

Local Government Association – Innovation Zone

Making SEND Everyone's Business in Hertfordshire

Hero Slinn, Director of Inclusion & Skills

Sam Rostom, Head of Improvement & Transformation



Who Are We?

Hero Slinn

Director of Inclusion & Skills



Sam Rostom

Head of Improvement &
Transformation

Hertfordshire Context



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

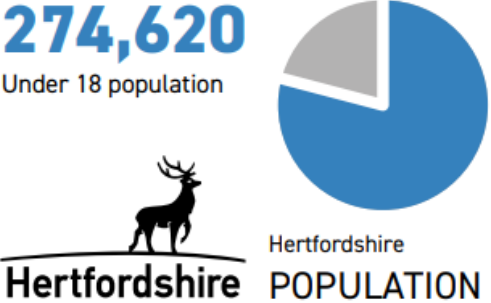


ABOUT HERTFORDSHIRE...

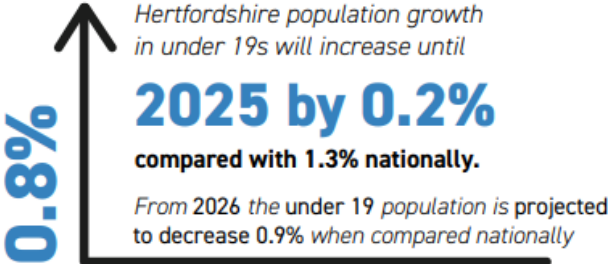
Population



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2022

Deprivation



(the national average is 18.5%) (2021)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool



(the national average is 23.1%) (2022)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

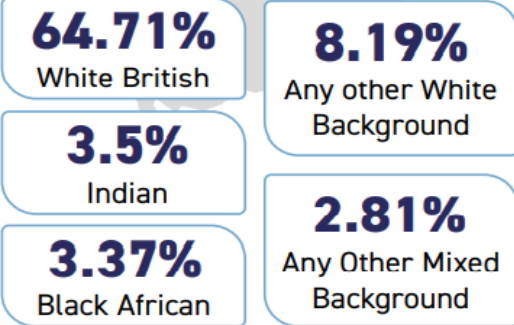


(the national avg 23.1%) (2022)

Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool

Diversity

Top 5 (Reception – Year 11)
ETHNIC GROUPS of school-age children attending Hertfordshire schools



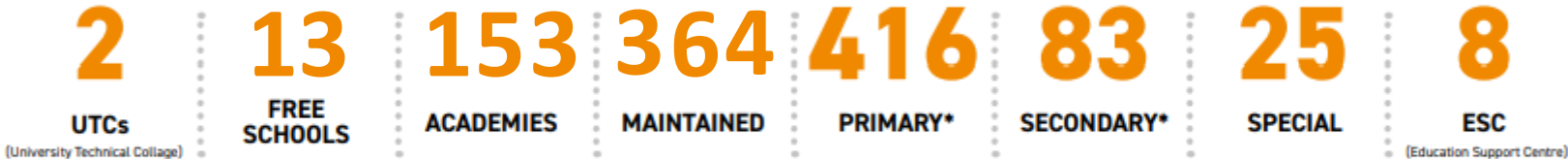
Source: Spring census 2022 year groups



Young People's Health & Wellbeing Survey 2021 August (Public Health, YCH Services for Young People, and HCT Public Health Nursing Service)

ABOUT HERTFORDSHIRE

Of the **532 SCHOOLS** in HERTFORDSHIRE:



*Primary includes junior, first, nursery and infant schools **Secondary includes middle schools and all through schools. Schools may appear in more than one category

Internal Hertfordshire County Council data 2022



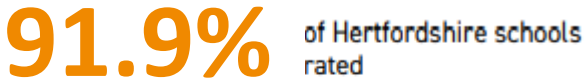
PRIMARY SCHOOLS
with **English** as an **additional language**
(the national average 21.2%) (2022)

Local Authority Interactive Tool



SECONDARY SCHOOLS
with **English** as an **additional language**
(the national average 17.5%) (2022)

Local Authority Interactive Tool

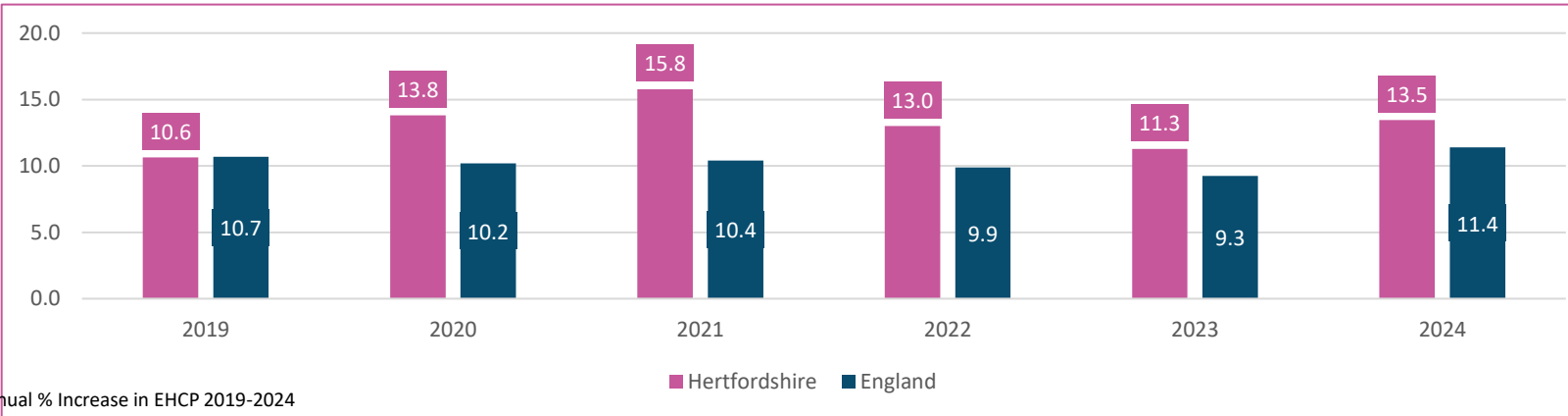


GOOD OR OUTSTANDING
by **Ofsted**
(the national average is 88%)
(2022)

