



flourish

Flourishing in Norfolk

A Children and Young
People Partnership Strategy
2021 – 2025

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Foreword and introduction

I am excited to be able to introduce our four-year partnership strategy for children and young people in Norfolk.

This strategy marks the formal beginning of our collective journey to make Norfolk the very best place to grow up – a county where every child can flourish.

And it comes at a critical time.

The pandemic has affected children's education, opportunities and emotional wellbeing, causing real uncertainty for the future. In addition, services for children and young people face significant pressures, with growing demand, greater complexity and increased financial constraints.

It is only by working together that we can help to ensure that this generation does not become defined by the pandemic and that Norfolk's children can **flourish**.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance was established in April 2021, reflecting our shared commitment to Norfolk's children and young people and bringing us formally together as one system.

Young people have told us that what is most important to them is their **family and friends**, access to **learning, opportunities** to lead a good life, being **understood**, building **resilience**, respect for their **individuality**, feeling **safe** and being **healthy**. The first letters of these words spell out **flourish** and have inspired our partnership vision and this strategy.

Whether it is in enabling children and young people to live safely at home, to thrive in education or be valued members of their communities, we are committed to prioritising the voices, needs and ambitions of children and young people so they can live their happiest, most rewarding lives and meet their potential.

We have a strong track record of working in partnership, evidenced more than ever by our response to the pandemic, which saw a huge number of organisations come together to support our communities at a time of great need. We must now galvanise that energy and commitment as we begin to rebuild

As a partnership, we have identified four key priorities – prevention and early help; mental health and emotional well-being; special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and addressing gaps in learning. This builds on the work already happening before the pandemic as well as responding to needs that have emerged over the last 18 months.

We are united in delivering in these areas and will share expertise and resources, identify and develop opportunities together and jointly problem-solve. Using our collective skills, knowledge and resources we can achieve more for our children and families, understand needs better and prevent children being moved around the system and between agencies.

We know that there is tremendous work happening every day across our services and communities, changing children's lives for the better. The passion, care and dedication of the children's workforce is our strongest asset and will help us to deliver on our strategic ambitions.

This strategy details what needs to happen next and what success looks like for our children and young people. By working together, as a county and a system, I am confident that we can achieve our ambition and help every child to **flourish**.

Sara Tough

Executive Director of Children's Services,
Norfolk County Council

Chair of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance



The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance

Alongside the key persistent and emerging challenges which drive the need for all organisations working with children, young people and families to come together to find solutions, there are legislative duties, government policies and strategic priorities which drive both our overall approach and day to day work. This includes the Children Act 2004 which requires Norfolk County Council to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners, and other people and organisations working with Norfolk's children and young people, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) which requires local agencies to have in place effective ways of identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and their families.

Our shared responsibilities are also reflected in the new 'Working Together to Improve Health and Social Care for All' policy paper, which sets out legislative proposals for a Health and Care Bill which aims to build on the incredible collaborations seen through COVID and shape a system that is better able to serve people in a fast-changing world.

In April 2021, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board and the Children's Alliance Board (which had a primary focus on mental health, supporting system-wide transformation) amalgamated into the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance.



The Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) brings together senior representatives from the following sectors* to collaborate and respond to the needs of children, young people and families, via regular meetings and the delivery of a shared Children and Young People Partnership Strategy built on the FLOURISH outcomes framework.

- Social Care
- Health – including Public Health, Norfolk & Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (NWCCG), key providers and hospitals
- Education – including schools and post-16 provision
- Criminal Justice – including police, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC), probation and prisons
- Safeguarding partnerships – Adults and Children
- Communities – including districts, housing providers, voluntary sector (VCSE) and Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
- Service User representation

The purpose of the group is to provide system leadership so that all children and young people in Norfolk can flourish.



The benefits of an Alliance approach

By coming together in a collaborative way to respond to key issues and opportunities across the children and young people's system, the Strategic Alliance seeks to be so much more than 'a sum of its parts', through realising the following benefits:

1. Obtaining a wider view of problems, challenges and opportunities informed by children, young people, families and partner agencies' experiences and insight, and using this to prioritise areas for action and monitor progress
2. Collaborating around problem-solving through bringing together a wide range of knowledge and expertise
3. Agreeing key decisions and providing a 'critical friend' function across partner agencies and organisations
4. Sharing resources to provide joined-up solutions which improve outcomes and provide best value for money for Norfolk's children, young people, families and their communities
5. Using a common language across the system to improve understanding and collaboration, including our shared ambition that children and young people in Norfolk can FLOURISH
6. Disseminating information, opportunities and best practice across the children and young people's system to ensure we are working collaboratively at every level

Core functions of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance

- To fulfil a leadership role for enabling collaborative working across the children and young people's system.
- To develop and agree strategic priorities and ensure delivery of a Children and Young People Partnership Plan.
- To monitor system performance in relation to securing impact and outcomes.
- To develop and agree strategic commissioning and transformation priorities and processes to ensure best use of resources.
- To ensure and promote co-production with service users and stakeholders.
- To advocate on behalf of children and young people within wider partnerships and boards.

In addition to delivering its core functions, CYPSEA has a Commissioning Executive (Part B) function. The responsibilities of the Commissioning Executive include:

- To act as the Executive Group overseeing any Section 75 Agreements and other arrangements for pooling and sharing resources.
- To identify and oversee the development of collaborative commissioning opportunities.

- To take or oversee joint commissioning/contractual action in order to promote improvement of existing services, including consideration of alternative providers.
- To make recommendations on the further development, or conduct, of any procurement within the market for children and young people's services in Norfolk.
- To oversee the development of the Alliance Contract and agreements (commissioner only aspects).

Reporting to the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board, CYP SA will be supported to deliver its purpose and functions by four specialist, targeted subgroups working on the four key priorities of:

- Prevention and early help
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Addressing gaps in learning following the pandemic

Other groups will be established as required to tackle emerging priorities.

