



Hertfordshire
**Family Centre
Service**

Hertfordshire Family Support Service

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2021 - March 2022

“

Hertfordshire Family Support Staff and volunteers (from Barnardos, Inspire All and One YMCA) have worked tirelessly to ensure that we continue to operate despite all of the challenges over the past year. Through the skill, hard work and professionalism, staff have been able to deliver much needed support to the families of Hertfordshire in a range of innovative ways to ensure that we meet our five service priorities.

”





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Who We Are

Hertfordshire's Family Support Service is part of the Family Centre Service. We help families from pregnancy through to when a child reaches the end of Primary School (aged 11 years).

Our purpose is to support children to have the best start in life, develop well and thrive.





Our Work Focuses on 5 Key Priorities



Priority 1: Healthy Lives, Healthy Relationships

Outcome Bee: Be Healthy,
Be Safe, Be Resilient, Be Happy



Priority 2: Raising Aspirations & Volunteering

Outcome Bee: Be Ambitious,
Be Resilient, Be Independent,
Be Happy





Priority 4: SEND Educational Needs & Disabilities

Outcome Bee: Be Healthy, Be Safe, Be Resilient, Be Independent



Priority 3: Narrowing the Gap

Outcome Bee: Be Ambitious, Be Resilient



Priority 5: Public Health Messages

Outcome Bee: Be Healthy

The Family Support Service

Being a parent is one of the most challenging, rewarding and important roles anyone can have. All children deserve to be supported so they can grow up happy and healthy.

We provide early help to families before problems escalate by offering:



1-1 Support



Parenting Groups



Emerging Needs Support



Universal Services



The Last Year

2021 was one of the toughest years families living in Hertfordshire have faced.

The Hertfordshire Family Support Service would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past year, looking at:

- **Ways the service rapidly adapted to new ways of working**
- **Impact of the Family Support Service***
- **What we have learnt**
- **Highlighting some of the plans for this coming year**



** All data supplied is for the Family Support Service. Providers from April 2021 to March 2022*

For Accessing Targeted Family Support

There is a designated portal for families and partners to make referrals into the Service.

This alerts the Family Support Service teams to:



Make contact with the family



Begin the process of identifying their needs



Work in partnership with the family



Design a plan to build on their strengths, skills and resilience to improve their children's outcomes





PRIORITY 1

Healthy Lives, Healthy Relationships

The Family Outcomes Stars are evidence-based tools designed to support positive change and greater wellbeing with scales presented in a star shape and measured on a clearly defined 'Journey of Change'.

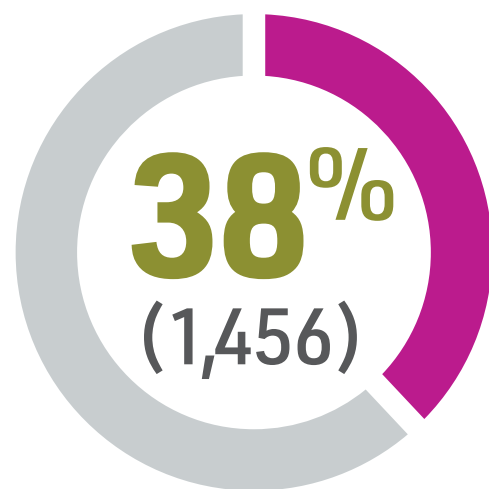
The Stars focus on the needs of the family as a whole, working to the family's strengths. The assessments address the underlying needs, rather than the presenting symptoms. The Family Support Service offers flexible, responsive support to build family resilience. All three providers use the Stars which provides outcomes that are clear and consistent'