Source: Ofsted Management information

11,897

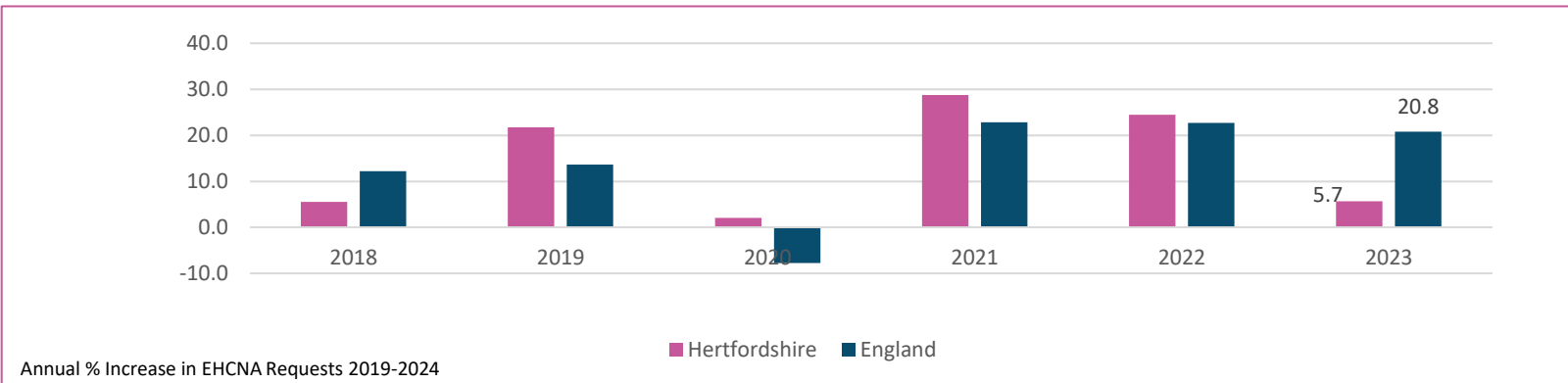
EHCPs as at Jan 24
(+13.5% from 2023)



5th
Rank /153 by
total number of
EHCPs

2849

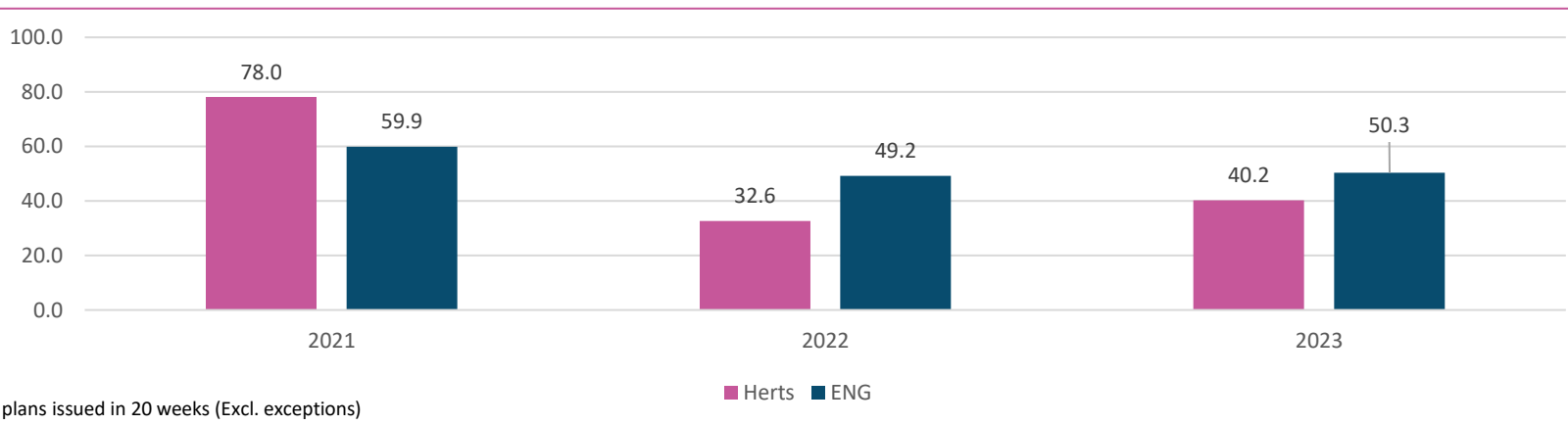
Requests for EHCNA
(+5.7%)



5th
Rank /153 by
total number of
requests

40.2%

Of assessments
completed were
within 20 weeks
(excluding exceptions)



103rd
Rank /153
Lower middle
quartile

What is our Challenge?



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer



Local (and national) context

- **Rapidly rising requests for EHC Needs Assessments.** Hertfordshire has experienced a significantly more rapid rate of annual increase (typically around 14.0%) compared to statistical neighbours (10.2%) or national (10.1%) comparators. The number of children with EHCPs has **increased by 185% 2015-2023** compared to 128% nationally and 115% for statistical neighbours.
- The **timeliness and effectiveness of the delivery of our statutory SEND duties** received the highest levels of parental dissatisfaction in our parent / carer survey results published in November 2022.
- **Performance challenges in delivery of statutory duties**, particularly in the timeliness and quality of EHCPs, despite a number of smaller scale service improvements projects. The workforce did not have sufficient capacity to support the levels of growth in need whilst improving at the pace needed.
- Rising levels of **complaints and legal challenge**, often linked to **communication – significant levels of parental dissatisfaction**



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer





SEND is everybody's business.



2. SEND Partnership Inspection report outcome

Two areas for priority action (PAs)

1. Leaders should act with urgency to accelerate their data dashboard work so that they have a shared, accurate understanding of the exact provision for SEND in Hertfordshire, and its quality, so that they can target coherent activity where it is needed most.
2. Leaders should work more collaboratively and in partnership across all of SEND provision, with secure governance and quality assurance arrangements in place, and with a particular urgent focus on addressing the areas leaders have identified in their strategy for SEND.

Five improvement Areas (IAs)

1. Leaders across the partnership should address the variability in children and young people's access to health services that exist in different areas within the local area so that all children and young people with SEND in Hertfordshire have an equal opportunity to access appropriate provision and support that meets their needs.
2. Leaders across the partnership should act to improve the quality of new and existing EHC plans and ensure that plans meaningfully capture the voice and experience of children and young people with SEND and their families.
3. Leaders should take action to ensure that pupils with EHC plans are attending the provision as stated on their plans, that the provision is effective in meeting needs, and that the use of part-time timetables is appropriate and is carefully managed and monitored.
4. Leaders should further address the gaps and delays in service provision to meet the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND. This includes services for ASD, ADHD, audiology and speech and language; and that appropriate support is in place for children and young people who are awaiting mental health support to mitigate the risk of any escalation of concern.
5. The local area partnership should act to address parents' and carers' concerns at an early stage to reduce dissatisfaction and eliminate the need for parents and carers to have to follow formal routes

We embarked on a significant improvement journey...