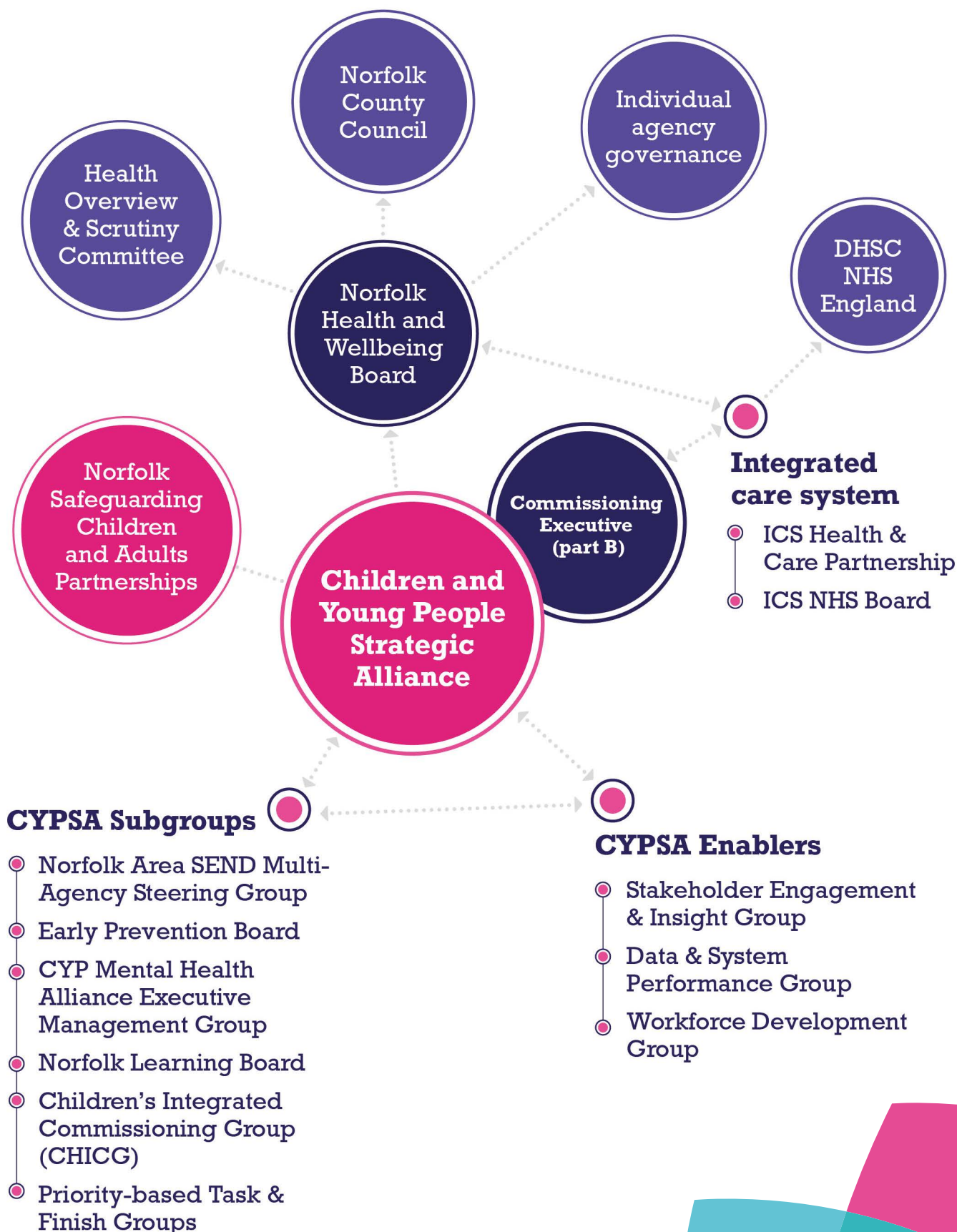
CYP SA will also have three enabling groups, shared with the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). These will provide vital support in specific areas to enable both boards to carry out their functions:

- Data and System Performance Group
- Workforce Development Group
- Stakeholder Engagement and Insight Group

The governance structure of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance.

- The Alliance reports to the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board, which in turn reports into the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The work of the Alliance is also governed by individual agency governance, including that of Norfolk County Council.
- The Alliance works closely with the Integrated Care System for Norfolk and Waveney and the Norfolk Safeguarding Children and Adults Partnerships, which have their own governance structures.
- The Alliance is supported by several priority subgroups, which are the Norfolk Area SEND Multi-Agency Steering Group, the Early Prevention Board, the CYP Mental Health Alliance Executive Management Group, the Norfolk Learning Board.
- The Alliance is also supported by the Children's Integrated Commissioning Group and three enabling subgroups which are the Stakeholder Engagement and Insight Group, the Data and System Performance Group and the Workforce Development Group.

Children and Young people Strategic Alliance Governance



Norfolk – our county

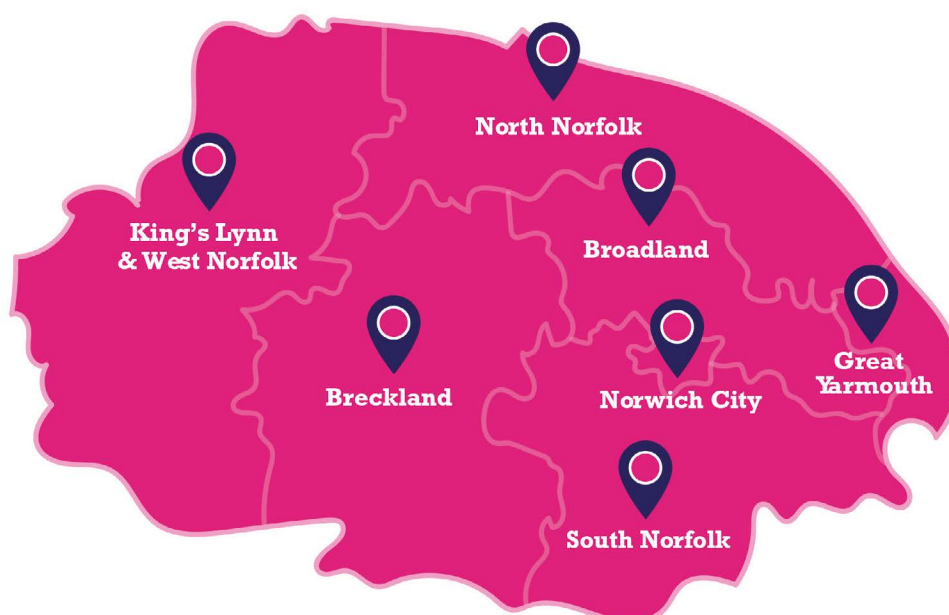
Norfolk is the ninth largest local authority area in England, with a population of just over 914,000 people. Just over a quarter of the population is aged 0-24 (around 243,000).

Norfolk's families live in one of seven districts: Breckland, Broadland, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk. Norfolk has a balance of urban, coastal and rural districts with Norwich the most urban and North Norfolk the most rural.

Although Norfolk has a wide range of opportunities available and many children, young people, and families access these with few problems, deprivation and poverty does influence the health and wellbeing of our population. Currently more than **140,000** people in Norfolk live in areas categorised as the most deprived **20%** in England. These are mainly located in the urban areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, but also some rural areas, coastal villages and market towns, where rural life can make accessing services and opportunities more difficult. The life expectancy gap between the most deprived areas of Norfolk and the least deprived areas is **7.4 years** for men and **4.4 years** for women.

The pandemic has also greatly affected Norfolk, as it has the whole of the UK and indeed the world. For everyone, access to opportunities and normal avenues of support and fulfilment has been disrupted and many people's lives have changed significantly, with additional challenges being particularly felt by our more vulnerable residents.

One of the challenges of helping Norfolk's children, young people to flourish is that their needs are very different, so the way we meet them also needs to be varied, flexible and built around our children and young people as individuals.



A picture of our children and young people

If Norfolk had just **100 children** and young people

- 51 would be boys
- 49 would be girls
- 83 would be white/British
- 7 would be from ethnic minorities
- 9 would have English as a second language
- 14 would have mothers who smoked while there were pregnant
- 3 would have low birth weight
- 86 would have reached all developmental milestones at age 2 and 72 would have reached a good level of development at age 5
- 49 would be physically active (over 60 mins per day)
- 20 would be classed as obese in Year 6
- 17 would have dental decay at age 5
- 4 would start smoking before they are 18
- 1 would be open to Family Support
- 2 would have a social worker
- 1 would be in care or have a Child Protection Plan
- 18 would be living in poverty
- 13 would have free school meals
- 6 secondary school students would be a Young Carer
- 16 would have a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)
- 95 would be learning in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rated Early Years settings and 83 in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rated schools
- 9 students would be persistently absent from Primary education
- 16 would be persistently absent from Secondary education
- 63 would achieve the expected standard in GCSE English and Maths
- 78 would stay in education, apprenticeships or employment for at least 6 months after leaving school, but 4 would not be in Education, Employment or Training at 16
- Most young adults would be in Education, Employment or Training, but 6 18-24 year olds would be claiming unemployment assistance

What children, young people and families have told us about their lives during the last two years

Parent carers (those who provide support to their children, including grown up children who could not manage without their help)

- **Half** want support to have a break from their caring role
- Over a **third** would like someone to talk to
- Only a **third** feel they have good support from family, friends and community
- Nearly **half** don't feel able to cope
- Over **three quarters** said their own mental health is negatively affected
- Only a **third** of families know where to go for support

Young people on mental health concerns

- The stigma around mental health means people are hesitant to get help
- Exams being cancelled and changed causing stress
- Variable support through schools and colleges
- Worried about health, including catching and passing on Covid
- Not knowing who to go to for help and support
- Depression caused by social isolation and anxiety about re-integration
- Fear of the unknown - what's going to happen next

Young people on opportunities

- Worried about struggling to find jobs
- Concerned about being the 'covid cohort' – being seen as less qualified or experienced than others
- Worried how missing out on large chunks of education might affect our future.
- Worried about grades
- If you have a disability or additional needs you're often not included
- Uncertain about the future

This section will be updated regularly through ongoing work with children, young people and families.

