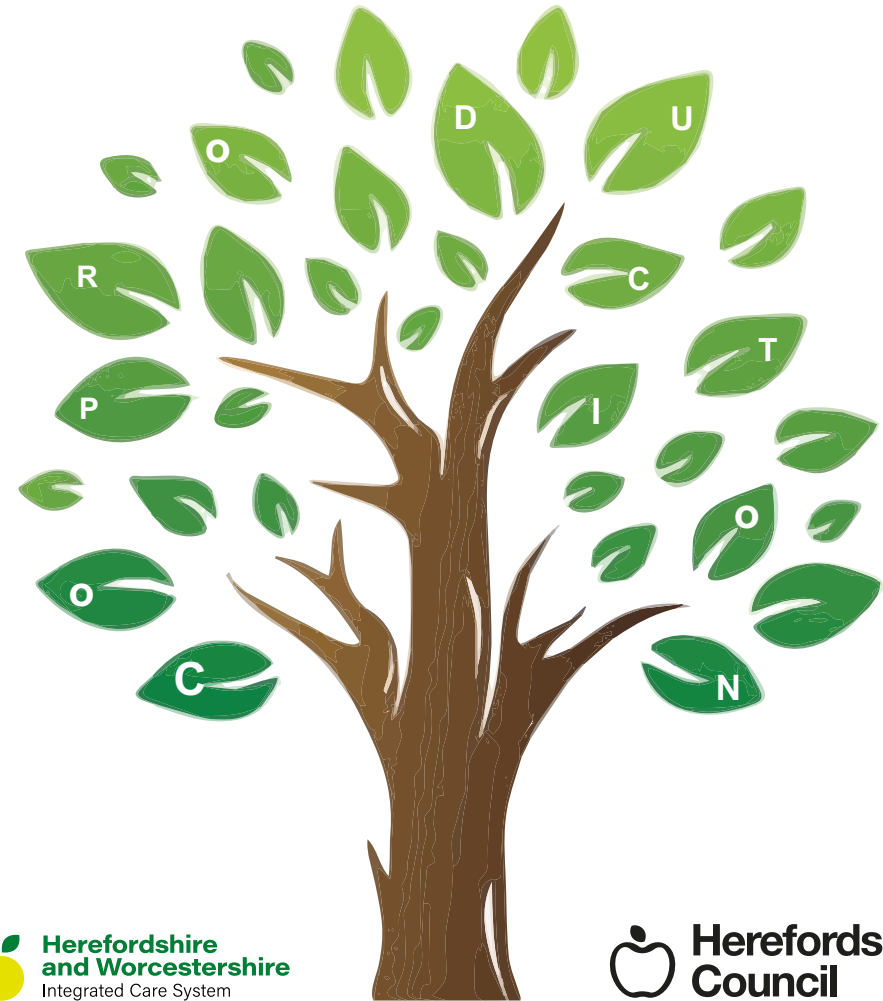


Herefordshire Local Area SEND Self-Evaluation Framework

Update Bulletin 1 (Summer 2023)



Welcome to our Herefordshire Self Evaluation Framework Update.

This is our first SEF update bulletin.

We plan further updates in January, May and September each year.

The SEND Assurance Board approved the purpose and developing format for this update bulletin 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).

The purpose of the SEF bulletin is to update our knowledge about local needs and ensuring that we are focused on the right priorities and checking that activities are improving experience and outcomes for children, young people and their families. Although this update has a focus on informing decision makers and planning, there is a role to support our practitioners and service users who are interested in knowing more detail about what is happening and why and to be able to help us build better knowledge about SEND in Herefordshire.

This update aims to:

1. Provide a self-evaluation update against the principles and priorities identified in our SEND Strategy 2023- 2026
2. Capture our most current knowledge base about what is working well in Herefordshire and how we know, and what our data and reporting tells us about what we need to work

on harder and why. This is about all the people and services that help and specifically support children and young people with special educational needs and disability aged 0-25 years, so this involves health, education and care services, community and families.

3. Provide a flow from the important issues through to action and reporting so that all interested can see the impact our SEF is having on planning and outcomes.
4. Provide an overview with a level of detail along with links to supporting evidence for leaders, so that ongoing service planning and resource decisions are well made, and made jointly around agreed priorities.
5. Compliment communications about our SEND Strategy and action plan, by providing an update summary to anyone interested in SEND about the current position, priorities and progress on improvements.
6. Highlight for all parties the key areas being tackled in the next 4 months which will form part of the next update bulletin so that everyone can look out for opportunities to be part of the next stage of the improvement plan.

Data included in this bulletin is the latest available at the time of writing up to and including the statistical release for January 2023.

