



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



# Business Plan 2025-26

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**This Business Plan sets out the objectives for the Agency for 2025-26 of 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. The following Business Plan is for year 3 of its Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan 2023-28 can be found here

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



# Objectives for 2025-26

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



Strategic Theme	Objectives	Timescale for completion of objective	Owner
<b>1.</b>  <b>Children and Young People</b>	<p>We will develop and implement an engagement strategy for children and young people.</p> <p>We will ensure that children and young peoples voices are fully represented in the Court.</p> <p>We will use a co-production methodology to include children and young people's views in improving our practice and service.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Action Plan to support the implementation of the Engagement Strategy with children and young people.</li> </ul>	April 25	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our engagement with children and young people to ensure their voice is heard in our Court Reports and ensure their feedback about their experience of the Agency is reflected in our case recordings, supervision, staff appraisals and Professional Standards.</li> </ul>	September 25	

Strategic Theme	Objectives	Timescale for completion of objective	Owner
<b>2.</b>  <b>Support to Staff</b>	We will support staff through learning and development opportunities to provide a quality service to children and young people.		
	We will support the health and wellbeing of our staff.		
	We will embed the HSC collective leadership model to support collaborative working and team culture.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to access Lena and other resources and ensure that through the work of our Health and Safety Committee we support our staff's health and well-being.</li> </ul>	March 26	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure equity of caseloads through the continued application and review of our Case Grading System.</li> </ul>	March 25	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will establish a working group involving Corporate, Management and Operational Staff to develop and embed a communication strategy within the Agency which will reflect our commitment to supervision, regular team and Service</li> </ul>	June 25	

	meetings, and opportunities to celebrate and recognize staff achievements.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>We will develop and implement a Learning and Development strategy for all staff to ensure they can fulfill their job and enhance their skills and abilities.</li></ul>	September 25	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>We will continue to ensure an inclusive approach with all our staff where they are the change agents who lead on initiatives and orchestrate improvement within the Agency to deliver on our collective improvement agenda.</li></ul>	March 26	



Strategic Theme	Objectives	Timescale for completion of objective	Owner
<b>3.</b>  <b>Systems</b> <b>Compliance</b> <b>Efficiency</b> <b>Effectiveness</b>	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.		
	We will continue to improve the collection, collation and evaluation of our data to influence better outcomes for children.		
	We will seek to optimize the use of our resources to achieve a high-quality service for children and young people		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will undertake a discovery phase to identify our needs and agree the specification for an upgrade to our Guardian Case Information System.</li> </ul>	September 25	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In assessing any future provision to support our information systems we will review our Allocations, Waiting list, Closures, Case Grading System, Application of Professional Standards, our Court Report Templates and “This is Me” App.</li> </ul>	December 25	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These reviews will inform and ensure that our strategic commitment to improving the collection, collation and evaluation of our data is achieved.</li></ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will ensure that though enhancing the quality and analysis of our Data this will act as a driver to inform and improve performance and service delivery evidenced in our reporting to the Board.</li></ul>	March 26
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will undertake a Review of our Administrative and Corporate Services roles and responsibilities to support the development of our Data function.</li></ul>	September 25





Strategic Theme	Objectives	Timescale for completion of objective	Owner
<b>4.</b>  <b>Influencing</b>	<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>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through connecting, collaborating and partnership working with other organizations, including the Statutory, Voluntary and Community Sectors, the Agency will raise awareness of its role and jointly work with others to deliver better outcomes for our workforce and our children and young people.</li> </ul>	March 26	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using our Data to support and influence improvements in practice and policy.</li> </ul>	March 26	



The Objectives outlined in the Business Plan above will be the priorities and focus of the Agency during 2025-26. The achievement of these objectives will be subject to the Agency being allocated the resource required to fulfill these objectives and meet our Statutory duty. These are 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

- The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI); including the Governance, Mental Health and Trauma Informed Practice subgroups.
- The Children's Service Strategic Reform Programme Board; including Legislative and Policy Reform, Workstream 7, subgroup.
- The Northern Ireland Social Work Leadership Network (NISWLN);
- Social Work Workforce Implementation Board (SWWIB)
- Shadow Family Justice Board, including Delay subgroup
- Chief Social Worker Forum for Organisations other than HSC Trusts
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-30, Expert Reference Group
- Principal Practitioner Forum meetings;
- Regional Signs of Safety Steering Group.