

2023-2027

Adult Care Services Information and Advice Strategy

Hertfordshire County Council



Hertfordshire

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We want to make sure those who receive social care, carers and families can find the adult social care information and advice that they need, when they need it, in the way they would prefer.

This strategy was produced following this engagement with residents, partners, the community, voluntary, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector and our staff.

Across 2022 and 2023 we engaged with over 600 people we support, carers, Hertfordshire residents, staff through an online survey, telephone consultations and face-to-face including public events / conferences and Libraries across the county identifying people's information and advice requirements and habits.

Thank you to everyone who contributed. This invaluable feedback, views, commentary, and opinions given have helped to inform and shape this Strategy, its priorities and actions. For the actions stemming from our priorities in this Strategy, we'll aim to co-produce each action as appropriate, analysing, developing and shaping our service plan for these priorities over the lifespan of the strategy to meet the needs of the people we support in Hertfordshire.

Background

Information and advice supports people to lead healthy, independent lives where they have choice and control.

It can help people to understand the care and support system, if you need to pay for care and how to access services from the council, and from community and voluntary organisations.

It can provide wellbeing and crisis support, aiming to prevent or reduce care and support needs and helping people be safe.

Our strategy reflects the priorities in our ACS Plans

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/acsplan

Our vision for information and advice

Our vision is for an information and advice service that:

- promotes the opportunity for everyone to lead healthy, purposeful and independent lives
- reaches people at the right time people so they can easily navigate, understand and access services
- prevents, reduces and delays the need for services by supporting people to make well informed choices
- offers a personalised experience that embraces digital innovation
- supports those who may not use the internet
- ensures accessibility and cultural considerations are threaded throughout everything
- represents and understands the range of diversity throughout Hertfordshire
- has a friendly, approachable tone and voice

Connected Lives

Connected Lives is a model of social care in Hertfordshire that puts prevention, enablement and community opportunities at the heart of everything we do. Our focus is on what people want out of life, and how they can be supported to live a full, active and independent lives.

Connected Lives is about connecting people to other people, and things like equipment and technology, work and volunteering, employment, activities and local community groups

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/connectedlives



Our information and advice service for adult care and support

Our Information and Advice Service is made up of a range of information access points, materials and online platforms. It includes credible care and support information provided by health services and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Hertfordshire and nationally.

General

Information on our services, how to access them and support to stay safe, healthy and independent:

- paying for care
- support to carers
- equipment
- reporting a safeguarding concern
- leaflets and factsheets

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/adults

Assisted

ACS and partner funded information and advice services to support people to access community resources:

- HertsHelp and community navigator services
- Age UK
- Carers in Herts
- Connected Lives Gateway Service
- Social care links in Hertfordshire Libraries

Self-help

Wellbeing information to encourage people to be independent and resilient:

- Online services including paying for care calculator
 - In case of emergency plan for carers,
 - Digital self-service for care records
 - Targeted guides and campaigns
 - Finding local groups and services
- www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/directory

Specialist

Access to specific information to meet more complex needs:

- Social care and mental health professionals
- Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector
- Advocacy services

Your *Connected* Life

Your Connected Life has tips to help people stay active, happy and well by building a network around them:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/yourconnectedlife



Information and advice priorities

Priority 1

Connect people to information and advice to help them stay well, active and independent

Work with partners to develop and promote information for people to promote resilience and independence and reduce the impact of people experiencing crisis by:

- Developing seamless information and advice with partners so there's no wrong door
- Promoting the benefits and impact of positive life choices
- Ensuring people have opportunities for face-to-face contact and can talk to the right person from the start
- Increasing awareness among staff of information and advice resources available

Key activity:

- Developing new library link action plan to include: campaigns / training of staff / roadshows / Slipper Swaps, carers
- Raising awareness of Winter Resilience including warm spaces, preparing for a power outage, staying healthy
- Plan in place to signpost people to information and advice to help with Cost of Living
- Promote the Connected Lives Gateway Service and helping people with their first interactions with Adult Care Services to navigate the system
- Co-produced review of information and advice available to people we support and subsequent campaign to promote these resources to staff and partners

