



A revolution in children's services.

By Dave Hill
Executive Director for Schools
Children & Families

'Change' doesn't feel like big enough a word to sum up everything that's happening at Essex at the moment. 'Revolution' might be nearer the mark. Across the entire council, we're redesigning our processes, procedures and policies – aiming to achieve greater efficiency and more effective service delivery. Ultimately we want to provide the best quality of life in Britain by 2012. And nowhere is this ambition clearer than in our Schools Children & Families Service. It has been tough, we are improving, and we will not rest until we are providing first-class futures for the children of Essex.

The journey that this service has been on has been remarkable, and it's by no means finished. A challenging couple of years, starting in 2008 and culminating in an Ofsted Report in 2009, saw the service undergo government intervention. This was a real turning point. We looked hard at how the service was being delivered, what improvements could be made and what the biggest challenges for the future were. It was because of the potential to shape the future and the leadership team's clear determination to achieve excellence that I joined in 2010.

Since 2009, progress has been made across all the key agencies. And although the service remains in government intervention, we are improving at a rate of knots. Our challenge now is to see that this

momentum is maintained, because we want to go far beyond merely coming out of special measures. We want to keep going, all the way to becoming the best children's service in the country.

Achieving this is going to take strong, inspirational leadership at all levels, for all services. In particular, we're currently looking for an ambitious Director for Children's Social Care and Youth Offending Service. The scale of our ambition, combined with the sheer size and diversity of the county, means that there is no bigger challenge in our sector.

There's a real sense of impetus here, and we're in a fantastic position to push forward. I truly believe that no children's service in the country offers the opportunities that we do for social workers to make an impact and shape a better future for vulnerable children and young people.

If you'd like to know more about the journey that Essex is on, and the opportunities that it's creating for social workers, senior practitioners and team managers, please visit www.workingforessex.com/socialcare or call 0844 800 6685.

