



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 6 November 2025

10.00 am

Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

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Cabinet Members:

Councillor L D Carter	Leader of the Council
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Councillor R A Overton	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement
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Councillor P Davis	Cabinet Member: Communities & Civic Pride
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Councillor Z Hannington	Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services
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Councillor C Healy	Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
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Councillor A D McClements	Cabinet Member: Leisure, Tourism, Culture & The Arts
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Councillor K Middleton	Cabinet Member: Public Health & Healthier Communities
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Councillor O Vickers	Cabinet Member: The Economy & Transport
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Councillor S A W Reynolds Cabinet Member: Children & Young People, Learning, Employment & Skills

Councillor P Watling Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health

Invitees

Councillor A J Eade Conservative

Councillor W L Tomlinson Liberal Democrat

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CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 25 September 2025 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER 2025

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2025)

Present: Councillors R A Overton (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing & Enforcement) (Vice-Chair), P Davis (Cabinet Member for Communities & Civic Pride), Z Hannington (Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services), C Healy (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability), A D McClements (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Tourism, Culture & The Arts) and O Vickers (Cabinet Member for The Economy & Transport).

Also Present: Cllr A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Cllr W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats Group Leader).

Apologies for Absence: Councillors L D Carter (Leader of the Council), K Middleton (Cabinet Member for Public Health & Healthier Communities), S A W Reynolds (Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Learning, Employment & Skills) and P Watling (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health).

CAB-17 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CAB-19 Leader's Announcements

(i) Redefined Bus Service

Councillor Overton encouraged people to hop onto one of the Council's new red buses and, at a cost of £2 was pleased to confirm this was one of the cheapest fares in the Country compared to other bus services provided elsewhere.

(ii) Councillor Lee Carter

Councillor Overton announced that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lee Carter had been unable to attend this meeting of the Cabinet due to meetings

being held in Telford, with two secretaries of state, where an announcement was expected in respect of government investment within the borough.

CAB-20 Customer Strategy - 2025-2030

Councillor Z Hannington, the Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented for approval by Cabinet, the new Customer Strategy 2025 to 2030, which built on the success of the 2021 to 2025 strategy, which culminated in Telford and Wrekin Council becoming the first local authority in the UK to receive the Institute of Customer Services' ServiceMark accreditation in April 2025, that recognised excellence in customer service.

It was reported that the new strategy set out a bold and inclusive vision for the next five years, which reaffirmed the Council's commitment to putting residents at the heart of everything it did and getting the basics right while embracing the transformative potential of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) in meeting the diverse needs of all of the borough's residents.

The strategy also outlined how the Council would continue to deliver excellent, accessible, and responsive customer services across digital, telephony, and face-to-face channels to ensure that all residents were able to access Council Services. The Strategy also expanded the Council's customer focus to include local businesses, tourists, and users of commercial services, which recognised their vital role in the Borough's vibrancy and resilience.

Councillor Hannington said that the Administration took great pride in this achievement, which reflected a shared dedication to innovation, continuous improvement and genuine care for the borough's community. She added that the progress made was testament to the hard work and forward-thinking spirit of everyone involved, which set a strong foundation for the future.

Councillor Hannington set out some of the accomplishments from the previous strategy, which included:

- 68% increase in positive customer feedback since 2021.
- A UK customer satisfaction index score of 74, well above the national average for Councils, which was 64.4.
- Successful implementation of the Ask Tom digital assistant, which had exceeded expectations by handling 30% of customer enquiries by providing access to an automated telephony system 24/7.
- Development of a pool of mystery volunteers who had played a pivotal role in testing the customer experience and helped to develop action improvement plans.
- Early adoption of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, which achieved new, reduced complaint response timescales.
- 33% reduction in calls to call centres due to increased digital engagement.

Councillor Hannington said that the new Strategy was focussed on enhancing access to Council services for all residents and actively responding to customer feedback. She said that this commitment to continual improvement and adaptability was vital in this ever-changing world.

Councillor Hannington said the Strategy emphasised making services accessible to everyone and delivering these across multi-channels, listening closely to customer feedback, supporting workforce development and building strong partnerships. She said that these priorities helped guarantee that services were not only excellent but also inclusive and adaptable to the needs of all residents. She said that, above all, the strategy was anchored in ensuring communications and service delivery through a variety of channels and residents were being offered a variety of ways to connect from traditional phone lines and face-to-face services to innovative, digital platforms and automated assistance.

Councillor Hannington said that the Council would ensure that every individual, regardless of circumstance or preference, could access the support they needed. She said this approach not only enhanced accountability in inclusion but also enabled more efficient handling of enquiries and allowing resources to be directed where they were needed most.

Councillor Hannington said the integration of digital tools alongside established channels would empower residents to engage on their own terms, fostering trust and transparency. She said that as the Council continued to adapt and evolve, multi-channel service delivery would remain essential in meeting the diverse needs of the borough and driving improvements in customer service.

Councillor Hannington expressed her thanks to officers for all their dedication and hard work, which had been instrumental in developing and delivering this strategy. She said their commitment to innovation, accessibility and service excellence had and would make a meaningful difference to the borough's residents and the wider community.

Members spoke on embracing the use of AI but not to lose sight of the requirement still to provide face-to-face contact for service users where there was such a need.

Whilst it was acknowledged there was still work to do, Members highlighted the high level of satisfaction amongst front facing service users (90%) and recognised that as technology advanced the Council's service delivery would improve further.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) In noting the progress delivered to date, the update to the Customer Strategy be approved and the refreshed action plan be endorsed.**

(b) The Council's commitment to providing multi-channel access to services, with the continuation of telephone and face-to-face services where appropriate, alongside the development of digital contact channels, be confirmed.

(c) Authority be delegated to the Director of Housing, Commercial and Customer Services, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations and to agree on future updates to the action plan, with an interim progress report to Cabinet in early 2028.

CAB-21 Results of the Residents Survey 2024/25

Councillor P Davis, Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Pride, provided Cabinet with an update on the results of the Residents Survey that was carried out, in-house, between 15 November 2024 and 31 January 2025, which shared the feedback from services in response to the findings, set out the Council's next steps and put forward recommendations for conducting future Residents Surveys.

It was reported that this Residents Survey had been conducted to gather residents' views on the borough as a place to live and made this an opportunity to refresh the Council's data and help shape future policy and service provision. It was noted that this also reflected the Council's cooperative values and commitment to shaping services through continuous engagement with residents.

Councillor Davis said that this survey had been one of over 100 surveys, which had been undertaken over the past two years. He said that, as a co-operative Council, it did not listen every few years but had ongoing dialogue with its residents. He added that the previous survey, carried out in 2020, had included the printing and posting to every household in the borough, which had attracted response levels of less than 7% and that feedback did not appear as representative of Telford's communities as it might have been.

Councillor Davis said that, as a result, and to refine the Council's approach to ensure the views of the broad and diverse range of residents, a random sample of 300 households per ward across the borough (9,600 addresses in total) had been invited to take part. He said that 1,384 responses (14.4%) had been received, which had been in line with LGA expectations. He added that, alongside this, a dedicated Young Persons Survey, which attracted 103 responses, had provided a valuable insight into the views of 11- to 18-year-olds across the borough.

Councillor Davis said that the covering report set out a summary of the main findings, which focussed on keeping residents informed, satisfaction with the Council services and the area as a place to live. He said it should be noted that the latest local survey had provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on

services in every area where comparable LGA benchmarking was available, in every case outperforming the averages.

Councillor Davis said that when thinking about Council services, two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they were satisfied with the way the Council ran its business, which compared very favourably with the LGA figure of 56%. Councillor Davis said satisfaction levels were particularly high in respect of recycling and waste (c.88%) (well above the LGA average), and whilst satisfaction levels with highways was only 46%, this was still much stronger than the LGA benchmark of 30%. On communications, he said that 77% of residents felt well informed of the services and benefits the Council provided (nationally, this figure was 47%). He said that this information told the Council that its efforts to keep people updated whether through print, online or community channels were being recognised.

Councillor Davis said that when it came to the issue of the borough as a place to live, three out of four (75%) respondents were satisfied with Telford and Wrekin as a place to live and 78% were satisfied with the borough's local neighbourhood, both of which were above the LGA average.

Councillor Davis said that whilst satisfaction levels were higher in less deprived areas, residents who lived in the borough's most deprived neighbourhoods were three times more likely to say their area had improved over the last two years, which was a clear sign that the Council's investment in its communities was making a difference where it mattered most.

On listening to residents, Councillor Davis said that 41.4% agreed that the Council listened to their views, with a further third saying they did not know. This, he said, was now an area the Council wanted to strengthen further since no matter where residents lived within the borough, it was important that their voices were heard.

Councillor David addressed some of the priorities residents had shared, which included:

- On highways, more maintenance on potholes and drainage (the Council was investing around £42m over the next four years on roads, footpaths, draining and structures).
- On planning and housing, more affordable housing and more empty homes being brought back into use.
- On greenspaces and play, protect, maintain and improve the borough's parks and play areas.

Councillor Davis said the Council was working towards eight green flag awards with 89% of its households within 300m of accessible green space. He added that the Council was also working to boost biodiversity, develop the local nature recovery strategy and work towards strategies for play and recreation.

Councillor Davis said that while these results were overwhelmingly positive, and every area the Council could benchmark exceeded the LGA average, he acknowledged the Council must not be complacent. He said there were areas where residents wanted more from the Council and that was what it intended to deliver.

Councillor Davis said that the next steps were clear in that the Council would carry out further engagement sessions to deepen the Council's understanding of feedback and respond in a targeted way; would build on the success of the young persons' survey and strengthen its engagement with young people; develop an action plan with directors accountable for ensuring delivery across services; formally report back to residents using a clear "you said, we did" approach in order that residents knew how their voices were shaping decisions.

In conclusion, Councillor Davis said the Council was proposing to make the residents' survey a regular biennial exercise to help track trends, identify emerging issues early and ensure services remained aligned with the borough's communities.

Members said that checking in with residents and collating feedback from them was critical to make Telford and Wrekin a better Council and that the survey was key to this.

In relation to feedback, Members said that this had been taken on board and had had been acted upon, which had recognised overwhelming support from residents in respect of services such as recycling, waste, parks, libraries and education etc.

RESOLVED that:

(a) The results from the latest Residents Survey, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, which highlighted the following findings, be noted:

- **70.1% of respondents felt Telford and Wrekin Council keep their residents informed.**
- **78% of respondents were very/fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live.**
- **75% of respondents were satisfied with the borough of Telford and Wrekin as a place to live.**

(a) The overwhelmingly positive feedback from Telford and Wrekin residents, in comparison to the latest national benchmark - Local Government Association (LGA) Resident Satisfaction Survey – be noted.

(b) The work being done by services to respond to the survey findings, as set out in section 4.11 to the report, be recognised.

(c) The proposals for future Residents Surveys – as set out in section 4.12.6 to the report, be approved.

The meeting ended at 10.41 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday 1 OCTOBER 2025**

Signed

Date: Thursday 6 November 2025

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Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

6 November 2025

2025/26 Financial Monitoring Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services
Lead Director:	Michelle Brockway - Director: Finance, People and IDT
Service Area:	Finance, People and IDT
Report Author:	Ed Rushton – Finance Manager
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 383750 Email: edward.rushton@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	21 May 2025
Report considered by:	SMT – 23 September 2025 Policy Development – 9 October 2025 Cabinet – 6 November 2025 Full Council – 13 November 2025

1.0 Recommendations for Decision/Noting

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Notes the 2025/26 revenue budget position, which shows that the Council is projecting to be within budget at year end, without having to use the Budget Strategy or General Fund reserves;
- 1.2 Notes the position in relation to capital spend; and recommends that Full Council approve the changes to the Capital programme detailed in Appendix C and all associated changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including Treasury and Prudential Indicators

- 1.3 Notes the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger; and
- 1.4 Notes the current position in relation to Treasury & Prudential Indicators.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide Cabinet with the latest financial monitoring position for the year relating to: the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2028/29 was approved at Full Council on 27 February 2025, which included the 2025/26 revenue budget and medium term capital programme. Since the MTFS was approved, the economic climate has continued to be challenging with cost and demand pressures being experienced, particularly in relation to the provision of Adult Social Care.
- 3.2 Good financial management is an essential element of good governance and long-term service planning which are critical to ensuring that local service provision is sustainable and the use of resources is maximised in order to meet the needs of our residents.
- 3.3 Financial management is the responsibility of budget holders and is supported by Finance staff using a risk-based approach: more focus is given to higher risk areas (high value/more volatile) whilst less frequent financial monitoring is undertaken on budgets deemed to be medium to lower risk. Financial monitoring provides Cabinet and Senior Management Team with a focussed view on the Council's financial performance, to inform and support decision making and to ensure financial sustainability.
- 3.4 This Financial Monitoring Report for 2025/26 provides the latest projections in relation to the projected outturn position i.e. how projected net revenue spend compares to the budget set for the year - progress against the approved 2025/26 capital programme - the key issues to be highlighted; together with a summary of collection information in relation to Council Tax, Business Rates and Sales Ledger income.
- 3.5 The Government has committed to reforming the Local Government Finance System with the intention that 2026/27 will be the first year of a new funding regime for Local Authorities. The new system will include an updated assessment of relative needs and resources and a reset of the Business Rates Retention Scheme. While there will be some transitional measures to smooth the impact of changes, the detailed implications for individual authorities are unlikely to be known until December 2025. As part of the process, a consultation was undertaken between 20 June and 15 August 2025: The Fair Funding Review, which was seeking views on determining new funding allocations for local authorities and outlined proposals to update the overall funding system. This will inform a Policy Statement to be published in the Autumn. This context makes financial planning extremely challenging. The funding outlook for the medium term therefore remains very uncertain and will clearly continue to be challenging, particularly given the Council has already had to deliver £181.7m ongoing budget savings since 2009/10.

- 3.6 There is a statutory duty for local authorities to set a balanced and robust budget each financial year and to take timely action to address financial pressures. In order to support unforeseen pressures the approved budget for 2025/26 includes contingencies of £7.2m (£3.95m General contingency and £3.25m specific contingencies including £2m for Adult Social Care). This supports the Council's aim to continue to deliver quality services whilst ensuring a balanced budget.
- 3.7 The Council has a consistent track record of sound financial management, ending the year within budget with unqualified audit opinions for the statement of accounts for many years.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1.1 Nationally, Councils continue to face extreme challenges in 2025/26 with unprecedented pressures driven by high costs and high demand for services – particularly Adult Social Care, Children's Safeguarding and School Travel Assistance.
- 4.1.2 On 11 June 2025 the Chancellor announced the Spending Review which set out budgets for all government departments for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29, and up to 2029/30 for capital investments.

The Local Government settlement showed an additional £3.3 billion grant funding in real terms for local authorities in 2028/29 compared with 2023/24, resulting in an average overall real terms increase in local authority core spending power between 2023/24 and 2028/29 of 3.1% per year.

The key announcements relating to local government at a national level include, additional housing investment, early intervention funding for the prevention of homelessness, additional funding for Adult Social Care (via increases to NHS budgets), funding to transform Children's Social Care, a SEND reform (with a White Paper due in the Autumn) and consolidation of the Household Support Fund into a new Crisis and Resilience Fund for households..

The Spending Review also reaffirmed the Government's commitment to multi-year allocations and moving to a more up-to-date assessment of each council's needs and resources as part of the 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement.

Overall, the Spending Review provides some additional investment for local government which is welcome however financial pressures will continue in 2025/26 and detailed information for individual council is unlikely to be fully available until the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December 2025, and further detail relating to grant funding is available, to determine the implications for Telford & Wrekin Council.

On 4 September 2025 the Chancellor announced that the 2025 Autumn Budget will be delivered on 26 November 2025. MHCLG have subsequently confirmed that due to the interactions between the Budget and the Local Government Finance Settlement, with the Budget usually confirming measures such as tax rates and reliefs impacting the business rates system, the provisional Settlement will be published later in the year, in line with usual timings just before Christmas.

- 4.1.3 Whilst inflation is expected to reduce in the medium term, current indicators show that the economy will be slower to recover than was expected when the Council's budget was set. In August 2025, CPI was unchanged from July at 3.8% which is above the Bank of England's 2% target and followed four consecutive increases. The Bank of England reduced the base rate from 4.25% in July, where it had been held for 3 months, to 4% in August. A further 0.25% reduction is anticipated before the end of the financial year.
- 4.1.4 Given these factors, monitoring for 2025/26 indicates a number of variations from the approved budget, notably relating to Adult Social Care where in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents, additional investment is required.
- 4.1.5 Strong financial management and prudent financial planning mean that the Council has budgeted contingencies in place, £3.95m General Contingency and £3.25m specific contingencies including £2m for Adult Social Care, to meet the financial pressures currently being projected. This will ensure that the overall position will be within the budget set at year end.
- 4.1.6 Before application of contingencies included in the revenue budget, the projected outturn position is currently expected to be over budget by £11.319m. This has increased significantly since the last financial monitoring reported due to the continuing increased demand for Adult Social Care. An in year savings exercise will be undertaken along with a review of reserves and together with the use of the budgeted contingency will bring the overall position back within budget.
- The Council has an excellent track record of strong financial management and Cabinet Members and budget holders will continue their work to manage budgets as effectively as possible during 2025/26 including further actions to identify in year savings to address the in-year financial pressures.
- 4.1.7 Projections will continue to be refined as the year progresses. Whilst extremely challenging, the Council's aim is to deliver a year end position that is within the approved revenue budget..
- 4.1.8 A summary of the current projection for the year end position is:-

	£m
Net Revenue Budget	167.640
Projected Net Revenue Outturn	178.959
Projected Pressures	+11.319
Use of One off Budgeted Contingency (earmarked for Social Care Pressures)	-2.000
Use of One off Budgeted Contingency (earmarked for general pressures)	-1.250
Use of General Budget Contingency	-3.950
In year savings	-4.119
Projected Year End Variance i.e. net spend will be within budget	0.000

4.1.9 There are a number of variations from the approved budget, detailed in Section 5. The key variance is Adult Social Care (ASC), with £14.103m additional investment expected to be needed by year end. The previous monitoring report had already highlighted the ongoing pressures in ASC linked to more people needing care for longer and increasing costs of care. Over the last 3 months since the previous report, there has been a further sustained and significant increase in the number of new people who need long-term residential care, largely older people. This is the main cause of the movement in the ASC projection, and reflects the challenge of a rapidly ageing population. Over the last census period, the percentage of people aged 65+ in Telford & Wrekin increased by 35.7% compared to 20.1% across England. These pressures are being mitigated by the ongoing delivery of in-year savings and cost avoidance in ASC, totalling more than £3.2m as at the end of August. This continues the approach taken in 2024/25 focusing on preventing, reducing and delaying the need for care wherever possible, which successfully slowed the growth in expenditure over the year.

4.2 **Capital**

The capital programme totals £122.93m for 2025/26 which includes all approvals since the budget was set. Schemes are in progress and at the time of compiling this report spend is projected to be on budget at year end.

4.3 **Corporate Income Collection**

Income collected in relation Business Rates is within the target set while Sales Ledger and Council Tax are slightly outside the target set. Ultimately, all debt will be pursued and will continue to be collected after the end of the financial year with all appropriate recovery avenues being pursued.

5.0 Additional Information

5.1 The overall 2025/26 monitoring position against the budget is summarised in the table below:

Service Area	Budget	Total Current Variation
	£m	£m
Finance, People & IDT	20.489	0.015
Policy & Governance	1.283	0.170
Adult Social Care	78.010	14.103
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services	6.525	0.000
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	50.177	0.897
Education & Skills	14.253	0.656
Health & Wellbeing	0.828	(0.017)
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	32.313	(0.013)
Prosperity & Investment	(6.034)	0.687
Council Wide	(30.204)	(5.179)
Total Pressures	167.640	+11.319
Use of Budgeted Contingencies		-7.200
Use of Reserves & in year savings		-4.119
Projected Year End Position - Within Budget		0.000

5.2.1 Projected variances over £0.250m are highlighted below, all other variances over £50k are detailed in Appendix B.

Service Area	Variance £m
<u>Adult Social Care</u>	
Longer Term Care Purchasing – expenditure relating to block and spot contracts continues to be under significant pressure. This position includes short-term enablement care costs. The trajectory of growth experienced at the end of 24/25 has increased this year, particularly over the last 3 months and is forecast to continue for the rest of the financial year. The pressures have been mitigated by the delivery of £4.3m of savings and cost avoidance in the year to date, and further measures are being implemented across the service to continue to reduce budget pressures with a focus on a home first approach and delivering care which maximises prevention and independence wherever possible.	+14.446

Service Area	Variance £m
Income – anticipated to be higher than income targets	-0.433
My Options – trading accounts – additional costs of staff cover.	+0.516
Learning Disability & Mental Health – Pressures include the use of agency staff, premises cost and carer posts	+0.281
Service Wide – mainly staffing vacancies	-0.565
<u>Housing Commercial & Customer Services</u>	
Income – use of Housing Prevention Grant to support services	-0.462
Housing Subsidy – variation against budget for overpayments recovery plus reduction in loss of subsidy from supported accommodation	-0.293
<u>Children's Safeguarding & Family Support</u>	
Children in Care, Leaving Care Team & Speciality Services, Family Solutions:	
CIC placements, Post 18 Staying Put & Leaving Care Support –care costs have increased over the last 3 months with a number of high cost placements resulting in a forecast overspend against budget.	+1.433
Health Funding – funding from ICB for cost of placements with health elements	-0.279
Children with Disabilities – reflects a reduction in cohort requiring support	-0.261
Homelessness – relates to homelessness accommodation costs	+0.530
<u>Education & Skills</u>	
Employee costs – additional costs due to inflationary pressures relating to historic teacher pension costs	+0.268
<u>Prosperity & Investment</u>	
PIP Income – Impact of capital spend phasing which is being covered from £0.5m of the income contingency released in	+0.679

Service Area	Variance £m
section 4.1.8. This income target will be met in future years as schemes are delivered.	
Wellington Market – Reduced rents being charged whilst development of the market is undertaken	+0.275
Development Planning Income – Planning application fee pressure	+0.367
BIT Income – fee pressure due to rephasing of capital works	+0.256
BIT Premises Costs - one off underspends due to various developments at Leisure sites and The Place	-0.798
<u>Council Wide</u>	
Purchase Rebate – additional West Mercia Energy rebate	-0.369
Council Wide - various underspends, including higher than budgeted Business Rates Retention Section 31 grant, release of provision for savings and inflationary contingencies .	-3.875
Income – Planned used of Reserve	-0.900

5.2.2 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Dedicated Schools Grant sits within Education & Skills and is monitored separately to the Council's General Fund position shown in Section 5.1. Excluding funds passed to academies and colleges, Dedicated Schools Grant totals £130m in 2025/26. DSG deficits are currently required to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts.

Telford & Wrekin's DSG had a deficit of £4.66m at the end of 2024/25 which has carried forward into 2025/26. This was made up of £1.82m deficit carried forward from 2023/24 plus the 2024/25 in year overspend of £2.84m.

The deficit arises because of high needs budget pressures. This is a national issue, and most upper tier local authorities now carry a DSG deficit. The overall national DSG deficit is increasing - at the end of 2023/24 it amounted to £2.148bn and once 2024/25 data is released, this figure is expected to have increased substantially. In order to alleviate pressure on the 2025/26 high needs budgets, Telford & Wrekin's schools forum again agreed to transfer 0.5% of the schools block to high needs, amounting to £0.9m. This agreement illustrates the positive relationships with schools and other providers which are invaluable in assisting the Council to maintain budgetary control of DSG, whilst ensuring that we meet our responsibilities to young people.

The increase in the Government's 2025/26 high needs funding allocation to Councils, including Telford & Wrekin, is higher than in 2024/25, which will assist in meeting cost pressures. The Council has established a cost improvement plan to address high needs budget pressures and continues to work hard to tackle the high needs pressures in partnership with the Forum, schools and other providers of education. However, with continuing growth in demand for high needs support, the budget situation remains challenging. It is anticipated that the deficit will increase further by over £4m during 2025/26. We will be in a better position to quantify this increase once the data relating to the new academic year from September has been quantified over the coming weeks.

The way in which local authorities account for DSG deficits was altered in 2020. DSG deficits are now required to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts and are disregarded from the measure of local authority reserves. The period covered by these regulations has recently been extended and now applies up to 31 March 2028. Further detail on the future treatment of the DSG deficit is anticipated as part of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later in the year. The pressure on DSG will continue as a result of rising demand, the SEND reform white paper due in the autumn should provide more clarity around the position moving forward.

The position is being closely monitored and updates will be included in future reports when more information is known.

5.3 CONTINGENCIES, RESERVES & BALANCES

- 5.3.1 The 2025/26 budget includes a general revenue contingency of £3.950m which is set aside to meet any unforeseen expenditure or income shortfalls during the year and a one-off contingency of £3.250m set aside specifically for Social Care pressures, PIP and other pressures.

The current projected position would require use of all contingencies.

- 5.3.2 The Budget Strategy Reserve remains at £21.7m and is available should the further unforeseen costs materialise before year end.

5.4 CAPITAL

5.4.1 2025/26 Capital Programme

The 2025/26 capital programme totals £122.93. The financial position is shown in the table below and shows projected spend at £121.11m which indicates that there will be some re-phasing into 2026/27 required at year end. The programme will continue to be monitored and updates brought in future reports.

Service Area	Approved Budget	Spend	% Spend	Year End
	£m	£m		£m
Prosperity & Investment	68.42	19.96	29.17%	68.31
Policy & Governance	0.08	0.01	12.50%%	0.07
Education & Skills	18.00	6.75	37.48%	18.00
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	0.07	0.00	0.00%	0.07
Adult Social Care	0.02	0.00	0.00%	0.02
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	19.29	4.61	23.88%	19.20
Hsg, Commercial & Customer Services	9.66	3.26	33.77%	9.66
Finance, People & IDT	5.89	2.24	38.01%	5.89
Corporate Items	1.50	0.00	0.00%	1.50
Total	122.93	36.83	30.40%	122.72

5.4.2 The 2025/26 capital programme is underpinned by capital receipts as part of its funding. Capital receipts included in the medium term budget strategy are kept under continual review and any changes will be reflected in future budget projections but are currently projected to be on target.