Priority 2

Inspire and enable people to connect to digital technology and online services

Support more people to access online services and make information and services more available and accessible to everyone, reducing our costs and carbon footprint in a sustainable way by:

- Finding opportunities to promote digital skills and confidence through support, advice and training
- Promoting the benefits of Assistive Technology to residents, staff and partners
- Developing digital alternatives for a wider range of information and advice
- Promote community groups, services and resources to people using the Hertfordshire Directory

Key activity:

- Development and roll out of an Online Financial Assessment, supporting people to understand and embrace the tool
- Implementation of Assistive Technology Communication Campaign, raising awareness about the benefits of this functionality available
- Understanding and implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) across our digital landscape, in particular the use of AI to assist in translating content on our website, letters and email
- Promoting the use of accessible functionality to residents empowering them to access the information they want in the way they want it
- Review of digital 'Need Help?' tool found on all ACS web pages – updating logic tree and content

Priority 3

Work in partnership to give people a more seamless information and advice service

Work with health services, other council departments and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector on the production of high-quality public facing information that promotes seamless services by:

- Co-develop health and social care information and promote a joint approach to people's journeys
- Build on our strong relationships with key health partners, including the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) and Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT)
- Promote Connected Lives principles to run throughout information and advice in Hertfordshire, whomever is the source of this
- Supporting people to have a voice through advocacy and co-production

Key activity:

- Develop guidance to support partners, businesses and the VCFSE sector to deliver information and advice with our Connected Lives principles
- Develop and lead on regular groups with key health partners across HCC, ICS and HPFT to agree priorities for development of information and advice
- Championing individual voices through advocacy contracts and those that support people to be involved in co-production

Priority 4

Inform the commissioning strategy for information and advice provision, including HertsHelp

Develop commissioned information, advice and support services which help make it as easy as possible for people to find the wide range of different types of help they may need to stay well, active and independent by:

- Co-ordinate high-quality information and advice between partners to promote the 'no wrong door' approach
- Secure funding and resources and improve increase efficiencies to respond to increased demands
- Improve the quality of information and advice provided by raising awareness of wider organisations and services
- Improve our use of data and use this to target information and advice to people most at risk of poor outcomes

Key activity:

- Review of accessibility of information and advice from organisations and commissioned partners providing advice and support
- Developing communications plan to raise awareness and use of the Hertfordshire Directory of organisations and services available to people across the county
- Connecting people to services including services that provide information and advice, help people to find out about and access support, and services to support hospital discharge
- Action plan in place to ensure information and advice covers a wide range of media that considers digital exclusion, language barriers and cultural sensitivities

Priority 5

The ACS Gateway

Develop our approach to our 'front door' to ensure people's wellbeing and preventative needs can be met with good quality information and advice by:

- Ensuring we have a good range of information and advice to reflect Connected Lives principles at the 'front door'
- Making certain that all information and advice embraces Connected Lives principles to promote independence, citizenship and enablement
- Working with key partners for a joint approach to first contact

Key activity:

- Review current information and advice to ensure it reflects Connected Lives principles around prevent, enable and support
- Align and shape our outsourced Serco Customer Service Centre (CSC) relating to Information and Advice for adult care
- Reviewing and updating as appropriate training for CSC Adult Care line advisors
- Understand the ACS Gateway priorities, key issues, main reasons for contact to be able to support with development of information and advice

Priority 6

Involvement and Accessibility

Ensure our information and advice service is accessible, culturally sensitive and provides what people want and need in a way they can understand by:

- Ensuring key ACS information and advice is available in accessible versions for people with sensory needs and learning disabilities or where English is not their first language
- Engaging with people and co-producing new information and advice
- Ensuring high standards of customer care when we engage with people we support and the public

Key activity:

- Develop and implement a set of internal customer standards for Adult Care Services
- Co-produce a review of information and advice to ensure it reflects culturally competent care (sensitive to people's cultural identity or heritage)
- Campaign to promote the NHS Accessible Information Standard and review of compliance rolled out
- Develop guidance related to the information that people receive from social care professionals

