

Families First News sharing

Keeping in Touch

Sue Chapman
Service Manager

SUPPORTING FAMILIES | CHILDRENS SERVICES

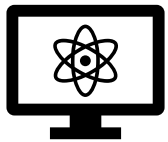
8th October 2026



**Families
First**

Early help, brighter futures

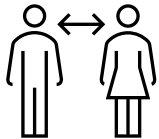
Workforce Development Opportunities



Join a Families First Induction Session - ideal for new starters

We host Families First online Induction days 3 times per year, where various early help services give a 20-minute whistle-stop tour of their service and are attended by new internal CS staff and external partners.

This is now covered in 2 sessions and our next dates are am on **Wednesday 15th October 2026** and pm on **Thursday 22nd October** via Teams. If you have any new staff or would like to hear more about early help services, please email: familiesfirst.support@hertfordshire.gov.uk



Consider a Workforce Shadowing Opportunity

Workforce shadowing provides a great opportunity to find out more about other services, what they do and how they might be able to support you in your work. It also enhances communication across agencies and helps strengthen and develop professional relationships, building local networks. Visit [Workforce development](#) to make a request

Working Together in Early Help Events



- **Workforce development and networking opportunity** for Families First partners.
- **In-person events across Hertfordshire** focused on improving school attendance.
- **Presentations from the Children's Services Attendance Team** and local support services that offer attendance support.
- Operational updates on the implementation of the national Families First Partnership Programme in Hertfordshire

Events are taking place across the county on the following dates:-

- **Wednesday 4 November 26**, 9:30-12:30, South Hill Centre, Hemel Hempstead
- **Tuesday 17 November 26**, 9:30-12:30, Broxbourne Borough Council, Cheshunt
- **Friday 20 November, 26**, 9:30-12:30. Icknield Centre, Letchworth
- **Wednesday 25 November 26**, 9:30-12:30, Three Rivers District Council, Rickmansworth

Book your place here: [Families First - Working together in Early Help - Autumn 2026](#)

Participation Team Young Carers Celebration Event

A free fun day for Young Carers aged 8-17
(registered with HCC)

- Tuesday 27th October 2026 (half term)
- Oaklands College (WGC campus)
- Sign up : [Young Carers Celebration](#)



The poster is a colorful invitation for a 'Young Carers Celebration' event. At the top, the title 'Young Carers Celebration!' is written in a playful, hand-drawn font. Below it, the phrase 'A celebration of YOU!' is prominently displayed in large, bold letters. A yellow banner underneath states 'A FREE fun day for young carers!'. The main body of the poster is divided into several sections, each with a different background color and icon. The 'MEET & CHAT' section (blue) features speech bubbles and lists activities like meeting other carers and sharing views. The 'GET CREATIVE' section (pink) shows a paint palette and encourages workshops. The 'EXPLORE & DISCOVER' section (orange) includes a magnifying glass icon and mentions a marketplace and local services. The 'RELAX & HAVE FUN' section (green) has a smiley face icon and lists lunch, refreshments, and socializing. A 'FREE EVENT!' starburst graphic highlights that lunch and refreshments are included. The 'WHEN?' section (purple) specifies the date and time. The 'WHERE?' section (teal) gives the location. The 'WHO CAN ATTEND?' section (orange) clarifies the eligibility criteria. The 'NOT REGISTERED YET?' section (pink) provides an email address for help. The 'QUESTIONS?' section (purple) also provides an email address. A 'READY TO SIGN UP?' section (yellow) points to the sign-up link. The bottom of the poster features the Hertfordshire logo and the 'HERTFORDSHIRE PARTICIPATION TEAM' name.

Young Carers Celebration!

A celebration of YOU!

A FREE fun day for young carers!

Take a break, meet new people and celebrate who you are.

MEET & CHAT

- Meet young carers from across Hertfordshire.
- Share your views about what matters to you.

GET CREATIVE

- Join fun workshops to express yourself and celebrate who you are!

EXPLORE & DISCOVER

- Marketplace with organisations that support young people.
- Find out about local services and activities.

RELAX & HAVE FUN

- Enjoy lunch and refreshments.
- Relax, socialise and make new friends!

FREE EVENT!
Lunch and refreshments included!

WHEN?
Tuesday
27 October 2026
10:00am – 4:00pm

WHERE?
Oaklands College,
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AH

WHO CAN ATTEND?
Young people aged 8 to 17 who are registered as a Young Carer with Hertfordshire County Council.

NOT REGISTERED YET?
Email us at youngcarers@hertfordshire.gov.uk and a member of the Young Carers Team will be happy to help.