Making SEND Everyone's Business – LAUNCHED

A Programme of Workforce Transformation to Increase Capacity and Enhance Capability

The initial **proposal for investment** was put forward in **spring 2023 before inspection**, culminating in agreement by Cabinet in July 2023, for an **annual investment of £5m**, largely to increase staffing for Statutory SEND duties. An **additional £2m investment** was agreed by Cabinet in December 2023, to further increase capacity.

The Context:

Increased Demand

Rapidly rising requests for EHC Needs Assessment.

Parental Dissatisfaction

Timeliness and effectiveness of delivery of statutory SEND duties received the highest levels of parental dissatisfaction in 2022 parent / carer survey results..

Workforce Challenges

Challenges with staff retention, recruitment and job satisfaction.

The Response:

- **New delivery model** - Increased specialist input and a more joined up approach across services
- **Recruitment campaign** - to secure up to 140 'motivated' new staff
- **Workforce development** - and a focus on transferrable skills and lived Experience
- Improve **timeliness and quality**
- Improve **communication**
- Improve **job satisfaction and retention** of the workforce

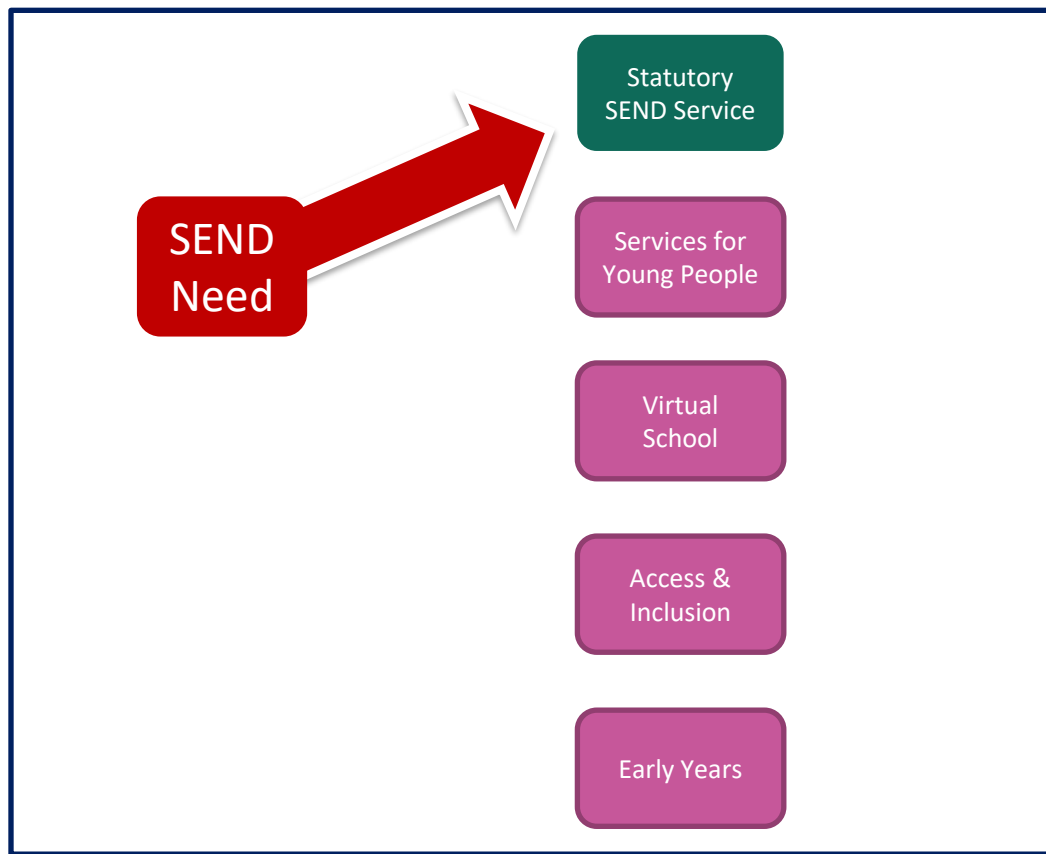
New Delivery Model



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

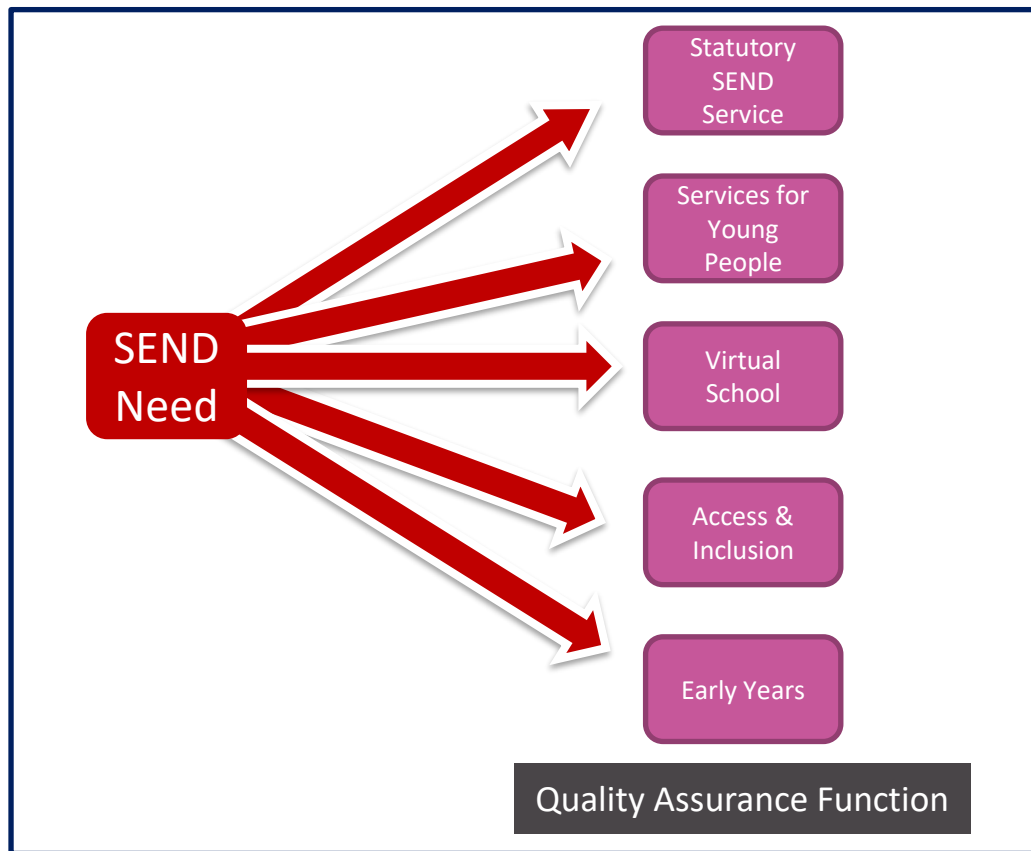


Previous model



- × Single point of failure - highly pressured service
- × Challenging caseloads
- × Poor performance – not meeting statutory requirements
- × Lack of capacity to improve quality

