

Families First News sharing

Keeping in Touch

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Service Manager

SUPPORTING FAMILIES | CHILDRENS SERVICES

JANUARY 2026



Early help, brighter futures

Introduction to the SEND Local Offer website

The Local Offer website lets parents, young people and professionals know what special educational needs and disabilities services are available in Hertfordshire, and who can access them. There is so much more than that, too.

A friendly face from the Local Offer team will take you through what's on the website and how you can use it to find the right services and support. www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

(For professionals) Monday 19 January 11am – 12pm [Introduction to the SEND Local Offer website webinar](#) | [Meeting-Join](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)

(For professionals AND parent carers) Wednesday 21 January 8pm - 9pm [Introduction to the SEND Local Offer website" webinar](#) | [Meeting-Join](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)

(For professionals) Thursday 22 January 2pm - 3pm [Introduction to the SEND Local Offer website webinar](#) | [Meeting-Join](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)

A quick note: The Local Offer website is different to Short Breaks (SBLO). We won't be going into detail about SBLO.



Domestic Abuse Resource Pack for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

In December, [GATE Herts](#), a leading Gypsy, Roma and Traveller empowerment charity, proudly launched a groundbreaking Domestic Abuse Resource Pack. Developed in close collaboration with community members, Safer Places, Gypsy Media Company, and other specialist domestic abuse services, this pack is designed to provide vital support for Gypsy and Traveller victim/survivors and the professionals who work alongside them.



What's inside the pack?

Three practical guides offering clear, culturally informed advice for victim/survivors and frontline professionals.

Two powerful new videos:

Road to Refuge – a walkthrough of a self-contained refuge designed with Gypsy and Traveller families in mind, helping to dispel fears and misconceptions about what refuge looks like.

Domestic Abuse Explained: Voices from Gypsy & Traveller Communities – sharing real experiences and clear information to support understanding and safety



Access the guides: [Resources](#) | [Gate Herts](#)

CYPMHS HertsHub is LIVE!

The CYPMHS HertsHub website is now live. The website contains children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing information and signposting to self-help resources, early support options, and more specialist services in one place for Hertfordshire's young people, parents/carers and professionals.

Please bookmark and share with your teams:
www.hertshub.co.uk .



Mental Health Support for Adults

If someone finds themselves in crisis and in need of advice, support, or help, there is someone providing care and support in your community waiting for your call.

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, sometimes known as HPFT, provides most of the mental health services for people who live in Hertfordshire.

Their '**single point of access**' (SPA) will connect you with advice and support if you are experiencing mental health difficulties.

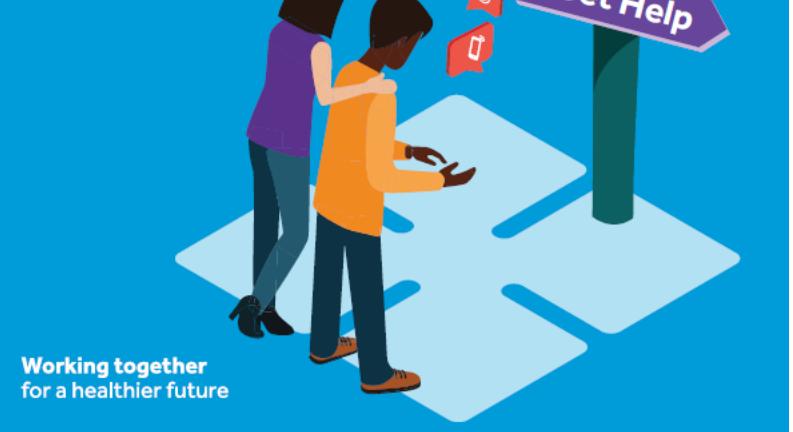
Visit and share: [Mental health services in Hertfordshire - Herts and West Essex ICS](#)



Mental Health Support

for adults in Hertfordshire

You are not alone.
We are here in your community providing care and support.
Contact us.



Working together
for a healthier future

Rucksack

Early Years Autism Programme for Families

About:

This course is designed specifically for parents/carers of autistic children or children on the autism pathway. It aims to provide you with the essential knowledge, practical strategies and valuable resources to support both you and your child in navigating everyday life.

Week 1: Understanding Autism
Week 2: Sensory
Week 3 : Communication

Week 4: Play and Social Interaction
Week 5: Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour
Week 6: Using My Rucksack

To self register an interest in the Spring 2026 course starting end of Jan 2026, scan the QR code or click the link and fill in the registration form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/8BkjfzexnF?origin=lprLink> or

Contact: EarlyYearsTraining@hertfordshire.gov.uk to find out more.



Clothing Bank

A clothing bank charity for young people between the ages of 10-25 are trying to reach out to more young people in need, they are based in Borehamwood, but cover Hertfordshire.

Please see website for more information and referral process on how to access these free clothing, shoes and accessories.

