

# WORKFORCE STRATEGY - OUR AMBITIONS FOR OUR PEOPLE 2024/28

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Herefordshire is a lovely place to live and to work and our children's services are ambitious and hardworking, determined to be judged good and outstanding in the future, confident that in everything we do we make a positive difference in children's lives. Our workforce are a vital part of our improvement journey and we encourage each of our colleagues to have a genuine impact and to help improve services and protect the children and young people in our county.

Building an ethos of working successfully together with families, partners and our workforce has been key to our improvement journey so far, as well as being able to step back and listen to the experiences and concerns of families and our colleagues.

As a leadership team we are constantly learning from the people we work with, and one thing we've learnt from recent experience is to never stop listening and to never stop having those conversations – that way, we remain connected to their experiences.

Herefordshire's improvement plan is testament to that. It has been prepared with input from our workforce, children, young people, parents and carers, and multi-agency and cross-sector partners, and responds to improvement areas identified by the service and by Ofsted.

Having a workforce that is energised, enthused and solution focussed to take on these challenges is a major contributing factor to our improvement journey.

It is important as the Leadership Team for Children and Young People for Herefordshire we set out our ambitions for our workforce and what each and every one of you can expect working for our directorate.

We are excited and confident about our future and the developments and opportunities set out in this document. We have already made progress and this has been evidenced through conversations with you, our workforce and through the feedback received from Ofsted monitoring visits. We still have a lot to do and a long journey ahead of us and by implementing our ambitions will enable you to feel you contribute and are fulfilled in your roles whilst ultimately delivering a great service to children, young people and their families.

# INTRODUCTION

This document describes our ambitions for our People 2024 - 2028 that will support the Children's Services Improvement Plans and supporting all colleagues to be the best they can be. This is where we aim to be in 2028 and will be accompanied by a Workforce Improvement plan that is refreshed periodically but monitored through our Workforce Delivery Board and overall Improvement Board together with our improvement partner Leeds City Council.

This strategy is specific for the Children and Young People Directorate and is aligned to the Councils Corporate Workforce Strategy 2024-2028 and corporate plan.

Through you, our workforce, we aim to develop our Children's and Young People's Services to consistently good over the next 4 years.

This document is not just for frontline staff, is applicable to all members of the Children and Young People's workforce.

We can only achieve our goals through a skilled, engaged and flexible workforce who can respond quickly and positively to changing demands. We are committed to providing you with all the support and development that you need and supporting a workplace culture that is compassionate, respectful and positive for everyone.

By delivering these ambitions together, we can ensure that our children and young people receive the best possible services from us and that we are seen to be a great employer and a successful organisation.



# OUR SUCCESS IS THROUGH OUR WORKFORCE

As part of our improvement journey and transformation we need to consider:

- Where we need to strengthen our workforce
- What skills shortages we are facing
- The types of knowledge and skills we will need now, and in the future
- How we recruit and retain the best workforce against a backdrop of national challenges in recruitment and retention
- What the local challenges are, e.g. demand for services, geography etc.
- What are or might be the nationally challenges we face e.g. Ofsted judgements, commissioners report, recruitment and retention of key roles and skills

Our workforce is not just restricted to those directly employed, it should and does include those who work with us through temporary arrangements, corporate support and partnerships who will contribute greatly to our success together with our permanent workforce.

Our children and young people deserve the best possible service whenever they need it.



# SUPPORTING YOU TO BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

We want you to feel engaged with us, skilled enough to do your job well and flexible and responsive to change.

Effective and easy to use systems and processes within a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion will support all parts so our approach will positively impact on our effectiveness as an organisation, with your help, we aim to:

- Ensure that there is clarity about our ways of working, leadership, your role and what is expected of you
- Develop a learning culture where every individual knows and takes their responsibilities seriously and clearly understands the consequences of non-delivery
- Have clear and meaningful objectives that are cascaded through the organisation from senior leaders, in a clear and timely manner
- Learn from our mistakes, creating great solutions, and sharing our experiences and knowledge to improve
- Minimise bureaucracy making it easier for you to support and help young people and families
- Communicate with you in an honest and timely way
- Develop channels for you to offer views and thoughts and get a solution focussed timely response
- Develop a safe, supportive, cohesive and positive culture where we all live and work by our values
- Make efficiency improvements that are based on reliable data and measure their success



# OUR VISION FOR YOU, OUR WORKFORCE



**01.**

We want you to feel fulfilled, fairly treated and valued, whatever role you undertake for us. We also want you to feel able to offer feedback and contribute to the development of service and of a great working environment.