This artwork was produced by a young person as part of the exploration of names for our Behaviour Support Team (now SEMH Inclusion Service (SIS)- sadly the young person preferred acronym WISH was already taken by another organisation. This young person explained that the colours flying around the strawberry were the feelings and behaviours he experienced and they could get very much bigger and take over, which can mean that the services represented by the grey strawberry, could disappear. The feedback from the young person illustrated strongly that behaviour was communication and that seeing behaviour as the issue, was not helpful for young people and so that word needed to be removed from the service name with a shift of focus to inclusion and relationships.

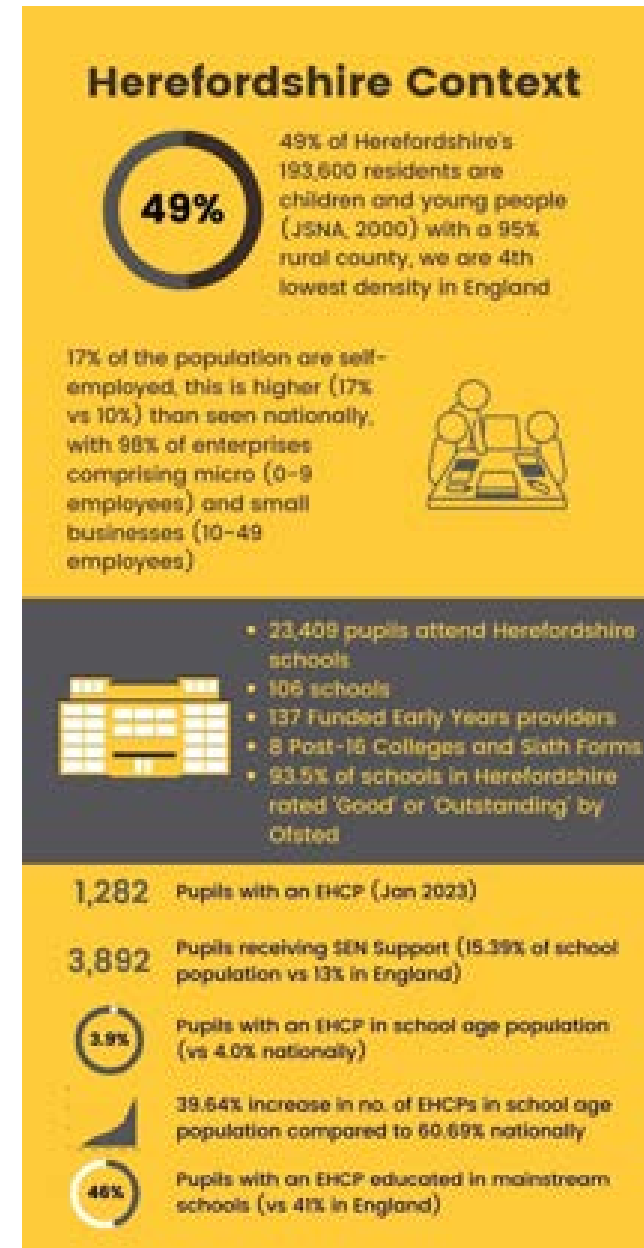


Our vision is to ensure that, “All children and young people in Herefordshire feel safe, loved, and valued, and grow up with the confidence and skills to be the best they can be.”