Flourishing in Norfolk – what does it mean?

Produced with children, young people and families, FLOURISH is our shared ambition for Norfolk’s children and young people.

We have captured areas of children and young people’s lives that are important to them and their families and against these we have agreed a framework which sets out:

Impacts - The key long term, sustainable change we want to secure for all children and young people in Norfolk.

Outcomes - The difference we want to make which, if secured, will lead to the impacts being achieved.

Guiding principles

- Child and young person focused
- Positively framed – based on aspirations rather than just needs
- Places importance on how children, young people and families feel about their lives
- Inclusive of all children and young people in Norfolk
- Recognises our shared responsibility for children, young people and families
- Co-produced with young people
- Represents the interests and focus of all Children and Young People Strategic Alliance members

We will be working with our partners to embed FLOURISH as an ambition that underpins all our work, but FLOURISH isn’t just an ambition for social care, education, health and other professionals working directly with children, young people and families. Our businesses, communities and every person living or working in our county has a role to play in helping Norfolk’s children and young people to Flourish.

We want Norfolk to be a county where every child can flourish:

Family and friends

Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks

Learning

Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life

Opportunity

Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents

Understood

Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes

Resilience

Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges

Individual

Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness

Safe and secure

Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure

Healthy

Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives

FLOURISH Outcomes

family and friends

Family and friends

- As many children and young people (CYP) as possible are able to live safely with family
- Where CYP are not able to live with their family, they have the support they need to build a stable foundation of positive relationships
- CYP have positive childhood experiences in their homes, schools and communities
- CYP have the support they need from their parents and carers
- CYP have positive role models and trusted adults in their lives
- CYP have the skills and opportunities to develop positive friendships and relationships which support them throughout their lives

learning

Learning

- CYP establish a great early years foundation for learning and see the benefit in becoming lifelong learners
- CYP enjoy learning and developing skills and feel positive about what they can achieve
- CYP have good engagement with learning in and out of school, including attendance and extra-curricular opportunities
- CYP make the best possible progress in learning and education
- CYP are supported by families, professionals and communities at all stages of their development
- YP are equipped with the skills and confidence to live as independently as possible

opportunity

Opportunity

- CYP have improved equity of opportunity through the removal of barriers including improved economic, geographical and digital inclusion
- CYP have a wide range of education, employment, training, social and community activities available to them
- All CYP, at every age and regardless of disability or additional needs, have access to opportunities that suit their needs and ambitions
- CYP have the emotional, personal and practical support they need to make the most of the opportunities available

understood

Understood

- CYP are active, respected and included members of their communities as individuals and collectively
- All CYP voices are influential in all decisions made about their lives
- CYP feel adults respect their views and opinions and promote CYP influence
- CYP know their rights, how to make their views known and are confident to speak up
- CYP are confident that all strategies and services for CYP have their needs and ambitions at their heart
- CYP are confident that their voice will make a difference and can see the impact they are making

resilience

Resilience

- CYP can understand and make good decisions and are empowered to do so
- CYP know what independence entails and are able to transition in the best way for them
- CYP are supported to try new things, have a variety of experiences and be curious and aspirational
- CYP understand life can be complicated and know asking for help is OK
- CYP can recognise when they need help and have choice and control over the support they receive
- CYP have a range of options for support and advice

individual

Individual

- CYP are understood and valued as individuals and in their social groups
- CYP understand and value each other
- CYP and others on their behalf are able to tackle prejudice and discrimination
- CYP have safe spaces to explore, develop and become confident in their identity as they grow
- CYP's self-expression is prioritised, promoted and respected
- CYP have a range of opportunities to influence the wider world

safe and secure

Safe and secure

- CYP are free from exploitation, abuse and neglect
- Fewer CYP enter/re-enter the criminal justice system
- CYP are safe and secure in all settings, including where they live
- CYP feel that families, professionals and communities understand and carry out their role in keeping them safe
- CYP trust the people and systems that are there to help keep them safe, know where to go for help and feel confident and able to do so
- CYP know what to do to keep each other safe
- CYP are supported to understand and take appropriate risks

healthy

Healthy

- CYP have the best achievable physical, mental and sexual health
- CYP know how to get healthy and keep healthy and are confident in their own self care
- CYP have choice in how they access health services, including the best possible virtual health experience
- CYP are supported at the earliest possible stage, reducing crises
- CYP know when and where to go for help with physical and mental health and have confidence and trust to do so





How well are Norfolk's children and young people currently flourishing?

Norfolk is a great place to grow up, with the majority of children having happy, healthy childhoods and flourishing.

Most children and young people receive the support they need from their families, communities and universal services, but everyone needs help sometimes, and some children, young people and families need more help due to the challenges they face.

Family life

Within Norfolk, most children and young people are able to live safely within loving and supportive families. Reducing the number of children who need to be in care and looked after outside of their family setting has been a priority for Norfolk, and has reduced since 2018. It is now below the national average rate and that of Norfolk's statistically similar councils. Historically, a higher-than-average proportion of children in care, around one in six, are adopted each year. Although this fell to around one in seven in 2019, by 2021 Norfolk was again ahead of regional, statistical neighbour and national percentages in this area.

For those children who are in care, arrangements and settings tend to be relatively stable. More children than average have placements that last more than two years, and for those approaching their 18th birthday (when they would cease to be 'looked after') a higher-than-average proportion go on to stay with their foster carers. More can be done, however, to support the emotional and behavioural health of children in care, and the percentage of children in care who return home to live with their parents or those with parental responsibilities is also reducing and is lower than in similar areas.

Re-referrals to family support and social work services are decreasing, reflecting an approach of family-led solutions planning and the building of positive support networks to improve families' resilience. It has been seen, however, that more family assessments are leading to ongoing involvement of social care support. In addition, in 2020-21 nearly 300 young people aged 16-24 had a homelessness duty accepted to them due to their family being unwilling or unable to accommodate them, which reflects a higher level of family breakdown than we would like to see.

International research has identified that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and household dysfunction, domestic abuse and substance misuse can have a significant impact on physical, mental and behavioural health as children grow. We know that ACEs have a cumulative effect – the more adverse experiences in childhood,



the more severe the effects can be. It is estimated that 9% of adults will have experienced 4 or more ACEs in their childhood. In Norfolk, this would equate to approximately 15,000 children and young people.

We also know that parents who experienced adversity as a child are far more likely to have children who experience high numbers of ACEs too, and that building resilience and having a trusted adult to talk to are crucial mitigation factors in a child's ability to flourish despite the challenges they have faced. Early help has an important role to play in preventing and overcoming the effect of ACEs, alongside working in a trauma-informed way across the children and young people's system.

