027</p>



Key Performance Indicators for 2026-27

For each objective in the 26/27 Business plan, the Board of the Children’s Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland has agreed specific KPIs set out in this section.

KPIs provide a clear and measurable way of assessing how effectively the Agency is at delivering on its strategic and operational objectives. They translate the commitments set out in this Business Plan into quantifiable measures that enable the Board, Senior leadership team and staff to monitor progress, identify risks, and ensure accountability across all areas of work.

KPIs support a culture of evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement, offering timely insight into performance trends, pressure points and areas requiring support or intervention. They help ensure that the work undertaken by the Agency remains aligned to the Strategic Plan 2023–28 and to the statutory responsibilities set out for the Children’s Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland.

Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Aligned KPIs	Owner(s)
<p>1.</p> <p>Children and Young People</p>	<p>By March 2027, reduce the number of unallocated cases by 25% and implement a case management system that ensures that no child or young person waits over 150 days for allocation.</p>	<p>Quarterly data regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals, • Number of cases allocated, • Total unallocated case numbers (number by triaged status), • Unallocated cases numbers over 150 days (by triaged status and number of waiting days) • case closures. 	<p>Assistant Director</p>
	<p>By March 2027 100% of year 1 implementation of the Children and Young People Engagement Strategy Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of actions in the Children and Young People Engagement Strategy Year 1 Action Plan completed spanning Governance & Participation, Feedback, & Engagement and Visibility & Communication. 	<p>Assistant Director</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained participation and ongoing feedback from Youth board members involved in the year 1 action plan process evidenced through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth Engagement Satisfaction: ≥80% satisfaction in annual survey. -Participation Rate: ≥75% attendance across all Youth Board activities. 	<p>Assistant Director</p>



By March 2027 complete review and refresh of Children and Young people feedback tools with learning implemented

-Website Engagement: at least 100 visits per quarter to Youth Board section.

-Induction Completion: 100% of new members inducted within 4 weeks.

- 100% distribution of feedback tools to eligible Children and Young people.
- 80% of eligible Children and Young people provide feedback.
- Annual feedback from youth board to agency board.

Assistant Director



Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Aligned KPIs	Owner(s)
<p>2.</p> <p>Support to Staff</p>	<p>By March 2027, review staff well-being supports and continue to monitor impact.</p> <p>By January 2027, implement the revised case grading system to enhance equity, efficiency and transparency of workflow.</p> <p>By March 2027, develop and implement an agency communication strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% delivery of People and well-being committee action plan. • Trend analysis in annual staff well-being data. • Achieve HSC target rate of sickness absence rates. • 100% of managers feeding back regarding allocation capacity and equity of caseloads. • 100% of guardians involved in the pilot feeding back regarding application of the revised model • Communication strategy and action plan approved by board. • 100% completion of year 1 actions contained in the agency communication strategy. 	<p>Head of Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Director</p> <p>Head of Corporate Services</p>



By March 2027, complete scoping of staff development needs to inform a Learning and Improvement Strategy.

By March 2027, implement learning from 25/26 staff surveys in regards to Continuous Improvement.

Through collective leadership, by March 2027, develop an operational team meeting culture.

- 100% engagement with all staff regarding development needs analysis (appraisal audit, team meetings etc.).
- Completion of staff training needs analysis report.
- 100% staff compliance with mandatory training.

- Complete analysis of IIP measures to target areas of improvement.
- Complete analysis of staff pulse surveys to target areas of improvement.
- Complete Training Needs Analysis to target areas of improvement.

- Hold at least 3-minuted team meetings across the workforce annually.
- Annual analysis of feedback on team meetings leading to an action plan.

