

Best Start in Herts

Our commitment to parents

2019 - 2022



Introduction

In Hertfordshire our ambition is that all children are given the best start in life, with parents and professionals working together to provide all the opportunities children need to become happy, healthy and successful adults. This document sets out our commitments to families and will be used to underpin the way services are developed and delivered.



Our overall commitment to Hertfordshire parents

Hertfordshire's overall commitment is that no child, family or community is left behind. This means that all children are given the opportunity to achieve the best outcome they can. To enable this to happen they need access to high quality services that support parents to be the best that they can. These may be services that are available to everyone or if extra support is needed, through specialist services.

This is so that any issues or problems are identified at the earliest possible opportunity and support is put into place where needed.

Local and national context

Hertfordshire borders with ten other local authorities and has a mix of urban towns with populations of up to 100 thousand and very rural areas where very few people live.

There is a big demand for good quality services as more and more families are moving into the county seeking more affordable housing.

Hertfordshire is a large county with areas of affluence and pockets of deprivation.

Estimated number of
people in Hertfordshire in
2017
1,180,900



Estimated number of
children under 5 in
Hertfordshire in 2017
75,400



Average gross weekly pay of full-time workers resident in Hertfordshire is £666.50

Average gross weekly pay of full-time workers resident in England is £574.90

Percentage of children under the age of 16 living in low income families (2016)

Hertfordshire 11.5%
England 17%

A family is classified as a low income family if they are in receipt of out-of-work benefits or tax credits with an income which is less than 60 per cent of the national average income.



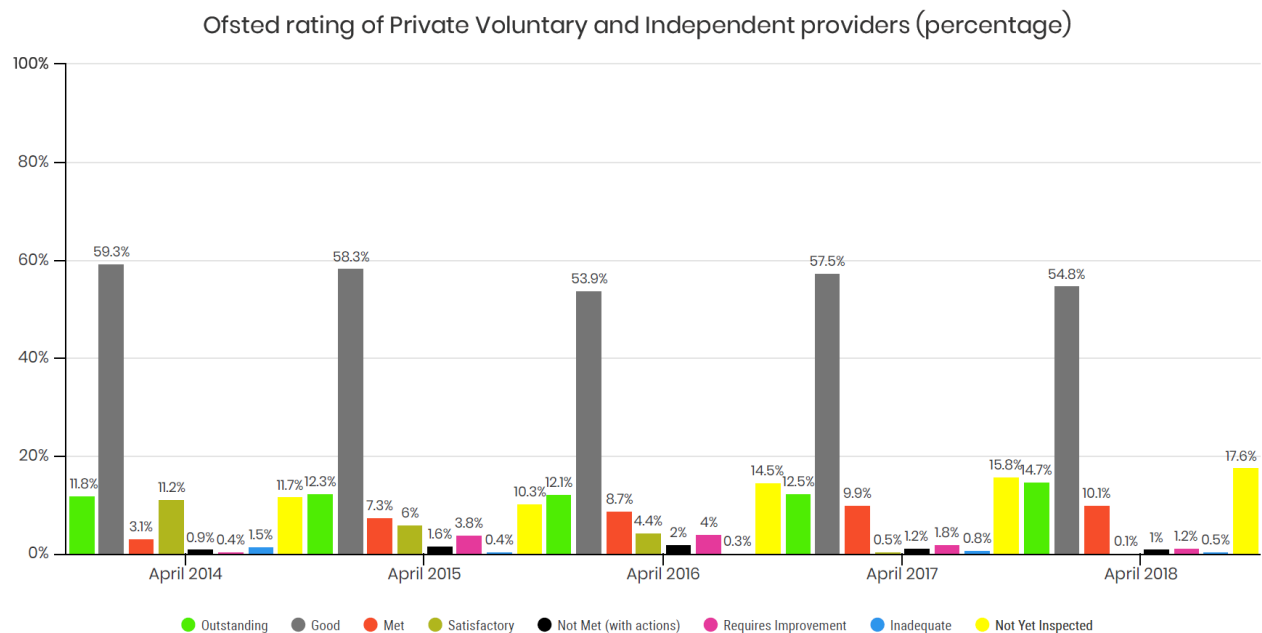
Percentage of children under five achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) 2018

Hertfordshire 72.9%
England 71.6%

Percentage of children under five with SEN achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) 2018

Hertfordshire 26.8%
England 24%

Children achieving a good level of development are those achieving at least the expected level within the performance measures.