5.4.3 Changes to the capital programme are shown in Appendix C for approval.

5.4.4 Full Council approved Prudential and Treasury Indicators on 27 February 2025. Appendix D shows the Treasury and Prudential Indicator monitoring as at the end of August 2025.

6.0 CORPORATE INCOME MONITORING

6.1 The Council's budget includes significant income streams which are regularly monitored to ensure they are on track to achieve targets that have been set and so that remedial action can be taken at a very early stage. The three main areas are Council Tax, NNDR (business rates) and Sales Ledger. Current monitoring information relating to these is provided below. The Council pursues outstanding debt vigorously, until all possible recovery avenues have been exhausted, but also prudently provides for bad debts in its accounts.

6.2 In summary, NNDR collection is within the target set while sales ledger collection and council tax are slightly outside target.

INCOME COLLECTION – MAY 2025			
	Actual	Target	Performance
Council Tax Collection	44.47%	45.34%	0.87% behind target
NNDR Collection	50.86%	50.86%	on target
Sales Ledger Outstanding Debt	9.12%	6.00%	3.12% behind target

6.3 Council Tax (£129.0m)

This measure represents the percentage of the current year liability for council tax which the authority should have received during the year, as a percentage of annual collectable debit. The measure does not take account of debt that continues to be

pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. The final collection figure for all financial years exceeds 99%.

Year End performance 2024/25	97.1%
Year End Target for 2025/26	97.3%

Performance is cumulative during the year and expressed against the complete year's debit.

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
45.34%	44.47%	44.88%

Collection rates are slightly behind target, and just behind performance of last year. In particular there is a decrease in collection rates for benefit recipients which may be linked to the wider transition from legacy benefits onto Universal Credit. We continue to monitor this closely.

6.4 NNDR-Business Rates (£86.2m)

This measure represents the percentage of business rates for 2025/26 that should have been collected during the year. This target, as for council tax, ignores our continuing collection of earlier years' liabilities.

The measure does not take into account the debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. As a general rule the final collection figure for any financial year exceeds 99%.

Year End performance 2024/25	98.1%
Year End Target for 2025/26	98.1%

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
50.86%	50.86%	50.86%

Collection rates are on target.

6.5 Sales Ledger (£98.4m)

This includes general debt and Social Care debt. Debt below 2 months is classified as a normal credit period.

The target percent is set relating cumulative debt outstanding from all years to the current annual debit. The targets and performance of income collection for 2025/26 are as follows:

	Annual Target %	Aug 2025	
		£m	%
Total	6.00	8.976	9.12

Sales ledger performance is outside of target, although there are some larger organisational debts which we are working with Finance colleagues to liaise with the debtor to recover.

7.0 Alternative Options

- 7.1 Budget holders will investigate a number of options to seek to deliver required service outcomes from within budgeted resources. Options to deliver savings and additional income have been explored.

8.0 Key Risks

- 8.1 Budget holders actively manage their budgets and the many financial risks and challenges that council services face, examples include the risk of a particularly harsh winter which would impact adversely on the winter gritting and adult social care budgets, the increasing dependency on income from a wide range of activities and the risk of interest rate movements and further inflationary pressures, the risk of changes in legislative or accounting requirements impacting on budgets etc. The Council has comprehensive risk management arrangements in place, which are reviewed and updated by the Senior Management Team.

9.0 Council Priorities

- 9.1 Delivery of all Council priorities depends on the effective use of available resources. Regular financial monitoring in the financial management reports helps to highlight variations from plan so that prompt action can be taken to effectively manage the Council's budget.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The financial impacts are detailed throughout the report.

11.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 11.1 The S151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and ensure that the Council takes action if overall net overspends /shortfalls emerge. There is also a legal requirement to ensure that the statutory service provision meets demands.
- 11.2 Legal services will provide ongoing advice in relation to specific proposals relating to the making of savings, including on any requirement to undertake consultation as such proposals are brought forward for consideration, the impact of any proposed savings on the delivery of statutory services and any other legal matter arising.

12.0 Ward Implications

- 12.1 There are no impacts on specific wards

13.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

2025/26 Financial Monitoring Report

13.1 There are no Health, Social and Economic Implications directly arising from this report.

14.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

14.1 There are no Equality & Diversity implications directly arising from this report. Proportionate impact assessments are carried out and a range of consultation mechanisms are used where appropriate.

15.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

15.1 There are no Climate Change and Environmental Implications directly arising from this report.

16.0 Background Papers

1	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29	Council 27/02/2025
2	2025/26 Financial Monitoring Report	Cabinet 17/07/2025 Council 17/07/2025

17.0 Appendices

Appendix A	Summary of 2025/26 Projected Variations
Appendix B	2025/26 Revenue Variations over £50,000
Appendix C	Capital Approvals
Appendix D	Treasury & Prudential Indicators

18.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	16/09/2025	18/09/2025	MLB
Finance	15/09/2025	16/09/2025	ER
Legal	16/09/2025	17/09/2025	RP

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2025/26 Revenue Budget Variations

Service Area	Budget	Variation 17 July 2025 Cabinet	Movement	Total Current Variation
	£	£	£	£
Finance, People & IDT	20,489,920	0	15,453	15,453
Policy & Governance	1,282,818	45,000	124,940	169,940
Adult Social Care	78,009,522	5,569,397	8,534,023	14,103,420
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services	6,524,720	0	0	0
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	50,176,686	(4,753)	901,697	896,944
Education & Skills	14,252,977	483,367	173,045	656,412
Health & Wellbeing	827,948	0	(17,125)	(17,125)
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	32,313,125	972	(13,651)	(12,679)
Prosperity & Investment	(6,033,804)	0	686,979	686,979
Council Wide	(30,204,232)	(1,231,000)	(3,949,283)	(5,180,283)
Total	167,639,680	4,862,983	6,456,078	11,319,061

2025/26 Revenue Budget Variations				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Finance, People & IDT				
IDT	Premises	(41,170)	79,786	Annual charges associated with Data Centre / PFI
	Supplies and Services	2,116,095	160,241	One off overspend re VOIP/WAN contract due to new contract arrangements
Finance	Staffing	2,452,710	(109,468)	Temporary vacancies in structure
Revenues	Staffing	1,296,440	(84,674)	Temporary vacancies in structure
Revenues	Supplies & Services	274,860	62,287	Increased cost of collection
Finance, People & IDT	Variations under £50K	14,390,985	(92,719)	
Total Finance, People & IDT		20,489,920	15,453	
Policy & Governance				
Registrars	Income	(931,151)	52,889	Shortfall in fees & charges relating to Birth, Deaths & Marriages and Cemeteries
	Premises	5,030	55,203	Pressure arising from Ground Maintenance charges for cemeteries
Legal Services	Land Charges	(122,322)	88,819	Shortfall of Land Charges income due to reduced demand reflective of current market position.
	Variations under £50k	2,331,261	(26,971)	
Total Policy & Governance		1,282,818	169,940	
Adult Social Care				
All long term care purchasing-Spot & block for all ages and short-term enablement care	Spot & block purchasing	106,446,914	14,445,911	The care purchasing budget is under significant pressure, this position includes short-term enablement care costs. The trajectory of growth seen towards the end of 2024/25 has increased this year, particularly over the last 3 months. The significant upwards revision to the forecast variation since the previous report reflects this increased trajectory being applied to the remainder of the financial year. The monitoring has shown a significant increase in the number of new older people with complex needs needing long-term and short-term enablement residential care since the last monitoring report, combined with some increases in fee rates. The position continues to be monitored closely, as demand for the service has historically been volatile. The pressures have been mitigated by the delivery of £4.3m of savings and cost avoidance in the year to date, and further measures are being implemented across the service to continue to reduce budget pressures with a focus on a home first approach and delivering care which maximises prevention and independence wherever possible.

2025/26 Revenue Budget Variations				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Health funding contributions-all ages and care types	Joint Funding	(7,486,218)	1,000,000	The team are continuing to focus on maximising health funding contributions, and there is a dedicated team responsible for progressing and negotiating current and historical funding claims.
Income	Client Contributions	(14,195,690)	(1,432,844)	Based on current expectations of in-year income. The amount projected to be received has increased as the overall projected cost of care has increased (see above).
Learning Disability and Mental Health		2,421,515	281,930	There are several pressures in this area, including the costs of agency staff, premises costs and carer costs.
My Options	Trading Accounts	158,046	515,752	Costs of casual and agency staff.
Service Wide	Staffing & Operational expenditure	6,952,035	(565,414)	Projected underspend is primarily a result of staffing vacancies. Plus income received from appointee/deputyship silent charges has exceeded the budget. Further concentrated work on this area is in progress
	Variations under £50k	(16,287,080)	(141,915)	
Total Adult Social Care		78,009,522	14,103,420	
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services				
Housing Strategy & Regeneration	Income	(424,000)	202,938	Income target shortfall; will be delivered when Housing Schemes become operational; Red Lion development due in November 2025/26. E106
	HPG Grant	-	(461,712)	
Communities	Solar Farm - New	(250,000)	250,000	Saving target for new location.
	Solar Farm current	(597,720)	41,629	Current year pressure has been reduced down to include £55k for the estimated compensation claim.
Customer Services	Housing Subsidy	310,000	(293,152)	(£160k) underspend due to an increased level of recovery of overpayments plus £104k pressure adjustment to reflect impact of bad debt provision relating to the housing benefit overpayments. A net (£236k) underspend from housing benefit expenditure/subsidy variation including B & B spend (£34k) whereby no subsidy can be claimed back and supported accommodation where only 60% subsidy can be claimed.
Place Executive Director	Vacancy factor	(211,000)	161,000	Includes projected future vacancy factor saving between October - March. The underspends will materialise within each service area as and when they arise.
	Savings target	(67,940)	67,940	Historical saving target put forward by AA of £132k part delivered. Remaining pressure held on HCC, although this should be shared equally between NES & HCC.
Operations	Net	2,928,738	148,043	Pressures associated with a number of Leisure site closures to enable refurbishments.

2025/26 Revenue Budget Variations				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
	Variations under £50k	4,836,641	(116,686)	
Total Housing, Commercial & Customer Services		6,524,720	0	
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support				
Children in Care, Leaving Care Team & Speciality Services, Family Solutions	CIC Placements, Post 18 Staying Put & Leaving Care Support	29,910,512	1,432,750	Net (of health income) reduction of £1.07m in the 2024/25 placements budget (excluding health funding). Children in care have increased over the past 3 months, with 4 high-cost placements driving most of the projected rise. 2025/26 costs, including agreed inflation, are expected to be £0.53m (1.7%) higher than 2024/25, as increased placement numbers and inflation outweigh savings from the work with Impower and ongoing work on prevention, early intervention and review of all placement costs.
	Health funding	(6,437,780)	(279,616)	Income currently projected in line with health income received in 24/25 by way of % of placements costs. Projected to receive £200km more than in 24/25 . Ongoing risk of funding being cut by ICB.
	Children with Disabilities	2,086,020	(260,963)	Small reduction in number of children with disabilities requiring support.
	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) - placements	2,099,310	(45,764)	Placement costs relating to UASC
	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) - Grant Income	(2,099,310)	45,764	UASC grant fully offsetting cost of placements
	Operational expenditure	1,065,285	104,613	Non placement related expenditure across Children in Care, Leaving Care Team & Speciality Services, Family Solutions
	Income	(883,520)	(249,165)	Difference between budgeted grant income and actual grant received plus use of specific reserve to offset placement costs
Child Protection & Family Support, Parenting Assessment & Contact Teams	Operational expenditure	568,270	67,528	
Family Safeguarding Service Wide	Operational expenditure	2,111,119	(55,541)	
	Staffing expenditure	20,225,695	88,109	Includes vacancy factor saving of £299,000 and historic pressure of out of hours team, offset by savings from vacancies across service.
	Homelessness	110,500	530,070	Majority of overspend relates to accommodation (housing) costs of NRPF and homelessness
	Income	0	(200,000)	Use of one-off reserves
Independent Review	Staffing expenditure	817,230	44,601	Use of one agency staff to cover sickness
	Operational expenditure	122,741	33,962	Overspends in interpreter fees
Variations under £50k		480,614	(359,403)	
Total Children's Safeguarding & Family Support		50,176,686	896,944	
Education & Skills				
Specialist Services		928,174	100,000	There is continued pressure from the Educational Psychology Service due to demand in statutory assessments although the impact of the ITS has meant a stronger structure from September that will reduce use of agency. Further work is planned to increase traded income following recruitment into key posts.

2025/26 Revenue Budget Variations				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Employee Costs		1,139,024	268,349	This policy ceased some years ago however, the local authority remains responsible for any historic pension costs and additional costs are due to inflationary pressures.
Insurance		25,806	50,979	The conversion of maintained schools to academies has led to a reduction in insurance contributions from schools.
Arthog		146,713	175,057	Current projections are that the budgeted income at the outdoor education centre and the Skyreach facility are not going to be achieved. An external review of the facilities has been commissioned in order to identify ways to ensure the financial sustainability of the facilities going forward.
Variations Under £50,000		12,013,260	62,027	
Total Education & Skills		14,252,977	656,412	
Health & Wellbeing				
Public Health Grant	Supplies & Services	284,038	16,000	Deficit against Public Health Spend
Public Health	Underspend/(Overspend) to/(from) Reserve		(16,000)	Ring-fenced Public Health grant transferred to/(from) Public Health reserve
Health & Wellbeing	Variations under £50K	543,910	(17,125)	General Fund
Total Health & Wellbeing		827,948	(17,125)	
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services				
Enforcement	Income - Car Parking	(412,080)	135,575	Shortfall against budgeted income from parking
	Income - Enforcement Control	(44,130)	63,657	Shortfall against budgeted income from FPN (Fixed Penalty Notices)
Highways, Engineering & Project Delivery	Supplies & Services - Street Lighting	2,111,130	64,324	Increased Maintenance Costs to be funded by special fund
	Income - Use of Reserves	0	(64,324)	Use of Special Fund to mitigate overspend
Strategic Transport & Highway Network Management	Supplies & Services - Concessionary Travel	(603,720)	(88,381)	Projected overachievement against budgeted NRSWA (New Roads & Streetworks Act) income
Waste & Neighbourhood Services	Waste Treatment	13,829,430	(99,316)	Reduction in residual & green waste tonnages
	Variations under £50k	17,432,495	(24,215)	Included all variations under £50k for NES here
Total Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services		32,313,125	(12,679)	

2025/26 Revenue Budget Variations				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Prosperity & Investment				
R&I	PIP - Income	(11,928,280)	678,884	Income pressure due to phasing of Growth fund capital spend, there is a benefit in relation to lower borrowing costs. This also includes one off benefits from backdated rent agreements which are now finalised.
	Wellington Market	15,240	274,866	Development at Wellington Market resulting in reduced rents charged to tenants.
Development Planning	Income	(3,360,070)	367,000	Planning application fee pressure.
BiT	Income	(3,689,940)	256,000	Fee pressure due to slippage of capital schemes, outturn in 24/25 was £263k. This is offset with one off vacancy management of (£38k).
	Premises Costs	7,482,297	(798,226)	One off underspends due to various developments at Leisure sites and The Place. One off NNDR rebates in addition to underspends on utility costs to be given up as saving in 26/27.
	Variations under £50k	5,446,949	(91,545)	
Total Prosperity & Investment		(6,033,804)	686,979	
Corporate				
Purchase Rebates	Purchase Rebates	(430,000)	(369,174)	Additional WME Rebate
	Employees	548,950	(65,957)	Part year vacancy relating to Executive Director post
Council Wide			(3,875,380)	Various council wide underspends, including additional BRR Section 31 grant lower than budgeted costs relating to the 25/26 pay award.
Council Wide	Contributions from Reserve		(900,000)	
Council Wide	Variations under £50K	(30,323,182)	30,228	
Total Corporate		(30,204,232)	(5,180,283)	
Total		167,639,680	11,319,061	

APPENDIX C

Capital Approvals - by Service Area

Virements						
Scheme	Service Area	Funding Source	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £
Capital investment Fund	Corporate Items	Prudential	(5,665,367)			
Swimming Pool - Dawley Area	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	5,665,367			
Capital investment Fund	Corporate Items	Prudential	(8,000,000)			
Levelling Up Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	8,000,000			
Highways & Bridges Capital Maintenance	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(40,000)			
Rights of Way	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	40,000			
HE Liability Sites	Prosperity & Investment	External	(1,100,000)			
HE Liability Sites	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(700,000)			
Levelling Up Fund	Prosperity & Investment	External	165,000			
Playing Pitch Investment	Prosperity & Investment	External	500,000			
Property Investment Programme	Prosperity & Investment	External	435,000			
Property Investment Programme	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	700,000			
Stalled Sites	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential		(500,000)		
St Georges Regeneration	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential		500,000		

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Slippage						
Scheme	Service Area	Funding Source	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £
Capital investment Fund	Corporate Items	Prudential	13,665,367	(6,165,367)	(7,500,000)	
Efficiency Schemes Capitalisation	Corporate Items	Capital Receipts	(363,524)	363,524		
Affordable Housing Programme	Housing Commercial & Customer Services	Prudential	(300,000)	(1,200,000)	1,500,000	
Housing	Housing Commercial & Customer Services	Prudential	(1,368,555)	1,368,555		
Swimming Pool in the Dawley Area	Housing, Commercial & Customer Services	Prudential	(9,331,312)	3,665,945	5,665,367	
Levelling Up Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Grant	(4,800,000)	2,000,000	2,800,000	
Levelling Up Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(8,000,000)		8,000,000	
Pride in Your High Street	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(60,000)	60,000		
Regeneration Funding	Prosperity & Investment	Grant	(2,000,000)	2,000,000		
Regeneration Funding	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(291,825)	291,825		
Stalled Sites	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(250,000)	250,000		
HE Liability Sites	Prosperity & Investment	External	600,000	(600,000)		
HE Liability Sites	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	700,000	(700,000)		
Towns Fund - Wellington	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(1,357,769)	1,357,769		
Condition Works - Leisure	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(55,298)	55,298		
Housing Company - Housing	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	1,389,472	(1,389,472)		
Pride in Your High Street	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential		(1,319,618)	1,319,618	
Towns Fund Wellington	Prosperity & Investment	Capital Receipt	(246,000)	246,000		
Towns Fund Wellington	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	246,000	(246,000)		
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	1,617,848	(11,443,881)	2,825,952	7,000,081
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Capital Receipts		(1,151,805)	1,151,805	
Stronger Communities	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(19,841)	(1,000,000)	1,019,841	
Safer Routes to Schools	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(65,176)	65,176		
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(208,347)	208,347		
Highways / Footpaths	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(1,801,073)	1,801,073		
Integrated Community Schemes	Adult Social Care	Prudential	(40,430)	40,430		
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Grant	(3,851,600)	(13,333,804)	17,185,405	
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Capital Receipts		(1,200,000.00)	1,200,000.00	
ICT Investment Programme	Finance, People and IDT	Capital Receipts	(4,676)	4,676		
Managing the Funding of the Capital Programme	Corporate Items	Capital Receipts	(2,006,801)	4,358,606	(2,351,805)	
Managing the Funding of the Capital Programme	Corporate Items	Prudential	2,006,801	(4,358,606)	2,351,805	
			(16,196,739)	(25,971,330)	35,167,988	7,000,081

New Allocation								
Scheme	Service Area	Funding Source	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £	29/30 £	
Family Hubs & Start for Life	Childrens Services	Grant	73,022					
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Grant	191,449					
Housing	Housing Commercial & Customer Services	Grant	(249,366)					
Warm Homes Local Grant	Housing Commercial & Customer Services	Grant	276,067	552,735	541,549			
Active Travel	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	196,736	524,330				
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	74,000					
Service & Financial Approved Schemes	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Revenue	1,000					
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	6,243					
Childrens & Adults ICT Systems Review	Adult Social Care	Prudential	(26,934)					
Rights of Way	Prosperity & Investment	External	21,150					
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant		7,026,000	8,786,000	9,829,000	10,871,000	
			563,367	8,103,065	9,327,549	9,829,000	10,871,000	

Treasury Management & Prudential Indicators

Overall Treasury Portfolio at 31st August 2025 - £m

	Budget	Latest Estimate
Estimated Total External Borrowing (@ 31.03.2026)	502.9	489.5
Investments (@ 31.03.2026)	15.0	15.0
Net Borrowing	487.9	474.5

Capital Expenditure & Commitments - £m

This indicator shows actual capital expenditure for the previous year and planned capital expenditure for 3 years. The table below reflects approvals throughout the year at Full Council, including those proposed in this report

Capital Expenditure/Funding	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Grant Funded	49.78	22.71	31.25
Prudential Borrowing	62.99	69.46	52.05
Capital Receipts	6.88	3.57	1.34
Revenue / External	3.29	1.43	-
	122.94	97.17	84.64

Capital Financing Requirement/ Borrowing - £m

The Capital Financing Requirement is the underlying need to borrow money over the long term. If outstanding borrowing is higher than the CFR this would indicate we are borrowing in advance of need.

Latest Projections				
	31/03/26	31/03/27	31/03/28	
Loans CFR	625.0	692.6	742.8	✓Outstanding Borrowing is lower than the underlying need to borrow
Estimated Outstanding Borrowing	489.5	559.0	611.0	

Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary (Debt)

The Authorised Limit for borrowing is the maximum amount the Council may borrow at any point in the year. The Operational Boundary is the maximum amount that the Council would normally borrow at any time during the year.

	25/26 31/03/2025	26/27 31/03/26	27/28 31/03/26	
Authorised Limit for borrowing - indicator set	665.0	745.0	785.0	✓Outstanding Borrowing (above) is below both the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary
Operational Boundary for external debt - indicator set	645.0	725.0	765.0	

Security

The Council considers security, liquidity and yield, in that order, when making investment decisions.

Credit ratings remain an important element of assessing credit risk, but they are not a sole feature in the Council's assessment of counterparty credit risk.

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted credit score of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments would be assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit Risk Indicator	Target	Actual - 31/8/25	
Portfolio average credit score	6 or lower (which is equivalent to a credit rating of A or higher)	1.81	✓ The Average credit score for investments is within the target set

Maturity Structure

This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

Maturity Structure	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Actual - 31/8/25	Within Limit
Up to 1 year	0%	70%	28%	✓
1 year to 2 years	0%	30%	20%	✓
2 years to 5 years	0%	50%	12%	✓
5 years to 10 years	0%	75%	13%	✓
10 years to 20 years	0%	75%	2%	✓
20 years to 30 years	0%	75%	2%	✓
30 years to 40 years	0%	100%	3%	✓
40 years to 50 years	0%	100%	14%	✓
Over 50 years	0%	100%	6%	✓

Principal sums invested for periods longer than one year

		31/03/26	31/03/27	31/03/28	
Indicator Set	Limit on principal invested longer than 364 days	95%	95%	95%	✓currently 0% invested beyond 1 year

Ratio Affordability Measure

Ratio of finance cost to net revenue stream (%)	25/26	26/27	27/28	
Indicator Set	7.85%	9.74%	9.46%	Financing cost to net revenue stream is very slightly higher than budgeted in 25/26 as interest rates have not reduced in line with budget assumptions and slippage has impacted all years
Current	7.96%	9.18%	9.56%	



Telford & Wrekin
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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 6 November 2025

Annual Public Health Report 2025 Towards a Smoke Free Future

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Kelly Middleton - Cabinet Member: Public Health and Healthier Communities
Lead Director:	Helen Onions - Director of Public Health
Service Area:	Health & Wellbeing
Report Author:	Helen Onions - Director of Public Health
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 381366 Email: helen.onions@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes – 28 th August 2025
Report considered by:	SMT – 2 September 2025 Policy Development – 11 September 2025 Health & Wellbeing Board – 18 September 2025 Cabinet – 6 November 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision

- 1.1 Cabinet is requested to endorse and support the recommendations of the Director of Public Health's 2025 Annual Report, which are aimed at reducing the impact of smoking and vaping-related harm in the borough.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The 2025 Annual Public Health Report focusses on a smoke free ambition for Telford & Wrekin. It covers the health and financial impacts for individuals who smoke, the affects on children and young people and vulnerable adults, and the wider impacts on our communities. The report introduces key local actions we need to take in Telford & Wrekin to make a smoke free ambition a reality.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Despite the decades of public awareness campaigns and regulation, smoking remains one of our most significant public health challenges. Tobacco-related harm is the single largest driver of health inequalities, and contributes to reduced life expectancy due to smoker's increased risk of a wide range of chronic diseases. Smoking in pregnancy negatively impacts on a range of outcomes for mother and baby.
- 3.2 The consequences of smoking extend far beyond individual's health and personal spending, it causes significant cost burdens on local authorities, the NHS, and economy and society more broadly. The overall financial burden of smoking in our borough is estimated to be a staggering £171 million per year by ASH (Action on Smoking and Health).
- 3.3 Vaping is much less harmful than smoking and can help to people quit, but the increase in vaping among children and young people who have never smoked is a major concern.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

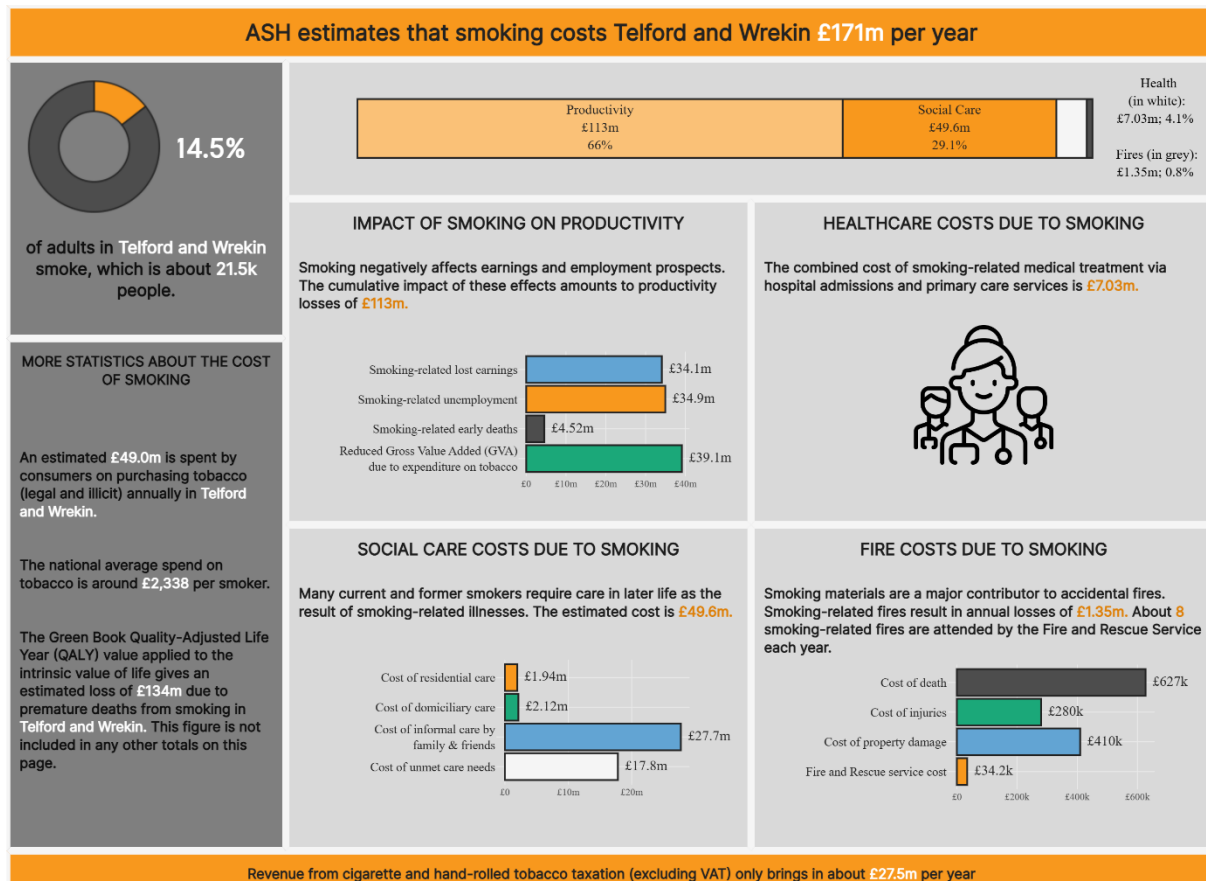
- 4.1 The Tobacco and Vapes Bill, which is progressing through the House of Lords, includes the following proposals:
- Generational Tobacco Ban - on tobacco sales to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009, to ensure future generations will never legally be sold tobacco products.
 - Licensing and Retail Regulation – introducing powers to establish a licensing regime for the retail sale of tobacco, vapes, and nicotine products.
 - Advertising and Packaging Restrictions – on branding, promotion, and advertising of vapes and nicotine products, especially those targeting children.
 - Expanded smoking restrictions - extending the smoking ban in public places to outdoor settings, where children and vulnerable people are present, including playgrounds, schools and hospital grounds, with strengthened enforcement of smoke-free policies in NHS settings.
 - Strengthening Enforcement Measures – against illicit tobacco and youth vaping, banning disposable vapes, ensuring the environmental costs of vape disposal are met by industry
 - Support for Smoking Cessation – through additional funding for local stop smoking services, introduction of Swap to Stop - free vape starter kits, introduction of pack inserts with positive quit messages, NHS opt-out smoking cessation interventions in routine care.