Information and advice principles

- We will involve people who use services and their carers to develop our information and advice service. We will always ask for feedback and act on it when we can.
- Our information and advice will be available in a range of formats and channels, taking into account people with sensory needs, those who don't speak English and those with a learning disability.
- We will use informal language and plain English when providing information and advice. Wherever possible we will have the same source of information for the public and professionals.
- We will check that information and advice is understood and can be acted on, which may include offering support from an independent advocate.
- Don't reinvent the wheel, signpost to credible sources of information. We understand we may not always be the best service offering advice and support and we'll work with partners to develop consistent and proportionate information and advice.
- Take the initiative to connect people to opportunities, promoting wellbeing and signposting people to preventative and universal services – whether we provide them or not.



How information and advice can provide support in a changing society

- Make sure that people have information and advice to help them keep safe from harm and that or report abuse or harm if it occurs.
- Motivating and inspiring people to live healthier and more active lives to prevent, reduce or delay health and social care needs.
- Supporting people who are living longer to plan for their future.
- Providing quality advice and information designed to help people better understand and manage finances and access financial support available.
- Making sure the increasing number of family and unpaid carers can access information and advice about support, training, employment and benefits.
- Learning from best practice from other local authorities and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector.
- Capitalising on advances in digital technology to create new possibilities for providing care and support.
- Supporting people who are digitally excluded to access and gain confidence in using digital technology whilst maintaining traditional methods so people are not excluded.
- Creating opportunities for seamless information and advice with social care as part of a broader interconnected system with health, housing and community services.

Factors underpinning the strategy

The Care Act

The [Care Act 2014](#) sets out information and advice duties for local authorities and says what we need to tell all residents and people with care and support needs. This includes:

- How the social care system works and how people can access it
- What services are available and how people can choose to receive those services
- Financial information to understand care charges, ways to pay, money management and where to get independent financial advice
- How to raise concerns about safety and wellbeing

Accessible Information Standards

All organisations that provide NHS care and/or publicly-funded adult social care are legally required to follow the [Accessible Information Standard](#). Key principles:



- Set out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of people.
- Aim to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information and communication support that they can access and understand.

