



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Telford and Wrekin Children and Young People's Strategy

2025-2028


Ofsted
Outstanding
Provider

Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin



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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce this Telford and Wrekin Children and People’s Strategy for 2025-2028, to support the delivery of the: Council Plan priorities, Health and Wellbeing Board commitments and Safeguarding Children Partnership responsibilities.

Children, young people and families living in Telford and Wrekin build our communities and are the foundations and heart of our borough. This partnership Strategy bridges families and communities, and many organisations alongside the Council, such as the: NHS, community and voluntary sector, specialist providers, the Police, early years settings, schools and other education partners.

This is an overarching strategy which acts as an umbrella for a range of partnerships strategies, plans and transformation programmes. Building on from our excellent Ofsted children’s services rating, our strategy vision is that **our borough is home to healthy, safe children who achieve their potential**, with the aims that all our children and young people start well, stay well, keep safe, and enjoy and achieve.

We have listened to local children and young people to understand what outcomes they want. A whole-child approach should maximise aspirations, life chances and outcomes for all children and young people. Alongside this is a focus on narrowing the gap for those who are marginalised or in need, for whatever reason.

Our partnership is committed to listening to, empowering and supporting children and young people, parents and carers, through asset-based community approaches. Celebrating diversity and being inclusive needs to be a clear part of our partnership culture.

Our Family Hubs offer is clearly making an impact on local children and young people. Going forward, as part of the national Homes Built on Love Children’s Social Care Reforms, family help with its strong prevention focus will be a key vehicle for change. Family Help is a crucial element of this Strategy’s keep safe aim, but it will also contribute significantly to the other three aims.

The Children’s Wellbeing Bill, announced in the Kings Speech 2024 will put children and their wellbeing at the centre of the education and children’s social care systems, to ensure children are safe, healthy, happy and treated fairly, removing barriers to opportunity. Tackling child poverty is also at the heart of the new Government’s mission to improve the life chances of every child. A Ministerial Taskforce is leading the development of a national child poverty strategy due to be published in the Spring 2025. There is clear context for urgent action on child poverty in Telford and Wrekin given our local picture, and this should support the delivery of all the strategy’s aims and objectives. Working towards being a child friendly borough will support successful delivery of our aspirations.

A set of delivery priorities for 2025/26 and a performance framework sits alongside the strategy aims and objectives. The implementation and impact of the strategy over the next three years will be steered and overseen by a newly established Children and Young People’s Board star chamber.



Jo Britton
Executive Director,
Children’s Services
and Public Health



Councillor Shirley Reynolds
Cabinet Member for Children,
Young People, Education,
Employment and Skills



Councillor Kelly Middleton
Cabinet Member for Public
Health and Healthier
Communities



Children and young people matter in Telford and Wrekin

Children and Young People are front and centre of the refreshed **Telford & Wrekin Council Plan**, with tackling poverty and inequalities in communities at the heart of the plan.

Getting the best start in life is an overarching theme in our **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**. Across healthy pregnancies, support for families in the early years, improving development and education outcomes – there is focus on children affected by poverty, poor mental health, domestic abuse, alcohol and drugs and special educational needs and disabilities.

Telford Vision 2032 partnership ambitions support all children in getting the best possible start in life, from the day they're born, commits to no child being invisible to key services.



Partnership Vision – our borough is home to healthy, safe children who achieve their potential

Children live in families, families make communities and communities build our borough



Telford and Wrekin Children and Young People's Strategy

Partnership Vision – our borough is home to healthy, safe children who achieve their potential

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Start Well

Enabling children to get the best start in life through universal prenatal, antenatal, postnatal and health visiting services and early/family help services.

Empowering parents and carers to care for and nurture their children, with early/family help to avoid issues escalating.

Supporting all children to be ready for school, achieving a good level of development on their language and communication, problem solving and personal-social skills, at home and in early years and community settings.

Stay Well

Encouraging families to be active, with healthy diet and lifestyles.

Improving children and young people's mental health and emotional and wellbeing.

Reducing health inequalities focussing on mental health, asthma, diabetes, oral health, epilepsy and immunisations.

Enjoy and Achieve

Promoting access to a quality education offer for all young people across the borough, with holistic wrap around support for families who need it most.

Encouraging aspirations in all children and young people, enabling them to gain skills they need to fulfil their potential, preparing them for independent, successful adulthood.

Offering all young people opportunities to engage in stimulating activity which improves their sense of wellbeing.

Keep Safe

Creating conditions so every child is safe and feels they belong in their home and educational setting.

