

Agenda

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 6 October 2026**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough
Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairperson	Councillor Toni Fagan
Vice-chairperson	Councillor Ben Proctor

Councillor Frank Cornthwaite
Councillor Clare Davies
Councillor Dave Davies
Councillor Robert Highfield
Councillor David Hitchiner

Co-opted member	Sarah Beard	(Diocese of Hereford)
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Agenda

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive declarations of interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.	
4. MINUTES To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2026.	9 - 14
HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5pm on Wednesday 30 September 2026. Questions can be submitted via the Online questions portal Further information and guidance is available at Get involved - Herefordshire Council Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Full details about asking questions and the deadlines at public meetings can be found here: constitution of the council . Guidance for questions being submitted for scrutiny can be found here	
5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive any written questions from members of the public.	
6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the council.	
7. ALTERNATIVE PROVISION To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of current Alternative Provision in Herefordshire, including the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS), and the capital programme being developed to increase capacity, strengthen early intervention and improve the quality and sustainability of Alternative Provision.	15 - 32
8. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NEET To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of Herefordshire's current not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures, including: the Impact of data updates on NEET average figures and an overview of the focussed service action plan with milestones.	33 - 60

[Please note: since its original publication, this report has been amended to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation]

9. WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme for the committee.

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10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 10 December 2026, 2pm

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www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-

The seven principles of public life

(Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Wednesday 22 July 2026 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Toni Fagan (chairperson)
Councillor Ben Proctor (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Clare Davies (virtual), Dave Davies and David Hitchiner
Co-opted member: Sarah Beard (Diocese of Hereford)

Officers: Simon Cann (Committee Clerk), Dawn Knight (Service Manager Families First), Victoria Leader (Service Manager Family Help North) Lindsay MacHardy (Public Health Principal), Tina Russell (Corporate Director Children and Young People) and Danial Webb (Statutory Scrutiny Officer).

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Frank Cornthwaite, Councillor Robert Highfield and Councillor Ivan Powell (Cabinet Member Children and Young People).

21. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There had been no named substitutes.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

23. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public.

25. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions had been received from members of the council.

26. FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME

1. Officers explained that the Families First Programme forms part of national children's social care reforms and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools agenda. Herefordshire is in the first quarter of year two of a three-year implementation programme. Progress has included strengthened partnership working,

development of a single Family Help Assessment, practitioner training and establishment of new Family Help Teams.

2. Reflecting on year one, officers reported that the focus had been on transformation and co-production with partners, schools, health services and families. A multi-agency steering group has been established and more than 170 practitioners have completed Families First training. Feedback indicated increased confidence in holding supportive conversations with families and greater understanding of partner roles.
3. Officers advised that service redesign had created dedicated Families First Teams to support partners undertaking Family Help work. These teams provide training, consultation, meeting support and community development expertise. Three locality-based Family Help Teams covering the north, south and central areas of the county became operational on 1 July.
4. Members welcomed progress and asked how success would be measured. Officers explained that a quality assurance framework combining performance data, audits, practitioner feedback and family feedback had been established. This would be benchmarked against existing measures, with quarterly monitoring used to identify issues and assess whether outcomes and experiences were improving.
5. Concerns were raised regarding long-term sustainability and funding. Officers advised that the programme is currently supported by a three-year government grant, but much of the approach has already been embedded within core services. Evidence gathered through monitoring could support future budget growth bids if required.
6. Members asked how value for money would be assessed. Officers explained that indicators would include reductions in repeat referrals, repeat assessments and repeat child protection plans, alongside evidence that earlier intervention was reducing the need for statutory involvement.
7. One member questioned whether nationally mandated reforms could disrupt arrangements that were already working well locally. Officers stated that Herefordshire had anticipated these changes and that the reforms align closely with existing restorative and strengths-based practice. Experience from national pathfinder authorities suggests the approach strengthens early help and partnership working.
8. Discussion turned to the new digital self-assessment tool. Officers confirmed that families would be able to seek advice, identify support services and potentially begin a Family Help Assessment. However, no family would be expected to complete this independently and practitioner support would remain available.
9. Members explored how use of the digital platform would be monitored. Officers explained that overall usage data, referral patterns and service demand trends would be reviewed to determine whether families were accessing support earlier and more effectively. Family feedback would also inform future development.
10. Questions were raised about ongoing costs and development of the platform. Officers advised that maintenance costs should be relatively low following implementation. While uptake levels remain uncertain, testing and evaluation form an important part of the wider reform programme. Children and families have helped shape the content, language, design and support links through co-production activity, with further testing planned before launch.

11. Officers confirmed that the county's support directory would be integrated into the new approach, enabling families to be directed towards appropriate local services based on their responses.
12. Members raised concerns about support for parents experiencing abuse from their children. Officers explained that assistance can be accessed through parenting support, family services and referrals via the Children's Help and Advice Team, including to specialist services such as PEGS (Parental Education Growth Support).
13. Reflecting on hidden need within communities, members highlighted the importance of trust and relationship-based practice. Officers agreed that Families First aims to strengthen links with schools, health professionals and community organisations so families can access help earlier and with confidence.
14. Discussion moved to workforce development and training. Officers explained that the 170 practitioners trained represent the start of a much larger programme, with strong demand and further courses already fully subscribed. Training is delivered through a range of formats to maximise participation.
15. Members asked about barriers to professionals taking on the Family Help Lead Practitioner role. Officers reported that concerns around risk and capacity had been identified through surveys. In response, the council has developed support arrangements, consultation services and targeted training to build confidence across sectors.
16. A broader discussion considered the challenges of implementing Families First alongside education reforms. Officers advised that strong governance arrangements are in place across education, children's social care and SEND services to maintain alignment and shared priorities.
17. The committee also examined pressures on schools and the role of locality working. Officers acknowledged current challenges but highlighted support available through school networks, safeguarding forums and specialist council teams. The locality model was described as improving communication, coordination and accessibility.
18. Members discussed whether schools could become the principal hubs for family support. Officers recognised the importance of schools' relationships with families but stressed that schools must remain focused on education. Family hubs would provide complementary community-based venues for support and engagement.
19. Finally, members asked how children and young people would influence the programme. Officers explained that their views are already gathered through quality assurance processes and will continue to inform evaluation. New digital engagement tools, including Mind of My Own, are being developed to support participation and feedback.
20. The committee welcomed the progress achieved to date and emphasised the importance of ongoing monitoring, partnership working and meaningful engagement with children, young people and families as implementation continues.

27. EARLY HELP TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1. The Chair introduced the findings of the Early Help Task and Finish Group, noting that the review had examined the Early Help landscape across Herefordshire. The review identified a strong and developing system supported by effective partnership working and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and families.
2. Members highlighted the importance of the Families First programme and Family Hubs in strengthening preventative support and improving service coordination.
3. Officers provided an update on the implementation of Families First. Members were advised that Early Help teams had been integrated into locality structures, with family help teams operating across all areas. Training programmes were supporting implementation and a new Family Help Assessment had been successfully piloted. Positive feedback had been received from families, particularly regarding opportunities for self-assessment and greater involvement in the process. Full implementation was scheduled from 1 August.
4. Members sought clarification on whether the new arrangements would simplify access to support. Officers confirmed that referrals would continue through the Integrated Front Door but that processes would be streamlined. Partner agencies would be able to submit Family Help Assessments directly, reducing administrative barriers and improving efficiency.
5. The committee discussed arrangements for identifying and supporting young carers. Officers outlined plans for a "No Wrong Doors" approach, including a screening tool within Family Help Assessments to support earlier identification and access to appropriate services. Members also discussed the national challenge of under-identification, noting that training, awareness raising and new screening arrangements were expected to improve identification rates.
6. The committee received an update on the Family Hub programme. Members were advised that the initiative forms part of a national programme bringing together a range of support services for families, with a focus on younger children while maintaining an ambition to support young people up to age 19, or 25 for those with SEND.
7. Officers outlined progress in establishing Family Hubs across the county through the transformation of existing children's centres and the development of additional sites. Provision would include parenting support, speech and language services, infant feeding support, mental health services, SEND support and activities to improve school readiness. Members noted the importance of accessible, welcoming environments where families could seek support at an early stage.
8. Members raised questions regarding long-term sustainability, including funding arrangements and workforce capacity. Officers advised that sustainability planning was underway and included embedding successful initiatives within commissioned services, developing workforce capacity, encouraging community ownership and building an evidence base to support future investment opportunities. While ongoing grant funding could not be guaranteed, the programme was intended to demonstrate impact and strengthen future funding bids.
9. Members reflected on challenges faced by partnership initiatives once time-limited funding ended and noted the importance of using the Family Hub programme to demonstrate the value of collaborative working. Opportunities to explore alternative delivery models were also highlighted.

10. The committee sought clarification on support for older children and young people. Officers acknowledged that current funding was focused largely on younger children but advised that planning for older age groups was already underway, including links to youth services, safe spaces, substance misuse support, resilience services and schools. Parenting programmes for older children were also being delivered and increasingly linked to Family Hub provision.
11. The committee discussed development of the emerging Youth Strategy. Members were advised that the strategy had been informed by engagement with young people and partners and that work was underway with local councils, voluntary organisations and community groups to strengthen youth provision and develop local delivery networks. The creation of safe spaces for young people was identified as a key priority. Officers noted that consultation had concluded and that the strategy was being finalised alongside an initial one-year action plan.
12. Members also received an update on youth services more broadly. Existing provision continued to be delivered through partnership funding arrangements, while work was underway to position the council and its partners to benefit from future opportunities arising from the recently published national Youth Strategy. Efforts to develop qualified youth workers and strengthen local sector capacity were also highlighted.
13. Members raised questions regarding children's language development and wider developmental outcomes. Officers outlined arrangements for assessing children's development during the early years and explained that those requiring additional support could be referred to specialist services and targeted interventions.
14. In concluding the discussion, the committee recognised the breadth of Early Help provision available across Herefordshire and the positive contribution of partnership working. Members noted the continued progress of Families First and Family Hubs and the opportunities these programmes present to strengthen preventative support and improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Resolved that:

- **The committee formally endorsed the Task and Finish Group report and its recommendations.**
- **Progress updates be reported to scrutiny in early 2027, including information on the implementation of Families First, Family Hubs and the operation of new self-assessment referral processes.**

28. WORK PROGRAMME

1. Members considered the current work programme and received an update on the next steps for its development. The Chair explained that further strategic work was still required before the programme could be updated. To facilitate this, a dedicated work programming meeting would be held over the summer to review priorities and agree any necessary changes.
2. In response to members' comments, officers confirmed that the work programme would be revised and reissued before the October meeting. This assurance was noted by the committee.

29. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 6 October 2026, 2pm.

The meeting ended at 4:17pm

Chairperson



Title: Alternative Provision – Current Provision and Capital Programme

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 6th October 2026

Report by: Liz Farr, Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

Classification

Open

Report purpose

To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of current Alternative Provision in Herefordshire, including the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS), and the capital programme being developed to increase capacity, strengthen early intervention and improve the quality and sustainability of Alternative Provision.

Background

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has included Alternative Provision within its work programme to review the Council's current provision and the associated capital programme. The review provides an opportunity for members to consider existing capacity and demand, the current role of the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service, the development of Tier 2 Alternative Provision and the Council's planned capital investment.
2. Alternative provision is an important part of the Council's education system for children and young people who are unable to access suitable mainstream education because of exclusion, illness or other circumstances. The Council has a duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who would otherwise not receive it.

Meeting objectives

2. The objectives of the scrutiny item are to:

- review the capital programme relating to Alternative Provision;
- consider the current Alternative Provision available in Herefordshire, including Pupil Referral Unit provision;

- understand current capacity and demand pressures and the Council's response to those pressures; and
- consider the intended outcomes, financial implications and arrangements for monitoring delivery of the Alternative Provision programme.

Report information

Demand and Cohort Profile

3. Herefordshire's current alternative provision system is under increasing pressure. Demand for places has risen beyond the capacity that can be delivered from the existing estate, resulting in greater reliance on bespoke, online, unregistered and externally commissioned provision. In November 2025, 24 children were reported as having no school place because of insufficient alternative education capacity.
4. The AP cohort differs significantly from the wider school population, with a disproportionately high prevalence of SEND, social, emotional and mental health needs, disadvantage and involvement with wider support services. Understanding these characteristics is important when planning future capacity and intervention models.
5. Referring to the data pack included, the number of children and young people accessing alternative provision (AP) in Herefordshire has increased significantly over the last three years, rising from 126 pupils in 2024 to 217 in 2025 and 305 in 2026. This represents a 142% increase over the period and suggests growing demand for AP placements, reflecting increasing complexity of need, inclusion pressures within mainstream schools, and rising numbers of pupils requiring specialist support.
6. The profile of pupils accessing AP has remained relatively consistent. Secondary-aged pupils (11-15 years) account for the majority of placements each year, representing around 62% of the cohort in both 2024 and 2026. This indicates that difficulties leading to AP placement are most prevalent during the secondary phase, with AP continuing to play a significant role in supporting young people at greater risk of disengagement from education.
7. There has also been notable growth in primary-aged pupils accessing AP. Numbers increased from 21 pupils in 2024 to 68 in 2026, more than tripling over the three-year period. Whilst primary pupils still represent a minority of placements, this trend may indicate increasing behavioural, emotional, social or learning needs emerging at an earlier age and highlights the importance of early intervention and targeted support.
8. Children with identified special educational needs and disabilities account for almost all AP placements. In 2026, 97.9% of pupils accessing AP either had SEN Support (2.3%) or an EHCP (95.7%), with only 2.0% recorded as having no identified SEN. This demonstrates the close relationship between AP demand and SEND pressures and reinforces the importance of ensuring sufficient specialist provision and support pathways across the local system.
9. Pupils eligible for free school meals continue to be over-represented amongst those accessing AP. Although the proportion has fallen slightly from 66.7% in 2024 to 64.3% in 2026, almost two-thirds of pupils accessing AP are FSM eligible, highlighting the continued association between socio-economic disadvantage and the need for alternative educational arrangements.
10. The gender profile remains broadly consistent with national trends, with males accounting for approximately two-thirds of AP placements. However, the proportion of female pupils