**Head of Corporate Services
&
Assistant Director**

**Head of Corporate Services
&
Assistant Director**

**Head of Corporate Services
&
Assistant Director**



Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Aligned KPIs	Owner(s)
<p>3.</p> <p>Systems and Processes</p>	<p>By January 2027 complete discovery phase of a new case management system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly RAG project updates to board 	<p>Head of Corporate Services</p>
	<p>By March 2027, implement actions and recommendations arising from agency audit of core processes to deliver a quality service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of agency audit recommendations implemented within agreed timescales. 	<p>Assistant Director</p>
	<p>By date agreed with BSO internal audit implement actions and recommendations arising from their audits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% implementation of all internal audit recommendations within timescale agreed with BSO. 	<p>Head of Corporate Services</p>
	<p>By October 2026 critically review findings and implement accepted recommendations arising from the 25/26 corporate and administrative workforce planning review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of accepted recommendations implemented/ partially implemented. Submission of progress report to mid-point and end of year board meeting. Minimum of 50% engagement of staff with the workforce planning review process. 	<p>Head of Corporate Services</p>



Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	Aligned KPIs	Owner(s)
<p>4.</p> <p>Influencing</p>	<p>By March 2027 enhance collaboration with stakeholders through regular structured engagement and measurable improvements in annual stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of joint working.</p> <p>By March 2027 improved data-informed decision-making culture across the organisation.</p> <p>By March 2027 aligned to the new communication strategy, harness social media to engage new and existing stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% increase in number of feedback responses from Stakeholders compared to 25/26 and evaluation of feedback. Minimum of 70% of responses rated satisfactory/better. 100% of all stakeholder feedback is reviewed and evaluated to ensure that decision making is Data informed in order to drive organisational improvement. Report social media engagement analytics. 	<p>Assistant Director</p> <p>Head of Corporate Services & Assistant Director</p> <p>Head of Corporate Services</p>



Outcome Based Accountability for 2026-27

For each objective in the 26/27 Business plan, the Board of the Children’s Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland has agreed an outcome-based assessment statement.

Outcome-Based Accountability (OBA), is a structured performance management framework designed to improve decision-making, service delivery, and measurable impact. By emphasising results rather than activities, OBA ensures that strategic planning, operational processes and decision-making are directly linked to meaningful improvements for children and young people availing of the court system in Northern Ireland. It promotes accountability across the organisation by making performance transparent and continuously monitored through data-driven indicators. By integrating OBA into this business plan, CCGANI reinforces its focus on achieving results that are not only ambitious, but trackable, measurable, and sustainable.

Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	OBA
<p>1.</p> <p>Children and Young People</p>	<p>By March 2027, reduce the number of unallocated cases by 25% and implement a case management system that ensures that no child or young person waits over 150 days for allocation.</p> <p>By March 2027 100% of year 1 implementation of the Children and Young People Engagement Strategy Action Plan.</p> <p>By March 2027 complete review and refresh of Children and Young people feedback tools with learning implemented</p>	<p>Children and Young people experience a shorter timeframe for final decision-making within the Northern Ireland Court System.</p> <p>Young people feel empowered to influence and shape CCGNI so that it best meets their needs.</p> <p>Young people feel empowered to influence and shape CCGNI so that it best meets their needs.</p>



Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	OBA
<p>2.</p> <p>Support to staff</p>	<p>By March 2027, review staff well-being supports and continue to monitor impact.</p> <p>By January 2027, implement the revised case grading system to enhance equity, efficiency and transparency of workflow.</p> <p>By March 2027, develop and implement an agency communication strategy.</p> <p>By March 2027, complete scoping of staff development needs to inform a Learning and Improvement Strategy.</p>	<p>Staff experience improved well-being and feel supported by accessible, effective and responsive organisational well-being arrangements.</p> <p>Children and Young People experience shorter waiting times for final decision-making within the Northern Ireland Court System.</p> <p>Staff and stakeholders receive regular, clear and consistent information resulting in improved understanding, engagement and confidence in the Agency.</p> <p>Strengthens staff capability, confidence, and organisational resilience to improve service quality, consistency and outcomes for children and young people in the Northern Ireland Court System.</p>



By March 2027, implement learning from 25/26 staff surveys in regards to Continuous Improvement.

