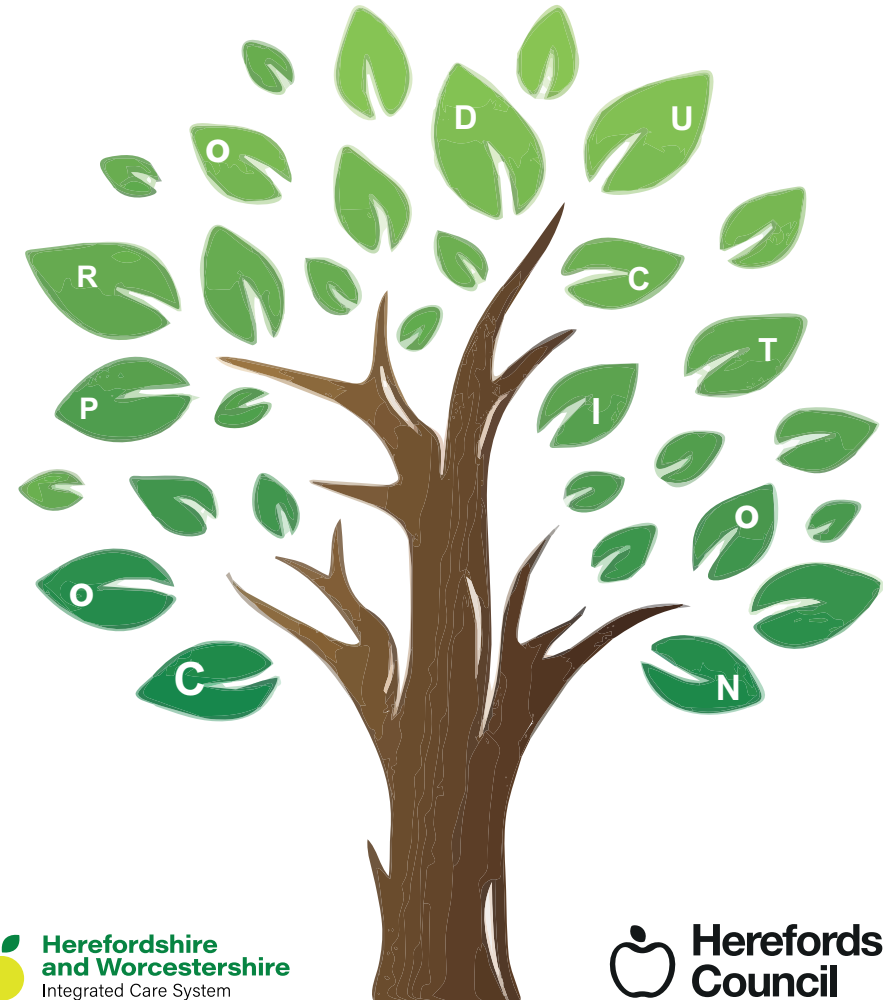


Herefordshire Local Area SEND and AP Strategy

Update Bulletin 2 (Spring 2024)

*Our vision is to ensure that,
“All children and young people in
Herefordshire feel safe, loved, and valued, and
grow up with the confidence and skills to be
the best they can be.”*



Welcome to our Herefordshire SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy Update Bulletin

Our full Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) was completed in January 2023 and is the foundation for our strategic priorities for special educational needs and disability (SEND) across Herefordshire.

Our strategy reflects what we know about needs and services and what matters most to our children, young people and their families. Early identification and effective response, listening to young people and choice and good information for planning for adulthood are top priorities. This means that the quality of our graduated response, multi-agency working, good quality education, health and care plans, effective transition to adult services, social inclusion, shorter waiting lists and more local education provision are all examples of where we are putting attention and effort.

In spring 2024, our strategic plans for alternative provision have been integrated into the SEND strategy and our published SEND and AP strategy reflects this update. Our Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy 2023-2026 is available to provide more detail and our strategic workstream for Education includes the key elements of developing our alternative provision.

This is our second SEND Strategy update forming part of our continuing cycle of self-evaluation. Our first update bulletin (December 2023) can be accessed [here](#). We received positive feedback and suggestions for improvement. In response to feedback we have revised the format to one that is more focused on specific progress against our strategic intentions as described in our SEND Strategy 2023-2026.

The bulletins provide information for anyone interested to know how the SEND Strategy is going and are available alongside regular publications such as Spotlight (schools) and the PCV/LA SEND Newsletter. This update captures our first full year of delivering the strategy.

Update bulletins are key documents for the SEND Assurance Board who have responsibility for ensuring pace and progress of the SEND Strategy. The bulletin is not exhaustive; it references updates, headlines and exemplars from the last 4-6 months. Links are provided to supporting evidence and other publications as appropriate. The bulletin is considered by leaders alongside formal reports and thematic reviews, performance reports and service user feedback.

The SEND Assurance Board approved the purpose and developing format for our update bulletins on the 26th July 2023. The Board has representatives from our Parent Carer Voice Forum, schools, colleges, early years and early help, health and care services (children and adults) and the Board is working directly with young people to make sure that we have the benefit of this most important perspective.

The bulletin is coproduced through the Partnership Group with key leads across education, health, care and parent-carer voice working together to agree content.

Data included in this bulletin is the latest available at the time of writing up including our data dashboard and service reports. Information from the statistical release for January 2024 will inform the next Bulletin later in 2024.

Outcome 1
Your needs are identified
in a timely and effective
way

We planned to change:



- Reduce waiting times for assessment of children in the early years by portage services by expanding our team so that you and your family receive home based early intervention and support
- Reduce waiting times for health assessment services



- Work together so that we make sure that your EHCP is issued on time. We will make sure that professionals who contribute advice to your EHC plan do so on time.