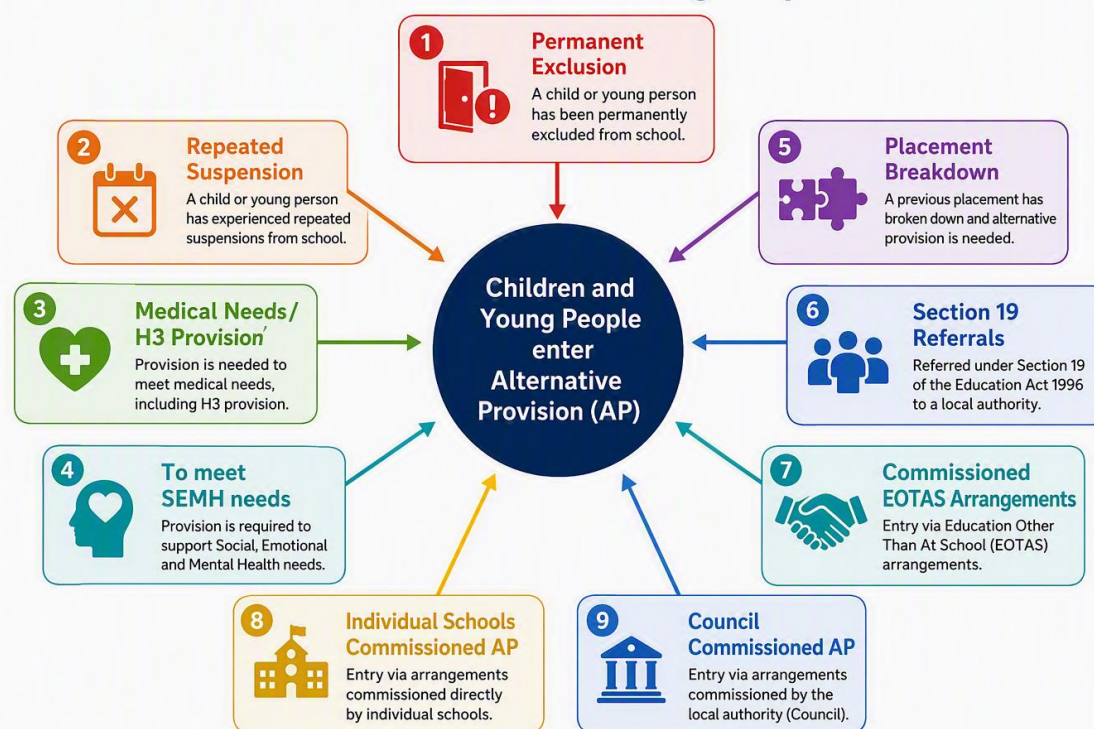
has gradually increased from 27.8% in 2024 to 37.4% in 2026, suggesting that the needs of girls requiring alternative provision may be becoming more visible and may warrant further analysis.

11. The number of children looked after (CLA) accessing AP has increased from none recorded in 2024 to 28 pupils in 2026. Similarly, the number of children subject to child protection plans increased from zero to five over the same period. Whilst these figures remain comparatively small, they indicate that a growing number of vulnerable children are requiring AP placements and underline the importance of strong links between education, social care and safeguarding services.
12. Compared with statistical neighbour authorities, Herefordshire has a notably higher proportion of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans accessing AP than many comparable areas. The local authority also has a comparatively lower proportion of pupils without identified SEN. This suggests AP in Herefordshire is being used predominantly to support pupils with the highest levels of identified need rather than as a broader response to behavioural or attendance concerns.
13. The average duration of completed AP placements has fluctuated over the period. Placements increased from an average of 9 months and 15 days in 2024 to 1 year, 2 months and 26 days in 2025 before reducing to just under 12 months in 2026. Whilst the recent reduction is positive, placements continue to be relatively long-term, indicating that many pupils accessing AP require sustained support rather than short-term intervention.

The Route into Alternative Provision

14. Children and young people can enter alternative provision through a variety of routes and for different reasons. These may include permanent exclusion, repeated suspension, medical needs (H3 provision), SEMH needs, placement breakdown, Section 19 referrals, Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS) arrangements, school-commissioned AP or local authority commissioned provision.

Routes into Alternative Provision (AP) for Children and Young People



What is Driving Demand

15. Demand continues to grow as a result of several interrelated factors affecting both schools and local authority services. Children and young people are presenting with increasingly complex needs, often involving a combination of SEND, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, safeguarding concerns and attendance challenges. There has been a rise in emotionally based school avoidance, anxiety and behavioural needs, whilst schools continue to face increasing inclusion pressures within constrained resources.
16. Demand indicators demonstrate growing pressure within the system. During 2024/25, 1,615 suspensions were recorded across Herefordshire schools involving 688 individual pupils. Whilst the local suspension rate of 6.86 remains below the national rate of 10.88, repeated suspensions can indicate that existing interventions have not secured sustained improvement and that more intensive support may be required. In addition, increasing SEND demand, growth in EOTAS and Section 19 provision, and placement instability within mainstream and specialist settings continue to generate demand for alternative educational arrangements. In addition, continued growth in SEND demand is increasing requests for specialist support, statutory assessment and Education, Health and Care Plans.

Existing provision

17. The Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS) provides the Council's core registered alternative education provision. Key Stage 3 provision operates from Aconbury and Key Stage 4 provision from St David's. A separate hospital and outreach service, H3, also forms part of HPRS but is not included within the current relocation proposals.

18. HPRS currently has 64 commissioned Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 places. However, a recent capacity review identified practical building capacity of approximately 47 places because of limitations in the size, configuration and suitability of the existing buildings. Local demand analysis has identified a requirement for up to 100 HPRS places.
19. The existing Aconbury and St David's buildings also constrain curriculum delivery, therapeutic and pastoral support, physical education, vocational learning and multi-agency working. Previous feasibility work concluded that neither site can be expanded sufficiently to meet future demand.
20. Where suitable HPRS capacity is unavailable, the Council may need to commission alternative arrangements in order to meet its statutory responsibilities. These can include bespoke packages, online education, unregistered providers and other external provision. While such arrangements may remain appropriate for some individual pupils, wider reliance on them is generally more expensive and can result in fragmented or part-time education packages.
21. In addition to HPRS, schools and the Council currently use a range of school-based interventions and externally commissioned part-time Alternative Provision to support pupils who remain on a mainstream school roll but require additional support. There is currently no dedicated local Tier 2 facility providing a consistent time-limited intervention and reintegration pathway.

Measuring Success and Value for Money

22. The Council's investment in Alternative Provision (AP) is based on a clear theory of change: by increasing the availability, quality and suitability of provision, more children and young people will receive the right support at the right time, reducing the risk of exclusion, disengagement from education and escalation of need.
23. Success is measured through a range of educational, social and financial indicators, including improved attendance, reduced suspensions and permanent exclusions, increased rates of successful reintegration to mainstream education where appropriate, better progress and attainment outcomes, and improved participation in education, employment or training.
24. The success of the capital investment will also be demonstrated through increased local capacity, reduced reliance on costly out-of-county or independent placements, and greater ability to meet need within Herefordshire.
25. From a value for money perspective, the Council expects that investment in early and effective intervention will reduce the significantly higher costs associated with unmet need, including persistent absence, exclusion, specialist placements and wider social care and health interventions. These costs are predominantly felt in the high needs deficit. Future scrutiny will therefore be able to assess both whether outcomes for children and young people have improved and whether the investment has contributed to a more sustainable and cost-effective system that delivers better outcomes with available resources.

Sufficiency of Provision and Capacity

26. Members were keen to understand whether Herefordshire has sufficient AP capacity to meet current and future demand. Current provision is under significant pressure. Herefordshire has no dedicated Tier 2 capacity and HPRS operates within constrained accommodation that limits the number of pupils who can be supported. Consequently, the Council and schools are often required to utilise externally commissioned provision, bespoke packages or Section 19 arrangements.

27. The approved capital programme is intended to address these challenges through the development of a new Tier 2 service and the expansion of HPRS to provide up to 100 places. Together, these developments will strengthen local sufficiency, reduce reliance on external provision and improve access to appropriate interventions. Demand will continue to be monitored to ensure future capacity remains aligned to local need.

Capital Programme and Strategic Investment

28. In February 2026, Full Council approved a £12 million capital investment programme designed to strengthen local Alternative Provision capacity and improve educational sufficiency. The programme comprises two complementary schemes: a £6 million investment to relocate and expand HPRS and a separate £6 million investment to establish Tier 2 Alternative Provision capacity.
29. The HPRS project is intended to relocate Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 provision into a single Alternative Education Centre, creating up to 100 places subject to site identification, detailed design and space validation. Delivery may be achieved through the adaptation of an existing council-owned building or, where no suitable asset exists, the acquisition and refurbishment of alternative premises.
30. Alongside this, Full Council approved a further £6 million capital allocation to develop a dedicated Tier 2 Alternative Provision model. This funding relates specifically to accommodation and supporting infrastructure. Detailed decisions regarding service delivery arrangements, staffing models, referral pathways, provider arrangements and recurring revenue requirements remain subject to further design and governance approvals.
31. The principal challenge to delivery remains the identification and acquisition of suitable premises capable of meeting operational requirements within approved budgets and timescales. As with all major capital schemes, delivery is also dependent upon property, procurement, planning and financial governance processes.
32. The investment has been prioritised because it addresses identified gaps within Herefordshire's AP system and supports the council's wider strategy to improve inclusion, educational sufficiency and SEND outcomes. By increasing local capacity and strengthening early intervention, the programme aims to reduce reliance on higher-cost provision whilst improving outcomes for children and young people.
33. Longer-term capacity requirements will continue to be reviewed through demand forecasting, sufficiency planning and High Needs Block monitoring to ensure provision remains aligned with future need.

Financial Pressures and High Needs Funding

34. Alternative Provision continues to represent a significant area of expenditure within the High Needs Block, particularly where local capacity is insufficient and external placements are required.
35. The proposed capital programme seeks both to improve outcomes for children and young people and to moderate future financial pressures through increased local sufficiency. Current expenditure indicates that expanding HPRS capacity could avoid approximately £370,000 per annum of Section 19 expenditure currently incurred where pupils cannot access suitable HPRS placements because local capacity is unavailable.
36. In addition, approximately £425,000 was spent during 2025/26 on externally commissioned part-time Alternative Provision. The development of a local Tier 2 model

has the potential to reduce reliance on such arrangements where pupils can be appropriately supported through locally delivered interventions. This represents potential gross annual cost avoidance of up to £425,000, although this should not be interpreted as a net saving as operating costs, implementation costs and capital financing costs will also need to be considered.

37. Insufficient local provision can result in increased expenditure through external placements, transport costs and bespoke arrangements required to meet statutory duties. Where suitable local provision is unavailable, costs can increase significantly as children and young people may need to access provision outside the county or receive individually commissioned packages of support.
38. The Council's financial strategy is focused on increasing local capacity and reducing reliance on higher-cost arrangements through earlier intervention and improved local provision.
39. The financial impact of Alternative Provision (AP) continues to be an important consideration in the overall management of the High Needs Block. Based on the information available when setting the 2026/27 budget, the total budgeted cost of AP placements is £2.1m. While the duration and cost of individual placements can vary, with some packages being short term, this represents an indicative average annual cost of approximately £21,450 per child. By comparison, the average annual cost of an independent school placement is approximately £64,321. At the point of budget setting, 64% of independent school placements were outside the county, with the 10 highest-cost placements each exceeding £100,000 per annum. All independent school provision included within the current financial information relates to registered provision.
40. The financial pressures associated with AP and independent specialist placements need to be considered in the context of the wider High Needs Block position. The 2026/27 High Needs allocation is £24.9m after recoupment, against a total High Needs budget of £50.9m, resulting in a deficit budget set of approximately £26m, as agreed through Schools Forum. The £2.1m AP placement budget represents approximately 4.1% of the total High Needs budget, while independent specialist placements account for a further £19.1m, or approximately 37.5%.
41. Continued growth in demand, particularly where needs cannot be met within mainstream settings or through locally available specialist provision, is likely to place further pressure on an already constrained funding envelope. Ensuring sufficient and appropriate local provision is therefore important both in supporting better outcomes for children and young people and in managing the Council's financial exposure. Based on current average costs, an independent school placement costs approximately £42,871 more per annum than an average AP placement. Consequently, where it is appropriate to meet a child's needs through AP rather than an independent specialist placement, there is potential for significant cost avoidance.

Market Development and Commissioning

42. There is a clear distinction between school and local authority responsibilities. Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions are short-term, targeted support commissioned and managed by schools. Tier 3 provision relates to children and young people for whom the Council has a statutory duty to secure alternative provision.
43. The AP market is overseen by the AP Lead Officer and Commissioning Manager through regular provider forums, site visits, quality assurance reviews, due diligence checks and contract monitoring. The introduction of the DC Pro system has strengthened oversight

through real-time attendance monitoring, referral management and performance reporting, improving safeguarding and visibility of outcomes.

44. Referral trends, placement requests and demand data are provided by the broker team to commissioning which is used to identify gaps in local provision. Where needs cannot be met through the Framework, spot-purchased placements may be used to meet statutory duties. Market intelligence is used to inform service development, provider engagement and preparation for the Framework re-opening in 2028.
45. The Council works collaboratively with schools and providers to shape local provision and improve outcomes for children and young people. Individual Placement Agreements (IPAs) set out agreed outcomes and support arrangements for each placement, with progress monitored through regular reviews. The Council also supports market development, promotes quality improvement, and works with providers to expand local opportunities.
46. Implemented under the Procurement Act, the Alternative Provision Framework includes 44 approved providers across three lots: Education and Engagement, Mentoring, and Tuition. The framework operates for an initial five years, with the option to extend for up to 24 months and can be re-opened to new providers in 2028. All referrals are managed through a central (commissioning) broker team, providing oversight of placements, expenditure, attendance, outcomes, quality assurance, and contract performance, creating a transparent and outcome-focused commissioning model.

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

47. The Local Authority has robust safeguarding arrangements in place for all children and young people accessing Alternative Provision. Prior to any placement being commissioned, a comprehensive Pupil Passport is completed. This document sets out the young person's educational, behavioural, medical and safeguarding needs, together with details of any agencies currently involved with the child or family.
48. The Pupil Passport forms part of the commissioning process and is shared with prospective providers to ensure they have sufficient information to determine whether they can safely meet the young person's needs and put appropriate support and risk management arrangements in place from the outset of the placement.
49. The Local Authority closely monitors attendance for all children placed in Alternative Provision. Until recently, attendance monitoring was undertaken through established manual processes managed by a dedicated member of staff. In response to increasing numbers of placements, the Local Authority has now commissioned DCPro, a specialist case management and attendance tracking system. This will provide enhanced oversight of attendance patterns and ensure that all pupils accessing Alternative Provision are tracked consistently and effectively.
50. Attendance information is reviewed regularly, and any absence is followed up promptly. Where concerns arise, officers will contact the provider, the home school (where applicable), and parents or carers to establish the reason for the absence. Where absence patterns indicate wider concerns, further enquiries are undertaken to determine whether:
 - the placement remains appropriate to the young person's needs;
 - additional support is required;
 - there are emerging safeguarding concerns; or

- there are unmet educational, social, emotional or health needs requiring intervention.