4,330

= TOTAL NUMBER OF
REFERRALS

for 1:1
& Parenting
Groups



of these
REFERRALS
were for
**emotional
wellbeing
support**

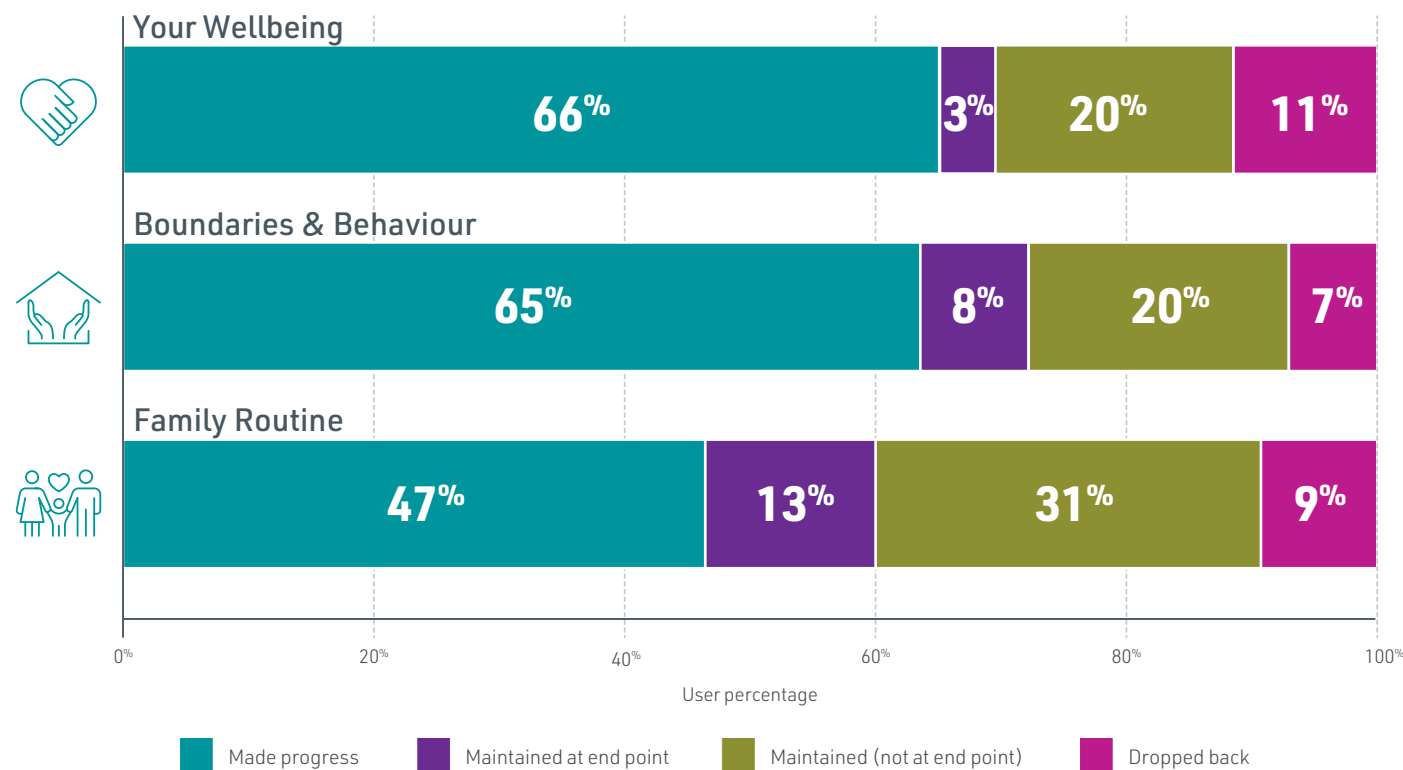


The Family Star Plus

This tool looks at the following areas:

- Physical Health
- Your Wellbeing
- Meeting Emotional Needs
- Keeping Your Children Safe
- Social Networks
- Education & Learning
- Boundaries & Behaviours
- Family Routine
- Home & Money
- Progress To Work

