

**Our Children, Our Future**



North East Lincolnshire Council  
**Children's Services**

# North East Lincolnshire

## Our Children, Our Future

A place our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities, with people that love them.

We are ambitious for a child's future with a focus on learning and aspiration so they can be the best they can possibly be.





As portfolio holder for children and education, I'm invigorated by our new vision statement, 'Our Children, Our Future.' It encapsulates the essence of our commitment to these young lives who embody the promise of tomorrow. Children are not just a segment of our council plan; they are its heartbeat, its purpose. For a council plan to truly succeed, it must prioritise the well-being and aspirations of our children, shaping a community where every child is safe, valued and supported. **'Quote from Margaret Cracknell**



## Our story in North East Lincolnshire

North East Lincolnshire (NEL) is a council that cares greatly about providing opportunities for children and young people. We're proud of our community and the unique experiences it has to offer from fishing port opportunities to fine beach landscapes. The authority has three main towns namely: Cleethorpes, Grimsby, and Immingham with several smaller villages within the 192 square kilometers which comprises the geographical area.

The 2021 census noted a population of **35,944** children and young people aged from birth to 19 years. There is also a high proportion of families who are raising children on low incomes, with 1 in 4 of the children in the area falling within this category. North East Lincolnshire council and partners are committed to addressing inequality within the community and improving the lives of our children, young people and their families.



22.9%

% of the population of North East Lincolnshire aged 19 years and under



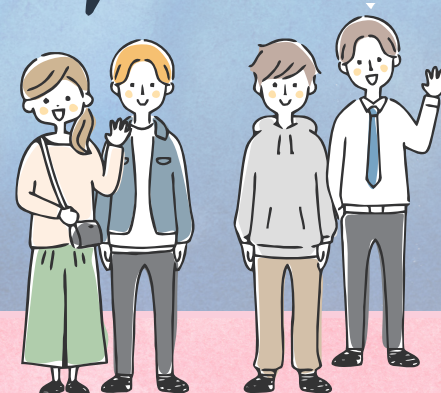
9,000

The number of children and young people estimated to be living in poverty



7%

% Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) as at July 2023



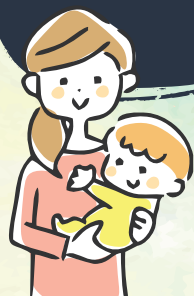
87%

Of schools are graded as outstanding or good by Ofsted



2 years

The increase in life expectancy in the last decade of someone born in North East Lincolnshire



43%

Proportion of children aged 10-11 years classed as overweight or obese



18%

Proportion of households living in fuel poverty in 2021



1,487

The number of babies born in North East Lincolnshire in 2022





# Opportunities and challenges that shape our vision

Our challenges are big, but we want to work with partners to make sure children and young people are safe in NEL and have access to opportunities. We know that children and young people face challenges such as stable employment prospects and mental health. We know that global events have further exacerbated existing inequalities.

However, children are at the heart and centre of NEL and we aspire to make sure they have the best possible experience. We want to work together to allow children and young people to fulfil their potential and be able to access integrated services when they need them.

We have essential strengths to harness in our vision and we have seen the power of early intervention. Our Team Around the Family (TAF) programme demonstrates how early conversations and collaboration with external partner agencies to undertake Early Help Assessments can create better outcomes. Our Start for Life offer includes advice and guidance so that our babies and toddlers are given the best possible start to life. Partnerships are crucial in the delivery of these services, and we need to continue collaborating on our journey to improving outcomes.

Over the next one to five years, we remain committed to working with partners to meet our Council Plan objectives:

- Work with people who use our services, and their families, to improve service delivery and to support people to live the lives they want to live;
- To engage our workforce so they can safely practice using evidence-based models, with relationships at the heart of this and supportive and reflective management support;
- To work with communities and partner agencies to build on co-ordinated responses to local need, how we work collaboratively on this important vision for the future and agree what success and outcomes looks like in North East Lincolnshire.

Children are the future of NEL and by increasing participation in learning and wellbeing outcomes for young people, we will help them reach their full potential.









# What we heard on our vision journey

Our vision's purpose is to support children and young people so it is vital to reflect their views in the work that we do.