51. The Local Authority maintains particularly close oversight of children placed within unregistered Alternative Provision. For every young person placed in an unregistered setting, the responsible Local Authority officer maintains regular contact with the provider and receives weekly updates regarding attendance, engagement, welfare and progress. Providers are also required to notify and record instances of non-attendance to ensure concerns are identified and acted upon swiftly. No unregistered Alternative Provision provider may be used by the Local Authority unless it has successfully completed the Local Authority's quality assurance process.

This process includes:

- scrutiny of safeguarding policies and procedures;
- review of recruitment and vetting arrangements;
- assessment of health and safety compliance;
- review of operational policies and governance arrangements;
- visits to premises and learning environments; and
- evaluation of the provider's capacity to meet individual pupil need.

Providers that do not meet the required standards are not approved for use and cannot receive placements commissioned by the Local Authority.

52. Quality assurance is an ongoing process. Provider performance is reviewed through monitoring activity, placement reviews, attendance information and feedback from children, families and schools. All commissioned providers are required to have formal complaints procedures, and the Local Authority will investigate complaints or safeguarding concerns relating to any provision it commissions. When concerns are received, officers consider:

- the nature and seriousness of the concern;
- previous monitoring information;
- findings from quality assurance activities;
- historical use of the provider; and
- whether any immediate safeguarding action is required.

Where necessary, further placements may be suspended pending investigation or additional quality assurance activity.

53. Strong due diligence arrangements underpin all commissioning decisions. Only providers that satisfy the Local Authority's requirements for safeguarding, governance, health and safety, staffing and educational delivery are approved for use. Ongoing monitoring and review arrangements provide assurance that placements remain safe, appropriate and capable of meeting the needs of children and young people.

Relationship Between AP, SEND and NEET

54. The relationship between Alternative Provision (AP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is complex and should not be viewed as a simple cause-and-effect relationship. Whilst national evidence indicates that young people who access AP are more likely to become NEET, this is largely explained by the higher prevalence of factors such as SEND, social, emotional and mental health needs, attendance difficulties, exclusion, care experience, family challenges and wider vulnerabilities within the cohort, rather than AP itself being the cause of poorer outcomes.
55. AP should be viewed as an intervention rather than a destination. Its purpose is to re-engage children and young people with education, address barriers to learning and support progression into further education, employment or training. Outcomes for pupils accessing AP must therefore be considered in the context of their starting points and levels of need.
56. In Herefordshire, the proportion of young people progressing into education, employment or training from AP remains lower than the overall county average. However, this should be viewed in the context of the complexity and level of need within the cohort. The outcomes achieved often represent meaningful progress from a significantly disadvantaged starting point.
57. The Local Authority recognises the importance of intervening early, before disengagement becomes entrenched. This is one of the key reasons Cabinet has approved the development of a Tier 2 Alternative Provision offer. The model supports both local priorities and the direction of national SEND reform by providing:
- Earlier intervention when concerns first emerge.
 - Increased support before permanent exclusion or placement breakdown occurs.
 - Greater collaboration between schools, AP providers and SEND services.
 - Improved opportunities to maintain young people within their local education community.
 - Support focused on reintegration wherever appropriate.

This approach is intended to prevent escalation, strengthen inclusion and improve longer-term educational and employment outcomes.

58. Whilst GCSE outcomes remain important, they are only one indicator within a broader picture of vulnerability and risk. The Local Authority therefore continues to focus on both educational achievement and the wider factors that support successful transitions into adulthood.

Future Demand and System Change

59. Alongside increasing demand, the Council is progressing significant investment in local AP capacity through the relocation and expansion of HPRS and the development of a new Tier 2 offer. These developments are intended to strengthen early intervention, increase capacity and improve outcomes for some of Herefordshire's most vulnerable children and young people.
60. Looking ahead, demand for alternative provision in Herefordshire is expected to remain high and may continue to increase as demographic growth, rising levels of identified SEND, increasing complexity of need and ongoing inclusion challenges place pressure on

both mainstream and specialist services. Demand for EOTAS and Section 19 provision is also likely to remain a feature of the system where pupils cannot readily access suitable educational placements.

61. Parental expectations and behaviours have also evolved, with families increasingly aware of their rights, more willing to seek bespoke provision, and more likely to challenge decisions relating to placement, support and attendance. Future demand modelling indicates that pressure on alternative provision, specialist placements and outreach support is likely to remain significant over the medium term as the number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans continues to rise.
62. In addition, the anticipated impact of national SEND reform, greater expectations around inclusion, and wider changes across the education system are likely to alter both the volume and nature of demand, requiring the council and its partners to maintain sufficient capacity, flexibility and early intervention services to meet the needs of children and young people effectively.

Consultees

63. The proposals have been developed through engagement with relevant Council services, including Education, Property Services and Finance, together with HPRS leadership in relation to the HPRS scheme. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has been consulted and is supportive of the overall approach.
64. Recognised trade unions and Schools Forum have been informed of the capital proposals and their intended purpose.
65. Political Group Leaders will also be consulted as part of the governance process, with any material feedback reflected in the relevant decision reports.
66. Further engagement will take place as the schemes develop. This will include pupils, parents and carers, mainstream schools, HPRS, relevant partner agencies, ward members and neighbouring communities once preferred property options and detailed service arrangements are identified.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Data Pack

Background papers and resources

None



APPENDIX 1 Analysis of children attending alternative provision: 3 year trend

2026	Herefordshire	Derbyshire	East Riding of Yorkshire	Lancashire	Lincolnshire	North Yorkshire	Shropshire	Somerset	Staffordshire	Suffolk	Westmorland and Furness
Number Accessing AP	305	857	368	1734	803	424	413	896	1454	1733	181
Under 5	1	0	0	11	1	1	1	0	5	22	0
Under 5 %	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	0.0%
Primary age 5- 10	68	131	36	343	160	56	80	128	262	351	37
Primary age 5- 10 %	22.3%	15.3%	9.8%	19.8%	19.9%	13.2%	19.4%	14.3%	18.0%	20.3%	20.4%
Secondary age 11- 15	191	414	272	1029	558	274	182	523	893	951	90
Secondary age 11- 15 %	62.6%	48.3%	73.9%	59.3%	69.5%	64.6%	44.1%	58.4%	61.4%	54.9%	49.7%
16+	45	312	60	351	84	93	150	245	294	409	54
16+ %	14.8%	36.4%	16.3%	20.2%	10.5%	21.9%	36.3%	27.3%	20.2%	23.6%	29.8%
No SEN	6										
No SEN %	2.0%										
SEN Support	7										
SEN Support %	2.3%										

2026	Herefordshire	Derbyshire	East Riding of Yorkshire	Lancashire	Lincolnshire	North Yorkshire	Shropshire	Somerset	Staffordshire	Suffolk	Westmorland and Furness
EHCP	292										
EHCP %	95.7%										
FSM	109	182	152	121	0	41	178	341	240	81	13
FSM %	35.7%	21.2%	41.3%	7.0%	0.0%	9.7%	43.1%	38.1%	16.5%	4.7%	7.2%
Non - FSM	196	675	216	1613	803	383	235	555	1214	1652	168
Non - FSM %	64.3%	78.8%	58.7%	93.0%	100.0%	90.3%	56.9%	61.9%	83.5%	95.3%	92.8%
CLA (September 2026)	28										
CLA %	9.2%										
CP (September 2026)	5										
CP %	1.6%										
Male	191	567	206	1296	555	316	289	600	983	1209	142
Male %	62.6%	66.2%	56.0%	74.7%	69.1%	74.5%	70.0%	67.0%	67.6%	69.8%	78.5%
Female	114	290	162	431	246	108	124	296	471	524	39
Female %	37.4%	33.8%	44.0%	24.9%	30.6%	25.5%	30.0%	33.0%	32.4%	30.2%	21.5%
Average duration in AP - Closed Placements¹	0 Years 11 Months 24 Days										

¹ Average time from closed placement entry date to leaving date

2025	Herefordshire	Cornwall	Cumberland	Devon	Dorset	Gloucestershire	Norfolk	Shropshire	Somerset	Suffolk	Wiltshire
Number Accessing AP	217	548	166	1493	711	478	1605	277	739	874	611
Under 5	3	1	0	9	4	4	6	0	0	6	1
Under 5 %	1.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%
Primary age 5- 10	45	85	19	185	122	90	266	58	94	188	113
Primary age 5- 10 %	20.7%	15.5%	11.4%	12.4%	17.2%	18.8%	16.6%	20.9%	12.7%	21.5%	18.5%
Secondary age 11- 15	134	311	94	986	412	313	1171	136	448	529	352
Secondary age 11- 15 %	61.8%	56.8%	56.6%	66.0%	57.9%	65.5%	73.0%	49.1%	60.6%	60.5%	57.6%
16+	35	151	53	313	173	71	162	83	197	151	145
16+ %	16.1%	27.6%	31.9%	21.0%	24.3%	14.9%	10.1%	30.0%	26.7%	17.3%	23.7%
No SEN	5										
No SEN %	2.3%										
SEN Support	5										
SEN Support %	2.3%										
EHCP	207										
EHCP %	95.4%										
FSM	84	246	11	676	0	120	723	109	273	6	159
FSM %	38.7%	44.9%	6.6%	45.3%	0.0%	25.1%	45.0%	39.4%	36.9%	0.7%	26.0%

2025	Herefordshire	Cornwall	Cumberland	Devon	Dorset	Gloucestershire	Norfolk	Shropshire	Somerset	Suffolk	Wiltshire
Non - FSM	133	302	155	817	711	358	882	168	466	868	452
Non - FSM %	61.3%	55.1%	93.4%	54.7%	100.0%	74.9%	55.0%	60.6%	63.1%	99.3%	74.0%
CLA (September 2026)	29										
CLA %	13.4%										
CP (September 2026)	2										
CP %	0.9%										
Male	143	410	119	1029	475	343	1119	198	502	652	413
Male %	65.9%	74.8%	71.7%	68.9%	66.8%	71.8%	69.7%	71.5%	67.9%	74.6%	67.6%
Female	74	138	47	464	236	135	486	79	237	222	198
Female %	34.1%	25.2%	28.3%	31.1%	33.2%	28.2%	30.3%	28.5%	32.1%	25.4%	32.4%
Average duration in AP - Closed Placements ²	1 Years 2 Months 26 Days										

² Average time from closed placement entry date to leaving date

2024	Herefordshire	Cornwall	Cumberland	Devon	Dorset	Gloucestershire	Norfolk	Shropshire	Somerset	Suffolk	Wiltshire
Number Accessing AP	126	467	155	1245	472	414	1303	277	588	620	504
Under 5	2	2	0	10	2	6	1	0	0	1	2
Under 5 %	1.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%	0.4%	1.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%
Primary age 5- 10	21	87	26	160	83	69	206	63	85	131	94
Primary age 5- 10 %	16.7%	18.6%	16.8%	12.9%	17.6%	16.7%	15.8%	22.7%	14.5%	21.1%	18.7%
Secondary age 11- 15	78	237	80	782	253	270	923	146	365	343	307
Secondary age 11- 15 %	61.9%	50.7%	51.6%	62.8%	53.6%	65.2%	70.8%	52.7%	62.1%	55.3%	60.9%
16+	25	141	49	293	134	69	173	68	138	145	101
16+ %	19.8%	30.2%	31.6%	23.5%	28.4%	16.7%	13.3%	24.5%	23.5%	23.4%	20.0%
No SEN	1										
No SEN %	0.8%										
SEN Support	2										
SEN Support %	1.6%										
EHCP	123										
EHCP %	97.6%										
FSM	42	221	13	529	0	86	509	105	209	4	103
FSM %	33.3%	47.3%	8.4%	42.5%	0.0%	20.8%	39.1%	37.9%	35.5%	0.6%	20.4%
Non - FSM	84	246	142	716	472	328	794	172	379	616	401

2024	Herefordshire	Cornwall	Cumberland	Devon	Dorset	Gloucestershire	Norfolk	Shropshire	Somerset	Suffolk	Wiltshire
Non - FSM %	66.7%	52.7%	91.6%	57.5%	100.0%	79.2%	60.9%	62.1%	64.5%	99.4%	79.6%
CLA (September 2026)	17										
CLA %	13.5%										
CP (September 2026)	0										
CP %	0.0%										
Male	91	365	107	866	334	302	932	205	403	469	345
Male %	72.2%	78.2%	69.0%	69.6%	70.8%	72.9%	71.5%	74.0%	68.5%	75.6%	68.5%
Female	35	102	48	377	138	112	371	72	185	151	159
Female %	27.8%	21.8%	31.0%	30.3%	29.2%	27.1%	28.5%	26.0%	31.5%	24.4%	31.5%
Average duration in AP - Closed Placements ³	0 Years 9 Months 15 Days										

³ Average time from closed placement entry date to leaving date



Title of report: Not in Education, Employment or Training – Herefordshire Update

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: October 6th, 2026

Report by: Liz Farr, Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

Classification

OPEN

Report purpose:

To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of Herefordshire current not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures

- Impact of data updates on NEET average figures
- Overview of focussed service action plan with milestones

1: Background

1a. What is NEET?

NEET stands for **Not in Education, Employment or Training**. It describes young people who are not participating in:

- Full-time or part-time education;
- Employment; or
- Government-supported training, apprenticeships or other recognised learning.

Monitoring NEET levels is important because young people who are NEET can be at greater risk of poor educational, employment and health outcomes in the longer term.

1b. What is "Not Known"?

Not Known (NK) refers to young people whose current participation status cannot be confirmed by a local authority. The authority is therefore unable to determine whether they are:

- In education;

- In employment or training; or
- NEET.

As a local authority we have a statutory duty to track the participation of 16- and 17-year-olds. A high "Not Known" figure indicates issues with tracking arrangements rather than necessarily higher levels of NEET.

1c. What constitutes participation?

Participation refers to a young person's involvement in education, employment or training (EET). As a local authority we have a statutory duty to monitor the participation of 16- and 17-year-olds and record whether they are participating, NEET, or Not Known. Participation data is used nationally to measure how successfully young people are engaging in learning and preparing for employment.

EET describes young people who are actively engaged in one or more of the following:

- Full-time or part-time education;
- Employment (with or without accredited training);
- Apprenticeships;
- Traineeships or other recognised training programmes.

Young people recorded as EET are considered to be participating and therefore are not classified as NEET.