How Much Progress Families Across Hertfordshire are Making in Key Outcomes



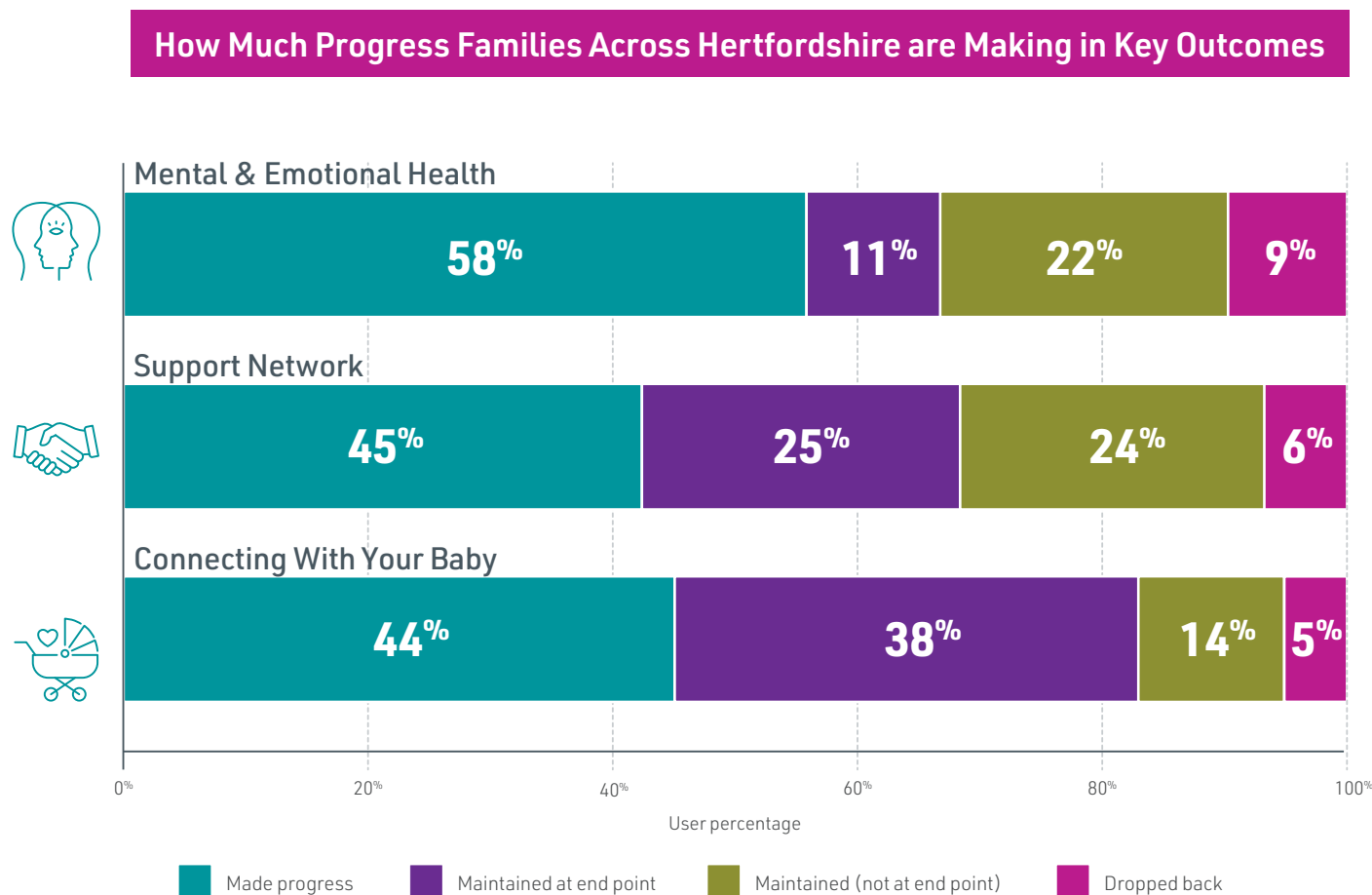
'Made Progress' measures the improved outcomes for the families.

Data informs us of any further support required in the family's 'Journey of Change'.

The Parent and Baby Star

This tool looks at the following areas:

- Connecting With Your Baby
- Relationships
- Support Network
- Looking After Your Baby