Ensuring an environment in our communities where child exploitation is prevented, identified and challenged, resulting in disruption.

Working together to tackle the impact of adverse childhood experiences, such as neglect, alcohol, drugs and domestic abuse – using a whole family approach to empower families and support communities to be resilient.

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Culture

Listening to children and young people through co-production and engagement.

Empowering and supporting using asset-based community approach.

Celebrating diversity and being inclusive.

Focus

Improving experience and outcomes for all.

Maximising opportunities, aspirations and life chances.

Whole child approach – physical, emotional, social and academic wellbeing.

Narrowing the gap – for children who are marginalised, living in poverty, with disabilities, SEND, care experience and trauma.

Partnership and strategy context

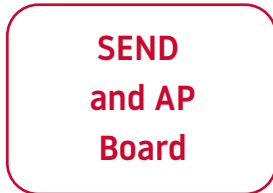
AIMS

AIMS



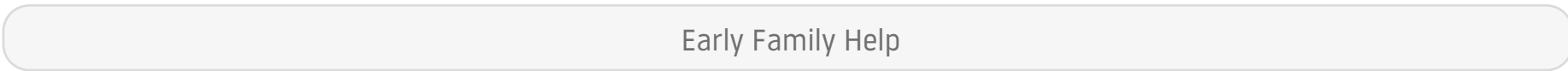
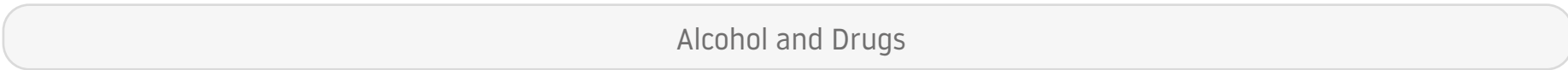
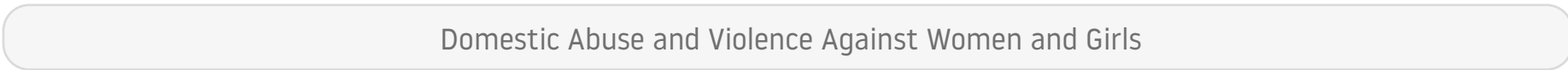
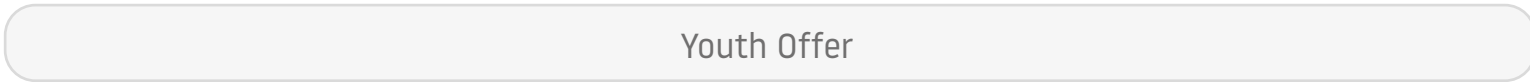
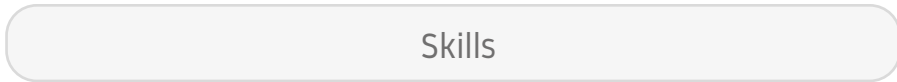
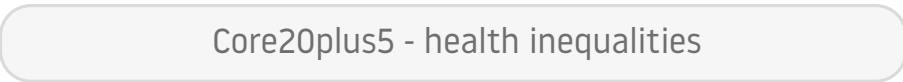
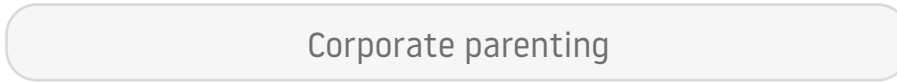
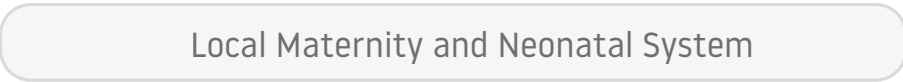
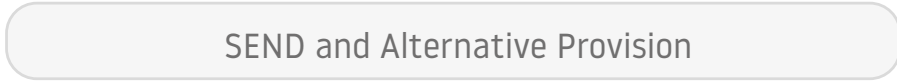
PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS



STRATEGIES

STRATEGIES



Listening to children, young people, parents and carers

The voices from a wide range of groups shape our commitments

Local schools and youth councils

Leavers Come First

Young Carers

Youth Parliament

Black and Minority Ethnic
Groups engagement

Emotional Health and Wellbeing
focus groups and survey

Young People's Forum

Maternity and Neonatal Voices
Partnership

Dandelion Parents

VOICE
(Children in Care Forum)

Family Hubs

Parents Opening Doors (PODs)