2: Meeting objectives

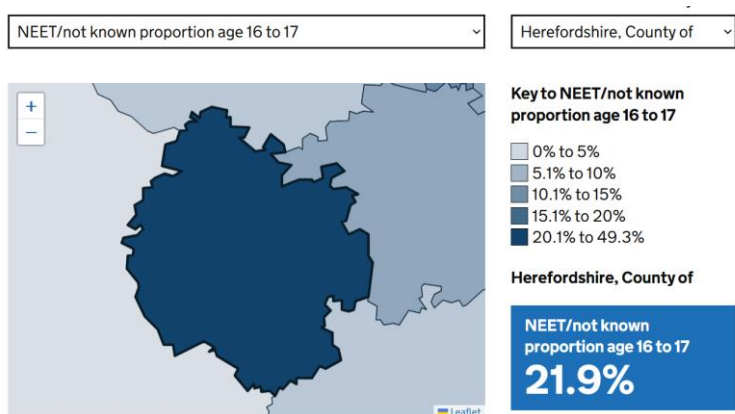
- Why are Herefordshire's NEET figures comparatively poor?
- Which young people are most affected?
- What is being done to improve outcomes?
- Is the current system delivering effective results and value for money?

Report information

The Department for Education publishes regular participation, NEET and Not Known figures for each local authority.

Herefordshire's most recent published combined NEET and Not Known figure for 16- and 17-year-olds is currently 21.9%, placing the authority within the lowest-performing category nationally. This data relates to the 'annual published outturn' and is the aggregation of December/ January and February data sets. However, analysis indicates that the position is significantly influenced by the number of young people recorded as Not Known rather than confirmed NEET. A substantial proportion of these young people are expected to be participating in education, employment or training but have not yet had their destinations verified through the participation tracking process.

[Release home - Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)



The published Herefordshire NEET and Not Known figures are higher than we would like, primarily because of limited participation tracking capacity, rather than evidence of unusually high numbers of young people who are disengaged from education, employment or training. In July 2026 there were 322 young people recorded as "Not Known" this rose to 337 in August 2026. The reason for the high numbers is linked to staffing challenges within the tracking function, including a six-month vacancy, followed by the absence of a dedicated tracking officer due to maternity leave, and a role that has historically operated with only 18.5 hours per week. These capacity issues have reduced the ability to make timely contact with young people and confirm their destinations, resulting in a larger proportion being recorded as "Not Known".

Please see appendix 1 Data Pack:

Cohort characteristics analysis of Yr 12-13 young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those recorded as Not Known: May-August 2026

Source: NCCIS monthly LA Tables

Benchmarking data: National, regional and statistical neighbours. Percentage of Yr 12-13 NEET and Not Known: May-July 2026

Source: NCCIS monthly Statistical Neighbours

KS4 Destinations for young people leaving AP: 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 leavers

Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-destination-measures/2023-24>

Longer term destinations of young people leaving AP, 1yr, 3yrs and 5 yrs after leaving KS4

Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/longer-term-destinations/2023-24>

Outcomes for 2025-6 Section19 AP cohort at the end of Yr11

Attendance & Engagement in Education Officer

Snapshot deprivation analysis of Yr 12-13 young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and Not Known, based on home postcode: August 2026

Source: NCCIS monthly LA Tables

3: Safeguarding and the 'Unknown cohort'

Local Authorities do not have a specific safeguarding duty solely because a young person is NEET or Not Known. However, LAs retain statutory safeguarding responsibilities for all children under 18, and young people whose whereabouts are unknown are potentially more at risk of wider safeguarding issues. As set out in appendix 1 the Herefordshire Not Known Figure has been high, to address this a recovery plan was put in place in July 2026.

Please see appendix 2: Herefordshire Not Known Recovery Plan

The Herefordshire Not Known Recovery Plan sets out the agreed actions to reduce the number of young people whose status is unknown. These include:

- Review all young people currently recorded as Not Known to establish an accurate participation status.
- Recruit maternity cover for the participation tracking function to restore dedicated tracking capacity.
- Increase staffing capacity by a further 0.5 FTE, subject to financial approval, to improve sustainability of the service.
- Introduce a structured induction and training programme for new tracking staff.
- Establish weekly tracking reviews during the autumn term to ensure young people's records are updated more quickly.
- Develop an online self-update facility and webpage so young people can directly provide participation information.
- Make greater use of destination, provider and participation data to validate information and confirm destinations.
- Monitor performance through regular Senior Leadership Team reviews and formal reports to Department for Education (DfE).

The plan aims to achieve a 50% reduction in the number of young people recorded as Not Known during Autumn 2026 and to bring Herefordshire's performance into line with comparable local authorities by January 2027.

3a: What is the impact on the NEET and EET figure of reducing Not Knowns

Reducing the Not Known (NK) figure enables Herefordshire to produce a more accurate NEET and EET figures because young people recorded as Not Known have an unconfirmed participation status and may be either participating in education, employment or training (EET) or be NEET. When a significant number of young people are recorded as Not Known, it is difficult to understand the true level of engagement and disengagement within the county. By strengthening tracking arrangements, making better use of provider and destination data, increasing staffing capacity and improving contact with young people, we can confirm the actual status of those currently recorded as Not Known. This reduces uncertainty within the data and provides a more reliable picture of how many young people are genuinely NEET and how many are participating. Improved tracking therefore strengthens the accuracy of both the Not Known and NEET

measures, enabling resources and support to be targeted more effectively towards those young people who need them most.

Since implementation of the recovery plan, officers have undertaken a detailed review of young people recorded as Not Known and strengthened tracking arrangements. As participation statuses are confirmed, young people are moved into either EET or NEET categories. This improves data accuracy and provides a more reliable understanding of the actual level of need across the county. Changes in the NEET figure during this period are likely therefore to reflect improved tracking and data quality rather than changes in the number of young people disengaged from education, employment or training.

Progress against the action plan:

Action	Target Date	Progress
Review all Not Known cases	July 2026	Completed
Submit DfE Recovery Plan	August 2026	Completed
Recruit maternity cover	August 2026	Completed
Staff induction and training	September 2026	Member of staff recruited to cover maternity leave starts 4 September. Initial training and induction completed in advance.
50% reduction in number of young people recorded as Not Known	31 August 2026	Achieved
Weekly tracking reviews	Autumn 2026	In progress
Online self-update portal	Autumn 2026	In progress, dedicated email account set up Post16Tracking@herefordshire.gov.uk
Additional 0.5 FTE capacity	Autumn 2026	Pending approval
October performance review	October 2026	Scheduled
January impact review	January 2027	Planned

In brief:

June 2026 Not Knowns 8% (322) NEET 6.1% (246)

July 2026 Not Knowns 8.4% (337) NEET 6.3% (252)

August 2026 Not Knowns 4.2% (167) NEET 7.1% (287)

4: Understanding who becomes NEET and why

Using the data pack included in Appendix 1: the data demonstrates that NEET outcomes in Herefordshire are not evenly distributed across the population and are strongly associated with additional vulnerabilities, special educational needs, care experience, youth justice involvement and deprivation.

4a: Main risk factors and predictors of becoming NEET

The strongest predictors evident within the Herefordshire cohort are:

1. Youth Justice involvement

Young people supervised by the Youth Offending Team have the highest NEET rate recorded in the dataset.

- 7 of 13 young people supervised by YOT were NEET (53.8%).
- A further 2 young people were recorded as Not Known.
- Overall, 69.2% were either NEET or Not Known.

This suggests that involvement with the youth justice system remains one of the strongest indicators of disengagement from education, employment and training.

2. Care leavers

Care experience is also a significant predictor.

- 25% of care leavers were NEET.
- A further 4.2% were Not Known.
- Nearly 30% were NEET or Not Known combined.

3. SEND

Educational needs remain a significant contributing factor.

- 15.2% of young people with an EHCP were NEET.
- 16.4% were either NEET or Not Known.
- 9.4% of young people receiving SEN Support were NEET.
- 12.6% of SEN Support pupils were NEET or Not Known.
- The data indicates that SEND learners remain disproportionately represented within the NEET cohort.

4. Mental health

Although numbers are small, the data suggests a strong association between mental health needs and NEET status.

- 62.5% of young people identified as having mental health needs were NEET.

4b: Early identification of young people at risk

DFE Risk of NEET Indicators has identified several groups that are more likely to become NEET, these groups are targeted by schools and prioritised for early intervention before they become NEET:

Priority cohorts

- Persistent absence or poor attendance
- Low educational attainment
- Fixed-term or permanent exclusion
- Young people with EHCPs.
- Young people receiving SEN Support.
- Care leavers.
- Looked After Children.
- Young people supervised by YOT.
- Young people with identified mental health needs.
- Pupils attending Alternative Provision or the Pupil Referral Service.
- Eligibility for Free School Meals or other indicators of disadvantage
- Children in Need, Child Protection Plans, or Care Experienced young people
- Behaviour concerns and disengagement from learning
- Young carers
- Young parents
- Housing instability or homelessness
- Limited career readiness, aspirations, or transition planning

4c: The role of deprivation and rurality

Deprivation

August 2026 analysis shows a clear relationship between deprivation and NEET status.

For young people recorded as NEET:

- 45.6% lived in the 50% most deprived areas nationally.
- Only 17.4% lived in the least deprived 10% of areas nationally.

For young people recorded as Not Known:

- 46.0% lived in the 50% most deprived areas nationally.
- Only 6.1% lived in the least deprived 10% of areas nationally. The concentration of both NEET and Not Known young people in more deprived communities suggests that socio-economic disadvantage is an important underlying driver.

4d: Rurality and transport barriers

The geographic mapping included within appendix 1 shows that NEET and Not Known young people are dispersed across the county rather than concentrated solely within Hereford city.

This is significant for Herefordshire because:

- Post-16 providers are concentrated in a relatively small number of locations.
- Many rural communities have limited public transport services.
- Travel costs can be a barrier for young people from lower-income households.
- Limited transport can restrict access to apprenticeships, work experience and employment opportunities. In addition, access to apprenticeships, work experience, and employment can be restricted by limited public transport and the cost of travel.

The evidence therefore suggests that deprivation and rurality likely interact. Young people living in more deprived rural communities may experience a "double disadvantage", where economic barriers combine with transport and connectivity challenges. Whilst data does not quantify the exact impact of transport on NEET outcomes, it provides a strong rationale of the inter linking with other elements of deprivation.

5. Progression Pathways, Prevention and Wider System Working

Herefordshire Council provides targeted support for young people aged 16 to 24 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) through the Youth Employment Hub (YEH) working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Hub offers personalised advice and guidance to help young people overcome barriers to participation and move into education, employment, training, apprenticeships or other positive destinations. Support includes one-to-one careers advice and coaching, assistance with job searching and applications, CV writing, interview preparation, Workshops covering confidence building, wellbeing, money management, employability skills and sector specific employment, signposting to training opportunities, and support to access wider services where required.

The YEH officially opened in February 2025 during National Apprenticeship week. In its first year it was jointly funded by a DWP grant of £98,469 and 50% match funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund which funded a YEH co-ordinator and 2 x FTE Careers and Employment coaches and premises, training and delivery costs. We recruited a further coach in September 2025 to meet demand and complexity of need.

Funding must be applied for annually and is subject to performance and therefore no guarantee of continuation. The council's match funding for the first 18 months has been from UKSPF which is no longer available and is now being funded via Herefordshire Enterprise Zone (HEZ) for 12 months. DWP has confirmed agreement of funding £193k for a further 12 months start date to be agreed. This will fund the YEH co-ordinator and 3 x career and employment coaches. HEZ funding will be used to fund an additional coach, an apprentice, a post 16 adviser, premises and running costs. Match funding is also provided by the NEET data officer and part of the Skills Officer post within the Growth Hub. The increase in funding and staffing reflects DWP requirements, increased targets and breadth of delivery including delivery in Ross-on-Wye and Leominster.

The YEH operates from a premises in Blueschool Street which due to increase in demand and despite outreach work is no longer fit for purpose. We are also seeing increased demand from partners such as the police prevent meetings, social workers and others requesting to meet young people at the Hub. We also need to increase workshop and training delivery, which the current premises is not big enough to accommodate. We are looking to move to Maylord

Orchards, but this is on hold at present and therefore we are exploring the possibility of moving into Franklin Barnes ground floor only.

The Hub has successfully embedded co-production, ensuring young people shape its design and delivery, and has built strong partnerships with local organisations and employers.

Since opening, the YEH has continued to expand its partnership network, establishing and building on relationships with further education and training providers and organisations including the Waterworks Museum, Close House, John Finch Computers, Melo-Onside, MIND, FCC Environment, M Group, The Veteran's Café, National Star, Larruperz Centre in Ross-on-Wye, Rural Media, The Lemner and many others. These partners support outreach delivery, enhance the range of progression opportunities, and help ensure support remains relevant.

The Youth Employment Hub has established regular drop-in sessions at Bright Beginnings and Futures, supported accommodation services for care-experienced young people. These sessions provide tailored support to help participants develop their CVs, explore employment and work experience opportunities, and build essential pre-employability skills. Beyond practical guidance, the drop-ins also focus on fostering confidence, resilience, and positive social connections, ensuring that care-experienced young people feel supported as they prepare to transition into education, training, or employment. This ongoing engagement has strengthened the Hub's ability to reach vulnerable young people within their communities and provide person-centered support that meets their individual needs.

Performance - The YEH has supported over 400 young people to date and also maintain a waiting list due to capacity. The YEH exceeded the DWP first year target to engage with 200 young people claiming universal credit by 25%. All 250 Universal Credit claimants received an agreed action plan and over 30% moved into sustained employment or education. Some participants due to complexity of need are still being supported. Participants reported increased work readiness, employability/essential skills, motivation and self-confidence. In addition, the YEH works with young people who are not DWP claimants.

Several focus groups have been held with young people who have shared that transport availability and costs are a barrier to participation especially in such a rural area and within the city, lack of employment opportunities at career entry level, apprenticeship opportunities, lack of feedback from employers following job application and that more needs to be done at school to prepare them for adulthood and employment, such as tailored careers advice and guidance. Some young felt that their SEND support needs such as dyslexia and later diagnosis of Autism and ADHD has been barrier to them because they have not received the timely support that they need. Further focus groups are planned.

The careers and employment coaches have reported that the young people they are supporting need encouragement, holistic wrap around support, stronger social connections, and to build greater resilience, alongside more opportunities from employers to experience the workplace, develop confidence, and see a positive future in employment.

The following are quotes from partners and young people providing examples of impact of the YEH.