It is likely that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the relationship children have with their family and friends. Whilst detailed comparative information is not available across all areas, we know that issues around domestic abuse, isolation and mental health have worsened during the pandemic. We know from local data that there have been 'spikes' in the number of domestic abuse cases recorded by the police where someone under-18 was present. The proportion of contacts about children relating to family support issues also roughly doubled between 2020 and 2021. A more formal review of the impact of the pandemic on family life will be possible when more recent benchmarking data is available, but this area is already a key feature of future planning.

Even before the pandemic hit and created greater pressure on families struggling to cope, we were concerned about children who were invisible to agencies while being neglected. Clearly, the impact of the pandemic limited professional eyes on some children at the same time as financial and social pressures have made it harder for some families to cope. The combined effect has been to make it more likely that some children will be neglected and less likely that they will be identified at an early stage.

This adds even more strength to the argument for continued cross-agency support as the most effective way of responding to neglect and preventing children coming in and out of care, especially in relation to our approach to prevention and early help.



Learning and Opportunities

Norfolk's very young children don't always benefit from the same learning opportunities as in other areas. The percentage of two-year-old children benefiting from funded early education has been significantly lower than in other similar counties for a number of years, and in 2021 was the lowest rate in Norfolk's statistically similar 'family group' of councils. The pandemic also seems to have had a significant impact on this, with the rate of disadvantaged two-year olds in funded early education falling from nearly 70% in 2019 to just under 60% in 2021. Our local data tells us, however, that there has been a significant recent improvement in this area.

By the time children in Norfolk are three and four years old, 90% are benefiting from some kind of free early education, which is close to the pre-pandemic figure and much closer to the 'family group' average. Overall learning outcomes at this stage show a more positive picture too, remaining above comparable authority areas.

As children in Norfolk move into school, and through the 'key stages', the attainment picture is mixed. Data is only available up to 2019, as national assessment and testing in primary schools were cancelled in 2020 and 2021. At age five, more children achieved a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage compared to national averages, but attainment at the end of primary school in reading, writing and mathematics lags behind national levels. Gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils remain significant – in line with those seen nationally.

Average progress in secondary schools is slightly better than national averages, particularly in mathematics. Attainment on GCSE examinations, and the percentage of young people remaining in education post-16 are all around national averages. As is the case nationally the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils widens as children get older.

Over 90% of 16 and 17-year-olds participate in learning (this includes full-time education and apprenticeships) with an additional 2.6% progressing directly into employment without training. This is different from the national profile where more 16 and 17-year-olds participate in learning than in Norfolk and less progress into employment without training. This pattern of more young people in Norfolk going into work without training is confirmed in the percentage of 19-year-olds having achieved level three qualifications, which at 51.4% is below the national average of 57.4%. The Norfolk Apprenticeship Strategy is designed to address this and even with the challenges of the pandemic we continue to have a higher percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds in apprenticeships than for England.

We know more work is needed to support children and young people as they progress through their learning, to address wider issues that impact on their education and learning, building on the help and support currently being provided. Having listened to families and young people who have special educational needs, they have told us that they need choice to ensure that they have the opportunities to fulfil their individual hopes and potential. For some, this is the choice of local inclusive education within the early years setting, school or college close to home. For others this is the choice to access specialist provision.



There is a good range of wider opportunities available for children and young people in Norfolk, but how easily these can be accessed is affected by a number of factors.

The availability of learning, employment, support and social opportunities varies markedly between different geographical areas. Most provision is centred in Norfolk's city and towns, with more limited opportunities in Norfolk's rural areas which also have limited transport systems, making engaging with and feeling included in opportunities more difficult for children and young people living there.

A number of children in Norfolk live in families experiencing financial challenges, which affects their ability to engage with available opportunities. Nearly 19% of children in Norfolk live in low-income families as defined by national measures, significantly above the average for statistically similar councils of around 16%.

Over 94% of households in Norfolk are in areas where superfast broadband coverage (>30Mbps) is available, which, although slightly below the national figure, represents good and improving coverage. More vulnerable families do still experience digital exclusion however, with pockets of poor coverage, access to equipment and affordability remaining issues to be addressed to ensure connectivity for all in an increasingly online world.

Vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) receive additional help to support their transition into post-16 learning, but in 2021 the number of 16-18 year olds in Norfolk who are NEET or not known remains stubbornly above regional and only just in line with national averages. Within this group of young people who are NEET, there is also a comparatively high proportion of young people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds (particularly in the urban areas of Norwich, Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth) those with special educational need and disabilities (SEND) and young people in, or who were formerly in, local authority care. The number of young adults aged 18-24 claiming unemployment assistance is, however, lower than local and national averages and is decreasing.

Health and Wellbeing

Overall health outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk are similar to those for England. There are, however, differences in health outcomes based on where children live and in some groups of children such as children with SEND and children in care. For example, children with SEND are more likely to display lower levels of emotional wellbeing and report self-harm.

Further work is required to promote healthier lifestyles with the focus on reducing the number of women who smoke during pregnancy and providing weight management support to children and their families to reduce obesity.

Recent research suggests that one in six children and young people are thought to have an emerging or diagnosable mental health need, a figure that has unfortunately risen from one in nine in 2017, perhaps in part due to the impact of the pandemic. Conversely, this figure suggests that five out of six children and young people nationally have a good level of mental wellbeing, and this is something we need to both maintain and build upon.

Across Norfolk, children and young people accessing therapeutic support for their mental health needs has been steadily increasing year on year, with 50% more children and young people accessing our local services this year compared to two years ago.

Safety and Security

We are seeing the overall risk of exploitation for children and young people supported by children's social care services reducing. There has been a reduction of the number of high-risk cases since February 2021 following the introduction of two new services to support young people at risk of exploitation and serious youth violence. Medium and standard risk cases have reduced by a smaller margin, however, given the focus on ensuring identification of extra familial risk, a more gradual reduction is to be expected.

Reoffending rates continue to track above the regional and national rates, however, the fluctuations seen through 2016 and 2017 have been flattened out

to mirror the national trend. The number of children on a statutory order has reduced significantly since the implementation of the Challenge for Change (C4C) project.

The long-term trends show an overall reduction of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system, roughly mirroring what is happening nationally. 2020 data is not yet available to be able to monitor and respond to the trend and impact of COVID, however, in 2019/20, 368 C4C referrals were received compared to 272 in 2020/21.

Demand for social care remained lower at the height of the pandemic compared to previous years, as seen across the country. A significant effort was mobilised to address this concern, including publicity campaigns to drive up awareness and an extension of the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) offer, which contributed significantly to referrals returning to normal levels.

The anticipated 'surge' in demand following return of schools in September 2020 manifested as a significant increase in referral to the Family Support Service during the autumn of 2020 and additional resources were deployed to this area to respond, helping to keep children safe and secure. This appears to be a pattern seen regionally, reflecting the increased strain on families and the disruption to the usual networks and system of early help which creates resilience for families. There has not been a corresponding surge in demand at social work or child protection level.



We know some of our adolescent young people are at a greater risk of child exploitation, both sexual and criminal, and that these risks have not abated despite our greatly enhanced understanding and response over recent years. We are currently seeing, as a result of rivalries between groups that come together for both criminal and allegiance/belonging purposes, significant increases in youth-on-youth violence, manifesting itself in tit-for-tat retributive violence involving weapons.

A number of Serious Case Reviews and a national Safeguarding Practice Review have highlighted the risks to very young children, especially from non-accidental injuries. This has been picked up as a priority for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) so that we can continue to build on the work that has gone before and address issues earlier as part of protecting babies.