Waiting times are improving in health services and Portage

- We have introduced a new system of initial response and triage for Portage which means that all referrals receive their welcome letter within two weeks and the waiting time for planned intervention has been halved from 10 months in early 2023, to less than 5 months currently.
- We have started regular monthly Portage groups for EY children with sensory needs, Downs Syndrome and children with a diagnosis of autism and also outreach communication and social interaction (COSI) sessions for parents and children who have received a diagnosis of autism. We have also started new Portage sessions for those children who have received a welcome letter but are awaiting intervention. This means that we have a practical offer of help for more families and more quickly.

In therapies

- Our target wait time is 40 weeks by the end of March 2024. The percentage of children seen within 18 weeks of referral has improved but is not yet consistent. The target here is that 90% of children are seen within 18 weeks.
- All vacant posts are now recruited to despite the national shortage which means we can offer service to more children and families.
- Ongoing service transformational work already is underway, as the teams are adopting the Balanced System approach; this includes piloting new projects and testing new ways of working such as drop-in clinics for parents with concerns, initially alongside Health visitor clinics in children's centres, this commenced in January 2024.
- Occupational therapy is already at 36 (was 64 weeks) and we also are finding new ways of working including workshops for parents and school staff. The percentage of children seen

Outcome 1

Your needs are identified in a timely and effective way

We planned to change



- Co-produce clear pathways for Autism and ADHD
- Ensure that staff, including those in early years are well trained to identify and assess your needs

We expect to measure how well we are doing by:

- ✓ Proportion of EHCP plans written within the national timescales
- ✓ Monitoring waiting lists for Portage services
- ✓ Monitoring waiting times for health assessment services
- ✓ Publish clear pathways for autism and ADHD on our local offer

within 18 weeks has improved from 42.9% in April 2023 to 54.5% in January 2024, for physiotherapy the improvement is from 56.7% to 77.4%.

- Speech and language therapy is improving more slowly but is at 45 weeks currently because it is difficult to recruit when there is a national shortage. A risk assessment matrix has been put in place for over 52-week waitlist. The 6 children concerned have been offered appointments.
- Waiting times for pre-school ASD assessment has reduced from 70 weeks to 40 following investment to reduce waiting times on the autism pathway, with regular review of capacity and waiting lists. The offer for preschool children following a diagnosis of ASD has been reviewed to ensure all children and their families are able to access a variety of support, resources and interventions.
- Interviews took place in Feb 2024 for the substantive Consultant post and a locum paediatrician has been secured for 6 months from the start of Feb 2024. We have also been able to offer additional clinics through the Paediatrician clinical team whilst a new initiative was piloted in December 2023 to support families of preschool aged children whilst they wait for their first paediatrician appointment. This pilot was successful and so we are continuing this way of working. This means that children are not waiting so long for help and will not wait so long to see the paediatrician.
- Weekend paediatric clinics are being undertaken by an insourcing team. This has ensured that children are seen in a timelier manner and prevented 78-week breaches. It has also contributed significantly to the reduction in children waiting > 52 weeks for their first appointment. This is now at 6 compared with 79 at the end of October. The plan is to continue to use the insourcing team to see additional new patients in February and March we want to ensure that there are no 52-week breaches after the end of March.
- We know from our Quality of Life survey which included adapted versions for children in special schools, that oral health for all children is a specific priority. Our Oral Health community-based programme have provided dental pack resources to all primary schools with supervised tooth brushing happening in schools and early years settings. Resources are available online and in our libraries ("Brush, Book, Bed" pack). Funding has been secured for 40 settings and the first 37 of

these are now live, including two special schools, alongside a focus on settings in areas of higher deprivation. This is important preventative work to help children maintain healthy teeth.

- In CAMHs we have worked hard to tackle waiting times. We have reduced waits of over 26 weeks from 33.3% in June 2023 to 9% in December 2023 (partnership patients) and 31% in June to 0% (Choice patients) in December 2023. This means we are now at 91% and 100% for less than 26 weeks.



Education, Health and Care Plans issued on time

- 75% of Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) are currently being completed within 20 weeks which means Herefordshire continues to be in the top quartile nationally despite the rapid increase in numbers of plans (by 37% 2019-2023). EHCP growth is across all age phases; however rather more in early years and rather less at 20-25 years than national. Additional staffing capacity is being put into place which means we will work to get to our 95% target during 2024.
- Additional investment and dedicated focus means that our target of 95% of statutory advice received on time for EHCPs is doing well: 100% for Educational Psychology advice, 94% for social care advice and an increase from 47% in December 2023 to 69% for health advice. The improvement in health advice has been effectively supported by our new Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) who is included in the full Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process and is working to ensure all health teams contribute with quality advice to the EHCP, any unmet need is identified, and onward referrals are made.
- 78% of requests continue to be from education settings which helps us have a range of supporting evidence to help with decision making from the point of request. 20% are from parent carers which is a consistent proportion of requests (21% November 2023).



Developing a NEW Children's Autism & ADHD Care Pathway:

We are working to improve the services and experience for children and families on the new autism and Attention deficit hyperactivity care pathway. We are extending what we offer through assessments and other services and through work with schools. We are listening to what matters to those with lived experience as we continue to develop our new care pathway. This means that families and children should be receiving better information and better support and a better quality experience.