Our Area SEND Strategy

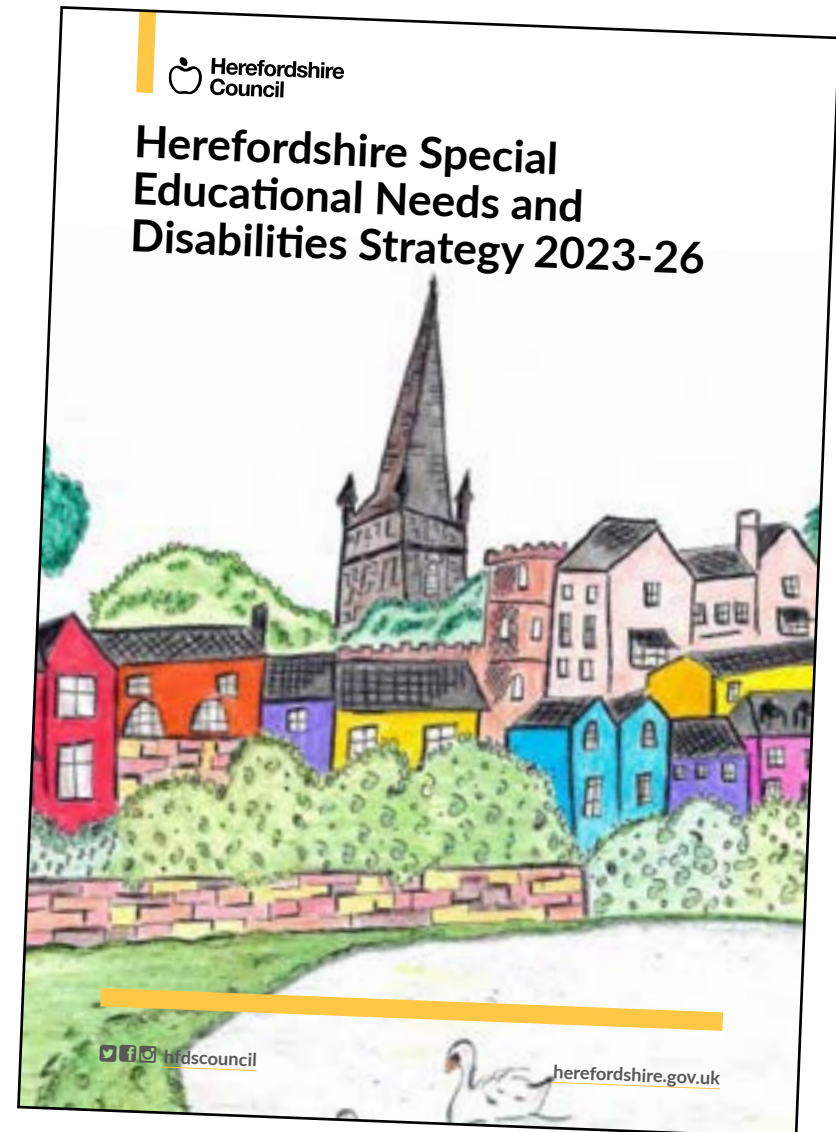
In Herefordshire, we have the highest ambitions for all our children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We are committed to working in partnership to meet the requirements of the Children and Families Act in a way that is ambitious, inclusive and realistic in a challenging financial context. We recognise, and this self-evaluation confirms, that there are many examples of good practice but there is also significant work to be done to realise the aspirations of our Herefordshire children and young people with SEND, and to deliver the improvement ambitions described in our SEND Strategy. New leadership and shared effort has added pace, with an increased spotlight on getting it right, early and well; we know that a broader leadership focus is now crucial.

We are focused on making sure that all children and young people have access to good local provision in Herefordshire, supported by skilled and caring practitioners; right from the start. We know that by work together we will best ensure our children and young people with SEND have great opportunities to grow, learn and develop to be the best they can be, We are looking to see impact in the outcomes achieved in education, health and wellbeing, employment, independent living and participation in the community.



Our strategy can be found **on our website**. This is written to our young people because they are the most important people involved, and written in straightforward English with the help of Parent Carer Voice to help us all hear the important messages. A list of key words used can be found on our website. Our young people continue to inspire us, such as Logan whose volunteer work in the community is leading him to think about a career in care work.

Our SEF SEND document (January 2023) provides an evaluation of how well the area Herefordshire partnership carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with SEND. Key strengths and areas for development are described and themes are threaded across leadership, and delivery to the key areas for improvement are monitored and tracked through our SEND Strategic Assurance Board. We will be reviewing our SEF and presenting a summary bulletin on a termly basis to support a cycle of continuous self-improvement. Throughout the SEF Bulletin, we include examples of good practice and links to supporting evidence including on our local offer website where further information can be found on area services and provision.



Governance and Leadership

Children and Young People's Partnership Board

- Membership: Local Authority Directors, Herefordshire County Council, Senior Leads and Commissioners, Police, Healthwatch, Integrated Care Board
- Purpose: to reduce health inequalities for children and young people. This done through responsibility for the Children and Young People's Plan and oversight of the Children's Improvement Plan. The Board is responsible for the design, delivery and review of work across the Local authority

Health and Wellbeing Board

- Membership: Local Authority Directors, Herefordshire Council, Senior Leads and commissioners including local authority programme director - mental health, learning disabilities and autism.
- Purpose: To advise and inform the commissioning and provision of emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people; To inform new developments and investment in local services which are the outcome from local needs assessments and from the national requirement to transform children's emotional wellbeing and mental health provision; To ensure delivery of the Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Transformation Plan; To advise and inform the development and delivery (including commissioning if appropriate) of activities to prevent mental ill health of children and young people and to promote good emotional wellbeing and mental health; Share best practice and work in partnership to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

SEND Strategic Assurance Board

- Membership: Senior Leaders from Health and Herefordshire Local Authority, Schools, Colleges and Early Years, Families and Young People, Community Support - Chaired by an advisor who does not work in Herefordshire and is independent
- Regular checks on what is working and what needs improvement for SEND across Herefordshire; Makes sure that there is enough challenge to make change quickly enough; Makes sure the senior people work together to make things better

SEND Partnership Group

- Membership: Local authority Directors and Heads of Service, Leaders, Managers, School representatives from across the local area.
- Purpose: To deliver on the intended outcomes of the SEND Strategy and associated action planning and keep the work of all partners in the local area under review.

