



CHILDREN  
& FAMILY  
SUPPORT

# Warwickshire Children and Young People Strategy 2021-2030



# Foreword

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I'm pleased to introduce the Children and Young People Strategy 2021-2030. This is the first strategy of its kind for the county's children and young people and has, at its heart, the Child Friendly Warwickshire programme.

Our commitment to Child Friendly Warwickshire has seen the programme evolve and grow since its launch in October 2021. This programme will enable us to meet our ambitions for children and young people. These include improving school attendance, reducing the number of young people not in education, training or employment and safely reducing the number of children in care.

To help us to achieve these ambitions, our strategy aims to bring the county together in a collective effort to ensure our children and young people have a voice and that they are heard, that they are safe, happy and healthy and that they are equipped with the skills to have the best lives they can.

Having the best life possible does not happen by accident. It needs involvement from a range of groups beyond the children themselves. So, this strategy looks at how Warwickshire County Council will work with not only the children and young people but also with parents, carers, communities and other agencies - all composite parts that, when brought together, create a county that is child-friendly, one where children and young people have every opportunity to flourish in all aspects of their lives. A Child Friendly Warwickshire.

How have we come up with this strategy?

As with all good plans, it started by listening. Children and young people are at the heart of all that we do but, as adults, we may have lost sight

of what a child needs in such a fast-changing world. In 2021, we surveyed youngsters in all sorts of settings asking them how we can make ours a county that is committed to creating an environment in which they can thrive. Their responses guided our ambitions and the priority areas outlined in the strategy where we will give focus. We are committed to creating a Child Friendly Warwickshire and ensuring we are guided by the voice of children, young people and families. Alignment to the Council Plan and its core objectives was also critical and we will deliver our plans to ensure our resources are managed well and that the economy and environment are supported.

Since the formation of the first Children and Young People Strategy in 2021 we have remained committed to partnership working. The next step in this commitment is to implement the national Families First for children pathfinder programme. The programme's vision is to rebalance children's social care away from costly crisis intervention to more meaningful early support through stronger and clearer multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, greater involvement of wider family networks, the creation of multi-agency child protection teams and ensuring earlier support for families with multiple needs.

To reflect these changes, there will be a fully refreshed strategy published in Autumn 2025.



**Councillor Sue Markham**  
Portfolio Holder for Children and Families and Education.

# Introduction

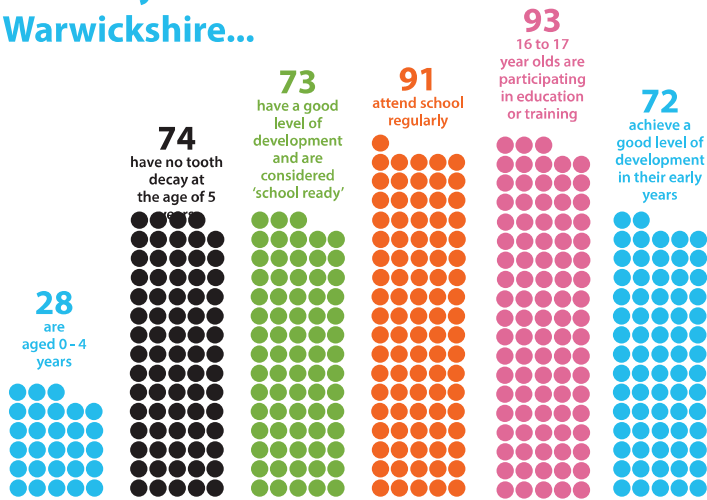
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## **Our aim is for Warwickshire to be a Child Friendly County.**

This strategy will establish how Warwickshire County Council will work with parents, carers, children, young people, communities, and other agencies to ensure children in Warwickshire can be the best they can be. It sets out how we will create a child friendly county and a safe place for children to grow up and reach their full potential.