Health

The first years of life are one of the most important stages in a child's development and can significantly impact on their health and well-being, in childhood, as a young person and right through to adulthood. Our ambition is that all children in Hertfordshire will have a healthy start in life and remain healthy as they grow and develop from the earliest point.

This includes good maternal health both pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy. We want families to know how and where to access advice, information and services so that they can maintain good health as well as get support early when they are worried or have a concern about their own or their child's health.

Infant mortality rate aged under one per 1000 live births (2016)

Hertfordshire 2.6
England 3.8

15 partners work together to offer antenatal/perinatal support in Hertfordshire (2019)

Hertfordshire's Family Centres (family support and health visiting teams) are Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) accredited and as such strive to make sure parents are given all the information they need to make an informed choice about how to feed their baby.

Percentage of infants breastfed at 6-8 weeks compared to the national average (2018-19)

Hertfordshire 56.1
England 44.4

Percentage of 4 – 5 year olds classified as overweight or obese in Hertfordshire compared to the national average (2016-17)

Hertfordshire 20%
England 22.6%

Commitment 1: Supporting parents-to-be

We want families to have information and support relevant to them to help them build a close and loving relationship with their child.

We think parents should be able to access the same level of antenatal support regardless of where they live in the county. All professionals that families come into contact with work together to make sure that families are well prepared for when baby arrives.

We know that some families struggle with the changes that take place when you are pregnant or have a new baby. There is additional support for families that need it during the perinatal period and beyond.



Hertfordshire's ambition

All parents and parents-to-be receive the same information and support regardless of where they live in the county and that this information is delivered by the professionals that they will meet in the early days of parenthood

Commitment 2: Offering support to parents as soon as it is needed

Family centres in Hertfordshire are the one stop shop for all families from pregnancy until a child is 11. Whether you are finding being a parent easy and would just like to meet new people and try some different activities with your child or you are struggling and would like some extra support, family centres are there to help. We encourage all families to register as soon as they know they are expecting so that they can benefit from the support available.

Family support work very closely with health so it may be that when you go to the clinic with your baby, someone from the family support team will be there.



Hertfordshire's ambition

All partners will work together to make Hertfordshire the best place to grow up and for children to have the best experiences they can throughout their childhood.

Commitment 3. Helping children to learn at home

Helping children to learn at home is one of the most important jobs that a parent has. Positive learning experiences at home in the early years have a long lasting and life changing impact on a child. Many of the positive outcomes link directly to the breadth of language a child is exposed to and how much parents talk to their children.

Parents talking to their child help their language and understanding to increase and develop.



Hertfordshire's ambition

Children can express themselves effectively and can understand and relate to the world around them.

Commitment 4: Making sure children with special educational needs and disabilities get the help they need

Families feel confident to make informed decisions about their child's needs and that these needs can be met within their communities. People who provide services in the community offer high quality support and where appropriate, signpost parents to services that may help them.



Hertfordshire's ambition

All children have the opportunity to thrive and have access to support which responds to their needs.

Hertfordshire will always aim to:

- get it right first time
- work in an open and honest way.

Commitment 5: Helping children to do the best they can

We understand that no two children are the same and that some children may need extra support to help them achieve the best they can. Support is available at every stage of a child's development where needed. Children may sometimes not achieve because of other things that are going on in their lives. There is a huge range of things that can help and parents can access support and guidance from any of our partners.



Hertfordshire's ambition

All children achieve the best they possibly can and we will help them to do this by providing the right support at the right time.



Partners in Hertfordshire