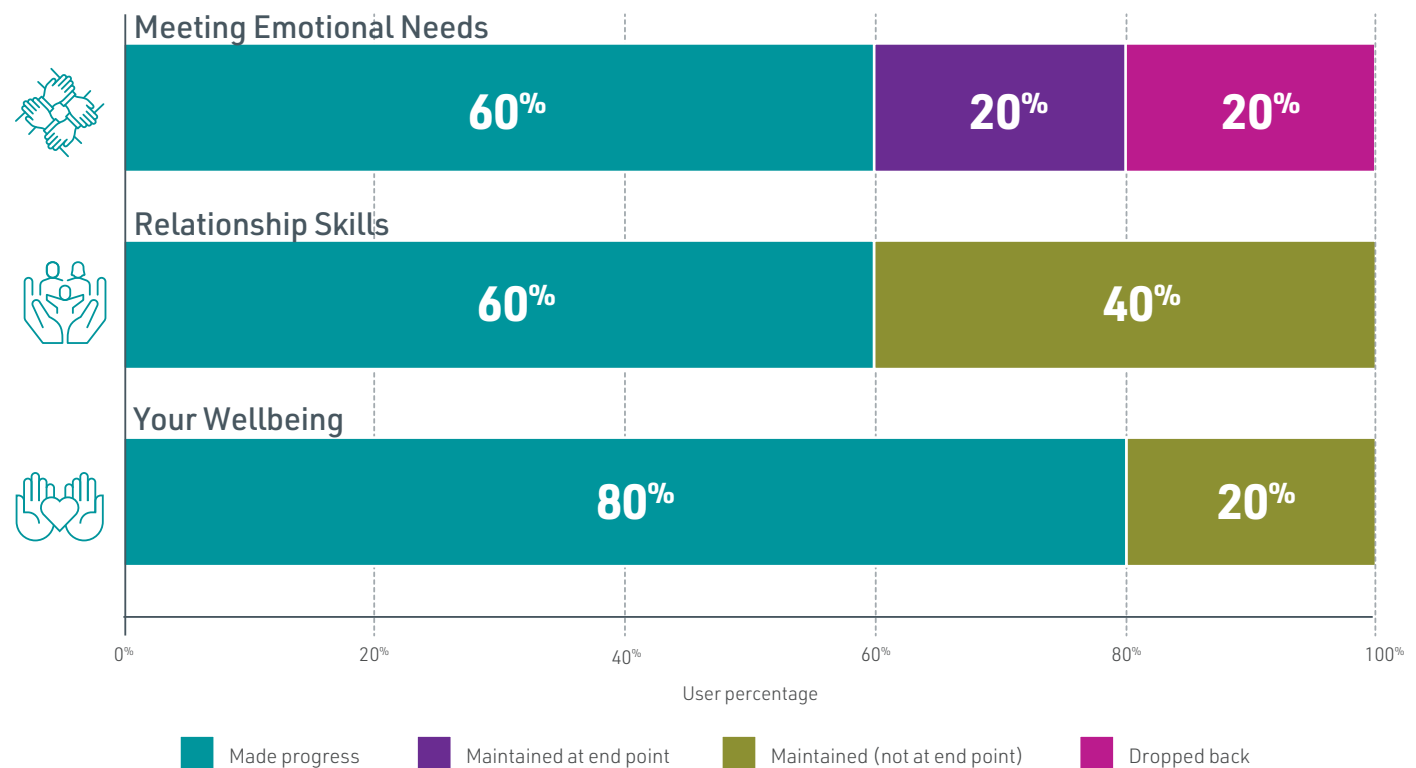
The Relationship Star

An action plan is created in collaboration with the parent/ carer to increase family resilience, develop confidence and improve the lived experiences of the children.

This tool looks at the following areas:

- Practical Arrangements
- Routines & Stability
- Meeting Emotional Needs
- Boundaries & Behaviour
- Relationship Skills
- Managing Strong Feelings
- Your Wellbeing

How Much Progress Families Across Hertfordshire are Making in Key Outcomes



Family Voice

"This package has been really good. I was at rock bottom before and it's showed that I'm doing a good job of looking after my child. I now have new ways to manage my feelings and feel more confident to start this..."

"I grew up in a house where we didn't talk about feelings or showed our emotions. Doing the work with you has helped me speak about my emotions more as well as getting the children to open up. Now the children ask me how I'm feeling and when I used to say I'm fine, I'll now say Mummy feels sad and explain in an age-appropriate way. I feel this has improved our relationship and stopped K's tantrums now we are speaking about why he's having them..."



PRIORITY **2**

Raising Aspirations and Volunteering

Raising the aspirations of families enables them to live fulfilled lives and make a positive contribution in their communities.