4.2 In Telford & Wrekin, smoking has a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

Smoking and vaping – local headlines



4.3 Alongside the health impacts, there are also major financial cost burdens associated with smoking.



Source: ashresources.shinyapps.io/ready_reckoner/

- 4.4 There are significant health benefits associated with quitting, and the majority of smokers wish they had not started in the first place. Engagement with local people who have quit smoking report very positive personal changes. The Council's Healthy Lifestyles Team offers a Stop Smoking Service for residents, and we regularly hear grateful feedback from clients on the support our Advisors offer.
- 4.5 The Council has been allocated additional funding through the Public Health Grant, to expand the number of people setting a quit date in Telford & Wrekin, and further Stop Smoking Advisors have been recruited. The new Neighbourhood Health approach launched in the NHS 10 year plan, provides a real opportunity to work with a range of NHS teams and voluntary and community sector organisations to improve proactive preventative care, such as stop smoking support, in our communities.
- 4.6 Locally, NHS Tobacco Dependency programmes offer stop smoking support in Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals NHS Trust for inpatients and in maternity services. Midlands Partnership University Foundation Trust offers smoking cessation to patients with mental health issues. The NHS 10 year plan expects the expansion and further development of the NHS Tobacco Dependency programme, so quitting support in the NHS is: offered to patients staying overnight and in outpatient and community settings, personalised and tailored to individuals, and is targeted at the most disadvantaged people and high risk groups.
- 4.7 Smoking poses a range of risks to children and young people, including pregnancy outcomes and the development of asthma due to second-hand smoke. Parental smoking influences children, and the younger people start smoking, the greater the harm is and the lower chances of quitting. There is a worryingly large rise in vaping among young people, particularly those who do not smoke.
- 4.8 Telford and Wrekin Trading Standards Team in collaboration with Telford police, conduct multiple operations targeting the sale of illicit tobacco, and underage vape sales enforcement across Telford and Wrekin.
- 4.9 Smoking is a complex social and health issue which needs a multi-layered, comprehensive approach with residents and partner organisations working together in a coordinated way. The Government's smoke free generation ambition, the new Tobacco and Vapes Bill and recently published NHS 10 year plan all provide local opportunities now to effectively work towards a smoke free future.
- 4.10 The Director of Public Health makes the following recommendation for the Health & Wellbeing Board to support and approve:

A comprehensive plan to deliver Smoke Free Telford & Wrekin ambitions should be developed across Health & Wellbeing Board partners, and implemented through the Telford & Wrekin Place Integrated Partnership.

The Smoke Free delivery plan, which should draw on opportunities offered by the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and the new Neighbourhood Health approach, should be based on the following commitments:

- Reduce the number of people who smoke, by supporting more people to quit in community and NHS settings.
- Protect children and young people against smoking, vaping (and other nicotine products).
- Create more smoke free places to protect children and vulnerable people from second-hand smoke.
- Enhance enforcement and tackling of illicit tobacco and vapes.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Producing an independent annual report is a statutory duty for the Director of Public Health and the local authority must publish the report, so not publishing a report would mean this duty is not complied with. Health and Wellbeing Board could decide to not endorse the recommendations of the Director of Public Health, but such a decision would be in spite of the wealth of evidence presented in the report.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 Lack of local comprehensive collaboration on the smoke free agenda would likely mean smoking prevalence in our borough reduces more slowly than other parts of the country, and as such the harms and impact highlighted in the report would persist.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The strategy included within the report will be delivered by Health and Voluntary Sector partner organisations and will be subject to resources available at a partnership level.
- 8.2 The Council reported expenditure of £466k in 2024/25 on stop smoking services and interventions.
- 8.3 The Council is receiving a Government grant of £274k in 2025/26, allocated on the estimated number of smokers over a 3 year period, described as “Smoking prevalence.” The grant is to support the Council to deliver a reduction in the number of people smoking, and has conditions attached, including maintaining original spending baselines such that the grant is additional spending power.

- 8.4 The Council will engage in the design and implementation of the multi-agency strategy within existing resources, however should there be additional resources required from the Council then this would be considered in accordance with the Council's Governance structure for setting future years budgets. RP 22/08/25

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to prepare an annual report on the health of the people in the area of the local authority under Section 73B(5) of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended). The report has to be published by the local authority under Section 73B(6). The attached report is produced by the Director of Public Health in order to meet these statutory responsibilities.

10.0 Ward Implications

- 10.1 Borough-wide impact, but particularly wards with highest levels socio-economic deprivation.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 11.1 Smoking increasing the risks of lung cancer, and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and dementia. Half of the life expectancy gap between the most deprived and most affluent communities - 8.8 years for males and 6.4 year for females in Telford & Wrekin, are due to smoking. Second hand smoke exposure affects babies, children and young people, and vulnerable adults.
- 11.2 Smoking places significant financial costs burdens on statutory services, the economy and society more broadly, due to loss of productivity, unemployment, health and social care, as well as the impact of fires.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 Smoking has significant implications for equality and diversity, particularly in how it reinforces health and social inequalities. It disproportionately affects individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with lower incomes, certain ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, and people with mental health conditions. These groups often face higher smoking rates due to targeted marketing, social stressors, and limited access to cessation support. In the workplace, smoking policies that lack inclusivity can further marginalise these individuals, especially if they do not provide equitable access to quitting resources or accommodate cultural and social needs. Addressing smoking through an equality and diversity lens means recognising these disparities to ensure that local partnership action is inclusive, supportive, and tailored to the needs of vulnerable populations.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 Smoking has a considerable impact on climate change and the environment globally, contributing to: deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion. Tobacco

farming results in the loss of 100,000s of hectares of forest each year, reducing biodiversity and carbon absorption. Farming consumes vast amounts of water and depletes soil through heavy pesticide use. The Tobacco industry emits millions of tonnes of CO₂ annually through cultivation, manufacturing, and transportation processes. Cigarette butts, among the most littered items globally, release toxic chemicals and microplastics into ecosystems. The rise of disposable e-cigarettes has further added to electronic and plastic waste. Environmental harms are disproportionately felt in low-middle income countries where tobacco is grown.

14.0 Background Papers

None.

15.0 Appendices

A Annual Public Health Report 2025 Towards a Smoke Free Future

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	29/08/2025	21/08/2025	HO
Legal	21/08/2025	27/08/2025	RP
Finance	21/08/2025	28/08/2025	RP

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Telford & Wrekin
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Telford and Wrekin Annual Public Health Report *2025*

Towards a smoke free future

Foreword

I am delighted to present my first annual report as Director of Public Health for Telford & Wrekin. There have been decades of public awareness campaigns and regulation, and smoking has reduced in the past 50 years as a result. However, smoking remains one of the most significant public health challenges in our borough, nationally and worldwide. Tobacco-related harm is not evenly distributed in our communities and smoking is the single largest driver of health inequalities. Smoking among adults in more deprived communities and those in routine and manual occupations, such as construction or factory work is higher than average.

"If you smoke, vaping is much safer; if you don't smoke, don't vape; marketing vapes to children is utterly unacceptable."

A leading cause of chronic diseases, smoking increase the risks of lung cancer and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and dementia. Half of the life expectancy gap between the most deprived and most affluent communities – 8.8 years for males and 6.4 year for females in Telford and Wrekin, are due to smoking. Second hand smoke exposure affects babies, children and young people, and vulnerable adults.

The consequences of smoking extend far beyond individual's health and financial impacts, causing significant cost burdens on councils, the NHS and economy and society more broadly. The overall financial burden of smoking in our borough is estimated to be a staggering £171 million per year by ASH (Action on Smoking and Health).

Engagement with people who smoke shows that three quarters would never have started if they had the choice again, and the vast majority, 83% started smoking before the age of 20. There are many barriers people face when quitting smoking, such as nicotine addiction and dependence, mental health challenges, social and environmental influences, emotional triggers and low confidence.

Vaping is much less harmful than smoking and can help to people quit, but the increase in vaping among people who have never smoked and especially children and young people is a major concern. Smoking is a complex social and health issue which needs a multi-layered, comprehensive approach with residents and partner organisations working together in a coordinated way. The Government's smoke free generation ambition, the new Tobacco and Vapes Bill and NHS 10 year plan all provide opportunities now to more effectively work towards a smoke free future. This report explores the local picture and outlines key local action we need to take in Telford and Wrekin to make a smoke free ambition a reality.



Helen Onions

Director of Public Health
Telford & Wrekin Council

Chief Medical Officer,
Professor Sir Chris Whitty,
May 2023

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Acknowledgements

A very big thank you to Rachel our Environmental Health Regulatory Support Officer and apprentice with the Council, for working closely with me to develop this report. Damion from the Insight Team, Lauren from Comms and John from Graphic Design were also part of the project team.

Thank you to our video stars who shared their experiences and the other residents who appear in our case studies. A big shout out to the Healthy Lifestyles Team and our Stop Smoking Advisors: Katie, Melanie, Cath, Nick, Rachel, Ollie, and Lindsey – who frequently receive strong positive feedback from the clients who they have supported.

With thanks also to other contributors to this report: Andrew, Trading Standards, Kate, Insight, Stacey, Amy and Alex, Content Creators and Clare from Public Health.

NHS colleagues Lorna Watkins, Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Board, Adam Bance, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Vicky Birch & Aravind Bhaskaran, Shrewsbury & Telford NHS Hospitals Trust.

Introduction

This report includes sections covering the following:

- setting the scene;
- the local picture;
- supporting residents to quit;
- children and young people smoking and vaping;
- tackling illicit tobacco and illegal vapes; and
- key actions for change.



Throughout the report local intelligence, smoking cessation support arrangements, and resident stories are used to describe the picture in Telford and Wrekin. Alongside this local perspective, the national context of changes being introduced in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill¹ and the NHS 10 year plan Fit for

the Future² are highlighted to outline opportunities to reduce the impact smoking of smoking and vaping in our Borough.

The report recommends the development and implementation of a smoke free partnership delivery plan across Telford and Wrekin. Key actions for change are set out towards the end of the report. These proposed actions are based on evidence of good practice and national legislation and policy expectations. This section provides the framework and actions to be included in the smoke free delivery plan, which should aim to reduce the impact of smoking and nicotine harm for our residents.

The UK Tobacco and Vapes Bill aims to create a **smoke-free generation**, reduce health inequalities, and protect children and vulnerable groups from nicotine-related harms. The Bill started its Parliamentary process in November 2024 and is currently progressing through the House of Lords.

Summary of proposals

- 1 **Generational Tobacco Ban** – on tobacco sales to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009, to ensure future generations will never legally be sold tobacco products.
- 2 **Licensing and Retail Regulation** – introduction of powers to establish a licensing regime for the retail sale of tobacco, vapes, and nicotine products.
- 3 **Advertising and Packaging Restrictions** – on branding, promotion, and advertising of vapes and nicotine products, especially those targeting children.
- 4 **Expanded smoking restrictions** – extending the smoking ban in public places to outdoor settings, where children and vulnerable people are present, including playgrounds, schools and hospital grounds, with strengthened enforcement of smoke-free policies in NHS settings.
- 5 **Strengthening Enforcement Measures** – against illicit tobacco and youth vaping, banning disposable vapes, ensuring the environmental costs of vape disposal are met by industry.
- 6 **Support for Smoking Cessation** – through additional funding for local stop smoking services, introduction of Swap to Stop - free vape starter kits, introduction of pack inserts with positive quit messages, NHS opt-out smoking cessation interventions in routine care.

Recommendations

A comprehensive plan to deliver Smoke Free Telford & Wrekin ambitions should be developed across Health and Wellbeing Board partners, and implemented through the Telford and Wrekin Place Integrated Partnership. The delivery plan, which should draw on opportunities offered by the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and the new Neighbourhood Health approach, should be based on the following commitments:

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- **reduce the number of people who smoke by supporting more people to quit in community and NHS settings;**
- **protect children and young people against smoking, vaping (and other nicotine products);**
- **create more smoke free places, in line with the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, to protect children and vulnerable people from second-hand smoke; and**
- **enhance enforcement and tackling of illicit tobacco and vapes.**

The Health and Wellbeing Board and Telford and Wrekin Place Integrated Partnership are made up of representatives from key organisations including: the Council, NHS, Community and Voluntary Sector and Community Safety partners, such as the police and fire service. The smoke free delivery plan should be owned and delivered within these partnerships, but also link more broadly to schools and education settings, employers and businesses, the housing and homeless agenda and beyond. Further engagement work with our communities, with residents who smoke and those who don't, should underpin and shape our smoke free plan. The key actions for change needed as part of the four high level commitments above are detailed on page 25.



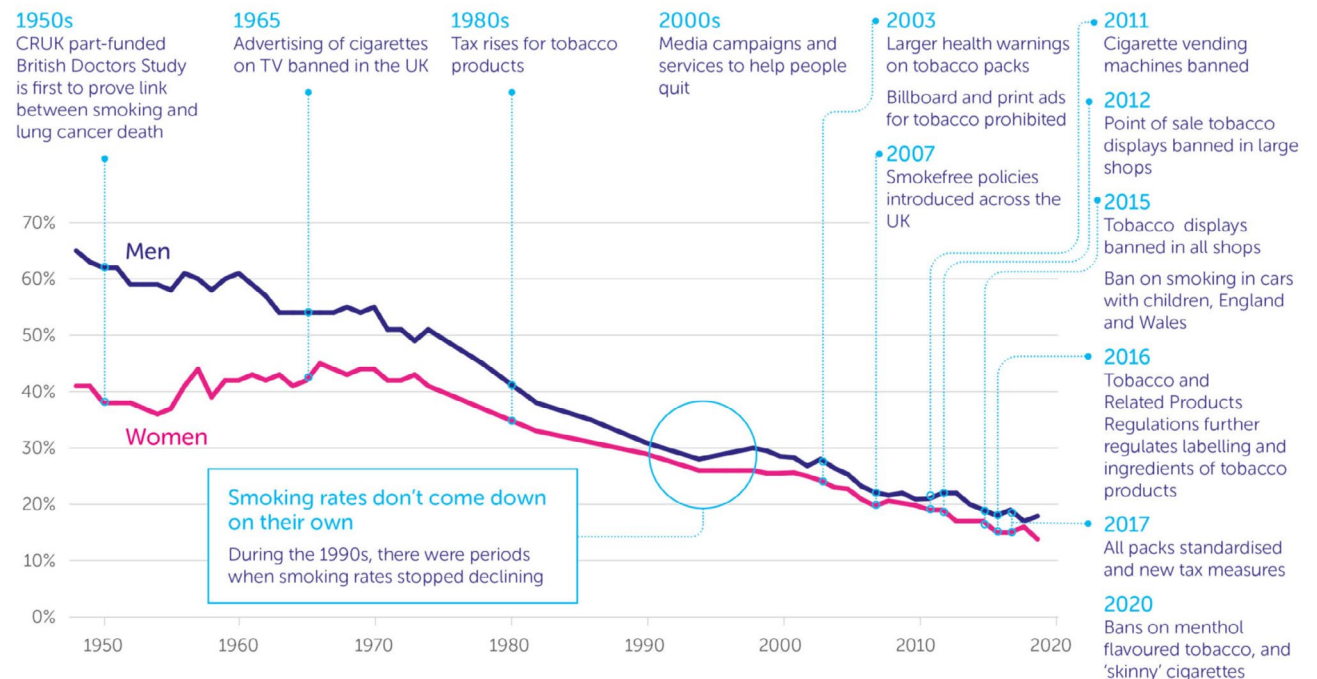
Tobacco – a brief history

Tobacco is a 400-year-old habit, documented from the 16th century. The sale of tobacco grew in the early 20th century with the introduction of mass marketing, by 1948 82% of men in the UK used some form of tobacco.

Targeted advertising from tobacco companies saw smoking amongst women soar throughout the mid 20th century - reaching a peak in the 1960s. Attitudes and knowledge relating to tobacco changed considerably in the 20th century, and in 1954 the harms of tobacco were first brought to light in the British Doctor's Study³, which led to shift in the views of healthcare professionals and the public. This shift marked the start of the on-going battle between the scientific and health communities and tobacco industry. The 21st Century timeline of tobacco control milestones is shown opposite – the 2007 ban in public places is viewed as significant public health intervention.



Smoking rates decline with action



Sources: Data for 1948-1973: PN Lee Statistics and Computing Ltd. International Smoking Web Edition. Available from <http://www.pnlee.co.uk/ISS.htm>. Accessed July 2020. Data for 1974 onwards: Office for National Statistics. Adult smoking habits in Great Britain. Accessed July 2020.

cruk.org
Together we will beat cancer

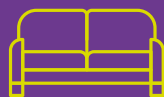


<https://news.cancerresearchuk.org/2023/03/17/the-killer-behind-the-counter/>⁴

Smoking and vaping – local headlines



14.5%
of adults (aged 18 years and over) smoke – **circa 21,580 smokers**



About 930
people in Telford and Wrekin are estimated to be **out of work due to smoking**



Every year around **360**
children in Telford and Wrekin **start smoking**



An estimated **600**
of 11-17 year olds in Telford and Wrekin **vape every day**, a rise from less than 100 regular vapers in 2014



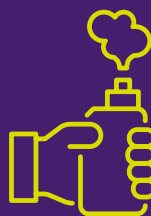
About 8,890
children in Telford and Wrekin **live in smoking households**



The smoking related mortality rate for Telford and Wrekin is **significantly higher than the England average**



8%
of women smoke in pregnancy and there are clear inequalities with 15% smoking in pregnancy in the most deprived communities compared to 4% in the least deprived communities



Over 1,900
young people in Telford and Wrekin aged 11-17 years, are estimated to have experimented with vaping in 2023



14.5% of adults 18+ in Telford and Wrekin smoke, which is about 21.5k people. In the West Midlands overall, the proportion is 12.0%



21.3% of adults aged 18-64 in routine and manual occupations in Telford and Wrekin smoke.



30.3% of adults 18+ with long-term mental health conditions in Telford and Wrekin smoke.



44.4% of adults 18+ with serious mental illness in Telford and Wrekin smoke.



59.6% of adults 18+ admitted to treatment for alcohol or non-opiate misuse in the West Midlands smoke.



62.0% of adults 18+ admitted to treatment for opiate misuse in Telford and Wrekin smoke.

Impacts of smoking

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing lung cancer, respiratory disease and cardiovascular disease, as well as other cancers. It is also closely associated with poor mental health. Most people know about the main causes, but they may not realise just how far-reaching its damage can be.



Hearing and vision loss

Studies show that smoking increases the risk of [hearing loss](#) and [eye problems](#) like cataracts, glaucoma, dry eyes, and vision damage as you age.



Digestive issues

Studies show that smoking can harm your digestive system, causing issues like [heartburn](#), [ulcers](#), liver problems, and a higher risk of Crohn's disease, pancreatitis, and gallstones.

Did you know the monthly cost of smoking half a packet of cigarettes per day is £213?

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Dementia

The UK Alzheimer's Society says smoking [increases the risk of dementia](#). It damages blood vessels, which is linked to Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Chemicals in smoke also harm cells and cause inflammation, making the risk even higher.



High blood pressure

Blood Pressure UK warns that [smoking damages blood vessels](#), narrows arteries, and puts extra strain on your heart by raising your blood pressure.

High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so getting checked is the only way to know.

If you are 40 or over in England, you can get a free blood pressure check at your pharmacy today.

[Find a pharmacy that offers free blood pressure checks.](#)


HealthyLifestyles

Crush the habit

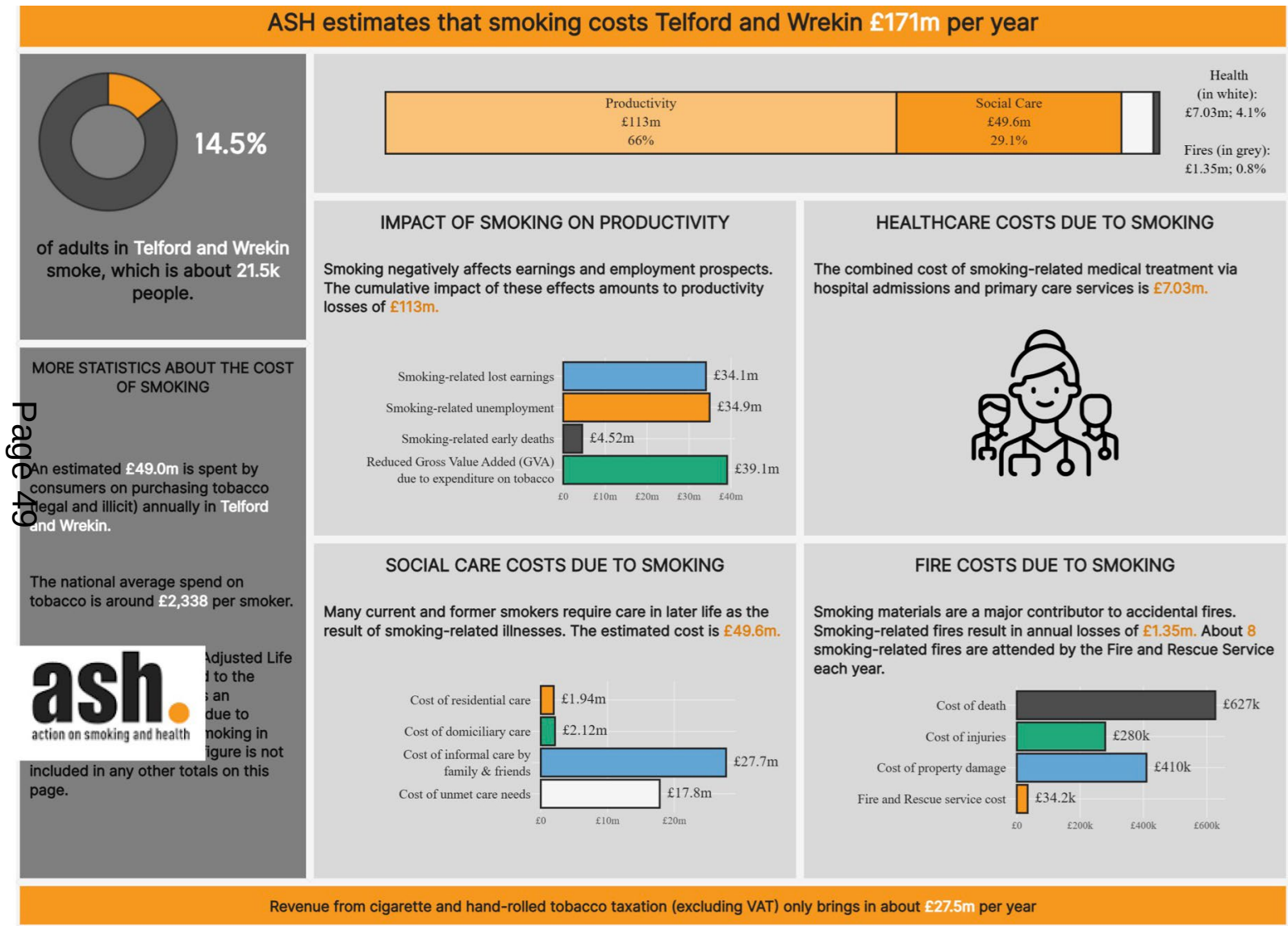


Damage to your joints

Smoking increases inflammation in the body, which can worsen joint pain and damage. It also [increases the risk of rheumatoid arthritis](#), back pain, shoulder tears and osteoporosis.