We developed this vision through collaboration with Children's Service staff and partners as well as children, young people and their families. We held a number of workshops and heard from diverse participants across NEL, including surveys to schools and across our residential estate to vote on which vision to use. School children also drew pictures based on 'Our Children, Our Future' to be used in this brochure.





'The feeling of pride and belonging, a valued proud member of the community'

'I like the key words, happy and healthy, and the feeling listened to, heard and respected'

'I like all of the statements in the slide and as a parent those are all the things I would want for my child. I can't find anything that I would

'All of the above, be confident in what we do, develop good working relationships'

'They are all good and I feel that everybody working for NELC should feel this way'

'So important we work cohesively with our partner agencies to work collectively and understand the vision'



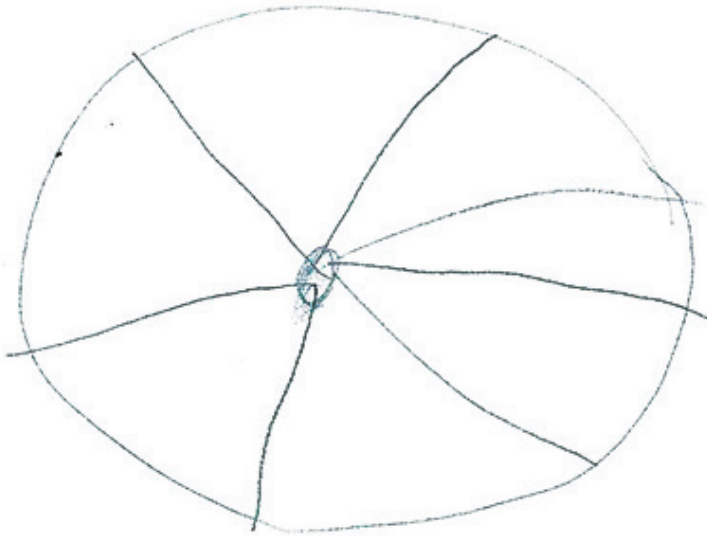
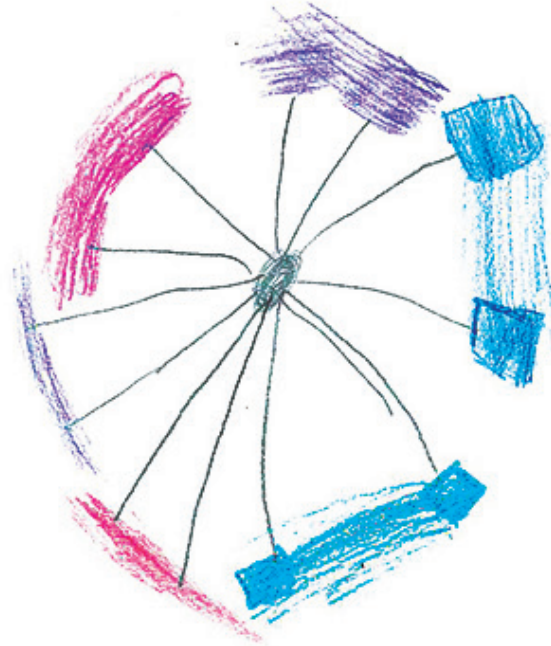
self confident  
listened  
secure  
safety  
joy  
valued  
happy  
safe  
love  
connection  
listened too  
pride  
warmth  
loved  
being heard  
respected  
supported  
empowered  
listened to  
supported with  
confidence  
community