[Website: Teenthreads Home](#)

Teen Threads Clothing Bank

Who We Help

We provide free clothing, shoes and accessories to:

- Children aged 10-18
- Young people leaving care
- Young people with additional needs, up to age 25



What We Offer

- Lightly used & new clothes
- Quality shoes for all seasons
- Accessories



Why We Exist

No young person should go without. We believe in:

- Confidence through clothing
- Dignity without judgment
- Reinforcing a sense of identity and self-esteem.



TeenThreads
CIC

Get in Touch / Refer a Young Person

📞 07438 585 617

✉️ info@teenthreads.co.uk

🌐 [Website www.teenthreads.co.uk](http://www.teenthreads.co.uk)

Instagram Teen Threads CIC

📍 Location Borehamwood

The Neurodiversity Support Hub Advice Line



Please help us promote the Support Hub for parents, carers and professionals will:

- Listen to your situation and offer you strategies, signposting and support tailored to your individual circumstances
- Help you to support your child's development and understand their different way of thinking
- Be a non-judgemental listening ear when you need it

The logo for the Neurodiversity Support Hub. It features a circular icon with the word 'ADD-vance' inside, followed by the text 'Neurodiversity Support Hub' and 'For Parents, Carers and Professionals across Hertfordshire'. Below this, there is contact information: a phone number (01727 833 963), an email address (supporthub@add-vance.org), and a helpline hours section. The helpline hours are: Mon, Wed & Fri: 9am - 1pm; Tues & Thurs: 9am - 3pm; and Wed evenings (by appointment): 7pm - 9pm. It also states that all helpline team members are parents/carers of neurodivergent children. At the bottom, there are logos for SEND Hertfordshire's Local Offer, Herts Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council, Herts Parents Carer Involvement, and NHS.

Neurodiversity Support Hub
For Parents, Carers and Professionals across Hertfordshire

01727 833 963
supporthub@add-vance.org

Whether you need practical advice, emotional support or simply a listening ear, we're here for you.

Helpline hours:

Term Time: Mon, Wed & Fri: 9am - 1pm
Tues & Thurs: 9am - 3pm
Wed evenings (by appointment): 7pm - 9pm

School Holidays: Mon - Fri: 9am - 1pm

All our helpline team are parents/carers of neurodivergent children.

No diagnosis required

SEND 0-25 years Hertfordshire's Local Offer

Herts Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Partnership

Hertfordshire

Herts Parents Carer Involvement www.hertsparcarinv.org.uk

NHS

Are you using the Hertfordshire Directory?

A free online tool to help you find support or social activities quickly and easily.

From cost-of-living support and help at home to family-friendly activities and services to improve your health, the Directory can help you find the support you need, when you need it, to thrive and enjoy life more.

Whatever your age or stage of life take a look at the Directory today to see what might be useful for yourself or for friends and family.

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/directory



The Hertfordshire Directory
A gateway to community services,
groups and activities across the county

Families First Donations appeal

Families First held their fifth donations event on Thursday 11th December 25 this time supporting Welwyn Garden City & Hatfield, Stevenage and Hertsmere Local Schools Partnership (LSPs). The three LSPs are supporting families in need in their local schools during the festive period by providing free items such as hygiene products, clothes, books, toys etc.

Over 70 bags of clothes, books, hygiene products and toys were donated by HCC staff and delivered to the three LSPs and are in the process of being given out to families before Christmas. Thank you to everyone who donated. Special thanks also for the donations from the Friends of Mandeville Primary School PTA in Sawbridgeworth.



My Baby's Brain Training (Universal): January to March 2026

Free online training for professionals working with families and children aged 0–3

Help build strong foundations for babies' development by understanding how early relationships and everyday interactions shape the brain.

My Baby's Brain Universal training

For: Professionals offering universal early years support (e.g. Health Visitors, Midwives, Family Centre staff)

To Learn:

- Introduction to the Five to Thrive model
- Understanding trauma and how everyday interactions support recovery

Dates:

-  Tuesday 3rd of February 2026, 9:30am–3:00pm
-  Wednesday 4th of March 2026, 9:30am–3:00pm

Book here: [KCA: Reg form: My Baby's Brain Spring 2026 - Universal Services Workforce](#)



Delivered via Zoom

- Interactive format – camera & mic encouraged
- Materials sent 48 hours before the session
- Certificate on completion

My Baby's Brain Training (Targeted): January to March 2026

Free online training for professionals working with families and children aged 0–3

Help build strong foundations for babies' development by understanding how early relationships and everyday interactions shape the brain.

My Baby's Brain Targeted training

For: Professionals supporting vulnerable families (e.g. Family Safeguarding, Specialist Services, specialist midwifery)

To learn:

- The importance of attachment and how early adversity can lead to developmental trauma
- Introduction to the **Five to Thrive** model for promoting secure relationships
- The impact of trauma and principles of trauma-informed practice
- Opportunities for reflection on practitioner vulnerability when working with traumatised individuals

Dates:

-  Thursday 26th of February 2026, 9:30am–3:00pm
-  Tuesday 17th of March 2025, 9:30am–3:00pm

Book here: [KCA: Reg form: My Baby's Brain Spring 2026 Targeted Services Workforce](#)



Delivered via Zoom

- Interactive format – camera & mic encouraged
- Materials sent 48 hours before the session
- Certificate on completion

Healthy Homes for Healthier Lives Booklet and Training

To support professionals in assessing the severity of poor housing conditions, including damp and mould, and making timely referrals, we have developed a new Healthy Homes for Healthier Lives booklet.