Our SEND Assurance Board is now established and meeting monthly with good attendance from health, care and education senior leadership and support from our Parent Carer Voice Forum. Our SEND Strategy informed by our JSNA and a wide range of data streams and participation activities, has been published and a launch programme in the early Autumn will invite community wide championing trialled at our recent “Child Readiness” information day, with a focus on best practice and impact.

Work on our data dashboard is moving apace with more than 150 measures across education, health, care and a separate tab for feedback from service users and their parent carers. This is already supporting a monthly SEN performance report, commissioning specifications and needs profiling. A summary of work on improving our data systems including the use of LG viewer to link social care and education system information will be available. An example of commissioning informed by our needs assessment data can be found [on our website](#).

8 work-streams are now operational to take forward our strategy with joint activity programmes being informed by peer reviews on key themes. The Local Authority has benefited from peer reviews on a number of key topics including the quality of statutory plans, and leadership and management. The LA has confirmed a permanent appointment to the Director for Education, Learning and skills (chairs Partnership Group) and recruitment is underway for a permanent Head of Additional Needs (interim in post) following the retirement of the substantive post-holder. A balanced system review is underway in health, and a wide range of activity is now reporting for the joint work with Worcestershire for the all age autism strategy. “Doing Things Differently” neuro-diverse improvement plan for provision is available on our website.

The highest priority for leadership across education, health and care is the resourcing and response to the substantial growth in demand for services and specialist placements. We have a 40% increase in the total of EHC plans (2017-2023) which now number over 1200. This is a substantial increase although lower than nationally at 61%. The growth is particularly evident since Covid.

In next Bulletin:

- Joint Commissioning review supported by system risk review
- 2024-29 Specialist Place sufficiency plan
- SEN Regional Partnership and SEND Improvements development work

Outcome 1 – How effectively do we ensure children and young people’s needs are identified accurately/ assessed in a timely & effective way?

1. The general health and well-being needs of children and young people completed in 2022 showed that overall early years development is good and children do relatively well at school, but there are significant areas of concern:
 - The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted two years of children’s development: social contact, education, experiences. Lasting impacts aren’t yet known, but it has undoubtedly widened pre-existing, deep-rooted inequalities, including for disadvantaged children and those living in deprived areas. (a greater proportion of pupils with an EHCP (37%) live in one of the 25% most deprived areas of Herefordshire compared to the proportion of all children and young people that do (28%) JSNA SEND 2020). Risk of fuel poverty/cold homes, reduced readiness for school and increase in leaving school for a social mobility “cold spot”. [View the cost-of-living-web page here.](#)
 - Long standing local issues in young children for oral health (1/5 five year olds have dental decay) and excess weight-also key issues for children with additional needs
2. The number of children receiving early years inclusion funding has doubled from pre pandemic (106 2018-19 to 220 2022-3)- demonstrates long term trend and impact in increased demand with requisite requirements for additional resourcing- placement and staffing , jointly planned services and early identification to meet needs early and well.
3. The total number of EHCPs for which Herefordshire is responsible has increased by 40% over a 6 year period from January 2017, compared to 61% nationally. Over the same period the school pupil population increased in Herefordshire by 2.08% so it is clear that this is not a function of general child population growth. This is a major priority for our attention due to the resource implications across health, education and care services, and in particular for Educational Psychology and SEN Casework. This is an area of particular risk due to limited resources and the impact on all services who provide advice and statutory provision
4. The Autism in Education training two year programme has been picked up by half our schools with mixed reviews; below our 85% target- needs further attention within the education priority within the All Age Autism Strategy.
5. A significantly higher proportion of care-experienced children have SEN compared to all Herefordshire children. 23.1% have an Education Health and Care Plan and a further 22.8% receive SEN support in school. Nationally 3.6% of all children and 22.3% of CLA have an EHCP, while 12% of all children and 28.3% of CLA nationally are marked on the census as needing SEN support.

The oral health cross system initiative has now extended into our first special school. The initiative includes supervised tooth-brushing, parental engagement sessions, Oral Health Champions, on-line training, distribution of oral health packs to services/organisations through prevention, identifying, stopping and dealing quickly with problems.

The health and well-being analysis for children and young people has informed the redesign for the Healthy Child Programme.

Targeted developments

We have seen an Increase in CYP with SEND attending Holiday Activity & Food programme (HAF) activities - Dec22: 60 / 548 CYP with SEND = 10.9% Apr23: 104 / 709 CYP with SEND = 14.6%

A three year Early Years and Early Years SEND wide ranging programme from training to transition and provision development programme has provided an effective response to increasing identification of young children with SEND (212 on the EY SEND caseload

Reducing emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) in Herefordshire

Following the pandemic, there was a sudden increase in the number of children and young people who were unable to attend school full-time due to anxiety. Those experiencing emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) can go unnoticed and are confused with disaffected pupils. The Educational Psychology team at Herefordshire Council undertook professional research on this issue and devised a 90 minute training package for school staff. Over 120 school staff and early help family support workers received the training. Of the 8 pupils who joined the initial project, 6 now attend school every week. Further work to disseminate good practice and expand this approach to a larger cohort is planned.

summer 2022 compared 140 in 2022, linked to children not attending settings in Covid). The Child Readiness paper informing the case study we have been invited to submit to the LGA **can be seen on our website**.

