



# Our Way Forward- Plan for Children and Young People 2021- 2026

This plan sets out our ambitions for improving outcomes for Hertfordshire’s children and young people.

Children’s Services  
**Our Way Forward**



# Introduction

2020 and 2021 have been unprecedented for everyone and the pandemic tested the resilience of Hertfordshire residents of all ages. Staff have worked tirelessly to prioritise cases, adapt their way of working and procedures to ensure services for the most vulnerable families continued and children and young people were kept safe.



**Drawing makes me happy.  
This is my foster family as foxes,  
one of my favourite animals**

Sophie – aged 10

However, this period of significant disruption also showed how adaptable and agile services can be, adopting new ways of working in a matter of days which traditionally may have taken months.

The next few years will, as we seek to get back on track, continue to provide unanticipated challenges. We are likely to see more families experiencing financial hardship. Many children and young people will have to deal with the impact of the pandemic on their education, mental well-being and work opportunities. Services will see an increase in demand at a time when support in the community and funding will be restricted. Therefore it will be even more important to work effectively with our partners to meet this challenge.



Emily – aged 4

Our ambitions are aligned with national and local plans for an integrated health and care system (ICS). An important part of our vision is a strong and effective “whole system” approach, through partnership working and with the ambition of tackling inequalities and giving children the support they need - especially as we respond to the challenges of the pandemic and beyond.

However, as we plan ‘Our Way Forward’, experience of the pandemic has also shown us what is most important and provided many valuable lessons. Working with those that we are here to support, we will apply that learning to deliver excellent sustainable services. Hertfordshire’s children and young people are its future and we are committed to creating a ‘County of Opportunity’ for all of them.



We invited our children looked after (CLA) to draw images of what makes them happy. Some of them can be seen within this document.

# Vision

Hertfordshire County Council's vision is to support Hertfordshire's children and young people to be happy, loved and thrive in their family and community.

## About Hertfordshire

### Population

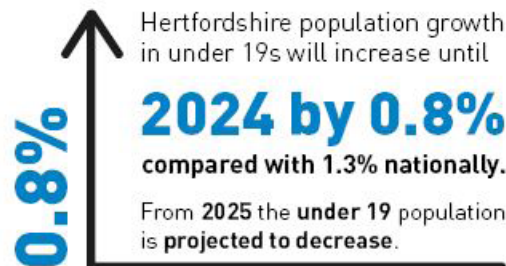


Source: Office for National Statistics, 2019-2020

**272,558**  
Under 18 population



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2019-2020



Source: Office for National Statistics Oct 2019

### Sustainability

SCHOOL BUILDINGS   
account for more than

**50%** of HCC

carbon emissions in 2018-2019 (30,000 tonnes)

Source: Internal Hertfordshire County Council data

**234 schools**

 signed up to

'Walk to School'  
'Clean Air Day'

campaigns in 2019



Source: Internal Hertfordshire County Council data

### Deprivation

**10.8%** of children in  
 HERTFORDSHIRE  
are in **low income** families

(the national average is 18.4%) (2019)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

**10.9%** of children in Hertfordshire

PRIMARY SCHOOLS  **free school meals**  
are entitled to and claiming

(the national average is 17.7%) (2020)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

**8.5%** of children in Hertfordshire

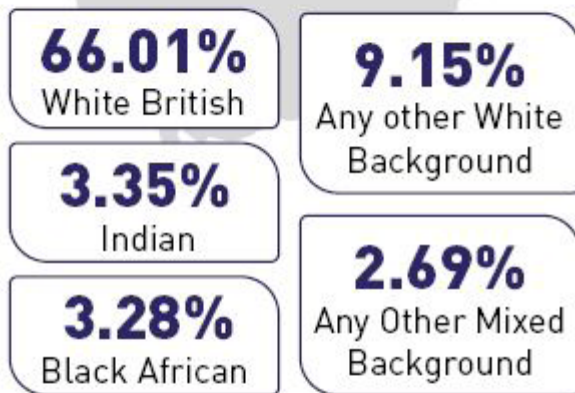
SECONDARY SCHOOLS  **free school meals**  
are entitled to and claiming