SEND Youth Forum

Autism Hub

Shout Out for SEND

Our local picture

Population



60,300

children and young people aged 0-25. 1 in 3 people in T&W (ONS 2023)



6.1%

increase in 0-25 population since 2013, compared to 2.2% nationally (ONS 2023)



22.1%

of young people from a minority ethnic background (Census 2021)



5%

of the younger population's main language is not English (Census 2021)



Higher proportion of children eligible for **Free School Meals** than England (27.6% primary, 25.6% secondary) DfE 2023/24



25.4%

(9,570) children live in low income families, compared to 19.8% nationally (OHID 2022/23)



30%

of households with dependent children, compared to 28.5% nationally (Census 2021)



7.8%

(5,973) lone parent households, compared to 6.9% nationally (Census 2021)

Our local picture

Start well



29.3

YEARS OLD

Mothers are younger on average (30.9) ONS 2021



36.3%

of children are breastfed at 6-8 weeks, lower than England (52.7%)



45.1%

of pregnant women access maternity care early, lower than national average (63.5%)



9.7%

5,493 younger people disabled under the Equality Act. Census 2021



50.8%

of children are physically active, higher than the national rate (47.8%) Sport England 2024



63.9% of children achieve a good level of development at 2-2½, lower than national (80.4)

OHID 2023/24



9.9%

A higher proportion of mothers smoke at time of delivery than nationally (7.4%)

OHID 2023/24



24.6%

of children in Reception are overweight (including obese) – higher than national (22.1%)

OHID 2023/24



The number of CYP accessing mental health services across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin continues to increase.

NHSE



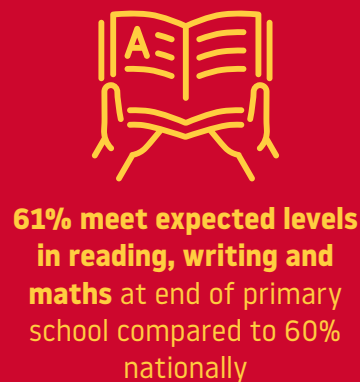
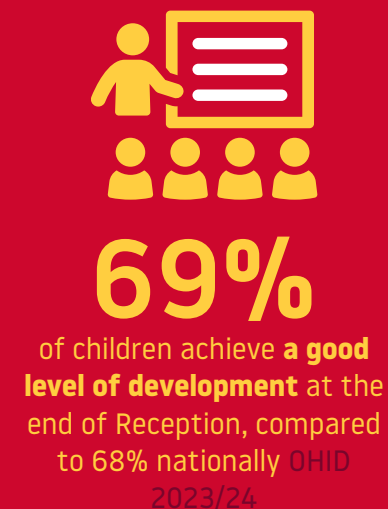
37.3%

of children in year 6 are overweight (including obese) – rate is improving and similar to the England rate (35.8%)

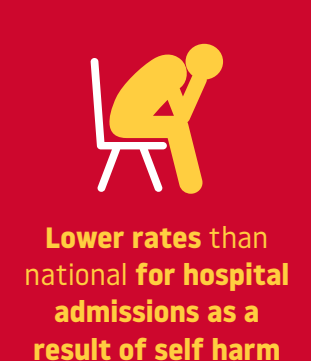
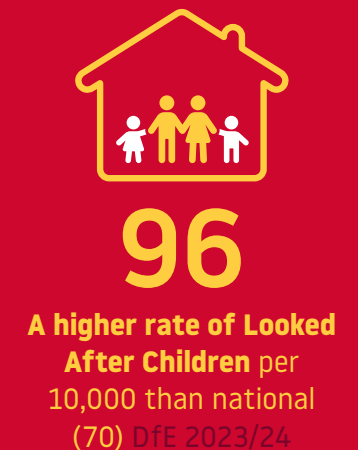
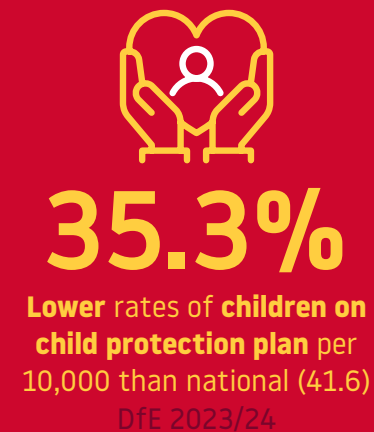
OHID 2023/24

Our local picture

Enjoy and Achieve



Keep Safe



Performance and outcomes we want to achieve

Our best start in life, social care and education outcomes are linked to Council priorities and a range of national frameworks.