Families are offered opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge through educational courses as well as workshops to prepare them for employment and improve their job prospects. We work with a range of partners in the education, community and voluntary sectors to support families so that they have the right skills to support their children to have better outcomes.



"Thanks a lot, the sessions were really insightful and I learned a lot about how to approach certain situations with my child"

Talking Dad's Workshop

"I feel more confident to attend to any accidents, especially as we are venturing out more"

First Aid Workshop

Volunteering

Our volunteering roles offer families opportunities to gain work experience, improve skills and confidence as well as support our work with families.

Through our programme many volunteers have gone into paid work or further training. Our volunteers are integral to our service. In some cases, they bring a wealth of skills from their previous roles or have substantial knowledge of our local community which enhances our ability to engage with a wide range of families.

We commit to providing volunteers with a comprehensive induction programme as well as ongoing training support and supervision to ensure they have a fulfilling experience and achieve their goals.



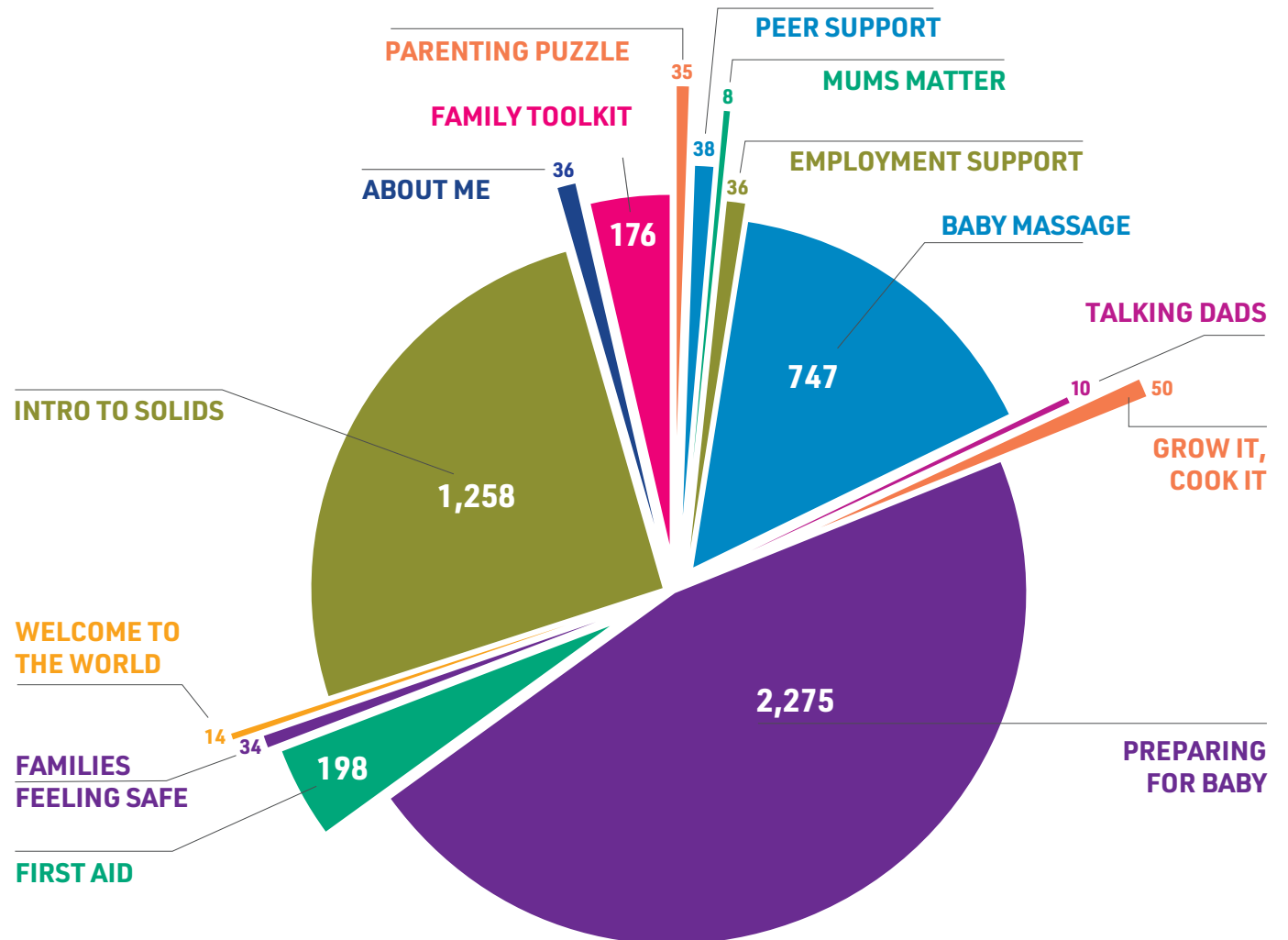
"Thank you very much for the amazing opportunity to help the community. Such a great journey I had an awesome experience."