QUESTIONS?
Email participationteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk

READY TO SIGN UP?
Complete the registration form: [Young Carers Celebration](#)

HERTFORDSHIRE PARTICIPATION TEAM

World Mental Health Day – 10th October

World Mental Health Day 2026

It's good to talk. It's even better to be heard.

Did you know that young carers may face higher rates of mental health difficulties due to the stress of their caring role?
It's time to check in with young carers.

Support starts with being heard.



Visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/youngcarers
to find further support



Community Donations Scheme



- HCC's Reuse Shops provide furniture to organisations and individuals in the greatest need through our Community Donations scheme
- They support vulnerable members of the community such as care leavers and families in temporary accommodation
- **Referrals (and all correspondence) must come through a professional**

Typical items that we offer include:

- chests of drawers
- dining tables and chairs
- sofas

We are unable to offer white goods, curtains, floor coverings or mattresses

- **Online referral form and more information on the scheme here:**
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/communitydonations

My Teen Brain Online Training

If you would like further information about the course or alternative dates, please email CSStrategic.Partnerships@hertfordshire.gov.uk

- Free 1-day course
- For practitioners working with parents of teenagers and/or working with teenagers
- Wednesday 4th November - [My Teen Brain Online Training - 4 Nov 2026 | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- Thursday 3rd December - [My Teen Brain Online Training - 3 Dec 2026 | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- Understand teenage brain development
- Help them cope with challenging feelings and behaviour
- How to support young people in an emotionally healthy context
- Explores the latest understanding from neuroscience and developmental psychology and the principles of The Nurturing Program from The Centre For Emotional Health.

Healthy Homes for Healthier Lives Training

The Public Health team at Hertfordshire County Council, in partnership with district and borough council Environmental Health and Housing departments, have developed a free training session to support professionals working with individuals whose health may be affected by poor-quality housing.

This session aims to increase participants' knowledge, understanding, and awareness of what makes a home healthy and why this is essential for both physical and mental wellbeing.

There are currently 2 sessions available to book:

- Wednesday 4th November, 10.00am to 11.30am
- Tuesday 8th December, 3.00pm to 4.30pm

Book via [Public Health Training webpage](#):



The Incredible Years Pre-School Parenting Programme



Delivered by Family Support Service through the
Best Start Family Hubs and Family Centres



- New parenting offer for parents and carers of children aged 3-5 years
- 14 week course: Nov-March
- Online – all areas
- In person groups – Stevenage and Watford
- Teaches parents to help their children feel loved, safe and secure
- Encourages child's language, social and emotional development
- Establishes clear and predictable routines
- Handles separations and reunions
- Uses positive, respectful and patient discipline to manage behaviour

Booking info + dates

Parents and carers: Best Start Family Hubs and Family Centres 'what's on' [webpage](#)

Professionals: complete a [request for support \(referral\) form](#) with the parent/carer permission

Ubuntu Family Threads

Parenting Programme for Families seeking sanctuary.

Every Wednesday 1pm – 2.30pm

South Hill Centre, Cemetery Hill,
Hemel Hempstead,
HP1 1JF

Ubuntu Family Threads

Parenting Programme



South Hill Centre,
Cemetery Hill, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1JF



Wednesdays
1.00pm - 2.30pm

Each session includes:
Fun play, songs, and easy
activities that help build
strong, confident bonds
between parent and child.



BARNARDOS Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

To register or find out more,
please contact:

☒ Sue Melvin
sue.melvin@barnardos.org.uk

All parents and carers are welcome

Parenting in Action

A six session Programme to support dads in developing their parenting skills and confidence.

Suitability

The programme is suitable for:

- Men over the age of 18
- Men who are the parents of children below the age of 18 or are an expectant parent

NEXT COURSE 6 weeks every Thursday:

START DATE: Thursday 5 November - 10 December 2026

TIME: 5.30pm - 7.30pm

VENUE: Intensive Family Support Herts County Council Otley Family Centre,



NEW COURSE

Parenting In Action

A six session Programme to support dads in developing their parenting skills and confidence.

Suitability
The programme is suitable for:

- Men over the age of 18
- Men who are the parents of children below the age of 18 or are an expectant parent.