Start Well

- Early access to maternity
- Infant vaccination rates
- Infant mortality rates
- Proportion of mothers smoking in pregnancy
- Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks
- Health Visitor: Proportion of New Birth Visits completed in 14 days, infants receiving 6-8 week review and children receiving 12 month review
- Teenage pregnancy rates
- Child development – proportion of children achieving good level of development at age 2-2½

Stay Well

- Childhood vaccination rates
- Prevalence of overweight and obesity – reception and Y6
- Proportion of physically active children and young people
- Hospital admissions for mental health conditions
- CaMHS waiting times
- Percentage of school pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs
- Hospital admissions for asthma, diabetes, epilepsy
- Dental decay experience

Enjoy and Achieve

- School attendance rates
- School readiness – children achieving a good level of development at end of reception
- Attainment – proportion of children achieving 5-9 in Maths and English
- Attainment – progress 8 scores
- Rate of children suspended or excluded from school
- Proportion of children not in education, employment or training
- Proportion of children on education, health and care plans
- proportion of children eligible taking up free school meals
- Proportion of 16 and 17 year olds not in education employment or training

Keep Safe

- Rate of Looked after children
- Rate of Child protection plans
- Repeat referrals to children's safeguarding within 12 months
- Stability of children in care placements
- Proportion of Children and Families Assessments with Domestic Abuse as a factor
- Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries – children and young people
- Hospital admissions as a result of self harm
- Number of missing children
- Proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation and in education, employment or training

Our children and young people have told us what is important to them:



Tackling Poverty

- Children in relative low income families
- Households with dependent children presenting as homeless

Transforming family help

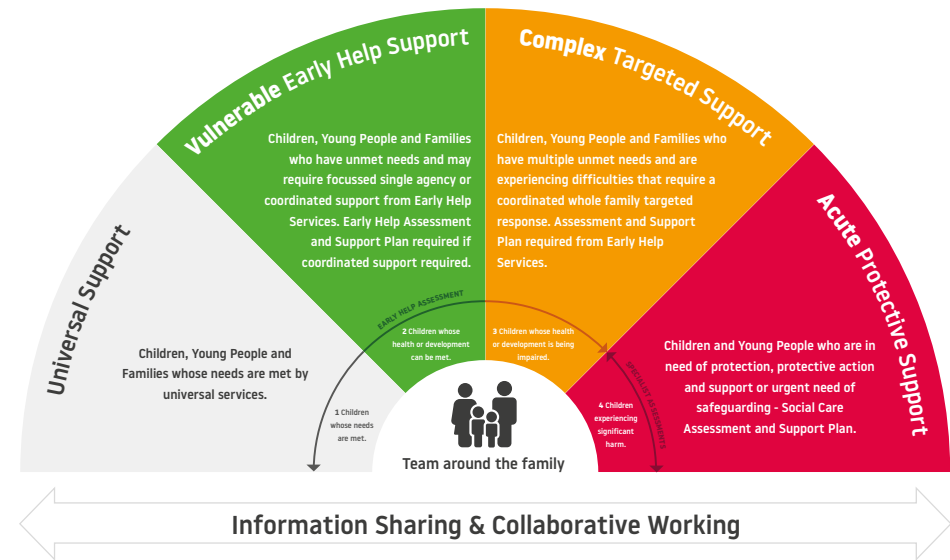
Our Early Help offer is clearly being transformed by Family Hubs. Going forward the Home Built on Love Children’s Social Care Reforms, will support a new evidence-based approach called family help, bringing together targeted early help and children in need into a single system.

The transformation will create a Family Help service bring together Family Hubs, our enhanced Strengthening Families Service and our developing youth offer. While Family Help is a key element of this strategy’s keep safe aim, it will also contribute significantly to the other three aims – start, well, stay well and enjoy and achieve.

The **Telford and Wrekin Family Hub Locality Service** will provide the following:

- Intense Family Help
- Brief Intervention Support
- Youth and Community Targeted Group Support
- Community Support – Here to help and Telephone support.
- Strengthened participation and engagement with children, young people and parents and will increase peer support and family ambassador roles
- Early Help Coordination support for Partner agencies
- Early Help Training

Family Help has a strong prevention approach and will be led by the Council, but community-based support from local voluntary, sector organisations such as: HomeStart, Families First and MIND are a vital part of the offer. Integration of the healthcare system, part of the Government’s Health Mission, should also provide opportunities to offer health services closer to home for families.