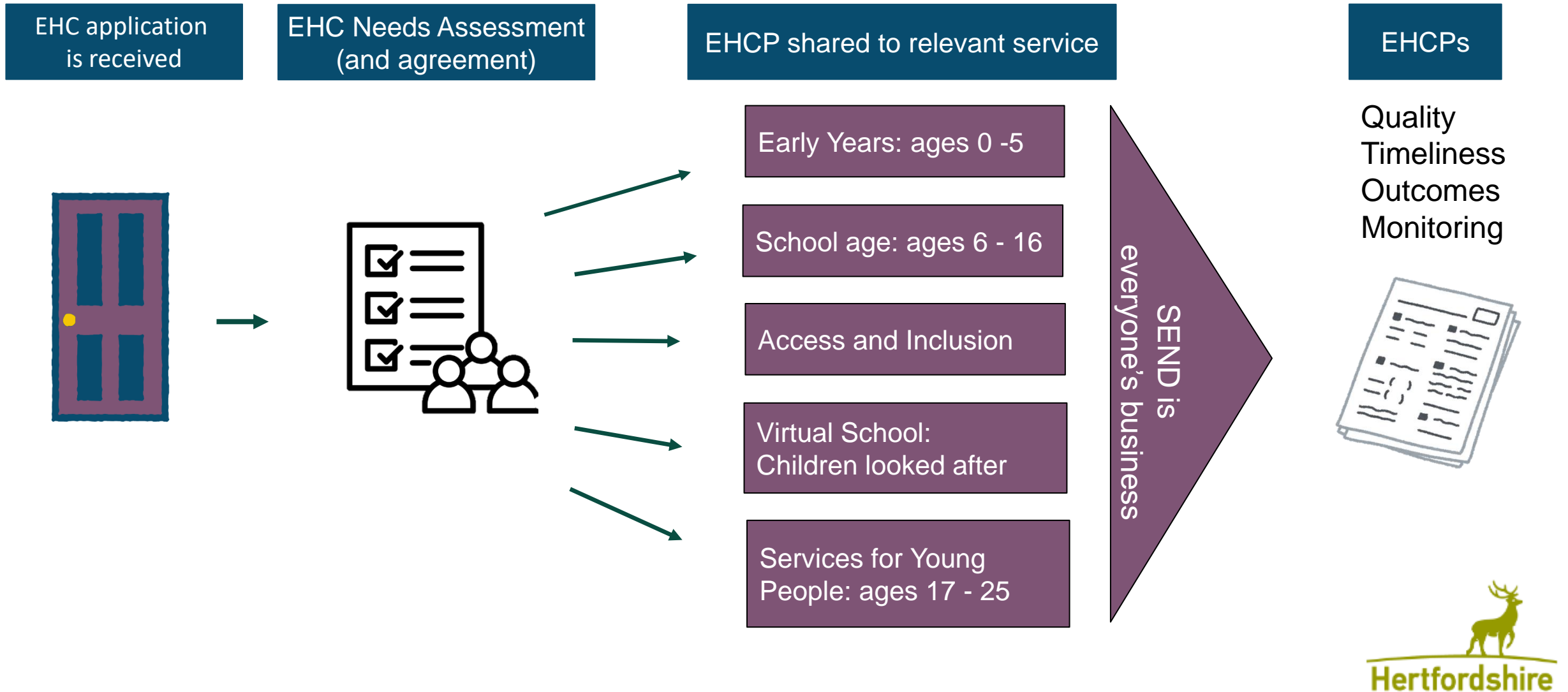
Target model



- ✓ SEND is everyone's responsibility
- ✓ Manageable caseloads
- ✓ Dedicated quality assurance function
- ✓ Meet statutory requirements (inc. expectations)

Making SEND Everyone's Business

A new service delivery model



MSEB EHCP Caseload Ambitions

Prior to MSEB, one team held ALL EHCP case work and those caseloads were significant (+500), impacting on the timeliness and quality of delivery – this was not sustainable or compatible with our required improvement ambitions

Service	Pre-MSEB Programme caseload	MSEB Programme Caseload ambition	Sept EHCCo caseload approx.
Early Years	0	50 – 60	80 - 90
School Age SEND	450 – 550	170 – 200	180 – 200
Services for Young People	0	250	180 - 200
Virtual School	0	50 - 60	60 - 70
SEND Front Door Assessment Team	150	30 - 40	50 – 60
Access, Inclusion and Alternative Provision	0	50 - 60	40 – 50



A key objective for the model is the reduce caseloads in a nuanced way across the directorate



Recruitment Approach & SEND Academy



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer



MSEB Programme Aims

- Recruit up to 140 'motivated' new staff
- Transferrable Skills and Lived Experience
- Improve timeliness and quality
- Improve communication
- Increased specialist input and a more joined up approach across service
- Improve job satisfaction and retention of the workforce
- Hertfordshire *an Employer of choice for SEND Professionals*