# Did you know?

## For every 100 children in Warwickshire...

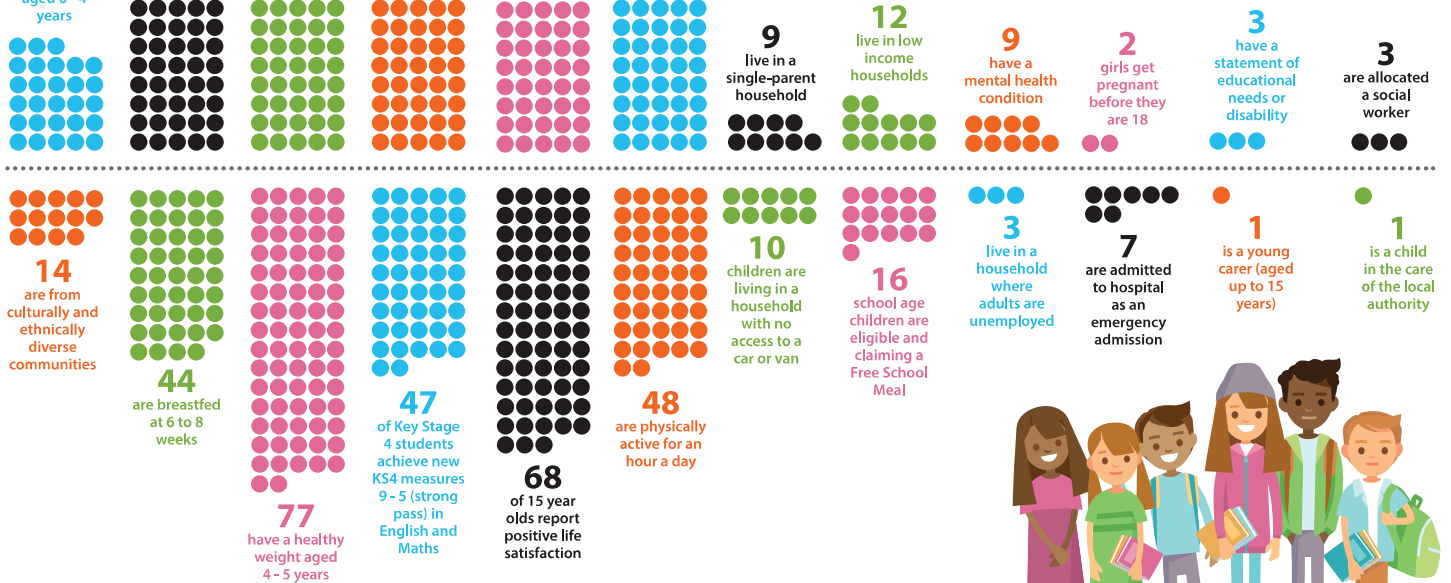


## In Warwickshire...

20% of the population are 0-17 (2020)



Source: Warwickshire County Council Business Intelligence 2020



# Our challenges & opportunities

This strategy will seek to address the following challenges and utilise these opportunities to achieve better outcomes for children.

**Warwickshire** has a high number of children in care compared to other similar areas.

**Warwickshire** has experienced a decrease in the number of children aged 2 plus accessing free early years provision compared to other similar areas.

**Warwickshire** has a rising number of children in Year 6 who are obese.

**Warwickshire** has long waiting lists for Autistic Spectrum Disorder diagnostics.

**Warwickshire** has high levels of hospital admissions for children and young people needing tier 4 mental health and for alcohol specific conditions compared to other similar areas.

**Warwickshire** has seen a 39% rise between 2017-2020 in the number of children with an Education, Health and Social Care Plan.

**Warwickshire** County Council has an ambitious change programme for Children's & Education (SEND) Services, focusing on support for our most vulnerable children.

**Warwickshire** children (71%) achieve a good level of development in early years.

**Warwickshire** has lower levels of young people aged 19 who are not in education, employment or training (6.9%) compared to the national average (10.9%).

**Warwickshire** Together for Children Partnership is implementing the Warwickshire Family Values programme, a recommended approach to support children & their families.

**Warwickshire** children (41.5%) go on to achieve a degree or equivalent qualification above the national average (35%).

**Warwickshire** schools have decreased permanent exclusions by 29% since 2018/19.

**Warwickshire** children (49.5%) in Key Stage 4 achieve education outcomes above the national average (43%).

# The voice of children & young people

Children and young people are at the heart of all we do. We are committed to listening to their voice as this will ensure it has impact and influence to shape services. In 2021, we started an annual survey of children and young people asking them how we can make Warwickshire a child friendly county.



**1,807** children responded and they said...

**81%** considered the area they lived in was child friendly. This figure reduced by age and varied by location.

Children said their family, friends and school make them feel safe.