**02.**

Great leaders and managers are fundamental in delivering these ambitions, we want to attract, develop and retain the best people, and we can only do that if they feel part of a team and know they make a positive contribution.

**03.**

Whether you have career ambitions or are content to remain in a job that you enjoy, we want you to feel part of a great organisation and be a motivated colleague.

# OUR VALUES

In addition to the corporate values adopted by the wider council (available on the Councils intranet pages) we have some service specific ones that we developed about how we will work with Herefordshire's Children, Young People, and Families.

**“DOING OUR VERY BEST FOR HEREFORDSHIRE'S CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THEIR FAMILIES” MEANS THAT:**

**WE WILL DO OUR VERY BEST TO MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GET THE RIGHT HELP AT THE RIGHT TIME**

**WE WILL KEEP OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO**

**WE WILL WORK TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES' WIDER NETWORK OF SUPPORT AND OUR PARTNER AGENCIES**

**WE WILL WORK HARD TO HAVE POSITIVE ENDINGS WHEN WE MOVE ON**

**WE WILL KEEP A FOCUS ON MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**WE WILL SUPPORT PARENTS AND CARERS TO MAKE SURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAFE AT HOME IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, AND NURTURED BY OTHERS IF NOT**

**WE WILL MAKE SURE WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND NEEDS OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES**

**WE WILL KEEP WRITTEN INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT RECOGNISES THAT THE INFORMATION BELONGS TO THEM AND WILL BEST ENABLE THEM TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR JOURNEY**

**WE WILL CREATE A SUPPORTIVE WORKING CULTURE**

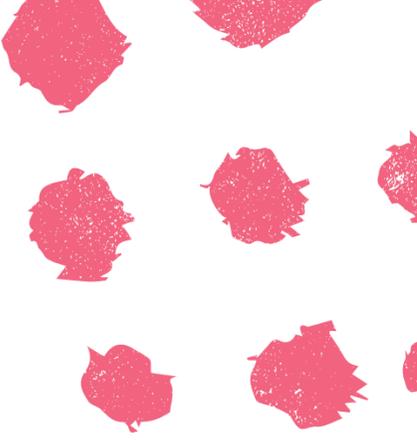


# AS LEADERS

We will have a one team ethos as leaders and through being connected as a team, listening to our workforce, children and families, being compassionate and competent leaders we will nurture trust, respect, and confidence by communicating clearly and treating people with respect and fairly.

Through collective leadership we will deliver this plan by developing a culture of leadership and management capability that is compassionate, quality focused, supportive and accountable.

To support our values, we will have career pathways in Children's Services that build on normal job descriptions to describe roles in more detail, including the positive behaviours we will see when the accountabilities are delivered well.



# OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (ED&I)



This is at the heart of who we are and critical for us to embrace. The impact of positive ED&I can be directly linked to quality and a positive experiences for children, young people and families. This in turn leads to a good experience for you. This approach is equally applicable between managers and their teams, from colleague to colleague and from worker to families.

## We aim to:

- Have a culture that values and embraces diversity and inclusion in service delivery, learning and employment; we all need to be a part of that.
- Have a workforce that reflects the diversity in our communities.
- Have a workforce that is culturally competent and sensitive to the diverse needs of our children, young people and families.
- Recognise disability and mental health issues and respond appropriately.
- Have the behaviours and skills to effectively support individual needs.
- Appropriately and effectively challenge stigma, discrimination, and isolation.

## We will deliver this by:

- Making ED&I a core, mandatory learning module in every role.
- Using the annual performance discussion My Conversation to set realistic and ambitious objectives to improve all aspects of equality, diversity, and inclusion; how we behave, take responsibility and lead others.
- On a voluntary basis, encourage advocates across all operational services who can support the work of the Black and Asian and other workforce networks to develop a culture of inclusion, diversity, anti-discrimination and ultimately belonging.
- Continually review all learning materials to ensure they are fit for purpose and set learning objectives and outcomes.