900+ applications

300+ interviews

138 staff
onboarded and
through SEND
Academy

Approximately 50%
staff have lived
experience



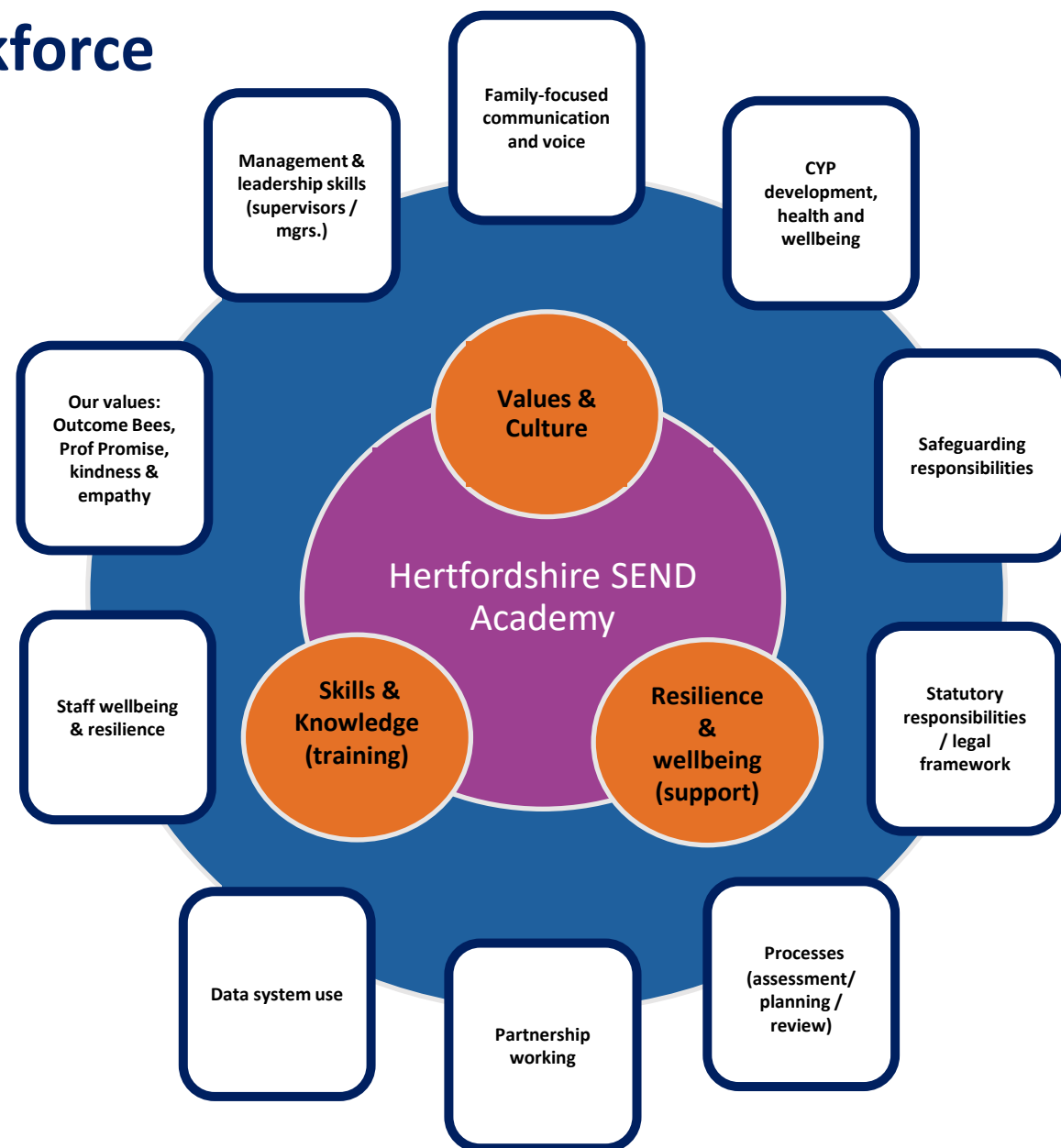
hertfordshire

SEND Academy – Professionalising the workforce



Hertfordshire SEND ACADEMY

- For new and existing staff - A 6-week intensive training offer
- **Aiming to improve skills, knowledge, working practices and job satisfaction for new and existing staff.** Accredited qualifications offered as part of model
- Combining theory-based learning, independent study, reviewing live cases, shadowing, visits to provision, accessing learning resources / intranet hub.
- Practical exercises and assessments at key points built-in to gauge staff competence in statutory SEND practice in relevant roles.
- Looking to build in joint training and other engagement activities with education and health partners to promote partnership working and good practice sharing.
- Elements on building staff resilience and wellbeing, with ongoing activities to support. Also, on promoting our values, building a supportive working culture and 'One Team' ethos.



Quality Assurance



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer



Expanded SEND Quality Assurance function

- Learning from what works well in Childrens Social Care, we have expanded and enhanced the SEND QA Function
- This is significantly increasing capacity to support the quality improvement of the work, including increased auditing work across SEND.
- To further embed the QA process, two new Practice Development Lead joined in March and April. They will play a pivotal role in 'closing the loop' and ensuring that learning is taken forward from auditing activity.
- They will be delivering bespoke training on identified areas for improvement, via training sessions, plus supporting teams with celebrating good practice and implementing any changes to improve practice.



Making SEND Everyone's Business

An expanded SEND Quality Assurance function

- There are pre-existing mature and outstanding quality assurance functions existing within sectors and organisations within the Local Area Partnership.
- Learning from what works well in NHS organisations and within Children's Social Care, we have expanded and enhanced the SEND QA Function.
- New multiagency governance has been established including a partnership QA Board and QA Framework. Good feedback on both from DfE advisors and NHS England advisors.
- This has significantly increased capacity to support the quality improvement of the work, including increased auditing work across SEND, SEND Quality visits with NHS Service providers, as well as multi-agency auditing involving SENCOs and parent/carers reps.
- Alongside existing QA practitioners, 2x new Practice Development Lead roles have also been created to play a pivotal role in 'closing the loop' and ensuring that learning is taken forward from auditing activity. This includes delivering bespoke training on identified areas for improvement, supporting teams with celebrating good practice and implementing any changes to improve practice.

