

Children's Services

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel
27 July 2026

Annabel Bates, Corporate
Director of Children's Services



Children's Services

Corporate Director of Children's Services
Annabel Bates

**Acting Service Director,
Education & Partnerships**
Caroline Cannon

**Service Director, Quality
Assurance & Practice**
**Mandy Davis (started 1 June
2026)**

**Service Director,
Safeguarding & Partnerships**
**Chris Rooney (started 22
June 2026)**

- Education Access
- Virtual School
- Education Outcomes
- SEND & Inclusion
- Early Help

- Quality Assurance
- Principal Social Worker
- LADO (local authority designated officer)
- Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership

- Front Door
- Safeguarding
- Child Protection
- Children in Care
- Care Leavers

Priorities 2026/2027

- Implementation of Local Area Reform Plan
- Delivery of Families First Partnership (children's social care reforms)
- Children's Services Improvement Plan (to be updated in response to Ofsted ILACS June 2026)
- South Tees Youth Justice Plan
- South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership Plan

Current Projects

- Regionalisation of fostering, in response to February 2026 policy announcement
- Youth safety and adolescent safeguarding
- Unregistered placements
- Participation strategy
- Workforce strategy

Challenges

- Sufficiency of placements
- National and regional shortages of staff in key roles
- Leadership capacity to deliver improvement priorities
- Volume of public sector reform

Questions?