• [Click to Make a Referral](#)

Or scan here to refer:



NEXT COURSE
6 weeks every Thursday:
START DATE: Thursday 5th November - 10th December 2026
TIME: 5.30pm - 7.30pm
VENUE: Intensive Family Support Herts County Council Otley Family Centre, Otley Way, South Oxhey, Watford WD19 7TB

HENRY Programme



Beezee
in Hertfordshire

- The *Healthy Families: Right from the Start* programme is for families with children ages 0-5.
- **Running locally - online and in centres**
- 8 week course
- Starts w/b 6th October
- Face-to-face programmes offer creche facilities.

www.henry.org.uk/hertfordshire

Tel: 01707 248648

Email: hertfordshire@henry.org.uk



Bags of Taste –

Free mentored home cooking programme

- For individuals who are struggling with their health or food bills
- Ingredients delivered FREE
- Remote mentoring (via mob phone)
- Ongoing support – receive more recipes

To register

Phone / text / WhatsApp : **07813 678 660**

Email:

adele.buckland@bagsoftaste.org

Sign up online:

<https://bagsoftaste.org/students>

Save money and cook better than the takeaway



Join our free, fun cooking courses

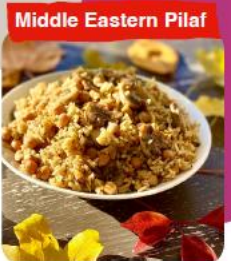
Impress your friends, learn to cook great food at home in just two weeks!



Chana Masala



Italian Pasta Sauce



Middle Eastern Pilaf

Meals can be quick, fun and cheap to cook:

- Free ingredients included
- Free, flexible, home-based short courses
- All you need is a kitchen and a phone

To register

Phone / text / WhatsApp
07813 678 660
Email:
adele.buckland@bagsoftaste.org

Sign up online:
<https://bagsoftaste.org/students>



NHS Mental Health Awareness Training



for anxiety and depression

Service provided by Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

NHS
Hertfordshire and Mid Essex
Talking Therapies

FREE online training by Hertfordshire Talking Therapies

Join Hertfordshire Talking Therapies for a free online Mental Health Awareness Training session in celebration of World Mental Health Day 2026, taking place on **Monday, 12th October (11am-12pm)**. This session will help raise awareness of common mental health challenges and equip you with practical tools and techniques to support colleagues struggling with pressures at work, service users navigating challenging lives, or friends and family members in need.

Improving your understanding of mental health problems could benefit many people around you. [Click here to register.](#)

For more information, please visit: [World Mental Health Day 2026 | HPFT Talking Therapies](#)

Would you like to make a difference in a young parent's life?

Ohana offers young parents who are **care experienced** the opportunity to build new, positive relationships. We are recruiting **volunteers** who are caring, flexible, positive, and friendly. Could you provide real support that makes a difference to a young parent's life? Do you have time to share and can make a commitment?

If you are interested in being an Ohana Champion, please see the advertisement below and [complete an Expression of Interest](#) 😊

The deadline for applications is the 1st of November.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Support young parents who've been in care

About you	Why volunteer with us?
★ Would you like to make a difference?	★ Meet new people and build connections
★ Are you caring, flexible, positive, and friendly?	★ Join a welcoming team
★ Do you have a couple of hours to spare each week?	★ Learn and develop new skills
	★ Receive training and ongoing support
	★ Travel and other reasonable expenses covered

How to apply

To find out more about this opportunity, please scan the QR code or email Ohana@hertfordshire.gov.uk and our friendly team will contact you.

To apply online to become an Ohana Champion, please complete an Expression of Interest by scanning our QR code:



"Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten."

One YMCA has changed its name to 'YMCA Chiltern Group'

Why is One YMCA getting a new name?

Over the past 140 years, the charity has grown from the first YMCA meeting in Watford to becoming one of the largest YMCA groups in England and Wales, serving communities across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. As One YMCA celebrates this important anniversary and reflects on the positive impact it has made, they also wanted to look ahead to the future. So, the new name 'YMCA Chiltern Group' aims to unite all services under a new collective name and reflects ambitions going forward.

To read more about One YMCA's name change, please visit:

<https://oneymca.org/one-ymca-becomes-ymca-chiltern-group/>



Local News

Girls Corner

Girls Corner in Waltham Cross offers a **FREE** girls-only youth space for girls aged **14–17** to make friends, try new activities and have a say in what happens each week.

This takes place at the Active Local Hub in Waltham Cross Playing Fields on Wednesdays 6pm-8pm

A vibrant poster for 'Girls Corner' featuring a group of four diverse girls smiling and posing. The poster is decorated with heart shapes and a starburst. It includes text about the free youth space for girls aged 14-17, a list of activities like movies, karaoke, and arts & crafts, and information about the location and booking process. A QR code is provided for booking, and social media handles are listed at the bottom.

GIRLS CORNER

FREE to attend

Youth space for girls ages 14-17

A girls-only hub in Waltham Cross where you can choose what we do. Make friends, try new things, build confidence and have fun in a safe, supportive space.