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/why-quit-smoking/understanding-the-true-impact-of-smoking/>⁶

The impacts of smoking in Telford and Wrekin reach far beyond individual and family health and finances, with significant costs estimated across our community.



https://ashresources.shinyapps.io/ready_reckoner/

Benefits of quitting

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) report that people who stop smoking:

- at age 60 can add 3 extra years to their life and stopping at 30 can add 10 extra years;
- before the age of 50 years cut their risk of dying of smoking-related disease in half.

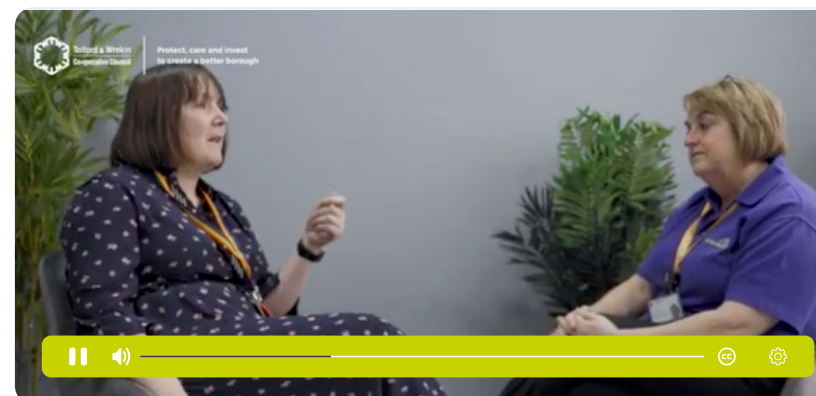
Other positive changes:

- return of sense of taste with food tasting better;
- improved fitness;
- skin and teeth start to look better; and
- fertility levels will improve, for those wanting to start a family.

Kelly's experiences from when she first quit to now:

The sooner you quit, the sooner you'll notice changes to your body and health. Look at what happens when you quit for good.

 After 20 minutes Check your pulse rate, it will already be starting to return to normal.	 After 8 hours Your oxygen levels are recovering, and the harmful carbon monoxide level in your blood will have reduced by half.
 After 48 hours All carbon monoxide is flushed out. Your lungs are clearing out mucus and your senses of taste and smell are improving.	 After 72 hours If you notice that breathing feels easier, it's because your bronchial tubes have started to relax. Also your energy will be increasing.
 After 2 to 12 weeks Blood will be pumping through to your heart and muscles much better because your circulation will have improved.	 After 3 to 9 months Any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function increases by up to 10%.
 After 1 year Great news! Your risk of heart attack will have halved compared with a smoker's.	 After 10 years More great news! Your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared with a smoker's.



1. Watch here



2. Watch here

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/why-quit-smoking/understanding-the-true-impact-of-smoking/>⁸

Smoking in our community

Smoking in adults

- Adult smoking prevalence has been declining since the 2010s locally and nationally. 14.5% of adults (aged 18 years and over) in Telford and Wrekin were estimated to be smokers in 2023*, compared to 24.7% in 2011.
- This means an estimated 21,580 adults are smokers in Telford and Wrekin.
- Slightly more women are estimated to smoke than men – 15.4% compared to 13.5%.
- National figures show that the highest rates of smoking are in 25-34 year olds.

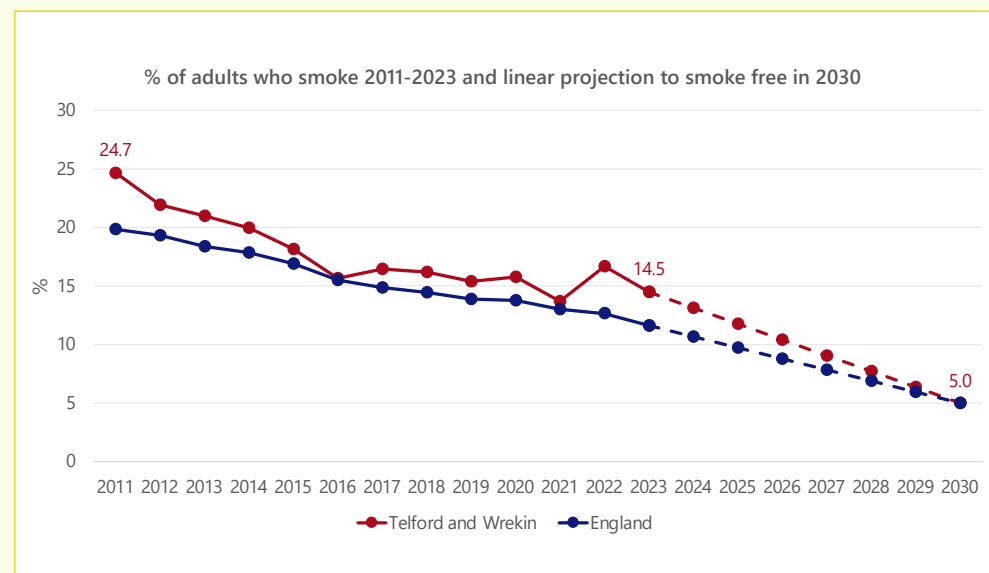
Smoking – deprivation and occupation

Smoking rates are three times higher in those living in the most deprived areas, compared to those living in the least deprived areas. The most deprived 20% of communities is termed at the “core 20” by the NHS and is a focus group for health inequalities.

The relationship between occupation and smoking is strong. In 2023 in Telford and Wrekin, the smoking prevalence among adults in routine and manual occupations was 21.3%, this includes jobs such as construction or factory work. However, this is significant reduction compared to in 2011 when 38.5% of people in routine and manual occupation smoked. This is in part due to the successful targeting of Telford & Wrekin Council’s Health Lifestyle Services stop smoking support.

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control>⁹

*Latest national data available



Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework - Annual Population Survey¹⁰

<https://www.telford.gov.uk/about-my-council/telford-and-wrekin-insight/living-well/>¹¹

Smoking and mental health

- People with mental illness, especially those with severe conditions such as schizophrenia or psychotic illness have particularly high smoking rates, which known to contribute to reduced life expectancy.
- In Telford and Wrekin in 2022/23 the prevalence of smoking in adults with a long-term mental illness was 30%, compared to 14.5% in the overall population.

See further information at the end of the report which details other groups who have higher smoking prevalence.

Smoking – pregnancy, children and young people

Smoking and pregnancy

Smoking is associated with multiple and poor pregnancy complications and for babies, maternal smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke can have devastating consequences, such as sudden infant death syndrome. Smoking at the time of delivery in Telford and Wrekin in 2024/25 was 8% and there are clear inequalities gaps with:

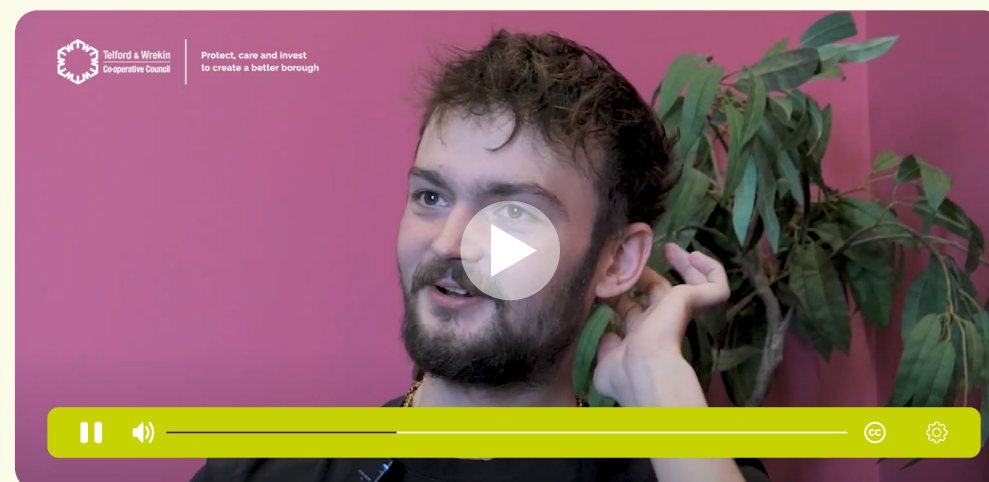
- 15% smoking in pregnancy in the most deprived fifth of communities (referred to as the core 20 by the NHS) compared to 4% in the least deprived communities; and
- 10% of white women smoking in pregnancy, compared to 1% in those from black and minority ethnic group backgrounds.

Twenty years ago smoking in pregnancy was much higher than today – 21% in 2004/2005 in Telford and Wrekin. A dedicated healthy pregnancy service delivered from Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals maternity services has supported many pregnant women to quit, but there is still more to do to reduce smoking in pregnancy inequalities. Hear more about the NHS Tobacco Dependency Programmes on pages 20-21.

Smoking in children and young people

- Among adult smokers in England, 66% report starting smoking before age 18.
- Nationally in 2023 11% of 11–15-year-olds reported trying smoking, 3% report currently being smokers, with 1% smoking regularly (at least 1 cigarette per week)¹².
- This means an estimated 400 11-15 year olds are regular smokers in Telford and Wrekin.

[Find out about Liam's smoking journey here](#)



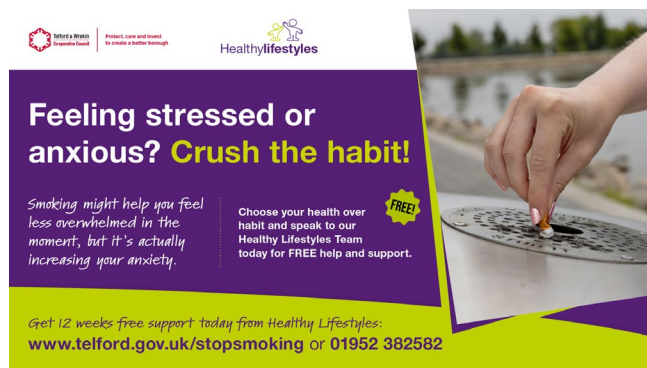
Supporting residents to quit

Crush the Habit is Telford and Wrekin's community-centred localised smoking cessation campaign, built around our well-known Council Healthy Lifestyles brand. More than a call to action, this campaign reaches out to support our residents to quit smoking for a reason special to them – be it for their health, future, or for someone they love.

Crush the Habit acknowledges that breaking free from a habit as strong as smoking is no small feat, so there's the offer of Healthy Lifestyles Stop Smoking services support for every step of the way.

Now in its tenth month, the **Crush the Habit** campaign continues to resonate with our community, encouraging many to seek information and support to quit smoking. Significant peaks in engagement are noticed around national events such as Stop Smoking Day, Christmas, and New Year, illustrating how these moments can inspire a shift in attitudes towards smoking.

Statistically, the campaign's reach and impact are impressive. With over 1.75 million impressions, more than 55,000 interactions, and 10,000 click-throughs leading individuals to commit to change, the numbers echo the campaign's success in engaging and motivating our community.



Crush the Habit links to the wider “Healthy Telford” pledge, a 12-week email campaign, providing valuable health and advice information. This initiative empowers residents to make small, achievable changes that greatly enhance their overall wellbeing while also joining a group of likeminded individuals who can help them on their journey to better health.

At Healthy Lifestyles, we believe that with the right support and resources, anyone can quit smoking. Take the first step towards a smoke-free life by signing up for our FREE stop smoking appointments. Ready to commit? Sign up now: orlo.uk/ILnfX @healthytelford



There are a range of free national online resources and apps to support smokers to quit.

Some areas, like Norfolk, have digital programmes which offer: interactive videos, virtual coaching and progress tracking.

Telford & Wrekin Healthy Lifestyles Stop Smoking Service

Telford & Wrekin Healthy Lifestyles Stop Smoking Service offers a free 12-week individually tailored programme through face-to-face appointments, video or simple phone calls. Support is available through in-person appointments, telephone calls, or video consultations, with translation services offered if needed.

Initial pre-quit appointment

- Page 54
- Review of smoking history, current habits, and routines.
 - Assessment of the financial cost of smoking.
 - Personalised advice on the most suitable nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) options (e.g. patches, gum, spray, lozenges).
 - Signposting to additional health and wellbeing services where appropriate.

Ongoing support

- Up to 12 follow-up sessions providing motivation and behavioural support.
- Focus on achieving 4-week and 12-week smoke-free milestones.

Behavioural support

- Strategies to manage cravings.
- Techniques for changing daily routines.
- Ongoing encouragement and motivation.

Find out more about Healthy Lifestyle support [here](#)



How the Healthy Lifestyles Team are making a difference

"The service provided is extremely helpful and of great assistance. No pressure was ever felt or put onto myself. Both the advice and support really helped in achieving my goal of quitting."

Swap-to-Stop is a national initiative designed to help smokers transition from cigarettes to vaping.

The scheme works alongside behavioural support from local stop smoking services, involving regular check-ups and progress reviews. There is flexibility in implementing the scheme, through either direct distribution of vape kits or providing voucher codes. The scheme also allows local authorities to prioritise certain target populations and areas with high smoking prevalence.

"When I first started this journey, I was anxious, nervous, and very doubtful that I'd succeed. But Catherine was incredibly welcoming, and we set a quit date for two weeks later. I honestly thought it was impossible — but I trusted her."

"I'm so glad I made the decision to go on this journey, and having the Healthy Lifestyles team as an anchor point made a huge difference."

"Great service! As a smoker, of some 43 years, I honestly didn't believe I've ever be able to stop!! Well, Ollie has been incredible, believing I could become "smoke free" even though I doubted myself."

"I have surprised myself that I have managed to do it and your support has been an extra prop to spur me on. Thanks again."

"Hi Cath thank you again for all your support, I don't think I could of done this without your support. I made the initial call as I was struggling with the craving of smoking and Cath explained what was happening very clearly and together we put a plan together to help me with the craving. The service honestly amazing and it was great I could do this over the phone and didn't need an appointment at the doctors surgery. I have since passed the information on to a friend who is wanting to give up smoking and shared my experience with her and I would recommended this service to other friends and family too. Truly an amazing service."

**Meet
Ollie**



**Meet
Nick**



**Meet
Cath**



**Meet
Rachael**



"Dear Cath and team, Healthy lifestyles stop smoking team has been incredible in helping me achieve my goals. I feel wonderful in myself and have more energy in every aspect of my living. Addiction to nicotine can be very hard to shake off as it becomes a part of your life and seemingly a crutch to depend upon. Your team has always given the right advice and support, which has led to an extremely positive outcome.

I have not touched a cigarette in the past 12 weeks, and I do not have the urge to do so. This means that your team has managed to address all aspects of my needs (psycho-social, emotional and physical) to be able to quit smoking. I feel wonderful in myself and have more energy in every aspect of my living. The social impact of your services is immense to people, as it impacts on overall improvement in health and social wellbeing. Many thanks once again."



"Hi Nick, first of all a huge thank you to you Nick. To be honest I was dreading contacting the Healthy Lifestyle Team but, I'm so glad I did. My assumption that I'd be met with ongoing judgmental comments was absolutely misplaced. I was supported with the utmost respect that had a lasting impact on me.

I'd been a committed smoker for over 40yrs and becoming an expert at giving up smoking but, this time felt very different to me & with your support I truly believe I'm truly a non-smoker. However, I've always trusted the advice of Nick and will continue to use his the advice he passed onto me. My advice to anyone wanting to give up smoking. Don't do it alone the support works. Thanks again Nick."

How the Healthy Lifestyles Team are making a difference

CASE STUDY

An 84-year-old woman with a diagnosis of dementia was referred by her Adult Social Care Practitioner. The referral was supported in-person within her local community, with assistance from her granddaughter to help her access the service.

She also lives with several long-term health conditions, including hypertension, heart disease, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

The client has been smoking since the age of 15. She previously quit during pregnancy and remained smoke-free for 11 years at that time.

Initial Carbon Monoxide (CO) reading: 17ppm

Week 3 CO reading: reduced to 2ppm – a level typical of a non-smoker

Her granddaughter reports noticeable improvements:

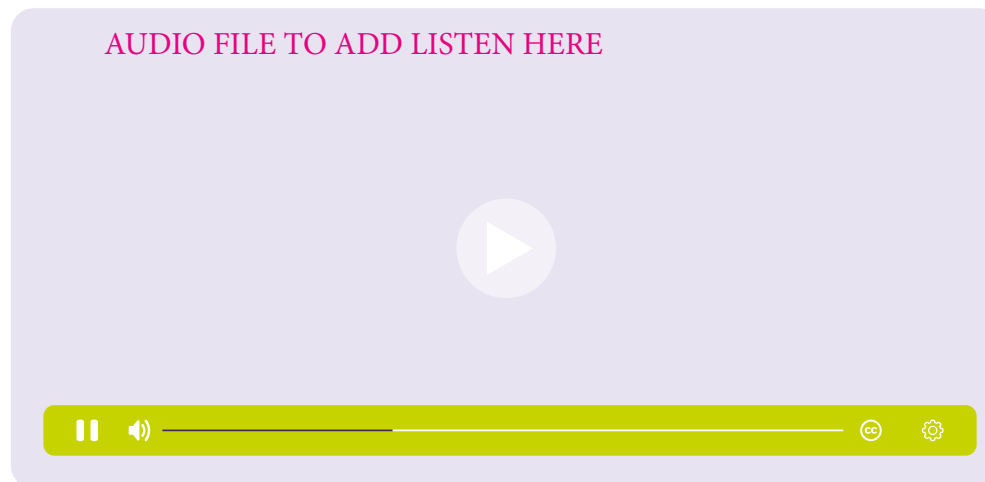
- no chest infections since quitting;
- increased energy levels; and
- enjoyment in walking and spending time gardening.

The client was expected to reach 12 weeks smoke-free by the end of June 2025.

She lives alone and experiences social isolation. Her granddaughter believes she often smokes out of boredom.

To support her, the Stop Smoking Advisor introduced her to new people and activities at the community centre where her appointments were held.

AUDIO FILE TO ADD LISTEN HERE



<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/ready-to-quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/>¹⁴

The [NHS Lung Cancer Screening Programme](#)¹⁷ aims to detect lung cancer sooner, often before symptoms develop and when treatment is more likely to be successful. The programme will offer lung health checks to people aged between 55 and 74 years who have ever smoked. Roll out of this national programme is phased and initially is targeting health inequalities by inviting people from the most deprived communities for lung checks first. The Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust is working with local GPs to start the programme in South East Telford in October 2025.

Telford & Wrekin Healthy Lifestyles Service will be offering stop smoking support alongside 12 weeks free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) to people following their lung health checks to encourage them to quit.

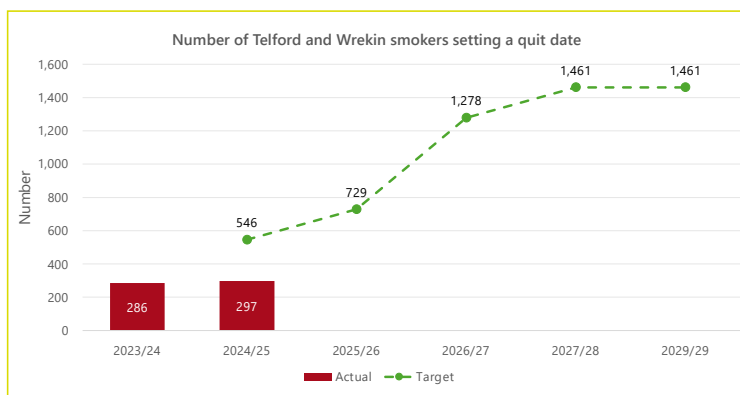


Increasing smoking quitters in the community

Vaping become widely popular in the 2010s and e-cigarettes have radically, but positively changed the landscape of quitting and the support people look for to help them stop smoking. The numbers of people smoking overall has fallen over the past 10 years too. As a result, the demand for local stop smoking services has declined over the past decade. In 2014/15 just over 1,800 people set a quit date with Telford and Wrekin stop smoking services, and in 2024/25 that number had fallen to under 300.

In 2024/25 the number of smokers setting a quit date (per 100,000 smokers) in Telford and Wrekin was below the England average. Over half of people setting a quit self referred into our service, and a third were referred from General Practices – either by GPs, social prescribers or other General practice staff. Self referral and GP referral rates are higher in Telford and Wrekin compared to the England average, but referral rates need to increase from across the NHS.

Funding to support local authority-led stop smoking services expansion has been agreed as part of the Government's Smoke Free Generation commitment. The targeted funding is based on local smoking prevalence, ensuring areas with higher smoking rates receive more support. During 2025/26 Telford & Wrekin Council will use this grant funding to recruit further stop smoking advisors to expand the team and increase the number of smokers setting a quit date, in line with our targets (shown on the graph).



Neighbourhood Health opportunities

Neighbourhood Health is part of the Government's mission to shift healthcare into the community. This transformative approach is designed to reshape how health and care services are delivered in communities across England. Preventative, community-based interventions, which tackle health inequalities are a crucial part of neighbourhood health.

Integrated neighbourhood teams (INTs) will work in neighbourhoods and are expected to provide proactive preventative care in communities. The INTs will include the staff from the following:

- Primary care teams – GPs, nursing staff, social prescribers;
- Community health services – therapies and nursing teams, pharmacists etc;
- Healthy lifestyle services;
- Mental health services;
- Adult social care; and
- Voluntary and community sector organisations.

Telford & Wrekin Place Partnership (TWIPP) oversees the neighbourhood health agenda in the borough, and the development of INTs aligned to the four Primary Care Groups offer a significant opportunities to engage more people who smoke in quitting support.

Views of residents who smoke

Engaging Communities Solutions, the current provider of Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin undertook engagement with around 100 residents who currently smoke during Summer 2025.

The themes of this engagement are summarised below.

Smoking behaviours

- Long-term smoking often begins due to family norms, peer pressure, or bereavement.
- Vaping is common and often used alongside smoking.
- Smoking is viewed as a coping mechanism for stress.
- Many smokers, especially younger ones, are not motivated to quit.

Service engagement

- Low awareness and uptake of stop smoking services, especially among young people and men.
- Willpower is the most common method to quit, but often unsuccessful.
- Group and 1:1 support are valued, especially when led by people with lived experience.

Communication preferences

- Social media is preferred by younger people, but often ignored unless actively seeking help.
- Leaflets, posters, and direct mail are important for older or socially housed individuals.
- Real-life stories and face-to-face conversations are more impactful than generic health warnings.

Barriers to quitting

- Emotional attachment and low perceived urgency reduce motivation.
- Stress, social triggers, and lack of follow-up support contribute to relapse.
- Existing messaging often fails to resonate, especially with younger audiences.

'I can vape in the pub but then go outside for a cigarette.'

(Female, 18-34)

'The vape is the first thing I do in the morning and the last thing I do at night.' (Male, 18-34 years)

'Currently don't have any bills to pay, so I can buy what I want, so it is not important to me at the moment.'

(Male, 18-34 years)

'In years to come when I have to consider a roof over my head, or food I would stop.' 'If I had a family, I would think about the cost, especially with the cost of living at the moment.' (Female, 18-34 years)

NHS Tobacco Dependency Programmes

Smoking greatly increases the risk of complications during and after surgery. Smokers have a 1 in 3 risk of having breathing problems after an operation, which can reduce to 1 in 10 if the patient stops smoking eight weeks before their operation.

The Tobacco Dependency Programme at Princess Royal and Royal Shrewsbury Hospitals, led by Aravind Bhaskaran was initiated in 2019 and is specifically aimed at inpatients identified as smokers. Upon admission, patients are asked about their smoking status. Those who smoke are then contacted by the dedicated SaTH Tobacco Dependency Team. Our team reaches out to smoking patients within 24 hours of their admission to provide personalized 1-2-1 behavioural support and Nicotine Replacement Therapy, which may include patches or medication. Continuous support is provided to patients throughout their hospital stay, and for those wishing to continue their quitting journey post-discharge, they are seamlessly referred to the three Local Authority Stop Smoking Services.



The [National smoke-free pregnancy incentive scheme¹⁵](#) (NSPIS) launched in November 2024, aiming to reduce smoking rates among pregnant women and improve health outcomes for both mothers and babies.

Incentive: Participants receive up to £400 in vouchers:

- weekly vouchers during the first four weeks of their quit attempt;
- monthly vouchers until birth; and
- two additional vouchers at one and three months postpartum.

Implementation: through participating NHS trusts and maternity services, integrated with existing tobacco dependency treatment pathways.

Uptake: As of mid-2025, 78 out of 120 maternity trusts in England are currently delivering the scheme.

Hear more from local midwife Vicky Birch [link to go here](#)

The NHS Tobacco Dependency Programme¹⁶ was launched in 2019, NHS trusts were expected by March 2024 to provide the following:

Universal Offer in Hospitals – NHS-funded tobacco dependency treatment offered to all inpatients who smoke, including a brief advice, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and behavioural support.

Specialist Pathways:

- tailored support through a smoke-free pregnancy pathway for pregnant women and their partners; and
- universal cessation offer for long-term users of specialist mental health, and in learning disability services.

