



# Our Way Forward Strategic Priorities 2023 - 2024

## Ambition and Wellbeing: Creating a “County of Opportunity for All”

Children’s Services provides a wide range of support for children and families. This document publicly sets out the strategic priorities for 2023-24 and shows how they contribute to the Council’s overall [Corporate Plan](#) to create a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire; and the Children’s Services [‘Outcome Bees’ Framework](#).

Whilst not exhaustive, the priorities outlined in this document highlight some of the key areas of activity that will be undertaken this year. Please read this document alongside: [‘Our Way Forward- Plan for Children and Young People 2021- 2026’](#) which sets out more information about our ambitions and what they mean for children and young people.

## Young People’s Priorities for 2023-24:

‘We want staff to have more training in mental health and what its like to be in care’.

‘We want better access to services, especially mental health services, and help to catch up at school if we need it’


Feedback from Hertfordshire’s Children in Care Council, February 2023.




Children’s Services  
Our Way Forward




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

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Sufficient local school places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure sufficient, appropriate and environmentally sustainable local school places for all children, including those with special educational needs, both in the short term and over the next 20 years.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of children requiring single occupancy transport to school.</p> <p>New schools designed as Net Zero Carbon in operation and existing schools supported in NZC transition.</p>	<p><b>Cleaner greener Hertfordshire</b></p> <p><b>Sustainable responsible growth</b></p> <p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Ambitious</p>
<p><b>Awareness and use of community resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness and use of local resources that can support children, young people and their families in their local area.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of visits to the Local Offer website.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Resilient</p>
<p><b>Keep children safe in the community through our Family Safeguarding model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand our Family Safeguarding model to enable more children and young people to stay safe both in and out of their home, by unlocking the resources of their family network and local communities.</li> <li>• To continue working with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to maintain the stability and effectiveness of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>Rate of children on Child Protection Plans.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Safe</p> 


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

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Innovation to support children in care</b></p> <p>Implement innovative ways to ensure healthy fulfilling lives and improved outcomes for Hertfordshire's children in care and children on the edge of care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide edge of care support that enables families to stay together, including through increased use of Family Group Conferencing and Family and Friends care.</li> <li>• Continue to innovate and develop Hertfordshire's residential homes and in-house foster care.</li> <li>• Enable children to leave care as soon as possible where safe to do so, through delivery of the Family Safeguarding for Children in Care programme.</li> </ul>	<p>Percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) living in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Children Looked After living in three or more homes during the year.</p> <p>Numbers of children supported to return home.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b></p> <p>Be Safe</p> 


## To plan, commission and deliver services that meet the individual needs of children and young people

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Excellent services for the most vulnerable young people</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure services support young people to transition out of care and into adulthood effectively.</li> <li>• Plan a coordinated approach to supporting the increased numbers of Separated Migrant Children, to dynamically meet their education, health and social care needs.</li> </ul>	<p>Percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation.</p> <p>Number of Separated Migrant Children who are Looked After and are in Education Employment and Training.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Healthy</p>
<p><b>Improve commissioning for young people</b></p> <p>Strengthen joint commissioning across education, health and social care with focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure young people know where to access support for their mental health and that services are accessible and flexible, with a trauma informed approach.</li> <li>• Education, prevention and support for children and young people related to county lines, gangs, knife crime, domestic abuse, and violence against women and girls.</li> </ul>	<p>% care-experienced young people who know how to access services if they are worried about mental health (Young People's survey).</p> <p>Number of commissioned services with a good rating (3 or 4) on their trauma informed self-evaluation.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Happy</p> 


## To plan, commission and deliver services that meet the individual needs of children and young people

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Listening and learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use data to track the emerging needs of children and young people; and aim to co-produce services alongside children, young people and families, ensuring the voice of those with lived experience is central to service planning and their own care planning.</li> </ul>	<p>Proportion of service development projects that show engagement and co-production with children and young people.</p>	<p><b>Excellent services</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Included</p>
<p><b>Improved support for children with SEND through services that are joined up, inclusive and easy to access where SEND is everybody's business.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the changes to the statutory SEND pathway are improving the timeliness and quality of statutory assessment and review.</li> <li>• Further develop an effective Graduated Response that supports our children and young people to achieve their full potential by enhancing the ASK SALI support offer to schools and rolling out the VSEND model .</li> <li>• Continue to embed the implementation of the new Integrated Therapies arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>% of Education Health and Care Needs Assessments completed within 20 weeks.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Resilient</p> 