The voice of children, young people and families

How children, young people and families feel about their lives and the support they receive is an important measure of how well Norfolk's children and young people are flourishing, and how well we, as the Strategic Alliance, are helping to meet their needs and aspirations.

There are a growing number of ways children and young people can make their voices heard and have influence over decisions affecting their lives. Active young people's groups across the county, including special interest groups such as Young Carers, the Norfolk In Care Council, the Mental Health Participation Group and a soon to be established reference group for BAME young people are giving young people a direct route to speak to and influence decision-makers. Other groups including the county-wide Youth Advisory Boards empower young people to campaign on issues that matter to them and directly influence how money is spent for children and young people.

Parents of children who might struggle to have their voices heard due to additional needs also have powerful advocates for them through a range of parent/carer groups, in particular Norfolk's Parent Carer Forum (Family Voice Norfolk) who are members of the Strategic Alliance alongside other parent/carer groups such as SENSational Families, SEN Network and ASD Helping Hands.

Strategic Alliance member organisations also have a commitment to directly engage with, involve and co-produce with children, young people and families and do so through a variety of methods. Stakeholders' involvement in co-producing key pieces of work (e.g. the FLOURISH outcomes framework), priorities and strategies is increasing across the system and the value and benefit of their involvement is recognised more than ever.

There is, however, more work still to be done in this area. Children, young people, and families tell us that decisions about them are sometimes still being made without them, and opportunities for them to directly have their voices heard are not always effectively and engagingly promoted. They also tell us that we aren't always using their views as well as we could, or that we are asking the same questions again and again, and that we need to be better at telling them the difference their views and suggestions have made.

Young people have also told us that it is important every young person, not just members of active groups, has a chance to have influence on issues that are important to them, and this is an area of focus for the Strategic Alliance going forward. The partnership also has a key role in empowering children and young people to influence the wider world, by facilitating opportunities for them to take action, and encouraging the growing reality that young people are more informed, aware and interested in wider social issues than ever before.



What children, young people and families have told us they want

Information and access

- Clear explanation about services and how they fit together
- Up to date information that's easy to find and relevant for us
- Early support that is open to anyone to access
- Transparency about waiting times and support for me while I wait
- Clear referral and access routes
- Clarity about what help is available, where and for who

Quality and inclusivity

- Services and activities that are accessible, inclusive, welcoming and non-judgemental
- People who listen to, encourage and believe in you
- Treat us as experts about our own lives
- Chances to contribute and help others
- Chances to contribute and help others
- Better understanding of my needs
- Use a range of ways, including social media, to engage with us
- Get to know me as an individual and involve me in decision making

Help and support

- Opportunities to talk about what's bothering us
- Safe spaces where young people can be themselves
- Support to help us get back into learning
- Help during important transitions, like moving to high school and turning 18
- More help and support and to receive it much earlier/sooner
- Teach us about risks like County Lines so we don't just see it in the media
- Support to help address my anxieties
- Consistent support – not just at certain times

Our FLOURISH Priorities



Over the coming years, Children and Young People Strategic Alliance partners will be focusing on four specific areas of work we have identified as particularly important, based on what children, young people and families and the information we have about them has told us.

1. Strengthening our shared focus and approach on **Prevention** and **Early Help**
2. Working together to support children and young people's **Mental Health** and **Emotional Wellbeing**
3. Improving support for children and young people with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**
4. Addressing gaps in **Learning** following the pandemic

Each of these areas is supported by a specific, expert subgroup of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, who will lead activities and report against progress.



Prevention and Early Help

Why this is a priority

Prevention and early help maximise life chances for children, improves outcomes for families and prevents more complex problems emerging and we know that the need for early help may occur at any point in a child or young person's life, requiring us to intervene early and as soon as possible in order to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and families, or with groups most at risk of developing problems.

We believe that in taking action to prevent the likelihood of adverse outcomes and in supporting families at the earliest opportunity as needs emerge is an essential part of helping children FLOURISH. Given that a range of universal and targeted services play an important role, the development and delivery of an effective early help and prevention offer is not the responsibility of a single agency.

As a partnership we have a duty to take action to reduce the likelihood of adverse outcomes in children, young people's and families' lives. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) requires local agencies to have in place effective ways of identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and their families. It also requires local agencies to work together to put processes in place for the effective assessment of needs of individual children who may benefit from early help services. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, requires us to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of our early help processes and services, including identifying and responding to any gaps, to inform and improve future planning and service delivery in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) has a strong focus on prevention in supporting people to adopt improved healthy behaviours and reduce the risks of early ill health. For children, young people and families, this will include areas such as breast feeding, infant feeding and healthy eating, emotional wellbeing and smoking cessation.

We know that a proportion of children face additional challenges and barriers at different points in their lives, whether related to their own additional needs or linked to their parents' needs. We want strong, resilient families, and supporting children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity is therefore an essential part of helping children to flourish.

Our focus is on working with children and young people and families to design an approach that works for them, so that all families, have the information, advice and guidance they need and can access the help, when they need it, no matter who they ask. We need to enable families to identify and make use of the strengths within their existing networks, build resilience and know when and how to ask for help. This requires practitioners across agencies and organisations to be able to work as one system with shared ways of working,

so that prevention and early help support is joined up, clearly communicated, simple to understand and easy to access.

This will require a step change in our approach so that we can bring together the collective capacity of families, communities, and professionals in the interests of children and young people and their emotional wellbeing, educational, health, social and family needs. If we can get it right, it will create the platform for all children to flourish.

What needs to happen:

- Improve opportunities for children, young people and families to access information, guidance and self-help through reliable digital information, marketing, and promotion.
- Work with our partners to develop further a whole system response to prevention and early help, joining up pathways to ensure that children, young people and families receive advice, guidance and support at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop a young person's participation programme to secure insights about what support children and young people need now and into the future to support their well-being.
- Share and analyse information across the partnership that assists to collaboratively respond to identified inequalities and emerging vulnerability of individuals and communities.
- Alongside the voluntary and community sector, develop vibrant communities that take responsibility for the aspirations, opportunities and achievements of their children and young people.
- Support the development of facilities to ensure a range of positive activities for children, young people and families.
- Assist children and young people through family networking and community-based approaches to develop networks of support that prevent need escalating.
- Maximise opportunities for learning and achievement within families, supporting social mobility and economic well-being.
- Further develop and strengthen the early help services being provided, including parenting support and childcare, to reach a wider range of children with SEND, including ensuring that children and young people with SEND can access universal provision.
- Develop the range of community based short breaks available for families with disabled children, ensuring parents/carers have choice and flexibility in how their needs can be met from inclusive universal services through to community-based provision.
- Facilitate opportunities for the workforce to identify and respond to the holistic needs of children, young people and families earlier, using shared a language and a more joined-up approach to assessment.

- Improve access to evidence-based practice interventions, including parenting skills, that support children, young people, and families earlier and prevent the need for more specialist services, and help build resilience and promote self-help.
- Develop and improve multi-agency working and coordination of services for children with SEND and their families by promoting early support and help when needs are first identified.
- Improve confidence, skills and practice across the children and young people's workforce around SEND and mental health that ensures earlier identification and responses to inclusion and emotional well-being.