We will improve our Early Help System by:

Leaders	Developing and communicating a clear Early Help offer with shared values, language and pathways.
Data	Data and intelligence led services with all partners to include shared Early Help Assessment case management system.
Workforce	Produce a shared workforce training offer to support the implementation of shared values, language and pathways.
Communities	Develop place-based knowledge, communication and sharing across workforce and communities.
Parental Experience	To understand and co-produce an Early Help system which supports the families Early Help journey.

Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin

Child Friendly communities aim to ensure all children are able to have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

These communities are those where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of policies, programmes and decisions so that children:

- have a good start in life and grow up healthy and cared for;
- are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;
- have access to quality social services;
- experience quality, inclusive and participatory education and skills development;
- express their opinions and influence decisions that affect them;
- participate in family, cultural, city/community and social life;
- live in a safe secure and clean environment with access to green spaces;
- meet friends and have places to play and enjoy themselves; and
- have a fair chance in life regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability.

Engaging with children and young people is fundamental moving forward with a Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin. Their voice will help to identify their own priorities to help understand how a Child Friendly borough should look and feel.

Across the Borough we want everyone to think about ‘what is it like to be a child growing up in Telford and Wrekin and how can we make it better’

Child Friendly Telford & Wrekin priority programme 2025/26

Adopting Child Friendly status will require a robust implementation plan, including the following elements:

- introduce the Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin descriptor within the council;
- understand current Child Friendly initiatives or ideas across the council;
- identify children and young people priorities;
- strengthen the voice of children and young people in all areas of local decision making;
- identify levels of need across the borough to target activities effectively;
- promote Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin with partners; and
- identifying how partners, community and voluntary sector organisations, businesses and communities can get involved.

Local businesses, partners, and community and voluntary organisations could get involved by:

- offering young people, the chance to be part of an interview panel;
- holding an open day to showcase their organisation and invite schools;
- donating prizes to local events or sponsoring a team;
- becoming a mentor;
- offering apprenticeships;
- offering volunteering opportunities;
- engaging children when making decisions;
- offering discounts;
- creating safe places for children to play close to their homes;
- creating sport and physical activity opportunities; and
- creating Child Friendly places and environments for children to visit.

Tackling poverty

Over a quarter of families in Telford and Wrekin, 9,570 children live in poverty, which contributes to a wide range of poorer outcomes throughout childhood, and which then persist into adulthood.

The cost of living crisis has made it harder for families to afford the everyday essentials, forcing many more children into poverty. Worrying about money affects young people's development, mood, and their ability to focus.

Food poverty is all too common with on average one in ten families using food banks in 2024. Ensuring children whose families are struggling to make ends meet can access to healthy and nutritious free school meals is crucial.

Poor housing conditions and homelessness add further layers of uncertainty and stress, disrupting young people's lives in ways which can have serious long-term consequences. Ensuring our most vulnerable local young people have a safe, comfortable and healthy home to grow is paramount.

The national child poverty strategy expected in early 2025 will address systemic drivers of poverty, including employment and housing. Building on the Government's wider reform plans, child poverty is being brought together around four key themes:

- 1 Increasing incomes**
- 2 Reducing essential costs**
- 3 Increasing financial resilience**
- 4 Better local support**

A key commitment for this strategy, focussing especially on the early years, high quality early education and health care. Our community and public sector partners should work together with families to improve access, co-ordination and the quality of services and wider opportunities, for those children of all ages that need them, recognising the particular benefits that early years interventions can have.

Tackling poverty priority programme 2025/26:

Introducing Poverty Aware Practice to support families, by adopting approaches being taken in Leeds and elsewhere through:

Language: guidance on having sensitive discussions with families about poverty

Community Practice: drawing on community support to reduce poverty

Advocacy: ensuring voices are heard

Improving Material Circumstances

Case Studies: best practice for working with poverty

Resources for families experiencing poverty: highlighting where families experiencing poverty can access support

Start Well

Objectives:

Enabling children to get the best start in life through universal prenatal, antenatal, postnatal and health visiting services and early/family help services.

Empowering parents and carers to care for and nurture their children, with early/family help to avoid issues escalating.

Supporting all children to be ready for school, achieving a good level of development on their language and communication, problem solving and personal-social skills, at home and in early years and community settings.

Start Well priority programmes 2025/26:

- Early/Family Help strategy and extension of Family Hubs programme offer;
- refreshed Healthy Child Programme offer; and
- Local Maternity and Neonatal System to reduce maternal and infant health inequalities.