Accurate, Compassionate and Timely
(ACT) communication

Skilled workforce

Early support and transition planning

Co-production

Clear criteria, standards and
processes

Accessible and equitable provision

CYP and parent/carers voice

Joined up services

Clear, smart, trackable outcomes

CYP-centred planning

Hertfordshire's 10 principles of quality

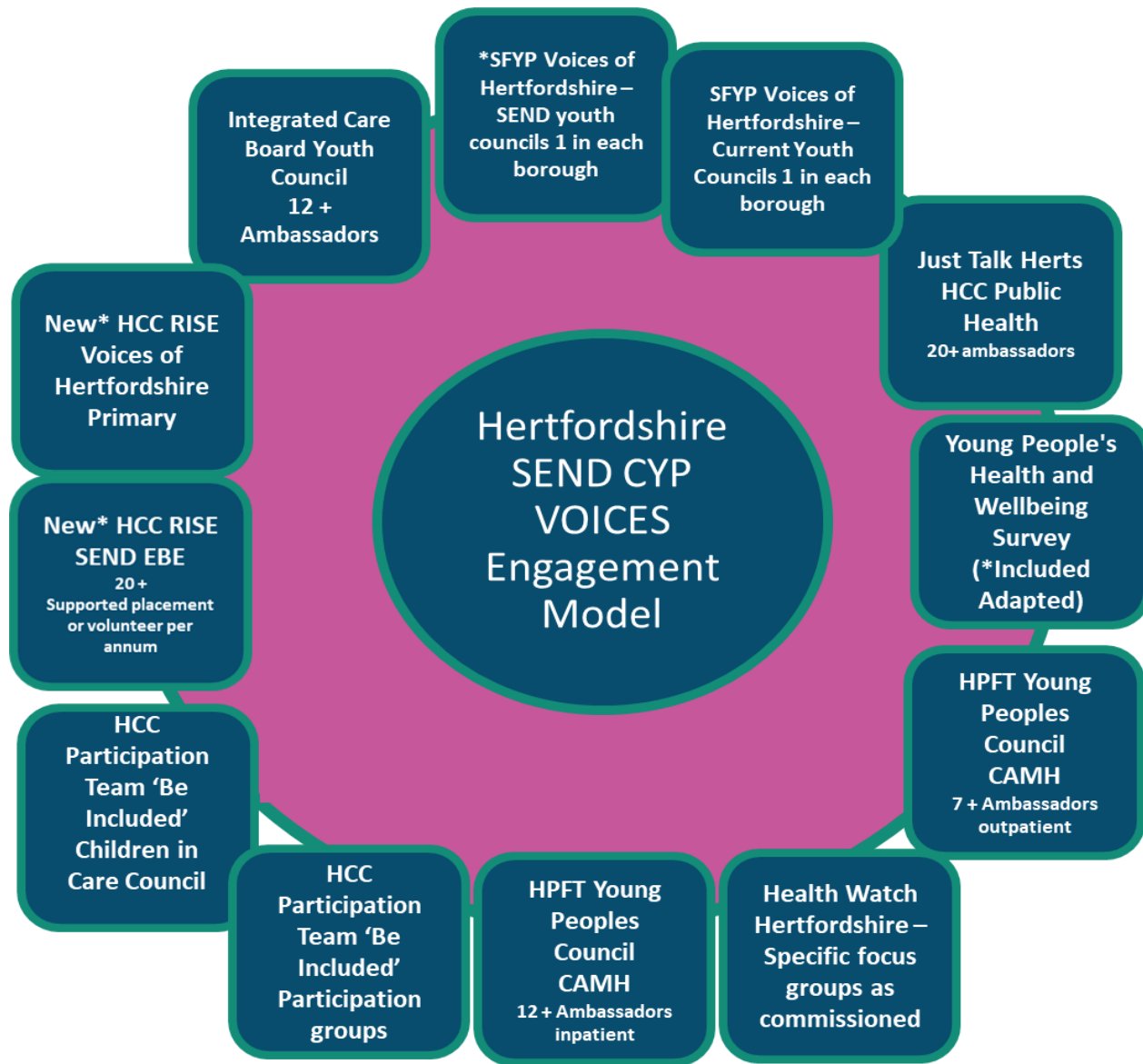
Participation, Engagement & Communications



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer



Voices of Hertfordshire



"I want to help give young people and children a much better experience of living with a special educational need as I strongly feel it is not something that should ever hold you back in life. I want to give them opportunity to be heard and connect and learn from other people."

- CJ

IMPACT



Ensure access to Designated clinical officers and their work



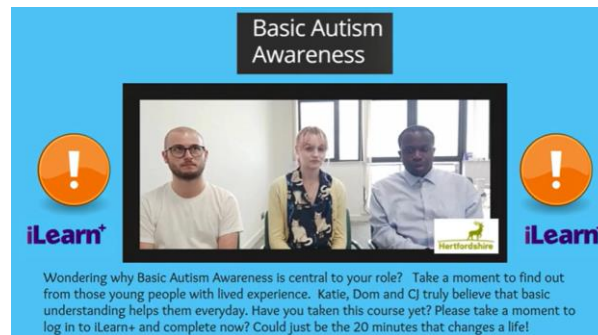
Reverse mentoring
Hertfordshire SEND Team really do want to hear from children and young people with SEND. Today we began our meetings between Directors and young people with SEND (Experts by Experience). Ellis (Expert) and Hero (Director of Inclusion and Skills) met and decided on a project to work on together that will benefit young people with SEND.



Involvement of young people with SEND in specialist building review

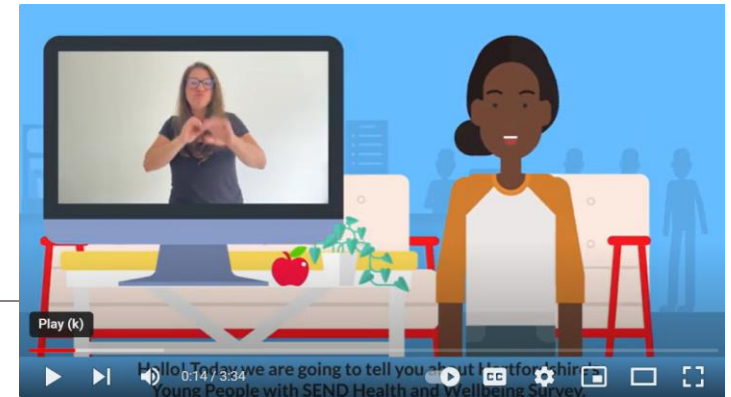


Voices of Hertfordshire



Coproduction of a county / service wide accessible approach for gathering CYP views perspectives

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/thisisme



Coproduction of an adapted HCC public health / SfYP adapted health and wellbeing survey for those in specialist provision, elective home educated / out of county

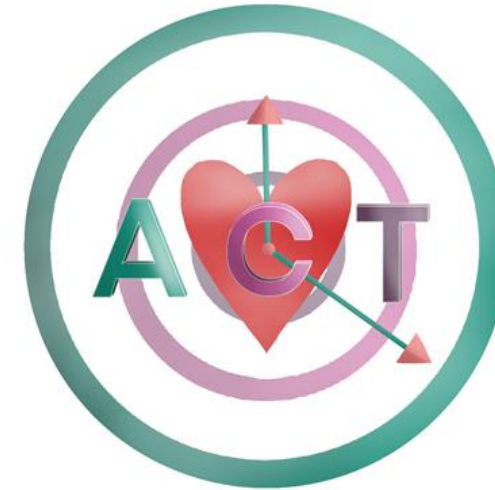


Accurate, Compassionate, Timely (ACT)

Devised and adopted from our parent / carer forum (HPCI)

We have a shared vision in Hertfordshire for communication. It is a joint commitment to a culture of accurate, compassionate and timely communication. We recognise that effective information sharing has a huge positive impact on the experience of everyone in the system.

[Hertfordshire SEND Communications approach | Hertfordshire County Council \(contensis.com\)](#)



ACCURATE.COMPASSIONATE.TIMELY

The So What..?