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- Children and young people's needs are collectively understood, action is taken to proactively address identified inequalities and needs will be identified earlier to enable the right help to be put in place before problems escalate.
- Parents and carers will have the support, advice and information to be able to build the skills they need to best support their children.
- Children, young people, families and professionals will be able to understand their needs through the use of common language and approaches to assessment.
- The proportion of children and young people attending school with 90% attendance or more will increase
- The number of parents and carers in continuous employment will increase
- The number of outcomes achieved through the Supporting Families programme will increase
- The number of early help assessments undertaken by the partnership will increase
- The proportion of families receiving early help prior to entering specialist/statutory services will increase
- The number of families making progress against the goals in their early help plan will increase
- The uptake and delivery of family networking within early help practice where families develop their own solutions to presenting issues will increase
- There will be a reduced risk of homelessness for families
- There will be a reduced risk of financial exclusion for families due to unmanageable debt or ability to meet basic family needs
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions will reduce

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Professionals working with children, young people and families will be more confident in providing direct help and accessing additional, joined up support.
- The demand for EHCPs where children and young people's needs can be met through early help and inclusive provision will reduce
- The demand on Children's Social Care (including Family Support & Social Work Teams) will reduce
- The demand for crisis mental health interventions will reduce, with children and young people's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing being supported earlier.
- Unnecessary re-referrals will reduce, with needs being met at the earliest opportunity.
- Planning and decision-making will be based on evidence about what is important to children, young people and families
- An increased proportion of funding will be spent on early help support
- Prevention and early help will have a clear partnership focus and governance.



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Why this is a priority

Children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health has never been so high on the public agenda and is a key priority within the NHS Long Term Plan. Historically underfunded, the NHS has made a new commitment that funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending.

At any one time a child may be on the spectrum of being emotionally and mentally healthy or very unwell, and many children move along the spectrum at different times during their childhood. Covid has had a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people, which were already inclining prior to Covid, and therefore this increased focus and resource has come at a critical time. In 2004, one in 10 5-16 year olds were estimated to have a probable mental health disorder, by 2017 this had increased to one in nine and by 2020 was estimated at one in six. Mental health is inextricably linked with wider societal determinants and the major socio-economic risk factors for mental health have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic.

Children and young people tell us some of the drivers for poor mental health are:

- family income and feelings about their family's socioeconomic circumstances
- social dimensions of life – worries about appearance, being bullied, family relationships and academic achievement
- poor parental physical and mental health
- abuse and neglect
- feeling unsafe in their neighbourhoods

What needs to happen

Ensure all children and young people 0-25 years with an emotional or mental health need have easy access to appropriate and effective support at the earliest opportunity with the aim of preventing mental ill health

- Develop an integrated single point of advice, guidance & access for all emotional wellbeing and mental health referrals that will be able to offer low level support and guided self-help, as well as improve quality of referrals to enable effective triage and allocation to appropriate pathways for support

- Continue to develop our children and young people's mental health participation and social recovery model to ensure the voice of children, young people and families is at the centre of all improvement and transformation work.
- Continue to build on and develop digital offers of support (e.g. Kooth, Just One Number) for children, young people and their families so they can access support more easily outside of traditional therapeutic settings
- Coordinate an integrated approach across local authority, health and the VCSE sector to support education settings around whole school approaches to emotional wellbeing, mental health and resilience and embed Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) across Norfolk and Waveney
- Develop an approach to 'parental support', including peer support models and whole family approaches with the wider system

Develop a comprehensive model of demand and capacity across the system to ensure we are able to optimise processes to ensure children and young people are seen at the earliest opportunity by a service, as well as have the capacity and appropriately trained workforce to provide specialist therapeutic support in line with demand.

- Continue to support services to reduce their waiting lists for accessing therapeutic support
- Develop system wide workforce development strategy and a local centre of excellence for children and young people's mental health training, learning and knowledge that all system partners can access. Embed innovation and research as core components within the centre of excellence to inform transformation
- Complete skills mapping survey of alliance provider workforce and identify training needs, with a particular focus on ensuring staff are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people with additional complex needs e.g. suspected or confirmed neurodevelopmental disorders.

Ensure all children and young people have access to 24/7 crisis support including 111 crisis line, assessment and brief intervention, Intensive support in the community and alternatives to admission.

- Ensure that where provision is expected to be utilised by children, young people and adults, that the provision is age-appropriate, and the teams are equipped and confident to meet the needs of younger cohorts
- Expand the offer to ensure all children and young people with a presenting mental health need are offered an assessment, brief intervention and where appropriate intensive support in the community, including an inclusive offer for children and young people with eating disorders and suspected or confirmed neurodiversity.

- Work with Children's Services and other system partners to develop a day unit as an immediate to short term solution for more complex children and young people presenting in crisis who need more intensive support or step down from an inpatient unit, in a community setting with wrap around care and treatment from a multi-agency team.
- Develop a decision unit and home treatment team for children and young people where a day unit is not clinically appropriate or not accessible for families
- Develop a service offer to ensure children and young people who are at risk of presenting in crisis can access risk support to help them feel safe and supported.

Ensure all children and young people with a suspected eating disorder are assessed and in NICE compliant treatment within one week for urgent cases and four weeks for routine cases

- Develop an all age eating disorder strategy which delivers a transformed service offer across Norfolk & Waveney based on need and choice
- Develop a system wide training programme to meet the needs of Specialist Eating Disorder Teams, Acute Hospitals, Community Services and Primary Care to help them effectively and safely manage and support children and young people presenting with an eating disorder
- Work with voluntary organisations to proactively support lower risk children and young people in the community and to support parent / carers with training and peer support/ respite to families

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- The number of children and young people accessing support for their emotional wellbeing and mental health across the system will increase
- Children and young people will have improved experiences of therapeutic treatment and exit services having met their goals
- The number of children and young people with a low-level need identified in schools and referred to Mental Health Support Teams or universal resilience provision will increase
- Children, young people and families can access crisis support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Children and young people who require more intensive support will be able to access treatment through Day Units and Home Treatment Teams, improving the experiences and outcomes of these individuals
- All children and young people with an eating disorder will be in treatment within one week for urgent presentations and four weeks for routine, ensuring their needs are met at the earliest opportunity

- Children, young people and their families will have easy access information, advice and guidance to support them with their emotional wellbeing
- The number of children and young people presenting in crisis with an eating disorder requiring medical stabilisation will reduce
- Children and young people who require medical stabilisation on acute paediatric wards are discharged when medically safe and are able to access therapeutic support for their eating disorder in the most appropriate environment to meet their needs
- Children and young people, families and professionals feel better supported by the mental health system

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Centre of Excellence for training and sharing good practice will be available to ensure all professionals working with children and young people are equipped to meet their emotional wellbeing needs, as well as understanding when it is necessary to refer to more specialist support
- Numbers of therapeutic roles to support children and young people mental health across a variety of statutory and VCSE providers will increase
- Unnecessary referrals to specialist services will reduce
- Children, young people, families and professionals will be able to understand children and young people's wellbeing needs through the use of common language and joint approaches to assessment and intervention.



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Why this is a priority

Norfolk is working towards four key priorities for children and young people with SEND, articulated through the [Norfolk Area SEND Strategy](#).

The need for an over-arching, ongoing, Area SEND Strategy is due to the need to ensure that the identification of need and the support, services and provision that follow is systematically co-ordinated across the county and across the education, health and care systems. We know from our own data, from our deepening working relationship with parent/carer groups and from comparison with other areas and through inspection that we need to improve SEND in many ways. However, we also have many examples of good and outstanding provision in Norfolk, and we need to celebrate these and learn from their successes.