Through collective leadership, by March 2027, develop an operational team meeting culture.

Staff feedback is actively used to drive continuous improvement, resulting in visible changes to the Agency's practice, performance, and improvement staff experience.

A positive and inclusive operational team culture is embedded through collective leadership, supporting staff engagement and effective delivery of services.



Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	OBA
<p data-bbox="177 412 280 510">3.</p> <p data-bbox="177 607 376 696">Systems and Processes</p>	<p data-bbox="517 389 911 533">By January 2027 complete discovery phase of a new case management system.</p> <p data-bbox="517 689 935 999">By March 2027, implement actions and recommendations arising from agency audit of core processes to deliver a quality service</p> <p data-bbox="517 1155 879 1411">By date agreed with BSO internal audit implement actions and recommendations arising from their audits.</p> <p data-bbox="517 1581 935 1948">By October 2026 critically review findings and implement accepted recommendations arising from the 25/26 corporate and administrative workforce planning review.</p>	<p data-bbox="967 389 1382 582">Improves service quality, consistency and outcomes for children and young people in the Northern Ireland Court System.</p> <p data-bbox="967 696 1378 929">Findings of audits of core processes are addressed, resulting in strengthened controls, improved service quality and increased Agency assurance.</p> <p data-bbox="967 1162 1393 1417">Audit learning is embedded into practice resulting in improved compliance with standards and increased confidence in governance and risk management arrangements.</p> <p data-bbox="967 1588 1417 1861">Corporate & Administrative workforce arrangements are; fit for purpose, sustainable and aligned to organisational needs, supporting effective service delivery and organizational resilience.</p>



Strategic Theme	SMART Business plan Objectives for 26/27	OBA
<p>4.</p> <p>Influencing</p>	<p>By March 2027 enhance collaboration with stakeholders through regular structured engagement and measurable improvements in annual stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of joint working.</p> <p>By December 2026 improved data-informed decision-making culture across the organisation.</p> <p>By March 2027 aligned to the new communication strategy, harness social media to engage new and existing stakeholders.</p>	<p>Strengthens collaboration with key stakeholders to improve service quality, consistency and outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Improved organisational performance and outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Strengthens awareness, transparency and connection across the organisation improving service quality, consistency and outcomes for children and young people.</p>



Operational Monitoring of Business Plan Objectives in 2026-27

The Objectives outlined in the Business Plan above will be the priorities and focus of the Agency during 2026-27.

Progress will be reported at every meeting to the Board via the Agency Business Plan action plan which outlines achievement against each objective and the Quarterly Operations Report which creates transparency within the agency.

As part of the fulfillment of these objectives there are a number of business as usual activities in which the Agency will engage, which include representation at key strategic fora to ensure staff are up to date with key issues in respect of Social Work Practice; Health and Social Care policies and procedures which relate to the Agency work, as well as opportunities to inform and influence from the unique perspective of the Agency's work.

This includes representation on the following:

- 4 Nations Shared Learning Forum
- ALB Finance Forum
- ARIS Adoption Development Group
- BSO ALB Customer Forum
- BSO Equality Forum
- Expert Reference Group, DSA Strategy
- Chief Social Worker Forum for Organisations other than HSC Trusts
- Children's Social Care Services Strategic Reform Board
- COPAB
- CORU/HSCT/SCC Dual Registration Forum
- CSIB Principal Practitioners Legal Issues Group
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-30, Expert Reference Group
- Family Court Pilot Task and Finish Group
- HSC Information Governance Advisory Group
- Inter-Agency Legal Child Care Legal Issues Group
- NI Court & Tribunal Service – Court User Group
- NISCC PiP Partnership Committee
- NISCC Social Care Research Innovation Strategic Group
- Principal Practitioner Forum meetings
- Regional ALB CX Forum
- SBNI Board
- SBNI Child Protection Sub-Committee
- SBNI Governance Sub-Committee



- Shadow Family Justice Board, including Delay subgroup
- Social Work Leadership Framework Employers Implementation Team
- Social Work Leadership Framework Strategic Forum
- Social Work Workforce Implementation Board (SWWIB)

Please see overleaf business plan action reporting template for monitoring purposes in 26/27.