- Additional funding has been provided to Wye Valley Trust to extend the Autism Co-ordination role for a further 6-months to accelerate the assessment process.
- An external provider has been commissioned to deliver 50 additional ASD Assessments for Herefordshire CAMHS.
- Herefordshire has been successful in securing funding to roll-out the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) Project, which will provide expert in-put to 40 Primary Schools to improve the support they offer pupils with a range of neurodivergent conditions.
- Autism Central Midlands Hub is providing 1:1 peer support and workshops for parents and carers of Autistic children and young people.
- Our All-Age Autism strategy based on lived experience of those attending open sessions and service user survey is getting ready to be published.
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire NHS are developing a new combined care pathway for children's Autism & ADHD aged 0-25 years. The pathway will include improving the diagnostic assessment process for Autism & ADHD as well as support for children, families and schools before, during and after the diagnosis assessment process.
- A lot of work has already been undertaken with parents and professionals to shape what the future pathway will look like and now we are moving on to stage 2 to develop the detail of this. We are asking parents of children with Autism or ADHD and professionals with an interest in this area, to join one of 3 groups progressing the pathway.
- Communication and Information – focus: to work with Children and Young People (CYP), parents/ carers CYP to ensure information on Autism & ADHD, pathways and services is appropriate and accessible.

We are focusing on

1. Diagnostic Assessments for Autism & ADHD:- to work with CYP, parents/carers to develop a diagnostic care pathway for Autism and ADHD.
2. Pre & Post Assessment Support for Autism & ADHD:- to develop a needs-led & system-wide approach to support CYP & Families with emphasis on identifying and meeting needs early.



Staff trained to identify and assess needs well and early

- We have been delivering the Oliver McGowan Learning Disability and Autism training across Hereford and Worcester for example 113 health professionals have completed tier 1 and 106 have completed tier 2, so we are well on our way to train 10% of health service staff by 1 December 2025. This is important so that children and families are welcomed and supported by health practitioners who understand better how to be helpful and how to communicate well.
- All Early Years forms have been redesigned to support effective and best practice, (for example better referencing to the inclusion learning goals in the developmental journal) and to promote the Local Offer. Our processes and our training have been improved so that we consistently support inclusion and individual needs in the early years. Some of our training initiatives are listed below:
- We have a broad training programme in Early Years (EY) with 11 (soon to be 22) new EY SENCOs achieving the L3 SENCO award. In addition, 251 (+ 43 since October 23) practitioners have completed Dingley's Promise training which is our key training to support children with SEND to participate in their local early years provision.
- 76/103 Early Years settings now have communication champions which means more effective and earlier support. 24 additional Early Years practitioners have completed Communication training and 17 more completed Autism training.
- 13/56 Child minders have attended training in early identification and the local offer. In all cases this is the first SEND training attended. The take up and great feedback means we will be running this again and supporting consistent inclusion across all settings.
- 451/570 (79%) Children's Services staff have attended Restorative Practice Introductory Sessions over the last few months. We are supporting all our social care staff to work with families and children in a new way based on positive relationships and strengths.

Outcome 2. You and your families' voices are heard and this makes a difference

We planned to change:



- Gather you and your families' views in different ways about matters that matter to you



- Making sure that the plans we make and the services we review includes you and your families from the start



- Make sure that you only have to tell your story once



- Make sure we all work to the participation and engagement framework we developed together



Gathering your views in different ways about matters that matter to you

- We now have the results of the children and young people's quality of life survey carried out in 2021 for mainstream schools where 4,900 children participated and for the customised version of this survey for special schools where 170 young people participated in 2023. Some of whom are in secondary school and identified as SEND said that they were afraid of going to school because of bullying, received hurtful, nasty or unwanted pictures or messages online or physically attacked at school in the month prior to the survey. Also, that their families are more likely to ask for help with their mental health and are less happy with life. We heard that emotional well-being and resilience is lower for some and worry and anxiety stops some young people from concentrating or enjoying other things. They also told us how important a trusted adult is. We are sharing what we have been told with those that know and can help and we are using what you told us to help us understand what services are needed.
- We were delighted received a higher return from your parents for the Parent Carer Voice (PCV) annual survey than in 2022 (165 compared with 102). The 2023 annual parent carer survey found that the majority of parents felt listened to and their views acted upon always or sometimes in education and health but that this fell for social care which reinforces the importance of our action to move into relational practice approaches. The PCV survey returns tell us that where listened to, views are acted upon. This survey has given us some important help and we will be looking in more detail at the areas of concern, sharing what is working well and coming up with an action plan.
- Our PCV have increased the number of opportunities for your parent carers to have conversations with people who deliver services through our SEND Summit and a programme of coffee mornings. Each mini summit will have people from different services so that we can help explain what the service offer is, and listen to ideas for working smarter.
- Our PCV has been working with the SENCo network to increase awareness of the new booklets, lending library and the Forum activities.

Outcome 2. You and your families' voices are heard and this makes a difference

We expect to measure how well we are doing by:

- ✓ Proportion of children and young people with SEND who report that the people who look after them care about their opinion
- ✓ Proportion of EHC plans that were reviewed at the annual review by the child and their parent-carer(s), or the young person.
- ✓ Proportion of children and young people with SEND and their families who report that they received feedback on how their views have been used

- To improve further children's voices in EHCP processes we have completed a new EHCP survey and checked through Quality Assurance. The survey and assurance processes has led to us changing our forms so that everyone is clearer about the importance of listening to and reporting parent and children's views. An example is the change we have made to the standard template for an EHCP.
- 38 Early Help workers attended a 'Stop the Clock' session (when we all stop for training. One of our Advanced Practitioner's delivered a well-received session on gaining the voice of the child with SEND. We chose this topic because we want to be better at helping very young children share their thoughts and ideas with those supporting them.
- Our network of your groups is growing in number (now 20 groups) and a name for the network was voted on- "Herefordshire Helpers" was the winner! We are working on subjects such as transport and buddying issues because of advice from young people.
- Learning from compliments and complaints, the SEN team have strengthened communications by reorganising into north and south teams with officers having oversight of a locality to ensure we know children well, parents and young people need to tell their story just once, and facilitating strong relationships with families and schools over time. By having sub-teams we have addressed risks associated with a single point of contact.