## To support all children and young people to thrive and achieve.

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Improving attainment for everyone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing the attainment gap between underachieving groups and all children and young people in Hertfordshire.</li> <li>• Promoting recovery from the impacts of Covid in schools and improving the attainment of all children.</li> <li>• Enabling every child in Hertfordshire to attend a great school where they are safe and happy and enabled to reach their full potential.</li> <li>• Ensure all children have the 'best start in life' through integrated family services and early education.</li> </ul>	<p>Attainment data for early years, and key stages 2, 4 and 5.</p> <p>Proportion of schools assessed by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.</p> <p>Take-up of Free early education for 2-year-olds.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Excellent services</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Ambitious</p>
<p><b>Support for children not in school</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and support children who are not currently attending school.</li> <li>• Ensure all children are able to thrive and achieve and receive the highest quality of education that enables them to achieve and helps them to catch up if needed.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of children successfully reintegrated into education (data from pilot programme).</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Ambitious</p>
<p><b>Support for young people with their skills and employment</b></p> <p>Deliver an offer to young people across the county, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with further education partners to help young people, and care leavers, to gain in-demand skills and open up job opportunities.</li> <li>• Provide information, advice, guidance and careers education, including on the green economy, for young people to take advantage of new environmental career opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training.</p>	<p><b>Sustainable responsible growth</b></p> <p><b>Cleaner greener Hertfordshire</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be independent</p> 

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

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Deliver excellent professional development for all roles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to deliver professional development in models of social work practice including Family Safeguarding.</li> <li>• Enhance training for staff working directly with young people in how to support them with their mental health.</li> <li>• Support our workforce to make SEND everyone's responsibility and embed the Professional's Promise.</li> <li>• Provide high quality supervision, management and a learning and development offer for all staff in Children's Services, including all professionals and foster carers.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff survey data.</p> <p>L&amp;D training data – number of people attending mental health training courses and SEND training courses.</p>	<p><b>Excellent services</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Safe</p>
<p><b>Improved recruitment and retention for key roles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train a new generation of Hertfordshire social workers in partnership with Front Line and the universities of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.</li> <li>• Promote Hertfordshire as an excellent place for a range of multi-agency professionals to work with children and families.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff receive support for their wellbeing and to manage their work.</li> </ul>	<p>Numbers of new social workers on Front Line and apprenticeship programmes.</p> <p>Reduction in use of agency staff.</p> <p>Voluntary turnover.</p> <p>Average days lost.</p>	<p><b>Excellent services</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Resilient</p> 

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

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p>All staff feel included</p> <p>Actively promote Diversity, Equality, Equity &amp; Inclusion within the Children's Services' workforce and the communities it serves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver actions through identified work streams that link to the Council's overall Diversity &amp; Inclusion Strategy.</li> <li>• Listen and respond to the voices of children, young people and families as well as employees.</li> <li>• Deliver the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standards action plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff survey data.</p>	<p><b>Excellent services</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Included</p> 



# To work in partnership to deliver early help and support to children, young people and families and prevent them from living in poverty

What we want to achieve	How this will be measured	This will contribute towards Hertfordshire's corporate priorities of:
<p><b>Excellent support for children and families, fit for the future</b></p> <p>Plan for the future, making bold decisions to transform services where it will improve support to children and their families who are at risk of poor outcomes, in order to prevent problems occurring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure children and families, including those with SEND, get the high-quality support at the right time from the right agency, and that children are kept informed of what is happening.</li> <li>• Strengthen father inclusive practice.</li> <li>• Explore new multi-agency Hertfordshire approaches to supporting children and families who need help, through the new government models such as 'Family Help'.</li> </ul>	<p>Hertfordshire quartile performance on the rate of children on Child in Need Plans and Children Looked After.</p> <p>Percentage of family outcomes achieved (Supporting Families claims).</p>	<p><b>Excellent services</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Ambitious</p>
<p><b>Building Life Chances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a partnership programme to address inequalities worsened by the current cost of living, delivering through 6 key themes:</li> <li>• A good start in life including early years and early intervention</li> <li>• Education and skills including lifelong learning</li> <li>• Health inequalities</li> <li>• Employment and jobs growth</li> <li>• Crisis and immediate support for residents</li> <li>• Food insecurity.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of households with families supported through the Household Support Fund (round 4).</p> <p>Take up of HAPpy (Hertfordshire Holiday Activity Programme) places from children eligible for free school meals.</p>	<p><b>Healthy and fulfilling lives</b></p> <p><b>Sustainable responsible growth</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Bee:</b> Be Resilient</p> 