We know that:

- Of the **123,233** students in primary and secondary education in Norfolk:
 - **13.1%** (16,138) have Special Educational Needs (SEN) support
 - **3.8%** (4,668) have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- The number of young people aged 0-25 with EHCPs in Norfolk has increased by around **21%** (from 6,689 to c8,500) between 2020 and our current estimate, similar to the national increase.
- Norfolk's young people were less likely to have new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks in 2020 (**20.1%** compared to 60.4% nationally) although local data shows this has increased to 54% in 2021
- Compared to national figures, in 2020 (our most recent data) Norfolk's young people with ECHPs or SEN Support:
 - are less likely to be in mainstream education settings (**35.4%** compared to 43% nationally)
 - are more likely to be awaiting provision (**0.9%** v. 0.4%)
 - are more likely to be educated at home (**1.3%** v 0.8%)
 - are less likely to be in a special school (**31.1%** v. 41%)
 - are more likely to be in alternative provision (**2.5%** v. 0.9%)

To ensure effective assessment for special educational needs and disability (SEND) there must be co-ordination of assessment and reviews and the related specialist provision across the county council's children and adult services, the CCG and education and health providers covering an age range of 0-25. This creates a complex system and operates within a statutory framework which places Children's Services in the lead agency role and with related responsibilities for the other agencies and providers. In response to rising

need, increased budget pressures and the outcome of recent Ofsted/CQC inspection there are currently three major programmes of SEND transformation which, taken together, combine in our SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness planning, these major programmes are:

- Area SEND Strategy
- SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Transformation Programme
- Ofsted/CQC Written Statement of Action

What needs to happen

We need to ensure that all our improvement work for SEND is focussed on the priorities within our Area SEND Strategy.

Working together with children and young people with SEND

- Children, young people, and their parents/carers feel confident about sharing their experiences and that these will be used to shape improvements
- Children and young people are supported to have an active role in decision making
- Communication about services is clear and understood by children and young people and their parents/carers and those working with them
- Children, young people and their parents/carers and professionals work in co-production to develop ways to share information
- Timely and meaningful assessments are used to plan the support needed to enable children and young people to progress



Improving what is in place for families and professionals to support children and young people with SEND

- All those working with or volunteering to support children and young people have the right skills and training for their roles
- Education, health and social care services for children and young people are shaped by a strong commitment to co-production
- All services regularly review how they collect, share, and use data
- Those who plan services are using resources effectively
- Children, young people and their parents/carers are part of conversations about SEND support, know what to expect and are included in decision making
- Children, young people and their parents/carers have access to information to be able to make choices when making placement decisions

Communicating the SEND services and support available in Norfolk

- Services produce and develop their information in co-production with children, young people and their parents/carers
- Services ensure that information is easy to use and understand, helpful and up to date
- Children, young people, parents/carers and professionals work together to continuously review and improve the SEND Local Offer website.
- A wide range of communication methods is used to make sure that information is available to everyone who needs it

Preparing young people for adult life

- Children and young people are supported to take an active role in their community, including employment and living an independent adult life
- Children and young people are supported to understand and look after their health and wellbeing
- Education, health and social care services will work together with children, young people and parents/ carers to understand and meet the needs of children and young people
- Services are shaped by a clear understanding of the needs of children and young people and by reviewing the impact of services on their lives
- All children, young people and their parents/carers will know where to go for help and support with transition and preparing for adult life

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- Children and young people are supported locally
- Children and young people are ready for education, training and/or employment



- Children and young people feel confident to aim high and have ownership of their future
- Three new specialist schools are opened and existing special schools have more places
- More than a hundred new places are created in our specialist resource bases
- Information is co-produced, accurate and reliable
- EHCs are always high quality and within the required timescale

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Everyone is committed to working together
- Services gather feedback and explain what they will do to improve
- Services respond to the changing needs of children and young people with SEND
- Settings confidently identify needs at an early stage
- Settings have the resources to meet needs
- Settings have an inclusive culture, supporting children and young people and their needs
- Improved quality and sufficiency of placements for looked after children with disabilities



Addressing Gaps in Learning

Why this is a priority

Face to face learning for children and young people, in a good school, is paramount to their achievement. Researchers from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the University of Exeter found that pupils in England and Northern Ireland lost 61 of the usual 190 days of schooling on average between March 2020 and April 2021 ([Covid: Pupils have lost a third of learning time](#)). Whilst some flourished, based at home, with a diet of on line learning, some have not. This has caused learning delay and in younger children affected their language and social and emotional development.

National evidence supports the view that there could be a significant impact on individuals who have lost time in school. For example, a year in school can increase earnings in later life by as much as 8%. Losing a significant amount of time in school could therefore impact on adult economic prospects.

The gap for children who are disadvantaged and those who are not was already greater than we would want, both nationally and in Norfolk. It is estimated that this could be worse as a result of the time out of school.

For some children and young people, we know that there has been an impact on their mental health and wellbeing and their confidence to re-integrate into large, busy schools. For a small number of children this has led to behavioural challenges, and in a minority, sporadic attendance. Some primary settings are reporting an increased occurrence of incidents of self-harm and disordered eating and concerns regarding 'age/stage' inappropriate behaviour.

Many children, whose parents had opted for elective home education following the pandemic have now returned to school. However, in some cases they continue to be home educated.

Schools are experienced in catch up, so will be able to assess learning loss quickly and plan recovery programmes. They are expected to manage the impact of the pandemic – sensitively in terms of children's mental health and wellbeing, to manage the current impact on their staffing and children with a significant rise in cases in young people, deliver recovery programmes as well as return to normal in terms of a robust, rigorous and comprehensive school curriculum.

For the very youngest children we know there has been a significant disruption to their language acquisition and confidence. Learning through play with others is fundamental to language learning. Access to a programme of learning to

read, with regular access to age-appropriate reading material will have further compounded language development for some children. There is more time to catch these children up and schools will adjust their curriculum appropriately. However, a wider response across all partners, agencies and communities could enhance this further and close the gap more rapidly.

What needs to happen

Utilise the newly formed Norfolk Learning Board to address the key systemic priorities – initially to support recovery, and longer term to lead the system collaboratively

- Bring together the education sector leaders, from settings, schools and colleges, to work collaboratively, pooling expertise and resources, draw in co-operation and support from key partners and stakeholders to focus on systemic challenges, to champion and lead county-wide priorities for recovery initially and future learning development
- In Year 1 - establish two key workstreams. 1) Transition at all key stages of learning to deliver co-ordinated approaches and strategies to promote better transition across early years, primary secondary and post 16, and 2) Inclusion - integrating priorities around wellbeing, mental health, SEND, curriculum support and language development, and align with wider Prevention and early help model

Through the Education Training and Strategy Group (multi-agency partners) ensure alignment to NLB, Norwich Opportunity Area, secure commitment to enhance post 16 pathways, promote key national and local opportunities and programmes, ensure robust communication and equality of opportunity

- Create/develop and deliver online transition and IAG support activities including face to face, automated and Live chat IAG solutions
- Develop and deliver targeted support activities during Y11 and Y12 at groups of young people identified as being most at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Schools, colleges, and other post 16 providers will identify and refer young people in need of support and who meet the criteria to the Social Recovery programme

Identify wellbeing need in schools and provide a contextualised response that is outcome focused, meets need early where possible and provides training, support and curriculum activity

- Enhance the DfE wellbeing project, target specific education providers to enhanced support
- Provide universal and targeted relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) support to schools that ensure an effective curriculum is delivered to equip pupils with the knowledge, values and skills to promote their health and wellbeing, including supporting their peers as appropriate

- Create a thematic toolkit of resources, guidance and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to help schools and settings identify and effectively respond to established and emerging mental health and wellbeing related challenges

Work with schools and early years providers to support the identification gaps in learning, utilise appropriate assessment strategies and build a curriculum that addresses these gaps

- Focus on targeting maintained schools at risk of poor/ less robust curriculum progression /provision, and therefore adverse Ofsted inspection
- Establish a blended approach to curriculum CPD, and work with sector to develop and broker training and support – e.g. headteacher associations, Teaching Schools, Research School NLB, Norwich Opportunity Area etc.
- Support schools with promoting resourcing and teaching reading through targeted CPD

Improve language acquisition and social and emotional development for young children who have missed out on experiences to socialise and develop language

- Support community groups to develop and improve stay and play sessions for families with children 0-2
- Support more disadvantaged families to take up funded Early Years provision for 2-year-olds
- build on the expertise and expand the network of trained communications champions ([Norwich Opportunity Area](#)) to create a sustainable network of communication experts working across schools and early years providers.