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer



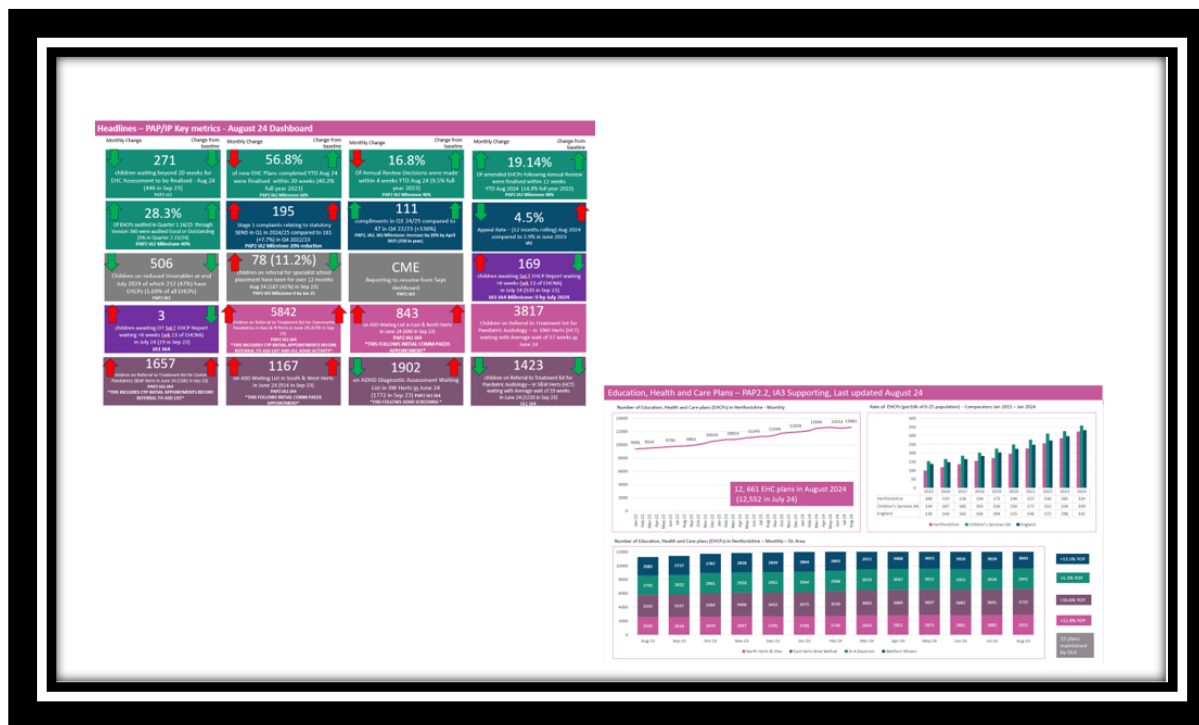
Measuring & Reporting on Impact

A data dashboard has been developed to present MSEB impacts over time, with a particular focus on impacts for families.

The following KPIs will be monitored and regularly updated in the data dashboard:

- Young Person experience measures ('Voices of Hertfordshire').
- Outcomes for Young People
- Parent/Carer Experience Surveys (see next slide – we are developing a feedback survey for parent / carers, children & young people and professionals to gauge views on how our staff communicate).
- Setting Experiences
- Invision Quality of EHCP Ratings
- Compliment & Complaint Numbers and Rates
- Call Metrics
- Rates of Legal Challenge / Use of Mediation

SEND Dashboard development



- Inspection findings highlighted the importance of a shared **understanding of the exact provision** for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Hertfordshire **and its quality so that leaders can target coherent improvement activity**
- The local area was data-rich but wanted to do more to bring together information into help drive insight and improvement
- Key feature has been developing a partnership dashboard to promote **shared ownership** across the partnership of the data insight that leaders use to inform improvements and provide **consistent and accurate presentation of performance data** that relates to improvements across education, health and social care.
- Alongside strengthening our wider work to mature culture and governance arrangements, the dashboard is helping to promote working together in partnership through an **understanding of performance to support prioritisation** and delivery of the areas for improvement and **targeting of activity where it is most needed**

Making SEND Everyone's Business

Some early indicators of impact

Timeliness: 20-week timeliness at 58% (year to date to July 24) compared to 40% 2023. Now performing above national average (50.3% in 2023).

Quality of new EHCP Plans: 36.2% EHCPs audited good/outstanding in Q1 24/25 (improved from 5% in Q2 23/24). Invision360 national benchmark is 40%.

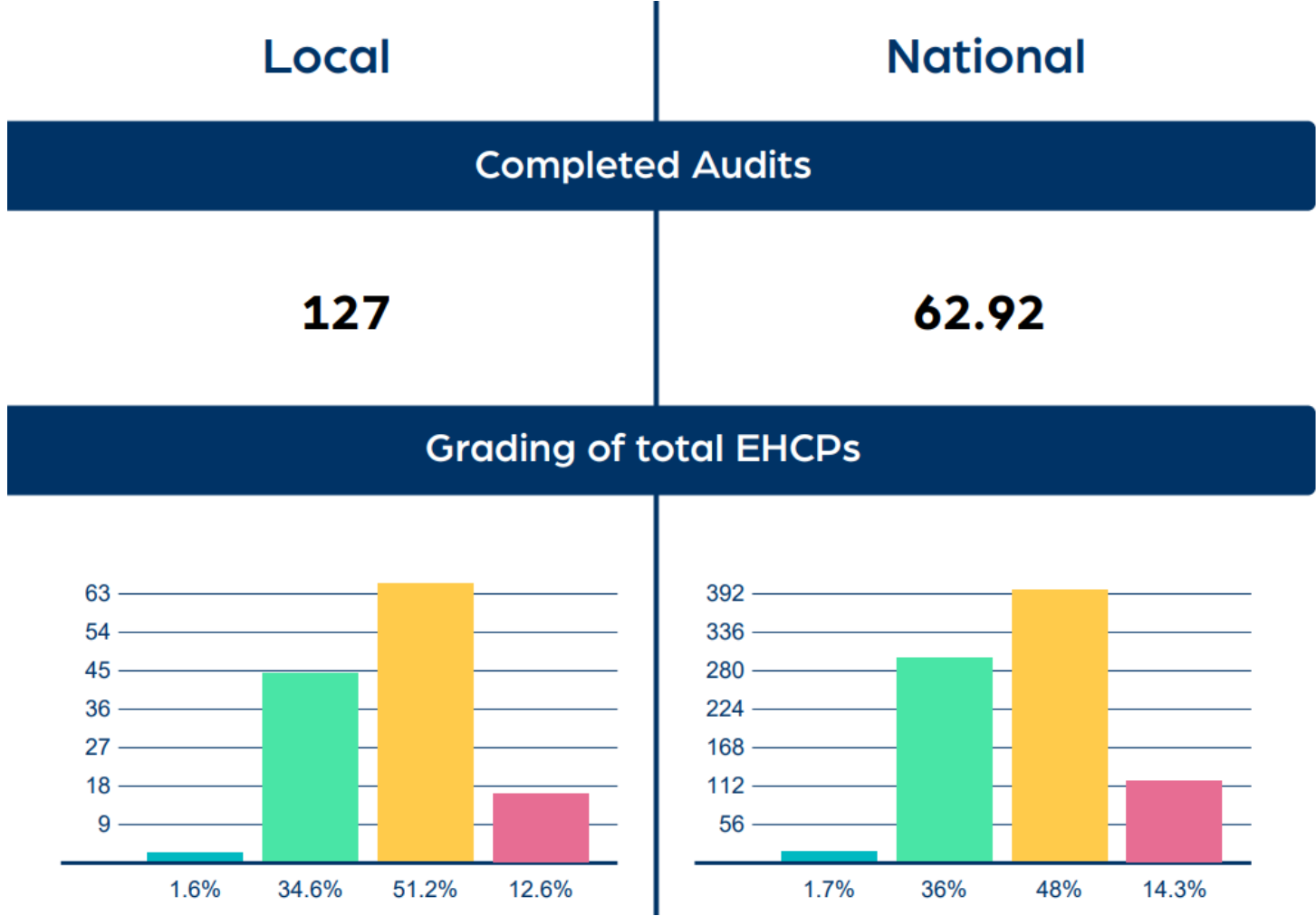
Parental satisfaction is beginning to improve: 61% parent/carers surveyed satisfied/very satisfied with process of getting EHCP in Q1 24/25. This is an increase from 50% during 23/24.