Your space, your voice, your way

- Movies & games
- Karaoke & music
- Tutorials & workshops
- Arts & crafts
- Food & drink
- Chats & chill

Every Wednesday, 6-8pm
Active Local Hub,
Waltham Cross Playing Fields, EN8 7LU

powered By **Active Local Waltham Cross**

@SportingAid
@SportingInspiration

Scan to book

Hertfordshire Libraries

Letchworth Library



For opening hours, events and more, download the Hertfordshire Libraries app below

Regular Events
Monday: Baby Rhyme Time
Monday: LEGO Club
Wednesday: Pic-n-Mix
Friday: Storytime

Download the Hertfordshire Libraries app from



Play Store



App Store

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraries



Hertfordshire Libraries
Hertfordshire County Council



Free to join

Scan here to sign up online



Join your local library today

Books, books, books Try a new genre, learn a new skill or read a new bestseller - all without spending a penny	Computers and Printing Get free access to computers for up to 2 hours and competitively priced printing/Wi-Fi printing
Digital newspapers and magazines Access your favourite magazines and daily newspapers for free	Studying and Research Access our Online Reference Library at home or in the library for study and research
E-books and E-audiobooks Borrow free e-books and e-audiobooks straight to your phone or tablet	Events Meet your local community at regular and one-off events, from author visits to art workshops

Letchworth Library
Broadway
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3PF

My Voice

Young Adults Craft Group

Last Tuesday of each month

Letchworth Library

5:30pm-7pm

Join our FREE craft group for young adult

Ages 14-24

Monthly themed sessions - Beading, Knitting,

Clay Sculpting, Painting and lots more

No long-term commitment required — come along whenever it suits you!



Book now

0300 123 4049

www.facebook.com/LetchworthLibrary



Storytime

Letchworth Library
Fridays 10.30 - 11.00



Join in with stories & rhymes
- ideal for children aged 2-5 years

This activity is free, donations welcome



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

Events and things to do at the library

Author talks, theatre, LEGO workshops, craft sessions, baby rhyme times - there's something for everyone at your local library.

[Baby rhyme time](#) - songs and rhymes for babies and toddlers.

[Storytime](#) - interactive story sessions are perfect for pre-school children.

[Events and things to do at the library | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Beyond the Walls: Supporting Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Beyond the Walls: Supporting Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment, taking place at Bedford Academy on **Wednesday 25 November 2026**.

Exploring the impact of parental imprisonment and how we can better identify and support the children affected.

The day will include practical workshops, professional insight and opportunities to connect with others working across education, family support and related services.

Event details:



Wednesday 25 November 2026



9.30am–3.00pm



Bedford Academy, Mile Road, Bedford MK42 9TR



Tickets: £10



Lunch provided



Free parking available

Tickets and further details can be found here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beyond-the-walls-tickets>



Beyond the Walls:
Supporting Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Do you work with vulnerable children and families in the Beds and Herts area?
Are you aware if any of those you are supporting have a family member in prison?

It's estimated that there could be up to **310,000** children every year with a parent in prison in England and Wales.

Parental imprisonment is a recognised Adverse Childhood Experience, yet despite this, there is currently **no statutory mechanism to support or even identify children** with a parent in prison.

Join Invisible Walls Family Service and partners to

- Explore the theme of parental imprisonment
- Find out more about the services IW offers
- Learn how a trauma-informed approach can help to support children and families affected by imprisonment

VENUE
Bedford Academy
Mile Road, Bedford MK42 9TR

WHEN
Wed 25 Nov
9.30 – 3pm

LUNCH
Lunch provided

PARKING
Ample free parking is available

Together, we can ensure no child is invisible

Book your space for just £10 by using the QR code



Inclusive Job Fair

Step2Skills is looking forward to the next **Inclusive Job Fair in Watford**, to be held on Thursday 22nd October at the Watford Colosseum, designed especially for adults with learning or physical disabilities, sensory needs, neurodiversity, mental health conditions and other complex barriers to work.

There will also be a dedicated **low-sensory quiet hour** from **12–1pm**, ideal for visitors who prefer a calmer environment.

Book your free tickets: [Watford Inclusive Job Fair | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

CONNECT TO WORK
Funded by UK Government

STEP 2 SKILLS

Funded by
UK Government

HERTFORDSHIRE
FUTURES

base

matrix

disability
confident
LEADER

Hertfordshire

Watford Inclusive Job Fair



- Find out about local opportunities and the skills that employers are looking for
- Chat with the Step2Skills Supported Employment team
- BSL Interpreter available all day
- Quiet Hour 12pm - 1pm



**THURSDAY**
22nd October, 2026

**STARTS AT**
10:00am - 2:00pm

**LOCATION**
Watford Colosseum,
Rickmansworth Road,
Watford, WD17 3JN

Contact us:

 01992 556194

 step2skills@hertfordshire.gov.uk

TODAY!! Energy Saving Work

Broxbourne Borough Council are hosting a FREE Energy Saving Workshop for families to pick up simple, practical tips to bring energy bills down, stay warmer, and tackle damp.