## What would make your area more Child Friendly?

- 1 Places to play
- 2 Clean environment
- 3 Good schools
- 4 Enough food for everyone
- 5 Children to be involved in important decisions
- 6 Enough housing for everyone

## If children and young people were in charge of their town, they said they would prioritise:

- 1 More homes and stop homelessness
- 2 Reducing child poverty
- 3 Support to stop Domestic Abuse
- 4 Improving access to training and jobs
- 5 Making young people's voices heard in creating services
- 6 Improving play, leisure and cultural activities

## Our Principles

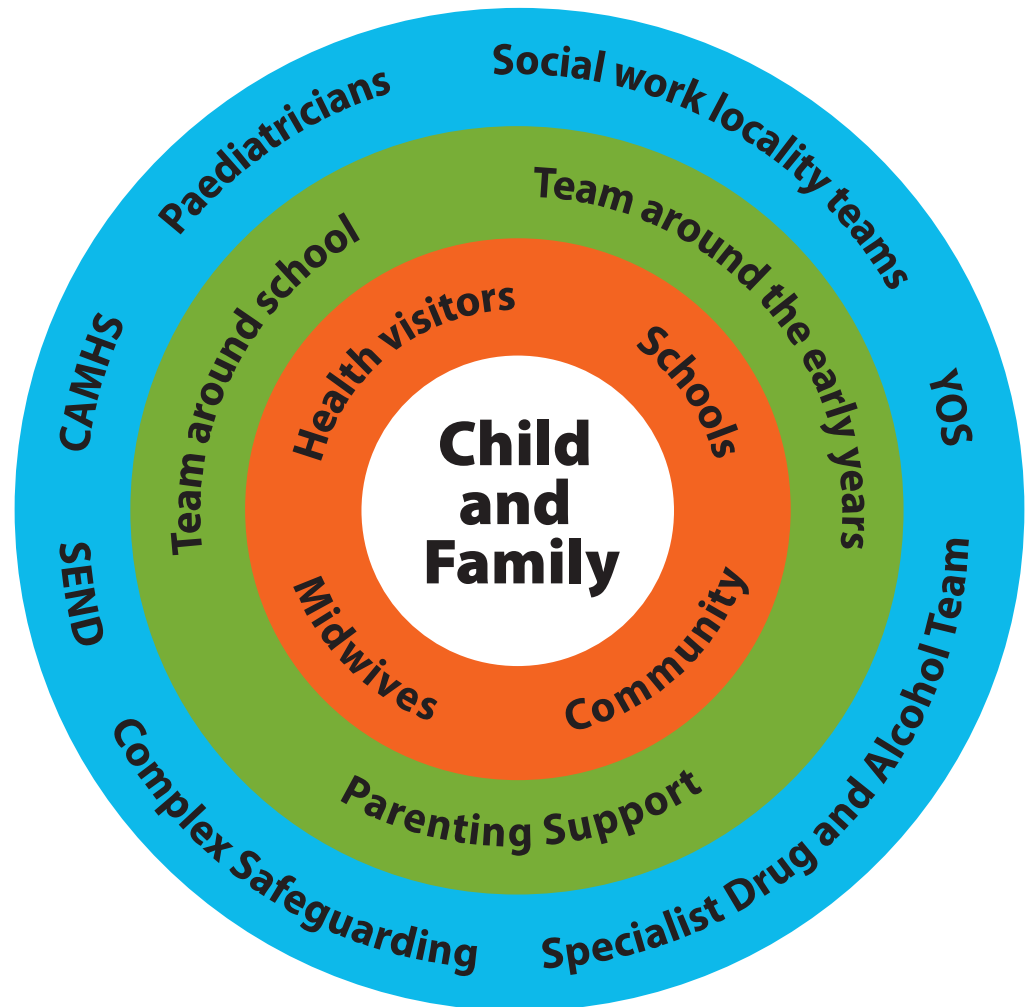
The County Council is committed to building services for children and young people that are:

- Aspirational and inclusive – equal opportunities for all children and young people.
- Based on a strengths-based approach, that is restorative and trauma informed.
- One integrated approach that is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency.
- A local and community-based approach that considers the level of need/context.
- Provision of timely and helpful support for children, young people, and parents/carers.
- Prioritising prevention and early help. Always providing the right service, at the right time.
- Enabling and empowering children, young people and families to be resilient.

