

West Sussex Children and Young People's Plan

2022–2025



Foreword

Welcome to the latest version of the West Sussex Children and Young People's Plan. We have developed this plan following engagement and consultation with organisations and services in the Children First Partnership, and with West Sussex children, young people and families.

This plan is about and for all children and young people in West Sussex – including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged and sets out the partnership's shared priorities and ambitions for the next few years. It provides a clear yet flexible framework within which we can all work together to give each child and young person the best start in life, and the support they need to succeed and achieve their potential.

Throughout its life, the plan and how it is delivered will be reviewed and updated. This will be in response to the feedback we receive from children, young people and families about the difference our actions are making to their lives and to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to what is happening at national and local levels that affects what we are setting out to do and/or how we plan to do it.

Whilst we are working in challenging times – recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on families, wider society and organisations and services, as a partnership we know we

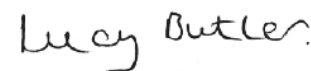
can adapt how we work and meet this challenge and future challenges together. We also know that by working together and strengthening our joint working arrangements we will add value to each other's work whilst also achieving the changes across our children's system that will deliver better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to develop this plan and we look forward to continuing our work together on its successful delivery.



Jacqui Russell

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People



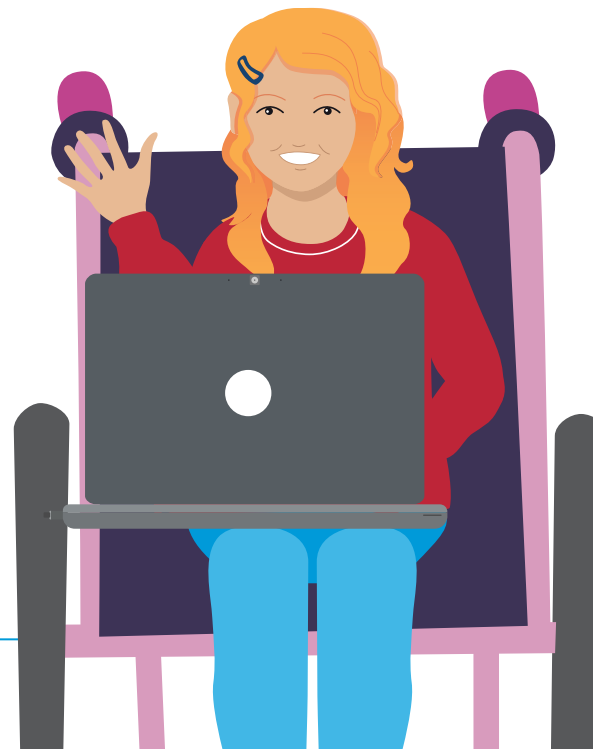
Lucy Butler

Director of Children, Young People and Learning

West Sussex Children First Partnership

The Children First Partnership leads on the Children and Young People's Plan for West Sussex.

This plan is focused on improving outcomes for children, young people and families and sets out the partnership's shared priorities and framework for achieving this.



Children First Partnership's Vision

The West Sussex approach puts the child first. We work with children, young people, families, communities, our partners and schools in a restorative, strength-based way. Strong relationships are at the heart of what we do.

We are committed to:

- Protecting our children and young people; especially the most vulnerable, always promoting their welfare
- Being inclusive; supporting the needs of our most vulnerable children, young people and families
- Working with each other to plan, design, buy and deliver the services and support that children, young people and their families need
- Raising the ambition for vulnerable families, so local services are driven to work better together to build their resilience and help them thrive
- Challenging inequalities
- Making sure children, young people and families, know what advice and support is available to meet their needs and how to access it
- Continuing to build strong partnerships in West Sussex to make best use of our resources to support children, young people and families
- Supporting teams and leaders to use data intelligence to inform decisions about practice and resources
- Providing children, young people and families with access to services when they need them – the right support at the right time
- Enabling children and young people to gain the knowledge, understanding, qualities and skills they need to succeed on their journey through their early years, school, work and life
- Promoting and supporting the development of safe and strong communities where people look out for and after each other



How we work

As a Partnership we will:

- Listen to, hear and act upon the voice of children, young people, families and professionals in everything we do
- Focus on the experience of children and young people in West Sussex and how we work together to make it better
- Make connections and build positive working relationships with children, families and professionals
- Value families – working with them to find the best ways to meet their needs
- Work as one (children and young people's) workforce in the design and delivery of training for practitioners
- Communicate openly and honestly with children, young people, families and professionals
- Hold each other to account for delivering what we have committed to do



West Sussex Children and Young People's Plan Priorities

The voices of children and young people and organisations across the partnership have helped to identify our priorities.