The Family Hubs/Family Help offer now provides a wide range of information, advice and support for parents to promote healthy development of their little ones. This is delivered in partnership with the community and voluntary sector, the NHS and early years setting and includes:

- Healthy Child Programme – health visiting and family nurse partnership (targeted interventions to vulnerable young parents);
- Antenatal education and Baby First Aid;
- Breastfeeding Network Peer Support;
- Social Prescribing – mental health support for mums;
- Families in Telford and HomeStart community groups;
- 0-2s booklet;
- Talking with your little one – for babies and toddlers;
- Early Years Talk Boost: primary schools and early years setting; and
- Dandelion Parents and Father Champions.

The NHS and councils work together with families through the “local maternity and neonatal system” to make maternity and neonatal services personalised, safe, accessible and fair. Reducing health inequalities is a key focus, especially for people from Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnic backgrounds and deprived areas.

Stay Well

Objectives:

Encouraging families to be active, with healthy diet and lifestyles.

Improving children and young people’s mental health and emotional and wellbeing.

Reducing health inequalities focussing on mental health, asthma, diabetes, oral health, epilepsy and immunisations.

Stay Well priority programmes 2025/26:

- Healthy weight partnership strategy actions for children, young people and families;
- Integrated Care System development of thrive model offer for social, emotional and mental health; and
- Integrated Care System core20plus5 programme expectations to reduce CYP health inequalities.

Adopting healthy lifestyles in childhood supports health throughout life, and vaping and smoking has become an important issue again in the past decade. Healthy lifestyles is a priority area given our local picture. The Council’s healthy lifestyles team, leisure services, School Nurses and our community food work offers longstanding support to families, and now the wider work with partners through the whole systems approach to excess weight is starting to have a real impact.

The NHS healthcare inequalities programme (core20plus5) is an approach which target the 20% most deprived residents (the “core20”), which aligns closely to the child poverty agenda. The plus element covers children and young people who are at increased risk such as asylum seekers or those with SEND. The 5 clinical areas are those requiring accelerated improvement in medical treatment.

Mental health can impact on all aspects of children and young people’s lives, including their physical wellbeing, relationships and educational attainment. It is widely acknowledged that mental health issue in children and young people has been increasing and access to mental health services is a challenge. The national i-THRIVE Programme, is an evidence-based framework being used across the country to improve outcomes for children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing.



Enjoy and Achieve

Objectives:

Promoting access to a quality education offer for all young people across the borough, with holistic wrap around support for families who need it most.

Encouraging aspirations in all children and young people, enabling them to gain skills they need to fulfil their potential, preparing them for independent, successful adulthood.

Offering all young people opportunities to engage in stimulating activity which improves their sense of wellbeing.



Enjoy and Achieve priority programmes 2025/26:

- boost the achievement of all children across Telford and Wrekin, through continual improvement activity across settings;
- raise aspirations with a focus on those from a disadvantaged background, through Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters programme;
- provide an inclusive educational offer that meets the needs of children with SEND in mainstream settings; and
- prepare young people for life after school, through youth offer and skills strategy.

Recognising the mixed economy of provision (i.e. maintained, academies, private, independent) that now exists within the national and local educational landscape our approach to achieving our key priority outcomes above is via partnership. Our work is driven through the Education Strategic Partnership Board who have oversight of improvement activity across our place and is made up of our local education leaders.

The Board believes that by collaborating, sharing and developing great practice in our organisations all our children can achieve their potential, at each stage in their education and development, to becoming successful young adults who have a real sense of belonging in Telford.

The Board is made up of education leaders from the early years sector, primary, secondary and special schools (maintained and academies), post 16 providers, diocese and the Local Authority. The partnership provides and opportunity for discussion and consultation between leaders of Telford and Wrekin, focused on education and promoting opportunity for all children and young people.

In addition the Council will further develop its holistic offer promoting best start in life, via the 5by5 and 10by10, expand and promote a community youth offer and develop a skills strategy to create a future fit workforce that will support an inclusive economy.



Keep Safe

Objectives:

Creating conditions so every child is safe and feels they belong in their home and educational setting.

Ensuring an environment in our communities where child exploitation is prevented, identified and challenged, resulting in disruption.

Working together to tackle the impact of adverse childhood experiences, such as neglect, alcohol, drugs and domestic abuse – using a whole family approach to empower families and support communities to be resilient.