Plans for services includes you and your families from the start

- To improve further children's voices we make sure that your voice is now more explicitly sought in our standard template for new EHCPs and annual reviews.
- We have been working on a joint All Age Autism Strategy with Worcestershire .To develop our strategy, we talked to Autistic People, family carers, people who work in support services and people living in our communities with an interest in Autism. We ran workshops, facilitated groups and conducted a questionnaire. 143 parent carers returned a questionnaire.
- Considerable progress has been made with the Restorative Practice Introductory training sessions

in Children's Services and 79% staff have already attended the training. 6 schools have completed whole school relational training which means that more staff are specifically trained in approaches that focus on relationships and inclusion. A sense of belonging and safety at school were two of the priorities highlighted by those of you who need help for special educational needs in the recent Quality of Life survey. The Mental Health pathway is being redesigned to improve accessibility and early intervention for complex needs following feedback from children and young people, for example the CLD trust have changed the way they work in that therapist now can go to the child where there are emotional challenges. <https://thecldtrust.org/mental-health/>

- A survey of parents receiving Portage service in early years gave whole heartedly positive responses, telling us that the service supports confidence and accessibility to services which helps us know what to focus on, and led us to set up a new sensory group, and to ensure that parents' and child's voice is in all Early Years play plans, and tracked. Impact surveys are now in place in all of our intervention services to better to find out what is working well, or not, and what particularly helps the lived experience.
- Parents have told us how important it is to get a new Education, Health and Care Plan completed in time and so we have prioritised this achieving 75% within 20 weeks across the year with the aim of returning to 95%-100% with the new staffing that has been agreed.

Making sure you only have to tell your story once

- The Herefordshire Early Help & Prevention strategy sets out our ambition to strengthen our prevention and early help provision within local communities, delivering services such as 'First Steps' an innovative multiagency programme for young parents under 21 years and for new parents who have left care. This is delivered together with midwifery, health visiting and Nationwide Community Learning Partnership (NCLP). Together with Play & Learn and Baby Play universal sessions in areas of most need, where there is no community offer or when there is a Health Visitor drop in session. This helps to deliver key preventative messages and ensure there is a joined up team supporting our families.



Putting our Participation and Engagement Framework into practice

- Our network of young people's groups now comprises 20 different groups and they have chosen the name Herefordshire Helpers. This is helping leaders and providers hear children's views for example the need for more frequent buses for travel to College, which are being commissioned.
- A care leaver participation officer is in post and a programme of activities and events have been co-designed and the Care Leaver Council is re-instated. This means that our young people who are care leavers are able to tell us and help us improve our understanding of what is important to them, and what good services need to look like.
- A Participation Officer for Special Educational needs and disability is to be recruited and additional funding has been agreed for our SENDIASS service which means we will be able to expand and continue help and opportunities for participation for parents and children/young people.
- Specialist College students organised a workshop with the SEND Strategic Board. This has led to an action list for Board members including plans to raise awareness about accessible parking spaces and review the Buddy Programme as well as closer partnership working between our specialist and mainstream colleges in Hereford.
- Early Help use 'Widget' as a tool with children with additional needs which has proved to be very successful in aiding communication and understanding.
- The Early Help Strategy was completed following extensive consultation with children, young people and their families, partner agencies, the community, faith and voluntary sector. 1054 questionnaires were completed, 14 focus groups and 18 engagement activities. Consultation highlighted areas which were priorities for the Implementation plan for example improved access to information. The online information on the council website is quicker to access, less clicks to have the information and Widget has been added to the toolkit to support communication.
- A survey of parents' views for new EHCPs provided feedback on what was working well- 69% felt

their views were included in the plan, 28% partly so, and 72% felt that the EHCP made things for their child better. The survey highlighted where we needed to do better for example-plans could better celebrate the strengths of each child / young person and better capture health and social care outcomes. This will be repeated annually and we will check how we are doing through regular sampling.

- The results of a coproduction charter survey with system and SEND leaders in education demonstrated a sound understanding of principles and good practice but less engagement than wanted. The Coproduction delivery action plan is relaunching the coproduction charter with supporting resources for managers and leaders to use with their staff teams.

Outcome 3. You receive the right help at the right time



Improving our graduated response

We planned to change



- The documentation for the graduated response so that it was easier for your parents to understand what a school should be offering, and make it easier for our schools to use



- Improve how we know how many places are needed in our special schools and resource bases so that wherever possible we can avoid some of you having to travel long distances



- The content and usability of the Local Offer website and help people working with you know how to get you the help you need

- Following the new versions of the graduated response being published (link) Parent Carer Voice have coproduced and published an early years booklet to support parents to know what help is available. This is in response to parent feedback. A primary booklet was launched in spring 2024. We know it is important to have information that is useable and practical and the feedback tells us that the booklets do this well.
- We are working together to plan for 40 of our primary schools to take part in the PINS project which will support early help for neuro-diversity and complement the work on relational practice which is being implemented in a number of our schools already.
- 100% of our Early Years SENCOs are attending updates/training and network meetings and report for example greater confidence with the Early Years Graduated Approach, we can see this reflected in improved play plans with clearer, smarter targets which drill down well into individual needs.
- Children with Disabilities have reorganised referral routes into the system following an internal review so that there is a single point of entry and no child gets lost in a what was a more complex referral system.
- A comprehensive and adaptable set of materials to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing component of the PHSE in schools has been developed into a toolkit and is now available for all primary schools in Herefordshire to use. The scheme has been made possible by Herefordshire Council's COVID Recovery and Resilience Fund and will be led by The CLD trust, a Herefordshire based charity, offering counselling and other mental health services across the county. The CLD has worked closely with a number of primary schools in Herefordshire to design the materials and make them purposeful and easy for teachers to use.