# Our vision for children and families

- **To be safe from harm and enjoy growing up in loving, caring homes**
  - We are committed to children having positive experiences growing up, we will support children to live with their family or someone they already know, love and trust if it is possible and safe.
  - Where children can't stay at home, we will support those who do, by providing a loving and caring home with the tools, resources and support they need to be able offer the best care possible.
- **To have the best start in life and a happy healthy, fun childhood**
  - The first 1001 days are so critical for a babies development and we want to support their parents/care givers to ensure children access the best start in life through our fantastic family hubs.
  - We want all our children to be able to have access to fun activities, safe spaces to play, make friends and have opportunities in the community they love.
- **To start school ready to learn, do well at all levels of learning and have the skills and opportunities they need to enjoy a bright future**
  - Our family hubs will offer the earliest of learning opportunities to help shape a child's future, ready for the learning journey ahead and ready for primary school.
  - Young people will be supported to have strong ambitions and aspirations for their future and to go on to take up training and employment opportunities so they can have a successful adulthood.
- **To be part of an inclusive, compassionate and thriving community**
  - A community that works together to continue to grow, face challenges with innovation and create positive opportunities for all our children.
  - A community that cares about every child and embraces everyone's unique identity.
- **To be listened to, involved in the decisions on their future and respected**
  - A commitment to making sure every intervention in a child's life is built on the child and young person's voice, the worries, what they love and what they want to happen next.
  - We will encourage children and young people to use their voice and have input through local groups, like 'Our Voice, Listen Up', to access advocates and to feel heard and empowered to make choices about their lives.
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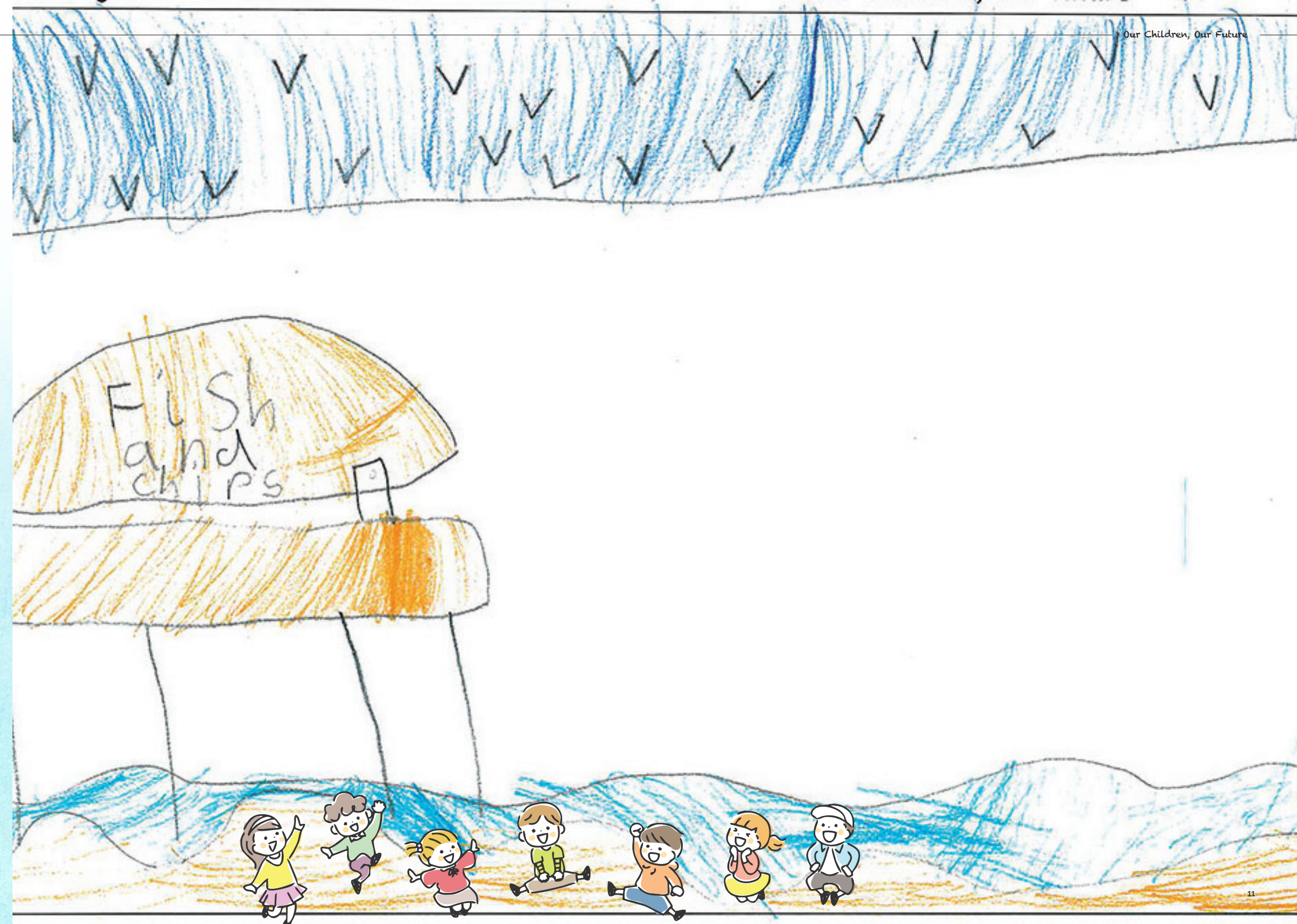
## Our vision for our workforce