 Wormley Community Centre, Fairfield Drive,
EN10 6DX

 **Thursday 8 October | 3.30pm–5pm**

 Completely free — no need to book, just drop in!



Join us for a FREE workshop and discover simple, practical tips to save money, stay warm and reduce damp in your home.

Wormley Community Centre
Fairfield Drive, EN10 6DX
Thursday 8 October, 3.30-5pm

No need to book in advance.
Simply turn up and join the free event.

For further information, please contact:
sustainability@broxbourne.gov.uk

Parenting Unplugged

FREE **Parenting Unplugged** session with CHEXS at Waltham Cross Library on Wednesday 4 November between 12 and 1. This session is open to anyone in the local community. Join our CHEXS Family Support Team to discuss 'Emotional Based School Non-Attendance'. Book here - [Parenting Unplugged - Emotional Based School Non-Attendance Tickets, Wednesday, November 4 • 12 PM - 1 PM | Eventbrite](#)



FREE **Parenting Unplugged** session with CHEXS at Cheshunt Library on Tuesday 10 November between 12 and 1. This session is open to anyone in the local community. Join our CHEXS Family Support Team to discuss 'SEND Support'. Book here - [Parenting Unplugged - SEND Support Tickets, Tuesday, November 10 • 12 PM - 1 PM | Eventbrite](#)

View the latest CHEX newsletter here: [❤️ CHEXS Family Update | October 2026](#) for activities, support sessions and community events for children, young people, parents, carers and families.

The Bridge

The Bridge is a support group designed for parents, carers and young people in school years 6,7 and 8 who are struggling with school attendance. This includes those who are not attending school at all or on a significantly reduced timetable.

Sessions will run for 12 weeks starting on Wednesday 4th November 2026- 10th February 2027 (Not including School Holidays)

Time: 12:30pm – 2:30 pm

Where: Welwyn Garden City Cricket Club, 288 Knightsfield, WGC, AL8 7NQ

Please contact Alison or Karina with any questions:

Alison.cowie@hertfordshire.gov.uk or

karina.saunders@hertfordshire.gov.uk



What is The Bridge?

The Bridge is a support group designed for parents, carers and young people in school years 6,7 and 8 who are struggling with school attendance. This includes those who are not attending school at all or on a significantly reduced timetable.

Purpose of The Bridge?

The group aims to provide a safe and supportive environment where families can:

- Share experiences
- Receive emotional and practical support
- Build confidence and resilience

Topics Covered

- Anxiety and worries related to school.
- Friendships and social dynamics
- Health and wellbeing
- Neurodiversity
- The Future

Who is running the group?

The sessions are facilitated by Alison and Karina from the Intensive Family Support Team, working alongside a range of specialist professionals who offer tailored insights and support.

Session Details

Sessions will run for 12 weeks starting on Wednesday 4th November 2026- 10th February 2027 (Not including School Holidays)

Time: 12:30pm – 2:30 pm

Where: Welwyn Garden City Cricket Club, 288 Knightsfield, WGC, AL8 7NQ

Please contact Alison or Karina with any questions:

Alison.cowie@hertfordshire.gov.uk or karina.saunders@hertfordshire.gov.uk

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.

HCC provides a range of FREE resources and training to help professionals confidently support families experiencing interparental conflict.

- A dedicated [professionals webpage](#) with guides, videos and toolkits.
- Recognising and Supporting Parents in Parental Conflict eLearning Module. This course explores what parental conflict is and how it differs from domestic abuse, how to identify conflict and what support is available for parents and carers in conflict. You can access the training via i-learn [HSAB and HSCP training and resources | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- Attend the Families First Induction Sessions for an overview presentation.
- The OnePlusOne Getting on Better e-learning is a self-guided course designed to build practitioners' confidence in supporting parents to improve their relationships. Across four modules, it covers the impact of parental conflict, recognising domestic abuse, using the resources, and applying learning in practice. You can access the training by completing the [OnePlusOne Getting on Better e-learning training request form](#)

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](#)
[Parenting When Separated for parents of children with SEND](#)
[Restoring Parent Connection in Difficult Times](#)

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

Key Families First Links



Keep up-to-date by reading o
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