Business Plan Action Reporting Template 2026-27

Version	Date
V1.0	

Key for RAG rating-

	Progress made on/ track
	Progress limited/ not on track
	Not started

Updates in **BLUE**

Key Strategic Theme: Transformation

Strategic Drivers: Improvement
Culture
Data

Key areas: Children and Young People,
Support to staff,
Systems and Influencing



Strategic Theme 1 Children and Young People Objectives

1. We will develop and implement an engagement strategy for and with children and young people
2. We will ensure that children and young people's voices are fully represented in Court
3. We use a co-production methodology to include children and young people's views in improving our practice and the service.

	Business Plan 26-27	Action	Lead	Date for completion	Progress	RAG rating
1.	By March 2027, reduce the number of unallocated cases by 25% and implement a case management system that ensures that no child or young person waits over 150 days for allocation.			March 2027		
2	By March 2027 100% of year 1 implementation of the Children and Young People Engagement Strategy Action Plan.			March 2027		
3	By March 2027 complete review and refresh of Children and Young people feedback tools with learning implemented.			March 2027		



Strategic Objective 2 – Support to staff

Objectives

1. We will support the health and wellbeing of our staff
2. We will support staff through learning and development opportunities to provide a quality service to children and young people
3. We will embed the HSC collective leadership model to support collaborative working and team culture

	Business Plan 26-27	Action	Lead	Date for completion	Progress	RAG rating
4.		By March 2027, review staff well-being supports and continue to monitor impact.		March 2027		
5.		By January 2027, implement the revised case grading system to enhance equity, efficiency and transparency of workflow.		January 2027		
6.		By March 2027, develop and implement an agency communication strategy.		March 2027		
7.		By March 2027, complete scoping of staff development needs to inform a Learning and Improvement Strategy.		March 2027		



8.	By March 2027, implement learning from 25/26 staff surveys in regards to Continuous Improvement.			March 2027		
9.	Through collective leadership, by March 2027, develop an operational team meeting culture.			March 2027		



Strategic Objective 3 Systems and process

Objectives

1. We will continually review and improve our systems and processes to ensure they are efficient and effective to support the delivery of a high-quality service to children and young people
2. We will continue to improve the collection, collation and evaluation of our data to influence better outcomes for children and young people
3. We will seek to optimize the use of our resources to achieve a high-quality service for children and young people.

	Business Plan 26-27	Action	Lead	Date for completion	Progress	RAG rating
10.	By January 2027 complete discovery phase of a new case management system.			January 2027		
11.	By March 2027, implement actions and recommendations arising from agency audit of core processes to deliver a quality service.			March 2027		
12.	By date agreed with BSO internal audit implement actions and recommendations arising from their audits.			Date agreed by BSO		
13.	By October 2026 critically review findings and implement accepted recommendations arising from the 25/26 corporate and administrative workforce planning review.			Oct 2026		



Strategic Objective 4 Influencing

Objectives

1. We will use opportunities to promote the role of the agency and to influence policy and practice to improve the lives of children and young people.

	Business Plan 26-27	Action	Lead	Date for completion	Progress	RAG rating
14.	By March 2027 enhance collaboration with stakeholders through regular structured engagement and measurable improvements in annual stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of joint working.			March 2027		
15.	By December 2026 improved data-informed decision-making culture across the organisation.			December 2026		
16.	By March 2027 aligned to the new communication strategy, harness social media to engage new and existing stakeholders.			March 2027		