Outcome 3. You receive the right help at the right time

We planned to change



- Improve access to health services

We expect to measure how well we are doing by:

How many of you say

- ✓ you had the support you need when life feels hard
- ✓ you highly rate the support you received
- ✓ you know where to go to get help with health or disability

How many of your parent carers say

- ✓ They know who to contact to get the support you need
- ✓ That the professionals who care for you can safely meet their health needs

We are looking at how we can grow our Alternative Provision (AP) for pupils unable to attend mainstream schools due to exclusion, illness or other reasons. We are looking at new options as our AP free school bid was not successful.



Specialist Education schools and resource bases

We know from feedback on the parent carer survey and our usage statistics that more people know about the local offer website and are finding it helpful.

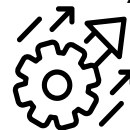
- We have opened 4 new resource bases in mainstream schools for youngsters with ASD needs, and also a really appreciated early years assessment base. Together these provided 42 new specialist education placements locally for autumn 2023. We are learning from the successes in these new bases and looking for ways to offer more local specialist places in bases within mainstream schools as well as options to develop more special school placements locally within the capital monies we have.
- One of our special schools has been approved for a rebuild with the help of DfE funding, after a successful bid to the schools rebuilding programme. Mapping work has been completed to identify local opportunities to increase our specialist education provision, particularly for social, emotional and mental health, moderate learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties. Further development or autism provision, particular as part of a complex profile is in following development phase. The 4 new bases have formed a strong network to develop best practice. Regular keep in touch meetings have been initiated with our specialist schools which will become part of the regular part of the review and plan for sufficiency of specialist education locally.
- A Child Readiness Project in Early Years has received a regional award and meant that 100% of children with SEND were identified early and over half of children with EHCPs making the transition to school in summer 2023 moved into a mainstream school (27 out of 53), up from 16 in 2022 and 20 in 2021. A practice case study on the Child Readiness Study has recorded (ISOS draft); "Crucial to this work has been improving the accuracy of data and oversight of early years children with SEN, pro-actively building the skills and capacity of the early years workforce, and ensuring 'every door is the right door' when families or professionals are seeking support." Our parent carer survey told us just how important it was to get transition better into school, to new schools and from school to college, so we look forward to sharing what is working well and seeing

what lessons we can learn.



Content and usability of the Local Offer website

- 1,164 users accessed the social media post about our SEND Summit. 7812 total views of our local offer were recorded for July to December 2023 compared with 3394 views for the period November 2022 to June 2023.
- Following feedback from the Parent Carer Survey we know that the Local Offer website is still not well enough known, so we are planning pop up conversations to find out more about key topics and to help confidence in use, we are planning to add a feedback button on the website. We will also be working with you to scope a young person's zone and are now using QR codes on posters, leaflets and letters to help everyone get to the Local Offer website.
- In our Quality of Life Survey 40% of you told us you have sought help for mental health (compared with 25% non-SEND) and the role of a trusted adult was very clear when you felt school was unsafe or where you were telling us you were happy with life (66% SEND vs 73% non-SEND). Overall we found out that your resilience and coping strategies are something we need to help you with as fewer of you (8%) had a high measure of resilience compared to 13% non-SEND.
- We are working with our SENCo network to develop a "New SENCO" section to encourage frontline practitioners to better know and use the Local Offer and thereby be better placed to help parents and young people and we are working with young people to develop a young person's section and to develop easy read versions of some key information documents as well as identify topics for videos or webinars.

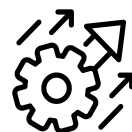


Improving access to health service help

- Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS were successful in obtaining NHSE funding to deliver a pilot project embedding psychology screening into the paediatric epilepsy services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The funding will support the delivery of a prescribed screening programme - Psychology Adding Value Epilepsy Screening (PAVES) with associated identified

interventions where appropriate. The funding supports the recruitment of a Clinical psychologist and assistant psychologist. After a number of attempts at recruitment, Worcestershire Acute (who are hosting the post) were successful in recruiting to the clinical psychologist post which is due to commence in April 2024.

- Children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health services has continued to be a priority area and consultation together with feedback has indicated that more help and support is still needed and that this help & support needs to be made available at a much earlier stage. To address this, work is underway to coordinate, increase and improve multi agency services intended to address emotional health and wellbeing problems as early as possible. Work is also underway to redesign the Neurodiversity assessment, diagnostic and support pathways.