# YOUR WELLBEING

## We will support your wellbeing by:

- Championing mental health first aider training to ensure managers and colleagues are equipped with the knowledge and tools to support you when you need it.
- Ensuring that you receive the health, safety and wellbeing training needed to keep you, your colleagues and the children, young people and families you work with safe.
- Having an Occupational Health scheme that can provide a helpful insight into longer term sickness absence so that we can work together to get you back to work.
- Encouraging you to talk to us if you're unhappy with work; we value you and how you are feeling.
- Providing an Employee Assistance Programme for you to access if you need someone to talk to about how you're feeling.
- Having a counselling service of Clinical Psychologists to support all colleagues who work directly with families in crisis.
- Making sure our managers and leaders are compassionate and connected to you.
- Having a robust and joined up approach to lone working to keep you safe.

## We will deliver this by:

- Welcome constructive feedback and encourage you to help us develop the service to improve workforce motivation and customer satisfaction.
- Be clear about standards of work, “what does ‘good’ look like?”
- Ensure that you have a voice; developing the current forums we will discuss how the service is running, our employment offer and what actions need to be taken to improve.
- Having a focus on retention to ensure we value our workforce
- Analysing exit and stay data to understand changes required
- Make sure that our policies and processes reflect our values and are streamlined to take out unnecessary workloads.

# A WORKFORCE THAT'S ENGAGED

Every part of this document is important but if we don't get engagement right, we cannot achieve it. Our sense of belonging, commitment, and enthusiasm for what we do and alignment to the organisation's visions and values will support excellent service delivery and continuous improvement. The more engaged you are, the better the outcomes for our children, young people and their families and for your own well-being. If we are all 'signed up' to our vision and values, we can better collaborate and work as one organisation.

## Our aim is that you will all:

- Be proud to work for our Children's Services and be an advocate for the services we provide to our children and families and partner agencies.
- Embrace our values and live them day to day.
- Feel gratified and valued in your role and that your contribution is recognised by us and those you provide services for.
- Feel that you are treated fairly and have equal access to opportunities to develop and grow.
- Feel empowered to be part of positively shaping and developing our services to be good and then to outstanding.

## We will deliver this by:

- Setting a united direction of travel and an overarching improvement plan.
- Service Directors and their leadership teams will develop delivery plans that will be shared with all colleagues through regular forums such as the Staff Reference Group, Aiming High group and team meetings.
- Your managers will encourage you to contribute in your team meetings and during your one to one sessions.
- Objectives will be jointly set by you and your line manager. They will help you identify what they need to be; some will be directly related to service objectives and others to your personal development and career aspirations.
- We will have manager forums and all staff briefings to discuss the service, our improvement journey and provide opportunities for two-way communication and development opportunities.
- Having a fully developed communications strategy that staff can input in to.

# A WORKFORCE THAT'S AGILE AND ADAPTABLE

Our aim is to have a wide range of generalist and specialist skills across Children's Services so, through skills audits, we can understand all the expertise you bring to the organisation. We want you to be able to work together and with partners to create a flexible service that can provide the right support at the right time to the children and families you work with leading to positive outcomes for them.

## We will:

- Be transparent about all the work we do and why we are doing it.
- Develop collaborative partnerships to build trust and allow for better joint working.
- Continually review how we do things to make efficiencies in the way we work; cutting out unnecessary processes to help you, your colleagues and our children and families.
- Where appropriate, work towards having multi skilled staff that have transferable skills so we can work more flexibly to support services when they have peaks of work or in times of emergency.
- Work with our regional colleagues to develop a more responsive and cost-effective approach to the resourcing of high quality, temporary staff when required.
- Develop family friendly policies and flexible contracts.

## With a system(s) led approach we aim to:

- Have effective Human Resources Management systems which will enable you to see and amend your own personal details, as well as making holiday requests and seeing your learning records.
- Have easily accessible accurate management information through a dedicated data analyst in the service regarding establishment and budgets to enable managers to plan and monitor their resources and work collaboratively to address any issues.
- Have good, easy to use, intuitive technology and systems available for our workforce to help them reduce their reliance on manual processes.
- Work with our colleagues in the council to maximise the benefits of all our systems and technologies within the context of our service.

# A WORKFORCE THAT'S SKILLED

Having a workforce that is competent in their role in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviours; the 'how' you do your role is as important as the 'what' you do. A workforce that learns from each other, shares best practice and has access to high quality learning and development opportunities.