The new simplified all age graduated approach is **now available** to support consistency and confidence across all education settings.

Specialist developments

You can view the new equipment lending library (146 items including 39 sensory aids) set up by our Parent Carer Forum (PCV) **online**.

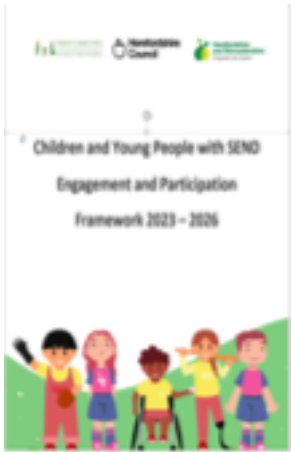
A place sufficiency review has projected a need for 147 new specialist school placements 2024-9, we have planned provision for 42 additional specialist places in 2023-4, and are working on the 5 year plan for both specialist and mainstream placement.

Personal Education Plan for Children who are looked after (PEP) completion rate has increased 2022-3 from 88% to 97.99% and the Virtual School are available to attend all annual reviews to ensure alignment with EHCPs.

In Next Bulletin

- Peer Review of SENCO network & support
- Annual review – a new approach and early impact data
- Alternative Provision strategy and commissioning framework
- All Age Autism Strategy
- CAMHS pathway update

Outcome 2. How effectively do children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support? How effectively are they heard?



Our charter is about the way that we work

- Be open and honest
- Actively listen
- Value the lived experience
- Do what matters
- Be accountable and responsive
- Work together
- Be respectful

Co-Production

Our Co-Production Charter which with leadership from our Parent Carer Voice Forum, was created in partnership with Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Integrated Care System (ICS), and adopted by Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Trust, Wye Valley NHS Trust and SENDIASS. [See the charter on our website](#). We are committed to working in co-production with children and young people and all other stakeholders from design to delivery with shared decision making throughout. We know that work directly with young people is not where we want it to be, so we have developed our Children and Young people's Engagement and Participation Framework 2023-6, and helped by the views from 200 parents and young people we have sorted our top priorities, found examples of improvement and described clearly what "good" looks like.

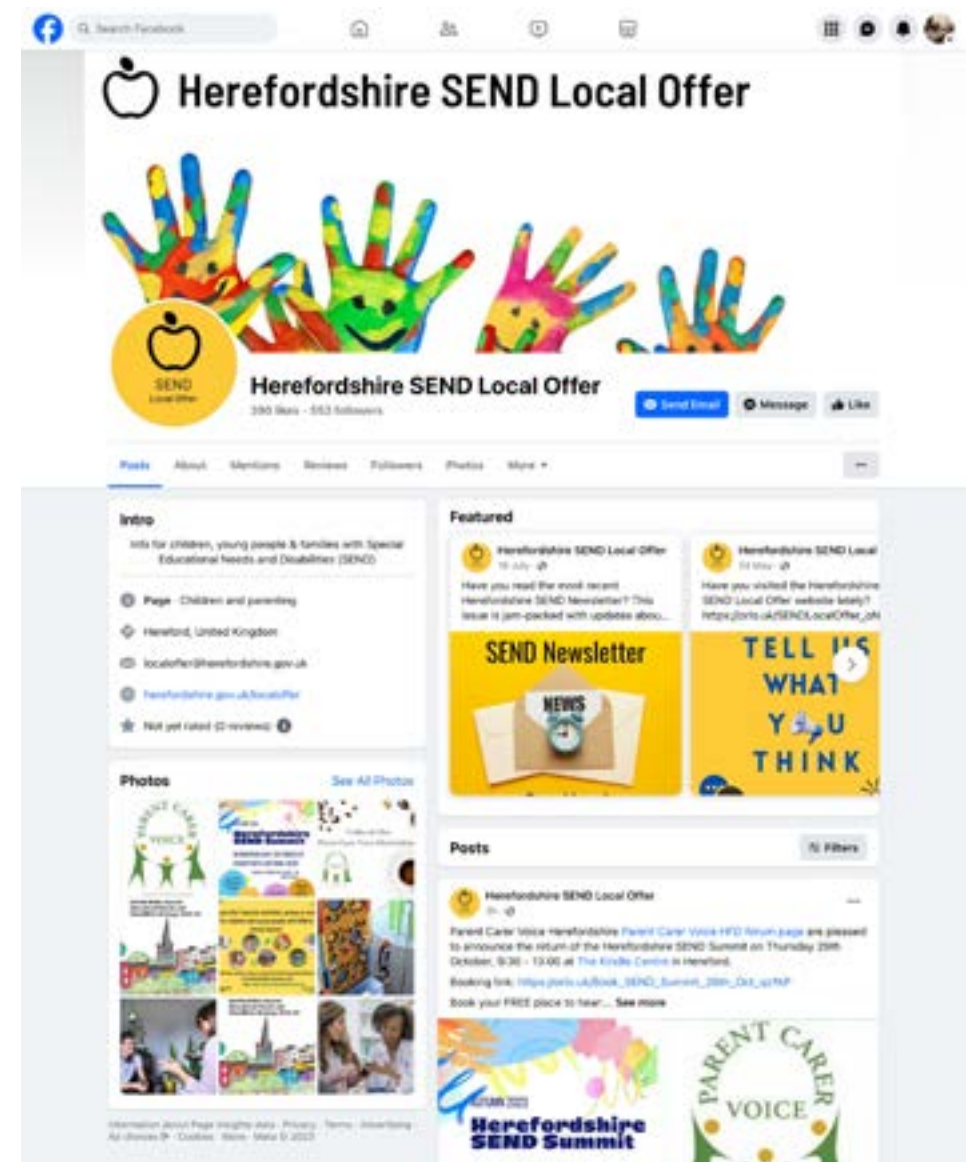
We are establishing a hub and spoke model for the Young People's SEND network and so far 12 groups from schools and community have engaged. We are working on the name/scope of our network this summer and planning a "Can you help" sheet to capture opportunities to inform and shape new initiatives, and a way for the groups to tell us what they want looked at which we know will include a request to improve identification badges to help children know who a new adult is. Our dashboard will start to capture feedback systematically through the annual parent carer survey, annual review feedback and the SEND quality of life survey for young people being adapted with support from our special schools. We are working with peer reviewers to increase the reach and quality of how we work together and to move apace to the top of the participation ladder.