The most up-to-date version of this booklet is available on our [Healthy Homes webpage](#). This replaces the previous *Damp and Mould in the Home* booklet.

A reminder that there is still availability on our Healthy Homes for Healthier Lives training sessions. For more information or to book, please visit [Public Health Training](#).



Healthy Homes for Healthier Lives

Credit Union is celebrating three decades of helping local people

Stevenage Credit Union is part of a worldwide movement a cooperative not for profit organisation running an ethical service for the people of Stevenage and North Hertfordshire. Credit Unions keep money within the community because there are no outside shareholders to pay. When members invest in their local community, they know that the only people are benefiting from apart from themselves are their neighbours' colleagues and local business.

We offer low-cost loans at fair and reasonable loan interest rates; it helps spread the cost and encourages you to save. You can get loans for household, Christmas. Home improvements, or budgeting for expensive times of the year. Members can also set up saving accounts, for Christmas, special occasions, or anything you want to.



Website: www.stevenagecreditunion.com

Telephone: 07895 327 826

Email: mail@stevenagecreditunion.com

Or come and visit us at 11 the Hyde,
Stevenage, SG2 9SD

Opening hours are Monday, Wednesday,
Friday.9.00 to 12.00 pm

Community Kitchen - Stevenage



Come along to put the fun back into meal times with quick and easy nutritious recipes on a budget.

Jackman's Community Centre, Letchworth
Starting January 23rd 2026
10-11:30am

Once a month (23.01.26 | 27.02.26 | 27.03.26)
FREE of charge!
Food and equipment provided



To register your interest, please scan the QR code!

For more information contact community@stevenagefcf.com
or call 01438 222 222

Relationship Support



When working with families do you think about the quality of parental relationships?

Do you feel confident to ask questions about relationship quality?

Do you know where to signpost for relationship support?

We understand that healthy relationships support good outcomes for children, so it is essential that we support parents to have the skills to manage stress and communicate well.

Arguing is **NORMAL** it is our behaviours and how we resolve conflict that determine relationship quality and stability.

The Strategic Partnerships Commissioning Team have developed an **i-learn** that we can share for free if you have a learning platform you can host the course on.

It covers:

- Understanding what parental conflict is and the impact this has on Children and Young People
- Understanding the difference between parental conflict and domestic and the appropriate support pathways
- Identifying signs that could indicate relationship distress and conflictual behaviours that lead to relationships breakdown
- Understanding a framework for working with parents in conflict

We offer free **training** in the use of the OnePlusOne Digital Interventions and are looking for relationship support champions across the VCFSE sector.

We have developed a **webpage** full of resources and courses to support parents in conflict [Relationship support for parents | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

We have commissioned 3 **online courses** for parents through the charity OnePlusOne
[Me, You and Baby Too](#)
[Arguing Better](#)
[Getting It Right for Children](#)

We have practitioners trained across the Family Centre Service and Local School Partnerships that can support parents and carers through the digital resources or parents can be signposted to complete the resources independently by creating a [free account](#)

We have trained practitioners and commissioned providers delivering **group interventions** for parents
[Parenting When Separated](#)
[Co-Parenting with Care for parents of children with SEND](#)
[Stronger Relationships](#)

If you would like to know more about the training, resources and courses available to support parental relationships please contact CSSStrategic.Partnerships@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Parenting Courses

Targeted parenting courses are commissioned by Strategic Partnerships Commissioning team, within the Joint Children's and Young People Commissioning Service and through the Targeted Parenting Framework (TPF).

They will meet the most common parenting needs in Hertfordshire and will be a key contributor to the overall package of support that a parent receives. Parenting courses to be delivered as part of a wider package of intervention and not in isolation.

Six providers have been commissioned through the Strategic Partnerships Commissioning team :-

ADD-vance

There is **NO cost** for families to attend.

Families in Focus

Family Lives

Families feeling safe

SPACE

Supporting links.

Further information about workshops can be found on The SEND Local Offer and

Parenting directory.

Links to special edition newsletters:

[Families First News – Parenting & Relationship Support](#)

[Families First News - Welcome to the Workforce](#)

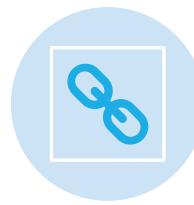
[Development Special Edition](#)



Key Families First Links



Keep up-to-date by reading our latest **Families First: Families First News**



Link to support for families:-
[Families First Website](#)



Professionals area:-**Early Help – information for professionals and partners**



For Families First partnership groups, news sharing and general info email:-
familiesfirst.support@hertfordshire.gov.uk



Ensure your service is listed on the **Hertfordshire Directory**:- **[Register to add a listing | Hertfordshire Directory](#)**