(the national average is 15.9%) (2020)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

## Diversity

Top 5 (Reception – Year 11)  
**ETHNIC GROUPS**  
 of school-age children attending Hertfordshire schools



Source: School census 2021

 **8.2%**  
 of young people aged **11-18** years identify as **GAY, LESBIAN OR BISEXUAL**

Source: Young People's Health & Wellbeing Survey, February 2021, Hertfordshire County Council (Public Health, YCH Services for Young People, and HCT Public Health Nursing Service)

## Education

 **17.9%**  
 of children and young people in Hertfordshire

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS**  
 with **English** as an **additional language**  
 (the national average 21.3%) (2020)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

 **12.5%**  
 of children and young people in Hertfordshire

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS**  
 with **English** as an **additional language**  
 (the national average 17.1%) (2020)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

 **2.4%**  
 of pupils in Hertfordshire schools have an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan**  
 (the national average is 3.3%) (2020)

**12.4%** of pupils have **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support** (All schools)

(the national average is 12.1%)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

**87.9%** of Hertfordshire schools rated **GOOD OR OUTSTANDING** by **Ofsted**

(the national average is 86.3%) (31/12/2020)

Source: Ofsted Management information

Of the **532 SCHOOLS** in HERTFORDSHIRE:



\* includes nurseries, first schools, infant schools \*\* includes middle schools, all-through schools  
 Schools may appear in more than one category

Source: Internal Hertfordshire County Council data

# Outcomes

Our well-established 'Outcome Bees Framework' has created a common set of outcomes that all staff are inspired by and committed to achieving for children and young people, regardless of their role in the organisation. These are:

## What's important to us?

These statements were developed in discussion with stakeholders and are listed in no particular order.

- Helping families to access information and early support as early as possible.
- Keeping children and young people safe.
- Strengthening children and young people's resilience and emotional well-being
- Improving educational achievement for all Hertfordshire's children and young people, particularly for those who struggle in education
- Supporting young people to develop the knowledge and skills to flourish in the workforce
- Supporting vulnerable young people to access a range of suitable housing and accommodation choices
- Achieving diversity and inclusion in our workforce and in the services we provide
- Working in partnership, deliver services that meet the needs of children and young people and that are delivered cost effectively by a skilled and committed workforce
- Supporting children to have a healthy start in life
- As Corporate Parents, ensure our Children Looked After enjoy a childhood where they feel safe, loved and well cared for and supported to achieve their full potential
- Embed the values of sustainability throughout Children's Services



# Our Ambitions

## 1. To meet the needs of Hertfordshire's children within their local community.

### What it will look like:

- Sufficient placements for CLA in county provided by more in-house foster carers and residential homes that can support a range of complex needs
- Sufficient school placements within Hertfordshire (including Special Schools)
- Children and young people are able to access the right type of therapy in a timely way to meet their needs locally
- Having a range of good quality local SEND provision and services that are responsive to changing needs

## 2. To plan, commission and deliver trauma informed services that meet the individual needs of our citizens.

### What it will look like:

- Children and young people's voices are listened to and valued in the service they receive and in the planning, development, improvement and delivery of services
- Services and processes are designed flexibly so that they can be delivered according to the needs of the individual wherever possible
- Practice and delivery of services reflects strong staff understanding of what being inclusive means

## 3. To support children and young people to get their lives and education back on track.

### What it will look like:

- Children and young people have access to a range of support to help them catch up and address the negative impact of the pandemic on their well-being, health and educational experiences

- Children and young people feel content, safe and more resilient
- Our vulnerable children, in particular, are engaging well in education and training
- Communities and employers work together to support and enable young people to enter training or employment and transition into adulthood

## 4. To have a skilled and flexible workforce who are proud to work for Hertfordshire

### What it will look like:

- Staff feel they are supported to do their job well and proud to work for Children's Services in Hertfordshire
- Individually and as an organisation we recognise achievements and best practice
- A strength-based approach is embedded in how we deliver services and support staff
- Staff actively look for improvements in service delivery

## 5. To work in partnership to deliver early help and support to children, young people and families and build life chances.