- **That is passionate, motivated and proud of their work**
  - o We are committed to making Children's Services and the wider Council in North East Lincolnshire a great place to work and to feel proud of.
  - o This includes connection with all Council teams, to ensure a consistent approach to compliance, quality and shared outcomes as we know that we need to work across silos to solidify the best outcomes for our local people.
- **Who know, support and care for their children, families and communities**
  - o We strive for our staff to work closely with children and families to build genuine relationships so they can provide the right care that meets their needs.
- **Is supported by caring and knowledgeable leaders and colleagues**
  - o We continue to 'grow our own' by retaining high quality workers and managers who are passionate and strive to deliver a good service to children and families.
- **Are supported to learn, develop, reflect on practice and feel valued, appreciated and respected**
  - o We will support and encourage our workforce to be the best they can be by having a high expectations, high support, and a high challenge environment that manages individual and collective performance to ensure that we do our best for children and families.
- **Who have the tools and resources they need to make a real difference**
  - o Ensuring we are future ready, embracing best practice and making the best use of technology to support better outcomes.

### Feedback about our staff from families

- o 'my social worker has gone above and beyond to support the foster home'
- o 'committed to the family and transforming outcomes'
- o 'worked incredibly hard to gain the trust of a young person'
- o 'empowering parents to attend support classes independently'
- o 'acting above and beyond in the best interests of the child'







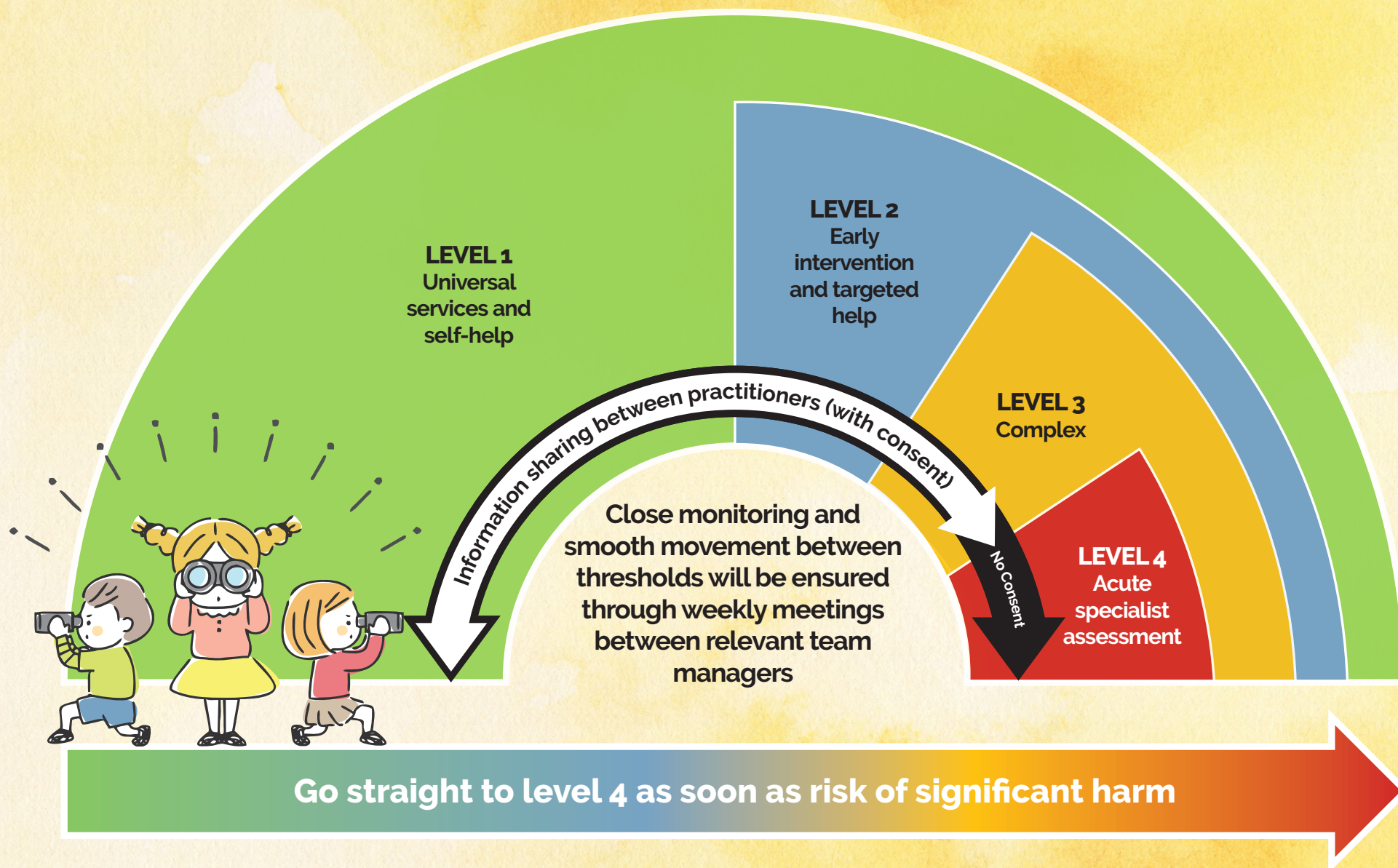
When we work together, we can make a real difference to the lives of children and young people in NEL. Collaboration between schools, the local authority and other agencies is a key factor in transforming outcomes in our community and we hope that we can continue to grow in partnership to ensure that children and young people can succeed and achieve their best. - **Quote from Headteacher, Mel Castle**