"You have given me back me."

Number of Families Attending Courses and Workshops

MUMS MATTER	8
TALKING DADS	10
WELCOME TO THE WORLD	14
FAMILIES FEELING SAFE	34
PARENTING PUZZLE	35
ABOUT ME	36
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT	36
PEER SUPPORT	38
GROW IT, COOK IT	50
FAMILY TOOLKIT	176
FIRST AID	198
BABY MASSAGE	747
INTRO TO SOLIDS	1,258
PREPARING FOR BABY	2,275

4,330  Total number of REFERRALS



*Full year attendance data

Volunteering



PRIORITY **3**

Narrowing the Gap

The Emerging Needs packages provide holistic support with narrowing the gap in attainment and reducing inequalities for children under 5 years. Children and families receive practical support, advice, guidance and access to high quality sessions that promote play, learning and development.



3 Narrowing the Gap

The Emerging Needs packages are:

- **Early Talk**

A six week course to develop ideas to promote a child's communication and language. Run in partnership with the speech and language team.

- **Little Learners**

A five week course for families with children aged 10 to 20 months supporting parents to have a better understanding of how to respond to their child's feelings and how to provide safe play and learning opportunities that they can enjoy together to help their child to reach their developmental milestones.

- **Young Explorers**

A five week course for families with children aged 2 and above supporting parents to have a better understanding of how to respond to their child's feelings and how to provide safe play and learning opportunities that they can enjoy together to help their child to reach their developmental milestones.

- **My Baby & Me**

A five week course for families with children aged 4 months to 1 year supporting parents to have a better understanding of how to respond to their child's feelings and how to provide safe play and learning opportunities that they can enjoy together to help their child to reach their developmental milestones.

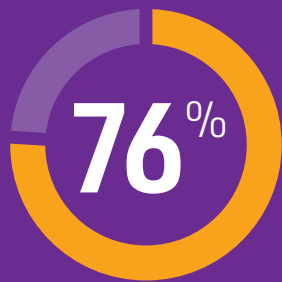
These are designed to support around the 3 prime Early Years Foundation Stages areas:

- **Communication & Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Personal, Social & Emotional Development**

3 Narrowing the Gap

Narrowing the Gap

Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQs) involve parents with their expert knowledge of their children to highlight developmental progress and catch any identified delays, ensuring that next steps for ongoing healthy development and learning or additional support is identified and provided as early as possible.



of Ages and Stages Questionnaires for 2 year review (ASQs) were returned during 2021. This is a Public Health Nursing project supported by the Family Support Service.

Anticipated a return of 40%

4,021



referrals into
**EMERGING
NEEDS**



Funding For 2 Year Olds

Eligible 2 year olds are entitled to free childcare (15 hours)

AUTUMN 2020
UPTAKE WAS 79.1%

AUTUMN 2021
UPTAKE WAS 94.1%



 AN INCREASE OF
+15%

PRIORITY **4**

SEND Educational Needs and Disabilities

The Family Centre Service has SEND Champions who work closely with specialist services to support families and be a source of expertise.

What support can the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Champions offer?

- Help parents to find out what support is available
- Support families to navigate the Hertfordshire Local Offer website
- Signpost parents to local courses and support groups
- Support parents with additional worries around learning and development, feelings of isolation or wellbeing and confidence through one-to-one or parenting groups
- Signpost or support families with help completing relevant forms, such as DLA, EHCP and referral forms



Case Study

Case study from a professional and the parent of a child who attended Young Explorers.