Psychological support for Epilepsy:

- Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS were successful in obtaining NHSE funding to deliver a pilot project embedding psychology screening into the paediatric epilepsy services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The funding will support the delivery of a prescribed screening programme - Psychology Adding Value Epilepsy Screening (PAVES) with associated identified interventions where appropriate. The funding supports the recruitment of a Clinical psychologist and assistant psychologist. After a number of attempts at recruitment, Worcestershire Acute (who are hosting the post) were successful in recruiting to the clinical psychologist post which is due to commence in April 2024.
- The Key Worker service commenced in Herefordshire & Worcestershire on 23rd January 2023. This service has been developed as a response to the NHS England Learning Disability and Autism long-term plan commitment that by 2023/24, children and young people with a learning disability, who are autistic, or both, with the most complex needs will have a designated Keyworker. The Key working function is an important response to ensuring children, young people and families get the right support at the right time, from local systems that are responsive to meeting their needs in a holistic and joined up way. All CYP across Herefordshire & Worcestershire admitted to a Tier 4 mental health hospital have an allocated Key Worker practitioner to support safe and timely discharge with focus on reducing risk of relapse and re-

Outcome 4. You are well prepared for your next steps in life and achieve well

We planned to change:



- Responding more promptly so that you do not feel ignored.



- Making sure your annual EHC plan annual review takes place on time and that we let you know how we will change the plan soon after the review, especially if you are about to change schools.



- Providing information so people supporting you (including in schools and colleges and your family) can start to talk to you about your future and what could be possible.

admission. We now have a SENDIASS Step-down Link Key Worker who is working with children and young people stepped down from the Key Worker service in January 2024.



Responding more promptly

- We have been successful with an application to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to establish a Herefordshire Youth Employment Hub (YEH), to bring together a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private organisations to provide multi-agency support, in one place. The aim of the YEH is to support 16 to 24 year olds into education, employment or training. Herefordshire has not had a Connexions Service since 2012 and the local authority does not have a NEET prevention team, so this new Hub is very important to make sure we support our young people into employment, education or training.
- The YEH will be accessible to all young people including care leavers, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and provide a joined up holistic support to every young person that would like help.
- Our new YEH Co-ordinator is managing the everyday running of both the physical and online hub as well as co-ordinating and working with organisations to develop the offer and support for young people. In addition, two Careers and Employment Advisers are being employed full-time to work directly with young people. The YEH is providing careers advice, referral into employment, education, training opportunities, provide resources, job application and interview guidance to young people. Young people will be supported by the YEH staff, JCP youth work coaches, National Careers Service advisers, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) along with partnering with local education and training providers who can also give advice on appropriate training pathways and career opportunities and provide specific training to develop skills. The YEH will also work with voluntary and community sector including HVOSS and their partners.
- Our Social Inclusion Support service is responding within 2 weeks to all referrals. The quick response and new way of working means that 72% of referrals need no further action at the

Outcome 4. You are well prepared for your next steps in life and achieve well

We planned to change:



- the range of training (including travel training) and job opportunities including offering supported internships with job coaches to help you.



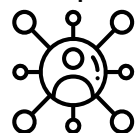
- The way in which activities are offered to young people to allow more opportunity for a social life.

We expect to measure how well we are doing by:

- ✓ Proportion CYP with SEND who report that most of the time, they enjoy life
- ✓ Proportion of annual reviews for phase transfer pupils that are completed in time for admissions deadlines

6 week review. This tells us that the new way of working together with schools is a good development and we will continue the new way of action planning together.

- Waiting list times are reducing and changes to how we offer help in early years means we are responding more quickly with support.



Annual Reviews on time

- PEPS (Personal Education Plans) are in place for 97.99% of children looked after (an increase from 88% in 2022-3) and the Virtual School is available to attend all annual reviews to ensure alignment of PEPS and EHCPs.
- All schools are now using the new and revised annual review annual review paperwork with a focus on preparation for adulthood.
- Work on the supporting information system has improved our reporting and accuracy for annual reviews.
- 68% of Annual Health Checks have been undertaken by the end of January 2023. Feedback continues to show a concern about consistent completion and standards so we sent a briefing to all doctor's surgeries in the New Year and are developing an improvement programme including an annual health check study day in the summer and a video being made for Herefordshire General Practice created with the community by Healthwatch to encourage take up of annual checks and vaccines. We have developed a sensory friendly environment assessment and 8 Herefordshire GPs have completed this.



Information to help with planning for the future

- Youth Worker Project in Diabetes and Epilepsy to support transition: Wye Valley Trust is part of a two-year NHSE funded pilot to embed youth workers into the Diabetes and Epilepsy teams to support young people transitioning into adult services. Two youth workers have been recruited to start in the New Year with an additional member of the team still to be recruited. Our Paediatric Diabetes Clinical Nurse Specialist who is leading the pilot has established a network of colleagues

Outcome 4. You are well prepared for your next steps in life and achieve well

We expect to measure how well we are doing by:

- ✓ Proportion of young people with SEND (18-25) in employment
- ✓ Proportion of young people with SEND (16-25) undertaking a supported internship or apprenticeship
- ✓ Proportion of CYP with SEND who are able to safely and confidently access public transport
- ✓ Proportion of children of children and young people with SEND report that they are involved in a club, group or hobby they enjoy.

across the country to provide peer support and shared learning. Data shows that young people transitioning to adult services are more likely to have poor self-management of their long-term conditions and present to primary care and/or Accident and Emergency in crisis. The Youth Workers will advocate for the young people and support them throughout their transition journey to ensure they are fully engaged with the adult teams.

- We have undertaken some specific work and we have found that a greater percentage of those aged 16-24yrs with SEND in Herefordshire are engaged in education and training than the national picture. We have an ambition to improve on employment options working through the Marches Network for schools and with local employers and have a target for additional Supported Internships for September 2024. All our secondary schools are signed up on the Marches Careers Hub and our schools we are doing than national for 7/8 benchmarks. We will have targets e.g. 65% of Careers Hub institutions fully achieving that one benchmark 6 – Experiences of the Workplace - with faster progress for schools serving the most disadvantaged young people including Special Schools and Alternative Provision.