NHS Tobacco Dependency Programmes

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Adam Bance, the Clinical Lead for Tobacco Dependency at Midlands Partnership University Foundation NHS Trust (MPFT), started working on Mental Health Wards in 1997, when smoking was a “deeply embedded part of the culture. Most inpatients smoked heavily, and many staff would join them in the smoke-rooms on the wards”. Slowly but surely the culture has changed, as the NHS has needed to adapt in line with smoke free legislation. The Trust adopted a “Totally Smoke Free” commitment in 2015 and this has taken nearly a decade to become a reality. A key resource used in the Trust for all Inpatient Mental Health Clinicians is an NHS Standard Treatment Programme for Tobacco Dependency.



This provides essential facts, background and evidence for the need for a smokefree NHS, along with “Care Bundles” to standardise a quality offer for our patients. It can be found here <https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/STP-inpatient-mental-health>. The MPFT service led by Adam, offers Tobacco Dependency Support on an opt-out basis to all patients admitted as smokers to the Redwoods Centre in Shrewsbury. This may mean days of weeks of abstinence, or the beginning of a full, smoke free future. We work closely with our colleagues in Telford & Wrekin Council Healthy Lifestyles Service, who are on hand to continue people’s support and quitting journey on discharge.

Fit for the Future² 10 Year Health Plan for England sets out clear expectations for the existing NHS Tobacco Dependency Programmes and their expansion, including the following elements:

Universal Access

All hospital inpatients, pregnant women, and people in mental health settings who smoke are offered support to quit and this should be expanded to outpatient and community settings.

Personalised Support

Patients receive brief advice, behavioural support, and access to quit aids (e.g. nicotine replacement therapy or vaping products), which is tailored to individual needs and circumstances.

Equity Focus

Targeting of health inequalities, especially in deprived areas where data shows smoking rates are highest, to reduce gaps and improve outcomes across different population groups.

Hospital-Based Interventions

Being in hospital is seen as a key opportunity to support quitting, and by the end of 2023/24, all overnight hospital admissions should have access to tobacco dependence treatment.

Training for NHS Staff

New eLearning modules help clinical staff deliver effective stop smoking support. Training includes how to provide brief interventions and recommend appropriate treatments.

Children and young people smoking and vaping

About 8,890 children in Telford and Wrekin live in smoking households and every year around 360 children start smoking.⁵

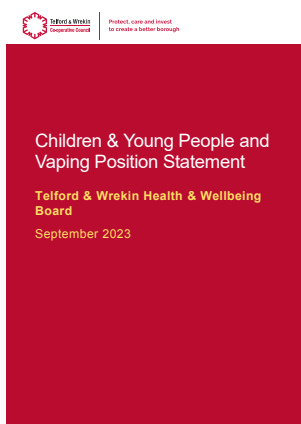
The risks of smoking to children and young people are wide and varied. As well as the pregnancy and infant impacts, children can develop asthma from second-hand smoke. Children learn by seeing, or 'modelling behaviour' and seeing parents, carers and siblings smoking is a risk factor for them starting smoking themselves. this increases the risk if smoking products are available at home. The younger people start smoking, the greater the harm is likely due to higher dependency, heavier smoking and lower chances of quitting.

While vaping has become an essential tool in helping adults quit smoking, worryingly there is a large rise in vaping among young people, particularly those who do not smoke. Over 1,900 young people in Telford and Wrekin aged 11-17 years, are estimated to have experimented with vaping in 2023.

In terms of regular vapers, the estimate is 600 of 11-17 year olds in Telford and Wrekin vape every day, a rise from less than 100 regular vapers in 2014.

Telford & Wrekin Health & Wellbeing Board published a [position statement on Youth Vaping](#)¹⁸ in September 2023.

This is series of key messages and advice on vaping for young people, parents, carers, schools and other education settings.



Crucial Crew the annual summer roadshow for 10-11 year olds leaving primary school held at Telford College, is an immersive, hands-on experience to offering information on essential life skills to help children stay safe and confident as they move to secondary school. As part of our plans to tackle youth vaping in Telford and Wrekin, school nurses attended crucial crew event this July 2025 to deliver a session on vaping.



Hear our school nurses talk about vaping at Crucial Crew [here](#)



The Tobacco and Vapes Bill¹ proposes the following to protect children and young people: Ban on Vape Sales to Under 18s / Advertising and Promotion Restrictions / Packaging and Flavour Controls / Shop Display Regulations

Tackling illicit tobacco and illegal vapes

What is Illicit Tobacco?

Smuggled Tobacco: Genuine products brought into the UK without paying the required taxes or duties.

Counterfeit Tobacco: Fake products made to look like legitimate brands but often contain unregulated and harmful substances.

Cheap Whites: Brands manufactured legally in one country but intended specifically for illegal sale in another, like the UK.

Unregulated Hand-Rolled Tobacco: Often sold in unmarked bags or packaging, with no health warnings or duty paid.

What is the impact?

Health Risks: Illicit tobacco is often made in unregulated environments and may contain higher levels of toxins, heavy metals, and contaminants.

Undermines Public Health Goals: It makes tobacco more accessible and affordable, especially to young people and low-income groups.

Loss of Revenue: The UK government loses billions in unpaid taxes – estimated at £2.8 billion in 2021–2022 alone.

Funds Organised Crime: Profits from illicit tobacco are often linked to wider criminal activities, including drug and human trafficking

The overall size of the illicit market in the UK is estimated to be 13.8% of tobacco smoked and leads to a loss in taxes of £1.4bn annually in excise tax plus an additional £400m in VAT. However, progress made over the last 20 years has been significant, with the illicit market declining from an estimated 21.7% of all tobacco smoked in 2006/7¹⁹.



Telford and Wrekin Trading Standards Team

In collaboration with Telford police, the Council's Trading Standards conduct multiple operations targeting the sale of illicit tobacco across Telford and Wrekin. During 2024/25, the following items were seized:

54,080 cigarettes – a **66% increase** compared to 2023/24

41.4 kg of hand-rolling tobacco – a **210% increase**

1,690 illegal vapes – a **37.3% increase**

78 pouches and **14 tubs of shisha tobacco**

A total of **11 separate seizures** were made, with the largest incident receiving media coverage (BBC report).

Underage Vape Sales Enforcement

In response to intelligence-led complaints –primarily concerning vape sales – we carried out **underage sales test exercises** during 2024/25:

18 retail premises were visited

7 shops sold vapes to underage individuals

1 business was prosecuted and had its **alcohol licence revoked** by the Council

Investigations and enforcement actions are **ongoing** for several other premises.



Key actions for change

Reduce the number of people who smoke by supporting more people to quit in community and NHS settings

- Understand the local inequalities picture to inform effective targeting, through equity profiling of tobacco dependency and stop smoking service clients - by age, gender, ethnicity etc.
- Develop confidence and expertise of frontline health and care professionals and appropriate volunteers (health champions etc.) through Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training on smoking and vaping.
- Improve and expand advice and signposting to support available for people to quit through promotion of Healthy Conversations campaign, underpinned by national campaign material (e.g. Stoptober).
- Develop and promote online resources and apps to engage those wanting to quit through a digital offer.
- Review, streamline and enhance the current stop smoking pathways across community settings in the NHS Tobacco Dependency Programmes and linked services such as Lung Cancer Screening.
- Expand the Healthy Lifestyles Service Stop Smoking Team and increase in

community stop smoking clinic venues in neighbourhoods.

- Introduce Swap to Stop free vapes offer (LA and NHS) and expand the number of clients supported with free NRT.
- Engage with residents who smoke to understand barriers, especially those in groups where smoking prevalence is highest (see further info for more detail).

Protect children and young people against smoking, vaping and other nicotine products

- Refresh the Telford & Wrekin Children and Young People's Vaping Position Statement.
- Engage with young people, through our Child Friendly approach, to co-produce prevention activities which raise awareness of the harms of smoking and vaping.
- Develop an online toolkit of resources and communications for children, young people, parents, carers, schools and education settings to stop the start of smoking and vaping.

Create more smoke free places to protect children and vulnerable people from second-hand smoke

- Make more local outdoor spaces smoke free, through expanded restrictions set out in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, e.g. outside schools, children's playgrounds and hospitals.
- Encourage premises to adopt voluntary outdoor smoke free places.
- Work with businesses and employers to develop smoke free policies.

Enhance enforcement and tackling of illicit tobacco and vapes

- Explore adoption of retail licensing scheme for tobacco and vapes products, linked to new Tobacco and Vapes Bill powers.
- Consider use of fixed penalty notices for offences such as underage sale of tobacco and vaping products.
- Continue to enforce compliance with regulations relating to all tobacco and vapes regulation, including point of sale, age restrictions on sales and illegal sales.

Resources and links/references:

1) <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3879>

2) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future/fit-for-the-future-10-year-health-plan-for-england-executive-summary>

3) a. <https://www.bmj.com/content/328/7455/1519>

b. <https://le.ac.uk/research/stories/human-health/tobacco-history>

c. <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/smoking-statistics>

4) <https://news.cancerresearchuk.org/2023/03/17/the-killer-behind-the-counter/>

5) https://ashresources.shinyapps.io/inequalities_dashboard/

6) <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/why-quit-smoking/understanding-the-true-impact-of-smoking/>

7) https://ashresources.shinyapps.io/ready_reckoner/

8) <https://www.telford.gov.uk/healthy-telford/help-to-stop-smoking/>

9) <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control>

10) **Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework - Annual Population Survey**

11) <https://www.telford.gov.uk/about-my-council/telford-and-wrekin-insight/living-well/>

12) <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tobacco-control>

13) <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/smoking-drinking-and-drug-use-among-young-people-in-england/2023>

14) <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/ready-to-quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/>

15) <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/prevention/tobacco-dependency-programme/national-smoke-free-pregnancy-incentive-scheme/>

16) <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/prevention/tobacco-dependency-programme/>

17) <https://www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/lung-cancer-screening/>

18) <https://www.telford.gov.uk/healthy-telford/tackling-young-people-vaping/>

19) <https://ash.org.uk/media-centre/news/press-releases/new-official-estimate-of-the-illicit-tobacco-market-ash-response>

20) <https://ash.org.uk/resources/view/health-inequalities-and-smoking>

Further information

Vaping

Vaping through electronic devices referred to as 'vapes' or 'e-cigarettes usually contain nicotine - the addictive chemical found in cigarettes, allowing the user to inhale nicotine in a vapour rather than smoke. Vapes are useful for reducing harm to adult smokers, by encouraging smokers to use vapes as an alternative to tobacco and to aid in quitting smoking altogether. Vaping is not completely risk free, particularly for people who have never smoked and should not be presented as an appealing activity to the wider non-smoking population. Around 5.1 million adults aged 16 years and over (9.8%) currently use an e-cigarette daily or occasionally in Great Britain in 2023, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). E-cigarette use was highest among people aged 16 to 24 years in Great Britain, with 15.8% using e-cigarettes either daily or occasionally.

Smoking and health inequalities

The burden of ill health and mortality attributed to tobacco related harm is unevenly distributed in society. Smoking is the single largest driver of health inequalities in England. Data from the Annual Population Survey, found that smoking prevalence was more than three times higher in those living in the most deprived areas compared to those living in the least deprived areas.

Smoking rates are known to be higher than the national average in the following groups:

- people with a mental health condition;
- people with lower incomes;
- people who are unemployed;
- people who are experiencing homelessness;
- people in contact with the criminal justice system;
- people who live in social housing;
- people without qualifications;
- lone parents; and
- LGBTQ+ people.

The level of socio-economic disadvantage varies hugely across the borough. Parts of the borough are among the most deprived in England whilst other areas are among the least deprived. 15.7% of the local population live in areas that are ranked in the 10% most deprived in England for overall deprivation and 19.5% of the population live in areas that are ranked in the 20% most deprived nationally.

[ASH-Briefing_Health-Inequalities.pdf](#)

[Telford_and_Wrekin_JSNA_Population_Headlines_January_2024\(2\).pdf](#)

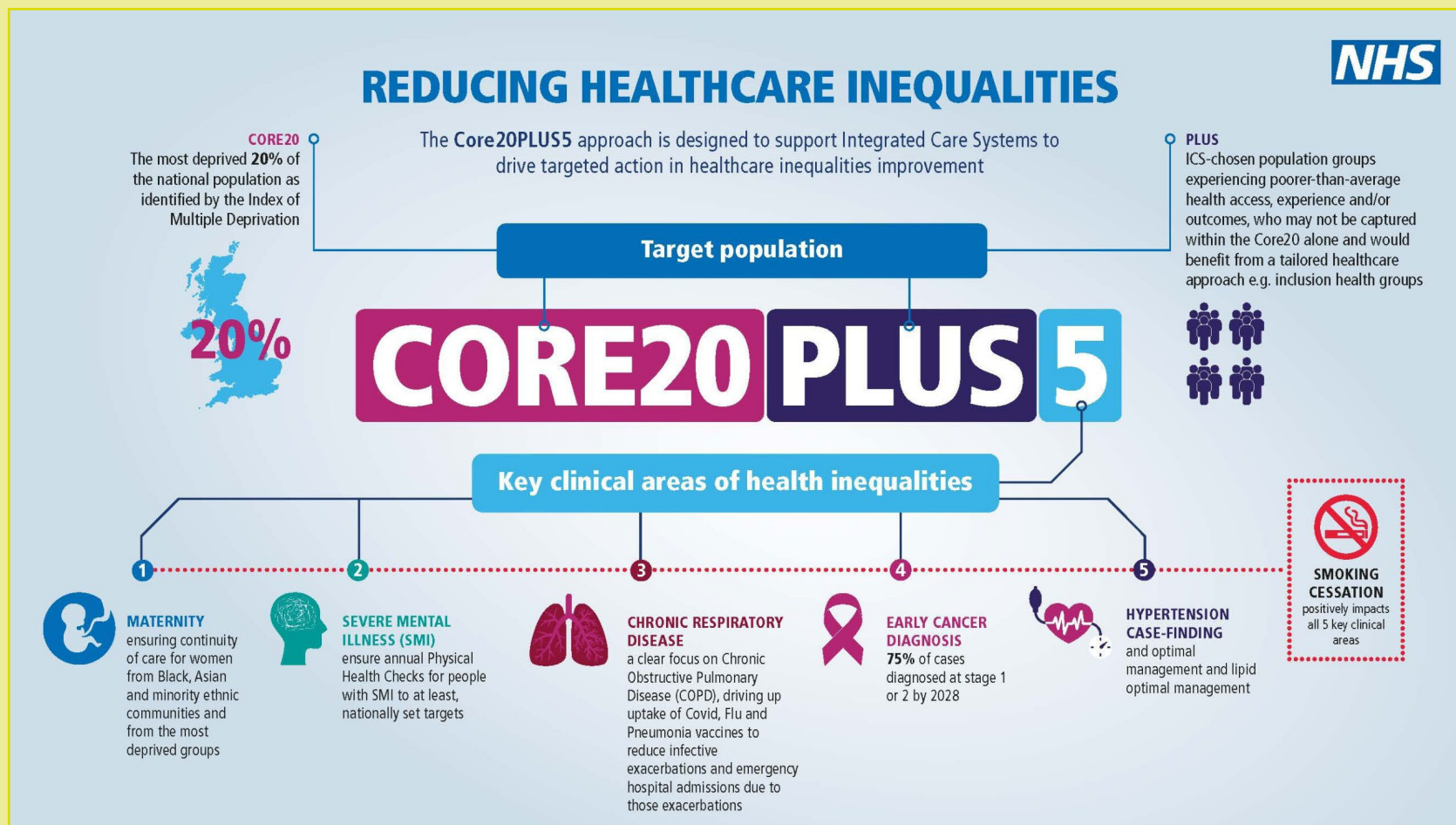
Further information

Core20PLUS5

Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach designed to reduce healthcare inequalities across England.

Smoking cessation is highlighted as important to all five clinical areas which are prioritised in the Core20PLUS5 framework.

NHS England »
[Core20PLUS5 \(adults\)](#)
 – an approach to
[reducing healthcare inequalities](#)





Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

6 November 2025

Kinship Local Offer

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning
Lead Director:	Darren Knibbs – Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support
Service Area:	Children's Safeguarding & Family Support
Report Author:	Louise Spragg – Strategic Lead for Practice, Principal Social Worker, Children's Services
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 385700 Email: Louise.Spragg2@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes – 21 May 2025
Report considered by:	SMT – 23 September 2025 Policy Development – 9 October 2025 Cabinet – 6 November 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Endorse the publication of the Telford and Wrekin Local Offer for Kinship Carers
- 1.2 Note the content of the report and acknowledge the national developments in Kinship Care and how we have applied these locally.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update on services provided to kinship carers and the children they care for, residing in Telford and Wrekin.

- 2.2 To highlight the Kinship Local Offer for publication. This will provide kinship families with clear and accessible information and guidance on the support that is available. This will ensure that the Council is compliant with the recent legislative and policy changes, and it is able to deliver its commitment to ensure effective services are in place for children and young people in kinship families in the borough.

3.0 Background – National Context

- 3.1 Currently, there is national focus on supporting all children where possible to remain with their family and relational networks, when they are unable to live with their parents. There is new statutory and non-statutory guidance to support overall practice working with children and kinship carers.
- 3.2 Kinship Care is a term used to describe placements of children living with family, friends or connected persons. In October 2024, the Government issued statutory guidance on 'Kinship Care', which included a definition (now enshrined in the draft Children's Wellbeing and Schools bill before Parliament) of kinship care: 'any situation in which a child is being raised in the care of a friend or family member who is not their parent. The arrangement may be temporary or longer term.'
- 3.3 This covers a wide span from informal arrangements and private fostering to Children in Care fostered by family or friends, and children subject to Court orders proving their family or friends with parental responsibility. Children may live with Kinship Carers in any of the following circumstances:
- In informal arrangements with a relative or connected person.
 - As a Private Fostering or Supported Lodgings arrangement.
 - Under a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order.
 - As a looked after child with Kinship Foster Carers.
- 3.4 In February 2023 the Government set out 6 ambitions of reform through the Stable homes, Built on Love. Within the new Social Care National Framework 2023, one of the six requirements is that all Local Authorities update and review their Kinship Care policy in line with the updated Kinship care statutory guidance.
- 3.5 The DFE have recently published their updated Kinship Care: statutory guidance for local authorities (DFE, October 2024). This sets out a framework for the provision of support to kinship families, and how family networks can be engaged to support the needs of children throughout children's social care, including those who are unable to live with their parents.
- 3.6 It sets out proposals and principles for local authorities (no change to statutory duties):

- To identify a 'Kinship Lead' who is a senior officer in Children's Social Care.
- For all local authorities to publish a Kinship Local Offer. This will include the provision of information about all support and services in the local area, which is to be readily available to those who need it.
- Support available should be based on the needs of the child rather than the legal status of the child.
- For local authorities to focus on family networks and identifying these at an early stage.

3.7 The National Framework 2023 outlines the principles of which children, young people and their families should be supported, the enablers to ensure that the system is effective, and the outcomes that should be achieved so that children and young people are able to thrive. It also places an emphasis on the importance of the voices and views of children, young people and their families; and how imperative it is that their voice is at the heart of practice, ensuring that they have a say in respect of how they are supported.

3.8 Jahnine Davis was appointed by the Department for Education as the National Kinship Care Ambassador in October 2024. The role "advocates for kinship children and carers across government and works directly with local authorities to improve services". Jahnine has lived experience of Kinship Care and has over 20 years professional experience in children's rights and participation work. Jahnine is scheduled to visit Telford and Wrekin for the second time on the 27th November 2025 with colleagues from the Department for Education to hear about the development of our Local Offer and localised changes in response to the reform's agenda.

3.9 In October 2024, a Kinship Care Practice Guide as published to "support senior leaders and commissioners in local areas to commission and develop effective services to support kinship families." This followed a commitment outlined by the previous government in "Stable Homes, Built on Love" to produce Practice Guides, which set out the best evidenced approaches for achieving the outcomes set within the Children's Social Care National Framework.

3.10 Kinship care (sometimes known as family and friends care) is the most prevalent form of alternative care for children worldwide. Kinship carers play a unique role in enabling children to remain with people they know and trust if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents and if being cared for by Kinship carers is considered as being within their best interests. These children may or may not be cared for by the Local Authority or even known to the local authority, although

through the local offer it is anticipated that more Kinship carers and the children they care for will be reached.

- 3.11 While many children in kinship care arrangements thrive, they can often face additional challenges due to the circumstances and experiences which led to them to their being in kinship care. Many carers both want and need additional support to enable them to meet the needs of the children they care for.
- 3.12 The Local Authority and wider agencies should be flexible in their approach to enable kinship carers to access the right support at the right time, without the need for them to become formally approved foster carers and without the child/young person needing to become cared for by the Local Authority.
- 3.13 Kinship carers should be able to access information, advice and training, alongside financial and peer support, that equips them to meet the needs of children and young people and provide them with a stable and loving home.
- 3.14 As part of the reforms to Children's Social Care, every Local Authority has a duty to co-produce a Local Offer for Kinship Carers in their local area. It is clearly set out within the National Policy Guidance, that the Local Offer should be co-produced by kinship carers, the children they care for and by partner agencies.
- 3.15 This is underpinned by Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, October 2024 (previously known as the Family and Friends Care Statutory Guidance) and Outcome 2 of the National Social Care Framework – 'children and young people are supported via their family networks'. The Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance sits alongside a range of existing legislation and provides a framework for Local Authorities and partner agencies to assess and provide kinship support.
- 3.16 The Local Offer should outline the local authority's commitment to provide specific services for kinship carers and the children and young people they care for. It is a requirement for the Local Offer to be a single source of accessible information about the support available to kinship families in the area.
- 3.17 The Local Offer should be developed in collaboration with local partners. It should be widely available, including publication on the local authority website and widely and effectively communicated in various accessible formats.
- 3.18 The Local Offer should be developed in response to local context and need, within the framework of the law and statutory guidance which details what the Local Offer should cover.

4.0 Local Context

- 4.1 When children cannot live with their birth parents, Telford and Wrekin Council are committed to ensuring that children can remain with wider family members, or connected networks, wherever this is possible. This offers some children and young people the best chance of permanence and stability and enables them to maintain strong links with their birth parents where this is considered safe and within their best interests. It is important that family and connected networks continue to be explored for cared for children throughout their childhood, in line with their personal circumstances and best interests.
- 4.2 Telford and Wrekin Council recognise that to support Kinship Carers to offer appropriate care to children, who cannot live with their parents, they need access to a range of high-quality support services, at universal, targeted and specialist levels. These should be aimed at improving outcomes for children who cannot live with their birth parents and where it is considered that being cared for by Kinship carers is within their best interests.
- 4.3 It is an underlying principle of the Children Act (1989) that children should be enabled to live within their family unless this is not consistent with their welfare. This principle underlies the work of Telford and Wrekin Children's services.
- 4.4 Prior to the Children's Social Care reforms, we had already launched and rolled out our local Family First Strategy, with the underpinning values and premise that children and young people have a right to remain within their birth family wherever it is safe for them to do so. When children and young people are separated from their birth families', every effort should be made to maintain relationships and connections where this is within the child/young person's best interests.
- 4.5 As part of the implementation of the strategy, we have held multiple training events, practice focussed sessions and practice evaluation activity. This has provided us with the opportunity to examine our current approaches to supporting kinship caring arrangements and the connections of young people with people who matter to them if this is within their best interests.
- 4.6 We have enlisted the support of the Practice Lead and Trustee of the National Charity 'Kinship' and National Ambassador Jahnine Davis as critical friends to support our journey of developing the Telford and Wrekin Kinship Local Offer.
- 4.7 We hold firm values in relation to meaningful co-production alongside people who we support and have been recognised by 'Kinship' as achieving best practice in relation to our approach to understand the needs of kinship carers and form a Kinship Local Offer that reflects these needs.

- 4.8 Our Kinship Local Offer development has been firmly grounded by research and best practice principles and has been co-designed by partner agencies.
- 4.9 The methodology paper (Appendix 1) evidences the formulation of our Kinship Local Offer development. This includes how we have engaged with key stake holders including Kinship carers, children and young people cared for by Kinship carers, cross directorate engagement, and engagement with the partnership including the voluntary sector. It also evidences the research underpinning the development of the Local Offer.
- 4.10 In terms of governance, the Director of Children's Services has been nominated to ensure that the Local Offer meets statutory requirements and is responsive to the needs of Kinship children and their carers.
- 4.11 We have built live web pages to enable us to continually update our offer with new additions, such as training, events, and community initiatives. The web pages provide an easily accessible link to understand kinship care and the Kinship Local Offer for partner agencies and families in our borough.
- 4.12 Alongside the launch of the Kinship Local Offer, there will be facilitated training and learning opportunities for partners which have been co-produced with kinship carers.
- 4.13 Based on feedback from carers, we have produced leaflets for carers and young people in respect of the support offer and assessment process for Special Guardian and Connected Carers.
- 4.14 We already have existing peer support forums which we are looking to expand for carers and young people. We have also developed a peer support advocacy offer. Both of which have been co-designed by Kinship carers and our Voice of the child apprentices.
- 4.15 We have an existing training offer, However, following feedback shared by kinship carers, this is being expanded to cover additional topics which are experienced by kinship carers that they feel would benefit our training offer. This has included an expansion of our family hubs offer in terms of wellbeing support for Kinship carers as well as ensuring the existing Family Hubs offer is accessible by Kinship carers.
- 4.16 We are recruiting for a Parent Worker to support birth parents with maintaining meaningful family time and to provide the bridge between kinship carers, the Local Authority and birth parents.