Think Local Act Personal

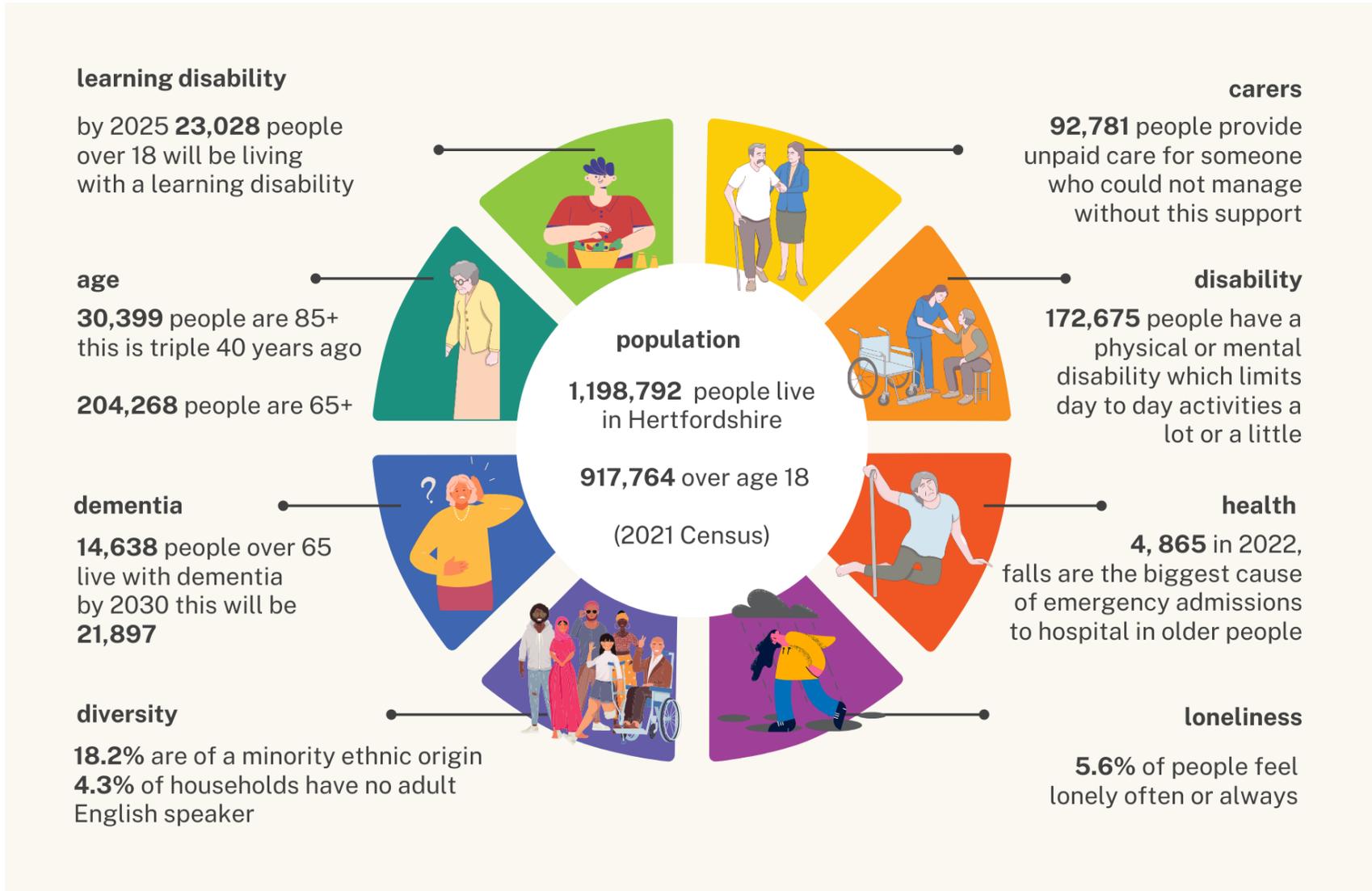
Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) has developed a set of personalised principles that focus on what matters to people. The Information and Advice 'I Statements' describe what good looks like from an individual's perspective. Adult Care Services will strive to keep to these principles when producing information and advice. The relevant Statements are:

- Having the information I need, when I need it - information and advice
- I can get information and advice that helps me think about and plan my life.
- I can get information and advice about my health and how I can be as well as possible – physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- I can get information and advice that is accurate, up to date and provided in a way that I can understand.
- I know about the activities, social groups, leisure, and learning opportunities in my community, as well as health and care services.
- I know what my rights are and can get information and advice on all the options for my health, care and housing.
- I know how to access my health and care records and decide which personal information can be shared with other people, including my family, care staff, school or college.



The Hertfordshire Picture

Adult Care and Support in Hertfordshire



Evaluating the strategy

Actions from this strategy will be presented quarterly to ACS Assurance to review progress from Summer 2024 onwards.

We will annually run an Information and Advice Survey with Hertfordshire Residents and professionals to benchmark the success of our actions relating to this strategy, reviewing and publishing information about the effectiveness of information and advice services locally, including customer satisfaction. Our internal Customer Service standards will be reviewed through regular co-produced internal mystery shopping run on a quarterly basis.

The measures for information and advice in the ACS Three Year plan are as follows:

Information and advice targets

How we measure success	2020-2021 Performance	2021-2022 Target	2022-2023 Target	2023-2024 Target
We will increase the proportion of adults who use services and find it easy to find information about support	<i>n/a</i>	76%	76%	78%
We will increase the proportion of Carers who find it easy to find information about support	<i>n/a</i>	65%	68%	71%
We will increase the proportion of adults who say that the organisation they were signposted to was quite or very helpful.	<i>n/a</i>	60%	60%	62%
We will increase the proportion of adults' enquiries resolved by information and advice	55%	65%	62%	65%
We will reduce the proportion of adults contacting us again after receiving information and advice	19.3%	20%	11%	15%

For further information and to feedback on this strategy contact:

ACS Information, Advice and Engagement

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