CAMHS Youth Team Neuro diverse pathway

In October 2023 the CAMHS youth team extended the service offer to work with young people aged 14+ with a diagnosis of ASC and/or ADHD who were also open to CAMHS services.

Youth workers work alongside existing provision, providing a young person led intervention which supports young people to develop and improve practical life skills. Empowering young people to live full and meaningful lives.

Young people on the CAMHS Youth Teams neurodevelopmental pathway will be offered an initial 10 sessions including two core session on Autism/ADHD and me and communication and relationships. In addition to this families (where agreed by the young person) will be offered 3 sessions with a senior mental health practitioner around understanding Autism, impact on families and supporting a YP with Autism/ADHD. All young people are sent a welcome letter containing the following:

3. Session outline
4. Family session invitation
5. Youth worker profile
6. Blank profile for them to complete
7. Images and directions for the venue
8. Appointment information

Feedback from young people has been positive:

'The tree analogy - I appreciate being able to learn visually and the youth worker using details that I can personally relate to.'

'I found it useful how the youth worker explained everything to me in detail to make sure I understood. I also thought it was helpful as it gives me a lot of hope for my future that I previously thought I lost.'

'The youth worker helped me figure out the areas I need help with, explained things that I didn't know :).'

- Our (draft) All Age Autism Strategy Herefordshire and Worcestershire includes the following priority Supporting more autistic people into employment.
- We have a corporate parenting focus on education, employment and training opportunities which means that we are working together to grow choice and opportunity for young people in and leaving care.
- Following in from the success of the Early Years and Primary booklet, our PCV has started work on a booklet to support transition from school.



Travel, travel training and job opportunities

- The preparation for adulthood and routes to employment work has seen a number of events including a conference and a coproduction workshop as part of a peer review. Clear priorities have been established for 2024 for example ensuring that all young people regardless of education setting have information and the same opportunities for targeted and specialist support when planning choices for after school, and that 5 supported internships are available by autumn 2024. We are supported by several successful grant bids in supporting this work with some extra capacity.
- In 2022-23, 28 young people successfully passed their travel training which enabled them to become more confident in the community and using public transport. This academic year has already seen a 20% increase in referrals, which means we can help more young people. Travel training is one of the topics planned for a Parent Carer Voice Coffee morning mini-summit this summer.
- Hereford City Council has purchased three electric buses that will run daily across Hereford city centre, providing free journeys for residents and visitors courtesy of Stronger Towns Funding. Specific work is happening with our young people in our specialist college to be confident in their use.

We received a good rating for our adult and community learning services and the inspectors told us:

- Learners, who come from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds, learn in positive and respectful environments. They are challenged to achieve their very best by supportive and well-qualified tutors. Learners develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours, for example, learners can communicate more effectively because of their studies. Nearly all learners move into further learning or into work.
- Learners study in familiar settings and benefit from well-developed links with other local community organisations. As a result, learners access services which they need to lead healthier and more productive lives.

- Leaders ensure that learners study in venues which are welcoming and friendly. Tutors promote equality and inclusion effectively. As a result, learners feel valued, and develop self-worth and confidence.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculums that they offer, which are ambitious and challenging. Tutors have high expectations of learners. They create inclusive learning atmospheres in lessons successfully. They establish a positive culture, which helps learners learn.
- Tutors are suitably qualified and have good levels of sector-specific knowledge and expertise. They plan a well-considered range of interesting learning activities carefully. These activities meet the needs of learners and challenge them to extend their learning.
- Leaders and tutors ensure that learners benefit from impartial careers advice and guidance. As a result, learners are aware of the options available to them after their studies and they understand what they need to do to succeed.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective- learners feel safe and valued.



Activities to help with a social life

- There is no longer any waiting list for assessment of eligibility for specialist short breaks and 352 children are receiving targeted short breaks. The new coproduced commissioning of short breaks is helping to tackle the shortage of service providers and we expect to see the waiting times for short breaks reducing, a secret squirrel approach is being used to help engage new providers.
- Talk Community was excited to welcome Pentre Farm CIC as one of the providers for the Christmas Here for Herefordshire Holidays programme. Pentre Farm CIC hosted a session specifically tailored for eligible children with SEND and their families.
- Funded by the Department for Education, as part of the Holidays and Food programme, this initiative offers free activities and meals during the Christmas, Easter and summer holidays. for children eligible for benefit related free school meals.
- Looking ahead to the Easter holidays, Pentre Farm CIC and Hereford Community Farm CIC will be running sessions, for SEND children and their families. FlipOut will host dedicated SEND sessions and we have a new provider, SportsWork, which will offer energetic sports and activity sessions,

Outcome 5. You feel valued, visible and included

We planned to change:



- Making sure partnership working groups meet more regularly and always adhere to the culture of co-production which includes you and your parent and carers from the start
- to build on the work of the Engagement Officer to improve communication across all partners and hear from you more regularly because we value what you want to tell us.



- To develop better ways of challenging practice that is not inclusive wherever we find it

exclusively for SEND children, utilising the excellent facilities at the Royal College for the Blind.