## Our vision for our relationship with partners

- **Relationships unite us, putting children at the heart and center of our work**
  - We have strengths in our partnership working through the North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NELSCP) and governance groups linked to the improvement plan.
  - We will continue to work closely with our local education providers, which are some of the best in the north of the country, to prioritise the development of children and facilitate early intervention where needed.
- **Where innovation and collaboration come together to create lasting change**
  - We have strength in our relationships with our partners in health, education, police and our incredible voluntary sector. We will continue to work together to build on innovative ideas and projects to ensure children and young people have access to the most effective services, support and help that they need.
- **A commitment to early conversations with the right support at the right time by the right person**
  - By working closely together with our Early Help providers, families are able to build upon their own strengths and receive help that is timely and effective.
- **We hold each other to account with open and honest conversations based on trusting relationships**
  - The Continuous Improvement Board oversees our transformation work and we will use this group, complemented by support from the Department for Education, to regularly engage with a range of partners.
- **A shared understanding of a collective vision, risk and thresholds with roles and responsibilities**







'As set out in our Council Plan, investing in children's services stands as our paramount commitment to the future. It's not just about fostering growth today; it's about nurturing potential, improving outcomes, and building resilient communities for generations to come. There is no finish line when it comes to improving outcomes for our children and young people; we will continue to innovate and strive for continuous improvement, as highlighted in the Children's Service improvement plan, ensuring a brighter future for our young people.' - **Quote from CEO, Rob Walsh**