"The Hub helped me realise that learning doesn't stop after school and guided me towards volunteering as a way to gain experience while working on my driving and job search. I started at the Waterworks Museum in Hereford, where I now help create promotional materials showcasing the museum's engines, pumps, boilers, and history. I'd recommend the Youth Employment Hub and their supportive staff to anyone unsure of their first steps." CK, Young Person

"Introducing me to boxing... has significantly improved my fitness which has also helped me with my mental health and how I feel about myself, as I always feel quite happy and great about myself after I've finished the boxing session which is really good. The boxing has also allowed me to come out my comfort zone by introducing me to new people in a environment that I've never really been in before." WF, young person

The Youth Employment Hub has been very helpful due to the hub being a safe space to go to when I've been feeling down and unhappy about myself, as everyone there is always willing to help and provide support, such as completing a referral with Hereford mind which was really helpful as I don't I would've been able to do it myself, helping me contact the doctors, coming with me to the doctors appointment to help reduce my anxiety and feel more calm and relaxed, providing techniques that I can use to help reduce stress and anxiety when doing something new." TH, young person

"The team at the Youth Employment Hub have been fantastic partners in supporting the young people in our care. They have worked closely with us to help our young people build confidence, develop their CVs, and explore meaningful employment and work experience opportunities. Their approach has been professional, compassionate, and genuinely youth focused. In particular, they have provided invaluable support to a young person who was facing other personal challenges, offering a safe space, understanding, and trusted guidance from friendly professionals. Their commitment and care have made a real difference." Charlie, Support Worker, Bright Beginnings

"The Youth Hub continue to provide outstanding support to young adults across Herefordshire, making a positive and significant difference to those who attend, Bex and the team are engaging and passionate about supporting some of our most disadvantaged and difficult to reach young adults. It is a pleasure to work in partnership with South Wye Police Boxing Academy." Vince McNally MBE, South Wye Boxing

What DWP Job Centre Plus Coaches Say About the Hub

"The tailored support available is really good and very helpful to customers."

"The smaller and quieter building works well with our vulnerable customers."

"Feedback from our customers has been really positive; they enjoy the quieter space and find the Employment and Careers Coaches there really supportive and listen to them."

"Feedback on the workshops has been very positive, and a couple of customers that don't even leave the house have been attending."

Further information is available through the **Youth Employment Hub**:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/youth-employment-hub>

Herefordshire Council also works closely with schools, colleges, training providers and partner organisations to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET and provide early intervention and tailored support. Alongside this, the Not Known Tracking Improvement Action Plan strengthens tracking arrangements so that young people who are not participating can be identified quickly and offered appropriate support to re-engage in learning or employment.

Following a recent review of need the LA have worked with a local post 16 college to develop a new ESOL course for 16- to 19-year-olds for whom English is not their first language, and in addition a new Supported Internship programme has which started in September 2026.

The Marches Careers Hub plays a key role in supporting young people in Herefordshire to progress into Education, Employment and Training (EET) by bringing together schools, colleges, employers and local partners to improve careers education and create meaningful links between learning and the world of work. The Hub supports education providers to deliver high-quality careers programmes aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks, ensuring that young people have access to impartial careers guidance, labour market information, encounters with employers, and information about a wide range of progression pathways, including apprenticeships, further education and employment opportunities. Through its partnership with local businesses, the Careers Hub helps young people develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to make informed decisions about their futures, reducing the risk of becoming NEET and supporting successful transitions into sustained education, training and employment. Its overarching aim of linking business with education helps ensure that young people are prepared for the fast-changing world of work while meeting the skills needs of the local economy.

[About Us - Supporting Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin](#)

Herefordshire Council receives a grant from Shropshire Council as the accountable body for the Marches Careers Hub to co-fund the Enterprise Co-ordinator for Herefordshire. The Council provides 50% of the match funding of circa. £20k for the period September to August.

In addition to targeted support through the Youth Employment Hub and Careers Hub, several strategic developments are strengthening Herefordshire's ability to prevent young people from becoming NEET. The Herefordshire SEND Reform Plan is focused on improving early identification of need, increasing inclusion, and ensuring that children and young people receive the right support at the right time. Alongside this, the Children and Families Wellbeing Bill places greater emphasis on early intervention and integrated support for all children and families, helping to address barriers to learning and participation before they escalate.

The Council's plans to re-site and further develop the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service will also increase access to high-quality specialist provision and targeted interventions for vulnerable learners. Collectively, these developments support pupils earlier in their educational journey, improve engagement with learning, raise aspirations, and enable young people to make more informed decisions about their post-16 education, employment and training (EET) pathways. By strengthening support before a young person disengages from education, these reforms are expected to reduce the number of young people who subsequently become NEET.

Herefordshire Enterprise Zone funding has been invested in a number of bursaries for Herefordshire Young People studying Higher Education courses at NMITE, Hereford College of Arts and Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College.

Herefordshire Council adult and community learning service delivers adult skills programmes to those aged 19 plus including English and ESOL qualifications and courses aimed at increasing employability and independence skills.

The Connect to Work programme funded by DWP is being delivered within the YEH providing up to 12 months support for young people aged 18 plus who are NEET where they have complex barriers to employment, including disabilities, health conditions, learning difficulties, mental health challenges, care experience, or other significant barriers to entering work. It is a voluntary programme that offers intensive and personalised employment support to help people prepare for, secure and sustain employment.

Government post-16 reforms (2025) seek to create a more responsive and integrated education and skills system that meets employer demand, supports economic growth and improves opportunities for young people and adults. Key reforms include strengthening technical education pathways by introducing V levels and widening T level sectors and introducing 2 new level 2 pathways, aligning provision with Local Skills Improvement Plans, reducing NEET levels through the Youth Guarantee, and improving integration between employment support and skills provision. These reforms provide potential opportunities for Herefordshire to enhance progression into employment, apprenticeships and higher-level skills training while addressing local workforce shortages.

[New V levels and post-16 qualifications explained – The Education Hub](#)

A Skills Development Officer has been recruited to join the Growth team and will play a key role in strengthening pathways into employment for young people by working with employers, schools, colleges, training providers and employment support agencies. The role will help identify and develop work experience placements, promote apprenticeship opportunities and support employer engagement to increase the number of opportunities available to young people. This will include coordinating activity through the Youth Employment Hub, ensuring young people can access careers guidance, work tasters, sector-based experiences, apprenticeships and other employment and skills programmes aligned to local labour market demand.

The Department for Work and Pensions is leading a range of initiatives to tackle youth unemployment, including the Youth Guarantee, apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps and enhanced Jobcentre Plus support. These programmes aim to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) by providing tailored employment support, skills development, work experience and progression into sustainable employment. The Growth Hub and the Youth Employment Hub is working with employers and key stakeholders to maximise these opportunities in Herefordshire.

Key Employer Initiatives

- **Youth Jobs Grant:** Employers receive a £3,000 Youth Jobs Grant when they recruit an eligible young person to a job registered with the scheme who is aged 18–24, has been on Universal Credit for six months or more, and works at least 25 hours a week.
- **Jobs Guarantee Placements:** For employers, the scheme provides a fully funded six-month job placement, alongside support to help both the employer and the young person succeed. This covers eligible 18–24-year-olds unemployed on Universal Credit for 18 months, covering 100% of costs for up to 25 hours a week.
- **Apprenticeships:** £2,000 Apprenticeship hiring payment for smaller businesses (non-levy employers), in England, taking on a new apprentice aged 16 to 24, as part of a drive to create 50,000 more apprenticeships for young people, available from October 2026.
- Fully funded apprenticeship training for smaller businesses (non-levy employers) for apprentices aged 16 to 24-year-olds from August 2026.

Further information on these initiatives and others [Recruit the right people with Jobcentre Plus](#)

6: Resources, Investment and Value for Money

There are funding implications to continue the YEH, Careers Hub and an additional 0.5 post to better manage the post 16 tracking statutory role that we as an LA hold. We are reliant on officers trying to find funding annually to keep the Youth Employment Hub services operating which is hard in the current climate and is not a sustainable model.

The Careers Hub Enterprise Co-ordinator is employed on a fixed term rolling contract and 50% match funded by the Council. Match funding required is £20,000.00 which covers salary for 2026/2027 financial year.

The YEH officially opened in February 2025 and in its first year it was jointly funded by a DWP grant of £98,469 and 50% match funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund which funded a YEH co-ordinator and 2 x FTE Careers and Employment coaches on a fixed term rolling contract and premises, training and delivery costs. We recruited a further coach in September 2025 to meet demand and complexity of need. The council's match funding for the first 18 months from UKSPF is no longer available.

Funding must be applied for annually subject to performance and therefore there is no guarantee of continuation. Year 2 YEH funding grant from DWP is £193k and will fund the salaries of the YEH co-ordinator and 3 careers and employment coaches. The council's 50% match funding has been allocated from the Herefordshire Enterprise Zone budget and will employ an additional employment and careers coach, an apprentice, a part-time post 16 adviser and premises and delivery costs. The increase in funding and staffing reflects DWP requirements, for increased targets and breadth of delivery including in Ross-on-Wye and Leominster.

Currently we have one 0.4 FTE officer who is tracking the post 16 cohort (approx. 4200 young people) at a cost of £17532, this is funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant (School Improvement).

Consultees

1. N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 Data Pack

Appendix 2 Not Known Recovery Plan



Herefordshire Council

NEET Tracking Improvement Action Plan

July 2026 – January 2027

Overall Objective

To reduce the proportion of young people whose participation status is recorded as "Not Known", improve the completeness and timeliness of participation tracking, strengthen early intervention arrangements for young people at risk of becoming NEET, and ensure Herefordshire Council's performance moves out of the lowest-performing local authority cohort within six months.

Assessment of Current Performance and Key Challenges

- 321 young people are currently recorded as "Not Known" (July 2026)
- Strong relationships are in place with post 16 providers, Local authority teams and external providers for data sharing
- Performance has been adversely affected by team capacity issues, the authority experienced a six-month vacancy during the previous year. Since May 2026 there has been no dedicated tracking officer due to maternity leave.
- The current tracking role has historically operated with only 18.5 hours per week capacity.
- Difficulties contacting some young people through traditional communication methods have limited the speed at which destination information can be updated.

Senior Accountability

Senior Responsible Officer: Liz Farr, Director of Education, Skills and Learning

Responsibilities:

- Overall accountability for delivery of the improvement plan.
- Direct communication and reporting to the Department for Education.

- Oversight of capacity review and resource requirements.
- Chairing performance review meetings.

Operational Leads: Alexia Heath, Senior Adviser Post-16 Learning and Skills/ Louise Tanner Head of Learning and Achievement/ Ian Sockett Business Intelligence Manager

Responsibilities:

- Day-to-day implementation of the action plan.
- Management of tracking processes.
- Improvement of data quality and reporting.
- Oversight of partnership engagement and development of digital solutions.

Action Plan to Improve Tracking Completeness and Reduce "Not Known" Status (to include timescales and milestones)

Action	Lead	Timescale	Success Measure
Complete a comprehensive review of all 321 young people currently recorded as "Not Known"	Senior Adviser Post-16 Learning & Skills and Youth Hub Coordinator	31 July 2026	An accurate and current picture of those yp who are not known (projected significant decrease)
Sign off DfE recovery plan	Director of Education	14 August 2026	Plan submitted to DfE by 14 August 2026
Recruit and appoint maternity cover for participation tracking function	Director of Education	31 August 2026	Dedicated tracking resource in place
Introduce structured handover and training programme for new postholder	Senior Adviser Post-16 Learning & Skills and Youth Hub Coordinator	August–September 2026	New staff member independently managing tracking activities
Review of current capacity is being conducted indicating that we can bolster this area by 0.5	Director of Education	31 August 2026	Additional dedicated tracking resource in place Autumn term

Action	Lead	Timescale	Success Measure
FTE, recruitment planned in the Autumn following financial sign off process			
Establish weekly tracking review process during autumn term	Post 16 Tracking Officer	31 September 2026 onwards	Increased frequency of status updates to SLT
Develop and launch online self-update facility and webpage for young people	Senior Adviser Post-16 Learning & Skills	31 September 2026	Alternative digital route for young people to update status
Improve use of destination, provider and participation data to support validation activities	Post 16 Participation Team	Ongoing	Increased proportion of destinations confirmed within expected timescales
First formal performance review completed October 2026	SLT	1 st October 2026	Significant reduction (50%) of yp recorded not known compared to September 2025 data
Mid-point evaluation against DfE targets November 2026	SLT	1 st November 2026	Significant reduction (50%) of yp recorded not known compared to October 2025 data
Six-month impact review and report to DfE January 2027	Senior Adviser Post-16 Learning & Skills and Youth Hub Coordinator. Director of Education	January 2026	Not known numbers in line with statistical neighbours

Monitoring Progress and Reviewing Impact

Monitoring Activity	Frequency
Review of total number of "Not Known" young people	Bi-monthly (SLT)
Review of destination confirmation rates	Bi-monthly (SLT)
Tracking team performance review meeting	Bi-monthly (SLT)

Monitoring Activity	Frequency
Directorate performance review chaired by Director(SLT)	Bi-monthly
Progress report against DfE action plan	September/ October/ January
Formal review of staffing capacity and sustainability	Autumn 2026

Key Performance Indicators

1. Reduction in the number and percentage of young people recorded as "Not Known".
2. Improved timeliness of destination confirmation.
3. Increased engagement with young people through digital reporting methods.
4. Sustainable staffing arrangements for participation tracking.