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- Gaps in outcomes for disadvantaged learners are narrowing and are smaller than those reported nationally
- Academic achievement in Norfolk schools returns to at least pre-pandemic standards, following re-introduction of testing and examinations

- A smaller proportion of young people in Norfolk are reported as NEET or with an unknown destination aged 16 and 17 compared to 2021 measures
- Outcome indicators related to language acquisition and reading are improving (EY Foundation Stage Profile, phonics screening check, reading attainment at KS1 and 2 in primary schools)
- Permanent exclusions remain lower than in previous years (pre pandemic), and continue to decline
- A higher proportion of disadvantaged two-year-olds benefit from high quality early education

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Ofsted Outcomes for quality of education and personal development are better or at least in line with national benchmarks, LA maintained schools do not receive an adverse inspection judgement
- Education leaders enjoy better wellbeing and are more effective due to better joined up working to meet the challenges they face



Working together to deliver ‘what works’

Alongside working together to achieve our four identified priorities, our Strategic Alliance partners each have strategies and plans which they have developed in order to deliver our wider responsibilities and ambitions for children, young people and families – what they want and need in order that they can flourish.

This strategy aims to complement and add value to these individual plans through identifying how we can work better together to help every child and young person to flourish, rather than duplicate anything that is well covered elsewhere.

There are significant areas where our partners’ strategic priorities align. These common areas help us identify where working together makes most sense and will lead to the best results.

Common themes emerging across Strategic Alliance member organisations’ strategies and plans include commitments to:

- Collaborate with and put children, young people and families’ views and wishes at the heart of all decisions which affect their lives
- Provide help and support at the earliest possible stage, to prevent problems escalating
- Ensure there is sufficient, good quality provision which offers choice and flexibility
- Protect and care for vulnerable children, young people and families
- Improve social mobility, confidence, achievements and life chances for children, young people and families
- Provide smooth pathways into and through services, with fewer gaps and duplications
- Work holistically with children, young people and families on all areas impacting on their ability to thrive
- Provide children, young people and families with opportunities to become more resilient and to help themselves
- Improve accessibility and reduce inequalities and barriers to independence
- Work more efficiently and effectively and embrace innovation
- Collaborate and share resources
- Develop the skills of the children and young people’s workforce

Building on these commitments, we have identified a range of areas that we need to focus on and secure through working together if we want to both deliver against the specific priorities identified in this plan and to enable children, young people and families to Flourish.

Several of the determinants will be actioned across FLOURISH and the four key priorities, because we know they are important areas of focus for all our work. Others are more specific to individual FLOURISH impacts.

Through the work of the Strategic Alliance across the children and young people's system, we will encourage, support and champion the focus on delivering these determinants so that all children and young people in Norfolk can Flourish.



FLOURISH Determinants



Universal determinants – applicable across all FLOURISH impacts

- Effective early identification and intervention
- Skilled and understanding workforce
- Choice and control
- Effective, accessible information, advice and guidance
- Aligned, easy pathways
- Targeted support
- Integrated system working
- Accessible, engaging opportunities
- Sufficient, effective support networks



Tailored Determinants

particular to individual FLOURISH impacts

family and friends

Family and friends

- Effective, accessible universal preventative services
- Risk and safety mitigation and management
- Edge of care support
- Safe, stable places to live
- Healthy peer relationships
- Trusted, safe relationships with adults

learning

Learning

- Effective, sufficient, high quality learning provision
- Access to life-long learning and skills development
- Inclusive and preventative practices
- Peer support
- Good home learning environments
- Engagement with learning

oppportunity

Opportunity

- Understanding of inequalities and barriers
- Removal of barriers
- Availability of pathways

understood

Understood

- System commitment to participation
- Embedded co-production
- Empowerment of children and young people
- Engaging promotion
- Children, Young People and Family-led planning
- Feedback and encouragement
- Advocacy of children and young people's views



resilience

Resilience

- Basic needs are met
- Effective transition planning
- Risk coaching and mitigation

individual

Individual

- Respectful relationships
- Promotion of understanding and acceptance
- Pro-active challenge from individual to system level
- Safe environments
- Peer support
- Inclusive, person-centred service design and delivery

safe and secure

Safe and secure

- Safe environments
- Effective perpetrator deterrent and prosecution
- Preventative interventions
- Effective safety promotion
- Understanding of risk
- Community and peer understanding and support
- Effective, timely information sharing and communication
- Trusted relationships with adults and agencies

healthy

Healthy

- Prioritisation of prevention and wellbeing
- Holistic approaches to clinical and social needs
- Healthy environments
- Understanding risk and impact of choices on healthy lifestyles
- Healthy behaviours

How we will know we are succeeding

Developing an outcome monitoring framework for FLOURISH

In setting out our strategy, we are able to call on a wide range of data and information from across our Strategic Alliance partnership as we think about children and young people's FLOURISH outcomes, the factors that affect them, and the impact of the support we provide to improve them.

This information, however, frequently relates to specific elements of children and young people's journey, or particular services, and we don't currently systematically bring this together to get an overall sense of individuals' experiences and outcomes, or a sense of the total impact of the Strategic Alliance's work.

Our aim is for our strategy, and the ongoing monitoring of its delivery, to be informed by an increasingly data and evidence-led narrative that enables the Strategic Alliance to identify issues and trends in how our children and young people are Flourishing and answers the "so what?" questions about whether we are making a difference.

Our approach will be based on an objective analysis of a range of data from across the children and young people system, using the skills and knowledge of analysts and professionals within partners' organisations, and collated into a set of key documents and products.

To support this, we will develop a systematic whole-partnership monitoring framework alongside the FLOURISH outcomes, to enable the Strategic Alliance to track progress against each outcome, and as a whole, using data and evidence. This will be supported by dedicated analytical and technical capacity within the data system & performance enabling subgroup.

The shape and nature of this framework will be set by the Strategic Alliance, but in line with good practice it is likely to include:

- A concise set of the most important outcome and progress measures for each FLOURISH impact area.
- An over-arching dashboard that brings all of these together into a single view, along with the ability to 'drill down' into more detail.
- Clear ownership of the monitoring of each of the FLOURISH impact areas, taking into account data sharing responsibilities and where the expertise lies to provide accurate, up to date context and further information.
- An agreed set of principles that describe how and when issues are highlighted or escalated to the Strategic Alliance and how data is collected, presented and reported.

- An annual cycle that includes:
 - A formal, published progress report and needs assessment, covering all FLOURISH impact areas.
 - a review of our priority measures, and any targets set against those, to ensure they are telling us the right information about the right people at the right time.

To inform the development of effective monitoring around the FLOURISH outcomes and impacts, we recognise we need to further develop our intelligence gathering, specifically around how children, young people and families feel about their lives. This work will be led by the Strategic Alliance's Stakeholder Engagement and Insight subgroup and will ensure the wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families are at the heart of the Strategic Alliance's measures of success and, therefore, the Alliance's decision making.



Partners





flourish