Priorities

- Keeping children and young people safe from harm
- Providing the earliest possible support to families on low incomes to minimise the impact this has on their lives
- Closing the disadvantage gap for children and young people across all key stages
- Improving children and young people's emotional health and well-being
- Strengthening our multi-agency approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Outcomes

- Children and young people are safe from harm
 - Children and young people succeed in their learning, have the skills they need for adult life and achieve their ambitions
 - Young people access further education and training, and progress successfully into employment
 - The gap between the attainment of vulnerable pupils and their peers is narrowed
 - Children, young people with SEND and their families understand and have confidence in the services available to them
 - Education, health, social care and services in the voluntary and community sector work together as one service to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families
 - Parent carers and families are more resilient
 - Children, young people and families have increased emotional health and well-being
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What are we setting out to achieve over the life of the Children and Young People's Plan?



Priority:

Keeping children and young people safe from harm

Keeping children and young people in West Sussex safe from harm is everyone's business. It relies on us working together to provide support as early as possible whenever problems emerge in a child or young person's life and wherever those problems occur. We are committed to delivering a strong multi-agency approach to child protection through our family safeguarding model, whilst our contextual safeguarding approach focuses on understanding and responding to children and young people's experiences of harm outside of their families - such as criminal and sexual exploitation and online harm.

To achieve this, we will:

- Provide services that focus on dealing with the root cause of issues that pose a risk to the safety of children and young people
 - Provide the earliest possible support to families to empower them to support and protect children and young people, meet their needs and help them achieve their ambitions
 - Improve children and young people's access to different learning-solutions for their education, to give them an increased opportunity to achieve their potential
 - Provide education and training for practitioners to help all children and young people to understand online risks and use the internet safely knowing how to recognise and challenge inappropriate online conversations, behaviours or requests.
 - Support families to develop the knowledge and skills they need to have conversations with children and young people about keeping themselves safe
 - Help children and young people to recognise the signs of exploitation and to have the confidence to seek help if they need it
 - Continue to improve the ability of services and organisations to recognise and tackle abuse and exploitation
 - Help children, young people and families develop coping strategies for dealing with emotional distress
 - Ensure there is provision in place to address risk outside the home, providing universal, targeted and specialist support as required.
 - Reduce the impact of domestic violence and abuse on children and young people's physical, emotional and mental health so they can go on to experience healthy relationships
 - Enable children, young people and their families to recognise that violence, and drug related violence is socially unacceptable
 - Reduce the number of children and young people involved in road traffic collisions
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Priority:

Providing the earliest possible support to families on low incomes to minimise the impact this has on their lives

Our aim is to ensure that being in poverty, in the short or longer term, should not be a barrier to any child or young person achieving what they want from life and that support is in place for them and their families, to help them be safe from harm, stay physically and emotionally healthy and focused on their future.

Our collective approach to supporting families on low incomes who are experiencing hardship will build on and develop further, what was put in place in West Sussex during the pandemic. This will include strategies for identifying families that may be at risk and intervening as early as possible when we know that families are in or imminently likely to be experiencing such difficulties.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure the early identification of families that may be at greater risk of experiencing hardship and identifying families in need that may not be already known to services
 - Have an agreed, well-coordinated strategy in place to support families experiencing short, medium and longer-term financial hardship
 - Ensure there is one central point of reference and referral in place, such as the West Sussex Community Hub that is central to the co-ordination of the offer to families
 - Ensure all complementary strategies and programmes are integral to the offer to families
 - Provide families experiencing hardship with access to expert advice and support on how their needs can be met
 - Increase the support available to lower income families during school holidays in the form of fun activities for children and young people and meals
 - Raise the ambition for vulnerable families, driving local services to work better together, to build their resilience and help them thrive
 - Help young people and families experiencing emotional or mental health issues as a result of financial insecurity to access support from specialist service providers and/or community groups and networks at local level
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Priority:

Closing the disadvantage gap for children and young people across all key stages

We have high aspirations for all children and young people in West Sussex and want to enable them to thrive and reach their potential, regardless of their circumstances. Our ambition, over the life of this plan, is for our vulnerable children and young people in early years settings and schools to achieve more closely in line with their peers at every stage of their education, including at GCSE level, so we see more of them progressing into further education.

To achieve this, we will:

- Help all our early years' settings, schools and colleges to identify and understand the issues vulnerable children and young people may face that could impact on their ability to succeed in their learning and achieve their ambitions
 - Support all our early years' settings, schools and colleges in putting strategies in place to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils
 - See an increase in the number of schools providing high quality, inclusive teaching and learning practice in all classrooms
 - See an increase in the number of young people between the ages of 16 and 18, in education, employment and training
 - Have an agreed county-wide approach to support all the transitions vulnerable children experience in their education e.g., between early years and all school phases, when moving from one type of learning setting to another and when moving from school into training and/or employment
 - Increase the number of school-based programmes focused on developing children and young people's resilience, self-esteem and confidence
 - Provide the earliest possible support for vulnerable families
 - Provide creative, flexible options for education of those children and young people, who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to attend school
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Priority:

Improving emotional health and well-being

In keeping with the recommendations in the Foundations for Our Future Report on the Sussex wide review of emotional health and well-being support for children and young people, we want to see a redesigned, joined up, comprehensive and effective emotional health and well-being service in place that delivers the care and support children and young people need.