Compliments & Complaints: Complaints reduced from 5.1% in 2023 to 4.8% in 2024 and compliments increased from 1.6% in 2023 to 3.1%

Staff feedback: 90% staff feel supported by managers and are committed to Hertfordshire

“She commented how much more responsive the SEN Officer was regarding the Annual Review process this time round, responding to her emails in good time. She also commented that the tone of the responses was so different from her previous experiences and she felt that the SEN Officer was putting the child and family at the centre, being empathetic and understanding.”

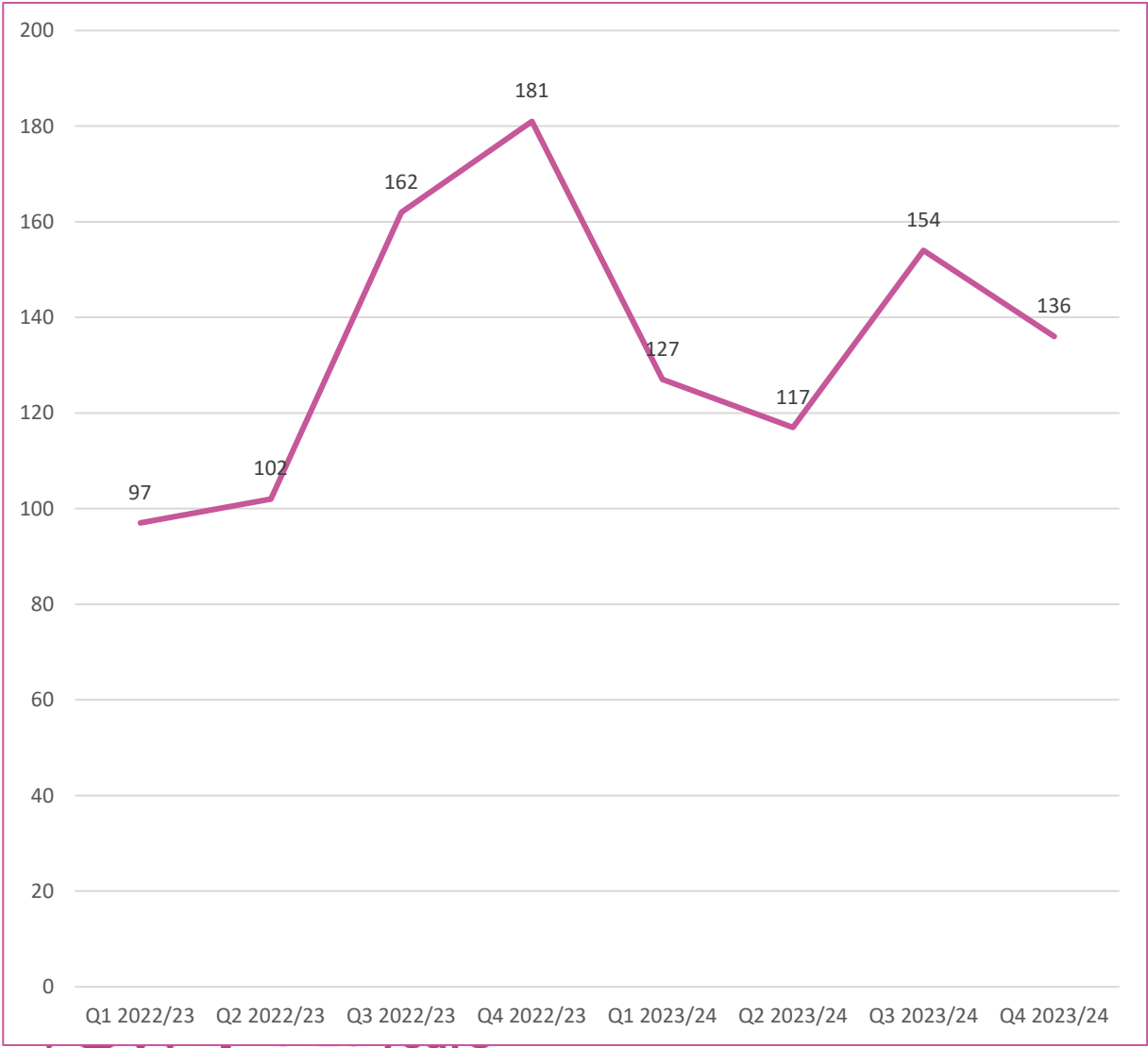
Latest Quality Assurance Data (EHCPs)



Quality of new EHCP Plans: 36.2% EHCPs audited good/outstanding in Q1 24/25 (improved from 5% in Q2 23/24). Invision360 national benchmark is 40%.

Parental satisfaction is beginning to improve: 61% parent/carers surveyed satisfied/very satisfied with process of getting EHCP in Q1 24/25. This is an increase from 50% during 23/24.

Complaints



Compliments



What next?

Staff wellbeing

Celebrating good practice

Focus on communications
(with families and schools)

Further QA work

Embed Voice of Child

SEND Academy as BAU