## Our aim is:

- To have an excellent training offer to deliver high quality development to you.
- To share knowledge and best practice across our services; helping each other to be the best we can be.
- For you all to be experts in your field, whatever role you undertake.
- To have a blended approach to learning so that you can learn individually or as a team.
- To nurture talent for the future and have a succession plan in place through career pathways, management and leadership development and apprenticeships.
- Learn from what we do; identifying what went well to do more of and what didn't go quite so well to learn from, understand and do differently next time.

## This means that:

- We will have a well-defined, transparent, and efficient recruitment process to ensure we recruit the right people for our organisation, whether internal or external utilising safer recruitment principles.
- We will review why people leave us and, as appropriate, if there are themes, where we can make changes.
- We will invest in you through development and would like you to invest in us by being the best you can in your role.
- You will have access to learning opportunities to help you do your job well.
- We will use a range retention approaches to retain our workforce
- We will further develop career pathways across a variety of roles that are based around accountability, knowledge, skills and behaviours and not tasks.
- If you have ambition, we will work with you to identify career progression opportunities to increase your knowledge and skills for future roles.
- We will help you to identify opportunities to broaden your knowledge and skills.

# LEADERSHIP

## Our aim is:

- Managers and leaders will receive the development they need to meet the standards expected of them in Herefordshire Council and its Children's Service.
- Managers and leaders will role model the desired behaviours within the service
- Managers and leaders will take responsibility and accountability for showcasing and embracing a culture of one team where mistakes are used to learn from, complaints handled timely and professionally and success is celebrated

## This means that:

- We will develop great leaders and managers who communicate well and take the workforce with them.
- We will develop a coaching culture; equipping managers to be great coaches and encouraging everyone to use a coaching approach to giving feedback across our directorate.



# OUR PLAN - WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

**Work volumes and our approach to work with children, young people and families** - we will set out our benchmark to achieve and maintain manageable workloads across roles in the directorate so colleagues have time to develop meaningful relationships that improve outcomes with children, young people, parents/carers and families/relevant others.

**Our Working Model** - promote the importance of relationships and restorative ways of working that acknowledge family strengths and resources, provide support to develop skills and build resilience.

**Management** - invest in attracting, developing and supporting effective line managers to provide clear management oversight and the necessary duty of care to the workforce to deliver safe, supportive and consistently good quality services

**Performance Management** - prioritise regular, reflective and good quality 1 to 1, My Conversation discussions and team meetings which consistently addresses professional discussions and focuses on the needs and priorities of the workforce and children and families.

**Career pathways** - to provide career opportunities to develop all roles within the services including dedicated microsite, our retention offer, career progression pathways, as well as supporting our 'rising stars' through succession planning, coaching and mentoring, shadowing, secondments, sector led initiatives.





# OUR PLAN - WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

**Training, qualifications, learning & development** - for the Academy to showcase its offer to “grow our own“ into social work training and qualification (step up students, traditional students, Apprentices and our Return to Social Work programme). To provide continuing professional development to inspire practitioners and managers across the workforce to be the best they can be by offering a robust ASYE offer, learning partnerships with local universities, in-house/partnership and externally commissioned core and additional training/learning and development plus management and leadership opportunities (the Staff college BALI and Aspirant DCS/HOS programmes). To explore further career pathways and development opportunities for all other roles across the directorate.

**Leadership** - to have visible, approachable and high calibre leaders who capture the ‘hearts and minds’ of the workforce through honest, open and authentic communication and decision making to improve and transform services with/for children, young people and their families plus the workforce who support, protect and care for them.



**Our offer** - to have and enhance our package of reward and benefits in order to attract, retain and support all roles across the directorate and in particular those roles that are hard to recruit and retain. To benchmark our offer against other local authorities. Utilising flexible working arrangements such as a nine-day fortnight, part-time working and other flexible contract arrangements. Enhancing our salary sacrifice benefits. Reviewing other existing policies for welcome, retention, market forces supplements and relocation.





## AND FINALLY ...

With a one team approach across all the workforce in Children and Young People, any individual who works in our directorate to deliver or supports services that are safe, relationship based and restorative practice based for children, young people and their families are key to the success of our services.

You should be able to see the golden thread between your work, your development and support of leaders and colleagues which will ensure the delivery of great services which will lead to positive outcomes for all.