Kinship Local Offer

- 4.17 We acknowledge that family relationships can be challenging for kinship carers, and we have enhanced our Systemic and Family Group Decision Making offer to support the repair of relationships and maintain family links.
- 4.18 Based on the research, we understand that kinship carers can experience fatigue and burn out. As such we have implemented a kinship self-care offer.
- 4.19 We understand that kinship carers are often caring for children/young people who have experienced trauma, and that this can be multi-generational in nature. We have devised a therapeutic offer to support kinship carers and the children they care for.
- 4.20 There are mechanisms in place to monitor the impact of the Kinship Local Offer and gain feedback from carers which will then provide the basis for an annual review. We are working to improve data collection to ensure we understand the demographic of kinship carers in our borough, demonstrate impact of our Local Offer and any areas for further development which will enable us to adapt our services accordingly.
- 4.21 Work will remain ongoing to continue building our Kinship Local Offer for families in Telford and Wrekin in collaboration with all local authority directorates, as well as local businesses, charities, and organisations across the borough.
- 4.22 Every elected member and employee of this Council, along with our partner agencies has a duty to support children, young people and their families to the best of their ability. We are all responsible for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and outcomes for the children who are supported by services and forming a shared vision as to how this should be achieved.
- 4.23 The Kinship Local Offer will be dynamic and will be updated at least annually but more frequently during this transitional period for service delivery and service provision.

5.0 Summary of main proposals

- 5.1 The report presents the Telford and Wrekin Kinship Local Offer, attached at Appendix 1, for approval. The Kinship Local Offer is a guide to all the support available to kinship carers in Telford and Wrekin. The report outlines how the offer addresses the Council's statutory obligations to kinship carers and its commitment to keeping families together and providing timely, needs led support to kinship carers.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The alternative option is not to approve the Kinship Local Offer, however, this would result in non-compliance with the government's legislative and policy requirements including the statutory guidance on Kinship Care.

7.0 Key Risks

- 7.1 Not having an up-to-date Kinship Local Offer with all that is available to kinship carers, not supporting kinship carers and their children adequately could result in an increased need for statutory involvement which is contrary to the Right to Private Family Life.
- 7.2 Not adequately supporting children to remain within their birth family/with those who are important to them creating additional trauma with a life-long impact creating a need for greater service involvement.

8.0 Council Priorities

- 8.1 Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Much of the activity undertaken to deliver the kinship offer forms part of the core service that is funded by ongoing Children's Safeguarding and Family Support budgets. However, specific government grants, such as the social care prevention grant and family hubs grant have also been used to support the offer, for example to fund recruitment of a parent worker outline in paragraph 4.16 above.
- 9.2 An effective kinship offer, supporting children to remain with their family and friends, reduces the need for greater service involvement and so assists in controlling the costs of the service.

10.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 10.1 Kinship Care – Statutory Guidance October 2024 provides the framework for provision of support to kinship families and references the legislative framework of the Children Act 1989, Children and Families Act 2014, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the associated statutory guidance and related regulations. The primary duties under the Children Act 1989 are reflected in the guidance and support children to remain with those they trust, including duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area and the duty, more specifically, to accommodate in the most appropriate placement under s.22C(5). The Children Act 1989 reinforces the required safeguarding for children and reducing risk, highlighting that looked after children should be cared for within their family network wherever

possible. Safeguarding duties are to be read in conjunction with Working Together to Safeguard Children – Statutory Guidance December 2023.

11.0 Ward Implications

11.1 All.

12.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

12.1 For Children where it is considered within their best interests to remain in their birth family/with connected people often achieve an increased sense of belonging, identity and improved outcomes than children/young people who are cared for by alternative caring arrangements.

12.2 Kinship carers are often older and will require support to maintain the kinship arrangement as the child/young person reaches adulthood.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1 In formulating the Local Kinship Offer, legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 must be complied with. The Equality Act 2010 puts a duty on public authorities, in exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those persons who do not share it, as well as foster good relations between those persons. Any potential barriers to accessing services should be considered and mitigated where appropriate and able. This is important because of the differences in the support available depending on the type of kinship arrangement.

13.2 The guidance states: *'When developing their local offer, local authorities are required to co-produce this with Kinship carers, young people and partners, with a specific emphasis on the needs of cultural diverse communities', which has been addressed within both the methodology paper and Kinship Local Offer. This area will require further development.*

13.3 The Kinship Local Offer will help to alleviate barriers for groups with protected characteristics by simplifying the routes to accessing information and support, and providing a single, seamless pathway to seeing help which adapts to the needs of kinship children and families through offering a number of forms of communication and engagement.

14.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 14.1 The Kinship Local Offer collates existing support to kinship carers into a single, simplified document. As a result, it has no direct carbon impact.
- 14.2 Clarity and ease in accessing and understanding the support available has the potential to increase resilience to climate change.

15.0 Appendices

A Kinship Local Offer

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	16.09.25	22.09.25	DK
Legal	16.09.25	22.09.25	ON
Finance	16.09.25	02.10.25	TD



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

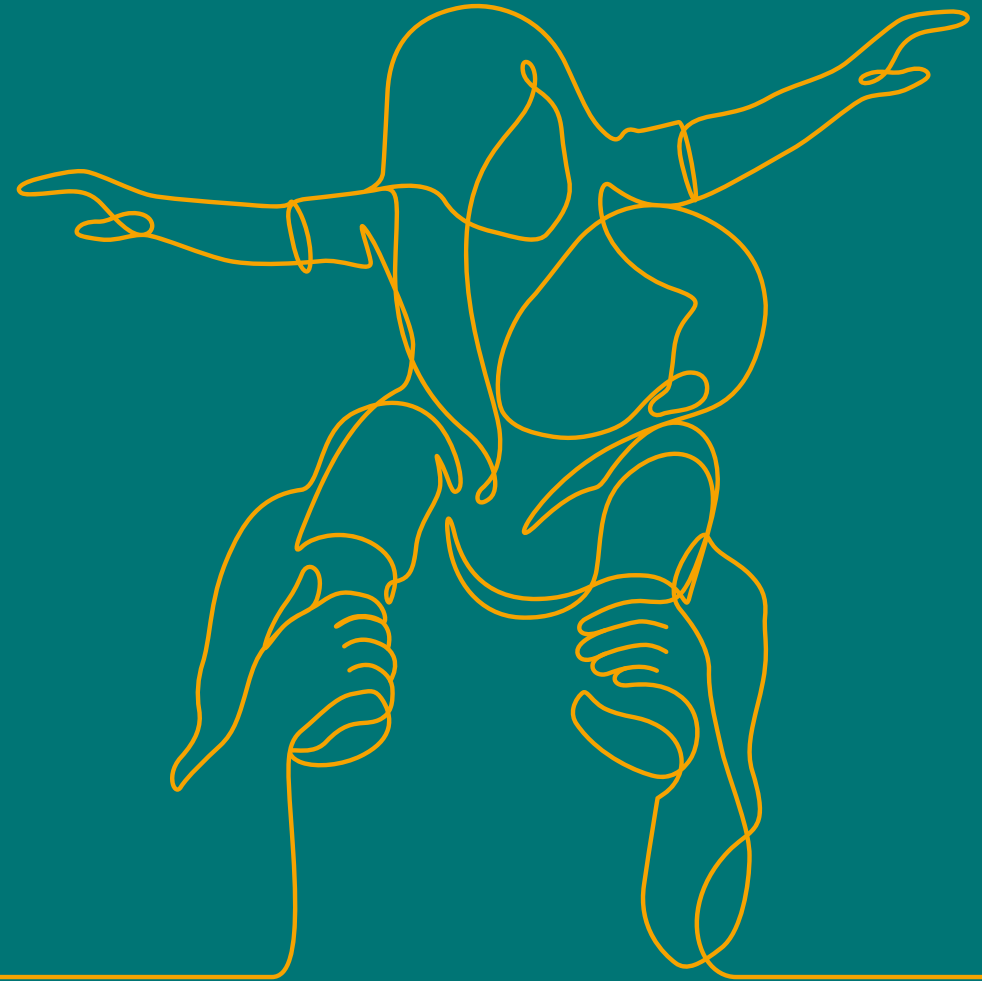
Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough



kinship telford

Kinship local offer

October 2025



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Foreword

Following recent social care reforms and the publication of statutory guidance for local authorities, all local authorities are now required to clearly outline the support available for kinship carers in their area.

The Telford and Wrekin Kinship local offer sets out the services and support available to children and young people, parents, and kinship carers. This marks the beginning of our journey to strengthen and expand the support we provide. We are committed to developing a high-quality offer through a staged approach, with short, medium, and long-term goals. As our work progresses, we will remain flexible and responsive, adapting our offer to ensure it continues to meet the needs of families effectively.

We recognise that kinship care can provide children and young people with lifelong benefits, offering stability and continuity within their family network. However, we also understand that it can be challenging, particularly when supporting children who have experienced trauma or navigating complex family relationships. Our aim is to ensure that kinship carers receive the right support at the right time, enabling them to provide the best possible care. We know that everyone needs help sometimes, and we are committed to making sure our support is accessible, meaningful, and positively experienced, even in difficult circumstances. Support should be provided at the earliest stage by the right person at the right time who can form a trusted and meaningful relationship with the carer and the child/young person.

Practitioners seek to understand family dynamics and relational patterns, promoting sustainable change while encouraging families to identify and build on their own capabilities. They will seek to understand the impact of trauma and family history which is embedded through training programmes.

Strong relationships should be built on empathy, mutual respect, and a genuine positive regard for families. This approach helps ensure that families feel heard, valued, and empowered. It is essential that these interactions are sensitive to each family's ethnicity, beliefs, and cultural identity. Underpinning this is the core principle that, wherever it is safe, children are best cared for within their birth families and wider support networks.

We are grateful to all our partners and contributors for their dedication to supporting kinship carers. Their insights, collaboration, and challenge have shaped this local offer and strengthened our understanding of the needs of kinship families.



Cllr Shirley Reynolds

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning, Employment and Skills



Jo Britton

Executive Director, Children and Family Services



Darren Knibbs

Director, Children's Safeguarding and Family Support

Introduction

Responsibility

The local authority should identify a senior manager who holds overall responsibility for the Kinship local offer, ensuring it meets statutory requirements and is responsive to the identified needs of kinship carers. The Director of Children's Safeguarding and Family Support as well as senior managers provide leadership to ensure that all staff:

- understand the purpose and content of the Kinship local offer;
- receive appropriate training;
- promote awareness among local partners of their responsibilities to children in kinship arrangements; and
- ensure the Kinship local offer is well-publicised so that prospective kinship carers are informed and know how to access further support from relevant teams and agencies.

Partners

In order for support to be successful this is a partnership approach with key partner agencies coming together to support kinship carers which includes, Education and Skills, Health, Police, Housing, Interfaith Council and voluntary services. We would like to thank our partners for their continued commitment and support to the implementation of this local offer and their passion for supporting kinship carers and the children they look after. We have also consulted with practitioners from various areas of Children's Services who support children and young people.

Our local offer has been informed by up to date and relevant research from organisations who support carers and birth parents including Foundations, Kinship (charity) and Pause.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Paul Shuttleworth and Michelle Hall for their invaluable contribution at the Therapeutic Working Group. Their partnership with Kinship in developing life story work for children and their carers/network has provided us with deep insight and practical guidance. Their session was instrumental in enhancing our understanding of how to support kinship families through meaningful life story work.

We would also like to thank Anam Raja for providing us with valuable insight based on her research with Kinship into the unique challenges faced by kinship carers from culturally diverse communities.

In addition, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Kinship, particularly Tim Fisher, Practice Lead, and Janet Kay, Kinship Carer and Trustee. Their support has been instrumental throughout the development of our Kinship local offer, acting as critical friends and providing constructive feedback and guidance.

Lastly, our gratitude goes out to Jahnine Davies, the National Kinship Care Ambassador, for her valuable contributions and challenge as well as future support. This collaborative relationship will continue, helping us remain accountable and ensuring we understand the lived experience and impact of our offer.

Coproduction

We would like to thank all kinship carers who have provided their time, expertise and ideas to aid the completion of our local offer. Their experiences are vital for us to understand and shape services that support kinship carers. We are committed to meaningful co-production, ensuring that the voices and experiences of kinship carers are heard, listened to and influence our service design and delivery. We are here to build bridges between practitioners, families, carers and children and young people to provide the best possible support we can.

We will also communicate with kinship carers where we are unable to act upon views and provide reasons for this which may be influenced by available resources or wider issues such as legislation. This is the start of our continued co-production journey alongside kinship carers.

To aid our journey we have been fortunate to have the support of our Voice of the Child Apprentices. They offer instrumental support to ensure that children and young people have access to information to help them understand their journey.

Review and consultation

The Kinship local offer will be reviewed with partners and kinship families after six months and then again after one year.

We have consulted with kinship carers caring for children in different types of kinship arrangements in order to inform our offer.

If you have feedback or are unhappy with the particular service you have received, we are keen to hear from you. You can find information about how to share feedback or make a complaint on our [complaints webpage](#).

Children/young people and adults can also provide feedback electronically and we will have a feedback section on our webpage where you can do this.

We also plan to send a feedback form annually via post for any families that do not wish to provide feedback electronically.

Values and principles

We are committed to ensuring that children remain within their family/wider relational network whenever it is safe and within their best interests. To support this, we offer tailored advice, guidance, and training to help families provide stable, nurturing care. This commitment is rooted in the principles of the [Family First permanence strategy](#) and the [Children's Services practice framework](#) which emphasise that every child deserves a safe, loving, and secure home, we are committed as a local authority to supporting children, young people and their parents/care givers to have the best chance to thrive.

To achieve this, we work to identify individuals who can either support the child to remain with their birth parents or provide care when that is not possible if this is within the child/young person's best interests. Our approach is based on the belief that every child deserves a stable and loving home and that a sense of belonging is essential to a child's wellbeing, identity, and resilience.

We aim to identify family members and support networks as early as possible. This may happen through the Family Group Decision Making process which we refer in Telford to as circle of support meetings, or via the child's allocated social worker. Building positive relationships is central to our practice, and we strive to demonstrate empathy, compassion, and respect in all interactions.

We also recognise and value cultural identity and heritage. Tools such as genograms help us map family relationships, values, and histories, allowing us to honour family stories and identify support systems often during times of crisis. Practitioners are expected to work in

a culturally competent and inclusive way, respecting the diverse backgrounds of the families we support.

Our work is guided by a strengths-based approach, which celebrates the progress and achievements of families. Support is delivered collaboratively, with shared accountability. Families are empowered to co-create solutions and lead their own change, supported by professionals who act as facilitators of transformation.

We also embed systemic practice, which seeks to understand family needs through the lens of relationships and broader social systems. This approach promotes sustainable change by encouraging families to take ownership of their solutions, while recognising the impact of trauma and intergenerational patterns.

Permanence

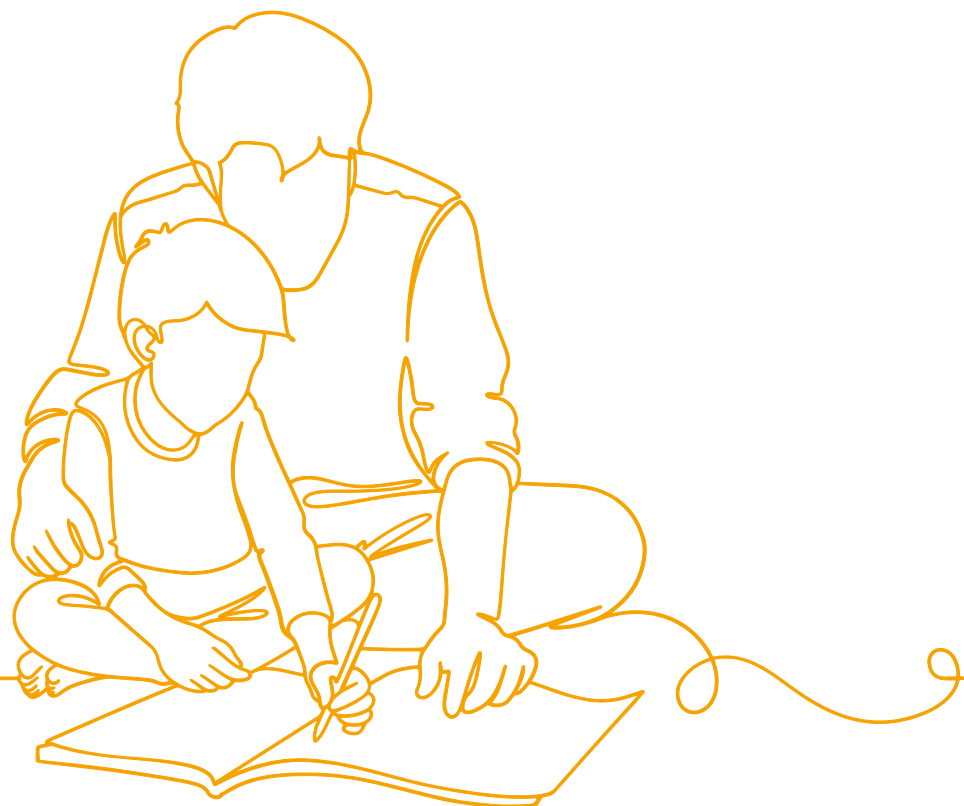
For most children who are cared for by the local authority, permanence is achieved through a successful return to their birth family/relational network, where it has been possible to address the reasons which led to the child becoming looked after, support will be provided for this to be able to happen.

If a child/young person is cared for by an alternative carer we seek to ensure that they see members of their relational network who are important to them if this is in their best interests, and these connections are supported to be the best they can be. We will also revisit these connections to see if family time or caring arrangements can change over time in line with the child/young person's best interests and individual circumstances.

Planning starts early and is reviewed regularly to avoid any drift and delay. We aim to secure legal, emotional, and relational permanence, ensuring children feel safe, stable, and that they belong.

We acknowledge that the more people who can support a child or young person, the better their outcomes will be. The child's voice, wishes, and feelings are central to all decisions made. We actively promote lifelong links with birth families, siblings, and significant others, and support family involvement in life story work to strengthen identity and belonging, where this is in the best interests of the child.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) play a key role in monitoring care plans, preventing drift, and ensuring children understand their rights and options. They support legal proceedings and ensure advocacy is available when needed.



What is kinship care?

Kinship care is when children are cared for by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them, for a variety of reasons, and in different arrangements. This could be for a short period of time while family members have support to make changes or over a longer-term arrangement.

Sometimes the arrangement is made in partnership with the extended family network and the local authority but more often it is arranged within the family network only. Sometimes these arrangements are identified through a circle of support meeting (Family Group Decision Making forums FGDM).

Many people become kinship carers, and can include grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. They could also be godparents, step-grandparents, or other adults who have a relationship with or connection to the child. These carers are often referred to as 'kinship carers', 'family and friend's carers' or 'connected persons'.

Arrangement types:

- Arrangements made within the family/wider relational network only - the length of the arrangement is decided by the person with parental responsibility (PR) or someone who has taken out a legal order to care for the child.
- **Private fostering** – an arrangement made by the family about the care of a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability), who is cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative and with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. The local authority must be informed of this

arrangement so that they can assess whether it is a safe and suitable arrangement they are required to notify the Kinship Team at the earliest opportunity. Carers who are caring for children within these circumstances are required to advise the local authority of these arrangements.

- **Child Arrangement Order** (previously known as a Residence Order) – this is a legal order granted by the court which decides where the child will live and who they spend time with.
- **Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** – a legal order granted by the court that gives a person parental responsibility for a child or young person, allowing them to care for and make decisions about the child/young person's upbringing until they turn 18.
- **Kinship foster carer** – arrangements made for children/young people cared for by the local authority where the child is placed by the local authority, and they have approved the carer who is a relative or friend of the family. The child remains cared for unless a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship order is made. Where the child remains cared for by the local authority, the carer remains a kinship foster carer.

Private fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child/young person is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more. These carers are usually extended family members or family friends. You cannot be a private foster carer if you are a close relative, which the Children Act 1989 defines as a grandparent, aunt, uncle,

sibling, or half-sibling (including those related by marriage or civil partnership).

A child is considered to be in a private fostering arrangement if they are:

- under 16 years old (or under 18 if they have a disability); and
- not in the care of the local authority.

The arrangement is made between the child's parent and the private foster carer, but the local authority must be notified. While carers make everyday decisions for the child, legal responsibility remains with the parents. The local authority will carry out an assessment of the private foster carer's ability to meet the needs of the child/young person they are caring for, and details about the assessment process are available in our leaflets on the Kinship Telford webpage.

You do not need formal approval to be a private foster carer, but a social worker will check:

- whether the carer or anyone in the household has a criminal record (via a DBS check);
- the suitability of the accommodation;
- who else lives in the home;
- plans for the child to spend time with their parents;
- school arrangements; and
- health care provisions.

Telford and Wrekin Children's Services must be notified at least six weeks before a private fostering arrangement begins, or immediately if the arrangement is due to start within a six-week period.

Kinship foster care

Kinship foster care, also known as family and friends foster care, is when a child is placed with a relative or close family friend who has been assessed and approved as a foster carer. In these circumstances, the child is cared for by the local authority's Children's Services, who share parental responsibility with the child's birth parents. Kinship foster carers do not have parental responsibility themselves, but they provide the child's day-to-day care.

To become a kinship foster carer, you will be assessed by a social worker to ensure you are suitable to care for the child. More details about the assessment process are available in our leaflets on the Kinship Telford webpage. Once the assessment is complete, the social worker will present their recommendations to the local authority's Fostering Panel, which makes the final decision. If possible, the assessment is completed before the child moves in. The process also includes identifying any training, advice, or support the carer may need now or in the future.

In urgent situations, the local authority can grant temporary approval under Regulation 24, allowing the child to be placed with the carer for up to 16 weeks while the full assessment is completed which will include various checks and focussed assessment sessions throughout this period. This can be extended by up to eight additional weeks, but no longer.

If the assessment cannot be completed in time, children's services may place the child with another carer temporarily.

Once approved, kinship foster carers are expected to continue engaging in training and development to support their ability to meet the child's needs over time.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is a legal decision made by the court that gives a special guardian extended parental responsibility for a child. While it limits the rights of the birth parents, it does not remove them entirely.

You can find more information about the [Adoption and special guardianship support fund \(ASGSF\)](#) on the UK Government website. [Telford & Wrekin Council's Special guardianship support policy](#) also provides local guidance and support options.

To become a special guardian, you must be over 18 and not the child's parent. You can apply individually or jointly with another person. You may apply without needing the court's permission if:

- you are the child's legal guardian;
- you are a relative or foster carer, and the child has lived with you for at least one year;
- the child has lived with you for at least three of the past five years;
- you have a Child Arrangements Order stating the child lives with you;
- you have the agreement of all individuals with parental responsibility; or

- the child is in local authority care, and the local authority agrees to your application.

If you do not meet these circumstances, you'll need to ask the court for permission to apply.

Form K assessment

A Form K assessment is completed where a kinship fostering arrangement is being explored or an SGO. It holds the child/young person at the centre and the assessment explores the strengths of the prospective kinship carer to meet the child/young person's needs. The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment help to make decisions about the child/young person's future care. Further details about the assessment process are available in our leaflets, which can be accessed via the Kinship Telford webpage.

Form K support plan

A Form K is a structured support plan created by the local authority outline the help available to special guardians and kinship carers. It is usually completed during or after the assessment process and ensures carers have the resources they need to care for the child safely. It also promotes transparency and prevents carers from feeling unsupported.

What does form K Support plan cover?

- **Financial support** – details of any allowances or payments
- **Practical support** – assistance with housing, transport, or childcare
- **Emotional support** – access to counselling or therapeutic

services

- **Training opportunities** – such as parenting courses or trauma-informed care
- **Family time arrangements** – support with managing contact with birth family
- **Review dates** – when the plan will be reviewed and updated

Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

A Child Arrangements Order (CAO) is a legal order given by a family court and usually lasts until the child is 18 years old.

If the order specifies that the child will live with someone other than their parent, that person is granted parental responsibility. You share parental responsibility with the child's parents but can make day-to-day decisions without parental involvement. However, for any major decisions about the child must involve the parents.

You can apply for a Child Arrangements Order if you are:

- the child's grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister (including by marriage or civil partnership), half-brother or half-sister, or stepparent, and they have lived with you for more than one year;
- the child's appointed guardian following the death of a parent or special guardian;
- a kinship foster carer, and the child has lived with you for more than one year, or you have consent from everyone who has parental responsibility; or

- a private foster carer and the child has lived with you for at least three years.

You can also apply for Child Arrangements Order if you have consent from:

- everyone else who holds parental responsibility;
- Children's Services, if the child is in their care; or
- anyone who already has a residence order or child arrangements order for the child.

You must be 18 or over to apply for a Child Arrangements Order and you cannot normally apply for a child aged 16 and over. If you don't meet the criteria listed, you can still apply to the family court for permission to apply. You can apply for a Child Arrangements Order online or get help from a solicitor and it is recommended that you get legal advice and support to understand all your options before applying.

Details about this process are available in our leaflets, which can be accessed via the Kinship Telford webpage.

Informal kinship care

An informal kinship carer is a relative or friend who looks after a child without the involvement of the local authority. The arrangement is made privately between the parent(s) and the carer.

Advice and guidance

Kinship care can pose challenges on occasions, and it is important that any support is identified and provided as early as possible. Families may need advice and support to decide when thinking about who is best placed to care for a child/young person and the options available to them. Advice can be accessed from a variety of sources including the Family Rights Group and Kinship.

Family Connect

Family Connect is a single point of contact or 'front door' for Telford and Wrekin Children and Families Services. Family Connect is a free, confidential service providing, impartial advice, information, guidance and support on a full range of children's services available across the borough including childcare, activities, school admissions and finance.

Family Hubs

Family Help is an early support service designed for families who may be experiencing challenges but do not require intensive intervention. Its aim is to enable families to utilise family and community assets. They can support with family relationships, building resilience, and improve outcomes for children and young people by addressing any issues before they escalate. In Telford and Wrekin, Family Help is delivered through Family Hubs which are welcoming community spaces that offer a wide range of support services tailored to family needs. Families benefit from improved confidence, stronger relationships within the family and easier access to coordinated support, reducing stress and isolation.

Family Hubs provide:

- information, advice, and guidance on everyday parenting challenges;
- support with infant feeding, mental health, and healthy lifestyles;
- drop-in sessions and workshops on topics such as behaviour, routines, and emotional wellbeing; and
- connections to local services and professionals, helping families access the right help at the right time.