We meet regularly with our Parent Carer forum (Parent Carer Voice) who have 14 new representatives being trained so that the forum have a larger number of parents who can attend the strategy work stream groups and the range of other development groups, and our PCV meeting feedback will help us track participation levels achieved across our improvement projects. Our latest co-produced newsletter can be found here [SEND Newsletter](#) which is now read by 4-500 each time. We can see the impact of the co-production work on our Local Offer website in the increased rating from 4.05 to 7.06/10 since summer 2022, 288% increase in page views (April 2022 to November 2022) when 874 views were recorded up to 3394 views for the period November 2022 to June 2023. 82% summer 2023 survey reported they found what they were looking for which is up from 66% in summer 2022. We achieved the 500 follower Facebook milestone in July 2023 since set up in October 2022. 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.

In the next Bulletin:

Peer review report and action plan- Children, young people and parents' voices

Parent Carer annual survey & progress with the feedback information on our SEND data dashboard



Outcome 3. How effectively does Herefordshire ensure children and young people get the right help at the right time?

- 93.5% of Herefordshire primary and secondary schools are Ofsted rated as good or outstanding so we know that local provision for children with SEND is in good hands.
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) is the most prevalent primary need type locally (20.63% versus 15.0% in England). Our child health assessment points out that the abundance of natural resources offers a potential protective factor for mental health and well-being and we need to make sure we are fully utilising this resource. Our Pupil Referral Unit is full for older children so we need to dovetail our planning for alternative provision and mental health. Our new education SEMH Inclusion Service (SIS) is responding to 100% referrals within 2 weeks. 72.6% met outcomes sought after service support.
- Across England, the most prevalent primary need amongst those with EHCP is autistic spectrum disorder (35.1%) which is second highest need locally at 23.85% (January 2023). Severe Learning difficulty (SLD) is attributed to 36.67% of pupils which is much higher than seen across England (18.6%). SEMH (23.85%) is also more prevalent than across England (12.28%). Lower numbers with EHCP for SLCN may be partially linked to the pre-pandemic investment in workforce skills (3.85% compared England 10.10%).
- The local/national differences may reflect the impact of health waiting lists, and reconciling primary need accuracy through work with SENCo network and data cleansing work.
- The number of requests for EHC assessments has grown although slower than nationally (83.6% nationally by 32% locally 26% 2016-22) and there has been a small drop in the national percentage of EHC assessments refused (21.9%) which is similar to the local refusal rate (23.4%) which means more statutory assessments for both reasons. The graduated response needs fresh attention so that all, including parents understand the expectations across all education settings.
- Unacceptably long waiting lists in therapies and paediatrics (37-70+ weeks) are recorded and unchanging- urgent attention is being given to the recruitment and retention issues that are challenges. Nationally the EHCP 20 week timeliness standard (20 weeks) has dropped from 59.9% (2021-2) to 50.7% (2022-3). We improved on our performance from 70.5% in June 22 to 100% in April 2023 and 95% in May 2023, which means that far fewer local children experience delay once high needs are identified
- A designated clinical officer has been appointed so we have increased resource to attend to the quality and timeliness of health advice and join up between health/LA
The Emergency Room at our hospital has been changed to better support sensory and autism needs with sensory boxes, body mapping and communication folders and quiet cubicles.