"When X started Young Explorers he initially struggled with tidy up time, he did not like to see his favourite toys being put away! We quickly implemented the use of a timer and frequent verbal reminders to help prepare him. By week 3, he was learning the routine and by week 5 he was helping to tidy away and even started to join in singing the goodbye song. We taught Mum how she could implement the use of a timer at home to help ease his anxiety around the ending of activities."



Before we started Young Explorers, I was struggling to understand my son's behaviour, he didn't like having his teeth brushed, or having to tidy up, we often had meltdowns around mealtimes as well. X helped us to implement boundaries, using the timer, distraction techniques and verbal reinforcement, we are now having more good days than bad. We have also booked onto BeeZee Bodies after X's suggestion, and we are looking forward to getting some more tips and tricks on how to lead healthy lifestyles."

Parent of child at Young Explorers

Early Talk

Early Talk is a targeted intervention designed by the Hertfordshire Community Trust Speech and Language Therapy teams for parents/carers of children aged 18–30 months at the early stages of talking. Family Support staff are trained to deliver Early Talk.

The aims for families are:

- To encourage parents/carers to play with their child, with the focus on developing listening/attention, turn-taking, play and vocabulary
- To provide opportunities to develop language skills at home
- The opportunity to observe Family Support Staff modelling basic adult-child interaction and encouraged to try these themselves



1,143



Total number of
**EARLY TALK
REFERRALS**



Early Talk

During the final session of the Early Talk course, parents/carers and practitioners complete a course completion form to reflect on the changes they and their child had made. The following is an example of a recent course evaluation.

90%

of parents said that this course made
A DIFFERENCE
to them and their
FAMILY



100%

of parents said they feel more able to
HELP DEVELOP
their child's
SPEECH, LANGUAGE
and/or
COMMUNICATION
development



100%

of parents said that they felt
CONFIDENT
applying what they learned during the course at home



Family Voice

"It was so reassuring to know that I'm not the only one with concerns about my child's development..."

"The course provided me with the opportunity to focus on my child..."

"The course gave some good advice to get started with at home. There were some great examples of games and activities to try with my child..."



PRIORITY **5**

Public Health Messages

The Family Support Service ensures that key Public Health messages are threaded through all the services it provides via 1-1 conversations, small group discussions, signposting to other organisations and by sharing information via social media platforms.

These key messages include:

- Infant Feeding – Breastfeeding Support & Introduction to Solids
- My Baby's Brain
- Oral Health
- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Smoking
- Toilet Training
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Immunisations
- Alcohol
- Safety



Public Health Messages

The Family Support Service also delivers a number of key Public Health services. These have included:

- **Self Weigh Stations** – parents have been able to book a 15 minute appointment to weigh their child and speak with a Family Support Service member of staff at key touchpoints
- **Introduction to Solid Foods** – information has been shared in a variety of ways via Facebook Q&A's sessions, virtual Introduction to Solids workshops and face to face as a regular part of the Baby Group and while attending self-weigh sessions
- **Vitamin Scheme** – families can pick up free vitamins from Family Centres
- **Supported Public Health Nursing** - with processing Ages and Stages Questionnaire for children aged two years to assess their development
- **Preparing for Baby Antenatal Programme** - the Family Support Service led one week of the three week course in partnership with Public Health Nursing and Midwifery



Healthy Mouths Programme

The aim of this pilot project is to prevent tooth decay/oral disease, improve oral hygiene, promote healthy eating and signpost families to local dentists.

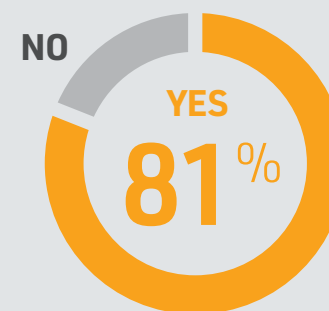
The objectives are to deliver a dental hygiene pack to vulnerable children (aged 0-5) in Hertfordshire through our existing Family Support Services and Public Health Nursing with professional advice to families about oral health.