## What action are we taking?

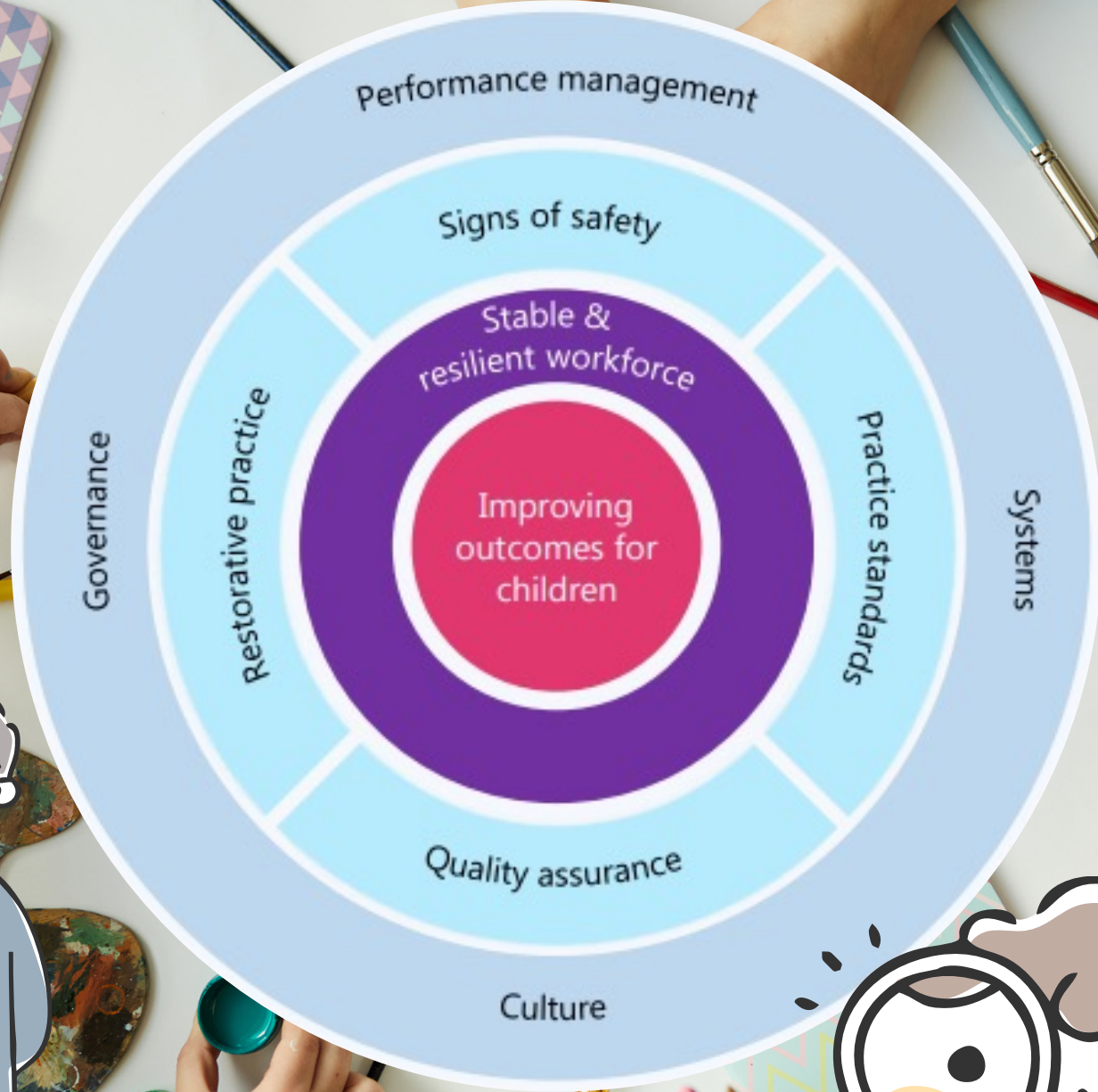
**Our improvement journey started following an October 2021 Ofsted inspection which raised justifiable questions on the quality and effectiveness of North East Lincolnshire Children's Services.**

The rate of improvement has significantly increased since June 2022, following the formal partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and the appointment of Anthony Douglas CBE as Children's Services Commissioner who have supported us in making rapid improvements, alongside setting up external governance to challenge us to improve quicker.

In April 2023, we agreed an improvement plan built on two priority areas: improving outcomes for children, and building a stable and resilient workforce. The plan has been designed to deliver meaningful short term improvements, while also establishing a longer-term programme of work and continuous improvement within the service.









As I step into this role as the new Director of Children's Services, I am excited by the progress the council has made in improving the lives of our children, young people and their families and to be part of this new vision as we continue to develop. Yet, my excitement is only matched by the recognition that our journey has just begun. We stand at an important juncture of our improvement journey, and our workforce, alongside our partners is critical to continuing to improve outcomes for children and young people in NEL.-

**Quote from DCS, Ann-Marie**



## Our vision's new leadership team

Ann-Marie Matson, Director of Children's Services, NEL

Paul Cowling, Assistant Director – Regulated Services

Charlene Skyes, Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Early Help