### What it will look like:

- Children and families are able to access support at the earliest opportunity
- Keeping children safe at home and preventing escalation into higher cost care services
- Families are more resilient and know where to go for further support
- Families have access to the right support to prevent them from falling into, or remaining in poverty
- Agencies working together (for example in relation to the Integrated Care System) to provide children and families with seamless access to information and support.

# How we measure success

- A reduction in the percentage of Children Looked After placed outside of Local Authority boundary and more than 20 miles from home
- An increase in the percentage of children and young people in Care who feel included in decisions that social workers make about their life
- An increase in the percentage of children and young people with EHCPs whose needs are met locally
- The proportion of service development projects that show engagement and co-production with children and young people
- A reduction in the environmental footprint of journeys for children in placements and those attending special schools
- An increase in the percentage of case audits that evidence the consideration of a child or young person's diversity and inclusion needs and how these will be addressed
- Survey responses from children and young people indicate improvement in their well-being
- A reduction in the levels of staff sickness and an increase in retention
- A reduction in the achievement gap between all children and young people and those who are disadvantaged
- An increase in the percentage of audited cases rated as good or outstanding
- An increase in the percentage of young people that are in Education, Employment or Training, including those most vulnerable
- Feedback from staff surveys and engagement events
- An increase in the percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (19-21 year olds)
- An increase in the number of Families First Assessments completed
- A reduction in the number of step ups from Families First Triage
- The make-up of Children's Services workforce reflects the diversity of communities in Hertfordshire.



The measures above are included in the Children, Young People and Families Panel report which is produced for County Councillors and is a public document.

# We are committed to:

## Hertfordshire County Council's areas of focus:

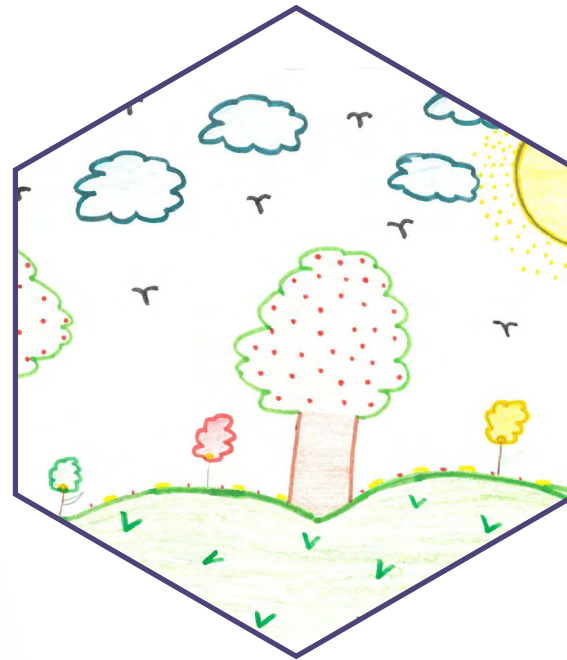
- Citizen focus
- Operational excellence
- Delivering transformation
- Developing our people

For more information see our [Corporate Plan 2019 - 2025](#)



**Lots of things make me happy**

Lily – aged 10



**Living in the UK makes me happy**

Ervis – aged 17

**Hertfordshire Children's Services Commitment to Voices of Children, Young People and Families:**

Hertfordshire Children's Services are committed to listening and responding to the voices of children, young people and families. We will work together to provide services which support families to be happy, healthy, ambitious, independent, resilient and safe.

To find out more about our commitment to the voices of children, young people and families please visit [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/voices](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/voices)

Strategies relevant to this Plan can be found at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/csstrategies](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/csstrategies) or, for staff, go to the Children's Services Strategy Library intranet page.