1,382

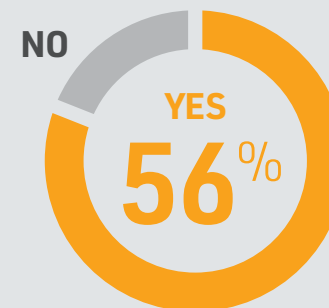


Total number of families who
BENEFITTED
from this project

Did you find the information leaflet in the oral health pack helpful?



Have you made any changes to your teeth cleaning routines as a result of receiving the oral health pack?



Self Weigh



TOTAL NUMBER OF
**SELF WEIGH
LOCATIONS**
ACROSS THE COUNTY

↪ **40**

TOTAL NUMBER OF
ATTENDEES ↪

10,322



Lessons Learnt

- Ability to rapidly adapt the service
- Our staff are very flexible/resilient
- Investment was needed in IT and filming equipment
- MS Teams saved time, for example it has enabled more partners to attend Partnership Network Meetings
- Many Parent & Toddler Groups needed financial and practical support to return



Lessons Learnt

- Offering a hybrid approach to service delivery has enabled more families to engage with the service
- Despite COVID-19 restrictions, many parents are ready to return to face to face groups
- As we 'live with COVID-19' we are re-evaluating our communications strategy to ensure offline promotion of the service alongside our digital marketing channels
- We lost some volunteers in the pandemic and need to recruit more



Our Next Steps

- **Breastfeeding re-accreditation via UNICEF**
- **Continue to increase engagement with families through our Universal service offer i.e. Parent Cafes, Preparing for Parenthood Social Events and new universal services**
- **Increase our engagement with families with a Families First Assessment to raise awareness of our service offer**
- **Increase our engagement with fathers**



Our Next Steps

- Review our Antenatal offer delivered in partnership with Public Health Nursing and Maternity Services
- Embed the SEND Professional Promise
- Establish a universal SEND offer
- Adapt Emerging Needs offer to meet the needs of SEND children
- Increase referrals from a wider range of partners into Emerging Needs, 1:1 Family Support and Parenting Groups



Digital Communications Statistics for the County

The Communications teams across the three Family Support Providers work closely together to ensure a consistent and correctly branded message is depicted on all social media platforms across the County.

Total numbers for the year:

24,099 ↘
 **FACEBOOK**
Followers

2,364 ↘
 **INSTAGRAM**
Followers

SOCIAL POSTS
9,314 ↘
 **FACEBOOK**
POSTS

368 ↘  **INSTAGRAM**
POSTS

FAMILY NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS ↘
4,858 

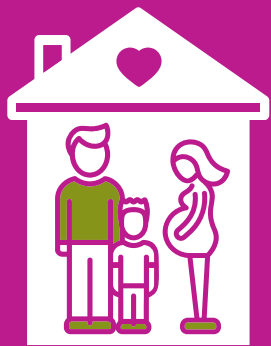
 **YOUTUBE**
SUBSCRIBERS
↘ **289** 

Thank You to our Partners



Collaborative working is central to so much of the service that we provide to families through the Family Support Service. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of our partner organisations listed below, in particular our Public Health Nursing colleagues from Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust.

- ADD-Vance
- BeeZee Bodies
- Catapult
- Citizens Advice
- Community Action Dacorum
- Communities 1st
- District Councils
- District Healthy Hubs
- DSPLs
- Early Years Alliance
- Families First
- Family in Focus
- Food Banks
- Herts for Learning
- Hertfordshire Libraries
- Hertfordshire Libraries & Heritage Services – HCC
- Herts Mind
- Herts Parent Carer Involvement
- Home Start
- Housing Associations
eg. B3 Living
- Job Centre
- Margaret Street, Early Years Librarian
- National Careers Service
- Playskills
- Safer Places
- Step2Skills
- SPACE
- Supporting Links
- Team Herts
- The Local Offer
- The Wellbeing Team
- Trainingly
- Watford & Three Rivers Trust
- Watford Women's Centre



Hertfordshire
**Family Centre
Service**

For more information:

Call: 0300 123 7572

Visit: hertsfamilycentres.org



Find us on social media

**Most of the images in this presentation are original Family Support Service photographs and are only used for the purpose we have been given permission for.*

Data references: April 2021 - March 2022