Support can be accessed in several ways:

- Walking into a Family Hub during opening hours
- Calling the Family Hub team on **01952 385385**
- Visiting online via the [Telford Family Hubs website](#)
- Referral by a professional, such as a teacher, health visitor, or social worker

When multiple services are involved, a lead professional may be assigned to coordinate support. This person helps complete an early help assessment, acts as the main point of contact for the family, ensures services are working together effectively, and can refer the family to Family Hubs or other relevant services.

SEND local offer

The [SEND local offer](#) is designed to bring together essential information across education, health, and social care to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015), every local authority is required to publish a local offer that outlines the services and support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in one accessible place.

The SEND local offer provides:

- guidance on how schools and educational settings support children with SEND, including access to specialist services and personalised learning plans;
- information on physical and mental health services, such as therapies and assessments;
- support for key life transitions, including moving into further education, employment, and independent living; and
- assistance with transport arrangements for eligible children and young people.

Citizens Advice

[Citizens Advice](#) is a UK-based charitable organisation that provides free, confidential, and impartial advice to help people resolve a wide range of issues. This includes:

- legal problems;
- debt and money management;
- consumer rights;
- housing;
- employment; and
- benefits and welfare.

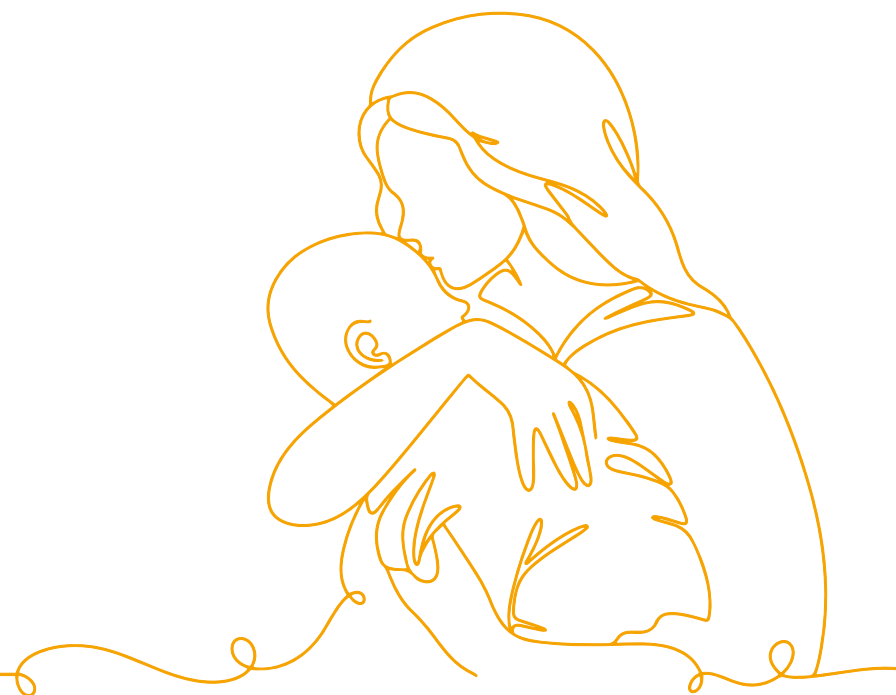
The Traveller Movement

The [Traveller Movement](#) is a UK-wide civil society organisation that advocates for and supports Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) communities. Their work focuses on promoting equality, challenging discrimination, and improving access to services for GRT individuals and families.

The organisation offers a wide range of support, including:

- health and wellbeing: resources and guidance on topics such as mental health, COVID-19, and general wellbeing;
- family support: practical advice on parenting, education, and child development;
- LGBTQ+ inclusion: tailored resources and support for LGBTQ+ members of the GRT community; and
- youth programmes: initiatives aimed at improving access to education and employment opportunities for young people.

Support is available nationally through phone and Skype consultations, face-to-face appointments, and online resources. The Traveller Movement also works in partnership with other charities and legal centres to ensure comprehensive support is accessible to those who need it.



Training

Kinship carers have told us they would like specific kinship training to meet unique circumstances. We have a range of bespoke training, courses and workshops for kinship carers including:

- supporting and facilitating family time arrangements;
- understanding life story support and therapeutic needs;
- understanding your role in safeguarding;
- understanding the impact of domestic abuse on adults and children;
- understanding the impact of substance misuse on adults and children;
- understanding exploitation; and
- kinship arrangement training (assessment support and legal orders) which includes:
 - the nature and impact of the various court orders and care arrangements;
 - the assessment process;
 - the team around the child; and
 - Form K support plan.

A training package is currently under development and further training will be informed by feedback received.

Fostering

[Telford and Wrekin Fostering Service](#) offers a comprehensive training programme for all carers.

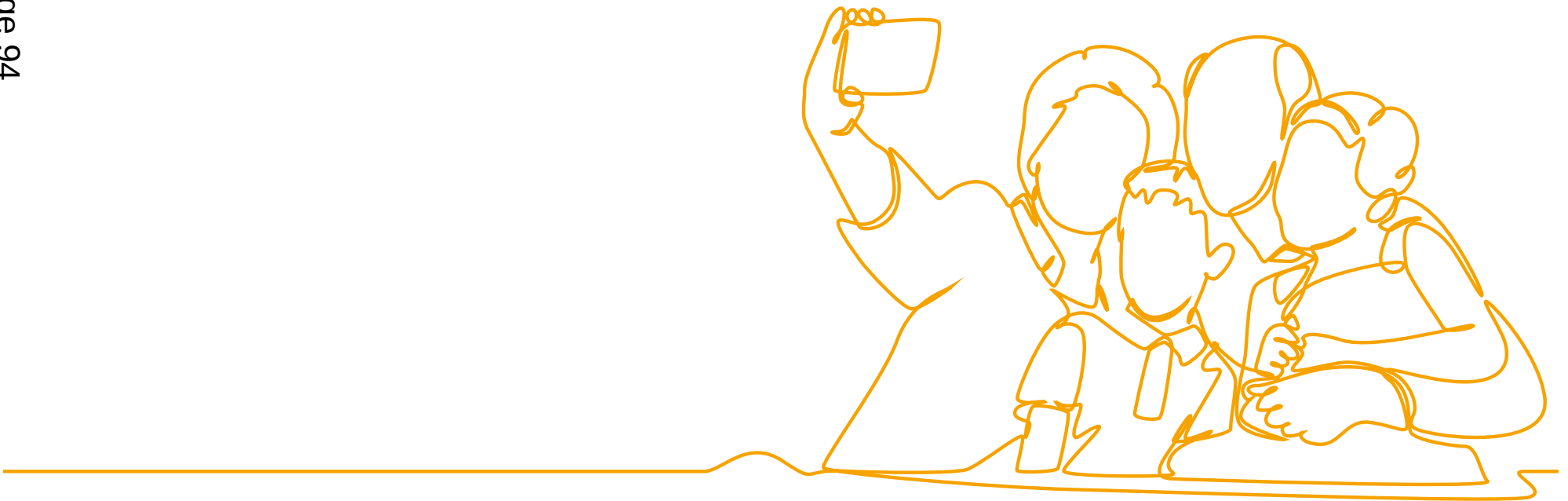
OLLIE is a regional training platform designed to support professionals and carers involved in safeguarding and children's services across the West Midlands. OLLIE offers a range of accessible, high-quality learning modules that can make a real difference. By engaging with OLLIE, carers can build their confidence, strengthen their caregiving skills, and feel more empowered in their role. For any issues with logging in or if there is a certain course that you would like to do, and cannot see on OLLIE, please email or call the Kinship Team.

Kinship (charity)

[Kinship](#) offers various free training and workshops designed to empower kinship carers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to navigate their journey. These sessions are available online and in-person. Some of the key training topics includes:

- understanding different types of kinship care and legal arrangements;
- managing emotional challenges and trauma-informed parenting;
- financial support and benefits guidance;

- life story work to support children's identity and emotional wellbeing;
- working effectively with local authority children's services;
- online safety and managing challenging behaviour; and
- supporting children in education and navigating the school system.



Support for carers

Family Hubs

As part of our self-care offer for kinship carers, The Family Hubs service will be offering self-care wellbeing sessions three times per year. Sessions will centre around community and peer support as well as mindfulness and wellbeing. These sessions will give carers the opportunity to receive support and guidance on how to manage stress and how to incorporate self-care. This is a new offer and as such the feedback from carers who have attended the sessions will inform the future development.

Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is available for children 11 years and under. It can help pay for care outside of school hours, such as breakfast clubs or after-school clubs. It can also be used to pay for childminders and nurseries for children who are not of school age. People cannot claim Tax-Free Childcare if they are also claiming Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers.

Peer support

Peer support is valuable and to walk alongside someone who has been part of a similar journey is central to meaningful support. We are fortunate that a number of our carers wish to become peer supporters and advocates and we are seeking relevant training and development for carers to be able to fulfil these roles.

[Kinship](#) offers a range of local and online support groups designed to help kinship carers connect, share experiences, and access practical and emotional support. [Telford Kinship Carers](#) is a local

support group based in Telford which is led by kinship carers and is open to all kinship carers aged 18 and over in the Telford area. This group meets monthly and can be contacted via email on telfordkinship@gmail.com for any questions or if you would like to join.

[Someone Like Me](#) is a free service where you can speak to a specially trained kinship carer volunteer on the phone. Whether you have just started your journey or have been looking after a child/young person for a while and are going through a difficult patch, you can use the service to talk to a trained volunteer about how you are feeling. Any kinship carer in England and Wales can register by completing the [registration form](#) on the Kinship website which aims to match you with another kinship carer within 10 working days. Once you're matched, a convenient time to have your first call will be arranged between Monday and Friday.

The Telford and Wrekin Kinship support team also facilitates a local coffee morning for all kinship carers on a bi-monthly basis. Any carer interested in joining this, can contact the Kinship Team via email or telephone.

Support Home-Start Telford and Wrekin

[Home-Start Telford and Wrekin](#) is a UK charity dedicated to offering compassionate and confidential support to families with young children, particularly during difficult times. Their approach centres around trained volunteers who visit families at home, providing emotional and practical assistance.

For kinship families, Home-Start understands the specific challenges faced, such as financial pressure, emotional strain, and limited formal support. Through their Families Together programme, they offer targeted support including:

- advocacy and training for carers;
- financial assessments and help with accessing benefits;
- peer mentoring and support groups to reduce isolation;
- confidence-building activities for children; and
- family outings to encourage bonding and create positive shared experiences.

Additionally, Home-Start runs a free 11-week course called Something More, designed to boost confidence, self-esteem, and emotional wellbeing in a warm, supportive group setting. A free crèche is available, so your little ones are cared for while you participate. To book a place or if you have a question, you can email Home-Start Telford and Wrekin on info@homestarttandw.org.uk or call on **07551 205821**.

Telford Online

Telford & Wrekin Council, with the help of our fantastic digital champion volunteers and workplace volunteers, offers free digital drop-in sessions for all residents. Whether you need help using your device, sending emails, using WhatsApp, accessing council services, or shopping online, we're here to support you.

Drop-in sessions take place:

Wednesdays, 10am to midday at Southwater Library, Southwater Square, Telford Town Centre, TF3 4JG

Thursdays, 1.30 to 3.30pm at Wellington Library, Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre, Larkin Way, Wellington, TF1 1LX

In addition, through our Library **iPad Lending Scheme**, you can borrow an iPad for up to four weeks to get online and build your digital confidence. Devices are available from Southwater, Wellington, or Newport Libraries.

Please bring photo ID when borrowing a device.

Digital support sessions

If you're aged 50 or over, Forum 50+ offers friendly, informal digital support sessions. Experienced volunteers are on hand to help you learn how to use a computer and the internet.

Sessions run weekly:

Mondays, 10.30am to 12.30pm at Hartshorne Court, Burton Street, Dawley, TF4 2BY

Wednesdays, 11am to 1pm at Butter Cross Court, Stafford Street, Newport, TF10 7UD

In addition, Learn Telford offers a range of digital skills courses for adults aged 19 and over. To find out more, call 01952 382888 or visit: www.learntelford.ac.uk

Tech Made Friendly

Tech Made Friendly is a six-session programme designed to help adults aged 18 and over in Telford and Wrekin build confidence using digital devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops by offering free support. Sessions will be delivered by AbilityNet and are friendly, informal, and tailored to beginners or those looking to improve their digital skills. These sessions are delivered across multiple locations, and each session is held for 1.5 hours. To find out more please visit: [Telford & Wrekin Council Digital face to face support and learning](#). Please ensure you complete the [Tech Made Friendly booking form](#) to reserve a place on these sessions. Alternatively, you can call us on **01952 380000** to book your place.

Live Well Telford

Live Well Telford is an online community directory provided by Telford & Wrekin Council. It is a valuable resource for kinship families, offering a central hub to access a wide range of local services and practical information. It helps kinship carers find local support groups and services that provide emotional support, respite care, and wellbeing advice.

Telford and Wrekin CVS

All Age Carers Centre

Telford & Wrekin All Age Carers Centre is an all-age service. They can provide a range of high-quality support for carers including information, wellbeing support groups, social respite activities and access to grants and training. The Telford All Age Carers Centre provides confidential free advice which you can access by calling **01952 240209** or emailing admin@telfordcarers.org.uk. They also offer support for young carers (under 18) and for inbetweeners (18 –

25) including age-appropriate activities and help with balancing care responsibilities with education and social life.

Wellbeing Madeley Community Café

The Wellbeing Madeley Community Café, delivered by Telford and Wrekin CVS in partnership with local businesses, volunteers, and wellbeing organisations, is a vibrant community hub located on Madeley High Street. The café provides both preventative and responsive support to help individuals and families live well and safely in their community. It offers opportunities to build independence, access information and advice, and receive practical support with daily living.

Some key features include:

- training and employability programmes for those facing barriers to work;
- life skills training, such as cooking on a budget and safeguarding;
- a safe and inclusive space to reduce social isolation and offer free meals where needed; and
- intergenerational activities that bring together community members.

All Age Autism Hub

The All Age Autism Hub delivered by Telford and Wrekin CVS, provides support for individuals of all ages using a whole-family approach. The service is available to children and young people aged between 0–18 who have a formal autism diagnosis, as well as those who are currently awaiting assessment. In addition, adults are also supported pre and post diagnosis.

The Hub offers a range of support including advice, information, and signposting to relevant services. Families can also access group workshops designed to help them better understand autism and develop practical strategies for everyday life. In addition, the Hub facilitates peer support groups, creating opportunities for parents, carers, and young people to connect with others who share similar experiences.

The Hub manages the waitlist for the clinical provider, MPFT, meaning people can self-refer and be added to the waiting list without having to go to a GP surgery.

On the third Friday of each month, CVS hosts a well-attended drop-in session that brings together a range of organisations offering support and information held at Hazeldine House. Kinship families are warmly welcomed to attend, providing an opportunity to connect with services and ask questions in a supportive environment.

Telford Crisis Support

Telford Crisis Support offers a range of multi-bank services to support individuals and families facing financial hardship such as:

- **School Uniform Bank** – offers pre-loved school uniforms for children of all ages
- **Food Bank** – provides emergency food parcels to individuals and families facing financial hardship
- **Baby and Toddler Bank** – offers essential items for young children, including clothing, toiletries, and equipment

To apply for a food parcel you should call **01952 380400** to make an application and for general enquiries you should contact **01952 586646**, email admin@telfordcrisissupport.org.uk or visit <http://telfordcrisissupport.org.uk/>

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council commit themselves in a spirit of friendship and co-operation to work together as people of faith for a just and inclusive community within Telford and Wrekin. They help to keep the 'Unity' in community through building and maintaining conversation and co-operation between all faith and cultural groups.

They host a range of community events throughout the year which can be accessed through their webpage.

In addition, if you need emergency food support outside of regular food bank hours, the Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council can help. The operating hours are weekdays after 5pm and all weekends (including Bank Holidays).

Contact details:

Mobile: **07895 395226** and **07545 023519**

Website: <https://www.interfaithtelford.org>

Email: hello@InterfaithTelford.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Telford.interfaith.3>

Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

The Older Adult Pathway supports individuals, where a specialist needs-led approach to supporting emotional wellbeing, is required. The multi-disciplinary team is specialists working with older adults who are experiencing a range of mental health challenges. They can provide support, treatment and interventions for older adults.

Access Team

Access is a freephone service receiving mental health referrals for all the Trust's adult mental health services. The Access Team helps people get the right support, in the right place, at the right time. They can help you get support from a variety of services.

To contact the Access Team please see details below:

Telephone: **08081 964501**

Email: access.shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk

If you're already open to any mental health services at MPFT, please only contact Access during out-of-service hours.

If you're calling between the hours of 9am to 5pm, you will need to call the Admin Hub.

Shropshire Admin Hub (covering Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Ludlow, and Bridgnorth areas) – **03003 033426**

Telford Admin Hub – **03003 031601**



Support for birth parents

When it is in the best interests of the child or young person, the involvement of birth parents in their lives should be preserved. We understand that this can sometimes be challenging, and we're here to help. We're currently developing additional support for birth parents to make family time a positive experience for everyone involved if this is within the child/young person's best interests. We also aim to support and strengthen the relationships between kinship carers and birth parents.

To further develop the support for birth parents we are in the process of recruiting a Parent Worker who will help guide and support parents who do not have their children living with them. This may include accessing therapeutic support, a forum to discuss and to support them with maintaining family time arrangements.

We will be offering workshops specifically for parents focussing on the impact of domestic abuse on your child. The parent worker will develop peer support groups for birth parents in a similar position. They will also offer support in relation to strengthening family time, which could be in the form of a group programme.

The Parent Worker will help to enhance the parents' ability to have an increased role in the child/young person's life where possible. Birth parents will be supported to understand their journey, the journey of their child, and their hopes and aspirations for the future if this is considered as being in the child/young person's best interests.

A Parent Worker can be requested by birth parents directly, the kinship carer or a practitioner supporting the family, via the Kinship Team.

Pause

Pause is a national charity working with women who have had or are at risk of having their children removed from their care. [Pause and Listen](#) aims to provide a platform for women to share their stories and experiences through a podcast and they are often joined by professionals and advocates. These podcasts are co-produced by women who have completed the Pause programme which is a national initiative aimed at breaking cycles of repeat child removals and supporting women to rebuild their lives. [In a Mother's Mind](#) is the main podcast series by Pause covering topics such as kinship care, domestic abuse, maternal mental health and housing instability.

Calm Café

The Calm Café is a free, face-to-face support service for adults over 18 experiencing emotional distress or mental health challenges. It is for those feeling isolated, overwhelmed or in crisis seeking support outside of typical service hours. The calm café provides a safe, welcoming space where people can talk, connect with others, and access support from trained staff.

Calm cafes run throughout the week at various venues:

Monday – Outpost Oakengates TF2 6EP, 5 to 7.45pm

Tuesday – Donnington Community Hub TF2 7PR, 5 to 7.45pm

Wednesday – Hub on the Hill TF7 4HG, 5 to 7.45pm

Thursday – Meeting Point House TF3 4HS, 5 to 7.45pm

Support for children and young people

There is always someone who can help if support is needed and this may be a teacher, social worker or another trusted adult.

Young Person Kinship Forum

To ensure that young people in kinship arrangements have a safe and inclusive space, the Voice of the Child Apprentice Team is launching a Young Person Forum for children and young people aged 8 to 18 years old. The forum will offer a non-judgemental environment where young people can express their feelings, connect with others in similar situations, and help shape future activities. Forums will be guided by the interests and ideas of those that join and will be held at the Wellington Arts Centre which is accessible via car, train and bus. For more information about these forums please email yourvoicematters@telford.gov.uk

Next Chapter Mentors Programme

The Next Chapter Mentors Programme is a volunteer-led initiative offering one-to-one mentoring for care-experienced young people in Telford and Wrekin. The programme focuses on building trusted, consistent relationships between mentors and mentees, offering both emotional support and practical guidance.

Mentors help with:

- building confidence and self-esteem;
- developing life skills (e.g. budgeting, cooking, job applications);
- setting life and career goals; and
- exploring hobbies and community connections.

While the programme is primarily designed for care leavers, we welcome enquiries from young people in kinship caring arrangements too. Each case is considered individually to ensure the right support is in place. To find out more or check eligibility, please contact Tig Poole, Volunteer Co-ordinator, at tig.poole@telford.gov.uk

Leisure

Leisure activities can support with physical and emotional health as it can improve sleep and fitness as well as promoting positive mental health. Shared leisure such as tennis, ice skating and swimming can help build connections between families and creates opportunities for positive memories.

The Telford Loyalty Card (TLC) offers a range of benefits designed to make leisure activities more affordable and accessible. To find out if you qualify please visit the [Telford and Wrekin Leisure Services](#) webpage. You can apply online via the Telford and Wrekin Leisure website or in person at any council leisure centre. If you have questions or need help applying, please email mytlc@telford.gov.uk

All resident TLC card holders aged under 25 are entitled to free swimming, while those aged over 50 can enjoy swimming at a 50% discount. As part of the Council's 10 by 10 initiative, children aged 5 to 10 who are unable to swim 10 metres can access free swimming lessons. In addition, teenagers and over 60s can benefit from discounted health and fitness memberships, helping them stay active and healthy.

SEND-specific sessions:

- **Swimming** – includes junior SEND swimming lessons, family disability swim sessions, and inclusive public swimming
- **Ice skating** – all public and SEND sessions are wheelchair friendly
- **Skiing and tubing** – My Options sessions are available for children with disabilities, led by trained instructors
- **Soft play** – junior and senior SEND sessions are offered to suit different age groups
- **Gym access** – Aspirations gyms feature adaptable resistance equipment and wheelchair-accessible machines

Outdoor activities:

- **Adaptive bikes** are available for children and families with mobility needs
- **Adventure golf** includes wheelchair-accessible pathways
- **Ability play areas** are designed with accessible play panels, roundabouts, and swings
- **Nature trails** are signposted with wheelchair-friendly routes to ensure inclusive access

Webpage

The Kinship Telford webpage is designed to be an accessible and inclusive resource for kinship carers, children and young people, birth parents, extended family members, practitioners, and partner agencies.

To support diverse needs, there are plans for the webpage to have a read-aloud functionality that can be translated into multiple languages.

Hosted on the Telford & Wrekin Council website, the webpage provides direct links to related services such as SEND and Family Hubs, helping users navigate support pathways with ease. Visitors will find regularly updated information on upcoming events, including training sessions, coffee mornings, and wellbeing workshops.

A key section on the webpage will be the therapeutic offer, which outlines the different types of emotional and mental health support available, helping carers understand what support might be right for them and their family. There will be other useful information within the webpage including a glossary and helpful contacts.

Resources

On the webpage there will be a dedicated space for resources. We are currently developing comprehensive resource packs to support kinship families. These will be accessible both digitally via our webpage and in printed form available through the Kinship Team.

Each pack will include a copy of the Kinship local offer clearly outlining the support available as well as informative leaflets covering the different types of arrangements tailored for carers and birth parents. These clearly explain each arrangement, their roles, and the

support entitlements. Business cards for carers are currently in design which will include a QR code to the webpage and will be given out to partnering agencies and to carers. Details about other services such as Family Hubs and Virtual School will also be included in these packs to help families navigate wider support.

In addition, the Voice of the Child Apprentice Team is developing child-friendly versions of leaflets, ensuring that young people can also understand their situation and the support available to them.

Community

The webpage will also provide links for you to explore a range of newsletters that showcase what's happening locally and how you can get involved. The Community Newsletter and Healthy Telford Newsletter are excellent sources for updates and opportunities. Your local community centre is also a great place to find helpful information and take part in events. Social media noticeboards are another useful way to stay informed about activities and services in your area. Additionally, there is a Live Well Hub based in Madeley, with two more hubs launching soon. Staff at these hubs are available to guide you and help connect you with the support you may need.

Libraries

We're excited to share that following positive discussions with the Library Service, we will soon have a dedicated collection of books available in libraries across the borough specifically for kinship carers, children, and young people. These books have been carefully selected to support, inform, and inspire those involved in kinship arrangements.

Reading can be a powerful tool for personal growth, emotional wellbeing, and connection. For children and young people, stories can help them understand their experiences, build empathy, and feel less alone. For adults, books can offer practical advice, emotional support, and reassurance that others have walked similar paths.

To make these resources easy to find, each recommended book will feature a special sticker, and there will be clear signage in the libraries to highlight the kinship section. This initiative not only promotes the importance of reading but also helps raise awareness and visibility of kinship care within our community.



Therapeutic offer

We want to ensure that kinship carers have access to the right therapeutic support at the right time. Caring for children/young people who have experienced trauma can be challenging. It can lead to carer fatigue and the need for emotional support.

We understand that there is a role for formal therapy modalities, but informal therapeutically informed practice doesn't have to be a therapy, and this may suit some families more.

Consultation

As part of the journey through the kinship assessment process, carers will have the opportunity to access support from a Systemic Practitioner. This support is offered in the form of up to two consultation sessions, designed to help reflection and thinking through any aspects of the assessment. Initially this is available to families who are supported via Children's Services, or Family Hubs and can be accessed by discussing this with the allocated practitioner. These sessions will be confidential and tailored to the needs of the kinship carer, providing a safe space to explore thoughts, feelings, and challenges the kinship carer may be experiencing. Further support could be offered via a referral from the Kinship Team which could include:

- family therapy/systemic practice;
- therapeutic life story work;
- DDP informed practitioners;

- video interaction guidance; and

- nurturing attachments

Systemic Family Therapy

Systemic Family Therapy is a way of helping families understand and support each other better. It looks at how family members relate to one another and how these relationships affect everyone's wellbeing. Instead of focusing on one person's difficulties, it explores how the whole family works together and how small changes can make a big difference. It is a respectful and inclusive approach that values everyone's voice and helps families find their own solutions.

DDP-Informed Practice (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy)

DDP-informed practice helps children/young people and carers build stronger, more trusting relationships, especially when children have experienced early trauma or loss. It focuses on creating a safe, nurturing environment where they feel understood and connected. Practitioners use a warm and accepting approach to support emotional healing and strengthen bonds within the family.