Making sure we have regular partnership meetings and work in coproduction

- Regular meetings are now well established which means that work programme in place and coproductive approach to e.g. SEF and better connected services around families and children/ young people for example a partnership development between Beacon College and Hereford College. Our SEND Assurance Board has been supported by an external chairperson and is now moving to being co-chaired by senior leaders in health and children's services.
- We are relaunching a re-designed Coproduction Charter and will be supporting it with more specific resources and a training offer.
- Our Quality of Life survey results are being shared widely and we have learned from the first round so we have gone out to tender for the next survey in 2024.
- We created a short video with a strong focus on what works and our children, including an interview of our Director by two of our young people. This is on the SEND Strategy page of our local offer.
- We commenced our SEND Triad project in January 2024 to foster collaboration across schools, creating a sense of community and shared purpose thus collectively supporting the very highest quality of leadership and excellent teaching and learning for all children and young people with special and additional needs in mainstream schools across the county.
- The SEND triad project currently involves 19 schools - 15 primary schools and 4 secondary schools working in triad groups (the secondary group has four members). The project will continue to run through the summer term.
- The triad model uses school visits across the three schools in each triad group. Each school hosts one visit for the other two schools. During each visit, school leaders exchange their practice - innovative teaching methods, curriculum design, assessment strategies, roles and responsibilities

Outcome 5. You feel valued, visible and included

We planned to change:



- To increase the number of activities available to give you and your family a short break especially those with other children.

We expect to measure how well we are doing by:

- ✓ Parent carers report that coproduction is effective
- ✓ Proportion of CYP with EHC plans who report that they feel safe and they belong in their local community
- ✓ Proportion of CYP with SEND who report that they feel safe and like they belong in their education setting

and professional development which are enhancing learning and outcomes. Four of the 19 visits have already taken place.

- The discussion, observation and peer learning is already providing new insights and ideas that schools can implement in their own classrooms. Leaders are already feeding back on this invaluable opportunity to grow professionally, share knowledge and best practices. Effective use of Teaching assistants, tracking and assessment, professional development and line management have come through as strong themes.
- The Parent Carer annual Survey (165) responses recorded that the majority felt that educational provision met child's needs and the quality of support from such as Short Breaks, Children with Disabilities service, SEND transport, Early years SEND were well regarded, Early Help, Adult social care and SEN teams had a significant percentage reporting a poor experience. The majority of returns reported that the social care package received was not enough and the majority of responses reported that health needs were met some of the time or not at all with a range of access difficulties identified with the top two being long waiting lists and professionals not attending to parental concerns.
- We have been thinking about how well we communicate and so have new format newsletters for the SEND newsletter for parent carers and SENCOs, and the Spotlight bulletin which goes to all school leaders. The important messages from this survey have been shared with leaders so that we can plan to improve. A "you said- we did" update will be coming out in July.
- The SENDIASS newsletter goes regularly to everyone on the mailing list, with social media posts. The service information on what makes a good EHCP is an example of a popular session.
- We know it is important to join up across services so if a child has an EHCP and receives help from social care, then the EHCP will be available through the Mosaic social care data system and this means social care can look at data about just the young people with EHCPs as well as for individual children.

- We know that our leaders are better informed about SEND. We are collecting information and feedback on just over 200 key indicators which helps us write much clearer and informative reports and we have been helped to think about how we organise our services and work together by peer reviewers from the Local Government Association and other Local Authorities and regions. Our Councillors ask about SEND regularly and our director and Chief Executive write about SEND in their staff updates and attend events in person. We are one of the 4 West Midlands local areas invited to help test out the new SEND reforms which is also helping to make SEND important in Herefordshire.

Developing better ways of championing and challenging for inclusivity

- We commissioned a consultant (ex HMI) to find out how our schools use SEN Protection Funding which helps schools be inclusive. The research showed that this was important funding and so our Schools Council has supported the decision to continue doing this. SEND a priority for everyone in Herefordshire. We can see this reflected in SEND plans in new strategies, and in the good attendance at our SEND governance groups.
- The three year trend for attendance at school is very positive. But we know from the parent carer survey that we could improve and so our new attendance team and our work to create more local specialist education placements are very important.
- In Herefordshire we continue to record lower rates of overall absence than your peer group across England. The gap between all pupils in England and those with SEND has widened since the COVID-19 pandemic: so we know that the work on well-being and mental health is really crucial to making sure that our children can do well at school.
- Persistent absence (10% and above) for those of you at SEN Support has consistently remained below national levels. Rates amongst EHCP pupils has improved comparatively and in 2021/22 fell below the England average. The gap between all pupils and those with EHCP has returned to pre-pandemic levels whereas the gap between SEN Support and all pupils remains higher than

pre-pandemic. The gap between all pupils in England and those with SEND has widened since the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Health Passports:** A review of existing health passport documentation is underway, and examples have been obtained from external organisations including Birmingham Children’s Hospital. The aim is to develop a standardised health passport for use across services to support the needs of children and young people with complex and additional needs in Herefordshire. This is part of the improvement plan at the hospital which includes such as school visits to the accident and emergency department and welcoming sensory spaces and alternative communication resources. This work means that you receive priority attention at A&E and should mean you don’t have to keep repeating information about yourself.
- Our SENCo network is looking into a self-assessment tool for use across all schools and the communications across the network are already helping SENCos help each other and share best practice.



Increase short breaks activities

- Short breaks are provided through targeted, early help route (EHCP or special circumstances) and at a higher level arising from assessment in the Children with Disability service. This may also be supported by health funding.
- We are meeting targets for assessment, have reduced the targeted assessment waiting list to 0, and increased the number of short break opportunities and providers through commissioning. This includes both day and residential short breaks. For targeted short breaks successful applicants receive funding via a prepaid card which can be used to help children with special education needs and disabilities to take part in a variety of leisure activities, allowing carers to have a short break from their responsibilities.
- Eligible children and young people are currently auto-renewed each year (provided that they remain eligible) however from April 2024 it will be necessary to re-apply for the allowance.

Monitoring how this affects take up will be crucial in understanding whether the funding is reaching those who need the allowance.