# Our Approach

We value relationships and partnership. When strategic partnerships work together to respond to need, the opportunities are enormous. Collaborative commissioning and delivery models will be a priority. We will reimagine Children's Services, through interdependent working. A Council led coalition of partner agencies across the county will reach children and young people in need of help and protection. Working this way leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

By 2030 we will build integrated, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency services. We will have a fully integrated leadership and management team and children's commissioning model. The objective is in each locality there will be a dedicated integrated multi-disciplinary team, wrapped around school consortia. We want to take an incremental approach to integration, achieved by consent, together with people and to improve the system. We will start with areas where we have the biggest challenges and make support systems better. Our initial priority areas are mental health, health services and SEND.



**Achieving integrated services and commissioning will require transparency, strong strategic leadership and ownership across the whole system. An integrated system will achieve better outcomes by:**

- Improving mental health and wellbeing for children and young people.
- Improving school readiness and education outcomes.
- Improving health outcomes.
- Helping more children to safely remain within their family and community.
- Reducing domestic abuse, child exploitation and youth violence.
- Support children and families earlier.
- Improving integration and reducing inequality.
- Improving children and their families and professional's morale and satisfaction.



# One integrated impact and outcomes performance framework

Across Warwickshire we will adopt a new integrated performance framework. This will have three performance obsessions which we believe will help all children and young people achieve.

Parents, young people and professionals helped determine Warwickshire's three obsessions for children. If we get these things right then we know young people will be well supported to have the best childhoods.

## Our obsessions are to:

**1** Improve school attendance.


**2** Reduce the number of young people not in education, training or employment.

**3** Safely reduce the number of children in care.

This is supported by five goals and fourteen priorities which we want to achieve by 2030.

Our outcomes and priorities have been chosen as critical measures for success as these are the things young people said were most important to them. In early 2021 over one thousand young people took part in our Child Friendly Warwickshire Survey and their feedback highlighted the things that matter most to them and would make them feel that they live in a child friendly county.

Our delivery plan will detail how we will do this, who will be responsible and offer a timetable for activity and a performance framework will be developed to measure the impact of this strategy. This will enable elected members, senior officers and interested parties to review progress to ensure real change is evidenced and achieved.

Five outcomes we want to achieve	Fourteen priorities we want to focus upon:	We will achieve this by...	We will measure success by...
 <p><b>Be healthy - Happy, healthy, resilient children.</b></p>	<p>Improve social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will work collaboratively across health, social care, education and with communities to ensure children and young people with special educational needs and a disability (SEND) and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) are identified and receive support earlier.</li> <li>We will redesign the system to focus upon prevention of emotional and mental health issues escalating. Focusing upon earlier solution focused approaches such as improving social prescribing and self-harm support pathways.</li> <li>We will significantly reduce the number of children requiring tier 4 mental health provision.</li> <li>We will work with partner agencies in health to ensure access to diagnostics and treatment is timely and effective for all children, particularly vulnerable children.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of children in care and the number of children/parents experiencing a second or subsequent instance of having a child or children enter care.</li> <li>Number of children and young people subject to a child in need and child protection plan.</li> <li>Number of closed Family Group Conference (FGC) which contributed to preventing family breakdown.</li> </ol>
	<p>Encourage physical activity and healthy eating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will provide access to opportunities in school and the community to value physical activities and exercise, from an earlier age.</li> <li>We will provide advice and support to parents and carers to ensure children grow up in an environment that enables them to make good health eating choices.</li> <li>We will tackle the causes of health-related problems to reduce the impact of ill health and inequalities on people's lives, their families, and communities.</li> </ul>	

Provide play, leisure, culture, and sporting opportunities.

- We will ensure all children have local access to play and leisure activities.
- We will invest in our Youth Services to increase access to targeted support and outreach work in schools, colleges, and local communities.
- We will ensure continued support for children during school holidays through the Warwickshire Welfare scheme.

Help children live in safe and supportive families.

- We value family and will utilise the full strengths of their family and community.
- We will continue to invest in Family Group Conferencing and restorative approaches, which support children and their families to establish their own solutions to problems.
- We will provide support to reduce the impact of parental conflict upon children when parents separate.
- Where children are unsafe, we will act working with families, through high support and high challenge so children are safe from harm.

Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected.