Nurturing Attachments Training

Nurturing Attachments is a training programme designed to help carers understand how early experiences affect a child's behaviour and emotions. It offers practical tools and ideas to support children who may struggle with trust, relationships, or managing their feelings.

The training helps carers feel more confident and connected, and supports them in creating a calm, safe, and loving home.

Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

Video Interaction Guidance is a gentle and supportive way to help families strengthen their relationships. It involves filming short moments of everyday interactions, like playing, talking, or sharing a meal and then watching them back together with a trained guide. The focus is on spotting the positive things that are already happening, like emotional connection. It's a great way to boost confidence and help carers feel more connected to the children they care for.

Therapeutic Life Story Work

Therapeutic Life Story Work helps children understand their past and make sense of their life experiences. It's a gentle and creative process that uses drawings, timelines, photos, and conversations to explore a child's journey. With the support of a trained worker, children can build a clearer picture of who they are, where they've come from, and how they fit into their family story. This can help them feel more secure, valued, and connected to the people who care for them.

Telford & Wrekin Council is currently piloting a [Storyteller App](#) which helps children capture and share their life stories using digital tools. It allows them to express their feelings and experiences, collaborate with trusted adults like carers or social workers and communicate safely with people in their support network. This app allows children to feel empowered to take ownership of their story and be supported with their emotional wellbeing and the development of their identity.

We are piloting our therapeutic offer for a period of six months and a further offer based on feedback from kinship carers will be formulated.

Care leavers

A care leaver is defined as a young person who has been in the care of the local authority, and they are entitled to support as they transition into adulthood. Care leavers are able to access a wide range of therapeutic and emotional wellbeing support services to help them manage their mental health and wellbeing during their transition to adulthood. These services are designed to be accessible and responsive to the unique challenges faced by young people leaving care.

Among the key services available are IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), which provides structured talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). In addition, [Papyrus](#) is a national charity offering confidential support and resources for young people who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide or emotional distress. Care leavers can also access the Rees Foundation's [Ask Jan](#) service, which offers app-based emotional support and guidance, tailored to the needs of care-experienced individuals. These services can be accessed independently or with the support of a Personal Advisor (PA).

In addition, care leavers are entitled to use digital mental health tools such as the [Kooth](#) and [Hapi](#) app. Kooth is a free, anonymous online platform that provides access to qualified mental health practitioners through live chat, as well as a range of self-help resources including moderated discussion forums, goal-setting tools, and a personal journal. This service is available without the need for a referral and operates during evenings and weekends. The Hapi app offers a holistic approach to wellbeing, supporting care leavers in managing their mental, physical, and emotional health. It includes guided text and audio sessions, sleep support tools, and personalised wellbeing recommendations based on a short quiz. The app also features a supportive community space and can be used without registration, allowing care leavers to begin accessing support immediately.

Circle of support

Sometimes help is needed to strengthen relationships and ensure the best outcomes for the child/young person. Our Circle of Support offer (also known as a Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) meetings) brings together everyone important in the child's life to explore how best to support their care, wellbeing, and future. These meetings are a structured, inclusive way to make key decisions about a child's care, including where they should live, who can offer support, and how to rebuild or maintain important relationships. They are particularly helpful in identifying safe and sustainable family-based solutions, often preventing the need for more formal care arrangements.

What happens in a Circle of Support meeting?

1. **Preparation:** a trained coordinator/practitioner meets with family members and key individuals beforehand. They explain the process, gather views, and ensure everyone feels informed and included.
2. **The meeting:** the wider family and support network come together to:
 - share information and concerns;
 - explore the child's needs;
 - identify strengths and resources within the family; and
 - discuss possible care arrangements and support options.

3. **Private family time:** the family is given time alone to talk openly and agree on a plan without professionals present.
4. **The plan:** the family's proposed plan is shared with professionals, who review it to ensure it meets the child's needs and is safe and achievable. The plan is then recorded and monitored over time.

This circle of support helps empower families to take the lead in decision-making and strengthens relationships and communication within the family. It also identifies practical and emotional support from within the child's network while respecting cultural identity and family values. This approach reflects our belief that families are often best placed to make decisions about their children when given the right support and space to do so.

Family Network pilot

Telford & Wrekin Council is one of a select group of local authorities participating in the Department for Education's Family Network Support Package (FNSP) pilot. The initiative is part of a national programme to transform children's social care by helping more children remain safely within their family networks rather than entering care. The pilot focuses on:

- helping families supported by the pre-proceeding's framework;
- supporting families to explore a child/young person returning to the care of birth parents/relational network;
- using Circle of support/Family Group decision making forums (FGDM) to identify family members who can provide support; and
- providing funding to remove financial barriers that prevent extended family from being in a position to support.

This will be offered on an individual circumstances basis for young people supported by Telford and Wrekin Children's Services and can be discussed with the practitioner supporting the child/young person.



Education

We want all children/young people to have the best educational experience, based on their needs and strengths. We have high aspirations for the educational achievement of children within our Borough.

Virtual School

As part of our offer, kinship carers will have access to the [Virtual School for children in care](#) where advice and support can be sought. The Virtual School Head role has been extended to specifically include championing the attendance, attainment, and progress of all children in kinship care. This means that all children in kinship arrangements, regardless of legal status, will benefit from the adaptation of the strategic role. Kinship families with a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangements Order, regardless of whether the children were previously in local authority care, will also benefit from advice and information, upon request, from the Virtual School to help them navigate the education system.

Breakfast clubs

Schools understand the challenges and benefits of kinship carers and the children/young people they care for. Kinship carers may be able to access support through school-based breakfast clubs, which provide a structured start to the day for children and young people. These clubs can help to improve attendance, concentration, and overall wellbeing. Schools are encouraged to consider the needs of kinship families when allocating places, particularly where children may benefit from additional routine and pastoral support. Further information about wraparound childcare, including breakfast clubs, can be found on the [Telford & Wrekin Council website](#).

Youth Offer

Children and young people in kinship care arrangements can access a range of youth services across Telford and Wrekin, including targeted support, enrichment activities, and safe spaces to build relationships and develop skills. The Youth Offer aims to promote inclusion, resilience, and positive engagement. Kinship carers are encouraged to explore local opportunities via the Telford and Wrekin [Youth Offer](#).

Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium Plus is special funding for schools in England for children in care, or children who have been in the care of Children's Social Services. It is currently around £2,500 per pupil per year. The funding is not a personal budget for a particular child but must be spent on improving educational outcomes for children in the care of (or previously in the care of) Children's Services.

Housing

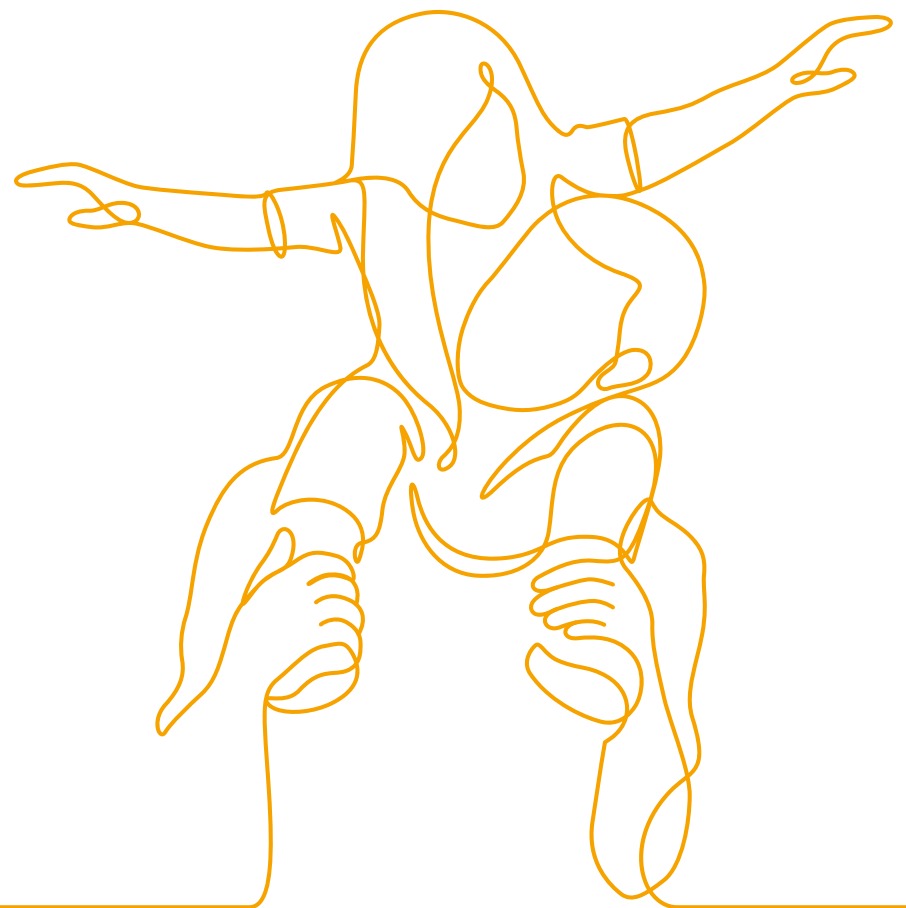
Telford & Wrekin Council recognises that housing should not be a barrier to providing safe and stable care for children in kinship arrangements.

If a kinship carer is living in accommodation that is unsuitable such as a property that is too small or lacks necessary facilities, support is available to explore alternative housing options.

Through the Council's Housing Solutions service, kinship carers can access advice and guidance tailored to their circumstances. This may include support with applying for more suitable accommodation, understanding housing rights, or being signposted to relevant services. While housing availability may vary, the Council is committed to working with kinship families to identify appropriate solutions wherever possible.

If you need support, please contact the Kinship Team, who can assist with your housing-related concerns.

In addition, Telford and Wrekin's [Housing Association](#) webpage offers links to all Registered Social Landlords.



Financial

A kinship carer may be entitled to financial support to help with everyday living costs and the additional expenses of raising a child. This support may come through government benefits or local authority allowances, depending on the legal arrangement and circumstances.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit for people of working age who are on a low-income. Eligibility can be for people who are employed, looking for employment, have an illness or a disability, or are caring for a child or a person with a disability.

Child Benefit

Child Benefit is paid to anyone bringing up a child under 16 years of age or a young person under 20 years of age who is in approved education or training. Only one person can receive child benefit and there is no limit to how many children that can be claimed for.

Pension Credit

If a person is over State Pension age, they may be able to get **Pension Credit**, which is separate to the State Pension. It provides additional finances to help pay for day-to-day living costs, which will include looking after a child as a kinship carer.

Guardian's Allowance

If a carer is caring for a child/young person whose parent(s) have died, they may be able to receive a **Guardian's Allowance**. A

Guardian's Allowance is tax-free and in addition to any child benefit being received.

Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

If a local authority was involved when a CAO was made, there may have been a financial allowance agreed to support the carer. This allowance should have been agreed in writing and does not affect entitlement to other benefits like Child Tax Credit.

Advice and support

Navigating financial support can be complex. We recommend speaking with:

- a specialist money advice service;
- your social worker/practitioner (if involved); and/or
- a solicitor, ideally early in your kinship journey.

There are also national and local organisations that offer free, confidential advice:

- Kinship UK
- Family Rights Group
- PAC-UK
- CoramBAAF

Allowances from the local authority

Depending on the legal order, a carer may be eligible for discretionary financial support from the local authority. Please note: these allowances are not guaranteed and vary by local authority, and they are subject to regular review as they may be increased, reduced or withdrawn if circumstances change.

Work and employment

Being a kinship carer can impact on employment and [guidance for employers](#) has been published which clarifies legal rights and responsibilities and how to support kinship carers sensitively and effectively. Support is available to kinship carers such as:

- Time off for dependents
- Unpaid leave
- Flexible working arrangements
- Some employers have schemes for kinship carers

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Legal

Kinship carers have told us that knowing their rights and options is important to them and often this can be confusing particularly at the beginning of the journey.

In order for kinship carers to understand their options and the meaning of these, the local authority can support with legal advice. You can contact the Kinship Team who can discuss this with you on an individual basis. The local authority can also provide a list of approved solicitors in the local area. Alternatively, you can contact the **Family Rights Group**, which provides a free telephone advice line available Monday to Friday, from 9.30am to 3pm (excluding Bank Holidays) by calling **08088 010366**. They also offer an online forum specifically for kinship carers, where you can seek advice, share experiences, and connect with others for support. Additional services include a webchat, an advice enquiry form, and the option to request an interpreter if needed. The Family Rights Group website features a wide range of [legal resources and guidance](#), including links to the charity Advocate, which helps connect individuals with volunteer barristers across England and Wales for legal assistance.

Parental responsibility

It is important to understand parental responsibility as it affects who can make decisions relevant to the child/young person's life. Parental Responsibility means having the legal authority to make decisions about a child's:

- health and medical treatment;
- education;
- religion and cultural upbringing;
- name and legal identity; and
- day-to-day care and welfare.

Without parental responsibility, a carer may need the consent of someone who does hold it (usually the birth parents or the local authority) to make certain decisions. Kinship carers do not automatically have parental rights, but this can be gained through a Child Arrangements Order and a Special Guardianship Order.

Culturally diverse communities

We acknowledge that kinship carers from culturally diverse communities face specific challenges related to accessing support. We are committed to promoting culturally sensitive practices which honour and celebrate the cultural background of all communities.

We are working in close partnership with our Equality and Diversity Officer and the Interfaith Council, which have established trusted relationships with faith organisations and culturally diverse groups across the Borough. Through this collaboration, we've gained valuable insight into some of the barriers that may prevent engagement.

These include complex or inaccessible language which can make information difficult to understand as well as the stigma and fear associated with involvement from the local authority which leads to feelings of distrust. Understanding and addressing barriers is essential to ensuring that all kinship families feel seen, supported, and empowered to access the help they need. We have begun providing information in relation to kinship care and the support offered within places of worship. We have visited the local Gurdwara and hope that relationships with other faith organisations will continue to grow over time. We recognise this is just the start of our journey and we are committed to exploring and understanding the specific needs of kinship carers from culturally diverse backgrounds and seek to provide support that meets these needs.

The [Telford & Wrekin Council Corporate equality, diversity and inclusion strategy 2022-2026](#) outlines the council's commitment to creating a fairer, more inclusive Borough. It aims to promote equality and celebrate diversity, ensure services are accessible while building a diverse and inclusive workforce. In addition, we have

commissioned culturally responsive training within our organisation and partnership wide as well as launching a partnership [Cultural Competence Guidance](#).

Race Equality Group

Established in 2020, the Race Equality Group brings together passionate representatives from across the organisation who are committed to promoting race equality and raising awareness both internally and within our local communities. The group envisions a truly inclusive workplace where everyone feels welcomed and contributions valued. Key priorities include educating the Telford & Wrekin Council workforce on race-related issues, strengthening community connections and supporting colleagues who face race-related challenges in the workplace.

Some notable achievements include:

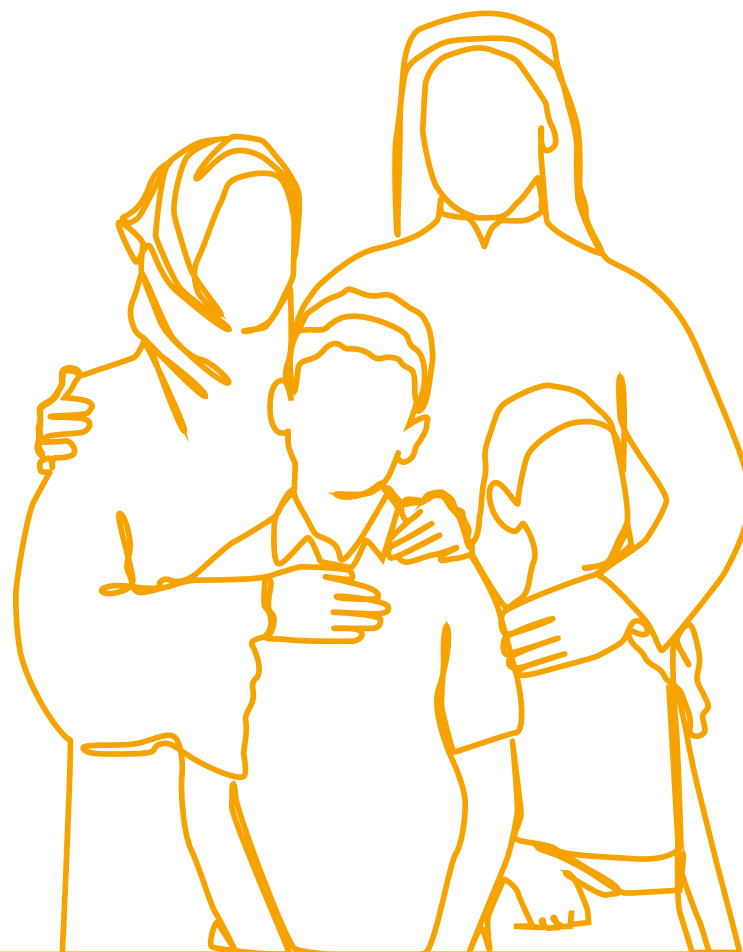
- Delivering workshops and participating in leadership forums to raise awareness of race equality
- Organising outdoor activities that engage diverse students who may not typically have access to such opportunities
- Coordinating a programme of events to celebrate significant occasions, such as Black History Month

Research

We have also benefited from the research conducted by Kinship, which has informed our development work. In particular, the contributions of Anam Raja, Research Manager, have been instrumental in shaping recent insights, especially through her involvement in the [Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian Kinship Carers](#) report, revealing systemic challenges such as cultural stigma, lack of culturally competent services, and limited access to support. It underscored the emotional and financial pressures faced by carers and many of whom felt they had no choice but to step in, often without adequate guidance or resources. The findings from the research have deepened our understanding of the intersection between ethnicity and kinship care and has reinforced the importance of culturally responsive and equitable support systems for all kinship families.

Peer support

Peer support is valuable and walking alongside someone who has been part of a similar journey is central to meaningful support. We are fortunate that a number of our carers wish to become peer supporters and advocates. At this time, we are looking for culturally diverse carers to become peer supporters and advocates too. We are currently seeking relevant training and development for carers to be able to fulfil these roles. We recognise the importance of culturally diverse communities and are actively working to ensure that peer support reflects the lived experiences of carers from all backgrounds.



Preparing for adulthood

Preparing for adulthood can bring a mix of emotions for young people. Feeling heard and involved in decisions can make the process more empowering and less overwhelming.

Care Leavers

The [Telford & Wrekin Council's Care Leavers local offer](#) is designed to support young people aged 16 to 25 who have been in care. It outlines the rights, services, and support available to help care leavers transition into independent adulthood. The offer includes support across multiple areas:

- **Personal Adviser (PA)** – a dedicated support worker to help with planning, advice, and accessing services
- **Accommodation** – help with finding and maintaining safe housing, including financial support and tenancy guidance
- **Education, training and employment** – support to access college, university, apprenticeships, or jobs
- **Health and wellbeing** – access to physical and mental health services, leisure activities, and emotional support
- **Money matters** – financial support including grants, budgeting help, and benefits advice
- **Special circumstances support** – help for care leavers who are pregnant

Adult Social Care

The Autism and Learning Disability Team supports young people who may be moving from [Children's Services into adult social care](#).

This transition is structured and person-centred process that begins early to ensure continuity and support outlined in the [Preparing for adulthood leaflet](#).

A Care Act assessment will be carried out by an Adult Social Care Social Worker to determine eligibility for adult services under the Care Act 2014. The assessment considers support networks, aspirations and areas of support needs. The transition process involves collaboration with social workers, education professionals, and health services (eg, nurses, therapists).

The Autism and Learning Disability Team continues to offer support while they have an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) and may remain involved until age 25 if ongoing support is needed. If long-term support is required, they may transition to another Adult Social Care team based on their primary need. If Adult Social Care support is provided, a financial assessment is conducted to determine any contribution towards care costs.

Kinship Telford Charter

Telford & Wrekin Council recognises and values the vital role that kinship carers play in providing safe and loving homes for children and young people where this is considered as being in their best interests. We are committed to working in partnership with kinship families to help them feel supported.

We promise to:

■ Recognise and respect

- Acknowledge the unique contributions of kinship carers, including grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and family friends.
- Treat all kinship families with dignity, compassion, and respect.

■ Support and empower

- Provide clear, accessible information about legal options, financial support, and available services.
- Offer training and development opportunities.
- Ensure carers have access to emotional wellbeing resources.

■ Champion diversity and inclusion

- Recognise the cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity of kinship families.

- Work to ensure services are culturally competent and inclusive.
- Engage with carers from all backgrounds to co-design support that reflects their lived experiences.

■ Listen and deliver a strong Kinship local offer

- Involve kinship carers in shaping documents and services.
- Promote peer support networks to amplify carers' voices.
- Respond to feedback and continuously improve our local kinship offer.
- Publish and maintain a comprehensive Kinship local offer in line with national legislation.

Glossary

Adoption: a formal legal process in which all the rights and responsibilities relating to a child are transferred to the adoptive parents.

Advocacy: this involves supporting and promoting the rights and needs of kinship carers and the children they care for.

Care leaver: a young person who has been in the care of the local authority and is transitioning to independent living.

Child Arrangement Order (CAO): (previously known as a Residence Order) - this is a legal order which decides on where the child will live and who they spend time with.

Connected person: this includes relatives, friends, and other persons connected to the child.

Co-production: a collaborative approach where kinship carers, children, and professionals work together to design and improve services, ensuring lived experience informs policy and practice.

Family group decision making: a process where extended family members come together to make decisions about the care and welfare of a child.

Informal kinship care: an arrangement where a child is cared for by a relative or friend without the involvement of the local authority. These are private arrangements made between the parent(s) and the carer.

Kinship care: this is when children are cared for by members of their extended families, friends, or other people who are connected with them for a variety of reasons in different arrangements.

Kinship foster carer: arrangements made for children cared for by the local authority (in care), where the child is placed by the local authority, and they have approved the carer who is a relative or friend of the family. The child remains looked after unless a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship order is made. Where the child remains looked after, the carer remains as a kinship foster carer.

Local offer: the support and services available to kinship carers within a specific local authority.

Parental responsibility: the legal right to make decisions about a child's care and how they are raised.

Private fostering: an arrangement made by the family about the care of a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability), who is cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative and with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. The local authority should be informed of this arrangement so that they can assess whether it is a safe and suitable arrangement, but the decision is made by the parent or person with parental responsibility.

Reunification: the process of returning a child to their biological parents after they have been in foster or kinship care.

Safeguarding: measures taken to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND): this is a legal term for a child or young person who has a learning difficulty or disability.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO): a court order that gives a person parental responsibility for a child or young person, allowing them to care for and make decisions about the child/young person's upbringing until they turn 18.

Statutory guidance: official advice issued by a Government department that organisations must follow.

Therapeutic offer: support services that provide emotional and psychological help to children and carers, often including counselling, play therapy, or trauma-informed care approaches.

Virtual School: This is a team of highly qualified, experienced and dedicated educational professionals. They work with all relevant partners in education, health and social care to ensure that children's opportunities in school are the best they can be.

Useful contacts and links

Access Team (MPFT)

Telephone: 0808 196 4501 (If you're open to any mental health services at MPFT, please only contact Access during out-of-service hours. If you're calling between 9am to 5pm, you will need to call the Admin Hub.)

Email: access.shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk

Telford Admin Hub - 0300 303 1601

Citizens Advice

Adviceline (England): 0800 144 8848 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Telford address for drop ins: Suite 4, Syer House, Stafford Court, Stafford Park 1, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 3BD (Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 4:30pm) or Wellington Library, Larkin Way, TF1 1LX (Tuesday and Thursday at 10am to 4pm)

Telephone: 0808 278 7988 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4:30pm)

Please visit the website for further support locations: Telford & The Wrekin Citizens Advice - Citizens Advice

Coram Children's Legal Centre

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Family Connect

Telephone: 01952 385385 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Text back service: 07908680320

Email: familyconnect@telford.gov.uk

Family Hubs

Telephone: 01952 385385

Email: telfordfamilyhubs@telford.gov.uk

Family Rights Groups

Free Advice Line: 0808 801 0366 (Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3pm, excluding Bank Holidays)

Admin Telephone: 020 7923 2628

Fostering Network

www.fosteringnetwork.org.uk

Home-Start Telford and Wrekin

Telephone: 07551 205821

Email: info@homestarttandw.org.uk

Kinship UK

Telephone: 03300 167 235 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Email: info@kinship.org.uk

Kinship Team

Telephone: 01952 380353

For Special Guardians - SGOsupport@telford.gov.uk

For Kinship Foster Carers - Connected.fostering@telford.gov.uk

We are currently in the process of exploring a designated email address for the Kinship Team.

PAC-UK

Telephone: 020 7284 5879

Email: advice@pac-uk.org

Webpage: <https://www.pac-uk.org/about/>

SEND Team

Telephone: SEND Team - SEND - Local offer

Email: SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk

Telford Crisis Support

Telephone: 01952 586646

Email admin@telfordcrisissupport.org.uk

Telford and Wrekin Leisure

Telephone: 01952 382621 (Monday – Friday 9am-5pm) general enquiries

Email: leisure@telford.gov.uk

Telford and Wrekin Libraries

Telephone: 01952 382915

Telford Mind

Telephone: (07434) 869248

Email: talk2@telford-mind.co.uk

Virtual School Team

Email: virtualschool@telford.gov.uk

Review and endorsement

We are proud to present this Kinship local offer as a living document, one that will continue to evolve through feedback, partnership, and the voices of kinship families.

The Kinship local offer will be reviewed and endorsed by Telford and Wrekin Cabinet members on Thursday 6 November 2025. Cabinet approval will help embed the Kinship local offer within our wider family support strategy, strengthening our ambition to deliver inclusive, responsive services that reflect the lived experiences of kinship families across Telford and Wrekin.



kinship telford