Keep Safe priority programmes 2025/26:

- delivery of Government's Stable Homes Built on Love, Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill expectations;
- ongoing development of child exploitation prevention programme;
- tackling youth violence; and
- enhancing offer for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

The Department of Education Children's Social Care Reforms **Stable Homes Built on Love** published in February 2023, is organised under six pillars:

- 1 Family help that provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families.
- 2 A decisive multi-agency child protection system.
- 3 Unlocking the potential of family network.
- 4 Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care.
- 5 A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one.
- 6 A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data.

Across the Council's Children's Safeguarding, Education and Skills and Public Health teams, we continue to drive the recommendations of the Government publications and hold ourselves accountable for the implementation of the reforms both from a local and national context.

Our housing strategy aim to provide suitable high quality housing in the borough, with extra support for those most vulnerable children and families to ensure our young people have a safe environment to live and grow.

We continue to measure our progress in accordance with the legislative context and local delivery to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and their families. We actively engage at a national level with policy and practice change and ensure the implementation of this at a local level, in addition to recognising our strengths and areas of development.

Proposed governance

Children and Young People's Star Chamber

A new CYP Star Chamber - including young people, Elected Members and Leaders from the key statutory organisations, will be put in place to provide sharper focus and critically appraise progress against the key commitments in the Strategy to demonstrate impact.

The existing boards below will continue to provide oversight, assurance and monitor outcomes across their current scope of responsibility.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Responsibilities for:

- public health, healthy lifestyles, best start in life, alcohol and drugs, domestic abuse

Early Help Operational Board

- early/family help transformation

Community Safety Partnership

- domestic abuse, youth violence

Integrated Care System

Responsibilities for:

- health services, maternity and neonatal system, mental health, child mortality, core20plus5 – health inequalities

Safeguarding Children's Board

Responsibilities for:

- children's social care reforms
- Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill
- SEND and alternative provision
- children in care and care leavers

Corporate Parenting Strategic Group

SEND Partnership Board

Responsibilities for:

- continued development of first class education system

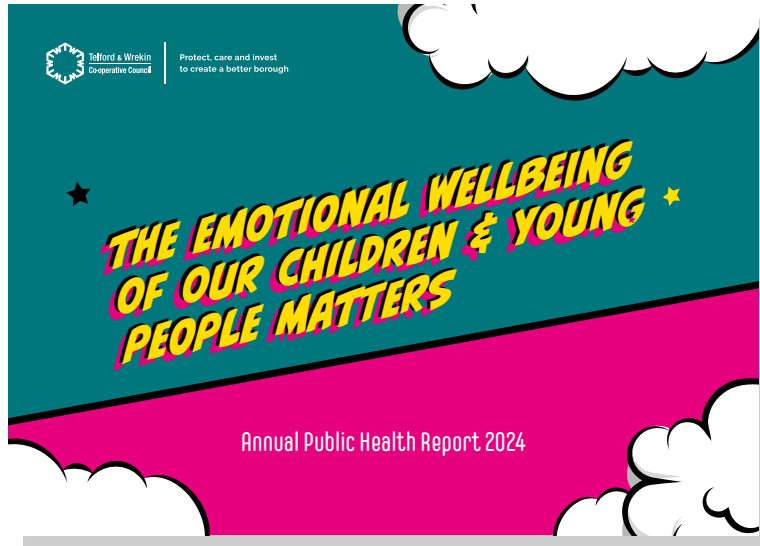
Start Well

Stay Well

Enjoy and Achieve

Keep Safe

What we hear from children and young people?



WHAT MAKES YOU SAD OR WORRIES YOU

...take it hard when my parents push me to do things or see people that I don't like

...not seeing family...

...being alone...basically I spend every day on my own

...situations you can find yourself in with family... 'family drama

...when my friends start acting up and isolate me for no reason

...anxious about going back to school after the school holidays...everyone finds school difficult at some point...school makes me sad and worried

...bullying and being picked on...being bullied constantly

...not being good enough...disappointing others... being underestimated...sometimes it motivates you

but often it makes you feel like you don't want to try because you aren't good enough.....can have a positive or negative effect..

...carbon emissions, the environment and the climate

...Friends dying and worrying about dying...

...social media...the news can make me sad...