Paediatric Therapies - Expansion funding agreed to provide additional therapies support an as of July 2023 Currently, no children are waiting over 52 weeks and the target is to reduce waits to under 30 weeks by the end of 2023.

Community Paediatrics - Additional clinics are being undertaken by the clinical team. Investment has been made to reduce waiting times in autism pathway, The service is regularly reviewing capacity, wait lists and DNA rates and oversight is offered through the productivity board.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing - WEST (Wellbeing & Emotional Support Teams) in schools are available in all secondary schools and 20 primary schools. The next wave will include provision to colleges and recruitment is underway. Our CAMHS Crisis & Home Treatment Team established in March 2023 provides 72-hour crisis support to CYP aged up to 17.6 yrs who are experiencing mental health crisis and provide intensive Home Treatment support/interventions up to 6 weeks to those with an acute

Improving the patient experience at Hereford Emergency Department

Hereford County Hospital has a priority to improve patient experience and with the emergency department as a crucial first contact for many, work has been undertaken to improve the experience for patients with sensory and autism needs. A range of adaptations have been made including sensory boxes, communication folders, using anti-glare laminates, infinity icon on patient notes, quieter cubicles and access to other sensory equipment. 76% of families contacted after visiting the emergency department said that their experience this time was 'much better than previous visits.

mental illness as an alternative to Tier 4 admissions. Transition Workers and qualified Youth Workers are in post within CAMHS-positive feedback from those accessing the service

School Nursing - School Nurse Drop-in Clinics are achieving much improved use

| 2022/23 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Total | 506 | 320 | 712 |
| Q2 -147 Home visits completed for high school children in the school holidays | | | |

In Next Bulletin

Waiting lists and pathways- improvement update

Alternative Provision Sufficiency update Needs profile – update

Mapping the offer for SEMH across education, health , care and Early Help

Outcome 4. How effectively does Herefordshire ensure that children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes?

Overall children with SEN continue to exceed national expectations in their KS1 outcomes. The pandemic has seen a dip nationally in % achieving this standard but Herefordshire continues to perform better than national despite this dip. Phonics outcomes have shown a dip and may reflect the later last Covid wave locally.

SEN Support children have performed better at KS2 and at KS4 than EHCPs against national benchmarks, however even our larger KS4 cohort than usual (90) is small in sample terms and many of the cohort (53%) attend specialist provision and have gained passes in vocational or level 1 qualifications that are not counted in national progress calculations.

The proportion of adults with learning disabilities known to services in paid employment in Herefordshire has been improving over time 6.8% v 5.5% nationally (ASCOF), although this remains far below good enough, there is a higher percentage locally than nationally.

Herefordshire students aged 19 with an EHCP reaching level 2 have been consistently below the England averages. In 2021/22 it was 22.9% compared to England average of 28.9%. The percentage of young people with an EHCP achieving level 3 at 19 has increased to 10% in 2021/22 but is still below England average of 13.9%. The relatively small size of the local EHCP cohort, the smaller percentage of EHCP as a proportion of the overall cohort at 19yrs alongside the numbers of students

placed in independent provision (outside of scope of the measure) are all factors for consideration in the performance trend of this measure. This will form part of the Post 16 Sufficiency planning.

Local 19 to 25 year olds who are not in education, employment or training NEET) or not known (NK) in December 2022 = 23.7% out of cohort of 321. This is a decrease from 53% (cohort 330) in September 2022. The percentage of care leavers who are NEET is also high. Drill down activity has clarified data cleansing required to be accurate.

There is a digital divide locally c.17,500 adults reporting that the internet is not used regularly and 31% of internet users reporting skill gap.

Covid Recovery Funding supported 60 vulnerable young people in SEMH special school and PRU (2022/3), 93% of the 2022 cohort have sustained their post 16 placement. A good practice model of transition into school is available to support primary-secondary transition discussion and review

All bar 2 secondary schools and colleges are part of the **Marches Careers Hub**. A community of practice for SEND has been established. Over 1400 year 10 students attended the 10th Annual Three Colleges Open Day event giving students the opportunity to experience college life, two subject areas and colleges of their choice through co-ordinated workshops. A total of 160 workshops were delivered along with a CPD Event for approximately 50 escorting staff.

Herefordshire Council's adult and community learning service for adults aged 19 plus was inspected by OfSTED in April this year and maintained 'Good' rating.