- We will tackle young people and family homelessness by supporting families to maintain their home and increase access to more homes across Warwickshire.
- We will provide access to a range of early interventions, so issues are addressed and do not escalate.
- We will provide children subject to child protection plans with timely and effective support to reduce the risk of harm.
- When children need to be in the care of the Council, we will ensure access to therapeutic support and good quality foster care and residential homes that are local and within children's own community.
- We will support more children in care to achieve permanency, by increasing support for parents to enable safe reunification and for connected others, special guardians, and adopters to care for children who cannot live with their parents.
- We will continue to prioritise our corporate parenting responsibilities and to influence the care market, ensuring children are provided with local, good quality and stable care. We will remain focused upon keeping families together, recruiting and supporting more foster carers and opening our own Children's Homes.

Create confident workforce with a common core of knowledge and understanding about children's needs.

- We are committed to ensuring all organisations are connected and work together to deliver and commission services for children in Warwickshire. We will streamline ways of working to ensure pathways for services are integrated and accessible. Integration could include streamlined ways of working together, co-location and/or full structural integration. We will decide on this together, by consent and only if this benefits children, young people, and their families.
- We develop a learning culture, which includes investment in develop opportunities and where the environment enables restorative practice and trauma informed approaches to be implemented across the whole of the children and young peoples' workforce.
- We will ensure there is a clear and consistent understanding and application of the Spectrum of Support, particularly focusing upon early and targeted support.

4. Percentage of pupils achieving a good level of school readiness and development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

