

# LCSA Response to a Question on Notice

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Inquiry into foundational and disability supports available for children and young people in New South Wales

**27 June 2025**

## Question

**I was really interested in your submission when you talked about the example in Leeds...In terms of what they did in the UK, were there changes to the public service and departmental arrangements to streamline the processes? Is that something we could be looking at is well?**

- Asked by the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC

Following the question LCSA took on notice regarding how the Child-Friendly Leeds reforms impacted public services and internal outcome-measurement systems, we are pleased to share the following evidence which includes:

- A developmental timeline of key reform milestones (2012–present)
- Detailed summaries of strategic shifts, including Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA), strengths-based social care, and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)
- A matrix of links to public reports, evaluations, and dashboards for easy reference
- Specific outcomes & KPIs, which highlight measurable impact

A few examples:

- From the University of Bedfordshire’s Family Valued evaluation (2017): internal adoption of OBA and data-driven performance tracking significantly shifted service redesign and decision-making within the Council.
- By 2021, the Leeds Beckett ABCD evaluation reported:  
“for every £1 invested in ABCD it returned up to £14 in social value within the local community.”
- Restorative practices extended across agencies helped reduce the number of children on protection plans by almost 50% between 2011 and 2017

These developments evidence clear internal culture change, the embedding of outcomes-based systems, and improved community-level results across public services.

The below information provides a comprehensive yet focused evidence base.

## **Child-Friendly Leeds: Systemic Reform, Outcome Measurement, and Strengths-Based Practice**

This document provides an overview of how Leeds City Council has embedded systemic reform through its Child-Friendly Leeds initiative, how outcome measurement systems evolved over time, and how Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and strengths-based approaches have become central to strategic planning. It is designed to support references for parliamentary or inquiry evidence relating to community-led systemic change.

### **1. Contextualising Change Over Time**

#### **A. Embedding Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA)**

Beginning in the early 2010s, Leeds adopted Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA) to monitor its "12 Wishes" framework. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and its successors (notably the Joint Strategic Assessment 2024) feature public dashboards that track key indicators like mental health outcomes, school attendance, and care entry numbers. These tools are supported by annual partnership reporting.

The Family Valued Programme, evaluated independently by the University of Bedfordshire in 2017, highlights how Leeds integrated performance tracking and outcomes culture within its services.

### **2. Embedding Strengths-Based and Asset-Based Community Development Approaches**

#### **A. Adult Social Care Reform**

Leeds City Council introduced a strengths-based model across Adult Social Care in 2020. This included a reduction in assessment complexity and the establishment of a Strengths-Based Social Care Board to oversee implementation. Key features include simplified conversations and focus on residents' own abilities and informal support networks.

## **B. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)**

The ABCD model began in Leeds through neighbourhood pilots from 2013 and was mainstreamed across the city by 2019. The approach identifies and empowers local connectors and emphasises residents' own assets as primary development levers. The 2021 Leeds Beckett University evaluation reported significant improvements in social capital, alongside an estimated social return of £14 for every £1 invested.

## **C. Strategic Embedding**

Since 2022, strengths-based and ABCD principles have been incorporated across multiple strategic plans, including:

- The Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023–2030), naming ABCD explicitly.
- The Equality Action Plan, targeting high-inequality areas using ABCD approaches.
- The Better Lives Strategy (2022–2027), promoting integration across services with strengths-based models.

## **3. Developmental Timeline**

**2012:** Launch of Child-Friendly Leeds and adoption of OBA.

**2013:** Start of ABCD neighbourhood pathfinders.

**2017:** Evaluation of Family Valued programme (University of Bedfordshire).

**2018–2023:** Children and Young People's Plan with expanded dashboards.

**2019:** ABCD scaled city-wide.

**2020:** Strengths-Based Adult Social Care launched.

**2021:** Beckett University ABCD evaluation published.

**2022–2023:** Incorporation of ABCD into Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Better Lives Strategy.

#### 4. Reference Matrix – Key Documents and Links

Document Title	Summary	Link
Joint Strategic Assessment (2024)	City-wide outcome dashboards linked to CYPP and health priorities.	<a href="https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Joint-Strategic-Assessment-2024-FINAL.pdf">https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Joint-Strategic-Assessment-2024-FINAL.pdf</a>
Leeds Family Valued Evaluation (2017)	Evaluation of restorative practice and outcome tracking in children's services.	<a href="https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/29566/1/Leeds_Family_Valued_-_Evaluation_report.pdf">https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/29566/1/Leeds_Family_Valued_-_Evaluation_report.pdf</a>
CSCIP Final Evaluation Report (2017)	Evaluation of national innovation in social care, including Leeds.	<a href="https://www.dmss.co.uk/pdfs/Childrens-Social-Care-Innovation-Programme-Final-evaluation-report.pdf">https://www.dmss.co.uk/pdfs/Childrens-Social-Care-Innovation-Programme-Final-evaluation-report.pdf</a>
Strengths-Based Adult Social Care (LGA)	Summary of simplified assessment and strengths-based model.	<a href="#">Leeds City Council – Strengths-based working   Local Government Association</a>
Leeds Beckett ABCD Evaluation (2021)	Outcomes and ROI analysis of ABCD implementation in Leeds.	<a href="#">ABCD Evaluation Report Summary PV-COAN.pdf</a>
Health and Wellbeing	Strategic plan including	<a href="#">Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 to 2030   Leeds.gov.uk</a>

Strategy (2023– 2030)	ABCD as a delivery mechanism.	
Better Lives Strategy (2022– 2027)	Social care strategy aligning with strengths- based and ABCD practices.	<a href="#">Better Lives Strategy 2022 to 2027   Leeds.gov.uk</a>
Equality Action Plan (2023)	ABCD referenced as tool for reducing inequality.	<a href="#">Equality, diversity and inclusion   Leeds.gov.uk</a>