A SEND Employment forum for Herefordshire was launched on 20 June in national disability week 2023. Paul Walker, CEO of Herefordshire Council opened the meeting. Over 40 people attended from over 25 different organisations. The challenges and opportunities identified are shaping the work programme over the next 12 months with the national Internship Works programme to be 'system' ready to offer at least 5 young people a Support Internship in 2024. Ensuring that education and training providers and employers are confident and have the skills and knowledge to offer Supported Internships. We will also be working with young people through our engagement work to involve them in developing the programme. This year's Herefordshire Skills Show (first since 2019) will be aimed at year 10s for earlier impact, and will extend into the evening to open to the general public

Health investment in transition to adult services – Wye Valley Trust have been successful in obtaining funding via a Youth Worker pilot to embed Youth workers in Diabetes (and Epilepsy) teams to support young people through their transition journey.

In Next Bulletin

Peer review findings Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

Gatsby Benchmarks report

Adult Family Learning programme and Youth Employment Hub developments

SEND Transport review and travel training report

Housing update

Outcome 5. How effectively does Herefordshire ensure children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Elective home education has seen a significant rise in recent years from 218 2018-19 to 308 2022-23. Currently 6.8% are recorded as having EHCPs.

Permanent exclusions and suspensions have increased since the pandemic (14 PEx 2018-19, 31 in 2022-23 (1 with EHCP)). This has led to the Pupil Referral Unit being full and increased requirement for alternative provision. 9.5% of the 1126 suspensions recorded this academic year have been for CYP with EHC plans.

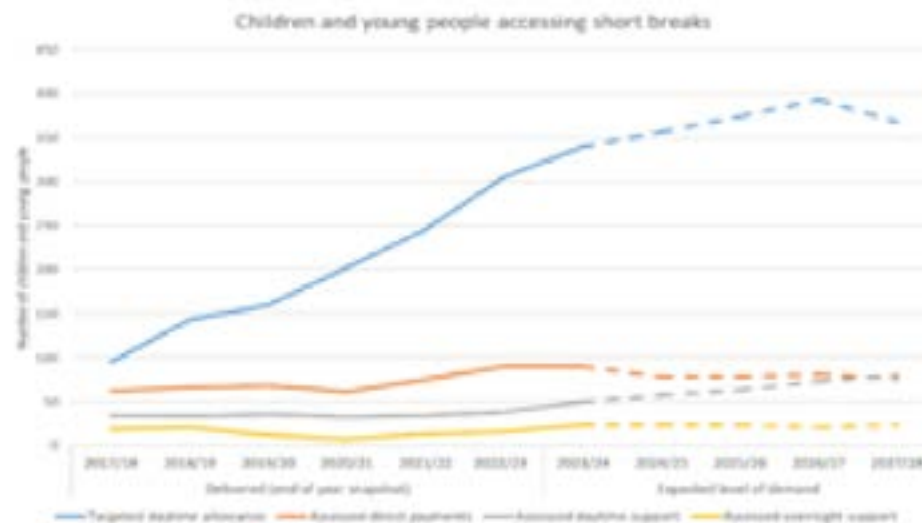
Part-time timetables are a key area of concern with 43-56% of those recorded being for children with SEN Support. The percentage that have EHCPs has dropped across the academic year from 24% to 17.9%

We have 4 CYP who are identified as blind which is high for our population number. The sensory service is reviewing capacity requirements in order to maintain local placements and is also plugging the mandatory qualification gap by starting a teacher in training for Multi-Sensory Impairment in Sept 23.

The percentage of pupils with EHCP recorded for Herefordshire as in mainstream schools has dropped from 46% in 2022 to 41% 2023 whilst England has remained stable at 40%. A greater percentage of children are being placed outside the state sector and the number of unknown placements needs factoring in (increase from 0% to 3.19%). Resources for data input and accuracy checks are impacting on our local profiling ability.

We can see an increasing need to place children with an EHCP in independent and non-maintained provision. Over the 2018 to 2022 the number of children placed in independent or non-maintained provision increased by 190.5%. Across England the increase was 68.9%. 142 Herefordshire pupils with EHCPs have been placed in schools, outside the county (59 with SEMH and 31 with ASD). This includes 75 pupils placed in independent & non-maintained schools. The majority of pupils placed out of county are of secondary school age or post-16 (109 of 142). This data is informing sufficiency planning/commissioning intentions 2024-29.

There has been a decrease in the children looked after educated out of county this year from 79.5% to 73.6%. This compares to 74% national average.



A commissioning review has demonstrated for example that demand for day time short break activities is expected to double over the next five years as the offer is improved. View the Cabinet paper on our [web page](#) detailing the commissioning plan and supporting analysis of feedback from families and providers.

In Next Bulletin

- Peer review findings and impact- Service user voice
- Short breaks commissioning progress/impact
- Health Passports - A review of existing health passport documentation with parents and carers is planned for September 2023 to ensure they are utilised to support the needs of our children and young people.
- Post 16 Education Placement Sufficiency report