5. Infant mortality rates.



6. Percentage of new school places in good and outstanding schools.

7. Attendance at primary and secondary schools.


8. Number of fixed-term exclusions from primary and secondary schools.



**Be safe - Children and young people are safe from harm.**

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will build local partnerships around our schools and children and family centres,</li> <li>• We value voluntary and community services. We will provide support particularly to organisations providing youth services to maintain quality, consistency and availability of activities and support to children and young people.</li> <li>• Support our workforce to work with all family members, particularly engaging fathers more, ensuring support is provided through our Caring Dad's programme.</li> </ul>	<p><b>9.</b> Percentage of children and young people seen within 18 weeks (Referral to Treatment Time) by RISE and the number of children and young people waiting more than 12 weeks for a follow up appointment.</p>
 <p><b>Be happy - Families able to make positive changes.</b></p>	<p><b>Access to helpful and earlier solution-focused and evidence-based interventions.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with our partner organisations to ensure people have access to the support and information they need and, where possible, are able to manage their own support.</li> <li>• We will invest in evidence-based parenting strategies. To ensure parents and carers have access to a wide range of parenting information, courses, and specialist one to one support.</li> <li>• We will invest in whole family approaches, to ensure multi agency integrated support is provided to address issues such as mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.</li> <li>• We will enhance support for children who experience domestic abuse by increasing access to provision for domestic abuse counselling and therapeutic support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>10.</b> Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2.</p> <p><b>11.</b> Progress 8 score at the end of Key Stage 4.</p>
 <p><b>Be skilled - Children are able to achieve at all levels of learning and have skills for life.</b></p>	<p><b>An open, honest, and transparent approach to supporting children and their families.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will remain inquisitive in our practice, to ensure all decision makers, professionals, volunteers, and community leaders keep children at the centre of all we do.</li> <li>• We will provide high support and high challenge to others and ourselves. Working <u>with</u> children, young people, and families, not doing "for" or "to" them.</li> </ul>	<p><b>12.</b> Percentage of disadvantaged children achieving Grade 5+ (strong pass) in English and Maths GCSEs at Key Stage 4 (age 16)</p> <p><b>13.</b> Destinations of young people with special educational needs and/or a disability when they leave school.</p>
	<p><b>Support children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning.</b></p> <p><b>Close the achievement gap at all levels of learning.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will increase the number of children accessing free early years provision from the age of two.</li> <li>• We will ensure fair access to good and outstanding education providers.</li> <li>• We will ensure health checks and support are provided to identify earlier health and care issues. This will enable us to ensure children are supported earlier to thrive and achieve their full potential.</li> <li>• We will ensure children have access to high quality teaching, together with strong leadership, which enables schools to meet the needs of disadvantaged children. This includes early years, as education starting at age 2 can have an impact on long-term social mobility.</li> <li>• Schools will be supported to ensure maximise Pupil Premium funding to raise the attainment of disadvantaged young people.</li> <li>• We will increase targeted support for children not in education, for those in alternative education or not in school full time. We will ensure children who are electively home educated are supported.</li> <li>• We will rigorously use data to identify gaps and to make them visible, pinpoint pupils at risk of underperforming and challenge those whose progress needs to accelerate. This will enable us to reach out to the families of disadvantaged learners and the communities in which they live to raise pupil aspirations/engagement.</li> </ul>	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing effective practice between schools and teachers. Applying the findings to the classroom focusing on using structured phonics instruction, cooperative learning, frequent assessment and teaching meta-cognitive skills which can significantly raise outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>14.</b> Prevalence of children at age 11 who are a healthy weight.</p> <p><b>15.</b> Proportion of young offenders who reoffend.</p> <p><b>16.</b> Number of children identified and protected from child exploitation.</p> <p><b>17.</b> Under-18 conception rates.</p> <p><b>18.</b> Admission episodes to hospital, including alcohol-specific conditions: under-18s.</p> <p><b>19.</b> Percentage of students achieving a level 3 qualification at age 19.</p>
 <p><b>Be heard - Young people are active citizens and are ready for and contributing to adult life.</b></p>	<p><b>Support schools to improve attendance, to become more inclusive and develop positive behaviour.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will provide support and training to ensure education providers are skilled and enable to meet the needs of children with SEND, so our schools become more inclusive.</li> <li>• We will implement a “one meeting, one plan approach”, so that the Education &amp; Health Care Plan (EHCP) is the single plan for the child or young person with special educational needs or a disability.</li> <li>• Implement a new Attend Framework to support attendance and tackle persistent non-attendance.</li> <li>• Provide wrap around support to schools and children to reduce temporary and permanent exclusions.</li> <li>• We will work with providers to achieve high standards in alternative provision, ensuring the focus is supporting children back to mainstream education provision.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Increase participation and engagement.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will engage and coproduce integrated services with children, young people and parents so they co design and shape services that impact upon them.</li> <li>• We will build upon the success of our voice and participation team, to ensure all children are listened to and this impacts upon the design of our services.</li> <li>• We will support our Youth Council to become more inclusive, widening engagement and increasing influence of children and young people in Warwickshire at a local, regional, and national level.</li> <li>• We will strengthen the voice of all parents, carers, adopters, and special guardians. In particular, improving engagement and communication between the Council and SEND Parent Carer Voice.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Reduce crime and child exploitation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will always treat young people as a child first and as an offender second. But we will ensure that young people understand and take responsibility for their behaviour.</li> <li>• We will remain focused on preventing young people from offending and re-offending. By improving the quality of young people’s lives, we will seek to ensure that they are diverted from the criminal justice system.</li> <li>• We will increase integrated support to parents with substance and alcohol misuse through the implementation of Family Drug &amp; Alcohol Courts to ensure parents receive the right support, so children and families can remain safely together.</li> <li>• We will support children and their families to safely access the internet and technology.</li> <li>• We will reduce missing episodes and ensure victims of exploitation are listened to, believed, and supported.</li> <li>• We will identify and manage risks in the community and keep a strong multi agency response to bring offenders of exploitation of children to justice by harnessing Police, Council and Court powers to protect children from harm.</li> </ul>	

Support young people to successfully transition into adulthood.

- We will help young people to develop life skills and be ready for work by further developing and increasing access to our independence training accredited programmes.
- We will support parents and carers to begin independence work earlier with young people.
- We will maintain and extend our offer for Care Experienced young people. With a particular focus upon extending the House Project.
- We will continue to build strong links with businesses to increase opportunities for work experience, internships, apprenticeships, training, and jobs for our children to build successful adult lives in Warwickshire.
- We will provide bespoke support where needed for young people, so they are able between 16-25 years old to be engaged in education, employment, or training.

**20.** Number of young people who are not in employment, education, or training, or whose status is 'not known'

**21.** Number of young people who have completed independence accredited training.

**This strategy is linked to the Warwickshire County Council Plan. It does not replace other strategies but is an overarching approach to services for children, young people and their families. The Warwickshire Children's Strategy will be overseen and championed by several partnership boards listed below.**

- **Warwickshire County Council's Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Warwickshire County Council's Corporate Parenting Board**
- **Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board**
- **Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership**
- **Warwickshire Together for Children Partnership Board**