To achieve this, we will:

- Have an effective, comprehensive emotional health and wellbeing service in place across Sussex
 - Provide children and young people who identify with having emotional health or wellbeing needs access to the earliest possible help
 - Provide children and young people, families and professionals with information about what emotional health and wellbeing advice and services are available and how to access them
 - Provide early years' settings, schools and colleges with the resources, training and support they need to respond confidently to the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and young people
 - Reduce the number of children and young people being excluded from schools; and the negative impact this can have on their learning, relationships at home, self-esteem, emotional well-being and mental health
 - Support all children and young people to become resilient
 - Empower children and young people to look after their own mental health before crisis and to have the confidence to reach out if they need professional help
 - Help families to know more about the challenges children and young people may experience with their mental health and how best to support them
 - Meet the mental health needs of children and young people in care and leaving care to build their resilience and help them achieve positive outcomes
 - Develop the skills and confidence of the children and young people's workforce in promoting and responding to emotional wellbeing and mental health
 - Develop a digital toolkit, co-designed by young people and health services, as part of the everyday support available to meet young people's needs
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Priority:

Strengthening our multi-agency approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND

Our SEND and Inclusion Strategy aims to ensure all children and young people in West Sussex will, irrespective of their learning needs or abilities, gain the skills and confidence to live well in their community. They will be supported and nurtured through an educational, health and social care system that responds to their circumstances and prepares them for adulthood.

To achieve this, we will:

- Listen to and act upon the voice and wishes of children and young people and their families - as the experts in their lives
 - Reduce exclusions for children and young people with SEND
 - Ensure we have systems and provision in place for intervening early, preventing the escalation of difficulties to more serious levels and responding to the full range of children and young people's needs
 - Support families to be more self-sufficient and resilient
 - Reduce waiting lists for access to support
 - See the Therapeutic Thinking approach to behaviour and tools embedded in schools' practice and in their support for families
 - Provide and promote resources, training and tools to support mainstream schools and settings to further develop inclusive practice
 - Support mainstream schools in providing and delivering a curriculum that is ambitious in meeting the needs of all children and young people
 - Have systems in place so children, young people and families only need to tell their story once
 - Provide trusted adults to help families and young people to navigate their way through the SEND system
 - Have a collaborative, multi-agency approach in place to meet the needs of children, young people and their families
 - Establish a children and young people's workforce that understands and demonstrates best practice in terms of inclusion and the provision of support for children and young people with SEND
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How are we going to put the Children and Young People's Plan into action?

This plan is not being delivered in isolation, but in the context of a wide range of other partnership work, strategies and plans that are closely linked to and critical to the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan.

To put our plan into action we will:

Set up working groups focused on each of the Children and Young People Plan's priorities. These will be led by specialists who will work with service leads and practitioners from different agencies and services that have an interest and the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the development of an action plan for the priority area. Each of the priority planning groups will also include input from children and young people and families.

Each of the working group leads will be supported by a management group including all the other working group leads to help to ensure coherence and synergy between the work of the groups and avoid any duplication of work or resources.



We need safe spaces where we can go and be understood; somewhere we can be ourselves

The working groups will generate action plans that will help to deliver the CYPP's overall outcomes; positively contribute to the work of any or all of the other priorities in the plan; and are supportive of the Children First Partnership vision, principles and the way in which it has pledged to work.

The leads of the working groups will ensure their plans include work to determine what's already in place that is working well and needs to be built upon or developed further, the gaps in provision or systems and practice that need to be filled and how, and ways of monitoring and evaluating progress and achievements in relation to their priority. We will measure how much has been achieved, the quality of what has been put in place and the impact it has had on the lives of children, young people and families.

Each lead will regularly report on progress and achievements to the Children First Board on a quarterly basis and will be expected to make recommendations for actions that will ensure the positive impact of the plan is felt within children's systems, our communities and most importantly on the lives of children, young people and families. The Board will offer support and challenge to the work of each priority group and identify ways in which further value may be added to their plans.



How will we know if our Children and Young People's Plan is making a difference to people's lives?

The Children and Young People's Plan is owned by the organisations and services that form the Children First Partnership; helping us to ensure we have a joined-up approach to the achievement of its shared priorities.

The delivery of the plan will be monitored and evaluated throughout each year of its life – so that adjustments and improvements can be made as we go along. This will involve services and organisations working with groups of children, young people and families in telling us what difference the work is making to their lives and what needs to change to make things even better.

Progress on the delivery of the plan will be reported to the Children First Board at their quarterly meetings.

Any actions necessary will be identified in the report and any changes to the Children and Young People's Plan or its plans for delivery will need to be approved by the Board.

To find out more or to get involved

For any queries about the Children and Young People's Plan, to request a copy of the plan in a different format or language, or to find out more about how you can get involved in its delivery or evaluation please email: CYP@westsussex.gov.uk

To find out how the Children and Young People's Plan is being put into practice, the partners involved and the difference it is making to the lives of children, young people and families, please visit [Children and Young People's Plan, Your Voice West Sussex](#).