Appendix 1: Data Pack

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Table 1: Cohort characteristics analysis of Yr 12-13 young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those recorded as Not Known: May-August 2026

		Looked after / In care	Caring for own child	Care Leaver	Supervised by YoT	Pregnancy	EHCP	Teenage Mothers	SEN Support	Mental Health
01/05/2026	Cohort Total	48	4	13	13	1	256	4	652	8
	NEET Group	7	4	3	6	1	34	4	57	5
	Current situation not known	3	0	1	1	0	11	0	19	0
	Not Known %	6.2%	0	7.7%	7.7%	0	4.3%	0	2.9%	0
	NEET %	14.6%	1	23.1%	46.2%	1	13.3%	1	8.7%	62.5%
	NEET + Not Known %	20.8%	1	30.8%	53.8%	1	17.6%	1	11.7%	62.5%
01/06/2026	Cohort Total	44	4	18	13	1	259	4	652	8
	NEET Group	7	4	3	6	1	34	4	57	5
	Not known in numbers	4	0	5	1	0	19	0	25	1
	Not Known as % of cohort	9.1%	0	27.8%	7.7%	0	7.3%	0	3.8%	12.5%
	NEET %	15.9%	1	16.7%	46.2%	1	13.1%	1	8.7%	62.5%
	NEET + Not Known %	25.0%	1	44.4%	53.8%	1	20.5%	1	12.6%	75.0%
01/07/2026	Cohort Total	44	4	18	13	1	258	4	652	8
	NEET Group	7	4	4	6	1	34	4	58	5
	Current situation not known	4	0	1	1	0	19	0	26	2
	Not Known %	9.1%	0	5.6%	7.7%	0	7.4%	0	4.0%	25.0%
	NEET %	15.9%	1	22.2%	46.2%	1	13.2%	1	8.9%	62.5%
	NEET + Not Known %	25.0%	1	27.8%	53.8%	1	20.5%	1	12.9%	87.5%
01/08/2026	Cohort Total	41	4	24	13	2	256	4	652	8
	NEET Group	6	4	6	7	2	39	4	61	5
	Current situation not known	2	0	1	2	0	3	0	21	0
	Not Known %	4.9%	0	4.2%	15.4%	0	1.2%	0	3.2%	0
	NEET %	14.6%	1	25.0%	53.8%	1	15.2%	1	9.4%	62.5%
	NEET + Not Known %	19.5%	1	29.2%	69.2%	1	16.4%	1	12.6%	62.5%

Table 1: Cohort characteristics analysis of Yr 12-13 young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those recorded as Not Known: May-August 2026

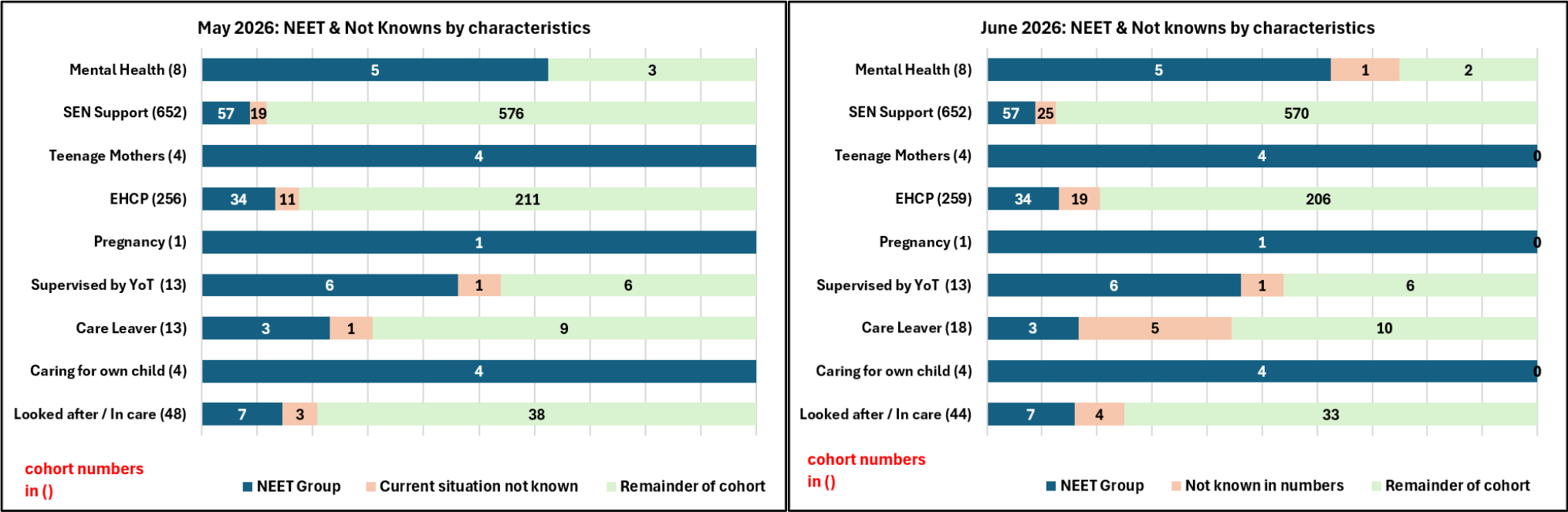


Table 2: Benchmarking data: National, regional and statistical neighbours. Percentage of Yr 12-13 NEET and Not Known: May-July 2026

	May		June		July	
Local Authority	NEET	Not known	NEET	Not known	NEET	Not known
Herefordshire	6.1%	7.4%	6.1%	8.0%	6.3%	8.4%
West Midlands	3.6%	1.5%	3.6%	1.5%	3.7%	1.6%
England	3.7%	2.0%	3.7%	2.0%	3.8%	2.3%
Westmorland and Furness	2.2%	0.9%	2.2%	0.9%	2.3%	0.7%
Staffordshire	4.2%	1.0%	4.1%	1.0%	4.2%	1.1%
Lincolnshire	2.4%	10.3%	2.4%	9.8%	2.4%	9.7%
Shropshire	2.9%	0.4%	2.8%	0.4%	2.9%	0.4%
Somerset	0.9%	19.1%	0.9%	18.1%	1.3%	17.2%
Lancashire	3.7%	1.3%	3.8%	1.4%	3.8%	1.3%
Suffolk	5.1%	0.7%	5.0%	1.5%	5.2%	2.6%
East Riding of Yorkshire	3.5%	0.5%	3.5%	0.5%	3.4%	0.8%
North Yorkshire	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%
Derbyshire	3.1%	1.1%	3.1%	1.0%	3.0%	1.1%

Table 2: Benchmarking data: National, regional and statistical neighbours. Percentage of Yr 12-13 NEET and Not Known: May-July 2026

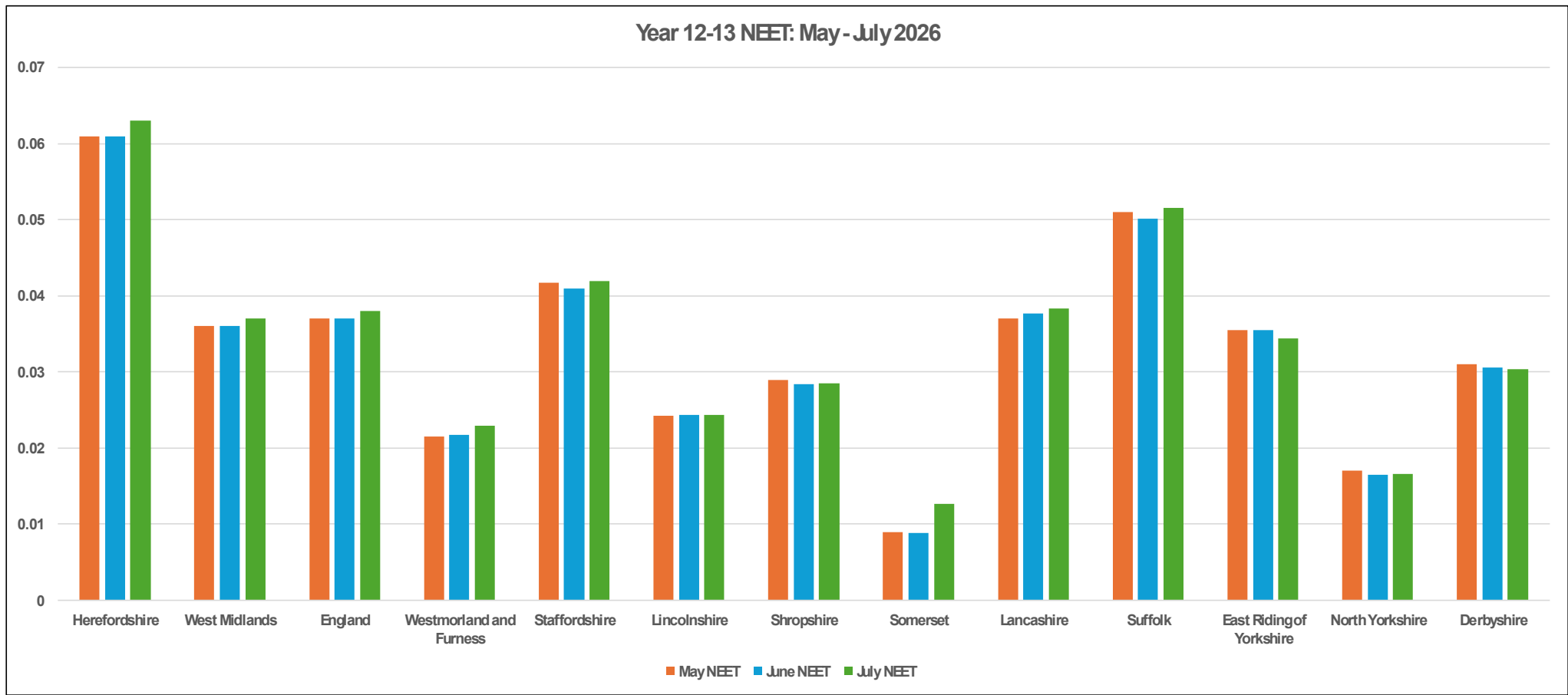


Table 3: KS4 Destinations for young people leaving AP: 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 leavers

Finished KS4	Provision	cohort	Sustained education destination	Further education	School sixth form	Sixth form college	Other education destination	Sustained apprenticeships	Sustained employment destination	Not recorded as a sustained destination	Activity not captured	Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships	Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships (%)
2020-21	HPRS	35	16	15	0	0	1	0	3	10	0	19	54.3%
	Herefordshire AP other than PRU	9	9	2	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	9	1
	AP England	7906	4275	2390	165	148	1572	169	426	1880	1156	4870	61.6%
2021-22	HPRS	11	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	5	45.5%
	Herefordshire AP other than PRU	9	9	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	9	1
	AP England	7133	3863	1984	123	150	1606	120	381	1519	1250	4364	61.2%
2022-23	HPRS	25	10	9	0	0	1	1	0	9	5	11	44.0%
	Herefordshire AP other than PRU	10	9	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	1	9	90.0%
	AP England	7631	4152	2115	112	135	1790	95	286	1577	1521	4533	59.4%

Table 3: KS4 Destinations for young people leaving AP: 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 leavers

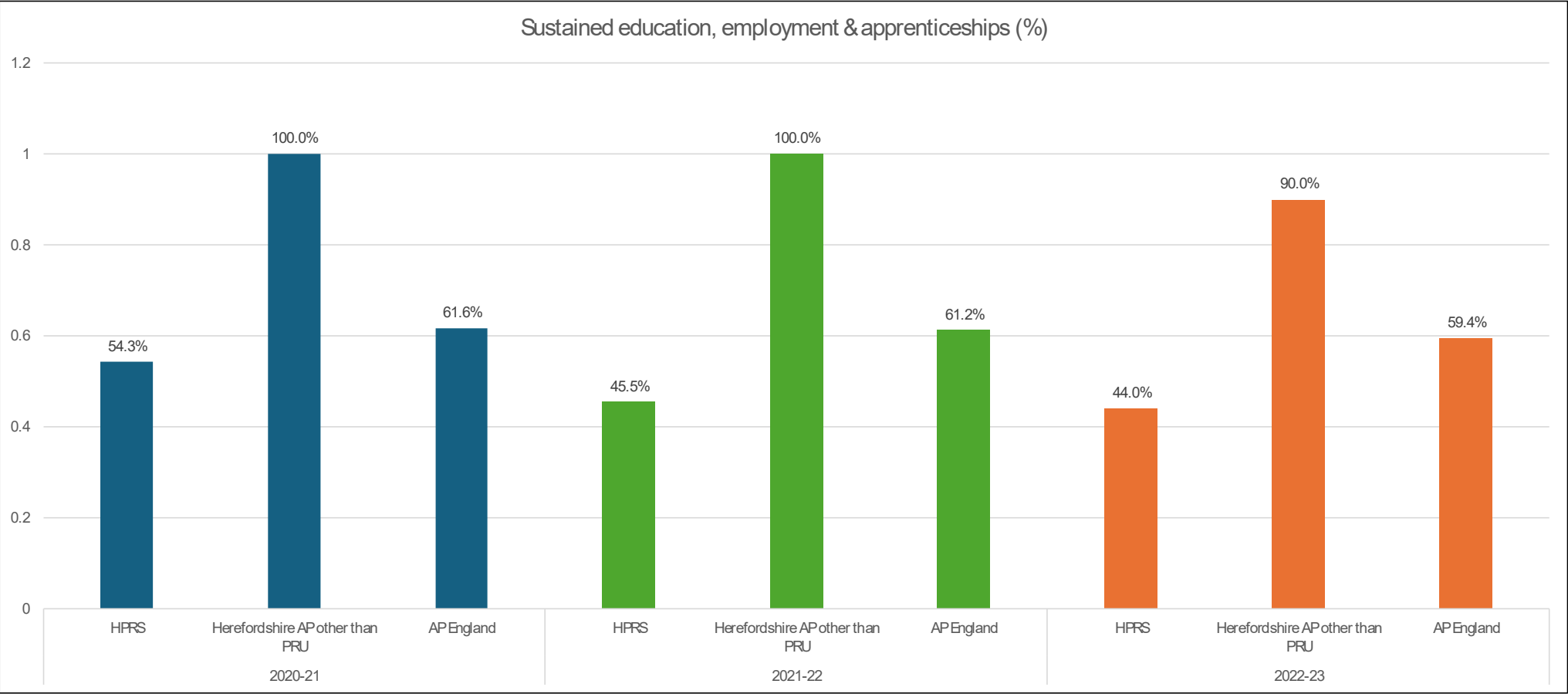


Table 3.1: Longer term destinations of young people leaving AP, 1yr, 3yrs and 5 yrs after leaving KS4

Destination of students 1, 3 and 5 years after leaving Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service									
Year of leaving	Cohort size	Destination year	Sustained education destination	Sustained apprenticeships	Sustained employment destination	Not recorded as a sustained destination	Activity not captured	Overall Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships	Overall Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships (%)
2018-19	37	1 yr	16	0	3	12	6	19	51.4%
		3yrs	2	1	12	19	3	15	40.5%
		5 yrs	0	2	17	15	3	19	51.4%
2019-20	22	1 yr	8	0	3	4	7	11	50.0%
		3yrs	2	0	4	14	2	6	27.3%
2020-21	35	1 yr	16	0	3	10	6	19	54.3%
		3yrs	3	0	8	18	6	11	31.4%

Destination of students 1, 3 and 5 years after leaving Herefordshire - All Alternative Provision									
Year of leaving	Cohort size	Destination year	Sustained education destination	Sustained apprenticeships	Sustained employment destination	Not recorded as a sustained destination	Activity not captured	Overall Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships	Overall Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships (%)
2018-19	39	1 yr	18	0	3	12	6	21	60.0%
		3 yrs	3	1	12	20	3	16	45.7%
		5 yrs	0	2	17	17	3	19	54.3%
2019-20	27	1 yr	13	0	3	4	7	16	59.3%
		3 yrs	4	0	4	15	4	8	29.6%
2020-21	44	1 yr	25	0	3	10	6	28	63.6%
		3 yrs	4	0	8	26	6	12	27.3%