...worry about things that are happening now, things that you can't change but you wish you could

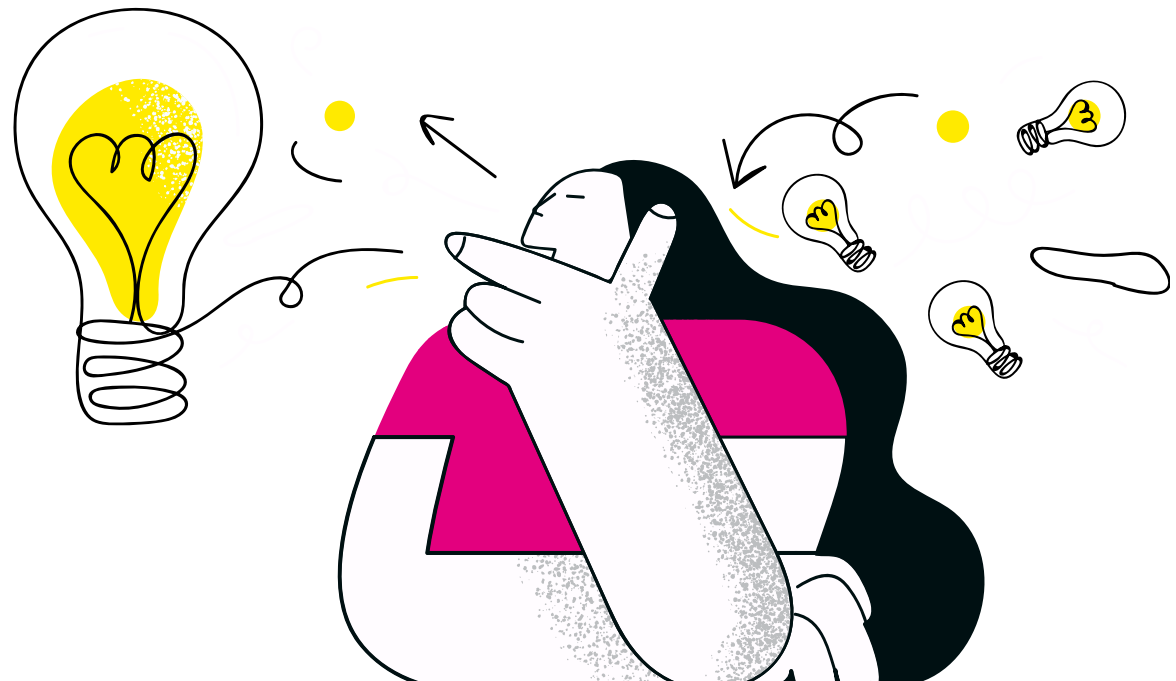
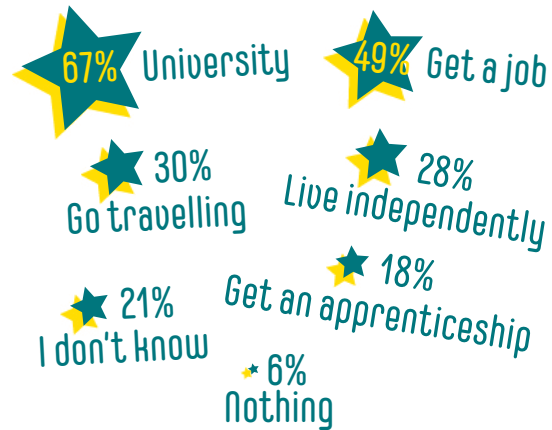
...fake news...altered images...made up stories on social media...avoid all social media...all these images have been edited, they are so fake

...bus times cause me anxiety...I have to get the college bus, which is always crowded and gives me anxiety



What our YPYoW survey shows:

What are your goals for when you leave school/college? Choose all that apply



What we hear from children and young people?

Do you feel you have the right support and opportunities to succeed in your goals?

...there is more support that I am looking for but it is hard to find and I don't drive or use buses so getting there can be difficult as I walk everywhere...

...I think there is adequate support out there but it's knowing what there is...

...from secondary school schools and then colleges should start teaching us about independence...

...lots of things that you do at school can help you in the future when you are independent, but many do not...

...some subjects are not relevant to life once you leave education

...education should teach us more practical things like life skills...school and college should help you more...they should teach us about taxes and bills

...family support system, and experience in going to university affects how much support we can get from them in completing applications for university...

...'parents who have no knowledge are less able to support or advise us than parents who do have experience...

...you have to figure things out for yourself if your family can't give you advice or support...

What do you do to keep fit and healthy

Care leavers are entitled to a free leisure centre membership taking part in PE/Gym at school

Going running on the track

Running around school all day

Flip Out in Stoke

Healthy eating was taught to me

I had no guidance about diet and nutrition

Nutrition the body needs

Can join that are similar to the young carers group

Swimming keeps me focused

Running helps me to destress

What our YPYoW survey shows:

What do you do to keep fit and healthy?
Choose all that apply