ENGLAND									
Year of leaving	Cohort size	Destination year	Sustained education destination	Sustained apprenticeships	Sustained employment destination	Not recorded as a sustained destination	Activity not captured	Overall Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships	Overall Sustained education, employment & apprenticeships (%)
2018-19	9810	1 yr	4852	243	422	2597	1696	5517	56.2%
		3 yrs	1930	289	1774	4781	1036	3993	40.7%
		5 yrs	746	170	2167	5644	1083	3083	31.4%
2019-20	9559	1 yr	5534	137	271	2174	1443	5942	62.2%
		3 yrs	1880	262	1692	4567	1158	3834	40.1%
2020-21	7906	1 yr	4275	169	427	1879	1156	4871	61.6%
		3 yrs	1659	177	1206	3845	1019	3042	38.5%

Table 3.2 Outcomes for 2025-6 Section19 AP cohort at the end of Yr11

Provision Post 16	No.	%
Mercia Grow	1	11.1%
Considering options	2	22.2%
College	6	66.7%

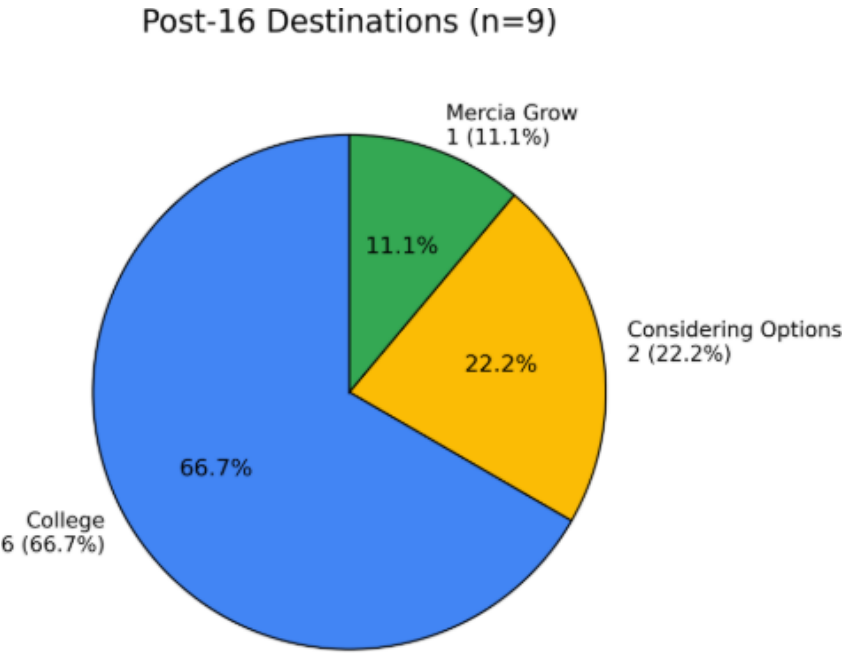


Table 4.0: Snapshot deprivation analysis of Yr 12-13 young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and Not Known, based on home postcode: August 2026

NEET										
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025 Decile	No. young people	%		IMD25: national percentile	No. young people	%		IMD25: Herefordshire percentile	No. young people	%
1 (most deprived)	8	2.8%		Least 10% deprived	5	1.7%		Least 10% deprived	23	8.0%
2	37	12.9%		Least 20% deprived	18	6.3%		Least 20% deprived	20	7.0%
3	26	9.1%		Least 25% deprived	9	3.1%		Least 25% deprived	14	4.9%
4	70	24.4%		Least 50% deprived	61	21.3%		Least 50% deprived	47	16.4%
5	53	18.5%		Top 10% most deprived	8	2.8%		Top 10% most deprived	53	18.5%
6	33	11.5%		Top 20% most deprived	37	12.9%		Top 20% most deprived	50	17.4%
7	24	8.4%		Top 25% most deprived	18	6.3%		Top 25% most deprived	25	8.7%
8	13	4.5%		Top 50% most deprived	131	45.6%		Top 50% most deprived	55	19.2%
9	18	6.3%		Grand Total	287			Grand Total	287	
10	5	1.7%								
Grand Total	287									

Not Known										
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025 Decile	No. young people	%		IMD25: national percentile	No. young people	%		IMD25: Herefordshire percentile	No. young people	%
1 (most deprived)	4	2.5%		Least 10% deprived	1	0.6%		Least 10% deprived	6	3.7%
2	17	10.4%		Least 20% deprived	5	3.1%		Least 20% deprived	11	6.7%
3	10	6.1%		Least 25% deprived	4	2.5%		Least 25% deprived	9	5.5%
4	32	19.6%		Least 50% deprived	52	31.9%		Least 50% deprived	42	25.8%
5	38	23.3%		Top 10% most deprived	4	2.5%		Top 10% most deprived	25	15.3%
6	35	21.5%		Top 20% most deprived	17	10.4%		Top 20% most deprived	22	13.5%
7	14	8.6%		Top 25% most deprived	5	3.1%		Top 25% most deprived	9	5.5%
8	7	4.3%		Top 50% most deprived	75	46.0%		Top 50% most deprived	39	23.9%
9	5	3.1%		Grand Total	163			Grand Total	163	
10	1	0.6%								
Grand Total	163									



Title: Work Programme 2026-27

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 6 October 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

The report:

- Provides the committee with a draft work programme for the committee, for approval.
- Provides the committee with a copy of the council's forward plan of key decisions to assist the committee in deciding its programme of work.
- Lists the recommendations made by the committee since January 2025, and any responses to these recommendations.

Background

1. A fundamental part of good scrutiny is planning and agreeing a programme of work for the committee to undertake. A well-considered work programme:
 - a. identifies priorities for the committee's work that align with corporate and partnership priorities, as well as reflecting community concern;
 - b. ensures that each identified topic has clear objectives that focus the committee's work;
 - c. creates a timetable for the committee's programme of work so that the committee carry out its work at the optimal time; and
 - d. provides officers and partners with requirements for evidence that will support the committee in providing evidence-based scrutiny.

Meeting objectives

2. To agree the committee's work programme.
3. To note the work programmes of Herefordshire Council's other scrutiny committees.

Report information

4. The most recent work programme was published for October 2026 onwards and is attached as Appendix 1.
5. Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is the council's most recently published forward plan of key decisions.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
 Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, email: danial.webb@herefordshire.gov.uk

6. Appendix 3 is a list of all recommendations made by the committee in 2025 and 2026.

Consultees

7. To prepare this work programme, the committee chairs have met with officers of the council to identify potential priority areas of work for the committee. These priority areas have been scheduled within the work programme to ensure the committee considers topics when it is most useful to do so. A draft of this work programme has then been circulated to the council's corporate leadership team and other key senior directors, alongside committee chairs, for further comment and refinement.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Work Programme October 2026

Appendix 2 – Herefordshire Council Forward Plan 25 October 2026

Appendix 3 – Recommendations made by Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in 2025 and 2026.

Background papers and resources

None



SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

September 2026 – March 2027

Below are the work programmes of Herefordshire Council’s five scrutiny committees and their six task and finish groups.

Work programmes are subject to change, with revised programmes agreed at the end of formal committee meetings.

Please note that no meetings will be scheduled after March 2027 until after the 2027 Council elections have concluded.

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

6 October 2026 **report deadline 28 September 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 2 October 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Alternative provision - Review of capital programme relating to alternative provision. - Overview of existing provision.	Officer report	Liz Farr - Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement - Hilary Jones, Head of Additional Needs - Jane Morse - Commissioning
Children and Young People NEET - Impact of data updates on NEET average figures. - Overview of focussed service action plan with milestones.	Officer report	Liz Farr - Alexia Heath - Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

10 December 2026 **report deadline 2 December 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC December 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Youth Strategy	Draft strategy	Tina Russell Hereford Rural Media Will Lindsey HVOSS Lindsay McHardy

11 March 2027 report deadline **3 March 2027** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC March 2027

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Fostering Objectives to be agreed	To be agreed	Tori Lynch - Natasha Newton
Participation strategy Objectives to be agreed	To be agreed	Suzanne Sims - Andrea Busk

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

23 October 2026 **report deadline 15 October 2026** **pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 19 October 2026**

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Review of projects funded - Examine future funding opportunities	Overview of funded projects	- Service Director, Economy and Growth Economic Development Manager
Public participation in planning task and finish group - Review final report - Agree report recommendations	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

27 January 2027 **report deadline 19 January 2027** **pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC**

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Year of delivery – capital projects End of year review of capital projects taking place in 2026.	- Council capital programme - Individual programme progress reports	To be determined

*The Corporate Director, Economy and Environment, Cabinet Member, Economy and Growth, Cabinet Member, Community Services and Assets, Cabinet Member, Roads and Regulatory Services, and Cabinet Member, Transport and Infrastructure, all have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

2 December 2026 **report deadline 24 November 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 27 November 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Carbon Management in Herefordshire - Identify progress in achieving carbon neutrality within: - The council and - Herefordshire more widely. - Scrutinise evidence, resident and business experiences, and project feedback to highlight - resident and business issues - evidence gaps, and - project progress. - Review the cost of carbon management programmes within the council and across the county. - Outline aims and objectives of Herefordshire Environment Board.	- Fourth Carbon Management Plan - Climate adaptation pilot feedback - Resident or business feedback and case studies - Best practice elsewhere, including the use of biochar	Richard Vaughan - Daniel Lenain - Mary Burton - Gareth Ellis - Outside representatives to be determined.
Rail Strategy - To test the ambition of the rail strategy - To establish progress to restore the Hereford-Ross-Gloucester rail link. - To seek assurance that the policy supports the objectives of the Local Transport Plan 5. - To establish how the strategy supports potential coordination of bus and rail services.	- Rail strategy - Buses task and finish group report (any West Midlands rail strategy)	- John Hobbs Ffion Horton - David Land

Flooding spotlight review – terms of reference To agree the terms of reference for a proposed spotlight review to scrutinise flood risk management and flood emergency responses.	Spotlight review terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
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Prospective spotlight review

February/March 2027

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Flooding and flood risk management Terms of reference to be agreed.	Evidence to be agreed	- John Hobbs - Other TBC

*The Corporate Director, Economy and Environment and Cabinet Member, Environment, both have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Health Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

8 December 2026 (TBC)** **report deadline 30 November 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning December 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Right Care Right Person Deferred update on work to deliver acute community mental health support in Herefordshire.	West Mercia Police Situation Report	Iain Richmond, Head of Adult Social Care Operations Nigel Webster, West Mercia Police Jake Wright, West Mercia Police Paul Abernethie, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust
Shaping neighbourhood health - Analyse how the health partnership identifies health needs in communities. - Scrutinise provision of current and future neighbourhood health services.	2Neighbourhood health bid - Taurus Out of Hours GP service - Worcestershire Council papers	Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health Sarah Shingler, Managing Director Wye Valley NHS Trust Nigel Fraser, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB Alan Dawson, Wye Valle NHS Trust Lauren Parry, Taurus Healthcare
Adult Social Care budget outturn Scrutinise financial outturn against budget savings plans	Quarterly budget outturn and performance monitoring	Hilary Hall, Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*The Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing and Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing, both have a standing invitation to the meeting.

**As of 28 September, we plan to move this committee meeting date from 14 December to 8 December 2026. This will be confirmed shortly.

Scrutiny Management Board

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

12 October 2026 **report deadline 02 October 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Temporary accommodation - Provide assurance that the council understands and is actively managing the growing demand and financial pressures associated with temporary accommodation, - Examine whether temporary accommodation services are meeting the needs of homeless households - Assess the effectiveness of prevention and support activity. - Identify the wider causes of homelessness and prolonged stays in temporary accommodation, including housing supply, demand trends and policy influences.	- Demand trends, causes of homelessness, turnover and household profiles. - Temporary accommodation costs, funding sources, capital investment and future financial pressures. - Resident experiences, prevention outcomes, housing supply constraints and options for reducing demand and length of stay.	Head of Supported Housing
Inequalities task and finish group final report Agree final report	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Commercialisation task and finish group final report Agree final report	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Annual review of effectiveness Agree final report	Scrutiny annual review	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Hoople spotlight review terms of reference Agree terms of reference	Terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

1 December 2026 **report deadline 23 November 2026** member briefing 24 November 2026 pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 27 November 2026

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Hoople spotlight review report Agree findings and recommendations of the Hoople spotlight review.	Terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
The voluntary and community sector Objectives to be agreed.		
Work programme Review work programme.	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

January 2027 (date TBC) **report deadline TBC January 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC January 2026

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Budget 2027/2028 To understand the executive's proposed revenue and capital budgets and its medium-term financial strategy.	2027/2028 revenue budget report 2027/2028 capital budget report	Cabinet members Directors

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
To make recommendations for the executive to consider before proposing the budget to Council.	2027-28-2030/31 medium-term financial strategy report - Supplementary information as requested by the committee.	

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



This document, known as the Forward Plan, sets out the decisions which are expected to be taken during the period covered by the Plan by either Cabinet as a whole, or by individual Cabinet Members. The Plan is updated regularly and is available on the Herefordshire Council website (www.herefordshire.gov.uk) and from Council Offices. This edition supersedes all previous editions.

The council must give at least 28 days' notice of key decisions to be taken. A key decision is one which results in the council incurring expenditure or making savings of £500,000 or more, and/or is likely to be significant in terms of the strategic nature of the decision or its impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

Current cabinet members are listed below. For more information and links papers for Cabinet meetings please visit <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251>

Councillor Jonathan Lester	Corporate Strategy and Budget (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst	Culture and Environment (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Carole Gandy	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Ivan Powell	Children and Young People
Councillor Harry Bramer	Community Services and Assets
Councillor Graham Biggs	Economy and Growth
Councillor Pete Stoddart	Finance and Corporate Services
Councillor Barry Durkin	Roads and Regulatory Services
Councillor Philip Price	Transport and Infrastructure
Councillor Dan Hurcomb	Local Engagement & Community Resilience

Documents submitted in relation to each decision will be a formal report, which may include one or more appendices. Reports will usually be made available on the council website at least 5 clear working days before the date of the decision. Occasionally it will be necessary to exempt part or all of a decision report from publication due to the nature of the decision, for example if it relates to the commercial or business affairs of the council. Other documents may be submitted in advance of the decision being taken and will also be published on the website unless exempt.

To request a copy of a decision report or related documents please contact governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01432 261699.

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead officer and lead cabinet member	Directorate	Notice of decision first published / ID	Issue Type and exemptions
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FORWARD PLAN FOR 25 September 2026 ONWARDS

The following information is provided for each entry in the Forward Plan:

Heading	Contains
Report title and purpose	A summary of the proposal
Decision Maker and Due date	Who will take the decision and the date the decision is expected to be made
Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	The cabinet member with responsibility for this decision and the officers producing the decision report.
Directorate	The directorate of the council responsible for the decision.
Date uploaded onto plan	The date the decision was first uploaded and the notice period started for key decisions.
Decision type, exemptions and urgency	Whether the decision is a Key or Non-Key decision, if the report is expected to be fully open, partly exempt or fully exempt and if urgency procedures are being followed.

Decisions to be taken by Cabinet at a formal meeting are listed first, ordered by date, and include both Key and Non-Key decisions. Decisions to be taken by individual Cabinet Members are then listed, grouped by portfolio area and sorted by date. These include Key and Non-Key decisions.

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
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Cabinet decisions by date (Key and Non-key listed)

Early Help Task and Finish Group - final report To provide Cabinet with the final report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's Early Help task and group, looking at the provision of early help in Herefordshire.	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer Danial.Webb@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260659	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	Non Key Open
Travel Plan Strategy The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for an updated Travel Plan process for Herefordshire. The updated approach sets out a clearer, more consistent and outcome-focused process for the development, implementation and monitoring of travel plans across new developments, existing organisations and key trip-generating sites.	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager ffion.horton@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Q2 2026/27 Budget Report To report the forecast position for 2026/27 at Quarter 2 (September 2026), including explanation and analysis of the drivers for the material budget variances, and to outline current and planned recovery activity to reduce the forecast overspend. To provide assurance that progress has been made towards delivery of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	Non Key Open
Q2 Performance Report 2026-27 To review performance for Quarter 2 (Q2) 2026/27 and to report the performance position across all Directorates for this period.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Jessica Karia-Fitzgerald, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence j.karia-fitzgerald@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260976	Corporate Support Centre	NEW ITEM	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Risk Management Update Q2 2026/27 To provide an update on the status of corporate risks at the end of Quarter 2 2026/27 (September 2026) and provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively across the council.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	Non Key Open
Update on the Phase 2 Phosphate Mitigation Schemes To provide Cabinet with an update regarding the Phosphate Mitigation Wetland schemes	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member culture and Environment Gemma Dando, Chief Operating Officer, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager gemma.dando@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Recommissioning of Drugs & Alcohol Recovery Services To obtain approval to recommission drug and alcohol recovery services in Herefordshire for an initial five-year period (2028–2033), with the option to extend the contract by a further two years. (2033–2035).	Cabinet 17 December 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Natalie Johnson-Stanley, Public Health Lead - Substance Misuse / Tobacco Natalie.Johnson-Stanley@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383230	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Cabinet Member Decisions (Key and Non Key decisions)					
Portfolio: adults, health and wellbeing					
Renewal of Access Group contract for Mosaic, Synergy and associated systems To seek approval to enter into a new contractual arrangement with The Access Group for the provision of Mosaic (adults and children's social care case management system), Synergy (education management system), Abacus (adult social care finance system) and Core+(youth service system including transition to a cloud-hosted Software as a Service (SaaS) , following expiry of the current contract's available extensions in September 2026.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 25 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Hilary Hall, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing Hilary.Hall@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Herefordshire Care Home Partnerships Framework To approve the procurement of a new multi provider partnership framework for the provision of care home placements and related services. The Council is looking to formalise partnership arrangements for a minimum of 500-550 placements across all providers. Estimated value of up to £320m across the framework term (maximum of 8 years).	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Before 28 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Ros Murphy, Commissioning Manager, Community Wellbeing ros.murphy@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
To re-commission the home care framework in Herefordshire To approve the re-commissioning of the council's home care framework, called Services In Your Home (SIYH), in Herefordshire. The new SIYH framework needs to be operational by 1 May 2027.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 21 October 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Sharon Amery, Senior Commissioning Officer sharon.amery2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383734	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy The purpose of the report is to approve the 2026-2036 Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 30 November 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing David Collyer, Acting Consultant in Public Health: General Practitioner david.collyer2@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
To re-commission the Technology Enabled Care Service in Herefordshire The existing contract for the Technology Enabled Care Service (TECS), including call monitoring, ends on 31 March 2027. Therefore, any new service arrangements will need to commence from 1 April 2027.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 3 December 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Sharon Amery, Senior Commissioning Officer sharon.amery2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383734	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: children and young people					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Schools Budget 2026/27 The cabinet member to approve the schools budget for 2026/27	Cabinet member children and young people 30 September 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Samantha Gregory, Democratic Services Officer, Jen Preece, Democratic Services Officer samantha.gregory@herefordshire.gov.uk, jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Schools, Central School Services and Early Years Budget 2027/28 To approve School Forum's recommended budget proposals for school budgets, central school services and early years within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2027/28.	Cabinet member children and young people 27 January 2027	Cabinet member children and young people Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151) stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
High Needs Budget 2027/28 To propose the High Needs Budget for 2027/28 to the Cabinet Member Children and Young People.	Cabinet member children and young people 29 March 2027	Cabinet member children and young people Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151) stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: community services and assets					
Establish a new Alternative Provision Centre capital spend To approve the spend of the capital allocation to establish a new Alternative Provision Centre	Cabinet member community services and assets 14 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Relocation of Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units Capital Spend To approve the spend of the capital allocation to relocate Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units onto a single site.	Cabinet member community services and assets 14 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	KEY Open
South Bank Close and Ivy Close Lease Arrangements To approve Midland Hearts request to rescind their lease of South Bank Close and Ivy Close. To approve the procurement of a new lease holder for these properties.	Cabinet member community services and assets Before 30 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Hannah McSherry, Housing Strategy Officer Hannah.McSherry2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383061	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: economy and growth					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Merton Meadow Flood Alleviation Scheme Approval for additional expenditure due to the impact of unprecedented levels of rainfall and flooding on the site during January to March 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth 15 October 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth, Stephen Holland, Interim Head of Housing Development Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk, stephen.holland@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260330,	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Connect to Work Programme To approve the procurement of the Connect to Work Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Programme in Herefordshire using the Open Procedure in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The programme is fully funded through a grant provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). To approve the award of a contract to the bidder achieving the highest overall score against the published evaluation criteria for a period of up to three years and six months, commencing in October 2026, with a total contract value of up to £1.22 million. To delegate operational responsibility for the delivery of the Connect to Work programme in Herefordshire to the Service Directors for Economy and Growth and Education, Skills and Learning, acting in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth.	Cabinet member economy and growth 16 October 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Alexia Heath, Post 16 Senior Advisor aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432383416	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Skills Bootcamps Herefordshire 2027/2028 Financial Year To approve the submission of a delivery plan to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Skills Bootcamps funding of £1.5 million for the 2027/28 financial year. To agree that Herefordshire Council will act as the accountable body for the management, administration and commissioning of the funding, once approved by DWP, including any subsequent Skills Bootcamps allocations awarded to the council. To delegate to the Service Director for Economy and Growth and Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning, all operational decisions necessary to implement and deliver the programme, including the appointment of training provider(s) and the management of associated funding and contractual arrangements.	Cabinet member economy and growth 16 October 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Alexia Heath, Post 16 Senior Advisor aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432383416	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: environment					
Portfolio: finance and corporate services					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Public Notices To approve a contract via a direct award process for the placing of public notices in newspapers circulating within Herefordshire.	Cabinet member finance and corporate services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Ed Bradford, Major Contracts Programme Director Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: local engagement and community resilience					
Portfolio: roads and regulatory services					
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy To seek approval from the Cabinet Member (Roads and Regulatory Services) for the proposed revision of the Policy and Strategy for the delivery of Highway Infrastructure Asset Management. These documents establish the framework for the principles which are applied to the maintenance of our highway network.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Mark Lewis, Group Manager – Highway Asset Management mark.lewis2@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Parking Enforcement Policy 2026 To approve the implementation of a revised Parking Enforcement Policy to include the policies relating to the implementation of virtual permits.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Michael Barnes, Parking Services Manager michael.barnes@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Procurement of Parking and Virtual Permitting Software To approve the procurement of Parking Enforcement and Virtual Permitting Software contract for a maximum of 5 years with an estimated value in excess of £500k .	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Michael Barnes, Parking Services Manager michael.barnes@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: transport and infrastructure					



Appendix 3 Recommendations made by Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, January 2025 – July 2026

Tuesday 21 January 2025		
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - Yearly Review of Effectiveness Report 2023-24		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	The partnership ensures that recommendations from the 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness onwards have an identified partnership lead and an indicative timeframe for completion;	Noted and will be incorporated into business plan 25/26
2	The partnership appends an implementation plan for the recommendations in its 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness; and	Noted and will be created for the business plan agreed for 25/26
3	Herefordshire Council's director of children's services and director of governance and law provide guidance to elected members on their corporate parent responsibilities in the event of a significant incident, or death, concerning a care leaver under the age of 25.	The role of members as corporate parents: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the council, or is a "qualifying care leaver" (someone who between 16 and 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their fourteenth birthday), the council becomes their corporate parent. This means that they should: • act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people • encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, • make sure they have access to services • make sure children and young people are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work • promote high aspirations and try to secure the best outcomes for them • prepare them for adulthood and independent living. All councillors and officers are corporate parents. It is therefore every councillor's responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers. Children can be in care in a range of different settings, with the authority

		acting as corporate parent to all of them. This includes foster care, children's homes, secure children's homes, young offender institutions, secure training centres and some types of kinship care. Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child. Lead members, those on corporate parenting panels, and overview and scrutiny committees will have particular responsibilities, but for all councillors, there is a role of being the "eyes and ears of the community". The role of the council in child deaths The death of a child is a tragedy, and subsequent enquiries / investigations should keep an appropriate balance between forensic and medical requirements and the family's need for support. There is a strict statutory framework to be adhered to following the death of a child, this is led in Herefordshire by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) under strict legislative guidance, and the Council does not have a role independently in such matters. Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines child death review partners as "local authorities and any Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) for the local area as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017". The HSCP therefore has a legal duty to undertake reviews of serious cases (Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) where a child has died or suffered serious harm, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. When a child dies, in any circumstances, it is important for parents and families to understand what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learned. HSCP must make arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, if they consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area. Key scrutiny responsibilities in children's services Through legislation, scrutiny committees have several critical roles: • Examining Children's Services Performance: They assess whether local authorities and partners are effectively delivering services such as social care, education, and youth support. • Scrutinising Safeguarding Practices: Ensuring that child protection measures, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and social work interventions are effective. • Monitoring SEND Services: Reviewing how well councils and health partners implement the SEND reforms and improve outcomes for children with disabilities. • Assessing Children's Health and Well-being Services: Overseeing the effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), public health initiatives, and early intervention programmes.
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		• Reviewing Education and Skills Provision: Evaluating school performance, alternative provision, post-16 education, and how councils support vulnerable learners. Limitations Despite their statutory powers, scrutiny committees have limitations in scrutinising children's services, particularly where other statutory processes are already in place. The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation outline that scrutiny committees cannot duplicate or interfere with statutory decision-making processes. This restriction affects their ability to intervene in certain cases, including: • Individual Casework and Complaints: Committees do not have the power to scrutinise individual cases of child protection, SEND disputes, or social care interventions, as these matters are subject to separate statutory complaints and appeals mechanisms, such as the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. • Regulated Inspection Processes: Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Ofsted has a statutory role in inspecting children's services, including safeguarding and SEND provision. Scrutiny committees cannot override or replace the findings of Ofsted or direct the regulatory body's work. • Judicial and Tribunal Matters: Matters that are subject to legal proceedings, such as care proceedings in the Family Court under the Children Act 1989, are beyond the remit of scrutiny committees. They cannot influence court decisions or interfere in ongoing legal cases. Statutory Safeguarding Boards: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 established Local Safeguarding Partnerships, replacing Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Scrutiny committees cannot take over or interfere with the statutory duties of these multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including serious case reviews, which have legal responsibility for protecting children at risk. They can, however scrutinise the safeguarding partnership itself.
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Tuesday 22 July 2025		
Herefordshire Children's Services and Partnership Improvement Plan		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	For the executive to ensure that the council's digital, data and technology teams are sufficiently staffed, and properly resourced in the next budget, to ensure that all of the data	A review of the council's ICT and Corporate Performance & Intelligence resources to support all Directorate teams will be undertaken as part of development of the council's revenue budget for 2026/27. This review will ensure that resource requirements are prioritised within the context of the funding available and the council's overall financial position.

	needs of the children and young people directorate are met.	
2	For full Council to debate and commit to the principle of working for a child friendly Herefordshire.	Cllr Fagan proposed her motion at the Full Council meeting on 10 October 2025 which was carried unanimously.

Tuesday 16 September 2025**Children And Young People's Quality Assurance**

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Herefordshire Council ensures that in quarterly performance monitoring and its annual report of complaints it includes: • learning from compliments • complaints that are declined and the reasons for this and • evidence in case file audits of informal resolutions.	Recommendations are agreed and will be incorporated into annual report 25/26 and quarterly case audit reports and reflected in summary in the annual report 25/26

Youth Justice

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Herefordshire Council engage with colleges regarding education and training for those in the youth justice system.	Action already in place: The Youth Justice Service Education, Training and Employment Officer works alongside colleagues from Herefordshire Council to advocate for justice-involved children to support entry and participation into education provision offered within local colleges. Justice-involved children's education and the suitability of their educational placement is overseen by the YJS Management Board via quarterly performance reporting.

Tuesday 11 November 2025**Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-25**

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Partnership to consider explicitly reporting what partners learned from children and families and how it influenced policy and practice (you said, we did) in its annual report.	Recommendations are agreed and will be incorporated into annual report 25/26 and quarterly case audit reports and reflected in summary in the annual report 25/26

Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	The Director of Children's Services, through the all-member briefing, to brief elected members on Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare, and on elected members' duties as corporate parents with regard to Prevent.	Briefings took place March and April 2026.
2	The Protect and Prepare Board to consider how the specific perspectives and experiences of children and young people can be built into the design and delivery of emergency/civil contingencies exercises	

Tuesday 10 March 2026		
ILAC inspection and action plan		
No recommendations		

Monday 12 May 2026		
Neglect Strategy		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	For the Integrated Care Board to consider an adaptation of the Graded Care Profile 2 antenatal toolkit for use by midwives.	No response yet
Update on response to Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection findings		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	West Mercia Police should pilot mechanisms to hear from children and families in Herefordshire with whom they have worked, to understand and improve their practice.	No response yet

Wednesday 22 July 2026		
Early Help Task and Finish Group		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Develop a Long-Term Sustainability Plan for Family Hubs Beyond 2029	No response yet
2	Increase the availability of safe youth spaces	No response yet
3	Request the council's Scrutiny Management Board reviews the council's support for the voluntary and community sector	This will be considered by Scrutiny Management Board in December 2026.
4	Share the good practices in early help that deliver good outcomes to families	No response yet